

# GOSPEL LIGHT.

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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 MESSAGE FOR YOU.

**B**E it known unto you therefore, . . . that through this Man [Jesus Christ] is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 38-39.)

These precious gospel words, accompanied with a solemn warning to those who should despise, were addressed by the apostle Paul to his kinsmen after the flesh, and to all that feared God in the Jewish synagogue at Antioch. It was a wonderful message of love and mercy to God's guilty people. Paul boldly declared that the Man whom Pilate had delivered to the will of the Jews, and whom they had crucified, was God's Holy One; that He had raised Him from the dead, and that through this very Man, the Man Christ Jesus, the forgiveness of sins was preached.

Precious, precious message of grace! What volumes these blessed words tell of the love of God! He might righteously have swept the whole world with the besom of destruction for the rejection and murder of His beloved Son; but instead of that He offers the free forgiveness of sins to all men through this very One, accompanying it with the soul-assuring words, that "BY HIM, all that believe are justified from all things."

Many who heard the joyful tidings believed; others contradicted and blasphemed. (Acts xiii. 54-48.)

Beloved reader, how have *you* treated this wondrous message? You need forgiveness as much as any who heard these memorable words. Born in sin, and shapen in iniquity (Psalm li. 5), possessor of a fallen nature, at enmity against God, and that cannot please Him (Rom. viii. 7-8), you can never enter the kingdom and glory of God unless your sins are forgiven.

Perhaps you have never felt your need of forgiveness; if so, you will not care for this precious offer of God; but if you *have*, if you know what it is to tremble as a guilty, lost sinner, oh! listen now, and believe His never-failing Word: "Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins."

You may have tried to overcome sin for many a year, only to find out your own powerlessness; your sins may stare you in the face, and seem too great to be forgiven. Satan may be withstanding you, charging you with such a long, dark catalogue of past misdoings and present failure, that your heart sinks in despair; but still the glorious message comes to all, and therefore

comes to you: "Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things."

Old sinner or young sinner, great sinner or little sinner, rich sinner or poor sinner, it matters not who you are, where you are, or what you have done; none are excluded in the precious words, "BY HIM ALL THAT BELIEVE." God says "ALL"; not some, but ALL. Mark, not all that try, or work, or strive, or all that make good resolutions, or become religious, or turn over a new leaf. These are Satan's plans. Cast aside at once all such vain and soul-destroying thoughts. God says, "Believe"; "ALL THAT BELIEVE."

Reader, do you believe? "All that believe are justified from all things." Can you, a guilty sinner, say, "Yes, I own I need forgiveness; God is declaring it to me through His Son, the Man Christ Jesus, and I believe it."

Is this the language of your heart? If so, then, weary one, rest on the Word of Him who cannot lie (Titus i. 2); who has linked in one indissoluble sentence, "By Him ALL that believe ARE JUSTIFIED" (that is, cleared, freed, delivered) "from ALL THINGS."

How often, when this precious truth has been pressed home upon an anxious soul, has the reply been returned, "I do believe, but I can't *feel* it."

My reader, does this describe *your* state? Does God say anything about *feeling*? Does God say we are justified and saved when we *feel* it? Nay, God says when we BELIEVE; "By Him all that BELIEVE are justified."

Says one, "Well, I hope I am." Does God say HOPE? Not a word in the text about feeling or

hoping; but a plain, positive, unmistakable sentence, "All that believe *are*." God says "ARE," and God means "ARE."

I press it upon you: God SAYS it, and God MEANS it. Will you take God at His Word?

"I will," says one. Then ARE YOU justified? God says so, and therefore you must be. Satan, who is a liar, and the father of it (John viii. 44), says you must do, or feel, or something else first. God says, "All that believe" (*you believe*, and therefore it must mean you) "ARE justified from all things." Not from some things, but from ALL THINGS, everything you ever did.

Feelings and works will follow faith; but you must believe God first. Believing that you are justified must make you feel happy; but feelings change and fluctuate; the Word of God *never* does. Therefore it is that resting on the Word of God gives peace and rest to the soul.

Reader, "Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and BY HIM all that believe are JUSTIFIED from all things.

Are YOU justified?

E.H.C.

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### "OUT."

When my sins are "blotted out" by the  
     "precious blood of Christ,  
 And my fear is "cast out" by the "perfect  
     love" of God;  
 I can say, the "sting of death" is taken out  
     And, "O death! *where* is thy sting?"



## II.—PERISHING.

**L**AST Sunday evening we saw and learnt what it means to spend all; we saw what God has given every soul to spend—life, breath, and all things. To-night we shall see and learn to what it leads.

When the prodigal son crossed the threshold of his father's home his pockets were full and his banking account was heavy. Everything was all right. As soon as he got into the far country he thought it was going to last. But it did not.

Let us look at the subject of "PERISHING" from

1. THE CAUSES AND THEIR LESSON.
2. THE FACT AND ITS LESSON.
3. THE RESULT AND ITS LESSON.

### 1. THE CAUSES AND THEIR LESSON.

We partly dealt with what the causes and their lesson were last week, when we spoke of how the prodigal spent his all. Between his spending all and his confession, "I perish with hunger," we see two more steps. They are the "mighty famine" and being "in want." It was afterward that he cried, "I perish with hunger; I will arise, and go to my father."

After he had spent all there arose a mighty famine, and he began to be in want. Friends, is there a mighty famine in your land? You ask me what do I mean? There might be a great famine in your land, and perhaps you are in want. This parable has a word for every soul in this room to-night. I mean you have been given life and breath and all things by God, but the question is, Have you yet found out your dependence on Him? Why did the prodigal say, "I

perish with hunger"? Surely the mighty famine in the land had something to do with it.

God is dealing with every one of us here to-night; it does not matter who we are, and the steps God uses in His dealings with us are wonderful. Like a young man who was converted, and when asked how he was converted, replied, "I did my part, and God did His." When questioned as to his part, he said, "My part was to run away, and God's part was to run after me until He found me."

Every single soul here that knows the Father's grace, love and forgiveness can say that is true.

When the prodigal cried, "I perish with hunger," it was God's way of dealing with him that brought him to it. I love to hear of God's wonderful ways of dealing with us. I have watched many souls as God has dealt with them and brought them to the point where they have put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. I have seen them in fear and trembling, and then rejoicing in the love of God. The ways and causes which led these souls to rejoice are just the same as we see brought out so beautifully in Luke xv.

The mighty famine comes when something stands in our pathway and retards our joys; the mighty famine is when nothing around us satisfies. And then God opens our hearts, and gives us light. May He open the eyes of every unsaved person here to-night. Let Him open your eyes; very soon you may be landed into eternity, and, if unsaved, to eternal doom.

I want to tell you of a young man who was brought, through the goodness of God, into blessing by these various steps.

When the young man became of age, his father,

a wealthy man, arranged a ball and dinner, to which the friends and relatives were invited. The young man had a wealthy uncle who was a devout Christian, and the nephew used to avoid him as much as possible, because the uncle used often to speak to him about his soul. On this particular day the uncle asked his nephew to walk with him in the garden. The uncle said, "I suppose you think I am going to speak to you about religion?"

The nephew replied in the affirmative.

The uncle said, "I am not going to say anything about it, but will you do one thing for me? Take this piece of paper home with you, and before you go to bed read it. There is one blank place left; fill it in before you go to bed."

The young man promised to do as his uncle asked, and in the early hours of the morning when he retired after the festivities of the birthday, he took out the piece of paper, and opened it and read, "For to me to live is——" and there was a blank space. In the corner of the paper he saw something about Philippians i. He secured a Bible, opened it, and read, "For to me to live is Christ."

The young man said, "I cannot fill it in; what shall I do? I promised uncle I would. I must put something." So after thinking it over he filled in the paper, "For to me to live is to enjoy myself." He got into bed, and slept.

Years passed away, and the young man got married, and had one daughter. Everything went on all right until a financial crash overtook him, and he lost all his money. He had to leave his lovely house and all his furniture was sold—ruined at one stroke. When various articles were being

taken away, his little daughter came up to him, and said, "Look at what I have found in the drawer."

It was a little piece of paper, and on it were the words, "For to me to live is to enjoy myself."

How different everything looked now. Once he thought that "For to me to live is to enjoy myself," but it had not proved true; the enjoyment had gone out of his pathway; he was a ruined man; and not bearing his daughter to see him in such a position, he went to his room, and cried to God that he might be able to write "For to me to live is Christ."

God answered his prayer, and there alone in his room he received Christ, trusting in Him as His Saviour; and then wrote with truth, "For to me to live is Christ."

Cannot you see God's ways with this soul in grace? He did not want Christ on the eve of the birthday party; but there came a time later when he began to be in want; yes, he wanted Christ then. The story reveals a mighty famine in the land, and the "want" that follows. God opens our eyes to shew us that we may be lost eternally if we go on with our backs towards Him.

I believe that in Luke xv. the prodigal son was brought on by these various steps—famine and want—until without anything in his pockets, and a mighty famine in the land he cried, "I perish with hunger." The things which will cause us to say the same are God's wonderful ways with us in bringing us to see our lost condition and that we may eternally perish if we do not accept His love and forgiveness.

## 2. THE FACT AND ITS LESSON

is the second point. The fact is that there is a great number of souls in this room to-night who are perishing. It may be that their eyes are not opened yet, but one thing is clear; every unsaved soul is a perishing soul. Do you realise that if you are unsaved you are condemned already? Read John iii., verse 18: "He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." If you are going on like that you may land for ever where mercy cannot reach you. Perhaps God has not yet opened your eyes; perhaps the god of this world is blinding your eyes, as in the story I have told you. As long as you are unsaved the wrath of God abideth upon you. It is an awful position to be in. I pray God to open your eyes. He can do it.

I once heard of a young professional pick-pocket and thief for whom a Christian man prayed twice a day for fourteen years. The young thief went on his course until one day he was arrested, and given five days for disorderly conduct. He had to work his time on a vessel that was full of corpses in boxes, and when he ate his dinner he had to use one of these boxes as a table. In the presence of death God spoke to this young man, and he promised to go straight to the Mission if he could get out of the boat. The thief was found at the Mission three nights in succession, and on the third he found peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

See how that man's eyes were opened. I trust that God will open the eyes of everyone here to the fact, the strong fact, that if you are unsaved

you are perishing. God does not want you to perish; He wishes to give you everlasting life.

A preacher once went to preach to some convicts in a prison. Instead of preaching in a room with the men present he had to preach in a corridor on each side of which were cells. After he had finished he went from cell to cell to hear what the men had to say; and from what he heard he came to the conclusion that the wrong men were in prison, and that those who should be there were free. At last he came to one cell, and when he opened the door he saw a man with tears streaming down his face and holding his head in his hands.

The preacher spoke, and the man replied, "My sins are greater than I can bear."

He replied, "Thank God for it. Why do you say they are too heavy when God will cast aside the burden?"

The convict realised the fact that he was perishing, he had heard about Christ dying on the cross that we might live. The gospel was no new story to him.

The next day, when the preacher went to see him, he found him rejoicing, and was told that he was glad he was sent to that prison, because God had shown him that his sins were greater than he could bear, but also that the One Who died on Calvary had taken them all away. The convict had to have his eyes opened to see his sins, and in that way God showed him that he was perishing.

Even when God opens the eyes of a lot of people, and says to them that they are lost, they try do the best they can for themselves. This is what the prodigal did. When he joined a citizen

of that country he was sent to feed the swine, and he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, but no one gave to him. Then it was that he came to himself and said, "I will arise, and go to my father; and and I will say unto him" (like the man in the prison), "I have sinned," yes, "My sins are greater than I can bear."

Have you got hold of the fact that without Christ you are perishing? God's word says in John iii. verse 36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." With the wrath of God abiding on you, you are perishing; our scripture says "perish with hunger." What a fact! How true! Always desiring something to satisfy, but never able to find it. You want it, you want Christ. He can satisfy. "Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish."

The fact that your soul is hungering after something shows that you are not satisfied, you are starving, absolutely starving, a starving man will do anything. The prodigal did the wrong thing; he took a situation with a farmer to keep his pigs and was still starving.

Do you remember when you said, "I will do differently; I'll live a different life! I will try to deserve to be saved"? And you have been feeding swine for salvation, and are still starving. You are doing the wrong thing; stop, before it is too late.

### 3. WHAT WAS THE RESULT?

The result was that he said, "I will arise, and go to my father." I wish to bring home to your

hearts to-night the point of decision. Have you decided to go to God as you are, and confess your sins? May God help you to confess to-night. Perhaps you have not realised yet that you are lost; may God open your eyes to see it, and that soon.

Sometimes there is, in the history of souls, a long time between the knowledge that they are perishing and the time when they decide to come into the presence of God. In the case of the prodigal it was some time; and here we see the wonderful way God works step by step to bring souls to Himself.

Many years ago there lived at Hayle a man who said he did not believe in the existence of God or of eternal punishment hereafter. A preacher who had heard that the man had been listening outside the place where he was preaching on a certain Sunday, called on him the following day. The man told the preacher that he did not have any sleep the night before, and that he did not feel at all well.

“What is the matter with you; are you thinking about your soul?” asked the preacher.

The man replied in the negative, but the preacher saw it was something more than his body that was troubling him. He talked to the man again about his soul, and found that something happened fourteen years before that he had kept a profound secret. The man told the preacher that he had a dream in which he was walking along a wide, lovely road with flowers on either side, everything looked beautiful, and the people he met looked happy. As he went on he saw a man in a field close by and asked him where the road led.



“ To hell,” was the reply; “ straight on, you cannot miss it.”

As the man went on the road he found that the sun did not shine so brightly; it began to get gloomy and dark, and there was a smell of sulphur.

He wanted to know the way back, and he saw some creatures with long rakes. He wondered what they were doing, and found that they were raking cinders, as every now and then flames shot up in the roadway. One of them looked towards him, and he asked, “ How can I get out of this? ”

The creature stared at him, and after a time answered, “ The same way as you came in.”

The man fell on his knees, but the ground was so hot that he could not bear it. He ran he knew not where; but as he went leaping from one safe place to another over the open places in the road where the flames were rising. At last a huge fire lay before him, and he fell into it.

Then he woke up, and he told the preacher that he had kept the dream a secret for fourteen years. It had haunted him day and night.

God allowed his visitor to speak solemnly to the man before he left, and the man's eyes were opened to the fact that he was perishing. When he saw him again he spoke about the prodigal and the mighty famine, and with the Bible open at Luke xv. he went on his knees, and remained there for four hours. Then he confessed that he was a sinner, and learned, in the presence of God, that Christ was his Saviour, and also received the forgiveness of his sins, and thanked God for what He had done. His rejoicing was heard by the next door neighbour, a Christian man, who,

wondering what had happened, looked in and saw him giving praise to God.

God in His infinite grace can save you, too. All you have to do is to receive His salvation in Christ. You who are perishing, arise, and go straight to Him Who will forgive you; make the decision now, and rejoice in the Lord Jesus as your Saviour. Remember, the prodigal did not continue doing the wrong thing; he changed his mind, he came to himself, and said, "I will arise, and go to my father."

Friend, I beseech you, stop doing the wrong thing, and think of what is all ready for you in God's house. You know how often you have despised what God has to give; but change your mind and value what you once despised. That is what the prodigal did, so now you, who have despised Christ and God's salvation, do the same, and joy and satisfaction will be yours for all eternity.

C.A.S.

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No, 'tis not by prayers or tears,  
 E'en though flowing months and years,  
 That the soul can life obtain,  
 'Tis alone through Jesus' name;  
 In the blood that pardon gives,  
 Every soul, believing, lives.  
 Quickened by the power of God;  
 Under shelter of the blood;  
 In the love of Jesus, blest,  
 None can rob me of my rest.  
 Thanks, eternal God, to Thee.  
 Oh, what wondrous love I see,  
 Not to pass by even me!

**“ AFFECTIONATE ; OBEDIENT ;  
KIND ; HONEST.”**

**W**HILE walking through a burial ground some time ago, I stopped before a vaulted grave, and read an inscription relating to a person of some distinction, in which his character was summed up in the following words :—

“ AN AFFECTIONATE HUSBAND !  
AN OBEDIENT SON !  
A KIND BROTHER !  
AN HONEST MAN ! ”

On reading this testimony to the deceased I thought that it embraced a pretty good summary of virtues, and that if the character given to him were true, he had been what is called a “ good ” man. One thing, however, struck me, which was that, though his virtues were thus proclaimed, there was no reference whatever to God or to Christ as the foundation of his hope for eternity, or as the source of his excellence in his various relationships.

This absence spoilt, to my mind, the whole tenor of the inscription.

It might, then, be asked if I object to morality or to the virtuous fulfilment of the obligations of life. By no means ; I greatly value them. Virtue is better than vice, and it is most pleasant to witness the fruits of “ natural affection ” in operation amongst one’s friends and neighbours. But this I say, that that virtue and morality which have not their root in Christ, through faith in His name, are altogether wanting in the element which renders them acceptable to God ; for “ without faith it is impossible to please Him ” (Heb. xi. 6).

The thirteenth chap. of the 1st Corinthians shows us that great things may be both said and done, by which many may be benefited, but which are of no profit to the doer of them. And why? Because they do not flow from the only source which God can recognize, namely, "charity," or that true love of Christ which is the constraining power of all which God can approve. (2 Cor. v. 14.)

The young man mentioned in the Gospels (see Mark x. 17) seems to have been exceedingly virtuous; and I suppose that, like Saul of Tarsus, he was, "touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless"; but we see that, notwithstanding all his outward blamelessness, when his heart was tested by Christ, he had no response to Him, and that consequently he went away sorrowful.

Man is a sinner, and until he is reconciled to God by believing on the name of His only begotten Son, he can do nothing that is acceptable to Him; but if one truly bows to that name, he has everlasting life; and, being united to Christ by His Spirit, God works in him "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. ii. 13).

Such a one can then work out what God has wrought in him, and fill up the duties and responsibilities of the relationships of life so as to please God. The love of Christ acting in his heart will thus make him a blessing to others; for "love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii. 10).

See, then, dear reader, that you be content only with that commendation which comes from God.

W.T.

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"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.*

## III.—THE FATHER'S KISS.

**W**E take to-night the third of the series of addresses on the Prodigal Son. The subject is to be "The Father's Kiss," and I propose to consider

1. ON WHAT GROUND COULD THE FATHER KISS THE PRODIGAL?
2. WHAT LESSON DO WE LEARN FROM THE FATHER'S TREATMENT OF THE PRODIGAL?
3. WHAT EFFECT HAD THE KISS UPON HIM?

1. ON WHAT GROUND COULD THE FATHER KISS THE PRODIGAL?

The father's kiss had a very great meaning. What was it? I believe it was a *forgiving* kiss. I believe it teaches us that God is a *forgiving* God, and that notwithstanding the fact that most here

have sinned for years, yet God's kiss of forgiveness can be yours to-night. I believe that to be the very truth.

But our first point is, On what ground can it be done? You say it was love. I think it was more than love; it was sovereign love and sovereign grace; that is, unmerited favour. Did he deserve forgiveness? No. Do you deserve forgiveness? No. So we read in Romans iii. verse 24, "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." God does not act towards us according to our deserts. He acts in sovereign grace.

There is a story of a missionary who was hated by a native of the place he was working in. One day the native found the missionary's daughter, a little girl, alone in the woods. He took her, and with the hatchet he was carrying, he cut off both her hands. Many years after the girl was alone at home, and a man came to the door. He said he was starving, so she told the maid to give him a good dinner. She sat and watched him eat it, knowing all the time that it was the man who had cut her hands off. After he had finished she let a cloth fall, and then showed him her arms.

That was grace, acting towards another (and that an enemy) in love when he did not deserve it. Scripture says we are enemies of God by wicked works; yet God loves us, and in His grace forgives every one who comes to Him believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, God is a "God of all grace" so must act in grace toward man.

But there is another thing which characterises God. He is faithful and He is also just. As it says, "A just God, and a Saviour." In 1 John i., verse 9, it says, "If we confess our sins, He is

## THE FATHER'S KISS.

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faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." God does not only forgive on the ground of grace but also on the ground of faithfulness and justice. The prodigal confessed his sins, and was forgiven; and God can forgive you your sins, and will, if you confess them; but remember, when He forgives, He is faithful in doing it.

I want you to think of the words of the Lord Jesus Christ when He was hanging between two thieves, hated by man, suffering from the most intense agony, and being mocked by the very ones He came to save. Just listen to His words: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke xxiii. 34.)

God forgives in faithfulness to the dying request of His own Son. The forgiving kiss is on the ground of divine faithfulness. But God also forgives on the ground of divine justice. Romans iii., verse 26, tells us that He is "just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

Again we turn to the Cross to see God's justice. He cannot pass over sin, although He desires to bless the sinner, so we see the just and holy God punishing His only begotten Son on the Cross of Calvary, thereby making a divinely just ground on which He could forgive every soul who comes to Him for mercy and forgiveness. You and I who have been forgiven can say, "It is because Jesus was punished instead of me."

Many years ago a ruler made a law that for a certain offence the culprit should have both his eyes put out. The first to break the law was his own son. He had a great desire to forgive him, but knew he could not be just in doing so. He therefore gave sentence that one of his own eyes

should be put out, and one of his son's. The ruler's justice could not then be called in question. Yet his love for his son was shown by his bearing half of the punishment. God's justice and love are shown by His own Son bearing *all* the punishment.

We see then, GRACE, FAITHFULNESS, AND JUSTICE are grounds on which God forgives sins. Now I say, Are you forgiven? Have you received the Father's kiss? Have you learned, in the Father's arms, that His heart yearns over you, and that, notwithstanding the tremendous cost, He can freely forgive you? If not, look at Calvary, and see what it cost Him there. Have you a son, one you greatly love, perhaps an only son, the joy and pride of your heart? Ask yourself the question, "How should I feel if I saw my son taken by my very enemies, and spat upon, smitten in the face, crowned with thorns, receiving many stripes on his bared back till all the flesh was torn and bleeding. Then taken by these same enemies, and laid down on a cross, and both hands and feet nailed to the cross, which is then lifted and dropped into a hole in the rock, and your son left there to die a death of the most awful suffering it is possible to bear. If while suffering thus you heard your son cry, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," what would you do?

The God who will forgive you if you come to Him to-night saw His well-beloved Son taken by those with hearts like yours and mine, spat upon, smitten in the face, crowned with a crown of thorns, and then a stick brought down upon His head. Also given many stripes on His bared back till all the flesh was torn and bleeding. And then those wicked hands nailed His to a cross.



“ Oh ! make me to understand it ;  
 Help me to take it in ;  
 What it meant to Thee, Thou Holy One,  
 To bear away my sin.”

Then the cross was placed into a hole in the rock, and when God heard His cry, “ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,” His grace went out towards those guilty men in forgiving love, in divine faithfulness to the dying request of the Blessed Saviour.

Yet for Him to forgive on a just ground He had then to turn from the Son of His love, and put the very sins He was going to forgive on His Son, so that the punishment should be borne by Him instead of by us. The greatest suffering then, that the Saviour suffered was in the three hours of darkness, when God forsook Him, and judged Him in our stead. It was God's justice led Him to judge the Lord Jesus. It was also God's justice led Him to raise Him from the dead. Death could not hold Him after His work was done.

“ Bless the Lord, O my soul ; and all that is within me, bless His holy Name.” God can forgive now, and the risen Saviour is the testimony that it is done on the ground of divine GRACE, FAITHFULNESS and JUSTICE.

## 2. WHAT LESSON DO WE LEARN FROM THE FATHER'S TREATMENT OF THE PRODIGAL?

We see in that treatment five important points. “ His father saw him.” I think the lesson for us is that God is looking down on each one here to-night, watching you. Think of the position you are in ; if away from Him. Or have you said, “ I will arise.”

Whatever it is, He sees you, and is ready to meet you as soon as you put your de-

cision into practice ; and, remember, from what we have already had before us, that His heart is full of love while He looks down upon you now.

2. "He had compassion." Yes, as we have just said, loving compassion, not a bit of hatred ; nothing but kindness shining from the God of all grace, causing Him

3. To run. Can it be true, such haste, such desire to show to this returning sinner the love of His heart of hearts? Yes, he "ran," we read. It brings to our minds the scriptures :

"Ready to pardon." (Neh. ix. 17.)

"Ready to forgive." (Ps. lxxxvi. 5.)

"Ready to save." (Isa. xxxviii. 20.)

God is "ready" at this very moment to run towards you, and give you the knowledge of His forgiving love. Why not come to Him now, and learn the lesson in a practical way, of that precious truth, he "ran"?

4. He "fell on his neck." What must have been the feelings of that prodigal son when he had those arms around him? Why, all his fear was gone in an instant. What a lesson we learn from this, a lesson never to be forgotten, to learn that God is for us, and not against us.

"He saw us ruined in the Fall,  
Yet loved us, notwithstanding all ;  
He saved us from our lost estate ;  
His loving kindness, oh how great !"

5. He "kissed him." The Father's kiss speaks volumes to the poor returning sinner. Yes, God kisses poor sinners, those who have hated Him, and wronged Him and His love times without number. Just think what a lesson that kiss teaches us.

Two little boys at Oxford, some time ago, were fishing in the river, and accidentally they both fell into the water. A young man was passing at the time, and plunged in after them. He was not a very good swimmer, but managed to bring them both to the bank safely. He then found himself in difficulties. The more he struggled the worse it was, with the sad result that he was drawn under the water and drowned. It was discovered afterwards that the boys' fishing-line was twisted four times round his right hand, and the hook had caught in his clothes.

The news soon reached his father and mother, who, of course, were greatly distressed; also his brother, who came home soon afterwards, but he was comforted when he heard that the boys were saved.

A few days later, two little boys were seen following close behind the coffin. After the funeral, the father of the brave lad, whose body had just been lowered into the grave, came up to the two little boys, and gave each one a kiss, and blessed them.

There was present a young man, a Christian, who that evening was to preach the gospel not far away. He went as arranged, and standing before his hearers, said, "I saw to-day what I have never seen before, a man kiss two boys who caused the death of his son." He then told them about the funeral, and showed that that is what God is doing now, kissing any who come to Him believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, notwithstanding the fact that they have caused the death of His Son.

It made a great impression on his hearers, one in particular, who was one of the worst men in that place. After the meeting this man came up

to the preacher, and said, "Does God kiss like that?"

"Yes," he replied; "if you come to Him in faith believing on the Lord Jesus Christ."

He replied, "I will come to Him now."

May God grant that your decision may be the same. The result will be that you will know forgiveness, and learn the lesson taught by the Father's kiss.

Our last point is

### 3. WHAT EFFECT HAD THE KISS ON THE PRODIGAL?

Let us see what he did immediately after he had received the kiss. It reads, "The son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

You see he at once owns himself (1) a sinner; (2) unworthy; (3) helpless. Notice that he left out what he had intended to say: "Make me as one of thy hired servants." When he owned himself a SINNER, UNWORTHY and HELPLESS, he owned the truth. And when you own yourself a SINNER, UNWORTHY and HELPLESS, you will own the truth about yourself, which will be of great blessing for you, for then you will be glad to be occupied with God; and His wondrous mercy having won your heart, you will desire to thank Him for such great love. It is when we really see God in all His perfections that we are able to see what we really are in His presence. There is nothing like the perfect love of God to show us our unworthiness. A picture of God's heart will do wonders.

