

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.

WHAT HAVE YOU TO TO SAY?

I WAS asked one day to go and see a poor old woman who had for many years lived quite alone. "And now," said her neighbour, "she is dying alone, and I have my husband and children to mind, and can only see her once a day."

Circumstances prevented my going just at once to see her, but these two sad words, "dying alone," rang in my ears, and seemed to haunt me from day to day. To live alone seemed to me sad enough, but to *die* alone the very depth of human misery.

I was young, but had known sorrow, and had stood by several death-beds. I had watched the last breath flicker out by the bed-side of both rich and poor; but none of them had died alone. My own friends were surrounded by every luxury

and comfort; everything that love could plan to make the sick room cheerful, and smooth the dying pillow, was done by gentle hands; and many cherished ones softly glided in and out with words of comfort and sympathy.

I had stood, too, by the dying beds of the poor, and had watched with admiration how every nerve had been strained to provide comforts for the sick one out of the hard-earned wages; and how kindly neighbours were ever ready to come in and share the weary night-watch.

But now I had heard of something new to me, a phase of suffering unheard of before, and I often repeated those dismal words, "Dying alone!" "Dying alone!" Death on the battlefield, amidst the dying and slain, or death in the crowded wards of a hospital, seemed to me comfort compared to this; and I even prayed, "Lord, may I never die alone."

Nearly a week after this I found myself on the way to see the poor creature I did not even know by name, but whose circumstances claimed my very deepest sympathy; for she was "dying alone!" It was a very low door by which I entered a very small, dark room; the window, but one pane of glass, scarcely giving sufficient light to show distinctly the few objects in that chamber; and it was with a feeling somewhat akin to awe I went up to the low bed in the corner and gazed upon that aged woman "dying alone."

Hers was a calm and pleasant face, though much furrowed and wrinkled by care and years.

Her silvery hair was parted upon her brow, and her white cap and sheets showed no signs of neglect; yet she was "dying alone."

"Sit down, miss," she said, with a kindly

smile; "my neighbour told me you would come some day; but I thought likely I would be gone home before you came; but now I hope you have brought me some good word about the Lord."

"I have His word in my pocket," I said.

"Ah! that's well; His own word is better than anything we can say; read for me, please."

As I turned from passage to passage of the Blessed Book, her aged eyes beamed, and her whole soul seemed to drink in the precious words, and, as I prayed with her before leaving she joined with me in every petition. As I parted from her, I expressed my surprise that she could be so full of peace and joy when "dying alone."

"Tsh!" she said, "Christ is with me, and when you have known Him as long as I have known Him, and proved His love as long, you will not wonder. I've known Him more than twenty years, and I've lived much of that time alone with Him; and now I've been dying these six months past, alone with Him; for few come to see me, and there's few I care to see, for I've Christ always with me, and there's no solitude in that."

I came away from that humble dwelling with very different thoughts from those with which I had entered it. God had a new lesson for me through this aged saint. Her calm face and joyful answer, "Christ is with me," opened up to me hitherto unknown depths in Him who, though known as my Saviour and Friend, was not as yet everything to me.

I saw this aged servant of Christ many times after this, and learned from her what I believe I have never forgotten. One day she told me she had asked the Lord, if it was His will, that some one might be with her when she breathed her last.

"Why?" I asked, thinking she was dreading to die alone.

"Because, if no one saw me die, they would not know I was as happy to die as to live; for Christ is with me now, and shall be with me then, and I shall be with Him for ever."

Each day, as I left her, I saw she was passing quickly to her desired haven. She had few earthly comforts, except those the Lord privileged me to take her; yet she was full of joy and thankfulness and unclouded peace.

One day I knocked as usual at the door, but got no answer. "Oh!" I said, "has she died alone?"

With breathless anxiety I opened the door. Her hands were clasped; her lips moved in prayer. I stood in silence, till her eyes opened, and she saw me.

"You've come to see me die," she said. "Sit down. If it was not for others I would rather be alone with Christ, but you'll stay till the end."

Then, in thoughtfulness for me, she said, "Oh! but you are young, and you may not like to see any one die."

"Yes," I said, "I should like to be with you."

Pointing to her well-worn Bible, she said, "Read for me once more the last verses of the eighth of Romans."

"For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii. 38-39).

As I closed the book I was about to ask her if I should pray. I observed a slight movement of

the eyelids. She gazed upwards, a radiant smile lighted up her features, and her happy spirit was with the Lord.

I knelt, and closed her eyes ; drew the sheet over the pale face of death ; came out ; locked the door ; and, having made a few arrangements with her neighbour as to her body, I returned home.

The lessons learned in that little room were precious lessons to me. Have you, dear reader, learned anything from reading this simple account of one who was truly satisfied with Christ? Can you say, "That is the Christ I have got? Everything to me if called to live alone ; everything to me if called to die alone ! A Christ who is above, and beyond, and over every earthly circumstance. A Christ who thoroughly satisfies my heart " ?

Or it may be this little paper is in the hands of one who knows nothing of God's Christ ; one who has " heard of Him by the hearing of the ear," but in whose heart is no loving response to His blessed name. Dear soul, listen to me. You will have to die alone, and meet God alone, if you are unsaved. Alone truly, for if you could not say, like the old woman in this story, " Christ is with me," your earthly friends would avail you nothing, and most truly you would be alone ; and alone throughout eternity.

You would not call it company to have the thief, the drunkard, and the murderer, your companions throughout eternity ; shut out for ever from the presence of the Lord, the only One who could save you now ! That would be in the most real and awful sense " to be alone."

Are you living without Christ? If you die without Christ you must spend an endless eternity without Him. But listen to me. There was One

who died alone, that you might never die alone. Look unto Him and live. He walked a lonely path on earth: "The world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." (John i. 11-12). The "Man of sorrows" walked *alone*. He agonized in the garden *alone*. *Alone* He died on the cross for thee. Yes; Jesus died alone! Was there none with Him? None: "I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none" (Psalm lxxix. 20). He went through death alone for thee, forsaken of God, in that awful hour when

He took the guilty culprit's place,

And suffered in his stead,

in order that, atonement having been made, we might be justified freely by His grace. Alone He suffered, and alone He died! By the grace of God He tasted death for every man (Heb. ii. 7).

And now, dear reader, what have you to say to the death of Christ? Is it a light thing that He died alone? That He died for you? K.

REPENTANCE REQUISITE AND ACCEPTABLE.

WE have been much interested in the way in which repentance is presented in those inimitable parables in Luke xv. There we learn, in a manner the most touching and convincing, not only the abiding and universal necessity, the moral fitness, in every case, of true repentance; but also that it is grateful to the heart of God. The Lord Jesus, in His marvellous reply to the scribes and Pharisees, declares that "joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that

repenteth." And, again, " Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." (*vv.* 7, 10).

This gives us a very elevated view of the subject. It is one thing to see that repentance is binding upon man; and another and very much higher thing to see that it is gateful to God. And so the prophet's record runs: " Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." (*Isa.* lvii. 15). A broken heart, a contrite spirit, a repentant mind, give joy to God.

Let us ponder this fact. The scribes and Pharisees murmured because Jesus received sinners. How little they understood Him! How little they knew of the object that brought Him down into this dark and sinful world! How little they knew of themselves! It was the " lost " that Jesus came to seek. But scribes and Pharisees did not think themselves lost. They thought they were all right. They did not want a Saviour. They were thoroughly unbroken, unrepentant, self-confident; and hence they had never afforded one atom of joy in heaven. All the learning of the scribes, and all the righteousness of the Pharisees could not waken up a single note of joy in the presence of the angels of God. They were like the elder son in the parable who said, " Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends." (*v.* 29).

Here we have a true specimen of an unbroken

heart and an unrepentant spirit of a man thoroughly satisfied with himself. Miserable object! He had never touched a chord in the Father's heart; never drawn out the Father's love; never felt the Father's embrace; never received the Father's welcome. How could he? He had never felt himself "lost." He was full of himself, and therefore had no room for the Father's love. He did not feel that he owed anything, and hence thought he had nothing to be forgiven. It rather seemed to him that the Father was his debtor. "Lo, these many years do I serve thee; and yet thou never gavest me a kid." He had not received his wages.

What egregious folly! And yet it is just the same with every unrepentant soul, with every one who is building upon his own righteousness. He really makes God his debtor. "I have served Thee; but I have never got what I earned." Miserable notion! The man who talks of his duties, his doings, his sayings, his givings, is really insulting God. But on the other hand, the man who comes with a broken heart, a contrite spirit, repentant, self-judged, that is the man who gives joy to the heart of God. And why? Simply because such a one feels his need of God.

Here lies the grand moral secret of the whole matter. To apprehend this is to grasp the full truth on the great question of repentance. A God of love desires to make His way to the sinner's heart, but there is no room for Him so long as that heart is hard and impenitent. But when the sinner is brought to the end of himself; when he sees himself a helpless, hopeless wreck; when he sees utter emptiness, hollowness, and vanity in all earthly things; when, like the prodigal, he comes to

himself, and feels the depth and reality of his need, then there is room in his heart for God, and (marvellous truth!) God delights to come and fill it. "To this man will I look." To whom? To the man who does his duty; keeps the law; does his best; lives up to his light? Nay; but "to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit." (Isa. lxvi. 2).

It will perhaps be said that the words just quoted apply to the people of Israel. Primarily they do; but morally they apply to every contrite heart on the face of the earth. And, further, it cannot be said that Luke xv. applies specially to the sons of Israel. It applies to all. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that"—what? Does his duty? Nay, it does not even say, "that believeth." No doubt believing is essential in every case; but the interesting point here is that a truly repentant sinner causes joy in heaven.

A person may say, "I fear I do not believe."

Well, but do you repent? Have your eyes been opened to see your true condition before God? Have you taken your true place before God as utterly "lost"? If so, you are one of those over whom there is joy in heaven. What gave joy to the shepherd's heart? Was it the ninety and nine sheep that went not astray? Nay, it was finding the "lost" sheep. What gave joy to the woman's heart. Was it the nine pieces safe in her possession? Nay it was finding the one "lost" piece. What gave joy to the father's heart? Was it the service and the obedience of the elder son? Nay, it was getting back his "lost" son. A repentant, broken-hearted, returning sinner awakens up heaven's joy. "Let us eat, and be merry" (v.

23). Why? Because the elder son has been working in the fields and doing his duty? No; but, "For this my son was *dead*, and is alive again; he was *lost*, and is found" (v. 24).

All this is perfectly wonderful. Indeed it is so wonderful that if we had it not from the lips of Him who is the Truth, and on the eternal page of divine inspiration, we could not believe it. But, blessed be God, there it stands, and none can gainsay it. There shines the glorious truth that a poor broken-hearted, penitent, worthless, self-destroyed, hell-deserving sinner gives joy to the heart of God.

Let people talk as they will about keeping the law, and doing their duty. It may go for what it is worth; but be it remembered that there is no such clause within the covers of the Volume of God. No such sentence ever dropped from the lips of our Lord Jesus Christ as, "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that does his duty."

A *sinner's* duty! What is it? What is it that can really define our duty? Surely the divine command. Well, here it is, and there is no getting over it: "God . . . now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts xvii. 30). His command binds them to it; His goodness leads them to it; His judgment warns them to it; and, above all, and most marvellous of all, He assures us that our repentance gives joy to His heart. (Rom. ii. 4; Rev. xvi. 9). A penitent heart is an object of profoundest interest to the mind of God, because that heart is morally prepared to receive what God delights to bestow, namely, "remission of sins"; yea, all the fulness of divine love. A man might spend millions of money in the cause of religion and philanthropy,

and not afford one atom of "joy in heaven." What are millions of money to God? A single penitential tear is more precious to Him than all the wealth of the universe. All the offerings of an unbroken heart are a positive insult to God; but a single sigh from the depths of "a contrite spirit" goes up as fragrant incense to His throne and to His heart. (Ps. li. 17).

No man can meet God on the ground of duty; but God can meet any man, the very chief of sinners, on the ground of repentance, for that is man's true place. And we may say, with all possible confidence, that when the sinner as he is meets God as He is the whole question is settled once and for ever. "I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." (Ps. xxxii. 5). The moment a man takes his true place, the place of repentance, God meets him with a full forgiveness, a divine and everlasting righteousness. It is His joy to do so. It gratifies His heart, and it glorifies His name, to pardon, justify, and accept a penitent soul that simply believes in Jesus. The very moment the prophet cried, "Woe is me; for I am undone," "then *flew* one of the seraphims with a live coal from off the altar." (Isa. vi. 5-6).

Thus it is always. The fulness of God ever waits on an empty vessel. If I am full of myself, full of my own fancied goodness, my own morality, my own righteousness, I have no room for God, no room for Christ. "He hath filled the *hungry* with good things; and the *rich* He hath sent *empty* away." (Luke i. 53). A self-emptied soul can be filled with the fulness of God; but if God sends a man "empty" away, whither can he

go to be "filled"? All Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, goes to prove the deep blessedness as well as the moral necessity of repentance. When it takes place it is a grand turning point in the soul's history, a great moral epoch, which sheds its influence over the whole of one's after life. It is not a transient exercise; but an abiding moral condition. We are not speaking of how repentance is produced; we are speaking of what it is according to Scripture, and of the absolute need of it for every human being under heaven. It is the sinner's true place; and when through grace he takes it, he is met by the fulness of God's salvation.

It is not that the most profound and genuine repentance forms the meritorious ground of remission of sins. To say or to think so would be to set aside the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ; for in that, and in that only, have we the divine ground on which God can righteously forgive us our sins. The holy apostles of our Lord and Saviour were charged to preach among all nations; to declare in the ears of every creature under heaven, "repentance and remission of sins." Every man, be he Jew or Gentle, is absolutely commanded by God to repent; and every repentant soul is privileged to receive at once the full and everlasting remission of sins. And we may add that the deeper and more abiding the work of repentance, the deeper and more abiding will be the enjoyment of remission of sins. The contrite soul lives in the very atmosphere of divine forgiveness; and as it inhales that atmosphere, it shrinks, with ever-increasing horror, from sin in every shape and form.

GRACE ESSENTIAL, EXERCISED AND ENJOYED.

WHY is it that so few gospel hearers understand what *grace* is? The word itself occurs very frequently in the Scriptures. And to a lost sinner it is the most important word in the Bible. Grace is the source and spring of every good that we receive from God. As the apostle Paul says, "By the grace of God I am what I am." (1 Cor. xv. 10).

But for that precious grace he would have continued to be the "chief of sinners," and gone as straight and as fast to hell as ever he could go. And, but for the same grace, so would every child of Adam, without exception. "There is none that seeketh after God." (Rom. iii. 11). Every believer is *saved* by grace, he *stands* in grace, and throughout eternity he will *shine* in grace, the pure, unmingled grace of God.

But now, why is it, think you, that grace is really so little understood? Just because so few know their *need* and *helplessness*, as seen in the light of the cross. To know grace we must know the cross. Whenever we have learnt the meaning of these two words *need* and *helplessness*, we shall soon find out the meaning of the word *grace*. The "woman of Canaan," in Matthew xv., when she took her true place as a Gentile dog at the foot of the master's table, learnt it there in the school of Christ. But it was under a deep, deep sense of her pressing need, and utter helplessness (Matthew xv.)

That is the only place, dear reader, truly to learn the meaning and appreciate the value of divine grace. We must be at the low place to

which grace flows, before we can understand the meaning of that precious text, "Where sin abounded, *grace* did much more abound" (Romans v. 20).

She had great faith, you say.

True, she had, but on what was it founded? What had she to look to? Only grace! The grace that dwells in the heart of Jesus. All the ancient promises of Scripture were to the children of Israel. Jesus was the Minister of "the circumcision." But she was one of the outcast race of Canaan, on whom the curse of God rested. (Gen. ix. 25; Deut. vii. 1-2). She had no right, no title to Christ as the Jewish Messiah. And she was brought to feel this in the bitterness of her soul, that the grace of God might shine forth in all its divine sovereignty, freeness, and fulness. But she trusted His heart of love. She counted on the grace that dwelt there, notwithstanding His seeming harshness. She knew that He had only to speak the word, and her every need would be met.

But she knew also that she had no right to that word, no claim upon Him. This was crushing, awfully crushing to proud human nature. And then to hear from those lips of grace, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," must have greatly increased the anguish of her soul. Still, she clings to Him in the energy of a faith which counts only on Himself, notwithstanding His covenant engagements with Israel.

"Lord, help me," was the earnest, believing cry of her heart.

"It is not meet," He answered, "to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs."

“ Truth, Lord,” was her instant reply, “ yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the masters’ table.”

Great faith this, indeed; and now she is in her true place, and grace flows out. The struggle is over. The victory is won; she is satisfied with what grace gives. It was to this point the Saviour was leading her, and He waited till she got there. And now that perfect love, which was only waiting for the opportunity, flows forth in streams of living grace. He could not say, I have not a crumb for thee. That would have been to deny the whole truth of God. “Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt.”

She had touched the deepest spring of His heart, and the full resources of His love are thrown open to her. This is a true picture of the sinner’s place and condition, and of the grace that immediately and perfectly meets both.

Whenever you are brought by faith to this point, all will be victory and peace. Your anxieties and struggles will be over. The moment we take this place, we are met and blessed by God according to the love and grace of His own heart. He acts from Himself, on the ground of the perfect and eternally efficacious sacrifice of Christ. We are pardoned, justified, and accepted in the Beloved. We have eternal life in Him. And neither measured time nor unmeasured eternity can ever break the bond that binds our hearts to the blessed Lord Jesus.

“ We are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ.” “ There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” (John v. 20; Rom. viii. 1).

AN END THAT WAS "ALL WELL."

IT was the privilege of the writer to visit a very sick man, who was reached by the Word, and converted to God.

Though he lingered on for two more years, yet it was only to experience the further development of his malady, and eventually succumb to it. But death to him meant release from a diseased, pain-stricken, emaciated body, to be in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was victory to him, the open door into paradise. "Death is ours," was with him realized in a full blessed sense. (1 Cor. iii. 22).

When asked by a Christian lady, a short time before his departure, "If you were called away from earth this evening, how would it be with you for eternity?"

With a look brightened with heaven's light, and which told of the peace and joy within, he said, "*All well, all well!*"

"On what are you resting?"

"On Jesus my Saviour," he replied.

"Is there nothing of your own on which you are resting?"

"Oh! no. Jesus has washed away my sins. I would so like to talk, but can't," he said, and fell back almost unconscious from exhaustion.

Not many hours later, the race of the ransomed saint was run, the happy moment of release came, his spirit was freed from its house of clay, and with untold and unmingled delight found itself in the presence of Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us (Gal. ii. 20; Rev. i. 5).

E.A.

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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.

"I LAID HOLD OF THAT."

DURING the Crimean war there was a young officer who was taken ill in the night.

His Turkish servant was too soundly asleep to be awakened, and there he was, with a high fever, all alone in his tent. Death seemed to be staring him in the face, all the more terrible to him because he had lived a godless life, and knew he was unsaved, unforgiven.

What was to be done? He quite expected to die before another sun rose upon that scene of horrible slaughter. It was a most solemn moment for his soul. Without Christ; alone, helpless, hopeless, his feelings could not possibly be portrayed. And then it was that, like the prodigal son in the parable, "he came to himself," acknowledged his sins, and looked up to the God of all grace, who delights to receive the

repentant, and whose sole prerogative it is to pardon and save all such.

Then came the answer that was needed for his soul's assurance and peace. It was a word learned in younger years from the lips of a beloved mother, which the Spirit of God applied to him in mighty, saving power; five simple words from the Scriptures of truth. They were these: "*Christ died for our sins*" (1 Cor. xv. 3).

Afterwards (for he did not die as he had dreaded), when telling the same saving story to a dying man, he said, "I laid hold of that, and was saved."

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

A WRECKED BODY, BUT A RESCUED SOUL.

IT was a lovely summer day, and the country people in the west of England were busy with their haymaking, when suddenly an alarm was given; a man had fallen from the top of a very high rick, and was taken up in an unconscious state. Kind hands carried him to his cottage home, and assisted his distressed wife in getting him to bed.

The doctor was sent for, and after a careful examination gave it as his opinion that John would always be a cripple, even if life was spared. The muscles had been overstrained; indeed, the marvel was that he was alive after such a fall.

I saw his wife, and asked her if he could read, and if there was a Bible in the house.

"Yes, miss," she replied, "but it has been on the shelf untouched for many a long day."

I gave her a little tract called "The Prodigal Son," and said I would call and see her husband the next day.

I found poor John in great physical suffering, but the Holy Spirit had been working in his heart. He had read the tract, and it had led him to read the beautiful gospel story in the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke.

"Oh, miss," he said, "I am that prodigal son. God is showing me what a lost, undone sinner I am. I have lived without Him all my life, nor have I desired the knowledge of His ways. I'm afraid I shall die, and be lost for ever."

I spoke to him of the Saviour's love, and the full atonement He had made on the cross for sinners. I told him that He had said: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." And, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (Matt. ix. 13; John vi. 37).

"You feel yourself a helpless sinner; then come to Jesus Christ now, just as you are."

I promised to call and see John again in a day or two, and said that in the meantime I would pray for him.

The next visit was quickly paid, for I was deeply interested in my poor friend. Most thankful was I to find him rejoicing in Christ. He said with a beaming face: "I'm so happy; my sins are gone, for Jesus has washed them all away in His most precious blood, and now I am His for ever" (Rev. i. 3; 1 John i. 7).

I knelt by his bedside, and we offered our heartfelt thanksgivings to God for His infinite mercy.

John's great anxiety was to try to bring others

to the Saviour. "Will you pray for my wife and boys," he said, "that the Holy Spirit would show them their lost condition, and lead them to the Lord Jesus?"

After this I frequently saw my friend, and he became one of the brightest and happiest Christians I have ever known.

"That was a blessed day for me," he sometimes said, "when I fell from the hayrick. I might have continued to live in forgetfulness of God."

He seemed to live in the atmosphere of prayer.

By-and-by I had to give up my Devonshire home, and called to say farewell to John. He took my hand in his, and said: "Missie, we shall meet in heaven. I shall look out for you."

It pleased God, however, to spare his life a few years longer, and he was made a great blessing to his relatives and friends. His wife became a sincere Christian, and his two boys God-fearing young men. He partially recovered the use of his limbs, but was never fit for regular work, and now he is "absent from the body," and "present with the Lord," the Son of God, "who loved him and gave Himself for him" (2 Cor. v. 8; Gal. ii. 20).

Have you, dear reader, come to Christ as a lost, undone sinner, or are you neglecting His great salvation?

"Oh, make but trial of His love;

Experience will decide

How blest are they, and only they,

Who in His truth confide."

"BEHOLD, NOW IS THE ACCEPTED TIME; BEHOLD, NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

J.M.F.

CERTAINTY FOR ETERNITY.

I KNOCKED at the door of a cottage in Ireland. It was opened by a tidily dressed woman, who evidently could not expect to be much longer in this world, for her grey hair and general appearance told of old age, and showed that the moment could not be very far distant when she would have to exchange time for eternity. After a few words of greeting, I asked her how old she was.

“Upward of three-score and ten,” she answered.

“Then you are very near either heaven or hell, and getting nearer every day. Which is it?”

“Oh, heaven,” she answered, without a moment’s delay.

“Are you sure of that?”

“Oh, quite sure,” she said, with a happy smile.

“And what makes you so sure?” I asked.

“Christ has made it sure for me,” was the unhesitating reply.

I needed not to ask any more. The aged woman meant what she said, and knew that her soul’s salvation rested on that sure foundation, on the finished work of a risen and glorified Saviour; and He had made it sure for her by going down into the death and judgment that she deserved, and bearing all the penalty Himself.

There was not a word about her own doings. She did not say, as so many do, “I have done the best I can, and hope that God will have mercy on me.” No, she rested simply on what Christ had done, and that was enough; enough for God, and enough for her; enough to meet every claim of a

holy God; enough to meet every need of a lost sinner.

She was saved, and knew it.

Can you, my reader, say what this dear old believer said? Is your future as bright as hers was? She had little indeed in this world; but her future was as bright and as sure as a glorified Saviour could make it. The light of the knowledge of a Saviour-God had shone into her heart, and, be her present what it might, her future was clear and bright.

Is yours? The question is, Are you saved or not?

If to-day you had to close your eyes on this world, on what would they open in another? In one moment the whole scene changes, and it is either departing to be with Christ, as it was to the poor thief on the cross, whose only hope was in the One the world had cast out; or departing to be in misery till you have to appear before the great white throne of Revelation xx. 11, to be judged for your sins, and then banished for ever to the lake of fire.

It is recorded of the rich man in the sixteenth of Luke, that "he died, and was buried. And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment."

That was the next thing. He had had all that the heart could wish for in this world; rich clothing and sumptuous fare. There was the outward expression of wealth to others, and by it the inward gratification of himself. Nothing is said about his character, whether it was good or bad, moral or immoral; all that we are told of him is that he lived practically for himself in this world, and was spending eternity in torment.

Oh! dear reader, think for one moment, I

beseech you, what an eternity of torment must be.

“No rest day nor night.” Nothing but torment for ever and ever. What a terrible prospect. And yet if you are unsaved it is the only prospect before you.

Look for a moment at the other side of the picture, as I have given it in the little incident recorded in the beginning of this paper. One who had nothing in this world to boast of, had before her the certainty (not the hope only) of eternal glory with the Saviour who had died for her, and had said, “Because I live, ye shall live also” (John xiv. 19). Her every hope was resting in that sure foundation, the finished work of Christ; and her simple faith was in that Word which “endureth for ever” (1 Peter i. 25). Well might she be bright and happy with such a future as that before her.

And such a future may be yours, dear reader, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; not, as many think, a thing to be hoped for, struggled for, prayed for all your life; but a *present possession*, consciously enjoyed, for “he that hath the Son *hath life*;” and, “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.” (I John v. 12, 13). That is what God says in His Word; and what all who believe Him know to be true.

He who, nearly nineteen centuries ago, upon the shameful cross, “suffered for sins, the just for the unjust,” and uttered that bitter cry, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” is now the brightest Object in all the brightness of the glory of God. Oh! the bright reality of having, and knowing that I have, a Saviour in glory; and of rejoicing in the blessed hope of seeing

Him, and being for ever with Him ! For Jesus *will* have with Himself in that glory every one who has been washed in His precious blood, every one who believes in Him. Not one of those who are His, bought at such a price, will be left behind on that glorious morning when He will call them up, raised and changed saints, to meet Him in the air, and to be "for ever with the Lord." (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17).

Is that your hope, dear reader? Or are all your prospects confined to this world? What is the end of it all, as far as this world is concerned? "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away" (I Peter i. 24). Yes, the brightest flower fades and dies; the brightest hopes and prospects that the world can give are gone for ever when death lays his ruthless hand upon you, and then ETERNITY.

Which is it with you, as you read this? Christ or the world? Do you hesitate? What! will you barter away an eternity of glory for a few years of pleasure? the golden reality of a glory made good and sure by His precious blood (and yours by faith in that blood), for the wretched varnish and tinsel of this world's pleasure? "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" is the pleading of a Saviour-God to you to-day. *To-day*, mark you; not to-morrow. *To-day* eternal life may be yours by faith in Christ Jesus. *To-morrow*, and the hand of death may be on you, and your opportunity gone for ever.

