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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.

HOPE OF HEAVEN: OR, THEIR OWN WAY.

THERE are few who, if asked where they hope to spend eternity, would give you the answer, "I have no hope of heaven."

Men hope to get there somehow; yes, even from the very brink of hell they hope to glide in some frail bark of their own construction over the rippling waves of some silvery tide, right into an eternity of ease and rest, or at least freedom from the ups and downs and vicissitudes of life here.

Their dreams of a future are misty enough, it is true, but their life here is spent in a mist or vapour of unreality, and eternity seems but an expanse of the same dream only without trouble. To have to meet God, to answer for a mis-spent

life of sin, to have to stand face to face with the One they have rejected, are facts seldom or never thought of; and so many a soul sinks, half asleep, into an endless eternity of woe, and is roused by the terrible realities scarcely believed in at all.

Now, why is this, when the word of God is plain and the way of escape is clearly pointed out?

"If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.)

It was one of those sultry summer days, so still that not a leaf moved, and the blackbird piped and warbled as if enjoying undisturbed the exquisite melody of his own clear notes.

I lay under the shade of a great tree, seeking beneath its branches relief from the glare. Numbers of people passed up and down over the green meadows on their way to the river-side, and my heart oftentimes longed to know the secrets of not a few who came and sat beside me on one of the iron seats placed for the comfort of weary ones.

How few, I thought, knew much of Him who sat, weary and footsore, by the way-side well, and, while asking from the hand of a poor outcast a drink of water, made known to her the "living water." (John iv.) She had no hope beyond present blessing; nay, she had judged herself even unworthy of that, and she doubted the veracity of One who offered her more.

And, oh! is it not still so with many a weary desolate heart like hers? Thirsty and wayworn, they know not Him who has said, "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." (John iv. 14.)

My reverie was first disturbed by an aged man who sat down on the seat at my feet, groaning as if oppressed by the burden and heat of the day. He leaned forward on his well-worn staff, and took off his hat to put back the silvery hair from his heated temples, and again he groaned aloud.

"The day is very hot, and you are tired," I remarked.

"Yes," he answered, "but that'll soon be all over for me: there's a brighter place beyond, and the sooner I'm in it the better, now I've seen eighty-five summers here, and it's time I was gathered to my fathers."

"Oh," I said, "then you have a hope beyond?"

"A hope beyond" ! he repeated, and, as if wondering if I had my senses, he muttered, "Surely, surely, all this time here, and no hope beyond, sad work that would be."

"Oh," I said, "perhaps you do not quite understand me. I mean, have you got the question of your sins settled, so that you can meet God without fear? How long have you known Him?"

"Known Him? All my life, to be sure; and you and I will know Him better when we get to heaven, I suppose."

"But what ground have you for supposing you are going to heaven at all? Is it on the ground of your own works, or the work of Christ?"

"Deed, neither; to be plain with you, I'll just go the way of my fathers, and it will neither be your preaching nor religious talk that will either keep me out of heaven or put me into it."

"True, my friend," I said, putting my hand on

his arm, to stay him as he rose to go on his way, "but listen to me. The word of God says, 'Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God' (John iii. 3.) What do you make of that?"

"Ah, these things don't trouble me, and it's a pity they trouble a young woman like you. Take things easy, and bide your time, and no fear but you'll get to heaven at last; that's my way."

"Oh, but it's not God's way," I said, but he hurried on.

I had but time to commend this aged man's darkened case to God, when a young man of delicate appearance came on the footpath. He walked with difficulty, and often held his hand upon his back as if in pain; and his wan face and feeble step, and the blue veins, that too plainly showed their tracery on his fragile hands and temples, told me that though quite young he had known much suffering. As he sank down exhausted on the seat, he apologized for taking that which was, of course, as free to him as to me, and this gave me at once an opportunity of addressing him.

"You look ill," I said; "and this resting-place is as much yours as mine; or rather, we have together to thank others for the provision made for our weak and tired bodies. Grace is a wonderful thing," I added, "it provides for our need, irrespective of who we are or what we are; so God in His grace and love provides salvation for you and me."

There was silence for a moment or two, and then, as if musing over his own suffering, he said, "Yes, I have been very ill, laid down in great agony with rheumatic fever, and now, though

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able to get out a little, I never expect to walk upright, or pursue the avocations I once took such delight in. I feel mine is a blighted life, and I desire to be at rest in a land where there is no pain or sickness. I do not think I shall be long here."

"Indeed!" I said; "and does the prospect of leaving this scene give you pleasure?"

"Yes," he answered mournfully, "I am sick of the world; it has treated me badly, and I long to leave it."

"And where will you go to?" I asked, solemnly. "You cannot die like the dog. You will have to spend an endless eternity somewhere. Where?"

"Oh, that does not trouble me much; anywhere would be better than this."

"Nay," I said, "hell would be worse!"

"Oh," he said, as a shade of annoyance crossed his face, "of course I know that, but I hope to go to heaven."

"On what ground?"

"Oh, I have suffered so much here I am sure there must be brighter days in store for me."

And, so saying, he rose, as if unwilling to pursue the conversation.

"Stop one moment," I said, "I may never see you again: you are on the wrong road for heaven. If you have not bowed to Christ; if you have not acknowledged yourself a lost sinner in God's sight, and accepted the salvation He offers you without money and without price you are on the wrong road: 'Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved' " (Acts iv. 12.)

He bowed, and hurried on, saying as he went, "Your way is not my way. I trust in the mercy of God."

His place was soon taken by a quiet, respectable-looking woman who sat knitting in silence for some time, while her little delicate boy played at her feet. My heart was sad because of the two who had passed on their way, and I had no word for her. I handed her a little book, which she received gladly, and read at once.

When she had finished it, I said, "Have you accepted Christ?"

"I don't know."

"Did you accept that little book I gave you?"

"Yes, certainly."

"And why certainly of the one, and not of the other? One is a very trivial thing, but your whole eternity depends upon your having accepted Christ or not. Of course, then, you have no hope of heaven?"

"Indeed, I should be sorry to say that. I had godly parents, and I was a nurse once, and I am sure the prayers of the dear lady I attended on her death-bed will not be unanswered. Her last words were, 'Mary, we will meet again.'"

"And is that all you are resting on?" I said.

"Yes, and I think that's a good deal."

"Poor soul," I thought, "'a good deal'! and it leaves out Christ, and there is no salvation in any other."

I had a few quiet moments for prayer, when loud and boisterous mirth roused me to see two young girls on the grass near me. Their flaunty finery and tinsel ornaments, and hollow, heartless merriment, told of a hope that would perish. "Like

the crackling of thorns under a pot." (Eccles. vii. 6.)

"You seem very merry," I said; "but this world won't last for ever, and what then?"

"Oh, a better, I suppose," said one quickly. "There's time enough to make ready for that too. My plan is, make the best of this world, and get the best of the next too."

"Ah," I said, "but you forget, 'The fashion of this world passeth away.' 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, if any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever' (1 John ii. 15-17.) 'The wages of sin is death,' and you may die in your sins."

"Oh," said one, starting to her feet, "there's time enough for religion some day."

And so they left me.

A middle-aged woman, with a basket on her arm, came up just in time to hear their last words, and looking at me, said, "That's terrible! but these are two of the worst girls in the place"; and taking the New Testament from her pocket, she said, "It is a blessing to be well brought up, and have religious teaching. Never a day but I have my lesson out of this; but, then, I had praying parents, and was early taught the road to heaven."

"Oh," I said, "how long have you been on it?"

"Many a day; indeed, all my life."

"And have you ever been converted?"

“ Oh, I don't know, but I'm sure I'm on the right road for all that, and I would not give up my hope for anything.” Then, looking at me from head to foot, she said, “ You are English, I suppose, but I am Scotch, and we are taught these things from our youth.”

“ What things? ” I asked.

“ Oh, how to serve God faithfully here, and get to heaven at last.”

“ And what about the death of Christ? ” I said. “ I am Scotch too, but my Bible tells me that Christ came ‘ not to call the righteous but sinners ’ (Mark ii. 17), and, ‘ As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; ’ ‘ There is none that doeth good, no, not one ’ (Rom. iii.); and that it's simply and only because of the finished work of another, that I have any right to heaven at all. Christ paid the debt for me that I might have what His free grace offers to all. He gave His life that ‘ Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ’ ” (John iii. 15.)

Deliberately she put her Testament into her pocket, saying, as she did so, “ That may be your way, but it is not mine,” and she too passed on.

Little more than an hour had elapsed since I left the house, and I returned weary and heart-sore.

But this is no uncommon case. If you have been accustomed to speak to souls by the way, in the trains, in the steamers, in the shops, you will know these are no uncommon cases. Souls are perishing all round us, we pass them daily in the busy street, or, it may be, on the quiet country road, or even under the same roof with us, because they will have their own way and re-

ject Christ, Him who said, "I am the way."
(John xiv. 6.)

Should this paper be read by any in such a case, let me entreat you to turn to Christ now. In a world where "all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ," there is much to blind you to the danger you are in. Awake, awake! Soon it will be too late, too late!

"The door of mercy's open still,
And Jesus says, 'Whoever will.' "

Come! come! Jesus ready stands to bless you, but it must be in His own way, and not in your way. The end of your way is death! His is the way of life. Listen to His voice of love; it speaks to you, reader, to you!

THE CONVERSION OF SIMON PETER.

IT is a brief notice which we have of Simon Peter in John i., though doubtless there is much wrapped up in it. "Andrew first findeth his own brother, Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, He said, Thou art Simon, the son of Jonas: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation a stone."

In these statements nothing is said of any deep spiritual work in the soul of Simon. We are told his name in the old creation (Simon), and in the new (Cephas); but there is no allusion whatever to those deep exercises of soul of which we know he was the subject. For these we must ask the reader to turn for a few moments to Luke

v., where we have the record of a marvellous piece of divine workmanship.

“And it came to pass, that as the people pressed upon Him to hear the word of God, He stood by the lake of Gennesaret, and saw two ships standing by the lake; but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And He entered into one of the ships, which was Simon’s and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And He sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.”

Mark especially the moral grace that shines here. “He *prayed* him that he would thrust out *a little* from the land.”

Though Lord of all creation, Possessor of heaven and earth, Jesus nevertheless, as the lowly, gracious Man, courteously owns Simon’s proprietorship, and asks as a favour that he would thrust out “a little” from the shore. This was morally lovely, and we may rest assured it produced its own effect upon the heart of Simon.

“Now when He had left speaking, He said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.”

Simon was about to be well paid for the loan of his boat.

“And Simon, answering, said unto Him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless, at Thy word, I will let down the net.”

There was power, as well as grace, in that word!

“And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes; and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which

were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink."

Neither their nets nor their ships were able to sustain the marvellous fruit of divine power and goodness.

"When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

Here, then, we have the great practical effect produced in Peter's soul by the combined action of grace and power. He is brought to see himself in the light of the divine presence, where alone self can be truly seen and judged.

Simon had heard the word of Jesus addressed to the multitude on the shore. He had felt the sweet grace and moral beauty of His way toward himself. He had marked the display of divine power in the astonishing draught of fish. All told powerfully upon his heart and conscience, and brought him on his face before the Lord.

Now this is what we may call a genuine work of conviction. Simon is in the place of true self-judgment; a very blessed place indeed; a place from which all must start if they are to be much used in the Lord's work, or if, indeed, they are ever to exhibit much depth or stability in the divine life.

We need never look for any real power or progress unless there is a deep and solid work of the Spirit of God in the conscience. Persons who pass rapidly into what they call peace, are apt to pass as rapidly out of it again. It is a very serious thing indeed to be brought to see ourselves in the light of God's presence, to have our

eyes opened to the truth of our past history, our present condition, and our future destiny.

Simon Peter found it so in his day, and so have all those who have been brought to a saving knowledge of Christ. Harken to Isaiah's words, when he saw himself in the powerful light of the divine glory. "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.*" (Isa. vi.) So also in the case of the patriarch, Job. "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." (Job. xlii. 5, 6.)

These glowing utterances reveal a deep and genuine work in both the patriarch and the prophet. And surely our apostle occupied the same moral ground when he exclaimed, from the very depths of a broken heart, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

If Simon is to be called Cephas ("rock man"), he must be thoroughly broken up, and brought to the end of himself. If he is to be used to catch men, he must learn, in a divine way, man's true condition. If he is to teach others that "all flesh is as grass," he must learn the application of this great truth to his own heart.

Thus it is in every case. Look at Saul of Tarsus. What mean those three days of blindness, during which he neither did eat nor drink? May we not confidently affirm that they were serious days, perhaps the most serious in the entire history of that remarkable man? They were doubtless days in the which he was brought down in the most profound depths of his moral

being, the deepest roots of his history, his nature, his character, his conduct, his religion. He was led to see that his whole life had been a terrible mistake, an awful lie; that his very career as a religious man had been one of mad rebellion against the Christ of God. All this, we may feel assured, passed in solemn and soul-subduing review before the soul of this deeply, because divinely, convicted man. His repentance was no superficial work; it was deep and thorough; it left its impress upon the whole of his after course, character and ministry. He, too, like Simon, was brought to the end of himself, and there he found an object that not only met his deepest need, but also perfectly satisfied all the cravings and aspirations of his renewed being.

But we must return to the lake of Gennesaret, and dwell for a moment on the lovely grace that shines forth in our Lord's dealing with Simon Peter. The work of conviction was deep and real. There could be no mistaking it. The arrow had entered the heart, and gone right into its very centre. Peter felt and owned that he was a man *full of sin*. He felt he had no right to be near such a one as Jesus; and yet we may truly say he would not for worlds have been anywhere else. He was perfectly sincere in saying, "Depart from me," but we cannot but believe he had an inward conviction that the blessed One would do nothing of the kind. And if he had, he was right. Jesus could never depart from a poor broken-hearted sinner; no, never. It was His richest, deepest joy to pour the healing balm of His love and grace into a wounded soul. It was His delight to heal the broken heart. He was anointed for that work, and it was His meat

and His drink to do it, blessed for ever be His holy name!

“And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.”

Here was the divine response to the cry of a contrite heart. The wound was deep, but the grace was deeper still. The soothing hand of a Saviour-God applied the precious balm. Simon was not only *convicted* but *converted*. He saw himself to be a man *full of sin*, but he saw the Saviour *full of grace*; nor was it possible that his sin could be beyond the reach of that grace. Oh, no! there is grace in the heart of Jesus, as there is virtue in His blood, to meet the need of the very chief of sinners. “Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook *all*, and followed Him.”

This was real work. It was a *bona fide* case, as to which there could be no question; a case of *conviction, conversion, and consecration*.

Readers have you, “a sinful man,” woman, or child, resorted to Jesus for the enjoyment of His precious and pardoning grace?

No heart ever really desired to know the Person of the Lord Jesus to which He did not reveal Himself. And no soul ever really desired to know the atoning work of the Lord Jesus, that will not stand in the full credit of that finished work, before the throne of God, for ever.

CHRIST IS ALL.

THE following incidents connected with a week-evening preaching of the gospel, occurred more than twenty years ago, and are recounted in the hope that the Lord will be pleased to make them of use to some poor stranger to that peace which is the privilege of all those that rest alone and securely on the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work.

Amongst the regular hearers at the preaching was a young wood-engraver, poor in the world's things, but rich in faith toward God, and on the evening referred to he came accompanied by his brother, a sailor boy, who had recently returned from the sea, and expected in a day or two to join another ship.

The Lord's servant who was speaking was enabled to be very faithful and earnest in presenting the gospel, and the blessing of him that receives it (Mark xvi. 16; Acts xvi. 31), as well as the fearful consequence, to such as "neglect so great salvation" (Heb. ii. 3). While his brother was occupied in secret prayer to God that He would bless the word to him, the young sailor listened with deep interest and fixed attention.

After the service, the preacher spoke to two or three of the strangers more particularly and individually about their souls, to the young sailor amongst the rest. The Lord had been working conviction of sin in his conscience during the preaching, and now (if we may so speak of His ways) appeared to deal with the lad as one whose case in a special way admitted of no delay.

While he was engaged in this personal intercourse, the light shone into his soul, and he was able to confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus

(Rom. x. 9), believing in Him with the heart as the One who was delivered for his offences, and was raised again for his justification (Rom. iv. 25.) Tears of joy flowed from his eyes as he took leave of the preacher, and accompanied his brother to his humble lodging.

I felt drawn to follow these two dear lads, and soon overtaking them, heard from the sailor boy a little about his worldly occupation and its hardships, along with a further expression of his newly found joy in the Lord.

I said to him, "Well! for the voyage on which you are now entering, there is no danger that you will have a good captain and a careless pilot, or a careful pilot but a bad captain."

"No!" he said, instantly catching the thought, and enlarging on it with unmistakable delight, "For Christ is my Captain and Mate, Bo'sun, Bo'sun's Mate, Doctor, Pilot, and all."

Thus had this sailor lad learned by the teaching of the same Spirit, the truth in which the apostle Paul rejoiced, when he wrote to the Christians in Colosse: "Christ is all" (Col. iii. 11.)

A few more words, and we parted. In a day or two he sailed, and we have not met again.

May you, dear reader, learn as the apostle Paul and this sailor boy learnt, that "Christ is all."

Every desire of the heart towards Christ is of the Holy Spirit, and in due time shall be fully satisfied. The soul that has got a glimpse of Christ will ever after desire to know more of Him. Nothing will ever satisfy it but Himself.

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"SAILOR JIM"; OR, MY "FIRST SOUL."

"**W**HAT a strange title!" perhaps some may remark.

Well, I did not give the name of "Sailor Jim" to him, who was saved by the grace of God. His simple story I write for other sailors like him; and it was Jim who always styled himself my "first soul."

I had been but a short time converted, and was very ignorant of the Word of God; indeed, I scarcely knew where to turn for a passage or verse, save those few grand verses that the Lord had pointed me to, when, in agony of soul, I cried to Him, "What must I do to be saved?" and the answer came with healing on its wings, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be

saved " (Acts xvi.); and, " Look unto me, and be ye saved " (Isa. xlv. 22).

But, though very ignorant even of God's plan of salvation, I knew He had saved me, and that, on the ground of Christ's death and resurrection, God had offered to me, a sinner, the gift of eternal life, and I had by grace accepted it.

Never did a doubt cross my mind as to whether I was really saved or not. God had said it, and that was enough for me. Having found peace through the certainty of sin having for ever been put away by the sacrifice of Christ, and the assurance that my debt had been fully paid by another, my soul rested upon that blessed word, " There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus " (Rom. viii. 1).

Soon an intense longing filled me to carry the glad tidings of Jesus the Saviour to others, and I cried daily to God, " O God, send me with a message from Thyself to some soul."

In my ignorance of the grace of God, I even said, " Lord, make me the means of blessing to one soul, just one soul; and then let me die."

I had few opportunities of speaking to souls. Too timid to talk to those around me, or to any I met outside, I still longed after that " one soul," and in confidence continued to cry to God by day, and often by night, for the one to whom I was to carry His message.

The answer came in a way I had little expected; and to " the God of all grace," who hears and answers some of our most ignorant prayers, be all the praise.

James H., or " Sailor Jim," as his companions called him, had long lived near us. I had often seen him pass up and down; and he was known

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by me only as a man who was seldom, if ever, sober. The unsteady step; the bloated face; the restless eye, told their own tales: he was a drunkard.

I had always a deep compassion for such men, and for their wives and families; but I should have trembled to speak to one of his character; and the thought of going to his house, though but a few doors from us, had never entered my mind.

“Sailor Jim” spent only part of his life at home. During that time he “drank” the wages he made on his short sea voyages; and his pale, sad wife and sickly children could tell their own tale of want and bitterness to any who had a look of pity for the drunkard’s wife and bairns.

One day, as I sat with my work near the window, a noise in the street attracted my attention. It was the rude, boisterous mirth of “Sailor Jim,” on his way home with a companion in his sin.

I prayed, as I stood at the window, “Lord, save him from hell”; and at once I seemed given the message, “Go, and tell him of Christ.”

I shrank from it. “What!” I said, “how could I go? Send some one else, but not me.”

I tried to forget Jim; but for two days and a night I was haunted by these words, “Go, and tell Jim of Christ.”

I was young, and unaccustomed to visit the houses of the poor; and the thought of a drunkard’s home terrified me. I had seen him; I had heard his oaths and coarse language, as he passed through the street; and I trembled to think I must meet that man face to face. But the words rang in my ears, “Go, and speak to him of Christ.”

The next day, in much fear, and not knowing what I was to say, I started for Jim's house. It was quite near and easy of access. I wished there had been some barrier or obstruction in the way, to give me an excuse for not going; and I oft repeated, "This cannot be the soul I have prayed for."

As I went down the narrow passage, and up the outside broken stairs that led to his house, I trembled. But a word seemed given me: "You have only to deliver God's message"; and fear fled.

I knocked, and the door was quickly opened by a pale, sad-looking woman, who nervously started when I asked if her husband was at home.

"Yes," she said, "but he cannot see you; he is ill."

With a sense of relief, I was just going to say, "I will come again," when a voice from within called out, in a husky, unpleasant tone, "Come in; I must see you."

Looking to God for strength, I went in.

I was struck with the air of poverty; not dirt. In the little kitchen the furniture was scanty. A sickly child sat by the fire, her little head resting on her wasted hand; and her sunken eyes, and startled, weary-looking face, marked her a drunkard's bairn.

I stood to speak to her; but the voice of Jim, in loud, angry accents, called, "Come in, I tell you; come in."

I passed into the little room beyond. On the bed lay Jim, his bloated face more terrible to me than usual.

"Shut that door, Tom," he shouted.

I closed it, and said, "It's not Tom."

In a moment he seemed sobered.

Astonished to find I was not the companion he was looking for, he scarcely knew what to say.

"May I sit down beside you?" I asked.

"If you like to sit beside a drunken fellow like me."

"James," I said, "I have not come to speak to you about drunkenness at present; I have come with a message from God to you."

"I hate God," he answered.

"He knows that," I said; "but His message to you is one of love. He has sent me to tell you that He so loved you, that He gave His Son to die for you, and that now, on the spot, before you leave that bed, before you even go on the sea again, He wishes to save your soul."

"If that's true," he answered, "that's the best message I ever got. But it's not likely the God I've been blaspheming for years should send you with a message to me as I lie here half drunk."

I then told him simply how the Lord had saved me, and given me a great desire to be sent with the glad tidings of salvation to some one else, and that I believed he was the man God was going to bless.

He was much moved; tears ran down his cheeks; and when I rose to leave, he pressed me to return.

I gave him a little tract called, "Pray for the Drunkard." It was scarcely the kind of tract I would give now to one in Jim's state. There was little of Christ in it. It was an appeal to those who knew Christ to pray for the drunkard. I had written it some little time before, on seeing a poor drunkard reel out of a public-house, and call upon the passers by to save him from hell. It was the only tract I had in my pocket, and I left it. The

Lord in His infinite grace used it, and a few words spoken, for the salvation of poor Jim.

Early next day his little boy was at our door, with the message, " Could you come and see my father? "

No longer trembling, I ran up Jim's broken stairs.

He met me at the door, and with sailor warmth, shook me again and again by both hands, saying, " Well, God bless you ; I'm your first soul ! May you win many more. I am saved simply through believing what Christ has done. He gave His life for me, and I've been hating Him, and killing my poor Betsy and the children all this time. But she'll come to Christ too, and we'll all be happy together. "

A shade passed over his face, and he said, " I wish to speak to you alone. "

We went into the little back room, where we had our first conversation. As the light fell upon his face, I observed for the first time he looked very ill, and that the bloated appearance had given place to a livid hue; his lips were bloodless, and his whole frame shook. He was a man in the prime of life, but sin had wasted a strong and manly frame.

" James, " I said, " you are ill. "

" That's a small matter; the doctor says I have heart-disease, but it is not that I want to speak about. I know my soul is saved, but how am I to escape the drink? If I ever go out again, I'll fall, as sure as I am alive; and what dishonour that will bring on Christ's name ! "

So saying, he laid his head on the table, and wept like a child. I felt powerless to speak to him for a few moments, and looked to God for words to meet his case.

"James," I said, "have you trusted God fully with your soul?"

"Yes, yes," he answered, "and I wish He would take me safe home this minute. I can trust Him with the wife and bairns, but I cannot trust myself to keep from that cursed drink, which has all but had me in hell. Oh, you don't know what it is, dear lady! The thirst for it, the craving for it, is on me now; and, at times, I would even sell my wife and children for a glass of grog."

"Oh, James!" I said, "this is terrible; but the One who has saved your soul can keep you from this too. Will you trust Him about this?"

I knelt down to ask help from the Lord for such a case.

In a moment James was by my side, and in heart-rending accents was crying to God, as only a saved soul could cry, for deliverance from the power of this awful temptation.

As he rose from his knees, he said, "Now I can trust Him for both soul and body. I'm not afraid to go out now; nor on the sea either, though it is worse than the land. I see Christ is enough for every temptation; only I wish He would take me safe home."

The next day James was laid on a bed of sickness, which kept him indoors for several weeks.

"No doubt," he would often say to me, "this illness came to keep me from the temptations I dreaded outside, and that I might learn of Him who is more to me than all that earth could give."

We often read together, and it was beautiful to see how the grace of God shone out in poor Jim. He longed after other souls, and used to urge me to speak to the drunkard especially.

"Ah," he would say, "I'm your first soul, but

not your last. Do not rest satisfied with one soul. The poor drunkards ! I only wish to go out again, to tell them of One who does love them ; for the drunkard believes that God hates him, and that everybody else turns from him too."

In a few weeks James was better, and ready to go to sea, and I saw him less frequently than before. But his house no longer bore the aspect of a drunkard's home. The wife and children were neat and clean ; the sick bairn had sundry little comforts provided for her ; and James had ever a cheerful word about the Lord when we met.

Many were his little love-tokens to me. Scarcely a voyage that he did not bring me something ; a shell, a pincushion, a heart made of pebble, were all gifts to remind me of my " first soul," as he said.

He had given me his likeness, in a large wooden frame, soon after he was converted ; but, a few weeks later, he asked me to return it, saying, " You must not keep that. I was not sober the day it was taken ; besides, it was the likeness of one who hated Christ ; and I wish to destroy it."

One day I saw him, just as he was starting on one of his short voyages, and we had a happy time over the Word, which had now become his delight, ere we parted.

A few days after, a message came to me, " Come and see Betsy H. Her husband is dead."

I hastened to her. Through her tears she told me she had had sad news that morning. Jim's ship had reached London Docks with his lifeless body. " Sailor Jim " was dead !

I could weep with that sorrowful widow ; but with joy I could say with certainty, " He is with the Lord."

“SAILOR JIM”; OR, MY “FIRST SOUL.” 25

His comrade brought but a few particulars; but these were full of interest. He said, “Jim was lacing his boot upon deck, when he fell back, calling out to me, ‘Bill, come here, I know I’m dying; but in a few moments I shall be with the Lord. Tell my wife to give her heart to Christ; and tell the lady who told me of Him, I’m safe home.’ He then raised his hand, and smiled, and was gone to be for ever with the Lord.”

I have written this story for sailors, or for any who may not know Christ, whether sober or drunken, whether your life is spent on land or water. If you are unconverted, you are on the road to hell, as he was; but the grace that met “Sailor Jim,” and saved him, cries to you, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isa. i. 18).