It reminds me of the story of the girl who left

her mother, and went to London. She wrote regularly for a time, then gradually left off writing, till at last the letters stopped altogether. She had got into bad company, and was living a life of sin.

Her mother came to London to seek for her, and finding a missionary who worked in the worst parts of London, asked him if he could help her. He said he thought he could, but only on the condition that she procured a hundred copies of her own photograph, and wrote under each, "Mary, I love you still; come home."

He then told her that she must allow him to take these photographs into the low parts of the city, and hang them up in the saloons and other places where her daughter might possibly see it; and he hoped by so doing to find where she was.

This was a hard thing to ask a mother to do, but she loved her child so much that she would do anything to get her back again. Off to the photographer's she went, and as quickly as possible returned to the missionary with the hundred photographs. These were taken, and put up in the haunts where the fallen girl might come.

Not long after, this girl came into a saloon, and caught sight of the photo on the wall. Going over to it she saw at once the familiar face. "My mother," she said to herself, and then read the words underneath, "Mary, I love you still; come home."

This was more than Mary could stand. She went out of the place at once, and made straight for home. She found her mother waiting to receive her, and there in her mother's arms received the kiss of forgiveness. That photo and those loving words did it.

May God open the eyes of wandering sinners here and now to see His own picture in this portion of Luke Fifteen, and give you to hear Him say, "I love you still; come home." If you do, it will be the most blessed moment of your life.

We have seen that God's gracious, loving treatment of returning wanderers is on the ground of GRACE, FAITHFULNESS AND JUSTICE. Because of the death of Christ for you, He now stands with arms outstretched waiting to receive and forgive you this very moment. Linger not, but come now, and you will be able to say, as one did to a Christian who, after a Gospel meeting asked him if he was saved, and his reply was, "I saw God holding out His arms to receive me while you were preaching, and I came into them to-night."

My earnest prayer is that God will save you all, so come now, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake.

C. A. S.

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## THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH.

(Matthew xxv. 1-13.)

**W**HEN we examine the precise terms made we must see that it applies (not to Jews, use of in the Parable of the Ten Virgins, but) to Christian professors; it applies to us; it utters a voice, and teaches a solemn lesson, to the writer and the reader of these lines.

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom."

Primitive Christianity was specially characterized by the fact here indicated, namely, a going forth to meet a returning and an expected bride-

groom. The early Christians were led to detach themselves from present things, and go forth, in the spirit of their minds, and in the affections of their hearts, to meet the Saviour whom they loved and for whom they waited. It was not, of course, a question of going forth from one place to another; it was not local, but moral and spiritual. It was the outgoing of the heart after a beloved Saviour whose return was eagerly looked for day by day.

It is impossible to read the apostolic epistles to the various churches and not see that the hope of the Lord's sure and speedy return governed the hearts of the Lord's people in **those** early days. **They waited for the Son** from heaven (1 Thess. i. 10). They knew He was to come, and take them away, to be Himself for ever; and the knowledge and power of this hope had the effect of detaching their hearts from present things. Their bright, heavenly hope caused them to sit loose to the things of earth. They looked for the Saviour. (Phil. iii. 20.) They believed that He might come at any moment; and hence the concerns of this life were just to be taken up and attended to for the moment; properly, thoroughly attended to, no doubt; but only, as it were, on the very tip-toe of expectation.

All this is briefly but clearly conveyed by the statement that they "went forth to meet the bridegroom." This could not be intelligently applied to the future Jewish remnant, inasmuch as they will not go forth to meet their Messiah, but, on the contrary, they will remain in their position, and amid their circumstances, until He comes, and plants His foot on the Mount of Olives. (Zech. xiv. 4.) They will not look for

the Lord to come and take them away from this earth to be with Him in heaven; but He will come to bring deliverance to them in their own land, and make them happy there, under His own peaceful and blessed reign, during the millennial age. (Isa. xxxii. 1, 16-18.)

But the call to Christians was to "go forth." They are supposed to be always on the move; not settling down on the earth, but going out in earnest and holy aspirations after that heavenly glory to which they are called, and after the heavenly Bridegroom to whom they are espoused, and for whose speedy advent they are taught to wait. (1 Thess. iv. 16-18.)

Such is the true, the divine, the normal idea of the Christian's attitude and state. And this lovely idea was marvellously realized and practically carried out by the primitive Christians. But alas; alas! we are reminded of the fact that we have to do with the spurious as well as the true in Christendom. There are "tares" as well as "wheat" in the kingdom of heaven; and thus we read of these ten virgins that "five of them were wise, and five were foolish."

There are the true and the false, the genuine and the counterfeit, the real and the hollow, in professing Christianity. Yes, and this is to continue into the time of the end, until the Bridegroom come. The "tares" are not converted into "wheat," nor are the "foolish" virgins converted into "wise" ones. No, never. The tares will be burnt, and the foolish virgins shut out. So far from a gradual improvement by the means now in operation, that is to say, the preaching of the gospel and the various beneficent agencies which are brought to bear upon the



world, we find from all the parables, and from the teaching of the entire New Testament, that the kingdom of heaven presents a most deplorable admixture of evil; a corrupting process; a grievous tampering with the work of God on the part of the enemy; a positive progress of evil in principle, in profession, and in practice.

And all this goes on to the end of the Christian period. There are foolish virgins found when the Bridegroom appears. Whence come they, if all are to be converted before the Lord comes? If all are to be brought to the knowledge of the Lord by the means now in operation, then how comes it to pass that when the Bridegroom comes there are quite as many foolish as wise? .

But it will perhaps be said that this is but a parable, a figure. Granted; but a figure of what? Not surely of a whole world converted. To assert this would be to offer a grievous insult to the Holy Volume, and to treat our Lord's solemn teaching in a manner in which we would not dare to treat the teaching of a fellow-mortal.

No, reader, the parable of the ten virgins teaches, beyond all question, that when the Bridegroom comes, there will be foolish virgins on the scene; and, clearly, if there are foolish virgins, all cannot have been previously converted. A child can understand this. We cannot see how it is possible, in the fact of even this one parable, to maintain the theory of a world converted before the coming of the Bridegroom.

But let us look a little closely at these foolish virgins. Their history is full of admonition for all Christian professors. It is very brief, but awfully comprehensive. "They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them."

There is the outward profession, but no inward reality, no spiritual life, no unction, no vital link with the source of eternal life, no union with Christ. There is nothing but the lamp of profession, and the dry wick of a nominal, national head-belief.

This is peculiarly solemn. It bears down with tremendous weight upon that vast mass of baptized profession which surrounds us at the present moment, in which there is so much of outward semblance, but so little of inward reality. All profess to be Christians. The lamp of profession may be seen in every hand; but ah! how few have the oil in their vessels, the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, the Holy Ghost dwelling in their hearts. Without this, all is utterly worthless and vain. There may be the very highest profession; there may be a most orthodox creed; one may be baptized; he may receive the Lord's supper; be a regularly enrolled and duly recognized member of a Christian community; be a Sunday-school teacher; an ordained minister of religion: one may be all this; and not have one spark of divine life, not one ray of heavenly light, not one link with the Christ of God.

Now there is something peculiarly awful in the thought of having just enough religion to deceive the heart, deaden the conscience, and ruin the soul; just enough religion to give a name to live while dead; enough to leave one without Christ, without God, and without hope in the world; enough to prop the soul up with a false confidence, and fill it with a false peace, until the Bridegroom come, and then the eyes are opened, when it is too late.

Thus it is with the foolish virgins. They seem

## THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH.

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to be very like the wise ones. An ordinary observer might not be able to see any difference for the time being. They all set out together. All have lamps. And, moreover, all turn aside to slumber and sleep, the wise as well as the foolish. All rouse up at the midnight cry, and trim their lamps. Thus far there is no apparent difference. The foolish virgins light their lamps, the lamp of profession lighted up with the dry wick of a lifeless, nominal, nominal faith; alas! alas! a worthless, worse than worthless thing, a fatal soul-destroying delusion.

But here the grand distinction, the broad line of demarcation, comes out with awful, yea, with appalling clearness: "The foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps *are going out*" (See margin.)

This proves that their lamps had been lighted; for had they not been lighted they could not be going out. But it was only a false, flickering, transient light. It was not fed from a divine source. It was the light of mere lip profession, fed by a head belief, lasting just long enough to deceive themselves and others, and going out at the very moment when they most needed it, leaving them in the dreadful darkness of an eternal night.

"Our lamps are going out." Terrible discovery! "The Bridegroom is at hand, and our lamps are going out. Our hollow profession is being made manifest by the light of His coming. We thought we were all right. We professed the same faith, had the same shaped lamp, the same kind of wick; but alas! we now find to our unspeakable horror, that we have been deceiving ourselves, that we lack the one thing needful,

the spirit of life in Christ, the unction from the Holy One, the living link with the Bridegroom. Whatever shall we do? Oh! ye wise virgins, take pity upon us, and share with us your oil. Do, do, for mercy's sake, give us a little, even one drop of that all essential thing, that we may not perish for ever."

Ah! it is all utterly vain. No one can give of his oil to another. Each has just enough for himself. A man can give *light*, but he cannot give *oil*. This latter is the gift of God alone. "The wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; *and the door was shut.*"

It is of no use looking to Christian friends to help us or prop us up. No use in flying hither and thither for some one to lean upon, some holy man, or some eminent teacher; no use building upon our church, or our creed, or our sacraments. *We want oil.* We cannot do without it. Where are we to get it? Not from man, not from the Church, not from the saints, not from the Fathers (so-called). We must get it from God; and He, blessed be His name, gives freely. "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. vi. 23.)

But, mark, it is an individual thing. Each must have it for himself, and in himself. No man can believe, or get life for another. Each must have to do with God for himself. The link which connects the soul with Christ is intensely individual. There is no such thing as second-hand faith, or faith by proxy.

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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.

## IV.—CLOTHED.

**T**HE prodigal son is forgiven; the father has kissed him; the father's arms are around his neck. But listen! He speaks. What does he say? "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." How true! This is true repentance, for repentance is owning that I am as bad as God knows me to be.

What is the next thing that happens? The father speaks, and says, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet." In other words, he is CLOTHED; and, God willing, that is to be our subject to-night: "CLOTHED."

Shall we see, first, WHAT THE PRODIGAL WAS CLOTHED WITH; secondly, WHEN HE WAS CLOTHED; thirdly, WHY HE WAS CLOTHED?

### 1. WHAT WAS THE PRODIGAL CLOTHED WITH?

We have been considering the subject on former occasions, and seen it to represent the prodigal son as a picture of a sinner receiving forgiveness from God on the ground of sovereign grace, divine faithfulness and justice.

Now, if the kiss means forgiveness, what does the robe mean?

In Isaiah lxi., verse 10, we read of one who says, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord . . . , for He hath clothed me with the GARMENTS OF SALVATION. He hath covered me with the ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS." These words sound almost as if they came from the prodigal. You will notice that the ROBE is called a ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. Now, this agrees with the truth of Romans iii., verse 22, where it says, "The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe."

I believe that Scripture shows us that the believer is covered with a robe of God's righteousness. We all know that a robe is for a covering, and we also know that we need a suitable covering if we are to abide in God's presence; so we are not surprised when we read that the father said to the servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him."

We see that man knew he needed a covering even in the garden of Eden, for Adam and Eve sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons. These fig-leaf aprons were the first robes worn by man, and they were of no more use in God's presence than the far country clothes of the prodigal were for the father's house. They, no doubt, thought they were all right, but they

made a mistake; and it is quite possible that you are making the same mistake, because those aprons are a picture of the things so many people are using to try and make themselves fit for God. If you think your good deeds and right desires are able to hide your past sins you are making that mistake.

It was after Adam and Eve were disobedient they made a covering; and perhaps it was after you had found out (through God speaking to you, it may be, at these meetings) that you were a sinner, you started sewing fig-leaves together. It comes so natural to say, "I'll do all the good I can; I'll attend more meetings; I won't get angry or be unkind." So one by one these fig-leaves are put together; but they won't do for a robe. Instead of being the best robe, they turn out to be the worst robe; for God says that all our righteousness are as filthy rags. The clothes of the far country are as much good.

Well, what is the best robe, then?

It is not *our* righteousness; it is God's righteousness.

A child was once asked why it was the *best* robe, and she answered, "Because it cost so much."

She was right, wasn't she? Yes, it cost all the agonies of Calvary and the precious blood of Christ. Read Romans iii. verse 24, and you will see that it says, "The righteousness of God, which . . . is upon all them that believe" is "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." God hath made Christ to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Cor. v. 21.) In 1 Cor. i., verse 30, it says that Christ is made unto us "right-

eousness." Yes, Christ Himself is God's righteousness, and because of His death and resurrection, the believer is put into Christ.

Are you in this best robe? If not, put it on now. If a believer your place is in Christ.

Once a man, after great exercise of soul, cried to God for mercy. He then tried to live a different life; but oh! how he failed! At last he was almost in despair, and God led him to Romans iii., verse 22. He saw his mistake when he read about the righteousness of God being upon all them that believe, and he said, "This is what I want; this is what God offers me; and this is what I will have." He there and then found out that Christ was his righteousness before God. This gave him perfect peace. And, thank God, it can give you the same.

The best robe, then, is a robe of righteousness, and that robe is Christ.

The father in the parable then said, "And put a ring on his hand." It was the custom in those days for men to wear rings, and we often find that rings were given. Pharaoh gave a ring to Joseph. The giving of a ring showed that the one who received it was acknowledged as in a place of special favour. The wearing of a ring might show that the wearer held a place of dignity, and in this case might show that the father acknowledged him as his son. Now, with these thoughts in our minds, we cannot doubt the father showed it to be according to the good pleasure of his will to have the prodigal in his presence as a son, and his pleasure would be great when he saw the ring on his hand. The son would see the riches of the father's grace in bestowing this token of favour and dignity, and everyone else who saw the ring



would see the kindness that was bestowed on the prodigal.

There are some verses in Ephesians i. and ii. which speak of these three thoughts in reference to believers who are saved by grace. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." (v. 5.) In verses 7 and 8 it says, "The riches of His grace, wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence." In chapter ii., verse 7, it speaks of God showing "the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

If there is a soul here who has got that ring on, don't forget that, first, God has great pleasure in seeing you wear it. Second, you ought to have great pleasure in the enjoyment of such a place of favour and dignity. Third, if you let others see this ring it will be manifest to them what grace and kindness has been shown to you by the God you once rejected and displeased.

Shoes also were given to the prodigal. However shamefully he had walked in the past, God now made provision for his walking differently in the future. Let us not forget that not only God, but also the world, expects to see a person walk in newness of life after they have been forgiven. I am sure that we have very much to be thankful for that God the Father has provided a pair of shoes for the forgiven one to wear. May He show us all the importance of having the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. (Eph. vi. 15.)

The Robe of righteousness, the Ring of favour and dignity, the Shoes for the new walk, all provided and brought from the house, are what con-

stitute the clothing of the prodigal; and love bestows them on the one who says, "I am no more worthy to be called thy son."

"It is the Father's joy to bless;  
His love has found for me a dress;  
A robe of spotless righteousness;  
O Lamb of God, in Thee.

"Yea, in the fulness of His grace,  
God put me in the children's place;  
Where I may gaze upon His face,  
O Lamb of God, in Thee."

## 2. WHEN WAS THE PRODIGAL CLOTHED?

This question is important. He was not clothed before he was kissed; and he was not clothed after he entered the house; but he was clothed between the kiss and his being received into the father's house.

We want to remember the steps that have led to this point. He left his father's house, and spent all; was perishing with hunger; came to himself; arose, and came to his father; and, before he could say a word, his father fell on his neck and kissed him. Then he confessed his sin, and the father had him clothed so that he would be suitable to enter the house.

Have you been like the prodigal? You have been spending what God has given you; but has it led yet to the confession, "I perish"? You say, "I have got further than that; I have come to God as I am. I expected to have to pray much, and try hard to be different; but I've found out through God's Word that forgiveness is mine through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Thank God for that. I trust it is true of a great many here to-night. Just believe God's word, and you'll feel God's arms about your

neck; you'll feel the warmth of His great heart of love; you'll have that kiss pressed on you, and a thrill of joy will be yours that you never had before. But you must come as you are; no preparation need be made. If you think you must be clothed before being forgiven you are wrong.

A great many do make that mistake. I'll tell you of one, a lady who spent her money on tracts, which she diligently distributed. One day she was much annoyed by the message given by a preacher of the gospel; and what annoyed her was this: he said that if any are to be saved they must be all saved in the same way, the self-righteous, religious person must be saved in the same way as the sinful woman who walks the street.

She was so upset that she made it her business to speak to the preacher. During the conversation he assured her that God's word gave but one way to be saved. She was very angry, and said, "Sir, do you know how much money I spend yearly in giving away tracts; and how much trouble and time I devote to good works? If what you say is true, I'll not spend any more of my time in this way, nor waste my money in buying any more tracts; I have a lot more now upstairs, but I'll not give away another tract."

The preacher assured her that if she was to be saved she must come as a hell-deserving sinner, and receive God's pardon in the same way as anyone else. He then persuaded her to give the tracts to him, which she did.

Then he said, "Now, your ladder is quite broken down; how can you get to heaven now? If ever you did you would be in a strange fix, for you would not know the song. You would

hear others singing, 'I've been redeemed and washed in the blood of the Lamb'; but you could not sing that. You would have to sing all alone, 'I came up here by giving away tracts.' "

This bit of plain speaking did the lady a lot of good, and she saw her true position. Although the position and process were most painful to her, she did at last take God's way, and came as a poor sinner, and accepted God's gift of grace, and rejoiced in the Saviour of sinners.

It is a great mistake to think that clothing comes before forgiveness. God's way is the kiss first, then the clothes; and it is the father who gives the kiss and also provides the clothes. The reason is because he wants the son in the house. The father's house is where we feed on the fatted calf. We could never enjoy the feast if we were not forgiven, neither could we if we were not clothed. It is when we know how suited we are to the Father in Christ that we can enjoy the love that has made all ours.

We can quite imagine how uncomfortable the prodigal would have been in the house with the clothes of the far country on him; but when he had the best robe, the ring, and the shoes on he would be able comfortably to enjoy the father's love in communion with him; he could feast on what the father was feasting on.

Now, that is what we Christians ought to be doing. We have every right to wear the clothes provided by the Father, and then enjoy communion with Him. When the Father tells us He delights in the Son who died for us, and by so doing glorified God, we also can say that we delight in the same blessed Person.

"Thou the prodigal hast pardoned;

Kissed us with a Father's love ;  
 Killed the fatted calf, and called us  
 E'er to dwell with Thee above."

### 3. WHY WAS THE PRODIGAL CLOTHED?

I want now to give three reasons why the prodigal was clothed.

1. Because he could not clothe himself. We are not told whether he tried to, but we know a very great many have. Oh, so many weave the spider's web and try to cover themselves with their works; but listen to the word of God by the prophet Isaiah. In chapter lix., verse 6, we read, "Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works." No, they cannot cover themselves; they try, but never produce a garment. God labels the best attempt "Filthy Rags."

It was after Charlotte Edwards found out her helplessness, after repeated trying to produce a garment in this way, that God opened her eyes, and she came as a guilty sinner, and was forgiven and clothed, that she wrote :

"Just as I am, Thou wilt receive ;  
 Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve ;  
 Because Thy promise I believe ;  
 O Lamb of God, I come."

2. The second reason why he was clothed is because God required it. God cannot have sinners in His presence unless they are quite suitable to Him. The first man and all his race are not suited and never can be. The flaming sword keeps man out of Eden, but the Second Man, the Lord from heaven, is suited. The Father said of Him, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." So if we are to be suited to God the Father we must be made like Christ. The Father

does this, as we have seen, by putting us in Christ, in the Best Robe. Nothing short of this will suit Him.

And now you, who have always considered that you were all right, just test your position by these truths, and find out if you are quite suited for the presence of God, because some have found out that they are clothed with the "filthy rags" of their own righteousness.

A chapel-keeper, who was very religious, once found that she had nothing but her own works to fit her for God's presence. She was shown this by the word preached by a servant of the Lord, who came and held some Gospel Meetings. He preached first from "Fig-Leaf Aprons"; then from "Filthy Rags." She found out through God's Word that what God requires she had not got. God used it to her soul's salvation, and she never regretted that she had been stripped of her own "filthy rags," and clothed with Christ.

Dear friends, the Father must have you in Christ, clothed with the clothes that He provides.

3. The third reason why the prodigal is clothed is because the Father will have us to be at rest, comfortable, and happy. At the commencement of our meeting we referred to Isaiah lxi., verse 10, and I think it is a good verse to finish the meeting with. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."

I find a lot of people who want to feel happy and at rest. If you are one, get into the Father's

arms first, and then let Him show you what beautiful clothes He has provided for you to wear, and by all means wear them. The Father wants you to be comfortable, so He clothes you before you get into the house.

Fellow-believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, let us rejoice together. Amen. C.A.S.

## THE COURSE OF LIFE.

**T**RAVELLING lately by express train to London, I could not but think how such a journey illustrates the course of human life. The passengers were seated in first, second, or third-class carriages, according to their different stations in society, and were being urged along, whether with or against their will, by a power beyond their control, to the destination for which they had set out.

How like this to "the course of the world," which, energised by Satan, "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," carries all with a resistless force to the region of death, the vast central terminus where the railways of this life meet. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment." (Heb. ix. 27.)

There is something very exhilarating in travelling at a high speed, though there may be the accompaniment of a slight sense of fear as to the ultimate safety of the journey. Still, on the whole, the sensation is one of enjoyment. We pass station after station without stopping; we have now a dark tunnel to go through; then a glimpse of a pretty piece of scenery on either

side, and a hasty glance at some elegant villas with their tasteful gardens sloping to the edge of the railway, succeeded by an unsightly view of the roofs of the houses in some overcrowded locality, where the squalor of poverty shows itself in all its wretchedness. But every view, pleasing or painful, is transient; a glimpse, and on we go; there is not time to dwell long upon anything.

Is not this like the course of a prosperous life in this world? There is joy, and there is sorrow; there is weal, and there is woe; and there are the lights and shadows of the way; but they are all fleeting, and make but slight impressions, so long as men are successful in the pursuit of the main object upon which they have set their hearts and minds. It is to be feared, however, lest infatuation in the pursuit should seize the mind, so that the real and proper end of existence should be forgotten or ignored. Man is an accountable being, and is responsible to God. He must stand before his Creator, appearing in all the awful majesty of a Judge, and hear from Him the solemn sentence of eternal condemnation, or else appear before Him as the justifying God and Saviour, giving to the believing soul eternal life, eternal redemption, and eternal glory on the ground of the perfectly finished work of His only begotten Son.

But what is this which we see before us? When we started on our journey the sun was shining brightly, and shedding its brilliance on all around; but now a veil of thick darkness hangs over the great city towards which we are fast approaching. It is enveloped in one of its dense fogs; such fogs as only smoky cities know. Still, on we go; no check as yet is put on the speed



of the train, though a slight damp falls upon the spirits of the travellers. But, hark! What is that sudden, sharp, and loud report, succeeded by another, and still another? It is the fog signal; there is danger ahead, and the engine-driver is warned to be wary.

*And the warning is heeded.*

We soon find that the rate at which we were travelling is lessened. Again and again similar loud reports are heard, which so act upon the watchful driver that we are made conscious that we are moving very slowly and cautiously indeed. This needful delay is rather trying to the spirit of impatience; but life is sweet, and a safe journey much to be desired; and so we become reconciled to the tardy motion of the train. We grope, as it were, our way through the mist of cloud and smoke which surrounds us, and at length, through the mercy of God, are all set down in safety at the terminus, free to pursue the business that brought us to town.

Has not this a voice to our consciences, yea, and also to our hearts? All who have not received Christ, the Life and the Light, are hastening on through the dense spiritual darkness which covers this world, to the great and solemn end that awaits them. If they continue in their present state, and thus die in their sins, a million-fold more terrible fate than that which arises from the most fearful accident on the railway must be their portion.

But God "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," and so He is continually warning them as to whither they are going, and what will be their end if they heed not His beseechings and admon-

itions. The thirty-third chapter of the Book of Job shows us some of the means that God uses to awaken souls to a sense of their condition, "having no hope, and without God in the world."

"God speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then He openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that He may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword. He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain: so that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat. His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen stick out. Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers . . . Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living." (*vv.* 14-30.)

Sometimes He takes away the desire of one's eyes, or the delight of one's heart; or He employs less striking, but not less impressive ways of arousing the soul from its natural state of insensibility. One verse from His own heart-searching Word, or, it may be, a sentence from an earnest discourse of a soul-winning servant of Christ, may be fastened upon the conscience; or one may be disturbed from one's lethargy by the presentation, in a railway carriage, or an omnibus, or by the wayside, of a messenger of mercy in the guise of a gospel tract; or, a kind Christian friend may, in his love for one's soul, have put some earnest, personal questions as to one's con-

dition in the sight of God; or have done the like service by means of a friendly letter, indited in the spirit of one who would pluck a brand out of the fire. (Zech. iii. 2.)

But whatever may be the modes that God in His grace may deign to use, they are all so many warnings to the soul to take heed, and entreaties to accept that salvation which He offers "without money and without price." (Isa. lv. 1.) But, oh! beloved soul, be careful not to slight or reject those warnings and those entreaties. "A prudent man forseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished." (Prov. xxvii. 12.) Hear, and learn from, what is said of the patriarch Noah: "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear" [or, being wary], "prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." (Heb. xi. 7.) God had told him of the Flood that was coming upon the world of the ungodly, long before there was even a sign of it; and he believed God, and "being wary," he took the God-appointed means of deliverance from that judgment, and thus he and his house were saved, when all the rest perished in the swelling of the mighty waters.

May you, then, heed and fear, and take refuge in Christ, the Ark of God's providing; and then, whether the remainder of your journey be long or short, instead of being led of Satan to that terminus which introduces the soul into everlasting woe, you will have your present portion in Christ, and, in God's good time, will be called away to dwell for ever in His holy and joy-inspiring presence.

T.

## A PRICELESS GIFT.

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**T**O put the case briefly, what distinguishes true believers from mere professors is that the former have in their hearts the grace of God's Holy Spirit; they have the spirit of life in Christ Jesus; and the Holy Ghost dwelling in them as the seal, the earnest, the unction, and the witness. This grand and glorious fact now characterizes all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ; should ever bow their souls in holy adoration before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, whose accomplished redemption has procured for them this great blessing.

A man may teach us religion, or theology, or the letter of Scripture; but he cannot give us faith; he cannot give us life. "It is the *gift* of God." Precious little word, "gift." It is like God. It is free as God's air; free as His sunlight; free as His refreshing dew-drops. But, we repeat, and with solemn emphasis, each one must get it for himself, and have it in himself. "None can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; that he should still live for ever and not see corruption. For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever." (Ps. xlix. 7-9.)

