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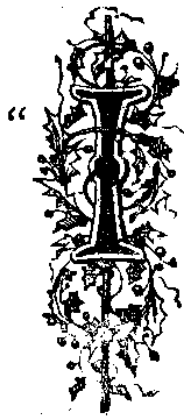
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THE GOSPEL MESSENGER.

SAUL'S JAVELINS.



“F God does not give me peace, I shall go mad,” and so saying, the speaker rose, and excitedly paced the room, while the clock intimated the hour—just two A.M.—one Saturday in 1871. He was a tall, powerfully built man, in the prime of life, with a piercing dark eye, and a countenance that bespoke more than the ordinary amount of intelligence, and force of character. All his natural boldness had, however, disappeared for the nonce, and he trembled visibly under the touch of the hand of God, now really laid upon him.

Our introduction was remarkable. On the previous Thursday a number of the Lord's people had gathered in Edinburgh, to study His word, and seek to edify each other. Called into Fifeshire early in the day, I only got back in time for the evening meeting, and was then led to speak a little on the history of Jonathan. We saw that in 1 Sam. xvi. David is brought into view. Type, as he is, of the blessed Lord Jesus, little wonder that his person is described as “withal of a beautiful

countenance, and goodly to look to" (v. 12). In chap. xvii. we saw his antagonist, Goliath of Gath, the "champion" of Israel's foes, a striking type of man's enemy, Satan. His voice is soon heard, "Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. . . . I defy the armies of Israel this day: give me a man that we may fight together" (vv. 8, 10).

The effect of this challenge was obvious: "When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid" (v. 11), and for "forty days" (v. 16)—the time of perfect probation—this testing went on, and yet no man dared face the foe. How could he? Certain defeat could only have been the result. No, my reader, neither you nor I are a match for Satan. It is good when we learn it.

Then was foreshadowed the lovely statement, "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John iv. 14), and David comes on the scene, bidden of his father, to "look how thy brethren fare" (v. 18). They were faring badly enough, but, like sinners since, were too proud to own their nothingness. "Why camest thou down hither?" says his eldest brother (v. 28), reminding one of the words, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John i. 11), and then goes on to say, "I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle" (v. 28). The battle forsooth! There was none. No man dared meet the

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giant. Not even boastful Eliab. This David knew, and simply rejoins, "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" This is perfect grace. Nothing chilled the love of Jesus, and nothing arrested the purpose of David. "Thy servant will go, and fight with this Philistine" (v. 32), is followed by action, for "David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling, and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David; therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith!" (vv. 50, 51.)

What a picture is this of the victory of Jesus. Coming into this poor sin-stained world, He found man the servant of sin, the vassal of Satan, and consequently under the power of death, with its after consequence—judgment. Satan had, and could wield, the power of death over man's conscience. But what do we read of Jesus? "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that *through* death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and *deliver* them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 14, 15). Wondrous fact for men to hear! We die because we are men—sinful men. He became a man—a sinless man—that He might die, and deliver us. Blessed Saviour! What a deliverer and what a deliverance! Death is our portion. Christ, on

whom it had no claim, took it. See this, and you get free. Goliath's head was cut off with his own sword. The chain of torture Satan can hold a sinner by—death, as the wages of sin—is snapped the moment you see Christ “made sin”—that “he died for our sins according to the scriptures”; yea, more, that He “died for sinners.” His death breaks Satan's power, puts away my sins, glorifies God about sin, and sets me free.

The giant's head off, his army “fled,” and all Israel had to do was to “spoil their tents” (v. 53). So with us, we have only to enjoy the spoil of Jesus' victory. He has done all. We enjoy all. Proof of David's victory is seen as “Abner took him, and brought him before Saul, with the Philistine's head in his hand” (v. 57); and the evidence of Christ's victory stands in the fact that He is now alive before God, having “led captivity captive,” and the Holy Ghost says, “Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power” (Col. ii. 10). Yes, far, far above the angels who never sinned, there sits now a Man who was once in death for sinners. In that Man every believer is complete.

Thus came out the gospel, and then its proper effect on the one who hears, or sees, and believes it. “And it came to pass when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David; and Jonathan loved him as his own soul, . . . and Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that

was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle" (chap. xviii. 1, 4). This was, indeed, a fine result—typically, a grand conversion. David had done all; Jonathan gets all the fruit; and, as a right outcome, his heart is all for David.

When David came into the camp, Jonathan was "trembling"; as David advances toward the foe, he would be Jonathan "hopeful"; as he sees the giant fall, his head roll off, and his army flee, he is Jonathan "delivered"; the sharer of all the spoil, he is Jonathan "enriched"; and now—lovely climax—he is Jonathan "devoted." Yes, all is surrendered to the Deliverer. What a lovely picture of a young convert yielding all to Jesus!

Reader, do you know aught of this? If not, may you know it. Follow Christ fully. What will be the result? "Javelins." If Christ be made much of, Satan must need oppose. Hence we read (chap. xviii. 10, 11, xix. 9, 10), that thrice did Saul cast a javelin at David. But Jonathan "delighted much in David" (xix. 2), and began to "speak good" of him, saying to Saul, "His works to thee-ward have been *very good*, for he did *put his life in his hand*, and slew the Philistine" (xix. 4, 5). Yes, David *risked* his life, but Jesus *laid down* His for us. Well may we "speak good" of Him. But if we do, what then? Look out for javelins. Satan cannot touch Christ, but he will touch you if he can; and so we read that David being off the scene altogether, Jonathan afresh witnesses to his worth,

and therefore "Saul cast a javelin at him, to smite him" (xx. 33). Jonathan is now the target for his darts. Blessed would it have been for him if he had from that moment fully associated himself with David in utter rejection. Alas! hindered, like too many, by home influences, he fails in fully following the rejected king, and therefore misses honourable mention in David's kingdom (see 2 Sam. xxiii.), where his name is conspicuous by its absence. This last lesson from his history is pregnant with importance to every lover of the Lord Jesus.

The foregoing, in brief, was what fell from my lips, and among my listeners was a stranger, whose appearance, and unconcealed interest in the ministry of the Word attracted my attention. As the meeting broke up, an old friend, and fellow-Christian, a lady from a distant part of Scotland, greeted me, and at the same time introduced the stranger as her friend, Mr C——. Circumstances prevented any conversation, and he passed out. During that night, and all next day, a great desire possessed me to again meet, and have converse with this stranger, but, as I knew nothing of his whereabouts, nor of my lady friend's, I had no means of reaching him. The Lord, however, had His eye upon him, and to my joy, in the afternoon I casually met the lady. Making inquiry as to her foreign-looking friend, she said he was unconverted, a thorough man of the world in every sense of the word, but had a believing, prayerful wife, and she

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thought that now, for the first time in his life, was beginning to take real interest in divine things.

"I have an immense desire to see that man again, and have a talk with him," said I.

"And that is just why I got him to go early to the meeting last evening," she replied; "only you were not there. Now, I fear it is impossible for you to meet."

"Why?"

"Because he leaves for the West Indies at ten to-morrow morning, and I know he is engaged to dine out, and thus will be occupied all this evening."

Learning where he was lodging in A—— Street, I said, "I shall be preaching at Leith to-night, and will call on him at ten o'clock as I come up." To this offer she gladly acceded, and, at the appointed hour, I called, to learn that the object of my visit had been in, and gone out again. I told the servant I would call again at eleven. I did so. He had not come in. "I will return at twelve," I said to the doorkeeper, as I gave her my name, to give Mr C—— when he did come in. As the clock struck I was on the doorstep. He had got home five minutes before me, and received me most courteously, as I at once offered an apology for so untimely a visit. "Make no apology, sir, I am truly glad to see you; and had I but known you were coming would most surely have waited in for you."

Without further delay I told him simply why I had called, viz., an irrepressible desire for his soul's salvation. The spring was immediately

touched, as he replied, he had longed for a conversation the night before. "I am a miserable sinner, a perfect wretch. I have had no peace for a week. I went to that same Hall last Sunday night expecting to hear you. I heard instead a little man with a terrible double squint, who worried me awfully with his 'two whosoever's.'"

Inquiring what that might mean, I learned that the preacher had dwelt on "*whosoever* was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. xx. 15); and "Let him that is athirst come; and *whosoever* will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17).

"These 'two whosoever's' have upset me thoroughly," he went on, "I don't think my name is in the book of life, and I'm sure if ever any man deserved the lake of fire for his sins I do. I have scarcely slept since Sunday, and then you made matters worse last night, for you did nothing but fling 'javelins' at me all the evening. I could scarcely sit the meeting out." At this confession, I need not say I was deeply rejoiced, for I saw a spirit-wounded man—an anxious soul. I wonder, my reader, if you have ever known anything of this sort in your soul's history. It is high time you did, be certain.

Anxious about his soul's salvation, as he evidently now was, I did not feel led to comfort him all at once, so asked him if he had ever seen his full-length portrait, as a sinner, as taken by God Himself.

"No! where is it?" he replied.

SAUL'S JAVELINS.

We drew in our chairs to the table, and, each getting hold of a copy of the Word of God, turned together and read, "There is NONE *righteous*, NO, *not one*: there is NONE that *understandeth*, there is NONE that *seeketh after God*. They are ALL *gone out of the way*, they are TOGETHER *become unprofitable*; there is NONE that doeth good, NO, *not one*. Their *throat is an open sepulchre*; with their *tongues they have used deceit*; the *poison of asps* is under their *lips*: whose *mouth is full of cursing and bitterness*: their *feet are swift to shed blood*: *destruction and misery are in their ways*: and the *way of peace have they not known*: there is *no fear of God* before their *eyes*. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that *every mouth may be stopped*, and *all the world may become GUILTY before God*" (Rom. iii. 10-19).

The effect of God's word on that man's soul I shall never forget. Some scenes in one's life leave an indelible impression. This was one. He blanched and trembled visibly as he said, "True, true to life. Every line of it. Yes, that's me. That is my likeness. I could sign my name to it. I am indeed 'guilty before God.'" Thereafter, he opened up a little of his history as a sinner,—his careless, godless, Christless life,—a life surrounded by God's mercies and goodnesses, which he had taken thanklessly, scorning the love that had so blessed him.

His awful sin now loomed hideously before his awakened soul, and after a good deal of conversa-

tion, in which I vainly endeavoured to show him the grace of God, in giving His Son even to death for sinners, such as he and I were, his anxiety reached its climax, as he pushed back his chair exclaiming, "If God does not give me peace, I shall go mad!" and then paced the room with a face betokening agony and despair.

I thought the Holy Ghost's divine and omnipotent javelins of conviction had done their work well, saw that no words of mine could avail to quell the storm that raged in his bosom, and knew that alone in face-to-face confession to God could he get deliverance ; so after a few moments of silence said, "Get down on your knees, man, before God, and have it all out with Him. 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity' (1 John i. 7). David shows us the way when he says, 'When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long : for day and night thy hand was heavy upon me ; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I *acknowledge* my sin *unto thee*, and *mine iniquity* have I NOT HID. I said, *I will confess* my transgressions unto the Lord ; and THOU FORGAVEST the iniquity of my sin' (Ps. xxxii. 3-5). Do just what he did, and you will get what he got—forgiveness, and the knowledge of it."

He fell in a moment on his knees before the Lord, and burst out weeping as though his heart would break. When the violence of his hitherto

pent-up, but now—in quiet confession to God—relieved feelings was a little spent, I prayed with him, simply confessing what utter sinners we had both been, but telling the Lord that the grace that had saved me could surely save him.

On his knees, in His own blessed tender grace the Lord spoke to him, and gave him perfect peace, for he rose, and gripping my hand as in a vice, said, "I can trust Him now. I see it all. Oh, what grace! what mercy! and to such a sinner as I have been!"

The storm was over, the clouds were gone, and genuine God-given peace and joy shone in his manly face, and he seemed to be filled with the Holy Ghost as we stood, and I quoted some scriptures to him. He had known somehow the letter of Scripture. Now he knew its spirit and power, and forcibly illustrated the apostle's wish, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xv. 13). He got on the spot the conscious knowledge of forgiveness, and realised that he was justified by faith in Jesus; rejoiced in the present possession of eternal life, as the gift of God, and, being born of God, took joyfully the place of a child who had received the Father's kiss of welcome (Luke xv.). Rarely, if ever, have I seen such a complete transformation, under the power of the truth.

It was near day-dawn ere we parted, and at ten A.M. I saw him off, rejoicing in Christ, as the

train sped south, and he went to his far-off home. Since then I have heard of his welfare and steadfastness in Christ, and that his lips often proclaim the Saviour's love and grace to others.

This simple narrative of God's grace, dear unsaved reader, I have told just as it happened, with the hope and prayer that you may be led to the same blessed Saviour. As this paper falls into your hands at the opening of a new year, surely you may well ask yourself, Have I been all my days slighting the God whose goodness each year attests, and each day proves? If you, too, have to plead, "Guilty before God," let this be the last moment of unbelief. Begin 1890 by a thorough and full surrender of yourself to the Lord Jesus—imitate Jonathan thus—and may you be a devoted follower of His all your days, and at the end hear His blessed voice saying to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

W. T. P. W.

THREE CRIES OF THE LORD JESUS.



HE Jews' Feast of Tabernacles, their most auspicious religious festival, had come and gone, leaving behind it souls still dissatisfied and empty; for how could that which had degenerated into a *Jews' Feast* satisfy the spiritual cravings of an immortal soul? Impossible!

THREE CRIES OF THE LORD JESUS.

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In its last and greatest day, when the tide should have run its fullest, and hearts should have been gladdest, "*Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink*" (John vii. 37).

At that very point, when *thirst* should have been unknown, He, who knows all things, stood and "*cried*"—presenting Himself in the most open manner to public gaze, and calling loudly so that all might hear—"If any man thirst." There was immense applicability in this loud and earnest "*cry*." Men were about to return home from this significant feast, and ought to have carried away hearts overflowing with joy. But the very opposite had been the case. Their hearts were still empty, their souls still unblessed. *Thirst*, biting thirst, would they but allow it, marked them still. They had gone to a cistern that contained no water—to that which was but a shadow—to that which only foretold a brilliant future day—but to that which, therefore, could not satisfy for the present.

How could, how can, a mere external form of religion, however rich and profound, however impressive and significant, meet the deep inward need of the soul? It may affect the senses, and solemnise the mind; but another power is required to reach the conscience, and touch the heart!

And, hence, dear reader, I ask you to look beyond the external drapery of Christianity, the splendid and sensuous ceremonies that are increasingly

flaunted before the eye, beautiful perhaps in themselves, but absolutely incapable of penetrating into that inner region where the Spirit of God alone can find saving access. They will only blind and bewilder you. A naked Christ is a thousand times better than a finely arranged form! Turn to Him! "If any man thirst." Yes, there was *thirst* after all, and they knew it, but Jesus graciously *cried to "any man"* that thirsted — "*any man! any man!*" — to come to Him and drink! Satiety, full, present, and for evermore, would be the portion of "*any man*" who came to Him! Thank God for such a fact. The believer in Jesus would get the Holy Ghost—the Spirit of God—to dwell within him,—sent from on high whenever Jesus should be glorified! Wonderful fact, but fact it is, else how could the child of God say "Abba, Father"?

Again, thank God for such a fact. We know it in blest experience, and our biting soul-thirst is gone for ever!

Jesus can do what no Jewish feast could, what no mere religious form ever can!

Oh that people would be persuaded to come to Jesus, and to come in their need, their guilt, their ruin, their blindness! He would meet it all. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

"*Jesus stood and cried*" whilst He gave out this invitation. His action implied great earnestness. "*He cried,*" —He called out aloud! Only on two other occasions, in this Gospel of John, did He thus *cry*. First, in this chapter, where in verse 28 He

THREE CRIES OF THE LORD JESUS. 15

“*cried*” in the temple, saying to His opponents, “Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am.” They had just said, disparagingly, that they knew Him whence He was. They looked upon Him only as Jesus of Nazareth, and cared not to make further inquiry. Theirs was the knowledge of indifference. Still, in that sense, they did know Him. Yet, would they but allow it, they had also the inward conviction of His being much more,—they both knew Him and whence He was. Conscience often knows more than we admit. Jesus charged them with this conviction of conscience, and He charged them boldly,—He “*cried*” to that effect.

A conscience gagged and muzzled is a fearful burden ; it needs a bold exposure.

Again, in chapter xii. 44, “Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but *on him that sent me.*” *Read on to verse 50.*

Now this was His last public appeal to the *world*. He spoke much to the disciples afterwards, but this “*cry*” closed His testimony to the world. If a man refuse this testimony, all is over with him,—“The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” Then the curtain, as it were, drops, and the sinner is brought face to face with the judgment of the last day!

But the warning “*cry*” is as earnest as any. The awful verities of future judgment were no trifle to Him. They meant to Him all that He said.

Man may ignore or lessen its severity, may

endeavour to explain the truth about it away, may affect to view it as an empty threat or an impossibility. Not so did the Lord Jesus. Ah, reader, hearken to His earnest loud "*cry*" of warning; hearken to His loud "*cry*" of invitation that you should come to Him and drink; hearken to the loud "*cry*" that tells of the glory of His person,—who He is and whence He came,—that you may be wise unto salvation, that you may know His love, and follow in His footsteps.

J. W. S.

THE TWO HOUSES.



CERTAIN rich and well-known man resolved to build himself a large and handsome house. He purchased a piece of ground in the best part of a great city, and spared himself no pains, nor cost, to ensure its being of the handsomest description. He arranged spacious dwelling rooms, and large reception rooms, taking special care that they should be comfortably warm in winter, and refreshingly cool in summer heat. In short, he sought in every way possible to make it a pattern of modern elegance and ease, hoping to enjoy his new and magnificent abode for many years.

During the erection of this palatial family

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residence, he had another building prepared. How great the difference between the two! Whilst the one contained a number of splendid apartments, the other was of one small chamber only, for the whole family, and that was under the earth. And although the wall was of beautiful marble, there was no other entrance than a small iron door. Strange! Both were prepared for the same person; the one a large, roomy, beautiful building for *the living*; the other, a small, narrow, low vault for *the dead*, in case any member of the family should depart this life.

Long before the mansion was completed, the tomb was ready. And in which of these two houses, do you think, the rich builder made his first entry? How singular! He was ready for the tomb, before the mansion was ready for him. Long before the spacious apartments of the new house in the great city were habitable, the proprietor was found in the narrow, dark, cold chamber under the earth, where his body must lie until the hour comes, in which all who are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God (John v. 28).

This is a history, dear reader, that should fasten itself upon your attention. Many things in life may appear bright and attractive, and promise rich enjoyment, but how soon the same fade into the past. "*The house of the living*" is great and beautiful, so that it hides from men's eyes, and covers over, "*the house of the dead.*" But forget not, that *thou*, like the man in our little narrative,

mayest be laid in the grave before thou comest to enjoy the looked-for pleasures of this life.

And *what then?*

After death the judgment. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27). But *now* thou livest; and *now* is the day of grace (2 Cor. vi. 2). *Now*—but of tomorrow, who knows? *Now* canst thou flee from the judgment, if thou turnest in sincere self-judgment to Him who has said, "I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall ye live; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die" (John xi. 25, 26).

The true *believer*, whose *sins are forgiven*, and who is *in Christ*, has the sure promise of a house, not made with hands, but eternal; not in this fleeting world, but in the heavens; and his passage out of this into that life is not death, but falling asleep here, to awake in the Lord's presence there (2 Cor. v. 8). Or, if the Lord should come, which is the Christian's blessed hope, the sleeping ones shall be raised, and those who are alive and remain changed in a moment, caught up to meet Him in the air (1 Cor. xv. 52; 1 Thess. iv. 15-18).

"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).

FR. GN.

BRIDGED OVER.



WHEN travelling by coach from Edinburgh to the "Forth Bridge," which spans the Firth of Forth, and now unites the Lothians to Fifeshire, and is one of the most marvellous achievements ever known in railway engineering skill, a fellow-passenger, who was quite a stranger to me, remarked that "This structure, built at such enormous cost, will be of immense benefit to people who avail themselves of it."

Getting interested in my friend, I felt desirous of knowing whether he had availed himself of the *Bridge* that spans the distance between earth and heaven, and took the liberty of asking him the plain question. His reply was, "Yes! I had a 'praying mother,' who is now in heaven, whose prayers I used to hear, when a boy. Then, as she mentioned my name aloud to God, and when she little knew, I was listening at her door. These prayers," said he, "followed me through all my sad course; but some years ago I was awakened to a sense of my need of a Saviour, and I believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and got my soul saved."

"Then," I remarked, "you and I have, through God's grace, availed ourselves of that divine wondrous Bridge, and, blessed be *His* name, it will never fail us." At the close of a happy and profitable conversation, I was sorry to have to part

company with my fellow-traveller to glory ; but, as I said to him, our " Good-bye " was temporary, and, at the most, only till we meet on the *other shore*.

This Forth Bridge seems proof against all storms above, and waves below, yet who knows, after all, whether it might, under some unforeseen pressure, succumb—as did its companion, the " Tay Bridge," a few miles farther north, not many years ago, with such well-remembered disaster. But mark, not all the combined forces of God's wrath, man's sin, and Satan's power, could ever shake one hair's-breadth what the blessed Saviour accomplished on Calvary's cross for *those who avail themselves of it*. So don't be afraid to trust Him, friend. There is no risk, and you cannot lose by it ; you are sure to gain.

Of course there are other means of crossing the Firth of Forth apart from the " Forth Bridge," but there are no possible means of getting from earth to heaven except and entirely through the finished work of Christ. " Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is *none other* name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved " (Acts iv. 12). But think of the *wisdom* and *skill* in devising such a salvation, as has met God's holy claims, and man's guilty needs, and provided eternal blessing.

" O God, the thought was Thine !
 (Thine only it could be,)
 Fruit of Thy wisdom, love divine,
 Peculiar unto Thee."

Think of such *love* as could lead the Lord Jesus

to leave the heights of glory, and descend to the depths of Calvary's woe to form a bridge, so to speak, for lost and helpless sinners to pass from endless ruin to eternal glory. Think of the stupendous *cost*, even His own precious life's blood, which cleanses from all sin, brings nigh to God, and gives peace. Think of the sovereign *grace*, too, that lets us have it all "without money and without price"!

But there is no benefit to *you*, my reader, from that *skill*, that *love*, that *cost*, and that *grace*, unless YOU *avail yourself of them*.

Mark well, no *bridge* of good works, prayers, and the like—good as they are in their place—will ever avail you anything for one moment. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that *not of yourselves*: it is the gift of God: *not of works*, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 8, 9).

You may not have following you the prayers of a mother who has reached the golden shores of glory, like our Edinburgh friend, but do let us ask, Will you avail yourself of this heavenly Bridge, and receive the full benefit? In short, as knowing your need, Will you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be saved? Dear soul, do not, we beseech you, allow your soul to drift into that place, where you will see what the rich man saw, when he lifted up his eyes, being in torment—namely, A GREAT GULF FIXED, between hell and heaven. Awful reality!

No bridging *that gulf*! No hope *there*!

Once this privileged day of God's gracious opportunities is over, there is no bridge for ever for *you*. Then no eye can pity, nor arm save. Wake up, therefore, we pray you, and make sure work of your soul's salvation before it be for ever too late. May you not lay down this paper without true exercise of conscience and heart, for by the horrors of hell we warn you, and by the joys of glory we encourage you. Accept Christ *now*, and ere long writer and reader, with all who avail themselves of that Saviour and His work, will meet on yon thrice happy shore, to praise for ever *the worthy One, sin had made, bridged the gulf by His death, and carried us over into eternal life.* J. N.



BLACK JOE WHITER THAN SNOW.



BLACK Joe was by report a convict and a bushranger. In the year 1842 he was taken ill in the city of Adelaide, South Australia. I was a young man then, and became acquainted with his condition, but he was such a desperate character that no one dared go near his house. I was greatly exercised about the state of his soul, and thought it a dreadful thing that he should be suffered to perish, without some one telling him of the precious blood of Jesus Christ, which cleanseth from all sin.

After much prayer, I asked a Christian man to go with me to see him. At first he refused, but afterward came, and said he would go with me, so we decided to go the next morning. On arriving at the house, I said to him, "You stand and keep the door open while I go in, and if he offers violence it will be easy for us to escape." When we opened the door, we saw him looking very ill, and very furious. I said, "Joe, we heard you were very ill, and we are come to see if we can do anything for you; and, better than all, we have a message from the sinner's Friend to you, who said, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into the judgment, but is passed from death unto life.' 'Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'"

Joe was broken down. We asked him if we should come again. He wished us to do so; which we did over and over again. His repentance and faith were genuine, and in proof of this he dismissed the abandoned woman that he lived with. Shortly after he took to his bed, and called in his neighbours, and instead of knocking them down he tried to build them up in the faith of the gospel. It was a beautiful sight to see a room full of people listening to his testimony, that he was going from his bed up to Jesus for ever.

Poor vile Joe was washed in the blood of the

Lamb whiter than snow; now he had passed from death unto life, and knew he should not come into the judgment. After a little while he passed away; but we shall meet him again, not in the scorching sands of Australia, but in the sweet fields of Eden, where the tree of life is blooming, and where there is rest for you. C. C. S.



THE JUDGE AND HIS PRISONER.

(Read Acts xxiv. 24-27.)



HUNDREDS of years have rolled by since the scene and the actors, we are about to depict, have passed away into eternity; but the onward march of centuries has not altered the lessons they should teach us; nay rather, my reader, inspiration has permanently recorded them on the sacred page for your benefit and mine.

Instead of the judge addressing the prisoner, the prisoner addresses the judge. The prisoner, not the judge, sums up. The governor upon the bench trembles. At his side sits his wife—the unblushing Drusilla, torn from another man's bosom.

The prisoner—the aged apostle Paul—discourses upon themes of eternal import. For a moment the judge of that day sees the bar before which he *must* appear. No flattering words, no sycophant's speech, fall from the lips of the man who had

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endured so much and so long for Christ. His spirit burns within him, and his speech is weighty with the approval of Heaven, pregnant with the powerful eloquence of the Spirit of God.

Paul reasoned on "righteousness, temperance (continence), and judgment to come." The unrighteous judge—the money-loving Felix—might well tremble as the aged apostle spoke about the righteousness of God; thus throwing, into deeper colour than ever, the deeds of the man in whose power he was for the moment. Well might Felix's cheek blanch, as, with unhesitating speech, the prisoner spoke of his lustful incontinence, his intemperance, and of God's retribution upon such sins.

And what about the judgment to come when all worldly gilt and sham shall have vanished for ever, and the guilty judge, stripped of the insignia of his high office, shall stand before the great white throne, to give account of all the deeds done in the body? Well might he tremble.

But Felix is not prepared to give up his sins, and take sides with an earth-rejected Christ. He will dismiss the troubler; he will stay the soul-arousing address. So he says, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." Thus the procrastinator cries. In his words lay for him the death-knell of eternity. No doubt the apostle left the court that day with a heart big with sorrow, as he knew how the trembler welcomed Satan's false peace back to his

heart, and clasped his chains tighter to him,—soon, alas! to bind him for all eternity.

Beloved reader, has this not a voice of warning to you? Have you not sometimes trembled as you thought of God's righteousness—of the punishment of sin—of the judgment to come? Do not stifle these God-given questionings of heart. Do not, like poor Felix, put off. He lost his grand golden opportunity. What an awful power Satan wields over souls!

He said, "When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." What better chance could he have than then? When he stands before the great white throne? No, a thousand times "No." His guilty spirit will then tell him, in thunder tones of remorse, of his lost opportunity.

When he lies upon his death-bed, when his mind loses its grasp of earthly things,—is that the convenient season? Never! When the conscience is more seared,—when the chains of lust are stronger and heavier? Never! God's Word gives the time—"Now." "Behold, NOW is the accepted time; behold, NOW is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

Oh, dear sinner, may God thunder that word "Now" in your ears before it be too late!

Felix does not appear to have ever had a convenient season. He had two years of opportunity, but seems never to have profited by them. At the end of that time Porcius Festus came into Felix's room, but we never read of a farewell interview between the judge and his prisoner.

“Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.” After this Scripture is fatally silent about the man who was fool enough to throw the golden opportunity away, who stifled the voice of God speaking to his conscience.

Dear reader, we would earnestly seek to lead you to Christ, if not already saved through grace. Do not rest content with Satan’s false peace, which will be awfully disturbed as you exchange the shadows and shams of time for the realities of eternity. The road to hell is paved with good resolutions. Be not content with turning over new leaves—doing your best—being religious; but take Christ as a living personal Saviour. He “made *peace* through the blood of his cross” (Col. i. 29). “*Without shedding of blood is NO remission*” (Heb. ix. 22). But the Lord Jesus Christ died upon the cross, and shed His blood to wash away the sins of those who believe in His name. “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from ALL sin” (1 John i. 7).

Do you, yes, you, who know not what a day may bring forth, decide, and decide NOW, for Christ. For:

“’Tis madness to delay,
There are no pardons in the tomb,
And brief is mercy’s day.”

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts xvi. 31).
May God grant it! AMEN.

A. J. P.

A NEW YEAR QUERY.



HITHER, O soul? To yonder zone of
bliss,

Dost thou this moment tread thy
hasty way?

To God? To Christ? To glory,
happiness?

Oh! whither, soul, oh! whither bound to-day?
Life's cares beset, and loves of time are sweet,
And earth is full of seeming glory now;
The subtle tempter oft thine ear will greet,
He offers still a world for one low bow.
'Tis well the voice of wisdom greets thine opened ear,
And tells of Jesus on the Father's throne.
"Arise, depart"—oh! heed the message clear—
"From this dull land of sin, of death and moan."
Thy life is brief, sin's pleasures but a dream;
The waking morn will bring the judgment day;
How can a sinner pass the fated stream
And master death in that unequal fray?
Know'st thou THE MAN who crossed the awful flood
O'er whom its waves in fullest tide did roll?
He conquered hell; He glorified His God,
Atoned for sin, once offering up His soul.
Oh! pause; bethink thee, man, and turn to Him,
The gracious Lord, in yonder glory bright;
The world is dark, its brightest scenes are dim,
But there above is joy, and love, and light.

J. M'C.

GOD SPEAKING TO US BY HIS SON.



BEFORE Christ came, God was pleased to speak "at sundry times and in divers manners" by the prophets. In these last days He has taken a more wonderful way. His Son became incarnate, and He has spoken unto us by Him; He being the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of His person.

The great thing for us to feel in our hearts, dear reader, is that God has spoken. He has spoken to man all down the ages since the fall, calling him back to Himself, and now, in the blessed person of His Son He has addressed Himself *to us*. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matt. xvii. 5).

It is a wonderful thing, when you think of it, and what ought to affect our hearts very much, that God in the person of Christ addresses Himself *to us*; and if He speaks to us, it is for our everlasting good. The great question is, Have we heard the voice of God through the lips of His Son, and has it wrought any change in us? God says, "*Hear ye him.*" Have you heard Him, dear reader, and has the word affected you? The word of Christ is a life-giving word. He says, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live" (John v. 25). Those who hear get life, everlasting life.

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How important it is to hear the voice of the Son of God,—God speaking to us by His Son.

But, for a moment, we will look at God speaking by the prophets. May His word affect us.

The word of God by Haggai was, “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, *Consider your ways*” (Haggai i. 7).

The word of God by Solomon was, “*God requireth that which is past*” (Eccles. iii. 15).

The word of God by Daniel was, “*Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting*” (Dan. v. 27).

The word of God by David was, “*The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.*”

By the same prophet God said, “*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God*” (Ps. xiv. 1).

God speaking by the prophet Amos, said, “*Prepare to meet thy God*” (Amos iv. 12).

By the mouth of Hosea, God said, “*It is time to seek the Lord*” (Hos. x. 12).

The word of God by Isaiah was, “*Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool*” (Isa. i. 18).

His word by Ezekiel was, “*Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live*” (Ezek. xxxiii. 11).

God spake by the prophets. And clearly the object that God had, was to turn those whom He

was addressing to Himself. "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. xxxiii. 11.) "Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you" (Prov. i. 23). But "they would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof" (Prov. i. 30). "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word" (Isa. lxvi. 2).

God has come nearer to man than speaking through the prophets, so intense is His desire to bless man. He has in the person of His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, addressed Himself to man. He has Himself, veiling His glory in the spotless humanity of the man Christ Jesus, come into our very midst, as a man amongst men—the most accessible of men—and spoken to man. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. v. 9). Such is the wondrous grace of God.

And if God's word to all is, "Hear ye him," of what importance is it to inquire, Have we heard Him? has His word affected us? has it proved life to our souls? Oh, how solemn to have God speaking to us in such a way, and for us to turn a deaf ear to all that He says, preferring the voice of the deceiver to the voice of God, "and the pleasures of sin for a season" to the everlasting joys of His presence!

Beloved reader, how is it with you? Have you

heard God speaking to you in the blessed person of His only begotten Son? Has His word reached your heart and conscience? If not, heed, I beseech you, His voice without delay. "Hear ye him." He will not always speak in grace; that Son of God, by whom God has spoken to us in grace, is also the executor of divine judgment. "All judgment is committed into his hand," and soon He will arise, first, to gather His people to Himself in glory (1 Thess. iv. 16-18), and then to judge and shake terribly the earth. Oh, hear Him; delay not.

What has the Son of God said? Listen, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 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. 14-16).

Again: "Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John vii. 37; John iv. 14).

Again: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28).

Again: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37).

Blessed words these, so full of love, tenderness,

life, light, and rest and peace, for the needy perishing sinner.

Beloved reader, hear them, heed them, receive them as the voice of God; believe them, and they will prove life and salvation to you. Read carefully John v. 24, 25.

E. A.



GIVING AND TAKING.



God's Declaration.

“ I WILL GIVE,”

saith God, “unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely” (Rev. xxi. 6).

God's Invitation.

“ LET HIM TAKE,”

saith God. “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev. xxii. 17).

Faith's Response.

“ I WILL TAKE,”

saith faith, “the cup of salvation, and will call upon the name of the Lord” (Ps. cxvi. 13).

J. R.

THE PERSECUTOR SAVED.



IN a large city in the west of England there lived a man, a bitter persecutor of his Christian wife for many years. At last a course of sin and drunkenness brought him to death's door. When he found he must die, he was like a madman, walking up and down the passage with an axe on his shoulder, declaring to his wife that if any Christians came to speak to him about his soul, he would dash out their brains with the axe.

Just then one knocked at his door, whereupon his wife opening, said, "Well, what am I to do? There is one come to see you." Coward-like he slipped the axe behind the door, and said, in a gruff voice, "Do as you like." The brother who called, not knowing what had transpired, began to preach Christ to him. He was distressed beyond measure, and for three weeks Satan was tearing him before he left him. At last he found peace in believing; and upon my visiting him, he said, "Mr S——, when I am buried the club I belong to will walk, and I wish you to preach the gospel to my drunken companions in sin. Don't mince the matter; they all know what I was. Point them to the same Saviour that has saved me."

Shortly after he departed to be with Christ. There were hundreds round his grave, and we read that solemn yet blessed scripture, "Be not

deceived, neither . . . idolaters, nor . . . thieves, nor drunkards, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10); and then pointing to the coffin, I said, "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' Now you must reject or accept this testimony; I am but the echo of our brother's words he is speaking unto you from that coffin." We heard from creditable authority that three of his companions accepted the testimony, believed in Jesus to the saving of their souls, and have since passed away to be with Him. Thus was the wife's faith and patience rewarded, and they will yet spend a blissful eternity together.

"Those that arrived at riper age
 Before they left the dusty stage,
 Thought grace deserved the highest praise
 That washed the blots of numerous days."

C. C. S.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE DEAD.



WORD with you, dear reader, about the judgment of God. We do not want to frighten you, or to work upon your feelings, but we do want you to wake up to *facts* before it be too late. We want you to look truth in the face. It is true wisdom. *Judgment is coming; God says*

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so. *It is written*; and His word cannot be broken; it endureth for ever (1 Pet. i. 25). But God does not want you to come into it; and we do not want you to come into it. He prepared *the lake of fire* for the devil and his angels (Matt. xxv. 41); but He prepared the gospel for sinners. He is Light; He is holy, and must judge the impenitent eternally for His own glory. Such too must meet with *the same* awful doom. But He is also Love, and in love gave His Son to die on Calvary, whose precious blood was shed, to cleanse us from sin, and to deliver us from judgment. Jesus waits to welcome, pardon, cleanse, and save all who come unto God by Him. But if you do not see your danger, you will still pursue the broad road in indifference and sin. Read then what follows, and may the blessed Saviour-God arouse you to a deep sense of your need, that in this day of His abounding grace you may be saved, and saved for ever, through the finished atoning work of His dear Son.

“*And I saw a great white throne,*” says the prophet John (Rev. xx. 11). Solemn momentous sight! God forbid that *you* should see it *in your sins*. And the throne was occupied. “*And him that sat upon it.*” No name is given, but we are not at a loss to know who it is. “The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto *the Son*” (John v. 22). ‘Tis *the Son of Man*, the Son of the Living God, “*from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.*” Awful vision of an

awful fact, yet to take place. From before the glorious face of the Son, whose "head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters" (Rev. i. 14, 15); the earth, *this earth*, this mighty globe with its continents and seas, the scene of man's fall, and pride, and folly, the scene of His own death, and the heaven, the beauteous firmament, flee away.