A young friend of mine, a bright young Christian, recently fell asleep in Jesus. He was not seventeen years old, and his sufferings were great during the last few days of his illness. He knew

to Whom he was going, and a few hours before he passed away his father said to him, "It is all peace and joy, dear F., is it not?"

"Oh!" he replied, "it has been peace and joy all along, but now it's *overflowing*."

Think of that; overflowing peace and joy in the midst of suffering, and with the certainty of death close at hand! Surely a scene that makes the possession of Christ a wonderful reality.

One meets with numbers of unsaved people who are "not afraid to die," as they say; and one expects to find such, for the Word of God says of the wicked, "There are no bands in their death" (Ps. lxxiii. 4). Their consciences are hardened, because they do not believe that "after death" comes "judgment." But you never heard of one such person who even pretended to peace and joy at the prospect of death, still less to "overflowing" peace and joy. Nothing but the knowledge of a Saviour-God, and of His love shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit can give that (Rom. v. 5). You never heard of an infidel "longing to go," as many and many a child of God has longed. How could they when they didn't know where they were going, and had no hope beyond this world of sin and death? But to the child of God, to the sinner washed in the blood of Jesus, all is indeed peace and joy, for he is going to be with the Saviour who loved him, and gave Himself for him. As my dear old friend said, "Christ has made it sure."

Once more, dear reader, I ask you, Is your future bright, should death come upon you? Is your soul saved? Do not treat the question as if it were a matter of no importance; but before you lay your head on your pillow to-night ask your-

self if the great subject of eternity is a settled one for you. And if all is yet dark before you, remember that the door of divine mercy will soon be shut, that the matter will be settled then, and you will be lost for ever. The *long-suffering* of God is truly salvation, but soon the day of long-suffering will be over, and the great day of His wrath will have come, and "who shall be able to stand?"

To-day, as you read these lines, God sends you a message of love and grace; "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17).

That is the way in which God gives—*freely*. "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23). A.P.G.

What, sinner, canst thou do?
 Where, sinner, canst thou fly?
 Eternal wrath hangs o'er thy head,
 And judgment lingers nigh.
 For God must visit sin
 With His displeasure sore;
 Since He is holy, just, and true,
 And righteous evermore.
 But Christ has died for sins;
 Upon the Cross He died;
 God's righteousness was there displayed,
 And justice satisfied.
 Faith is the way of life;
 Believe in Christ, and live;
 Fly to the shelter of His blood,
 And peace with God receive.
 (John iii. 36; Gal. vi. 7; Rom. iii. 25, v. 1).

“EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM.”

(Rev. i. 7.)

THE next great public event between the heavens and the earth, and therefore between God and mankind, will be the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and at such an hour as men think not.

The devil knows quite well that if the momentous fact of the Lord's coming were held as the one great and *next* reality between God and the soul, a complete revolution would pass upon the systems of the world, and upon the whole being and pursuits of men.

Take, as an example familiar to all, the approach of a judge into a city at the assize time. Some go out to meet and to welcome him. They are conscious that no judicial charges can be heard against *them*, for they are one with him. Others, on the contrary, are full of alarm, being condemned already in their own consciences, because they know that the proofs of their guilt, and the judge's sentence, and his officers', must be all against them. What a contrast!

The practical value of the Lord's coming upon the conduct of men is likewise plain; for it was not until the *evil* servant said in his heart, “My lord delayeth his coming,” that he began to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken.

Nothing can be more striking than these examples, whether as to conduct during Christ's absence or as to going forth to meet Him in the joy of His approach. Is it any wonder that the god of this world blinds the hearts of men as to the speedy coming of the Lord, “to be glorified

in His saints," or else in judgment and in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ?

What else can the destroyer do than "blind the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them," and so draw them out into this portion with Christ, in life and righteousness, where He *now is*?

In truth, however much man may think himself a free agent, and boast of his independence, he is either acted upon by God in grace, for salvation through faith, in the finished work of Christ on the cross : or else led captive by the devil, through the artifices and wiles by which he entangles his prey. Craftily he watches the result, and waits his moment, like a spider with a fly.

God tells us of His Son : " Behold, He cometh with clouds, and *every* eye shall see Him, and they also who pierced Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." Think of this coming day, and the ten thousand times ten thousand who shall join in that universal " wail," and because of having refused this very Christ, by whom God is now as it were beseeching men (just as they are) to be reconciled to Him, through the death of His Son.

But there is another company, thank God, a countless multitude, who know Christ in the perfect work of *their* redemption, by the sacrifice which He presented on the cross, when He offered Himself without spot to God at His *first* coming. Ten thousand times ten thousand take up their happy song on earth, as the consequence of this redemption, and say, " Unto Him that loved us,

and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.”

Does my reader question what the Lord's *second* coming will be to those who look for Him? Harken : “ The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be ever with the Lord.” The love of Him who gave Himself for us is displayed *now* in washing us from our sins in His own blood; for love like His cannot but put away from *us* whatever is unlike Himself. Do you know this washing by the blood of Christ? If so, you can join in ascribing to Him who gave Himself for you, and has put away every stain of sin, “ to Him be glory and dominion for ever.” Perfect and divine love like His crowns all, by putting its *own* comeliness and dignity upon the objects of its delight. He brings us into the same place and glory with Himself.

Does my reader know this sweet and precious love, and is he under its power? Or does he say, “ Go Thy way ” to this blessed Christ, and set Him aside in His first and second coming, as Saviour and Lord? Oh! do not fall a prey to the devil, the liar and murderer from the beginning, who “ goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour ”; but look on Christ *now*, and live *for ever* (Matt. xxiv. 48; 2 Thess. vii. 8; 2 Cor. iv. 4; 1 Thess iv. 16-18; 1 Pet. v. 8; John v. 24).

THE TWO "WHOSOEVERS."

A YOUNG man was greatly troubled about his soul. He knew that he was a sinner in God's sight, and so deeply did he feel this that he was often ready to lie down in despair, saying, "Is it possible that God can save such a miserable sinner?"

In the daytime he thought of hell as his justly deserved punishment, and at night he would sometimes imagine himself shut up in the pit of outer darkness. He tried to reform, and live on his good works; but, alas! he got nothing better, but rather grew worse.

One evening, however, he was passing a large building, where a servant of the Lord was preaching. He went in. Soon after he entered, he heard the preacher call attention to the words of our blessed Lord, "*Whosoever* believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16).

Mark, said the preacher, this word "WHOSOEVER"!

For the first time this troubled hearer began to perceive the freeness of God's grace in the gospel, and to think that there was some hope after all, even for such a sinner as he was; because "who-so-ever" included him, and everyone else who received Christ for his Saviour.

I need not say that, by the power of the Spirit of God, his heart was led to look wholly to Jesus for salvation, and thus he found joy and peace in believing, and has delighted in the service of the gospel for many years (Rom. xv. 13).

Have you thus simply received Christ? Are you trusting in Him who died on the cross to save

sinner? Is the precious blood of Christ the sole ground of your peace with God?

But there is another "WHOSOEVER," equally general in its scope, and free in its application. Yet, oh! how wide the contrast! "*Who-soever* was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. xx. 15).

Mark, it is "whosoever"; no matter who it is, or what plea is raised, it is "whosoever," for God is no respecter of persons. How solemn! If a man has not Christ Jesus, the Son of God, the giver of everlasting life, for his Saviour, how can his name be written in the book of life?

"The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 37).

HOW IT PLEASES GOD TO SAVE.

I FOUND that a young man with whom I conversed on a journey, had been earnestly seeking a knowledge of the forgiveness of his sins for many years. That very morning he had been reading his Testament, and thirsting for the waters of life.

"Would you be willing," I asked, "to be saved in God's own way? And would *now*, in this very carriage, *be too soon* for you to become a Christian?"

"Let God save me in any way," was the reply, "and now!"

"You have been looking for evidence where you will not find it," I said. "God's word, sealed by the Spirit, is God's evidence. None other is needed. If you received by the mouth of an angel,

the message from God that your sins were all blotted out of God's record, you would believe that Christ had saved you. If you were suddenly filled with a flood of light and joy, you would believe that you had received remission of sins."

He assented, and I continued, "But in one case your confidence would be founded on *sight*, and in the other on *feeling*. It pleases God to save *by faith*, founded on the evidence of His own word, not by either sight or feeling; and you may now, as you sit in this carriage, calmly take the promise of our Lord, 'He that believeth on me *hath* everlasting life' (John vi. 47), and, through faith in the sacrifice of Christ, find "forgiveness of sins."

"It never seemed so simple," the young man exclaimed.

Seeing that the Spirit was teaching him, I thought it best to say no more, and dropped into silence, in confident prayer for him.

After some interval he turned to me, with his face beaming with joy, and said, "I'm not afraid to die now! Those trees are not more clear to my eye than to my soul it is certain that Christ is my Saviour!"

God, who had prepared his heart for the message, had revealed to me that "it must needs be" that I should be in that carriage, and it now became plain why it had been made evident to me I should take that journey, and not have been suffered to stay longer where I was, for God had a work for me to do.

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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.

"WATER OF LIFE."

MANY years ago, Coulthard, an explorer of the Australian continent, was found dead on the spot where, through want of water, he had dropped down in utter prostration; and, while the party who discovered him were standing over his body they noticed these words scratched by him on his canteen as death drew near:

"The last thing I remember is pulling the saddle off my horse, and letting him go. My tongue is sticking to my mouth. I know it is the last time I shall express my feelings. Lost for want of water! My eye dazzles; my tongue burns! I can say no more. God help me."

Reader, what think you? Had you been there to offer this poor sufferer a draught of water, would he have made any scruples about drinking it? Would he have found any difficulties as to

appropriating the cooling draught to allay his burning thirst? Ah, no! He *wanted water*; he *knew it*, and he perished for want of it.

Do you thirst? I do not mean for this poor hollow world's so-called pleasures. Doubtless you have tasted them, and found that they satisfy not, they leave an aching void within. You may write on every fountain of this world's vanities and shams, "He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again" (John iv. 13).

But do you know anything of soul-thirst? Do you thirst for salvation, for forgiveness, for Christ? Behold, then, a fountain near! Jesus, who once hung a victim on the cross of Calvary, the believing sinner's Substitute, is alive again, and is now in the glory on high; and now "let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17).

"The river of God's grace,
Through righteousness supplied,
Is flowing o'er the barren place
Where Jesus died."

Oh! what if you had offered the poor dying man water, and he had refused to taste! There was once one who cared not for "the water of life," but sought his fill of this world's draughts, was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day; but, dying, lifted up his eyes in hell, and prayed for one drop of water to cool his tongue. But there was none for him. (Luke xvi. 19).

You, dear reader, are now in the place where the water of life is flowing freely, and, remember, he that drinks thereof shall thirst no more; for it shall be in him a well of water springing up into eternal life (John iv. 14).

Some one has caused to be placed over one of the drinking fountains in a large town this inscription : “ Pro bono publico ” (for the public good). Who that passes by questions the truth of it? And is not the good news of salvation “ unto all ”? (Rom. iii. 22). Did not Christ die, the *Just* for the *unjust*? Did He not die for the *ungodly*, for *sinners*, for those *without strength*? Remember, if *you* perish it is not because there is no water, but you perish a willing rejecter of “ the water of life ” now offered you freely, “ without money and without price ” (1 Pet. iii. 18; Rom. v. 6, 8; Isa. lv. 1).

W. R. H.

“ AND THEN ? ”

WHEN Filippo Neri was living at one of the Italian universities, a young man, whom he had known as a boy, ran up to him with a face full of delight, and told him that what he had been long wishing above all things in the world was at length fulfilled; his parents having given him leave to study the law; and that he had come to the law-school at this university on account of its fame, and meant to spare no pains nor labour in getting through his studies as quickly and as well as possible.

In this way he ran on a long time, and when at last he stopped, his friend, who had been listening to him with great patience and kindness, said, “ Well, and when you have got through your course of studies, what do you mean to do then? ”

“ Then I shall take my doctor’s degree,” answered the young man.

“And then?” asked Filippo Neri.

“And then,” continued the youth, “I shall have a number of difficult and knotty cases to manage; I shall catch people’s notice by my eloquence and zeal, and gain a great reputation.”

“And then?” repeated the other.

“And then,” replied the youth, “why, then there can’t be a question but that I shall be promoted to some high office or another; besides, I shall make money and grow rich.”

“And then?” repeated Filippo.

“And then,” pursued the young lawyer, “then I shall live comfortably and honourably, in wealth and dignity, and shall be able to look forward quietly to a happy old age.”

“And then?” asked his attentive auditor.

“And then,” said the youth, “and then—and then—then I shall die.”

Here Filippo lifted his voice, and again asked, “And then?” (Heb. ix. 27.)

To which the young man made no answer, but looked embarrassed and went away.

This last “And then?” had pierced like a flash of lightning into his soul, and he could not get rid of it. Soon afterwards he devoted himself to the service of Christ, and he spent the remainder of his days in making Him known to others.

It is only by loving the Saviour and trusting in Him that you can look calmly and cheerfully into the future, and think without dread, of the close of life. Nor will you find that godliness casts any shadow over your views of the present. It only brightens and fixes them. It has the promise of the life which now is, as well as of that which is to come. (1 Tim. iv. 8.)

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou

“ YOU WOULD THINK I OUGHT TO LOVE HIM.” 37

shalt be saved.” (Acts xvi. 31.) “ And then ” He will guide you safely and happily through this world, and bring you at last to the mansions prepared for you in His Father’s house above. (John xiv. 2.)

“ AND THEN? ” I cannot give you the answer to this thrilling question. I cannot unfold to you the glories of heaven. All I can tell you is, that in God’s presence there is fulness of joy, and at His right hand there are pleasures for evermore. (Ps. xvi. 11.)

C.C.

“ YOU WOULD THINK I OUGHT TO LOVE HIM.”

DURING a summer sojourn in one of the most charming watering places of our island home I wandered one afternoon over some steep and rugged cliffs, whose precipitous sides are lashed by the Irish Sea. Having walked a long way, I began to feel very tired, and longed for a friendly habitation where I could rest awhile.

I cast my eyes around. A short distance before me stood a tiny cabin, which might possibly be a human dwelling, and yet I asked myself, “ Who can dwell here so far from his fellow-man? ”

Resolving to seek an answer to my query, and also the rest I needed, I soon found myself at the door of the cottage. It was larger than I at first fancied, and having given a gentle tap, it was answered by a cheerful “ Come in.”

I entered, and found myself in a clean and pleasant kitchen, whose bare walls and scanty furniture clearly betokened the poverty of the inmates.

At a small deal table sat an aged woman. Her bright, contented face bespoke a heart and mind peaceful and happy even amidst the privations which were evidently her lot.

I asked to be allowed to rest a little, and most courteously was the permission given, as the old woman with the corner of her apron dusted a chair for me to sit upon.

During this action I had time to notice the things around me, and found that I had disturbed the aged woman while she was reading the Bible, which lay open on the table at which she had been sitting. In order to draw her into conversation, I asked if she lived there alone, and if she did not feel very lonely dwelling so high above the town.

Her answer soon assured me that I had not judged wrongly of her on my first entrance into the cottage. "No, ma'am," she replied, "I am never lonely or sad, I have my good man through there," pointing to a door. "He has been confined to bed for more than two years. But more than that, I have Jesus ever with me, and He says, 'I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' (Matt. xxviii. 20.) Whenever I am weary I just open this Book, and there I find such sweet words of peace and comfort, that I forget all my fatigue. Jesus is so precious to my soul I want nothing else. He satisfies all my desires."

"Does your husband share your joy? Is he happy on his bed of pain?" I asked, feeling very much interested in this aged couple so far away from the world's din and turmoil.

She then told me the story of his illness; that he used to work in the copper mine, and one day the tackle which drew the men up from the mine

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broke, and they were dashed to the bottom. Happily, no one was killed, but all were more or less injured. Her husband was so severely hurt that he could never again return to his work, and it was not thought probable that he would ever rise again from his bed. When he had recovered a little from the first shock of the fall, he was quite overwhelmed with thankfulness to God for sparing his life.

“ It was then,” she said, “ that I thought God would answer my prayers for my husband’s soul, and I spoke to him of Jesus more earnestly than I had ever done before. So eagerly, and so constantly did I tell him of the Father’s love in sending His Son to die for sinners, and what Jesus was to me, that he one day exclaimed, ‘ I see it all now, I am a sinner, but Jesus died for *me*.’ Since he has found Jesus to be his Saviour he is never tired of hearing me read the Bible, or repeat some sweet hymns. He cannot read at all, so I teach him a text every day, and the hymns he likes best I say over to him so often that he soon learns them too; and when I go down into the town to buy a bit of something to eat I know he will be quite contented till I come back, for he can talk to Jesus, and praise Him for all His love and goodness.”

I asked her what means of livelihood she had since her husband could no longer support her.

“ Eh ! bless you, ma’am,” she replied, “ my God always finds a way to feed His poor children. The gentleman who owns the mine gives us five shillings a week ; and the ladies at the manse send us soup in the cold weather ; and when we have nothing to eat, I just kneel down and ask God to send us some. And sure enough He does. Somebody

comes with a loaf of bread, and a bit of tea, or some nice broth for my poor man, which we share together. The Bible says, 'Ask, and ye shall receive'; 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.' (John xvi. 24; Ps. lxxxi. 10.) So you see, ma'am, we have only to take God at His word, and He will give us all that we need." She concluded by saying, "If John were awake he would like to talk to you, ma'am."

She then arose, and going into the other room, found that her husband still slept, and as I had already stayed more than an hour, I took my leave, promising to go again at an early opportunity.

The next week, on account of heavy rains, was unfavourable to mountain climbing, and so my visit was deferred until the week following, when I started early one sunny morning to ascend the cliffs, knowing that I should find a friendly welcome at the top.

When I reached the cottage, no response greeted my knock for admission. I knocked again, and, after waiting awhile, I ventured to open the door, and walk in.

There was no occupant of the kitchen, but the door which communicated with the inner room was open, and there, stretched upon the bed, was the sick man of whom I have previously heard.

As soon as he saw me he begged me to come in, and pointed to a chair near the bed for me to sit upon.

When I was seated, he said, "I daresay you are the lady Mary told me about, who called the other day when I was asleep."

I told him I was, and that I had come to talk to him of Jesus whom he loved.

“YOU WOULD THINK I OUGHT TO LOVE HIM.” 41

He thanked me, and said, “If you only knew what a sinner I’ve been you would think I ought to love Him. He has forgiven me so much, and died for me that I might live with Him for ever. I cannot find words to tell of all His goodness. ‘Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name.’ (Ps. ciii. 1.) Just when you came in I had been saying to myself those beautiful verses beginning, ‘Safe in the arms of Jesus.’ Yes, lady, I want nothing else but to rest in those arms for ever. I am hastening home.”

Again he repeated the lines, and when he came to the words, “Hark, ’tis the voice of angels,” a radiance overspread his countenance, his voice became very faint, and before the last words were uttered he had gone to finish the song, “in the beautiful Eden above.”

I watched him for some time, for so quietly and peacefully had he passed away, that it seemed as if he were only sleeping. Then I knelt in prayer, and before I rose from my knees the widow entered, and joined me, and only as I interceded for her who was left behind did she become conscious that her loved one had passed from earth.

When I related all that had occurred in her absence she rejoiced even amidst her tears that God had taken him so gently.

We talked together for some time of the home to which he had gone, of the joys and glories of the place, and the happy meeting of those we have loved and lost. I also read to her Rev. xxi. and xxii. We were both cheered and comforted.

I left her, never to meet her again on earth, for I was summoned to a distant sphere, and when another summer’s sun had risen, she had gone to

join her husband in "the realms of the blest."

Do you, dear reader, know anything of this Jesus on whom these aged people placed their confidence and their hope? Can you trust Him for time? Are you resting on Him for eternity? If so, you need fear no evil. No sorrow can harm you. No trial can crush you. "All things are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's." (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.)

It may be that some will read this who know not a Saviour, because they have never desired one. The day is coming, my dear friend, when you will want a Saviour; the hour of death, the day of judgment. Where will you be if you have no Saviour *then*?

Oh! is it not time to be in earnest? You know not how brief your life may be. In the mining districts of our land, on the railway, and even in our crowded streets, many who leave their homes in the morning strong and well become before evening injured to death.

Reader, dare you say, "This will not be my case"? Pause and think before it be too late. Turn to the loving Jesus, who waits to receive you. Hear the gracious words, "*Whosoever* will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.)

You have nothing to do to purchase this salvation. It is free, as unmerited. The serpent-bitten, dying Israelite of old, in the wilderness, asked no questions as to the power of the brazen serpent to heal; he was eager enough to be cured of his malady; he was told to look and he would live; as soon, then, as he raised his failing eyes to the summit of the pole on which was placed the emblem of his disease, he at once felt his breath

renewed, his strength increased; he was cured (Num. xxi.)

Oh ! sinner, look and live, look unto Jesus. See Him lifted up on the cross for you. Look unto Him, and be saved. (Isa. xlv. 22.) Only believe !

S. J. B.

“TO OPEN THEIR EYES.”

I. BLIND.

HOW do we know that every man in his natural, but unconverted state, is blind?

Because the very first thing that the gospel is to do for men is “to open their eyes.” (Acts xxvi. 18.) This proves beyond all question that he must be blind. The apostle Paul was sent to the people and to the Gentiles; that is, to the whole human family, “to open their eyes.” This proves, to a divine demonstration, that all are by nature blind.

II. IN DARKNESS.

More than this. Man is not only blind; he is in “darkness.” Supposing for a moment that a person has his eyesight; of what use is it to him if he is in the dark? It is the double statement as to man’s state and position. As to his state, he is blind. As to his position, he is in darkness. And when his eyes are opened, and divine light streams in upon his soul, he then judges himself and his ways according to God. He sees his folly, his guilt, his rebellion, his wild infidel reasonings, his foolish notions, the vanity of his mind, his pride and ambition, his selfishness and worldliness: all these things are judged and abhorred. He

repents, and turns right round to the One who has opened his eyes, and poured in a flood of living light upon his heart and conscience.

III. UNDER SATAN'S POWER.

Not only is man, every man, Jew and Gentile, blind and in darkness, but, as if to give the climax of all, he is under the power of Satan. This gives a terrible idea of man's condition. He is the slave of the devil. He does not believe this. He imagines himself free; thinks he is his own master; fancies he can go where he pleases, do what he likes, think for himself, speak and act as an independent being. But he is the bondsman of another! He is sold under sin, bound hand and foot. Satan is his lord and master. Thus Scripture speaks, and it cannot be broken (John x. 35).

IV. THE AUTHORITY OF GOD'S WORD.

Man may refuse to believe, but that cannot touch the fact. A condemned criminal at the bar may refuse to believe the testimony from the witness table, the verdict from the jury-box, the sentence from the bench; but that in nowise alters his terrible condition. He is a condemned criminal all the same. So with man as a sinner; he may refuse the plain testimony of Scripture, but that testimony remains notwithstanding. Even if the thousand millions that people this globe were to deny the truth of God's word, that word would still stand unmoved. Scripture does not depend for its truth upon man's belief. It is true whether he believes it or not. Blessed for ever is the man who believes; damned for ever is the man who refuses to believe; but the word of God is settled

for ever in heaven, and it is to be received on its own authority, apart from all human thoughts for or against it (Ps. cxix. 89.)

This is a grand fact, and one demanding the profound attention of every soul. Everything depends upon it. The word of God claims our belief because it is His word. If we want any authority to confirm the truth of God's word, we are in reality rejecting God's word altogether, and resting on man's word. A man may say, “ How do I know that the Bible is the word of God? ” We reply, It carries its own divine credentials with it; and if these credentials do not convince, all the human authority under the sun is perfectly worthless. If the whole population of the earth were to stand before me, and assure me of the truth of God's word, and that I were to believe on their authority, it would not be saving faith at all. It would be faith in men, and not faith in God; but the faith that saves is the faith that believes what God says because God says it.

It is not that we undervalue human testimony, or reject what are called the external evidences of the truth of Holy Scripture. All these things must go for what they are worth. They are by no means essential in laying the foundation of saving faith. We are perfectly sure that all genuine history, all true science, all sound human evidence, must go to establish the divine authenticity of the Bible; but we do not rest our faith upon them, but upon the Scriptures to which they bear testimony; for if all human evidence, all science, and every page of history, were to speak against Scripture, we should utterly and absolutely reject them, and cordially, reverently, and implicitly believe it.

Is this narrow? Be it so. It is the blessed narrowness in which we gladly find our peace and our portion for ever. It is the narrowness that refuses to admit the weight of a feather as an addition to the word of God. If this be narrowness, we repeat it with emphasis, and from the very centre of our ransomed being, let it be ours for ever. If to be broad we must look to man to confirm the truth of God's word, then away with such broadness; it is the broad way that leads straight down to hell. No, reader, your life, your salvation, your everlasting peace, blessedness, and glory, depend upon your taking God at His word, and believing what He says because He says it. This is faith; living, saving, precious faith. May you possess it!

V. TURNED TO GOD.

God's word, we have said, most distinctly declares that man in his natural, unrenewed, unconverted state is Satan's bonds slave. It speaks of Satan as "the god of this world," as "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." (2 Cor. iv. 4; Eph. ii. 2.) It speaks of man as taken captive by the devil at his will. (2 Tim. ii. 26.) Hence, in Paul's commission, the third thing which the gospel is to do is to turn man from "the power of Satan to God." Thus his eyes are opened; divine light comes streaming in; the power of Satan is broken, and the delivered one finds himself peaceful and happy in the presence of God. Like the demoniac in Mark v., he is delivered from the ruthless tyrant, his cruel master, Satan; his chains are broken and gone; he is

clothed, and in his right mind, and sitting at the feet of Jesus.

What a glorious deliverance! It is worthy of God in every aspect of it, and in all its results. The poor blind slave, taken captive by the devil, is set free; and not only so, but he is brought to God, pardoned, accepted, and endowed with an eternal inheritance among the sanctified. And all this is by faith, through grace. (Eph. ii. 8.) It is proclaimed in the gospel of God to every creature under heaven; not one is excluded.

VI. SALVATION FREE AND FULL.

So the apostle proclaimed it in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia. We quote his concluding words: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through **THIS MAN**" [Jesus Christ, crucified, risen, and glorified] "is preached" [not promised in the future, but preached *now*, announced, as a present reality] "*unto you* the remission of sins. And by Him all that believe **ARE** justified from *all things*, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts xiii. 38, 39.)

From these words we learn, in the clearest possible manner, that every soul in that synagogue was called upon there and then to receive into his heart the blessed message which fell from the preacher's lips. Not one was excluded. "*Unto you* is the word of this salvation sent."

If anyone had asked Paul if the message was intended for him, what would have been the reply? "*Unto you* is the word of this salvation sent."

Was there no preliminary question to be settled?

Not one. All the preliminaries had been settled at the cross.

Was there no question as to election or predestination?

Not a syllable about either in the whole range of this most magnificent and comprehensive discourse.

When the apostle stands up as an ambassador of Christ, the herald of salvation, he proclaims in the most absolute and unqualified manner a present, a personal, a perfect salvation to every creature under heaven; and every one who hears him is responsible there and then to believe.