Beloved friend, do give these weighty matters a place in thy heart now, while yet the door is open, and while yet the day of grace is lengthened out in God's marvellous long-suffering. The moment is rapidly approaching in the which the door of mercy will be closed against thee for ever, when all hope will be gone, and thy precious soul be plunged in black and eternal despair.

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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.*

## **V.—SATISFIED AND HAPPY.**

"Bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry." (Luke xv. 23.)

**T**HE prodigal is made satisfied and happy. This he could not be, if he was not made it. To be satisfied and happy are results; there must be something before to cause them. This, I think, is an important thing to see, as so many souls expect to have happy feelings of satisfaction come over them in some mysterious way, with really nothing to cause them. I am quite sure a very great number of people who attend these and other gospel meetings think this; and it leads them to say, "I'm waiting for feelings."

Are there any here to-night who are waiting for feelings of satisfaction and happiness? If so, I impress on you the fact that you must have some-

thing to cause them. May the Lord help us now to see—

First—WHEN was the prodigal satisfied and happy?

Secondly, WHAT CAUSED his satisfaction?

Thirdly, WHAT CAUSED his happiness?

Perhaps it will help you to see how you can also be satisfied and happy.

# 1. WHEN WAS THE PRODIGAL SATISFIED AND HAPPY?

Go back with me, and have a look at our friend the prodigal, first, Spending all; secondly, In the mighty famine; thirdly, In want; fourthly, In the fields feeding swine and not even able to eat their food. And now ask yourself the question, "Was he satisfied and happy?" You must answer, "No, he was not." Why? Because his circumstances, occupation, and condition caused him to be unsatisfied and unhappy. I quite think he was trying to be satisfied and happy; but trying to be will not make anyone so.

Dear friends, if you are away from God you are not satisfied and happy, and it is quite impossible for you to be so where you are, for you know as well as I do that when you think you are quite satisfied and happy it all vanishes away. Real, lasting satisfaction is a thing unknown in the "far country"; so also is true happiness.

Perhaps the feelings you have got are feelings of misery, an empty void, and no joy, but a terror at having to meet God; and, with your sins unforgiven, you tremble. These are the feelings of some of those who are in the "far country." What has caused these feelings? God has been showing you what a sinner you are. His Word says that every mouth must be stopped, and all

the world become guilty before God. (Romans iii. 19.) Every soul must come to this at some time; but every soul who finds it out in this world can be forgiven; but should you close your eyes to the fact now, and then have to stand before God in your sins in eternity, there will be no forgiveness, but an awful existence through the eternal ages in misery, away from God, where no happiness ever comes. Why not let God make you satisfied and happy now?

Do you say, I would like to be, I am really in earnest; I've been miserable for many weary days and weeks, and I would do anything to be different? It may be you are like a man I have read about, who was talking one evening to a Christian, and in the course of conversation he told this Christian how miserable he was; yes, he was in deep distress about his soul. This Christian introduced him to a doctor, also a Christian, who asked him to call round to his house that evening, and have a chat on the subject of being saved.

This he agreed to do, but it was after eleven when he knocked at the doctor's door; for being a cab-driver he could not get away before. He was asked into the dining-room, and at once a good hot supper was placed before him. He began to eat, then pushing the plate from him, said, "Beg pardon, sir, but I'm that wretched I cannot eat any more. Oh, what must I do to be saved?"

Oh! that every unsaved soul here to-night were wretched, too wretched to eat or to sleep. You ought to be, for your danger is real. If you are, I have good news for you. You can be made satisfied and happy. Do you ask, When?

Let us look and see when the prodigal was satisfied and happy. Let us follow him a little. He is in the field, the swine are eating ravenously; he starves; he is thinking, making plans; we see him get up, and start walking. Where is he going to? Listen! Can we not hear him say, "I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned"? Yes, that is what he says; and he means it, too, for he is making for the road that leads to his father's house. "When he is yet a great way off" he is seen by his father, who runs towards him, and, falling on his neck, he covers him with kisses. We know the story, the kisses, the robe, the ring, the shoes; all for that naughty prodigal son. Then the door thrown open, and he finds himself inside the house.

What then? Why, the feast is ready, and at his father's table he can eat of the fatted calf, satisfied and happy. When? When sitting at the table, forgiven, clothed, and provided for; but not till then. The result followed the cause.

Fellow-believer, can you see your history here? Happy Christian, can you see yourself at the Father's table? Yes, I know you can. I ask you, What makes you so satisfied and so happy?

You tell me, "What the Father has done for me."

My dear unsaved, miserable friend, God can make you happy; he can satisfy you with Christ as the One, and only One, who can make you satisfied and happy, and you will never be that until you know that you have access by faith into the favour of God, till you are forgiven, clothed, and eternally provided for with the richest of heaven's blessings.



## 2. WHAT CAUSED HIS SATISFACTION?

In Psalm xxxvi. verse 8, we are told of some who will be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of God's house, and who will be made to drink of the river of God's pleasures. Does not this help us with the answer to our question? To eat of the fatness of God's house, to drink of the river of God's pleasures, will abundantly satisfy.

Look at verse 5 in the same Psalm. "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds." We have God's mercy and God's faithfulness in that verse.

Now verse 6: "Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; Thy judgments are a great deep: O Lord, Thou preservest man and beast." We have God's righteousness and God's judgments in that verse; and verse 7 says, "How excellent is Thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings."

If the ground of God's mercy to poor sinners, faithfulness to the dying Saviour's prayer for their forgiveness, righteousness that cannot pass the sinner by, and judgments that were poured out and exhausted when the Saviour died the awful death under the sword of justice which smote the Shepherd, His loving-kindness has reached you, a sinner, so that you put your trust under the shadow of His wings, you can surely speak of being satisfied, yea, abundantly satisfied with the blessed Saviour who endured so much on your account. The fatness of God's house is Christ; the river of God's pleasures is that stream of blessings which we have in Christ.

"Sweetest rest and peace have filled me,  
Sweeter praise than tongue can tell;

God is satisfied with Jesus;  
I am satisfied as well."

I went the other day to see a man in the hospital. He had been very anxious about his soul, and I had seen him before, and put the gospel before him, and he had received it in faith, and trusted in the Lord Jesus as his Saviour. I spoke to him about God's holy claims having been met by the death of Christ, and that God is satisfied with the atonement made by the Lord Jesus through His death and blood-shedding, and how He has shown His satisfaction by raising Him from the dead to His own right hand.

The dear man was very happy, and spoke very simply about believing in the Lord Jesus. He also spoke of being ignorant about the Word of God, but said he had a great desire to learn more about Christ. The world and things that used to interest him had lost their charm.

I said, "Have you found satisfaction in Christ?"

He replied, "Yes, I'm satisfied; and when you are satisfied you have enough, and don't want any more."

None but Christ can satisfy like that. Christ is the food of the newly born soul. When God's sovereign act of giving life to a dead sinner has taken place, we see desires created which can only be satisfied by Christ. Do you find these desires after God's word; a desire to be where Christ is preached; a desire to talk to those who want to talk about Him; a desire to be occupied in your thoughts with the Lamb of God Who died that cruel death to redeem your soul from hell? If so, no doubt God is at work with you.

We see these desires in the prodigal son when

he spoke about the "bread enough and to spare." How much more should we expect these desires in those souls who have been forgiven, clothed, and seated at the Father's table!

My dear friends, if the fattened calf speaks about the blessed Saviour, we may be quite sure that we shall be satisfied when we feed there. Yes, abundantly satisfied, because the satisfaction is caused by the eternal Son of God, Who has died for perishing sinners, and lives to be everything to them for time and for eternity.

But there is also the drinking in that thirty-seventh Psalm, drinking at a river. That river of God's pleasures speaks to us, does it not? Where does God find His pleasures? Why, it was of Christ He said, "In whom I am well pleased." If God is well pleased with Christ we ought to be. Let me test your heart and mine with a few questions.

What is it that gives you and me most pleasure from day to day? What pleasure do we find in reading the Bible? What pleasure do we find in thinking about the things of God and eternity?

Perhaps you say, "Oh, I don't find pleasure in that, I do it sometimes; but it is a duty, not a pleasure."

God forgive you! Another says, "We cannot be always reading our Bibles, and speaking about God's things; we must have a bit of life sometimes."

Friend, you don't know what life is. Jesus told us what eternal life is when He said, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." (John xvii. 3.)

“ Life is found alone in Jesus,  
 Only there 'tis offered thee,  
 Offered without price or money,  
 'Tis the gift of God sent free.  
 Take salvation, take salvation,  
 Take it now, and happy be.”

I have heard of a girl who, after she was converted, was going a trip by boat. There were a good many young people among the party, and some of them got up a concert. They put this girl's name down for a solo. When called upon, she was rather taken aback; but looking to the Lord for guidance, she started to sing that hymn one verse of which says,

“ I tried the broken cisterns, Lord,  
 But ah! the waters failed,  
 E'en as I stooped to drink they fled,  
 And mocked me as I wailed.  
 Now, none but Christ can satisfy,  
 None other name for me,  
 There's love and life and lasting joy,  
 Lord Jesus, found in Thee.”

It made a deep, solemn impression on those that heard it. The waters are sure to fail when this world's pleasures are sought after, but the river of God's pleasures never fails. As the old fisherman said, when talking about the Lord: “ Jesus never fails, Jesus never fails.”

The question we have been considering is, “ What caused the prodigal satisfaction? We have seen that the fatted calf which was prepared at the father's table tells us of the never-failing Saviour who feeds us with Himself, and satisfies us with eternal pleasures. May God make Christ precious to us all.

### 3. WHAT CAUSED HIS HAPPINESS?

Our third question is, "What caused his happiness?"

I should like to answer it by asking another: How could he help being happy? You see he was satisfied; he could see how happy his father was; and he had been dead, and was alive again; he was lost, and is found. It is not surprising that "they began to be merry."

And so with you. How can you help being happy if you are truly satisfied. That cabman that I was just now speaking about said, "I'm that wretched I cannot eat." You see he could not be happy. When unsaved and under conviction, happiness cannot be yours; but the cabman could be made happy; and so can you. He listened to the sweet story of Jesus and His love, told with all earnestness by the Christian doctor. He believed what he heard, and very soon could say, "Thank God, I see that He died for me, poor lost sinner; I believe Jesus; I see that He died for me. I trust in Him. I believe His blood has washed all my sins away. I see it clearly." And tears of joy rolled down his cheeks.

The two dropped on their knees, and the young convert poured out his heart to God, thanking Him for the salvation he had received in Christ, and praying earnestly for the salvation of his wife.

Getting off their knees he was asked to finish his supper. He started, took one mouthful, and again pushing his plate from him, said, "Beg pardon, sir, but I am that full, I could not eat another mouthful. I'll away home, and tell the wife what God has done for my soul."

He went off perfectly happy because perfectly satisfied.

Satisfaction first, happiness next with the prodigal, and with every poor sinner saved by grace, and the more satisfied with Christ we are the more happy we shall be.

But I also see that seeing his father's happiness must have caused him to be the same, and when a soul really understands how much joy there is in the heart of God when He bestows the blessing on returning sinners, it will have the same effect of producing joy too. "THEY began to be merry." The joy was mutual.

One last thought: "He was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." The new life also produces joy. Galatians v. 22 speaks of the fruit of the Spirit being "love, joy, peace, etc." It was the word "JOY" as a fruit of the Spirit produced in us through the life we have as new-born souls which I think bears on our subject.

O Lord, produce in all Thine own here that joy which is the fruit of the Spirit; and, Lord Jesus, make Thyself the satisfying portion of all, that there may not be one soul here to-night who is not satisfied and happy. Lord, grant it for Thy Name's sake. Amen. C. A. S.

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### **"I SEE YOU ARE ONE OF THEM."**

SOME months ago, when calling on a poor woman, a Christian, living in a rural district in Buckinghamshire, the precious promise contained in Isaiah lv. 11 was brought forcibly to my mind: "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that

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which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

After the first few salutations, she said, “ Oh ! I must tell you my joy this week ; it has so cheered me up. What good may not a little word do.”

I wondered what she could mean.

She went on to tell me about a ragged, shoeless man who, seven or eight years ago, had come to her house begging.

As she was giving him a piece of bread, he noticed a text of scripture which I had given her, and which she had hung upon the wall. The text was : “ As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” (Josh. xxiv. 15.)

This brought from him a volley of abuse against Christians, or Methodists, as he styled them ; and he added, “ Ah ! I see *you* are one of them.”

Her reply was, “ Thank God ! I am ; and I hope, my friend, when you come again, God will have changed your wicked heart, for remember His word says, ‘ He that believeth . . . shall be saved ; but he that *believeth not* shall be *damned.*’ ” (Mark xvi. 16.)

This only made him more angry, and he went off uttering fresh oaths and imprecations against the person whom the Lord had chosen as one of His instruments of mercy in the salvation of his precious soul, although he knew it not.

Years passed on ; the text on the wall, being soiled, had been removed, and the circumstance was well-nigh forgotten by the family, when, three days before my visit to her, a respectably dressed man appeared at her door.

He entered smiling, and saying, “ Don’t you remember me, and my abusing you about the

'Methodists'? But now, praise the Lord, He has used them in blessing to my soul! Where's your text on the wall: 'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord'? And don't you remember that solemn passage you said to me in parting, 'He that believeth . . . shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned'? Oh, how that word *rang* in my ears afterward!"

For some little time they sat weeping for joy, when he proceeded to tell her how the Lord had met with him. One Sunday afternoon, in some part of the country, he had been present at an open-air preaching which recalled to him more vividly than ever the words of the poor woman. He went home, but could not sleep that night, and for a fortnight continued pleading with God for mercy. *Unbelief*, as he expressed it, *hindered* him from getting peace, though all the time his mind was full of the words, "He that *believeth shall be saved.*"

At length peace and joy entered his soul, the result of believing in the Lord, who, as he said, "had given Himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20.)

When she spoke of the contrast in his appearance to his former ragged state, he replied, "Oh! it's that Blessed One who has done it *all*"; proving the truth of that word which says, godliness is *profitable* unto the life that now is. (1 Tim. iv. 8.)

On departing, he put into her hand a shilling, in token of gratitude, *urging* upon her the solemn responsibility of speaking earnestly and plainly to any "cad" who might ever visit her hereafter.

G. T.



## **"HEALED BY HIS STRIPES."**

A POOR man was dying in Paris. Several times the clergyman had been to see him, and had read prayers for the sick, and told him what a great sinner he was. But the clergyman did not know of God's love to sinners, therefore all he said only made the poor man more miserable.

The visit was repeated several times, but the sick man received no comfort; he could only moan out about the weight of his sins.

One Sunday morning he sent his little child to fetch the clergyman on his way from church.

"It is no use for me to go," said he, "your father never seems any better."

"Oh, sir," answered the child, "father said I was not to go back without you."

"Well, I'll take my sermon to read to him." And he followed the child.

He found the poor man almost distracted about his soul. "I've brought my sermon to read to you," said the clergyman, and he began reading the text, that beautiful one in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, fifth verse: "But 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."

"Hold," called out the dying man; "read that again, sir. 'Wounded for our transgressions.' Then He was wounded for *mine*! I have it!" he exclaimed, starting up. "'Bruised for my iniquities.' Why did not you tell me that before, sir? But I have it now, thank God! I am saved."

That night, in full assurance of faith, he fell asleep in Christ, resting on His finished work.

The day following, the clergyman called on a friend, and asked what there was in that scripture more than another.

“Why,” said his friend, who was a believer in the Lord Jesus, “this verse contains the whole gospel. Now, I pray you believe it. Can you say, ‘He was wounded for *my* transgressions? The Son of God bore *my* sins in His own body on the tree’?”

“I see,” exclaimed the clergyman, “how blind I have been all along; knowing the Scripture with my head, and not believing it with my heart.”

Next Lord’s Day his congregation were amazed at the intensely earnest way in which he preached; still more so when he told them that he had been a blind leader, but that God’s grace had shone into his heart, and that now he was a new creature in Christ Jesus. He begged them all to trust Him as their Saviour.

M. J. E. B.

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## HOW THE BLESSING SPREAD.

**A**MONGST the girls of my class who came to me on the Lord’s Day afternoon was a nice, bright-looking young servant. She had been brought by her sister, one who had found peace by believing.

I was interested in the young girl, who always knew her scripture and hymns so well; but she had an anxious look on her face, which made me speak to her privately once or twice.

One afternoon it was very wet, and I did not think it would be any use going out, as none of the girls would come in such weather; but I felt

I *must* go. When I arrived, there was but this young servant.

“Now,” thought I, “God has a message to this dear girl this afternoon.”

After we had talked a little, she told me she was very unhappy, for she knew she was a great sinner, but did not know how to believe in Jesus.

I read to her the word of the Lord in Isaiah i. 18: “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” I told her that it was “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to *His* mercy, He saved us.” (Titus iii. 5.) And while kneeling before the Lord, asking Him to send light into her heart, the light came, and she got up a saved soul. There was no mistake about it; her face *beamed*.

“Oh,” she said, “while I was asking to be saved, something made me feel saved. I understand now what it is to believe.”

Since then her mother has been brought to the Lord. This daughter wrote to her, telling her, with a full heart, what great things the Lord had done for her, and begging her also to come to the Saviour, quoting the verse, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matt. xi. 28.)

The letter was put by, but the mother could not get such an invitation out of her mind.

One evening she felt very weary, and thought she would look at that letter again. “I’m weary and heavy laden, sure enough,” said she; “so I think I’ll just come,” and she knelt down and asked God to show her how. And do you think

He refused? No. His loving heart was rejoiced by another burdened one coming to trust Him, and He delayed not to give her the desired rest.

Reader, He still waits to give you all you need; life, joy, peace, the hope of glory; yea Himself! In Him we may find everything we need. Come, then, to Him, *now*. M. J. E. B.

## **"I GIVE UNTO THEM ETERNAL LIFE."**

(JOHN X. 28.)

Had'st thou the wealth of all the world,  
All thine its countless treasure;  
Could'st thou gain all the world's applause  
Command its every pleasure;  
Thou still wert far from peace and joy,  
Were thy sins unforgiven;  
None can be happy, though they try,  
Till they are meet for heaven.

And Jesu's precious blood alone,  
Can fit the soul for glory;  
A truth which far and wide is known;  
An oft-repeated story;  
And oh! 'tis true. God's grace is free;  
Lost sinner, now believe it!  
"Eternal life" is offered thee;  
Oh! haste thee to receive it.

"Eternal Life!" Oh! ponder well  
The meaning of this sentence;  
Let it upon thy conscience dwell,  
And lead thee to repentance;  
No longer think the Blessed God  
Is One who cannot love thee;  
He waits to ease thee of thy load;  
Oh! let His mercy save thee.

A. M.

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# GOSPEL LIGHT.



**GOD IS LIGHT.      GOD IS LOVE.**

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

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

## GOSPEL TALKS BY THE WAYSIDE.

“**W**ELL, friend, if it were raining showers of gold sovereigns, what would you do; would you go on with your work, or make sure of the gold?” said an evangelist to an old man by the road-side, who was busily gathering rubbish in a pail.

“Oh! I should stop, and pick up the gold first,” he replied knowingly.

“To be sure you would. Now it has been raining gold this eighteen hundred years; do you know what I mean?” The old man looked up wonderingly. “I mean,” he continued, “all the unsearchable riches of Christ have been showering down on poor sinners all this time. Have you received them?”

“I’m afraid not.”

“It is high time that you had.”

"Yes, I know that; I'm eighty years of age."

"There now, and yet you are busily engaged, but forgetting the gold showers!"

"But it's right to do this," said he, turning back to his pail of rubbish, with apparently the greatest indifference.

"Surely; but you know men, as they say, generally look out for the main chance, and it is all chance in man's world. But here is the main certainty; you had better look out for this. Make sure. If gold were falling, you would fill your pockets at once. Now, take your place as a guilty and lost sinner before God, and believe on His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will receive the remission of sins, and the gold showers, so to speak, will fill your heart. Accept this little book, and read it. Good day."

How many thousands are to be met with on the high road of the world in the same condition, striving for a large fortune or for a little pittance, as the case may be, but deaf to God's offers of grace, blind to their own eternal interests, and no heart for the unsearchable riches of Christ; knowing *about it*, probably, but yet *not knowing Him!*

Passing along down the road, an elderly woman came out of a house to post a letter. Having remarked upon the weather, the evangelist repeated to her what had just passed, adding, "The old man did not at first quite understand what was meant."

"Ah! he ought to have done," she replied earnestly, "if he had the grace of God in his heart. He used to pray. I know who he is."

"Have you the grace of God?"

"Yes, I've had it this thirty years."

“I am glad to hear that. Then let the living water flow out; tell all your neighbours; let them hear all you know about Jesus.”

Dear reader, do you know the grace of God? Grace is abounding, reigning through righteousness. (Romans v. 20, 21.) It brings salvation to the guilty and the lost. Grace is what you need. Your best works are mixed with sin; the law condemns you, but grace will set you free, and teach you the way of holiness.

What a contrast; an old man of eighty without God, and an old woman knowing His grace for thirty years! A short period at most must decide the eternal destiny of both; the former, if called away as he was, to find out his folly when it is too late; the latter, to reap for ever the glory God gives with the grace.

A few hundred yards farther, a man sat in a cart drawn up at a cottage gate. “A little book about Jesus,” said the evangelist, handing him one.

“Ah!” he replied, as he readily took the book, “we little know, when we see a stranger go by, that he is a Christian, till we speak together.”

A few words were exchanged about the Lord, when a blacksmith, who had been standing at a little distance, listening to what passed, drew near.

“And are you a Christian, too?” asked the evangelist.

“I know whom I have believed, and when my sins were forgiven,” was the reply.

A similar testimony followed from the wife of the man in the cart, who came up just after. All three appeared to be rejoicing in the Lord.

"Well, friends," continued the evangelist, "if you are Christians, every one all round about where you live ought to know it. Your light should shine; and it will, if the lamp is well lit."

"Yes, but we shall have trouble down here, but that's to purify us," said one of the three.

"Yes, it is cleaning the glasses for the light to shine out more clearly. Good day."

Proceeding on his way, the evangelist came to a man resting upon his barrow by the road-side. "The good old Book says that 'the rest of the labouring man is sweet,'" was the present greeting. "I'm labouring now, and looking for *eternal rest*; are *you*?"

"I hope so."

"I'm sure."

"Sure?"

"Yes, *sure*. Jesus said, 'Come unto me, . . . and I will *give you rest*,' and I came, and I *have rest of conscience*. Now, I'm taking His yoke, and walking with Him, *enjoying rest of heart* by the way. And also waiting for His return, to see His face, and *share eternal rest*. And why not *you*?"

"I heard a preacher say that when we'd spent as many years in eternity as there are blades of grass in King's-mead, we should be no nearer the end."

"Well, now is the time to make sure of eternal blessing, and the only alternative is eternal woe."

"Ah! yes, there are only the two roads, the broad and the narrow," said the man.

"Exactly. Then come as a poor sinner to Jesus; that is entering the strait gate; and walk under His yoke; that is treading the narrow way; and look for His coming, when you will have



eternal rest. But you *must* come to Him first. I have the first, am enjoying the second, and looking for the third. Believe as a poor, guilty, lost one on Him, and the blessing is yours. Make sure. And read this little book."

"Thank you, sir; I'd as soon have that book as my dinner."

My reader, have *you* come to the Saviour? Has He given you rest? Are you burdened and heavy laden with sin? He bids you come. *All* are invited. "Come unto Me, *all* ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi. 28.) It does not say, Come, and ye shall find it. It is better than that: "I will *give* you." You have not to search about for it; He *gives it* to every one that comes to Him. Will you come? Come now, and *rest* most surely shall be yours; present, permanent, eternal rest. Come.

Distributing books right and left, the evangelist presently came to a place where a group of men were working at a rick.

A chimney-sweep, black from head to foot, who stood by, greeted him jestingly as he approached: "You be'ent afraid to come by, sir, be you?" alluding to his own condition, covered with soot.

"Oh, no!" replied the evangelist; and, handing him a book containing the gospel, he added, "That will tell you how you can become whiter than the snow, through the precious blood of Christ."

The man of soot was evidently taken aback at the unexpected response. The Lord grant that it may have impressed his soul.

Dear reader, all men in nature are blacker with sin than the blackest of chimney-sweeps. Sin is

blackier than soot. The latter is but outward; but sin has affected man's whole moral being, and he is utterly unfit for the presence of God. Nothing but the precious blood of Christ can cleanse him. Are *you* cleansed? "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. xvii. 11.) None but those who are redeemed by blood will ever escape wrath or enter the glory of God. No other passport will avail there.

Passing along a field just beyond, as the evangelist drew near to his destination, a young man crossed his path, carrying a large sack of sheep fodder. "You have a heavy burden there upon your shoulders."

"Yes."

"Have you got rid of the burden of sin? You would find a great difference going up yonder hill if I took the burden off, would you not?"

"Yes."

"If you get rid of the burden of sin, you will travel much lighter through this world."

"I expect I should."

"Well, who can take it off?"

"Jesus Christ, I expect."

"Then believe on Him, and He will do it. If I offer to take your burden, and you believe me, it is soon done. And if you believe on Him, He will take the burden of sin from your heart. Only trust Him."

How blessedly simple the gospel is! Men have many devices of their own to reach heaven, but God's way is Christ. "I am *the way*, and *the truth*, and *the life*." (John xiv. 6.) He is, as another has said, "The way to the Father; the truth of the whole thing; and the life to enjoy it." CHRIST IS ALL. "If ye believe not that I am he,"

said Jesus, "*ye shall die in your sins.*" (John viii. 24.) But "*whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.*" (Acts x. 43.)

Reader, how is it with you?

E. H. C.

## GOD'S GRACE AND MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY.

AN OPEN LETTER.

**T**HERE is a very lovely passage at the close of the Book of Revelation to which you have not referred: "*WHOSOEVER WILL, let him take the water of life freely.*" (Rev. xxii. 17.)

This is but one of a large number of passages which give us the other side of the subject. Your letter is entirely one-sided. The writer of the article to which you call our attention rejects utterly the notion of man's free will. He believes that man is perfectly powerless; and not only so, but in a state of positive enmity against God, so that, if left to himself, he never would come to Christ. All who come to the "great supper" are compelled to come, else they never would be there. (Luke xiv. 23.)

Moreover he most fully believes in the sovereignty of God; and that the names of all who are saved were written in the Lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world. (Rev. xiii. 8.)

But then, on the other side (for we must take both sides), let us ponder such words as these: "I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplica-

tions, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for ALL MEN; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; WHO WILL HAVE ALL MEN TO BE SAVED, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." (1 Timothy ii. 1-6.)

And again: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to usward, NOT WILLING THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH, BUT THAT ALL SHOULD COME TO REPENTANCE." (2 Peter iii. 2.)

Now, if it be said that, in the above scriptures, the words "any" and "all" refer to "the elect" we reply that this is an unwarrantable liberty to take with the word of God. If the inspired writer had meant "any of the elect," or "all of the elect" he would most assuredly have said so. But he says nothing of the kind. It is not according to the desire of the heart of God that any should perish.