Won’t you come now? Soon the day of grace will be over for you, and in eternity you will for ever regret, when too late, that you rejected Christ. Listen to the voice of Jesus speaking to you: “Come! Come unto me! Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.” (Matt. xi. 28; John v. 40.) God desires to save you. “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. ii. 4).

Flee from the wrath to come! In a moment, like Jim, you may be called from earth. “Be ye also ready!” (Matt. xxiv. 44.)

K.

“THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE.”

SCRIPTURE expressly informs us that “there is no difference, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” (Rom. iii. 23.) And it repeats this statement, in chapter x. of the same Epistle, basing it upon another footing, “There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him.” (v. 12.)

It is not that there are not broad lines of distinction, in a moral and social point of view, between men. Most assuredly, there are such. There is, for example, a vast difference between the wretched drunkard who comes home, or is carried home, night after night, worse than a beast, to his poor broken-hearted wife and squalid, starving children, and a sober, industrious man, who realizes his responsibility as a husband and a father, and seeks to fulfil the duties attaching to such relationships.

Now, we judge it would be a very great mistake indeed to ignore such a distinction as this. We believe that God, in His moral government of the world, recognizes it. Contrast, for a moment, the drunkard's home with that of the sober man. Yea, contrast their whole career, their social position, their course and character. Who can fail to recognize the amazing difference between the two?

There is a certain way of presenting what is called, “the no-difference doctrine” which, to say the least of it, is far from judicious. It does not allow the margin which, as we believe, Scripture suggests, wherein to insert great social and moral distinctions between men and men, distinctions which only blindness itself can refuse to see.

If we look at the present government of God, we cannot but see that there is a very serious difference indeed between one man and another. Men reap as they sow. The drunken spendthrift reaps as he sows; and the sober, industrious, honest man reaps as he sows. The enactments of God's moral government are such as to render it impossible for men to escape, even in this life, the consequences of their ways.

Nor is this all. Not only does God's present government take cognizance of the conduct of men, causing them to reap, even here, the due reward of their deeds; but when Scripture opens to our view, as it does, in manifold places, the awful judgment to come, it speaks of "books" being "opened." It tells us that men (Rev. xx. 12, 13) shall be judged "every man according to their works." In short, we have close and accurate discrimination, and not a promiscuous huddling of men and things.

And further, be it remembered, that the word of God speaks of degrees of punishment. It speaks of "few stripes" and "many stripes." (Luke xii. 47, 48). It uses such words as "more tolerable" for one than another. (Matt. xi. 22.)

What mean such words, if there be not varied grounds of judgment, varied characters of responsibility, varied measures of guilt, varied degrees of punishment? Men may reason; but "the Judge of all the earth" will do "right." (Gen. xix. 25.) It is of no possible use for people to argue and discuss. Every man will be judged and punished according to his deeds. This is the teaching of Holy Scripture; and it would be much better and safer and wiser for men to submit to it than to reason against it, for they may rest fully assured

that the judgment-seat of Christ will make very short work of their reasonings. Impenitent sinners will be judged and punished according to their works.

Although men may affect to believe that it is inconsistent with the idea of a God of love that any of His creatures should be condemned to endure eternal punishment in hell, still sin must be punished; and those who reason against its punishment have only a one-sided view of God's nature and character. They have invented a god of their own who will connive at sin. But it will not do. The God of the Bible, THE GOD WHOM WE SEE AT THE CROSS, the God of Christianity, will, beyond all question, execute judgment upon all who reject His Son; that judgment will be according to every man's works; and the result of that judgment will inevitably be "the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone," for ever and for ever. (Rev. xxi. 8.)

We deem it of the utmost importance to press on all whom it may concern the line of truth on which we have been dwelling. It leaves wholly untouched the real truth of "the no-difference doctrine"; but at the same time it qualifies and adjusts the mode of presenting that truth. It is always well to avoid an ultra, one-sided way of stating things, which damages truth and stumbles souls, perplexes the anxious, and gives a plea to the caviller. The *full* truth of God should always be unfolded, and thus all will be right. Truth puts men and things in their right places, and maintains a holy moral balance which is absolutely priceless.

Is it then asserted that there is a difference? Not as regards the question of righteousness before

God. On this ground, there is not a shadow of difference, for, as we have already seen, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Looked at in the light of that glory, all human distinctions vanish. All are lost, guilty and condemned. From the very lowest strata of society, its deepest dregs, up to the loftiest heights of moral refinement, men are seen, in the light of the divine glory, to be utterly and hopelessly lost. They all stand on one common ground, are all involved in one common ruin. And not only so, but those who plume themselves on their morality, refinement, orthodoxy, and religiousness, are further from the kingdom of God than the vilest of the sons and daughters of men, as our Lord said to the chief priests and elders, "Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." (Matthew xxi. 31.)

This is very humbling to human pride and pretension. It is a doctrine to which none will ever submit until they see themselves as Simon Peter saw himself in the immediate presence of God. All who have ever been there will fully understand those glowing words, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." (Luke v. 8.) These were accents flowing forth from the depths of a truly penitent and contrite soul. There is what we may venture to call a lovely inconsistency in them. Simon had no such thought as that Jesus would depart from him. He had, we may feel assured, an instinctive sense that that blessed One who had spoken such words to him, and shown such grace, could not turn away from a poor broken-hearted sinner. And he judged rightly. Jesus had not come down from heaven to turn His back upon any one who needed Him. He

came "to seek and to save that which is lost." (Luke xix. 10.) "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (I Tim. i. 15.) "Him that cometh to me I will *in no wise* cast out." (John vi. 37.) A Saviour-God had come down into this world, not, surely, to turn away from a lost sinner, but to save him and bless him, and make him a blessing: "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men," He said to converted Simon.

Such was the grace that shone upon the soul of Simon Peter. It removed his guilt, hushed his fears, and filled him with joy and peace in believing. (Rom. xv. 13.) Thus it is in every case. Divine pardon follows human confession, follows it with marvellous rapidity. "I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." (Ps. xxxii. 5.) God delights to pardon. It is the joy of His loving heart to cancel our guilt, and fill our souls with His own blessed peace, and to make us the messengers of His grace to others. (1 Thess. i. 5-10.)

The state that the publicans and harlots were in brought them to this certainty, that if God spoke they had nothing to say for themselves; there was nothing which they could do, except indeed to put their hand, as Job says, upon their mouth, and say, "I am vile." And this they did, whilst the scribes and Pharisees remained as insensible as possible, not only to God's word, but also to the operation of God's grace; they were as insensible to it as if there had been no such thing.

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain King, which made a Marriage for His Son.”

(Matt. xxii. 2.)

THE whole affair is, God is glorifying His Son Jesus, and we have nothing to do but to rejoice in His grace. It is He who has thought of the “wedding” for His Son, who has thought also of the dress of the guests (providing not only the marriage supper, but everything needful to fit the guests for their presence at it), and we have nothing to do but to have done with ourselves, and to think only of the worthiness of Him who has invited us.

Our title to be at the feast is the invitation of Him who is glorifying His grace in the “marriage” for His Son. What an unworthy feeling for one instant to call this in question! He gave His Son; He sent His Son into the place of our sin and misery to bear that wrath upon the cross which was due to us; He has raised Him again from the dead.

What do you fear? Are you hesitating about your own worthiness, saying, “Oh! but my state of soul is not such as befits one who is called to the marriage supper of the King’s Son”? No matter, in that sense, what the state of your soul may be; we read that they “gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good.” No matter, if invited by the King, whether the invitation meets you in the “highways” as a beggar, or in the palace as a prince, so to speak. What is it you are doubting about? Has God made a mistake in inviting you? Surely you are not worthy to be before the King; but He has called you without expecting to find any worthiness in you. He knew

what your unworthiness of heart was before He called you. He is calling sinners by a love that has been proved stronger than death. The Son of God went down "into the dust of death" for sinners. The Son of God went down under the power of Satan (though He could not be holden of it) for sinners. The Son of God went down under the power of the wrath of God for sinners. What more could have been done? Christ is risen again, and is alive at the right hand of God. "All things are ready; come unto the marriage." (v. 4.)

God invites on the ground of what *has been done*, and not on that of anything *yet to be done*. The only question we have to ask ourselves is, whether or not our hearts have submitted to His righteousness. Surely what He gives is that which produces fruit. At the "marriage" the King desires that cares and sins and anxieties should be all forgotten. He will have, around His Son, happy faces, hearts free from distrust and free from doubt. Everything can be forgotten, except that we are there. If you see this, I do ask you, Are your souls happy? Do your faces shine with gladness as those who know that their place is to sit around that table, in the presence of the King?

God's heart is set upon the glory of Christ in connection with the joy and blessing of those whose hearts have submitted to His righteousness. And He has provided for it. If your hearts are occupied with the glory of Christ, you will not be thinking (in one sense) of what you *are*, or of what you *were*. Your thoughts will dwell upon the blessings into which you are brought through grace, of which Christ is the source and the centre in the presence of God.

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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.

ARE YOU SAVED ?

I HOPE I shall be."

"Then am I to understand by that answer that you are *not* saved? "

"Well, I don't think any one is justified in saying positively that which can only be known at the day of judgment."

"Then what do you say to these scriptures written by the apostle John to the children of God, and indited by the Holy Ghost? 'These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may *know* that ye have eternal life.' (1 John v. 13.) 'We *know* that we are of God.' (1 John v. 19.) 'We *know* that we have passed from death unto life.'" (1 John iii. 14.)

"I confess I am at a loss for an answer, and certainly if you make my salvation depend on my

knowledge of the absolute possession of eternal life, then I am *not* saved."

"I did not by any means intend that you should so understand it. Knowledge of a fact depends upon the previous existence of the fact, not the fact upon the knowledge. In other words, if you *are* saved, you may expect to know the certainty of it, but the most perfect knowledge would never save you : nothing but faith in the blood of Jesus can do that."

"Then why did you quote those texts? "

"Because you implied that people could not know they were saved till the day of judgment, whereas the apostle affirmed it of people then living on the earth. As Scripture is written for *us*, as well as for them, it follows that every child of God is open to know *now* the certainty of his salvation."

"I can see that this certainty is very desirable, and I am sure it would make me very happy to have it; but tell me, Why do you press me as to my having this certainty? "

"Because I know that until this point is settled, it is a proof that the precious work of Christ has neither been clearly understood nor appropriated by you."

"But I believe in Christ."

"Oh yes, so does everybody in Christendom, I suppose, except Unitarians."

"Well, but I mean, I believe that Christ died for sinners."

"Precisely; and does not Christendom keep Good Friday? "

"Yes; but of course the greater part of that is mere profession."

"Well, and what is yours? "

ARE YOU SAVED?

35

"You pain me: *I* am really sincere. I know I am a sinner, and need saving; and I know that none but Christ can save me. If I am saved at all, it will be His work, not my own, I am quite sure of that."

"I did but wound to heal. If I did not believe you were a child of God, I should talk in a very different strain."

"Then do *you* think I am saved?"

"Would you believe me if I told you?"

"Well, you are so very strict, and pull people's religion to pieces in such a way, and bring such unanswerable texts upon one, that I should attach some weight to what you said."

"I thought so, and therefore I will be very careful that your faith does not rest on my word, but on the word of God. Now listen to the words of Jesus:

" 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life, and *shall not* come into condemnation [judgment]; but is passed from death unto life.' (John v. 24.) Can anything be plainer than that?"

"Well, it is so plain that I begin to be ashamed of myself."

"That is a good sign; and since you have confessed thus much, I will tell you a secret about yourself that you have not yet mentioned to me."

"What is that?"

"Just this, that you find in yourself much failure, imperfection, inconsistency, and the like, and if you were to say boldly, 'I am saved,' all this would stare you in the face and condemn you."

"Really—"

"And more, there is a mass of inconsistencies

of greater or less degree that you do not quite see your way to get rid of."

"But—"

"And if you did see your way to get rid of them, you would not mind keeping them a little longer for old acquaintance' sake. Now, what have you to say to this?"

"Simply that you have just laid bare what I have hardly dared to admit to myself, much less to you; but now the secret is out, tell me what I ought to do. I confess that it has been hanging over me for months like a dark cloud. Sometimes I think I am saved, but when I look at my ways, even in spite of my wish to act right, then I get all in a tangle; and I am ashamed to say I have sometimes argued with you hoping to find you waver in that *certainty* which you have, but which I lack; this was wicked, but I may as well confess all while I am about it."

"Well, there is nothing like confession for lightening the conscience; only it should be to God rather than to man. He says, 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'"

"I feel sure all you are saying is right, because you keep throwing me back on God. I feel that He must care for me, or He would not have given His Son for me; but it is my wretched ways that hinder me. I feel as if I should be acting the hypocrite if I were to go on my knees just after I had lost my temper, for instance."

"I should have thought that was just the time that you needed to go on your knees."

"Well, so it is, in one sense; but then, if I go on my knees and ask for forgiveness for my temper when I am conscious of having broken my last

promise of amendment, and having, moreover, the consciousness that the promise I am making will probably be broken before the day is out (much as I may strive), does it not look like mocking if I do go? and yet, on the other hand, if I do not, can I say, with anything like honesty, I am saved?"

"My dear friend, I could even weep for you, because I know, only too well, what a bitter position it used to be; but, thank God, I can tell you the way of deliverance; not for a mere temporal relief, but for complete emancipation. Listen with a subject heart, and I will show you from God's word what a wrong view you have had of Christ's work, and your position; and then I will set forth the truth about Christ, His work, and the effect of His work.

"First, as to the wrong thoughts you have had of Christ's work, and your consequent position. You, a sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, have supposed that Christ came and died upon the cross, and became a Saviour, that He might enable you, a sinner, to improve your condition, and to produce righteous acts instead of unrighteous ones. You have supposed that a corrupt tree was to be operated upon in such a way as to produce good fruits. Hence, you have overlooked the fact of the utter ruin of man as a child of the first Adam. You have forgotten that God has declared you must be born again. A *new* birth necessarily implies something quite distinct from that which is *old*. In effect, you have thought, as Nicodemus thought, 'How can a man be born when he is *old*?' but if God says there must be new birth, it is manifest that improvement of old birth is not contemplated by

Him. 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh.' It may be improved, cultivated, refined; it may be religious, moral, devoted; it may have adopted Christianity, been baptized, taken the sacrament; each or all of these it may have believed in and supposed, according to its own view of things; but after all it has not advanced a step beyond the flesh; and God says, 'They that are in the flesh cannot please God.'"

"You alarm me. If this be true (and it really seems to be true), who then can be saved?"

"Why, those who are born again."

"But I thought I had been born again. - I have believed on Jesus, the lifted-up Son of Man, and He says He was lifted up that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Now I believe in Him; indeed I do; I have no other refuge, no other hope: may I not then say I am born again?"

"Indeed you may, and I bless God that this conversation is bringing out your faith so distinctly. I rejoice that I have divine ground in your soul to work upon; and if you will only lay aside your old thoughts, and just listen obediently to the word of God, you will soon get a clear view of your true position before God, and then everything else becomes plain and simple."

"I am all attention; what point will you start from?"

"From the Throne of God."

"Dear! I thought you would have said from the Cross."

"So I would, if Jesus were still hanging there; but Jesus has done with the cross, blessed as are the effects which spring from it. He settled the question of sin there, a question that can never be

re-opened to the believer. He there vindicated the holiness of God's character (which might have appeared to have been sullied) by the fact that none less than the Son of God must become a victim to clear His creation from the loathsome pollution of sin. He there removed the barrier that stemmed the pent-up torrent of God's love and grace, always ready to flow, but kept back because God, perfectly holy, could not thus display Himself without appearing to wink at sin, the exact opposite of all that God is. On the cross Jesus not only undid that which Satan had done, but He did that by which God positively *acquired* glory, and a glory too that can only be measured by the worth of the illustrious One by whom it was acquired. Throughout eternity the work of the cross will stand prominently forth as the marvel of all created intelligences—the crowning glory of Him who is the God of glory. But my purpose now more especially is to press the resurrection, a truth the lack of the knowledge of which has obscured the glory of the cross, as a cloud obscures the blazing sun. It is in resurrection that all the precious efficacy of the work of Christ becomes available. 'If Christ be not *raised*, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.' (1 Cor. xv. 17.) The dying cry of Jesus on the cross (John xix. 30) was, 'It is finished.' Precious for us; still more precious to God. But in resurrection we see Him as the First-born, the Head of the New Creation. (Eph. i. 22.) Having passed through death, and completely settled for ever the question of sin, He took His place on the throne of God, and that is now the starting-place of every believer. Does this ignore the cross?"

"Oh dear no! I never saw it put in its true place before. This is all new to me."

"Of course it is; everything is new in the new creation. You have been accustomed to the old creation, and never got beyond the cross. The cross was the last transaction (if I may except the sepulchre) in the old creation; the end of volume one, if I may use a figurative expression."

"I am getting light already—go on."

"God be praised. Volume two begins with Jesus risen from the dead on the first day of the week, and saying, 'Go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.'"

"Where is sin?"

"Gone; cancelled; only found in volume one."

"Where is flesh?"

"In volume one."

"Where is death?"

"In volume one."

"Where am I?"

"In volume two."

"Oh, this is precious! it is quite new to me! How is it that this is not generally known?"

"The adoption of human thoughts, instead of God's plain word, has led to false, imperfect, and inadequate teaching. At the beginning it was not so."

"Why, did not the apostles preach the cross?"

"They did more. The cross being an accomplished fact, the resurrection was now their theme. 'They preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.' (Acts iv. 2.) 'With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.' (Acts iv. 33.) 'Paul seemed to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he

preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection.' (Acts xvii. 18.) 'And when they heard of the resurrection, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again.' (Acts xvii. 32.) So you see resurrection was the prominent truth they set forth, and so in many other passages."

"But they did also set forth the crucifixion."

"Yes, of course; and mark the contrast. Man had slain Him on earth, but God had exalted Him to His right hand in heaven, to be a Prince and a Saviour."

"Pardon me if I appear too tenacious about the cross. I think you said it closed up the old creation?"

"You cannot possibly be too tenacious about the cross. But for the unspeakably precious work accomplished there, you and I were still dead in trespasses and sins; still under the righteous wrath of God; still awaiting the damnation of hell. But for the cross God had remained dishonoured in His creation, but now is immeasurably glorified thereby, a thing of infinitely greater importance than our salvation, although, thanks to His wisdom and His grace, both go together, He having accomplished the one with the other. But when I say the cross closed up the old creation I speak of it as the place where man crucified his Saviour; but you must also bear in mind that the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God had provided against this wickedness; and while man, as man, sealed his own ruin, when he nailed Jesus on the cross, God made the cross the basis on which He could set up the new creation; and the resurrection is the manifest proof and token of all this. A man cannot be risen, except he have first been dead."

"Oh, I see! Then I was dead?"

"Surely; and by faith in Him whom God raised from the dead you are now risen, as it says, 'Ye are risen with Him through the faith (or belief) of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead.'" (Col. ii. 12.)

"Is not this Scripture spoken of in connection with baptism?"

"Yes; baptism is a material symbol or picture of an act which is unseen, but quite as real as that which is seen; yea, much more so. The process of sight illustrates the process of faith. The Lord Himself appointed this symbol, therefore it must, of course, be perfect."

"Say a little more about this; I think I understand it."

"It is very simple; there is no mystery about it. Suppose I meet with a soul oppressed with a sense of its sins, and desiring deliverance, I say, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' 'Where is *He*?' says the enquirer. 'At the right hand of God,' I rejoin. 'But what about my sins?' 'Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree,"' I reply. 'And because He was an adequate sacrifice, God has raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand, and offers Him there as the object of your faith.' 'I believe,' replies he, 'in my heart, and I confess with my mouth, that God raised Him from the dead.' Then I take him to the water, and as I plunge him under, I remind him that thus he is buried with Christ; thus he takes leave of the Old Creation; thus are his sins washed away; and as he rises from the water do I remind him that thus he is risen with Christ; thus he is in

the New Creation; thus he is 'alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' "

"How beautiful the figure becomes when one understands that which it figures! "

"Yes; and how the Lord has, in His tender, gracious care, remembered how feeble is our apprehension of divine things in thus giving us this shadow, that by it we might comprehend the substance! "

"Truly. But how I wish I could stand for ever in that resurrection moment! "

"And so you do. God looks at you in Christ, and never sees you otherwise than in that resurrection moment. Once there, you are there for ever. You are passed from death unto life."

"But what about sins committed after this? "

"They belong to the Old Creation, and become as hateful to you as they are to God."

"But will not God call me to account for them? "

"Certainly; but it makes all the difference whether He calls you to account as a saint or saved one, or whether He calls you to account as a sinner or lost one."

"Oh, I see! Then I never come before God again in the character of a sinner? "

"Never. He that is born of God sinneth not. You are always before God in the character of a saint, a member of Christ, a child of the New Creation; pure, spotless, sinless, holy."

"Then I appear to have two existences; one that was born of the flesh, impure, defiled, sinful, and that belonged to earth; and one that is born of God, pure, spotless, holy, and that belongs to heaven."

"Yes; the first belongs to the Old Creation, the last to the New. The first was spoiled by the

devil, the last was the result of the work of Christ. The first was marred by disobedience; the last came about through perfect obedience."

"But how is the New Creation nature sustained?"

"By the Holy Ghost, sent down for the express purpose, consequent upon the resurrection of Christ. He is the living link of connection between Christ at God's right hand, and our new or risen nature down here. Every individual act that we undertake as spiritual people is guided and controlled by the Holy Ghost, who links us with Christ."

"But is not the old nature a great hindrance? I suppose Satan influences the old nature as the Holy Ghost does the new!"

"Precisely; I see you are understanding it all now."

"Yes, and I am so thankful; but please answer one or two questions more, and then I shall go on my way rejoicing. Tell me; when my new nature is disgusted with the acts of my old nature, and which (though I hear some people call it failure) I must call by its right name, sin; tell me what I must do with this hateful sin?"

"Confess it to God. Hide nothing from Him. The blood of Christ, that made you clean at first, has eternal efficacy to keep you clean in your walk and ways. Not that the first work has to be repeated, *that* was done once and for ever on the cross; but upon the ground of that perfect work you shall be kept clean. 'He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.' Confession keeps the soul in its proper dependent condition before God, and justifies God, as to the failure or sin committed, in-

stead of *self*. What God looks for from you is your judgment of the sin as sin, and that according to His own judgment of what sin is, He having given you a nature to hate it as He hates it."

"Once more, and I have done. What you said about volume one and volume two has fixed itself on my mind. I am afraid I have hardly read more than the first page of volume two."

"To him that hath shall be given. Ponder the truths here laid before you, and act upon them fearlessly. Never mind what Satan or Satan's instruments may say about presumption, self-sufficiency, and the like; but press on, forgetting that which is behind (volume one), and reaching forth to that which is before (volume two), press toward the mark (Christ Jesus the Lord) for the prize (Christ Jesus the Lord) of the high (or heavenly) calling of God in Christ Jesus."

"Thank you very much; you have made me so happy."

"Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." W.R.H.

It is the fact of God having provided a Saviour for sinners that so richly manifests divine love; and when received into the heart by faith, the ruined and lost become attracted to the bosom of God. No one ever could have conceived that God had such love for sinful man as Jesus revealed. To condemn sin in His only begotten Son, that He might bring us to glory, instead of eternally condemning us, as we so justly deserved, was such a deep thought of unutterable love as the cross of Christ alone could fully set forth.

MORE WONDERFUL THAN CREATION.

Oh ! the wonder of wonders, that the thrice-holy God should come down to sinners of every race and class with words of reconciliation, a message of pardon and peace, through the death and resurrection of His only-begotten Son ! This is divine love ; this levels men, with all their boastful pretensions, to the dust ; this shows God's judgment of man, whether Jew or Gentile ; this reveals the fact that God is a sin-pardoning as well as a sin-hating God, giving remission of sins to every lost sinner that believes. Paul's preaching, then, was the cross. Wherever he went, he set forth Christ crucified and risen, because this alone can deliver from the wrath to come ; this alone is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. But though he said, " We preach Christ crucified," we know he sometimes entered also into the coming glory of Christ, as well as of His past humiliation and suffering, as we find he did at Thessalonica. He preached to them about " another King, one Jesus." This magnifies the glory of the cross. The fact that Christ is soon coming to receive His people unto Himself, that God is yet going to set up His blessed Son as King over all the earth, and put everything in subjection under His feet, bring every knee to bow, and every tongue to confess to Him, reflects greatly on the value of His cross, and shows God's estimate of His finished work, however men despise and reject it.

SEARCHED AND KNOWN.

(Psalm cxxxix. 1.)

I HAVE sometimes been asked, after preaching, "Did any one tell you anything about me?"

"No," I replied, "I know nothing of you."

"You might have known all about me, from what you have been saying to-night," said one.

"It was God directing the arrow; I only pulled the bow. He knew where the joints of the harness were, so that the keenly pointed barb could penetrate the conscience."

There is power in God's Word. Happy is he who owns it, and bows to it.

Did you ever think that God reads you through and through, and there is no escaping His penetrating eye? (Heb. iv. 12, 13.)

I like the little Sunday scholar's reply to her teacher, who was speaking about God being everywhere; and thinking it a hard question, said, "Can you tell me where God is not?"

"Yes, sir," said a bright-eyed girl, "'God is not in all the thoughts of the wicked.'" (Ps. x. 4.)

Ah! yes, the fool says in his heart, "No God"; and he would fain keep God from his thoughts. (Ps. xiv. 1; liii. 1.)

INTERNALLY; EXTERNALLY; ETERNALLY.

HE was only "a rag-and-bone man," and hunger and cold had brought on an illness, in consequence of which the parish doctor ordered him to be taken to the Union Hospital.

For about twelve months, in the convalescent ward, he had the privilege, each Lord's Day afternoon, of listening to the gospel of God's righteousness and love. The message was not unheeded, for we could perceive by the man's countenance and manner that it was taking effect.

As we were going round the circle of hearers on one of these occasions, shaking hands, and enquiring after their welfare, the writer came to this man, and said, "Well, friend, and how are you?"

"Well, sir," he replied, "I can say, through the mercy and love of God, I am well *internally*, for the love of God is shed abroad in my heart, because of the Holy Spirit who is given to us. I also can say I am well *externally*, for I have on the righteousness of God, which is unto all, and upon all them that believe. I can also say I am well *eternally*, for the God of all grace hath called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus." (Rom. v. 5; iii. 22; 1 Peter v. 10.)

He finished up by saying, "Some people say, 'All's well that ends well'; but I can say it is well with me before the end comes."

What, dear reader, is your answer to the love and mercy of God, who sent His Son, the Saviour of the world? Do you say, with the chief of sinners, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift"? or with the unbelieving world, "We will not have this Man to reign over us"? (2 Cor. ix. 15; Luke xix. 14.)

Eternity waits upon your answer.

C.H.F.

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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.

"LOOSE HIM, AND LET HIM GO."

(John xi. 44.)

A FINE man, at least six feet in height, he was invalided out of the army. He had been in the Field Artillery. His pension was sevenpence per day, of which the Guardians claimed sixpence, leaving him one penny per day for himself.