Awful moment! Think of that mighty rush through the boundless space. And "*the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.*" Where shall the puny voice of men be in the midst of this vast conflagration, the voice of emperors and kings that have made the world and nations tremble, and the voice of the people? Where will be the wondrous works that men have boasted of in time, the mighty cities, the progress of civilisation, the march of intellect, the works of science, art, and skill? All—all will perish for ever. With *a great noise, and a great heat, and a great fire*, the heaven and earth disappear—dissolved (2 Pet. iii. 10-12). "*And there was found no place for them.*" Their place among the mighty orbs of God's boundless heaven is no more. *No place is found for them. But the great white throne and the great Judge remain.*

"*And I saw the dead.*" Mark it well. When

the earth and heaven have fled ; when the ages of time are past ; when the fashion of this world shall have passed away ; when every possible imaginary hiding-place shall have disappeared for ever,—then *the dead*, summoned by the Divine power of the Omnipotent God, the dead from first to last, from the fall to the end of the history of man upon the earth, *all* who lived and died in their sins, the ungodly, the guilty, the lost, “*small and great stand before God.*” None can escape.

Every soul of man that doeth evil, every sinner who lived without God and Christ, men of low and high estate, from the poorest beggar to the greatest potentate the world has seen ; from the most ignorant, degraded, or bestial creature of the human race to the most refined and cultured man that modern civilisation can produce,—one and all stand before the throne and before the Judge. They lived in their sins, they died in them, they are raised in them, they are judged in them. The infidel, the mocker, the despiser, the rejecter, the neglecter, the Pharisee, the hypocrite, the criminal, the liar, the cheat, the religious professor, the immoral man, the self-righteous man, the moral liver without God,—in short, all classes are there. Millions and millions of men, out of all nations in the past, present, and future,—antediluvians, post-diluvians, Jews, Gentiles, Christian professors, all who died impenitent and unbelieving,—are represented ; “*the dead, small and great.*”

Reader, you may shut your eyes to the truth,

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but the tremendous fact still remains. Satan-deluded and sin-deluded and self-deluded, you must stand before the Judge. There is no possible way of escape then. The infinite holiness of His Presence, the unsullied purity of that awful judgment-seat, the great white throne, will expose all in its true colours; the searching light will show the enormity of sin.

But to-day, as I write and you read, the Judge is the Saviour; and *to-day* is the day of salvation (2 Cor. vi. 2). But the moments run swiftly by. Eternity is at your door. Death is here, the wages of sin (Rom. vi. 23). You may die at any moment, and after this the judgment (Heb. ix. 27), the great white throne.

“And the books were opened.” Think of the feelings of that vast multitude, at that awfully solemn moment. Think of your feelings if you should stand there. Every one will be there with a bad conscience, and will find that every deed, word, and thought is known to the Judge; every careless, wicked, secret, and presumptuous sin before His eye. *“And another book was opened, which is the book of life.”* Thinkest thou that this will bring a ray of hope amongst those vast ranks? Nay, nay. The most careful searching of its pages must be without result. Had their names been inscribed there, they had never stood in that company. The saints shall judge the world and angels (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3), but sinners be judged among the wicked dead (Rev. xx. 12). The

believer, whose name is in the book of life, "*shall not come into judgment*" (John v. 24); he is "*not condemned*" now; there is "*no condemnation*" now to them which are in Christ Jesus (John iii. 18; Rom. viii. 1). But alas, alas, *no hope* for all who stand there. Without hope in the world (Eph. ii. 12), and without hope in the day of judgment. Then follow the deeply solemn words, "*And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*" The records of their works are against them. The strictest justice reigns. A just Judge will scrutinise and weigh their works. All are more or less bad; works of the flesh, works of the law, works of self-righteousness, dead works, all are mixed with sin. *The duration* of the sentence, the punishment, is *eternal*; but *the severity* is according to the privileges and responsibility and works of men. A fully-merited and just award will be passed upon all.

"*And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell (hades) delivered up the dead which were in them.*" How careful and minute is the Word of God. He is love, and judgment is His strange work (Isa. xxviii. 21). The wish of His heart is that all men should be saved (1 Tim. ii. 4). But men are responsible, and not mere machines. The natural heart loves to maintain the latter fact, and to assert its independence, but without the former. God desires our blessing, and warns us in His Word; we are without excuse.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE DEAD.

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He has not kept back the consequences of sin, that we may be judge ourselves now, and flee from the coming wrath and find a refuge now in His Son. Soon, soon, will it be too late. This last sentence is another proof that no sinner can escape the judgment. "*And the sea gave up the dead which were in it,*" &c. &c. Tens of thousands have found a watery grave. Multitudes of sailors, fishermen, lifeboatmen, travellers, emigrants, pleasure-seekers, &c., have passed beneath the waters of the mighty ocean into eternity! All shall rise again; all who have died in their sins *to judgment*. With God all things are possible. The mighty Atlantic, the vast Pacific, the rolling Indian Ocean, the wild North Sea, the tideless Mediterranean, every sea great or small, shall yield her dead. He who made all will raise all. Blind unbelief raises endless difficulties. What are difficulties to God? "*The sea gave up the dead,*" &c. Who made the sea? God. And He who as Man on earth quelled the raging waves of the Sea of Galilee, will command, and the sea shall obey in the day of judgment.

"*And death and hell (hades) delivered up the dead which were in them.*" Yes, every churchyard, graveyard, cemetery, catacomb, mausoleum, tomb, urn, *shall* deliver up its dead. The grave, death, shall deliver up the bodies, and hell (or hades) shall deliver up the soul; and so shall the dead from sea and land, all the ungodly, stand before the Judge. Does any man, with his foolish heart darkened (Rom. i. 21, 22), think that modern

heathen customs, the burning of remains, &c., will be an effectual hindrance to this tremendous fact? Let such read the 15th chapter of the 1st of Corinthians, vers. 35, 36. "But some man will say, *How* are the dead raised up? and with *what body* do they come?" "*Thou fool,*" &c., answers the Word of God.

"*And they were judged every man according to their works,*" &c. *Every man.* Ah! there is no escaping in the crowd. And men will not be judged in batches in that day. No. Every man; each individual, from sea and land, from every nook and corner of this vast rolling globe. Judged according to their works. Could language be plainer?

"*And death and hell (hades) were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*" Death (the first death) and hades are no longer needed. They are but temporary receptacles of the bodies and souls of men. Raised, they go no more into them. The first death and hades are cast into the lake of fire; and then we are told there is "*the second death.*" And this is "*the lake of fire*"! How fearfully solemn the import of this eternal statement of God who cannot lie. What can our minds imagine more awful than the sure and eternal judgment of God? "The second death." And, as we have seen, the first death is no cessation of existence. Then neither is the second. "The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are *eternal*" (2 Cor. iv, 18).

The lake of fire is eternal. Eternal woe, eternal darkness, eternal punishment (Jude 13; Matt. xxv. 46).

This solemn vision of God's sure judgment ends with the awful words, "*And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*" Whosoever, whosoever, whosoever!!! Oh! reader, is your name in *the book of life*? The name of every true Christian is inscribed there, the name of whosoever believeth on the Son of God. But whosoever believeth not, his name is not written. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, *was cast* into the lake of fire. "Bind him hand and foot (no escape), and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," says another scripture (Matt. xxii. 13). All whose names are written now, will be *found written* then. There will be no mistakes in God's registry. *Written, or not written. Whosoever is as solemn* for the unconverted in this scripture, as it is *precious* in many a gospel scripture for all who believe now. Can *you* read this scripture? Can *you* read this paper, friend, and *go on another moment* careless and indifferent about your state before God? A sinner you are, guilty, ruined, and lost. Death, judgment, and the lake of fire stare you in the face. But love lingers, grace waits, mercy pleads, whilst the righteousness of God is revealed, whereby He can and does pardon, justify, and save the greatest sinner, or the greatest Pharisee, who bows before Him in self-judgment, and *believes* on His Son.

The Judge who will sit upon the throne in the coming day, is the exalted Saviour on the throne of God now. To Him, and to Him alone we point you, the only Saviour from the coming wrath. Many a soul is building his house upon the shifting sand of his own fancied goodness and religious self-righteousness, to come down with a crash at the first blast of the wind of Divine judgment; but *whosoever* buildeth upon Christ, the Rock of Ages, is safe and sound for ever (Luke xv. 27). "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).

Wondrous grace! Unfathomable love! The Judge Himself has died for the prisoners. Judgment is appointed (Heb. ix. 27); the Judge is appointed (Acts xvii. 31); and the day of judgment is appointed (Acts xvii. 31); but before the execution, the Judge Himself, the Son of Man, has *given Himself* (Gal. i. 4). "*Christ died for the ungodly*" (Rom. v. 6). "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, *Christ died for us*" (Rom. v. 8). And then follows the precious statement, "Much more then, being now justified *by his blood*, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. v. 9). Reader, are you yet a saved one?

Then in Rev. xxi. 8 we read further, "But the

fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and *all* liars, *shall have* their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Note it well; the first on the list are *the fearful, i.e., the cowardly*, or those who wished to be saved, who oft thought about it, but never decided for fear of the consequences. Secondly, *the unbelieving*. Oh! that damning, soul-destroying *unbelief!* "He that *believeth not* the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 36). And then follow all manner of the ungodly. And this solemn verse is indited by the Holy Ghost about men *after* the fleeing away of earth and heaven, *after time is over*, and *after* describing the new heaven and the new earth. Then, last of all, we read of the eternal doom of sinners without God.

And now for a moment, ere we close, let us look behind the curtain of the eternal future, that the Son of God Himself drew aside in Luke xvi. 19. A rich man, who fared sumptuously every day; who had all this world could give, but *forgot God and his neighbour*,—not a wicked man, but a man who *just simply lived for himself*,—*died*, and *was buried*. Common occurrence that in the world! It will happen to you soon, sinner. No doubt it was a splendid funeral. We shouldn't wonder if a large number of the inhabitants of the city turned out to see it. *Died*, and *was buried*; and *in hell* he lift up his eyes, being in torments.

What a change from the palace, and purple, and sumptuous fare! We lack space to dwell upon the details, but we see plainly that a man in eternity without God finds nothing but endless misery, with no mercy, no mitigation, no hope, and the awful memory of neglected opportunity for ever and ever. He exchanged time, and the privileges of wealth, for eternity and torment. Hopeless as to himself, finding even the request for a drop of water denied him, he wants his brethren warned, who still live, &c. The answer is, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, *neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.*"

Dear reader, *Christ is risen from the dead*; and you have *His testimony*, and also the testimony of *the Holy Ghost*, and the testimony of *the Lord's servants*, and of *this little paper*, as well as of *Moses and the prophets*. Great indeed is your folly, and great indeed your responsibility and guilt, if you neglect the warning. Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade you, be ye reconciled to God (2 Cor. v. 11, 20). You are going straight to death and the great white throne, if unsaved, and from thence to the lake of fire for ever. But *Christ died*; believe on Him, and your back is turned on hell for ever, and your path leads straight to the eternal glory of God. Believe on Him, and you are saved now, saved for ever, saved to follow Christ, saved to be manifested in His Presence as His own, saved to be rewarded according to your works, saved to dwell for eternity in the holy and blessed Presence of your Saviour-God. E. H. C.

"FROM JERUSALEM TO JERICHO."



YOUNG man residing in one of our country towns where runs a deep river, has, in various flood times, nobly rescued three drowning children, by diving into that river at great risk to his life, for which he has been awarded a gold medal by the Royal Humane Society, gained good county honours, and received much gratitude from the parents, who were poor, the children being deep in the water, far gone, and quite powerless to help themselves.

All this of course is very praiseworthy of one who put himself to so much inconvenience for the sake of others, but it is a very small picture indeed of what the Lord Jesus has done for utterly helpless sinners who have departed far from God, and are sunk deep in sin. That Saviour left *glory's heights* for *Calvary's depths*, to rescue lost and helpless ones from distance, ruin, death, judgment, and the eternal lake of fire, and to raise those who accept Him as their Deliverer to life, peace, relationship, and to fulness of joy with Himself in eternal glory.

That youth dived to where those poor children were and saved them from a certain death; so Jesus, as the good Samaritan, *came to where we were*:—"A certain man went down from Jerusalem

to Jericho and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead; and by chance there came down a certain priest that way, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

“ But a certain Samaritan as he journeyed, CAME WHERE HE WAS, and when he saw him, HE HAD COMPASSION ON HIM and WENT TO HIM, and BOUND UP HIS WOUNDS, POURING IN OIL AND WINE, and SET HIM ON HIS OWN BEAST, and BROUGHT HIM TO AN INN, and TOOK CARE OF HIM. And on the morrow when he departed he took out two pence and gave them to the host, and said unto him ‘ TAKE CARE OF HIM; AND WHATSOEVER THOU SPENDEST MORE, WHEN I COME AGAIN I WILL REPAY THEE ’ ” (Luke x. 30-35).

Reader, have you yet seen your soul's state in God's sight to be like the condition of this man at Jericho's roadside, and do you know this Good Samaritan as having come in love and grace to where *you* were and had compassion on *you*, and rescued *you* from Satan's power and endless misery? If not, hasten to commit yourself into His loving hands, and rest in His finished work, and trust His precious blood. We beseech you never to rest till you can truly say you are on your way to that glory He came from, to which He has returned to prepare a place for His own and from which He is so soon coming again to take all His blood-bought

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ones into. He went into death itself for those dead in trespasses and sins.

"He passed through death's dark raging flood
To make our rest secure."

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things *in heaven*, and things *in earth*, and things *under the earth*; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is *Lord*, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii.).

Dear soul, sinners may sniff, and sneer, and jeer, and turn away, but depend upon it, God is not going to be mocked in the face of this love and grace shown by His beloved Son! No, no, by-and-by He will laugh at your awful calamity and will mock when your terrible fear cometh, for He will still be a *holy* God. How much longer *you* will still be left on earth to reject God's salvation during this day of His grace and long-suffering mercy, with your deluge of privileges, God only knows! But once more you are entreated to wake up to your lost and helpless condition, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved ere it be too late, and it be all over with you for ever!

Trust Jesus now, and when you are saved you will find endless opportunities for gratitude, praise, thanksgiving, and worship to flow out "unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Rev. i. 5).

J. N.

“I CAN DO NOTHING TOWARDS IT.”



WITH the above words a young man excused himself, when I called his attention to the question of the salvation of his soul. “I can do nothing towards it,” said he; “so long as it does not please God to work in me, and to give all to me, I must wait.”

“But would you so think and speak,” I asked, “if you knew for certain that in four and twenty hours you must die and appear before the judgment seat of Christ?”

He was silent a moment, and then said, “I believe not; at all events, I should be in great trouble and anxiety, and would call on God for grace.”

“You would even then, as now, be able to do a little, and to assist in your salvation,” I rejoined. “God then must work and give all?”

“Doubtless,” replied he, “but the certainty of approaching death, and after that the judgment, would frighten me, and cause me to cry to God.”

“You remain, then, now indifferent, and you don’t cry to Him,” I added, “because the hour of your death is uncertain. One thing is quite certain, that it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment; but you do not know for certain whether you have still four and twenty hours to live. Should then a criminal sentenced to death neglect to seek grace because the hour of his execu-

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tion is not yet appointed? Would he not be much more concerned lest his petition came too late, or not into the right hands?

“Again, would not a rich man be daily in fear and anxiety if he knew for certain that sooner or later he would lose all, and be plunged in the greatest poverty? I am convinced that this knowledge would embitter every hour that he enjoyed his wealth. He would not say with calm indifference, ‘I can do nothing towards it.’ He would think over ways and means, listen to the advice of his friends, in order to escape from this sad plight, and certainly would not tarry to use every possible resource. Surely, then, it applies to those who are exposed to a far greater loss—not to the loss of temporal concerns, not to the loss of earthly goods, nor a few years’ poverty and misery here below, but to the loss of their souls’ salvation, and the fearful torment of eternal damnation, ‘where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched’ (Mark ix. 43-48).

“Can it be possible that a man can be indifferent, in the face of such a loss and of such a prospect, and that because he is not sure about the moment when eternity will come upon him? What folly! And at the same time that you *excuse yourself* you *accuse God*. You say, ‘I can do nothing towards it; God must work and give all.’ If you come into the awful judgment of God, then, it is His fault, and not yours; for you could not do anything towards it, and He hasn’t done it, although He

could. Do you think you will dare to excuse yourself in this way before the judgment seat of Christ? Have you a ray of hope to escape the condemnation with your excuses, in the presence of Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire, who will demand a strict account from each, even of every secret thought, word, and work, and to whom none can answer one in a thousand? Surely not. There will it be fully manifested that you wouldn't, and not God, that He is just and you guilty in all, and that you loved the darkness better than the light. There will it be fully manifested that the excuses, with which you sought to still conscience, had a far deeper source than uncertainty as to the hour of your death.

“Yes, it is love to the world, and to your lusts, as well as, even though unperceived, an inward enmity and aversion against God, and all that's godly. You would like to be spared from eternal punishment, and would therefore be in trouble and anxiety when the last hour approaches; yet now, since you believe that your death and the coming of Christ are far off, you seek with an empty excuse to put away all that reminds you of it, until it will be too late. When you say, 'Only God can do it,' you are right; only add thereto, that God has already done everything for the salvation of the sinner. He has given His only begotten and well-beloved Son in the sinner's place; He spared Him not, that He might spare us. Christ died for the sinner, went under judgment for him, glorified God for him, and

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obtained for him an eternal redemption. He offered Himself upon the cross to God, the one sacrifice for sinners, and His precious blood is ever under the eye of God. Now every sinner is invited by God Himself, through faith in the sacrifice of Christ and the blood of reconciliation, to draw nigh and to receive grace. On God's side is no more hindrance, and every one who comes with sincere confession of his guilt—of what he is, with all his sins—is welcome.

“All is done. God has set forth a mercy-seat in Christ, and now invites lost sinners to believe and receive all freely, and to rejoice in His love. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and does not come into judgment (John v. 24). Is it not now an inexcusable indifference, if, instead of coming and finding an eternal salvation, and enjoying with thankful heart this love of God in Christ Jesus, you answer simply, ‘I can do nothing towards it’? It is nothing more nor less than pushing away this incompatible grace and love, and making God responsible for it. What a heart such a sentiment betrays!”

He was silent, and we separated. Oh, that these words may have brought earnest consideration and led him to Jesus!

Yet is it the “day of salvation” (2 Cor. vi. 2), but soon will the fearful day of judgment follow. Reader, “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” (Heb. ii. 3.)

K. B.

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?



HE old, old question which has been ringing out over this world for now more than eighteen hundred years—once God's question to the *world*—is now God's question to *you*. The world gave its answer at the cross. God is waiting for yours.

Sinners! what think YE of Christ? He *died* for sinners—for His enemies—for His murderers. Think of Him—the Stranger from heaven—who sat on the well at Sychar and offered to that thirsty soul the living water. Think of Him—the Son of God—who said to the wretched woman of Nain, “Thy sins be forgiven thee!” Think of Him—the King of kings—who stood, crowned with a crown of thorns and robed in a purple robe, on the steps of the Prætorium at Jerusalem, rejected by His own. Think of Him—the Lord of glory—crucified between two thieves, scoffed at and derided by those He came to save, praying for His murderers. Think of Him—the Spotless One—forsaken by God because He was bearing the sinner's sins. Yes, and think of Him too who will one day sit on that Great White Throne as the Judge, from whose face the earth and the heaven shall flee away. What think ye of CHRIST? Is He *anything* to you?

Christians! what think YE of Christ? Your

“A NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME.” 55

Saviour, your great High Priest, your Advocate, your Lord. Think of Him who bore your sins in His own body on the tree. Think of Him—the Man in the Glory—who ever liveth to make intercession for us. Think of Him on His Father’s throne, patiently waiting for the moment when He shall descend into the air and call His own to be with Him. Think of Him with whom we shall dwell throughout eternity. Think of Him who alone can satisfy the hearts of His people down here. What think ye of CHRIST? Is He *everything* to you?

L. J. M'N.



“A NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME.”

(Phil. ii. 9)



NAME of power! all names transcending,
Tower of strength, and Rock of might;
Shield of help, from foes defending,
Armour for the deadliest fight.

Name of peace, 'mid Sinai's thunder,
Peace, the fruit of Calvary's shame;
Wisdom, grace, delight, and wonder
Triumph in this peerless name.

Name of beauty! there beholding
Countless hues of glory shine;
Magnifying, while upholding
Every attribute divine.

Name of fragrance! richest treasure!
 Name of joy, all joys above!
 Grace and truth in fullest measure,
 Harmony of light and love.

Name of rest—of health and healing—
 Balm for e'en the sorest smart;
 God's own spring of life revealing—
 Food to satisfy the heart.

Name alone that brings salvation
 Now in this accepted day;
 Name of victory! all creation
 Soon shall own its rightful sway.

All the powers of hell can never
 Dim the lustre of this name;
 Yesterday, to-day, for ever,
 JESUS, Thou art still the same!

C. G.

A PARADOX.

“How perplexed is the course which a Christian
 must steer,
 And how strange is the path he must tread;
 For the hope of his happiness rises from fear,
 And his life he receives from the dead!
 His fairest intentions must wholly be waived,
 And his best resolutions be crossed;
 And he cannot expect to be perfectly saved,
 Till he finds himself utterly lost!”

ANON.

HOW AM I JUSTIFIED ?

HOW AM I JUSTIFIED ?

(ACTS xiii. 26-52.)



HERE are three points in this passage which are of great interest to the soul, viz., how I can get forgiveness, justification, and eternal life. They all three come out distinctly in this scripture, and are proclaimed by Paul to an audience which he had never seen before. Do you happily know, my reader, that your sins are all forgiven, that you are justified from all things, so that there can never be a charge laid against you—nay, more—that you are the possessor of eternal life? Do you ask, Can any one know this here? Yes, thank God, one can, and many also do, and two things follow, joy and the possession of the Holy Ghost—as in the last verse of our chapter.

The apostle came to Antioch in Pisidia, and they gave him a hearing, and he spoke to them of Jesus, of a Saviour. What we all need God provides, and that is a Saviour; and, my friend, if you are not saved now, it is your own fault, it is because you have not availed yourself of what God has provided—viz., a Saviour. The Jew refused this Saviour, trampled Him under foot, and then God turned to the Gentile. "I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth," is God's precious statement; and if you are a poor sinner

unsaved, there is salvation for you. God has done all He can do. He has done His part. He has sent the Saviour, now it is for you to accept Him. Who is a Saviour suited to? Lost people. Only lost sinners need Him. Are you saved? Perhaps you reply, I could not say that. Well, are you lost? Oh! you answer, I should not like to say that. That is the reason, then, that you do not know that you are saved, for the Saviour only came for the *lost*. Until you take your place among the lost you will never have the joy of knowing Jesus as your Saviour. You have heard the name of Jesus very often,—from a child, I doubt not,—but, tell me, is He yours, are you saved?

The apostle first unfolds the character of the One of whom he was speaking, and indicates His mission—"A Saviour, Jesus." He unfolds His name,—the sweetest name that ever fell on mortal ears,—Jesus. He then (ver. 26) goes on to say, "Whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent." Are you a God-fearing person who, though without the knowledge of forgiveness and salvation, is still looking towards God? "*To you* is the word of this salvation sent."

Do you say, I could not take up that ground? But have you never feared God yet? Then you will fear Him—fear Him in a day when it will be too late to taste His grace. Your days of carelessness and heedlessness will soon be over, and then you must meet God. The fear of God is a blessed thing. When I have the fear of God upon me I

am in my right place, feeling my own nothingness, and His greatness. Right fear is the doorway of blessing. Are you fearing the Lord? Then, "to you is the word of this salvation sent."

How does God save men? Is it by the law? No; for "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight" (Rom. iii. 20). Is it by our works? No; for "to him that *worketh not*, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 5). If it is "the *word* of this salvation," then the only thing the sinner has to do is to listen. You may be saved by "*words*," by "*works*" never. What does he mean by words? It is the tale of the work of another, the love and goodness of another, the life and death of another, and how God has raised Him from the dead, and put Him into glory; and you hear, and believe, and are saved before you know it.

There never was a simple look of faith to Christ, as a soul heard the story of His love, but that soul got salvation at once, though it might not know it.

Let me implore you to get into right relationship with God now. There is a breach between the world and God now. What is the breach? The grave of His Son. You may argue that He gave Himself. Yes, but this world demanded His death, they clamoured for His blood. Hatred put Him on the cross. Love took Him down, love buried Him, and love rolled a stone over His beloved body in the tomb. But who sealed Him in that tomb?

Fear. Hatred killed Him, love buried Him, and fear sealed Him in, and set a watch over the grave, and then the world went away and hoped it had got rid of Him for ever. But they have not, and they have yet to meet Him, for "God raised him from the dead," I need not say, without breaking the seal. No stone or seal could hold the Saviour in. "God raised him from the dead," and then there was an earthquake, and an angel came and rolled away the stone—not to let the Saviour out, He was out already—but to let you look in and see an empty tomb. Oh! then, I say, my Saviour is risen, my sins must be gone. When man had done his worst against God, then it was that God did His best for man. As a martyr, Jesus died for the truth of God; as a victim, He died for the sin of man. On the cross He took the cup due to man, but He took it from the hand of God. He had looked into it, fathomed it, and He took it, and drank it to the very dregs, and He holds out to you and me the cup of salvation which we have just to take and drink, and then bless His holy name for ever and ever. Precious Saviour!

In the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, we have more than the display of the love of God; we have the unfolding of His righteousness too, and there is the basis on which the gospel rests. Oh, what a love is the love of God! Let it penetrate your heart if it never has before. Christ's incarnation is the proof of His interest in man. His death is the sure proof of—more than interest, yea,

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of—His deep love, and now that God has raised Him from the dead in righteousness, and seated Him at His own right hand, God can offer to you the forgiveness of your sins, if you turn round to Him. The tide of human affection may at times rise so high as to cover for a moment the tablet on which are recorded your offences; but as the tide recedes, on that tablet of memory still remains the unerasable list, but with God the tide is ever at the flood. “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more,” He says. I look back to the cross and see my blessed Saviour dying, and faith lays hold of the work of the cross. I never can estimate its value, but God estimates it at its full value. I cannot measure the love of Christ, but I can enjoy it. The law can only convict and condemn you, but Jesus can save you, and He will if you look to Him.

What a charming unfolding of grace is here! “Be it known unto you . . . that through this man *is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.*” Is it conditional? No. It is unconditional, as free as the very air you are breathing as you read this paper. “And by him *all who believe* are justified from all things.” Another scripture says, “Being *justified freely by his grace*, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. iii. 24). Then we read in Romans v. 1, “Being *justified by faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;” and again in v. 9, “Much more then, being now *justified by his blood*, we shall be saved from

wrath through him." There is only one *way* of justification, "through this man." There are not three ways, but there are three parties to my justification. God is a party to my justification; Christ is a party to my justification; and I, most necessarily, am a party to my justification. God by His *grace*, Christ by His *blood*, and I by *faith*. The *spring* is grace, the *basis* is blood, the principle of it is *faith*. Faith is the hand that goes out, and takes the gift of God.

It is God that justifies. God is on your side now. I am justified from offences by the grace of God, the blood of Christ, and by my own faith; and then I am not only justified from offences, but I get a life in Christ that cannot offend. A believer in Christ has "justification of life" (Rom. v. 18).

Is Christ alive? God raised Him from the dead. There was a man who deserved to die, and Jesus died for him; and now there lives a Man on the throne of God, and I live in Him. I have "justification of life." Yea, more, it is "eternal life," and all I have to do is to go on my way rejoicing in Him, who is my life, and make much of Him till I see Him face to face.

Reader, shall He not be yours henceforth?

"Oh take with rejoicing from Jesus at once
The life everlasting He gives;
And know with assurance thou never canst die
Since Jesus thy righteousness lives."

W. T. P. W.

THREE WARNINGS ; OR, "WHY WILL YE DIE ?" 63

THE THREE WARNINGS ; OR,
"WHY WILL YE DIE ?"

TOWARDS the close of the year 1848, I left the headquarters of my regiment, and proceeded in command of two companies to an outpost about one hundred and fifty miles distant from the cantonment in which I was then stationed. After a few days' march, I arrived at the pretty village of S——. The little station contained only two or three Europeans besides my subaltern and myself. It was beautifully situated in a lovely undulating spot, surrounded on all sides by a magnificent teak forest, abounding with game of almost every description, from the bison to the peacock. Some time after my arrival, I gave my subaltern a month's leave to accompany two brother officers, who had come out from headquarters on a shooting excursion. Consequently I was left alone in my little cottage, upon the outskirts of a luxuriant jungle.

The events which followed enable me plainly to recognise the Lord's hand in thus leaving me for a time bereft of all companionship. His purpose was love.

Naturally extremely fond of society, and accustomed to enter deeply into all its amusements and allurements, I at first felt my solitude burdensome. But it was not long ere the Spirit

of the Lord began the glorious work of my soul's conversion.

A rustic bridge, built by my own men in their leisure hours over a deep nullah, or bed of a stream, led into a lovely spot, teeming with wild flowers, creepers, and gorgeous parasites, the dense foliage of huge forest trees forming a grateful protection from the rays of a tropical sun. Here, day by day, I often strolled along the winding tracts worn by the feet of the woodcutters and shikarees, or native hunters, and amidst the wondrous beauties which surrounded me, the Lord made His own still small voice to be heard in my soul.

In my youth I had been carefully brought up, and a Christian mother's precepts and examples were then before me ; the Word of God was in my hand, and her endeavour was ever to lead me in the paths of wisdom.

Early emancipated from home, however, by a commission in the Indian army, the counsels I had received in youth were speedily disregarded, and I eagerly entered upon the, alas ! too common, course of sin and folly. It is unnecessary to go into details : suffice it to say that the Word of God lay dusty and neglected on my book-shelf, and even the very form and semblance of religion was gradually thrown aside. This continued up to the period of which I am now writing.

During one of my solitary forest rambles, the following text recurred forcibly to my mind :—

“ Whosoever hath, to him shall be given ; and

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whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have" (Luke viii. 18).

These words I must have learnt in former days. Over and over again they rang in my ears. I paused, and some such reflections as the following ensued :—

This surely is my case—these words are indeed applicable to me. When I was a child, in a measure I feared God, and was in the habit of bending my knee to Him ; but, alas ! even this duty has been discontinued many years, and the practice wholly laid aside.

For some time I tried to banish these thoughts, but in vain. In the evening, whilst sitting after dinner, again was the text of the morning vividly present with me. I thought of my home ; I thought of my mother, and of her many earnest appeals to me, orally and by letter, urging me to turn to the Lord.

Presently it occurred to me that several whom I had known had become good men, and the thought struck me that I also might follow in their steps, and add one to their number.

Alas ! how little did I then know what really constituted a good man in the eyes of the Lord. How little did I know of the deep mystery involved in the term, " good man." Like all the unconverted, I blindly imagined that abstaining from grosser wickedness, frequenting a church, reading the Bible, and saying morning and evening prayers, fully comprised every requisite for the salvation of the soul.

I now began to offer formal prayers in my closet. This continued some days, when one night (I remember it well, it was Friday, the 16th of February 1849), as I retired to rest, the Spirit of the Lord brought to my mind a passage from one of my mother's letters, that "without a change of heart all religion was vain." I lay upon my bed for some time in deep reflection, and frequently, ere I closed my eyes in sleep, repeated these words: "Lord, change my heart!" "Lord, change my heart!" Little did I then imagine what that change of heart involved; the next morning, however, the Lord revealed it to me.

I was pacing the verandah in front of my cottage, thinking upon the subject which had lately so engrossed my attention, when on a sudden I was almost, as it were, struck to the earth. The fearful catalogue of my sins seemed to pass in dark array before me with overwhelming celerity. Tears gushed from my eyes, and I felt riveted to the spot. The events of my life, occupying nearly forty years, appeared compressed into a few moments. I was nearly stunned by the powerful agitation of my feelings, and I scarcely know how to attempt to convey to the reader the state of mind into which I was thrown.

Though in a manner crushed under the awful visitation, still a gleam of hope ran through the whole of my thoughts; for a crucified Saviour was revealed to me, and that so powerfully, that I felt He had died for the very sins then presented to

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my mind. I audibly exclaimed, "Then it's all true—this is conversion!"

That morning will never be effaced from my recollection. I have ever looked on the 17th of February 1849 as my spiritual birthday. The whole of that day and the next were passed in deep sorrow, and much prayer. The Bible, which up to that time had remained unopened, now became my constant companion. My spirit drank in its precious and glorious promises to all who believe in the Lord Jesus, and I was now enabled, by the mercy of God, in some measure to appreciate and appropriate them to myself.

On the third morning great joy filled my heart, and the Spirit itself bore witness with my spirit that I was a son of God. A change so striking had taken place, that at times I was awe-struck with the magnitude of it. Old things had passed away; behold, all things had become new? I have often since thought that had I at darkest midnight suddenly seen the sun rise in all its splendour, I could not have been more astonished than by the change effected by my conversion.

The Holy Spirit was now much with me, and led me as a little child. Peace and happiness filled my soul, and truly I went daily on my Zionward way rejoicing.

Never have I since, nor perhaps ever shall I again on this side Jordan, experience such uninterrupted joy as at this period of my Christian course; and the words of the sweet poet of Olney

have frequently been most forcibly brought to my mind:—

“Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul refreshing view
Of Jesus and His word?”

Shortly after this my subaltern and his two friends returned from their shooting excursion. I did not give them time even to take off their shooting dress, before I related to them what had happened. And earnestly indeed did I beg and entreat them to turn to the Lord.

I may here inform the reader that all three were solemnly impressed with my altered manner, and the words I was permitted to put before them. Not long afterwards two of them were markedly converted; the other put his hand to the plough, but has “looked back,” and is at present in the world. Of the two converted, one is now with the Lord Jesus, the Saviour, whom he truly loved and served ere he was called away. The other is to this day a bold and zealous servant of his Master.

I now spoke of Christ Jesus and Him crucified, in season and out of season, and He gave me souls.

The change which had been wrought within me made me very anxious for the salvation of all men, but more particularly of those with whom I had been intimately acquainted.

The case of three friends in particular caused me much thought. With them I had passed very many what I then considered happy days. And

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indeed, to my unconverted taste they were happy, for the men I allude to had many endearing qualities. All three were in the service, and the circumstances attending their death led to the writing of this tract. The officers I allude to were Captain J——, of the infantry, Captain K——, of the cavalry, and Captain E——, of the engineers.

Captain J—— was on duty within twenty miles of my detachment, and frequently paid me a visit. Of him I shall first speak.

During one of these visits, shortly after my conversion, I warmly pressed upon him the necessity of his turning to Jesus, if he would ever see life.

The Spirit of the Lord evidently strove with him, and he became for a time much softened. I noticed in his manner and conversation, moreover, a marked change. This, alas! was but transient. He came over to me one morning with a letter in his hand, saying he had received an invitation from his regiment, recently arrived at a station not far from where we were, to go down and see them. He had not met his brother officers for some time, and expressed his determination to go. Knowing his disposition, I trembled for him, and endeavoured to prevail upon him to refuse, but in vain. He went, and my fears were realised. He returned in about ten days, with every solemn impression apparently effaced.

I endeavoured to re-direct his thoughts into the current in which for a little season they had flowed. But no, his heart appeared as adamant, and he be-

came petulant and impatient whenever I spoke to him on the subject.

At this time a minister of the gospel visited our little station. I mentioned to him my anxiety about Captain J——, and in the evening, after dinner, the Rev. Mr A—— read the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, speaking very solemnly and forcibly upon it.

The next day Mr A—— was going to preach the gospel and administer the Lord's Supper in the collector's cutcherry.* I was young in the Christian life then, and did what I should never think of now, viz., urged my friend to go to the Lord's Table, adding, as far as I can remember, something to this effect, "Come to the service, and stay to the Lord's Supper. If you stay I shall have some hope of you, if otherwise I shall have none." He came to the service, and my eye was frequently upon him. At the end of the sermon I saw him remove his cap from under his seat, and then hesitatingly replace it. This he did once or twice, when suddenly he took it up and quitted the room.

Two or three days after this, I left with my detachment to rejoin the headquarters of my regiment. I took leave of my friend Captain J——, who was then in perfect health—a strong, powerful young man.

My march occupied ten or twelve days, and almost immediately after my arrival at headquarters I received a letter, which I found con-

* "Cutcherry" means "court."

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tained the fearful news of my poor friend's death. It appears he had been suddenly seized with violent inflammation, speedily inducing delirium. The doctor who attended him was a Christian man, and from his lips I have since heard that he had no reason to hope any change had taken place in him.