But man is a responsible being; although your letter is totally silent on this very important question. In short you seem to lose sight altogether of two weighty truths:

First, the largeness of the heart of God; the fulness and freeness of His grace; the wide aspect of His salvation; that His righteousness is unto all; that the gospel is to be preached to every creature; that God "commandeth ALL MEN EVERYWHERE TO REPENT." (Mark xvi. 15; Acts xvii. 30; Romans iii. 22.)

Secondly, man's responsibility. Is the sinner responsible, or is he not? If he is not responsible, then what mean such words as these: "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels; in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power"?

Again, "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thessalonians i. 6-9; ii. 11, 12.)

Are men responsible to believe the gospel? Yes, verily, inasmuch as they "shall be punished with everlasting destruction" for rejecting it. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. xviii. 25.) People find difficulty in reconciling man's powerlessness with his responsibility. It is none of our business to reconcile things that are revealed in Holy Scripture. It is ours to BELIEVE. They ARE reconciled, inasmuch as they are distinctly taught in the word of God.

It is remarkable that we do not see the same difficulty in reference to the things of this life. Suppose a man owes you a thousand pounds; but he has by unprincipled extravagance rendered himself wholly unable to pay you. He is quite powerless. Is he responsible? And are you not perfectly justified, according to worldly principles, in taking legal proceedings against him?

How much more will God be justified in His judgment of all those who reject the glad tidings of a full and free salvation sent to them on the ground of the atoning death of His only begotten Son! (Rom. iii. 4; Heb. ii. 1-3.) C.H.M.

## GOD'S PURPOSE AND POWER TO BLESS.

**T**HE purpose of God is to save and to bless man, and this comes out at the time when we might least have expected it.

At the call and conversion of Saul of Tarsus, as related in the twenty-sixth chapter of the Acts, we read that the Lord had appeared to him for a *purpose*, to make him a minister, and a witness, not of judgment, but of blessing. (v. 19.)

A little before that time God's Son had been crucified and rejected from the earth. Messages of grace from heaven by the mouth of the apostle Peter, and the testimony of Stephen, were equally refused, the latter sealing his witness with his blood. Saul of Tarsus was of the company of his enemies that stoned him to death.

What should we have expected after all this? Surely the immediate outpouring of God's judgment. Not so." God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world" (John iii. 17.) Accordingly this very Saul of Tarsus is arrested on the journey from Jerusalem to Damascus, as one who was to be the witness of grace on God's part to man; for God was, and is, bent upon blessing.

So the Lord Jesus in glory said to Saul, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to

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make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified." And he was to go forth and tell them that all this full cup of blessing should be theirs individually, on the simple principle of "faith that is in me" (Acts xxvi. 16-18).

And Saul went forth, and continued witnessing that Christ had suffered, and risen again from the dead, according as the prophets and Moses had said, in order to show light to the people and to the Gentiles (vv. 22, 23). For indeed "gross darkness" had set in, since He who was the Light of the world had been put out of it.

Now, this sets forth the condition the world is in to-day. It is under the blinding power of Satan, who is its god. (2 Cor. iv. 4.) Darkness, gross darkness, pervades the whole scene (Eph. vi. 12). It was at this very time that God Himself declared what He had done. He who is slow to judgment, who delights in mercy, turned that dark deed of man in placing Christ upon the cross into the occasion of His richest blessing, even of His having been made sin for us (2 Cor. v. 21), to bear the penalty of the very sin that put Him there, and to bear sins in His own body on the tree (1 Peter ii. 24).

Christ has suffered; He died, was buried, and rose again (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4), and on that ground, the glad tidings of life, light and salvation are now

addressed to you. This is God's power to salvation to every one that believes. (Rom. 1. 16.) How simple!

#### FROM THE POWER OF SATAN TO GOD.

We may look at the case of the poor demoniac, whose name was Legion, as a wonderful illustration of this turning from the power of Satan to God. In the account in Luke vii. 27 we read that Jesus met "a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs." Further, "he was kept bound with chains and in fetters: and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness." (v. 29.)

His name was "Legion; because many devils were entered into him" (v. 30). What a terrible picture of man in his natural state! Not that every individual is possessed by the devil in the same way; yet every one, however he may boast of his freewill, is really captive to that dreadful enemy, the god of this world, that old serpent (Rev. xx. 2). And as Legion had had devils a long time, so man's condition has been such a long time; yea, ever since the entrance of sin, when he disobeyed God in Eden, and became the prey of the tempter. We were all born in this slavery and thralldom.

Legion also "ware no clothes." Man, woman, or child, all are naked sinners in the sight of God. He abode not in any house. He was, indeed, an outcast, as also the sinner is from the only secure dwelling-place, the presence of God. His dwelling-place was in the tombs; fit description of what this world is, one vast graveyard. Where are all the generations of men that lived before the present one? All, with two exceptions, died.



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Do you believe these solemn realities? They are the truth; apply them to yourself; do not put the truth away from you, from a feeling of despair, for there is salvation even for you.

Legion was bound with chains and fetters, the restraints his fellow-men put upon him; but he broke them, "and was driven of the devil into the wilderness," and would have been driven sooner or later to destruction had not deliverance come. There are in the world to-day many agencies emanating from man to keep order and check the evil that is in him. Yet, withal, restraints good or bad, do not deliver; man's state remains the same.

Oh! my reader, be not deceived by the sight of your eyes, but believe the word of God, and look at things as they are, and see also in the uncontrollable restlessness of the world to-day, the devil already driving his victims in the wilderness on the way to everlasting destruction in the lake of fire (Rev. xx. 15). Do not be the devil's dupe, when God warns you plainly, but take your place as a guilty, helpless sinner, and learn how you may be eternally delivered.

Wherein was Legion's deliverance? Jesus meets him; He in whom resided the full power of God draws near. What was the effect? "What have I to do with Thee?" wretched Legion cries out; "I beseech Thee, torment me not."

Do you feel like this? How often, when Christ is introduced, men feel it is tormenting them. Speak of Him, and you are a troubler. Yes, man finds the presence of Satan more easy to be borne than the presence of God. Dear reader, do you in your heart say to Jesus to-day, "What have I to do with Thee?"

Let me tell you that you must have to do with Him, now or hereafter. May it be, like this poor man, now. Jesus commanded, and by His word the unclean spirit departed out of the man.

Soon the same man that besought Jesus not to torment him, besought Him that he might remain with Him. What a change! and *it is* a change to be delivered from the power of Satan to God. The gospel is now the power of God to this purpose.

The lookers on see the wondrous work of God (Luke viii. 35). They see the poor man, clothed, and in his right mind, sitting at the feet of Jesus, the only place where rest is to be found. For Jesus says, "Come unto me, . . . and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi. 28.) God also has provided the best robe of the Father's house, Christ Himself, for the repentant sinner.

They see him in his right mind. Man never has right thoughts of anything till he is brought back to God. What a deliverance! And Christ is now the repentant, believing one's rest and peace. Christ, of God, made unto him righteousness (1 Cor. i. 30)), and the mind of Christ (1 Cor. ii. 16), becomes his own. Surely, he can only need one thing more, as every true-hearted Christian must desire: that is, to be *with* the One who has wrought all these marvels, and who has displayed such love. (Col. iii. 1-4).

Yet is there an interval before this may be. The men of Gadara would not have Jesus. He departed from them for a season. So has He from this world that refused Him; and, until His return, He bids us, as He did delivered Legion, to tell what great things God has done for us; first, to friends at home (Mark v. 19), and then

## GOD'S PURPOSE AND POWER TO BLESS. 79

it is our privilege to publish God's glad tidings abroad.

And when Jesus returns a second time (Heb. ix. 28), there will be, as was found at Gadara (Luke viii. 40), a people who (not like the Jews, who *will* receive Him when they see Him, but who) *have* received Him, and are waiting for Him, God's Son from heaven, who comes quickly to receive His own to Himself (Rev. xxii. 20).

May you, my reader, be amongst the happy number who will be caught up to meet Him in the air (1 Thess. iv. 15-17), and by the only means, on our part, "*faith* that is in me," that is, in Christ (Acts xxvi. 18).

J. S. C.

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The LORD Himself shall come,  
And shout a quickening word;  
Thousands shall answer from the tomb,  
"*For ever with the LORD!*"

Then, as we upward fly,  
That resurrection word  
Shall be our shout of victory,  
"*For ever with the LORD!*"

"Knowing as we are known!"  
How shall we love that word,  
How oft repeat before the throne,  
"*For ever with the LORD!*"

That resurrection-word,  
That shout of victory:  
Once more: "*For ever with the LORD!*"  
Amen, so let it be!

## THE HEEDED WARNING.

**S**OME years ago a young man was one evening hurrying to catch the last train from W——. He was many miles distant from London, where he had business early the next morning.

Just as he arrived at the station he heard the train come in. He ran down the steps, put his stick to the door to prevent the porter shutting it. But the porter said, "Too late, sir," and closed the door. Bolt after bolt was fastened; every light put out; the *last* train gone.

The young man knew not what to do, and while standing there the thought came into his mind with terrible force, "What if it is thus with me at last when Christ comes, if I find I am just *too late*, and see the last hope gone, and I am left in darkness for ever."

The thought made him shudder; nor could he get rid of it.

"But," suggested Satan, "how do you know the blood of Jesus is of any avail now? Jesus is not here to save you."

In despair he threw open his Bible, and his eye rested on the 20th verse of John xvii: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word."

These were the words of Jesus, and they were enough. Light entered into the young man's soul; he could shut the Book, and kneel down, and thank the Lord for saving him, and to this day never a doubt has he had as to his acceptance.

M. J. E. B.

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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 NEED AND COST OF REDEMPTION.

"**E**VERY firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break its neck" (Exod. xiii. 13).

This type teaches us a wholesome and humbling truth with reference to our state by nature as children of Adam, together with the wondrous provision of God's grace for relieving us from this state. It brings before us, not what we are in our personal responsibilities, and the way of meeting these, so as to free us from the penalties that attach to us as guilty, but (apart from every act of our own), what we are by simple inheritance from our parents, by virtue of which our lives are forfeited from the first moment of our existence, so that we require to be redeemed in order that we may live to God.

The type brings before us three things.

1st. The nature of the animal that is to be redeemed—an ass.

2nd. The mode of its redemption—by a lamb.

3rd. The absolute alternative if not redeemed—the neck to be broken.

Under the law, as we read in Leviticus xi., all animals were divided into two classes—clean and unclean.

The first class alone was to supply the Israelite with food, and from it the various sacrifices were to be drawn. What man could eat for his blessing, and God accept for him in sacrifice, were thus made identical.

On the other hand, what God could not accept in sacrifice man was not to eat; and thus in what was used or refused God associated His people with Himself in that which made up even their life in natural things.

Without going into the details of what constituted clean and unclean, we learn from the broad features of this typical teaching two all-important truths: in nature and in practice one animal is clean; while in nature and in practice another is unclean.

What have we here but the simple unfolding of what Christ, as man, is on the one hand, and what man in the flesh is on the other? The defining line of clean and unclean runs from Genesis to Revelation. Whether in type or in fact, it is Christ on the one side, and Adam on the other. Man by his *birth* from Adam is unclean. He is *born* outside the pale of all blessing, far removed from all that is good and acceptable before God.

The pride of the natural heart by no means receives readily such a humbling truth as this.

Man would fain disown his inheritance, and take higher and better ground. He would see in the type we are considering only a curiosity in a past economy. He cannot allow himself to see in it his own condition by nature. Though forced to admit that in practice he has failed to be *all* he should be, whether towards God or his neighbour, he would utterly disclaim that he is by nature merely the "firstling of an ass." His knowledge of himself cannot admit such a thought for a moment, for "vain man would be wise, though man be *born* a wild ass's colt" (Job xi. 12).

It is easier far to acknowledge that we have acted *like* a wild ass's colt, than to acknowledge that we are such. Yet this is the clear utterance of God's Word about us, and it is the unmistakable language of our type. It is not till we see God's estimate of ourselves, that we are free to receive, in all its fulness, His wondrous remedy for the dire necessity we are in.

By type and by direct teaching God has taken great pains to give us the real state of things as before Himself. Nor will He overlook what His own eye sees, however much we would like to have it so. He will not confound things that differ, nor yoke clean and unclean together. "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together," is His word in Deut. xxii. 10. Would He show us the extremity of man's necessity in the things of this life, He pictures it to us in the famine of a city "besieged till an *ass's* head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver" (2 Kings vi. 25). The horrors of famine could go no further; the ass's head, and "we boiled my son and did eat him," go together.

So Israel's wanton reliance on an arm of flesh, in going to Egypt for help, is to God the abomination of feeding upon those "whose flesh is as the flesh of asses" (Ezek. xxii. 20.) Had not Israel been taught God's utter rejection of Egypt, as that which to Him was utterly unclean, indeed, "as the flesh of asses"? Was not their state that of those who had been by Himself redeemed from that unclean condition? And had not the type we are taking up been given as the memorial of this very thing?

"Every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the first-born of man among thy children shalt thou redeem. And it shall be, when thy son asketh of thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage. And it came to pass when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the Lord slew the first-born of man and the first-born of beast; therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the first born of my children I redeem" (Exod. xiii. 13-15).

God would ever have His people remember the degradation from which they had been redeemed, and continually He would keep before them and their children the bright *grace* that had interfered to save them from a destruction which, in virtue of their *nature* as sinners, as much belonged to them by *inheritance* as it did to the Egyptians.

What man is by *nature* is abomination to God, and cannot live in His presence, or, while in that state, enter into His service, while to die in that state is to be consigned to everlasting shame.



For a little moment man may glitter in the pomp and vanity of human greatness, like Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, King of Judah, and his friends may lament his end, saying, "Ah lord!" or, "Ah his glory"; but in God's sight he is "buried with the burial of an *ass*, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem" (Jer. xxii. 19). Man without the knowledge of God is but as Nebuchadnezzar, with a "heart made like the beasts, and his dwelling with wild *asses*" (Dan. v. 21).

Such in God's sight is man's state by nature. He is conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity, David tells us (Ps. li. 5). He goes astray from his youth up, speaking lies. He is but "the firstling of an *ass*," by his earliest breath, and can only grow up as such. He may be educated to serve *man's* purposes, but with God he has no link, either for time or eternity.

It is for us to consider such things. The plea of innocency is constantly put in for the babe at the breast, and education is brought to bear upon him as he grows up. A pardon for some lapses in good conduct he may require at the end of his history, but redemption, the thing needed *at birth* to bring him to God, and save his life from eternal destruction, finds a small place in the popular theology of the day, or the ordinary pulpit oratory that people delight to have their ears tickled with.

"Every firstling of an *ass* thou shalt redeem with a lamb," is the utterance of Him whose word "liveth and abideth for ever." *Redemption*, not *education*, is what the infant at the breast requires, in order that he may have a place in God's economy.

One other alternative awaited the firstling of an ass; "if not, thou shalt break his neck." Redemption or destruction became its portion from the first moment of its existence. It was no question of what it had been or might become. It was "the firstling of an ass," and its life was forfeited by the first breath it drew. The lamb stepped in between it and destruction, and through the death of that lamb it passed out of its state by nature, and could take its part, in virtue of redemption, in the service of the God of Israel. By God's provision, the lamb was thus ready to die for the firstling of the ass, the *moment* it made its appearance. The *choice* lay between the lamb and the broken neck.

How simple is the language of this type to the eye of faith! Redemption or destruction awaits the child of Adam at the very moment of its birth. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin," and it is "appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment." Man's history begins with the alternative of "the lamb," or "the broken neck."

Blessed be God, the "Lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world," has "appeared once in the end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. ix. 26). The blood of God's own Son has been shed upon the cross for man's redemption. It knows no limitation of nation or of colour. It is not a ceremonial system for a special people, but the bright witness of divine love and mercy for all men; "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom *for all*." He is the blessed "Lamb of God, that beareth away the sin of the world."

The healing rays of that Sun shine for all, and the redeeming virtues of that blood are *available* for the entire human race. Upon this ground, and not upon that of innocency, every little helpless infant that passes out of this scene ere it reaches the platform of personal responsibility, finds its place in the blessedness provided for it by Him whose will it is that "not one of these little ones should perish" (Matt. xviii. 14).

It was not pity for the "firstling of an ass," as such, that God would have had His ancient people learn from this suggestive ordinance, but a lesson about themselves, and His love for them. "Doth God take care for oxen?" asks the apostle Paul, "or saith He it altogether for our sakes?" "For our sakes, no doubt, this is written," he replies. The pitying eye of God has looked down in mercy upon every little helpless "firstling of an ass" of the widespread human family, and in the blood of "the Lamb of God" we see the rich and eternal provision for its state as such. If, according to His choice, they die early, He avails Himself on their part of its blessed efficacy. If, according to His will, they grow up to take a place before Him on the footing of personal responsibility, He in "the word of the truth of the gospel" tells them of their state before Himself, and bids them avail themselves, by personal faith, of that redemption through the blood of Jesus, which is also "the forgiveness of sins" (Eph. i. 7).

Man *must* take his place before God, not only in the acknowledgment of sins, *but of sin*. Not only of what he is by practice, but of what he is by nature. Not only of what he has gained for himself as "the wages of sin," but of what he

stands possessed of by inheritance. He must change from the condition of *sinnerness* to that of *righteousness*, and from the ground of *creation* to that of *redemption*, if ever he is to see the light of God in the abodes of everlasting blessedness. He does this *the moment* he trusts himself to THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. The firstling of the ass is eternally saved, and his neck shall *never* be broken.

Dear reader, have you done this? Has the blood of the Lamb become your *redemption*?

C. W.

### **"UNLESS THE BLOOD FAILS."**

"**H**OW is it with you as to the future?" said a mother to her daughter, who was rapidly passing away from this world, and who for some time previous had confessed Christ as her Saviour.

"I'm all right, *unless the blood fails*," was the daughter's reply.

Unless the blood fails! Beloved reader, *that can never be*. If the blood of Christ could fail, Christianity is a myth; man's case is utterly and irretrievably hopeless; the world itself could not stand, and there is no alternative but the lake of fire for the whole human race. No, it cannot fail, because it is *the blood of Christ*.

Then, have you trusted therein? If death were at your door this hour (and it may be for aught you know), could you say, "I'm all right, unless the blood fails"?

"Trusting in that precious blood,  
There is perfect peace with God."

Nothing but the blood of Jesus can do helpless

sinner's good. “ It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul ” (Lev. xvii. 11).

What was it that sheltered Israel on the night of the destruction of the Egyptian first-born? *Blood*. They were told to sprinkle the blood of the lamb upon the doorposts and lintel of their houses outside, and the Lord said, “ *When I see the blood, I will pass over you* ” (Exod. xii. 13). Not when *they* saw it, for it was night, and they were under its shelter inside; no, but, “ *When I see* ” it. They sprinkled it in the obedience of faith, and were passed over. Have you taken shelter, so to speak, under the blood, even the precious blood of Christ? There is no shelter elsewhere. God's eye is on *the blood of Christ*, and the moment you, the sinner, trust therein, His eye is on it for you. And you are all right, “ unless the blood fails ” !

Careless, sceptical souls often cry, Can you show us anything? Show anything ! No, indeed; nor do we want to. Sight would not be faith. And we are justified by faith, not sight. To show anything now is virtually to deny faith. Scripture says, “ *Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory* ” (1 Peter i. 8). “ *Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed* ” (John xx. 29). “ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things *not seen* ” (Heb. xi. 1).

“ No one ever came back to tell us,” said a clever dying man to a Christian, who was seeking the salvation of his soul.

“ Oh ! yes, *there was One*,” was the reply.

“ Who? ”

“ Why, Christ, to be sure.”

He came back from the dead, showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs; Himself proclaimed peace, the result of His own death and blood-shedding. But His prophetic words are only too true, as seen in the answer of Abraham to the rich man in hell, “ If they hear not Moses and the prophets, *neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead* ” (Luke xvi. 31).

Ah! poor sinner, you may neglect or despise now, but, be assured, if once your ruthless enemy, *death*, should overtake you, hell, even hell for ever, will be your sad and awful doom, and even the blood of Christ will nought avail you then. “ Beware lest He take thee away with His stroke; *then* a great ransom cannot deliver thee ” (Job xxxvi. 18).

But God hath set forth Christ as “ a propitiation ” (or mercy seat) “ *through faith in His blood* ” (Rom. iii. 25). What was it that made the dying thief a fit companion for God’s Beloved One in paradise? Was it his works, his righteousness, his religion? He had none. He was an ungodly Jew; so bad that his life was forfeited at the hand of man in this world. But yet his spirit passed from that cross to the presence of Christ. Why was it? ’Twas the death and blood-shedding of the One who was crucified at his side. *His precious blood* washed him *whiter than snow* (Psa. li. 7). “ The blood of Jesus Christ His ” (God’s) “ Son cleanseth us from all sin ” (1 John i. 7). Are you cleansed thereby? If not, how is it? Are you vainly thinking to stand before God on the ground of your works, your religion, or aught else? What is that but the way of Cain? “ Woe to them ” is the solemn statement of the Word of God (Jude 11).

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A poor dying woman, who had led a careless, ungodly life, said to one who visited her, “ I’m going to heaven.”

“ *You* going to heaven; such a sinner as you?” was his surprised reply.

“ I know I’ve been a great sinner, sir; but oh! it’s the blood, it’s the blood, it’s the blood.”

Yes, my reader, “ *it’s the blood.*” “ It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul ” (Lev. xvii. 11). “ It is the blood ” that alone can cleanse you from your sin. “ It is the blood ” that alone can give a title to glory. The redeemed in glory sing, “ Thou art worthy, . . . for Thou hast redeemed us to God *by Thy Blood* ” (Rev. v. 9). John strikes a chord on earth, “ Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins *in His own blood* ” (Rev. i. 5). Mark, dear reader, “ *His own blood.*” Have you an interest therein? Are you among the *us*?

Tens of thousands of sheep, goats, bullocks, etc., were offered in days of old, but their blood could never take away sins (Heb. x. 4). Nothing but the blood of Jesus could do that. “Lebanon,” we read, “ is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering ” (Isa. xl. 16). But when the fulness of time was come Christ was manifested. “ Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,” said John. And again, “ Behold the Lamb of God ” (John i. 29, 36). He was both a burnt-offering and a sin-offering also. God gave, God sent, Him. He offered Himself through the eternal Spirit without spot to God (Heb. ix. 14). Peace was made by *the Blood* of His cross (Col. i. 20). God raised Him from the dead. And all who *believe* are redeemed, not by silver and gold,

but with *the precious blood of Christ*, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Peter i. 19).

“ *Without shedding of blood is no remission* ” (Heb. ix. 22). His blood was “ shed for many for the remission of sins ” (Matt. xxvi. 28). Mark it well; without it *no remission*. But the blood of Christ *was shed*; and *with it* there is full, free, complete remission. Trust therein, and your sins are pardoned, remitted, blotted out, gone completely and for ever from before the eye of God. “ Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more ” (Heb. x. 17).

“ Christ’s blood *will not fail*,  
Nought else *can* avail.”

His blood was shed for many. Have you put in your claim? Can you say, “ Yes, thank God, it was *shed for me* ”?

Some reply, “ Oh ! I know He died for all; I know His blood was shed for many; but I am not sure whether it was for me.”

Why not? It is simply unbelief. You do not take the word as it stands. “ All ” means *everybody*; you, to be sure. Rest there, and you may join in singing,

“ Not all the blood of beasts,  
On Jewish altars slain,  
Could give the guilty conscience peace,  
Or wash away its stain.

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,  
Took all our guilt away,  
A sacrifice of nobler name  
And *richer blood* than they’.

A dying youth was rejoicing in Christ. A visitor said to him, “ ‘ The blood of Jesus Christ His ’ ”



(God's) ‘ Son cleanseth us from all sin,’ so that not a spot or stain remains.”

“ *Not a speck,*” he whispered, and in a few hours fell peacefully asleep through Jesus.

“ Not a speck ! ” Oh, how blessed ! Sin still in us till we leave this world ; but *not a speck upon us in the sight of God* through the infinite value, the marvellous efficacy, the all-cleansing virtue of “ the precious blood of Christ ” (1 Pet. i. 19). Well may God in His own Word call it “ *precious blood.*” Precious it is in His sight, for it is the blood of His beloved Son ; precious to every one who is washed therein ; precious, indeed, it will be to you, my reader, if you will but believe therein. It will never, never fail you.

And when are we to be justified by the blood of Jesus ? Now. “ Being *now* justified,” says the apostle, “ by *His blood*, we shall be saved from wrath through Him ” (Rom. v. 9). Again, “ In whom we have ” (not hope to have) “ redemption *through His blood*, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace ” (Eph. i. 7).

What wondrous fulness ! Oh ! who will dare despise that “ precious blood ” ? Where will you find a refuge in the day of His wrath, if you fail to get an interest in His “ precious blood ” now ? Where will you obtain redemption but in Him whom God raised from the dead ?

*In Him*, and in Him alone, is salvation to be found ; and now is the time to find it. The last grain of sand in the hour-glass of the day of grace will soon run through. Woe, woe, woe to all who are outside the then closed door. Come, then, poor sinner, to the Saviour now. His blood will make you meet for the holy presence of God ; nought else can avail

E. H. C.

## THE GREATEST WONDER.

PEOPLE tell us that there were seven wonders in the ancient world. I cannot say what they all were, but I believe one was the Colossus at Rhodes, and another the great Pyramids of Egypt.

Not so very long ago I climbed, with considerable difficulty, to the top in the principal pyramid, and could well understand why it was considered to be one of the world's seven wonders. No one can say definitely what methods were employed for transporting and for placing in position these huge blocks of stone.

I think, however, I may suggest there is an eighth wonder, and it is one which eclipses those seven completely. I need scarcely say it is not anything created or built up by men. It is the fact that it is now possible for a righteous, holy, and sin-hating God to show grace, and to bring blessing to poor fallen sinners, and still maintain His righteous character.

Let us ponder this for a moment.

On the one hand we have a God Who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, a thrice-holy God Who must punish sin.

On the other hand we have a people full of sin, and marked by self-will and disobedience to the God to Whom they have to give an account.

Before we go further, dear reader, may I ask if, in this latter picture, you see yourself? Have you yet learned that in God's sight you are a lost and guilty sinner, and that if your eternal future is to depend on yourself or your doings, your case is hopeless? I hope you have.

Well, to return to our question. "How can

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God show grace to the guilty sinner, and yet judge sin as He *must* do if He is God? ”

This is where the good news of the gospel comes in. In the Old Testament days God did many and wonderful things for His earthly people. He cared for them, and fought their battles. Yet none knew anything of His love to guilty sinners, and therefore none could make it known.

But at last a Divine Person, the Son of God, Who was ever in the enjoyment of His Father's love, was found in this sin-benighted world. He, and He alone, could make known the matchless love of God to guilty men.

——“ He knoweth all

“ That in that bosom lies,  
And came to earth to make it known  
That we might share His joys.”

The Lord Jesus Christ came to make this love known, and to do His Father's will. Part of that will was that He should lay down His spotless life as an offering for sin, in order that God might have perfect satisfaction for sin, and that He might then be able, in perfect righteousness, to forgive and bless the sinner. Nothing greater could have been offered, and nothing less would have satisfied a holy God.