Brought up a churchman, he was put down in his regimental book as of the Church of England. But he had lived a lawless life as a soldier, and was a terror in manner and language in the Union Infirmary, where we first saw him. He had lived for twenty years in this Infirmary without coming out, and for ten years in one ward.

Having a privilege from the Master, a godly man, to visit and preach to the inmates, it was at the end of a visit that, having to pass through

a ward where the inmates were lying in bed, I shook hands with several, and at last came to this man's bed. I took his hand, and said, "Are you a believer in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?"

He answered me by repeating the Church of England Creed, two parts of which I well remember, namely, "I believe He was raised the third day according to the Scriptures." "I believe in the forgiveness of sins, and life everlasting."

Many times the gospel was preached, both in this sleeping ward and in the next room—the convalescent ward. We traced man's down grade from Eden to Calvary: in the Garden of Eden a sinner; from that time till the Flood, violent and corrupt. After the Flood, could not rule himself, and was drunken; then an idolater; placed under law, a transgressor; God in mercy sending His Son, they said, "This is the Heir; come, let us kill Him"; putting Him on the cross, they sit down and watch Him there; Jew and Gentile guilty of the murder of the Son of God.

Such was the scene during the first three hours, from the third to the sixth.

From the sixth to the ninth hour the Saviour works. As made sin, and a sacrifice for sin, and the Sin-bearer, He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" But He also came to taste death for everyone, and bear the the sentence of death passed upon Adam's race. He cried, "It is finished," and "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." A soldier with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water; the blood that makes atonement, and the water which speaks of cleansing.

They place Him in the tomb.

When He came into the world, there was no room for Him in the inn, and the world cast Him out, giving Him a cross and a grave.

But God raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory. The Spirit of God, through Peter on the day of Pentecost, declared, "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

It was said, many own that these things were done, but, like Lazarus coming out of the tomb, are hindered by grave clothes from getting the full blessing and assurance of salvation. Their grave clothes are the creeds and doctrines of men and sects, which many allow to occupy their minds, instead of the Word of God.

For instance, how may I know I have the forgiveness of sins?

Well, God has given a record of the Person and work of His Son by two witnesses—John the Baptist witnessed to His Person that He was the Son of God; John the Evangelist witnessed to the fact of His atoning death. And we have God's own testimony that, if any man believes this record, that even his faith in the record is that by which he overcomes the world. That is, from the moment he believes the record, God separates him, and he is not of the world, nor under its judgment; he also, through his faith, has everlasting life given him, and forgiveness of sins. His standing is in God's Son, and not in Adam. The whole world lieth in the wicked one, who led the world to reject and cast out the Son of God. (See John i. 32, 33, 34; xix. 28 to 35; 1 John v. 4, 5, 11, 12.)

The first two scriptures give God's record of His Son.

If you believe this record, the third scripture is God's record to you.

Jesus, knowing these things, says for our blessing, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word" (of grace and truth, not the word that came through Moses, which was the law), "and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life."

And the Saviour has left on record a promise that He will come for all those whom He calls His own, to be with Him in the place He has gone to prepare, and the Spirit of God testifies that as to anything being against these it is impossible, for as He is in the presence of God now, so are we in this world, and when we see Him we shall be like Him as to our bodies, for we shall see Him as He is. We have seen by faith what He was, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we are reminded by the Spirit of God that our Saviour and Lord has not forgotten His promise, although it was made before He left this earth.

Our Saviour's last words to us now from the glory are, "Surely I come quickly. Amen."

His own people unite in answering, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

At length this dear man was loosed from every hindrance of creeds and opinions, and gave thanks to God for His great salvation.

From that time he was a living testimony to the love of God, and kept many of the other inmates in check in their ways and language. His works testified to his faith, as will be seen by the following instance.

In the town there was much distress amongst

the poor, and soup kitchens were commenced. At the end of our service one Lord's Day evening he called me aside, and placed six two shilling pieces in my hand, asking me to give them to the treasurer for the poor. Such a gift shows that for a period of a hundred and forty-four days he had saved the one penny a day allowed to him out of his pension.

Dear Reader, are you a professing Christian, Romanist or Protestant? Have you the grave clothes on? Your Lord and Saviour says, “ Loose him and let him go.” The Spirit of God brings to you the record of God concerning His Son, and for your faith. Can you sing,

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

“ 'Tis everlasting peace,
Sure as Jehovah's Name.
'Tis stable as His steadfast throne,
For evermore the same.

“ And yonder is my peace,
The grave of all my woes ;
I know the Son of God has come,
I know He died and rose.

“ I know He liveth now
At God's right hand above ;
I know the throne on which He sits,
I know His truth and love.”

C.H.F.

AN R.A.'s CONVERSION AND CONFESSION ;

BEING A FEW WORDS

BY T. SIDNEY COOPER, R.A., C.V.O.

Born 1803. Born again 1889.

MUSINGS ON MY EIGHTY-SIXTH BIRTHDAY.

ANOTHER birthday dawns, the eighty-sixth.
How little take we note of fleeting time !
Since last this day of joyful glee was here
What blessings have been mine ! Alas, how oft
Have unrequited been ! The cares of life
Engross my thought, when holy things my heart
Should fill. Thou who hast made my way of life
So full of mercies, be Thou still my help,
When o'er this day of life the night shall fall,
And called my feet to pass through ways unknown,
Be near me still. Be Thou my strength ; and, when
The walls decay, leave not the tenant lone,
But by Thy Spirit, comfort and uphold.
I have but Thee. I have no claim of gate
Of pearl, or street of glittering gold, but through
Thy boundless grace, my good and bad are both
Forgiven. In humble, fitting place, among
The many mansions, where there is no sin,
And by Thy crystal river, flowing on
Through heaven's green expanse, I'll sing the new
And holy song of " Worthy is the Lamb,"
And 'neath the healing tree shall find that life
Wished for so long ! (Revelation xxii. 1, 2.)

T. SIDNEY COOPER.

September 26th, 1889.

" He is despised and rejected of men ; a man of
sorrows, and acquainted with grief." (Isaiah
lii. 3.)

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No tongue can tell, nor human heart conceive
 Thy woe, O Lord, as Thou didst tread the path
 For man's redemption, yet despised. Those deeds
 Of love divine broadcast were sown; by man
 Rejected; yet in that bright realm above
 Thou wilt reveal the secrets of Thy path
 To all who loved Thee here; to all Thy grace
 Hath won, Thou wilt bestow heaven's wealth.

Who but
 Thyself, Lord, couldst have borne our sins, and
 saved
 Us from eternal wrath, to know Thy joy,
 And see Thee in the glory as Thou art?

T. SIDNEY COOPER.

July, 1895.

BORN in wealth, reared in luxury, abounding in (so-called) pleasure, without desire for or thought of God, the younger son demands and receives his portion, and seeks a far-off clime, regardless of a father's love. Soon plunged into the vortex of immoderate excitement he is brought to ruin. Alas! a beggar is the rich man's son. So long as he was in wealth, no care or anxiety had he, but now by famine stricken, under a burning sun, he herded swine, of all occupations the most abject.

We know not what thoughts came into his heart; but sorrow and sickness oft open memory's gates. The warning of a father's love, or soft endearing of a mother's kiss, or dreams of home, where bread was plenty and to spare, or, may we say, the grace of God awoke the heart to say, "Father, I have sinned. I will arise and go, he will not say me nay." "And he arose, and

came," in rags and nakedness, in hunger and in thirst, and shoeless feet, but lo ! the father runs to embrace his long-lost son. No greetings cold awaited him, but kisses of forgiving love. The robe, the ring, the sandals, tell the welcome home.

And thus it is with all who turn to Jesus in their need—helpless, crushed and stricken though they be. He only waits the word "BEFORE THEE I HAVE SINNED," and straight the sinner is enfolded in the Saviour's arms. Unfathomable love and power divine are his, a robe of righteousness adorns the suppliant, the feast of love prepared, the angelic shout of welcome rings through the courts of heaven, the eternal joy begun. "For this my son was dead, and is alive again, was lost, is found." "Likewise I say unto you, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." (Luke xv.)

T. SIDNEY COOPER.

To the Editor of the "MONTHLY REPORTER."

April.

DEAR SIR,—You ask me what I think of the Bible. It brought me to see I was lost in sin, and had no power to save myself. It showed how I must get God's forgiveness for all my iniquity.

It told me the door of mercy was open, and salvation was to be freely had.

It showed me the wonderful sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and through His precious blood all my sins are washed away. "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.)

I am thankful to say I read the Bible daily at

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9, at 1, and at 10 p.m., and would recommend your readers to do the same.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) THOS. SIDNEY COOPER.

(1803—1899.)

January 22nd, 1900.

My dear Husband said when very ill in bed:—

Dictated.

“ As I lie here, I think of God as all-powerful and all-patient. He does not hurry any of His purposes, He ‘worketh all things after the counsel of His own will,’ and therefore it is useless to think the power of man can supersede the purpose of God. I do believe that if God blesses not the remedy offered, it is of no avail. All the little man can do is an atom compared with the infiniteness of God. The Great Physician, Jesus Christ, has the remedy for every malady: life for the dead; hearing for the deaf; sight for the blind; above all, the power of curing the soul. He says, ‘Come unto ME, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.’ (Matt. xi. 28.) It is only to hear the gospel; a living faith in His atonement. It is the breath that has come from Christ. If you do not believe in Him you frustrate the very purpose for which He shed His blood. ‘The peace of God,’ how do you know it? It has no shape, no substance; it comes over the heart without effort, and brings with it perfect light. I can only compare it to the early dew of a summer morning. There is no fear. It is all glorious. I can give it no other name than ‘the love of God.’ There is the sweet sense that ALL the sins are gone; nothing but tranquillity and rest.”

February 6th, 1900.

Spoken in calmness to the LORD when suffering greatly.

“ O GOD, in Thy mercy comfort me with Thy love, shed it o’er me, that I may feel it sustaining me, for it is Thy greatest attribute. The Scriptures say ‘ God is love ’ ; if I have Thy love, what can destroy me? *Nothing*, it is the sure foundation of eternal happiness. It is a long life I have had, and marvellously varied; storms and tranquillity, sunshine and shadow; but Thou hast brought me through it all, and ‘ I am a wonder unto many.’ I have long known how to rely on Thee. Thou hast been my strong refuge; may Thy love cheer me the little bit of the path left. Lord Jesus Christ, I want Thee to support me through this dreadful malady. I have full faith in Thy atonement; I am confident of Thy help. I am all contrition and humility, and the precious blood I fully rely on. I have no fear, as I go on through the valley. Give me full submission to Thy holy will. I have the peace of God, and the love of God in my soul. Lord Jesus, Thy strength is perfected in my weakness, and Thou wilt uphold me, and help me to endure. I am cleansed in Thy blood, and Thou dost comfort me with the blessed assurance that ALL my sins were obliterated at the Cross. Thou dost comfort me, Thou art the source of my comfort, I have no other, I want no other; may I have an easy issue into Thy presence above.”

March, 1901.

I HAVE to record the goodness of God in bringing my husband through another serious illness.

He was in his room seven weeks, and suffered

greatly from bronchial and gastric catarrh. I have treasured up a few precious words that fell from his lips, as they tell of the work of God in his soul, and I trust they will be used for His glory.

On one occasion the doctor said, "Everyone is asking how you are, Mr. Cooper."

He replied, "It is very kind, but I am less anxious they should hear about my health, than that they should hear that God has rescued me by the blood of His beloved Son for 'an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven' for me. I want everyone to know that I am going to enjoy that inheritance *with Christ*."

I was writing to a friend who wished to hear of him, and said, "What message have you?"

"Tell her that I have full confidence in the mercy of God, both for soul and body, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ."

One day he was speaking of the certainty of salvation, and said, "If anyone asks me how I know that I am saved, I should say I know it better than if I had heard an angel out of heaven say so, for I might make a mistake about that, but I cannot make a mistake about the WORD OF GOD. The Lord Jesus said, 'All that the Father giveth ME, shall come to ME [and I have come to Him]; and him that cometh to ME, I will in no wise cast out.' (John vi.) The Father has made my soul a present to His Son, and I know that He will not take me away from Him."

A friend said to him, "We must prepare for death."

He replied, "The cross of the Lord Jesus Christ has done that for me."

In conversation he said, "I have been thinking of the infinite distance between a holy God and a guilty sinner, but what intense delight to know the death of Jesus has bridged the distance, and made a highway unto the presence of God."

Dictated.

THE resurrection day, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, the sure foundation of eternal life. Millions are rejoicing, and we trust that the preaching of the gospel this day will be as seed sown on good ground, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and will take root, and bud and bloom in many a soul for eternal glory. This the sixth week I have been shut in this room with a severe malady, not able even to go outside the chamber door. I have had continual prayer with my God and Saviour as to it. I abstain from any murmuring or impatience, or from questioning the authority of God, and I have earnestly prayed for grace to keep me so. I desire to maintain an abiding reliance on God's mercy, and that I may be able in the fulness of confidence to endure these circumstances, that they may not have any influence to prevent me having the joyful assurance that I have, through the Redeemer's blood, the indestructible conviction that all my sins are washed away, and that He will not allow these sufferings to interfere with my devotion to His holy will. I looked out of my window to-day, and could see my sheep cropping the tender grass in tranquillity and comfort, the bright gleams of sunshine cheering all nature with joy and light. Oh! how I longed to be out for a little while to enjoy the beautiful atmosphere in exchange for my bedroom; I longed to be in the meadows and bask

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in the health-giving sunshine and to see the glories of God's creation, or to wander under the shadow of the gnarled willows, whose finger-like foliage moved by the gentle breeze, fans the nerves with peace and health. No sound heard save the silvery ripple of the pebbly brook, where often I have passed the time in studying the varied beauties of picturesque groups of trees, river, hill, and brilliant skies. Alas! that is not now the case with me. . . but I return to my chair in the full admiration of the wonderful creation of God, and in full confidence and trust that He will give me the strength I need, and restore me to health and comfort again.

T. SIDNEY COOPER.

Feb. 7th, 1902.

The Lord Jesus has this day taken my beloved husband to Himself; he is "Absent from the body . . . present with the Lord." I am overjoyed in his joy; his every desire more than fulfilled. Who can tell the rapture that is his, or the rich compensation for every sorrow and suffering here? "To depart and be with Christ is FAR BETTER."

A few days ago he said to me, with tears of joy, and a clear, triumphant voice, "Christ is cheering me. It is *all* clear; *He* is ready, and *I* am ready. I shall fall asleep in Him."

I wondered to hear such words, as he was not seriously ill, but with delight I find they were put into his lips to comfort me. I said the two lines to him,

"Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let *me* to Thy *bosom* fly."

With tender earnestness he said, "I AM ALWAYS THERE."

When I returned to his room, after a short absence, I said, "What have you been thinking about?"

"The same thoughts."

"What are the same thoughts?"

"Of God and Jesus Christ, and His sacrifice, and full faith, and holiness, and righteousness, and purity." He said, "Read to me."

I read 2 Cor. v., with those precious, blessed words, "Absent from the body . . . present with the Lord." I then said, "I must read the glorious resurrection chapter," 1 Cor. xv., and read from verse 35 to 57, finishing *there*: "But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," little thinking it would be the last words I should read to him from the Scriptures, and that the victory over death would so soon be his.

A few more hours passed without suffering, and his prayer uttered two years ago was answered: "May I have an easy issue into Thy presence above."

A short time ago I found in his own writing a little verse, written evidently when God began to work in him:

"My soul in anxious fear was lost,
By faith I fell at Calvary's cross;
My heart contrite, my soul laid bare,
Then oh! *what joy*, I found *peace* there."

And "peace with God" was uninterruptedly his, till the last, through abounding grace. (Rom. vi.)

On one occasion he wrote, "God has brought

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me to a sense of how unmindful I have been of the long chain of His mercies; not one link has broken from childhood to old age. He has brought me to seek mercy at the foot of the cross, where I found peace and grace which will support me the rest of my life in full and abiding faith in 'the precious blood' of Him who 'was made sin for us,' and suffered in our stead, and accomplished the wonderful and glorious plan of human redemption; and I shall continue in that faith, staying on Him, till the time comes for my departure, when I shall leave this world in the blessed assurance of a glorious immortality; and I shall see Christ 'as He is.' "

I was much impressed with some thoughts he dictated to me a few months ago, as I had never heard him express so much as to the first conviction produced in him by the Holy Ghost.

"God made man for His own enjoyment and delight; but sin came in, 'and death by sin.' Our Blessed God, instead of annihilating His creature, looked down in mercy. All the angelic host (Luke ii. 13), witnessed the great and wonderful thought of God's love, in sending His only begotten and well-beloved Son to sacrifice Himself to an ignominious death. We read in God's word the treatment He received here: despised, scourged, spit upon and crucified, His glorious death opened the way of mercy, and in His own words He responded: 'The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost.' (Matt. xviii. 11.) The blood of atonement shed on Calvary is the blessed means by which every black sinner, despiser, murderer, may be cleansed and made 'whiter than snow,' and the invitation to such is, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will

give you rest ' (Matt. xi. 28), the rest of *holiness and eternal salvation*. I wish that others could know what I did when the Holy Spirit first worked in my soul, showing me my need of ' the precious blood,' showing me the darkness of my heart, my ignorance and sin, and nothingness; but grace passed over my heart, and ' repentance unto life ' was mine. (Acts xi. 18.) Now I know the love of God I have no fear, no anxiety; all is clear, and open, which once was hidden. The veil is rent (Matt. xxvii. 51), and God can make Himself known to all who by faith are rescued from eternal death. The joy of holiness and salvation annihilates all sorrow, and fills with hope, and the peace which the world cannot give or take away, renders the heart calm and confiding, with no fear of death. Nothing disturbs, not *even* the thought of what we *once called happiness*. The love of God; praise to the Saviour; contrite and humble watching and praying; subjection to the will of God; relying entirely on Him for every day's mercies, we have the full interest of the love and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. He keeps us by Him, strengthens our faith, and has our souls in His holy keeping. He alone is ' the Way, the Truth, and the Life.' (John xiv. 6.) There is no other way to God."

I have thus put down a few words uttered or written by my beloved husband, in thankful remembrance of the grace of God given to him, and in the earnest hope that some may be led to trust the Saviour who was so precious to him.

MARY COOPER.

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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.

**“A WORD SPOKEN IN DUE SEASON,
HOW GOOD IT IS!”**

(Proverbs xv. 23.)

IN travelling from Londonderry to Penzance during the war, a Christian sailor was sitting quietly in the train nearing Taunton, reading some notes on the seventeenth chapter of John.

On arriving at the platform, there entered three young men into the compartment, bound for the Navy. On finding seats for two of their number, the third stood in the corridor within sight of his two mates.

A conversation ensued between the three concerning life in the Navy, and their future occupations and enjoyments. The two seated within jocularly referred to their companion in the corridor as one who was fond of a pint of beer; and

then, turning to the old sailor, enquired what he thought was the best thing for men in the Navy.

The Christian sailor replied: "The best thing you can take in the Navy is to have the Lord Jesus Christ with you there."

Upon this, silence followed for awhile, and then the old sailor began to speak of his Lord and Saviour. There was sitting alongside of the sailor an Army officer, who then joined in the conversation. The old sailor perceived that he was a well-educated man.

This officer scouted the remark made by the sailor to the three young men as nonsense, and, addressing him, said, "Look here! I am an atheist, and my father was an atheist, and died an atheist."

The old sailor rejoined: "If that be true, your father has gone to hell, where hope can never come."

"That's all nonsense," said the officer sneeringly. "I was present at my father's deathbed."

The old sailor then quoted several scriptures, proving that the Bible was the word of God, and remarked, "You say that you are an atheist. May I ask you one question?—and give me an answer if you can."

The officer enquired, "What is it?"

The sailor replied, "You freely admit that there are millions of books written, some good and some bad?"

The officer replied, "Yes, of course!"

"Now tell me the reason," said the Christian sailor, "why none of these many writers could write *another Bible*."

The officer was speechless.

There was sitting on the opposite side of the

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carriage a dear old gentleman, who had been a silent listener to the conversation. He now raised his hand, and said to the so-called atheist, "Ah, my friend, give in! You are floored! You cannot answer that question!"

The old sailor then replied, "The answer is, Because all scripture is given by inspiration of God; and the word of God is complete, and will endure for ever."

Upon this the sailor invited the officer to read the notes on the seventeenth of John.

The officer took and read them, remarking that they were very appropriate!

By this time the train had reached Plymouth, which proved to be the destination of the officer. On leaving the carriage he turned to the old Christian sailor, saying, "Good-bye, old man; I shan't forget you!"

T.B.N.

THE NAME OF JESUS.

AMONG the many whom we have known brought to the exercise of faith in this Name was one who, poor and aged and sick, had been conveyed to the Union Infirmary, where we first became acquainted with him. He had attained the advanced age of eighty-four years without having experimentally known the grace and power of the Name of Jesus; but he was now privileged to hear, on successive Lord's Day afternoons, earnest and scriptural testimonies to that grace and power, testimonies which referred to many precious truths of the gospel, including such facts as the following.

1. Before the birth of Jesus, God had said, "Thou shalt call His name JESUS; for He shall SAVE His people FROM THEIR SINS." (Matt. i. 21.)

2. Thirty years later, Jesus "was manifested to TAKE AWAY OUR SINS." (John i. 31; Matt. iii. 13-17; 1 John iii. 5.)

3. Three and a half years later still, on the cross at Calvary, He "gave Himself FOR OUR SINS." (Gal. i. 47.)

4. This involved those three hours of darkness, from the sixth till the ninth hour, when Jesus "BARE OUR SINS in His own body on the tree." (Mark xv. 33, 34; 1 Pet. ii. 24.)

5. Suffering was inseparable from bearing such a burden; consequently "Christ also hath once SUFFERED FOR SINS, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." (1 Pet. iii. 18.)

6. And as "the wages of sin is death," so "Christ DIED FOR OUR SINS, according to the Scriptures." (Rom. vi. 23; 1 Cor. xv. 3.)

7. Finally, "when He had by Himself PURGED OUR SINS," that is, made atonement for them, and put them away from the sight and memory of God for ever, Jesus "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. i. 3.)

The good news contained in the foregoing and similar testimonies, rendered on those Lord's Day afternoons to the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, was received into the heart of that dear, aged man; and when, one afternoon, I said in his ear: "Do you believe in Jesus?" he replied, "Jesus! my precious Saviour," while a heavenly smile lighted up his face.

Thus he had right and title to be with his Saviour. He knew his title because he believed "on His NAME." (John i. 12.) And he had the

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blessed assurance that his sins were forgiven, according to the apostle John's comforting communication : " I write unto you, children, because your sins are forgiven you for His NAME's sake." (1 John ii. 12.)

The heart's desire of that aged believer was expressed in the lines which follow :—

Oh ! speak of Jesus, of that love,
 Passing all bounds of human thought,
 Which made Him quit His throne above,
 With God-like, deep compassion fraught,
 To save from death our ruined race,
 Our guilt to purge, our path to trace.

Yes ! speak of Jesus, of His grace,
 Receiving, pardoning, blessing all ;
 His holy, spotless life retrace ;
 His words, His miracles recall.
 The words He spoke, the truths He taught ;
 With life, eternal life, are fraught.

Oh ! speak of Jesus, of His death ;
 For sinners such as me He died.
 " 'Tis finished ! " with His latest breath,
 The Lord, Jehovah-Jesus, cried.
 That death of shame and agony
 Opened the way of life to me.

Dear Reader, have you too a title to glory by believing on the Name of Jesus? Have you the assurance of your sins forgiven for His Name's sake?

C.H.F.

But lo ! He's risen from the grave,
 And bears the greatest, sweetest name ;
 The Lord, almighty now to save,
 From sin, from death, from endless shame.

“THE NIGHT COMETH” !

(John ix. 4.)

DEAR READER, have you ever thought of this world as a dark, morally dark world, where in the midst of its social and religious make-up, so much is wrong and wanting in reality; a world of wickedness and suffering and far away from God; have you, I say, thought seriously of it as such?

Perhaps you may not be prepared with a ready answer to this question, and think it a hard saying, and cannot hear it. But the object of this little book is to help you to consider it, that you may give a willing ear to God's word upon this serious subject; for if unsaved you belong to this world which lieth in wickedness (1 John v. 19) and under the sentence of judgment. For just as the believer, the child of God, is saved out of the world, and belongs to the new creation (2 Cor. v. 17) with all its privileges and safety, equally true does the unbeliever belong to the world, and is far removed from Christian blessing.

But your thoughts of the world may be entirely out of agreement with what has been said, and you choose to think of it as a pleasant world, in which you find comparative satisfaction, and (as some say) intend to make the best of it. It may be natural and easier for you to think and reason in this way, and, with the pleasing occupations and pleasures of life, to go on in disregard of the eternal realities before you. (Matt. vi. 33.)

Never mind about your own thoughts of the world, and the pleasant prospects which open out before you in life, with all the attractions offered

you, and the pleasures within your reach. All this is vanishing; all will pass away. Not that we should speak slightly of, or be unthankful for, the mercies which surround us here. These things proclaim the goodness of God, and manifest His wisdom, power and glory in creation; but all is passing away. (1 John ii. 17.)

And here let me refer to Isa. lvi. 8. God has said, “My thoughts are not your thoughts.” Your thoughts may be wrong. “Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.” (Eccles. xi. 9.)

And you are passing onward, and whither going? It may be to you the morning of life, when everything looks bright and fair and prosperous; when cares rest lightly, and evil seems far from thy path. Remember, “the night cometh”!

Or it may be mid-day, when the sun is high up in the heavens, and half thy life spent and gone. And for what? “The night cometh”!

Or, perhaps grey hairs are here and there upon you, and you know it not; and the shadows of evening are falling around you, and night wears on apace; and how quickly does the darkness of night succeed the twilight of evening! Yet for all this you are living the same manner of life, to self and pleasure, perhaps; “walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” (Ephes. ii. 2), unreconciled to God, your soul not saved, no certainty of heaven; but rather without

hope and without God in the world. (Ephes. ii. 12.) Oh remember "the night cometh" !

"The night steals on ! it is the watchman's cry ;
 Life's happy morn is gone, its visions fled ;
 Its hopes, like rainbows painted in the sky,
 Are quenched in darkness ; all its pleasures
 dead."

The words that form the title of this little book, although having reference to the Lord Jesus Christ and His works, yet are words of admonition, of warning to all, and seem to urge upon our notice the seriousness of delay, and the importance of making the most of the present time.

The Lord Jesus Christ had just noticed the condition of a poor blind man, blind from his birth (a picture of the spiritual blindness of the people of Israel as a whole, and yours also, if not a believer in Jesus), and in all the grace and love which He ever manifested proceeded to heal the poor afflicted one, to give him sight. And in connection with this work of love He spoke these words : "I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day : the night cometh, when no man can work." He would fulfil the will of God in every detail in His pathway to the cross ; and there He finished the work His Father gave Him to do. (John xvii. 4.)

We all know the advantage of day. When any work of importance has to be done, day-time is chosen in order to successfully accomplish the work. If this is true in things natural, how strange that the solemn, searching and important question of the soul's salvation should be deferred and put off during the day-time of life, and treated as if it can be safely left till "the night cometh" !