A few weeks after this startling event, receiving an appointment on the staff, I proceeded to the Presidency, and thence met Captain K——, of the cavalry, who had just returned from England. At my first interview I put before him the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, and used every argument I was master of, in the hope of being the instrument in the Lord's hand of saving his soul. He turned the subject into ridicule, and I left much cast down. A few days afterwards, however, a gleam of hope beamed upon me. I received from him a note, saying he had been thinking over the subject of our conversation, and would like to hear from me further on the matter. I have often doubted, from the sequel of our interview, whether my poor friend wrote to me in sincerity or in jest.

I visited him. His manner at first appeared changed and earnest. We were some time together, and I tried much to lead him to Jesus, but was eventually obliged to leave him, as he made use of a fearfully blasphemous expression, in reference to something I had just said to him.

This unhappy meeting between Captain K—— and myself was our last on earth. He died, I think, about three weeks afterwards at B——.

The third friend I have mentioned, Captain E——, was in England at the time of my conversion, but I had written to him very urgently about his soul. His reply was light, and gave me little hope of success. With Captain E—— I had been more intimate than with either of the others, and I anxiously looked forward to seeing him, when I hoped to be more successful orally than with my pen. In a few months he arrived from England. At first we were together several times, he coming to my house; but gradually he became offended, and shunned my society.

The last time we met was one morning out walking, when he told me he was leaving the Presidency the next day. I took him aside, and affectionately urged upon him the necessity of fleeing to the Lord Jesus ere it may be too late. Among other things, he said, "You, I suppose, consider yourself one of God's elect." I told him by mercy I was so, and that he might be one also, if he would close with the gracious offers of the Lord Jesus Christ. His reply I shall not give. Though not so blasphemous as Captain K——'s, it was thoughtless and wicked. I shook hands for the last time with poor E——.

I made no memorandum of the date, but, as far as I now recollect, it was not many days afterwards that I saw his death recorded in the newspaper!

I do not know the particulars of his last moments. All I heard was, that he died suddenly

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from an affection of the throat, and I have no reason to believe that any spiritual change had taken place since our last interview.

It is said, "Truth is stranger than fiction:" is it not forcibly illustrated in these "Three Warnings"?

I have given a simple narrative of actual occurrences. I will not dare to say that the Lord had permitted me to make the last offer of mercy to these poor souls ere sudden destruction came upon them; I leave the reader to judge: but it has ever been strongly impressed upon my mind that it was, in each case, the last effort with the fruitless tree ere He said, "Cut it down!"

I know that of those into whose hands this little book may fall, some will say that it is a fiction got up by psalm-singing hypocrites—others, that if the events did happen, it was by mere chance.

No, dear reader, no! What I have written is solemn truth, and will, I doubt not, be recognised and remembered by many; for I have often told the story myself, when urging upon the unconverted the uncertainty of life, and the necessity of fleeing for refuge to the only hope set before them in Christ Jesus.

These things are ordered, and ordered in mercy, to warn sinners that *now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation.

Put not down this paper lightly; it contains an awful, a solemn, a true picture of God's visitation upon those who refuse His proffered grace!

“Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?”

“Come, let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

Remember, O remember, while it is called to-day, the Lord Jesus stands with open arms ready to receive you. He will never, never cast you out; the way is made all clear, the uttermost farthing is paid. There is nothing for you to do; Jesus has done all.

Look at 2 Cor. v. 19, 20, and there you will read, “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” And Paul continues: “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”

Here is the mighty God Himself beseeching sinners to come and be friends with Him, through Jesus the Son of His love.

Then “come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”

Will you refuse? Think not that you cannot go just as you are, and at this very moment. Think not that you must first repent and be sorry for your sin. Go to Jesus; repentance is His gift. (See Acts v. 31.) “Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.”

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You will never know godly sorrow for sin until you go to Jesus. Go to Him, as expressed in the two following lines :—

" Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

Go to Him, dear reader ; He is a loving, He is a tender Saviour, and then shall you know the wonders of the great change of conversion. Then shall you know " the secret of the Lord."

I urge upon you, Go to Jesus. Let not the idea, that you may possibly not be one of His elect, give you a moment's uneasiness. All are His elect who simply believe in Him !

Dr Chalmers used to complain that many preachers and writers so laid down the gospel, that a sinner could not take it up. What they stated sounded very like the gospel, but yet it contained no "*glad tidings*" ; for it still left the sinner something to do, or to feel, before he could consider himself qualified to partake of its joys. It affirmed a certain kind of freeness in the gospel, but so hampered with conditions, cautions, and restrictions, that no sinner, *just as a sinner*, could think himself at liberty to enter at once into peace with God. It did not bring salvation nigh, or at least so nigh as to be in contact with the sinner ; it left a gulf, or at least a space, between him and the Saviour. It set forth repentance, contrition, mortification, as pre-requisites, to the acquiring of which the sinner was to direct all his efforts before he was warranted to throw himself into the arms of the Saviour.

It was jealous of a speedy settlement between the sinner and his God; nay, it warned men against such a thing as a delusion. It made doubting the evidence of believing, as if it had been written, not "he that believeth is justified," but "he that doubteth is justified." "For a man to doubt was the essence of true humility; to continue doubting was the mark of increasing humility; to fall into despondency, so as to conclude that God had forsaken him, and that his day of grace was gone, was proof of the deepest lowliness of spirit that could be conceived. This despondency was the true state of soul in which he could best acquire that 'poverty of spirit,' that 'meekness,' that 'pureness of heart,' by obtaining which he would at length find himself qualified to come to Christ, and entitled to the peace of the cross!"

But, dear reader, all this is the very reverse of God's plan. Hear the words of the Lord Jesus Himself: "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).

Again: "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).

Denham Smith has said with regard to this text, that it is as though the Lord let down from heaven three golden links in the chain of His mercy.

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These links are—*Hearing, believing, having.* But SATAN forges the three iron fetters—*Doing, feeling, praying.*

Think not, my friend, for one moment that I would counsel your not praying. Prayer is the *life and breath of the Christian's soul*; but you must *believe* before your prayer is acceptable to God.

"He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son" (1 John v. 10, 11).

You will, I am sure, admit, that to make God a liar is a fearful thing. Only believe, and you shall have joy and peace. Then will your prayer be as incense, and the lifting up of your hands as the evening sacrifice.

Man is ever prone *to do* something for himself—too proud to accept as a free gift that which Jesus has done for him. Set a man the hardest task, and tell him that the accomplishment of this would save his soul, and I verily believe he would endeavour to perform it. Man's own idea ever is—*Doing.* Mark the question put to the Lord Jesus in *John vi. 28, 29*: "What shall we do, that we might *work* the *works* of God?" Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye *believe* on him whom he hath sent."

When the jailer at Philippi said to Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" did they

answer, "Go and pray," or give him any other of the too numerous replies made to anxious souls? No; their words were, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." And what was the result? You will find it in Acts xvi. 34.

He rejoiced.

The same shall happen to you, dear reader, if you will follow his steps. *Only believe.*

Close then, this moment, with the offers of Jesus. He came "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." If, dear reader, you feel yourself a sinner, it is enough. Go to Jesus, say to Him, "I do believe, blessed Lord. Thou didst die upon the cross for my sins, and upon Thy precious head was laid the iniquity of us all. I accept Thy gift of eternal life. Give me Thy Spirit, and henceforth give me grace to follow Thee whithersoever Thou leadest."

Be sure, yes, be sure, the Spirit of Jesus will never lead you into the company of the *worldly*, the *unconverted*, except you go solely and entirely as a missionary for Him.

The moment you give yourself to Jesus, you must come out from the world and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing. Oh, what fearful mistakes many dear children of God even make upon this subject! They seem entirely to forget that there are only two classes—the *converted* and the *unconverted*, the children of God and the children of the wicked one.

"LET HIM ALONE."

79

In conclusion, let me urge upon you to delay not a moment; wait not in the vain hope of being able to lay aside the sin which may easily beset you, but go to Jesus. He is the author, and He is the finisher of our faith.

For a man to suppose he can leave off his sins before going to Jesus is one of Satan's most subtle and dangerous delusions. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; and it is only by being united to Him that we are enabled to resist temptation, and run with patience the race set before us.

May the Lord Jesus bless this paper to the souls of very many into whose hands it may fall; and to Him be all the glory now and for ever. ANON.

 ❖

 "LET HIM ALONE."



VARIOUS are the ways by which the wandering soul is brought to Christ.

Proud Saul of Tarsus, struck down by the light above the brightness of the sun at high noon-tide, is instantaneously converted into the slave and prisoner of the Lord. Thrice happy, willing bondage!

The rude fisherman bending over his net-mending, the grasping publican sitting at the receipt of custom, hear the words, "*Follow me,*" and the whole current of their lives is changed.

Lydia's heart opened to the word of God, as the

fallow ground drinks in the spring shower; while to awaken the soul-slumbers of the Philippian jailer the earth is shaken.

The case we are about to relate strikingly exhibits the grace of God in dealing with the soul.

The subject of our remarks was employed as an under-shepherd, by a godless, careless man, amid the Cheviot Hills,—the border-range between England and Scotland. The young man was just entering into the business of life, and he threw himself with all his soul into the problem of how to get rich quickly. Do not think a Cheviot shepherd lad has no such temptations. True, he has not the opportunity of gambling on the Stock Exchange, and the thousand and one temptations of busy city-life. Still he had his temptations, and they were, no doubt, as glittering, attractive, and decoying as anybody's to him.

The keen eye of his master noticed the incipient stages of cupidity and avarice. Somehow or other the old man had a great knowledge of the letter of Scripture, and, thinking to give his lad a word of advice, repeated to him that verse in Hosea iv. 17, "Ephraim is joined to idols: *let him alone.*"

The word spoken in reference to earthly matters proved to be the arrow of conviction concerning eternal realities.

What would the use of his money be to him if God left him alone? What about eternity without God? How could he meet the judgment to come in his own strength? No doubt such questions as

these would rise up in the lad's heart and demand an answer.

What a blessed thing it is when the soul is awakened to a sense of sin and judgment to come, and to thoroughly overhaul itself in the presence of God! This exercise led to his conversion to God.

He found the Word of God revealed a present, personal Saviour. He discovered that God was for him—not against him. He learned that instead of God leaving him alone, He was ready to be a Father to him.

There surely is no need in this land of Bibles, to prove the truth of the foregoing paragraph. Read the four wondrous gospels, and these truths lie upon the surface. The whole matter seems to be concentrated and gloriously summed up in the truth of Romans iii. 26:—"That he (God) might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Light and love, mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, seem all to be perfectly met and eternally satisfied in God's new character, as expressed in the words "*just, and the justifier.*"

Dear reader, this is an intensely solemn thought, this being left alone by God. Think of Christ—the holy spotless Lamb of God—shrouded in thick darkness at high noon-tide, uttering that awful cry of deepest anguish, "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!*" High-priest and ruler, soldiers and mob, Jew and Gentile, led on by Satan—all raising their cry of hatred against the most wondrous Benefactor the world ever saw. But above all this,

and far beyond all this, God forsaking Him, and striking that blow which light demanded and love sustained. What stupendous solitude, what an awful forsaking!

Then He cries that victor-shout, "It is finished!" and

"Death by dying slew,"

and the way for God to be just, and to justify the vilest sinner, is opened up. All praise to His thrice-blessed name throughout all eternity. Amen.

Beloved reader, close in at once with God's offers of mercy. His love follows you this moment; but if once the boundary line of time is passed by you, unsaved, unconverted, then a holy God must punish you for eternity. No gladsome strains of gospel love, no peace-giving messages of redemption, are heard in the dismal depths of hell.

Now is the acceptable year of the Lord, *now* is deliverance to the captives preached (see Luke iv. 15-19).

Before the shadows of death cross your path, before the Lord comes for His own, and shuts the door of salvation for you for ever, come to Christ. Let nothing hinder you, and then you will be able to exclaim like Ephraim, "What have I to do with idols? I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir-tree: from me is thy fruit found" (Hosea xiv. 8).

A. J. P.

LAW AND GRACE.



FROM thickest darkness, 'mid the light-
 ning's glare,
 And the loud thunder, bursting from
 the cloud,
 When God came down in fire, and the
 dread blare

Of the great trumpet sounded long and loud ;
 When Sinai quaked, and Israel thrilled with awe,
 Then God proclaimed aloud His holy Law.

Deeply important and most solemn hour,
 When by Jehovah—Lord of earth and heaven—
 Mid awful pomp, and manifested power,
 That Law, so holy, just, and good, was given !
 But say, what was our gracious God's design
 In giving thus to man His Law divine ?

Speak, hoary Mount, on whose dread summit God
 Sat throned in clouds ; can thy commandments
 bless

The lost and guilty ? Can thy holy code
 Furnish frail man with perfect righteousness ?
 It can, and does reveal sin's awful ill.
 To cleanse the guilty sinner hath it skill ?

Ah no ! the righteous law can only curse
 Unrighteous man, when placed beneath its sway ;
 He is not subject to it. and still worse,
 He neither can nor will its hests obey.

Offending worm ! he surely must be trod
Beneath the feet of an offended God.

But, joyful news ! 'tis not to Sinai dread
That God commandeth sinners frail to come ;
That were a call destruction's path to tread,
And thus ensure weak man's eternal doom.
God opes to all the riches of His grace,
Which from the soul can every sin efface.

O truth most precious ! 'tis the grace of God
That brings salvation to the lost, to all,
Which, by removing sin's tremendous load,
Undoes the evil of the primal fall ;
Nay more, it brings us, now redemption's won,
As near to God as His beloved Son.

Dost thou ask how ? From heaven the Lord
descends,
Leaving in glory bright His vacant place,
To Calvary's cross His lonely way He tends,
To ope the floodgates of eternal grace.
He dies ! the gates are opened ! far and wide
Through the dark world now flows the healing tide.

Thus God His love commendeth ; when in sin
We lay supine, 'twas then that Jesus died
To cleanse us, save us, and our love to win,
That we might dwell for ever at His side.
Come to the living waters ! come with speed ;
'Tis grace alone that meets the sinner's need.

H. M.

FOR HIS SON.

MATT. xxii. 1-14.



WE cannot read the first sentence of the instructive but solemn parable contained in Matt. xxii. 1-14, without being struck with the words, "*for his son.*" It is a likeness of the kingdom of heaven, setting forth the activity of God's grace, first to the Jew, and then to the Gentile, and their treatment of it. But what was this grace for? Why are the invites sent out? Why is the wedding to be furnished with guests? That the *king's son* might be honoured. "A certain king, which made a marriage [or wedding feast] *for his son.*" The meaning is plain. It illustrates God's preparation of a feast for the honour of His Son, Jesus our Lord, and He must have guests. Three times, therefore, He sends His servants forth. Let us see what reception they met with, and who are the worthy ones.

First, the king sent forth his servants to *call* them that were bidden to the wedding. This had its answer in the mission of the twelve apostles, and seventy disciples sent forth to preach to the Jews (Matt. x. 5-7; Luke xi.). They were the privileged nation, who had long been the bidden ones of God. Now they hear His distinct call to come to the wedding. But how do they treat it? Solemnly the Lord adds, "*they would not come.*"

D

Following their own will, the Jews as a nation deliberately refused the call. They *would not* come. How many are like them now!

But "Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage" (v. 4). Are the seats at the festal board to be unoccupied? Is the king to provide the feast, and none partake? Will the king honour his son, and none join with him? In condescending grace, again he sends *other* servants forth, not to other people, but to the same, taking no notice of the slight already offered. "Tell them," said he, "which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner, &c. . . . come . . ." Surely they will respond now. But no. What! still refuse? Yes. "They made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: and the remnant [or the rest] took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them" (vv. 5, 6).

And what did God do, beloved reader, when the Jews slighted *His* call? Did He revenge the insult, and close His palace doors. Nay, but again He sent forth other servants into their very midst to tell them of the provisions of His grace. After the death and resurrection of His Son, again He sends by His servants to the bidden ones, saying, "Come to the marriage." Servant after servant was sent forth by the Holy Ghost to testify to the Jews of the finished work of the Lord Jesus, and

to tell them of the feast of fat things that God had prepared for those who came. "All things are ready, come." Forgiveness of sin*, justification, the righteousness of God, eternal life; yea, everything the poor guilty Jew needed, were all ready. Nothing to do, nothing to pay. The day for doing had passed away. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness" (Rom. x. 4).

Those who had already refused the call of God, are again pressed to accept His proffered grace. But all in vain. The nation at large spurned the message. Some made light of it, trifled with it; treating it with carelessness and indifference, or scorn and contempt, and went *their ways*. And what were they? To the farm and the merchandise. Things right enough in themselves, but wrong when followed to the exclusion of the claims of God. *Their ways*; one to his land, and another to his commerce. Things by which men seek to enrich themselves. Ah! and 'tis the way of the Gentile world, as well as the Jewish. "But my ways are not as your ways, saith the Lord" (Isa. lv. 8).

My reader, let me pause here a moment, and ask you, "What are you following?" Your ways? or God's? How are you treating the message of grace, for it comes to you now? Think of the conduct of these foolish men. The king *made* a wedding feast for his son, and they *made* light of it. And their sin found them out, as we shall see.

And the remnant did not stop there, but took

his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. The stoning of Stephen, the slaying of James (Acts vii. 59, xii. 1, 2), witness to the exact fulfilment of the parable.

But God has said that "He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Prov. xxix. 1). This searching scripture found a solemn fulfilment in the judgment that soon fell upon that guilty people. "But when," continued Jesus in the parable, "the king heard thereof, he was wroth : and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city" (v. 7). And as it came to pass with the bidden guests, so also, when the Jews had twice refused the calls of grace, judgment shortly ensued. The wrath of God overtook them. God sent His armies to execute it. Titus and the Roman armies were the instruments wielded by God to carry out His word. "Vengeance is mine ; I will repay, saith the Lord." Awful indeed was the judgment that fell upon Jerusalem. Masses of the guilty people were slain, the city destroyed, the temple burnt. He *destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.*

But the certain king made *a marriage for his son*. Is he to be disappointed ? Is his purpose to be frustrated ? Are there not any to be found worthy to honour him ? The bidden ones refuse ; the privileged go their way. Ah ! but guests the king must have. "Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden

were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage." And "go ye into all the world," saith the Lord, "and preach the gospel *to every creature.*" Again, "Seeing ye put it from you," said Paul to the Jews, "and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, *we turn to the Gentiles*" (Acts xiii. 46). The feast is prepared; all things ready. The Jews as a mass refuse; "but through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles" (Rom. xi. 11). "Go ye therefore," said the king to his servants. And go ye therefore, saith the Lord to His. Go into the thoroughfares of the highways, and "*as many as ye shall find*, bid to the marriage."

Blessed news! Joyful news! Sinners, hear it. It concerns all, and therefore, reader, concerns you. *As many as ye shall find.* Go, servant of the Lord, go where men congregate, and tell out the news. 'Tis a day of *glad tidings.* "Unto you, O men, I call," saith Wisdom (Prov. viii. 4). Ye who are busied with the farm and the merchandise, here's a message for you. God sends it; His servants bear it. What is it? He has prepared a wedding-feast *for His Son.* Mark, for *His Son.* And you are invited. Me invited? says one. Yes, all, everybody. Everybody everywhere, and anybody anywhere. The king said, *as many as ye shall find.* So it must mean you. Then will you accept the invitation? Will you *come?* The doors of the heavenly palace will soon be closed. *Now* they are open wide. Will *you* come to the

feast? You will find there all you want, and all you need. The feast is prepared, the robe provided, the invitation world-wide, free to all. God invites you to the marriage; and again I press it upon you, "*Will you come?*" Yet there is room. Thousands, tens of thousands, have come. Now, will *you*?

"God's house is filling fast; Yet there is room.
Some guest will be the last; Yet there is room.
Yes, soon salvation's day
To you will pass away,
Then grace no more will say, Yet there is room."

"So those servants," continues the parable, "went out into the highways, and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests" (v. 10). And what have the Lord's servants done these last nineteen centuries? Like the servants of the king, they have done more than they were told, and done it very badly. What do you mean? some one may say. Why, all that they were told to do *here* was to bid, or invite. But instead of that they gathered (or rather, brought) together all, bad and good, and let one in without a wedding-garment. And what do we see as we look round upon Christendom? Ah! plenty of guests. The wedding furnished. Bad, good, and indifferent, brought together under the name of Christ; *professedly* in the light, and feasting on the riches of His grace; but how many without the wedding-garment! But the reckoning day will come, when

the professor will be unmasked, and judgment overtake the Christless soul.

“And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (vv. 11-13).

I have often pictured this scene in my own mind. Let me bring it before you. And oh! my reader, if you are without Christ, may God in His rich grace use it to your salvation, ere it be too late.

Picture to yourself a magnificent hall, illumed with myriads of lights, furnished from end to end with long rows of tables, laden with the richest provisions. Seated at the tables row after row of guests, assembled to do honour to the king's son. All taste of the rich viands, when suddenly a door opens, and the king himself enters. With flashing eye he takes in the whole scene at a glance, as every face is instinctively turned towards him. One of the guests arrests his searching gaze, and quails beneath it. Every eye now turns to this poor trembling one. Is there not a cause? What is it? Why, he has failed to clothe himself in the garment suited and provided for the occasion. “Friend,” says the king, “how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment?” Graciously

the king addresses him, calling him "Friend," giving him the opportunity to defend his conduct. But, conscious that he himself is alone to blame for his folly and neglect, *he was speechless*. No excuse falls from his lips. He has none. "Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

And now the moral of all this. My reader, a solemn reckoning day is at hand. "Behold, the judge standeth before the door" (Jas. v. 9). Mere profession is utterly worthless. God must have reality. You may have heard the invitation of grace, and professed to have received and accepted it. You may have taken your place as a nominal Christian, and, as we read in Hebrews vi., been once enlightened, and *tasted* of the heavenly gift, &c. But, with all this, if you are not clothed with the wedding-garment suited for the presence of the King of kings, all is vain. Better, like the Jews, to have spurned the call, and gone your own way, than prove to be a mere professor and hypocrite in the day of the Lord.

The king came in to *see the guests*. And a *guest* was cast out! Weigh these solemn words, I beseech you. How will you meet the eye of God in the day of judgment? What excuse will you make, if you have failed to put on the wedding-garment? You are not told to purchase one. It cost the precious blood of Christ. You are not told to make one. God has provided it in grace. It is ready-

made, and free for all who come. Have you put it on? If you take your place at the feast in your own robes, without one, God will see you, and say, "Friend, how camest *thou* in hither, not having a wedding-garment?" Convicted then, when it is too late! guilty, when there is no remedy! clothed in the rags of your own self-righteousness, with a conscience unpurged by the blood of Christ, you must stand Christless and speechless in the presence of the Judge.

Take your place now with your mouth stopped, a lost and guilty sinner before God, and He will justify you freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Rom. iii. 19-24). "For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. v. 21). Thus will you be clothed with a wedding-garment, even the righteousness of God in Christ. But stand before Him guilty at that day, without Christ, and eternal judgment must be your doom.

Awful sentence! Again I beseech you, weigh it ere it be too late. The Lord meant what He said. Sceptical doubts may arise in your deceived heart. But His word is for ever settled in heaven (Psa. cxix. 89). And though it be a parable, yet is it a perfect picture of a solemn and dread reality. Sinner, professor, beware! lest this be your fate. "Then said the king to the servants, Bind him . . . and cast him into outer darkness."

Such is the fearful portion of a Christless pro-

fessor. Bound hand and foot, so that he can neither extricate himself nor by any means flee, taken away from that bright scene of glory, and cast out of the presence of Him who is Light, and in whom is no darkness at all, into outer darkness, the blackness of darkness for eternity (Jude 13). *There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Dear reader, lovingly and earnestly I plead with you again, How is it between your soul and God? Are you clothed, saved? Do not shirk the question. Pass it not off with a careless smile upon your face, but your conscience ill at ease. Be honest with yourself now, and with Him. Maybe you are a nominal Christian, one of the many thousands attending the outward ordinances of the profession of Christ. But have you the wedding-garment on? Are you *in Christ*, clothed with the righteousness of God? Is your profession a mere sham, or a living reality? "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7). But, praise be to His name, it is not yet too late. Cast aside your rags, your own righteousness, and submit to God's. Believe God, and righteousness is reckoned to you, without works (Rom. iv. 6). Believe on the Son of God, and everlasting life is yours now. For "he that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life" (John iii. 36).

The king made a marriage *for his son*. He must have guests. But he will come in *to see them*. And woe to the man that comes in there without

the garment. "For many are called, but few are chosen" (v. 14). Beloved reader, you are invited. Yet there is room. Do you accept it? Have you come? Are you a guest? *Have you the wedding-garment on?*

"Louder and sweeter sounds the loving call;
Come, lingerer, come; enter that festal hall.
Room, room, still room,
Oh! enter, enter now,
Ere night that gate may close, and seal thy doom,
Then the last, low, long cry, 'No room, no room!'
'No room, no room!'
Oh! woful cry, 'no room!'"

E. H. C.

FAITH OR FEELINGS—WHICH ?



IN the month of June 1887 I had been staying in the town of ———, and, in visiting amongst the poor, came across an old woman who was evidently concerned about the salvation of her soul, as she wept much when I spoke to her about the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work. But I found that she was not occupied with a *person*, but with her own *feelings*; for to almost every question I asked, she replied she did not *feel* this, or that, or the other, and it seemed to me to be altogether a question of *feeling* with her. After presenting the truth in various ways to her, and still receiving

the same kind of response, I endeavoured to fix her attention by the following story :—

A woman who had been ill for some time, and who had a great objection to send for a doctor, was at length induced by a friend to do so. The doctor came, and after a few questions, he told the woman that he knew exactly what was wrong, and that he would send her one bottle of medicine, which she must take in one dose, and it would cure her, and that in two days he would call again. The medicine came, and instead of being taken was put away into a cupboard. The day but one after the doctor called again, and was greatly astonished to find that the woman, instead of being cured, was worse; but he was greatly annoyed when he learned that his medicine had not been taken, and when also the woman told him that she wanted to feel a little better before she took it, and that then she intended to take it.

After reasoning with her, and endeavouring to show her the folly of such a course, he left her, after eliciting a promise that she would take the medicine, and saying that he would again visit her.

The doctor came for the third time, fully expecting to find his patient quite well. His disappointment was great, however, when he found her still worse, and that the medicine had not yet been taken; and when the woman told him that she did not believe the medicine could do her any good, for a friend had called and told her that if she would only rouse herself up she would soon feel

better and would shortly be quite well, the doctor became then very angry, and said to the woman, "My good woman, why did you send for me if you had no confidence in my skill, and why did you insult me by not taking my medicine? And now let me tell you, that unless you do take it, you will most assuredly die,"—and with that he took up his hat and left the house. When the doctor had gone, the woman began to be frightened, and after a little reflection upon her foolish conduct she took the medicine and was quite cured.

The woman I was addressing listened with the most rapt attention, as I continued to say, "Now this woman wanted to make a saviour of her feelings, instead of having faith in the doctor and his remedy, and so do you; you want to be saved, you want to *feel* saved before you *are* saved, and that is impossible. You know you are sick, and that you have been bitten by 'that old serpent, the devil,' and that the wound is fatal; and you know that God is the only one that has skill, and the right remedy to meet your case, and that if you do not by *faith* take His remedy, which is Christ, God's beloved Son, that you will die, and be eternally damned, and still *you* are trying to be saved by your feelings. You want to *feel* better, like thousands of others, before you have accepted God's medicine for your sin-sick soul." When I got to this point, the eyes of the woman suddenly lighted up, and a change came over her face, as she exclaimed, "I see it all now; it's faith, not feelings; it's Christ,

not myself." After thanking the Lord for His delivering grace, I left her.

And now, my reader, how is it with you? I am convinced there are thousands of sin-sick souls who know *about* the remedy, but the devil comes and whispers in their ears, "Rouse yourself up, say your prayers, turn over a new leaf, go to church, chapel, or meeting, build almshouses, give to the poor, and do the best you can, and you will soon feel better." My dear reader, do pray close your ears to all these lies of the devil, who only mocks you, for let me tell you that God's remedy does not make a person *better*, it makes him **QUITE WHOLE, perfectly cured, EVERLASTINGLY SAVED!** The skill of the Great Physician cannot fail. He cannot prescribe a remedy which may fail, He will heal you perfectly without money, and without price. Reader, you are ruined by sin. Have **YOU** accepted God's remedy—**CHRIST?**

"If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all."

H. W. S.



THE resurrection of Christ is the attestation on God's part of His perfect delight in the work of His Son, a work by which God has been glorified, sin put away, death annulled, the grave opened, and the believing sinner brought to God in divine righteousness; and further, Christ's resurrection is the pattern of that of all who are Christ's at His coming—they will be raised in glory, and like Jesus.

W. T. P. W.

"MUCH SOAP."

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"MUCH SOAP."



OW much dirt there is in the world! And how rival manufacturers affirm that they produce the best article for cleansing it away! Judging by advertisements and placards, this is a day of "much soap."

But there is another kind of pollution much more difficult to get rid of than outward dirt; it is *moral* pollution. This engages the thoughts of wise men and philanthropists. The question of which they seek a solution is—How can we cleanse men's minds, so that their habits and ways shall be beneficial, and not detrimental, to the rest of mankind? It is a difficult question, as they own, but various schemes are proposed and discussed. Again we might say, although in a different sense, it is a day of "much soap."

But GOD'S eye rests upon us. If we are so polluted before each other's eyes, what are we before His? It is written of Him, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Hab. i. 13). Isaiah the prophet saw His throne, high and lifted up, with the seraphim flying before Him with veiled faces and feet, and as they flew they cried ceaselessly, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts." Before that thrice-holy God Isaiah shrank abashed, and cried, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean

lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isa. vi. 1-5). Dear reader, have you had consciously to do with this holy God, and have you found yourself defiled and unclean by sin?

Here comes the most important of all questions: What shall be done to render the soul of man clean before God? How then can man be justified before God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?

Men have various answers. Some speak of reformation, and the leading a better life. Some speak of good works, as they judge, and acts of kindness to men. Others urge the ordinances of the Church, and religious zeal. Truly we might say, even with respect to this, it is a day of "much soap."

But now hear the word of God. "Though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee *much soap*, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God" (Jer. ii. 22). All man's most earnest efforts, most diligent observances, can never cleanse away one guilty stain. If *works* could have atoned for sins, then should the works of the law have perfected us. But it is written, "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. ii. 16, &c.). If *ordinances* could have saved, then should the sacrifices of the law have given us peace. But it is written, "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. x. 4). O reader, if you are trying the "nitre" of works,

and the "much soap" of religious ordinances, be warned; it is all in vain; your iniquity is still marked before God, and eternal destruction in His wrath is before you.

But what saith the Scripture? "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). Oh what blessed news! That which nitre and much soap cannot effect, is accomplished by His precious blood. Those who were seeking blessing by works of the law, and who thus brought themselves under its curse, may now say, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. iii. 13). Those who were diligently occupied with the religious offerings which left them as far away from God as ever, may now say, "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 14). Every poor sinner who believes in Jesus may re-echo with joyful heart, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." ALL SIN! It leaves not a stain behind. Full atonement has been made by it. The claims of God's righteousness have been fully met. God's holiness has been fully vindicated. His nature has been perfectly glorified. The poor sinner who believes is eternally blessed.

In conclusion, we ask you then, dear reader, In which is all *your* trust? The "much soap" of your own efforts and ordinances, or the precious blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son?

J. R.

“PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD.”



“S I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. xiv. 11, 12).

God even now gives us in His Word His estimate of the different classes of men that make up the human family. So that even before we reach the place where every knee has to bow, and every tongue has to confess, we may know how we stand before Him. And this He does, that our consciences may be reached, and, in His goodness, led to repentance; or our souls, already feeling their need, may find peace in believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

We will briefly look at a few of these classes.

1st. *The Atheist.*—An atheist is one who denies the existence of God; the testimony of God in creation, in government, in redemption, is all deliberately rejected, which leaves the individual to the workings of his own mind and the conceit of his own heart. A man that closes his eyes to everything, as a natural consequence, can see nothing.

“The owllet atheism,
Sailing on obscene wings athwart the noon,
Drops his blue fringed lids, and holds them close,
And hooting at the glorious sun in heaven,
Cries out, *Where is it?*”

God specially designates that man a fool. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psa. xiv. 1).

2nd. The Infidel.—An infidel is one who, though he may believe in the existence of a God, does not believe that anything can be known of Him, or that He has revealed His mind to us in any way. He is to such the unknown, and the unknowable. Atheism is Satan's attack upon the Being of God; while in infidelity, the chief point of attack is the Word as the revelation of God to us.

Thus all the past acts of God, as stated in the Scriptures, are denied, such as creation, the flood, and His dealings with Israel; while the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, are ridiculed. But as there can be no honest atheists, neither can there be any honest infidels.

Of the former, it is written, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. i. 20). Of the latter it is written, "*For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men*" (2 Pet. iii. 4-7).

Solemn words these. Thus we see the poor atheist to be *without excuse*, and the infidel to be *willingly ignorant*. But the time is fast approaching, when "they shall know whose words shall stand, mine, or theirs" (Jer. xliv. 28).

In the scripture just quoted we find a clear statement of creation by the word of God, of the flood by the word of God, of the dissolution of the heavens and the earth, and the judgment and perdition of ungodly men, by the word of God. The Christian judges already whose word will stand, "mine, or theirs"; for he knows that the "word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isa. xl. 6-8).

"A glory gilds the sacred page,
Majestic as the sun;
It gives a light to every age,
It gives, but borrows none."

3rd. The Covetous.—"Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth" (Isa. v. 8). "I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (Luke xii. 19, 20.) "For this ye know, that no covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. v. 5).

4th. The Loose Liver.—"Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow

strong drink ; that continue until night, till wine inflame them ! And the harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts " (Isa. v. 11, 12).

5th. The Unconverted Church-Member.—"If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matt. xv. 14). "Except a man be born again (from above), he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3). "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke xvii. 32). Dear friend, let no such delusion, as joining a church, lead you to suppose that you are all right. "Ye *must* be born again" of God, in order to see and enter the kingdom of God. Let no blind leader lead you blindly to hell. There are thousands to-day who are going religiously to hell. Beware ! Remember that Lot's wife had an outward religion, and was connected with a saint of God, but perished with the Sodomites.

6th. The Self-Righteous.—The following verse will describe the awful consequence of a sinner refusing the salvation of God through Christ, and trusting to his own righteousness. "And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment ; and he said unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment ? *And he was speechless.* Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. xxii. 11-13).

7th. *The Doubting Christian.*—Hear ye the word of the Lord: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that *heareth* my word, and *believeth* on him that sent me, HATH everlasting life, and SHALL NOT come into condemnation (or judgment); but *is* passed from death unto life” (John v. 24).

Friend, do you hear this word of the Son of God? Is it not enough to scatter to the winds all your doubts and fears, and give you blessed peace with God, and assurance that you are saved? Look at the blessed consequence of *hearing* and *believing*: 1st, “Hath everlasting life;” 2nd, “shall not come into judgment;” 3rd, “but is passed from death unto life.”

Do you believe what the Son of God says? You say you saw yourself a sinner years ago, and looked away to Jesus for salvation, but all along you have lacked the peace and assurance that some have. Your cry is, “I find myself just as bad as ever.”

Yes, dear friend, and I can answer, “You will *never* find self any better.” You have yet to learn that faith is an outward, and not an inward, look. It looks to Christ, and trusts Him, who died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. It believes His blessed word, and rests assured of pardon, and present and eternal acceptance in Christ. God looks at the blood of Jesus, and sees our sins washed away; He looks at Christ, and sees us accepted in Him, “made the righteousness of God in Him,”—in Him, where there is no condemnation, and from whom there is no separation.

"*Christ is all!*" Christ who became incarnate, who died, and in death made atonement for sin, and in doing so accomplished our redemption; Christ risen again from the dead, and glorified at the right hand of God. I repeat, it is not the improvement of self, or works of righteousness, that save, but this blessed Christ. Faith in Him secures all the blessed results of His death. "Accepted in the Beloved: in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. i. 6, 7).

To His blessed worthy name be all the praise!

E. A.



"I DON'T LIKE THAT TEXT."



WHILE waiting one day in a shop, to speak about some texts which I had taken to be framed, the young person who waited upon me opened them out on the counter. As she was not able to give the information I desired, I turned in another direction until Mr A——, who keeps the shop, would be at liberty.

In a few minutes the lady to whom he was speaking approached the counter on which the texts lay, having evidently made some remarks about them, for Mr A—— brought one—"TO HIM THAT WORKETH NOT, BUT BELIEVETH ON HIM THAT JUSTIFIETH THE

“UNGODLY, HIS FAITH IS COUNTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS”—to me, asking, “Is that text in the Bible?” On my replying in the affirmative, he asked where it was to be found. On telling him that it was the 5th verse of Romans iv., the lady turned to me saying, “It would do to *die* with—not to live by.” “Oh, yes,” I said, “to live by; what could be better?”

This recalled a little circumstance in connection with that very portion of God’s precious word, which I related to her. When at Sandgate, some time before, I had painted that text for a young friend. On her mother seeing it she exclaimed, “I don’t like that text, it is not at all a nice one, not suitable for hanging on the wall—decidedly not; it might make people think they could be as careless as they like.”