I want you to realize, dear friend, that God's love for you was so great that He counted not the life of His beloved Son too great a price for your redemption. Do not you agree with me that the fact that God now offers pardon and salvation to sinners is the greatest wonder in the universe?

Will you let Him have the joy of blessing you now as you read this? It may be you have for

years rejected, or at least neglected, His gracious call, yet His arms are outstretched towards you still. He longs to bless you, and to make you eternally happy.

If unsaved, let me lovingly warn you. You are heading for an eternity of woe, and I do pray that God, by His Spirit, may give you to see your danger before it is too late. And having learned that, may He then bring you in repentance to the feet of my Saviour, for you to own Him as your Lord and Saviour too.

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” (Acts xvi. 31.) J.A.B.

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GREAT God of wonders! all Thy ways  
Are wondrous, matchless, and divine;  
But the blest triumphs of Thy grace  
Most marvellous unrivalled shine.  
Who is a pardoning God like Thee?  
Or who has grace so rich and free?

In wonder lost, with trembling joy  
We hail the pardon of our God;  
Pardon for crimes of deepest dye;  
A pardon traced in Jesus' blood.  
To pardon thus is Thine alone;  
Mercy and grace are both Thine own.

Soon shall this strange, this wondrous grace,  
This perfect miracle of love,  
Fill the wide earth, while sweeter praise  
Sounds its own note in heaven above.  
Who is a pardoning God like Thee?  
Or who has grace so rich, so free?

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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 MEETING-PLACE OF GOD'S LOVE AND MAN'S HATRED.

**I** LOOK around! What can I see?

Heathenism, men worshipping stocks and stones; Christendom that would often disgrace a heathen; yet goodness and wisdom evidenced in the midst of it all.

What can I think?

All is confusion. The goodness and wisdom I see lead me in spite of me to God, and the thoughts of God confound me when I see all the evil. Philosophy, poor philosophy, would justify the evil to justify God.

But when I see Christ, the riddle is gone. I see perfect good in the midst of the evil, occupied with it, and then suffering under it.

My heart rests. I find one object that satisfies all its wants, rises above all its cravings. I have what is good in goodness itself. I see what is

above evil, which was pressing on me. My heart has got rest in good, and a good which is such in the midst of and above evil, and that is what I want; and I have got relief, because I have found in that One what is power over it.

But I go a little further, and I get a great deal more.

I follow this blessed One from whom all have received good, and who has wrought it with unwearied patience, and I hear the shouts of a giddy multitude, and I trace the dark plans of jealous enemies, men who cannot bear good. I see high judges who cannot occupy themselves with what is despised in the world, and would quiet malice by letting it have its way, and goodness the victim of it.

But a little thought leads me to see in a nearer view what man is; hatred against God and good. Oh, what a display! The truest friend denies, the nearest betrays, the weaker ones who are honest flee. Priests set to have compassion on ignorant failure, plead furiously against innocence. The judge washing his hands of condemned innocence. Goodness absolutely alone, and the world, all men, enmity, universal enmity, against it. Perfect light has brought out the darkness. Perfect love jealous hatred. Self would have its way, and not have God; and the cross closes the scene as far as man is concerned. The carnal mind is enmity against God.

But oh! here is what I want. Oh! where can I turn from myself? Can I set up to be better than my neighbours? No, it is myself. The sight of a rejected Christ has discovered myself to myself, the deepest recesses of my heart are laid bare, and self, horrible self, is there.

But not on the cross. There is none. And the infinite love of God rises and shines in its own perfection above it all. I can adore God in love, if I abhor myself. Man is met, risen above, set aside in his evil, absolute as it is in itself when searched out. The revelation of God in Christ has proved it in all its extent on the cross. That was hatred against love in God; but it was perfect love to those that were hating it, and love when and where they were such. It was the perfect hatred of man, and the perfect love of God doing for him that hated him what put away the hatred, and blotted out the sin that expressed it.

*There is nothing like the cross.*

It is the meeting of the perfect sin of man with the perfect love of God. Sin, risen up to its highest point of evil, and gone, put away and lost in its own worse act. God is above man even in the height of his sin; not in allowing it, but in putting it away by Christ dying for it in love. The soldier's insulting spear, the witness if not the instrument of death, was answered by the blood and water which expiated and purified from the blow which brought it out. Sin was known (and to have a true heart it must be known) and God was known, known in light (and the upright heart wants that) but known in perfect love, before which we had no need to hide or screen the sin. No sin allowed, but no sin left on the conscience. All our intercourse with God founded on this—*grace reigning through righteousness.* (Romans v. 21).

J. N. D.

## THE BASKET OF STRAWBERRIES; OR, SALVATION NOT FOR SALE.

**M**ANY years since I was travelling in Cornwall from T—— to P—— It was a hot summer's day; and, before starting, I had purchased a basket of strawberries to slake my thirst on my journey.

At the outskirts of the town the vehicle stopped, and a lady stepped in. She had barely taken her seat, when, her eye lighting on the strawberries, she ejaculated loudly enough for me to hear, "Oh! dear me, I am so sorry."

On hearing her exclamation I inquired the cause thereof, when she replied, "Because I omitted to procure some strawberries to take with me to the friend I am going to see, who is sick."

I immediately said, "Pray, madam, take these," holding out the strawberries to her.

"I could not deprive you of them," was her reply.

"I assure you, madam, you are quite welcome to them, if you will accept them," I answered.

"Oh! no," she said; "I cannot take them, unless you allow me to pay for them," at the same time putting her hand in her pocket.

"You must have them for nothing, madam, or not have them at all," I rejoined.

Still she hesitated; but at length, when I added, "You must have them on my terms, or not at all," she perceived my purpose was to give, and not to sell; and accordingly thankfully received them.

After they had become her property, I said, "The reluctance you have shown in receiving those strawberries is just what many a sinner



shows towards God in the matter of his soul's salvation, because he wants to pay God something for it."

The conversation was here stopped by her having to leave the omnibus.

A few months after the above incident took place, I was again nearing P—— by a different route, which necessitated my crossing a river by a ferry-boat.

The boatman was a hale old Cornishman, full sixty summers, who said to me on stepping into his boat early in the morning, by way of excusing the use of the pipe which was in his mouth, "Always have a pipe after breakfast, sir"; and immediately added, "Have been a teetotaller for twenty-eight years, sir."

His countenance confirmed his statement that he was a temperate man.

"Teetotalism is all very well for this life, my friend, but it will not save the soul," I replied.

"So I find, sir," was his ready answer.

On getting into further conversation I soon discovered that he was in an inquiring state of mind, having been many years previously awakened to a sense of his need of a Saviour. All these years, however, he had never tasted the sweetness of the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins through the precious blood of Christ, nor the blessedness of peace with God. As he was slowly paddling me across the river, I sought to unfold to him the way of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and illustrated the freeness of eternal life, as God's gift to the sinner, by the foregoing narrative of the basket of strawberries.

I had no sooner finished than he exclaimed,

"Oh, dear me, I see what I have been about these last twenty-one years, like that lady wanting to give God something for His great salvation; but I see that it is all the free gift of His love through our Lord Jesus Christ, I have nothing to do but to take it." And he then began to rejoice, being filled with joy and peace in believing. (Romans xv. 13.)

Nine years elapsed before I again saw my friend the boatman. When we next met after that long interval of time he expressed his joy in again seeing me, and said, "Oh! sir, I have had the peace of God flowing into my soul ever since you met me in this boat that morning; and besides which He has converted two of my sons, one of whom has gone to the Island of Bermuda to preach Christ."

Beloved reader, these incidents are related that by their means your eyes may be opened to see that God is a *giving* God. He "so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). In the midst of a world of guilty, ruined sinners, who had forfeited every claim on His mercy and favour, He was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself not imputing their trespasses unto them, never judging or pronouncing a woe except on those who dared to hinder Him in the blessing of the needy sons and daughters of Adam; or those who, notwithstanding the most unmistakeable proof of the divine character of His acts of love, turned away from Him, who alone could save them from their sins.

Man is a sinner by nature, and is consequently lost; is without God and without hope in this

world; can do nothing but perish in his sins. This is true of all, whether those on the righteous side of the broad road, or the unrighteous side of it; and, therefore, true of you, dear reader. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii.). God saw this the moment man disobeyed Him in the garden of Eden, and fell a prey to the seducing power of Satan. And four thousand years of probation from the first man's disobedience to the rejection of Christ, and His being taken by wicked hands, and hanged on that shameful cross of Calvary, only demonstrated how thoroughly guilty and ruined he had become.

The cross of the Lord Jesus Christ is the solemn proof of this truth, how hopelessly lost and thoroughly bad you are, dear reader, in God's sight. There is no exception, for all are become guilty, whether it be the privileged Jew under law, or the Gentile without law. Satan is at the bottom of all this mischief. God knows it, but you do not till your eyes are opened by Him who is the Light of this world; and Who here was in the midst of darkness, yet the darkness comprehended not the Light.

Satan's business is to keep precious souls in ignorance as to their true condition before God; he blinds their eyes lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ should shine upon them; and he does not care how he succeeds, whether by that which is good in itself, as far as this life is concerned, or by that which is grossly evil.

Oh! that you may see that God has provided a salvation for man worthy of Himself and His glory, the cost of which none can estimate. He is *too rich to sell* salvation, and man is *too poor to give* anything consistent with the claims of a

holy, sin-hating God, or adequate to satisfy His holy demands. The thought of such a thing is monstrous. What! the Creator selling anything to the creature of His hands, to man who has disobeyed Him, and crucified His own dear Son!

No, reader, away with such unworthy thoughts. God has provided a propitiation in the person and finished work of His beloved Son; that is, a way of access into His presence, by that one sacrifice for sin, which Jesus became when He offered Himself through the eternal Spirit without spot unto God, so that believing sinners of *Adam's fallen race* can now draw near, in the true and honest acknowledgment of what they are, as taught by the blessed Spirit, *and receive, as a gift*, without money and without price, at the hands of Jesus, the crucified but now risen and glorified Son of Man at God's right hand, eternal life, forgiveness of sins, and eternal redemption from sin and all its consequences, and deliverance from Satan and all the power of death.

Remember, dear reader, that what Jesus says, has done and gives, has *the stamp of eternity* on it. This is what He gives now, in time, to those who believe in Him through grace; and to consummate all, in a little while, when He comes the second time, He will give eternal glory with Himself in the Father's house above, "that Paradise," of which dear Paul Gerhardt speaks—

"Of light, and love, and song,

Where the eye at last beholdeth

What the heart hath loved so long."

Do not let Satan deceive you. The consequences are tremendous. If this gift of God's love is despised you will be taken and cast with all neglecters and rejecters into that lake of fire

prepared for the devil and his angels. He blinds men's eyes to their real state before God. And whatever you may be before men, if yet unsaved in God's sight, you are a needy, guilty sinner, with a forfeited life inherited from the first man. For "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Oh! come at once, then, to Jesus, who still sits at God's right hand to give eternal life to as many as the Father has given Him, even to those who simply look to Him, believe in His name, hear His voice, and trust in His precious blood which cleanseth us from all sin.

H. P.

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**W**E sing the praise of Him who died,  
 Of Him who died upon the cross,  
 The sinner's Hope, let men deride;  
 For this we count the world but loss.  
 Inscribed upon the cross we see,  
 In shining letters, "GOD IS LOVE!"  
 The Lamb who died upon the tree,  
 Has brought us mercy from above.  
 The Cross! it took our guilt away,  
 It holds the fainting spirit up;  
 It cheers with hope the gloomy day,  
 And sweetens every bitter cup.  
 It makes the coward spirit brave,  
 And nerves the feeble arm for fight;  
 It takes its terror from the grave,  
 And gilds the bed of death with light.  
 The balm of life, the cure of woe,  
 The measure and the pledge of love,  
 The sinner's refuge here below,  
 The theme of praise in heaven above.

## **“NOT BY WORKS OF RIGHTEOUS- NESS.”**

**O**NE Lord's day afternoon, in the latter part of the summer of 1871, I was preaching by the roadside, in the small village of G——.

Notwithstanding the intense heat, a large company had been drawn together by the opening hymn, and remained, as they had frequently done before, until the close of the address.

About half-an-hour had elapsed when my attention was drawn to a respectable-looking old man, neatly attired in a white smock frock, who appeared to have walked some distance, and was glad to avail himself of the rest offered by an upturned cart under the opposite hedge.

He seemed greatly interested, and I determined to have some conversation with him; but a crowd pressed round me for tracts directly the preaching was over, and when I sought for the old man he was nowhere to be found. However, I commended him to God whose eye of love rests on poor sinners.

The last week in October had arrived, when one evening a message reached me from a poor woman in the little town in which I then lived, begging that I would visit her aged father, who had expressed a wish to see me. The woman, who had kept a low public-house, was personally unknown to me, and, on my calling at her cottage the next morning, she explained that her father, who was nearly eighty years of age, while engaged in thatching a barn the day previously, had missed his footing, and had been precipitated on to a heap of stones, severely injuring his spine.

He had been brought to her home to be nursed, and, it was feared, to die; and immediately on his

arrival had asked if she knew the gentleman who during the summer months had preached at G——. Upon her suggesting that it was I, he begged that she would send for me.

On entering the sick man's room, I at once recognised the frank, open face; but it now wore an expression of unrest, which told of a heart to which the peace of God was unknown.

Seating myself beside his bed, I listened to his account of the impression the preaching had made upon him; but was distressed also to hear a detailed defence of his fourscore years of sin and distance from God. He urged his morality, his love of truth and honesty, and the like, until I at length interrupted him by reading those solemn words in Romans iii. 10-20.

He seemed hurt by my refusal to accept all he had urged on his own behalf; but I reminded him that it was not I, but God, who had made these strong statements as to man's condition by nature, and urged him to bow to the word of the living God, and own himself a lost, ruined sinner.

My time was now expired; so after prayer I left him, promising to call the next day.

Though he was eagerly watching for me, I was disappointed to find that he had completely forgotten the truth of the verses read to him; but feeling convinced the Lord had blessing in store for this poor sinner, I took courage, and prayed for guidance.

As the poor man was unable to read, it occurred to me to teach him a single passage of Scripture daily; so, beginning with the following, “For there is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” I made him repeat the words slowly after me several times,

until he could say them without assistance; and again asking God to cause His own precious word to enter and give light, I bade my old friend good-bye.

On my third visit he repeated the verses correctly; but the uppermost feeling in his mind seemed to be gratification at having so well remembered his lesson. This time I sought to impress him with the solemn reality of being a sinner before God, and to divest his mind of his fondly cherished notion of measuring himself by his neighbours.

As he appeared equal to the effort, I taught him the twenty-fourth and part of the twenty-fifth verses: "Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness."

At these words I stopped, and dwelt a few moments on the wondrous fact that the blessed, eternal God, who had created man for His own glory, and had seen him fall short of it, and who had testified to man's utter unrighteousness, now proved His own righteousness in freely forgiving the sins of every believer in Jesus, who bore them all in His own body on the tree, and who was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

A ray of light seemed to break in that day, and I had the joy of seeing during the following week that the divine work had indeed begun.

The injuries to his spine proved to be incurable, and paralysis quickly seized the aged sufferer.

I was now anxious that, before the power of speech was taken from him, he should give testi-



mony that he was firmly resting on Christ, and the Lord graciously permitted this.

For same time he had been thoroughly aroused, and his face wore an expression of deepest anxiety occasionally relieved by a gleam of hope as the ground of peace was presented to him. It was, I think, during my fifteenth visit that he learned to repeat those precious words in Titus iii., “But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

The next morning when I called, I saw at a glance that at last God's peace had chased all trouble away. His perfect love had cast out fear. The old man's countenance was radiant with joy as he exclaimed, “According to His mercy He has saved *me*,” and together we poured out our hearts in grateful thanks to Him who had wrought so wondrously.

He now became rapidly worse, and when I saw him again he was unable to speak, but with his finger he pointed upwards, his face all the while beaming with heavenly peace and joy, especially when I repeated slowly the verses which had been so blessed to him.

This was the last time I was allowed to see my new-found brother in Christ, for during the following night the Lord called him up to the joys of His own presence.

No other case of conversion was known to

follow that summer's campaign ; but as I thought on the one hand of the long, weary trudges in the intense heat, and preaching to people who returned to their homes apparently unimpressed, and on the other, of the dear old man who listened to the gospel for the first time in his life, and was now with the Lord, I could deeply sympathise with those sweet lines in Rutherford's "Last Words" :

" Oh, if one soul from Anworth  
Meet me at God's right hand,  
My heaven will be two heavens,  
In Immanuel's land."

### FOR WHOM DID JESUS DIE ?

**N**OT long since the gospel was preached under a railway arch in the East End of London. The love of Jesus to poor sinners for whom He shed His precious blood was faithfully presented. Afterwards some of the hearers were spoken to separately.

Amongst them was an old man of seventy-five, whose heart seemed untouched by the glorious tidings of God's salvation. On being asked if he believed in the Lord Jesus, he replied, " Do you believe all that's in the Bible? "

" Oh, yes."

" Do you believe that the sun would stand still at the bidding of man? " referring to the tenth chapter of Joshua.

" Oh, yes," replied the speaker.

After speaking for some time, he asked a friend to talk to him, of whom he asked the same ques-

tions. "But," said the second speaker, "I can tell you of something more wonderful."

"What is that?" asked the old man in astonishment.

"When the One who made the sun stand still stood still Himself at the cry of a poor blind beggar; and, more than that, He gave him his sight; and He will give you sight now, will save you now, if you will only trust Him." (Mark x. 49.)

Three weeks afterwards the gentleman who first spoke was again under the arch, and saw the old man peering about, looking at the texts of Scripture on the walls. God had, by His Spirit, been working in the old man's heart, and he could get no rest, so had some again. He was looking at the text, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

The gentleman just whispered in his ear, "Christ died for sinners," when, to his astonishment, the old man jumped round, and, smiting his side, cried, "And for *me*! and for *me*! I see it now; for *me*!"

Oh! the joy of his heart to see that Jesus died for him. The entrance of God's words giveth light, and as the light flashed on his soul, he could see himself a sinner, therefore the very one for whom Jesus died. (Ps. cxix. 130.)

Let me ask you, reader, Do *you* know yourself a sinner before God? His word says, "There is none that doeth good; no, not one." (Ps. xiv. 3.) Do not delude yourself with the thought that because you have lived a pretty good life God will save you. An old soldier of eighty-nine told me the other day that he had never done anyone any harm; no one could say a word against him; he

always went to church on Sunday; had a good coat to his back; always paid his rent, and had enough money to pay for his funeral!

Think you he could plead that before God? No, indeed! He could stand there in no coat of his own; nothing short of God's righteousness would avail him, or you either, dear reader, in God's presence.

M. J. E. B.

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The perfect righteousness of God  
Is witnessed in the Saviour's blood;  
'Tis in the Cross of Christ we trace  
His righteousness, yet wondrous grace.

God could not pass the sinner by,  
His sin demands that he must die;  
But in the cross of Christ we see  
How God can save, yet righteous be.

The sin alights on JESUS' head,  
'Tis in His blood sin's debt is paid;  
Stern Justice can demand no more,  
And Mercy can dispense her store.

The sinner who believes is free,  
Can say, "The Saviour died for me":  
Can point to the atoning blood,  
And say, "This made my peace with God."

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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.*

## **TWO YOUNG RAILWAYMEN WHO WANTED FUN.**

**O**NE Sunday afternoon, many years ago, two young railway porters stood on the platform at the D—— station. They had an hour's leave before the next train came in. They were making plans as to how they should spend it.

"Let's go where we can have a bit of fun," they said.

"If it's fun you want," said an old porter who was passing by, "just you run up the ladder, and look into the signal house. There you'll see the signal-man reading the Bible, and he'll give you a lot of tracts, and maybe preach you a sermon into the bargain; and it will be the best bit of fun you ever had in your life."

Scarcely were the words spoken when the two thoughtless young men were at the top of the

ladder, looking in at the open door of the signal-house. There, sure enough, sat the signal-man, enjoying the hour of leisure also allowed to him, with a Bible open before him; and, to add to the "fun," he got up and handed a tract to each of them, desiring them to read it.

"Read it! oh, yes!" said they; and forthwith one of them began to read aloud a sentence here and there in what he supposed to be a true Methodist drawl, advancing with his companion, as he did so, into the signal-house, the more to rouse as they both expected, the anger of the signal-man.

But they were not prepared for what followed. Without saying a word, the signal-man rose up, locked the door behind them, put the key in his pocket, and sat down.

"Young men," he then said, "it is not often I have an opportunity of speaking a word to you about your souls. I have one now, and I will make the most of it. I will read you some passages from God's Word, and will endeavour to explain them to you. Will you kindly be still whilst I do so?"

"No indeed," said the young men, "we didn't bargain for that. We have an hour's leave, and a good bit of it's gone already, and we don't mean to spend the rest hearing a sermon. So you'll unlock the door, and let us out."

"No," said the signal-man, "I shall not let you out till I have said what I have got to say. You know how often an accident happens to those employed on the line. How can I know that it might not be so this very day? And what account could I give of myself to God if I had had this opportunity of speaking to you of Christ, and

had neglected it? If one of you were killed, I should then feel that your blood was upon my head." And, in spite of their further angry remonstrances, the signal-man read one passage after another from the Word of God. He spoke to them of the awful danger of the unsaved sinner, of the love of God even to those dead in sin, shown in sending His Son to die for them. He told them God had pardon and life for such as they were, on account of what His Son had done.

When he had spoken at some length, he unlocked the door, and said, "I am now clear of your blood; I can do no more but pray for you."

The two young men then went down the ladder, cursing and swearing, for their hour was all but over, the up-train was close at hand, and one of them had to go on with it to London, returning by the following down-train.

The signal-man's sermon seemed to have left no impression on either of them but that of disgust. Perhaps you think that it was unwise of the signal-man to force the subject upon them, and that he should have waited for a more fit season. But God, who has told us to be "instant in season," has also told us to be "instant out of season" (2 Tim. iv. 2.)

The young porter who had to go to London tried, we may suppose, to forget all that had passed in the signal-house, and to think of something more agreeable. But he was to be reminded of the signal-man's last words in a way he little expected.

His journey to London and back occupied two or three hours, and he returned to D—— as the evening closed in. He at once saw, as he stepped

out on the platform, that something unusual had happened. There were anxious-looking people going to and fro, there were marks of blood on the platform, and a little group of men with awe-struck faces were crowding round the door of one of the offices. The young man seemed to hear again ringing in his ears the words he had tried to forget: "There might be an accident to-day, and one of you might be killed."

"Something the matter?" he inquired, quite afraid to hear the answer.

"Yes," he was told; "a porter slipped off the platform just as the last train went by. It took both his legs off. They have taken him in there. He is dying."

The young man pushed his way through the crowd. Was it his friend? No; God had not yet closed the door for him. The man who lay senseless on the table was the old porter, who had sent them up to the signal-house, and kneeling by his side, in earnest prayer, was the signal-man! The poor man was still breathing, but gave no other sign of life.

In a few minutes all was over, and the young porter could now begin to realise the fact that the man who but a few hours before had been scoffing at the Word of God was himself gone to appear in God's presence. It was an awful thought. Could there be any hope for him?

The young man asked one who was present when the accident happened to tell him about it. Had the poor man been senseless all the time?

"No, not at the first."

"And did he speak after you took him up?"

"Yes, he spoke when we brought him in."

"What did he say?"



“ He said, ‘Fetch the signal-man ! I am dying. Fetch the signal-man ! I want him to pray !’ Yes, that’s the way he went on : ‘Fetch the signal-man.’ So we went to fetch him, and he came at once ; but then, poor fellow, he couldn’t speak, and we couldn’t find out if he knew what was said to him ; but we could do no more.”

And we know no more. The eternal condition of that poor despiser is to us unknown, and must be until the coming of the Lord. But there was one trembling sinner who went that night to ask again to hear the words of life from the one who had spoken to him in vain three hours before. The young porter believed, and was saved.

His companion remained unmoved. He must have been far more hard of heart from that awful evening than he had been before. Circumstances alone can never change the heart. It is by the mighty power of the Holy Ghost alone that under *any* circumstances a sinner is brought to repentance. Thus the one thief on Calvary believed, and was saved ; his companion, who alike saw the dying Saviour before him, perished in his sins (Luke xxiii.)

I would now ask you, reader, to consider this solemn truth, that, in the case of those who scoff at the people and the Word of God, it is not, alas ! simply in ignorance that they do so ; at least in many, if not in most cases, it is not ignorance, it is the terrible enmity of the natural heart of man against that which he knows to be of God. When the old porter saw the awful reality of death before him, the one to whom he had turned for help was the very man whom he had treated as a fool, perhaps as a hypocrite ; and, as it came out, he had *known in his heart* that the signal-

man was right, even at the time that he had mocked him.

Unsaved reader, you have heard again and again of God's willingness to save all who will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. How will you escape if you neglect so great salvation? (John vi. 37; Heb. ii. 3).

## FAITH MUST BE FIRST.

SOME time ago I was asked by a friend to visit a young married woman who was dying of consumption, and who was very anxious about her soul.

I went immediately, and found her in bed, not suffering much pain, but very weak, and with a look of intense weariness upon her face.

After making a few kind inquiries regarding her health, I asked her if she was at peace with God.

"Ah, no," she said, "I wish I were. I have been anxious about my soul a long, long time, and have tried all I could to *live* well, and be good; but I cannot *feel* as I want, I am so cold and dead."

"Don't you believe Jesus came to save sinners; and are you not a sinner?"

"A sinner! yes, ma'am, I am indeed, but then I can't tell if I believe right enough. Sometimes I feel so sorry for my sins, and then I think Jesus will save me; but then the next day, perhaps, I feel cold and not sorry at all, and then I think I am all wrong."

"Where do you find in the Word," I asked, "that Jesus will not save you unless you *feel* very sorry? We read a great deal about believing;

nothing at all about feeling till after."

"Yes, but then how am I to know if I have believed right enough?"

"Have you read the Bible stories of Joseph, Daniel, and others?"

"Many a time. I always liked to read my Bible."

"Do you believe them?"

"Oh! yes, I never doubted them."

"Why do you believe them?"

"Well, I suppose because they are in God's Word."

"Exactly. Now, did you ever say, I wonder if I believed them enough?"

"No, ma'am, I never thought of that."

"Then why can you not take the rest of the Bible because it is God's Word as well? Faith is just the same in spiritual as in natural things. If we hear anything from a person on whose word we can rely, we believe it, we can't help doing so; and is not God's word more worthy of belief than any man's? When He tells us He has put away our sins, can you not trust Him?"

As she was getting exhausted, I bade her good-by, praying our Father to bless the word spoken,

A day or two after I called again, and found her just the same.

"I cannot grasp it," she said; "oh! if I could only *feel*."

I saw she wished to feel rather than to believe, so asking God to be with us, I turned to Matt. xxvi. 33-35, and read, "Peter answered and said, Though all men should be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this night before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

Peter said unto Him, Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee."