Oh ! be warned in time, for "the night cometh when no man can work."

Listen to God's word, "For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." (Eccles. ix. 10.) And again, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. vi. 2.) To-morrow may prove too late. "The night cometh" !

Yes, salvation, to-day and now, is offered you, without money, without price, without works of your own doing. Jesus has finished the work whereby free salvation comes to poor lost sinners; and you must believe the record that God has given of His Son, the testimony of finished redemption on Calvary's cross. Receive it as God's gift. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." (Ephes. ii. 8.)

Let there be no misunderstanding. If unsaved, you need salvation, and you can get it in no other way than by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv. 12.) Not of works, no ! "For by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." (Rom. iii. 20.)

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. ii. 3.) No escape from the dark night that looms before the careless and unbelieving, unsaved soul. No escape from the "outer darkness" which God's word forewarns as the portion of those who despise His love and grace made known in Jesus. (Matt. xxii. 13; xxv. 30.) No escape from the sure judgment that

awaits you if you die unrepentant and in your sins, unpardoned, without the sheltering blood of Jesus to screen your soul; for after death the judgment. (Heb. ix. 27.)

But you may escape, fully escape. And why risk so much? Harken to God's word: "For He hath made Him [Jesus] to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. v. 21.) The question of righteousness is raised, the righteousness of God. Do you stand in this? Jesus, the sinless One, was made sin for us upon the cross, there suffered for sins, He the just One for us the unjust, that we might be brought to God. (1 Pet. iii. 18.)

Where are you, my reader? Do you believe God's word concerning the finished work of salvation wrought by Jesus on Calvary's cross for lost and undone sinners? Do you believe He died for you, suffered for your sins when on the cross of dark Calvary, and now lives in heavenly glory? This is the only way of escape. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (Acts xvi. 31.)

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 16.)

Farewell, reader. Remember, "the night cometh"! G.M.

"All things are ready," come;
 God calls you by His grace.
 Oh, turn not from His offered love,
 But seek e'en *now* His face.

THE DIVINE ANATHEMA.

(1 Cor. xvi. 22.)

IT is difficult to speak or write without deep feeling when dwelling on that awful word, and with so many on every side who are utterly careless as to its dread reality. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha," that is, accursed of the Lord at His coming.

But is this, some may ask, its plain and true meaning? Most assuredly it is. Nothing could be plainer, more definite or absolute. The curse of God is the eternal doom of all who love not the Saviour of mankind, His well-beloved Son.

"If any man," is surely most comprehensive. "Any man," no matter who he is, what he is, where he is, how he reasons, what excuses he may offer; the word of God is positive; it has gone forth from His throne; it is unalterable; it is fixed as the foundation of that throne; changeless as His own being: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha" (anathematized when the Lord shall come).

Do you, dear reader, think this judgment severe? It may appear so at first sight, or to a thoughtless reader; but a moment's reflection will convince you that it is not only just but necessary in the righteous government of God. He loves His Son, knows what He has done and suffered for mankind, and fairly estimates His claims on their grateful love.

All this He has revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures. We know His mind. And how sweetly He has pressed His love upon us, with every blessing that love can give; and the bearer to us of all these blessings is the Son of His own

bosom whom He spared not, "but delivered Him up for us all." (Rom. viii. 31.) But, surely, if we are careless about all these things, and despise the bearer of heaven's richest favours, what will the throne of judgment say? Is there no crime in despising both the love and the authority of God; in disregarding His demands for the honour of His Son? Are His rights not to be vindicated, or the claims of His Son maintained?

Rest assured, my fellow-sinner, that so just, so holy, so righteous, will the judgment of God be, that the vast universe will resound with a solemn "Amen," as the curse of God is pronounced on those who have hated in place of loved the Lord Jesus. Heaven will willingly own it; the faithful on earth will re-echo heaven's universal "Amen"; the condemned must own it; and hell too must groan out reluctantly its "Amen," and acknowledge that God is holy and just and good, and that the man who is accursed has only lost what he despised, and is now in the place which he chose for himself.

But let us examine more closely the claims of Him whom God would have thee love. Is He fairly entitled to the homage of thy heart, and the willing, happy obedience of thy life? Surely, oh! most surely He is, and He only!

To love the Lord is to believe in Him; and the more we meditate on His love to us, and what He has gone through for us, the more will our faith expand, and rise into the most admiring, adoring, grateful love. But we must know Him to believe in Him, and know Him in the fullest expression of His love to us. Blessed Lord! He invites us to come to Him, to be drawn to Him by the attractions of His cross, and the

glory of His Person : “ And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This He said, signifying what death he should die.” (John xii. 32, 33.)

Never was God’s love to thee, a sinner, and God’s hatred of thy sins, so fully manifested as in the cross of His beloved Son ; and never did His love to the lost and helpless soul shine so brightly. Here thou wilt do well to pause for a moment, and dwell on this wondrous sight, this twofold aspect of the cross. When, or how, could God’s hatred of sin be so manifested as when He judged it in the Person of His own beloved Son ?

The thought is overwhelming ! But it must for ever justify God in judging sin in the person of the impenitent sinner himself. The cross of Christ will stand for ever as the declaration of God’s righteousness in the judgment of sin, and in pardoning the chief of sinners who believes in Jesus. But look also at the greatness of God’s love to the sinner in the sufferings and death of Jesus. Every drop of that precious blood which was shed at Calvary, proclaims to heaven, earth, and hell, God’s love to the lost and ruined sinner.

But sin must be put away according to the claims of God’s glory, that His love may flow forth freely, and the full blessing come to us. “ Without shedding of blood is no remission.” (Heb. ix. 22.) Jesus, in the greatness of His love, bore the punishment in our stead. He was nailed to the accursed tree, that the anathemas of God might never fall on us, and sink our souls in hell for ever. In love He endured the cross, and there was nothing that His love did not devotedly endure that God might be glorified and the sinner saved.

But who can speak adequately of the judgment

of God against sin; that which man is disposed to make light of; that which thou hast made light of these many years. The waves and billows of divine wrath rolled over His sinless, spotless soul; His brow was wreathed with a crown of thorns, emblem of the curse of sin; He was forsaken of God; He tasted the bitterness of death. God hid His face from Him when bearing our sins; but at length the cup was drained, and the shout of victory was heard, "It is finished."

All was now done; every claim of heaven, and every need of the sinner, fully met; sin and guilt were put away; the word of God maintained inviolate, and His name glorified. But again we say; again we press upon thy attention the awful thought: it was the judgment due to sin. And as the Lord Himself says, "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" (Luke xxiii. 31.)

But tell me, O my friend, tell me, before I close, hast thou been in any measure drawn to Jesus by His wondrous love in dying on the cross, in dying for thee; in dying that thou mightest be drawn to Him in faith and love, and delivered from the awful judgment due to thy sins?

Is His love less to-day than it was the day on which He died? Surely not! His love is the same; "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." (Heb. xiii. 8.) He waits to be gracious now; He loves to bless now; He delights to save now; He rejoices over every returning sinner now; He is ready to receive every repenting, returning prodigal now.

Flee, then, my friend, oh! flee to His open, His outstretched arms. No anathemas are there. All is love! and such love! The enfolding arms, the

fond embrace, the robe, the ring, the fatted calf, the joyous welcome of heaven's myriad hosts; all await thy coming. (Luke xv.) Thou knowest the invitation and the promise, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi. 28.) "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.) Believe His word, His loving word to worn and weary hearts. Come! Believe His promise true. Come! The love that suffered for sinners ready to perish, bids thee come!

What so fitted to melt thy heart, to win thy confidence, as a Saviour's love! Despise not this love, I entreat thee, or what must the end be? Thou wilt surely find that thou hast not been frightened with vain fears. The anathemas of indignant justice will far exceed in their terrible thunders the most vivid descriptions of either preacher or writer. And thou shalt also find, in that awful day of retribution, that this sore judgment is not for thy common sins merely, but for the great, the aggravated sin, of rejecting a Saviour's love. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha," are the just and unalterable words of heaven.

Once more, my friend, for I tremble to leave thee, lest thou art still preferring the favour of the world to the love of Christ. Pharaoh hardened his heart against the judgment of God; but what must be the guilt of him who hardens his heart against the love of Jesus? Bow, then, O lost one, bow, bow at Jesus' feet. Salvation, full, free, and everlasting is there; peace with God is there, the eternal glories of heaven are there: delay not, then, I beseech thee. Years roll on; the end draws near; divine love has sent forth another and

another messenger of peace to thee; but the last will soon be here; the dreadful day of recompense lingers not; the gathering storm of divine wrath can only be averted by the sheltering blood of the slain Lamb. Flee, then, to that refuge; flee; it is thy only covert from the storm, thy only hiding place from the sweeping tempest of coming wrath. But flee now, just now, lest thou shouldst be overtaken suddenly, and swept into the lake of fire. (Rev. xx. 15.) Before turning thy thoughts to anything else, turn to the Lord; speak to Him; confess thy sins to Him; have faith in His love, and in His precious blood which cleanseth from all sin. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." (Ps. ii. 12.)

May the Lord give to thee, my dear reader, and to every unsaved reader, thus to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

He comes! He comes! the Son of Man,
The second Adam now;
The King of kings, the Lord of lords;
All knees before Him bow.

He comes! His Israel in the land
Of promise to instal;
He comes! He comes! to clear away
The ruins of the Fall.

He comes! He comes! the Bridegroom comes;
Oh! sinners, hear the sound!
Accept Him *now*, if you among
His chosen would be found.
Still mercy's offered; costless, free;
No longer turn away;
He comes! He comes! oh! linger not;
Come "while 'tis called to-day"!

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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.

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT.

A MAN who used to take the place of being a Christian fell into sin, and even ceased to believe the Bible. After a time he became ill, and felt that he was going to die. He thought of his sins, and was greatly alarmed. His distress of mind was such that it was fearful to see him. He so trembled that the bed on which he lay shook under him.

They tried to get a preacher of the gospel to go and see him; but there was not one in the neighbourhood where he lived. It happened that a young man who was a true Christian was on a visit to a family living near. He was asked to go and see the sick man. He went, and entering the room, he sat down by the bedside. But when he saw the great agony the sick man was in, he knew not what to say.

He asked him what caused him so much distress.

"My sins! my sins!" was his despairing cry.

The young man was afraid to speak any words of his own; so he repeated a number of verses of Scripture which came into his mind, and which he thought would suit the sick man's case.

One of these verses was as follows: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Timothy i. 15.)

The man caught at this text in a moment. It seemed to take right hold of his mind. "Repeat that text," he said to the young man.

It was repeated.

"Is that true?" he asked.

"It is," was the answer; "it is God's own truth; the word of Him who cannot lie." (Titus i. 2.)

"Then I am safe," said the sick man. The look of horror passed away from his face, and the smile of peace took its place.

The change was brought about in a moment. It was wonderful. It was like the voice of Jesus when He rebuked the stormy sea: "And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." (Mark iv. 39.) Or like a sudden burst of sunshine coming into a dark room and filling it with brightness. Or like God saying, "Let there be light" when "darkness was upon the face of the deep." "And there was light." (Gen. i. 2, 3.) Thus the sinner who believes the word of God is brought "out of darkness into His marvellous light." (1 Peter ii. 9.)

Does the reader know what it is to be in the light of God?

“HE IS ABLE.”

(Heb. vii. 25.)

THE Lord Jesus is the same as in the days when He was upon earth, still full of mercy, joined with power, ever ready to save and to bless. Why are so few souls saved, when there is such a Saviour at hand? Why are there so many slaves, when He is willing to set them free; so many sick, when He is able to heal?

See Him pressed by a thronging multitude on every side (Mark v. 24-34.) But they have not touched Him. One person came close to Him—a feeble, trembling woman, who just ventured to put out her hand, and thus by faith she laid hold of Him whom the world does not know. The multitude around received no virtue from the Saviour. But this woman has a new life in her. They press around Him; but she has *touched* Him. Here is the difference. Reader, is her case your own? Many attend and multiply their religious services; they are deeply impressed, and make many sacrifices, in order to have a sight of Jesus. But they have no real faith in Him; they press around Him, but they have not touched Him.

What more has this woman done than the rest?

1. She knew her disease. Are you aware of your real state as a sinner?

2. She knew that no earthly help could cure her. Are you brought to the knowledge of this truth?

3. She trusted that Jesus would not fail her. Have you the same reliance on Him?

Have you truly applied to Jesus, the only Mediator between God and men? He was freely given by God for sinners, and He intends you to

come to Him. Come, then, without delay. Hasten to this heavenly physician, ye sick and suffering souls. Touch Jesus, and you will know by experience that He is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," whose word still holds good: "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." (Heb. xiii. 8; John vi. 37.)

THE PUGILIST AND THE GOSPEL.

IN 1845 Hugh Miller, as he tells us in his "First Impressions of England," visited Olney, the home of the poet Cowper. It was then a Babel of blackguards. He thought that all the bad-looking fellows in England had been drawn together there.

Two prize-fighters, named Bendigo and Caunt, were about to fight for the championship and three hundred guineas.

After ninety-three rounds Bendigo beat. Hugh Miller saw him after the fight standing at the door of a whisky shop, with his face all bruised. What would Hugh have said if any one had prophesied that that battered pugilist should be "born again" in his old age, and become an earnest student of the Bible, and worker for Christ?

The idea of that man taking to the Bible! Not very likely!

The scene changes. Thirty years have passed, and Bendigo is now about sixty years of age, and is in jail for the twenty-seventh time. One Sunday, he hears in prison an address on David and Goliath. (1 Sam. xvii.) I will give you the result as I read it in the printed report.

Bendigo listened, as the subject was just in his line. He understood it all: Goliath was just another Caunt.

He forgot where he was, so interested was he; and at the close bawled out, "Bravo, I'm glad the little 'un won."

He kept thinking about it in his cell, and decided that somebody must have helped the little one to kill the big giant.

Next Sunday, the sermon was on Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. (Dan. iii.) He fancied that the name of the third was *Bendigo*, and said to himself, "If one *Bendigo* may be saved, why not another?"

The subject for the following day was "the twelve fishermen." (Matt. iv. 18-22.) Again he was thoroughly interested, as he was a keen fisher himself.

The next sermon was about the seven hundred left-handed men in the twentieth chapter of Judges. Once more he is all ear, being himself a left-handed man.

The Bible seemed to him a very strange book: it was all written for himself!

Upon getting out of jail he found his old companions waiting for him; but he declared that he would never enter another public house. He went to a mission meeting; and that very night, on his way home, he fell on his knees in the snow, and yielded himself to the Saviour. (John vi. 37.)

He had been in twenty-one matched fights, and had not been beaten in one; but, said he, "When I came to the cross of Christ, I was quite beat at the first round."

He was then doing his desperate utmost to master the A B C, that he might be able to read

God's blessed Book; and he wound up, the reporter said, by declaring, "If God could save Bandy, He could save anybody."

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and THOU shalt be saved." (Acts xvi. 31.)

NOT SALVATION ONLY BUT A SAVIOUR.

READ LUKE vii. 11-50.

IN this passage two scenes are brought before us. In the one we find the Lord enters the City of Nain, and in the other He is a guest in the house of the Pharisee. The meaning of the word Nain is "beautiful."

It is a *beautiful* place to which the Lord comes; but what is then presented to Him? The saddest picture which earth could offer! He meets at the gate of the city a widow who has lost her only son. This was the filling up of sorrow. Greater you could not find. We can hardly estimate the desolation of a widow in those days. There was no provision made for them as now; and here was one, not only a widow, but one who had lost her only son, on whom her heart naturally fastened, and had grown up to be her stay. He was dead, and she was left utterly desolate. What a commentary on the beautiful things of this earth! Here was a beautiful place. but what misery of heart in it; and the Lord comes to it only to find there the greatest human sorrow!

Elisha had found the same terrible contrast at Jericho. The "men of the city" say unto him,

"Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth; *but the water is naught, and the ground barren.*" There was a positive attraction in the place itself; but then there was dearth and barrenness in it. The earth is like Jericho and Nain. That there is beauty in it I do not deny, but I say also there is *death* in it; "*the water is naught, and the ground barren*" (2 Kings ii. 19.)

In the wilderness the Lord learnt, as a Man, that there was no subsidy [aid] in nature (Luke iv.) To Adam in the garden of Eden *everything* was a subsidy, telling him of God's interest in and care for him; but with the Lord it was all different. He was put to the proof. He was the dependent One. He, when hungered, could say, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." He could waive the righteous claims of nature in simple subjection to God. He endured because God was His resource; not in supplying His need, but satisfying His heart while suffering from it.

This blessed One came to declare God's thoughts about man, and here we find Him in this place, called "beautiful," before a case of sorrow that, humanly speaking, was irreparable. What could you or I do in such a scene? What was all the beauty of the place to the widow when her last link to earth had gone?

But God had visited His people. Here was One who had come to destroy (not death only, but) "him that had the power of death . . . and to deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage"; One who brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel; who had vowed to render the judg-

ment of death that He might *abolish it*; who had gone down into the grave to grapple with it in the very stronghold of its power. Well, it is He who comes to relieve the sorrow and desolation of this scene at Nain. His word is, "Young man, I saw unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up. . . And He delivered him to his mother."

Let us look now at the other scene. The Lord's fame had gone abroad. "The rumour of Him went forth throughout all Judea." And in verse 36 we find Him a guest in a Pharisee's house. He is now revealed as the Saviour. In this day we hear a great deal about salvation, but I want more than salvation; and I have more; I have A SAVIOUR!

What is the difference? you may ask.

Why *this*, even that I have the *Person* who wrought the salvation. Many a one who is not yet sure of the forgiveness of sins is more devoted than some who say they are. One is theoretically right but practically wrong; the other is practically right but theoretically wrong. Not one of the apostles, before the death of Christ, would speak with assurance of the forgiveness of sins; and yet *how devoted* they were. And why? They had got the Person.

It is the Lord's Person that is left out in the preaching of this day, while His work is proclaimed. If any sovereign of a country gave himself for me, would it not be far above any benefit he could confer?

Well, in Christ I have got the blessed One Himself; not salvation only but a Saviour. Simeon had the Saviour in his arms (Luke ii.) Nothing really satisfies the heart but a know-

ledge of the person who has conferred the benefit. It is this that gives rest to the soul, security. I have love itself, the whole of His heart; and my necessity becomes the opportunity for the display of the love. Love is not exhausted by giving expression to itself, and God's love is not happy till it has removed every hindrance to the expression of itself, and met my every need. Then only can it fully enjoy itself. The woman who touched His garment was made whole, but she had no sense of security till she knew the heart of the One who had healed her, till *He* made her to know "I have done it, and that with all my heart." Then she got the knowledge not only of salvation but of a Saviour (Luke viii. 43.)

Now it is just this which we get in this scene in the Pharisee's house. The report of the Lord had gone abroad, and this poor woman, when she knows where He is, comes to Him; for she says, I have got a Saviour. Then, mark! she *comes to Him*; she is drawn to Him; she was a sinner; she wanted a Saviour; she knew that He sat in the Pharisee's house, and she was awakened to the sense of what He was in Himself.

How different was it with the Pharisee! He, too, had heard the rumour of this wondrous One who had brought in life when there was death, and he invited Him to his house. But mark the reception! Thus it is with the religious people of this day: they accord Him a certain reception, but there is no real link to Him. But this woman, who was a sinner, feels the magnitude and gravity of what He has wrought, and it is Himself, the Saviour, that is before her mind, though she knows nothing about the extent of the blessing.

The Lord knows all about her history and

state; and He says, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she *loved much*."

Now, this is just what characterizes a true reception of Christ. She has found out that He is the Saviour; and how does she come to Him? Prepared to make the most of Him. She can do nothing else; she is taken up with the Person of the Lord; she is indifferent to the sneers of the Pharisees, and undeterred by her own wretched condition; she thinks only of making much of this Blessed One. She was very ignorant, and as yet knew nothing of the forgiveness of sins, but she was regardless of everyone but Himself. He is her Saviour, and her heart is so captivated with Him, that the one purpose of it is to make much of Him, at the expense of herself and of everything else. Great love can make no account of self. To make much of its object is its one thought, and there is no effort. "She stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and to wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment."

The Pharisee received Him into his house, but had no thought of all these attentions, and in his heart he condemns her; but no matter what might be said of herself, her purpose was fixed; there was One before her to whom her heart was bound.

We find in 1 Sam. xvii. xviii. another example of this. David killed Goliath, and is brought before Saul with the head of Goliath in his hand; and we read, "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."

What has happened? Goliath is killed. Jonathan has full sense of the deliverance. He, as the king's son, was properly the person who should have rid the country from thralldom. Imagine Jonathan's feelings, a moment before overwhelmed with the dread of Goliath. But now one had come who had overcome and destroyed the mighty one. The head of Goliath is in David's hands, and the soul of Jonathan is so knit with the soul of David that, before the eyes of all, he strips himself of the robe that was upon him, and of his garments, even to his sword and to his bow and to his girdle, denudes himself of everything that distinguishes him; and for whom? For David. He says, as it were, I put *all* the distinction on the one who is worthy of it, and all because of what David had accomplished for him. Every distinction that marked Jonathan as a man he puts on David; he says, "I owe that man everything, and it is the positive delight of my heart to render everything to him."

Saul, like the Pharisee, accords him a certain reception; he is satisfied that the thing is done, Israel is delivered; but he has no heart's affection for the one who had wrought the deliverance. If *you* had the sense of what that blessed One has wrought, it would be an easy thing to you to say, The best thing I have I would give to Him, because I delight in Him who has delivered me. I not only "love Him much," but I have got heart-satisfaction in Him, and it is no effort to me to accord all distinction to the One who has all pre-eminence in my affection.

By an unseen process this woman is led to Christ, she is absorbed with Him; like Jonathan to David, her soul is knit to Him, and the Lord

takes it into account because He knew it was love. It is not a question of the amount done, it is the manner of the attention, the minuteness of it; and He marks the contrast between her and the Pharisee, and says, "Thou gavest Me no water for My feet: but she hath washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest Me no kiss; but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed My feet with ointment."

You may know the forgiveness of your sins, and yet your heart may not be bound to Him, and you may never have stepped out of your way for a moment to declare that He is the object of your heart, One so worthy in your eyes that the very thing that would distinguish you, is the very thing you would give to distinguish Him. Ah! if your soul has apprehended what Christ has wrought for you, your whole life will declare it. The order and depth of conversions are proved by the measure of the apprehension souls have of Him. The disciples evangelized JESUS. Where there is the *apprehension* of Him there must be the *expression* of Him. It must be so.

It is *one* thing to be saved, to have salvation, and another for your soul to be in immediate contact with your Saviour. He has been lifted up as the brazen serpent. Have you looked and lived? If you have looked at Him you cannot help loving Him; and, like Jonathan, your heart requires of you that its love should find expression without an effort.

We meet with conversions in the present day in which there is little evidence of affection to Him, no sense of *who* He is, or of His being per-

sonally an object to the heart. It is merely a question of happiness, or rather rest of conscience. People are asked, "Are you happy?" I ask, "Have you found *Christ*?" And if you have, the distinguishing mark of your possession is that you delight in Him.

Neither do I believe it can be happy conversion where *forgiveness* is everything. It is the one who is forgiven much that loves much; and where there is little devotedness to Christ there is little sense of what He has done. How often we are allowed to get into doubt, trouble, sorrow, just to bring to our souls the wonderful blessing of finding Christ our object; when we have found Him it is easy to give up everything for Him, nay, it is pain to keep anything back from Him. Simeon, with the Babe in his arms, says, Everything for me is bound up in this Child; I don't want anything more. Peter forsook all to follow Him. Was it sorrow to him? It would have been far more sorrow if the Lord had forbidden him to do so. The man that was delivered besought Him that he might be with Him (Mark v. 18.) Zachæus wants to see *Him*, and so this poor woman goes straight to Him; He is her Saviour. Paul says, "He loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*." Can you say, "He has done it for *me*?" This it is that occupies you with the Person; this is the mark of a true reception of Christ. If you have believed the testimony to His work, your heart ought to be occupied with the One who wrought it. If it is not, you will be brought through deep waters, that you may discover the terrible yawning gulf between your nature and the living God; and that Christ alone can deliver you from that nature.

A devoted heart is only one that has discovered the worth of Christ; and no one can be devoted until he has discovered it. It is not a question of time or attainment; the immediate and necessary consequence of this secret being divulged to your heart is to make it true to the One to whom it is so deeply indebted. Love makes much of its object, and counts it not self-sacrifice. Self drops off when my Saviour becomes the *one* object of my heart.

WHAT IS IT TO "REPENT"?

THE very moment a man believes God's testimony to Christ, he repents toward God, and his repentance is deep and genuine in proportion as his faith is simple and childlike. But if I make repentance to be something which I must feel previous to, or as a warrant for, my coming to Christ, I overthrow the entire fabric of redemption, I make the cross of Christ of none effect, and deprive the sinner of the only true and possible ground of peace. It is the revelation of God's true character in Christ that leads to repentance, and that saves the believer's soul. It is neither human penance nor human repentance, but divine atonement, that justifies God in justifying a believer.

The blood of Jesus has settled the whole thing, "ONCE" and "FOR EVER"; and the soul that believes this has got "repentance unto life," perfect pardon and perfect peace. He has given up the previous mind, the false mind which came from Satan, and become the possessor of "an after mind," "a right mind," which comes from Christ. It is labour in vain to seek to produce

repentance in any other way. Neither the moral evil nor the direful consequences of sin, can lead a sinner to repentance. Such things may terrify him for a moment; but momentary terror is not permanent repentance, not a change of mind unto life. It is to be feared that preachers sometimes give greater prominence, in their preaching, to the evil of sin, and the terrors of hell, than they do to the powerful, soul-subduing, heart-melting attractions of the grace of God, and the immortal joys of "His eternal glory."

Now, if we look at the preaching of the Lord Jesus and His apostles, we do not find such topics brought *prominently* forward. True, they are occasionally glanced at, when circumstances demand it. The Lord Himself speaks of one "lifting up his eyes in hell, being in torment." Awful thought! And the apostle Paul could "reason of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," after such a fashion as to make Felix tremble. All this is quite true; and there may be seasons when the man of God will feel called upon to set before the careless infidel heart the terrors of "the wrath to come"; but this is quite another thing from making such subjects the grand theme of testimony.

If my reader will look at Peter's address to the Jews in Acts iii., and to the Gentiles in Acts x., and then turn to Paul's address to the Jews in Acts xiii., and to the Gentiles in Acts xvii., he will find divine models of true gospel preaching. And what, let me ask, is the theme? Is it sin and its horrid fruits? hell and its ineffable terrors? Nay; it is Christ, from beginning to end; Christ as the living expression of the very heart of God;

Christ as the channel of out-poured love, from the eternal bosom of God; Christ, dwelling in that bosom from before all worlds; Christ, manifested down here, in perfect humanity, revealing God in every movement of His blessed life; Christ, nailed to the cursed tree, "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," as an offering and a sacrifice for sin; Christ, laid in the dark, silent tomb; Christ, raised from the dead, by the glory of the Father, and seated at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven, as the proof of the perfectly-accomplished redemption; Christ, coming again in the clouds of heaven, to lay the top-stone of glory upon the magnificent superstructure of grace. Such is the prominent theme of apostolic testimony, to which is added the gift of the Holy Ghost, as the witness, the seal, the unction, the earnest, the power of enjoyment, and as producing in the heart of a sinner that faith which connects him with all the fulness of grace and blessedness in Christ.