And every one who reads him now is equally so. If any one had presumed to tell the preacher that his hearers were not responsible, that they were powerless, and could not believe; that it was only deceiving them to call upon them to believe; what would have been his reply?

VII. THE PERIL OF DESPISERS.

We think we are warranted in saying that a full and overwhelming reply to this, and every such preposterous objection, is wrapped up in the solemn appeal with which the apostle closes his address, "Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets: Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." (Acts xiii. 40, 41.)

C. H. M.

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GOSPEL LIGHT.



GOD IS LIGHT. GOD IS LOVE.

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

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

OLD WILLIAM'S MISTAKE.

"**H**OW are you this morning, William?"
"Very poorly; I've had a bad night; an' a'thegither I'm unco dune."*

"But I hope you have had Jesus with you, William, giving you 'songs in the night.'" (Job xxxv. 10.)

The old man was silent for a few moments. Then his eyes moistened as he replied, "I'm wonderfu' dark, wonderfu' dark. I hardly ever was at this o't."

"There's nothing strange in that, William," I said, "for your disease is depressing, and the want of sleep is depressing. You must, in quiet, simple trust, lay down your head on Christ, and rest on Him in perfect peace."

* And altogether I am extremely weary.

“ I wish that I could, but I canna. I can see naething. I can feel naething. My heart’s hard, and dark, and dead. Oh ! I never was at this o’t.”

“ How happy is it for us, William, that, though we change, Jesus never changes. He is always holy, always gracious, always sympathizing. And though you cannot help saying just now, ‘ I am poor and needy,’ you must go on, and add, ‘ Yet the Lord thinketh on me.’ (Ps. xl. 17.) The Lord is thinking on you, William. Is not that a most comforting thought? ”

“ I dinna ken,” said the old man, “ I’m unco sair put about. Last nicht I dovered† a wee, and fell into a frightfu’ dream. I thought I was in hell. Oh ! what if I should turn out to be deceiving mysel’ after a’? ” And the old man’s voice, which had been growing husky, fairly broke down.

“ But that was only a dream,” I said. “ Never mind your dreams. God’s word is no dream ; nor Christ’s blood ; nor Christ’s love. Rest your trust on Him and remember that it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for the least jot or tittle of His word to fail.” (Matt. xxiv. 35.)

“ Oh, yes ; God’s words are true. I hae nae doot about them. It’s mysel’ that I’m no sure about. I’m sair fear’t that I hae been deceiving mysel’ a’ alang. Ye dinna ken what a desperate battle I hae had wi’ a bad, bad, unbelieving heart. I aye dreaded, mair or less, that it micht come to this ; but I ne’er was clean forsaken till noo. To hear Him say, ‘ Depart from me, ye cursed ’ ; I canna bear to think on’t.” And the old man covered his face and sobbed aloud.

“ But, William,” I said, “ you must not indulge

† Dozed a while.

these desponding thoughts. They dishonour the Lord Jesus, and they torment yourself. The Lord, you know, is the very same that He ever was. You must trust him, and rest on Him."

The old man, however, had a "but" to this, and to every other comforting word. The words of Scripture, which are so unspeakably precious to a soul that has appropriated them by faith, were not, he thought, for him. It was manifest, however, that though he continued to defend his position of distrust and self-torment, the simple and powerful words of God were really reaching his heart.

For several reasons this case was a peculiarly distressing one. When all efforts to console him were nearly exhausted, a thought occurred to me.

"William," I said, "I have had a letter from— She desires to be remembered to you."

"Very kind of her; how is she?" he asked.

"She has been very sorely tried. — has most cruelly deserted her. After doing all to win her confidence, and leading her to abandon every other earthly hope, he has broken his troth with her at the last."

"Shame, shame," cried the old man. "It's most awfu'! I wonder God bears in patience wi' a world like this."

"Yes, it is most wicked. We are fit for anything when left to ourselves. How unsafe it is for us to allow our hearts to rest anywhere but in Jesus! He never will deceive a soul that trusts Him in this fashion," I replied.

"Never," said the old man, firmly. "His name is faithfu' and true."

"I am glad to hear you say so, William, for I feared you might have been thinking otherwise."

“ Me think ithewise o’ the Lord Jesus ! Na, na. What puts that in your head? ”

“ Simply this,” I said : “ It seems to me that all your trouble this morning comes from the fear that the holy Lord Jesus, so full of grace and truth, will deal with you in a similar way that that man —— did with poor ——.”

“ Never, never,” cried the old man, with energy ; “ it’s no Him I’m misdooting, it is mysel’. I’m quite sure He’ll be true ; but it’s my ain deceitfu’ sel’ I’m feared for.”

“ I am not quite clear about that, William. I am afraid that you *do* misdoubt Him, and that your trouble this morning arises very much from a fear that sadly reflects on the truthfulness of the Lord Jesus.”

“ I dinna understan’ ye ava,”* said the old man, deeply interested. “ Explain your meaning to me ,and mak’ it as plain as ye can, for I’m unco dull o’ the uptak’.”†

“ Well, then, William,” I said, “ has not the Lord Jesus been seeking for years to engage your heart with Him? Has He not, in His holy word, been setting Himself out before you in every attractive way that was fitted to win the heart of a poor sinful soul that needed such a Saviour? Has He not again and again spoken words which were enough to make your heart leap, and assure you that He desired to have you His for ever? Has He not taken away, one by one, all your earthly ties ; your wife, and children ; till now you have nothing left you but Himself? In short, has He, so to speak, left any stone unturned to gain your

* At all.

† Dull of understanding.

OLD WILLIAM'S MISTAKE.

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whole heart? Would you not, then, be everlastingly heart-broken to lose Him now? Are you afraid that He will desert you now at this moment of your greatest need? He knew all your unworthiness before He offered Himself for you and to you, in the perfect knowledge, too, that you were infinitely unworthy. Ah! William, never think that the Lord Jesus is such a one that, after having thus acted, He will at last say to you, 'Depart from me, ye cursed.' Never think that, after you have been led to rest on Him and His faithfulness and truth, He will deceive you. Can you dare to think that after all this He will now, in your helpless extremity, turn away and coldly leave you to everlasting heartbreak? Never, never! And I protest here, William, against your presuming to suspect so unworthily the perfect faithfulness of the Blessed One, who is Himself love and truth."

The old man made no reply for some time. The thought had fairly got hold of his mind; but it took him a little while to look at it till he felt its power. When he did so he suddenly lifted himself up, and resting on his elbow, the beaming look in his face showing out the gladness of his soul, as he said, with energy, "Na, na; He'll do naething o' the kind; and it's a shocking thing for me ever to even the like o't till Him.* Yes; I can trust Him; and though I be what I am, the very chief of sinners, He is aye what He is, the Faithful and the True! See ye, I widna' hae wanted† that bit wordie e'noo§ for all that's in the hoose. I'll jist lie still in His holy hauns, and rest on Him."

Dear reader, a sorely tried heart like this can

* Ever to compare the like of it to Him.

† Done without.

§ Just now.

find no true rest save in "Jesus only." Frames and feelings won't do. The good opinions of others as to our state won't do. The remembrance of past experience won't do. Nothing will calm a restless heart, or give quiet to a troubled spirit, but Jesus Himself.

The heart may get a false peace for the moment apart from Christ; but a true heart, sorely tried, is like the dove which found no rest till it rested in the Ark with Noah. (Gen. viii. 9.) Therefore, in seeking to have the heart at rest, it is idle to turn for it anywhere but to Jesus; Jesus, in His glorious person; Jesus in His finished work; Jesus, in His faithfulness to Himself and to His word.

In the case of this troubled old man, it was rather the *faithfulness* of Jesus than His *graciousness* that was overlooked. How many souls are thus tried! It seems to the burdened heart to be true humility that so looks upon its own exceeding sinfulness as to feel that it is almost beyond the widest stretch of mercy.

Humility! It is but unbelief! But if the soul which is thus tried would but look at the divine truth of Him who has spoken, then the heart would rest. Look well, then, O tried one, to your false humility, if it keeps you from rejoicing in the perfect love of God. True, heaven-born grace it is that thinks little of self and much of Christ. His mercy is not more engaged in pardoning the believing one than are His faithfulness and His truth.

His is an unchanging love,
Higher than the heights above,
Deeper than the depths beneath,
Free and faithful, strong as death.

DISOBEDIENT ; DISCIPLINED; DELIVERED.

(Jonah i, 2.)

THE remarkable history of Jonah is a picture of the history of the Jews. That people are at present at the bottom of the sea, as it were ; but there will be, in the coming day, a restoration of the nation (Isa. xi. 10-16).

But the prophet is more than a type of the Jew ; he is a perfect picture of man in his natural state ; and it is in this light I would consider his history.

“ Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah, the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it ; for their wickedness has come up before me. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa ; and he found a ship going to Tarshish, so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.”

Here, then, we have him as a genuine son of Adam, setting up his will against that of God. Self-will marks him at the very start. In the pride of his heart, too, like Adam, he will take his own way to accomplish his own ends ; and instead of going to Nineveh, where God had sent him in the exercise of a ministry in which all the power of God would sustain him, he rose up to flee to Tarshish “ from the presence of the Lord.”

Like Adam again, who hid himself “ from the presence of the Lord ” among the trees of the garden after he had set up his will.

Sin consists in having a will which is ever opposed to God's will, and this leads to distance from God. Adam went out from God's presence ;

Cain and Jonah likewise. This is the unvarying path that flesh walks in.

It cannot abide the light of God's presence ; and God cannot suffer the exercise of its will.

The prophet having thus acted in self-will, and fled " from the presence of the Lord," in the independence of the flesh paying his fare to Tarshish, presents a sorrowful picture of the condition of many a sinner at this present time. Death and ruin all around him, and none to help, in a ship well-nigh broken up by the violence of the waves, while the very heathen call on their god, he alone of all others lay "*fast asleep.*"

Oh, what a picture ! Alas ! no uncommon one at this moment. My reader, a picture of yourself, if as yet you have never been awakened to your true state before God. Lay "*fast asleep*" are the simple but expressive words by which the Holy Ghost describes this most solemn condition. It is not only self-willed and independent, but when the awful consequence is upon him, and death stares him in the face, he alone is indifferent.

Here, then is the condition of the professing multitudes around us. In the midst of religious observances of all kinds, and religious appliances of every shape ; open churches, fast days, and sacraments, synods and religious societies, the vast mass lie in the boasted cradle of privilege, and the devil rocks them "*fast asleep.*"

" What meanest thou, O sleeper ? " is the only suited language when pondering such a state of things.

Awakened at last, in the mercy of God, to a sense of their perishing condition, the prophet passes the sentence of death upon himself ; " Take me up, and cast me into the sea."

DISOBEDIENT; DISCIPLINED; DELIVERED. 57

And Jonah is soon wrapped among the weeds of the sea, down in the bottoms of the mountains, the waters compassing him about, the depth closed around his head.

Now, there are two points of immense value here :—

1. Who was it *thought of* Jonah in his self-willed independence and indifference? Oh! the wondrous grace of our Saviour-God, who in His own persevering love pursues in awakening tenderness the failing prophet, or a poor sinner now! Yes, reader, the very same God who shook to its foundations the prison of Philippi, to awaken the jailer, now causes His mighty storm to blow upon the ocean to awaken the sleeping Jonah; and, in His grace, He may use these poor lines to awaken you.

2. Who was it *provided for* Jonah a salvation worthy of Himself? Who but God? Now, mark it well, the prophet passes sentence of death on himself. Nothing less would suit; it must be *death*, and it must be *accepted*. “Take me up, and cast me into the sea.”

And so when death had its victim the sea ceased from its raging.

But is that all? What of Jonah? If left to the consequences of the death he has accepted, he must perish. But here it is exactly where the blessed God comes in, and that in a way worthy of Himself. He does not remit the sentence. To do so would be to clear the guilty. But He does bring salvation and this is in grace. It is, too, a salvation, which, while it maintains all the righteous character of God, and vindicates Him to the uttermost, most blessedly delivers the sinner from all the consequences of his rebellion against God.

And so we read : " Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah."

In the life of another, which can go down into the element where Jonah could not live, the prophet *is saved*. Beautiful type of salvation by Him who in grace took the sinner's judgment and endured it, He who alone could bear it. He went into death, passed through its dark raging flood for us who believe in Him.

And so Jonah's sin is all that is left in the bottom of the sea, and left there for ever.

Thus, in this scripture we have a striking picture of man's rebellion and God's salvation. On man's side, as in the case of Jonah, nothing but self-will, independence, indifference, death. On God's side a compassion that can send out " a great wind " to awaken the sleeper to a sense of his danger, and a grace which provides a salvation, so complete, so perfect, so full, that while He is demonstrated to be just, there is also deliverance for the sinner. The sin is judged, and the perishing one is saved.

" They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy . . . Salvation is of the Lord " (Jonah ii. 8,9).

A TALK ON ELEMENTARY TRUTH.

" I HAVE come to have a talk with you about the Lord Jesus."

" Well, I shall be glad to hear you talk."

" And how is it with you? are you saved? "

" I am not quite sure about that, but I hope I am forgiven my sins."

“ When were you forgiven? ”

“ Oh, for years ! About five years ago I got religion. ”

“ I am glad to hear you say so ; but let me ask you, ‘ How do you know your sins are forgiven? ’ ”

“ I don’t know ; but I find that the things I once loved now I hate, and the things I once hated I now love. ”

“ And is that all the evidence you have that you are forgiven? ”

“ I pray, and I hope God has forgiven me. ”

“ But, my dear friend, however much I may hope the work of God has begun in your soul, let me tell you that neither prayers nor an inward change will wash away your sins. Do you not know you are a sinner, and that the righteousness of God claims death, eternal death, as the penalty of sin? ”

“ Yes ; I was a sinner, but I hope I am not now. ”

“ But there are your sins. How are you going to meet that question with God . He is like a creditor, you are His debtor, and you know that in the case of debt, no resolve to pay your creditor in the future what you owe him, even should you actually do it, would pay the past debts. ”

“ I don’t know. Will you teach me? I am willing to be taught. ”

“ I mean that God’s word says you are a sinner. It says, ‘ All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. ’ (Rom. iii. 23.) It puts every unsaved man in the place of a condemned criminal. (Rom. iii. 19.) What would be the use of a condemned criminal falling down before

his judge and praying for forgiveness, or resolving to reform, after he had already been sentenced to prison or death by the laws of the land. The judge would answer, 'I am very sorry for you, but the law has condemned you already, and it must take its course.' "

"You pester me a bit by what you say; but does it not say you must be born again? "

"Yes, it does; it is necessary to have a new nature to enter the kingdom of God, for man is unfit for it, and he must get a fitness for it. But the new birth does not change the old man; and man, as man, is responsible to God as Judge for his sins, and is under the penalty of death; so he needs something more than new birth; he needs righteousness, justification. How are you going to get the debts you owe to God cancelled? "

"I don't know; will you tell me? "

"It astonishes me to find that, with all your profession and church membership, you are still unsaved, though, I trust, on the way to salvation. Only one thing will do for God, and that is Christ's blood presented to Him as a ransom, so that you, a poor bond-slave of sin and Satan, may be set free righteously, 'justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.' (Rom. iii. 24.) Justification is the sentence of the Judge in favour of the criminal accused, clearing him from all the charges laid against him. (Rom. viii. 33.) The only ground on which the righteous God can do this is the redemption work that Christ accomplished on the cross. That work was completely done when Jesus cried, 'It is finished.' Two things were then fully accomplished for the believer: First, all his sins, and the judgment due for them, were

borne, once and for all (Matt. xxvii. 45, 46, with 1 Peter ii. 24); so that there is no condemnation, to those that are in Christ Jesus. Second, Christ has so glorified God in the work of redemption, and fully accomplished His will, that the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, signifying that now heaven was opened to man, and the way into the holiest fully made manifest. A witness of this was the case of the dying robber, to whom the Lord said, 'To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' (Matt. xxvii. 50, 51; Luke xxiii. 43; Heb. x. 19, 20.) "

"Then by that there is nothing to do. But what about repentance? "

"Repentance is a change of mind towards God produced by the word of God. The Ninevites believed the word of God, by Jonah, that judgment was coming; and their mind was turned to Him, and as a consequence they humbled themselves. (Jonah iii.) The same with the people in John the Baptist's day. He preached 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand'; they believed the word that the King was coming, and in that light were convinced they were not ready, and took the place of judgment in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Thus John's baptism is called the baptism of repentance. (Matt. iii.) But repentance produced by preaching Christ is deeper, as we see in Acts ii. 36, 37. Peter pressed on the Jews that that Jesus whom they had crucified God had made Lord and Christ, upon which their minds were turned toward God, who had accepted Him, from their rejection of Him, and they owned Him as the Anointed in baptism. They owned the sin of having rejected Christ."

"Oh, I see now how very wrong my thoughts

have been ! I thought repentance was a long course of sorrow for sin that we had to go through, and produced by our own will ; but I see now it is produced by the Word. Oh, how little have I thought of the Word of God ! ”

“ I am so glad you are beginning to see that, and I would now press upon you that the word of God is the great evidence of salvation that God gives. First of all it produces quickening (John v. 25) ; faith (Romans x. 17), and repentance, as we have seen ; it announces salvation in the gospel through Jesus and His blood, and gives assurance to the soul that believes of what it has got through believing on Christ. Jesus said, ‘ He that believeth on him is not condemned.’ ‘ He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.’ (John iii. 18, 36.) And John in his first epistle says, ‘ 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.’ Do you not now begin to see that the word of God is the great evidence to the believer that his sins are forgiven, and that he has got eternal life ? (1 John v. 11-13.) ”

“ Yes, I think I begin to see it. But what about sins I may commit after I am saved ? ”

“ How many of your sins did Jesus bear on the cross ? ”

“ I suppose all. ”

“ And they were all future ? ”

“ Yes. ”

“ Then there is no question as to past or future sins, as to the criminal question of sin. Jesus took them all upon Himself, bore them all, and the judgment, too ; and now He is in heaven as man without them, and delivered from judgment. ”

“ And is that all mine if I believe? ”

“ Yes, certainly; and you inherit the blessing of that verse, ‘ Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.’ (Rom. iv. 7, 8.) ”

“ Oh, glory to God ! ”

“ But there is more. God having accepted Jesus as man, and put Him in glory, you are accepted in Him, have righteousness in Him, and God gives Christ Himself to you as His present gift of eternal life; so that believing, you are in Christ, and no more connected with Adam.”

“ Praise God ! But still, if I commit sins now I feel miserable, and how is that? ”

“ That is because you are born of God. You are now a child of God, and stand on that ground. That is why I said just now the criminal question of sin was settled by Jesus on the cross, so that you are never held as a criminal by God any more; you are now His child. But there is another question now if you sin; Communion between you and your Father is interrupted, and your new nature, as born of God, makes you feel miserable.”

“ What is communion? ”

“ It is two or more associated together in common thoughts or feelings about an object. Having received eternal life, and the knowledge of the Son as the eternal life, we have common thoughts and feelings with the Father as to His Son and His Son’s death. (1 John i. 1, 3.) Now, unbelief and sin interrupt this. Not that the link of faith can be broken where there is eternal life, and in that sense association with the Father in the knowledge of His Son; but, oh, how our enjoyment is marred both by unbelief and sin ! ‘ Can two walk

together, except they be agreed? ' said Jehovah to Israel in Old Testament times (Amos iii. 3); and then He enumerates various sins which prevented their walking together. Thus, though the criminal question of sin is for ever settled, and we can never lose eternal life, still the communion question has to be settled between the Father and His child in government. Chastisement must come in unless there is repentance. When you whip your child, does he cease to be your child? "

" No; if I do it, I do it because I love him. He is my child, therefore I do it. Oh, I see now what you mean! "

" Thank God if He has given you light. Now the Father's provision, if His child sins, is Jesus as Advocate who pleads. ' If any man sin, we (the children of God) have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins. (1 John ii. 1, 2.) Not if we confess our sins, we have an Advocate; but if we sin. The child confesses his sin truly, and the Father is faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse from all unrighteousness. (See 1 John i. 9; ii. 1, 2.) "

" Thank you, thank you; I see it now. I am saved by faith in Jesus and His blood; I know it by His word; and if I sin as a child of God, I have an Advocate with my Father, so that I can never be lost; but, on the contrary, through Him my communion is restored upon the confession of my sins. "

A. P. 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.

"THERE'S A GREAT LIGHT OVER THERE."

IT was twelve years ago, my dear, when I lost my husband. No, I didn't lose him, he is not lost, though if I had died an hour before him, I was *lost for ever*. But the Lord spared me. He opened my eyes. One afternoon my husband and I were sitting together before tea in this little room. He was talking about the Lord, and was grieving over me, as he had often done before.

"Isn't it a dreadful thing, my dear," said he, "for me to be in heaven, and you to be in hell?"

"Sure I'm not going to hell," said I.

"Indeed you are, my dear, indeed you are; there's nothing in the world to stop you, nothing to prevent it, indeed you'll surely go there."

"Sure you're always threatening the devil on

me," said I; "but he'll not get hold of me, for he'll not have me at all."

"Indeed, then, he will, my dear; indeed he will. What is there to prevent it?"

"And won't you go to hell too?" said I.

"No, my dear, for Jesus has died for me. My sins are all gone in His precious blood."

And then he began to sing a favourite hymn:

"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins," etc.

"And isn't that for me as well as you," said I, after listening a while.

"Indeed it is," said he.

"And won't this blood wash my sins away?"

"It will, my dear."

"Sure," said I, "the thief that went slandering and denying the Lord on the cross, when he said, 'Remember me,' didn't the Lord say, 'To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise?'"

"He did."

"And won't He take me there, too?" said I.

"He will, if you trust in Him," said he.

"Sure, then, I do," said I, "with all my heart."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Quite sure, *sartain* sure," said I.

"Praise the Lord," said he. "Then we shan't be parted after all. Oh! then I'll be glad when I see you coming after me."

"May be I'll be there before yourself."

"Oh! no you won't," said he, "I'm going first."

My husband was not very well, but there was nothing serious that we knew of.

He was standing up by the window, looking across towards the hall, when he said, "What is that light, my dear?"

“What light?” said I. “I see no light.”

“Yes, there’s a great light over there.”

“May be it’s the lamps in the hall,” said I.
“I’ll go and see.”

So I went to the door, but could see nothing, and I began to feel uneasy.

When I got back into the room, he turned round, called me by my Christian name, “Mary,” and then died, without another word.

That’s twelve years ago, and since then, when I first knew the Lord, He has never let me want for anything. I haven’t got to the height of the apostle who could say, “I know how to suffer need,” for the Lord hasn’t tried my faith so far as that. May be it wouldn’t stand that. He knows what we can bear.

All the twelve years I haven’t known twelve minutes’ want, and that’s only a minute for each year. I’ve lost my sight; but as I sit all alone (no, I’m never alone), I think of that Blessed One from the manger to the cross, where I see Him. Ah! no! it isn’t, for He’s off the cross, and it’s in the glory I see Him now.

A. T. S.

A PARABLE FOR THE PRESENT DAY.

THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. They that *were* foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at

midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But 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. Afterwards came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour. (Matthew xxv. 1-16.)

What makes this parable of the Lord so exceedingly striking and solemn is that it contemplates that which we ourselves are really in at this present moment, that is, that we in this world at this moment are between the midnight hour, between the cry that went forth, and the moment when the bridegroom comes.

We are not waiting to come up to the midnight hour. The midnight hour *has passed*, because the cry has already gone forth.

Every professing Christian, whether intelligently or not, believes in the coming of the Lord at some time. Some believe death is the coming of the Lord, some that the judgment is the coming of the Lord (so it is in one sense), but all look for His coming in some way or other. It is not that people deny that He is coming, but this is what is in their minds, "He will not come to-night, He will not come just now," that is they say He delays it. They put aside the

solemnity of the expectation of its being at any moment.

May I ask you who are unsaved, Do you believe He might come at any moment? or have you said in your heart, My Lord delays His coming?

The effect in a man's mind of deferring the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is, that he settles down into the enjoyment of the things of this world, eats, drinks, and is drunken, and the Lord of that servant comes in an hour when he is not expecting Him, and appoints him his portion with the hypocrites.

The Lord save you from the doom of that one. The Lord save you from settling down and saying, "I will take my fill of this world, have all its pleasures, drink of all its streams of enjoyment," for Satan puts into those streams a lulling drug of intoxicating power, and the end of it all is "weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. xxiv. 57.)

In this parable we have two sets of virgins. But mark the difference; five were wise and five foolish. What a character, "foolish"! It was not that they had not this coming of Christ before them. They all went forth to meet the bridegroom. But here was the difference; the "foolish" had their lamps; that was *profession*, and I can quite conceive how clean and bright those lamps were; but they took no oil with them; the wise took oil not only in their lamps, but in their vessels with their lamps.

What is the meaning of the oil which the wise have, but the foolish have not? The oil is the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His,"

(Rom. viii. 9.) and hence if you have not this oil you do not belong to Christ.

People will tell you they are Christians as much as you; wish to serve Christ as much as you; can see no difference. The difference between the virgins was, not that both did not expect the bridegroom, but the foolish had no oil, and if you have no oil, you will burn like a piece of wick, give a bright glare perhaps for a moment, and *then go out*, for you have not that which sustains the light; you have not the oil; *your soul is not saved, you have not yet the forgiveness of sins, you do not belong to Christ.*

Oh! I ask you, Have you this oil? Can you say, "I know my sins are all forgiven, are all forgotten; I know that at God's right hand to-day is seated *my Saviour.*" Do you know what it is to have the present pardon of your sins through the finished work of Christ? and the Holy Ghost, the oil, in your heart?

Look at the fifth verse. It is an immensely solemn fact that at first they had all turned their back on everything, and, foolish and wise alike, went out to meet the bridegroom. But the Bridegroom delayed His coming, and they all lost the hope of His coming.

That is exactly what happened in the history of Christendom. The hope of the Lord's coming was lost, and the Church, instead of being out watching for Him, turned in, as it were, somewhere carnally to sleep.

"But at midnight." You know what midnight is, the dead of night, when all nature is at rest. At midnight, then, a cry came forth. Whom did this cry come from? From God. "Behold the Bridegroom!"

That was the cry, not "Behold the Bridegroom cometh." It is not so much His coming as Himself. Every thought was turned on the Bridegroom.

Look at the effect of the cry: "Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps." The wise had been to sleep as well as the foolish, but the wise had the oil, though they were not using it. And herein is the difference, the foolish had no oil! They were merely professors.

What is the good of profession if you have not Christ? What is the good of sending hundreds of pounds to convert the heathen, if you are not converted yourself? What is the use of taking the sacrament, if your own soul is not saved?

The foolish virgins say to the wise, "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are *going out*."

That is, on the eve of going out, the wick gave a flame, but the flame was unfed, it was going out. How could the wise give of their oil? I cannot give you the Holy Ghost. I may speak of Christ to you, tell you the wondrous tale of the cross, and of how willing He is to receive you, but I cannot give you Christ.