"Now, what was Peter trusting to? Was it not to his feelings instead of Christ's word?"

"Yes, he was, and he fell."

"Well, wouldn't you think you loved Jesus if you could say you would die for Him?"

"Yes, I would, indeed."

"Well, now, which proved right? Christ's word or Peter's feelings?"

"Christ's words, ma'am."

"Well, then, can you not trust Christ's words when He says, 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow'? 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' (Isa. i. 18; John iii. 16). These are as much His words to you, as were His words to Peter. You will never get more. Believe that He did the whole work; bore your punishment; died in your stead, that you might not die eternally; that God raised Him from the dead, to show that He was satisfied; and you will be saved. His word is truth, and cannot be broken. Trust it, *just because God says it*, and the feelings will all come right after you believe, but not before."

With that a bright smile came over her pale face, and she said, "I see it! I see it! Oh! how blind I have been! I have been trying all the wrong way. I see now Jesus has done it all. He won't cast me out, because He *says* He *won't*. How can I praise Him enough!"

It was a solemn moment, a soul passing from death unto life.

After a little she said, "I always thought I

had to *do* something to get saved; now I would like to do something because I am saved; but I cannot, I have no strength."

"Yes, you can," I said, "you can glorify God in suffering. Be a witness for Jesus, by patiently waiting His time, and speaking a word to those who may step in to see you."

"Yes, I can do that, and by His grace I will. I see now that God knows best; I was very bitter when He took my baby from me; but I praise Him for it now, it was all in love. I have only one to leave motherless, and He will watch over him. I will trust Him."

After this I saw her many times until her death, which happened four months later; and truly she did glorify God in the furnace of affliction. Through all her sufferings (for she suffered very much from a dreadful cough and sleepless nights), a murmur never escaped her lips.

"He giveth songs in the night. Jesus is always with me. It would be very weary if He were away all the long night," she used to say.

Just before she died, in answer to a question, I asked her if she was quite happy, and if Satan harassed her.

"He often brings up my sins, ma'am, but somehow it does not trouble me much. His blood cleanseth from ALL sin"; and then added with a bright smile, "*I am clinging fast to Jesus. I shall soon see Him; soon be with Him for ever.*"

I stooped and wiped the cold sweat of death off her brow, kissed, and bade her good-bye, and a few hours after she fell asleep in Jesus, without a shade of sorrow at leaving her husband and child.

Reader, how is it with you? Are you trusting to your feelings or to Jesus? Oh! how many souls are lost by trusting to feelings. Satan has no objection to us being religious, or trusting to anything we like, provided we do not trust Jesus.

Our feelings are like the shifting sand. Christ is the rock of ages. Those who trust their feelings are like the troubled ocean, never at rest; one day happy, believing they are saved; the next day fallen, it may be, into some sin, and then thinking all is lost. That will not do. God is beseeching us to be saved, but it must be on His own terms, believing first, then feeling; not feeling first and then believing (2 Cor. v. 20).

God has promised us the feeling if we believe. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself" (1 John v. 10). "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God" (Rom. viii. 16). God wishes us to know it, and rejoice in it; but how can we rejoice if not certain whether we are saved or not? If we have taken salvation, the gift of eternal life, "we must love the One who gave it us, the blessed One, who by His death has made us so safe, that those who trust Him shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of His hand" (John x. 28, 29).

Here our peace of conscience will much depend upon our walk, but that must not be confounded with the peace which Jesus makes for us by His blood. The apostle exhorts us to walk worthy of our high calling. We are made sons and daughters of God; let us prove it by our consistent walk and example, living epistles, known and read of all men.

M.S.D.

## REGISTERED; OR, HOW MAY I KNOW THAT I AM SAVED?

**I**N visiting one of the villages of Oxfordshire, calling from house to house, it happened that at one cottage a woman, full of earnestness, ran up to me saying, "Oh, sir, are you the gentleman that has come to register my baby?"

"No, I am not," I replied.

"I thought you was, sir, for the gentleman said he would come to-day, so I were expecting him."

"No, I am not he; but I have come to know if you have been registered?"

"Me! me, sir! do you mean me?" she said, with great astonishment.

"Yes, truly! I do mean YOU."

"Really, do you mean ME? me myself, sir?"

"Yes, I really do mean you, your very self. I have called to ask you if YOUR name has been registered?"

"Yes, sir, it has," said she, interrupting me.

"In heaven?" I added.

"Oh sir! I do not know that."

"Well, that is what I want to ask you. Now, is your name written in the Lamb's book of life, for it is only they whose names are found there can go to heaven?" (Rev. xxi. 27).

"But how may I know that? We cannot see the book, and much less can we see our names therein."

"That is true, we cannot with our natural eyes see our names written in the book of life. Indeed the natural man cannot know anything of the things of God, because they can be only spiritually discerned. Therefore we *must* have a spirit-

ual nature; we must be born of God; we must have the Holy Spirit in order to see our names in God's book of life. There is, however, no difficulty for anyone who has believed in Jesus, and been made a new creature in Christ, to know if he is going to heaven. Yea, it is the privilege of every child of God, not only to know, but to rejoice that his name is written in heaven. The Lord Jesus told His disciples not to rejoice that evil spirits had been made subject to them, but that their names were written in heaven (Luke x). The Thessalonian Christians knew that they had been chosen of God, and, therefore, they were happy in Christ, and were able to endure very heavy afflictions for the sake of the truth; and they were continually waiting for the return of the Son of God from heaven" (1 Thess. i. 10).

The Holy Spirit of God writes to God's children, saying to them, These things have I written unto you that ye might know that ye *have* eternal life, (1 John v. 13), and the true believer's joy and privilege is to respond and say, "We *know* we are of God" (1 John v. 19). The believer has a divine nature in him, that does ever by the Holy Ghost rise up to God, as made known to him in the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven.

Everyone knows what he likes. A boy knows if he likes play. And why does he like it? Because he has a nature in him that does so. Does one love dress, or money, or pleasure? Well, the reason is simply because one has a nature in him that does so. But a child of God has a nature that loves God, and that seeks after God, that loves His holy word, His doctrine, His ways, and will. Now, if I have real and holy desires after the Lord Jesus, then surely that is of



God, and not of mere nature, and so "we *know* that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the wicked one." Human nature never can love true, divine, spiritual worship. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and is, and can be, nothing else; but "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," and loves the Lord Jesus Christ HIMSELF, the glorified Son of Man in heaven. "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they who are in the flesh cannot please God." (Rom. viii.)

Thus it is quite clear that we may, and, indeed, we ought, to know whether our names are written in heaven, and we ought to be able to rejoice, and thank God that they are there. The Spirit of God would have all true believers to give thanks unto the Father. "Giving thanks unto the Father, which *hath* made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who *hath* delivered us from the power of darkness, and *hath* translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son; in whom we *have* redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. i. 12-14).

But again it may be asked, How may I know that my name is written in the Lamb's book of life?

Well, how did the Thessalonians know it? Was it by their frames and feelings; by their experiences? No, certainly not. Blessed as feelings may be, and doubtless are, in their proper place, their existence is no evidence that he who experiences them is saved. There may be abundance of warm and happy feelings apart from Christ. Many persons have been filled with joy at hearing the Gospel; but alas! time has proved that after all,

they were but dead, while they seemed to live, mere stony-ground hearers.

The writer knows an aged woman in the country who for many years had passed for a very wonderful Christian. Ministers and other Christians of various denominations have been in the habit of visiting her to learn of her, and to hear her remarkable experiences. Alas ! it was her experiences and not Christ that she ministered to those who visited her ; and now she is on her death-bed, the Lord has (happily indeed) come in, and taken away all her experiences, frames, and feelings, and the like, and she finds that there is nothing whatever to rest upon but Christ.

But she is at present without hope, and miserable indeed. And what makes her case the more sad is, there seems to be no power to lay hold of the plain Gospel, and simply to believe on Jesus the Christ of God ; because her efforts are to get back her experiences, and not to confess Christ. She is taken up with herself instead of her Lord and Saviour. She is saying to herself, " Oh, that I were as in months past ! " instead of looking to Jesus now, as a present Saviour.

Thus it is seen that confidence in mere frames and feelings, apart from Christ are worthless ; they are no grounds for peace whatever. They will never stand the test of a dying hour.

The early Christians knew they were elected of God, because the Gospel of God had come home with the power of the Holy Spirit. They believed that Christ Jesus is the Son of God, and that He laid down His life for lost sinners. They believed what God told them, that His only begotten Son had borne all their sins, and had received the full amount of wages due on account of their

sins, even eternal judgment. And in thus believing what God had said, and confessing that Jesus was their Lord and Saviour, they had peace with God, and were delivered from the fear of death and eternal condemnation (Rom. v. 1).

Now the question is, Have you, my reader, really in your heart believed in Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God? No doubt you do believe in your head; but the question is, Is it with the heart you believe and confess Jesus as your Lord? It is to be feared multitudes say, Sunday after Sunday, "I believe in the Lord Jesus," and yet they are not saved, because the heart's affections do not go out towards Him whom they profess to believe in. Christ is not really in their hearts; they do not mind going to a place of worship on Sundays to hear a sermon; but they do not like to have the question put home to them in a personal manner, "Do you love Jesus?" There is really no joy to them, no sweetness, in the name of Jesus. It makes them uncomfortable when it is pressed on them. He has no place in their hearts.

Now reader, do you care a bit for Christ? Do you delight to hear His name; and is it a joy to you to bless and praise Him? Do you go to a place of worship because it is respectable to do so? or because you love to meet with the children of God, and to offer up spiritual praises to Him who hath loved you, and given Himself for you?

Well, then, is it asked, How may I know that my name is written in the Lamb's book of life?

The answer is, simply, Do I heartily believe in Christ as my Lord and Saviour? "He that believeth on the Son of God HATH everlasting life (John iii. 36). When we believe in truth, the

Good Shepherd gives us eternal life, and He puts us safely in the Father's hands, and says to us, You shall never perish, and none shall pluck you from my Father's hands (John x. 38).

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The only real knowledge we can have of God is contained in the Scriptures; and hence, if we are deprived of them, we are deprived of God. The infidel may tell us that God is to be known in creation. Did any one ever find Him out there? No doubt, creation does prove the existence of a Creator, as we read in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans: "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so they are without excuse." Creation yields a testimony which the heathen were bound to receive; and, had they received it, a higher light would assuredly have shone upon them. But they did not receive it; nay, they actually worshipped the things that were made, instead of the One who made them. Philosophers talk of rising from nature up to nature's God. But nature is a ruin and man himself is a ruin; and instead of rising up to nature's God, he makes a god of nature, and degrades himself below the level of a beast (Romans i. 20-32). The plain fact is, we cannot do without a divine revelation; and that revelation we possess in the Holy Scriptures.

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# GOSPEL LIGHT.



**GOD IS LIGHT.      GOD IS LOVE.**

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

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

## "I FOUND IT TRUE."

**I**N a beautiful spot in one of the midland counties stood an old-fashioned house, surrounded by a lovely garden full of flowers and fruit, in the midst of a large village inhabited by a population more or less strict in outward religious observances, but, with few exceptions, densely dark as to the true knowledge of Christ.

The family that occupied the house was what would be called *religious*; but only one member of it, the eldest daughter, had been brought "from darkness to light" through faith in the Son of God. (Acts xxvi. 18.) The father and mother, going away for a change, left the young people in charge of the house, also desiring that they should take an interest in, and show a care for, the temporal needs of any who might be sick in the adjoining village.

Just at this time a man named Joseph L—,

well known throughout the place, had broken his leg. He had been a dreadful character, and had become the terror of the village through his rough and drunken ways. Many a time the young girl already mentioned, and her brothers and sisters, had run to get out of his way when meeting him. He was one of the last that we should naturally expect to be brought to the Lord. But the eye of God was upon this poor sinner for blessing, and the love of God had marked him out as a vessel of mercy, and trophy of His everlasting grace. (Rom. ix. 23.)

Through his accident, his wife and family were constrained to work hard in the hayfields to obtain a livelihood, so that he was often left many hours alone, a prey to his own thoughts, with nothing to reflect upon in the past but a godless, misspent life.

"Remember to send poor Joseph some dinner almost every day," said the mother to her daughter before she left home.

This was carefully attended to, and it was deeply impressed upon the daughter what a blessing it would be for him if he could be brought to a knowledge of Christ as his Saviour.

But how was this to be accomplished? She was young in the things of the Lord, and had never yet made a bold and open confession of Christ in her own family circle, the most difficult place of all in many instances to commence in. She longed to visit and speak to this man of his lost condition, and of the Saviour of sinners, but feared, among other things, the laughing and teasing of her brothers.

Still the responsibility of it was so impressed upon her that she felt she must go at all cost;

and so she resolved to steal away whilst the rest were busily engaged gathering a large crop of strawberries for preserving. Concealing her Bible beneath the folds of her dress, she stole out of the garden, and along the path to the picturesque little cottage, surrounded with roses and honeysuckle, where Joseph lived.

Knocking timidly at the door, she heard him invite her to enter. After inquiring about his health, and referring to the dinner that was going to be sent in, she at last ventured to speak to him of eternity. To her surprise she found him ready to listen; so, producing her Bible, slowly read to him that precious portion in Isaiah liii. 5, 6: " But 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. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

The Lord seemed to have prepared the ground for the good seed, His own Word, so that it was not difficult to impress upon him that he was a lost sinner. But as yet he could not grasp the truth that Christ had died for *him*. His visitor sat some time with him, and he lay patiently listening to all that was said. After pressing upon him that Christ had done the work upon the cross, and that God must be satisfied with it, so that by believing the gospel he would be saved, she rose to go.

Lingering at the door, she added, " Well, Joseph, do you believe that I am going to send you the meat for dinner? "

" Why, of course, Miss S——," he replied.

“ But I might forget, or tell a lie and deceive you; but you believe it because I said it. Now when God says that Jesus was wounded for our transgressions, and that He gives salvation to all who believe His Word, cannot *you* trust *Him*? He is a God of truth, and is faithful and just to forgive sins. He can make no mistake; His Word is true. Why can you not trust Him? ”

Not long after, Miss S—— left the village; but a year or two later again returned. Meanwhile poor Joseph had died. One Sunday evening she was watching by the bedside of one far gone in consumption, and waiting for the moment when she would be absent from the body and present with the Lord, when an elderly woman, one among the few known as Christians in the village, came in to see the invalid.

After a little fellowship together over the Word, she said, “ Oh! Miss S——, I have a message for you.”

“ For me? ”

“ Yes; from Joseph L——. I went to see him the day after you left, and found him alone.

‘ Why, Joseph,’ I said, ‘ are you alone? ’

“ ‘ No,’ he replied, ‘ I am not alone.’ ”

“ ‘ Why, is Kitty [his wife] at home? ’ ”

“ ‘ No.

“ ‘ Your daughter? ’ ”

“ ‘ No; but *I have Jesus with me.*’ ”

“ ‘ What!’ said I, filled with astonishment; ‘ how did this come about? ’ ”

“ ‘ Why, when Miss S—— was here in the summer she said she was going to send me some dinner, and told me all about Jesus, and how He died for sinners on the cross, and about His precious blood. And then she said, “ Now you



believe me, *why will you not believe God?* " So I thought about it again and again, and I FOUND IT TRUE, and *He is with me.* ' "

Thus had God in His rich grace blessed the simple message of the gospel from the lips of His feeble and timid messenger to this poor hardened slave of sin; first laying him aside, and separating him from his course and companions in sin through a broken leg. How wondrous and perfect are all God's ways! However deeply dyed the sinner may be, none is too guilty for Him to save. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7).

Dear reader, what think you of Christ? Have you believed God about Him? Have you taken Him at His word? If not, oh! think about it *again and again*. You will find it *true*, and Jesus will be with *you*. He died for the guilty and the lost. Believe on Him, and henceforth you are found amongst the number of whom it is said, "He was wounded for *our* transgressions, He was bruised for *our* iniquities." Death lies right before you, and after death judgment, *eternal* judgment. (Heb. ix. 27.) Escape it you cannot, if you *will* go on in your sins. There is but the one way of escape, namely *through Christ*. Then, *will* you have Christ? Are you burdened with sin? Receive Him *now* by faith. *Believe* on His name (John i. 12). Then shall He be *your* Saviour, and you shall be His; His now, and His for ever; a sinner saved by grace, washed in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. vii. 14.)

"Look to Jesus, look and live;  
Mercy at His hands receive;  
He has died upon the tree,  
And His words are, 'Look to Me.' "

E. H. C.

## **"MY SINS," "MYSELF," "THE WORLD."**

**A** FEW months ago I felt led of the Lord to go and see a man who was ill and not likely to get better. Sad to say, he had no concern about his soul.

On reaching the house I found that the little family had increased since my last visit, an aunt of the man's, who was over eighty years of age, having come to live with them. After a little chat with her and the man's wife, I went near to the invalid, and began talking to him of our great need as sinners with eternity in front of us. I spoke of our being utterly ruined and without strength, of the provision God has made in His love for us, of the wonderful love of the Lord Jesus in coming out of the ivory palaces to this world of woe to live for thirty-three years a perfect life, and then at the close to offer Himself a spotless sacrifice to God for us. I told him how God had accepted that sacrifice, and how the Lord Jesus had gone into death, and was raised up the third day, and how the heavens received Him.

It had been great joy to my soul about that time to think of the heavens receiving my Saviour, the One Who bore my sins, and I spoke of how perfect the work of the Lord Jesus, and how perfectly it was finished; but it made no impression on the man and my heart was sad. After pleading with him further I rose to go.

I said "Goodbye" to the man, and turned to the old lady. I had not thought of her at all, but God had. She rose from her chair as I wished her "Good-bye," and said, "I thank you,

“ MY SINS,” “ MYSELF,” “ THE WORLD.” 135

ma'am, for coming here this afternoon; these things have always been a mist to me, but now I can see my way clear to heaven.” “ The Lord Jesus did it all.” Overcome with joy, she began to praise the Lord.

The words of the Lord were, “ The wind bloweth where it listeth,” and how true in this case. (John iii. 8.)

A little time after, two brothers were visiting the house, and the old lady began to tell them what had happened on that happy afternoon. She ended by saying, “ As I heard what the lady said I turned away from my sins and myself and the world to my Saviour.”

May I ask you, Have you done this? Have you turned away from your sins and yourself and the world? A great many turn away from their sins to themselves; but it is of no use. You cannot be your own saviour; you are a sinner; you are no good for God; you must turn away from yourself too. There is only one Man for God. God is absolutely satisfied with Him, and if you are not hiding in Him, and accepted in Him, you are LOST.

So often we see people turning for a moment away from their sins, but not to the Lord Jesus. They think they can lead a different life, and satisfy God that way. It is a way in which Satan is luring thousands to hell. If this is your case, and you are discouraged with yourself, give it up. It is a refuge of lies, and one day the hail will sweep it away. Turn to the Lord Jesus. Rest your soul on Him. Hide there.

There is no refuge,  
There is no refuge,  
There is no refuge but Jesus.

Trust in Him, sinner;  
 Trust in Him, sinner;  
 Trust in Him, sinner;  
 He is the Refuge you need.

The old lady also said she had turned away from the world. What a blessing we get to our souls as we do this! The world is a place where souls are trying to be happy without the Lord Jesus, but nobody is, for man is so created that nothing but Jesus satisfies.

A little while ago I again visited my old friend, and after enquiring as to her health I asked her about her spiritual welfare.

This is the reply I got: "To-day I have been enjoying that verse of the hymn,

"Peace, perfect peace,  
 In this dark world of sin;  
 The Blood of Jesus whispers  
 Peace within."

May you and I know more of this wonderful  
 PEACE.

Christ is my Refuge,  
 Christ is my Refuge,  
 He is the Refuge for sinners.  
 In Him I am hiding,  
 In Him abiding;  
 He is the Refuge for you.

F. C. C.

In Eden the enmity of man's heart first appeared. Man believed the devil's lie rather than God's word; his rebellion, then declared, ran on century after century, till at Calvary's cross man consummated his guilt by slaying the Son of God. Such is the history of man as reviewed by the Spirit of God. Dear reader, be reconciled to God.

## **JOYFUL, JOYFUL, JOYFUL JOE ; or, THE CROSS THE SETTLEMENT OF SIN.**

**I** WAS asked to visit a poor man who was lying ill and unsaved; and, "My daughter here, sir, will show you where he lives," said the person who asked me to go.

I soon found myself in a poor-looking room, by the bedside of a man who had evidently known hard times, and was now suffering very much from chronic bronchitis, with a terrible cough that had quite prostrated him for over nine years, and confined him to bed the greater part of that time.

As a consequence, deep poverty was marked on everything within the walls of the house, for he was past work these many years; and instead of his providing for his family, his wife and two daughters had to provide for themselves and him, out of the scanty wages they earned at the factory.

Still, notwithstanding this, there was an air of respectability in the house, and an evident desire to make the best of things, that brought with it a certain measure of relief, as the heart well nigh sickened at the thought of the abounding sorrow and misery, the fruit of folly, disobedience, and of sin, of the manifold forms of which but one class was typified here.

After a little introductory conversation, we soon turned to the question of his soul's eternal salvation. He was free to speak about it, poor fellow, shut up there in suffering and want, with few to visit or speak to him, a stranger's face and a word of sympathy was like an angel's:

visit to him. He had not much fear of death: not that he saw the way exactly through it, but he was religious, and he had good thoughts of God.

"But if you were to die to-night, where would you go to?" said I to him.

"To heaven, I hope?" was his reply.

"But why do you hope to go there? Many won't. In what do you differ from others, that entitles you to that hope?"

"Well, I do all I can that's good, and I try to live the best way that I can, and I believe in God, and I hope I'll go to heaven when I die."

"Yes, all very good; but you know 'the devils also believe, and tremble,' and they are none the better for it." (James ii. 19.)

"True," he said, rather staggered at the idea, and struck with the possibility of his ground not being altogether so firm as he had thought it was. "But," he added, after a little pause, "the devils believe, and tremble; they do not believe and serve."

"Well, and do you believe and serve?"

"I do."

"You serve God? How long have you served God?"

"Oh, this long time!"

"How long?"

"These many years now."

"How many?"

"Oh! a good many, perhaps a dozen or thirteen."

"But have you ever been converted?"

"Well, I can't say as to that, exactly, but I have served God these many years; that I'm sure of."

"But Judas Iscariot served also. The Lord Jesus chose him as an apostle; and sent him out to preach the gospel, and to cure diseases, and do many similar things along with the other apostles; and we know that he was a traitor after all, and has gone to hell."

"Oh! I hope not. I hope no person has gone there. That's an awful place; and it's an awful thing to say of anyone. I would not say that of anyone. I hope God is too good to send anyone there. Oh! no; I wouldn't say that of anyone."

"But do you believe there is such a place as 'everlasting burnings'?"

After a pause, he replied, very thoughtfully,

"Yes, I do; for the Book says it; and if I did not believe in 'everlasting fire,' I could not believe in everlasting life, for it is the same Book that tells me of the one that tells me of the other also. I must believe it."

"Well, and if you had your deserts, which would be your proper portion, eternal life or eternal judgment?"

"Eternal judgment. I know that, if I had my deserts, for there's not a wickeder living man in the town than I have been."

"And how then are you to escape it, if you deserve it? How do you expect to get to heaven?"

"Well, I just do the best I can, and pray to God, and I believe, and hope He will have mercy on me when I die, and overlook my sins."

"That He won't. He couldn't do it," I replied.

Looking at me with a mixture of amazement, curiosity, and contempt at my ignorance, he

replied in a most cynical tone, "Then there's no salvation for me."

"No," I calmly said, "not in that way."

"Then how am I to get it? Let me hear your way."

"Now," I said, "look here. Suppose you owed a bill, say £10, at a place of business, and could not pay it. And suppose there were different partners in the firm; we'll call them, for example, Mr. William, and Mr. Henry. Now, if you went in one day to make known your poverty, and found Mr. William making up the books, and he said to you, 'Well, Joe, I know you are a poor man, and cannot pay the money; I will overlook your account in the book, and not charge you with it,' would that not make you very happy? and you would come away in great peace, and tell the wife that it was all right now that Mr. William had overlooked your account, and you need not pay the money?"

"I would to be sure."

"Now, suppose next day you met one of the other partners, Mr. Henry, say, and he said, 'Joe, you owe us £10'; you would say, 'Yes, but Mr. William has overlooked the account, and I haven't to pay it. 'Oh, but,' says Mr. Henry, 'Mr. William has no power to do any such thing, He is but one of the firm, and *the firm* demands it, so get ready to pay or go to prison,' where would your peace be then?"

"I confess it would be gone in a moment."

"To be sure it would. But suppose, instead of that, Mr. William had said, 'Joe, you are poor and cannot pay; I will pay for you,' and put his hand into his pocket, and pulled out £10, and popped it into the till for you, and said,



‘ There, Joe, the money is paid; I will give you a receipt, and put “*paid*” to your name in the book ’; would you then be afraid to meet the rest of the firm, with the receipt in your pocket? ”

“ No; that I would not. ”

“ Well now, Joe, God could not *overlook* your sin. His righteousness demanded the payment of the debt; but what justice demands grace provides; and in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, God has shown how ‘ He can be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. ’ (Rom. iii. 26). The cross is not the *overlooking* but the *settlement of sin*. The debt is paid, and “ being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ” (Rom. v. 1.)

“ ‘ Bold shall I stand at that great day,

For who aught to my charge shall lay;

While by Thy blood absolved I am

From sin’s tremendous curse and shame? ’ ”

Thus I went on to tell him the story of the cross, and as I looked up, I saw his hand stealing over the bed to get his handkerchief to wipe away the big tear-drops that were rolling down his cheeks, as he was trying to stifle his emotion. But perceiving that I had noticed him, he said in a broken voice, “ You must really excuse me, sir, for I cannot help it; but there’s something in that that touches me. I haven’t grit\* any this many a long year, for my heart is as hard as a stone, but somehow that touches me, and I cannot help it. ” And then he fairly broke out. “ I see it all, ” he presently added; “ well, I was blind; but the cross settled it; and it is not overlooked, but settled. I thank God; I thank Christ; I thank you, sir. Oh! but there are many blind that do

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\* Wept.

not see the way, and those that teach them are as blind themselves. No one ever told me that before, and I never heard it. Oh! I am thankful that I lived till to-day, for if I died yesterday I would have been lost, for I was on the wrong road, and many hundreds besides me, but now I see that the cross has settled it all. Thank God! Thank God! I'm not afeerd to die now." And he sobbed right out.

The long-continued burst of very intelligent praise in which he now gave expression to the feelings of his emancipated soul was most touching and blessed to listen to.

Not long since one of my children went with her mother to visit him, and found him in great distress, as one of his daughters was very ill, and both father and mother thought her dying. Yet he was so full of praise and joy in God that my little girl was quite struck with it, and on leaving the house said, "Oh, I never, never saw anyone so happy as that man. I shall call him Joyful Joe." And on visiting him again on another occasion she said, "Every time I see him I feel inclined to add another Joyful to his name: so now I must call him Joyful Joyful Joyful Joe."