“Oh, but, mother,” said the daughter, “only think what it would be to any one dying, who never had done any good works, and had no prospect of doing any? How glad it would make such an one to know that God saves us without our doing anything of the kind, just as we are—*ungodly*, that when there is simple faith in His word about what the Lord Jesus Christ has done, God will count *that*, to the one who believes on Him, for righteousness.”

The lady turning to go, said, “The epistle of James does not teach that.”

“True, but James does not contradict the teaching of the apostle Paul,” I added. “No one would work more zealously for God than he who truly believes what Paul says. We are justified indeed,

freely, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Rom. iii. 24); but saved too, that we should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again (2 Cor. v. 15)."

Reader, do you like that text? I do. Faith does. God likes it. Don't differ from Him.

J. E. M.

THE WORK AND THE WORKMAN.



HE sufferings of the blessed Saviour were over. He had received the vinegar, and, with undiminished force, He said, "*It is finished.*" The toil, the trial, the testimony were now complete. The cup had been drained, and not one word or act was now necessary to perfect His obedience, or accomplish atonement. He speaks in anticipation, but He affirms the close of His errand to earth. All is done. "*And he bowed his head and gave up the ghost,*"—placing, by the dismissal of His spirit, the seal of deity on His person, and the mark of eternal value on His work. He who thus died was God. He bowed His head in a triumphant acceptance of death, in a voluntary response to the claims of sin, the judgment of which He bore. Death had no power over Him, nor "could he be holden of it." He laid down His life of Himself. Such an act was purely voluntary on His part, and unnecessary but for the work of atonement. The

bowing of His head indicated a surrender that was entirely unforced. No storm, however terrific, could do that. He dismissed His spirit in the calm omnipotence of One who could lay down His life. *He who could thus act was God.* Man, the child of sin, and the subject of death, cannot retain his spirit; death dissolves for him the tie between it and the body, and death is monarch.

But not so with Christ. He laid down His life that He might take it again, and this truth places Him, at once, in a position quite distinct from fallen and guilty man. In order to save sinners, He must be sinless; and therefore "he who knew no sin was made sin for us." Blessed and perfect substitute! How His grace is enhanced, when we think of the depths into which He had to go, the waters of judgment through which He had to pass, in order to meet our case and bring us to God!

What grace do we see in the bowing of His head to the stroke! What eternal power in the giving up the ghost!

How remarkable, too, that in one verse (John xix. 30) we should find both of these truths. It is John who alone mentions that He bowed His head; but then John views Him, more than the other evangelists, in His deity; and therefore we see here the blessed Word, who had become flesh, in the calm majesty of His person willingly accept the condition of death and judgment, in order that His work might be completed, sin atoned for, and meaning attached to His closing words, "*It is finished.*"

What a work! and what a Workman! And so we read that "*the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin*" (1 John i. 7). Whose blood! That of God's Son! How significant! That blood cleanseth from all sin! How infinitely valuable!

Dear reader, may I ask you to lay these truths to heart. They lie at the foundation of Christianity, and it is this foundation that Satan is sapping. Satan is your adversary.

J. W. S.

“NOT YET.”



LADY had a dream one night,
That filled her spirit with surprise:
She stood in fields of azure light,
Before the gates of Paradise.

With gracious mien, and love benign,
A Being on the threshold stood;
Within those realms of joy divine
The guest might enter, if she would.

“There *now* is room,” He said, “*to-day!*”
Slowly she answer made, “Not yet.”
With faltering step she turned away—
Her heart on this poor world was set.

Alas those words! How they forget
Who utter them (one scarce knows how)
That they who say in life “Not yet,”
In throes of death may cry “Not now.”

Time wheeled with rapid flight his course,
 And twice six years passed quickly by ;
 A fell disease of potent force
 Proclaims to all that she must die.

Once more she dreams, and now again
 The pearly gates of Paradise,
 Where enter neither death nor pain,
 Appear before her gladdened eyes.

Desirous now to enter in,
 Loud the procrastinator knocks.
 The Porter's air of deep chagrin
 At once her sanguine spirit shocks.

Anticipations all are chilled,—
 No time that moment will efface,—
 He said, "*Too late, your seat is filled ;
 An earlier comer has your place.*"

Death claimed its prey, the end had come ;
 The woman, unrepentant, died ;
Procrastination robbed of "home"
One who could not for Christ decide.

How true : "God speaketh once, yea twice ;
 In dreams, in visions of the night,
 But man perceiveth not,"—the vice
 Of indecision dims his sight.

Come NOW, "if ye will hear his voice,
 While it is called to-day," saith He.
 Who on *to-morrow* set their choice
 May rue it through eternity.

C. E. P.

"YET DOTH HE DEVISE MEANS."

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"YET DOTH HE DEVISE MEANS."

(Read 2 Sam. xiii. 28-xiv., xv.)



HAVE no doubt that God has told us this history that what the gospel really is might come out by way of contrast, because, while we have, in David, a type of what is in the heart of God to the sinner, in grace, yet David began to gratify his heart at the expense of righteousness, and his throne was upset. Now the gospel is based not on the love of God merely, but on His inflexible righteousness. "Grace reigns *through* righteousness." In the day of which these chapters speak, grace was allowed to come out at the expense of righteousness.

Absalom was at heart a murderer, and no sooner was his anger wreaked than his conscience told him he was such, and we read "but Absalom fled" (xiii. 34). In three verses (34, 37, 38), we read that this guilty murderer fled. He knew he was guilty, and that he had laid himself open to the righteous vengeance of the law, so he fled. It is but the history of man over again. If you go back to the Garden of Eden, what do you find? Lust comes in, and when that is gratified conscience wakes up, and Adam flies from the face of God—puts the trees of the garden between himself and God.

In Genesis ix. 5, you get the moral foundation of what should have been the action of David at this

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moment: "At the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man." No doubt Absalom felt, "I am a murderer, and must pay the penalty," and so he fled from the presence of the throne; and that is what works in the sinner's mind, he feels he has sinned, and that the wages of sin are death, and therefore he tries to get away from the presence of God. God cannot have to do with sin save to judge it, but too often the soul feels that God cannot love the sinner. This is a mistake. While hating sin, God loves the sinner.

Absalom got as far from Jerusalem as he possibly could, and the heart of "David longed to go forth" unto him (xiii. 39). Why did he not go forth? Because if he had he must only have judged him. And did not God long to go forth after man? He did, and when the right moment came He sent forth His own Son to bring us into the Father's house straight away, and to reveal to us all that is in the Father's heart.

"Now Joab the son of Zeruah perceived that the king's heart was towards Absalom" (xiv. 1). Does a wanderer, a banished one, read this? Friend, let me tell you the Lord's heart is towards you. His heart has been towards you all the time.

What then paralysed David's hand? Righteousness. He knew perfectly well that if he sent for Absalom it must only be to judge him. If David's throne were to be "established in righteousness," then, had he sent for his son, it must only have been to put him to death in the first hour of his return.

And so the wanderer was three long years absent, and the heart of the father was yearning over him. And then Joab—schemer that he was—comes in with a long story through the wise woman of Tekoah (xiv. 1-20).

David could not keep the "throne guiltless" without judging the guilty, but it is my joy to tell you, my reader, that the throne of God is established in righteousness, and yet that the guiltiest sinner out of hell may be saved by the gospel. The cross of Christ is the means. Into man's place has stepped Another, the guiltless One in the place of the guilty, and there is now no need for the guilty one to wait three years, for the moment atonement is made, the Holy Ghost comes out and proclaims pardon to the guiltiest.

Is there a banished one reading these lines, feeling that sin has broken every link between his soul and God? Ah! my friend, the Father's heart is yearning over you.

The woman of Tekoah tells her mythical story to interest the king's heart, and he says to her that he will look after the matter. He is interested in her case, and then she turns round and says, as it were, "If you would do it for me, why not do it for your own? Why not bring again your own banished one?" And then she gets bolder, and says, "If you are going to do it at all, do it quickly, 'for we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again.'" She adds also, "Neither doth God respect any person, yet

doth he devise means that his banished be not expelled from him" (ver. 14).

David's means for bringing back his banished will not bear looking into, his means were based on unrighteousness, and the glossing over of his sin; and though Absalom comes up he does not see the king's face. But having been brought back, without his sin having been judged, he gets bold, and sends for Joab, and says, "Now therefore let me see the king's face, and *if there be any iniquity in me* let him kill me," and then we read that Absalom was brought to the king, "and the king kissed Absalom."

But the throne that does not judge sin is upset by the sinner, hence in the next chapter (xv.) we read that David has to flee from Absalom. Now the beauty of God's gospel is that the sinner is brought back, not at the expense of righteousness, but with the maintenance of righteousness. God is able to bring you, my friend, into His house, giving you the Father's kiss of reconciliation based on accomplished righteousness. God has devised means, and His means are the cross of the Saviour. The sinner is brought back in righteousness on the ground of the work of His sinless Son, who has suffered for sin, so that the throne of God is perfectly justified in its action of grace, and the Father's heart perfectly satisfied.

God's heart was towards us, and the proof of that is the gift of His Son. The birth, the life, of Jesus were the expression of the interest God took

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in man. His life alone would not do. There must be His death. "The wages of sin is death," but there is something after death. You have to meet God, my friend. You cannot get away from the fact that after death there is the judgment. Men dare not deny that they have to meet death; how can they deny the other thing, the judgment of God after death? The Word of God is most distinct and plain, that "he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." But before that appointed day of judgment the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

The cross is God's means whereby His banished may return to Him. David spared the guilty; God did not spare the guiltless—even His blessed Son Jesus, when He took the place of the guilty. Righteousness smote Him when He took the sinner's place. There alone on that cross, in the blessed love of His heart, the Lord Jesus took my place—the guilty sinner's place—bore my judgment, and now the outcome to me is life and pardon and peace.

"He took the guilty sinner's place,
He suffered in his stead;
For man (O miracle of grace!)—
For man the Saviour bled."

These lines I believe from the bottom of my heart, and therefore rejoice to sing also, and I hope, my reader, you too can chime in—

"Jesus, my soul adoring bends
To love so full, so free,
Thy Word declares that love extends
In saving power to me."

The truth of the gospel is, that if He bore my sin on the cross there is nothing left for Him to judge in the day appointed by-and-by.

If you build an arch there must be two pillars on which it shall rest. And what are the two pillars on which the arch of Christianity rests? The love of God, and the righteousness of God. The believing soul says I can repose in perfect security on these two pillars. Put on afterwards all the superstructure of peace, and pardon, and justification, and life, &c. But what do they all rest upon? That God loved me when I was a sinner, and that Jesus died for me when I was a sinner. If you come to God, He will tell you that He has judged all your sins on the cross of His Son. How then can He judge you since He has judged Christ instead of you? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." God sends out to you a messenger with the news that the claims of His throne have all been met in perfect righteousness. The claims of His heart now want to be met, and His heart will not be satisfied till He sees you coming to Him.

When Absalom first saw Joab coming to fetch him, I have little doubt he was not very happy in his mind. He might naturally fear he was going to be brought to justice, but Joab could say to him, "Fear not, it is all going to be slurred over." And do you ask, "Is God going to slur over my sins?" Not one of them. Either every one of your sins was judged when your Substitute hung

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upon the cross, or you must pay the penalty for every one of them in the depths of the lake of fire. God spoke to His Son about your sins, that He might speak to you about Him.

Absalom at length gets the king's kiss, but it is not like the kiss the Father gives the prodigal in the 15th of Luke, for, in the first case, the sinner arises next against the throne itself which has brought him back unrighteously, but in the 15th of Luke the prodigal goes into the father's house, and all is joy and merriment. God's gospel rests not till it brings the soul, repentant and believing, right into His blessed presence, there to rest in the sense of present favour and unchanging love. It is the Father who starts the joy, and His grace maintains it too. The song of Luke xv. never dies out. God is ever the same, and the heart that dwells with Him dwells ever in the presence of unchanging grace and undying love. When He says, “Let us make merry and be glad,” what has the believing soul to do but to follow suit, and sing in harmony with Him?

Well may we sing,—

“The new and living way
 Stands open now to heaven ;
 Thence, where the blood is seen alway,
 God's gift is given ;
 The river of His grace,
 Through righteousness supplied,
 Is flowing o'er the barren place
 Where Jesus died.”

W. T. P. W.

MY CONVERSION.



GOOD instructions as to the contents of the Bible were mine at school at seventeen, under a John the Baptist ministry, but I never knew the gospel till at nineteen I went abroad, full of the animal pleasures of a military life.

I and my comrade spent a long and tiring day on the fields of Waterloo in June 1824. Arriving late at night at Link I soon went to my bedroom. It struck me, "I will say my prayers" (it was a habit of childhood neglected in youth). I knelt down by the bedside, and found I had forgotten what to say. I looked up as if trying to remember, when suddenly there came over my soul a something I had never known before. It was as if a Someone, infinite and almighty, knowing everything, full of the deepest, tenderest interest in myself, though utterly and entirely abhorring everything in and connected with me, made known to me that He pitied and loved myself.

My eye saw no one, my ear heard no one, but I knew assuredly that One, whom I knew not, and had never met, had met me for the first time, and made me know that we were together. There was a light, which no senses or faculty of my own human nature ever knew. There was a presence of what seemed to me infinite in greatness, something altogether of a class that was apart and supreme,

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and yet at the same time making itself known to me in a way that I, as a man, could thoroughly feel and taste and enjoy. The light made all light, Himself withal, but it did not destroy, for it was love itself, and I was loved individually by Him. The exquisite tenderness and fulness of that love; the way it appropriated me myself for Him, in whom it all was; while the light, from which it was inseparable in Him, discovered to me the contrast I had been to all that was light and love. I wept for awhile on my knees, said nothing, and then jumped into bed.

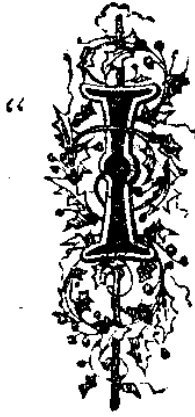
The next morning's first thought was, "Get a Bible." I got one, and it was thenceforward my *hand-book*. My clergyman companion noticed this, and also the entire change of life and thought. We journeyed together to Geneva, where there was an active persecution of the faithful going on. He went on into Italy, and I found my own company—stayed with those who were suffering for Christ. I could quite now, after nearly fifty years' trial, adapt to myself those few lines as descriptive of that night's experience:—

“ Christ, the Father's rest eternal,
 Jesus once looked down on me,
 Called me by my name external,
 And revealed Himself to me.

With His whisper, light, life-giving,
 Glowed in me the dark and dead,
 Made me live, Himself receiving,
 Who once died for me and bled.”

G. V. W.

CONSCIENCE—GUILTY OR PURGED.



“T is John whom I beheaded,” said Herod, as he heard of the fame of Jesus; for he could not imagine that there could be two prophets, whose testimony was so largely similar, and whose declaration of the coming kingdom seemed so identical.

But John had been beheaded! How then could he appear again? Said Herod, “He is risen from the dead.” But a leading doctrine of that day taught that there was no resurrection of the dead; and doubtless Herod was acquainted with it. Nevertheless, he lived under the conviction that John was risen. He could not persuade himself of the advent of another and infinitely greater servant of God. Such a thing did not appear probable; and, besides, his conscience smote him for the murder of John. The spectre of that faithful prophet haunted his dreams; the ghastly form of the crowning sin of even his awfully sinful life appeared ever before his frightened vision, to appal his days and to scare his nights. “It is John whom I beheaded,” was therefore the Nemesis of that man’s miserable existence, the mighty counterpoise to his earthly exaltation, and the intolerable load that burdened his guilty soul.

Oh! what an image must thus have been imprinted on the retina of his conscience, and how

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ineradicable? Some sins fade from memory, others refuse to do so! The beheaded John was a chronic apparition, and flitted unmasked across Herod's mental horizon, to bring sin to remembrance, and to embitter his heart.

The galling recollection of some sins is borne along upon the conscience of the sinner throughout his life on earth, and then forced upon his unwilling attention in a lost eternity. Sin cannot be erased from the tablet of memory. Allow recollection to brush aside the dust from memory's eye, and guilt is seen in its own imperishable enormity.

The sin of a beheaded John may pursue the soul like a sleuth-hound, whilst perchance an "idle word" may be forgotten; but it is for the latter, recalled in the light of that day, that "men shall give account in the day of judgment." All sins, great and small, are recorded in heaven, and engraven on conscience. There is no load so heavy as a guilty conscience. A smiling face leaves that load untouched, and the heart that carries it unrelieved.

A guilty conscience has driven thousands to despair, and is the parent of innumerable religions. Forms of penance the most painful, and of self-sacrifice the most superstitious, have been devised to obtain immunity from its torture. But the trouble remains. To give the fruit of your body for the sin of your soul would be unavailing.

Yet there is a remedy, and only one. It is God's remedy. Harken! "The blood of Jesus Christ,

his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Thank God for that! The gravity of sin, instead of being thus lessened, is seen in its true and awful malignity. No equivalent short of the blood of the Son of God could be found, and therefore, in deepest grace, that blood was shed.

Apart from this, salvation was impossible. God could not, consistently with His justice, vindicate the sinner. Justice demands satisfaction, and what infinite satisfaction is needed to meet the claims of God! Could man, already guilty, render it? Impossible! But Christ, ever sinless and perfect, has done so; and now the guilty and burdened conscience can find, by faith in Him and His blood, rest from its heavy load.

A conscience, once and for ever purged, is a primary doctrine of Christianity (*Heb. x.*), and the believer has "no more conscience of sins." Again, thank God for such a work as that of Calvary. The believer is conscious of indwelling sin, and is bound to exercise himself to have a conscience void of offence before God and man; but as a believer he is purged before God by the precious blood of Christ, and rejoices in the God-spoken declaration, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

What a debtor is the Christian to Christ!

J. W. S.

THE OLD, OLD STORY ONCE AGAIN.



HERE are few verses, if any, more familiar to men's ears than John iii. 16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." But there are many who fail to grasp its wondrous fulness and blessedness. There is more than enough contained in it to make every sinner who receives its blessed contents by faith, happy both now and for ever. Let us ponder these life-ministering words.

First of all, we learn who is the source of the love — God Himself. God is love. It is His essential nature. The blessed Author of all things, the Self-existent, eternal God, is *love*. And from Him love flows. All His ways are characterised by it, whether in heaven or in earth. Perfect, unchanging, boundless, eternal love is there. GOD IS LOVE.

Now there was a moment when that love gave a manifest expression of itself towards an object. And here a precious little word of two letters is introduced to convey to us its fulness and extent, "*so*." God *so* loved. Who can fathom its depths? You have the heart of God Himself there. No cold formal statement, but all the warmth and affection of the heart of hearts, the heart of the Blessed

Saviour-God told out in loveliest simplicity—God so loved. It speaks volumes to the heart that receives it. Meditate, as you read these lines, upon the infinite depth of meaning in those soul-winning words.

And what was the object of so great love? Wondrous to say, a world steeped in sin and wickedness! Not one lovely and attractive in itself, but a world full of enmity and hatred against God, that was opposed to both light and love. A selfish, self-satisfied world, whose heart's desire was to live without Him. But the love of God goes out to an object utterly unworthy in itself. "For God so loved *the world*." Not a favoured part of it, nor a favoured people in it here, but the world at large, the whole world, this world of poor guilty hell-deserving sinners, fulfilling the lusts and desires of their own poor deceitful hearts.

Already man in the world had been put to the proof; the holy law of God had clearly manifested that love was not there, neither to God nor to his neighbour. It was then, when the fulness of time was come, that the full expression of God's wondrous love came out. He no longer demands of man, but gives to him. "For God so loved the world, that he *gave*." And gave what? Wonder of wonders! Gave *His only-begotten Son*. Can it be true? Yes, gave His only Son. We are often so familiar with it, that we treat it as a matter of course, and lose sight of the immensity of the gift. And many pass it by, without scarce a thought; and yet such

wondrous love is enough to break the hardest heart. The gift of Christ can alone give us an idea of the infinite depths of meaning in the words "*so loved.*" He withheld not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. He looked from His holy dwelling-place upon this world of ruined sinners, guilty, lost; and—instead of sweeping it with the besom of judgment, so richly deserved—*so loved*, that He gave His only begotten Son.

Wondrous story! The Son of God come down into this lost world to save! the Son of God become the Son of man, the delight and joy of the heart of God, and yet here to do His will even unto death! He went to the cross, bore the whole judgment of God, and glorified Him. God is *light* as well as love, the Holy One who dwells in light unapproachable. Hence the hiding of His face from His Son at that awful moment when He was made sin. And such was the infinite value of that sacrifice, that in view thereof, we hear the Lord saying, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Blessed, joyful news! *All* are invited now to participate in His wondrous love. And righteously so, because the claims of His holiness were perfectly met. None need reap the consequences of their folly and sin. Salvation now is for "*whosoever.*" Where is there one that is not included there? Who can get outside of *whosoever*? The vilest need not despair, so long as "*whosoever*" is in John iii. 16; and the word of the Lord endureth for ever.

A life-long sin may be pressing upon the conscience of some one reading these lines, and Satan may be thundering his accusations in your ear, but the glorious gospel word "*whosoever*," from the lips of the Son of God, is enough to silence every foe and every fear. "Whosoever" simply means everybody, anybody, all, *you*. Are you clear as to this? Do you accept it? If so, now one word more only is needed, and the link for your soul is on, and that is "*believeth*." "Whosoever believeth." "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth," &c. What could be more simple or more blessed? *Dost thou believe?*

You may know all about it, see it all as clear as daylight as so many facts, but unless you believe you will remain just as you were—guilty, ruined, lost. You must believe. You are responsible to believe. To believe is to honour God. To disbelieve is to dishonour Him. And to believe, is to *have*—to escape eternal punishment, and to *have eternal life*. For, whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Weigh these precious words, weigh them now, in the presence of God. Here you are, a sinner under the judgment of a holy God, in danger of perishing everlastingly; but God so loved this poor world, of which you form part, "that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever (that's *you*) *believeth in him* (well, do you?) should not perish (He says so), but *have everlasting life* (and His word is for ever settled in heaven)."

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It is blessedly simple. Your eternal weal is wrapped up in this precious verse. Faith in the Saviour, the only Saviour, Jesus, the Son of God, is enough. As a little hymn says, "*Believing doth suffice.*" The moment you believe in Him, the blessing is yours. "Believeth in him;" not in yourself, and your own wretched doings, for "in all your doings your sins do appear" (Ezek. xxi. 24); but in Him, the victorious One, who went to the cross, glorified God, vanquished once and for ever the whole power of death and hell, and came forth triumphant, a Saviour offered to all by God Himself, God who is love!

Once again then, dost thou believe in Him? Not about Him, as an historical personage; but on Him, the Living Christ, the Living Son of the Living God. Can you say simply in the presence of the Searcher of hearts, "*I do*"? Very well then, you shall not perish, but have everlasting life. He says so, and His word endureth for ever (1 Peter i. 25). "Not perish!" precious, precious promise. Delivered now, once and for ever, from the lake of fire; and "everlasting life," the free gift of God, *yours!* "The gift of God is eternal life" (Rom. vi. 23). He that believeth *hath*. They go together; believing is having. Should not perish, but have everlasting life. Have, *have*, HAVE!

Look at the whole verse once again. "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). It

begins with God, and ends with life. It begins with God, who had no beginning and has no end, the eternal God; and it ends with life, which has no beginning nor end either, for Christ is that life (Col. iii. 4). And the believer has this life in the Son. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may *know that ye have eternal life*" (1 John v. 12, 13).

And if you have eternal life, then are you heir of eternal glory. You have eternal life *in the Son*, and you will shortly have eternal glory *with the Son*. What have you to do, then, till that day? To *follow Him*. Live the life you have. "To me to live is Christ."

E. H. C.



DYING, AND GOING—WHERE?



UCH was the thought that disturbed a dying girl as she lay on a bed of sickness. Being the youngest of the family, like Benjamin, she was specially loved and cared for, having a place in the parents' hearts that none other possessed. Though only twelve years of age, soon she was about to enter that bourne from whence no traveller — One excepted — has ever returned. He was that One who came from the glory of God

down to this poor scene where sin and death reigned, to tell us of God, and to declare Him (John i. 18), and to reveal the Father (John xiv. 6-10), blessed be His name,—who could say, “I do always the things that please the Father.” In John x. 17, in speaking of that last act of obedience and devotedness, He could say, “Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life, that I might take it up again.” Man put Him in the grave, but God raised Him out from among the dead, and seated him at His own right hand (Eph. i. 20), and sent down the Holy Ghost to make known to us the glory—as man—He now had received, and to lead our hearts to share all that glory with Him. Dear reader, God loves you, and wants to reveal Himself to *you* as Father. He has been so glorified by the work Jesus did on the cross that He now comes and invites *all* (1 John ii. 2; John iii. 16) to believe on Jesus,—receive Him (John i. 12),—and be in present possession of everlasting life.

The poor sufferer, feeling that the end—so far as concerned the body, but *not* the soul—was near, suddenly asked her mother, “If I die, where will I go to?” The mother answered, “If you have been a good girl, you will go to heaven.” Miserable comfort at such a solemn hour!

Again the dying girl's voice is heard, “But if I have been a bad one—where will I go to?” What a solemn question to fall upon the ears of the one that loved her best; and the mother felt it, and

did not know how to answer. At last she said, "*I do not know.*" As the words fell upon the sufferer's ears she shrieked out, "Such a pity!" And thus she died.

Parents, I appeal to you, if placed in the same position, what would you have said? Could you have given the sweetest of all answers by pointing to Jesus, who says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "I am the door; by me if *any* man enter in, he shall be saved" (John xiv. 6, x. 9). Dear fellow-traveller to *eternity*, let me ask *you*, how would you have answered the poor dying girl? Would you have pointed her to works of her own as her mother did? Surely not, with the third of Romans before you: "There is none that doeth good, no, not one."

The father of the girl was a respectable, moral, upright man, but had imbibed Unitarian ideas—those baleful, pernicious doctrines, that would rob us of all that God has so graciously revealed in His own blessed Word. The kernel of that peerless volume is Jesus (Luke xxiv. 27), and the books of Moses must go, and all the prophets, for they speak of the things concerning Himself, if He be not what He said He was—the Son of God. What comfort can it bring to poor hell-deserving sinners, as we *all* are by nature, to be told of a Supreme Being if there is no "Daysman," no mediator between God and man; and there is *only one*—the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. ii. 5, 6). His young daughter's dying words haunted the father. She

was gone, but where? That question all his freethinking could not answer for him. His wife, afraid he was going wrong in the mind through brooding over it, his own soul trembling in the balance, tried to calm him by saying, "We could not help it." Well he knew he could not help it now, but still the question that pressed on his soul was, Where?

"Eternity, where? oh! eternity, where?
 With redeemed ones in glory,
 Or with fiends in despair,—
 The one, or the other,—
 Eternity, where?"

Possibly my reader may have imbibed those ideas that man is pleased to say are in keeping with the enlightened age in which we live, but which practically set aside God and His Christ. I warn you in the most affectionate manner to "consider your ways," for such can only end in the second death (Rev. xxi. 8).

Still the father's thoughts could not be so easily lifted from the searching question, death being so vividly brought before him. Eternity, where? His wife, determined to get his conscience quieted, —and he, not knowing God as Job did, unable to silence her by saying, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women,"—brought him a glass of whisky, saying, "Here, take that; that'll quiet you." Alas, alas, she succeeded; and so Satan's peace took the place of that *peace* which might have been his—the peace that Christ made by the blood

of His cross. He lived for some time after, and then died too; but so far as known to man he was never again anxious about his soul, and never born again.

And now, dear reader, ere we part, let me ask you, How do *you* stand as to your soul's salvation? Where will you spend eternity?

“With redeemed souls in glory,
Or with fiends in despair?”

L.

TWO “WHOSOEVERS.”



WHAT a comprehensive word, dear friend, the word “whosoever” is. It takes in rich and poor, moral and immoral, honest and dishonest, the temperate and the drunkard, religious and irreligious—all classes of society, all states and conditions of men. In God’s Word, however, we find the word “whosoever” connected very specially with two distinct classes of people; and for confirmation of this, we would draw your attention for a few moments to two verses in the Book of Revelation, chaps. xx. 15 and xxii. 17.

In the one case we get the whosoever of judgment, and in the other of life,—what a contrast! Every person who has gone off this scene *in his sins* will receive the portion connected with Rev. xx. 15, and every one who may yet die in their sins will have

the same portion. If you will, dear friend, look all the scripture referred to for yourself, and read the preceding verses, commencing at ver. 11, you will notice, first of all, that a great white throne is set up, a throne of dazzling purity, and One seated on it from whose face the earth and the heaven flee away. What a moment! and what a scene! Are you, beloved fellow-traveller to eternity, prepared to face it? If you go out of this world *in your sins*, face it you must, escape it you cannot. There will be no escape, there will be no hiding, from the face of Him who sits upon that throne.

Further, *only the dead* are mentioned—no living persons are brought before our notice in *this* scripture. The sea has to yield up its dead, the grave too; and what a delivering up it will be! And not only is it *only the dead* who are specially mentioned here, but again we would say only those who have *died in their sins*. How solemn! *Died in their sins, Buried in their sins, Raised in their sins*, and now standing in the presence of a Holy Judge *in their sins*. How awful! how terrible! Oh, beloved! let us warn you, *before it be too late*, to "flee from the wrath to come," and flee *now*, flee to the blessed Saviour Jesus. If you go on careless and indifferent as to your soul, and you are cut down, how awfully solemn it will be for you! Not one single person who has died, has been buried, and is then raised *in their sins*, will have a moment's peace, joy, or happiness hereafter, but one long eternity of misery in that place where

there is no ray of hope, no salvation, no gospel, or gospel preaching, and, above all, no precious Saviour!

God's Word cannot indeed make it more distinct, more emphatic. It does not require learning to understand it—it is simple, plain, clear, and decisive. "*Whosoever* was not found written in the *book of life* was cast into the lake of fire;" and such, beloved friend, will be your portion if you die unsaved. But perhaps you say, "Well, I am not irreligious, profane, immoral, dishonest, or a drunkard. I have been piously brought up. I have lived an upright moral life, lived honestly, have sought to do good to my fellow-men, and have done my best to serve God." Now we would say to you, dear friend, that all these things are very good in a way; but all these combined could never save your soul, or fit you for the presence of a holy God.

We find in this scripture that "they were judged every man *according to his works*." Think for a moment of the whole of your history written down in God's book, and coming up again at a future day for judgment! YOUR SINS, dear friend, YOUR SINS!! God hates sin, He abhors it; and consequently, if the sinner comes up before Him for judgment in his sins, He has not only to remove the sins from His holy presence, but the person who has committed them likewise. The sinner must bear the consequences of his sins for ever and ever in the lake of fire.

Gladly we now turn from this "whosoever" of judgment to the other "whosoever" of life and salvation, as presented in Rev. xxii. 17. Again we find that it is a comprehensive word. None are too bad to accept it, none are too good not to need it—"the water of life." It is for thirsty, needy souls. And how blessed the terms—"freely"—the privilege of taking what the blessed God presents! In Rev. xxi. 6, God says, "*I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.*" God delights in giving. Here He offers it "freely," without any terms; it is as free as the air you breathe, which costs you nothing. Before the blessed God could offer you "the water of life freely," it cost Him everything,—the sending down into this world of ruin, sin, and wretchedness, of His only, His well-beloved Son, and delivering Him up to death, and that the death of the cross.

God could not in the love of His heart keep the very best He had back, but freely gave Him in whom His soul delighted. And now He is free—in virtue of the work of atonement wrought by His beloved Son—to offer to you, "without money," "freely," the water of life. But, you say, "Must I not do something to deserve it?" Certainly not. God wants you to take on the same terms that He offers "freely." Hold out, then, the empty hand of faith, and take what He is ready and willing to give. It is "whosoever will." Do, then, we beseech you, in this the day of grace, before it be too late, respond to the gracious invitation of the

blessed Lord Jesus Himself. "If *any* man *thirst*, let him *come unto me*, and drink" (John vii. 37). He is the "fountain of living waters;" He is the life itself; and in coming to Him, in believing on Him, you get everlasting life. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John iii. 36).

Do not *despise* God's offer,—"*Behold*, ye *despisers* and wonder, and perish" (Acts xiii. 41); or *neglect* God's offer,—"*How shall we escape*, if we *neglect* so great salvation?" (Heb. ii. 3); but accept without delay His gracious, blessed gift, and thank Him for it. Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift. It will fill the heart of God with joy, and it will fill yours in accepting God's precious gift. E. G.

JESUS—HEAVEN.



FELLOW-CHRISTIAN, known to the writer, went to a London hospital a short time since to pay another visit to a dying man, who, when in health, had lived in forgetfulness of God.

"You are very near to eternity now," said the visitor; "can you tell me where you are going to spend it?"

"*Heaven*," was the simple utterance of the dying man.

"I am very glad to hear you say that; but tell me," continued the visitor, "upon what ground do

you expect to enter heaven? What is to be your passport there?"

"*Jesus*," was the sole reply.

"That's right," answered the visitor. "Cling to *that* name,—the name of JESUS, 'for there is *none other name* under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.'"

Reader, Jesus went down into death, and there met all the claims of divine justice in regard to sin; "wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him *a name which is above every name*, that, *at the name* of Jesus, every knee should bow, . . . and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Have you, as a lost, helpless, guilty sinner, bowed the knee to Jesus, and in heart, as well as by mouth, owned Him as *your* Saviour and *your* Lord?

Bow the knee *now*, in this day of God's grace, and it will mean "eternal salvation" to you; but wait until the day that's coming, and it will mean "eternal judgment." Come to Jesus, saying—

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.
Naked, come to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly—
Wash me, Saviour, or I die."

N. L. N.

“ A L L . ”



OW far it reaches! Precious little word!
How wide in its embrace! and yet
how small!

“ *All* we like sheep ” have wandered
from the Lord,
But Christ, who died for sinners,
“ died for *all* . ”

“ For *all* have sinnèd, ” “ *all* . . have gone astray, ”
So *all must die*, is God’s divine decree.
But “ *I* have sinnèd, ” each in faith may say,
And “ He who died for sinners *died for me* . ”

O’erleaping Jewish barriers, far and wide,
“ The grace of God to *all* men hath appeared. ”
“ *All* that believe, by Him are justified, ”—
From every charge of sin and folly cleared.

Oh, grace illimitable! vast and free!
Ne’er was such grace declared since Adam’s fall;
O’er sin abounding,—for, upon the tree
Christ died for sinners,—yes, Jesus “ *died for ALL* . ”

N. L. N.

HE BELIEVED THE WRITING.



SOME time ago a Christian whose wife was in bad health left home with her and their child to spend a few weeks in German Switzerland, hoping the change of air and scene might be used to restore her. One day they went for a walk with a Swiss officer and his wife in a neighbouring wood, to enjoy the cool shade from the burning August sun. After rather a long ramble, coming to a suitable spot to rest a while, the husband handed his wife a camp-stool that he had brought with him, and the rest reclined quietly on the moss. There they talked some time together, when suddenly one of the party missed the child. One after another called him loudly by name, thinking he could not be far off, but no answer came.

All were filled with anxiety, especially the poor mother. Again one or the other called, but the voices were drowned by the noise of the wild mountain stream that rushed over the rocks close by. Then they hastened to and fro in every direction to find the little one, but all in vain. With a heavy heart the husband left his wife, who looked deadly pale, and plunged deeper into the wood. On he went, up and down amongst the rocks and trees, now running, now walking, then stopping again and again to call with loudest voice

F

possible, but finding at every step that the wood became wilder and thicker, and the way more difficult. The perspiration streamed from him, and his knees began to tremble under him through the great exertion and intense anxiety which he was in. He cried to God for the child, but it seemed to him as though the heavens were closed. Profound silence reigned, and finding that he had already spent an hour in the search, he began with a heavy heart to retrace his steps.

He would go back ; help must be obtained ; he must get the villagers to come and search the wood ; the child *must* be found. Such were the thoughts which ran through his mind. Then all kinds of dreadful suggestions came before him. Had the child fallen into the wild mountain torrent and been dashed to pieces against the rocks ? or had he fallen over one of them ? Was he alive or dead ? And then his heart trembled for the consequence for his poor wife, already in ill-health. Then came the hope that he might have been found during his absence, and, gathering his little remaining strength, he pressed towards the place where they had lost him. This was not easy to find, for he had entirely lost his way ; but looking up to the Lord to guide, he found himself after a while at the same spot, But no one was there. There stood the camp-stool, but that was all. Where were they ? Were they still in the wood ? or had they gone to the village to call for help ? or had they taken his wife home ? He sank

exhausted on the stool, when—ah, what is that? A piece of paper fastened to it, with a few words written in pencil,—“*Rudolf is found; we have gone back to the hotel, and await you there,*” with the name of the officer underneath.