Oh! if I could but take you to some of the deathbeds of your own town, and show you how people quit this world who have not Christ! If you could only see the throes of agony, the terror, the remorse; conscience enough awakened to know that heaven is a reality; that hell is a reality; that eternity is a reality; and that the salvation of the soul is a reality! Could you but hear their agonized cry, "Here am I on the verge of eternity, and I have no Saviour, no peace, no forgiveness, no pardon, no security, nothing to cling to." And could you see them

clinging even to a poor human being who is a Christian, you would not put off your salvation till a deathbed.

What do the wise virgins answer? "Go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves."

This is very solemn. What do the foolish do? Do they say then, "We can do without?" No! no! *They go to buy.* Too late! Too late!! They went to buy too late!!! They did not say, We will take a leap in the dark, and we will do as well as others without oil. No! no! They realised the necessity of it, they said, "We must have it, we cannot do without it"; but they went to buy *too late.*

"While they went to buy, the Bridegroom came."

They slept while they might have had it freely; said, "Tomorrow shall be as to-day," said, "I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years."

What does God say? "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." (Luke xii. 20.)

Oh! how many of the wise men of this world does God count fools! And how many of those whom men count fools does God count wise? Men count a man a fool who turns his back on the wisdom of this world, and says, "I will put my trust in that One who died on Calvary's cross. My confidence is in the Lord, the One who was nailed to the tree here. He is *my Saviour, my Lord.*"

Now look at the state of these foolish virgins. They went to buy; they did the right thing *too late.* What comes after this is fearfully solemn. May the Lord impress the solemnity of it on your

heart; "They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage, and the door was shut."

Who were the ready ones? Those who had the oil. Who had the oil? Those who were saved; who had the forgiveness of their sins; who trusted in their Saviour. Are *you* one of these? Are *you* ready? Can you say, "Come what may, I have no fear; I am ready"?

We have seen doubtless what that readiness means. One has seen how, when death came, it was not a beginning to think then of Christ, pardon and forgiveness, but only peace, only rest.

It is not the time to begin to think of Christ when the poor body is racked with pain; when there is weary, restless tossing on a bed of sickness; when the mind has no power to think, and the body is torn with agony. It is the time then to *prove* Him; to feel what the comfort is of the everlasting arms underneath one; to know that death is not a policeman that hands me to judgment, but a friend that ushers me into the presence of the Lord.

But if you do not die, and the Lord comes, what then? You will be left behind to receive the devil's man, antichrist. You *would not* have God's man, and now you *cannot*, for the door is *shut*.

If the Lord Jesus Christ were to come to-night, I ask you, Would it close the door for you? You know it would. The Lord is coming for His people, and you know that you are not one of His people. Have you not despised the idea of being a Christian, and do you not know that the very thought of anything out of this world is terrible to you? You like the world; you like its attractions; you like its follies; and you do not

like religion. You *think* it is a gloomy, depressing thing, a thing that makes a man hang his head like a bulrush; that by having to do with Christ you would lose everything and gain nothing.

The Lord gives your conscience this sum to work out, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark viii. 36.) Let your conscience work it out in the presence of God.

If you get everything this world can give you, I will show you a picture of your future. If the Lord does not come first, you will have to be stretched on a death-bed, *and it will be a Christless death-bed*; and you will be wound in a shroud, *but it will be a Christless shroud*; and you will sleep a long, long sleep, *and it will be a Christless sleep*; and you will be put in a *Christless coffin*, and will be buried in a *Christless grave*; and you will come out of that grave to stand before the judgment seat, *Christless still*; and from that judgment seat you must pass into a *Christless eternity*.

As you lived without Christ, you will die without Christ; as you would not have Christ here, you must spend eternity without Him, in the lake of fire; and all for what? A few passing trumpery pleasures of this world.

"Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us."

How awfully solemn that there will be people who will come and knock at that closed door, saying, "Let us in," "Give us a place," who will only have this answer, "Too late, I never knew you!"

Now that same voice says to the vilest,

“Come”; to the most worthless, “Come.” But then He will say, not to the vilest, nor to the most worthless, but to the respectable, moral, Christless professors, “Depart, I never knew you.”

Which of these words are you going to hear said to you? If you do not listen to the word “Come,” you *must* listen to the word “Depart.”

You will see Him once face to face; “Every eye shall see Him.” (Rev. i. 7.) Will you see Him now as a Saviour face to face, or will you see Him as a Judge then? See Him you must as a Judge, if you will not see Him as a Saviour. If you *will not* receive life from Him, you *must* receive judgment; for you must give an account to Him of everything, even of this warning word to you. Either it will increase your responsibility and send you deeper in the depths of eternal damnation, or you will be brought face to face with Him who waits to be gracious.

There will not be a soul in the lake of fire, who will not say, “I am here because I deserved it. I chose the world; I preferred it; I turned my back on Christ. He called, and I refused His call; I sold my soul to Satan; he offered me what I thought a costly gift, and I sold my soul for it; I deserve my fate.”

Do not let this be your bitter cry, for you may have the blessing at this very moment.

Will you not have it now?

Will you not *now* close with that blessed Saviour?

Will you not this moment take Him as *your* Saviour, fall down at Jesus’ feet, and worship Him, the Lord of all?

"A NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME."

(Philippians ii. 10.)

IN answer to the question, Are you saved? some might say, "Oh, nobody can know that till he gets to the bar of God's judgment! Then everything will be settled."

My reader, if you say that, it at once proves that you know nothing of that worthy name that is thus exalted; for if you are going to be saved by your good works, you set aside Jesus as Saviour.

Neither is He a helper to man to save himself. It is often argued thus: "God must do His part, and I must do my part."

But then man is lost. A lost man cannot find himself. Scripture says, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was *lost*."

It says that the whole world is *guilty*, and *under sentence* before God. (Rom. iii. 19.)

Can a condemned criminal help to save himself?

Again, man is pictured as born in sin, a slave of sin from his birth. (Rom. v. 12-viii.)

Can a slave free himself? No; his masters, sin and Satan, so hold him that he is fast bound; tied and bound with the chain of sin, as it is written.

Again, he is pictured as a debtor, having nothing wherewith to pay his debts to God. (Luke vii. 41, 42.)

Can a debtor without a penny to pay his debts free himself? No.

He is again described as spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. (Eph. ii. 1-3.) Can a dead man bring himself to life, or help to do it? No.

A NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME.

77

Then man needs Jesus, the Saviour. He needs a *Saviour*, not a helper; and such a One is Jesus.

JESUS is the personal name of the Lord of glory. Such was the name Jehovah, the God of Israel, took when He became a man, to save His people from their sins. The angel said to Joseph,

“THOU SHALT CALL HIS NAME JESUS.”

(Matt. i. 21.) The Hebrew word for it is Joshua, signifying Jah, Saviour.

Oh! the blessedness of such a name! and how significant when Jehovah became incarnate!

Under the law God never came out to man, and man never went in to God! but here, blessed be God, is God come down to man, God become a man to save His people from their sins. But, alas! the nation would not have Him. The Jews blindly refused their own God come down in grace to save them from their sins, through which they had been already brought under sentence by the law. They crucified Him. (Matt. xxvii. 35.)

What a dreadful thing!

And Pilate wrote upon the cross,

“THIS IS JESUS.”

Why did they crucify Him? They said in mockery, “He saved others; Himself He cannot save.” Just as they say to-day, when God is working salvation, “That fellow says he’s saved,” and they scoff.

See how man reproduces himself in all ages.

Why did the Jews and Gentiles crucify Him?

Because they did not know He was Jehovah the Saviour.

Why do you reject Him to-day, and remain unsaved? Because you do not believe in His name. You do not believe *He saves now*. Oh, may

God give you repentance to discern the real meaning of the title, "This is Jesus."

But God raised Him from the dead the third day, and made that same Jesus Lord and Christ. Judgment was written on the world that crucified Him; but salvation in His name was afresh preached by Peter and others to those who repented. They boldly proclaimed, "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name . . . whereby we must be saved." Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch. Stephen saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. But they again refused to believe, and murdered the man who gave them the testimony. (Acts viii. 35, vii. 55.)

Afresh the Lord revealed Himself to the persecutor Saul in the words,

"I AM JESUS."

Saul fell to the ground at the revelation of such grace, to be raised up again, and find complete salvation in that Person from all imputation of his sins, and from the judgment resting on the doomed world that had rejected Him.

Separated from the Jews and Gentiles, and having a new standing given him in this heavenly Saviour, He goes forth to proclaim His virtues to Jew and Gentile. Man in the flesh he finds completely judged and set aside; but salvation in the heavenly man, Christ Jesus, was given him and offered to all nations "without money and without price."

Though you, my reader, were the greatest Christ-rejecter on earth, here is a present salvation made known to you in this heavenly Person, in the words "I am Jesus." This Person is

coming again. He lives now to intercede for His people, to maintain their faith amidst the trials and difficulties of their journey through this world, to advocate their cause if they sin. (Heb. vii. 25; 1 John ii. 1, 2.)

When the last soul is saved He is coming again.

"I JESUS . . . am the Bright and the Morning Star," He says. "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come."

Do you belong to the bride of the Lamb? Have you the Holy Ghost dwelling in you?

If you have not, how can you say, Come? All believers can say, Come. They desire to see Jesus; the One who has saved them. We are not looking for a judge. No; we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall descend from heaven with a shout; who shall change the bodies of His living saints, and raise up His dead ones, so that we shall all be caught away to meet the Lord in the air, before the day of judgment takes place at all.

It is "I, Jesus," who says, "I am the Bright and Morning Star." When He comes to judge the world He will rise as the Sun of Righteousness. (Mal. iv. 2.) But before that He will appear in the air to translate all believers to glory, as the Bright and Morning Star. (1 Thess. iv.)

Jesus said, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life." (John v. 24.)

Where, then, are you, in view of these things, reader?

Blessed Lord Jesus! In Thy name is present salvation from the imputation of sins; present salvation from the eternal judgment; present salvation from the power of sin; and salvation from the very presence of sin when Thou comest again, so that we shall stand, before Thy judgment seat is set, perfect before Thee, in bodies of glory like Thyself.

“And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”
(Rev. xxii. 17.)

A. P. C.

“HE HATH DONE THIS.”

“They shall come, and shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that HE HATH DONE THIS.” (Psalm xxii. 31.)

“He hath done this.” Oh! words of wonder.
Still would my soul their meaning ponder,
Ere, in the land of glory yonder,
I see Him “face to face.”

“He hath done this.” By whose creation
Was laid of old the earth’s foundation.
JESUS! ’tis He who wrought salvation,
In boundless love and grace.

“He hath done this.” That work’s perfection
(All unto God in full subjection),
Attested by His resurrection,
Hath purchased all our bliss.

“He hath done this.” With faith’s deep yearning,
More, more of “this” would we be learning,
While evermore our praise returning
To Him who “hath done this.”

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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.

"TAKE HIM AT HIS WORD."

A PERSON who was exercised about the salvation of her soul, and who had been the subject of many prayers, went one evening to hear the gospel preached.

The following morning the preacher called at her house, when a conversation took place between them.

After a few remarks, in which he sought to make God's plan of salvation simple to her soul, he took a book out of his pocket called "Fundamental Truths of Salvation," and handing it to her, said, "Will you take this little book?"

She took it without question, saying, "Thank you."

"Whose book is that now?" he said.

"God's book," she replied.

"Well, it is about Him; but who does it belong to?"

"Oh, to me."

"But how did you get it?"

"You gave it to me."

"Yes; and what did you do for it?"

"I didn't do anything."

"No, you did nothing whatever. I bought it; I brought it; I offered it to you; you believed I meant what I said, and so you took it."

"Yes."

"Well, now, God says in the Bible, 'Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely' (Rev. xxii. 17); and thus if you take God at His word, as you took me at mine, the water of life is yours, just like the little book."

"It is simple, it is simple," she replied, earnestly.

"Yes, indeed it is, Miss——, very simple, very simple, indeed. I might have deceived you, and withdrawn the book, as you were about to take it. *God cannot* with you, then take Him at His word, and the water of life will be yours."

"It is simple, it is simple," she again repeated.

"Well, then, will you believe Him, will you believe Him now? Mark, 'whosoever will.' It means everybody, so must mean you. 'Let him take.' Not come and take; but *take*; so very simple. 'Take the water of life freely.' Tomorrow may be too late. Will you take it now?"

A few seconds passed. A struggle seemed to be going on in her soul, when she suddenly exclaimed, "I see it, I see it. I never saw it before. I have possession now, and I hope I shall walk in the light to prove it." (Eph. v. 8.)

These last words gave her visitor great confi-

dence, as he replied, "Do you really see it, Miss ____?"

"Yes, I see it; it's mine. I am saved. It is simple, it is simple."

"You will really take God at His word, as you took me at mine?"

"Yes, I will; and the water of life is mine" (Rev. xxi. 6.)

After some further conversation, with prayer and thanksgiving to the Lord, he left.

Calling a few days afterwards, he found her very bright and happy, and she said, "The light broke in upon my soul that Saturday morning, and I am a new creature now, everything seems so different."

Since she was thus simply brought to the Lord, she has been seeking to carry out her words, walking in the light to prove it.

Dear reader, if you never saw it before, do you see it now? Are you a thirsty soul? Think of these precious words, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." E.H.C.

A VITAL QUESTION DIVINELY ANSWERED.

GOD made the death of a much-loved friend instrumental in awakening the conscience of the writer to godly and earnest concern.

For the first time in his life he had solemnly proposed to himself the vital question, "What must *I do* to be saved?"

The soul, thoroughly in earnest, at once commenced *doing*. Eternal life, peace of mind, and

present forgiveness of sins were believed to depend upon much *being felt*, much *realized*; and for this purpose, namely, that convictions of sin might be deepened, that the anxiety of his soul might be increased, he cried night and day, "Lord, show me *my sin*, *my vileness*, *my ruin*. O Lord, make me feel that I'm a sinner, *needing* and *deserving* hell! Lord, save me!"

It was a solemn time. Friend after friend pointed him to the Lamb of God, who was made an offering for sin, who made peace through the blood of His cross, and, founded upon His *finished* work, from the throne of God in glory, presses upon every soul the message of reconciliation, "Be ye reconciled." (2 Cor. v. 20.)

It was all in vain. His distress increased with the fervour and urgency of his prayers.

Weeks and months rolled on, and found him still a stranger to the peace which passeth *all* understanding. (Phil. iv. 7.) And no wonder; for, vainly imagining that he had to make his peace with God, and that the ground for that peace must be laid in agonizing emotions, stirring and deep conviction of sin, the shedding of tears, and labouring at the task with all the fervour and resolute determination of one on whose *doing* depended eternal life and peace with God, it was not what God required.

"God will have mercy upon me," he said to a friend on one occasion; "God will save me, but not now. I don't *feel* enough, don't half *realize* my condition as a guilty sinner. I must cherish my convictions; I must *feel* more. I must *grieve* over my sins more, I must *weep* more."

And again he gave himself to the sad, sad task of propitiating God. Alas, how vain! The peace

of a sinner in the presence of the Holy God has absolutely nothing to do with his prayers, tears, and soul troubles. The foundation of an *immediate* and *perfect* forgiveness of sins, the clearance of all guilt, the removal of all iniquity, has not the slightest reference as to his moral condition. He may be an awakened sinner, feeling the burden of his guilt, groaning under the weight of his sins; or he may still be, what is worse, yet unconcerned and unconverted.

The sinner is "made nigh to God," not by his tears of repentance, his bitter sorrowings for sin, but by the "BLOOD OF CHRIST." (Eph. ii. 13.) The peace of a sinner is not founded upon his feelings, be they good or bad; or upon his faith, be it weak or strong; or upon his experiences or realizations. No, no. "The blood of His cross" *has* made peace; the blood alone; the finished work of Christ. The dying, dead, buried, risen, and glorified Son of God, *has obtained redemption*. For whom? For sinners, for poor, lost, hell-worthy sinners, be they good or bad, whether feeling or "past feeling." (Eph. iv. 19.) A lifted-up Christ is God's remedy for sinners; the cross His answer to the ruin, sin, and guilt of man.

Has my reader believed in Christ? Has he got eternal life in the Son of God? Have you, dear reader, yet gazed upon Christ in glory? Have your eyes beheld His pierced side, and hands, and feet?

"Why look there?" you say.

Why? Because that once wounded Man is in glory. He is seated on the throne of God. The Son of Man lifted up on the cross, the atoning victim for sins, has accomplished His work. The victim's blood has been shed; His life laid down;

justice thereby satisfied, and the authority of God divinely vindicated.

“ But,” you say, “ it was against God I had sinned, against Him I had transgressed. Is He satisfied. Is He well pleased? ”

Yes, sinner, He is, and the proof is the empty grave, the tenantless tomb. The Son of God has been raised from the tomb by the glory and power of God, and He now is exalted to the highest point in the universe, the throne of God.

This truth, which, when believed, carries salvation with it, was put simply and earnestly before G—— F——. He was pressed with that scripture which declares that all our righteousnesses, that is to say, human goodness of any kind, are as filthy rags; that divine righteousness, instant salvation, perfect peace, and eternal life, were each, alone and entirely, grounded upon Christ in death and resurrection; that *no other* foundation can man lay than that is laid, even Jesus Christ, the Lord; that any foundation to build for eternity, which had even a grain of human composition in it, would prove a foundation, a standing, weaker than the sinking sea-shore sand; that salvation was in “ NONE OTHER.” (Acts iv. 12.)

“ I see it,” said the young man, “ I see it now; I’m saved by the blood of the Lamb; I’m saved by the blood of Jesus. Hallelujah to His name! ”

Years have rolled on, and yet that happy one is happy still; that rejoicing one is rejoicing still. Why? Because the blood of Christ is ever the same. Why? Because the throne of God is still occupied by the risen Christ. Why? Because, a full salvation is his portion, a full and perfect salvation enjoyed even *now*. Why? Because this One who died is coming, yes, coming, to his

everlasting joy, to his eternal blessing, to take him to his Father's home, to the rest of heaven. Yes, Jesus is coming.

"How soon?" do you ask?

"Quickly," is the divine answer. And when He comes, the song, loud, long, and eternal, resounding from every blood-washed soul, shall be, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." (Rev. i. 5, 6.)

F.

NO MORE DOUBTS.

CALLING on S. to-day I observed that he did not look so bright as usual, and soon the cause discovered itself.

"Do you know," he said, "I sometimes think I am deceiving myself, and that I am not a child of God at all; for when I was converted, ten years ago, in the time of the Revival, I *felt* such a load of sins taken off me, and then I was so happy; but I have not at all the same feeling now, so perhaps after all I am self-deceived."

I saw at once that the fault here was self-occupation, looking *in* instead of "looking *off* unto Jesus," and therefore I said, "Well, dear S., I am not surprised at what you say, for it is the natural result of basing your acceptance with God on your *experience*, and not on what *He says* in His word.

"I passed at one time through the same experience, and therefore I can feel for you. I used

shortly after my conversion to have at times great sensations of joy, followed by corresponding feelings of depression; and while these latter continued of course I was miserable. But what gave me perfect peace was the ceasing to take account of my feelings *altogether*, and beginning to rest calmly and quietly upon what God says in His word about Christ, who was delivered for my offences, and was raised again for my justification. (Rom. iv. 25). And I reasoned with myself thus: 'If Christ has indeed been delivered for my offences, there is no necessity for me to be delivered for them, for God is too just to demand payment over again for a debt already discharged; and if He has been raised again for my justification no one can ever lay anything to my charge, for His resurrection has set me down righteous in the presence of God. By His death and resurrection my sins were put away, and I am constituted righteous before God. I stand before God righteous as He is righteous.' I believe this, and therefore, however much my feelings may change, I never doubt that I have peace with God."

"Well," Mr.——, "I see quite what you mean, and I'm sure it's very happy for *you*, but how am I to know that He died for *me*?"

"Oh," I said, "that is easily discovered. Look at Romans v. 6, where it says, 'Christ died for the *ungodly*,' and verse 8, where He died (it says) for 'sinners.' Satan never yet could persuade me that I was neither a 'sinner' nor 'ungodly,' and therefore I always have the assurance of God's word that He died for *me*; and putting two and two together, if He died for me I know that God is satisfied, and therefore not a shadow of a doubt, as to my acceptance, ever crosses my mind."

I am enabled to ‘joy in God,’ by whom I have received this wondrous reconciliation.”

“ Well,” Mr.——, “ I think I must not doubt any more; I see I must cease to be occupied with myself, and enter more into what God has *done* for me, and what Christ *is* to me.”

“ THERE IS NO MIDDLE PLACE.”

“ For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John iii. 16.)

THESE very plain and simple words contain the whole story of the grace and love of God to sinners. Words cannot express the depth of that grace and love; neither can the carnal mind, which is enmity against God, enter into it. (Rom. viii. 7.) But so it is, “ God so loved ” the sinner, one who had, by his own act, and the unbelief of his heart, brought that fearful thing, sin, into the world (Gen. iii.), He so loved him, that He spared not His only Son, that He might with justice bring sinners who had departed from Him in rebellion and sin back to Himself. And oh ! what precious infinite love and grace is here set forth ! He spared not His Son. His only Son in His bosom from all eternity, was given for the sinner, for those who did not care about Him.

We may well pause and wonder at such love. But it is as true and as perfect as that God from whom it came forth. It is worthy of Him, indeed. Blessed be His Name for ever !

For what purpose did God not spare His only Son? That *whosoever* believeth on Him should

not perish, but *have* everlasting life. Well, if this *does not fill up the measure of that love*, nothing can.

Oh ! what a plain, simple, but glorious truth is contained in those words ! No condition ; nothing to be added thereto ; nothing to be taken therefrom. It is only necessary to feel and know that one is a sinner, dead in trespasses and sins (the more broken-hearted about it the better) to have a sure and unfailing title to the virtue of the scripture at the beginning of this paper.

To be conscious that such never can do anything towards their own salvation, and to receive God's own true and gracious words as perfect and sufficient. To accept of the living and true Saviour, here provided, to meet every need. And mark, it is a Saviour of God's own providing, to meet the sinner's need. None other would have satisfied Him ; none other would have been accepted of God.

Why not, then, dear reader, at this very moment, come to this Saviour and believe on Him ? *He* is all that you need in God's sight. He has promised that "whosoever come unto Him, He will in no wise cast out," that He will "never leave nor forsake" those who do trust in Him. (John vi. 37 ; Heb. xiii. 5.)

Are you saying that you are too great a sinner ? Oh ! do not trifle thus, I beseech you. It was for such, or worse, if there could be such, that He came and died. He came to save "that which *was lost*." None of us know how soon it may please God, with whom are the issues of life and death, to call us away out of this world. Oh ! then, do not delay, but accept Him now, in this the day of His salvation and wondrous grace to sinners. There are but two ways in which you

must appear before God : either clothed in Christ as your righteousness, an inheritor, through Him, of everlasting glory ; or clothed in your sins, and an inheritor of eternal damnation ! Awful words ! But so it is ; either one or the other is your lot ; there is no middle place.

You may say, “ I have heard all this over and over again. ” But if you have not a vital interest in these glorious truths, may God soften your heart, and give you to believe them, by the teaching of His gracious Spirit. Accept, I do pray you, this glorious gospel, this good news of God’s full, free, *unconditional* salvation for sinners, by the “ blood of Jesus Christ, ” which “ cleanseth us from all sin. ” (1 John i. 7.) Do not let unbelief reign any longer in your heart. I believe this sin will be that which will meet the direst punishment, for from it spring up all other sins : it is the root of them all.

“ When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that knew not God, ” and—mark, it is on them also “ that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power. ” (2 Thess. i. 7-9.)

Let me again repeat this glorious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. That “ whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ” Oh ! what a fearful looking for of judgment for those who will not accept of this message of grace ! (Heb. x. 27.) Accept it, then, I beseech you, reader, now. Do not go away, or cast it from you ; for “ now, is the accepted time ; behold, now is the day of salvation. ” (2 Cor. vi. 2). Come

to Jesus this very moment, if you have not already done so. Believe on Him, and trust in Him for your all. Nothing is wanting in Him. The more you trust in Him, the more you will find in Him, and the more perfect peace you will have for your own soul. Believe, then, on the Lord Jesus Christ, that He is the Son of God, the Son of the Father, who sent Him into the world to save sinners. This is have eternal life; to set to your seal that God is true; to know that His most precious blood, which was shed for you, cleanses you from all sin; mark, dear reader, it is from *all* sin; not one jot or tittle of sin is on those who are washed in that precious blood. It is not the value which *you* put on this blood; it is the value and the efficacy that *God* sees in it which constitutes your safety.

May God, who is rich in mercy, teach you to accept and know all these precious truths for your own soul, by His Holy Spirit. He alone can bless these words to your soul. And to Him be all the honour, and praise, and glory, now and for ever, through Jesus Christ. Amen. G.S.P.

What was it, blessed God,
 Led Thee to give Thy Son,
 To yield Thy Well-beloved
 For us by sin undone?
 'Twas love unbounded led Thee thus
 To give Thy Well-beloved for us.

What led Thy Son, O God,
 To leave Thy throne on high,
 To shed His precious blood,
 To suffer and to die?
 'Twas love, unbounded love to us,
 Led Him to die and suffer thus.

“I’M TRUSTING ALL TO YOU.”

SOME years ago, whilst going round with some tracts in a certain poor district, I knocked at the door of a garret room in a high back-land.*

As no one opened, and I thought I heard a faint voice within, I raised the latch and entered.

In a bed in the wall, supporting himself on one arm, while the other hand held back the bed-curtain, was a strange, weird-looking old man. His eyes gleaming out of an unshaven face gave him a peculiarly wild look, the effect of which was heightened by the eager gesticulation with which he immediately began to address me, in what at first appeared to be an unknown tongue.

He turned out to be an old Highlander, who could scarcely speak a word of English.

With some difficulty I made out that he lived alone in the house, and was not on speaking terms with his neighbours; that he had seen no one since the day before; and having been suddenly taken very ill, had not been able to leave his bed to make his state known, nor to get as much as a drink of water.

As I turned to see if I could not supply this want, I was struck with the bare, desolate look of everything in the little room. A small pan was on the hob, but only black cinders in the grate; and opening the cupboard, not a particle of food of any kind was there, but an old, dry crust.

He drank the cold water eagerly, and on giving back the cup, laid hold of my hands, with his dry,

*Back-land, a house or building lying back from the street.

burning ones, as if afraid I would leave him before he had finished all he had to say.

He had been long too ill to work, he said, and now the "bawbees were all done" he would have to apply to the parish for assistance. But he had no one to send, and did not know how to set about it. But I had come, as he said, a good missionary, I would manage the whole thing for him; and with the words, "I'm trusting all to you," he sank down exhausted on his wretched bed.

He had thrown his burden of care upon me, and with this last effort his worn-out mind and body succumbed.

He could answer no questions, nor did he understand a word I said, and the only thing for me was to take up the case. So with these words, "I'm trusting all to you," urging me on, I rested not till the poor friendless dying man was cared for.

Many a time since this little incident has recurred to my mind as an illustration of faith.

"The poor committeth himself unto Thee." (Ps. x. 14.)

To a Scottish ear, the old-fashioned word "lippen" has a fuller, deeper meaning of trust and confidence than the word "commit."