On speaking subsequently to the person who first asked me to visit him, she said, "Joe is converted anyway, and all the house know it of him; his temper is quite changed."

He is still struggling on with pain and poverty, poor fellow, but his account with *the Firm* is settled, and his one desire while awaiting the Lord's time in patience, is that it may not be long till He takes him home to be with Himself for ever, where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be

any more pain; for the former things are passed away." (Rev. xxi. 4.)

Reader, are you, like Joe was, hoping that God will have mercy on you, and overlook your sins in the day of judgment? No; He could not, for it would really leave you still in your sins, and you and He could never thus be happy together. He has something far, far better for you than that. Infinite love has provided for the requirements of infinite righteousness in the cross of God's beloved Son, and the truth of this must reach your conscience and your heart through faith, if you are to have eternal life, peace with God, and boldness in the day of judgment.

Every other hope is a delusion.

E. C.

## CHRIST IS "THE WAY."

**D**URING a great revival of God's work, a servant of the Lord was walking down the aisle of a crowded building.

Observing a young man whose eyes were filled with tears, and whose face betokened profound sadness, he paused to speak to him, when he was instantly and earnestly asked, "Can you tell me the way to Christ?"

"No," was the reply very deliberately uttered; "I cannot tell you the way to Christ."

"I beg your pardon," said the inquirer, "I supposed you were a minister of the gospel."

"So I am," was the answer.

"And you cannot tell me the way to Christ?"

"No," again said God's servant, "I cannot tell you the way to Christ."

The look of surprise with which this was heard gave place in a moment to an expression of sorrow, and the young man bowed his head in silence, as if bitterly disappointed.

"My friend," said the preacher solemnly, "THERE IS NO WAY TO CHRIST. You think of Him as standing in that distant corner of the room, and you wish to know how you are to get through this vast crowd, and over these seats, in order to reach Him. But your thought is not according to truth. He came down from heaven to the cross, there to put sin away by the sacrifice of Himself, and then He comes on, not merely to yonder corner of the room, but up to the very spot where you now are, and tenderly laying His hand upon you, says, as He said unto the sick of the palsy, "*Man, thy sins are forgiven thee*" (Luke v. 20). You think of Christ as a half-finished bridge across a river, and trembling in alarm upon the bank of a broad stream, you wish me to tell you how to reach it, and thus escape the fire rolling so rapidly towards the lost sinner. But your thought is not according to truth. He bridges not only half the river, but He spans the entire mighty chasm between you and God, and you have nothing to do but to trust Him for salvation straightway, right here and now; for "*by Him all that believe are justified from all things*" (Acts xiii. 39).

The next day the servant of God had the satisfaction of seeing the young man distributing hymn-books through the building, and singing at his work.

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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.

## TURNED FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT.

I LOOK out upon the night. The sky is serene, one uniform, deep grey-blue; but oh! so dark, so heavy, so lowering! The moon is away. Its beautiful light might never have shined in the heavens, so utterly cheerless is the vast expanse above me, so destitute of one ray of brightness.

The stars are hidden; oh! it is black, hopeless; and yet so calm, as though it had never known another aspect; as though it needed nothing to throw beauty and warmth into its cold darkness. It knows not its own lack, and so is content to abide unchanged. Only the on-looker who has felt the gladness of a sky ablaze with light is saddened and depressed to find it gone, leaving behind such gloom.

Even as I looked my mind descried a type, a picture. I saw my own heart (only twelve months

younger than it is to-day) in that dark sky. I saw it imaged; for oh! my heart was dark, heavy, dead, when last Spring's sun was shining. And like this firmament it was calm and undisturbed, for it knew not its own hopelessness, knew not it was shutting out the Light of life, that Light "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John i. 9). Truly the darkness comprehended it not; knew not even that it was shining.

I remembered being examined by a phrenologist some years ago. Among other marks of character, I was pronounced to have a strong religious propensity, and I wondered within myself, "Shall I verify the prophecy?"

I used to have fits of earnestness at long intervals, excited by hearing a good sermon, or reading some record of a nobly spent life. At such seasons I felt that I ought to be *better*, more sincere; and yet I knew not how to become so. I used to *SAY* my prayers: I asked that I might be forgiven all my sins, and that I might be enabled to overcome my temper (a terrible fire in this poor heart!). It was the *one* evil I had discovered; the *only* thing I knew within as sin; the only thing that prevented my acceptance with God.

I prayed, but I always rose from my knees feeling that I had not prayed earnestly enough, and so *could* not *expect* to be answered; for, Satan whispered, "God would of course hear none but a *very* earnest prayer."

I thought, "Shall I *ever* be able so to pray as to *compel* a hearing?"

Seeing God would not help me, I sought to conquer in my own strength; but though I tried hard, oh! so hard sometimes, I only failed miser-

ably, and at last I gave it up in despair, feeling it was hopeless. My burden had been made too heavy for my strength; I had never been *meant* to bear it entirely!

But all this was the effect, not of grief for offending a loving Father, but of a faintly disturbed conscience, a self-condemned heart. I had never sat under a gospel ministry. I had not a thought or a suspicion of existing rebellion and hatred against God, of innate, indwelling sin. Truly darkness was on the depths of my soul; the Spirit of God had never moved upon those waters!

I read my Bible nightly AS A DUTY. But I read with blind eyes; seeing, I saw not; and hearing, I did not understand; and yet the while suspected not my own lack. Nay, was I not *better* than so-and-so? I generally went to church *three* times on Sundays; I gave most of my pocket-money to the offertory. I taught in the Sunday school, and was not an unfrequent communicant; in fact, I was well enough were it not for that unfortunate temper. I was doing my best; surely God would consider my temptations, and have mercy on me at the last! Unconsciously I whispered to my heart, "Thou art rich, and have need of nothing," and knew not all the while that I was "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. iii. 17). My eyes had never lighted on the "gold tried in the fire"; and the "white raiment" of Another's righteousness I envied not; for was I not already clothed? Ah! it was truly a dark land I groped in, the blackness of darkness!

But *He* had marked me, the great God of heaven, in whose sight every creature that

moves is manifest. *He* had watched the prodigal's wanderings further and further into the far country, had yearned over him, and gone swiftly out to meet him "while he was yet a *great* way off" (Luke xv. 20).

I had spent the winter abroad. Oh, *such* husks of worldly joys I had fed on! And yet the Deceiver had made them very sweet to my taste. I only hungered a *very* little sometimes, for *I knew not what*. But this sense of want only made me taste more abundantly of the one supply I knew. Oh, my Father! my Father! I did not even *think* on Thy house of plenty; and yet Thou wert never for a moment unmindful of Thy long-missing child!

I spent some weeks in London before returning, and one Lord's Day had a tract put into my hand. Strangely enough, I had never had one given me before, and looked with astonishment at the donor. I put it carelessly into my pocket, and forgot it till the evening, when I took it up and glanced at the heading: "Faith."

I read a line or two. It put before me very plainly that salvation was full and free, by grace through faith. "Salvation by faith *alone*," I inwardly cried; "what nonsense!" and taking up a Bible, I found the references given, and read again from the Word itself what I had seen in the tract, and *totally disbelieved*.

I could hardly believe my eyes, and thinking I was misunderstanding the verses, I went down to the friend whose guest I was, and asked had she ever heard of this way of salvation?

"Of course I have! As if every one had not!"

I was astonished; but my self-love was



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wounded at having shown my ignorance of an evidently universally known fact, and I soon changed the subject, and forgot, in the excitement of making plans for the day, what had before interested me. Ah! Satan was ready to pluck away the good seed, but the ground had been thereby prepared for the sowing-time so blessedly near (Matt. xiii. 19).

I left my friends and returned home. The "season" was just beginning, and I plunged into all its excitement and gaiety, enjoying it thoroughly. Those poor, paltry, meaningless pleasures! How soon they were to fade into nothingness by reason of the great joy so soon to fill my empty heart!

Quite by CHANCE I had almost written. Chance? Can we thus speak, and yet know that the same God who knows the falling of a sparrow, who gives to the winds a decree and to the waves a commandment, is also He who marks out the way we must tread, making all things work together for good to them that love God? (Rom. viii. 28). Chance? when it is written, He worketh *all* things after *the counsel of His own "will"* (Eph. i. 11). Nay, rather would I say, By His grace, His love, He let my path cross that of one of His servants who was to be to me the bearer of the "glad tidings," and when all things were ready, bid me to the banquet-house, and spread before me His rich, rare feast of love! Happy, happy day! (Song of Sol. ii. 4; Matt. xxii. 4).

Oh! the first breaking up of the darkness within! The mixture of astonishment, and joy, and despair. Was I misunderstanding the King's message, offering me a free, full, com-

plete salvation *now*, that night, that hour? Surely my ears deceived me. How could it be a *present* salvation for me when I had done so few good works? Ah! the Spirit's work was already begun; and, before I left the meeting that night, I saw myself a sinner, undone, condemned; and yet my eyes were too bedimmed with tears of sorrow to behold JESUS, the Deliverer, waiting to whisper, "Peace."

I was left in this bitterness of spirit for (I think) three days. Oh! those long, weary days of weeping! What a cheerless time it was! for Satan had blinded my eyes, so that I could not see the Sun of Righteousness arising with the healing in His wings my wounded heart so needed (Mal. iv. 2). I was occupied only with *self*. I was struggling to *make myself* believe, to *give myself* faith—God's gift, which His royal Hand *only* could bestow. Truly I had read blindly, "Saved through faith, and that *not* of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Eph. ii. 8).

At last in an agony of despair I felt I must give it all up, and with heart and brain alike bursting, I lay there, and felt I was lost, lost; unless Jesus would help me. Then it was that He who had so long stood knocking at the door of my heart, discerning the thought *before* it came forth, entered in Conqueror. I had a sense of a strange calm on the surging waves of condemnation rolling over my soul; but I hardly understood it; it was not yet, "*perfect* peace." Oh! my loving Father! He was very, very tender with His faithless trembling child!

*Again* He gave the word to His servant to speak in season to me, being weary; and coming out from the Master's presence, he brought His

Word to me, and opening John v. 24, spoke out the message, "Verily, verily, [*surely, surely*] I, [JESUS] 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."

That message opened the flood-gates, and a mighty ocean of peace and joy and rejoicing swept into my long-divided heart, and I was at rest, at rest! And He has kept me rejoicing before Him with the joy of His salvation up to this hour, and *will* keep me till the fruition of that thrice-blessed hope of His appearing; when, caught up in rapture to meet Him in the air, I shall learn the new song, and sing through endless ages the praises of Him who "loved me, and gave Himself *for* me" (Titus ii. 13; 1 Thes. iv. 16, 17; Gal. ii. 20).

Reader, the same JESUS who sent His messenger to testify to *me* these things is this moment speaking: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that *heareth* my word, and *believeth* on Him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life." Do you believe on Him? Then *you* have *eternal life*, for it is written: "This is the record, that God *hath* given to us *eternal life*, and this life is in His Son." And again: "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. 11, 13).

Are you still *out* of Christ? Oh! then hear His voice *to-day*: "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man." "Come unto Me . . . and I *will* give you rest." "Him that cometh to Me I will in *no wise* cast out" (Prov. viii. 4; Matt. xi. 28; John vi. 37).

A. DE C.

## **"I KEN I SEE IT PLAINER."**

**I** WAS on my way from the railway station to the little meeting-room where I was to preach, in a small fishing-town in Scotland, when I was asked by a Christian man if I would go and see a poor young fellow who was dying.

I at once consented to do so, having nearly an hour to spare before the time announced for my meeting.

The friend who asked me to visit the young man led the way, and soon we were in his room. There, upon his bed, lay what had once been a fine young man twenty-nine years of age. That deadly disease consumption had brought him thus low. Its dreadful sweat lay heavy upon him. I saw he was fast sinking, and that if his soul was to be saved at all, it must be *now*.

His story as a sinner is soon told. He had lived hard and fast, and, to all intents and purposes, had been a prodigal. He had wasted his health and substance in riotous living; but he had spent all that he had without obtaining happiness or satisfaction; and now, in all the weakness and helplessness of disease, he desired to return to the parental roof that he had so long deserted, and die under the care and nursing of those simple, Christian, praying parents. He was brought home on a Monday, on the evening of which day the friend who took me to his house first saw him. The sick man asked to have read the Gospel narrative of the conversion of the dying thief.

My friend read it, as it is given in Luke xxiii., which drew from the dying man the remark, "That's grand."

On Tuesday, the day following his being brought home, I saw him, and have already told you how I found him, as to his body. Now I will tell you how I found him as to his soul.

God had evidently been working in him by His Spirit, and had shown him that he was a lost sinner, and that it was an awful thing to go into eternity unsaved.

His agony about his soul seemed almost to make him forget his body, and he never expressed a desire to recover. Salvation was what he longed for; but he questioned if there was salvation for such a wretch as he had been.

I opened my Bible, and read to him from I. Tim. i., 15. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

I then asked, "Are you a sinner?"

"Indeed I am," he replied.

"Then Christ came into the world to save you," I rejoined. I then turned to Rom. v., 8: "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we are yet sinners, Christ died for us."

I asked again, "Are you a sinner?"

He replied, "Yes, *that* I am."

"Then Christ died for you," I said.

I then turned to a third scripture in Luke, xv., 2: "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them."

Once more I asked, "Are you a sinner?"

"Yes," was his earnest, emphatic reply; and turning on his elbow, he looked across the room to the friend who had brought me, and said, "I ken I see it plainer, Donald."

"But man, you must believe it," replied the friend.

I then went over the three scriptures above mentioned again, and asked him, "Who did Christ come into the world to save?"

"Sinners," he replied.

"And what are you?"

"A sinner."

"Then Christ came into the world to save you; believe it."

"For whom did Christ die?" I asked.

"For sinners," he said.

"And what are you?"

"A sinner."

"Then Christ died for you; believe it."

"Whom does Christ receive?"

"Sinners."

"And what are you?"

"A sinner."

"Then Christ receives you; believe it, and you are saved."

He drew a long breath, and exclaimed, "I wish I could say I was saved!"

I replied, "If you believe that you are a sinner, and that Christ came into the world to save you, and that He receives you, then you are saved."

The blessed Spirit of God applied the word; light broke in upon him, and he was saved.

I now read a fourth scripture, Galatians, ii., 20: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

"Who does '*who*' mean?" I asked.

"Jesus."

"And who is '*me*'?"

"Thomas M——"

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“ And what is between you both? ”

“ Love.”

He turned on his back, and said, “ I wish I could make a little prayer to Him.”

“ Thomas,” I said, “ He wants you to thank Him.”

He immediately said, “ Lord Jesus, I thank you for having loved me, and received me.”

My friend and I fell on our knees, and praised God for having shown this poor prodigal that Jesus had loved him, died for him, saved him, and received him.

When we rose up, he said, “ Fetch in my mother.”

We gladly did so, and in an instant mother and son were weeping with joy, as each embraced the other; the mother praising God as she heard from her son's own lips the cheering news, “ Mother, He has received me.”

Prayer was answered; the prodigal was saved; and the joy of that humble room and its happy occupants was but a faint picture of the peculiar joy that God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and all heaven itself were now indulging in over this returned and saved and happy prodigal.

Thomas M. was brought home to his parents on Monday, was saved on Tuesday, and on the following Thursday evening he fell asleep, without a doubt or murmur. Glory be to God for this trophy of His grace! Surely “ where sin abounded, grace did much more abound ” (Rom. v. 20).

Should this account reach the eyes of any of Thomas M.'s companions, I would beseech them at once to be reconciled to God.

## “DON'T BOTHER ME.”

**I**T will seem almost incredible that the above words, strictly and literally as they stand, should have been uttered by a young woman who knew that her little span of life was all but over, and that she was about to enter eternity. But it is a solemn and terrible fact that they were so uttered, and under such circumstances; spoken, too, in reply to the warning of a nurse in the hospital where she was dying, who told her that the end was near, and asked her a question about her poor perishing soul.

“Don't bother me,” was the only answer the nurse got, and two hours later that soul passed into eternity, the words in which she rejected the grace of God and the message of His love being almost, if not quite, the last that passed her lips.

And what makes it more solemn is that some weeks before, when there was still a hope of recovery if the operation it was necessary she should undergo should be successful, she seemed to listen to one who then spoke to her about her soul, and to be anxious as to her state. But, oh! fatal mistake! she *put it off* in the hope that she might recover, or that at least she might have time at the last to repent; and when the time came, that heart which had trifled with the message of grace was hardened against it, and in three little words she rejected it for ever, and hopeless and helpless she passed away; to wait with the “dead, small and great” who will “stand before God,” whose names are “not written in the Book of Life,” and who will be “cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. xx. 12-15).



Is it not wonderful that there are so many people, and who believe, or profess to believe, that they have immortal souls, souls that will live throughout the countless ages of eternity, either in boundless bliss or hopeless torment; either *in* the presence of God, or *out* of that presence; who yet persist in *putting off* the great question in comparison with which every other question is as nothing?

It was only yesterday I was speaking to one who, in reply to my remarks, said he did his best to keep the Law; and when obliged to admit, which he did freely, that he constantly broke it, added that there was “hope to the last”; and even pointed to that wondrous instance of the grace of God, the saved thief upon the cross, to confirm his statement. Too many there are who do the same; thus using this most blessed story of God’s super-abounding grace to go on with the world which crucified His Son, and enjoy its so-called pleasures to the end. But they wilfully forget that there were *two* thieves dying there, and that the one who perished everlastingly was as near to the Saviour whom he rejected as the one who looked and lived.

Let me ask you, dear reader, earnestly and affectionately: Are you trifling with that great question, the question of eternity, as if you were going to live as long as *you* pleased, and then at the last, as a mere kind of formality, you would repent, and go to heaven? Perhaps you would be horrified to say so; but if you are going on doing your own will, and living for yourself in this world, you are saying so by your life, if not with your lips. You know well you cannot claim the next moment as your own, and yet you

are living as if you had an unlimited number of years before you.

As I recall those terrible, God-rejecting words which form the title of this little paper, I think of that solemn warning found in the Word of God: "Because I have called, and ye refused . . . I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall *not* find me." (Prov. i. 24-28.)

But I turn from the warning of judgment to the invitation of grace; to those blessed words of the Son of God: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28). Do you "labour" under the weight of your guilt? Are you "heavy laden" with the burden of your sins? How many are so God only knows. Do you crave for "rest," rest of conscience as to those very sins with which you know yourself to be laden, and which unfit you for the presence of a righteous God who cannot look at sin? Do you tremble at the thought of the righteousness of God, and say, "Oh! tell me about His love and mercy, and not about His righteousness."

Why, it is to that very righteousness I would point you as the most certain and sure foundation on which to rest every hope. Surely "God is Love" (1 John iv. 8, 16), and the cross of His Son is the measure of His love to a world lost and ruined, and to a sinner dead in trespasses and sins; but it is not love which passes over sin as if it were nothing; *that* is not what God is,

or what God does. “God is Light.” (1 John i. 5). He requires payment to the very last farthing. But He points the poor, burdened, weary sinner to the One who *has* paid to the very last farthing; and while such a one also learns the fulness of the love of God at the cross of His Son, he also learns there the righteousness that cannot impute the sin to the Saviour and the sinner too. And when he knows that the righteousness of God has been so met and vindicated, and that that is all settled, he can enter into and enjoy God’s love, and not before: grace reigns indeed, but, blessed be God, it reigns “through *righteousness* unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. v. 21).

As God cannot in righteousness pass over sin, not even a single thought of sin, so He cannot in righteousness impute sin, not even a single thought of sin, if it has been imputed to His Son upon the cross. Oh! wondrous, blessed thought, nay *truth*, the Son of God has become a man, and taken *my* standing and place before God, that He may give me *His* standing and place before God; and Christ, and Christ only, is the measure of my acceptance before God, and of the love wherewith I am loved!

Can you say this, dear reader? If not, why not? Is it God’s fault if you reject the free offer of His grace? He is “not willing that any should perish.” Only take it while He offers it, I entreat you, and don’t *put it off* to a death-bed which you may never have, for you may be suddenly cut off in your sins. This moment is yours, in the goodness of God; the next, and you may be gone for ever to that place from which there is no return.

A. P. G.

## A DIVINE APPOINTMENT.

(Read Acts xvii. 30, 31).

**G**OD has a controversy with this world. He has a question to settle with it, an awful question, the mere mention of which should make men's ears to tingle and their hearts to quake. A righteous God has to avenge the death of His Son. It is not merely that the world accepted a vile robber, and murdered an innocent Man; *this, in itself, would have been a dreadful act.* But no; that innocent Man was none other than the Son of God, the beloved of the Father's heart. The world will have to account to God for the death of His Son, for having nailed Him to a cross between two thieves! What a reckoning it will be! How red will be the day of vengeance! How awfully crushing the moment in the which God will draw the sword of judgment to avenge the death of His Son! How utterly vain the notion that the world is improving! Improving! though stained with the blood of Jesus. Improving! though under the judgment of God for that act. Improving! though having to account to a righteous God for its treatment of the Beloved of His soul, sent in love to bless and save. What blind fatuity! What wild folly! Ah! no; reader, improvement there can be none till the besom of destruction and the sword of judgment have done their terrible work in avenging the murder, the deliberately planned and determinedly executed murder, of the blessed Son of God (Ps. cx. 1; Matt. xxii. 44; Mark xii. 36; Luke xx. 43; Acts ii. 35; Heb. i. 13, x. 13).

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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 STRONG MAN SPOILED OF HIS GOODS.

(Matt. xii. 29; Mark iii. 27; Luke xi. 21, 22).

"I NEVER felt so powerless as to-day," said an earnest evangelist, as he entered the garret of an aged Christian woman, with whom some of us were wont to mingle our prayers that God would strengthen us for His service, and that He, who alone can quicken the dead, would grant the salvation of some for whose blessing we yearned.

"The word fell like water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again," continued he. "I can only liken that poor woman to the man with the unclean spirit, 'who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains' (Mark v. 2, 3). She

cries in the bitterness of her spirit; the sharp arrows of conviction pierce her soul; and the devil provokes her to blaspheme the God who made her. Satan seems to command her thoughts. Nothing I could say touched her."

"Oh! my brother," said the aged believer, who sat propped up by pillows in her large arm-chair by the fireside, "no *mere* man could tame the demoniac, but the Lord of heaven did, the blessed Jesus, our Master; and we will lay this poor soul at His feet. Let us have *faith in God*, who in a moment can say, 'Peace, be still,' to the storm that rages in her bosom" (Mark iv. 39).

She lifted her voice in prayer. Her manner was remarkable, and her language most quaint. She spoke as to One whom she well knew, asking Him to do the work for which His servant was powerless. In earlier days she had herself been active in gospel work, and the Lord had given her many souls; but now she was called aside to learn deep lessons in the school of affliction.

In her earlier life she had been a handsome woman; but little trace of it now remained. Through inflammation one of her eyes was quite closed; and both had to be shaded from the light of day. Rheumatism fastened her to her chair, to which in the morning she was with difficulty removed from her little bed in the corner of the attic. This was all the exertion which she who had formerly been so active could now make. But not a murmur escaped her lips; and her spirit breathed His praise, who chastened that she might be partaker of His holiness. Lovely specimen of a holy priest! Like David she could

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say, "My praise shall be continually of Thee" (Heb. xii. 10; Ps. lxxi. 6).

One day I said to her, "Would you not like to go about, and speak of Jesus, as you used to do?"

"No, my dear," she quickly replied. "If He needed that of me now He would give me the strength for it; holy and blessed be His name. I can pray in my corner here; and that's my service. To love His will is the joy of my soul."

Her words rebuked the less restful spirit in me, and I thanked the Lord for lessons learned through this lowly saint, who had drunk so sweetly in His spirit, and in whom shone so brightly the virtues of Christ.

We spent in prayer some part of the afternoon on which my story opens. Then I obtained the name and address of the woman for whom we had prayed together, purposing soon to see her.

A week later I again visited my old friend in the attic, and on my entering she inquired with eagerness, "Well, what of that poor soul? The Lord has laid her heavily on my heart. I have been night and day in prayer about her, and I believe He will use you in blessing to her."

My heart smote me. Alas! the case had passed from my mind. Other interests had engaged me, and I had not been to see her.

I told the truth to my aged sister in Christ, who was much disappointed at my little zeal for souls; but added, "Now we will again together plead for that troubled one, with Him who is full of love and compassion, and you will go direct to her house, as from the sanctuary of His presence, which, bless His name, we have often known in this little room."

We prayed, and both felt we had the thing we had asked of the Lord (Mark xi. 24).

In expectation of blessing I proceeded to the house of Mrs. R. and found her at home.. I explained my errand, telling her I knew the blessedness of having God as my Father, that I had no fear I should ever meet Him as a Judge, and I desired she should have this comfort also.

“ Oh ! ” she said, “ you need not speak to me like that. I am lost. I wish I had never been born, I have such awful thoughts of God. I would not dare tell them to you, and sometimes I almost *believe* there is no God ! But,” she added with a sigh, “ I would be happier if I could always believe that. Something warns me there is a God, and that He is sending me to hell.”

“ Poor soul ! ” I replied. “ Conscience, that witness which God has set in every bosom, speaks true when it warns you that there is a God, and keeps you from quietly yielding to the deluding suggestions of the ‘ father of lies. ’ Your conscience convicts you that you are unholy, and unfit for His presence ; and the question you must have answered before you can find rest is, ‘ How can I be just with God ? ’ It is my joy to-day to be able to tell you that God has solved this great difficulty. He has found a ransom ; and the way is open for *you* to be in the presence of the holy God in perfect peace (Job xxxiii. 24).

“ God, whom Satan makes you think so badly of, *loves you*, even now, when you are without any strength to love Him. Though you are ungodly, His enemy, as all those thoughts now raging in your bosom prove you to be ; though you are but a poor sinner ; in the past He so



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loved you as to give His only Son, who eternally dwelt in His bosom, to die a shameful death, that you might never go to hell. This is the God you tell me is *sending you* to hell.

“ Now, the devil succeeds in making you wrong Him. Jesus went into ‘the dust of death’ that God might have sinners such as you brought into the sweet relationship of children, on whom He could lavish the riches of His grace. God does not send you to hell, and if you go there it must be past the open door of heaven, laden with the guilt of having spurned God’s love, and of having refused the salvation He now so freely offers you. To-day He would make you His child, and a co-heir with Christ of all the glory of heaven (Rom. viii. 16, 17). Do you prefer to be the captive of Satan? ”

“ Oh ! no,” she eagerly replied. “ But how can I know all you tell me is true? ”

“ I have the authority of God’s Word for all I say ; and that Word will, I believe, carry home conviction with it ; for I trust God will use it as ‘the sword of the Spirit’ to repel all the fiery darts Satan is aiming at your soul (Eph. vi. 16, 17). Hell was not made for *man*, but ‘for the devil and his angels,’ and it is he who is now seeking to drag you to his dark domain (Matt. xxv. 41). Yet it is true, if you will not listen to God’s gracious message of salvation, there is no place for you but hell (Heb. ii. 3). It would be misery for you to be in heaven if you did not know Christ, for He will be the great, the engrossing, Object of joy there. I have come to-day to seek to win your heart for that Blessed One, by telling you of His great love. It is said of human affection that ‘love begets love,’

and this may sometimes prove true ; but to-day I am confident the tale of divine love will win your heart for Christ.