In short, the apostles simply presented to their hearers "the truth as it is in Jesus"; leaving it to God the Holy Ghost to clothe that truth with heavenly power. They did not, in their preaching to unconverted people, occupy themselves with those feelings, emotions, affections and practical results, which are sure to flow from the hearty belief of the glad tidings. Their preaching was OBJECTIVE. They presented "salvation" as a thing complete, irrespective altogether of any SUBJECTIVE work in the sinner. This is of immense importance. The gospel should be so preached that any one hearing it may enjoy immediate and everlasting peace.

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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.

"DOES IT SOUND TO SENSE?"

HE was seventy-four years of age, and the brother of the one whose testimony to the Name of Jesus was given in a previous issue of "Gospel Light."

Through poverty, and having no one to care for him, he was brought to the Union Infirmary, where he many times heard the gospel of the love of God.

1. THE MEASURE OF GOD'S LOVE in the gift. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son"; a world that was at enmity with Him, and hated God and His Son without a cause.

On one Lord's Day after he had heard this gospel, I went to him, and asked him what he thought of this wonderful love, which brought from his lips the above-quoted words.

He said, "Now, does it sound to sense that anyone would give His only begotten Son for His enemies?"

This dear man was a thorough radical in politics, and a reasoner as to things of God. He would talk about politics for hours, but he still sat and heard the gospel of God's love.

2. THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD'S LOVE.

"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. 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. 8-10.)

It was put before the hearers that God's Son took upon Himself the penalty of sin, and the sentence on Adam's race, that is, death. That He took the sinner's place on the cross; the sinner's sins, and the sinner's judgment. That He then by the shedding of His own life-blood in atonement for sins, fulfilled the Scriptures as to the claims of God, and gave God infinite satisfaction in respect of the sinner's guilt: "For it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." "I have given it to you upon the altar," said the Lord, "to make an atonement for your souls." "And without shedding of blood is no remission," no forgiveness. (Lev. xvii. 11; Heb. ix. 22.)

3. Behold, what MANNER OF LOVE the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons (children) of God. (1 John iii. 1.) Yes, we are children of God, because when He sent and gave His Son we believed on His Name. (John i. 12.) And, being children, He loves us

as a Father, and purposes that, having a title as children, we shall dwell in the Father's house and be with and like His Son for ever.

4. The GREAT LOVE of God. “God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ,” “and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus”; accepted in His beloved, us who were by nature the children or wrath even as others. (Eph. ii. 3-7.)

5. PERFECT love. “Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment.” “Perfect love casteth out fear.” “He that feareth is not made perfect in love.” (1 John iv. 17-19.)

We pointed out that God does not see His children now as in Adam, but He sees us in His Son, and therefore says, “As He is, so are we in this world.” (1 John iv. 9, 10, 17.)

The subject of our narrative heard these news with delight, and getting much better in health, he was put in the convalescent ward, where we ministered these precious things every Lord's Day afternoon.

He was a great talker and delighted to get in argument on politics, or any matter.

The following Lord's day, when we arrived in the ward, we saw him sitting in a corner of the room with his face in the corner, and his back to the others in the room.

After greeting the men there, I said, “What is the matter with Oscroft?”

One answered, “We do not know, Mr. F.; but he has been like that for days and hours. He won't speak to us, or answer us when we speak to him.”

I went to this dear one, and putting my hand on his shoulder, said, "Well, Mr. Oscroft, what are you sitting like that for?"

He waved his hand towards the men in the room, and said, "Because I don't want to talk to them, nor want them to interfere with my thoughts."

"Why," I said, "what are your thoughts?"

"Oh!" he said, "I am thinking constantly of God so loving His enemies and the world which hated Him. It is too wonderful."

Several in that company were children of God, and we sang together with thankful hearts and loosed tongues:—

"Have you heard the story of the love of God,
Have you seen it displayed at the Cross,
When from Jesus' side flowed the precious
blood
Which eternally saves from loss?
Do you know that Jesus is in glory now,
And has taken His seat on the throne,
And that every knee at His blest Name must
bow,
And His greatness and worthiness own?
Would you like His glory to be your bright
home,
And your heart to be filled with His love?
Then confess your guilt, and to the Saviour
come,
And His mercy you'll instantly prove.
Can you say, 'He is mine,
He's the love gift of God unto me'?
Have you heard Him saying,
'Thou art ever mine,
For I bought thee with blood on the Tree'?"

Dear reader, this gift of God was for the world. What are you going to do with it?

Those who receive Him are the children of God, and as children have a right and title to go into their Father's house, to the place which His Son has gone to prepare. (John xiv. 2, 3.)

Those who reject Him, and are duped by the devil, will go to the place prepared for the devil and his angels. (Matt. xxv. 41.)

Accept Him now, and sing,

"I can sing, 'He is mine,
He's the love gift of God unto me.'"

C.H.F.

THE PERFECT AND PERMANENT GOOD: IS IT YOURS ?

WERE we to judge of the comparative value of the soul and the body from what we see around us, we should surely come to the conclusion that the body is much more valuable than the soul; so little attention is paid to the one, and so much to the other.

We see, on every hand, far more thought, care, labour, and money, spent on the body than on the soul. It is perfectly right, of course, to attend to the body. It is our duty to do so. But the danger of neglecting the soul is all the greater on that account.

Our greatest snares are daily duties. Just because they are lawful and right in themselves, we seek thereby to keep the conscience quiet under the plea that duty must be attended to. Surely it is right to do our duty; but it is wrong,

always wrong, to neglect the soul. If it is neglected, all is wrong, however prosperous we may be in the world. Has the soul no claims? Do we owe no duty to it?

Many satisfy themselves by attending for a few hours on the first day of the week, to what is called their *spiritual* interests, and then devote the remaining six days to their *temporal* interests. Thus the soul comes in for a very small share of their time and consideration. But we shall neither rightly understand the worth of the soul nor appreciate its claims, until we have learnt its value from the words of Christ: "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, 37.)

Here we are plainly taught that one human soul is of more value than the whole world; that if a man were to gain the world, and should lose his soul, he would be an infinite loser.

The soul is spiritual, and must exist for ever, either in a state of perfect happiness or the most awful misery. The world is material, and must pass away; but the soul will never pass away. It is immortal; it will never die. No, never, never die! It may, alas! be eternally separated from the living God, which is called "the second death"; but it can never cease to exist. (Rev. xx. 14.) Either the Father's house of many mansions or the burning lake must be the everlasting abode of every immortal soul, and of the body, too, after the resurrection. (John xiv. 2.) It is this consideration that makes the soul so precious, that gave it such a value to the compassionate heart of Jesus. No one could tell the worth of a soul as He could. He had counted

the cost and paid the ransom price of its redemption.

And now, observe, the soul being spiritual and immortal, nothing will meet its need that is not both *perfect* in its nature and *permanent* in its duration. Besides, the soul has to do with God, and nothing will suit Him that is not as perfect as He is Himself. The soul, being immortal, must have an everlasting portion.

But where, you may ask, are we to find this character of blessing for the soul? Certainly not in this world. Vanity, decay, and death, are written on everything down here. There is nothing perfect; there is nothing permanent. Nothing can be found "under the sun" that will meet the need or satisfy the desires of one human soul. (Eccles. i. 3.)

In the Book of Ecclesiastes we have the record of human experience, with reference to this world, on a large and magnificent scale; and the result is proved that all is vanity and vexation of spirit. "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?" (Eccles. i. 2, 3.) So long as we seek happiness "under the sun," we shall not find it. Solomon was a wise man and a great king. He tried and proved everything that could be supposed capable of rendering man happy. He tried mirth and pleasure, wisdom and folly. He made great works, builded houses, planted vineyards, gardens, orchards, and trees of all kinds of fruit. He got singing men and singing women, silver and gold in abundance, and the peculiar treasure of kings. "So I was great," he says, "and increased more than all that were before me in

Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy: for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit *under the sun.*" (Eccles. ii.)

So long as the heart of any one is seeking rest, satisfaction, or happiness in this world, it will surely be disappointed. The result in every case must be bitter disappointment, for it can only reap, from such a soil, "vanity and vexation of spirit." The heart of man is too large for this world to fill. Its capabilities are too vast for all that is "under" the heavens to satisfy. And yet how eagerly many are chasing after the fleeting phantoms of time, to the entire neglect of the solemn realities of eternity!

But supposing that every desired object were reached, and all possessed, what would be gained? Only a deeper sense that all is vanity, that it is not in the power of earthly good to fill up the aching void within. All worldly pleasures, amusements, indulgencies, and gratifications, leave the soul more thirsty than ever; they cannot satisfy. Excitement is the right name for worldly pleasures; take that away, and they would prove a most burdensome task. They only increase the painful sense of want, with an intensified desire which makes the poor neglected soul thoroughly miserable. There is a worm at the root of every gourd, and a thorn in earth's fairest flower.

The portion, dear reader, which thy soul needs is not to be found within the wide range of nature. Solomon could not find it "under the sun," and "what can the man do that cometh after the king?" There is nothing perfect, there is nothing permanent, that has its spring in this sin-stricken world. Oh! what a poor, hollow, worthless thing the world appears in the light of this plain truth! It only excites the feverish thirst of the soul, but cannot quench it. A greater than Solomon found it to be "a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." (Ps. lxxiii. 1.) O reader! think of this! This is a true testimony. There are no living waters in this world. There is no life, no food, no rest, no joy, for the soul, beneath the throne of God. Husks you may have, if you can buy them, but the price is your soul.

But where, you may again ask, are we to find the needed, suited portion for the soul? Let the Spirit of Truth answer: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." And again, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto ME, and drink." (Isaiah lv. 1-3; John vii. 37.)

Nothing can be plainer than these passages. Christ Himself is the life and food of the soul. "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." (John vi. 35.) Here, and here alone, the soul of man will find eternal rest. He is the only perfect and permanent good of the soul. But He is *above*

the sun. He has gone up on high. We must believe in Him, and through believing, come to Him where He is. We must rise in spirit, in heart, *above* the sun, to find the spiritual blessings which our souls need. "He that *hath* the Son hath life." (1 John v. 12.) We must possess Himself as our wealthy portion. Oh, have you found your way to Him? Are you occupied with Him? Can you now say, just now, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee"? (Psalm lxxiii. 25.) Christ not only fills, but overflows, the soul that is occupied with Him alone.

The contrast between a person who is seeking happiness in the world and one who has found it in Christ is strikingly presented in the Book of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. (Song i. 1-7.) In the latter, the believing soul is with Christ Himself, and that is everything. In His presence there is fulness of joy. It is not, as in Ecclesiastes, an endless variety of things, but a living Person, the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The heart not only believes the truth, but it loves the Person. The blood of the cross having met all the need of the conscience, the Person of Christ meets all the need of the heart. And oh! what confidence, rest, and joy the believer has in Him, speaking of the bride in the Canticles simply as a believer in Jesus. "Thy love," she can now say "is better than wine." Wine is the symbol of human joy, the joys of earth; but all that the heart now desires is to know and enjoy more of the love of Jesus. For it has found the blessed realities of His faithful love are sweeter and better far than all it ever found here below. This is the only source of true

happiness to the soul, the only spring of real joy.

But observe, further, there is not a word here about sin, forgiveness, or justification; neither was there anything said about these things by the father to the prodigal in Luke xv. Why is this? Is God indifferent to sin? Oh, no! Far from it. It is intolerable to His being. But these matters were perfectly settled, for every believer, in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. So that when the prodigal returns he is not blamed, or charged with anything, but met with all the affections of the father's heart. Surely, if sinners believed this, they would not be so unwilling to return to God. (1 Thess. i. 9.) Judgment was spent on the cross: the wrath of God was poured out there, and sin was dealt with and put away, according to the glory of God. He had something to say to Christ about the prodigal's sins, but nothing to the prodigal himself. When the sinner turns to God, in the name of Jesus, he comes before Him in all the value of His work, and that so fully answers for all his sins, that God the Father says nothing about them. True, the sinner himself may be deeply exercised about his sins, and fully confess them, and very right that he should do so, but the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin, and fits us to be "in the light, as He is in the light." (1 John i. 7.)

And now the poor heart is free in the presence of God, and occupied with Jesus there. It can now say, "the king hath brought me into his chambers." (Song i. 4.) It has learnt his wondrous love. It has tested its sweetness. It is at home with the King in his chamber. Oh! what joy can be compared with

this? Every other attraction loses its power when I am here. What are all the varieties spoken of in the Book of Ecclesiastes compared with this place of perfect and everlasting joy? They all dwindle into utter insignificance, now that I have found the perfect and permanent good, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." (Heb xiii. 8.) When the heart is occupied with Christ Himself it can relish nothing else. In Ecclesiastes the heart was too large for its portion; in the Song of Solomon the portion is too large for the heart. Its cup runneth over. To know that the presence-chamber of the King is my eternal happy home is joy unspeakable and full of glory. (1 Pet. i. 8.)

But oh! a strange feeling passes over my spirit, and whispers, "Is there any other place for souls besides this?"

Oh, yes! The truth must be told. There is another, and *only* another; and that is, the burning lake of fire. Oh, solemn thought; And know thou that every child of Adam must be in one of these two places for ever and ever. Oh, reader! reader! which is to be thine, the chamber of the King, or the lake of fire? The highest place in heaven, or the lowest place in hell? If Christ is the desired object of thy heart, thou art with Him, already, in His chamber. Rejoice, then, in thy portion. "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." (Phil iv. 4.)

But, oh! if the world is thy portion here, the lake of fire must be thy place for ever. Oh, be warned of thy danger ere it be too late! Hast thou no thought, no concern, no care, for thy precious soul? Jesus says it is of more value than the whole world; and wilt thou sell it to

Satan for the pleasures of sin, which are but for a moment? Wilt thou barter away the ineffable bliss of heaven for the gratifications of earth? Oh! ponder the bent of thy heart and the ways of thy feet. If thy foot be lifted in the direction of the world, stay! put it not down. Oh, stay! turn round! Let thy back be on the world, and thy face to Jesus. Oh! let the uplifting of thy heart be unto Himself. Believe in Him; trust in His finished work as the ground of acceptance in God's sight. His precious love has long kept the door of mercy open for thee; yes, for thee! Why linger outside? He still says, "Come;" "yet there is room." Enter, this is the "door" that leads to the chamber of the King, to His presence, to His heart, to the Paradise of God, to the eternal blessedness of heaven.

"And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.)

CHRIST IS COMING AGAIN.

Do not fail to read every word of this paper, as it is an Appeal regarding your safety at that terrible day.

WILL YOU BE READY?

"**S**IT Thou at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool" (Psa. cx.1.)

Thus spake the Father, as the Son entered heaven with the marks of the world's hatred upon His blessed person. (Rev. v. 6.)

Nigh two thousand years have come and gone since then, and time, with lightning wing, is

speeding us toward that awful moment when the Son will rise up in resistless might to fulfill the Father's decree. Christ is coming to make His enemies His footstool. Art thou washed in His blood? If so, thou art His friend. If not, thou art Christ's enemy, and when He comes in power and great glory it will be to crush thee, as His enemy, beneath His feet (Matt. xxv. 31-46; Rev. xix. 11-21.)

Oh, the terrors of the Christless at that coming! The coming of the Man whom the world once crucified, whose love it has not ceased to scorn, and whose blood it has even treated with proud indifference. Men who never prayed before will then, in their soul's deep terror, cry to the rocks and to the mountains, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. vi. 16, 17.)

Vain prayer! The Lamb's arm of judgment shall then reach all who would not take salvation from His hand of love.

Then will forever cease the gay song, the careless laugh and the mad whirl of gaiety, in which the poor victims of the devil are indulging, and an eternity of weeping and wailing will take their place.

Then will forever be suspended the world's pleasures and business, with the allurements of the one, and the wear, hurry and bustle of the other, which so often shut out God, and leave men no time to think of their soul's deep need.

Then will forever be arrested the world's boasted progress, and man in his mad career of proud indifference to the claims of God brought

face to face with Him whom God has constituted Judge of quick and dead. (Acts x. 42.)

Reader, before that terrible day of judgment comes, Christ is coming to take to His bosom His blood-purchased Bride, that is, every believer in Him. If Christ were to come this moment, would you rise to meet Him? (1 Thess. iv. 15-17.) Are you ready? Are you saved?

Christ is coming, and one of two things will happen to you when He comes: you will either be caught up to be forever with Him, or else left behind for judgment. Think of it, left behind for judgment!

Jesus said, "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man." (Luke xvii. 26.)

How was it in the days of Noah? A world of sinners, heedless of God's warnings, and unprepared for His judgment, was in a moment swept away to eternal destruction by the terrible waters of wrath.

So shall it be when Christ comes. Multitudes will be unprepared, because unwashed in His blood, and hence will be damned throughout eternity.

Will you be one of them?

There will be terrible crying and wailing in that day, reader; men and women crying out for mercy, and wailing because no mercy can be found. Will your voice thus be heard?

The myriads who have listened to the gospel of God's grace, and turned carelessly away, will realize then that the day of grace is past, and that their doom is forever fixed.

Will you be one of them?

Oh! mad lingerer on the brink of that lake

wherein dash and roar the flaming waves of eternal judgment, I warn you that Christ's coming is no mere fancy of a disordered mind. (Rev. xx. 15.) Already there are to be heard the mutterings of the approaching tempest. How darest thou, then, trifle with the solemn question of thy soul's salvation! I adjure thee by Christ's dread appearing, by the love that thou hast for thy soul, by the fear of hell's eternal torment, to fly this moment for refuge to that Saviour who still cries, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.)

Yes, Christ is coming again, coming as Judge, and yet there reaches us His voice of grace, borne along the centuries from the distant past, still pleading with the sinner in the tones of the tenderest love: "Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest." "He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life." (Matt. xi. 28; John vi. 47.) But even as we listen the voice changes to a voice of sorrow, and we hear Him sadly say, "And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life." (John v. 40.)

Reader, are those words of grief prophetic of the doom of thy Christless soul? Or wilt thou this instant hasten through the shadows of impending judgment that even now gather round thy path, to the feet of Him who died that thou mightest live, and who, in patient grace, still lingers to receive thee and forgive thee through the virtue of His blood?

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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.

HER LAST CHANCE.

A FEW weeks ago, a girl, apparently well and strong, sat in a Bible Class for young women and girls, under the sound of God's Word.

For many years she had come to that Class, many times had God spoken to her, and her teacher could see that God was exercising her as to her soul's salvation.

As she grew older her mind seemed to be full of other things, the world seemed to attract her. But there is One stronger than the god of this world, and that is the God who gave His Son to die for sinners like you and me.

On this afternoon, E. was touched as God's Word was read; her teacher felt a work was going on with several, especially E. and her friends, and at the end she found that E. had

come as a guilty sinner to the Saviour of sinners, and got peace through knowing that on Calvary's cross that Saviour bore her sins, for she was among the number spoken of as "all that believe."

Six others also confessed the Lord, and few belonging to that Bible Class of over seventy girls went away untouched. Many went away rejoicing, for they had long prayed for these dear girls.

E. went home, and at the back of her little Testament she put her name into this verse. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that E.——, who believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16; Acts xiii. 39).

On the following Thursday evening she went for a walk with her friends. Before this they had gone to the Pictures on Thursday evenings, but now they had come to Jesus, and they knew they would not think about Him at the Pictures. They had started to follow Him, and they would not learn of Him, nor about Him, there.

E. got home about 8.30 p.m. She had her supper, read a chapter of God's word, and went to bed.

Soon after, she was taken ill, and her parents, becoming alarmed, asked the next door neighbour to come in.

When E. saw her, she said, "You will help my mother, won't you?"

The neighbour replied, "Why are you talking like this, dear?"

E. answered, "I'm dying, give me my Testament." Then looking at her mother, "Mother, I can see heaven open in front of me"; and lying back upon her pillow, she died.

Reader, if this were your last moment would it be God's Word you would ask for as that on which you were resting your soul? Do you know anyone in heaven? If not, you will never get there. If you do not know the One who is the centre of heaven's joy no heaven will ever open in front of you, but your place will be where you will remember that God warned you of the wrath to come.

If you have not come to Jesus as a lost, guilty sinner, and found in Him that which God requires for that which is past in your life, as well as all that you are, then come now to the God who loves you. Open your Bible at John iii. verse 16, and put your name in where E. put her's, and rest on God's word.

Is one who reads this a Sunday School teacher? Is your heart sad because some of the members of your class seem hard, and as they grow older come less often to class? Does the god of this world seem to be having all his own way?

Look up! There is One stronger than the strong man. He sees your heartache, and He knows. Just go on sowing the seed, and bringing the members of your class, one by one, to Him in prayer.

Always have one aim—to bring them to the feet of Jesus. The teacher of this class felt compelled to speak personally to some of these girls, and as she looked on the dear, dead face of E. how she thanked God that He had given her courage to speak at the right moment!

She had to wait five years for the harvest, but if it was five times that number it would have been worth it, for E. was absent from the body, but present with the Lord. (2 Cor. v. 8.) F.C.C.

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN.

TWO men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke xviii. 10-14.)

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican presents to us a most striking sketch of the two classes of persons which are spread over a large portion of the globe; namely, those who make prayers, and those who really pray, and is accompanied with the divine estimate of both.

Outwardly, there was a great similarity between the Pharisee and the publican. A Gentile idolator might have seen both wending their way to the same temple; they both went to pray; they both began their prayers with saying, "God"; in the eyes of men they were both pursuing the same object; unlike those who were without, they were inner-court worshippers. Like the mere formalist and real Christian now, there is often outwardly little difference, but, in God's esteem, how very wide the contrast!

1. Let us consider the PHARISEE. I think I see him with his broad phylactery, hastening

through the crowded streets, often gratified by salutations of "Rabbi"; stopping now and then at the corner to repeat his accustomed prayer, and out-stripping many a broken-hearted publican.

At length he approaches the holy temple. How boldly he enters! How unhesitatingly he walks straight up to the innermost part of the holy place! How erect he stands! How often his eye glances on the gazing multitude, to be sure that he has secured their admiration and esteem! And how scornfully he views the weeping sinners that surround him! Then he begins his prayer, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican; I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess."

Such is the Pharisee's prayer. We are told that he "prayed with himself"; all the resources of self are therefore called to his aid: hence his prayer is full of self; self-exaltation, self-love, self-righteousness. He says, "*I* thank Thee." "*I* am not as other men." "*I* fast." "*I* give." "*I* possess." All through his prayer "*I*" stands most prominent. Self, whatever form it may assume, can never rise above self. He thanks God that he is better than other men.

How is it that he is better than other men? Is it not that his fasting and alms-giving have accomplished this? Then why thank God? Is it not like Cain's offering of those fruits of the ground that his own hand had cultivated, and which had been matured by divine aid? Yes, this is the delusion of Pharisaism. It is the cultivation of self, but professedly by divine help. It is not salvation; it is not the cleansing of the

guilty conscience; but the outward trimming of the corrupt tree which cannot bring forth good fruit, and sets at nought the gospel declaration, that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.)

The Pharisee thanks God that he is not as other men. God declares that "all have sinned," all have "gone astray," all are "guilty" before Him, and that "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." (Prov. xxvii. 19.) It is quite possible that the Pharisee might have been preserved from the outward sins which the publican had so long pursued, and which many around him were frequently revelling in; but he little thought that "God seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." (1 Sam. xvi. 7.)

The Pharisee knew not the sin of honouring God with his lips, while his heart was far from Him. What was the state of the Pharisee's heart? He spoke as if he were righteous, and had never sinned. This was not true; for the Scripture says, "There is none righteous, no, not one," and that we are all as an unclean thing, conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity. His thought, like that of many now, was that it was only outward things that defiled the man; whereas our Lord said that it was the evil things from within that defiled the man: "For out of the *heart* of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within and defile the man. (Mark vii. 21-23.)

Was not the Pharisee, then, an "extortioner" in heart? Had he not, times without number, desired and obtained God's providential mercies, under the pretence of honouring God, when it had really been for self-exaltation in the sight of men? Was he not "unjust" not to credit the testimony of the holy and true Son of God? Was he not an "adulterer" in heart, in pretending affection for God, calling the living and true God his God, while he was wholly set on exalting and adoring self? O deluded Pharisee! O unregenerate, unpardoned, sinful man! how hath Satan blinded thine eyes! how hath thine own evil heart deceived thee! Well hath the Lord said of thee, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." (Matt. xxiii. 27, 28).

In the Pharisee's prayer there was no sense of need expressed; no expectation of receiving anything from God; no felt unworthiness; no repentance; no confession of sin. His thought was that God required something from him, and he flattered himself that he was competent to meet it. He knew not the truth, that God is not "worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed any thing, seeing He *giveth* to all life, and breath, and all things." (Acts xvii. 24, 25.)

2. Now look at the PUBLICAN. Here you see a man exercised, not about what he is in the sight of men, but what he is before God; and this is always the way of the action of the Holy Spirit in the soul. The publican knows it is to

God, from whom no secrets are hid, that he must give an account. With a trembling step and an aching heart he enters the temple. He feels deep contrition, and is bowed down under a sense of unworthiness of the least of God's mercies, and standing "afar off" the question with him is, How can I approach God? for

"The best obedience of my hands

Dares not appear before His throne."

He knows that he is "a sinner," that he has actually transgressed against God's laws. He is self-convicted, and therefore self-abased. His past acts of covetousness and extortion stare him in the face, and he is conscious that all sin is really "against God." "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight," is the utterance of his heart (Ps. li. 4.) He feels he cannot "lift up so much as his eyes to heaven"; for he knows God is holy and just, that He will by no means clear the guilty, and has power to destroy both body and soul in hell, and is deeply conscious of having broken His commands. But, more than this, he traces sin to its source; he laid his trembling hand upon his heart, "he smote upon his breast," so much as to say, What horrid thoughts, vile desires, and abominable suggestions, lurk within this breast! O wretched man that I am! O foul transgressor! O ungrateful enemy to God! What mercies have been vouchsafed to me! What a kind Benefactor! yet how rebellious and disobedient have I been, to have wasted my time, health, strength, and every other talent, in selfish objects; yea, even using the Almighty's gifts to seek happiness and glory, apart from the Giver. What ungodliness! What sin!

But language fails to describe these workings of the Spirit in the conscience of the convicted and confessed sinner.

The question, then, in the publican's heart is, Can such "a sinner" be saved? Is there any hope of salvation for one so deserving God's wrath? If there be, he is convinced it can only be in God Himself; for the experience he has had of his own weakness and vileness excludes all hope from himself. The only possibility is in divine mercy. Can God, will God, be merciful to *such* a sinner? He has heard that God is merciful, and he feels that mercy only can meet his need; but he cries,

"Depth of mercy, can there be
Mercy still reserved for *me*?"

This is the anxious enquiry. He, however, ventures; he casts himself on free, unmerited love; his cry is, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!"

Mark the character of this prayer:

1st. His supplication is to "God."

2nd. He acknowledges his guilt as "a sinner."