"I can lippen all to Him now," said one lately, who had been long groaning under his own burden, "and oh! how happy I have been all day long, in the thought of my Saviour's nearness and willingness to supply all my need."

"I, too, will lippen all to Him," said a dying man, to whom was narrated the above little incident, as illustrating the nature of saving faith; and leaning upon One "mighty to save," with "the

everlasting arms ” beneath him and around him, he was carried through the dark valley, as a little child, resting safe and happy in its mother’s bosom. (Isa. lxiii. 1 ; Dent. xxxiv. 27 ; Ps. xxiii. 4.)

True faith has respect not simply to the truth about Jesus, but to Jesus Himself. It is to a living Person we must “ trust,” not merely to a doctrine, a fact, or an abstract truth. The knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus is precious just as it leads to the knowledge of Jesus Himself. (Zph. iv. 21.) When we truly know Him, we cannot but trust Him, knowing ourselves to be lost and perishing, and Jesus to be the only and all-sufficient Saviour.

“ I believe that Jesus died for sinners, and that He is the only Saviour,” said a wife one day in my hearing, wondering at the new-found “ believing ” which filled her husband with peace and joy.

“ O woman,” he said, “ the devils believe that, and they only tremble.” (Jas. ii. 19.)

The faith that leads the soul to trust all to Jesus believes that too, but rests not there ; it straightway flees to Him ; lays hold on Him ; cries, “ Lord, save me ; undertake for me ; say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.” Then, in the experimental knowledge of His love and power, of His truth and faithfulness, the believing soul takes up the glad language of assurance, “ The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song ; He also is become my salvation.” (Exod xv. 2 ; Ps. cxviii. 14.) Yes, He whose name is “ Faithful and True,” is One who may indeed be trusted. (Rev. xix. 11.) He has never proved a broken reed to any fainting soul who leaned upon Him. None were ever ashamed who waited for Him ; and no needy lost one who came to Him for salvation was ever cast out.

Dear reader, come, taste and see how good He is, and how blessed is every one that trusts in Him. (Ps. xxxiv. 8.) The woman of Samaria told her fellow-citizens about Jesus, and many of them were thus led to come to Him, and prove Him for themselves; and then they said, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." (John iv. 42.)

The faith that leads to appropriating Jesus is the only faith that saves. It is not enough to say, "I believe that He is the only Saviour, and that He is able and willing to save." Have you made Him yours by receiving Him, by committing yourself to Him? (John i. 12.) The profession of faith that leaves the soul as careless and secure in sin as ever, or as heavily laden and burdened as ever, is no faith at all. In the one case there has been no felt burden to roll upon Him, in the other, no real rolling of the burden which was weighing it down. Just in proportion as we truly trust all to Jesus, our souls are filled with joy and peace in believing. (Rom. xv. 13.)

The old Highlander's mind was at rest when he cast his care upon me. He did not wait till he saw all he desired accomplished before he rested. He trusted simply, and was sure that his helpless need would be supplied; and in this he rested. And so the believer trusts Jesus with a faith which is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. xi. 1.) He has learned to rest calmly upon Jesus, whom not having seen he loves, and in whom, though now he sees Him not, yet believing, he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of his faith, even the salvation of his soul. (1 Peter i. 8, 9.)

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GOSPEL LIGHT.



GOD IS LIGHT. GOD IS LOVE.

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

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

"I'LL TELL YOUR FORTUNE."

A COLPORTEUR was returning homeward one evening through the heart of a large Oriental city, when he was accosted by a tall fine-looking young Turk, with the words, "I'll tell your fortune."

Our friend was so taken back that for the moment he did not reply, and the man explained, "I am a fortune teller; I can tell you what will happen in the future."

"But how am I to know that you tell the truth?"

"Oh, I have books; I tell by astrology."

"Well, I would like to ask you a question first, so as to test whether you can really tell the truth or not. If you can tell my fortune truly, you certainly can tell your own. Where will you be in a hundred years?"

The Turk looked greatly annoyed, and replied, "Oh, I don't know *that*; but you let me look at your hand, and I will tell your fortune for you."

"But," replied the colporteur, "I also am somewhat of a fortune teller. I also use books, and if you will tell me one thing, I will tell your fortune for *you*."

"What do you want me to tell you?"

"Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son?"

"No, He was not God's Son."

"Now," replied our friend, taking a New Testament from his bag, "I will tell your fortune. My book tells me, '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.' This is your fortune:—*Now* you have the wrath of the Living, True God ever abiding on you, and in a hundred years you will be in hell, in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, unless you believe on the Son of God."

A long talk ensued on the side of the street, and the fortune teller asked, "May I have one of your books?" a request that was gladly granted.

The next question was. "Where do you live? When may I come and see you?"

The following day he and a friend came and had a long talk with the Christian, and departed with a copy of the Bible.

What the result may be, God alone knows. But let me ask you, reader, Have you ever thought about *your* fortune, your *eternal* fortune? You need not remain in doubt as to that. Thank God we have a Book that leaves no room for uncertainty in these matters. Where will *you* be in

a hundred years? Aye, where will you be *to-morrow*?

What could be more brief, more pointed, more precious, and yet more awful, than those solemn words: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him"? (John iii. 36.)

A MAN WHO PLEASED GOD.

AMONG all the antediluvian *macrobi*, or long-livers, the life of Enoch, though the shortest, was the most remarkable. He is brought before us in Scripture three different times; once in the Old Testament and twice in the New:—

- I. In Genesis v. 21-24 his *path* is in view.
- II. In Hebrews xi. 5, 6 we see his *faith*.
- III. In Jude 14, 15 we hear his *testimony*.

He believed *in* God; he walked *with* God; he spoke *for* God.

ENOCH'S PATH.

I. Let us first look at his *PATH*; the beginning and end of his journey.

We find that, in common with his forefathers, he lived a certain number of years, handed down a son, who was the representative of THE PROMISED SEED. (Gal. iii. 17.)

To this son he gave a remarkable name. Several translations of Methuselah have been given, but the most likely one is that which divides

it thus, *meth*, death; *u*, his; *selah*, he shall bring or send—"By his death he shall send it."

Enoch prophesied, as we read in the Epistle of Jude, concerning the end of all man's self-gratification; and did he not, in the spirit of prophecy, tell that, by his son's death, the end would come? His piety was not of the nature of the priest, hermit, or monk, but he trained a family; he had sons and daughters in common with the other Sethites.

But here the parallel ends. He is singled out from among them all as in a particular way walking with God. It is also said of Noah that he "walked with God," but more of Enoch is said: "He was not"; and the reason is given, "for God took him."

Let us look at his path in its character and its termination.

First. Its character. "He walked with God," or, as the Hebrew has it, "He walked habitually with God"; it was the habit of his life. Adam *walked* in innocence, but here Enoch *walks* in the midst of the moral desolation. (Gen. vi. 5, 11.) Noah walked in the midst of the active opposition. Abraham walked as coming out from his fatherland. Twice it is said of Enoch that he "walked with God": first, in verse 22, in the midst of rearing a family. For three hundred years he showed that walking with God was not incompatible with being engaged in the business and a sharer in the cares of the world. And second, in verse 24, it is put as at the terminus, he walked up to his rapture.

We find what is meant by walking with God

* Methuselah died in the year of the Flood.

in Heb. xi. 5: "He pleased God." A blood-bought, believing sinner pleases God; and this is walking with Him. He had got into God's mind concerning the course of the age. He walked not with "the men of progress," but with God. He got God's views of things. Paul, in 1 Thess. iv. 1, says, "Ye have received of us how ye ought to *walk* and to *please* God." Adam pleased himself. and had to flee from God. We believers have now to please but One, Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us. (Gal. ii. 20.) Paul, elsewhere, also puts walk and pleasing together: "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all-pleasing." (Col. i. 10.)

Second. Its termination. "He was not; for God took him." He quietly disappeared, as in Elijah's case. (2 Kings ii. 9, 10.) The Epistle to the Hebrews tells us he "was not found." They missed him, sought for him, as in 2 Kings ii. 16, but could not find him. God took him. The end of the journey was in keeping with its character; thus walking with God, he naturally took the higher step, without tasting the divine appointment for men. (Heb. ix. 27.) Was this not to show us how naturally Adam would have been translated from earth to heaven? Enoch had lived the heavenly man on earth, and is now caught up from earth to heaven. Our curiosity is not enlightened about the how or the whither. It was to God he went. Only one other went without tasting death, Elijah, in days of special testimony.

These are specimens of those believers who shall be alive when Christ comes, and who shall not die. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."

(1 Cor. xv. 51.) Nor does this militate with the appointment of God that men must die once. All in the Adam standing must die. Enoch had got a new standing; so with the Christian now. He has met his appointed doom as a man in Christ, and now waits, not for the merely human termination of his earthly existence, but for God's Son from heaven. (1 Thess. i. 10.)

ENOCH'S FAITH.

II. In Hebrews xi. 5, 6, we see his FAITH and its foundation. His walk resulted from his faith, as his faith was fixed on God.

“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”

Here we learn as to faith :—

First. That it was by faith he pleased God.

Second. He knew it.

Third. That it was by faith he was made an exception to the lot of men.

And as to its foundation we find :—

(1.) He believed that God existed.

(2.) He believed that God was a rewarder of diligent seekers.

(3.) He acted on his faith, and came to God.

1. As to the faith.

First. It was by faith he pleased God; for without faith it is impossible to please Him. Man in unbelief wandered from Him. It is by faith

alone any sinner can return to Him. And now, it is not the faith of angels nor devils (the former in innocence, the latter in despair), but the faith of a sinner deserving to be with devils, but accepting the testimony of God for his salvation. This faith alone can please God; this faith is the origin of all a believer's walk. Faith set him down righteous before God; faith linked him with God; faith led him to please God; faith made him the companion of God.

Second. He knew it. His faith accepted the testimony of God, and was not thus moved by his ever-moving emotions. He received testimony from God that he pleased Him.

Third. Faith translated him. God made no slip when He said, "It is appointed to men once to die." Faith linked Enoch to a well-pleased God; but it united him also to a living God. All men must die, but we (sons of God) shall not all sleep. Faith goes through the tomb. Even if we go to the tomb it is but a sleep. "He that liveth and *believeth* in me shall never die." (John xi. 26.)

2. As to the foundations.

(1.) He believed that God *is*; not merely there is a God, but that God is, a certain well-defined Being, the object that filled his vision. His creed was very short, consisting of but two articles, but those of the greatest importance. Do men believe that God exists; that God lives; that God sees them; that God weighs their actions; that the All-Creating *is*; that the All-Knowing *is*; that the All-Present *is*; that the All-Powerful *is*? And yet they can live to please themselves! Nay, verily, they say it, but it is all *say*. The first step in Enoch's belief, as in ours, is, "God *is*."

(2.) He is a "rewarder" of diligent seekers. None ever sought His face in vain. He will have people in earnest. He is now found close to the vilest sinner, for He had already come to seek Adam before He is revealed as the rewarder of the diligent seeker. (Gen. iii. 8.) He had been found by Abel. Cain took his own way, and could not be troubled with seeking. Enoch found Him, and the world could not find Enoch, because he had sought the Lord. These two fundamental points in Enoch's confession of faith acted, not as a cold dry formula, a creed to be subscribed, but as a living power which brought him to God.

(3.) He came to God. He did not stop short of Him. He thus first had heard of Him, that He could now be met by sinners. He believed it. He came to God; God accepted him; God gave him testimony that he was accepted. Enoch pleased God; he walked with God; he witnessed for God, and then God took him. Amid the din of the Cainites' hammers and organs, God is excluded. God fills all Enoch's history. Is his believing God not in contrast with all the "hard speeches" which the ungodly were using against God? Does not this give us the confession of faith of one who walks with God without a Bible (the heathen)? God is, and rewards those who diligently (according to their light) seek Him.

ENOCH'S TESTIMONY.

III. In Jude 14 we have his TESTIMONY:—

1. For God.
2. Against the world.

First. His testimony for God.

"Behold, the Lord cometh with myriads of His saints, to execute judgment upon all."

Some have thought that this prophecy is taken from the uninspired Book of Enoch; but though like, they are not at all the same. Is this not the divine use of poetry, as Lamech's was the apostate use?—

“ Behold the Lord cometh
 With ten thousands of His saints,
 To execute judgment upon all,
 And to convince all that are ungodly
 among them
 Of all their ungodly deeds which they have
 ungodly committed,
 And of all their hard speeches which un-
 godly sinners have spoken against Him.”

This remarkable and only prophecy of the antediluvian world is not told us till two millenniums afterwards; told by that apostle who in John xiv. 22, said, “ Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?” told concerning that prophet who was so separate from the world; showing, in a way which almost no other scripture does, the entire separation of saint from sinner as much as is between judge and judged, that the saints shall come with the Lord when He interferes with man's rebellion. They had sought Him diligently; they now are rewarded. Enoch's hope was thus the coming of the Lord, which was fulfilled in so far as judgment was concerned at the Flood, but waits still to be completely fulfilled when He comes with all His saints.

“ *The seventh from Adam.*” In this expression God takes pains to say that a full perfect cycle of patriarchs had gone.

Second. Against the world.

The end of all their mirth was the coming of

the Lord, which was judgment to them. This is the end of all the wealth of Jabal, which he secured by his agriculture and cattle; of all the art which Tubal cultivated on his harp and organ; and of all the science which Tubal-Cain developed by his brass and iron. We find that only when it is too late will the ungodly be convinced of their ungodliness.

The great thing that characterized Enoch was his godliness, that he believed God is. The character of his age was *ungodliness*, so that four times in this verse we have the word "ungodly," "ungodly deeds," "ungodly committed," "ungodly sinners." They were ungodly themselves; therefore their deeds were ungodly. To back up their deeds they used "hard speeches against Him." As in the last days they will say, "My Lord delayeth His coming"; "Where is the promise of His coming?" as Lamech set his hard speeches in the form of poetry. But the end is as sure as Enoch's prophecy. Enoch was caught up 669 years before the Flood; but time is nothing to God: "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Enoch was taken away before the judgment on the world came. Noah went through the judgment. The Lord will come for His saints (as He came for Enoch), and then will come with them to judge. In the Gospels, when speaking to the Jews, it is put as in Noah's days: when to the Church the Enoch character is given.

Is it not remarkable that the only notes preserved of the only sermon which this most remarkable of all the ancient patriarchs preached, are on the subject of the second coming of Christ? a subject almost universally shunned by the majority of evangelical preachers!

To sum up what we see of Enoch :—

1. He believed that God is.
2. He believed that God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.
3. He came to God.
4. He walked with God.
5. He pleased God.
6. He received testimony from God that he pleased Him.
7. He waited for God.
8. He prophesied for God.
9. He was taken by God.
10. He was translated to be with God.
11. He is with God.
12. He will return with God.

W. P. M.

“ACCEPTED” IN CHRIST;

“ACCEPTABLE” TO CHRIST.

“IT is a blessed thing to have eternal life,” I said to an aged Christian man, whom I found working in his garden the other day.

“It is, indeed,” he replied. “I was just now thinking on that word, ‘We are in Him that is true, even in His Son, Jesus Christ,’ *accepted* in Him; and now we want (at least I do) to be more *acceptable* to Him. We are *in* Him, and ought to be acceptable *to* Him, well pleasing to Him.” (1 John v. 20; Eph. i. 6; Rom. xii. 1.)

This was most refreshing to my spirit; for I had just been looking over a pamphlet of thirty pages, written by a learned man and professed teacher of souls, to prove that no one could know in this

world if he were accepted or not, and that even the apostle Paul laboured to be accepted (2 Cor. v. 9); and that thus working for salvation was quite right, and uncertainty until the judgment-day the portion of each, and that those who teach otherwise, namely, that salvation is of faith without the deeds of the law, and certainty the blessed portion of every one who is resting on the infallible word of God about the work of His Son, are all wrong.

As I said "Good morning" to my old friend, I thought how true is the word, "Not many wise" (1 Cor. i. 26); and "God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith." (James ii. 5.)

On reaching home I took a Greek concordance to look out the particular word in 2 Cor. v. 9, and could not but wish that the translators had given "acceptable" or "well-pleasing," as they have in the other eight passages where the same word occurs*; although this was no excuse for the writer of the tractate, as surely he could read this for himself.

But one great difference between him and my old friend was that the latter had learnt himself a ruined sinner in the presence of a holy God; the former had not, or he would never have thought of daring to appear before God on the ground of works of righteousness which he had done, but would surely have said, "Nothing but mercy will do for me."

No other *ground of acceptance* before God can there possibly be for sinful creatures as we are, but the precious blood of Christ; and, blessed be God! no less a *measure of acceptance* will suit His

*Rom. xii. 1, 2; xiv. 18; Eph. v. 10; Phil. iv. 18; Col. ii. 20; Titus ii. 9; Heb. xiii. 21.

grace than “accepted in the Beloved.” “As He is, so are we in this world.” (1 John iv. 17.) Acceptance *in* Christ is acceptance *as* Christ; His present place and nearness, as the risen and glorified Man, the true measure of the acceptance of the weakest believer.

My reader, what say you to this? Are you resting as a ruined sinner on the finished work of the Lord Jesus on the cross; and will you not accept all the peace and comfort that flow from the fact that the work there completed is the eternally righteous ground whereby God can, and will, yea, delights to, bless to the full every soul resting in it; that He can receive you and bring you nigh, as nigh as that infinitely precious work has virtue, according to God’s estimate of it to bring you? And as the eye of faith rests on Christ now where He is in the bright, unclouded light of the glory of God, *seated* there, one may say, Can He be more accepted than He is? Could God delight more in Him than He does now? Then can the believer, who is “in Christ,” be more accepted if accepted in Him? Or can God ever love him more than He does now if “accepted in *the beloved*”?

Then what have I to do in this world if I am His? To seek surely to be more “acceptable,” more “well-pleasing” to Him, constrained by His infinite, unchangeable, and eternal love to me. (John xv. 9, xiii. 1; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.)

I cannot add to my acceptance, or improve it, for it is Christ. I cannot lose it, for He lives to die no more. But I can seek grace to enjoy it more; and I cannot be too much exercised about my acceptability, for “he that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked.” (1 John ii. 6.)

W.R.H.

“I CAN’T GET BEYOND A HOPE, SIR.”

AN old working man was one day sitting at tea in his cottage, when a servant of the Lord, who was interested in his salvation, called in to see him and his wife.

The latter, after years of anxiety about her soul, had gone one night to hear the preaching of the gospel, and, under a searching word on Isaiah vi., was led through grace to take the prophet’s place who cried, “Woe is me, for I am undone”; and, like him, found her iniquity at once taken away, and her sin purged.

She was now anxious for the salvation of her husband, and had, too, been earnestly praying to the Lord that he might be saved.

He was an exercised soul, one who read much in the Word of God, but had not yet received in simple faith the testimony of God concerning His Son.

On the wall there was a text of Scripture, which caught the eye of their visitor as he entered. It was a blessed, precious word: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” (John iii. 36.)

“Well, B——, and do you believe?” said the visitor, pointing to the text.

“Oh! yes, sir, I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

“Well, ‘He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life.’ Have you it?”

“Oh! yes, I know that, sir; but I can’t get beyond a *hope*, sir.”

“But it doesn’t say *hope to have*, but *hath* everlasting life. H—A—T—H does not spell *hope*, but ‘*hath*.’”

"I CAN'T GET BEYOND A HOPE, SIR." 111

"No, I know that, sir."

"Then why do you '*hope*,' when God says '*hath*'? The Lord Jesus uttered those words. He meant what He said; and He cannot lie. If you really believe, you have everlasting life. God says so. But if you have not everlasting life, but only *hope* to have it, you don't believe. It is not what you think, but what God says."

"Ah, well, I can't get beyond a hope, sir."

More than once after this a similar conversation took place between them; but still the poor old man kept on with his "hope." God's "hath" was more than he could rest upon at present.

One day found him seated by the fireside reading to his wife, from a periodical, about a poor black woman who was led to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and whose sins were washed away by His precious blood; and as he read the remarkable tale of the grace of God to a poor negress, he was thoroughly broken down, saw that Jesus had died for him, and rested on the Word of God.

It was no longer a "hope" with him now, but all was *certainty*. He believed on the Son, and had everlasting life. "Hath" was no longer a meaningless word to his soul, but a living word of power and rich blessing.

Shortly after this, when returning from a meeting, he was met by the friend who had visited him. Accosting him in rather a loud tone, for he was very deaf, the friend said, "Well, B——, and how are you getting on?"

Looking up in his face with deep earnestness, he replied, "He was raised again for my justification, sir." (Rom. iv. 25.)

"Ah, that's right, B——, you are on the right

side of the cross, for if Christ be not raised your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." (1 Cor. xv. 17.)

Blessed answer, "Raised again for *my justification*." He had singled himself out, and appropriated the finished work of Christ, and not only found out that Christ had been delivered for his offences, but raised again for his justification.

Beloved reader, how is it with you? Can't you get beyond a *hope*, or can you rest on God's *hath*? Do you believe?

"Yes, I do," perhaps you say.

Then the Word of God says, "He that believeth on the Son *hath everlasting life*"; and I press it again, God means what He says. All was done when Jesus died and rose again. Do you believe? Then may *you* say with our old friend, "He was raised again for my justification."

E.H.C.

THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED;
And all His work performed;
The captive Surety now is freed,
And death, our foe, disarmed.

THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED;
He lives, to die no more;
He lives, His people's cause to plead,
Whose curse and shame He bore.

THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED;
And death has lost its prey:
And with Him all the ransomed seed
Shall reign in endless day.

AUGUST, 1925.

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.

"RESTING ON A LIVING SAVIOUR."

AN old man, who had been a ploughman in former years, was taken so ill that he felt he might not have long to live. Then his thoughts were directed to a life of seventy years without God, and with these thoughts came tears and trouble as to where his soul would go when he died.

Hearing of his illness I went to see him, and, after inquiring about his bodily ailments, I prayed to God to open my mouth with the suited word, and to give it power to his heart.

"Well, J.," I said, "if this affliction ends in death, where will you go then?"

"Ah!" said he, "that's the thing that troubles me. I've been praying and praying these many years; but instead of getting rid of my sins they seem to increase more and more."

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Anxious to know if God was really working in his heart, I pressed upon him the fearful realities of eternal judgment.

He wept much, saying, "Ah, what shall I do? Ah, what shall I do?" Such an anxious look as he gave me I never shall forget, and we wept together.

After some silence I said, "My dear J., I have a message from God for you this morning."

"What is it?" he asked.

I read to him from the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah: "He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities."

"What!" said he, "is that in the Bible?"

"Yes, dear J.," I answered, "and more too. 'The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.' And now, mark, 'By His stripes we are healed.'"

"How is it I have not been told this before?" he anxiously asked. "I have heard the Bible read these forty years in church, and never knew that was there before. Why didn't they tell me?"

"Never mind that," I answered him, "you're just in time now. And now listen" (for it seemed quite difficult for him to remain quiet), "'All we like sheep have gone astray.'"

"Yes," said he, "that's my wicked character."

"'We have turned every one to his own way.'"

"That's exactly my wicked character," he put in.

"But now listen further to what God says," I rejoined: "'The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all.'"

"What!" said he, "my iniquities?"

"Yes," I answered, "yours. Listen to it again. 'The Lord HATH LAID ON HIM the iniquities of us all.'"

“ Praise the Lord,” he called out; “ praise the Lord; it is for me.”

“ Yes,” I said, “ for you.” I turned to his wife, and I said, “ And you see, Mrs. S., it is for you too.”

“ Yes,” anxiously answered J., reaching out his hand to me, “ but tell it to me now. I shall soon be gone. Tell her afterwards. Oh! tell it to me.”

I turned and said, “ Thus you see that blessed One has been down here, and has gone to the cross, and there He bore the judgment of God for our sins, and has for ever put them away, by paying down the redemption price, even His own blood, satisfying divine justice, meeting God’s righteous demands, and thereby clearing a guilty one like you.”

“ Praise the Lord! Oh! how shall I praise Him enough?” he answered.

He seemed utterly exhausted with the excitement of this good news.

I left him quiet for a little till he seemed to rally, and then asked him, “ Shall I kneel down, and thank the Lord?”

“ Yes,” said he, “ but do let me kneel down too.”

I assisted him up to do so, seeing he was so bent upon it, and we knelt down in the quiet of that solemnized sick chamber together. Then in his feeble and simple way he poured out his soul in praise to the Lord for what He had done for his soul.

I then helped him back into his chair, for heart disease and dropsy combined rendered it impossible for him to lie down.

Leaving the house, I promised to call again in the evening.

About seven o'clock I called in again, and still found him rejoicing in the knowledge of being saved. I talked of the love, the power, and the work of Christ, and he broke out in an ecstasy of joy; "Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Oh! where should I have been hadst Thou not sent one of Thy children in to tell me the way to be saved?"

Then he turned to me and said, "I must thank you again for ever coming to me with that message from God; and now the work is done, and I am saved, bless the Lord!"

With my heart full of real joy at God's wonderful grace I left him, and again after two days called.

I found him now very sorrowful. As I came in he reached out his hand, saying, "Oh, I have been waiting to see you, I'm in such trouble."

"What is the matter?" I asked, as I saw that Satan had been troubling him; and I looked to the Lord to give me the right word.

"I've been so naughty," he said, "for I have been to-day with worldly things, through people of the world coming in to see me. I want to know, does that affect my safety?"

"Can your son cease to be your son," I asked, "because he is not always talking about you?"

"Of course not," was his answer. "Then," said I, "listen to what God says through the apostle Paul: 'Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'"

“NOT ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGE.” 117

“Then,” said he, “all is well now, I am happy.”

He was now quite exhausted, and his strength rapidly failing, so commending him to God, and to the word of His grace, I left him.

Many visits I paid him after this, and always found him resting on a living Saviour, who had loved him, and died for him. In Him he continually rejoiced, until, gradually day by day sinking, he at length fell asleep in Jesus, who has promised to come again quickly. When He comes, “the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we, which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.)

J. C.

“NOT ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGE.”

“For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that BELIEVETH.”—ROMANS x. 2, 3, 4.

I HAVE been one of the most self-righteous men that ever lived. For years I groaned under my folly, expecting to find peace by regulating my life according to the Word of God.

I could not but believe the Bible true, which told so plainly the secret evils of my heart. So I

sought carefully for all the commandments of the New Testament, but I found no "commandments" as I understood the word.

Oh! yes, I read, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer"; and "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment," and others of the same character; but they terrified me, so I sought quickly to forget them. (1 John iii. 15; Matt. xii. 26.)

I read also, "Seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink"; but it did not seem to be for me; my daily labour brought in abundantly.

I read also, "Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor," and then I wished, "Oh! that I were only rich, that I might sacrifice all." (Luke xii. 29; Matt. xix. 21.)

Then I found Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and, in my anxiety to do everything, I took them for "commandments." But, after doing all, and living an irreproachable church-life, I got no settled peace of mind. The "Rejoice evermore" of the Bible was a mockery to me. (1 Thess. v. 16.)

When I was baptized, I expected some mysterious change, but there was none. I wept at the Lord's Table; but there was no peace. I prayed in secret and in public, often so earnestly that others thought me mighty in prayer; but yet there was no peace.