Found, found; saved! In a moment he was freed from all fear, from all anxiety. *He believed the writing*, and, sinking down upon his knees, praised the God of all grace aloud. Now he could return in perfect rest of spirit, with the camp-stool on his arm, looking from time to time on the precious message that his child was safe; and a little later could rejoice, together with his wife, over their little one. In her anxiety to find him, she had gathered strength to aid in the search, and had found him playing by the stream, whose noise had drowned their voices; and the officer had fixed the writing to the camp-stool to announce the good news.

And why, think you, dear reader, that we have brought this simple story of a child lost and found before your notice? Because we have a wonderful message for you from heaven itself,—the good news concerning Jesus, the Son of God, who came into this world to save, and which this forcibly illustrates.

When you learn that you are a sinner, wandered from God, with no way of deliverance from the errors of your life, no answer to the voice of conscience, no peace for the heart, no salvation for your never-dying soul,—then is this good news

indeed *for you*. It is the testimony of God, in His own written word. Believe Him. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, whom He gave to die for all, whose blood cleanseth us from all sin, whose finished work brings eternal life and salvation. Bow down before God, mistrusting all your own foolish and misguided efforts to save yourself in your own strength. Read the good news, *believe it*, and you will cry out jubilantly, Found, found! saved, saved!

We ask you, dear reader, would it not have been very foolish for the father to have doubted whether the news of the finding of the child were true, or whether it was meant for him? *The written communication was enough*. He believed it unquestioningly. He lost all anxiety, and went home without doubt or fear, even with praise and thanksgiving, knowing for certain that he would see the child there, and that all would be well. "If we receive the witness of men, *the witness of God is greater*; for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (1 John v. 9-11).

FR. GN.

HOW A SINNER CAN GET SAVED.



ARE you saved, my reader ?

If Christ, or death, came this moment, could you meet either without fear, in the confidence that you would go straight to that place of bliss where God is ? Do not evade the question, I beseech you, for it is the most important one that can be asked you,—your never-dying soul, your eternal destiny, heaven and hell, are at stake.

If you are *not* saved, then yours is a most awful position ; for if death or Christ came now, you would be consigned to endless torment as the reward and result of your sins. If you inquire what I mean by being saved, my reply is, Has God forgiven you your sins, and made you fit for heaven ?

On the supposition that you are unsaved, I am about to show you God's salvation, and the way you may gain it ; and to this end I shall divide this paper into three heads, viz. :—

1. The sinner's *need* of salvation.
2. God's mode of *providing* salvation for the sinner.

3. The way the sinner *obtains* this salvation.

First, therefore, as to

THE SINNER'S NEED OF SALVATION.

God has not left man to discover unaided his ruin and need as a sinful fallen creature. He has

written a Book, in which He has plainly and distinctly revealed his history and condition as seen and known by Himself, the One who never errs. To this book we therefore go to learn the extent and measure of the sinner's need of salvation.

In Romans iii. you will find the most startling declaration of the failure and depravity of the whole human family. "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NO, NOT ONE: . . . THERE IS NONE THAT DOETH GOOD, NO, NOT ONE. . . . FOR ALL HAVE SINNED, AND COME SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD."

Now I want you to consider that expression, "*none righteous*"; to ponder over that statement, "*all have sinned*,"—for, bear in mind, *you* are included there. It is useless for you to say, "That doesn't mean me." When God says "None," He means "none"; and when He says "All," He means "all"; and in order that you and I, and everybody else, may know what we are in His sight, He has written with the pen of eternal truth, "*There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that doeth good, no, not one; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*"

Now if there be *none* righteous, it is clear that *you* have no righteousness. If there be *none* that doeth good, *you* cannot pretend to possess any goodness. If *all* have sinned, *you* must be a sinner. If *all* have come short of God's glory, *you* clearly are on the wrong side of heaven's gate. "Come short of God's glory," is God's description of the sinner's position with regard to heaven; he is *out-*

side of it, has come short of it, and cannot by his own individual efforts reach it.

If this be true, my reader, does it not show that you sorely need salvation? and as it is God's word, can there be any doubt of its truth?

Now the Bible teaches that MAN is ruined, for he is born in sin (Psa. li. 5); is lost (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4; Luke xiv. 10); is condemned already (John iii. 18); has the wrath of God abiding on him (John iii. 36); is unrighteous (Rom. iii. 10); is devoid of goodness (Rom. iii. 12); is guilty before God (Rom. iii. 19); cannot please God (Rom. viii. 8); has come short of the glory of God (Rom. iii. 23); is blinded by Satan (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4); is dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. ii. 1); must be born again (John iii. 3-7); walks according to Satan (Eph. ii. 2), and according to the course of this world (Eph. ii. 2); is *by nature* a child of wrath (Eph. ii. 3); has no hope (Eph. ii. 12); is without God in the world (Eph. ii. 12); will, if not saved, be judged according to his works, and, as a result, be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. xx. 11-15).

I want you to ponder over this terrible list until the fact is engraved upon your soul *that every word of it is true of you*. Do not, I beseech you, read it and say, "Yes, I quite believe it is true of some." But read it, and know that this is God's description of *your* state,—a description given not by mortal erring man, but by the God who made you, and in whose presence you must shortly stand.

But man's heart is deceitful above all things, and

desperately wicked, as God says in Jeremiah xvii. 9, and yours may even deceive you with the thought that you may be able to deliver yourself from this position. I therefore ask you to refer again to Rom. iii., where God declares it to be impossible, for says He, "BY THE DEEDS OF THE LAW THERE SHALL NO FLESH BE JUSTIFIED IN HIS SIGHT." Future good conduct can never atone to God for past misconduct. If it were possible for you to cease from sin this moment, and lead hereafter a sinless life, there would yet remain before God's eye the black dark sins of your past life; and the question would still be, "How are you going to satisfy His holiness with regard to those sins?" For remember, God *cannot* pass over sin while the claims of His holiness remain undischarged. "Without the shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22).

In that same chapter where God says, "All have sinned, and come short of my glory," we hear Him also saying, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in my sight." What have you to say to this, reader? Are you learning what a desperate condition yours is?

But even if God were willing to save you on the ground of good works, Scripture teaches that you are utterly unable to perform any,—first, because of the incurable evil of your nature (Rom. vii. 18, 19); secondly, from lack of power (Rom. v. 6). You are WITHOUT STRENGTH.

There are many invalids so weak as to be unable to help themselves, or even to move hand or foot.

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Now this illustrates your own helpless condition as a sinner. The sad dark catalogue on page 147 is descriptive of your state, and you are unable to alter one single fact in it, you have no power to get out of that awful condition; to speak figuratively, you cannot move hand or foot.

Read that black list again, and receive it, I pray you, as the voice of God to your soul. Read it, I say, as one who must soon stand in the presence of Him who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity. Now look at

GOD'S MODE OF PROVIDING SALVATION FOR THE
SINNER.

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

Here are glad tidings. God has not left you to perish eternally, because of your sin, and inability to deliver yourself from its consequences. He has come out and declared Himself to be on your side. Not by surrendering His holiness, mind, but by bringing forth One who was qualified so to deal with the question of sin as to make perfect satisfaction to Him concerning it.

You see, when man was ruined by sin, and utterly unable to save himself, God took up the matter—not, however, to *judge*, but to *save* him. But to do this He had to give up the Son of His bosom to the death and shame of the cross, to make expiation for sin, and to die for sinners.

For the sinner's salvation the death of the Son

of God was absolutely necessary ; nothing short of this, nothing more ; and when it was demonstrated that this *must* be, God hesitated not, but freely delivered up that Son.

And remember, this gift was bestowed, this love manifested, on behalf of the sinner whose ruined, sinful, apostate state is depicted on page 147. Read that catalogue again, please, then read John iii. 16, and ask yourself whether human thought could ever have conceived such marvellous love.

In the gospel of the blessed God two facts are stated,—(1) That man needs salvation ; (2) That God has provided salvation for him through the atoning death of His Son.

At the cross, Jesus the Mediator voluntarily came between God the Judge, and man the sinner, that He might Himself endure the sinner's judgment, that He might personally receive the stroke of divine justice against sin. The judgment was meted out ; the stroke felt ; the sinless Sufferer cried out in the measureless agony of His stricken soul, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? " and died. The claims of divine holiness in respect of sin were met, the work that was needed for the sinner's salvation was accomplished ; Jesus is raised from the dead, ascends into heaven, is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, crowned with glory and honour ; and God, satisfied about sin, immediately comes out to the sinner, not in judgment, but to offer him an eternal salvation. Now see
THE WAY THE SINNER OBTAINS THIS SALVATION.

“By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. ii. 8, 9). *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved”* (Acts xvi. 31).

This is it, reader,—*by grace,—through faith.* *“By grace,”* is God’s part; *“through faith,”* the sinner’s. *“Not of works,”* shows that Christ’s one work is sufficient.

The sinner then obtains God’s salvation through faith, without the addition or help of a single good work, ordinance, or ceremony whatsoever.

Mark this particularly, for the devil is busily engaged at the present time in hiding the glory of Christ’s work, by occupying men with ordinances and ceremonies, and persuading them that they are necessary to salvation. Be not deceived, my reader, you may be baptized a thousand times, and yet go to hell; you may partake of the Lord’s Supper an equal number of times, and yet perish eternally,—and this because there is not an atom of saving merit or virtue in either of these ordinances. **THEY ARE NOT THE BLOOD OF CHRIST;** they are merely shadows of His work, and not the work itself. Neither of them can impart a particle of blessing to an unsaved person, neither is in the smallest degree an aid towards salvation. Many will be in glory who have never either been baptized or partakers of the Lord’s Supper, and millions will be in hell who have conformed to both; and yet in saying this we are not denying that these institutions

are scriptural, and most precious *in their place*. Salvation results exclusively from the finished work of Jesus, and is to be obtained by faith alone, apart from works, ordinances, or anything else whatsoever.

The Word of God reveals the sinner's need, by disclosing his terrible depravity and wretched weakness. But the work of Christ meets this need by putting away the sin, and rendering it unnecessary for the sinner to do anything towards saving himself. By faith, then, he must take his true place before God,—confessing his sinfulness, and weakness, and appropriating the work of Christ as that which was undertaken for his salvation, and which is sufficient for him.

There are many blessed illustrations of this fact in God's Word.

Jesus began His ministry with the announcement of the precious truth, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; *that whosoever believeth in him* should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 14).

Please turn to Numbers xxi. You will find five things there,—(1) That Israel sinned; (2) God in judgment sends fiery serpents, which bite many of the people; (3) Moses prays for them; (4) God hears, and tells Moses to make a serpent of brass; (5) "And it came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived."

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What did the bitten Israelite do, my reader? Did he betake himself to the Jewish ordinances for salvation, washing in the water of purification, according to chapter xix., or keeping the passover, as enjoined in chapter x.? Not a bit of it! He just took God at His word,—*he looked, and lived.* And Jesus said, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, EVEN SO must the Son of man be lifted up; THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.”

Blessed, thrice blessed, “*Even so!*” It means, my reader, that just as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness as an object for faith, so should Jesus be lifted up on the cross; that as the dying Israelite looked and lived, so may you, a lost sinner, look and live.

In John vi. the multitude inquire of Jesus, “What shall we *do* that *we might work the works of God?*” Jesus answers, “This is the work of God, that ye BELIEVE on him whom he hath sent.”

To the sinner of the city, who in her misery, and the longing of her heart for deliverance from that misery, sought His presence, Jesus says, “Thy *faith* hath saved thee; go in peace” (Luke vii.).

When the woman with the bloody issue touched the hem of His garment, and then, astonished, and in fear at the marvellous result of that touch, falls down before Him, Jesus dismisses her with the blessed words, “Be of good comfort, *thy faith hath made thee whole*; go in peace” (Matt. ix. 22).

And to the blind men who cried after Him, "Son of David, have mercy on us," Christ replies, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" They say, "Yea, Lord." "Then touched he their eyes, saying, *According to your faith be it unto you; AND THEIR EYES WERE OPENED*" (Matt. ix. 29, 30).

When the Philippian jailer, affrighted by the earthquake, comes into the presence of the apostles of Jesus, and asks the question, "What must I *do* to be saved?" they immediately reply, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*"

Thus do the Scriptures distinctly and unmistakably testify to the glorious fact that the Son of God has so perfectly finished the work that was needed for the sinner's salvation, that there does not remain one jot or tittle for the latter to do. The instant he feels his need, takes his true place before God as a sinner, and believes on the Lord Jesus, as the One who died to become his Saviour, he is saved, everlastingly saved.

Every blessing provided by God for man is connected with faith as distinct from works. If it be salvation, Scripture announces that "by grace are ye saved *through faith.*" If justification, Scripture teaches that "being justified *by faith,* we have peace with God." If it be eternal life, Scripture proclaims, "*He that believeth on the Son* hath everlasting life." And faith is, JUST TAKING GOD AT HIS WORD.

And yet thousands of people, in answer to the question of how they hope to get saved, reply,

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“I'm doing all I can,” quite unconscious of the fact that God is not asking them to do all they can, nor indeed anything at all. He is simply asking them to bow to the truth of their sinful, miserable, weak condition, and that Jesus His Son died to become their Saviour.

It is God's glory to save the sinner, and it is Christ's glory to have provided the ground of this salvation; and God will never permit His own glory, nor that of His Son, to be clouded by admitting man as a co-worker. *Man* is the sinner, *God* the Saviour; and if the former would be saved, he must be so on God's own terms, and these are “BY GRACE, THROUGH FAITH.”

The Holy Spirit in Romans v. says salvation is of *faith*, that it might be of *grace*. If the sinner obtained it by his works, it would not be of grace but of debt. Now God will never consent to be a debtor to the *sinner*. The sinner must be a debtor to *God*, hence God bestows upon the believer a salvation towards which the latter contributes nothing, a salvation which is altogether the result of Christ's atoning work. Will you, my reader, consent to be a debtor to God? then take salvation at His hands this moment. His word to you is, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;” *and God never says what He does not mean.*

I once asked an aged woman if her sins were forgiven. She replied that they were not. I asked her when she thought they would be forgiven.

She said she could not tell,—she prayed to God night and morning for forgiveness. I asked her how long she had prayed thus. She replied, “A great many years.” “What,” I said, “do you mean to say that you have prayed all these years for pardon, and still remain unforgiven? What a hard-hearted God *yours* must be!” And then I told her of the God who “so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

But *must* I not pray? do you ask. Well, what do you pray for? Salvation and pardon? If so, *God is offering these to you*; and it is an insult to ask Him for them, for it amounts to a denial that He is offering them. Men would count you foolish if you were to ask something of a person who was all the while holding it out for your acceptance.

When Peter was preaching to those poor anxious Gentiles in Acts x., he said, speaking of Jesus, “To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name *whosoever believeth in him* SHALL RECEIVE REMISSION OF SINS.”

If prayer is necessary to salvation, my reader, why did he not tell *those* sinners to pray? and if it was *not* necessary in their case, can you explain why it should be necessary in yours?

Why will you not forthwith take God’s word as it stands, refusing your own, and everybody else’s thoughts, and cast yourself as a poor lost sinner on Jesus the Saviour of sinners, believing in Him as

the One able and willing to save you? Doing this you will get the blessing, which can be got in no other way.

Do you say the terms are too easy? Too easy! Ah, my reader, the terms *are* easy, marvellously, gloriously easy *for you*; but have you ever considered *what the procuring of this salvation cost the Son of God?*

To make salvation so easy for you, He endured agonies which no creature will ever fathom. He, the Son of the Father's bosom, the Beloved of God, the sinless, unsullied Lord Jesus Christ, was at the cross *made sin*, and as such had poured out upon Him all the unutterably terrible wrath of an offended, insulted, holy, sin-hating God.

Remembering this, will you ever dare to say again that the way to be saved is too simple, too easy? Once more I repeat, God's word to you is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." If in spite of this you die unsaved, what answer will you make to God when you stand before Him in your sins, a neglecter of His salvation?

The basis on which the believer's salvation rests is an imperishable one. It is THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.

There was only one thing in the universe that could put away sin, and that was the blood of God's Son. That precious, precious blood, poured out in atonement at Calvary, is the answer to God for the blackest, darkest, foulest life. There is not a sin which it cannot take away. Through its

virtue, Saul the Pharisee, chief of sinners, Mary Magdalene, a crucified thief, and millions of others, once loathsome through the leprosy of sin, are now in the immediate presence of a sin-hating God.

The *power* of God could not put away sin, nor could His *love*. Works, tears, prayers, repentance, ordinances, ceremonies, cannot put away sin. One thing only will suffice, and that is the blood of Jesus. "And one of the soldiers, with a spear, pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water." "The blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from all sin." Search the Scriptures, friend, and find, if you can, anything beside that blood that will take away sin?

Well now, the blood of Christ having been shed, God both can and will save the sinner who seeks salvation through Jesus alone, apart from any merit or goodness which he might think it necessary to bring to Him. Do grasp the fact so clearly established in Scripture, that on the ground of the one great, atoning, sacrificial work of Christ, God bestows an everlasting salvation upon every sinner who believes in Jesus.

You have not to become better first. God will save you just as you are; your need gives you a claim upon His mercy. Just as the prodigal returned to the father's house, filthy and in rags, manifestly the one who had so sinned against that father, so do you come this moment to God, not excusing yourself, and resting on nothing but the blood and merits of His dear Son, and you will

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instantly get the prodigal's welcome ; the Father's arms will be around your neck, His kiss imprinted on your brow, and He Himself will conduct you to that home, the joy and music of which will never end.

In contrast, then, to the condition of the sinner as detailed in the first catalogue, the believer in Jesus is born again of water and the Spirit (John iii. 5) ; is saved (Titus iii. 5) ; shall not come into condemnation (John v. 24 ; Rom. viii. 1) ; is delivered from the coming wrath (1 Thess. i. 10) ; stands in grace, accepted in the Beloved (Rom. v. 2 ; Eph. i. 6) ; is counted righteous by God (Rom. iv. 5) ; brings forth fruit unto God (Rom. vii. 4) ; rejoices in hope of the glory of God (Rom. v. 2) ; has everlasting life (John vi. 47) ; walks after the Spirit (Gal. v. 25) ; is by birth a child of God (John i. 12, 13) ; has God as his Father (John xx. 17) ; is an heir of God, and predestinated by Him to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. viii. 17, 29).

Now, my reader, contrast the two catalogues, and bear in mind that the first is the fruit of sin, and man's inability to free himself from its consequences ; the second is founded on the atoning blood of Christ.

Yes, thank God, all these unutterable blessings result from, and are built upon, that precious blood. What a foundation ! Not the blood of Christ *and* human merit. Not the blood of Christ *and* ordinances, human or divine—but THE BLOOD OF CHRIST ALONE. Reader, *that* foundation can never be

moved, all the assaults of hell can never prevail against it; and remember all the misery and ruin of the first list are yours through sin, all the blessings of the second are yours the moment you believe in Jesus.

W. H. S.

“THIS MAN RECEIVETH SINNERS.”

(LUKE xv. 1, 2.)



HERE are only two classes of men,—those who draw near and hear Christ, and those who hold aloof. “Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.” Unsaved reader, have *you* ever done so? You have heard what others have said about Him, who, it may be, knew Him not. You may listen to your own heart, which totally misrepresents Him;—but have you drawn near *unto* Him to *hear* Him? Remember that “the hour now is when the dead (souls) shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear live.” It is He who speaks in this wonderful chapter. Then draw near unto Him now to hear Him.

“This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.” Did He deny the charge? No, He admitted it fully—it was His glory to receive them. In doing so the glory of His divine origin shone out. “He could not be hid.” He was in

the midst of sinners. How would He treat them? He would receive them. How could *the Son of such a Father* do otherwise?—the Father whose portrait He draws in the third section of this parable. Will He refuse you? Have you ever *drawn near* to Him to ascertain?

"I am too bad," you say. What, too bad to be a sinner? Are you sure you are not too good? You may be too good, but you cannot be too bad. Thank God for that. That robe, that *best robe*, has covered the chief of sinners, the thief on the cross, a Mary Magdalene, a woman in the city, which was a sinner. That Shepherd sought *them*, that "woman" (figure of the Holy Ghost) found *them*, that Father receiveth *them*, and art *thou* too vile? You wrong the blessed Three.

"Oh, but He was on earth amongst sinners then, and He is in heaven separate from sinners now," do you say?

But is He changed? Has He ceased to own a Saviour's heart, or to do a Saviour's part? Nay, nay, you wrong Him. The very last words He spake to us from heaven He spake in the character of "Jesus," the name He received because "he shall save his people from their sins." And what did He say? "Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 16, 17). He wills—will you?

And why is He in heaven? As the evidence of His finished work accepted. For whom? For SINNERS. But more, He EATETH WITH THEM" (v. 2),

that is, holds communion with them—with *sinner*s saved by grace. Who shall express the grace of this? That He, the Lord of glory, should partake with such,—should bring them to participate in His joys. As we read, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me” (Rev. iii. 20). That is, that to “any man” amongst self-satisfied, religious professors, who say, “I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,” but whom He sees wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked (Rev. iii. 17); to any who will hear and open, He will come in. And people do not knock on the inside of a door. He is outside. And art thou of those who are keeping the door of their heart barred against the Saviour, and He seeking admission? Beware that He rise not up and close His door against all thy importunity (see Luke xiii. 24-30).

On one occasion it was said that He was gone to be the guest of a sinner. And on another—“How is it that he eateth and drinketh with sinners?” But the Saviour answered, “I came to call *sinner*s to repentance.” Oh the condescension of grace! How blessedly the Lord “condescended to men of low estate.” Well may we sing—

“But, ah! the Master is so fair,
His smile so sweet to banished men,
That those who meet it unaware
Can never rest on earth again.”

W. G. B.

“HE LAYETH IT ON HIS SHOULDERS.” 163

“HE LAYETH IT ON HIS SHOULDERS.”



“**W**HAT man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, *he layeth it on his shoulders*, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, That likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance” (Luke xv. 3-7).

In Stapleton there was a young woman slowly but surely dying of a fatal disease. She was poor, very poor and miserable, both in her soul and her circumstances. Her helpless and hopeless condition was the cause of great distress and anxiety to her, for she was afraid to die, knowing very well that after death there was judgment to come, and as yet she had not put her trust in the Saviour's finished work. I was asked to visit her, which I did as early as possible, and found her very sorrowful and very much troubled.

“Oh! sir,” she said, “I'm such a great sinner. I know I won't live long, and there is no one who

can do me any good. The clergyman has been to see me, and he does me no good. I read the Bible, but I am not good. Oh! I am so bad, so bad."

Looking to the Lord for the right message for this hungry, thirsty one, I opened the Bible, the Word of God, and she, with her Bible, followed me as I read. I pointed her to the Lord Jesus, who died for sinners, "the just for the unjust," and how He had finished the work; "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Peter ii. 24). "Oh!" she said, "what must I *do*?" Turning to Luke xv., I read to her that beautiful story of the shepherd seeking the poor lost sheep, and when he hath found it layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing, bringing it home.

"You see," I said, "the Lord Jesus left the glory above and came into this poor miserable world to seek and to save the poor lost sinner. He bore all God's judgment against the sinner, and died in our stead. You do not know all your sins, but God knew every one, and the Lord *hath* laid on Him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all (Isa. liii. 6). We have all like sheep gone astray, but all your sins and iniquities hath God laid on Jesus."

"Oh, sir," she exclaimed, "I see it! I see it! God has laid all my sins on Jesus. He layeth it upon His shoulders; my salvation is secured for ever."

A stream of light had been let in by the Holy Spirit, completely banishing the darkness of her mind, and there was indeed rejoicing in heaven over this one sinner that day. I saw her again,

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but the time of her departure was at hand, and as I neared her bedside she extended her hand and caught hold of mine, and exclaimed, “Oh! precious Jesus! *He layeth it upon His shoulders*; Jesus, precious Jesus!”

I knelt down, and returned thanks to God the Father for her salvation, and for her and my precious Lord Jesus, to which she only could say, “Oh, yes! my Jesus. Jesus layeth it on His shoulders.”

She never spoke again, but her spirit soon departed to be with the Lord Jesus, her precious Lord and Saviour. Oh, dear reader, whoever you are, how is it with you? Have you, like that young woman, owned yourself before God a lost hell-deserving sinner, and accepted the Lord Jesus as your substitute? “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. iii. 23). You cannot improve your condition before God. “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isa. lxiv. 6). Church goings, almsgivings, prayers, tears, penitence, “turning over new leaves,” good resolutions, “doing your best,” can never save your soul. “God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. *Every one of them is gone back*; they are altogether become filthy, there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Psa. liii. 2, 3).

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. v. 8).

“The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John i. 7). The blood of Jesus has satisfied God; He has proved His satisfaction by raising the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and setting Him at His right hand in heaven.

“Oh! take with rejoicing from Jesus at once
The life everlasting He gives,
And know with assurance thou ne'er can be lost
Since Jesus, thy righteousness, lives.”

J. E. M.

CHRIST MY TITLE.

CHRIST has wrought out a righteousness in which we can be in the presence of God, and in which He can Himself sit on the throne of God. He has clothed me with divine righteousness as well as given me forgiveness, and He preaches peace. I know, when clothed, I have perfect peace. After this, there is the full and blessed result in glory. What Christ is entitled to, we get. He has a title to everything, and I have a portion with Him in all that He has. The work which has earned the glory for Him as Son of man gives it to me. When He comes we shall come with Him in the glory. There is the “inheritance”; but, what is better, we are to be with Him who is the universal Heir. He has finished the work for salvation. For whom? For me; for every believer.

J. N. D.

ENDED AT LAST.

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ENDED AT LAST.



FOR a long time had she been anxious about her soul. Satan had striven long and hard with her to keep her from coming to Jesus and committing her all to him, the One so ready to receive, to pardon, and to save. Satan for a while seemed to have his way, but the Lord was standing by, watching the dreadful conflict, allowing it, so that the precious soul in question might learn the wretchedness and helplessness of herself, and to find her all in Him.

For a while she could see the whole plan of salvation, and as it was gone over with her it gave her a measure of joy, but as she said, "I can see it all, but I cannot lay hold of it for myself, I can't make it my own."

But light broke in, light from God, and she was able to trust in Jesus and His precious blood, and by faith to make the salvation her own, that was wrought out for her on the cross. She was able to "eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood," and thus possess eternal life.

At the close of a gospel meeting when asked, "How is it with you to-night? is it all settled between you and God? have you peace with Him?" she replied, "*I am trusting Jesus and His blood, I am looking away from self to Him;*" and this was said with an earnestness that came from the depths of her heart.

Blessed ending of a dark period of conflict for her soul, during which Satan was using all his satanic art to keep her from her Saviour. *Now she is saved.* Now she is numbered among the sheep of Christ, of whom it is said, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one" (John x. 28-30).

Has the conflict ever begun with you, dear reader, and if begun, is it ended,—ended as in the case of this precious soul? Can you say with her, "I am trusting Jesus and His blood, I am looking away from self to Him"?

If so, I need not ask you, have you peace with God? for the one who is trusting Jesus and His blood is "justified freely by God's grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth a propitiation (or mercy seat), through faith in his blood" (Rom. iii. 24, 25). "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom v. 1).

Being justified, we have peace with God.
Blessed portion!

E. A.

"YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN."

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"YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN."

(Read JOHN ii. 23-25, iii. 1-21.)



HE connection between the second and third chapters of John is obvious to any careful reader of Scripture. It is on the understanding of what chapter ii. 22-25, brings out that the soul really craves what chapter iii. unfolds. If I do not know my state as a child of Adam, I shall not crave to know what chapter iii. brings out, viz., what is the New Birth and Eternal Life. These two are distinct, for if I think of the new birth, I do not think of Christ. It would be blasphemy to think of new birth in connection with Him. New birth is what I need. If I think of eternal life I can only think of Christ, for He is "the true God and eternal life."

It is important to bear in mind that whatever God has done in this world has always been effected by the blessed Spirit of God. The Son of God has paid the earth a visit. He was not wanted, was not welcomed when He came, and thirty-three years was quite long enough for this world to put up with Jesus, and then they cast Him out. But the Spirit of God came down and took His place on the earth.

From the garden of Eden onwards, wherever there has been any work of God in man's soul, it has always been the act of the Holy Ghost. New

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birth was therefore known in Old Testament times, though the whole truth had not come out then. Now it has. The earth is tenanted now by the Spirit of God, and His first thought is to bring man into the presence of God.

Turning now to chapter ii., we find Jesus going up to the passover. There He works miracles—all of them miracles of mercy. Many of God's servants have wrought miracles — but they were often miracles of judgment, conspicuously those of Moses. All the miracles of Jesus were miracles of pure mercy and goodness.

But what was the effect of those miracles? "Many believed in his name, *when they saw the miracles which he did*" (ii. 23). Could the Lord trust a man who believed on Him on the ground of His miracles? No. That is sight, not faith, and it is faith only which God regards. The reason the world does not believe in the Spirit of God is that they cannot see Him. But we read that Jesus "needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man" (ver. 25). And what was in man? Unbelief, and the very people who liked to see His miracles, cried, "Away with him, crucify him." Man may like to see miracles, but he does not care to have to do with God, unless there is the sense of need in his soul.

In chapter iii. we get a man who did feel the sense of need. The teaching of Jesus in this chapter is that, do what you will, you cannot change the nature of man, nor make it fit for God. "That

which is born of flesh is flesh" (ver. 6). Educate it. It is but educated "flesh." Refine it. It is but refined "flesh." Improve it as much as you will, it is only improved "flesh," and "flesh" will not do for God. You must have the new birth, a new nature capable of enjoying God.

This third chapter really begins, "*But* there was a man of the Pharisees." When the Lord had said He could not trust man, I get brought upon the scene the best kind of man the world could produce—hoping, doubtless, to go to heaven, for, I am sure, if you had told Nicodemus—before he met and heard the Lord—that he was only fit for hell, he would not have believed it.

To this best kind of man Jesus says, "You MUST be born again." He was a ruler of the Jews, and an earnest man, or he would not have come to Jesus. He came "by night," hoping nobody would see him—nobody would know it. He would lose his reputation if it were known. But though he came by night he "CAME TO JESUS." Now, my reader, have you ever done this? Have you ever come to Jesus? Though Nicodemus came by night at first, in a year or two more he did not mind coming by broad daylight, and bringing a hundred pounds of spices to anoint the body of Jesus. You have *midnight* in Nicodemus's history in the third of John, and you have what I may call *twilight* in John vii., when he says, "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" and you have broad *daylight* with him in

John xix., when he openly confesses and identifies himself with Jesus.

The point in John iii. is that Nicodemus came to Jesus. He was face to face with the living Son of God—he a sinner, dead in his sins; as religious as you like, but *dead*, for religion is not life. Nicodemus was impressed with the sense of the dignity, the moral, the divine power that was in this Man. He felt that He was “from God,” but did not yet know that He Himself was God. He drew near, as he thought, to a Man who was “a teacher come from God,” but he got face to face with God Himself. Have you, my friend, ever got face to face with the Lord yet?

Nicodemus came to Jesus to be taught, but Jesus says, as it were, to him, Before you can be taught you must have a new life. “Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” I have no doubt this was a startling piece of information to this religious doctor of the law. Nicodemus assuredly thought he would make a capital scholar. But Jesus said, You have no eyes, Nicodemus, you cannot see. The ruler does not understand what the Lord means, so he puts a question which you and I might think foolish, but it brings out what the Lord means. He says, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” The Lord replies, “Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot *enter into* the kingdom of God.” Water here does not mean baptism. What

did Nicodemus know about baptism? What is spoken of here as "water" is what is abundantly referred to in other parts of the Word of God. The Lord is speaking in figures. In chapter iv. He says to the woman, "If thou knowest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." Water is the figure of the Word of God—not merely the word, for the letter might kill—but the Word of God in connection with the Holy Ghost's applying power.

Look at Ezekiel xxxvi., the scripture which I have no doubt the Lord refers to when he says to Nicodemus, "Art thou a master in Israel and knowest not these things?" There we read (vers. 25-27), "I will sprinkle clean *water* upon you, and ye shall be clean . . . and a *new spirit* will I put within you." Again in Isaiah xlv. 3, we read, "I will pour *water* upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." Both these scriptures give us the water and the Spirit, *i.e.*, the application of the Word of God by the Holy Ghost, and that is always the way by which the new birth comes. Again, in John xiii., the Lord takes water and washes His disciples' feet, saying, "Now are ye clean, but not all," for Judas was there, but when he had gone out, gone to his "own company," and on the road to "his own place" (do not you join him there, my reader, I add in passing), the Lord says, in John xv. 3,

“Now are ye clean through the *word* which I have spoken unto you.” Again, in Eph. v. 26, we read of “the washing of water by the word”; and in James i. 18, we are told, “Of his own will begat he us with the *word* of truth.” So also 1 Peter i. 26, gives us, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the *word* of God, which liveth and abideth for ever”; and in chap. ii., ver. 2, he writes, “as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.” Thus John, Paul, James, and Peter tell the same tale, and these scriptures make it abundantly plain that what Jesus spoke to Nicodemus of was the Word and Spirit of God.

Reader, can you honestly say, “I have been born of the Spirit”? Can you say, “Whereas I was blind, now I see”? Perhaps you cannot tell the exact moment when you passed through the new birth, but every child of God knows that he does see, and that Christ is precious to him. To be in heaven without this new birth would be impossible, but, if possible, intolerable to you, for all there is light and clearness, and in the light you would find out what you are in the depths of your soul. If you could get there without the new life, your one thought would be, “How can I get out of this awful place?” But, thank God, “the wind bloweth where it listeth.” This is the sovereignty of God’s grace. It has no limit, and if you really believe in the Lord Jesus Christ you will find yourself to be one of those born of the Spirit.

Nicodemus now says, "How can these things be?" Jesus replies, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." He knows what suits God, and if you have listened to any other voice but His—any voice that diverges from what He says here—you have listened to the voice of a stranger, and not to the voice of the Good Shepherd. His divinity comes out as He speaks of "the Son of man which is in heaven." He knows what suits God, and what man needs. He says, I know what man needs, he "must be born again"; he needs new life. I know what suits God, for I came from the glory of God. I am in it now even. And do you want to know how to get there? I will die to open the way. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so *must* the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." He points us to His own death. My sin brought His death. Jesus, the sinless One, went to death to put my sin away. He was made sin. Sin brought in death, and only death, the death of a sinless One, can put my sin away.

There are two wonderful "musts" in this chapter. The first is the sinner's, "Ye *must* be born again." The second is the Lord's, "Even so *must* the Son of man be lifted up." The second is the complement of the first. The first could not be without the second. One is man's necessity, the other is Jesus' love. If I am to live, He *must* die.

It is a simple thing looking—too simple for some.

Oh! do look at that blessed One, at the Son of Man, the Son of God, on the cross once, but now in the glory. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Will you not trust Him—come to Him? It is for "whosoever believeth in him." Here we have God's side and man's beautifully brought out. God's part is *loving* and *giving*, and man's side is *believing* and *having*. Will you not be one of them who believe and have?

W. T. P. W.

A VOICE FROM THE SEA.



QUICKLY the news spread through the village that a large vessel was rapidly nearing the "Church Point," and soon the sea-shore was lined with a large company of eager watchers. A terrible storm was raging, and the angry billows were heaving their foam-crested waves high up in the air, and over the huge rocks which had stood guard for so many years over the little fishing village of ——. A dark moving mass was dimly discernible in the distance, rolling and pitching as if at the mercy of the cruel breakers. Arrangements were speedily made to effect communication with the ship by means of the life-saving appliances.

The opportune moment was awaited with feverish anxiety in the deepening darkness of that winter's evening. It was difficult to follow the movements of the vessel, but at last she seemed to be stationary, and, concluding she had grounded, the coast-guard quickly despatched a rocket, which apparently landed right over the ship. After a few moments' waiting, and no response coming, another and another was fired, with the same result.

Why didn't the sailors take advantage of this timely help? Why didn't they haul in the line? Why didn't they shout or signal in some way in answer to the efforts being put forth for their rescue? Was there any one on board? Had they all succumbed to the cold and privation they may have had to endure? These and similar questions agitated the minds of those on shore. Now a cry was raised, "Can't the lifeboat venture out?" Would the crew dare attempt to face that pitiless blast? Yes, willing hearts and hands were ready to undertake it if there was any possibility of success. The more experienced said, "It is impossible; there is no sea-room, and she will be unable to steer clear of those terrible rocks. Any such attempt must end in disaster. We must wait until the storm abates or daylight breaks." Shortly after midnight there was a partial lull in the tempest, which gradually calmed down as the hours wore on towards morning.

With the first streak of dawn a coble put off to the ship, which was now seen to have grounded on a

flat rock about two hundred yards from the shore. Quickly the coast-guards scaled the ship's side, and scanned the deck from stem to stern, but no sign of human life could they see. Hurrying down, into the after-cabin, a strange sight met their gaze. Everything was in complete order, and perfectly dry. A large open Bible was lying on the table, and a watch ticking away by its side. A cat was quietly sitting by the stove, and a canary bird was cosily perched in his cage, but no other signs of life. Continuing the search forward, they met with no better success, there was not one living soul on board. The gale had cleared the decks completely, but all below was dry and undisturbed. No need now to ask why the appeal from the shore was unanswered. But why did they leave the vessel, where they might have remained with the utmost security? and where were the crew? A man was left in charge of the abandoned ship, and the news was quickly conveyed to the shore. About mid-day the receding tide left the vessel high and dry, and as we walked around her, and examined her desolate decks and her shattered timbers, we thought of the folly of building one's hopes upon anything in the present scene.