“ You have been much prayed for by one who is no stranger to the prayer-hearing, prayer-answering God. Children of God also have met together to ask for your salvation counting on the promise, ‘If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven’ (Matt. xviii. 19); and I came straight to your house from the room of an aged saint who prayed with me on your behalf, and who sent me to you in faith that you are to-day to break company with Satan, and through divine grace be delivered from his cruel bondage. ‘If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed’ ” (John viii. 36).

“ Oh ! ” said she, “ I would be thankful if I could get rid of these thoughts ; but I cannot.” And she burst into a fit of wild grief.

“ Dear distracted one,” I rejoined, “ you are sorely driven of Satan, the great enemy of Christ and of your soul ; but his victor, the Lord Jesus Christ, now in the glory of God, has His eye upon you ; and well does Satan know it, else this tempest would not now be raging in your bosom. He keeps his goods in peace, till the stronger than he comes to snatch his victims from his deadly grasp (Mark iii. 27). I am come to you with a message of love from the living God, who can say to Satan, ‘Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther’ (Job xxxviii. 11). His message to you is, ‘Thou hast destroyed thyself, but *in Me* is thine help’ (Hos. xiii. 9). ‘Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow ; though

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they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool' (Isa. i. 18). 'God commendeth His love toward us,' such is the gracious attitude He has taken toward the sinner, 'in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us' (Rom. v. 8). These are the words God gave me for you. Oh! think of it; He is the *giving* God. He gave His Son and He will give you salvation, if you will receive it. Dear Mrs. R., the day hastens when we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and knowing the terror of that moment for the unsaved, I would persuade you to take the position which these lines express—

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

"Could God have mercy on one so bad as I am?" she slowly asked. "My whole thoughts are wicked, and my actions have been little better. I am utterly vile; I could not be worse; I loathe myself. What a profitless life mine has been!"

For some time she continued in this strain of self-condemnation. I did not interrupt her, knowing what a relief it would be for the anguish of her soul to find vent; and my heart rejoiced as I marked the deep repentance which, unknown to herself, God was working in her. Naturally we think well of ourselves, and are *self-excusers*; but when the Holy Ghost convinces us of sin we become *self-accusers*.

When she was silent I said, "I am so glad this is the estimate you have formed of yourself."

She looked aghast.

"Very glad indeed," I added; "and I am

going to read some verses from the Word of God which show it is only such as you God *can* save."

She sunk into a chair by my side as I opened the Scriptures, and read from Rom. iii., beginning at the 10th verse and ending at the 19th. I commented on each verse as we went through them, and inquired if she would not plead guilty to what it said.

When I had finished reading I said, "Now, Mrs. R., that was a good picture of me before God in His mercy saved my soul, do you not think it will do for you?"

"Oh, yes," was her reply, "that's just what I am, guilty before God."

"Then your mouth is shut, and you have nothing to say for yourself?"

"Nothing! oh, nothing," she emphatically answered.

"Well, I do rejoice, for now you and God are at one about your state of soul, and this is the first step towards salvation. In order to be saved there are two things the sinner must believe, and only two. I must believe what God says about myself, and what He tells me about Christ, my Saviour. You have added your 'Amen' to the first, for you have bowed to God's verdict on you as a lost sinner. You believe you stand condemned before Him, and now it only remains for me to unfold the record which God has given us of His Son, and on this your faith will find a resting-place.

"When God, by His Spirit, begins to deal with a soul, His first great object is to get the individual, in his own estimation, right down amongst the company of sinners; for Christ came

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'not to call the righteous, but *sinner*s,' (Mark ii. 17), those who own there is nothing in or about them that God can commend. Before Him 'there is none righteous, no, not one' (Rom. iii. 10). 'There is not a just man on earth, that doeth good and sinneth not' (Eccles. xii. 10); but everlasting praise be unto Him who suffered, 'the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God' '' (1 Pet. iii. 18).

With joy I watched the Holy Spirit's work in Mrs. R. She had fully owned her unworthiness, and unto such "the righteousness of God" is addressed. It is "unto all, and upon all them that believe" (Rom. iii. 22). How free! "Unto all!" God is "rich in mercy," and He calls the sinner to receive His bounty, a full and free salvation! (Eph. ii. 4). None need perish if they will only *receive* the glad tidings, and accept the salvation God brings.

I called Mrs. R.'s attention to the scripture in Titus ii. 11: "The grace of God that bringeth salvation," asking her to mark the expression "*bringeth*," and told her she did not need to ask or pray for it. Jesus died on the cross, and bore the full judgment of sin, so that God can now *offer* salvation, adding, "He offers it to you to-day, if you will simply believe what He says."

We turned to 1 Pet. ii. 21-24, and read of the Saviour as there detailed; and then I said, "In your stead Christ was on Calvary's tree; there He underwent the judgment of sin, the thing so hateful to God that, when His beloved Son was *made* sin, though it was not His own, God had to hide His face even from Him, for He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; and then Jesus cried, in the bitterness of His soul, "My God,

my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? ” (Matt. xxvii. 46). “ Dear Mrs. R., I can answer His question. God forsook that Blessed One then, that I, that you, if you will simply trust His Word, might for ever bask in the sunshine of the Father’s love.

“ You see, the sinner has nothing to do, and he must not try to do anything. ‘It is to him that *worketh not*, but believeth’ (Rom. iv. 5). Everything was done by Christ on the Cross. He cried, ‘It is finished,’ and you have simply to rest on that fact (John xix. 30). How wondrous His grace! He beseeches you to be reconciled, you who have been so alienated from Him, filled with such thoughts that you said you would not dare to tell them to me. He had seen them all, for He knows the thoughts and intents of the heart, and yet He pleads with you to forget them, and be reconciled to Him! ”

Whilst I spoke she listened with increasing interest as each new phase of the heart and ways of our Saviour God passed before her.

At last she said, “ Do you mean to tell me it will be all my own fault if I am not saved now? ”

“ Yes, indeed,” I replied; “ it will be your fault; nay, more, your guilt. You cannot blame God; for in love He lingers over you; but if you refuse the grace He offers you you must land in hell, and the direst woe of that scene will be the thought, I have none to blame but myself. Then, as one once said, you will brood on the fact, that ‘God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life’ (John iii. 16). These words will be no glad tidings then, but the knell of your eternal con-

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demnation. Conscience will not forget this great truth, and it will ever taunt you with it when your doom is sealed, and you are where the worm of remorse never dies, and the fire of God's righteous judgment never goes out. Ah! Mrs. R., let God have His way to-day, for it is bound up with your blessing; and I know you wish to be happy. Tell me, have you been so whilst you let the devil rule your heart? "

" No, indeed," she answered; "and I do desire to be happy."

" And God desires it," I added; "and you must turn your back on His loving entreaties if you go to bed to-night without peace, eternal peace, filling your soul."

I spoke a little more of Him who is altogether lovely, fairer than the sons of men, "heaven's beloved One," and before she knew it, Mrs. R. was sitting at "the feet of Jesus," "with open face beholding the glory of the Lord" (2 Cor. iii. 18). The burden of *her* sins had gone. Her eye brightened, and a calm, restful expression took the place of anxious fears.

I uttered His words, "Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace."

She smiled! It was the glad response of a heart that rested in the deep love of the bosom of Jesus. She knew now that heart was hers. What a treasure! And she, too, was His treasure; "redeemed not with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Pet. i. 18). Satan had lost his prize, and she, whom he had so governed, sat clothed in her right mind at Jesus' feet.

It was a moment of great joy in the quiet, out-

of-the-way cottage, down an obscure lane, in the city of A——, joy in unison with that which pealed through the courts of heaven, in the presence of the angels of God, over a sinner who had repented; one whom the Shepherd had brought home to God, on His shoulders, rejoicing. God truly had share in that which, for some hours that afternoon, had engrossed two souls on earth.

We bowed the knee together.. The new-born child lisped her first note of praise to her Redeemer—God, her Father. “What hath God wrought!” was the thought of both our hearts. We were as the dust before Him, but He claimed us as His portion, and we rejoiced together in His love. We felt that He who had given Himself for us, a sacrifice even unto *death*, deserved that we should present our bodies a living sacrifice for Him, as the Holy Ghost in Romans xii. 1 beseeches. We asked Him to keep us for Himself.

The shades of evening were closing in, warning me that I should be looked for in my own home, and that I must leave her, to whom my soul was knit in the love of God; but I desired to drop a word as to the confession of Christ, which God looks for from the one He *has saved*.

I repeated the words of Romans x. 9, and charged Mrs. R. at once to tell her husband, when he returned from his daily labour, of God’s goodness to her.

“You do not need to tell me that,” was her reply; “I am only too thankful to have such good news to give him. I must speak of it, I am so happy.”

Sweet testimony to the place Christ had got



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for Himself in the affections of her heart ! “ Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh ” (Matt. xii. 34).

“ The fowler’s snare is broken  
And loosed my captive wing ;  
And shall the bird be silent  
Which Thou hast taught to sing ? ”

I bade her adieu, but she lingered on the doorstep as I passed through the cottage garden. Her expression told me there was something yet she desired to ask of me.

I returned, and laying my hand on her shoulder said, “ You are very happy, dear Mrs. R., are you not ? ”

“ Oh ! very,” was her reply, “ but what should I do, if I ever had another bad thought of Him ? It would be so much more awful now that I know He loves me.”

How blessed to see that as the sense of God’s love to her deepened in her soul, so did the exceeding hatefulness of sin ! Manifestly repentance is a progressive work in the soul that is brought to God, and the thoughts of the heart grow in union with His mind.

I told her she now belonged to Christ, and that “ He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him ” (Heb. vii. 23). He had given her eternal life, and would preserve her from every snare in the way, till she was safely landed in the glory of God.

“ Look steadfastly on Jesus, as you see Stephen doing in Acts vii.,” I said, “ and thus run the race, which, through grace, you have to-day begun. Tell Him *all* that is in your heart : things you could tell to no one else you will learn

*His ear is bent to hear. Every care He will delight to relieve you of; every duty He will strengthen you for; and the love of His heart will prove your unfailing stay. Keep so near to Him that He may hear your feeblest whisper, and like John, whose resting-place was on the Saviour's bosom, you will catch the words that fall from His lips, which those at a distance may not. Satan will try to disturb your peace, but do not listen to him. Tell every evil thought to Jesus, and He will give you grace not to harbour it. 'Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin,' is the attitude of soul God would have the believer ever to maintain (Rom. vi. 11). There never would be the sins of word or deed if wrong thoughts were not cherished; they are the darts of the evil one, and the shield of faith can alone defend you from them. May you, dear Mrs. R., have it ever ready, and God will prove to you the truth of that word, 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you' (James ii. 7). Satan is a conquered foe to the feeblest saint who has faith in the blessed victor, our Lord Jesus Christ."*

It was due to my old friend in the attic that she should share in the joy of Mrs. R.'s conversion. When I lifted the latch of her door the voice of prayer again fell upon my ear. It was that of the evangelist who had told us of Mrs. R.'s misery of soul. My entrance did not disturb him. I also knelt in prayer, rejoiced to unite with those whose hearts were glad with the joy of His presence, and who drank of "the river of His pleasures" (Ps. xxxvi. 8).

When he paused I said, "Now give thanks to the Lord, Mrs. R. is one of the ransomed band. God in grace has fully met the need of her soul,

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and she rests simply in the fact that He loves *her.*"

Joy filled each heart, and our combined praise gave Him the glory who had again proved Himself the prayer-hearing, prayer-answering God.

How sweet such fellowship in soul-gathering! Would that the children of God knew more of it. What fragrant incense to Him who is the Lord of the harvest, who cheers each labourer going forth to serve, with the word, "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together" (John iv. 36). In this instance how fully we proved that One, the Great Sower, had to make the good seed of the word take root, whilst in richest grace He permitted us, whom He deigns to call His fellows, to enter into His labours; and now as joyful reapers we sent up our song of praise, in unison with that which was sounding in the presence of the heavenly host.

Often after this it was my joy and privilege to visit Mrs. R. Satan did his utmost to shake her confidence in God, but she proved the power of faith, and learned its patience. She fed on the Word of God as a new-born babe desiring its sincere milk (1 Pet. ii. 2). She waited upon the Lord in prayer, and thus renewed her strength remembering the words, "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength" (Isa. xxx. 15). "Like a tree planted by the rivers of water" her soul prospered, and like Andrew of old, having found Christ, she sought to bring others to Him (Ps i. ; John i. 41).

One day she joyfully told me her husband was anxious about his soul, and begged I would go

to see him the following Lord's Day afternoon. He had listened to the tale of his wife's conversion, but that would have had little effect had he not marked a wonderful change in her life. The daily walk is louder testimony than that which falls from the lip. The confession of the mouth should not be absent, but it is worthless unless thrown into relief by the telling background of a spirit subject to the Lord in the little details of every-day life. To accept the sentence of death on the flesh and its workings, and to manifest the spirit of Christ is that to which we are called.

Does this meet the eye of some child of God, unequally yoked with an unbelieving husband? Has he wearied of hearing you speak of Christ? And is your spirit tired, because of enforced silence on the subject of all others most dear to you? Let the words of the Apostle Peter encourage you, "Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that if any obey not the word, they may *without the word* be won by the conversation [behaviour] of the wives."

Thomas R. was not one of this class. He loved his wife, and listened to her earnest entreaties that he would accept salvation. Through her words he saw he was lost. He sought the Saviour, and, through grace, when I met him on the appointed Lord's Day afternoon, he learned that the Saviour sought him, for "the Son of Man is come to *seek* and to save that which is lost" (Luke xix. 10). The seeking sinner and the loving Saviour met, and Thomas R. rejoiced that *all his* sins also were put away through the finished work of Christ.

M.C.

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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.

## NOT JERUSALEM, BUT JESUS.

(READ 1 KINGS VIII. 41-43; ACTS .VIII. 26-40.)

**I**N the first portion of Scripture to which I would call the reader's attention, we have brought before us a bright moment in Israel's history. Solomon occupies the throne of his father David. The Temple has been completed, and "the glory of the Lord" has filled it. Solomon is standing before "the altar of the Lord" in prayer.

After having made supplication respecting the people of Israel, he prays for the "stranger, that is not of Thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for Thy name's sake (for they shall hear of Thy great name, and of Thy strong hand, and of Thy stretched-out arm), when he shall come and pray toward this house, hear Thou in

heaven Thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to Thee for, that all people of the earth may know Thy name, to fear Thee, as do Thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by Thy name."

This prayer of Solomon was thus laid before the throne of God in heaven, His dwelling-place. And although THAT house in its glory had passed away, and another had taken its place, at the time referred to in the second scripture we get an answer to the prayer after an interval of more than a thousand years.

But "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Peter iii. 8.)

In the eighth chapter of the First Book of Kings the prayer is uttered; and in the eighth of Acts the prayer is answered, according to the integrity of the heart of God, and the subject of it is guided by the skilfulness of His hands into the way of blessing.

There are three prominent persons brought before us in this latter scripture:—

First, the SERVANT,

Second, the SINNER,

Third, the SAVIOUR.

On each of these I would dwell a little, but only as they serve to illustrate one grand prominent thought, namely, God's interest in an individual soul.

### 1. THE SERVANT.

First, then, let us look at the servant.

Philip is a beautiful example of what a servant of God should be; and what I am about to add respecting Philip is exclusively for those who

have "peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ," and are thus at rest in His holy presence, for only such can truly serve Him. (Rom. v. 1.)

Philip was at Samaria, in the midst of much blessing from the Lord, "and there was great joy in that city." He has no plans of his own, but is directly under the control of his Master in heaven. He is serving Christ in **PREACHING** Christ.

"And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert."

Instructions could not be more simple or decisive, "Arise, and go toward the south," etc. Mark the response! "And he arose and went."

A servant is responsible only to obey. **Philip** had received his instructions from the **Lord**, **and**, whatever he may leave behind him in **Samaria**, he could say, The Lord knows best, **I will arise** and go. "As the eyes of servants **look unto the** hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God." (Ps. cxxiii. 2.) This is the true position of the servant, in every age and in every circumstance.

## 2. THE SINNER.

I would now call the reader's attention to the second person referred to, namely, **the** sinner, brought before us in the person of **the** eunuch. "Behold, a **man** of Ethiopia, an **eunuch** of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning."

This is all that is told us of the previous history of this interesting man. . He had lived in a far

country, surrounded by idolatry, doubtless. He was in the midst of all that could make THIS LIFE pleasant and easy, inasmuch as Scripture tells us, he was a man "of great authority," occupying a post of honour in the court of the Queen of Ethiopia. But in that distant land he heard of Jehovah's "great name," of His "strong hand," and of His "stretched-out arm"; and the report of "the living and true God" had thus brought into his soul a yearning for that which the gods of Ethiopia could not give him. He had everything for THE PRESENT, but had nothing FOR ETERNITY; and the gods of Ethiopia could not help him.

My reader should remember that God once had a place of distinct blessing on the earth; and, notwithstanding Israel's terrible failures, until the Messiah came, and was rejected, Jerusalem was the recognised centre of earthly blessing. The eunuch therefore naturally connected the blessing of Jehovah with His House at Jerusalem. But how many difficulties and obstacles had to be overcome before he could approach its sacred courts. Scripture has not told us. We may safely conclude thus much: there were difficulties of no ordinary character resulting from the high office which he held, and then there was Satan opposing, in every way he could, the journey of this man from the place of Gentile darkness to the city of Jehovah's blessing.

But there came a moment in the history of the eunuch that may be truly termed the turning-point when, in the presence of all the dangers and difficulties of the way, HE DECIDED to go to Jerusalem. What a sight for heaven! What an object for the ridicule of men in Ethiopia! And



what an object for the hatred and opposition of Satan? Every movement of his heart in its longings toward Jerusalem gave its own delight to the living God. The necessary preparations for the long and wearisome journey, all, all, were watched with interest from above, with dark suspicion from beneath. Of the details of that journey we have no account. But this we know, that at last he neared the spot around which his hopes had centred. Can you not, beloved reader, imagine that stranger from "a far country," as he approached the walls of the sacred city, delighting in the thought that at length he had reached the haven of his desire?

The record of Scripture is extremely brief respecting his visit. It merely states he "had come to Jerusalem for to worship, and was returning." And why is the record so briefly given? I will tell you. He was **TOO LATE FOR THE BLESSING AT JERUSALEM!**

"Too late," you say! "What do you mean?"

I mean that JESUS, the Son of David, the Son of God, had been and gone in Jerusalem before him. His sacred feet had trodden the courts of the house of the Lord, which, in the beginning of His ministry, He had fully owned as His Father's house (John ii.) But the people of Israel had refused to receive Him. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." (John i. 11.) He brought in His own Person light into the world, and they would not have it, "because their deeds were evil." (John iii.) The Person of the Son of God they could not tolerate in their midst; and the unrebuked enmity of their hearts led them at last to be His "betrayers and murderers" (Acts vii. 52.) Out-

side the city of Jerusalem, in the place called Calvary, "there they crucified Him." (Luke xxii. 33.) But before He left the city for the last time He said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." (Matt. xxiii. 37.)

From this scripture, beloved reader, you will notice that the Lord Jesus no longer owns the temple at Jerusalem as His Father's house. He says, "YOUR HOUSE is left unto you desolate." (v. 38.)

I would entreat the reader to give these words his most careful attention. They demand very serious consideration, inasmuch as there is a principle of truth wrapped up in them which professing Christendom at large has entirely lost sight of.

Let me explain what I mean.

God had, as I have already stated, a place of distinct blessing on the earth, the centre of which was His House at Jerusalem; but over that once favoured spot, the Son of God has written "Desolation."

There are ~~two~~ great systems around us to-day. The one is the ~~moral~~ system, called "the world," a system that has grown up by man's departure from God. Over this, the Lord has written, "Judgment." (John xii. 31.)

The other system is that of an earthly religion. Such Judaism was, a divinely ordained system of religion, with an earthly temple and magnificent ceremonial. Over this the Lord has written

“Desolation.” So that, apart from creation, all around that can meet the eye of my reader is lying under this two-fold declaration of the Son of God.

You may tell me I am seeking to draw a dismal picture. Well, be it so; for I grant most fully, that as far as the world and worldly religion go, the prospect is as dismal as death.

Now let us return to the eunuch. He has been to the “desolate house,” and is returning. Think you, beloved reader, that God is going to allow this soul to return to Ethiopia without the blessing he had so earnestly sought; going to let him return as he came, UNFILLED? Not so; the eunuch was an EARNEST man, and on his way home to that distant land of Ethiopia he is still in the search of that which his heart so deeply craved; he is found sitting in his chariot, reading the Scriptures.

Whether he got them at Jerusalem, or had them in his possession before he left Ethiopia, we are not told; but now that he has them, one thing is most evident, HE DEEPLY VALUES THEM. Not like many a Christless professor in the present day, who reads a chapter only on a Sunday, and gives the greater part of his spare time during the week to the novel or the newspaper; the eunuch was not a man of this kind. A shower of rain will keep such people away from a gospel preaching, but the eunuch crosses a desert in the search of that which tens of thousands around treat with utter neglect. And now, on his homeward journey, he is “in the way” to get the blessing.

Here we have again brought before us the servant, who is on the right spot, at the right moment. How beautiful are God’s ways!

“ His every act pure blessing is,  
His path unsullied light.”

“ The Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.” The servant is ready: “ instant in season and out of season.” “ And Philip ran thither to him.” On the part of the servant there is no questioning; nothing but hearty and ready obedience.

The eunuch is reading aloud from the fifty-third chapter of the prophet Isaiah. Philip asks, “ Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.”

Philip has not left Samaria in vain. The living God well knows the need of this precious soul, and sends His servant to minister the desired blessing. Such, beloved reader, is His INTEREST in the welfare of the souls of men. (1 Timothy ii. 4.)

“ The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: in his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? ”

Could ignorance be greater? He was reading the prophecy respecting the sufferings and the humiliation of the blessed Son of God; and he knew it not. He was truly, in this most important respect, an ignorant man; but he was not ashamed to own it. Reality and pride do not go together; but unreality and hypocrisy are ever twin companions. Where the soul is real,

ignorance is no barrier to blessing. And I do most earnestly desire to impress the soul of my reader with the fact THERE IS SUCH A THING as deep, divine, eternal blessing !

Do you ask, Where is it to be found?

I answer; Not at Jerusalem, but in Jesus !

“ And Philip opened his mouth, and BEGAN at the same scripture, and preached unto him JESUS.”

### 3. THE SAVIOUR.

Here, then, we have brought before us the third person already referred to, namely, the Saviour. And if I have drawn a dark and dismal picture of everything around, I would now seek to bring before you a bright and a blessed contrast; a glorious scene of unfading brightness; a home above, on which “ Desolation ” never will be written; and a Person there, in whom “ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” (Col. ii. 9.) That scene is the glory of God; that Person is Jesus, the Son of God; refused on earth by man, nailed to the accursed tree, and buried in a sepulchre, “ but raised from among the dead by the glory of the Father.” (Romans iv. 6.) He went up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God; “ angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him.” (1 Peter iii. 22.) It was the person of Jesus, the Son of God, that Philip thus announced to the eunuch. He presented Him as a present resting-place for his soul, and as a source of everlasting joy.

We find from Scripture that the eunuch in truth received Jesus as a Saviour; and, having owned His claims by baptism, he goes on his way rejoicing. His back is on Jerusalem certainly;

but his face is now toward the glory of God. (1 Peter v. 10.) By the instrumentality of the SERVANT, this SINNER has been directed to the SAVIOUR in heaven, Jesus Christ, who is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." (Heb. xiii. 8.) The eunuch has learned, from the lips of Philip, the story of the Saviour's cross and shame. "He preached unto him JESUS."

Who can tell out all that is wrapped up in that most wondrous name?

"JESUS! how much Thy name unfolds  
 To every opened ear;  
 The pardoned sinner's memory holds  
 None other half so dear.  
 JESUS, the One who knew no sin;  
 Made sin to make us just;  
 Able art Thou our love to win;  
 Worthy of all our trust."

Has He not a claim upon the confidence of your heart, beloved reader? Who has such a claim as the One that died for you?

You may exclaim, What! died for me?

Yes, for you. Man in his wickedness nailed Him to the cross.

"Thy love, by man so sorely tried,  
 Proved stronger than the grave;  
 The very spear that pierced Thy side  
 Drew forth the blood to save."

It was upon the cross that God, in His love to the sinner, gave His only Son to bear the judgment that was due to sin (2 Cor. v. 21). And He, on His part, became the willing victim, and thus "tasted death for every man" (Heb. ii. 9).

Having thus brought glory to God in the place of judgment, He rose from the grave, bringing "life and incorruptibility to light through the

gospel." (2 Tim. i. 10.) He was crucified through weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. Never was there such a display of weakness as at the cross of Christ; never was there such a display of power as at His resurrection. (2 Cor. xiii. 4.)

Reader, do you know this wondrous Person in heaven? Have you owned His claim upon you, and confided to Him the keeping of your priceless soul? You KNOW whether you have or not. The language of confiding faith is: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (2 Tim. i. 12.)

I warn you against trusting aught but Christ. We are living in a day when men are busily engaged in rearing PLACES attractive to the eye, and seeking to fill them with sounds that shall captivate the ear; but ON ALL THIS SYSTEM OF THINGS the Lord Jesus Christ has written "Desolation."

May you, in your heart and soul, turn away from the PLACES on earth to the PERSON in heaven, and say to Him,

"JESUS, I will trust Thee, trust Thee with my soul;

Guilty, lost, and helpless, Thou canst make me whole.

There is none in heaven or on earth like Thee:  
Thou hast died for sinners; therefore, Lord,  
for me.

"JESUS, I do trust Thee, trust without a doubt.  
Whosoever cometh, Thou wilt not cast out.  
Faithful is Thy promise, precious is Thy blood,  
These my soul's salvation, Thou, my Saviour,  
God."

E.P.C.

## WHO IS THE PEACEMAKER?

**A** YOUNG woman was dying.

A minister visited her, and after making inquiries about her health, said, "I fear there is not much hope of your recovery."

She replied, "I am told there is none, sir."

"Well, then," said he, "have you made your peace with God?"

"No, sir."

"Do you not think it is time you began to do so?"

She answered, "It was made by Jesus when He died on the cross."

Reader! have you peace with God? Peace we could not make; our sins had separated us from a holy God; but the Lord Jesus Christ "made peace" upon the cross (Col. i. 20). He shed His precious blood, making full atonement for sins, that He might give peace to all who believe on Him.

"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1).

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"Behold the Lamb" enthroned on high!

"He is our peace."

In Him we are to God brought nigh;

"He is our peace."

He who on Calvary's cross has bled;

He who was numbered with the dead;

Exalted now o'er all as Head;

"He is our peace."

"Complete in Him" at God's right hand;

"He is our peace."

Before the throne we boldly stand;

"He is our peace."

The blood-besprinkled mercy-seat;

His pierced side, His hands, His feet;

Proclaim redemption's work complete;

"He is our peace."