"O Lord!" I cried, in my agony, "why hast Thou not been plain in Thy Word, that I might know exactly what to do? I would run and do it, even at the peril of my life."

But there was no answer.

I now visited the sick, and spent much time in reading the Word of God, and still more time in

prayer. I preached too; yes, dear reader, I preached; I pretended to be a bearer of glad tidings, while my own heart writhed in agony.

What did I preach? What others had preached to me: “Do thy best; give all the glory to God; be a valiant soldier of Jesus Christ, and then He will save thee.”

But no peace! No peace!! In spite of all this supposed duty fulfilled, there was no peace!!!

One day I called on a sick man, and quickly introduced the subject of religion, as that was my object in calling.

“Ah! sir,” he said, “they used to tell me to do my best; and I tried and tried, until I found there was no best to be reached. When I examined myself, I found I was still the same old sinner. Then I watched my instructors, to see if I could detect in them what I found in myself, and they failed so visibly to live up to what they taught and professed that I set them all down as hypocrites, and turned infidel. But here, read this”; and he passed to me a Testament open at Romans iii.

I had often read it before; but now the declaration, “There is none righteous; no, not one,” was strangely solemn to me. (v. 10.)

I read on: “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. . . . Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” (vv. 20, 28.)

And, as I read, the Holy Ghost opened my blinded heart, and I beheld it all. Then and there, in that log cabin, I got what Cornelius got when Peter told him that remission of sins was by believing in Jesus. (Acts x. 43.) But, oh! the shameful

pride of the natural heart ! Though I felt like breaking forth in " Glory ! glory ! glory to the Son, who has met all the requirements of justice against me, and has given me eternal life by simply believing that ' it is finished ' " ; yet I stifled it.

What ! I, who had been a church-member for years, and a good one too, *I* acknowledge that I was then only brought to the knowledge of the truth ! It was too humiliating. It is not so now. JESUS, the mighty Saviour, is also a sweet and meek Teacher ; and when we get acquainted with Him we learn the sweetness of hiding our poor mean self, and showing Him only.

And you, dear reader, where are you ? Are *you* praying too ? Are *you* seeking after the " commandments " to do them ? Are you proposing to make Jesus your MODEL before you know Him as your SAVIOUR, your peace, your righteousness, your sanctification, your all ? You may try, and try again ; but at last you will look back, and say with me, " What a bottomless pit this doing is ! "

But I had a brother whom I loved as my own soul. My soul went after him. My treasure was too great to be hoarded. I wrote to him, and told him that I had been blind, but now I saw. I told him of that man that is called JESUS ; of the work which He finished on the cross, and of the wonderful results of simply believing on Him.

He replied " that he was in great distress sometimes, and did not know whom to believe. One said, Do this ; another said, Do that ; and all seemed earnest. It was very puzzling. "

I blessed God for this, for it showed that the Holy Ghost was dealing with his soul.

One day he wrote, " All you tell me is true. I have compared it with the Word. One thing only

I cannot understand. You say, ‘It is useless to try to better that which cannot be bettered’; and add, ‘That which is born of the flesh is flesh.’ (John iii. 6.) Surely you do not mean to say we must not strive to improve ourselves; else how could the Lord have said, ‘Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven’?” (Matt. v. 20.)

I prayed to the Lord that He would guide me in my answer, and thought of the joy of being made the instrument in bringing my dear brother to Jesus. I then replied, “Yes, that is just what I meant to say. I meant that it is useless, and even folly, to strive to better what cannot be bettered. ‘Ye must be BORN AGAIN.’ We are completely lost; without hope; desperately wicked. Nor does the Lord anywhere promise, as so many pretend, the strength needed to do anything towards our own salvation; and you have no right to pray for it. You certainly have never understood the words, ‘For by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight,’ or you could not expect ever to accomplish more in that way than the scribes and Pharisees. The Lord takes them for examples because they were the leaders of the people. You will never be able to accomplish more than they did, pray and strive as you may. Your only hope is in what another, even Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has done for us. This is humiliating, but there is no other way. ‘He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.’ This is the testimony of the whole Word, Believe, and you are saved.”

A few days after I received his answer: “Give glory to God, my beloved brother (doubly so now).

I see! I see!! JESUS, and JESUS *alone*, saves me. He is now my all. Since yesterday, it seems, I understand more than half the Word, which before was all darkness. I received your letter yesterday morning, and, as usual, I read it over and over. I read the passages you mentioned, and they were there. I could not deny it. But I was miserable. I went to my task heartlessly and insensible. Towards evening a gleam of hope reached me. I fell on my knees, and prayed; and while there the whole redemption which is through CHRIST JESUS was opened up to me. I desired to see and feel it with such force that my heart might leap high for joy, but I got only a deep, solemn, strange peace within. My wonder is that in view of such a salvation I can remain so calm. I almost tremble lest I should lose such a precious rest."

Yes, glory to Thee, O my God! Glory to Thee for such a salvation. Glory be to Thy name for ever that, in CHRIST JESUS, my brother also is saved. We are saved for evermore!

Alas! how many there are who, in face of the repeated declarations of God's word that they are not only "condemned already," but are "dead in sins," go about to establish their own righteousness. Conscious that they cannot render a perfect obedience even according to their own estimate of it, they make up a code of their own and call it their duty. And in doing what they call their duty they are smoothly, religiously sliding to hell.

Reader, have you ceased from our own works, and taken the place of "him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifies the ungodly"?

L

“THE SALVATION OF GOD.”

(Luke iii. 6 ; Acts xxviii. 28.)

THE salvation of God ” may surely be traced all through Scripture, from the earliest, simplest revelation of it in the opening of Genesis to the celebration of it in realms of glory at the close of the Book of Revelation.

It came with the first utterance of God in the hearing of this sin-stricken world. The disclosure as to the Seed of the woman conveyed it. It was illustrated in patriarchal stories all through Genesis. It was presented by a thousand shadows or symbols in the ordinances of the Law. It was echoed in a thousand voices of the prophets. And thus the current of it may be traced all through the ages of the Old Testament, and the line of light that was revealing it then may be seen as spanning, or stretching across, the whole old volume.

In due time, in “the fulness of the time,” the New Testament age begins ; and then at the very outset, the salvation of God appears again. It becomes embodied. (Gal. iv. 4). The Child that was to be born, the Son that was to be given, was named of God “ Jesus.” If the first divine utterance in the Old Testament bore salvation upon it, so does the like first divine utterance in the New : “ Thou shalt call His name JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins.” (Matt. i. 21.) The salvation of God was, as I may again say, now embodied. It entered its human temple to dwell there for ever ; from thence to be unveiled : and thereby and therein to accomplish all eternal purposes of grace.

Not only, however, was salvation thus embodied, but its arrival here was celebrated by the ecstatic

joy of heaven, and the full, earnest-hearted welcome of the earth. Angelic hosts in the light and presence of the glory, and angels in their individuality, tell us of this joy; and vessels anointed by the Holy Ghost proclaim this welcome. Mary rehearses it, and so does Zacharias, and so do Simeon and Anna; and the shepherds in the fields, and the babe in the womb, wait in their several ways to greet it and rejoice. (Luke i., ii.)

When thus arrived, it is active. What had been ushered forth in the midst of such congratulations, could not but stir itself, and be at its work under its high commission; and this is the life, the ministerial activity of the Lord Jesus. He was dispensing health and salvation all round Him. Every sickness and every disease among the people, had to tell that *Jehovah-rophi* was here, Christ the healer; the salvation of God was abroad, dispensing itself to the need of a ruined, death-stricken world, in every form of its misery.

Being thus announced, and having thus arrived and dispensed itself in the ministry of Jesus, as we read in the Evangelists; it is now the subject of preaching in the Acts of the Apostles. The Jews hear of it first, and then the Gentiles. Peter calls on the Jew to come to it, and goes to the house of the Gentile with "words" that convey it. (Acts ii., ix.) Paul preaches it to the nation of his kindred in the flesh, and then to the ends of the earth, on the authority of God by His prophet. (Acts xiii.) And when at the very end he leaves Israel in unbelief, under sentence of blindness of eye, and hardness of heart, he lets them know that it, "the salvation of God," is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they would hear it. (Acts xxviii.) It is as fresh in that day of Acts xxviii.

as it was when first announced in Genesis iii. The Spirit of God was as full of it then, as the mouth of the Lord was when He uttered His earliest word in a world where sin had entered. (Gen. iii. 15.)

There is no moment in the story of the world to be compared with that which witnessed the arrival of “ the salvation of God ” from heaven to earth. As we have seen, heaven in its hosts and its glory was rejoicing then; and earth in its anointed vessels, great and small, was answering it.

And throughout this lengthened story we may see that the sinner may possess himself with this salvation, taking it *immediately* from God, without debtorship to any other. Adam took it from the lips of God, and made it his own at once. It entered the house of Zaccheus, and came there simply and solely *in company with Jesus*. It is faith that gets it; and faith is the individual act of the soul, the sinner’s exercise of heart and conscience entirely with God alone.

Old Simeon illustrates this. He took the Child in his arms as God’s “ Salvation,” without asking leave of its mother, for faith knows it to be God’s gift to the sinner as the sinner; and knows that it is our necessities as sinners that constitutes our fitness and our title for it and to it.

From that day surely, to say no more, from the day of Acts xxviii., “ the salvation of God ” has come forth to this wide, wide world under divine commission. It has been sealed with the broadest seal. The clear and deep stamp of heaven, or of God, has been put upon it; and no one speaks from God, under commission and authority from Him, who does not publish it. “ The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles. ”

The Epistles, in their season, teach it to those

who have received it as preached to them. They teach it in its glories. They distinguish it in its present and future relation to us. We have now "the salvation of the soul." We wait for that "salvation which is to be revealed at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. i.) We have now "the grace of God that bringeth salvation." We wait for that form of it which the second coming of the Lord shall bring with it. (Tit. ii. 11-14; Heb. ix. 28.)

And then when we pass the Epistles, and reach the end, the very end of the Divine Book, and read the Revelation there we find that this salvation is celebrated; not preached nor taught; not as addressing itself to a wide world of sinners, or unfolding itself to the sacred enclosures and assemblies of the saints, but celebrated, whether in heaven or on earth, in courts of glory, or regions of renewed creation. (Rev. vii., xii., xix.)

And surely then, as I said, I may still say, the salvation of God is tracked all through the Word; announced, illustrated, typified, prophesied, embodied, dispensed, preached, taught, and celebrated.

But salvation is too great a thought for the heart of man to suggest, or indeed to receive. God must provide us with it; the Spirit must enable us to accept it. *The religious mind* of man resents it as inconsistent with the obligation he owes to God, and with the responsibility under which he lies to Him. *The moral sense* resents it as being no security of practical life and righteousness.

How deeply at fault both are! How unequal is the best human thing to reach the divine! While neither man's religion nor man's morality give toleration to the idea of salvation, God, as

we see, is occupied with it from first to last. The disclosure of it, the history of it, the display of it, the illustration of it in one sinner after another, stretch across the whole Inspired Volume. God dispenses it now, and would have us enjoy it. He will perfect it in all its glory by-and-by, and will call us to celebrate it.

JESUS is the imperishable name : “ Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.” (Heb. xiii. 8.) This is the name which abides in bloom and freshness still, the unfading name which eternity has no power to efface. Time may wear away rocks; eternity will do nothing with that name but celebrate it. JESUS, or Saviour, was the first word written by the finger of God in the record-book of this world of sin, as we have seen; and it has ever since been kept, like the bow in the cloud, in the vividness of its earliest power. It is the unchanging, unchangeable name. It is not the *unutterable* name, it is true, but it is the *imperishable* name. We have heard that the Jew, under the Law, found the divine name to be too high, too distant, too sacred, for human lips to use. But the sinner under grace talks now of the divine name all the day long, and will for ever.

When God spoke in law, He satisfied Himself to speak in a sequestered nook of the earth; and in the hearing of the smallest of all the nations of the earth; but when He came to speak of salvation, He summoned the wide, wide world to listen!

Great and glorious as it is, it rests on the simplest foundation which God has found in the sacrifice of the cross. This I have assumed throughout. God is satisfied in Christ; the believing sinner is saved! God has found His satisfaction in Jesus; I have found my salvation

in God ! Call our good thing by what name we may : justification, acceptance in the Beloved sonship, peace, glory, redemption, reconciliation, or whatever other name that good thing may carry, all rests on this : that Christ has satisfied God in that which He has done for sinners.

The rent vail, the empty sepulchre, the resurrection and the ascension, the glory of the Purger of our sins in heaven, and the mission of the Spirit upon that to earth, testify, in the mouth of the most august witnesses, this satisfaction of which we speak. (Matt. xxvii. 51, xxviii. 6 ; Luke xxiv. 51 ; Heb. i. 3 ; Acts ii. 33.) None can gainsay such witnesses on the side of the accuser ! None can exceed them in dignity and triumph on the side of God ! Himself our Justifier, we are to accept salvation from God, just because He has accepted satisfaction from Christ ; to accept it with all thankful, worshipping assurance.

If God has rent the vail, it is obedience in the sinner to enter. When I lay my burden on God's foundations, I am glorifying as well as using them.

Salvation is to be enjoyed by *faith*. As we read, "The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it." "Faith comes by hearing." (Rom. x. 17.) We cannot get it by working. We dare not count upon deserving. It is God's salvation ; "prepared" by Him. (Luke ii. 28-32.) It was counselled, brought out, revealed by Himself, and sent out into the world by Him. We have but to gaze and to listen ; to be debtors to the provisions of grace for the most ruined, miserable, degraded condition in which the creature could find itself ; grace which is, indeed, the fruit, as it is the proof of God's holy, infinite love.

J. G. 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 ONLY WAY OF SALVATION.

ONE morning lately I met an aged woman with a bundle of papers in her hand, who, coming up to me, said, "Will you please buy a tract of a poor woman?"

I asked her what the tracts were about, and she said, "They contain the truth, I assure you. I have read them myself."

I then asked her what she meant by "the truth," and what standard she judged by.

She immediately replied, "Oh, the Bible, sir!"

I began to feel interested in the woman, and by way of ascertaining what she knew of the Bible, I further questioned her.

"And what does the Bible say is the way to heaven?"

"Well, sir," she said, "of course we must act right, and do good to our neighbour."

And this, alas ! was her gospel, what she called "*the truth*," and this she professed to have gathered from reading the Bible.

I then said, "My Bible tells me very differently. It says, '*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us. And, 'To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.'* (Titus iii. 5; Rom. iv. 5.) My dear woman, your position is a solemn one. While professing to sell tracts pointing others the way to heaven, I fear you have never yet taken one step in the way yourself. Let me ask you if the 'dying thief' went to heaven."

"Yes, certainly."

"Tell me, then, what acts of righteousness he had done? His hands were nailed, his feet were nailed; how did he go to heaven?"

She was silent. She did not know. Like thousands more, she could talk of works and doings, but had not one idea of grace, THE ONLY WAY OF SALVATION.

I said to her, "Now, if you were *only* a lost sinner, I could tell you *good news*; but there is no good news for those who are *not* sinners, those who, like you, talk of 'acting rightly, and doing good' as a ground of salvation. Do not deceive yourself, you are not a Christian; you are not going to heaven."

She burst into tears, and sobbing, she said, "I am a sinner, and a great one too. I have been a very bad woman."

"Then," I said, "how could you talk of doing good if you really from your heart own yourself a lost sinner? Jesus came to seek and

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save the lost, and you are, then, just one of those He came for, and this is your title to heaven. 'The dying thief' owned he deserved what he was suffering. He condemned himself, and looked to Jesus. 'Lord, remember me,' he said; and he went from the cross of ignominy and shame to the paradise of God, washed whiter than snow in the blood of the Lamb."

She was listening most attentively, and seemed so absorbed that she did not notice the money I was holding out to her. Evidently she had never heard of grace before. I hope the word really reached her heart. After thanking me warmly for the words she had heard, she went on her way.

"If our gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost." (2 Cor. iv. 3.)

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

H.

WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

(Isaiah xxi. 11.)

THE careless world asks this question; sleeping, sleeping on; arousing itself, it may be, at the cry of warning for a moment, and then sinking back into its dark death slumber. Every disaster amongst men, suddenly launching their souls into eternity, is God's voice speaking to this guilty world.

Watchman, what of the night? Perhaps an answer from the Word at this time may be seasonable to any that have ears to hear.

The Lord Jesus compared the present dispensa-

tion, that is, the period between His rejection by the Jews as the Messiah, and His coming again to take His Kingdom, to four watches of the night. He said to His disciples before His crucifixion, "For the Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not when the Master cometh, *at even*, at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, *Watch*" (Mark xiii. 34-37.)

He takes the figure of the night, as divided by the Jews into four watches (the first the even, from 6 to 9; the second the midnight, from 9 to 12; the third the cock-crowing, from 12 to 3; and the fourth the morning, from 3 to 6 a.m.), to figure the present dispensation.

Jesus was "the Light of the world"; come into it, but cast out of it. That was the beginning of the night. The disciples were not to know the hour of the Lord's return, but were to watch. Reader, if this be so, and they were commanded to watch, how much more ought you and I, who live after a great part of the night is past.

But is there any portion of the Word of God whereby we may find out what the hour of the night is now?

I believe there is. In the parable of the ten virgins we find that at *midnight* there was a cry made: "Behold the Bridegroom; go ye out to meet him." (Matt. xxv.)

Reader, have you heard of late years the cry of the Lord's coming sounding in your ears? Then be sure the midnight watch is past, and there re-

mains but the cock-crowing and the morning when the Lord may come!

At the beginning of the nineteenth century of the Christian era the cry began, and it has sounded louder and louder ever since. The wise and foolish virgins, that is, the professors in Christendom, are waking up, to see if they are ready for the approaching Bridegroom!

But another thing. The Lord says, in Rev. xxii. 16, "I am the bright and morning star!"

When does the morning star arise? I answer: Before the sun. We find, by astronomical calculations, that the morning star sometimes rises before the sun as much as four hours and twenty minutes, so that, say the sun rises at 6 a.m. (the end of the morning watch) the star would then rise at 1.40 a.m.

Now, if we have sure proof that the midnight hour is past, oh! how close are we to the coming of the Lord! It may be delayed, just like the morning star might rise three hours, two hours, or one hour before the sun; but come it will. And I ask, my reader, Are you ready for His coming?

Jesus is also the Sun of righteousness, and He will display Himself in that character when He returns to the earth, burning up the wicked like stubble, and rising with healing in His wings to restore the remnant of Israel. (Malachi iv.) But before that day, when He will judge the world in righteousness, He will rise as the morning star, for His Bride, the heavenly church. He will descend into the air; the dead in Christ will be raised; the living saints changed, and all caught away to meet the Lord in the air. (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.)

Before the year is out, this wonderful event may

have taken place! And how wonderful! If it was wonderful for the Lord to rise as man out from among the dead, whilst the rest of the dead were left behind; how wonderful for all the saints, from Abel downwards, to be raised from their graves in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye! "The rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were expired. This is the first resurrection." (Rev. xx. 4,5.)

But if this be so wonderful and blessed for the saved, oh! how dreadful to be unsaved, and left behind for judgment when the Lord comes! We read, "They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage, and the door was shut." (Matt. xxv. 10.) The foolish virgins, the mere professors, were left outside for judgment, to hear the withering words, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

In Egypt's land, on the passover night, there was not a house amongst the Egyptians where there was not one dead. But how dreadful for the unsaved to find some morning that the saved members of the family had been taken away to heaven from the unsaved, and they left behind, to experience a strong delusion to believe a lie.

Yes, dear unsaved reader, if you reject Christ now, and resist the Holy Spirit, when Christ comes it will be all over with you! What is the dark picture after that, during the short interval between the rising of the Morning Star and the outshining of the Sun of righteousness?

"Then shall that Wicked One be revealed, whom the Lord shall destroy with the Spirit of His mouth, and the brightness of His coming; whose coming [Antichrist] is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying won-

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ders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion to believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Thess. ii. 8-12.)

Thus all hope is over for the wicked rejecter of Christ in that day; he is handed over to these strong delusions, to be destroyed with Antichrist, at the time of the rising of the Sun of righteousness. Oh, reader, flee to Christ now; whilst His blood cries for mercy! for then it will be unmitigated judgment.

A. P. C.

“ I CAN REST ON WHAT GOD SAYS.”

THOSE Christians who speak much with people about their soul's salvation, find that most are hindered in some way or other from receiving Christ, by looking at themselves.

Being occupied with their own doings and feelings, they follow their own thoughts and opinions, instead of simply bowing to and believing the Word of God.

But speak to whom you will of those who have been brought to a knowledge of Christ, and who enjoy the glorious salvation of God, you will find that it was solely *by believing God* that they came into this blessed liberty of grace. (Titus ii. 11.)

The moment that people are exercised about

their state before God, and Satan finds they are seeking to escape from under his power, he uses every effort to obstruct, and hide from them God's wondrous way of salvation.

As a wily serpent, a roaring lion, or as an angel of light (Gen. iii.; 1 Pet. v. 8; 2 Cor. xi. 14), the devil is successful, in thousands of instances, in keeping souls in darkness and bondage for months and years, and hindering them from resting by simple faith IN CHRIST AND HIS FINISHED WORK.

The following is the substance of a conversation between a servant of the Lord and an exercised soul; a fair sample of the difficulties so often met with in seeking to extricate sinners from Satan's meshes, and win them to Christ.

"Well, and are your sins forgiven, Mrs. —? Are you justified in the sight of God? Can you rest assured that you are saved?"

"No, sir, I cannot say that; there are so many trials to meet in one's family and circumstances."

"But what of that? God says in Acts xiii. 38, 39, that through this man, that is, Christ Jesus, His beloved Son, who died for sinners on the cross, and rose again, is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things. Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?"

"Oh, yes, I believe in Jesus; I believe He died for sinners; I always did believe that from a child."

"Do you believe He died for *you*?"

"He died for all, didn't He? So He must have died for me."

"And you believe the Word of God?"

"Yes, indeed I do."

"Then your sins are forgiven, and you are justified from all things."

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“ I hope I shall be.”

“ I thought you believed the Bible?”

“ So I do.”

“ Well, God does not say a word in the passage about ‘ hope ’; but all that believe ‘ ARE ’; *are* forgiven, *are* justified.”

“ But I can’t feel it, sir.”

“ You are not told to feel it, but to *believe*. And mark, too, it says, ‘ All that believe.’ So, if you believe, it must mean you.”

“ I *do* believe then.”

“ All that believe are justified from all things.”

“ Ah! but I’m not one of that sort of people who make a profession.”

“ My dear soul, it is not a question of profession, but reality. If you do really from your heart believe, God says, and He *cannot* lie, that you ‘ *are justified.*’ Or, in other words, *you are cleared.* He says what He means, and He means what He says. You told me you believe the Scriptures, and——”

“ So I do, but——”

“ There’s no ‘ *but* ’; let me finish, please. You will surely spoil it if you put in a ‘ *but.*’ ”

“ But——”

“ No, no; I cannot let you add even ‘ *a but* ’; you told me you believed the Scriptures, and here it is as plain as plain can be, ‘ *All that believe,*’ and that includes you, ‘ *are justified from all things.*’ WILL YOU TAKE GOD AT HIS WORD?”

“ When I was ill once, and thought I was dying, a gentleman who visited me, told me it was very simple, ‘ only to believe, and love your neighbour as yourself.’ I never forgot that.”

“ But there is nothing about loving your neighbour as yourself in this passage. How about the

dying thief? He had no time to love his neighbour. He died just after he believed, and yet went to paradise with his Saviour at once." (Luke xxiii. 42, 43.)

"But Miss —, at the mothers' meeting, says there must be good works as well."

"Good works are the fruit of faith, not the ground of our justification. Salvation is not of works, lest any man should boast. (Eph. ii. 9.) It is of no use talking about good works until you believe and are saved. The truly saved one, that is, the Christian, delights in them. They are the evidence of faith; but *faith must come first.*"

"I don't think my faith is strong enough."

"Now, do not look in at self, and at your faith, but look out at Christ. It is not the quantity of faith that saves, but Christ Himself. Christ alone is the Saviour. You want the faith of a little child *to trust Him.* As a poor feeble lost one *to believe on Him.* His blood cleanseth us from all sin. (1 John i. 7.) Believe, and you are cleansed, whiter than snow. Believe, and you are forgiven, justified. *Do you now really believe?*"

"Oh! yes, I *do* believe, indeed I do; but, how about the sabbath? We *must* keep the sabbath. Don't you think it's very wrong to work on Sunday? and I nearly always have to do *some* work."

"But what has that to do with what we are speaking about? These questions come in afterwards. Every Christian ought surely to delight to spend the Lord's Day with and for the Lord. Saturday is the Jewish sabbath. Christians are not under law, but under grace. All this, though, is simply a hindrance to you; the great question, and the first, for you is, *Are you justified?*"

"I get out of temper, you know, sometimes.

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I'm sure that isn't right, now, is it? You don't believe a Christian ought to do that?"

" 'By Him *all* that believe are justified from *all* things'; tempers and everything else. 'All things,' *means* 'all things.' It is plain English. Do you think that God made a mistake?"

" Oh! no, I can depend upon His Word, I am quite sure of that. But I want to live nearer to God than I do."

" Another 'but.' And 'I,' 'I,' 'I,' self, self, self, do, do, do, instead of *Christ*. Do you not know that God has said, 'All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.' (Isaiah lxiv. 6.) Your own righteousness would lead you to hell as much as wickedness. We cannot be saved by works of righteousness which we have done. (Titus iii. 5.) Cast your deadly doings down. Let 'I do' go; for *Christ has done all.*"

" Well, I like to go to a place of worship, and *hear the preaching*. I'm not one who cares for pleasures and sight-seeing. Don't you think that——"

" Dear, dear soul, *do* let *self* go altogether, *good* self or *bad* self, and *listen to the word of God.*"

" I always did. I have been brought up to understand these things, and to take an interest in them."

" But you don't believe God."

" Yes, I do; you think I don't believe. I believe every word of the Bible. Christ died for sinners. I quite believe that."

" Did He die for you?"

" He must have done so. He died for all."

" Then let me repeat again, 'that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins,

and BY HIM *all* that believe *are justified from all things.*' God says you *are* justified, and Satan says you are *not*. It is simply a question which you believe."

"I don't believe Satan. I know he's a liar."
(John viii. 44.)

"Then you do believe God."

"Yes, certainly."

"Then you are justified from all things."

"I believe I shall get at it some day."

"*'Now is the day of salvation.'* TO-MORROW MAY BE TOO LATE. (2 Cor. vi. 2.) *'Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.'* (Prov. xxvii. 1.) You see, it is as I was afraid, you do not really believe. You believe about it, but you *don't believe it.*"

"I can't say *'I am justified'* to-day."

"It's not what you say, but *what God says.* BELIEVE GOD, AND YOU ARE JUSTIFIED. But my time is gone, I find. I must leave now, so wish you, *'Good morning.'*"

"Good morning, sir. I hope I shall get right."

"I hope you will, before it is too late; there is no time to be lost."