Dear reader, have *you* ever thought of the wreckage the prince of this world is making, not with stranded vessels, but with *human souls*? When this beautiful three-masted barque left her moorings, after receiving her cargo, with her sails gaily spread to the breeze, and everything on board in neat and

trim condition, little dreamt the captain and crew of such an ending to their voyage. You may be young, just entering on life's voyage, your buoyant spirit sees no breakers ahead, you joyously picture out a smiling future,—wealth, fame, honour, position, spread themselves out before you, and the prospect looks fair. Pause, dear friend, *who* is it that presents this brilliant future to you? (Luke iv. 2-12.) Dare you trust *him*, “who is a liar from the beginning,” who plots your destruction? (1 Pet. v. 8.) You will find the commencement of his course in Gen. iii. 1-5, what he has been doing ever since in Eph. ii. 2, his final doom and destination in Rev. xx. 10. Surely you will never engage yourself to such a master. The very best he can give you, dear unsaved one, however dazzling it may *appear*, is only like the *mirage* in the desert, which lures the thirsty traveller on, but *never* quenches his thirst. Many a promising youth, listening to his “radiant lies,” has been led on, step by step, down to the dark shores of infidelity and despair. Listen *early* to Wisdom's voice; walk in her paths, and you will know what *true* pleasure is (Prov. viii.).

And what about the crew of the ill-fated vessel? Ah! the briny ocean soon told its sad tale. Next day a little boat belonging to her was picked up; and during the next succeeding days the treacherous sea yielded up its prey,—one here and another there, within a radius of a few miles along the coast, the bodies of the poor fellows were

washed ashore. And now the facts spoke for themselves,—the sailors, finding themselves amongst rocks in a raging sea, had deemed it wisest to abandon the ship to its fate, and trust to their boat landing them on the shore. Vain hope, and yet, humanly speaking, it was what most would have done under the circumstances. Had they remained in the vessel, they could have walked ashore dry-shod the next day.

We know not what may have transpired before they left the ship. Doubtless they held a solemn consultation before they took the fatal step. It touches a chord in our hearts as we think of that *open* Bible on the cabin table. Had they held a prayer-meeting? Did they commend themselves to God and the word of His grace? (Acts xx. 32.) Were they *all*, or *any* of them, “children of God by faith in Christ Jesus?” These questions must be left for “that day” to declare (2 Tim. i. 12). Not one was left to tell the tale as to why, when, or how they abandoned the vessel. Clearly their safety consisted “in abiding in the ship,” as in another case (Acts xxvii. 31), but they left the place of safety and perished. Such is man’s wisdom at its best (1 Cor. ii. 6).

Dear reader, there is no need for you to be lost in eternity’s fathomless waters, for *loud* and *clear* above the tempest’s roar ring the clarion-notes of the voice of the SON OF GOD—“God so loved the world.” “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” “Him

that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out" (John iii. 16; Matt. xi. 28; John vi. 37).

The crew numbered thirteen, of whom the most were fine young stalwart men. Friends, were communicated with, and those who were able to come had the mournful duty of following their loved ones to the village churchyard, where their bodies rest till the resurrection. Others of them who had no friends were quietly laid by their side. There were few tearless eyes in the simple but sympathising funeral cortege that day, as they slowly wended their way around the Point where the little churchyard lay (Eccl. vii. 2-4).

Dear young friend, in the face of a picture like this, which would you choose,—Satan's glittering bubbles, or heaven's *solid* realities? earth's honours, fame, wealth, morality, and religion *without* Christ, or glory, honour, and immortality *with* Christ? Just as surely as the mariner *has* to face the gale in his journey across the trackless deep, so surely will *your* foundations be tested when the withering blast of God's holy judgment bursts upon you in all its relentless fury. How will your frail vessel of *human hopes* meet the storm? or *where* will you find a haven for your poor shipwrecked soul in the day that is coming apace?

Dear friend, choose Wisdom's unfading treasures, which in all their solid grandeur are held out *to-day* for your acceptance. Take Jesus at His word (John v. 24); come to Him in your rags (Isa. lxiv. 6), your guilt (Eccl. iii. 15), your wretched-

ness (Luke xv.), your need (Heb. ix. 22), and you will be AT ONCE translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. i. 13). Instead of being a poor shipwrecked slave of Satan, with the judgment of God overhanging you, you will be a MILLIONAIRE of glory! (Rom. viii. 17; 1 Cor. iii. 21-23.)

Happy are you if you thus listen to Wisdom's voice, "For her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace" (Prov. iii. 17).

G. F. G.

"THAT WHICH IS LOST."

(LUKE XV. 4.)



N the Highlands of Scotland, on those wild and rugged mountains, the home of the red deer, a strange sight is seen at times. While scanning a distant hill-side with a telescope for deer, the sportsman will sometimes observe a moving white speck. On questioning the keeper beside him, he is informed that it is *a lost sheep*. So lost that it is past recovery. Terraces, or flats, have been formed on the hill-side by the action of rain and weather. The sheep, looking over the top, has noticed how green and fresh the grass appears on the terrace beneath, and without thinking of getting back, has leapt down, to find, after it has eaten the little patch of grass, that retreat is impossible. Neither

can the shepherd reach the sheep; the descent is too perilous. *It is lost.* It may be that the poor silly sheep can see and reach another terrace, or even two or more beneath. The story is repeated; the little patch of grass is soon grazed, *and then?* When the last blade is consumed on the last terrace, the poor sheep must either die of starvation, or casting itself over the edge, be dashed to pieces.

And so it is with the poor worldling. The pleasures of sin lead him on, ever offering him something fresh, or more agreeable, like the next flat which the poor sheep sees beneath it. But for sheep or sinner it is a *downward path*, like the man in Luke x. 30. Oh! poor pleasure seeker, what will your *end* be? The *last* grass flat of pleasure will soon be reached. *You may be on it now.* The *last* blade will soon be consumed, the *last* bit of pleasure enjoyed, *and then?* What about your *soul's eternity?* Or it may be profit, or renown, yes, even *religious* reputation, that you are set upon gaining; and when you have obtained the last bit of either, or all — *what then?* What about your *soul's eternity?*

But thank God, unlike the lost sheep on the Scotch hill-side, you are not yet beyond the Good Shepherd's reach. He has gone "into the mountains and sought that which is gone astray" (Matt. xviii. 11-13), spoken about a little child, and my reader may be one.

"And none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed;
Or how dark was the night that the Lord passed thro
Ere He found His sheep that was lost."

He gave His life for the sheep. He went under the dark waters of death to save them; and now He would put thee upon His strong shoulders, and carry thee all the way home to glory, rejoicing over thee; or, if thou art a little lamb, carry thee in His bosom, pressing thee to His tender heart, that thou mightest know the deep fond love that fills His heart for thee.

Do you object to be *cared for* with *such* care, to be *loved* with *such* love, to be *saved* at *such* cost, my reader? Oh! do but say in thy heart,—

“Saviour, I do trust Thee—
 Trust Thee with my soul!
 Guilty, lost, and helpless,
 Thou dost make me whole.
 There is none in heaven
 Or on earth like Thee;
 Thou hast died for sinners,
Therefore, Lord, for me.”

W. G. B.

“THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE.”



THESE are the words of the Holy Ghost. You will find them in the Bible, Rom. iii. 22. They are also the formula of the gospel of a considerable part of the more cultivated section of American and English society, especially of the former; but in how widely a different sense the words are

used, this little paper will attempt to explain. And may God in His sovereign mercy use the explanation, as far as it is true, to the saving of some soul.

The autumn before last the writer was staying in the Bernese Oberland, seeking health and strength. In the large hotel in which he stopped he met with an exceedingly attractive American lady. She was the wife of an Independent minister, who, like the writer, was also travelling for his health. I only saw him once; he seemed a kind, benevolent old gentleman. But as it is of his wife I wish to speak, I will attempt in a few words to describe her. Her shapely head was covered with nearly white wavy hair, her eyes were large and luminous, her features chiselled and almost Grecian in their regularity, and her bearing gentle and dignified. She was extremely courteous; and her face was full of kindness, sympathy, and refined intelligence. In short, though past middle age, she was beautiful. I was naturally attracted to her, as was everybody else; she was a general favourite, and all paid her court. I sat next her at *table d'hôte*, and soon found she had read the best of English and American literature, and not a little of French and German. She sketched and painted rapidly and skilfully, and while she did so I used to sit by, and talk at intervals with her. We soon got on to serious subjects, and then her creed came out which is embodied in the words at the head of this paper, "There is no difference." "Any opposite," she said, "is not a difference; there is no difference, it is

only the other side of the same thing. Thus," she argued, "you could not know what light was without darkness, or darkness without light; in fact, light is only more or less of darkness, and darkness only more or less of light." And then she would point to her painting, and say, "You see Art taught me this; shade is not different from light, only less of it," and then she would put on her shade and bring out her high lights. "The same thing is true," she added, "of a crooked line or a straight one; they are opposite, but not different, only in the sense of degree." From this she slid on to knowledge and ignorance, spirit and matter, good and evil, heaven and hell, and finally to God and Satan. "We shall see it all," she said, "in the blessed future; all is in harmony, if we could but see it; and the conditions we designate by these words, are merely the necessary steps in our moral and spiritual evolution. The words we use are only necessary expressions of our ignorance; and oh it is such a relief to me to know that it is so, amidst all the suffering and misery of the world," her face meantime beaming with enthusiasm and hope.

I was for the moment silent. I had heard something of this before, but never so blatantly set forth, and with such evident sincerity.

I asked her if her husband shared these views. "Oh, no," she replied, "he is much more orthodox."

When I came to think over this specious reasoning, the use the Holy Spirit makes of these words came to my mind. "There is no difference"

truly, and why? "There is none that doeth good, no, not one; all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Well, here is a difference truly, and a terrible difference; for according to this poor lady none have sinned, or, if they have, it is only a difference in *degree* of goodness or badness, which was no difference after all,—and so on, with all the rest of the terrible condemnation contained in Rom. iii. 10-19.

May God preserve all of us from such awful folly and delusion. There is such a "difference" between sin and righteousness, that the blood of Christ was required to make reconciliation between God and the sinner; and He, the Holy One of God, had to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And if His blood be not applied to our souls, there is such a "difference," both now and to eternity, that a "great gulf" is placed to keep us out of heaven, and in hell; and I need scarcely point out, that when a sinner is really in hell, he will find there is a "difference" and that it is not heaven, though he does not know and cannot know what heaven is,—but he will know there is a "difference" all the same, a mighty "difference," and an eternal and infinite "difference," between the love and the wrath of a holy God. But do not deceive yourself, there is "no difference" between you and the worst criminal that ever existed in God's sight, even the Whitechapel murderer if you like. "There is no distinction," the Revised Version has it, which perhaps more clearly conveys what is meant,—that

is, that naturally we are all short of the glory of God, and all have sinned and are all guilty of all contained in the verses already referred to, Rom. iii. 10-19. The distinctions men make are of no avail in God's sight,—proper enough in their place, but out of court here. God made man for Himself, and man has outraged and insulted God in every possible way. All have done it; “there is no difference,” “no distinction.” That you, sinner, cannot see it until you are on God's side is no wonder; you have not the moral position necessary until you own it as true; but it is true all the same, and God could not be God if it were not so. A blind man knows he is blind though he never saw; but the terrible fact about the unconverted soul is, that though blind, it thinks and says it can see, therefore, adds our blessed Lord, “your sin remaineth.”

If you would acknowledge your blindness, half your trouble would be over; but you won't, and, what is more, you do not want to. There is wilfulness in it, as I heard a servant of God say a few days since. “Unbelief is the child of dislike.” Conscience continually warns you—sometimes in feeble, sometimes in forcible, tones—something is wrong within you. Beware!

Now you have been told what God says; and if only you would credit it, why, that would be faith. And oh, the peace and rest of faith! and then the remedy, how you would seize it!

I conclude with beseeching you to accept God's

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words as to your natural state, and as to the provision which His love has furnished, in that He gave His only begotten Son for your salvation, otherwise you are for ever undone. "There is no difference."

F. F. R.

THE PROCLAMATION OF PEACE.

Deut. xx. 10-14.



AMONGST the laws of God given to Israel in case of war, was the command, "When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, *then proclaim peace unto it,*" &c. God delights in mercy, and judgment is His strange work.

There was to be a proclamation of peace before its execution at the hand of Israel. How forcibly this illustrates what God is doing now! The world is in danger of judgment. "Behold, the judge standeth before the door" (Jas. v. 9). But to-day the Judge is a Saviour proclaiming peace. The gospel comes first; judgment has been long threatened, but mercy holds back its execution upon guilty men, and peace is proclaimed in righteousness on the ground of the finished work of Christ.

God is glorified about sin in the death of His Son. Raised from the dead, Jesus was the first to proclaim peace to His disciples, the fruit of His own work. Now from the glory He proclaims to

all, "Peace be unto you." His propitiatory sacrifice was for all, and it is enough for all. The proclamation of peace is not for any favoured people, but for the whole world that liveth in the wicked one (1 John v. 10). All are responsible to receive it. All who reject, despise, or neglect it, must reap the consequences,—*eternal woe* (John iii. 36; Rev. xx. 15).

"And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein," &c. (ver. 11). It was at the option of the people of the besieged city to make an answer of peace to those outside, and to open their gates, &c., or to fight against them. And men are responsible now for their treatment of God's message of peace. It is our own fault if we fight against Him. We are the enemies of God, but He seeks to reconcile us to Himself in this day of His grace. It is a question for every individual soul in this poor world exposed to judgment. What answer will you make to His overtures of peace? Do you cry "Peace," or "War"? Will you make answer of peace, and find peace with God now and for ever through the finished work of Christ? (Rom. iv. 23-25, v. 3.) Or will you fight against Him in heart and mind until too late, to be overwhelmed by His righteous judgment? Will you open the gates of your heart, so to speak, and let Christ in? or will you close them, and shut Him out?

If you follow wisdom's way you will open to Him

at once. Delays are dangerous. Another day may be too late; the day of peace and salvation past and gone for ever. Take care that you give a true answer of peace. Many, puffed up with fleshly pride, are strong in their rebellion against God. Judgment is before them. Many are already crying, "Peace and safety," but it is a false peace. Sudden destruction will come upon them also (1 Thess. v. 3). But all who hear God's proclamation of peace through the precious blood of Christ, and whose hearts are open to believe it, *have peace* with Him *now*. For every believer it is written, "Who 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. 15, v. 1). Again we ask you, Is it to be "Peace" or "War"?

For nearly nineteen centuries has this glorious proclamation been sounded forth far and wide. What wondrous patience our Saviour-God has shown! Tens of thousands have despised every overture of His grace. Surely they will be without excuse when the judgment comes.

Many have heard and believed it, and *have peace with God*. Are you amongst the number? If so, what follows? "And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee" (ver. 11). *Tributaries* and *servants*. And that is exactly what believers become. We

are saved from judgment, have peace with God, henceforth to be dependent upon Him and to serve Him. Dependence and obedience are what characterised the Lord Jesus Christ as a man down here. And He has set us an example that we should follow His steps. To be God's tributaries and servants, is far better than to live in this world in independence and self-will. But there is no way to this but by faith. We must *first have peace*.

"And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it; and when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword; but the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee" (ver. 12-14). Every city that wilfully resisted was to be exposed to all the horrors of a siege. The men were to be smitten without mercy, when the Lord delivered it into their hands, and the rest and the spoil were for Israel.

And if men now persist in their self-will, rebelling against God, the only alternative is judgment. If you, poor sinner, and enemy of God, *will do your will*, fighting against God's offers of mercy and grace, not only will you live without peace here, but to all eternity. All judgment is committed unto the Son. Soon the rebellious and wicked will be delivered into His hand. Terrible will be the

day of retribution. None can escape, who fail now to accept His gracious terms, neglecting so great salvation. 'Tis not yet too late. Once more we sound forth the proclamation of peace. "Acquaint now thyself with God, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee" (Job xxii. 21). You have nought to do. The ground of it is laid (as we have already seen) in the finished work of Christ. Peace was made through the blood of the cross of God's dear Son (Col. i. 20), and now it is offered to you. What is your reply, "Peace," or "War"?

E. H. C.

THE TWO CREEDS.



HERE are many creeds in Christendom, from the so-called "Apostles' Creed" down to the "I believe" of the latest-born sect. But the two creeds I am about to present, express the belief of two individuals, one still living, the other absent from the body and present with the Lord.

Alice B—— was in her nineteenth year. She died in the early morn of Thursday, 30th January 1890. A short time before she passed away, her father, Dr B——, who is a Christian, asked her if she had any message to send to the absent loved ones. She replied, "Tell them I believe that Jesus died for

my sins, and I know that He is my Saviour ; I can fully trust Him."

What a simple, sweet, and scriptural confession of faith, or rather of Christ! My reader, is this your creed? Can you, in the presence of God, and in the face of eternity, say, "I believe that Jesus died for my sins"? Have you had your eyes opened to your sins? Have you really been burdened and troubled on account of your sins? Have you discovered that you cannot save yourself from your sins? Have you, in the consciousness of your guilt and helplessness, been brought to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the One who died for your sins? Have you the blessed assurance resulting from such faith, and say "I know that He is my Saviour." Oh what rest and peace this gives! It not only soothes the troubled conscience in the presence of a holy God, but it delivers the soul from "fear of death," and in the very presence of death and eternity fills the heart with that confidence expressed in the words, "I can fully trust Him."

My reader, if you, like Alice B——, should be brought face to face with death and eternity, have you the faith and confidence she had? Alice B——'s creed-book was the Bible, the Word of God; her teacher was the Holy Ghost.

Now I want to tell you of the other creed. Philip S—— was spoken to by a Christian about his soul. His confession was, "I believe in living hard, I believe in working hard, I believe in dying

hard, and then going to hell." Truly this is an awful creed.

If the reality of believing is shown in works, then Philip S—— has already given abundant evidence of his faith in the first two articles of his creed. He is both a hard liver, and a hard worker; and if he does not repent, he will surely die hard, and go to hell. My reader, is Philip S——'s creed yours? Do not get angry, and say, "I would not dare to say such wicked things." Perhaps not. But remember "actions speak louder than words." What is the language of your life? Are you going on in sin? Are you an unbeliever? Are you a rejecter of Christ, a neglecter of God's great salvation? If so, then you are "living hard." In the eyes of your fellows you may be accounted respectable and good; and perhaps the thoughts of your own deceitful heart have joined themselves with the judgment of the world to fasten the delusion upon you. But in the eyes of a holy God, and according to His judgment revealed in His Word, you are a "hard liver." And doubtless you are a "hard worker,"—working hard in pursuit of the "pleasures of sin for a season," or in the endeavour to "lay up for yourselves treasures on earth"; or it may be working hard in a religious way, deceived by the thought that your works can secure you the favour of God and the salvation of your soul. And, my reader, what will the end be of your hard living and hard working? You will die hard, and go to hell. You may not have the hardihood to

express it, as did Philip S——; you may even shrink and shudder at the thought of dying hard, and going to hell; but, my reader, as sure as God's Word is true, such will be your end if you continue in unbelief.

What a striking contrast these two creeds present! Both were uttered in the village of A——, in Illinois, one on the morning of January 30th, the other on the afternoon of March 12th, 1890. God grant to each reader of this narrative the faith of Alice B——, "I believe that Jesus died for my sins, and I know that He is my Saviour; I can fully trust Him."

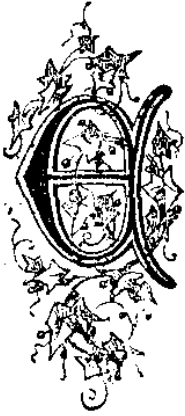
J. P.



IN 1 Cor. ii. 12 we have *revelation* (ver. 12), *inspiration* (v. 13), and *reception* (ver. 14), and all by the Holy Ghost. *Revelation* is the communication which God, by the Spirit, makes of His mind to His prophets or apostles. *Inspiration* is the record or communication which these vessels make of the revelation "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, communicating spiritual things by spiritual means." *Reception* is that which is open to us who hear the Word of God, but as "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God" it is really the effect of the Spirit's work if they be received, "because they are spiritually discerned." This makes nothing of man, and everything of God.

W. T. P. W.

A GERMAN SOLDIER'S CONVERSION.



— V —, the subject of the following narrative, was called to the Prussian military service in December 1869, little suspecting what he would soon have to pass through. He was not very strong, and found the exceedingly strict discipline very testing, which led him from time to time, though still unsaved, to pray to the Lord to help him.

Just as he was on the eve, as he thought, of better days, war broke out between France and Germany. On the 25th of July 1870, his regiment started for the French frontier, and after long and arduous marches, heavily accoutred, and sometimes in the pouring rain, arrived near Weisenburg on the 4th of August. Here they first heard the roar of the cannon. Marching in a long semicircle to Geisenburg, they cut off some reinforcements for the enemy, and took a number of prisoners. At four in the morning of the 6th they ate their last small piece of bread, and at mid-day reached the line of their artillery at Woerth. After halting some time in an oat-field, about two o'clock the Colonel said, "Now, men, we must advance; now show that you are Westphalians! We must go through, and not back again."

Forward they went at a running pace towards Fröschweiler. Six cannons poured their murderous

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fire upon them at a distance of about a hundred and fifty paces, but three grenades quickly silenced them. They now found themselves some three hundred paces from the infantry of the enemy, strongly posted in a hop-field, who poured in a hot musketry fire, which was steadily returned. Suddenly came the command, "Shoulder muskets, march!" And then, as they went straight through the hops at the enemy, "To the attack; muskets to the right; lower muskets."

At this moment E—— V—— was struck by a ball in the foot, and as his comrades fell back a few paces, for the moment, before the foe, he fell to the ground, scarcely more than a hundred paces from the French. Lying there, helpless, thoughts of God filled his mind. His whole life, from earliest youth, passed like a panorama before his soul, and he was conscious that the Lord had often come near him, but that he had failed to pay any heed to Him.

He now turned towards God and prayed, "Forgive all my sins wherewith I have sinned against Thee, and if it be Thy will that I should die here, send a bullet that I may not suffer long, and take my soul to Thee in heaven. But if Thou hast thought otherwise of me, that I should remain on the earth to confess Thy name before men, then preserve me from another bullet, and bring me home to my mother as soon as possible." As he thus prayed, all the anguish and fear of death left him, for he knew that God could prevent every

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bullet from harming him. They were rattling all around. One went into the earth about two hand-breadths off; a second touched his hair just over his left ear; a third grazed his head, and singed the skin where it touched. He then swooned, and before he recovered consciousness, a small grenade splinter passed through his neck, and a big one entered his left arm, which was quite lamed and swelled so much that the sleeve of his coat was too small. When he awoke, as out of a sleep, the fight was over, and all was quiet except the moans and groans of the wounded.

Towards evening his comrades sought and found him, and carried him back to Woerth, where he was laid in a garden full of wounded. The next day, by means of a stick used as a crutch, he managed to hobble to the church, which was being used as an hospital, where his wounds were at last bound up, some twenty-four hours after they were received. The whole town was a pitiful sight. Great efforts were made to send the wounded away, but unavoidable delays occurred, entailing much suffering upon them. E—— V—— was conveyed to the station, but the trains were already full, and he was brought back again to spend the night on the stone floor behind the front door of the Rathhaus, which was filled with sufferers from cellar to tower.

Three days passed without his obtaining either bread or water. A lady, who spoke German, sought to obtain bread with two thalers (about six shillings) which he gave her, but came back and

said that there were no provisions to be found anywhere. On the fourth evening they were again brought in carts to the Soultz railway station, where at last he obtained some meat-soup, and was then started back to Mainz, in Germany. From thence they journeyed by steamer, on the Rhine, to Düsseldorf. At a place near, called H——, a convent was fitted up as an hospital, where he remained four days or so, when the Crown Prince Frederick issued an order that any wounded who wished to go home to be nursed privately, could do so.

On 16th August, E—— V—— found his prayer answered; he was at home again with his mother. But now he was called to pass through fresh trials. His two sisters were both lying seriously ill, his brother indulging in drink, and his own bodily state became much worse. Scurvy set in, and pieces of flesh fell out through the mouth; the glands became ulcerated, followed by inflammation of the bowels. These deep afflictions tried his spirit greatly. He saw the Lord's hand in them; but without understanding His ways, and turning to his mother, in tears, said, "How have we and our forefathers sinned that it goes thus with us? Let us confess our sins that His anger may turn away from us, for the Lord is good, He will not always judge us."

In the beginning of 1871, things took a turn. His younger sister, aged nineteen, died happily, having been led to a knowledge of the Lord during her illness. The elder one was restored. E—— V——

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was now assigned and transported to the Compensation Battalion at Frankfort-on-the-Main.

Here, conscience still being in exercise, he wished to keep his promise to the Lord on the battlefield. He sought to abstain from wicked thoughts, words, and deeds. But the more he tried, the worse he seemed to be. All his best acts were mixed with sin. Two years he struggled on, tired out with his useless efforts, but without reaching his desired aim.

One day two Christians were led of the Lord to speak in his hearing about Pharaoh and Israel, and how God said to Moses, "I will harden Pharaoh's heart that he will not let them go out of Egypt." These words fastened themselves upon his mind, and he feared God would harden him. A fearful anguish of soul fell upon him at the thought of being eternally lost. This brought him face to face with God about his state, in a little room alone. And there His infinite grace met him. God revealed Christ to him as his Saviour, as the One who had finished the work of redemption for him. There he learned the value of His atoning sacrifice; and there he learned to trust alone in Jesus' precious blood. In Him whom God had raised from the dead and glorified, he found rest and peace for his soul (Rom. v. 1). A joy unspeakable filled him, as he went forth and confessed to others, "*I have found the Lord, and He is mine, and I am His.*" Blessed meeting; the Lord Jesus, the Son of Man, who came to seek and to save that

which was lost, had found him, and he had found the Lord as his Saviour.

Two days later his eldest sister, and the next day after, his eldest brother was converted. Surely they were learning that the Lord was pitiful and full of tender mercy. All the trials and sorrows they had passed through were dealings of God to bring them to true self-judgment before Him, that He might bless and save them for His own glory. But, notwithstanding all, the poor mother still remains in the dark, her heart still estranged from the love of God. Like many more, she goes on till to-day with the uncertain testimony, "The Lord will receive me in grace when I die," without knowing what it is to have an interest in His precious blood now.

Dear reader, you have heard how mercy followed E—— V—— in the midst of the dangers of the battlefield, and the hospital, &c., ending in the richest blessing for his soul; how is it with you? You may not have passed through such trying scenes, or been exposed to such visible dangers, but whatever the circumstances of your pathway through life, one thing is clear, this scene is, as it were, the valley of the shadow of death. Death is here, and may mark you for its victim this day. Are you ready to meet it? Has the Lord met with you, and have you met with Him? Now is the time (2 Cor. vi. 2). He gave Himself for guilty lost sinners. You are one. Have to do with Him now about your state, and believe on Him. "Whosoever

believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). And, "Whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). Then will you be enabled to say from the heart, "*I have found the Lord; He is mine, and I am His.*"

And all who are His, are called to walk as His. We are saved to follow Him. "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk even as he walked" (1 John ii. 6). E. H. C.



NEW BIRTH AND ETERNAL LIFE.



N the July number of *The Gospel Messenger* (p. 169), occurs this paragraph regarding New Birth and Eternal Life:—
 "These two are distinct, for if I think of the new birth, I do not think of Christ. It would be blasphemy to think of new birth in connection with Him. New birth is what I need. If I think of eternal life I can only think of Christ, for He is 'the true God and eternal life.'"

Some have written to inquire what I mean by these words, evidently drawing from them a meaning I did not, and do not, attach to them—in fact, quite misunderstanding their import. By "these two are distinct," I mean the two *terms*, new birth and eternal life, are distinct, though I do not in the

least deny that to be born again is substantially to have eternal life. But, in John iii., the Lord, having first stated the need of man, viz., to be born again—true in all ages—passes on to declare the need of a work being done, in order to give God a righteous title to bestow blessing on sinful man. This He does in the wonderful words of verse 14, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but”—what? be born again? no!—“have eternal life.”

Without doubt here we have a change of terms on His part, who cannot err, of the deepest moment. In all ages, if one were born of God, I have no doubt that divine life was there, and that life eternal. Nevertheless we may be sure the Lord had an infinitely wise reason for the change He makes here. When He comes to express the application of this universal necessity of new birth to the believer in Himself—the Son of Man, the Son of God, who was going to die, to accomplish redemption, to lay the basis really of all blessing from God to man—He does not describe it as new birth, but gives it another title and character altogether—eternal life. This change is connected with His Person, and His work on the cross, and most fitting it is that it should be. Beyond all controversy He, the Son of God, is the quickener of all, whether in Old Testament times, or now, for “the Son quickeneth whom he will.” There is but one Saviour,

and Jesus is He, hence the new birth, which all need, was ever the revelation of Christ to the soul, by the Holy Ghost, through the Word (see 1 Pet. i. 23-25).

The change in the terms, however, is noticeable for, if I think of "new birth," it is what I need, and get through grace, but it does not, in terms, convey the thought of association with Christ in the same full way as the words "eternal life," which Christ is, and which I possess when I possess Him.

By the words, "It would be blasphemy to think of new birth in connection with Him," I meant that while new birth is the need of man—of all in every age—*Jesus is the one exception*. He, though become a man, did not need it; to think that He did would surely be blasphemy. Blessed be His name, it is He who had "life in himself," and died to enable God, in righteousness, to impart it to us.

W. T. P. W.

A SOLID FOUNDATION.



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 abideth for ever.*" 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.

“THE LAW of the Lord is perfect, *converting the soul*: the TESTIMONY of the Lord is sure, *making wise the simple*. The STATUTES of the Lord are right, *rejoicing the heart*: the COMMANDMENT of the Lord is pure, *enlightening the eyes*. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb” (Ps. xix. 7, 8, 10).

"HE'S LOST FOR EVER."



THESE were a mother's words to me respecting her eldest son, who had a short time before met with a fatal accident. He was returning home from a sale he had been attending, one very dark night, about eleven o'clock. He had two companions with him in the light dog-cart he was driving, and all three were very intoxicated. In this condition they were rushing along, urging on the poor horse with curses and oaths, and with frequent cruel lashings of the whip. They had no lights, and were therefore quite unable to see any obstruction in their path. Suddenly the off wheel collided with a stone wall, and the three occupants of the trap were all thrown violently out on to the hard road. The pony was also thrown and stunned. It was some distance from any habitation, and no help was nigh. One of the men, only very slightly injured, sprang to his feet, and by the aid of a match he struck took a hasty look at his fellow-travellers. What he saw was sufficient to make him start off for assistance, which was obtained with some difficulty. Lanterns were brought, and a ghastly sight met the gaze of those who had been so ready to respond to the cry for help. One poor fellow's head was literally in pieces, and death must have been instantaneous.

The other man was so seriously hurt that for weeks his life was despaired of.

I saw the mother of the dead man a day or two after the burial. It is impossible to describe her grief. She was a sincere believer on the Lord Jesus Christ, and this made her mourning the more bitter, as she knew what a Saviour her son had lost, and what a fearful doom he had found.

“I cannot rest,” she said, “I can only leave my trial with the Lord. But I know too well that he’s lost for ever. There was a hope at one time that he would be led to the light, but those impressions soon wore off, and he is past hope now. He lived without Christ, and he died without Him, so he must be lost for ever.”

Lost for ever! What a thought. Lost, and in torment for ever! Oh, unsaved reader, let this solemn incident remind you of your condition. Lost now—will it be for ever? If you do not know Christ as your Saviour; if you have never yet seen your lost, helpless, ruined state; and have never been to the One who is so “ready to help,” “ready to save,” and “ready to forgive,” *you are lost*; and if you should be as suddenly cut off as this poor fellow was, or if you should die unsaved, you would also be “lost for ever!”

Perhaps you do not relish the thought. But it is in full accord with God’s Word, for He says—“He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark xvi. 16). “He that believeth on him (Jesus) is not con-

demned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John iii. 18). "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."

Perhaps you think that God will not deal so hardly with you as to cast you into hell because you have always been respectable, pious, honest, and charitable. You may be a regular partaker of the "sacraments"; you may even have your name written upon the roll of church members, and may be a Sunday school teacher, taking a prominent part in all kinds of religious work, and yet—solemn truth—may be still unsaved, unforgiven, lost. Dear reader, do not deceive yourself. You are trying to merit God's salvation. You are working for it; striving to win it, whereas God offers it as a *free gift*. "The wages of sin is death, but the *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23). "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that *worketh not*, but *believeth* on him that justifieth the ungodly, his *faith* is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 4, 5).

Take warning, too, ye despisers, from this terrible incident. I have known this man spurn the gospel message, and repulse those who would speak to him about his eternal welfare. He knew about Christ, but he died without receiving Him. He

had often heard the gospel preached, but never believed it to the saving of his soul, and now he is beyond it all. No offer of salvation now. No chance of escape now. He is doomed. Without hope, without Christ, and without God he lived—and so he died. And such will be his awful state through the everlasting ages. Oh, dear unsaved one, where will you spend eternity? If you die unsaved, it must be in hell, tormented day and night for ever. Oh, escape for thy life! Hasten to the sinner's Saviour! Flee from the wrath to come! God is inviting, calling, beseeching you. Come to him, and that without delay, for "*now* is the accepted time, and *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2). B.

THE SINNER AND HIS MISTAKES.

(Read 2 Kings v. 1-19.)



NCOURAGEOUS man — a successful general—a pleasant friend is the brief but comprehensive character of Naaman. Possessed of abilities and qualifications many might well envy—covered with honours from his king and country, the land of Syria rang with plaudits as victory after victory was added to his roll of glory.

Yet, spite of the favour of the king—spite of the applause of his admiring countrymen—beneath the general's uniform glittering with the decorations of valour, the humbling truth was known in the heart of Naaman, so pithily expressed in Scripture, "*But he was a leper.*" He was painfully conscious that he was a dying man—that the loathsome leprosy had numbered his days.

Leprosy in Scripture is a type of SIN. It entirely baffled medical skill. The man least affected was as surely marked for death as the far-gone victim. The only difference in their cases was time. If strength held out till the leprosy had worked its way through the system—till there was nothing more to work at, then the leper was pronounced by the priest clean. Sometimes God specially stayed the disease.

Family ties were broken by it—the leper must shun the habitations of men. The running stream must not quench his burning thirst. The stagnant pool must allay that. The freshening breeze must not pass from him to the unwary traveller, so that contagion might not be carried on the wind. His duty was to call, often alas! in sad sepulchral tones, "*Unclean, unclean, unclean*" (Lev. xiii.).

What a picture of you, dear unsaved reader! The leper felt the disease, for he had to leave the clean to die alone. You are a moral leper amidst moral lepers. Hence the sad condition is not so keenly felt; though alas! moral leprosy—sinfulness—is far worse than the physical. The one

brings death to the body—the other, judgment to the soul. God grant your eyes may be opened to the truth of your lost, hopeless, hell-bound condition. “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after death the judgment” (Heb. ix. 27). “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. vi. 23).

Thank God, there is a remedy for your case—a cure for your disease. “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from ALL sin” (1 John i. 7). And “the Lord . . . is not willing that any should perish, but that ALL should come to repentance” (2 Peter iii. 9).

Let us see what mistakes Naaman made as he sought to be cleansed, for the mistakes he made are those the sinner makes in seeking salvation.

A little captive maid knows the power of God is with the prophet in Samaria. She longs for the restoration of her kind and noble master. Perhaps with many a tremor and fear, she expressed an ardent desire to her mistress that her master might visit the prophet.

The king hears of it, and so desires the cure of his valued and successful general, that with his own royal hands he writes a letter to the King of Israel. Naaman sets off on his journey, and number one mistake is made. He goes to

THE WRONG PERSON.

He goes to the king not the prophet—he tries earthly power not divine. The king is useless and gets alarmed.

Is this mistake not often repeated in the history

of the anxious soul? How many thousands seek the intercession of a priest with some legendary saint! How many rest satisfied with following man's way of obtaining salvation instead of trusting Christ! Then, dear reader, go not to man as thy resource but to God. Hear what He says of Jesus,—“There is *NONE OTHER NAME* under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts iv. 12).

The prophet hears of the sad dilemma the king is in, and sends for Naaman, and now the leper makes his second mistake. He tries

THE WRONG POWER.

He, no doubt, knew well the power of the golden key. Perhaps he thought it well-nigh omnipotent. But he has to learn that God's blessing is not to be bought. He brings ten talents of silver, six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. At the very lowest computation these were worth £15,000. What a physician's fee! His presents are not accepted. How could they be!

But let us bring the moral out of the dim historic past into the living present. How many thousands of to-day, in these lands of gospel light, are seeking to buy God's salvation?