3rd. His only ground of expectation is in divine mercy: "Be merciful."

4th. His deep, heartfelt, personal necessity: "Be merciful to *me*."

He brings nothing but a load of sin to be removed; a conscience oppressed with guilt to be cleansed; an agonizing breast to be comforted; a needy soul to be filled. He presents no creature-merit to God, and he expects everything from God. He feels, if God does not save him, he is lost for ever: "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

How widely different are the two prayers! The self-exalting Pharisee needs nothing; the self-

abased publican needs everything. The one is ensnared in the trammels of dead formality; the other is under the influence of spiritual life.

3. THE DIVINE VERDICT. Having set before us a sample of these two wide-spread classes of persons which have been in the world ever since the days of Cain, the Lord Jesus then tells us that the publican "went down to his house JUSTIFIED." This is clearly the meaning of the passage. It is not that the Pharisee was in any degree justified; but comparing the two persons, the publican could be spoken of as JUSTIFIED.

How blessed! What a glorious unfolding of the riches of the grace of God! A self-condemned sinner, thus casting himself on the free, sovereign mercy of God, JUSTIFIED!

And surely this has always been God's way. In the days of Job, Elihu was instructed by the Spirit to say of the Almighty, "He looketh upon men; and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not, He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light." (Job xxxiii. 27, 28.)

But to be "justified" means not only forgiven, but to be accounted righteous, to be just before God. To this end Christ died and rose again. He who knew no sin was made sin for us, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. v. 21.) Thus Jesus, by His finished work, has not only delivered His people from guilt, but fitted them for glory; hence the Colossian believers were enjoined to give "thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of dark-

ness, and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son : in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." (Col. i. 14.) This is the mercy of God to sinful man. He justifies the ungodly who believe; and this He is able to do consistently with His own holiness and justice, through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. iii. 24-26.)

The only perfect sacrifice for sin had not been offered when Jesus put forth this parable. He tells us on another occasion that He was "straitened," that is, He was unable fully to tell out the grace and peace of God to lost, sinful man, until His death had actually taken place. He said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke xii. 50.) But God's purposes and thoughts of redeeming mercy have always been the same. He could account such as Abel, Noah, and Abraham, righteous by faith, by looking forward to the cross, as much He now justifies a sinner because of Christ's already accomplished work. In Christ, all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses. (Acts xiii. 39.)

But further. The Lord Jesus adds to this parable the divine statute, "Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

On two other occasions He put forth the same solemn declaration; but both were in reference to seeking honour and distinction among men. Here, however, He sets it before His hearers as a doctrine of eternal importance. Every one that exalts himself, by professing to stand on the ground of carnal confidence, self-righteousness,

and self-importance, can only be judged by God as worthy of eternal banishment from His presence. To stand before God without a wedding garment, without that spotless and infinitely perfect righteousness that Christ is to every one that believes, is to be exposed to the just indignation of the King of kings, who must abase such, and whose sentence must be, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. xxii. 13, 14.)

How deep, how eternally full of bitter anguish will that abasing be! On the other hand, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Such a one does not contend for his own opinions about the things of God; he boasts not of his own abilities or attainments; he believes that "God is greater than man"; he lays aside his own thoughts; he gives God His due place; he inclines his ear to Him, and hearkens to His word. Taught by the Spirit of God, and enlightened by the word of truth, he acknowledges that all his righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and confesses that he is unclean and undone.

Such a one God will exalt; for "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory." (1 Sam. ii. 8.) In this present life, he receives a garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, and the oil of joy for mourning; he is consciously exalted from the degraded gratifications of carnal lusts to the enjoyment of fellowship with his Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ; even now such are exalted from the slavery of Satan's bondage to liberty and sonship in the presence

of God; and when the Lord Jesus shall come again, while many are left behind for abasing judgments, they shall be exalted to share His throne of glory. They shall see His face, be like Him, and share His glory for ever. How high, how holy, how perfect, and unchangeably happy will this exaltation be!

Now, dear reader, let me affectionately ask you solemnly to ponder over these things. Are you a prayerless soul? Do you eat and drink, and enjoy the bounties of God in nature and providence, without ever bowing your knees to Him in acknowledgment of His mercies? Is it really so? Then wherein do you differ from the poor heathen, or from "the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth"?

You say, I make no profession! What! God blesses you day by day with such providential mercies, and, far beyond all that, has sent His only begotten Son to die for sinners, and save them from the wrath to come, by shedding His own precious blood, and yet you make no profession! As if such wondrous love and grace were beneath your dignity to notice! Fie! fie! my reader! Repent at once, turn to God, and accept pardon for thine ingratitude and sin, through the atoning death, the finished work, of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But perhaps my reader may say, "I am not a prayerless person. I could not lie down at night, or get up in the morning, without saying my accustomed prayers. I never commence a meal without repeating grace, and I must own that God has greatly blessed me in my family, business, and property." Ah, my dear reader, all this may be quite true; but about your soul—your

soul—your undying soul! Are you resting in your accustomed religious duties, and owning God in His dealings with you in providence, but not owning the mercy of God in saving sinners by the death of His Son, thus neglecting your soul's salvation? Oh! what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? You may acknowledge God, but do you believe in His Son Jesus Christ, as a lost sinner, for the salvation of your soul? This is the all-important question.

But some of my readers may say, "Neither of these describes my case. I try to pray, and cannot. I am often afraid to sleep at night, lest I should awake in hell; and when sometimes I see the lightning flash, and hear the thunder roar, I fear it may be Christ coming in judgment to cut me off. I had serious impressions when a child; but they passed away, and I lived in sin for many years. Others speak of happiness, but I spend weeks and months in sorrow. Sometimes I feel better, and then again sin and guilt are fastened deeper than ever upon my conscience. I have been advised to attach myself to some church (as it is called); but knowing that a profession without the power of godliness is abominable in the sight of God, and feeling that it is inward peace, a sense of forgiveness of sins and acceptance with God, that I need, I have always declined."

My dear reader! if this be thy experience, the Holy Spirit hath been working in Thy heart. He proclaims in the gospel the free mercy of God, full forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness and salvation to the uttermost, to every sinner that cometh to God through Christ. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be

saved." Take thy stand at Calvary's cross; there read in the shedding of His blood the abundant mercy of God to sinners. Doubt no more. Lift thy soul to heaven's throne of grace where Jesus is. Confess thyself to be a lost sinner, take the living God at His word, rely only upon the Saviour's death for acceptance and peace, and thy groans will soon be turned to praise, and thy burdened heart be filled with songs of joy.

Once more! Remember that Jesus Christ came into the world to SAVE—who? Not *righteous* persons, but SINNERS!

COME, ye souls by sin afflicted,
 Bowed with contrite sorrow down;
 By the word of God convicted,
 Through the cross behold the crown.
 Look to Jesus;
 Mercy flows through Him alone.

Take His easy yoke, and wear it;
 Love will make obedience sweet;
 Christ will be your strength to bear it;
 And the light to guide your feet
 Safe to glory,
 Where His ransomed captives meet.

Sweet as home to pilgrims weary,
 Light to newly opened eyes,
 Or fresh springs in deserts dreary,
 Is the rest the cross supplies:
 All who taste it,
 Shall to rest immortal rise.

Rest, full fruit of grace's story;
 Rest from sin's oppressive thrall;
 Rest in God's eternal glory;
 Rest for pardoned sinners all,
 FAITH believes it;
 HOPE perceives it;
 LOVE doth it with joy forestall.

A servant of Christ having preached to the effect that the salvation of sinners is entirely of divine grace, one of his hearers afterwards said to him, "If what you have preached is true, what is it my duty so do?"

"It is your duty to believe it."

"What else is it my duty to do?"

"It is your duty to love it. You ought surely to love the truth."

"What else is it my duty to do?"

"I fear I have told you now more than you will ever do. If you will do these things, you will find no difficulty in regard to any other part of your duty. It will be very plain."

Some thoughtless young men, after hearing an aged servant of God preach on the subject of eternal punishment, agreed among themselves that one of their number should go to the preacher, and endeavour to draw him into a dispute, with the design of making a jest of him and of his doctrine.

The deputed man accordingly went, was received into the house, and commenced the conversation by saying, "I believe there is a small dispute between you and me, sir; and I thought I would call this morning and try to settle it."

"Ah! what is it?" said the preacher.

"Why," replied the other, "you say that the wicked will go into everlasting punishment, and I do not think that they will."

"Oh! if that is all," answered God's servant, "There is no dispute between you and me. If you turn to Matthew xxv. 46, you will find that the dispute is between you and the Lord Jesus Christ; and I advise you to go immediately and settle it with Him."

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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 WITNESS OF GOD IS GREATER."

(1 John v. 9.)

IN the prime of manhood, a young officer of the French Imperial Guard, of an old Roman Catholic family, was shut up in Metz with a portion of the French Army at the time of the Franco-Prussian War.

The German Army was around the city besieging it. A Dutch evangelist took the opportunity of preaching the gospel daily, and after some days he noticed this officer draw near to the circle of listeners.

The state of man and his need of a Saviour was pressed, and that no effort of man could alter his state as a helpless sinner, and nothing could make an atonement save blood, for God had declared, "It is the blood that maketh an atone-

ment for the soul" (Lev. xvii. 11). And that man must come to God just as he is, and believe the witness that God has given of His Son, that He came by water and blood. The Spirit bears witness to the fact that it was not by water only, but by water and blood, and declares and makes good to every believer the truth that "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from every sin." (1 John i. 7.)

As the evangelist lived in a chamber overlooking one of the ways to one of the gates of the city, he heard the tramp of armed men, and looking out of his window he saw this young officer at the head of a company of men who were about to try to break through the German Army. The officer whipped his sword out of its scabbard and saluting, sang,

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thou shedst Thy blood for me;
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come."

After some time, he heard this company return, and looking out of his window, saw the officer borne back dead, he having been killed in the sortie.

The scene changes to the Boer War. Before Magersfontein, a soldier of the Brigade of Guards, a Protestant, was lying wounded to death. An orderly came along, and said, "Can I do anything for you, mate?"

"Yes, please, get me a Testament out of my haversack."

It was placed before him, and he said, "Find me the place where it is written, 'The blood of

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Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' ”

It was found.

He then said, “Put my finger on the place.”

This was also done, and in a little while his spirit departed, and he was with the One who shed His blood for him.

The scene again changes to a troopship going out from the East India Docks, London, to the Egyptian War. On board the ship was a trooper who had been convicted of sin in a Wesleyan choir whilst singing,

“Depth of mercy, can there be,
Mercy still reserved for me;
Can my God His wrath forbear,
Me the chief of sinners spare?”

Thus leaving a godly home, and country, the question arose in his mind, “If I never return, where shall I spend eternity?”

A scripture he had often heard came back to his memory: “He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” (Isa. liii. 5.) And later, the Spirit of God brought before Him a scripture which gave him the assurance of salvation, namely, “the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from every sin.”

And now, dear reader, Romanist, Protestant, Dissenter, do you believe the witness of God? “For this is the witness of God, which He hath testified of His Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself, he that believeth not God, hath made Him a liar.” (1 John v. 10.)

Are you, dear reader, deceived by the teachings of men, to think that you can do anything for your cleansing, then here is a witness that you cannot : "Though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before Me, saith the Lord God." (Jer. ii. 22.)

A witness to this fact : "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt Thou plunge me in the ditch, and my own clothes shall abhor me." (Job ix. 30.)

Another witness : "Purge me with hyssop [give me to see and know my littleness, sinfulness, and helplessness, that I am without strength,] and shall be clean [nothing of self remain]; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." (Psa. li. 7.)

Believers in our Lord Jesus Christ and His atoning blood, whether from amongst Romanists, Protestants, Dissenters, the Spirit of God says, "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 9-11), and we can sing, "Unto Him who loveth us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion to the ages of ages, Amen." (Rev. i. 5, 6.)

"For ever be the glory given to Thee, O Lamb of God;

Our every joy on earth, in heaven, we owe it to Thy blood."

C.H.F.

“JESUS OF NAZARETH PASSETH BY.”

“AND they came to Jericho : and as He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude of people, blind Bartimæus, the son of Timæus, sat by the highway side begging.

“And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, (Thou) Son of David, have mercy on me.

“And many charged him that he should hold his peace : but he cried the more a great deal, (Thou) Son of David, have mercy on me.

“And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise, He calleth thee.

“And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.

“And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto Him, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

“And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way ; thy faith hath made thee whole. (“Saved thee”—*margin.*) And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.” (Mark x. 46-52.)

In the Gospels we frequently find incidents which illustrate very fully the way in which a sinner lays hold of Christ. In this scripture we have a lovely picture of a seeking Saviour and a seeking sinner, and how they met.

In the Gospel of Luke we find the text that is at the head of this paper, which was (as it were) preached to this blind man. A very short sermon, “Jesus, of Nazareth passeth by.”

And Jesus never passed that way again.

Bartimæus had come to the turning-point of his history, and had he not that day gone to Jesus he never would have had his eyes opened, for Jesus was then on His way to the cross. And the difference between the Lord's journey on that day and now, is this : He was on His way to the cross, where He shed His precious blood, and accomplished the work of redemption. Having finished His work there, died, and risen again, He is now on His way to the judgment and the glory !

It is because of that judgment, which must come, that I would now press, on every unsaved soul who may read these words, that which we find so blessedly characterized Bartimæus, that is, *promptness*; the deep necessity of seizing the present opportunity; for such may never come again.

How often moments like this, in the history of souls, are slighted, and they never return. "I shall have plenty of opportunities; people do not often die as young as I am."

Such like excuses are pleaded by those who would procrastinate. But I would warn you. There is one sin more terrible than any in a man's history, and that is his *last*. Souls float on easily down the stream of time; they go quietly out of the world, perhaps without any fear of hell. Some are exercised, and for a time are in an agony of conviction, but the many slight the warning, the fond entreaty of the father, the mother, or the friend, as to the solemn eternity which lies beyond time; until a moment arrives when God says, as it were, "Let him alone!" and his heart is hardened.

It is a solemn, deeply solemn thing, this harden-

ing of the heart. And the more solemn when we think of *God* doing so. We have an example of this in Pharaoh. God warned him in nine solemn judgments; and then, as it were, gave him one chance more. Pharaoh did not yield his will to God; he hardened his heart against God, and God hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he went to destruction.

In the face of such a fact, I would press on every sinner the need of promptness in the matter of salvation. The Lord is longsuffering: He *waits* on His road to judgment; but at any moment the day of grace may close.

It is more difficult now than in the early days of the Church to press the fact that at any moment the Lord Jesus may come. The enemy of Christ and His people has succeeded in almost blotting out the hope of the Lord's coming, a truth held by all at the first. The Word of God describes it as, “ In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the trumpet shall sound.” (1 Cor. xv. 22.) So sudden will be the coming of the Lord for His own, and the transit of the blood-bought throng from earth and the grave to the Father's house on high.

No figure of speech could give a more true idea of the sudden (to many, alas !), unexpected action, and yet Satan has almost succeeded in blotting out this truth. But for this also Scripture has prepared us. In Matthew xxiv. 48 we read: “ That evil servant shall say in *his heart*, My lord delayeth his coming.”

From his *heart* comes the thought. He is not living as he would like his Lord to find him; his heart is set on earthly things, and he does not desire his Lord to come. To cover what his heart

says, he settles that there is much to be done before the Lord can return: the Jews have to be converted, and such like things.

Treat all such theories as the voice of the evil servant. *Nothing* has to happen before Christ may come *for* His own; and with that event the day of grace closes for all who have listened to the message of salvation. The denial of this truth, which should have such power in the conscience of the sinner, is immense loss; but I press earnestly and affectionately on you, and say, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." Will *you* allow Him to pass in the day of grace, only to meet Him in the day of judgment for the first time, like Pharaoh?

We find three kinds of blindness in the world.

There is physical blindness, like that of Bartimæus. His sightless eyeballs never gazed upon the light of the sun, as we may suppose.

Then there is another kind of blindness, that of the mind, of which Scripture also speaks, soul blindness, which is of the god of this world. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. iv. 4). Such see no beauty in Jesus to desire Him. Fatal blindness, unless removed! The blinded one in such a case is "lost."

Then there is mental blindness, as we say, That man is an idiot.

Bartimæus was blind, but "he *heard* that Jesus passed by." God's resource for the blind sinner is the "hearing of faith." This was the avenue to his soul. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 17).

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Remark the little word “ when ” (v. 47). Bartimæus might have said, Here is a golden opportunity; I will get me a harvest to-day from this multitude. Perhaps crowds like this were not often to be seen on the roadside between Jericho and Jerusalem. The great multitude were following Jesus to-day. He had many followers, but few friends. Bartimæus might have reasoned thus: I will speak to Jesus some other time, and gather the silver coins to-day. Such an opportunity will not come again, and Jesus may be met at any time.

But he did not reason thus. How many do so! I will give myself to my gains *now*, get rich; (perhaps at some craft that is not as it should be); then I will retire. I wish to be saved, but I must attend to other things now; later on I will look after my soul.

But Bartimæus felt that the *present* was too great an opportunity to lose: it might never come again. “ When ” Jesus passed by he cried out; he was in earnest, and his promptness to use the moment is lovely to behold. It was his turning-point. Saints and sinners have all their turning-points. If he had missed his, the opportunity had never come again. We boldly say this; for Jesus never did pass by that way again. He was on His way for His last entry into the City of Solemnities, to Jerusalem, where after a few days He was crucified. He was on the road to the cross that day. He is on His road to the judgment now, and the cross is past; His work there is done.

But a man with a need in his heart will be prompt, will be in earnest: and “ when ” Jesus was passing he cried out, “ Son of David, have mercy on me.”

Have you, my reader, an unsatisfied need in your heart? This may meet the eyes of some whose hearts Christ has satisfied; but I speak to those whose hearts are still unsatisfied. Do such feel their need? Then cry out, and Jesus will stop; your cry of need will arrest His steps just where you are this moment. "And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called." When was there a cry of need which He refused on earth? Will He refuse the cry of need now that He is in His glory? Will He not stay His steps, as it were, as on that day, and meet the need, fill the void of your heart?

In three of the Gospels we have this tale told in a different way. In Matt. xx. 32, it is simply "Jesus *called*." This is the sovereign call of mercy through grace. This belongs to God alone.

Then in Mark x. 49, it is Jesus "*commanded him to be called*." This shows the instrumental call; of the preacher, for instance. What a word for those who preach the gospel, for the ambassador of God's grace!

In Luke xviii. 40, Jesus "*commanded him to be brought unto Him*." This was done by the earnest, effectual, guiding hands of others. It encourages the believing wife to bring her unbelieving husband under the sound of the gospel; the parent to bring his child; the child the parent, if still unsaved. It is the earnest, seeking, guiding hand and heart of some soul whose eyes have been opened, to bring those dear to him, others, to hear the word of His grace.

Oh! the deadness, in this service, of those who believe. The dead form in many places "the gospel" becomes, through the inertness of Christians themselves. How often has the Lord

answered the faith of those who have brought others to hear the word of grace preached, in saving the souls of those who have been brought ! It is sad, sad indeed, to see the empty seats in many a meeting-room, where an earnest preacher, who longs to bring souls to Christ, finds that his heart is chilled by the sight of the empty benches, and by the vacant listlessness of those who are there.

“ But many charged him that he should hold his peace ” (v. 48). They try to hinder his coming to Christ. The devil always finds ready instruments for this service. Those who labour beside one in the factory, in the counting-house, etc., are ready with their scoff for the anxious, seeking soul. But there are many ways of hindering besides the open taunt. I will tell you of one. Christians criticising the gospel that is preached. I remember reading of one case in point.

A Christian lady brought her unconverted husband to hear a preaching of the gospel. The servant of the Lord who spoke that night, was “ no great preacher,” as people say. On their way home she remarked the failures, the poverty of the address ; she was pulling the whole thing to pieces, but on turning to see why she got no response from her husband, it was to see the tears coursing down his cheeks.

On her asking him what was the matter, he replied, “ Ah ! I found Christ to-night in that preaching,” or such words.

How condemning to her ! for what she derided was God’s instrument in saving her husband’s soul ; she a Christian too. It was God’s quickening Word to the soul of her husband !

Oh ! take care how you criticise the Word

preached in the ears of the unsaved ! Christians are often thus the greatest hinderers of the gospel, by their careless ways, their thoughtless speech, their lack of wisdom.

Saying this it does not excuse the sinner in the least; he is responsible to come to Christ, and God will hold him so. He does not come because his *will* is against God. In the judgment scene of Matt. xxv. it is the absence of good, not the commission of evil, for which the sentence is passed : “ Ye did it not unto one of these my brethren, . . . ye did it not to me.”

And “ Jesus stood still.” Thus He waits on you in grace, because “ He delighteth in mercy.” And Bartimæus, “ casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.”

How many things are allowed to hinder the soul in coming to Jesus ! Some garment or other, which must be cast aside.

Job was a righteous man; none like him in all the earth. And Job wrapped his garment closely around him, and it kept him from being fully in the presence of God in heart and conscience. He had to pass through deep trials; a history that fills forty-two chapters in the Bible, all concerning one man; before he would cast aside the garment of his own righteousness. Righteousness was really there, but he looked upon it as his own, and it obscured the divine grace which had really produced it in his ways. At the close of the book he cast his self-righteousness aside, and abhorred himself, repenting in dust and ashes. *Then* the Lord accepted Job.

Balaam had a garment too. He “ loved the wages of unrighteousness,” and he used the truth of God against the people of God. He said, “ Let

me die the death of the righteous ” ; but he never said, “ Let me live the life of the righteous. ” His garment clung to him till it was too late.

The young Ruler too had one (Mark x.). “ Jesus beholding him, loved him. ” He saw in him the traces of man as he once had come out of the hands of God, “ very good. ” Much doubtless that was lovely in nature was found in him. But his “ great possessions ” were his garment. Jesus said to him, “ Go and sell that thou hast ” ; cast aside the hindering garment ; and he “ went away grieved. ” He could not part with his garment ; he preferred it to Christ. An anxious sinner, with a need in his heart, never “ went away grieved ” from Jesus.

Herod too, had a secret garment ; he loved his lusts. John Baptist preached, and reproved him. For a time he gave up his sins ; “ he did many things, and heard him gladly. ” The garment was only laid aside for a time ; by and by he wrapped himself in it ; gave way to the desires of the flesh, and ended in beheading John, who had told him faithfully of his ways. Then at last he shook hands with Pilate in condemning Jesus, and in the solemn scene before the crucifixion when he spoke to Jesus “ He answered him nothing. ” (Luke xxiii.). His time was over ; his heart was hardened ; Jesus had no word for him.

Do I address an indifferent soul, like Gallio, “ who cares for none of these things ” ? A garment of indifferentism like his may cover your heart. God has opened the very heavens, and sent down its best treasure, that man might be blessed. Oh cast it not aside ; do not go on your way heedless of the call of mercy, and still reject the Saviour.

You see I am pressing the sinner's responsibility upon you. If I were preaching the other side of the gospel, I would rather seek to unfold the heart of God, and show you His love in the gift of Christ; the perfectness too, of Jesus, in doing His Father's will; but I am seeking rather to press your responsibility to come to Him, to receive Him, to cast from you whatever hinders your coming as a *lost* one to the Saviour's feet. You are "lost," "dead"; your life is forfeited, but nothing is asked of you.

And Bartimæus, "casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus."

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?"

Jesus expected nothing from him; and all actions on your part also, as on his, would be working. But hear what Jesus says: "What *wilt* thou?" Have you a *desire*. He who came from heaven, died and rose, and went on high again, waits (as it were) to serve the poor sinner who comes as a suppliant to Him.

What is the request of Bartimæus? "Lord, that I might receive my sight."

Luke, in his Gospel, tells us of the echoing reply from the heart of God: "Receive thy sight; thy faith hath saved thee." (xviii. 42.)

Faint and tremulous was the request of faith, but clear and blessed the response of the Lord, the echo of heaven: "Receive thy sight; thy faith *hath saved thee*." Not a doubt remains; his eyes are opened, and he *is* saved.

Have you, reader, a need to bring to Him? Do you trust Him, and God's heart will bless you to the full. It was so with the poor prodigal in Luke xv; he asked a servant's place, and the

father's heart exceeded all his expectations; he kissed him and received him as a son. It was more than the echo of the desire; the answer of grace ever exceeds the request of faith. It was so with the thief on the cross. He asked a place in the kingdom, but received one in Paradise that very day!

And Bartimæus opened his eyes, and the first object before him was the Lord. The beauty of the Lord was before him, the object for eternity. What will the joy of the most blessed saint be throughout eternity? Surely the same object, Jesus! Jesus only! And "he followed Jesus *in the way.*"

It was then the way to the cross; now it is the path of rejection to the glory. He is on His way to the kingdom and glory. Then follow Jesus in the way; suffer with Him; true in heart to Him in the day of His rejection, and when He takes His place as "King of kings," you will reign with Him. (Rom. viii. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 12.) F.G.P.

FACTS *versus* FANCIES.

HOW monstrous are the reasonings or rather the ravings of infidelity! Infidel teachers begin by throwing overboard the word of God, that peerless and perfect revelation; and having thus deprived us of our divine guide, they with singular audacity present themselves before us, and undertake to point out to us a more excellent way; and when we inquire what that way is, we are met by a thousand and one fine-spun theories, no two of which agree in anything but in shutting out God and His word.

True, they talk plausibly about a God; but it is a God of their own imagination; one who will connive at sin; who will allow them to indulge in their lusts, and passions, and pleasures, and then take them to a heaven of which they really know nothing.

They talk of mercy, and kindness, and goodness; but they reject the only channel through which these can flow, namely, the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. They speak not of righteousness, holiness, truth and "judgment to come."

They would fain have us believe that God put Himself to needless cost in delivering up His Son. They would ignore that marvellous transaction which stands alone in the entire history of the ways of God; namely, the atoning death of His Son. In one word, the grand object of the devil, in all the sceptical, rationalistic, and infidel theories that have ever been propounded in this world, is to completely shut out the word of God, the Christ of God, and God Himself.

We solemnly call upon all our readers, especially our young friends, to ponder this warning. It is our deep and abiding conviction that the harbouring of a single infidel suggestion is the first step on that inclined plane which leads straight down to the dark and terrible abyss of atheism, down to "the blackness of darkness for ever." (Jude 13.)

"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with the angels of His power, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." (2 Thessalonians i. 7-9.)

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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.

**"IS NOT THIS A BRAND PLUCKED
OUT OF THE FIRE?"**

ONE afternoon, on a sultry day in the summer of 1864, wearied in making house-to-house visits, the air of the over-crowded houses at H—— being so oppressive, I turned into a quiet little street, and opening my Bible, read aloud the story of Naaman the leper (2 Kings v.).

Attracted by such an unusual proceeding, several persons gathered around me, and others stood at the doors or at uplifted windows, and listened to the wonderful ancient story.

I next told of sin, of its leprous character, of the blood of cleansing, and in conclusion urged each hearer to—

**"Prove the value of the Blood
Of Jesus crucified."**

I was about to leave the street when a woman with a pleasant face, and neatly dressed, came out of a house opposite to where I had been standing, and approached me, saying respectfully, "Pardon me, sir, but will you come and speak to my brother?"