Beloved reader, does this describe your case? Are you like this poor tossed one? Thousands, tens of thousands are raising these or similar difficulties, and thus letting Satan rob them of salvation, joy and peace. As long as you look at anything you ever did, are doing, or ever can do; at self in the past, present, or future, you will never enjoy peace with God. (Rom. v. 1.) It is not you, but *Christ*; not what you do, but what He has done for you that secures peace.

Jesus did it, did it all, long, long ago.

If Christ were on the cross, you might doubt;

or if Christ were in the grave. For if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. (1 Cor. xv. 17.) But Christ is risen indeed. God raised Him from the dead. (Acts ii. 24.) He “ was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. iv. 25; v. 1.) All the claims of God have been perfectly met by Him, once for all. God is glorified in His Son. Christ in heavenly glory at His right hand is God’s own testimony to this wondrous fact. (Acts ii. 36.) And now, dear reader, “ *Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe are justified from all things.*” (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) Think of that. BELIEVE IT, AND YOU ARE JUSTIFIED.

“ I do believe,” said one.

“ Then are you forgiven, and justified from *all things?*”

“ It says ‘ all,’ does it not?”

“ Indeed it does, and God means it too.”

“ And *all* who believe.”

“ Surely.”

“ Then I must be justified?”

“ Yes.”

“ From all things?”

“ What does God say?”

“ I see it.”

“ Do you believe it?”

“ *I can rest on what God says.*”

“ Then you are justified from all things.”

“ Yes, how simple ! I never saw it like that before. I didn’t think it was quite so easy. I always thought I must do something.”

“ That’s just it. It was ‘ I ’ instead of Christ.”

It's all in *taking God at His word.*" Dear reader, WILL YOU? "*Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe are justified from all things.*"

E. H. C.

THE TRUE CHARACTER OF THE BIBLE.

I HAVE a profound, unfeigned (I believe divinely given) faith in the Bible. I have, through grace, been by it converted, enlightened, quickened, saved. I have received the knowledge of GOD by it, to adore His perfections; of JESUS, the Saviour; joy, strength, comfort of my soul.

Many have been indebted to others as the means of their being brought to GOD, to ministers of that gospel which the Bible contains, or to friends who delight in it.

This was not my case. That work, which is ever God's, was wrought in me through the means of the written Word. He who knows what the value of Jesus is, will know what the Bible will be to such a one.

If I have, alas, failed it, in nearly thirty years' arduous and varied life and labour, at least such, and as far as the service of an unknown and feeble individual usually leads, I have never found it fail me. If it has not for the poor and needy circumstances of time, through which we feebly pass, I am assured it never will for eternity.

"*The Word of the Lord endureth for ever.*" (1 Pet. i. 25.) If it reaches down even to my low estate, it reaches up to God's height, because it

comes thence: as the love that can reach even to me, and apply to every detail of my feebleness and failure; proves itself divine in doing so: none but God could, and hence it leads me up to Him. As Jesus came from God and went to God, so does the book that divinely reveals Him come from and elevate to Him. If received, it has brought the soul to God, for He has revealed Himself in it. *its positive proofs are all in itself. The sun needs no light to see it by*

I beg to avow, in the fullest, clearest, and distinctest manner here, my deep, divinely taught conviction of the inspiration of the Scriptures. That while of course allowing, if need be, for defect in the translation and the like; when I read the Bible, I read it as of absolute authority for my soul as *God's Word*. There is no higher privilege than to have communications direct from God Himself.

My joy, my comfort, my food, my strength, for nearly thirty years, have been the Scriptures received implicitly as the *Word of God*.

In the beginning of that period I was put through the deepest exercise of soul on that point. Did heaven and earth, the visible Church, and man himself crumble into non-entity, I should, through grace, since that epoch, hold to the Word as an unbreakable link between my soul and God. I am satisfied that God has given it me as such.

I do not doubt that the grace of the Holy Spirit is needed to make it profitable, and to give it real authority to our souls, because of what we are; but that does not change what it is in itself. To be true when it is received, it must have been true before it was so.

And here I will add that, although it requires

the grace of God, and the work of the Holy Ghost to give it quickening power, yet divine truth; God's Word, has a hold on the natural conscience from which it cannot escape. The light detects the "breaker up," though he may hate it. And so the Word of God is adapted to man, though he be hostile to it, adapted in grace (blessed be God!) as well as in truth. This is exactly what shows the wickedness of man's will in rejecting it.

And it has power thus in the conscience, even if the will be unchanged. This may increase the dislike of it; but it is disliked because conscience feels it cannot deny its truth. Men resist it because it is true. Did it not reach their conscience, they would not need to take so much pains to get rid of and disprove it. Men do not arm themselves against straws, but against a sword whose edge is felt and feared.

Reader, it speaks of grace as well as truth. It speaks of God's grace and love, who gave His only begotten Son that sinners like you and me might be with Him, know Him, deeply, intimately, truly know Him, and enjoy Him for ever, and enjoy Him now; that the conscience, perfectly purged, might be in joy in His presence, without a cloud, without a reproach, without fear. And to be there in His love, in such a way, is perfect joy.

The Word will tell you the truth concerning yourself; but it will tell you the truth of a God of love, while unfolding the wisdom of His counsels. . . .

Let me add to my reader, that by far the best means of assuring himself of the truth and authority of the Word is to read the Word itself.

J. N. D.

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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.

**"THEY SHALL BE ALL TAUGHT OF
GOD."**

(John vi. 45.)

IN certain wild, uncivilized parts of Cheshire, said a servant of Christ, probably some seventy or more years ago, there is a class of persons living (agricultural labourers or petty farmers) who are, many of them, removed far from any means of grace. Indeed, the greater part only go to church three times in their lives: when they are presented by their parents for baptism; when they go to be married; and when their bodies are carried there for burial.

It was in some such region as this that I was wandering, when, as it *seemed* by accident, I lost my way, and entered a cottage, where I found a man sitting by the fire in a very dreadful state of suffering. I learned it was a surgical case, and

that there was no chance of his recovery, unless he submitted to a very painful and hazardous operation.

When I proposed this to him, he quite refused, and said he would rather not hazard it; he would die as he was.

"My friend," said I, "it is a very awful thing to die."

To my astonishment he replied, "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 asked him how he, so far removed from all the ordinary means of grace, had been enabled to acquire so much knowledge.

He seemed delighted to meet with one who understood him, and said he had never met with a Christian before. He had had no one to sympathize with his feelings; and when he told his wife and children of what he had learned, they called him a madman. At last he had been obliged to give up speaking on the subject, excepting to tell them, that if that were really the case, then he would far rather live and die as they said, a madman.

I was, of course, much interested in this account, and asked him more particulars of his history, when he narrated the following:—

He was one of the ordinary sort of his class, employing himself in agriculture and farming, until he was laid low by disease. He then found that time began to hang heavily on his hands. A weekly newspaper came; but when that was read through he was again at a loss.

At length one day he asked some one to reach him down an old family Bible from a high shelf,

“ THEY SHALL BE ALL TAUGHT OF GOD.” 147

where it had been gathering dust and cobwebs since it was taken down the last time, to enter the birth of his youngest child, then twenty years of age. Well, he opened the Bible at the Gospel of John, and when he came to the third chapter, he was struck with these words : “ Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John iii. 3.)

He began to think there was something more in religion than he had been accustomed to consider, and he longed for some Christian friend who could teach him, and explain what seemed so mysterious. However, he looked a little further into the Bible, and his eye caught these words : “ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.” (James i. 5.)

He did ask, and he obtained from God that teaching of His Holy Spirit which led him to Jesus as his Saviour, and taught him, amid all his sufferings, to rejoice in the prospect of a future blessed life.

I was obliged soon after to leave the house ; and at parting he grasped my hand, and, with tears in his eyes, said, “ Farewell, then, sir, till we meet again in heaven.”

Oh ! are there not many like this man, who, called from remote parts of the earth, where it seems to us that the gospel truth could scarcely have penetrated, will rise in the judgment against those who hear the gospel preached, and call themselves Christians without any saving faith in the name of Jesus (Matt. xii. 41, 42.)

“ Behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.” (Luke xiii. 30.)

W. T.

THE QUESTION OF QUESTIONS.

AT the close of a bright summer season a young evangelist, who had been holding some special gospel meetings on the beach at a seaside town, was asked to visit an old schoolfellow dying in consumption.

Before seeing him the mother called him aside, saying, "Do you know, my boy is so good. If any one is going to heaven *he is*. He has been always obedient to me, and never done any harm."

A few remarks having passed, he went to see his friend.

After sitting with him a moment or so, the light went out, and they were left in the dark.

He suggested getting another lamp, when the sick one said decidedly, "No, we can talk better in the dark." And then added, "I'm so miserable. I'm afraid to die. *I'm such a sinner*. What *shall* I do? My mother thinks I'm good, but she doesn't know. On Sunday evenings, when she thought I was at church, I used to slip off to the hotel, with a lot of other fellows, where we smoked, and drank, and spun yarns."

His visitor thought of the mother's words: "So good." Then of her son's: "*Such a sinner*." What a contrast! And he earnestly presented the gospel to him.

But although he was very anxious, there seemed to be some hindrance in the way of his laying hold of the truth.

Many days passed by. At times it seemed as if the light would break in, but still doubt and fear held sway.

On one occasion he found him sitting up and dressed. He was slightly better, and had been out for a little in the sunshine. But it had been

almost too much for him. He was much excited. Asked what was the matter, he narrated how that one day, when outside the house for a few minutes, one of his old companions met him, and said, "You are looking ill, old chap; cheer up."

To this he replied, "I'm very bad; but what troubles me most is, *I have to meet God*, and I am not ready."

The other, who professed to be an infidel, laughed at him, saying, "Well, I don't believe in all that trash. If you go on moping like that, you'll die, and there will be an end of you."

But he replied again, "*I have to meet God*; and you have to meet God too; and you know it. There is a hell and a heaven."

But with a laugh and a sneer the sceptic passed on.

Two days later the latter was seized with rheumatic fever, and was taken to the hospital, where he lay for a week or so, getting rapidly worse, when one day, waking out of his sleep, he uttered an awful shriek, and passed into eternity.

The other, not knowing this, had called at the house the day after the funeral, and the young widow had told him of the sad occurrence.

As the sick man repeated this painful story to his old schoolmate, he added, with a look of despair, "He has gone to hell; and if I die as I am I shall go there too."

His friend read and prayed with him, and left.

Calling again a few days after, he found a great change had taken place. He was sitting in his room, and his countenance was lighted up with joy. "Oh," he exclaimed he, "I've got it now. What a fool I was before! It is so simple. 'He

that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life.' ” (John v. 24.)

It appeared that he had been much occupied with this scripture, quoted in a pamphlet that had been given him.

He then continued, “ I have had seven friends to see me to-day, and I’ve told them all about Christ. One lady wept for joy ; for she had been praying for me for years. Another fellow (oh ! such a hypocrite) told me I must hope for the best. But I told him I was past that now. But when I spoke of Christ he was so indifferent. I am sure he was not saved. He talked to me in such a goody goody way, I felt sure there was nothing in it.”

The next evening his friend called again. He was much worse, and was removed to the ground floor.

Gasping for breath, he said, “ Here I am, you see ; you know what this means.”

“ Yes, I know you’re going home.”

“ Yes, but I should like to have been here a little longer, to tell some about Christ and His love.”

And then, after a pause, he continued, “ Do you remember how we used to go to that meeting-room every Sunday morning when we were boys ? How I should like to go there now ! I used to think the meetings so dry, when they broke the bread. But I see it now. I should like to do that to remember Him.”

As it was evident that death was approaching, his friend lingered by his bedside.

Presently he asked the departing one, “ *Is all well?* ”

“ Yes, I feel as if I had a rope right round me, and I’m sure He won’t let it slip.”

With his friend’s hand clasped in his, he soon became unconscious and quietly passed away to be for ever with the Lord. (2 Cor. v. 8.)

His brother, who was also present, the remainder of the family having left the room, said, as he saw the end had come, “ I’d like to die like that.”

Would not *you*, dear reader, like to die like that? But can you say, as that one could, “ I’ve got it *now* ”? It’s a grand thing for those who can. Death is near, and may come to you sooner than you think. Take heed that it does not find you unprepared. Scripture says, “ *After this the judgment.*” (Heb. ix. 27.) It does not say, “ *After this salvation.*” You must have salvation *before* death, or you will never have it at all. You may have it TO-DAY, and you could not have it on better terms than what are offered. It is free as the air you breathe. “ The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke xix. 10.) And if still unsaved, *you are lost*. But, “ If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, *thou shalt be saved.* For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto *salvation.*” (Rom. x. 9, 10.) The *three shalts* go together.

1. If thou shalt confess.

2. If thou shalt believe.

3. Thou shalt be saved.

The gospel is very simple, if men would only be simple about it.

Maybe others are saying of *you*, how good *you* are. But that will not take you to heaven, and you know it. God knows how bad you are, worse than you like to think. But you must come out in your true colours if you wish to be saved. If you were good you would not need a Saviour at all. Christ died for the bad, and you must take the sinner's place if you would be saved by Him. Neither respectability, morality, nor religion will ever put away your sins. Nothing but the precious blood of Christ can do that.

There was once, on the ground of obedience, a way to earthly privilege and blessing before God; but man utterly failed, and that way was closed when they refused Christ. He, a Saviour glorified, is the only way to eternal blessing now. If any scoff at His name, and call truth *trash*, they may meet the death of the ungodly with an awful shriek, like the one of whom we have written, to find a Christless hell for eternity beyond the dark portal of the grave.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. vi. 7.) But if any man hears the voice of Jesus, and believes on Him who sent Him, eternal life is his now; condemnation is gone, and he is *passed* from death unto life. Such, like the poor subject of this narrative, will be able to say at the last moment, "I feel as if I had a rope right round me, and I'm sure He won't let it slip."

What is your case, dear reader? This momentous question, sooner or later, face you must. Death is the sinner's sure wage. (Rom. vi. 23.) *All* have earned it. You are a sinner. But Christ, the sinless One, has been into death, and for every

one that believes, has robbed it of its awful sting. Victorious on the throne of God we point you to Him alone.

“ Only trust Him, only trust Him ;
He will save you now.”

Oh ! what a bright moment when, ceasing from yourself and your own wretched doings, you turn the eye of faith to Christ ! There is life in a look. And light from the glory of God will fill your soul. Have you looked ? Can you say with our young friend, “ I’ve got it now. What a fool I was before ! ”

Surely it is folly to live without Christ. What irretrievable folly to die without Him. Then trust Him now, poor doubting heart ! Receive Christ now in simple faith, and you will have Christ for your Saviour, Christ for your object, Christ for your model, Christ for your hope, Christ for your all, both now and evermore.

“ My hope on nothing else is built
Than Jesus and the blood He spilt ;
I dare not trust the stoutest frame,
But wholly lean on His great name :
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand ;
All other ground is sinking sand.”

E. H. C.

THE GRACE AND POWER OF CHRIST.

WE will look at four remarkable scenes grouped together in the first two chapters of Mark’s Gospel, for they form a most instructive picture of Christ’s work with and in man.

There is little more than a passing notice of the

temptation of Christ. It is merely mentioned in i. 13. It has, however, an immense significance.

In the temptation of Christ we find Him as God's Man upon earth, not putting forth His power to overcome and bind "the strong man," but conquering him by simple obedience to the word of God. "The strong man" (Satan) had kept his palace and his goods in peace; but here was a stronger than he, binding him, and leaving him utterly powerless by simple obedience to God's word, by the word of His lips keeping Himself from the paths of the destroyer. (Mark iii. 27; Ps. xvii. 4.)

Man had fallen under the dominion of Satan, hearkened to him at the beginning, and taken his lie for truth, and was driven out of God's presence for his sin. (Gen. iii.) The fear of death and a coming judgment possesses his heart, which, do what he will, he cannot shake off; liable, too, in such a state, to be drawn deeper into ruin and destruction by the enemy.

The Son of God comes to deliver him out of this terrible bondage, and becomes a man to do so: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death [for He must die to accomplish it] He might destroy Him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. ii. 14, 15.)

Jesus entered into the last stronghold of the enemy, broke its bars asunder, and rose out of it in the power of endless life that was in Him, having borne all that the righteousness of God

required respecting our sin when entering into the place of death.

1. THE DEMONIAK.

Now here we read : " And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit ; and he cried out, saying, Let us alone, what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God." (Mark i. 23, 24.) The effect of the presence of the Lord here in the midst of sinners is that it brings out distinctly that Satan had undisputed dominion over man. Where sinners are all down at the common level under his power, it needs some one upon whom he has no claim to discover this. The moment, then, that Christ, who had " bound " him, came into the synagogue, the possessed man cried out in the presence of his deliverer.

If this scene discloses that Satan had dominion over man, the next describes the condition of man under Satan's power.

2. THE DISEASED WOMAN.

" But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell Him of her. And He came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up ; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them." (i. 30, 31.) A fever aptly figures the restless condition of man under the power of the enemy ; running to and fro after pleasure, or gain, or vice, or folly ; the corruptions of the world governing the heart, which has no response for aught else. As the proverb describes the ways of the world's corruption to keep the heart busied in this restless scene : " Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou

canst not know them." (Prov. v. 6.) A bustling, shifting, variable scene is dazzling the eyes of men, and the enemy uses it to fill their hearts to the exclusion of Christ, lest they should ponder the path of life. The Lord Jesus comes and lifts up the fevered one out of this condition. Another atmosphere dawns upon the soul, which now is set free to minister to Christ.

All this shows us the power of Christ in breaking the fetters with which Satan has bound poor sinners, and the deliverance that He gives, without however showing how the soul is brought into the enjoyment of the results of His work. Neither heart nor conscience are in exercise in these two cases. It was just God Himself, active in His love, coming down to poor sinners to snap the chains, and, unsought, to deliver them from the enemy. But God also deals morally with the heart and conscience of sinners.

3. THE LEPER.

In the third scene we find a soul in this state. A poor leper, conscious of uncleanness and defilement, comes to Jesus. Observe that here it is the leper who comes to Jesus. Jesus had gone to the possessed man and to the woman in the fever. Here this one comes to Jesus. Thus we have the two sides of the picture. This poor defiled one comes and beseeches Jesus, kneeling down to Him with the cry, "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." (i. 40.)

Jesus is the One who can meet his case, and he is conscious of this. How many souls are in this state, convinced of sin, and that Christ alone can meet their sin; and yet they are not able to say, He has cleansed me!

Now, the leper came and made his request, and got what he desired. "Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth His hand and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. And as soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed." This man came to Jesus *with a request*, embracing the need of which he was conscious. He limited his faith to the measure of his consciousness. Many err thus, and fail to learn the extent of the salvation of God.

4. THE PARALYTIC.

In the next narrative we find a much more blessed lesson. The soul does not come with the request, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst." The need was simply brought to Him, and laid at His feet; no suggestions were made as to how He was to meet it. The Lord thus was not limited. Faith here makes no limitations or suggestions, but leaves Christ room to act according to *His* knowledge of the need, and *His* way of relieving it, in full character with Himself, and according to the full dictates of His own heart. (ii. 4.)

This scene of the paralytic illustrates the incapacity of man to come to Christ. If the sinner is incapable of coming to a Saviour full of power, and love, and grace, to meet his case; if he has no power to come and take the blessing, what is to be done? Faith must come in. Jesus "saw their faith."

The thought in many souls before deliverance is, "I see the goodness and mercy of the Lord to meet my need, and I am conscious of my own sinful state. I have discovered that in God's sight I am a sinner, and without excuse; yet I don't know how to lay hold upon Him or His work.

I am invited to lay hold of Him, and I can't do it."

This very state of soul is a proof that God *has* applied the work of Christ to you. If, by divine teaching, you have discovered your sinful state, and that your only hope and trust is in Christ, God has applied His word to you. A soul in this state has need to learn that it has *no strength* to lay hold on Him. It is not when you have strength to accept Him that His work applies. It is "when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." (Rom. v. 6.)

This paralytic does not limit the Lord, as the leper did, to the relief of the need which he had discovered. The case, in all its misery, was laid at His feet. The world, too, hinders a soul in thus getting near Christ. But where "faith" is, it is not stopped by the difficulties. The Lord can now act according to the fulness of the grace of His heart; and He looks to the root of the matter, relieving what the conscience needs first, with the words, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."

But this is not all His work; this is only the relief of the conscience that it may learn more; and the Lord does not stop there. His work is not merely relieving the conscience of its sins, and letting the soul go on again in the old condition of things. Much of the preaching of the gospel goes no further than this.

The Lord now communicates *life* by His word to the paralyzed limbs. Hitherto the helpless nature had yielded to its weakness, and lay on its bed. Now, with one life-giving word, the helpless one has strength; life is communicated; and he goes away in the power of this new life, bearing the couch before them all. (ii. 12.) It is not

only that sins are put away, but life is communicated. The two cannot be separated. Until the second is learned there is no *practical* result, and no glory to God. Thus the very thing to which nature, in its helpless state, yielded (a temper, or lust, or folly,) becomes the very thing I resist most. It becomes the burden for my shoulder in the power and possession of eternal life.

May you, dear reader, learn the extent of His work, God's work, in your soul. It is not only relieving you of your sins, but uniting you by the Spirit of God with Him who has so relieved your soul. Then you learn the power for your walk here. He has bestowed upon you a life which not only can, but which, if you allow it to act, must live to God. (2 Cor. v. 15.)

The law did not bestow life. It prohibited the evil nature from which Christ died to deliver you. The gospel, on the other hand, first bestows the life, and then directs and guides it. Once I learn this, I am conscious that whatever Christ bids me do I am bound to do. I do not stop to look at my ability to do what He directs, but I look at the power of Him who works through the weakness and incapacity of man; who Himself is my life; and "when I am weak then am I strong." (John xv. 5; 2 Cor. xii. 10; Phil. iv. 13.)

THE BIBLE A BOOK OF FACTS.

I HAVE been interested lately in this character of the Book of God, that it reveals God to us, not by description, but through His own actings. From the beginning of the Book it is so, and it is a blessed fact. What a different thing we should have heard, if our God had

employed prophets to describe Him ! What a precious thing we have in seeing God in action Himself !

Philosophy seems to delight itself in describing God, thinking to magnify its object by long and learned treatises. But this is not Scripture. Scripture allows God to show Himself by His acts, not undertaking to describe Him.

And what a proof that God reveals Himself to us in action and in personality, and not by theological description, is the mystery of the Incarnation, with all that it led to, in the life of JESUS, His childhood, His youth, His subjection under the law at Nazareth, His ministry, in His sayings and doings, His sorrows, temptations, and death, His resurrection and glory !

What a witness does all that bear to the great truth that we are here considering together, that God's method has not been to commit the revelation of Himself, what He is, and who He is, to the pen of inspired description, but that He has chosen to show *Himself* to us, lovingly and personally. His own activities bespeak Him, and not the pen of a theologian.

Theology's first and best thought of Him is thus miserably defective, and thus perceptively rebuked. That thought of Him is this : *God is in heaven*. Nay, God is on earth, among us, in acting, speaking, sympathizing, in our natures, and in our wills, and in our circumstances. It is indeed true that He is in heaven, provided we remember all this of Him at the same time ; but as an abstract theological maxim, that God is in heaven, all of Him is lost to us. (Acts xvii. 27, 28.)

J. G. 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.

"I CAN SEE IT ALL PLAIN NOW."

AN evangelist one day visiting around the small village of E——, came upon the cottage of a poor old woman, over seventy. Having entered in and sat down, he asked her whether her soul was saved.

"No; that's just what I want to know," replied she, in tones of deep earnestness.

"How's that?"

"I don't know."

"How are you going to be saved?"

"That's just what I want to know."

"Well, let us look at what God says in His Word."

Immediately she reached her large Bible off the table, and putting on her spectacles, sat down with her back near the window to get the light.

Her visitor opened the Book, and asked her to read three passages.

1. "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 36.)

2. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." (John v. 24.)

3. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me *hath* everlasting life." (John vi. 47.)

The old woman read them slowly over to herself, one after the other, gazing at them intently for some moments.

All at once she looked up in her visitor's face, and said, "Well, that *is* strange. Here I've been a-going and a-coming, and a-hoping and a-striving, and sometimes thinking myself a castaway, and it's all as plain as that. Well, *that is* strange. What a stupid I've been!"

"Well," replied he, "that's God's Word; the words of the Son of God."

"Yes, I can see that."

"And they are in your own Bible."

"Yes, there it is. What a stupid I've been!"

"Have you eternal life, then?"

"Well, yes! I *must* have, it says so there."

"What does it say?"

She read the words again: "He that believeth on me *hath* everlasting life," and then said, "Well, I believe; and of course there it is in my own Bible; that's plain."

Finding she was joyfully resting upon the

“ I CAN SEE IT ALL PLAIN NOW.” ... 163

truth in these precious verses, after making a few more remarks, and having knelt down and together praised the Lord for His goodness, he left.

At a subsequent visit a few days later, he found her calmly rejoicing in the truth the Lord had made known to her the week before. After speaking with her a few moments upon its simplicity, she said, “ Here I’d been a-arg’ing and a-arg’ing over it, me and my daughter, many a time, and we couldn’t make head or tail of it, and nobody to help us; and now it’s all as plain as that. I sat up till midnight after you’d been, sir, going over and over those scriptures; they were so plain and so precious. Here I’ve been living in this place fifty years, groping in the dark. What a stupid I’ve been ! But I can see it all plain now, thank God !”

The poor old woman lives on, happy and bright, rejoicing in Christ her Saviour and her Lord, in whom she now knows that she has eternal life. Stupid indeed she had been, like thousands more, but now wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Long, long had she been groping in the dark; but now brought out of darkness into His marvellous light. (1 Pet. ii. 9.) Following Christ in simplicity, she looks with joy for the moment when He shall claim her as His own, the purchase of His own life’s blood, to be for ever with Himself in glory. (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.)

How is it with you dear reader? Are you still groping in the dark? Or can you see it all plain? If the latter, I am sure you readily will own, with this poor old soul, what a stupid *you* have been. Ah ! worse than stupid. What height of folly to live on without Christ ! A free and full salva-

tion to be received and enjoyed now, offered in your own Bible, and very likely its pages neglected and unread. Or if you have given a few sober thoughts to your eternal future, maybe you think you are as good as most people. You have never done any harm; you attend a place of worship; what more can be required?

What more? Why, not so much. Nay, your goodness and your religiousness are only in the way. Salvation is not of works. (Titus iii. 4, 5.) Here the stupidity of thousands comes out. They see that wickedness will shut them out from God; so they turn over a new leaf, reform, and turn religious. Verily, they *think* that the reformation of the present will make up for the shortcomings of the past. Ah, delusive wile of the enemy, how many are ensnared therein! Sinner, it is too late to be doing to get to God; nearly nineteen centuries too late. God gave up man, and his doings in the flesh, long, long ago. "The flesh profiteth nothing." (John vi. 63.) You must get to God, first, before doing begins.

And *how* are you to get to Him? The answer is simple: The same way as this poor old woman; by *faith*; BELIEVING. "He that *believeth* on the Son *hath* everlasting life." (John iii. 36.) Do you *believe*? Like her, it may be, you have been going and coming, hoping and striving, long enough. Ah! what a stupid you have been! When will ye be wise? Now? Be wise in time. All is done; the work of Christ is a finished work. Christ, victorious on the throne of God, is a present and perfect Saviour now for every one that *believeth*. Have you believed on Him? "Verily, verily," saith the Son of God, "He that *believeth* on me *hath everlasting life*." (John

vi. 47.) Take heed lest you let the day of grace slip by, and wake up in hell, when it is too late, to discover what a stupid you have been.