Spite of the fact that the Scripture declares God's salvation is “without money, and without price”—spite of the fact that it took nothing short of the death of Jesus on Calvary's cross to pay the ransom price, men insult God by bringing their

money of good works to buy salvation. What stupendous folly!

A gentleman has lately reared a handsome church costing thousands of pounds. The townspeople are saying, "What a heavy fire premium." Oh! sinner, if it took such untold agony and suffering to atone for sin at the cross—if it took the shedding of such precious blood, how all men's works and gifts will be utterly condemned at that last, great day! But mark, "the gospel of Christ . . . is THE POWER OF GOD unto salvation, to every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16).

Naaman goes down to the house of Elisha in great state. He fancied his power and position would call forth respect and deference at the hands of God's prophet. But NO. A simple, plain message is sent down to him, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean."

This simple plan arouses the great man's anger, and in his wrath he speaks aloud. He had beforehand settled in his mind the way of blessing. He makes his third mistake in thinking of

THE WRONG PLAN.

Naaman soliloquises thus,—"*Behold, I thought*, he will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper." The Psalmist well said, "I hate *thoughts*, but . . . I hope in thy word." God said, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man *his*

thoughts, . . . for my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord."

How like the sinner! How often he has his own useless plan. The anxious soul often expects some great revulsion of feelings—some striking dream—some sudden flash of light in the soul. As the prophet sent a simple message, "Go and wash;" so God sends thee a simple message, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

Said a lady to the preacher at the close of the gospel meeting, "Have I to be saved in the same way as my coachman?" "Exactly," answered the preacher. "Then I prefer not to be saved," was the awful answer, as she swept out of the room on her proud way to hell.

Now Naaman makes his fourth mistake. He thinks of

THE WRONG PLACE.

The prophet said, "Go and wash *in Jordan*." He thinks of the little, muddy, rocky stream with disdain. His mind travels to the broad stately rivers of his own country—"Abana and Pharpar"—flowing through Syria's capital. "May I not wash in them, and be clean?" is his indignant question. "So he turned, and went away in a rage."

Do not sinners of the present day strive to find cleansing in earth's streams—Morality and Religion? Millions are busy washing in these streams

now. They think an outward observance of religion—a moral, blameless life will atone for the past; will give them the necessary cleansing they require for God's holy presence. Nay, the Scripture declares,—“Without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. ix. 22). “God requireth that which is *past*” (Ecc. iii. 15).

Just as the broad Damascene rivers rise in the mountains—pursue their steady way through Syria's capital—flow into the desert and lose themselves there and find not their way to the sea; so man's streams rise on man's elevations—flow through this poor scene—are lost in the desert of man's imaginations, and pass not into eternity.

Naaman might have washed his leprous skin in his own rivers, and would be no whit cleaner; nor will the sinner be any cleaner in God's sight by all his fruitless attempts of man's cleansing. “*The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from ALL sin*” (1 John i. 7).

Now, the servants affectionately gather round their master and reason with him. “My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it,” say they.

Yes! there was the point. If it had taken great courage—involved great expenditure—caused immense pain, Naaman would gladly have undertaken the terrible task of self-cleansing; but because the plan was so simple, it rouses his anger and excites his contempt. Is this not like the sinner?

At last Naaman begins the journey of blessing—

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the going DOWN. "How much rather then," had said his servants, "when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean?"

He weighs the advice of his servants. The force and propriety of it is seen by him. He betakes himself to Jordan. He enters the flowing stream a poor, dying, loathsome leper. He dips himself in the water according to God's command once and comes up a leper. He repeats this, and time after time comes up still the poor leper. At last *down* he goes for the seventh time and the waters flow over *the leper*, but, blessed be God, he comes up *the cleansed*—with his flesh like the flesh of a little child—not one taint of disease about him. Jordan's stream contained such marvellous efficacy because it was God's *place*—the dipping seven times, the *plan*—His word, the *power*.

Then Naaman says, "*Behold, now I KNOW*" (v. 15). His thoughts had fled—had given place to certainty and assurance. So, dear uncleansed reader, you must come to what God says, if you want cleansing and to know it surely.

Jordan is a type or figure of the death of Christ; and as Naaman was cleansed by washing therein, so you may know what it is to be cleansed from all your sins by trusting Christ—accepting His death as that which gives you life—His blood being known by you as that which cleanseth you from ALL SIN (1 John i. 5).

As Naaman dipped himself in Jordan seven times (seven means perfection in Scripture); so

you must honestly and thoroughly own that you are utterly hopeless in yourself, and take home to yourself all the value of the person and work of Christ.

Then, dear reader, avoid Naaman's four mistakes, and take God at His word, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). "Through this man (Jesus) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 38, 39).

In India at this present moment there lives a modern Naaman in the person of a rajah of great state and importance. The loathsome leprosy has manifested itself in his forehead, and to hide it from his subjects he has placed a large, sparkling jewel over the tell-tale spot. How like the sinner, who endeavours to hide his condition from his friends and neighbours. God can see through all subterfuges and shams. We earnestly urge you to be right with God. Have it all out with Him in the day of His grace.

There is a book being sold on our railway book-stalls entitled, "Letters from Hell." I am informed that the writer makes the most crying sin in hell to be "hypocrisy." No! dear reader, all shams will be eternally displaced by the heavy hand of God in judgment for eternal realities. My longing desire is that you may know the cleansing value of the precious blood of Jesus. May God grant it, for Christ's sake! AMEN. A. J. P.

"FIGHT MY WAY INTO IT."

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"FIGHT MY WAY INTO IT."



YES, Jack, it's a real thing to be a Christian. It is not a question of turning over new leaves, giving up this, refraining from that, leading a moral, upright life, and so on,—commendable as all these things may be in themselves,—but it's a positive, present, and substantial reality; it is a new life communicated, with new hopes, new joys, new associations, so infinitely superior to the old order of things, that all that formerly engaged the heart and mind must of necessity drop off like autumn leaves. Only fancy what a relief it must be for one who has found out his lost and guilty condition (Rom. iii.), and who has become alive to the fact that he is CONDEMNED ALREADY (John iii. 18) to learn, on the authority of God's Word, that his many sins have been atoned for, that judgment is now behind him, and that the prospect immediately before him is one of unclouded happiness with the One who has accomplished it all. Of course, Christians have their trials and their sorrows on the road, but it only serves to draw out the tender care and sympathy of the Shepherd into whose keeping they are entrusted. Like the little conies in the hour of danger, they hide themselves in the safe shelter of the rocks (Prov. xxx. 26). If they are troubled and perplexed, they have a friend and counsellor;

are they tempted, they have an High Priest, ready and able to succour; are they pressed down with afflictions, they have a Father, who bids them 'cast all their care upon *him*;' and 'in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to let their request be made known to HIM' (Phil. iv. 6).

"These are realities, Jack, to be known and enjoyed by faith NOW. *You have your troubles, your trials, your sorrows*, I know, but you have to bear them ALONE,—*no* sympathising Saviour by your side to cheer your drooping spirit, to calm the surging breakers; *no* Friend, like Jesus, to advise and comfort in your hour of need; *no* Father to whom you can unburden your griefs or carry your sorrows. No wonder you are downcast, with God's wrath hanging over you, a dark eternity in front of you; friendless and Christless, yours is no enviable position. Wouldn't you like to have this matter settled? We won't be here always, you know. Have you no desire to be a *real* believer in the Lord Jesus Christ?"

"Ah! yes, but how am I going to fight my way into it?"

"There's no fighting for *you* to do, Jack; Another has done it all. You have fought long enough; lay down your arms of rebellion, and you *are* into it. You have been taking sides all these years with the enemy of your soul against your best Friend. Surrender to Him now, and a free pardon is yours."

We give the substance of a "little conversa-

tion" which took place between two schoolmates, who met each other after an interval of a few years, during which time one of them had been converted to God; while the other, although he had had a deal of rough tossing on life's rude billows, was still a stranger to Jesus.

Jack seemed deeply interested while his friend spoke of that which was nearest his heart, and his reply, given in a serious tone, accompanied by a deep-drawn sigh, expressed his earnest desire to know for himself those truths which had so entirely changed the current of his friend's life; but he evidently thought it must be a matter of attainment, or a blessing only conferred upon a certain class of persons, who in virtue of their good deeds, moral life, or religious tendencies, had qualified themselves in some way to merit the favour of God. As this is a pretty general thought, will the reader permit us to point out that it is *quite foreign to Scripture?*

Salvation is offered *exclusively to sinners*,—lost, guilty, undone, bankrupt *sinners*. Have you learned this, dear reader? Have you felt the burden of your sins intolerable, and have you believed in your heart that the Son of Man is COME to seek and to SAVE that which was *lost*? The righteousnesses of the best men that ever lived are described as "filthy rags" (Isa. lxiv. 6). What, then, could you say of any one who expects to be saved through his own merits or good works? There is only *one* platform where God's grace is

dispensed (Rom. iii. 23); but it is a blessed fact that all who *do* take that place will most assuredly be justified; for therein is God's righteousness declared, "that he might be just and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26). The Queen may exercise her prerogative of mercy, and *pardon* a guilty criminal, but that does not justify him. Sovereign grace has arrested the arm of justice, but has not satisfied her righteous claims. Far different is it with you, dear friend, if you have trusted Christ, for He has *paid* the penalty of your sins. He has sustained the wrath of God on your account, and so God is righteous in *clearing you* from *every charge* of guilt. For—

"He will not payment twice demand,
Once at my bleeding Surety's hands,
And then again at mine."

What a salvation! what a Saviour! Are you weary and heavy laden, still groaning under the heavy load of your sins? listen to the voice of Jesus—"It is finished." Where was He when He said it? On the cross of Calvary. Why was He there? Your sins and mine would for ever have shut us out of God's holy presence, but the Father's Beloved One—His holy, spotless Son, in whom was all His delight (Luke iii. 22)—*voluntarily* endured the cross, with all its shame, its abandonment, its overflowing cup of Divine judgment, in order that a *full* cup of *everlasting* salvation might be put into *your* hands without money and without price (Isa. lv. 1).

G. F. E.

THE BLOOD OF ATONEMENT.

“ And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood ; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood ; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls : for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood. And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten ; he shall even pour out the blood thereof ; and cover it with dust. For it is the life of all flesh ; the blood of it is for the life thereof : therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh : for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof ; whosoever eateth it shall be cut off. And every soul that eateth that which died of itself, or that which was torn with beasts, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger, he shall both wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even ; then shall he be clean.” — LEV. xvii. 10-15.



T is very striking to observe the marked contrast between the teaching of the New Testament and that which we get here with regard to the blood. Here it was not to be touched ; it belonged to God, and the man who ate it should die. The reason is clear ; man's life was forfeited, man was a sinner under sentence of death, and God would ever keep that before His mind. “ For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls, FOR IT IS THE BLOOD THAT MAKETH AN ATONEMENT FOR THE SOUL.” I do not suppose that the Israelites would grasp the meaning of this fully ;

but with all the light that the New Testament has given us, it should have the deepest meaning for our hearts.

What tidings for a man that is a sinner, and knows that he is at a distance from God, with the judgment of God hanging over him, to hear this verse! You see, my reader, we have sinned, and God must take notice of that sin, for "the wages of sin is death." No effort of yours or mine could put away that sin. Distance has come in between the soul and God, and nothing we could do avails to bridge over that distance.

What can atone for my sins? Can my tears? my prayers? my works? Nay, nay, who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? If all the penitential tears that ever flowed, and all the prayers that ever went up from the lips of pious men, and all the good works that ever were done, could be put to your credit, you would be thereafter, my reader, if still without faith in Jesus, just what you are this minute—an unwashed, an uncleansed, an unpardoned sinner. On the other hand, if your eye only rested for one moment, in faith, on the blood upon the altar, though you were being hurled from this earth for your wickedness, like the dying thief, who was too bad to be let live any longer, you would get to know that the blood had made atonement for your soul, and as that thief went to glory that day with Jesus, because of the blood upon the altar, so also would you. If you get hold, my reader, of the answer in the

New Testament to this striking verse in the Old, you will get peace in your soul—peace with God.

You must get God's claims met,—God's claims in righteousness on man. How can those claims be met? The blood on the altar is given by God as the answer. Let us see what the Spirit of God has written about that blood. Read John xix. 28-37. Here you have the altar and the blood. What the brazen altar was in Old Testament times, with the smoking victim thereon, and the blood poured out for atonement, the Cross of Christ is in our day. But in the Old Testament the fire consumes the victim, while in the New Testament the wonderful thing is this—it is not the fire of the altar that consumes the Victim, but the Victim that consumes the fire. And what is the fire? Always in Scripture the type of the unsparing judgment of God. There comes out blood and water from the side of the dead Christ,—the blood that makes atonement, and the water that purifies and cleanses. This was no mere man, though He was a man, but the Holy One of God, the Lamb without spot or blemish.

In the Old Testament the fire consumed the victims, and they were gone, and were seen no more; but here the Victim rises from the dead, the judgment has been endured, the claims of God in righteousness have been taken up, and all met and settled by Christ on the cross, and now there is a living Saviour for you in glory, my reader. A living Christ on earth could only convict me,

because He is sinless and I am guilty, because He is accepted of God and I am rejected, because He is holy and I am a sinner. It is a dead Christ that is my ground of salvation.

Christ incarnate convicts man of being utterly unlike Him. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." But He died. He gave Himself for us. Death lay on us, and judgment hereafter. He takes the two consequences of sin—death and judgment. God forsakes Him because then He was standing in the sinner's room and stead—

"He took the guilty culprit's place,
He suffered in his stead,
For man, O miracle of grace,
For man the Saviour bled."

And what is the result? From the side of the dead Saviour comes the blood that makes atonement towards God.

There is a threefold testimony to the fulness of redemption—"the Spirit, and the water, and the blood" (see 1 John 5). The Spirit tells who Jesus is, the water tells of purifying, and the blood makes atonement. In the Gospel narrative first comes out the blood that makes atonement, that is Godward; then the water which flows over my soul and gives the sense of cleansing, that is manward.

When the history is told it takes up God's side first; but when John's epistle takes it up, it takes it up from man's point of view first, and gives "the water and the blood," telling of the cleansing of

the soul before it speaks of the atonement which is God's side. In the Gospel of Matthew, "Pilate took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it. Then answered all the people and said, His blood be on us and on our children," *i.e.*, they say, "Let the gravity of His murder lie on us. We cannot bear him, we do not want Him, we will not have Him," they say; and Pilate says, "I wash my hands of it all." Poor pusillanimous Pilate, he could not get clear of the blood of Christ in that way. And let me tell you, my reader, if the blood of Christ does not lift you into glory, it will weigh you down into the lake of fire, for solemn and grave as is your condition as a sinner, it is intensified by this, that you have heard of the blood that can cleanse you, and have not availed yourself of it, and therefore you put yourself with those who cry, "His blood be on us." Oh, I beseech you, do not put yourself among that company.

In Rom. iii. 25 we get God's testimony to the blood of Christ. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." What does God call for from you now? "Faith in his blood;" and what is faith? It is not what I do or am, but my receiving God's testimony to the blood of Christ. The Spirit of God gives the definition of faith in John iii. 33, "He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." Faith does this. God speaks, and faith puts down its seal, and says, "That is true."

From the side of the dead Saviour came out blood and water. Faith says, "That is true." That blood has met the claims of God, has been sprinkled on the very throne of God. It is a blood-sprinkled pathway right up to that throne, and the Holy Ghost would encourage you to have faith in His blood, *only* in His blood.

I ask you, Can you rest your soul for eternity, only and entirely on His blood? If you cannot, you do not know His Person, and you do not know His work, and you do not know His worth.

In Rom. v. 9 you will find the effect of the blood of Christ on a guilty man (and Rom. iii. has shown me I am guilty), "Being now justified by his blood." Is there any wrath for me? Impossible! Because the wrath has been taken by Christ, He has died for me. His blood has so completely answered for my guilt before God that God declares me justified.

There are three ways in which I am declared justified in Romans—"Justified by his *grace*," that is the spring of it; "justified by his blood," that is the righteous basis of it; and "justified by faith," that is the way in which I get it; faith is the hand that is stretched out to lay hold of it. It is God that justifies, and whom does He justify? The soul that believes on Jesus. But I have wronged God. It is true. Now what can God do to a man who has wronged Him, taken his own way. Eph. i. 7 gives the answer: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, *the forgiveness of sin.*" God

forgives the man who has offended Him. On what ground? The blood! He forgives me in the grace and love of His heart, not at the expense of righteousness. Grace reigns through righteousness. God forgives me through the blood.

I am justified then by Christ's blood, forgiven through His blood; and if I say, Yes, but I feel defiled by sin, moral defilement is on my soul, what then? Look at 1 John i. 7: "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin." I am cleansed by the blood. It is the blood of Jesus that cleanses me from every sin. *Guilty*, the blood justifies me. *Having offended God*, the blood pardons me. *Being defiled*, I am cleansed by that precious blood.

Do you say, reader, "But my conscience is often troubled"? Look at Heb. ix. 14: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." The effect of the blood of Christ is to purge my conscience, and then the next thing is, I want to get to the spot whence all this blessing comes. But, you say, Have I a right to go into His presence? Heb. x. 19 answers that: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." What right have I to go into the holiest, the presence of God? The blood of Jesus gives me the right. I have liberty now to go in. The veil is rent. God rent it, and the Holy Ghost says we have "boldness to

enter into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus." God has rent the veil, and the great sin of many of the teachers of the present day is that they have taken needle and thread, so to speak, and stitched the two sides of the veil together, *i.e.*, they tell people they cannot go in now to God, whereas Scripture assures us we may.

There was no liberty to go to God till that blood had been shed, and just as sin had put me at a moral distance from God, the second of Ephesians tells me where the blood of Christ puts me, and leaves me too. Notice it: "But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." I am as nigh to God as the blood of Christ can bring me. As a sinner I was in Adam, far off; as a believer, I am in Christ made nigh.

Then Col. i. 20 tells me He has "made peace through the blood of his cross." I have peace with God through that blood.

Look then, my reader, at what that precious blood does for the soul that is under its shelter, the blood that is upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls. Guilty, the blood justifies me. Having offended God, the blood secures my pardon. Being defiled, it cleanses me. Having a troubled conscience, it purges me. Being outside, it gives me boldness to go into the holiest. At a moral distance from God, it brings me nigh, and then sets my heart at peace and rest in His presence, and the Spirit of God lets me know it will never vary. I

am brought in through the rent veil and *made nigh* through the blood of Christ once and for ever. Well then may we sing with the beloved apostle John, "Unto him that loves 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. Amen."

W. T. P. W.

WAS HE CHRISTLESS ?



"WITH regard to his spiritual welfare, I think father was one of the best Christians I ever knew. He was very highly respected by all who knew him, and at home he was a most faithful husband, and loving father."

The subject of the above remarks the writer first met at a hydropathic establishment in one of the midland counties. A robust, healthy-looking man (his wife told me), he had for thirty years walked five miles, night and morning, to and from work. They had been a hard-working, industrious couple, generally enjoying good health, and had saved a nice bit of money, which they intended to enjoy in their old age. But, alas! like the man in Luke xii. 16-20, they had left *God* out of their calculation. That rich farmer could say, "I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for *many*

years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, *this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided.*"

And, dear reader, let me pause here a moment to ask thee a most solemn question,—Hast thou ever considered seriously for one quarter of an hour where thou wilt spend eternity? Will it be in the realms of the blest, in the mansions of glory with Jesus; or will it be *in hell*, the smoke of thy torment arising *for ever*? It must be one or the other. *Which?* Thou mayest perhaps be building on some earthly prosperity, or be reckoning on some future happiness down here. But remember the solemn words, "*Thou fool, THIS NIGHT thy soul shall be required of thee.*"

But to return to my friend.

He was taken suddenly ill one day, but under medical treatment soon recovered sufficiently to visit the establishment where I met him. W— was a jovial man, and could sing a song, or recite pieces, for the amusement of the company at night.

My heart yearned over him, and I often longed to speak to him about Jesus, and ask him if he was saved.

After some days the opportunity presented itself. I found him alone, and then spoke to him of the shortness of life, and the certainty of eternity, and how it could only be a few years, at the very outside, ere he and I must cross that boundary line that separates time, with all its privileges and opportunities, from that never-ending eternity,

where our destiny must be fixed for ever. If we made a mistake about our salvation here, or neglected it, we could never come back to rectify the mistake. If we would give a million worlds to come back, and have the opportunity we had at that moment, they would be valueless; the opportunity would be gone for ever. To all this he assented.

To my inquiry, "Was he saved?" he replied, "No, I am not."

I then spoke to W—— of God's great love in the gift of His blessed Son; how He had left the Father's house, the dwelling-place of love, where He was always the Father's delight; how He had left that scene of brightest glory, which He had with the Father before the world was, and had come down here to this scene of sin and misery, of ruin and death; how He had come down to make God known to us, to reveal the heart of God to us, that God in His true character might be known; how in all His blessed life down here, in all His words or works or ways, He was ever expressing what God was; how He infinitely compassionated His poor creatures; how His great loving heart ever sympathised with them in all their sufferings and sorrows. He rejoiced with those that did rejoice, and wept with those that wept. How He ever went about doing good, feeding the hungry multitude, casting out devils, cleansing the leper, opening the eyes of the blind, healing all manner of diseases, raising the dead, and causing the poor widow's heart to rejoice; and although He only

met with opposition at the hands of man, and at the end of His course had to say, "For my love they gave me hatred," yet it never changed the current of His love; He never did one act of kindness less.

And, further, when finally He was delivered into the hands of man, and they stripped Him of His raiment, and put a purple robe upon Him, and when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand; and they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, and they spit on that blessed face, and smote Him with the reed; and when they had searched the dungeons of Jerusalem for the worst criminal they could find to set beside the blessed Son of God, men desired a murderer to be granted unto them, and "killed the Prince of life." And when they had nailed Him to the cross, and sat down to mock at His agony, "when he looked for some to take pity, and there was none, and for comforters, and found none," yet all this cruelty and hatred did not change His love. No, "many waters could not quench love, neither could the floods drown it." His final prayer was for them, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

And here—O mystery of mysteries!—when all the scorn and cruelty and hatred of the heart of man had been heaped upon the blessed Son of God, when God might have righteously swept the whole scene into eternal judgment, it was at that moment that God unlocked, as it were, the secret chambers of His heart, and showed that there was one thing

greater than man's sin, and that was the love of His own bosom. Instead of pouring His judgment upon man, He took our sins and laid them on the head of His blessed Son, who had ever glorified Him, and poured on Him all the righteous wrath and judgment that ought to have been our portion in hell for ever,—“Christ” also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” But when those three hours of darkness had passed away, Jesus cried, “It is finished!” bowed His head, and gave up the ghost. They laid Him in the grave, but God raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in glory, showing His satisfaction and delight in the work of His blessed Son. And from that glory God now declares, “That whosoever believes on him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Such is a brief account of the truth set before W——, to all of which he assented. What the effect was upon his soul, eternity alone can unfold.

Three days later W—— determined to go home, and as I stood on those front-door steps, and bade him “good-bye,” I little thought how soon the truth which I had been telling him was to be verified. His wife promised to write and tell me how they got home; and a few days later a letter came to say he passed into eternity exactly thirty-six hours from the time he stood on that front-door step. It was in answer to some words of sympathy, I wrote to his wife, that I received a letter from his son, an extract from which stands at the head of this paper.

What passed between W——'s soul and God I know not. But, oh, dear reader! let me tell thee, if thou hast nothing better to go into God's presence with than the fact that thou hast been "highly respected, a faithful husband, and a loving father," thine must be an awful awakening in eternity. Yet it is to be feared there are thousands deceived by Satan, who are building for eternity on their prayers, or their tears, or their good works, or on ordinances. But, oh, dear reader! don't be deceived about this all-important matter. Listen to the testimony of God Himself, "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). Abel's little lamb, Noah's sacrifice, Abraham's ram at Moriah, all the rivers of blood shed on Jewish altars,—all told out the same solemn fact, "Without shedding of blood is no remission." This is the universal testimony of Scripture. And, dear reader, there's no blood in thy prayers, no blood in thy tears, no blood in thy good works.

Let us look at Jesus a moment. On one occasion we read, "He spent *all night* on the mountain in prayer;" and again, "He rose a great while before it was day, and went apart into a desert place to pray." His whole life was a life of prayer. Could those prayers save thee? Never. Could any tears be more precious to God than the tears of Jesus? No, never. But could those tears wash thy sins away? Never. Was there ever such a blessed, perfect life as the life of Jesus on earth? Never. He could say, "I do always those things

that please him." To man a life of wondrous grace, of faithfulness to God. But could not that blessed, perfect life of the Lord Jesus save thee? Never. No, Jesus must die, His precious blood must be shed, or there could be no salvation for thee and me. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with such corruptible things as silver and gold; . . . but with *the precious blood of Christ*, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. i. 18, 19). "But in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh *by the blood of Christ*" (Eph. ii. 13). "*The blood of Jesus Christ* his Son cleanseth from all sin" (1 John i. 7). And "when *I see the blood* I will pass over you" (Exod. xii. 13).

In conclusion, let me say, dear reader, if you reject or despise or neglect that precious blood, there is nothing else left for you. You must die a Christless death, be put in a Christless coffin, be buried in a Christless grave, be raised in a Christless body, and cast Christless into the lake of fire for ever. Oh! let me affectionately persuade you; do not be deceived; search the Word of God for yourself; accept God's testimony as to the value of the precious blood of Christ; and then you will join in that song of the redeemed in glory,—“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy, . . . for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev. v. 9). o.

"JOY IN HEAVEN."

(LUKE XV. 7.)



JOY in heaven! What produces it? The repentance of ONE *sinner*. Marvellous that *heaven* should be so stirred by what produces so little commotion on *earth*, and that there should be joy *in heaven* over what produces little else but contempt in the world.

An heir is born to some powerful sovereign, or such an one is married, or ascends the throne, and there is great rejoicing and merry-making on earth. Some mighty conqueror returns at the head of his victorious armies, there is great rejoicing on earth; but such matters receive little notice in heaven. Some poor, broken-down, miserable wreck of a man or a woman on a heap of filthy straw, in some tumble-down garret or hovel, turns their face towards heaven and says, "Father, I have sinned," and *all heaven rings again with joy*.

And where is the source and spring of this joy? In the heart of the blessed (that is, happy) God. "There is joy *in the presence of the angels of God* over one sinner that repenteth." Who is in their presence? God. And in whose presence are they? In that of God. That is where the joy is, from which all heaven catches the tone.

And only to think that it is not the faultless, self-righteous Pharisee that produces this joy; it is

the repentance of a *sinner* that does so—of a sinner? Yes, there is joy in heaven over ONE sinner that repenteth. Will you, my unconverted reader, yield heaven this joy? *Your* repentance would do so. Do you ask, "What is repentance?" It is that change of mind which godly sorrow works. Not the sorrow of the world, that works death, as in the case of Judas. A change of mind as to God, that whereas you thought Him hard and exacting, you own Him to be just, and merciful, and gracious. That whereas you thought yourself righteous, and it may be were even religious, you own yourself to be a sinner, to be utterly without claim upon Him on the ground of anything you are or have done, and cast yourself unreservedly upon His mercy.

A young gentleman, the possessor of ample fortune and estate, lay on his couch dying. A wild course of dissipation had thus early ruined his constitution, and brought on a fatal malady. Beside him sat his uncle, a Christian man, earnestly pleading with him, and setting forth the *freeness* of God's grace. The young man held the remains of an orange, which he had just sucked, in his hand. "What," he said, "uncle, do you mean to say that God will receive *me*, a sinner like me, as empty and valueless to Him as this orange? Why, it would be ungentlemanly, as it were, to offer myself to Him in such a worthless plight. Do you mean to say He would take me as I am?" "Yes, I do." "Then," said the dying man, as he let the empty

orange skin drop to the floor, "I will let Him take me."

"Dost thou love the name of Jesus?
Wilt thou trust thyself to Him?
Canst thou say, 'My Saviour Jesus,'
Though thine eyes are now so dim?
Fear not thou! the blood of Jesus
Cleanses thee from all thy sin.
In the mighty Name of Jesus
Life anew thou may'st begin."

W. G. B.

MODERN IDOLATRY.



FRIEND of mine who resides in Ceylon, when recently on a visit to England, told me that he once went into the great Buddhist temple in the city of Kandy, the ancient capital of Ceylon, and there saw the idolatrous men, women, and even children, bow down with bouquets and closed hands to the life-sized golden image of Buddha, which is so decked with costly rubies, emeralds, and diadems, that the gold is almost invisible. These precious stones have from time to time been collected and placed there by the ancient kings of Kandy. These poor deluded and superstitious followers of Buddha make pilgrimages from China, Japan, and other heathen countries, to this "temple of the world," as it is called, which is their headquarters.

So ignorant and blind are these devotees that they believe that if they can just get one sight of a tooth enshrined in a golden casket there—thought to be one of Buddha's—they will gain a good place in the world to come; and when rain is wanted in the island, twenty superior elephants are selected to parade the city, the finest being chosen to be the bearer of the said tooth, in a gold box, on its back, an important Buddhist priest being in charge. As this "tooth-procession," with its music and dancing, passes, the idolatrous followers prostrate themselves to the ground. In such repute is this tooth held that were it to fall to the ground these people would expect some calamity to befall the island; and when it is lodged in its shrine at the temple it is placed under three locks, the keys of which are kept respectively by the English Government agent, a chief, selected for the purpose, and the Buddhist high priest.

My friend also informed me that another of their delusions is that they think they can gain eternal life if they can succeed in ascending to the top of "Adam's Peak," a mountain point some 8,000 feet high, where is a footprint appearance in the rock, believed by them to be the exact spot where *Adam set down his foot!* Thus do they live on, blinded by Satan, without Christ, "having no hope, and without God in the world." Yes, Satan, "the god of this world, hath blinded the minds of *them which believe not*, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. iv. 4).

We may bless God we were not born in the faith of the Buddhists, but can our reader say, as being really *true of himself*, "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness *hath* shined in *our* hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"?

Friend, if your heart is not occupied with Christ as your object and Saviour, that heart is joined to an obstructing idol. That idol may be money, title, ambition, honour, learning, pride, empty profession of religion, and the like, all of which will ere long vanish away, and all of them put together, were they yours, would avail simply nothing for the eternity that awaits you.

The gospel came to the Thessalonians in word, in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. They "turned to God from *idols* to serve the *living and true God*, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. i. 9). In our privileged Christian country—this land of Bibles—people who hear or read the gospel, and refuse it till they become gospel-hardened, are much more responsible than those poor Buddhists, who perhaps have never had the opportunity of refusing a Saviour, nor of believing the gospel.

But we are told that in this enlightened nineteenth century Buddhism is spreading in Great Britain, and it is too true.

"After that in the wisdom of God the world

by *wisdom* knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, *to save them that BELIEVE.*"

When the great apostle Paul visited Athens, the most *enlightened* city in the world, "he saw the city *wholly given to idolatry,*" and said to them,—“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men’s hands as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life and breath and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations, that they should *seek the Lord,* if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from any one of us: for in him we live and move and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also his offspring.’ Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art and man’s device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; BUT NOW COMMANDETH ALL MEN EVERYWHERE TO REPENT: because he hath appointed a day in which HE WILL JUDGE THE WORLD in righteousness BY THAT MAN whom he hath ordained; whereof *he hath given assurance unto all men* in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts xvii.). The result of this address was that these learned Athenians divided into three classes, viz., *mockers, procrastinators,* and *believers.*

This is what happens when the gospel in power is heard, and our reader may have felt that power, and be in one of these classes. If so, which is it? let us solemnly inquire. Never mind the fineness of your Bible, your regular attendance at this place or that, the number of good sermons you have heard, and the like; the question is, Are you a mocker, a putter-off, or a believer? If in class one and remain there, remember God will soon say to you, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish!" If in number two, do not forget "delays are dangerous," and you might put off accepting Christ till you are on the wrong side of your last opportunity, which must come, and might overtake you at any moment! If you are in class three, thank God for His love and grace in saving from hell, putting away your sins by the *trusted* blood of Christ, and for making you as ready for His presence as ever you will be.

When King Belshazzar was drinking wine with a thousand of his lords, and praising the gods of gold, of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone, the same hour came forth the fingers of a man's hand and wrote upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his knees were loosed and his knees smote one against another. One of the words of that writing was "TEKEL," which means "*Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting.*"

"IT IS ALL RIGHT, GUY."

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Bear in mind this was after all the solemn judgments upon his father Nebuchadnezzar, who lifted up his head and hardened his mind in pride. Daniel, the prophet, said,—“Thou his son Belshazzar hast not humbled thine heart, *though thou knewest all this*, but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven,” and “in that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain” (Dan. v.). How solemn!

Beloved unsaved one, whoever you are, we know not how long that pet idol of your heart, whatever it is, has kept you from Christ, but what if that handwriting were now to appear for you and God were to say, “This night *thy* soul shall be required of *thee*”? to be weighed up in God’s holy, righteous, and just balance? Would *you* be found WANTING? If so, you would be found *wanting for ever!*

God grant that it may never have to be said of you, as was said to that enlightened and privileged one of old, “Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone.”

J. N.



"IT IS ALL RIGHT, GUY."



N a little room with low ceiling, upon a small humble cot, Mrs M—— had spent many a weary month of painful illness, her poor body racked with pain, for she was a paralytic and utterly unable to help herself. All the skill of a physician had been exerted, but without avail, and at last her

case was abandoned as hopeless. It was just then that I visited her, and it was with joy that I found her resting peacefully in the knowledge of her sins forgiven and her eternal security in Christ. She had been led to see, by the Word of God, her helpless condition as a lost guilty sinner before Him, and had fled to Christ for refuge, and was now rejoicing in the Lord.

"Ah, sir," she said, "it is my Saviour that has made me happy, for He has died for me, putting my sins away there upon the cross, and why should I not be happy? He has suffered for me, 'the just for the unjust'; and risen from among the dead, all to bring sinners like me to know Him, and to be with Him for ever. To know Him, and to be like Him, this is peace and glory indeed."

"How did the Lord Jesus bring you to know Himself as your Saviour?" I asked.

"I see altogether different now," she replied, "from what I used to do. I once was a Sunday-school teacher, doing my best to earn salvation, but it was useless. I was conscious that I was not right before God. I was a guilty sinner, had 'sinned, and come short of his glory' (Rom. iii. 23); but I now see that it is not in doing any more, for the Lord Jesus on the cross has done everything."

"How do you know you are saved?"

"Because the Word of God tells me so," was her reply, "for you see I could not do anything. Oh no, but He did it all. Does He not say, 'It is

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finished’? (John xix. 30.) ‘He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life’ (John iii. 36).”

“Ah then,” I said, “you know that your sins are forgiven you, because ‘through this man (Jesus Christ) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things’ (Acts xiii. 38, 39). And again, ‘I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name’s sake’ (1 John ii. 12). ‘These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may *know* that ye *have eternal life*’ (1 John v. 13). It is not in any feelings nor experiences of ours, but by the Lord Jesus ‘having made peace by the blood of his cross’ (Col. i. 20), hence, “being justified by faith, *we have peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ’ (Rom. v. 1). Blessed be His name. You know it, because God says so in His Word.”

Turning to her husband, she said, “It is all right, Guy. The Lord has laid me upon this bed for some good reason, and ‘he doeth all things well.’ I know the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour, and it is all right, Guy.”

Poor man, it was not all right with him, because he had not yet believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

Dear reader, is it all right, or is it all wrong, with you? There is no middle ground. You are either saved or unsaved. There will be no hiding behind wealth, social rank, or position, however powerful, famous, or cultured you may be, in the day of

judgment spoken of in Rev. xx. 11, 12. In vain will be the pleas for mercy then. Judgment is coming, and how will you meet God? Christless professor, you that boast of your good works, you that trust in your own righteousnesses (which are as filthy rags in God's sight, Isa. lxiv. 6), you cannot stand before God in all His majesty and holiness in such a garb.

How will you do? Oh, be not deceived. It is the blessed work of Jesus upon the cross that alone puts away our sins. "His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24). His blood washes the sinner from all sins.

"By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight" (Rom. iii. 20). "A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. iii. 28). "By him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39). Oh! poor guilty one, you who, like the prodigal in Luke xv., are guilty, like him* own to God, as he did to his father, that you have sinned. Own what God says of you is true, "Sinned, and come short of his glory." The Father's heart yearns over you. It is for just such guilty sinners that Christ died.

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 6). "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). Christ died, blessed be His precious name, for the "unjust," for "sinners," for the "ungodly"; and to you, poor weary, heavy-laden one,

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He says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28). Rest for your guilty conscience! Rest unto your soul! Rest for your aching heart! Oh, such rest, eternal rest in Christ for evermore!

Again, dear reader, is it all right with you? Have you taken refuge in Christ? If not, then "*now* is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." "Flee from the wrath to come." "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

W. E. S.

"COME," OR "DEPART."



OR the last eighteen centuries the word on the lips of the blessed Saviour of men has been "*come*." That word was first pronounced when He was here upon earth—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28).