"Gladly, madam," I replied, and followed my conductress into the house.

"None of your preaching here; a lot of canting hypocrites! None of it here; that's what I say."

Such were the words which greeted my ears as I followed my conductress into the room from which the sounds proceeded.

There, on a mangle sat a big man about forty years of age, clad in a butcher's blouse. There also were his wife and three children, one a little cripple girl about six years old.

My entrance put a stop to the loud talk of the man, and sitting down on the mangle beside him, I took from my pocket some books, and gave one with pictures to the little cripple. Then selecting a copy of a monthly magazine, I read to them one of the interesting stories it contained.

"How pretty!" said the little cripple.

"It's beautiful!" exclaimed the wife.

"Not much the matter with that," added the man.

Folding up the paper and offering it to him, I replied, "You are welcome to this, my friend; and I will soon come and read to you again."

For many weeks I regularly called, and each time read other interesting stories. The man was very civil, and the little cripple was delighted to see me.

Very soon the wife was induced to attend the

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Mission Services, and after a year had passed away, in answer to earnest and persevering prayer, one night the husband came to the meeting, and heard the tale of redeeming love.

The man was a porter in Newgate Market, and his condition was that of those “ whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness : their feet are swift to shed blood : destruction and misery are in their ways ; and the way of peace have they not known ” (Rom. iii. 14-17).

About this time the wife saw that he was making great efforts and forming strong resolutions to leave off his wicked habits and to free himself from his evil companions.

In 1865 their eldest daughter (a fine young woman, aged nineteen years) came home from service very ill ; she rapidly grew worse, lingered a few weeks, and died.

I was present at her death. The mother supported the dying girl in her arms ; the brothers and sisters stood around weeping ; the father placed himself at the foot of the bed, and tears streamed down his face as he looked on the heaving chest, and heard the quick heavy breathing of his departing child.

Addressing her brother and sister, the dying girl said, “ Be good children to father and mother ; and think of Jesus, and love Him, and you will meet me in heaven.”

Turning to her mother, she continued, “ Mother, dear, you do love Jesus, and Jesus loves us all, and you will meet me in heaven.”

“ Then, my child, you are not afraid to die ? ” asked her mother.

“ No, mother, why should I be afraid ? ” answered the girl. “ Jesus has suffered for our

sins, and God has said He will spare all who trust in the blood of Christ, the same as He did the people in Egypt. I am going to heaven, and you will meet me there."

And the mother kissed her child, and the child kissed her mother.

For a few moments nothing was heard but the laboured breathing of the girl, the smothered sobs of the children, and occasionally a half-suppressed groan wrung from the almost broken-hearted father.

"Father!"

"Yes, my child."

"Come to me; let me kiss you."

And they kissed each other.

"Father, will you meet me in heaven?"

He weeps, but answers not.

Again, in voice calm and firm, comes the inquiry, "*Father, dear, will you meet me in heaven?*"

And the father falls on his knee, and buries his face in the bed-clothes, and bitter sobs and groans shake his strong frame.

Again, with increased emphasis, the daughter asks: "Father, WILL YOU MEET ME IN HEAVEN?"

"Oh! my child," replies the man, "God helping me, I will meet you in heaven."

"Then, father, you must give up the drink"; and having said those words, her head dropped back on the mother's arm, and her spirit entered into Paradise (Luke xxiii. 43).

A few months after the death of his daughter, something occurred which showed that the Holy Ghost was working mightily in the heart of the man. I missed him from his usual place at the meeting on the Lord's Day evening. On the

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following Tuesday he was again absent from the Bible-class. The next day I called at his house to inquire after him, fearing he was ill.

With downcast looks and stammering tongue, he said: “ Mr. F——, I am a bad man.” I shall never forget his look of horror and penitence as he continued, “ On Saturday last I cursed my children; I am a wretch to do such a thing ”; and as the tears started in his eyes, again he said: “ I cursed my children, I did.”

He had returned from the Market the worse for drink; then went into the little back yard and lay down on a bench and fell asleep. The children were sent to awake him. While thus sleepy, muddled, and annoyed at being aroused, the “ old man ” showed itself in oaths and curses; but the Holy Spirit was there also, and His convicting power was felt. Horror-stricken at what he had done, the man felt himself to be “ vile,” and in bitterness of soul cried: “ Woe is me! for I am undone, I am a man of unclean lips ” (Isaiah vi. 5.)

Brought now to feel his state, to see his condition as guilty and perishing, he found his desperate case was met by the boundless love of God in saving the lost through Christ Jesus; and when by faith he saw the Lord of glory take his place and suffer in his stead, with trembling voice he sang:

“ Oh! ’tis a wondrous sight,
All sights above:
Jesus the curse sustains,
Guilt’s bitter cup He drains;
Nothing for us remains,
Nothing but love.”

One evening an experienced Christian visited

him to converse with him, and to see the change which grace had wrought. With faltering lips the butcher told of the mercy that had reached him, adding, "I am like one of them things took out of the fire," referring to that scripture, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" (Zech. iii. 2).

Henceforth was in him exemplified that which was written by the apostle Paul: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus ii., 11-14).

He left off swearing, and discontinued his drams. A gentleness of manner and a kindness of speech became habitual to him; love filled his breast, and peace and concord dwelt at home. His wife and family felt the change, and praised the name of the Lord. He was now an "epistle of Christ" and a wonder unto many. With him "old things had passed away" (2 Cor. v. 17).

Till now he had been unable to read, but he set himself to the task. The cripple girl by this time had learned to read, and she became his instructress. A very touching and pleasing sight was it to see the big, strong man, with the little cripple on his knee, learning of her the A B C.

About this time he received from his sister, who was a Christian, and who for years had not

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ceased to pray for his conversion, a large-print book containing a selection of “ The Sayings of Jesus.”

I well remember on one occasion with what pride and joy he spelled out very slowly to me, “ Verily, verily I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life ” (John v. 24).

In the Spring of 1867, disease of the heart and lungs showed itself, and very soon it became evident to us all that his days on earth were numbered. But for nearly a year longer he continued to go to the Market at three o'clock in the morning, and did a little work.

As he now constantly refused to go to the same excess of riot as formerly, his old companions spoke all manner of evil against him, and the clerks at the “ Firm ” joined in tormenting him.

On one occasion they hid his clothes, got him down, tied him hands and feet, put him into a sack, locked him up in a cellar, and then wrote to his wife, saying, “ Your husband, Jack, is locked up. Tell the Parson to come and bail him out.”

The poor wife came to me in a state of excitement, bringing the letter.

I immediately started for the City, but I had not proceeded very far before I met poor Jack coming quietly along.

On my telling him what we had heard he smiled, and said, “ It was hard to bear, but I thought how much the blessed Jesus had to bear, and I asked Him to help me, and to forgive them.”

His health now rapidly failed, and he was unable to work. One day, about a week before he died, he went into the City carrying with him the book "The Sayings of Jesus." Arrived at the Market he called his mates around him; and several of the clerks, attracted by the proceeding, also drew near. "Gentm'n and Mates," he said, "you know what Jack was; but the blessed Saviour has saved me; the blessed Jesus died on the cross for me, and He has pardoned my sins."

Then he read to them "The Sayings of Jesus."

A few days later, after having been at our Bible-class, he went home, and calling his wife and children and friends around him, he blessed them in the name of the Lord, and told them he was going to see the blessed Jesus and Susy. Then growing weaker he whispered, "Jesus, precious Jesus," and fell asleep; "absent from the body, and present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8).

SOME "GREAT" THINGS.

ONE outstanding characteristic of the natural man is his craving for greatness, and his admiration for that which he calls "great." It matters little to him whether this greatness be good or bad. How men will follow the course even of a criminal, if only he is guilty of "great" crimes!

This has always been a desire of man's heart. We find a very early expression of it in the plain of Shinar (Gen. xi.). There men said, "Let us make us a name," and to that end they commenced building the Tower of Babel. Alas!

their great project but showed forth their exceeding littleness: God's hand wrote "confusion" on their work. They were reckoning without Him.

We come on a little in the history of mankind, and see the Pharaohs engaged on their Pyramids. What are these? Nothing but tombs! Man's greatness ends but in death.

Nebuchadnezzar was a "great" monarch. At the summit of his glory he said, "Is not this great Babylon which I have built . . . by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" In the same hour God's hand degraded him to the level of the beasts of the field (Dan. iv.).

And so we shall see everywhere; the greatness of one century is well-nigh forgotten by the next. If we want true, enduring greatness we must turn to God. In Him alone do we find that which is worthy of honour, praise, and worship; and all eternity cannot exhaust the songs of praise due to Him.

There are five scriptures which bring before us five things that God calls "great," which we might with profit examine a little.

1. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His GREAT LOVE wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved)."

This is the first and greatest of the five. It is the root, the spring of all; God's great love; the free unbounded love that flows out from Him towards a sin-stricken, lost world, unhindered, unchecked by all our guilt and distance from Himself. What can we say to love like this? It is above all our comprehension.

Man loves that which he thinks to be lovely. God's love flows out to you and me "even when we were dead in sins," without one thought Godwards in our hearts, and nothing but hatred for Him in us. It is a trait in human character to hate those we have wronged, and whom have we wronged like God Himself? for all sin is against Him. "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned," says David (Ps. li.). Yet such is His love toward us that none of these things can hinder its outflow. He hates our sin, but He loves the poor sinner, though so unlovely and unloving. What "great love"!

"God is its blessed source;
Death ne'er can stop its course;
Nothing can stay its force;
Matchless it is."

But the question arises, How can God's love be shown to us, if we are sinners, and He cannot have sin in His presence? For we must ever bear in mind that, though God is love, He is holy and righteous, and His love cannot be exercised at the expense of His holiness. But thanks be to Him, His love has solved the question.

2. This brings us to our second scripture in Hebrews ii. 13: "How shall we escape if we neglect so GREAT salvation?"

Here we have brought before us a "GREAT SALVATION." This is worthy of God, worthy of His greatness and His love. And, friend, it is a "great salvation," consider it how you will.

If we consider who planned it, how great it is! for God Himself planned it.

If we think of the Person of the Saviour, how great! for it was no less a Person than God's

beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who accomplished salvation's work.

If we consider how He performed it, how great it is! Oh! unsaved reeader, the story of the cross is probably as familiar in your ears as anything you have heard; but how little do you enter into what it means! Do you realize that the One on that shameful cross, in the centre of the three (as though man would make Him out to be the worst) was there enduring what you should have endured? That He, to whom the thought of sin was abhorrent was there made sin for us? That He was bearing God's righteous and holy wrath against sin? Do you realize that your sins helped to nail Him there, and that you have added to the awful load that was laid upon Him, when that bitter, bitter cry was wrung from His soul, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"? Do you realize that it was for you that that blessed Saviour was in such agony of soul?

Man did his very worst at the cross of Jesus. They put Him to the most shameful, agonizing death ever devised by the perverted ingenuity of man; and while He was there enduring that torment they were not ashamed to use the cruellest taunts and insults against Him who all His life had done nothing but good.

That side of the cross, beloved reader, brings out your heart and mine; shows us of what we are by nature capable; but it could never save your soul. No! It was what the Lord Jesus endured during those three hours of darkness from His God, when He was alone, forsaken, Who was ever the delight of the Father; it was in that awful moment when He was brought into

the dust of death that salvation's work was done (Ps. xxii. 15). He could say, "All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over Me"; and, "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow, which is done unto Me, where-with the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger" (Ps. xlii. 7; Lam. i. 12).

Jesus knew, and fully appreciated, God's thoughts of sin, that sin which men think so lightly of. His holy head was bowed in death to meet the fierce anger of Jehovah against sin.

Friend, isn't it a great salvation, and will you still neglect or despise it? "Oh!" you say, "I do not despise it." Pardon me, but plainly, if you are not saved, you are despising God's gift of His Son, the Son of His love. "What think ye of Christ?" is the question to each one to-day.

We have seen that if we consider the person of the Saviour it is indeed a "great salvation." Then if we consider how it was wrought it is so indeed. Now we go to another point and see its exceeding greatness manifested in what it does. There is virtue enough in the atoning work of Christ to save every man, woman, and child that ever lived. If any are lost it is not because there was not provision for their salvation. Think where we were as revealed in God's word: "Dead in trespasses and sins"; "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God"; and so on all through the third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and in many other passages we get our woeful state revealed. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. xvii. 9), and so on, everywhere we see how great a distance was between us and

God, and what impassable barriers (to us) there were in the way. But we had no desire to be saved. This is because we had no sense of our condition. But when through God's mercy we are aroused to a sense of dire need, a sense of ruin in God's sight, what a blessing to be able to turn to Jesus,

"He who met the claims of glory

And the need of ruined man,"

and avail ourselves of this wonderful, this "great salvation." We are thus saved from eternal perdition, and banishment from God's presence, and given eternal life in the light of God's favour and with Himself, with Him who loved us and gave Himself for us (Rev. i. 5).

When through infinite grace and mercy we are saved, and brought into such a position, are we now to keep ourselves in it? Ah! by the time we are in such a position, we have learnt a little of our depraved hearts, and we know, and the more we go on the more we know, how vain would be the endeavour. Blessed be His name, He knows it, too, and has not laid upon us this that we could not sustain. What He asks us for is our trust and our love. He will keep us. Look at a child holding his father's hand, and say who does the holding. Is it the father or the child? The father, of course. And so it is with the believer. We cannot "hold on" (as it is often put), we should be lost eternally if one jot or tittle of our salvation was to be our own work.

3. This brings us to our third scripture: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that GREAT Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the

everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will " (Heb. xiii. 20).

Here we have brought before us the " Great Shepherd." What a beautiful picture of the Lord in His work now for those who are His! He keeps, He guards, He leads, He feeds His own. There is not a step on our pathway home to Himself that He does not know. He has passed through this world before us, and knows just what we have to encounter. " When He putteth forth His own sheep He goeth before them " (John x. 4). He has gone before, and now He leads. " He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake " and further down in this same twenty-third Psalm is brought out the comfort of this shepherding: " Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." Then He knows, too, how much we have need of spiritual food while travelling here. He Himself is " the bread of life." He nourishes us. In short, as it is so beautifully expressed in the well-known fifteenth chapter of Luke, " When He hath found it [his lost sheep] He layeth it on His shoulders rejoicing," and He carries it right home. There is not a care, not a trial, not a sorrow, which Jesus will not enter into, and bring us triumphantly through.

4. Now there is a word to those who are His own. " Go home to thy friends," said Jesus, " and tell them how GREAT things the Lord hath done for thee " (Mark v. 19). What a privilege is here given to us by the Lord Himself. If He had done great things for that poor lunatic, surely He has for us. He has brought us up out of a horrible pit and out of the miry clay, set our feet upon a rock, and established our

goings (Ps. xl.). Everything we have, and everything we are, we owe to Him, and now He bids us go and tell others: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi. 15). He would have His people proclaiming to every creature everywhere His "great love," His "great salvation."

But, my yet unconverted friend, what do you think of these things? God Himself, in the passage we have just read, has called them "great" things; and His estimate is right. Do you consider them *small* things, of little account, and not worth your attention? Is it nothing to you what Jesus endured on the cross? Does that "great love" of God remain unheeded by you? If so, my friend, yours is a most perilous condition. That "great love" of God, manifested at such infinite cost, is toward you; that "great salvation" is offered to you freely at this moment. That "Great Shepherd" is yearning with an infinite tenderness over you, to impart all these great things to you. Then, oh! why turn away? Can you turn a deaf ear to such love, to such pleadings of grace? God has not only provided this salvation, but actually beseeches you to accept it; and is your heart so hard, so filled with this world and its vain pleasures, that such "great love" as this cannot touch you? (2 Cor. v. 20). Then, dear friend, those great things of which we have been reading can never be yours. One object looms ahead of you at the end of your career of rejection of God's infinite mercy, an object of such greatness, such majesty and such awfulness as this world has never yet seen. Listen!

5. "And I saw a GREAT WHITE THRONE, and

Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God. . . . And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." (Rev. xx. 11, 12.)

God has decreed that every knee shall bow to Jesus, and every tongue confess Him as Lord (Phil. ii. 10, 11). Will you wait till that blessed Saviour sits on that throne revealed as a Judge? For there is no mercy at the "Great White Throne." It is a throne of righteousness, and what is wanted to meet your need and mine is mercy. Dear friend, it is offered now without money and without price. How awful to have to contemplate throughout a never-ending eternity the opportunities neglected, the warnings unheeded, the tender pleadings of grace that fell on deaf ears, when the cry of your soul can only be for ever, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved"! (Jer. viii. 20). Oh, what would you give then for one more chance! With what eagerness you would snatch at the least hope of rescue from that awful place! Vain hope! There hope NEVER comes.

Oh! turn not from the offer of salvation; accept before God His estimate of His beloved Son and His work on the cross; and at that very moment, on the authority of His own Word, this salvation, this love, this Shepherd is yours, and the "Great White Throne" has no terrors for you. The believer in Jesus is passed from death unto life (John v. 24). "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, THOU SHALT BE SAVED" (Rom. x. 9)

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

**"I'LL WAIT TILL I'M A LITTLE
BETTER."**

A SERVANT of Christ, when on a visit to a town not many miles from London, was staying at a friend's house, and whilst there, a person came to the door, and asked for some one to go and see a sick man, evidently lying on the bed of death.

He immediately went, and while on the way he heard an account of the man he was about to visit.

It was something as follows.

He was the husband of a woman who had been a notable sinner, yea, a terrible sinner; but who, through the grace of God, had been led to believe on Him who is the Saviour of sinners, even Jesus Christ; and she, having so much joy in the Lord in consequence of having so much forgiven her, was exceedingly anxious that her husband might also enjoy the happiness of possessing eternal life,

and of knowing the pardon of all his sins. She used often to speak to him in a very simple manner, that it was only to believe in Jesus, to come as a poor lost sinner, and accept what God had to give, even eternal life through the Lord Jesus Christ, bidding him trust for peace to the finished work of Christ.

All, however, seemed in vain; he would say in a boasting manner, "He," meaning the Lord Jesus, "hasn't done much for me, that I should think of Him"; and such like things; thus despising the proffered mercy of God.

But now he was laid on a bed of affliction, and although naturally a strong man, he became as helpless as a babe. Even in this condition he did not want to hear about Christ; had no thought of dying yet; and said he would wait till he was better before he talked of such things.

When the visitor reached the house, the poor man was lying in a state of great exhaustion, and was gasping for breath. He was so ill that he could scarcely bear to hear the sound of the human voice.

When asked about his soul, he replied, "I'll wait till I'm a little better, and then I'll think of these things."

But in spite of this the visitor spoke to him in tender tones about Jesus who came down into this world, and died upon the cross on account of sin; and how that whoever believes on Him should be saved. No matter how vile a sinner he might be, if he trusted in Jesus, as a poor ruined sinner, he would be saved.

All, however, that could be got from him was, "I'll wait till I'm a little better."

Alas! he never got better; in a few days he

died. He had entered upon eternity, and what an eternity for him !

Dear reader, are you saved? Do you know that if at this moment you were to step into eternity you would spend it with Christ in heaven? Oh, if not, if you are still unsaved, let me entreat you to delay not a moment in coming to Christ ! *To-day* if you will come to Him you may be saved; *to-morrow* may be too late. You may be strong now; you may be enjoying the pleasures of health; you may have riches; but your health may not last, and your riches may take to themselves wings, and flee away. Oh ! trust not to anything short of Christ. Do not say you will wait till you are different from what you are.

This poor man put off and put off until it was too late. Will you be like him? You may be saved if you like *now*; but *to-morrow* you may be for ever amongst the lost ones. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," is the message to each sin-burdened one now; but if you die in your sins you will have to listen to those terrible words, "Depart from me." (Acts xvi. 31; Luke xiii. 27.)

J. A. B.

THE WARNING.

"For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them."—1 Thess. v. 3.

Speak not of "*The good time coming*"; Luke 17 : 26, 30.

Say not, "*Happy times draw nigh.*" 2 Tim. 3 : 1.

Lo ! the clouds with terror looming, Rev. 1 : 7.

Darken o'er the future sky ! 2 Thes. 1 : 7, 8, 9.

Undeceive thyself, O mortal ! 2 Tim. 3 : 13.

To the winds such dreamings give. Eccles. 5 : 7.

Think upon the fearful purging Matt. 13 : 40, 41.

That the earth *must first* receive. Matt. 13 : 43.

Rather tell of *wrath* and *vengeance*,
 Pending o'er this guilty race ;
 In its shame still glorying, boasting ;
 Deaf to all the calls of grace ;
 God forgetting, God dishonouring,
 Guilty world, thy doom is nigh.
 Fear unknown will seize upon thee,
 When He shakes the earth and sky.

Sodom's fall but faintly pictures,
 What thy awful lot will be ;
 It had not so many warnings,
 As the Lord hath sent to thee.
 Grace refused makes judgment sorer :
 Oh, what grace hast thou refused !
 Guilty world, thy judgments hover,
 All escape for thee is closed.

Yet, as in the case of Sodom,
 Lot departed ere it fell ;
 So, the Lord will come from heaven,
 Take His Church with Him to dwell,
 Ere destruction's work commences,
 On *this* Sodom's guilty ones :
 They, the salt, alone preserve it ;
 They removed, the judgment comes.

To the Ark and *from* destruction
 All who'd be preserved, then, haste !
 Christ's *alone* the Ark of safety ;
 Come, and full salvation taste :
 Tarry not for reformation ;
 Sinners—Jesus died to save.
 Art thou *lost* ? He came to *find* thee ;
 Thou, believing, life shalt have.

Then, amid the coming glory,
 Which the Church with Christ shall
 share ;
 Thou shalt have thy happy portion,
 Bride of His, His image bear.
 Then, His earthly people gathered,
 Earth made clean, and Satan bound ;
 Thou shalt, with thy Saviour, reigning
 O'er a happy world be found !

Isa. 13 : 9.
 Jude 14, 15.
 Phil. 3 : 19.
 Luke 14 : 16-24.
 Rom. 3 : 10-23.
 Rom. 2 : 5.
 Prov. 1 : 24-30.
 Hag. 2 : 6, 7.

Jude 7.
 Luke 10 : 12.
 Matt. 24 : 39.
 Mark 16 : 15.
 Prov. 29 : 1.
 John 3 : 16.
 2 Pet. 3 : 7.
 1 Thess. 5 : 3.

2 Pet. 2 : 6.
 Gen. 19 : 29.
 John 14 : 3.
 1 Thess. 4 : 17.
 2 Thess. 1 : 7.
 Rev. 11 : 8.
 Matt. 5 : 13.
 Luke 17 : 29, 30.

Gen. 7 : 1.
 2 Pet. 3 : 9.
 Acts 4 : 12.
 Rev. 22 : 17.
 Rom. 4 : 5.
 Mark 2 : 17.
 Matt. 18 : 11.
 Acts 16 : 31.

Rev. 20 : 4.
 1 Thess. 4 : 17.
 Eph. 2 : 6, 7.
 1 John 3 : 2.
 Ezek. 37 : 24-28.
 Rev. 20 : 2.
 Rev. 5 : 10.
 Rev. 11 : 15.

“HOW SHOULD MAN BE JUST WITH GOD?”

Job ix. 2.

MAN, in his very best estate, is unfit for the kingdom of God. He has been weighed in the divine balance, and found wanting. He has been tried and tested in every possible way, and proved to be utterly worthless. He cannot be trusted. “Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man.” (John ii. 24, 25.) “They that are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Rom. viii. 8.)

These are conclusive statements. There is no possibility of escaping their force and application. There is no exception to the solemn rule. When the Holy Ghost uses the term “flesh,” He means the whole race, the whole human family, the first man and all his posterity. So also when He uses the term “man,” He refers to the whole species. It is therefore wholly impossible for any one (man, woman, or child) belonging to that species, that race, that family, to avoid the application of the solemn sentence: “They that are in the flesh *cannot* please God.”

Let the reader see well to it that he really understands the meaning and force of these words. It too often happens that we read, hear, and even quote passages of Scripture without understanding their true significance, their spiritual meaning, their proper bearing, their application to ourselves.

What, then, does the Holy Ghost mean when He says, “They that are in the flesh cannot please God”? What is the meaning of being “in the flesh”? Is it the same as being “in the body”?

Most certainly not. True Christians, children of God, genuine believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, are "in the body"; but the Holy Ghost, in Romans viii. 9, expressly tells such that they are not "in the flesh."

What does this mean? It means that they are no longer viewed by God as connected with the first man, the old Adam, in the old creation. They have entered upon an entirely new footing; they belong to the second Man, the last Adam. (1 Cor. xv. 45, 47.) They are "in the Spirit," in Christ, members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. They are a new creation. They have passed from the old platform of nature on to the new platform of grace. Hence, although they are "in the body," as to the fact of their condition, they are not "in the flesh" as to the ground or principle of their standing before God.

If we mistake not, it will immensely help the reader, in the clear understanding of this weighty subject, to bear in mind that Holy Scripture speaks of two men, the first man and the second. These two men are each presented as the head of a race. As is the head of the race, so is the race of which he is head. Every member of the race stands in the position of the head. There is no difference.

Now, if it be asked, "When did the first man become head of a race?" Was it before or after his fall? After, most surely. When the first Adam became the head of a race, he was driven out of paradise; he had lost his innocence; he was a ruined, outcast, sinful man.

We speak, of course, only of Adam federally. Looked at personally, he was pardoned and saved; but he could not transmit his pardon, his salvation, or his new life, to his race, or to any single mem-

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ber thereof. These things are not hereditary. They are the fruit of faith; and a father cannot believe for his son. All that belonged to the first man, personally and naturally, he could, in the way of nature, transmit to his posterity; but all that which he enjoyed by grace, through faith, was peculiar to himself, because faith is intensely individual.

It is of the very last possible importance to thoroughly understand this great foundation truth of headship. When the first man became head of a race, he was a fallen creature. Hence, if we look at Cain and Abel, we shall find in them a simple illustration of the truth that as is the head so are the members. Both these men were born in sin, and shapen in iniquity. There was no difference in their birth, their nature, or their moral condition. The apostle does not say that “by faith Abel was a better man than Cain.” No; but “by faith he offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice.” (Heb. xi. 4.) No doubt in their after history we see the difference in the men, and the difference in their conduct; because Abel was born of God, and Cain was not. And thus it is that the apostle John presents the two men, when he says, “This is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.” (1 John iii. 11, 12.)

The apostle Paul, in Hebrews xi., presents the *principle* on which Cain and Abel stood before God. The apostle John presents the *nature* and *practice*. In each we have the two men as representing the two races.

Abel took his true place as a sinner, and found refuge in the blood of the Lamb. Cain refused to do this, and took his stand upon his own doings.

Abel, by faith, placed the blood of a spotless victim between his sin and a holy God, thus he was saved, pardoned, accepted, justified. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of"—what? of himself? of his feelings? or even of his faith? By no means. What then? "God testifying of *his gifts.*" (Heb. xi. 4.)

And what was it that distinguished Abel's gift? What marked it off from the offering of his brother? What gave it its value in the judgment of God, and made it the meritorious ground of his pardon and justification?

Blood!