Thousands, tens of thousands, live on, groping in the dark. The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which *believe not*, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine into their hearts, and they should be saved. (2 Cor. iv. 4.) But believe on Him, dear reader, now, just as you are; guilty and lost, and the light will shine into your heart. Then may you exclaim, like the one of whom you have read, "What a stupid I have been. *But I can see it all plain now.*"

E. H. C.

HOW AN ANXIOUS SOUL FOUND PEACE.

NOT long ago, in a quiet little village in the far west of Cornwall, a respectable young woman was reading the Scriptures, and became deeply and solemnly impressed with what she found there about "the pure in heart." (Matt. v. 8.)

She was at once convicted. Then and there she was thoroughly convinced that her heart was anything but "pure."

The more she pondered the all-important matter, the more she became assured that those only who are without sin can stand in the all-searching light of God's glory, and she seriously feared that her position would be banishment from Him for ever.

Aware that God was perfectly holy, and of purer eyes than to behold evil, and that she must

give an account of herself to Him, her heart was sorely troubled. She truly felt herself to be a sinner in His sight.

Her anguish became intense. Death and judgment and the wrath of God stared her in the face. So great did her dread of the future become, that her health gave way, and her mind threatened to be overbalanced by the desponding misery she felt. But God had a purpose of mercy toward her, which she then little knew.

Days and weeks, and even months, of bitter anguish this dear soul passed through. She conversed with many, but no one could give her one ray of hope.

On one occasion, a curate of the neighbourhood called on her. After hearing from her own lips her solemn estimate of her own evil heart and ways, as justly exposing her to the wrath of God, he replied, "You need not fear. You are all right. There are three miles to heaven, and you have gone over all of them. The first mile is Baptism; this has been done in your case. The next mile is Confirmation; this you have properly attended to. The third mile is Holy Communion; and this, also, you have received. Why, then, be distressed?"

The curate's counsel, however, was totally ineffectual in giving her any relief. She felt that her heart was not "pure"; that her conscience must be cleansed, or she could never be made fit for the presence of God, or enter into the kingdom of God.

On another occasion, the much-respected vicar of the parish sent her same pamphlets to read, no doubt with a view to ministering consolation to her troubled soul. But on looking into them, she

found that they consisted chiefly of advising the reader to observe Lent, keep holy days, and so forth. They, therefore, gave her no relief. How could such things make her heart "pure"? How could they relieve her of the burden of her sins? Impossible.

She did not yet know God's way of salvation; but she knew that such books were so bad and misleading, that she says she put them into the fire, lest any one should be injured by them. Still her distress of soul continued. She had no rest, and was almost in despair. Her conscience continually accused her of being unfit for God.

On being asked one day by a neighbour why she was so unhappy, she answered, "I am a sinner; and I am afraid I shall be banished to the lake of fire for ever."

The neighbour's reply was: "Well, if you do go there, you will have plenty of company."

This so distressed her already deeply troubled soul, that she almost resolved never to ask another person how she could be saved.

One day, however, she thought of a working man not far off, whom she judged must be a "saved" man, and she made up her mind to call upon him. She did so, and it gave her some relief to find one who could speak of his own assurance of salvation. And he introduced her to another person, who had also the certainty of her salvation. She now resolved to read the Scriptures, and to cry to God to show unto her His own way of saving a sinner.

When reading one day, her deeply anxious soul came to the following words: "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my

Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto Him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life : he that cometh to me shall never hunger ; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me : and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out " (John vi. 32-37).

These precious words of Jesus, brought home by the power of the Holy Spirit, were enough. Hope began to animate her desponding heart. The more she pondered them, the more she felt they exactly met her case. She came to Jesus as she was. Then and there she took her place as a sinner before a Saviour. His assurance to the coming one, " I will in no wise cast out," and " He that cometh to me shall never hunger ; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst," and such like words of divine grace, were the very truth of God to her soul, a balm to her troubled spirit. Sinner as she was, she believed God, and found in Jesus Christ His Son, the true bread from heaven, all she needed.

She soon learned also, from another scripture, that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, and knew what it was to have her heart and conscience purged with His precious blood. (1 John i. 7 ; Rev. i. 5, 6.) Now she knew what it was to be " pure " in heart, and at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Her intolerable burden of sin was gone. She could delight in the Saviour's love, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (Acts xv. 9 ; Rom. v. 1, 2.)

The story of "three miles to heaven" was now seen in its horrible falseness, as well as the delusion of keeping days and such like as a means of salvation. In Jesus and His blood the guilty conscience finds that which alone can cleanse it.

It is very lamentable that multitudes of people are trusting in ordinances, religious duties, keeping days, and such things, instead of simply believing God's own word, and coming as sinners in their sins to the sinner-loving Saviour, whose blood cleanseth from all sin, and who still says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." May God graciously attract many who read these pages to that only Saviour.

H. H. S.

GOD'S JOY IN SAVING SINNERS.

Read Luke xv.

THE one great thing that I want to bring before you is that the joy of God in receiving the sinner is infinitely greater than that of the sinner himself. Irrespective of everything in you and of you, and of everything you have done, God has His joy, His own peculiar joy, in getting the sinner back to Himself.

Those of you who are familiar with the Scriptures will have your thoughts directed to Luke xv. as illustrating most precious this theme.

It is the gospel of the grace of God that it is our privilege to preach; our one desire is to bring you into immediate contact with that large, loving heart of God, and with that which was the most full and blessed expression of it, namely, the work of His precious, spotless Son.

The first that ever preached the gospel in the ears of ruined sinners was the Lord Himself. He was the first to proclaim the glorious tidings of salvation. For four thousand years had God been working, as the Lord Himself declares: "My Father worketh hitherto." (John v. 17.)

What was He working for? For the salvation of poor sinners. And then the Lord adds, "And I work"; that is, He takes up the work of His Father. What an earnest, diligent, constant, faithful preacher! How devoted! His days spent in work, and sometimes, too, His nights in prayer. Wherever He could find an open ear He was ready. As to poor sinners, He always had a message of peace and love. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," He could say; "because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke iv. 18, 19.)

This work of grace is going on now; but you know not the moment when it will be "the day of vengeance." Did you ever mark that the Lord in quoting this scripture stopped at that terrible word, "And the day of vengeance of our God"? That is the reason why He shut the book. Had he passed that comma, you would not be where you are just now. There is only a comma. We know not when the last moment of "the acceptable year" will pass. Oh, the solemnity of the day of vengeance! It shall overtake all those who have been hearkening to the gospel, and have never yielded to its power.

In this fifteenth of Luke we have unfolded the

work of the Son, of the Spirit, and of the Father, and all tending to one blessed point.

In the first we get the Son going after the poor, lost, wandering sheep, and going after it *till* He find it. The Lord has come down into this world for the purpose of seeking and saving that which was lost.

Every clause in this marvellous picture is full of the sweetest grace for our hearts. When He hath found it, what does He with the sheep? Just what He will do with any poor sinner that comes to Him now. He lays it on His shoulders. He lays it on "rejoicing." We have not merely the action, but the style of the action, "rejoicing." It will give Him a great deal more joy to have you on His shoulders than it will give you to be there.

I was asked one day to go and see a dying infidel. I went, and found him in a state which I can never forget. As I went up to his room, his sister told me that a moment before he had been blaspheming God for laying him on that bed, and for all that he was suffering. The chamber of a dying infidel in as awful place to be in. I entered, and saw one who had been a fine young man tossing upon his bed of death in the last stage of consumption.

There he was; no getting out of the grasp of that last enemy; all the treasures of the universe could not have saved him. You, too, beloved friends, must meet that enemy. It is only a question of days, of months, or at most of years.

All the reasonings of the infidel are like cobwebs when he approaches the reality of eternity.

This man was an artisan. He had spent his weeks in work and his Sundays in pleasure.

There he was, at thirty-two years of age, evidently dying.

I sat down beside him, looking to God to give me something to say; then, drawing my Bible from my pocket, I read this self-same Luke xv. Then I said, "There is one thing I want you to learn from this chapter."

"What is it?" he earnestly asked, fixing his eyes on me.

It is this: "God's joy in getting you back, and pardoning all your sins, is infinitely greater than would be your joy in being brought back and forgiven."

There was a pause, and he looked at me. "That is good news for me," he said.

The effect of these words can be better imagined than expressed. They were the first gleam of hope.

But then came, in broken accents, as if the devil were at work there, words which he could scarcely get out: "Will God save me, lying here and doing nothing?"

I said, "And what have you been doing the thirty-two years you have lived in the world? If you were to live thirty-two years more, do you suppose you would make a much better use of them?"

Again I press this most precious truth, the very essence of the grace of God. Do not talk of your miserable doings. What has the sheep done? What is it likely to do? To wander still farther. It is *lost*. It is not a question of what you have done, though it is right enough that you should be broken-hearted. What you have done and what you are, all together is but "filthy rags." (Isa. lxiv. 6.)

But what became of the infidel? His soul was blessedly saved, and in a few weeks afterwards he passed home to glory.

But now I have another picture. His brother was close by, and he too was dying. But he was not an infidel; he had been one that had preached the gospel, but one who had never known the peace of God.

I found him miserable; quite a different case. He had no peace, had never known true solid peace. He was one of that large class who think it is right always to have doubts and fears.

I sat down beside him, and had a different work to do; to show him that for the weakest believer in Christ there is no such thing in the New Testament as doubts and fears; no such thing recognised.

I would assert this in the fullest and freest manner. People doubt because they do not know the heart of God and Christ; they know not what it is to be in His presence. Could I doubt if I felt myself carried above everything by Christ, on the very shoulders of Christ?

What should I doubt? Myself? Of course you would be a fool to trust in yourself. The shoulders of Christ? Do you think that if He puts you there, and keeps you there, you can ever perish? It is no humility to doubt. It is presumption. My poor friend (the brother of the infidel) was brought into the full liberty of the grace of God, and he too died rejoicing.

Well, beloved, see the consummation of all this in what our Lord adds here. What He here says is not that there is joy amongst the angels. He says there is joy in heaven. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God." What He

teaches us is that God has His joy. If you had your way the harps of heaven would hang upon their willows for ever; you would rob God of the joy of His heart.

There is the same in the second parable. The woman represents the Holy Ghost. She seeks diligently till she find that which was lost.

And now we come to the marvellous unfolding of the heart to God. What a picture in the younger son of one desirous to escape from the restraint of the father's house! What a photograph of a fast young man; of a young man wanting to taste what the world is!

Depend upon it, if you want to do the same you will find out what it is. "He began to be in want." The time is sure to come when want will stare you in the face. So long as you have anything to bestow, the world will have plenty of room for you. Did you ever hear those lines?

"It is a very good world to live in, to spend in;
The very worst that ever was known to beg,
to borrow in."

Let a man's fortune have passed away, he will not be troubled with many carriages. Whatever you may be, whenever you want the world, it does not want you. If you ask me what was the most vivid proof that ever was afforded of the hollowness of the world, shall I turn to police reports and statistics of crime?

Never! To what, then, shall I turn? To the cross of my Lord. The world "crucified the Lord of glory." Shall I expect anything from it? When you want God, He wants you. That is the difference between God and the world. There was no giving in the "far country."

"And when he came to himself."

Mark, there are stages in his history. First, he came to himself. Second, the father came to him. The first is the moment of the gracious visitation of God's Spirit to the heart of man.

People constantly say when urged, "I have not love enough in my heart."

Ah! that is the very reason why you should come. God knows that there is nothing but hatred towards Him; still He wants you just as you are. Do not wait till you are a little better, or till you have got a little more love. No; you must come trusting in the love of His heart.

The work of conviction cannot be too deep: "Make me as one of thy hired servants." That is all the length that anyone goes. I do not believe that the element of legality is ever eradicated from anyone's heart till he knows what God is to him. So long as you reason from what you are to what God is, you are all in the dark. We ought to reason from what God is down to ourselves. The moment the prodigal says, "I will say, Make me as one of thy hired servants," he shows a deep ignorance of the father's character. This always marks the awakened heart.

"While he was yet a great way off, the father ran."

That is the father's way. "He ran." Remember, this is not delineated by the pencil of fancy. It is the Lord Himself letting you into the very secret of the heart of God, giving you to understand, if you will, what is in that heart at this moment. The father saw him first. He ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him in his rags and wretchedness.

Then the prodigal goes up only to a certain point, omitting all about being his servant. How

could he speak about this when the father was kissing him? Impossible. There is not a word of that. The father interrupts him with, "Bring forth the best robe."

You say, "I am not worthy of that."

It is not a question of what you are worthy of, but of what it is in the Father's heart to give. "Let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

Then there is a whole scene of joy awakened up in that house at the return of the poor wretched prodigal. This is a specimen of the joy that there would be in heaven this day over one poor sinner who turns to Jesus.

But there was one (the elder son) who could not appreciate the fruits of it all, and the Lord turns the whole brunt of the parable upon the Pharisees. The elder son, coming back from the field, hears the sound of music and dancing. What do the servants say? "Thy *brother* is come, and thy father hath killed for him the fatted calf." He is angry, and will not go in, and the father comes out to entreat him. Mark what he says in reply. "As soon as this thy son" (not my brother) "was come." He does not understand what a brother is.

Dear friends, no one can understand anything of what God's heart is but a poor lost sinner who has been saved by grace. The father says, "Your obedience goes for what it is worth, but will you rob me of my joy? Won't you let me taste the sweetness of having a poor lost sinner back with myself?"

God (oh, marvellous thought!) will have the joy of filling His house with sinners saved by grace.

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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 FALSE GOSPEL, AND THE TRUE.

WHO shall tell the mischief that has been caused in the world, the dishonour done to God and His Christ, the misery brought to many of His dear children, and the ruin to souls, by a false gospel?

The following instance is but the sample of too many.

An earnest Christian lady once mentioned to a brother in Christ the case of a man in her "district" in London, in whom she was greatly interested. He was a professed infidel, a working shoemaker by trade.

On going to see him, the visitor found that the man had, as usual, "many and weighty difficulties" against the inspiration of the Scriptures.

"Well, what are they?" asked his visitor.
"Let us have them one by one."

And so they were presented.

The result so far may be anticipated by those who know the power, the exact, because divine, consistency, the marvellous adaptedness of the Bible to meet every "difficulty."

The infidel was not one of those who make pretensions to the intellectual superiority so loudly claimed by his class, and he advanced his "objections" with the air of one who distrusted them himself, acknowledging at last that he had got them all out of a book, which he produced from under his work-bench, and which was found to be, and proved to him to be, like all works of the kind, full of misrepresentation, falsehood, and statements founded on gross ignorance.

Instead of struggling to maintain his ground, the man seemed to find relief, and even gratification, in the demolition of the infidel author's false "facts" and reasonings, and at the close of the interview, begged his visitor to come again as soon as possible.

He did so, and then the truth came out. The man was not really what he seemed, namely, an infidel.

"Why then, did he pretend to be?" you may ask. Well, you shall hear.

He had once been a village Sunday school teacher, and a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

He told his visitor, with tears in his eyes, that he still remembered the happy hours he had spent in his earlier days, surrounded by his class, or leading his little scholars to the chapel he attended. But in an evil hour he came to London to lodge with, and work for, an ungodly master.

He was but a young man then, just out of his apprenticeship, and his master compelled him to

work on the Lord's Day. To resist his master's unjust and ungodly demands would, he knew, cost him his situation, and as a stranger in London, he thought there would be nothing before him but destitution.

"I hadn't faith, sir," he said. "I couldn't trust the Lord. And so," he continued, "I did as master wanted me to, though I was miserable, and did it with a bad conscience. I felt I was sinning against light and knowledge. Yet I went on with it."

One day I went to hear a preacher, and he told us that if a believer fell into sin, he was lost, and would surely be damned, unless he could "repent, and believe the gospel" all over again, the same as he did at the first. And if he couldn't feel the same sorrow for sin, the same groaning and tears he had once gone through, it was a proof that God had given him up, and left him for ever.

Such were some of the statements which this so-called minister of "the gospel of the grace of God" made in this poor man's hearing. (Acts xx., 24.)

And now mark the result.

"I went home that night, sir, and tried hard to rouse up the same feeling of repentance I had when I was first converted, but I couldn't do it anyhow, and I believed God had left me to myself. I was afraid to go to sleep, and sat on my bed with my back to the wall to keep myself awake, for I thought if I fell asleep I should open my eyes in hell. For three weeks I went on in this manner, only getting a little sleep when I was sitting among the men in the shop, for somehow I felt safer there, though I don't know why I should. That's all the sleep I got for three weeks,

and what I went through, night after night, I can never tell you."

Just think, dear reader, what this poor young man must have suffered during those three terrible weeks, alone all night in his room, in weariness, darkness, and despair. It must have been, as he himself expressed it, "a foretaste of hell" indeed! And this was one of the fruits of a false gospel.

Yet only one, for more followed.

"I felt the Bible was against me, sir, and so I tried to give up the Bible, and make myself an infidel." This is the true secret of all forms of infidelity and atheism, although from widely different causes.

"The men helped me on in it; for most of them were infidels; and they took it by turns to read books of that sort, while the others did the work for him that read, as they do in other shops. But, somehow, I couldn't quite fall in with it, though I tried hard to, and have been trying ever since; and that's a good many years ago now. I think I had nearly got to it when you came the other day. I told that lady as has called on me so often, that I was an infidel, and didn't want to read her tracts. My wife reads 'em; but what's the use of 'em to a man who knows the Bible is against him, and that God has given him up?"

The poor fellow asked this question with a calmness that would have astounded his visitor, but that he reflected it was, and had been, the settled conviction of many years, for he was middle-aged now, and it was when he was a young man that a false gospel had turned him aside.

If there were any feeling at all expressed in the poor man's manner, it was not one of dread. He

had gone through all that. It was not despair. He had made up his mind to all consequences long since. It was rather a feeling of indignation against God for having given him up.

Again I say, Think of that; think of the dishonour done to God by a false gospel; of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" represented by a false gospel as having less pity, less compassion than you or I, dear reader, would have had on a poor young man, little more than a boy, helpless in the toils of the adversary of our souls.

The visitor's first business, of course, was to show the poor misled man that believers are NOT UNDER LAW, BUT UNDER GRACE (Rom. vi., 14); that "we are dead to the law by the body of Christ" (Rom. vii., 4); that just as a man sentenced to be "hanged by the neck until he is dead," and executed by the law under which he was sentenced, is for ever freed from the law, so the believer in Christ having already suffered the full penalty of the law in the Person of his precious Substitute, is for ever freed from the law that had condemned him; that therefore he, even he who had so grievously gone astray from his God, from his loving Father, gone unto "a far country," spent all that he had, and fed on the husks of infidelity, had not the condemnation of a judge to fear; but had a Father's heart to come back to, a Father who had missed him, and loved him still through all his sinful wanderings. (Luke xv.)

The poor man left off his work, leaned on his elbow, and listened with wonder depicted on his worn face, wonder at himself, his blindness, his folly, his iniquity, in so fearfully misjudging "the

God of all grace ”; and when his visitor went on to show him further that he that believeth “ HATH everlasting life, and SHALL NOT come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life,” that “ neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from THE LOVE OF GOD which is in Christ Jesus our Lord ” (I. Peter v., 10; John v., 24; Rom. viii), the wondering listener was overwhelmed with his feelings, and the visitor retreated, and left him with God.

On calling again next morning, he found his friend rejoicing in the Lord.

“ I didn’t do another stitch after you left, sir, and I didn’t sleep all night,” he said. “ My joy was so great that my wife thought I was beside myself.”

From that time the shoemaker made it his business, as soon as his day’s work was done, to go in the evening among his shopmates and former infidel companions, and talk to them, as the Lord enabled him.

In this way God was glorified, His word exalted, His Christ magnified, and not a little work cut out for the shoemaker’s visitor, who got introduced to places (“ shops ” as they were called), where perhaps twenty men sat round the room at work, with, as is commonly the case in such manufactories, one man who was looked up to as a leader, and able to meet any “ parson ” who might have the temerity to intrude.

The dear man’s simple testimony stirred up the adversary, of course; but God owned it.

To destroy that which had almost destroyed him

was the shoemaker's delight ; to tell of Christ, his privilege and his joy. Nor did he confine his labours to infidels. Every door in his locality was opened to the district visitor above mentioned, and she found her way wonderfully smoothed by his honest testimony, and earnest but quiet zeal.

One thing he told his friend was very touching. It was that all through the weary years in which he *tried* to forget God, to ignore the truth of His word, to blind his own eyes, and to become an infidel, there was one passage of Scripture (probably that used at his conversion) which never left him, and always hindered him from becoming *quite* a sceptic. He could not shake it off ; it was in his ear, and in his heart when that heart was at its hardest.

It was Christ that followed him in all his wanderings, as the Rock followed Israel in the wilderness, its sweet waters, as they flowed, ever telling of a love that knows no weariness ; the Spirit of Christ evermore whispering in his ear the word that at the first had brought him to God. (Exod. xvii., 6 ; Ps. cv., 41 ; I. Cor. x., 4.)

He had misjudged Him most bitterly, but He would not let him go. His love still followed, yea, "went before to search out a resting-place" for him, and found it at last, in spite of all the evil done in his soul by a FALSE GOSPEL. (Num. x., 33.)

J. L. K.

“WHEN I HAVE A CONVENIENT SEASON.”

IT had been a time of real blessing to many souls at B——. The good news of salvation had been simply and faithfully preached, and many had received it.

One evening in particular, while the preacher dwelt much on the solemn words of the Governor Felix to the apostle Paul, in Acts xxiv., “Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee,” many felt the power of the truth, and confessed it to have been a season of unusual solemnity.

Shortly afterwards, after the preaching one Lord’s day evening, a sister in the Lord asked me to accompany her to the house of her sister who was dying, and whom she feared was not a believer.

When we reached the sick chamber, where the poor emaciated sufferer lay, the husband, who with five or six of their children surrounded the bed weeping, said to me, “Will you pray, sir?”

Before speaking to him, I addressed myself to the dying wife, whose moans and expressions of anguish were most painful to hear, and I soon found that all reason had fled, and that she was far beyond hearing or understanding anything; in fact, death had already laid his cold hand upon her, and she had but a very brief span of suffering here.

But what about the eternal future?

I turned to the weeping husband, and said, “My dear man, what can I pray for now for her? Tell me, what about her soul? Has she received

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the truth of God about His Son? When did she speak last, and what did she say?”

Her sister, who had asked me to see her, said, “ At four o’clock she spoke last to me. I asked her, Are you trusting in Jesus, dear sister? Is your soul saved?” And she replied, “ Don’t trouble me now. I have enough to do to bear my pain.”

These were apparently the last words she had spoken.

I found on further inquiry, that she had been one of the hearers at the gospel preaching on the evening alluded to, when the last words of Felix to Paul had rung with solemn import in many ears and hearts. She too had been apparently much impressed, and soon afterwards was laid aside, and had not been out since.

I turned again to the husband, and said, “ You ask me to pray. My earnest prayer to God is, that neither you nor one of your children may ever be found in the state of your poor wife here.”

To Him who reads the secrets of every heart we left the matter; but with the solemn conviction that she had said to Him, “ Go thy way.” “ Depart from me, I desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.” (Job xxi., 14.)

Soon after our visit she died; another among the many solemn instances of hearing the word, trembling at it, and nevertheless saying, “ Don’t trouble me now.” “ Go thy way for this time.”

Her “ convenient season ” never came. Reader, has your “ convenient season ” come? Are you rejoicing in the last words of the dying Saviour, “ It is finished,” knowing that His finished work has made you meet for heaven?

Or are you still where Felix was? And are his

last words yours still: "Go thy way for this time"?

Take heed in time. Trifle not longer with your immortal soul. The language of the trifler will get its answer. "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways," are the sinner's words to Christ now. But *His* words in "that day" will be to such: "Depart from *Me*, all ye workers of iniquity, I know *you* not." (Luke xiii., 27; Matt. xxv., 12.)

Now is your "convenient season." It may be your last. Your to-morrow may be spent where "a convenient season" is never known.

W. R. H.

"THIS PLACE OF TORMENT."

(Luke xvi., 28.)

DID you ever mark this, that side by side with the wonderful unfolding of grace in Luke xv. you have the awful scene in chapter xvi.? The same hand that opens the door of the Father's house draws aside the curtain, and gives you a glimpse into hell. There you see the rich man asking for one drop of water to cool his scorching tongue. There is where every soul who reads this will be who dies in his sins. Do not deceive yourselves, you who are hardened. There is such a thing as a hell-fire.

You who are still afar off I entreat to come to Jesus just as you are, in your rags and wretchedness. It is well you should look on your rags, and know they are such, but let them not hinder you.

There must be a work of repentance sooner or

later; but when you have gone down into the deepest depths of self-judgment, the question still remains, What is there in the heart of God?

The proof of what is in His heart towards you is the gift of His Son. You could never be in the bosom of the Father till the Son had borne the wrath of a sin-hating God, that rebels like you and me should be brought to the Father’s house of love and joy.

“ He spared not His own Son.” (Rom. viii. 32.) In proportion to the love, to the grace, will be the depth of the darkness and desolation of your soul, if from the very sound of the gospel you drop down into the pit of hell. If there be a place of torment deeper than others, it will be occupied by rejecters of the gospel of the grace of God.

I entreat you with all earnestness, trample not upon God’s love; lay not your head on a Christless pillow to-night, or you may spend a Christless eternity.

C.H.M.

“ I’M EASY.”

THESE words are the answer of an old man of over seventy years, who had recently been “ born of God.” (I. John v., 4.)

Many, ever so many, had been saved in the same place and township; and some weeks after the Lord’s servant was on his way to give a gospel address at T——, when he met this old man hobbling along towards the place of meeting, and thus addressed him: “ Good evening, James. And how are you getting along now?”

“ Oh, I’m easy.”

“ Easy ! What do you mean by that ? ”

“ Oh, I’ve no trouble *now*. I’m easy. ”

“ Well, I don’t know but that you ought to be troubled. What about your sins ? ”

“ Oh, the blessed One up there ” (pointing to the starry heavens) “ has put *them* all away. ”

“ And when did that take place, James ? ”

“ When the blessed One hung on the cross. ”

“ And how can you be sure of it, dear old friend ? ”

“ Because I’ve heard you read from the Bible, ‘ The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all* sin,’ and I *believe it*. ” (I. John i., 7.)

Glory be to God and to the Lamb ! This dear old son of toil, who had been very un-“ easy ” about his sins, feeling the burden of them almost intolerable, and rolling about in his bed under the weight of them, could now say, with a clear conscience before God, “ I’m easy,” for his faith was in the “ blessed One up there,” and in the “ precious blood ” which flowed from His side on Calvary’s cross ; and no wonder peace was flowing like a deep river, for the Book of God says, “ Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ” (Romans v., 1.)

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

But boundless joy shall fill our hearts,
When, gazing on Thy face,
We fully see what faith imparts,
And glory crowns Thy grace. ”