Yes, reader, all was founded on the blood. Sin having come in, and death by sin, the *only way of life*, and the *only ground of righteousness*, is in "the blood of the Lamb." (Rom. iii. 25; v. 9; Rev. vii. 14.)

To this Cain would not listen, would not submit. He took his own way. He rested on his own doings. He brought a bloodless sacrifice, thus ignoring or denying his guilt. He brought the fruit of a cursed ground, without any blood, to remove the curse. Such was "the way of Cain." (Jude 11.) Here lay his fatal mistake. He was rejected, not because he was a sinner, but because being a sinner, he had dared to approach a holy God without blood.

Doubtless, like thousands in this our day, Cain might reason and argue and speculate. He might think it far better, far more suitable, far

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more rational, far more natural, to bring fruits than blood. But, ah ! reader, of what possible use can it be to argue and reason and speculate? Is it not far better at once *to submit to God's way*? He must have the upper hand at last; why not let Him have it now? Why not cast aside all our proud reasonings and lofty imaginations, and bow to His eternal word? That word shall judge at the last day, and it shall prevail for ever. No power of earth or hell, men or devils, can possibly stand against the word of God; and hence it is the very height of folly and wild madness for any one to set up his thoughts or his reasonings in opposition to the plain statements of Holy Scripture; and, on the other hand, it is the beginning and end of all true wisdom to submit in all things to the absolute authority of that word which for ever “is settled in heaven.” (Ps. cxix. 89.)

Now, if there is one doctrine above another which shines with special lustre, and stands prominently out on the page of inspiration, it is the glorious doctrine of “the blood.” From Genesis to Revelation it runs like a broad golden line, visible to the most cursory reader. No sooner had sin entered, and man's nakedness become thereby apparent, than the Lord God Himself gave the first great testimony to the indispensable necessity of the blood, in the fact that the coats of skins with which He clothed the naked pair were furnished by the shedding of blood. (Gen. iii. 21.)

What a telling fact ! Adam and Eve had sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons. But these proved perfectly worthless. They did not even satisfy their own minds. “ I

was afraid," said Adam, "because I was *naked*." Yes, naked, though he had the apron on. He actually ignored his own device in the moment of real trial. He felt himself perfectly naked because his covering was a bloodless one.

It may perhaps be objected that this was a mere figure. Yes; but a figure of what? Of a great fact, the first of a series of facts which stud the Sacred Page from beginning to end, facts demonstrating beyond all question that in a world of sinners THE BLOOD OF ATONEMENT IS THE ONLY BASIS OF ETERNAL LIFE AND DIVINE RIGHTEOUSNESS.

It is full of interest and spiritual instruction to note the moral link between Adam's apron and Cain's offering, on the one hand; and between God's coat and Abel's sacrifice, on the other. In the former, the blood is completely ignored; in the latter, it is divinely established. There is nothing which so completely sets man aside as the doctrine of the blood; and hence it is that his religious mind so entirely rejects it. Man will work, pray, give, suffer, in order to secure the salvation of his soul, because this gives him a place, and makes him somebody. But man will not accept and confide in the blood, because it makes nothing of all his efforts and all his pretensions. If it be true, and it is true, because God says it, that "without shedding of blood is no remission," then verily is man's religiousness utterly valueless, inasmuch as he can only be pardoned and justified by the death of another. (Heb. ix. 22; Rom. v. 8, 9.)

C. H. M.

A YOUNG SAILOR'S FIRST AND LAST VOYAGE.

JAMES DU BOICE had been carefully reared, but impelled by a strong love of adventure, and an ardent desire to see the world, had gone to sea. The ship, a whaler, had made a prosperous voyage, and was on her way homewards across the South Atlantic.

Of all the men in the ship, none were more elated than James. He had been on shore at the Azores, and got a few more curiosities; he had been ashore at Rio and Cape de Verdes, and clambered up the rocky sides of one of the Falkland Islands; and he felt already his mother's kiss, and heard the cordial welcome of friends at home, and saw their look of wonder, and heard their words of astonishment, while he showed his shells and related his adventures to them. He spent the whole of the middle watch in painting, with enthusiastic words, the anticipated meeting and the scenes which would occur at home. Poor fellow! it was only a waking dream with him. He never saw his mother again in this world.

The next day we went to work at stowing down the oil. It was a rough sea, and the ship pitched heavily, so as to make it hard and dangerous work to handle the casks of oil. The last cask was stowed and filled, and in ten minutes more the hatches would be down. Du Boice stood on the cask in the main hatchway, and was passing a few sticks of wood down amongst the water casks, when the vessel rolled deeply to the leeward, a cask of water broke from the lashings at the weather rail, and rolled into the hatchway where he stood, and in one instant both his legs above his knees

were literally jammed to pieces; the bones were broken into shivers.

We took him into the steerage, and did the best we could to bind up his broken limbs, and make him comfortable; but we knew, and he knew, that his days were numbered; he must die.

That night, as I sat by his berth and watched with him, he was constantly calling, "Mother, mother!"

Oh, it was heartrending to hear him, in his piteous ravings, calling "Mother! mother!" and then he would weep like a child because she came not. In the morning watch he grew calm, and spoke rationally again. After giving me the address of his parents, and a message for them, he slept a little while. When he awoke, he bade me go to the fore-castle, and open his chest, and under the till I should find his Bible.

I brought it to him, and he opened it at the blank leaf, and looked long and eagerly at the name there.

His mother had given it to him when he left home, and on the fly-leaf was written by her hand, "Presented to James du Boice, by his mother, Sarah du Boice."

"Now read to me," said he, handing me the book.

"Where shall I read?"

"Where it tells us how to get ready for heaven."

I opened the Book, and my eye fell on Psalm li., and I read to him from that Psalm till I came to the tenth verse, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

"Hold there! That is just what I want," said he. "Now, how shall I get it?"

“ Pray God to give it you, for Jesus’ sake,” I suggested.*

“ Oh, yes; Jesus is the Saviour! Shipmate, it is an awful thing to die; and I have got to go! Oh, if mother were here to tell me how to get ready!” and he trembled with earnestness.

After a short pause, during which he seemed in deep thought, he said, “ Do you know of any place where it is said that such sinners as I can be saved? ”

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

“ Oh, shipmate,” said he, “ that is good. Can you think of any more? ”

I quoted Heb. vii. 25, “ He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing that He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

“ That’s plain. Now, if I only knew how to come to God! ”

“ Come like a child to its father,” I suggested.

“ How’s that? ”

“ As the child believes that his father can help him in danger, so you are to look to God to help you now; and, as the child trusts his father by fleeing to him, so you must trust Jesus by casting yourself upon Him! ”

He lay a little time engaged in earnest pleadings

* The sailor tells his mate to pray for salvation or pardon, but we find the apostle Paul beseeching men to accept salvation. God had proved His willingness to save all that come to Him, for He “ so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life ” (2 Cor. v. 20).

with God, as was evident from the few words I overheard. Then the tears began to run down his face, his eyes opened, and a bright smile played like a sunbeam over his features. He then said, "He died for me; He forgives me, and I shall be saved! 'He is able to save to the uttermost!'"

The day dawned; then the sun arose in regal splendour on the ocean. I held his hand in mine, and felt the death thrill; then he murmured, "He's come! He's come!"

"Who has come?" said I.

"JESUS," he whispered, and he fell asleep.

W. C. A.

AN OPEN LETTER ON THE SUBJECT OF SALVATION.

YOURS is only one of the numberless cases that have come under our notice during the last thirty-six years, illustrating the truly deplorable effect of mere theology, whether high, low, or moderate.

What a mercy, dear friend, for such as you, that God never puzzles people about their souls. The devil is sure to do so, if he can; and he is never better pleased than when he can make use of theology and religiousness to accomplish his end. He cares not what he uses, provided he can keep the soul from Christ.

We earnestly recommend you to fling far and for ever away from you all the puzzling statements of men, the bewildering dogmas of divinity, the conflicting opinions of theologians, and hearken to the gracious words of a Saviour God:

“Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.” (John vi. 37; Matt. xi. 28.)

Where, we would ask those friends of yours, are we told in Scripture that “we must continue a long time in an anxious state of mind”? How long are we to continue? Who is to prescribe?

We fully believe in the abiding necessity of repentance, the deep and thorough judgment of ourselves. Yet we are not saved by our repentance, but by the precious, atoning blood of Christ. (1 Pet. i. 18-21.) None can so fully value a lifeboat as a drowning man; but it is the lifeboat that saves, and not his feelings as to his danger, or as to the value of the lifeboat. We are not to build upon the character, depth, intensity, or duration of our repentance, but upon the finished work of Christ.

Again, you say your friends do not believe in sudden conversions. Then they would not believe in the conversion of the woman of Samaria, of the thief on the cross, or of Saul of Tarsus; for most assuredly all those three were what would be called sudden conversions.

The fact is, it is not a question of the suddenness of the conversion at all; it is simply a question of the genuine work of God's Spirit in the soul, revealing Christ by the Word, and causing the heart to believe in Him for salvation and peace. It is the Christ I reach, and not the way I reach Him, that saves my soul, and satisfies my heart. Nothing can be more miserable or depressing than this occupation with our own experience, so sadly characteristic of both the high and low schools of doctrine. It is a common saying that extremes

meet; and its truth is illustrated by the fact that Calvinism and Arminianism, though so unlike, both meet in the one point of self-occupation.

Finally, then, dear friend, let us assure you, on the holy authority of the New Testament, that there is nothing whatsoever to hinder your resting, at once and for ever, in the amazing love of God to you as a sinner, on the finished work of Christ, and on the imperishable testimony of the Holy Ghost. Turn your back, with decision, on schools of divinity, and think of the loving heart of God, the precious blood of Jesus, and the clear and tranquillizing record of the blessed Spirit in the Holy Scriptures. Then will your peace flow as a river, and your heart, your lips, and your life will praise and magnify the God of your salvation. (Col. i. 12-14.)

C. H. M.

Under the law of God it was a question of righteousness on man's part; in the gospel of God divine righteousness is revealed on God's part; it is "unto all, and upon all them that believe." Under the law man was acting, doing: "Do this, and live." Then God was hidden behind the vail, giving out His laws, and dwelling in the thick darkness. "And the people stood afar off: and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was." But under the gospel, God is acting, doing; and man has simply to believe. The believer having received eternal life, and divine righteousness through faith, he is not only delivered from dead works, but he is to serve the living God. Then his doing, his acting commences.

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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.

"IT IS FINISHED."

ABOUT a mile outside the town of N— lies an extensive common, covered far and wide with furze and heather, but almost bare of trees. Several roads traverse it in various directions, and a goodly number of persons are found crossing it, to and fro. Some distance down one of these roads, stands a rude hut, built of wood, surrounded by a small garden, inhabited by an old couple named W— .

The roadways being very exposed, it often happens in stormy weather, that people are glad to run there for shelter. Whether this is the reason, or whether on account of its having been originally conveyed on wheels to its present resting-place from a former site in the adjacent town I know not, but it has become to be generally known by the name of "the ark."

One evening, a Christian in the neighbourhood

was walking past with his wife, and being anxious that the poor old people should be safe in the True Ark, called to leave them a little paper about God's salvation.

The woman invited them into her hut to see her husband, as he had been taken very ill. They soon discovered that she was a Christian, and anxious about the state of his soul.

Sitting down by his bedside, they told him the blessed story of God's boundless grace and love, apparently at the moment without effect, as he seemed to be full of his own doings.

Rising to leave, one of them pressed upon him the words of the Lord Jesus on the Cross, "It is finished."

Many times after, this visit was repeated by one or the other. The poor old man seemed much impressed, but though gradually letting his own righteousness go, he could not for some time lay hold of the blessed truth that Christ bore His sins in His own body on the tree. As his wife expressed it: "He seems different, ma'am; but he can't quite lay hold of it."

The light, however, dawned more and more brightly upon his soul; and at last he could rest on Christ and His "finished" work; so that one day, when another visitor had been in to see him, and occupied him with his works and his prayers instead of Christ, he called out as he left the room, "IT IS FINISHED" (John xix. 30.)

Yes, he had laid hold of the precious truth that Christ once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God (1 Pet. iii. 18.) He was now safe, eternally safe in the True Ark of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

It often happens in the very dry weather, that

the furze on the common catches fire, and large tracts are burnt; but the Lord graciously protected the poor old couple. He cares for His own; His eyes are over the righteous; they are the purchase of Christ's own precious blood. (1 Pet. i. 18, 19.)

The old man recovered from his illness, and though still feeble, manages sometimes to do a little work. Times are hard with them, but grateful to the Lord for the portion they receive, they look with joy for the moment when they shall leave their "ark" in this wilderness world for the prepared place in the Father's house on high (John xiv. 1-3.)

Dear reader, what say you to the words, "It is finished"? Are you going on with your own doings and efforts to save yourself, or are you resting on Christ?

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

Jesus finished the work, glorifying God perfectly, and His precious blood cleanseth from all sin (1 John i. 7.)

It was enough for poor W——! Then why not enough for you? Where is Jesus now? On the throne of God. What more do you want? He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have *peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. iv. 25; v. 1.) Sinner, this is all you need; now tell me, is it not?

E.H.C.

SPENDING ALL.

OUR subject to-night is the first of a series of five addresses on the Prodigal Son, but we must remember that the whole of Luke xv. is one parable, setting before us the three Persons of the Godhead, and their work and joy in saving the lost.

The Lord Jesus Christ, as God the Son, goes after the lost sheep until He finds it, which is in death itself.

The woman, representing God the Holy Spirit, with lighted candle—the Word of God—sweeping the house, and in so doing removes that which hinders lost souls from coming in contact with God through His Word, sweeping away hindrances and leading to the finding of the lost.

The fourth portion of the parable sets before us the returning prodigal and the joy of God the Father in receiving him safe and sound.

In coming now to our subject, "Spending All," we will treat it under the three headings set out in these questions :

First. What have prodigals got to spend?

Second. What satisfaction for time and eternity is obtained from "Spending All"?

Third. What does God do while we are spending all?

First. WHAT HAVE PRODIGALS GOT TO SPEND?

I have no doubt that the prodigal represents every child of Adam who has turned to his own way, and spent the gifts of God in the service of Satan. The question is, "What have they got to spend?"

In the scripture we have already read, we see that God giveth to all life, and breath, and

all things. These words were spoken by Paul at Athens, and he tells the idolaters of the Creator God who has given to everyone life, breath, and all things; and God tells everyone here to -night that He has given you life and breath and all things. (Acts xvii. 22-28.)

The question is, what are you doing with that which God has given you?

What is life? James tells us in his fourth chapter, verse 14, "It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Your life cannot be long at its longest. What are you doing with it?

What is breath? The Book of Job, chapter xi. verse 20, speaking of the wicked, says, "Their hope shall be as a puff of breath" (marginal reading.) Your brightest hopes, if unsaved, are of no more value than "a puff of breath."

Many of you were here last Lord's Day evening, and have drawn a good many breaths since then, but each one has brought you nearer the last. Don't be like Saul, who breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the Lord's people, and the Lord said it was against Himself. (Acts ix. 4.) How true the Lord's words, "He that is not with Me is against Me"!

"ALL THINGS." What does that mean? Surely it means your health, strength, talents, skill, influence, money, body, with its various members. What are you doing with them? What did the prodigal do with that which he received from his father? Three things: First. Gathered all together. Second. Wasted his substance. Third. Spent all. And that is what you, who are unsaved, who are in the far country

away from God, have done and are doing with your life and breath and all things. You say, How? I will tell you.

"He gathered all together." You have, no doubt, gathered all together; that is, you have made your plans for the future. A young man asked another in the street one day, "Which is the nearest way to so-and-so police station?" "I don't know," he replied, "but why do you ask me?" He said, "I've spent all in drink, and I want a night's lodging." "Oh! and suppose you get it, what then?" "I have decided to turn over, and give up the drink, and then I shall seek for employment to enable me to maintain my wife and children and my dear old mother." "Well, suppose you are able to do that, WHAT THEN?" "I then hope to be able to save and lay up for the time to come when I shall be an old man." "Well," said the other, "if you are successful, WHAT THEN?" He replied, "I know what you mean, then I suppose I must die." "Yes, and WHAT THEN?"

Ah! my friends, that's the question: WHAT THEN?

You gather all together and make wonderful plans for the future, but you forget eternity. WHAT THEN?

"HE WASTED HIS SUBSTANCE." Perhaps you have done the same. Up to now your life has been wasted; your breath, which God holds in His hand, has been wasted. Your health and strength have been wasted, if you are unsaved; because they have been used for self and Satan instead of God, and unless you are born again you cannot please God. Your talents and skill have been wasted.

There was once a young man who left his home, and joined with some other young fellows a minstrel troupe. God had given him a talent, a good voice. They blackened their faces, and went to some watering-place to perform, and to try to amuse their fellow travellers to eternity by singing comic songs. One day, they were performing in a street, and the one I am speaking about went round for money; he asked a gentleman in a shop for some.

"He said," I'll give you one shilling and this book besides if you will read a portion of it among your comrades there, and in the hearing of the bystanders." He handed him a Bible opened at Luke xv., and told him to read from verse 11.

The young fellow took it as a joke, so, saying, "Here goes!" he began to read: "A certain man had two sons, and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance in riotous living."

"That's thee, Jem," said one of his companions; "it's just like what you told me of yourself and your father."

The reader continued: "And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want."

"Why, that's thee, Jem, again; go on," said the voice.

"And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his

belly with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him."

"That's like us all," said the voice. "Go on; let's hear what came of it!"

And the young man read on, and as he read his voice trembled: "And when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father!"

At this point he fairly broke down, and could read no more. Thank God! it reached his conscience, and he returned home; but better still he was led to see himself as a guilty sinner, away from God, and then was brought to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour, and so was received and forgiven by the God he had sinned against.

If you are not at peace with God, everything you do is wasted; it has no value with God.

My friends, what are you doing with all the things God has given you? God wants you.

I well remember going to a Sunday School treat some years ago. There came on a shower of rain, and all the teachers and children had to take shelter in a large tea room. There was present a dear brother in the Lord who had a fine voice. In his unconverted days he was an actor, so had many times used that voice on the stage to amuse the godless and careless; but now all was changed. He looked at the company, and then began to sing:—

"Where will you spend eternity?

This question comes to you and me.

Tell me, what shall your answer be:

Where will you spend eternity?"

That is the way to use your talents and skill; they won't be wasted if yielded to the Lord under the Holy Spirit's guidance; but for that you must have a new life through believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

"HE SPENT ALL." Are you spending all in the far country? If so, it will end in starvation; it always does. May you find it out before it is too late, and may God help you to return to Him. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. vi. 23.)

Second. We now come to the second question.

WHAT SATISFACTION FOR TIME AND ETERNITY IS OBTAINED FROM "SPENDING ALL"?

In looking at this question we must bear in mind that when we spend our all away from God it is sin. Even an outwardly blameless life away from God is sin. The prodigal was as much a sinner when he left his father as when he was running riot in the distance, or starving among the swine. So are you, if unconverted, unsaved, your every act is sin, because you are in rebellion against God, because you are rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ, whom God presents to you as a Saviour; and for your sins the wages is death. "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment." (Heb. ix. 27.) Those two things, death and judgment, take the satisfaction for time and eternity out of everything our hearts go after in nature.

The answer to our question then is, "NONE." No satisfaction NOW, no satisfaction HEREFTER, from spending all as the prodigal did. No

doubt we have all experienced an unsatisfied, unhappy feeling after we have been seeking to enjoy ourselves away from God. And what is it? Surely it is death. As the scripture says, "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." (1 Tim. v. 6.) You do not like to think it is death which may end in eternal death if you remain where you are.

I want to tell you of a young man whose name was Ralph. He was stricken down with consumption. He thought he was going to recover as the warmer weather came round, but the doctor knew differently. He got weaker and weaker. One day he overheard the doctor say he was near the end; might not live till the next day. It was a great shock to him. After the doctor had gone he said to his mother, "Mother, I'm not dying, am I?" She said, "I thought you knew." He said, "Knew! How was I to know? What has a gay young fellow like me to do with death? I love life, and health, and strength; and fun and frolic; and sports and pastimes; and drinking and betting too, if you like. I don't want to die."

You see he was like a lot more, he did not want to die, but still death stared him in the face. After some minutes he said, "Mother, what will happen to me; to my soul, I mean? It has only just struck me that I have a soul, and after death the judgment. I'm dying and there is nothing before me but the blackness of darkness. I'm lost, lost; lost for ever and evermore."

His mother told him to rest; but he said, "How can I rest with an awful eternity staring me in the face? Mother, tell me what to do, you ought to have told me I should come to this, that one

day I should have to face eternity, with all the deeds of my sinful life bearing me down, down into the awful blackness. By the way, now I think of it, I never remember hearing you mention the name of God except in church, you never taught me a prayer. O mother, why didn't you tell me?"

His mother cried bitterly, kneeling at his bedside.

He placed his hand on her head and said, "Never mind, mother dear, perhaps you did not know. Do send for someone who does know."

She sent at once for a young man, a preacher of the gospel. After some hours, he came, being away at the time he was sent for. On entering the room he found poor Ralph very weak. As he came near the bed Ralph said, "I'm dying, I've only a few minutes to live. Show me the shortest road to heaven." The visitor sat down, and with opened Bible showed him that God knew all about his past, how that he had had health, talents, riches, influence, and power to do much good, and now on a deathbed his eyes were suddenly opened to see that he had spent all for self; no thought of God who so loved him. He quoted John iii. 16: "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."

"Jesus died for such as you," he said. "He loves you. For Christ's sake the Father is willing, yea more than willing, to forgive all the sins of the past, and to receive you now. Throw yourself entirely on His mercy, Ralph, and He will not fail you. Christ died for the ungodly."

He replied, "It's too late, too late; I've missed

the way to heaven; I can only see an eternity of woe."

He then thought of his companions, and asked his Christian friend to warn them. "Tell them," he said, "about me. Tell them not to put it off till the end. They'll make splendid Christians, they're not bad fellows, and I was not worse than them, but I forgot about death; I was too busy with the world's pleasures to think about your God."

After a short period of unconsciousness Ralph again opened his eyes, and then said, "Too late for me. Remember the others and my mother." And he was gone. Yes, passed into eternity, spent all for self and Satan here, and missed heaven. May God grant that it will never happen to anyone here to-night.

Does spending all in this way, satisfy for time and eternity? No. If I were to ask any here who are unsaved to say if they are perfectly satisfied, I feel sure they could not say, Yes. I ask, Is there one here who can testify that although unsaved, they enjoy perfect satisfaction? Not one!—— But how different those here who are saved. I now ask all those who are saved and have found satisfaction in the Saviour who has saved them, to stand up and sing,

"Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine,
Oh what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His spirit, washed in His blood.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long."

You've seen us stand, and heard what we can

sing. May God help you to see where you are, and to flee to the Saviour to-night.

Third. Our third question is

WHAT DOES GOD DO WHILE WE ARE "SPENDING
ALL"?

In Job xxxiii. we read that GOD SPEAKS. In Matthew iii. some were asked, "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Yes, God warns, and He also calls. Every time you hear Him say, "Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life," it is God calling you in the gospel.

We see then, that, first, GOD SPEAKS; secondly, GOD WARNS; thirdly, GOD CALLS.

First. Why does He SPEAK? Referring again to Job xxxiii., it says it is "to turn man from his purpose." If your purpose is to continue with your back to God, He speaks to you that you may be turned, yes, turned to God from idols. Why not say, like the prodigal, "I have sinned." Then God will say, "Deliver him from going down to the pit for I have found a ransom." "Deliver him," says God, "I have found a ransom." Who is it? The Lord Jesus Christ who died for sinners, yes, went into the pit in their stead. The ransom price has been paid, and God can save you to-night. Why not let Him?

Secondly. GOD WARNS. I cannot tell you in how many ways God warns sinners of their danger. He has warned you time after time. Have you taken heed to His warning voice? If not you will live to regret it. I expect most of you have heard of that man who had charge of a swing bridge over a river. The bridge was used

by the railway, and this man one day received a warning that an excursion train containing six hundred people was to pass over between two and four o'clock, and therefore on no account was he to swing open the bridge for vessels to pass during those hours. Soon after two o'clock a man came up the river in his boat and wanted the bridge opened. The keeper said, "No, I can't do it." Soon after, another offered him five shillings if he would let him pass. Again the keeper said, "No." Later, a very great friend came up and wanted him to open the bridge; he pleaded with him, saying that half his fortune depended on his catching the tide. He was so earnest in his pleading that the keeper gave way, and opened the bridge. He had just done so, when he heard the train coming. Although he tried hard to attract the driver's attention, it was too late, and the train dashed into the river.

This poor man did not heed the warning. He was found after the awful accident wandering up and down, and crying, "Oh, if I only had. Oh, if I only had!" over and over again, and he was quite insane.

Many years after this, in a lunatic asylum he was pacing his cell saying over and over again, "Oh, if I only had." And this was all through not taking the warning; and I've no doubt that many will spend eternity away from God and for ever and ever say, "Oh, if I only had! received the warning voice, and accepted God's offer in Christ." But it will then be too late. Thank God! it's not too late now. Be warned in time, I implore you.

Thirdly. GOD CALLS. With open arms and a heart overflowing with love He calls sinners to

repentance. Listen to His call now, and respond to it too, for you can be saved to-night.

One evening a miner attended a gospel meeting, and he heard the preacher say that any soul who desired to be saved could have the matter settled that night. This man was anxious to be saved, so after the meeting he told the preacher, and they both went on their knees. But although he was in great earnest he did not, until three o'clock next morning, receive the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour, but when he did he was full of joy.

He had no sleep that night, and went to the mine at six o'clock. During the day there was a fall of earth, and this very man was buried under it. A rescue party worked hard to get at him, and when he was uncovered he could only just whisper; his strength was nearly gone.

One of the rescuers put his ear to his mouth to hear what he was saying, and heard him say, "Thank God, it was settled last night." And so he passed into eternity; saved by grace just in time.

May it be the same with you, for it is true that you can be saved to-night. God's call sounds still. Respond to it at once, for Christ's sake.

C.A.S.

"All things are ready," Come,
 All hindrance is removed;
 And God, in Christ, His precious love,
 To fallen man has proved.

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

“ I MUST CHANCE IT ! ”

MY dear fellow, it would never do for me to think of those things. It would make me miserable, and I should not be able to get through the business of the day.”

So said a young man to the writer, when seeking to press upon him the importance of giving heed betimes to his soul's salvation.

“But you do not expect to live for ever? And the matter must be considered some day,” I replied.

“True,” said he, “but I'll tell you my thoughts about it. I hope, before I die, I shall have a long illness, and then I intend to think of these subjects, and make my peace with God.”

“But should you be called away without a moment's warning,” I answered, “think what your state would then be.”

“I know it,” he rejoined; “but I must chance it, as thousands do.”

And so our conversation ended.

The Bible tells but of one man who found salvation in his dying hour, and that was a crucified thief. This one case only is given that none may presume too much on God's long-suffering grace. It does not appear that the other thief was saved.

Had you invested your fortune in merchandise, which you were going to ship to some distant port across the seas, would you not insure it, so that you might not be ruined if the ship went down? And is not your eternal salvation of more value than many fortunes?

“What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” Can you answer the question?