Many thousands of poor unsatisfied souls have heard and responded to the yearning energy of that word; and they have found the aching void of their hearts more than filled up by His love. Many a storm has been hushed to a calm—many a tear turned into a smile—many a groan into a hymn of praise—as that word was acted upon, and they came to the Saviour of sinners. Have you heard

that word, dear reader; or have you as yet steeled your heart as the music of His voice broke in upon your ear? Oh! struggle not any longer with the burden of your guilt and folly; but come to Him and He will give you rest.

But if you refuse in your blind, mad folly to come on earth in response to such gracious pleading, then you will hear a different word uttered by the same lips—a word that has a stern commanding ring about it, that brooks of no delay or refusal—“*Depart.*” When the wicked dead are raised, when the heavens shall be rolled together like a scroll, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up, then you will stand before the great white throne suspended in mid-air, and hear those soul-appalling, hope-withering words — “*Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*” (Matt. xxv. 41; Rev. xx. 11-15).

I beseech of you to pause, and hear, and respond to that loving, wooing entreaty ere it be too late—“*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*” (Matt. xi. 28).

“Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. vi. 2).

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” (Heb. ii. 3.)

A. J. P.

"THAT WHICH WAS LOST."



HE burning rays of an August sun were falling in meridian power on the level and fully ripe corn-fields of Somersetshire, as, over a quarter of a century ago, I wended my way from a village, where I had overnight preached the gospel, to another where I was announced to hold a meeting that evening. Pushing along at a good pace I saw before me, and eventually overtook, a little donkey-cart containing two women, evidently of a humble station in life. Offering them each a gospel tract, the elder, who held the reins, stopped her conveyance and thanked me courteously for the gift. A moment or two of conversation soon revealed that she was a simple and happy believer in the Lord Jesus, and knew her sins were forgiven through faith in His name.

"And do you know this blessed Saviour also?" I inquired of the younger, who was her daughter. A sad shake of the head, accompanied by a deepening of the settled melancholy of her face was the only response she made, but her mother put in, "No, she does not yet know the Saviour. She is in great sorrow, and cannot rise above it."

I had noticed that each was draped in mourning, and now learned that the younger had several months previously lost her only child, a babe of tender years. "She has never looked up since,"

now added the mother, "and refuses to be comforted."

Expressing my sympathy with the bereaved mother, I said, "But it surely ought to be a comfort to you to know that your dear babe is with Christ."

"Oh!" she cried, "if I were only sure of that, I would not care what became of me."

"Sure of that," said I, "why, how can you doubt it?"

"That is the cause of her sorrow," put in her mother again. "She thinks her child is lost for ever, and she is indifferent as to what happens to herself." How deep and real is a mother's love, I thought, *but turning again to the stricken woman* I simply said, "Have you never read what the Lord Jesus says about the 'little ones,' in Matt. xviii.?"

"What does He say?" was the sad reply.

Taking out a little Testament, I read, "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus *called a little child* unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. . . . Take heed that ye despise not one of these *little ones*; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. For the Son of Man is COME TO SAVE that which was lost. . . . It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven

that one of these *little ones* should perish" (Matt. xviii. 1-3, 11, 14).

The sorrow-stricken one was arrested by the blessed Lord's statements as to His interest in the "*little ones*," and she listened with the deepest attention as I read on. At verse 11, I pointed out that the expression "that which was lost" applied simply and directly to the "little ones." They are not, because young in years, therefore "innocent," as men foolishly say, but being children of Adam, are "lost" as such, and therefore the Son of Man has come "to save" them. His work on the cross avails for them, and as they do not refuse it, He applies its efficacy for them—and His heart is gratified in saving them.

"Observe," I added, "that in Luke xix. 10, where the Lord is dealing with and addressing Himself to 'a man' who was old enough to have become a 'chief' and 'rich,' He says, 'The Son of Man is come to SEEK and to SAVE that which is lost.' He has to seek us big grown-up folk, for like silly foolish sheep, we have all run away from Him when we had strength and age to do so. Not so the 'little ones,' yet nevertheless are they 'lost' too. Them He saves outright. Us He has first to seek. The 'little ones'—your dear babe, for instance—never ran away from Him, so He had not to seek it, but being the child of a sinful parent, it was 'lost,' and He died to save it, and I believe He has it safely now in His blessed arms. Don't you believe it too, now?"

The surcharged heart found relief in a copious shower of tears, as the truth of the eternal safety of her child burst upon her, and then "Thank God, thank God for that," fell from her lips. "Yes, I believe that," she added, "and oh, what a comfort to know my babe is safe with Jesus. I don't care what happens to me now that I know he is safe."

"But would not you like to be saved, too? Will you not let the blessed Saviour that has already saved your dear child, save you?"

"If He will have me," she softly answered.

"Oh, He will have you, without doubt. Just trust Him simply. You see He has been seeking you for a long time, and perhaps He saw the only way to get at your heart—so full of earth and its ties—was to take away your darling child, thus giving you a link with heaven, and now He is calling upon you to surrender yourself fully to Him. Will you not do it?"

"He has saved my child, I will let Him save me too. Yes, I will trust Him, for He came to save 'that which was lost,' and I know I am lost, and He died to save me too. I see it all now clearly. Thank God, thank God."

I needed to say no more. The cloud had departed from her face, the load from her heart, the weight of sin from her conscience, and in the conscious sense of the favour of the Lord she rejoiced in His goodness to herself and to her child.

It is said that the Eastern shepherd, if he will

take his flock over a brook, easily effects it. He does not drive his sheep, he leads them, and when he would have them cross the water—which they like not—he simply takes a lamb under each arm, goes over and deposits them on the other side. The anxious dam follows its offspring without hesitation, and the flock, following suit, is soon over.

Thus is it too with us oftentimes. God takes from our side here some tenderly loved one to scenes of rest and glory on high. The hearts of others left behind them get awakened, and the matter ends in solid conversion to God.

Reader, how is it with you? Are you still among "them that are lost"? Why is this? Perhaps you say you cannot tell. Let me then point out the reason to you in the words of the Holy Ghost. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to *them that are lost*; in whom the god of this world (Satan) hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4). Yes, the devil brings in the things of time and sense to block out of your vision what is eternal and divine. If you are wise you will decline to be any longer duped. Birds are wiser than men. Of them Scripture says, "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird" (Prov. i. 17). But Satan sets his net for careless sinners, and in they walk to their eternal ruin. Friend, be wise in time!

W. T. P. W.

“I HOPE SO.”



YES, every one hopes it will be all right. No one yet wished to go to “outer darkness,” the place of “weeping and wailing.” Each hopes God will have mercy, though “he spared not his own Son.” None can for a single moment think of the unflinching judgment of God without fear and terror; still, in the face of all things, they hope.

How plausible is Satan, how much he desires your soul; how easily he hides his hook under his bait.

In Warwickshire, the other night, a young man lay on his bed, breathing heavily, death-sweat upon his brow, dying of consumption. When asked of his soul and his hope, he calmly said, “I hope it’s all right; I hope so.” We simply presented the dying sinner’s Friend, spoke of His work on the cross finished, His work in heaven now going on, His coming out of heaven (Heb. ix. 26-28), and then bade him “Good-bye.”

Dear reader, dare you risk your soul, your precious soul, and calmly lie down to-night, and say, “I hope so”? How awfully indifferent are souls everywhere to their best interests, their eternal interests! How is this? How! This is it, they are blind, and led captive. Going, where? Still going! Going now; never stopping; hasting on! End where? The lake of fire!

Our gracious God knows the value of your precious soul. He puts the question for your answer, "What shall it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

Man, woman, child, in your sins, what of eternity?

WM. S.

"HOW OFTEN WOULD I!"



HERE is nothing more wonderful than God's long-suffering. In fact we read that it is "*salvation*," forasmuch as "he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Now, this fact is most noteworthy. It cannot be pointed out too frequently. It is little known, and widely disbelieved; indeed, the ordinary natural idea is that God is vindictive, austere, and hard, and that He finds pleasure in judgment. Such is, alas, our natural conception of God; but it is, blessed be His name, altogether wrong. The verse just quoted may well dissipate that idea. He is not willing that *any* (no, not one) should perish, but that *all* (yes, every one) should come to repentance.

How minute is this statement! Ponder the two words "*any*" and "*all*." Let your mind run down the ranks of the entire fallen family and select, if you will, its most prodigal members, and those

most worthy of perdition; and, then, remember our word, "not willing that *any* should perish," or again, on the other side, "that *all* should come to repentance." Such is God. He is long-suffering, but withal He is not indifferent. His long-suffering never merges into indifference, nor His patience into apathy.

To us it may seem extraordinary that nineteen centuries have been allowed to pass without vengeance being taken for the death of His Son, or for the growth of sin during that long period.

The long-suffering of God is the blessed answer.

But that suffering though long, though very long, will end, and give place to judgment.

So it was with the world before the flood, and with Israel before its captivity. So will it be with Christendom to-day. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night"—and then woe betide the unwary and unprepared.

Hence, if God's present long-suffering should be constantly pointed out, and widely proclaimed, so also should be the solemn, certain fact of His coming judgment.

When Christ was in their midst He said to Israel, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, . . . but ye would not!"

How often? He alone could tell! but, often as He would, so often would they not; and His tender love and outstretched hand of mercy were coldly disdained, spurned, and rejected. He pleaded patiently, and He suffered long, but without avail

For His love He received hatred, and was awarded the cross. But at last, at long last, when His long-suffering was proved beyond measure, He said to them, "Behold your house is left desolate." He retired from their midst who alone was their Helper, and left the dire desolation of His absence instead. Ah! what more desolate than the people, or the man, left and forsaken of God!

One of the worst and bitterest sorrows of hell will be that God cannot be reached!

The wicked wish to-day that there was "no God." Their wish will be gratified to their eternal anguish by-and-by.

Take care, dear reader, God has suffered long with you, very long! *How often* has sounded in your careless ear the sweet "come" of a patient Saviour, as often treated with guilty neglect by you. Take care, I pray you, lest *desolation* be your doom. Mercy rejected is judgment accepted.

J. W. S.

"UNTIL HE FIND IT."

(LUKE XV. 4.)



Oh the perseverance of grace! "*Until* he find it." Never till that moment does the Good Shepherd relax His efforts. And how far had He to go after "that which is lost?" To where it was—stripped, and wounded, and half dead, And was this all? Had He not to go into death

itself to get the sheep out? "The good shepherd giveth *his life* for the sheep." And has He not suffered this for thee, my reader? "Who gave himself a ransom for *all*, to be testified in due time."

Oh the persevering diligence of grace! "What woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and *seek diligently till she find it?*" (ver. 8.) Reader, has the stupendous fact ever possessed your soul that there is a Divine Person in Christendom—the Holy Ghost—here for the very object of bringing the piercing rays of convicting light to bear upon the hearts and consciences of dead sinners?

The Son must seek the lost. All is founded on His work, therefore it is put in the first place. It maintained God's righteousness, and permits Him to justify him that believeth in Jesus. The Son must seek the lost, the Spirit must quicken the dead, before the Father can receive the repentant sinner.

And when He has found it, where does He, the Good Shepherd, put the sheep? Back with the ninety and nine? Never. "When he cometh *home*," not till then does He put the sheep down—

"O Saviour, who hast loved Thine own,
 Thou faithful One and true!
 Who camest down, and wert alone,
 The will of God to do.
 Lord Jesus, sent One, 'tis Thy voice,
 Thy love, supreme and free,
 That o'er Thy treasure doth rejoice,
 Thy Father's gift to Thee."

But is there no "wilderness" for the believer? Certainly, but he passes through it on *the Shepherd's* shoulders—the place of strength and of security. There are many who think they would not like to make a profession, lest they should not be able to keep it. If believers, they forget that Christ will *keep them*. There are those who fear lest they should not "hold on." Do you think *the Good Shepherd will let go*? He says, "None shall pluck them out of my hand." Will He save sinners and lose saints? Never. "He is *able* also to save them to the uttermost"—that is all the way through—"that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life"—that is, by His living to intercede for us now. How blessed it is for the soul to be out and out in its confidence in Christ. The sense of reconciliation and pardon is ensured, and with joy and truth can it then *sing*—

"I have a Friend ; oh such a Friend !
 So kind, and true, and tender ;
 So wise a counsellor and guide,
 So mighty a defender !
 From Him who loves me now so well,
 What power my soul shall sever ?
 Shall life or death, shall earth or hell ?
 No ! I am HIS *for ever*."

W. G. B.

“AN ABUNDANT ENTRANCE.”



HE was an old man, and full of years. The snows of eighty-three winters had whitened his spare locks, and told us all plainly that the cold wintry blast of death was fast coming on. His sun was about setting, and he knew it, for his strength was ebbing away, clearly proving that “as the shadows lengthen the sinews decay.” I visited him upon several occasions during his last illness, and I always came away comforted. He was basking in the sunlight of God’s presence, without a cloud between. Many doubts and fears had clouded his pathway during his long pilgrimage journey, which often troubled his mind.

I called upon him once, and in company with his dear wife and their son conversed with him for a short time upon eternal realities. He enjoyed the conversation very much, but said his great difficulty was to get quit of the dark clouds that ever came in between his soul and God; and as he read John iii. 16, he said, “That gives me comfort when everything else fails; for,” said he, “I firmly believe that God so loved the world that He gave His Son for me.” The last time I called, after conversing and praying with him, I said, “Now, Mr G., I am going to say farewell, perhaps for the last time, but remember I’ll meet you in the morning.” “Yes,” said the dear aged saint, as he held up his

two hands, and his eyes as it were penetrating the veil of that borderland upon which he stood ready to enter in to be for ever with the Lord; "Yes," said he, "and that will be a glorious morning."

I replied, "Thank God, that will be a glorious morning." I never saw him in life again. The second day after he fell asleep in Jesus; but it was the testimony of all those who saw and conversed with him, that the Lord had given him an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He realised that death was deprived of his sting, and the grave robbed of its victory, through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And now, my dear reader, what are your silent thoughts concerning these last moments you have just been reading about? Realities seem just to strike some people at the very last moment. Why not at an earlier period in life? Dear old Mr G., notwithstanding his many dark clouds during his lifetime, I have reason to believe, kept going on with God. Have you entered upon this pathway yet? Or have you just made up your mind to go on as you are, and leave the eternal issues with God? My friend, beware! it is a solemn thing to trifle with these matters. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Possibly you will never live to reach a ripe old age; and if cut away now, would you not be taken away in your sins? "Because there is

wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke, then a great ransom cannot deliver thee" (Job xxxvi. 18).

Oh, my friend, the things of God are solemn realities; you have just to stand by the bedside of a saint of God who is about to enter in, and hear the language of such an one to convince you on this point. You have been warned often perhaps, prayed for, and entreated to yield your heart to Christ, and still indifference characterises every step you take. But remember the last day, and the last hour, and the last moment will come, and then—well, what then? The Master, ere that moment arrives, may have risen up and shut to the door. Alas! grace has been despised; now mercy is clean gone for ever. His long suffering has been set at nought; now the door is shut. His pleadings have all been in vain; now He pleads no more. But hearken to this never-to-be-forgotten sentence which now drops from those lips that once breathed mercy, grace, and love. "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded. But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and

did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof; therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices" (Prov. i. 24-31). But, my friend, mercy's door is still open, and the voice is calling to you now, "To-day, if ye will hear his voice;" "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation;" "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). J. G.



"NOT ME."



ONLY two words, yet intended to be full of bitter meaning by the utterer, a young man who had been brought up in a godly home, and who had knelt at a loving mother's knee, as a child, to repeat his little prayer when the curtain of night had fallen. He had grown up and left his native place to go to the great city,—great in wickedness as well as other things. Like many another young man he had been careless as to the choice of friends, and became an associate with those whose feet were upon the downward path that leadeth to destruction, and he soon followed closely

in their footsteps; he shunned the people of God, he joined with the profane and the vile, the drunken and licentious. His letters home were fewer and fewer, and his poor mother's heart was breaking, for she was sure he was not living as she could have wished.

It was a raw cold wintry night, and the wind seemed to cut right through you. At a mission hall some evangelists were holding special services, and outside the hall was a Christian young lady giving to passers-by an invitation to the meetings. She saw this young man coming along, offered him a bill, and asked whether he would not go in and hear the speaker. He brusquely pushed past her, made no attempt to take that bill, and hissed through his teeth, "Not me."

He had just left some of his companions in vice, having spent the evening in a gambling den. To meet the constant calls through losses, he had "borrowed" some of the moneys entrusted to him and belonging to his employers, and just as he was spoken to by that lady he was madly trying to choke down some of the true but hard sayings of his conscience.

He turned into a busy thoroughfare, and while crossing the road, busy in mind with the harassing conflicting thoughts referred to, he was knocked down and run over by a heavy dray. A crowd gathered round, and soon he was taken away to the hospital. The pain was so intense that he became delirious, his groans were frightful to hear, but his curses and oaths were awful, filling that ward with

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language foul and black. Satan had got hold of him with a vengeance, and during that night snatched away his prey and flung it into outer darkness. The last words he ever uttered were "Not me."

This is a solemn matter to bring to your notice, my reader. Do you happen to be a young man who has left a home where God was worshipped and adored, and are you in danger of choosing companions who would only ruin you, and ready when the question is asked, "Who will serve Christ?" to answer "Not me." Oh, let us beseech you to remember the prayers of that poor widowed mother of yours, to whom you were once as the light of her life. Remember the God of your fathers, and turn not a deaf ear to the pleadings of the Holy Spirit. Christ Jesus died for sinners that by the shedding of His blood you might be brought nigh to the Father. Come to him now.

W. S. R.

 THE FAITHFUL SERVANT.



HERE are certain events which leave an indelible impression upon the mind, and such was the kind of impression made upon mine by an event which occurred to myself nearly half a century ago. I think I can see that scene even yet, and can vividly recall the astonishment with which I

regarded it. I was a very young Christian then, and it was my first visit to a dying bed, so that the impression was all the more likely to be deep and lasting. But let me to my narrative without further preface.

J—— D—— was long in my father's service as a gardener, and a more faithful servant could not be found. As the grounds were somewhat extensive he had a good deal to do, and he did it well—so much so, indeed, that he required no looking after. "Is that a weed?" he said one day, when he happened to light upon such a plant in one of his beds, as if it was to him a matter of astonishment that such a thing should be seen in the garden of which he had the care; and many a joke was manufactured out of that little occurrence in after-days. He was an immense favourite with us children, to whom he was always kind, and often we would flock into his cottage and laugh at his pawky jokes and quaint sayings, especially on the afternoon of the Lord's Day, when he was at leisure, and when we were sure to find him, spectacles on nose, poring over the "big ha' Bible," for J—— was a religious man, a regular reader of the Bible, a regular attendant at the kirk, and a regular partaker of the "sacrament." In a word, he was regarded as a kind of model man for his station in life; and the man who said that he was not a faithful servant and an excellent Christian, would have been regarded by most as a bigot and a fool.

But time sped onward. My father died ; I grew up to manhood ; and J—— D—— became an old man, and at last tidings came that he was dying also. I went to see him, and entered the room where he lay, without being informed as to his state of mind. What a change had come over him ! He had had a slight stroke of paralysis, which, without affecting his powers of motion, had greatly affected his powers of speech, so that he stammered and spoke with difficulty. But where was the placid expression of countenance which had ever distinguished him ? Where was the pleasant calm of his mild blue eyes ? Where his quiet and rather slow manner of speech ? All gone ! His countenance was haggard, his eyes looked wild and glaring ; he was restless, and his feeble hands fumbled with the bedclothes as one that seemed scarcely conscious of what he was doing. Everything betokened a mind ill at ease ; but what he said proved that with awful and startling distinctness, for the one thought that filled his mind, and on which he talked, or rather babbled, all the time I was beside him, was the thought of eternity. But such an eternity ! Not in anywise the “rest that remaineth for the people of God,” but rather a dark, terrible, boundless ocean, without port or bay, to which he was being borne by an irresistible fate, and on which he must needs launch without compass, rudder, or pilot. “Oh, Eternity !” was his ceaseless cry. “Eternity—awful—eternity ! Oh, Mr H——, what a t-terrible thing eternity is ! Oh,

awful—dreadful—e-ter-ni-ty!” and so on, with little or no variation. It was in vain I tried to speak peace to his poor troubled soul, by pointing him to Christ, and quoting the few scriptures I then knew. He listened with wonted deference while I was speaking, but as soon as I ceased to speak he recommenced his heart-rending monotonous wail. I never saw him again,—he died a few days afterwards,—but I never forgot the scene of his deathbed.

Reader, how would you like to die such a death as that? Does it look like the death of the righteous? A celebrated poet has said,—

“For modes of faith let fools and zealots fight,
They can't be wrong whose life is in the right.”

Well, as far as I can judge, this old man's life was as nearly right as most men's, and a great deal better than that of many. He was strictly moral; he was most faithful to his master; he was religious,—in a word, no man could have honestly said, so far as I can judge, a single word to his disparagement. And yet, when death came, he shrank back in horror as if he had lived like an abandoned criminal. I judge him not; but this at least is plain, that morality, faithfulness, and religion, blessed as these things are, did not avail to speak peace to his soul at the all-important moment when he was about to appear before God. And yet the thief upon the cross, although his life had been wicked, and his death ignominious, had no such experience, his end was peace. We know in

whom he trusted, and so can account for his peace. But did the moral, faithful, and religious gardener trust in the same Saviour? If so, then all is well; for although clouds and darkness surrounded his deathbed, all was brightness beyond. But if not—if he put his trust in his morality, faithfulness, and religion, then—ah, me!

H. M.

Pages for the Young.

LITTLE JOHN.



HE house was very still, the elder children at school, the younger laid down for his forenoon nap, when the dear boy, a child of four years, of whom I have been asked to give some reminiscences, came to the sitting-room as usual to play beside his mother, always a time of quiet happiness to both. John's chief characteristic, I think, was love.

He had been playing under the table with a favourite wooden horse, minus the head and with but a very shabby tail, when suddenly rising and coming very close to me, at the same time laying his hand on my knee, he said with great seriousness, "Is God Jesus?" "Yes," was the reply. "And is Jesus God?" to which the same response was made. Apparently satisfied, he went back to his play,

while I kept the saying in my heart. Several days passed, again the quiet hour had come, when my child made an advance in his queries, "Does God ever die?" "No, God lives for ever. He always was, and the time will never come when He shall not be." Then, with a very anxious expression, but *not* unbelieving tone, he said, "You told me Jesus died!" I was deeply moved, and felt a process of thought had begun in his mind, not, I think, usual at so early an age, and I sent up a cry for help, "Put thy words into my mouth."

Taking the child on my knee, I told him of the birth of the Holy Babe in Bethlehem (of which he had often before heard), and in the simplest language possible spoke of the glorious mystery of the Incarnation; but overwhelmed by the impotency of words in such a connection, and to so young a child, I said, "Dear, I do not understand how it could be, but I believe it; will you?" My boy had never doubted his mother's word, but as if this "wonder of wonders" were too great to receive on my testimony, he said, "But who told you?" "God," was the reply; "God made holy men write the wonderful story; and when you are able you will read it for yourself in His book, but just now you will believe it, won't you?" "Yes," with a beaming look, "when God said it." Feeling sure that the Holy Spirit was teaching my child, I kept silence, pondering these things in my heart, prayerful and watchful, and I was not disappointed.

Again some days passed, and now the practical

issue of the process which had been going on was reached in the question, "Where did the blood go to that came from Jesus on the cross?" A great awe fell on me. "This is holy ground," I said; and again the cry went up, "Holy Spirit, speak through me." "That would depend on the quantity that would run down the limbs, and might reach the ground." "Oh," with something like a sob, "*the dirty ground! how is it to wash me white?*" I could not speak to "the little one" of God as a severe judge, demanding the life of His Son as the price of our redemption; but I dwelt on the love of God in Jesus Christ, in having given His Son for our salvation, and of His Son's love in putting our sins away by the sacrifice of Himself, telling him how we grieved that blessed Saviour when we were naughty, and added to His joy when we loved and served Him, adding, "If you ask Him, He will make you white, pure, and holy, keep you all your life long, and take you at the right time to be with Him for ever."

His face literally "shone." The good news was real to John; but there was yet another pressing anxiety, "But will He do it now?" "Yes, darling, just now if you ask Him." And kneeling at my side, the simple prayer went up even to the highest heaven where He reigns, who waits to answer such, "Dear Jesus, wash me and make me white, keep me all my life, and take me at the right time to be with Thee for ever." And then rising he went back to his play, as if completely satisfied; and his

mother believes that then her child was made a new creature in Christ Jesus.

A few months passed, when John's life, "always happy," was made more so by the addition of little twin sisters. All the children were delighted, but to his intensely loving nature they were specially dear. *What would he not have done for them?* What he could he did. Morning and evening he took his position by the bath, the basket by his side, ready to hand each little garment as it was required, watching his opportunity to give his aid in washing and dressing "the babies," who slept in a swing crib, one at each end, the climax of his delight being reached when they were laid down for their forenoon nap, and he had them in his own keeping as he imagined. Standing by its side humming some "bairns'" hymns, all the while giving it a gentle push, he might be seen drawing aside the curtains, peeping now at one, now at the other, till the sweet eyes closed, and he turned with a sigh of satisfaction, his duty done, saying, "They are both sleeping now, muvver." It was about this time, I think, that I read to the older children, one quiet Sabbath afternoon, Mrs Sewell's "Mother's Last Words." All were interested and touched by the pathos of the story, but his mother will never forget the look in John's eyes, brimful of tears, as she read of the "wicked sprite," or the sigh of relief which passed his lips as the victory of good over evil was described: then he shared in the joy which is felt in heaven over one sinner that

repenteth. For nine *full* weeks our cup of joy was brimming over; "our children were about us," filling our home with glee, giving promise of yet deeper gladness, and then,—

“‘My Lord hath need of those flow’rets gay,’
The reaper said, and smiled;
‘Sweet tokens of the earth are they,
Where He was once a child.’”

And two sweet buds from our family tree blossomed in the paradise of God. First to go was John, "the loved of all;" his illness lasted six days, days of intense suffering. When told that Jesus might be wanting him, and asked if he should like to go, his reply was, "I should like to stay with *muvver* a little while." At one time feeling very cold I had put a shawl over my head, which confusing him, brought out the plaintive cry, "Oh, you are not *my* *muvver*." "Yes, dear," I said, at the same time throwing it hastily aside, "I am your very own mother, and you love me, don't you?" I feel now that this was a selfish question, but can scarcely regret it in view of the response it elicited. "Yes, and *favver*, and J., and M.," adding all the "dear household names" successively, closing the list with that of his nurse; and then, as if this were not enough, saying with great difficulty, "I love everybody." So he did, and thus fulfilled the law. The last night was one of constant unrest, of awful agony, and I begged he might be lifted on my knees,—holding him, strengthening and cheering him, would help me,

and so it proved. Singing had always a great charm for John, and hoping it might soothe my child I ventured to try its power and so, during that sore night, many precious hymns were sung between such paroxysms of suffering as made our heart-strings quiver.

Night wore on, and as the day was breaking we saw that "the right time" was near. "Just a little patience, darling; Jesus is coming for you; would you like to go?" "Yes," was the answer, "*it's better than here.*" And suddenly putting his arms round my neck, and drawing down my head into his bosom, he kissed me passionately; then "favver too" gave him also this last expression of love. Again the awful agony, and now "Jesus has come, dear." *How glad we were to know it true,* and to tell it to our child, who looking *up and out,* with the wistful expression so often seen in eyes so near their closing, quickly, and for the last time turned his loving gaze on us, while, kissing his dear hand for "farewell," he passed into the "home" where "love reigns supreme." A week of anxiety and constant nursing, and then the lovely little brother joined *him,* who was always happier in having one of his "very own" as companion, and we could not but rejoice for his sake that it was so; but oh, the blank in our home! To the tender heart of their loving father the prospect of their loss came as an almost overwhelming blow, and his cry was, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." But his Heavenly Father was better to him

than his fears, and when separated, as we necessarily were, from our other children, we knelt in prayer. The relief to the writer may be understood when the 116th Psalm was selected as the morning's portion, "I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplication." Yes, we said together, "He hath done all things well."

Just one little incident, and these reminiscences shall close. Four months passed ere we were able to resume the wonted custom of hymn singing on Sunday evenings. The winter following the removal of our darling boys was one of great anxiety and watchful care, illness reigned for long in the nursery; but at length, by God's grace, on a lovely spring evening we once again as a family sang the dear old hymns. One of these was, "My God, my Father, while I stray." There were tears and sighs, but we sang it with its ever recurring prayer, "Thy will be done." No, not all, the dear eldest girl, the sister-mother, a child little more than ten, was silent. At the time no notice was taken, but when the other children had left the room the remark was made, "You did not sing that last hymn with us, dear."

"No," she replied, "I can sing it about Harry, but I can't about John." Ah, when the "Johns" are taken from us, then is the testing time, then we are *tried*. "Then you were quite right not to sing, don't force yourself; your Father knows all about it, *wait* and He will help you; ask Him to make you able and willing to do it." Some weeks had

passed, nothing was said to her on the subject, but prayer was made for her, and we too waited, believingly and expectantly, and once again we rejoiced over our answered prayers. Bringing her school books as usual one evening to me that I might hear her lessons, she said, "I can say it now." Not realising her meaning, my reply was, "Which shall I hear first." "Oh," she said, "it's not that; but I can say 'Thy will be done' now, God has helped me." I put my arms around her, how dear, how precious her confession, how comforting and cheering to my soul! Yea, verily, God had helped us.

"No affliction for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous; nevertheless *afterward* it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby." Well did the Psalmist say, and we can echo his words, "I was brought low, and he helped me. Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

"O God! it was a time divine,
 Rich epoch of calm grace,
 A pressing of our hearts to Thine
 In mystical embrace.
 The work of years was done in days;
 Fights won, and trophies given;
 For sorrow is the atmosphere
 Which ripens hearts for heaven."

P.

CONSIDER CHRIST JESUS.

“Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered.”—ISA. xlix. 24, 25.

“God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. . . . How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him? Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. . . . Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.”—HEB. i. 1-3, ii. 3, 14, 15, iii. 1.



THE verses from Isaiah which head this paper present two queries which Heb. i. and ii. answer. I connect these two chapters in Hebrews with the queries, for they are solemn and weighty ones. You and I were the “prey” of the “mighty.” Sin has made man the “lawful captive” of the god of this world—Satan. You will find that two things come out in these two chapters. *Salvation* as presented in the person of the Son of God, and *deliverance* through the work He has accomplished by His death.

What does God propose in the gospel? He pro-

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poses to deliver you, to break the shackles with which sin has bound you, to bring you out from the power of sin, from the grip of the enemy—in short, to set the captive free. Satan has a hold on you, for you cannot deny that you are a sinner, and “the wages of sin is death,” God says, and “after death the judgment” is a terrible reality that you must face. But here is the charm of the gospel, that after man has sinned, and before the day of judgment, the Son of God has stepped in, has become a Man, and, in grace on the cross, taken the place of the sinner, wrought the work of redemption, broken the enemy’s power, and now the believer in Him is set free.

Are you, my friend, set free and delivered? Do you know Christ? Have you got Him as your life, your hope, your all? Chap. i. gives you Jesus as the Apostle, chap. ii. shows Him as the High Priest, and chap. iii. says, “Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.” Let us obey this behest together.

In chap. i. you have Him as One who has been sent forth from God to us—this is the Apostle. In chap. ii. you have Him as one who, as man, has gone up to God *for* us. Thus He is “*able to succour*” (Heb. ii. 18), *able to sympathise* (Heb. iv. 15), and “*able also to save them to the uttermost (right on to the end) that come unto God by Him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them*” (Heb. vii. 25). He is the Saviour, the Deliverer, the Sustainer, and there is nothing your

soul can need—nay, more, there is nothing that the heart of God can confer on, or make over to you—that is not wrapped up in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore, my reader, if you have never done it before, pause now, and CONSIDER HIM.

Look how striking is the opening of chap. i. Am I addressing one who is looking to find the Lord—groping about after Him? How sweetly this falls on the ear. “God hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son.” Is it a failing prophet who brings us the gospel? A Moses? No. Moses did very well to bring the law, but he could not bring the gospel. Is it Elijah? No. He was a great reformer, but he was unable to bring us the gospel. But Jesus, the Son of God, Jesus the Saviour, He, and He only, can bring us the gospel. The law-giver, Moses, can show your uncleanness, but cannot cleanse you; can show you your sin, but cannot take it away. Elijah, though a great reformer, cannot bring you salvation, for reformation is not salvation, is not the new life. If you turn over—as men say—a “new leaf,” it is but a leaf of the old book, and that is not salvation. But if I learn what this blessed One is, and who He is, and then learn eventually that He died for me, all His personal glories only enhance the value of the sacrifice which He offered on my account.

If I look around on the starry firmament I can learn what the power of God is, but not what His heart is; but when I come to Jesus—“the express

image of his person"—I learn to know God. Here He was once in this world, and if you follow that lowly humble Man in His pathway, you cannot deny that His whole life was lovely. There is a moral loveliness about His life, which even a Socinian—who would take from Him His Godhead, and deny His propitiatory sacrifice—cannot deny. But I learn that that perfect life, which expressed, for the first time, all that man on earth should have been for God, that life was also the life of God, and Jesus "the express image of his person."

He brought grace for guilty man, grace for needy souls. He was in this world the very expression of what God is in His nature, and it came out in the life of a Man here on earth, that I, a man too, might be able to understand it. But this same blessed, gracious, lovely Man was "God over all," "the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person."

Now this blessed One, whom the apostle brings out here, as being the expression of all that God is, does not sit down in heaven until He has purged our sins entirely. He has gone into the grave and has come out of it, and has gone into the glory, and now I have a Saviour in glory, at God's right hand, who did not go there until He had done the work that put all my sins away, and gives me a righteous title to follow Him. He went up "when he had *by himself* purged our sins." "By himself"—all alone. People think sometimes that they have to do something to help purge their sins away. My

friend, that only takes away from the glory and work of the Saviour. You can add nothing to the work of the Saviour. All you can do is to bring in something that obscures the value of that work from your heart.

In the Old Testament, when the High Priest went in once a year, to make atonement, he had the bells on his garments, and the bells told the people, waiting outside, that their priest lived. Our High Priest did not go in until He had done the whole work—He Himself, all alone—that put away all our sins—and it is your privilege and mine to believe on Him now, while He has gone in. Many (Israel) will not believe on Him till He comes out.

Do you ask me, Are you sure your sins are purged away? Well, if they are not already all purged away now, they never will be, for only the blood of Jesus can purge them, and He will not come down from the glory to shed that blood again. Look back at the cross, and see that blessed One doing the work which He only could do. It cost Him His life; it cost Him the hiding of God's face; it cost Him the being made sin, but He, by Himself, purged our sins.

The Epistle to the Hebrews brings the soul to have to do with Christ, and when the heart has to do with the heavenly Saviour, that man is spoiled for earth. When you learn that He, by Himself, purged, blotted out, removed your sins, what will be the result? I have no doubt you will feel happy, but feelings are not the ground the Christian rests

on; he rests on Christ—on Christ, who is the crowned Saviour at God's right hand, a Saviour honoured, and crowned with glory, when He went back to heaven, as a Man, having finished the work God gave Him to do. And that work was to put sins away from God's sight, and from off the man who trusts in Him, to pick up ruined sinners on their road to hell, and bring them to glory.

The apostle, in chap. i., contrasts Christ with angels, and shows His superiority, for angels cannot save you, and bring you to God. Christ came into this world in order to have companions in His Father's house. He is going to have companions, that is the grace of His heart. None but the heart of Christ could have thought of giving that dying malefactor on Calvary a place as His companion in paradise that day.

Having unfolded the glories of the Son of God in chap. i., the apostle in chap. ii. says, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word *spoken by angels* was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, *how shall we escape*, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be *spoken by the Lord*" (ii. 1-3). Pause, and ask yourself, How do I propose to get saved? and then answer the apostle's question, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" He does not say reject, he says *neglect*. I do not suppose that one

who reads this paper thinks of rejecting God's salvation, but, I ask you, Has Christ had His right place in your heart yet? If not, can you answer this momentous question of the Spirit of God's, "How shall we escape if we *neglect*?"

Christ is in heaven to-day a glorified Saviour, and He is speaking to you from thence. He spake the gospel when He was on earth. Men jeered at Him. He told them of God, and they mocked Him, and at length wicked hands nailed Him to the cross, and He says, I will die for you who only hated Me. He dies, but God raises Him from the dead, and He enters heaven as the Saviour, and from heaven He says to you, How will you escape if you neglect so great salvation?

Oh, my friend, let me entreat you, neglect it no longer, procrastinate, put off no more, halt between two opinions not another hour, nor hesitate, for how shall you escape if you neglect this great salvation of God's own providing? You cannot escape. There is no other way. Christ says, I am the Way. Oh, neglect Him no more. Cast your eye on Him this day. See how God presents Him to be admired in this second chapter: "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." Death is on every man, the wages of sin, but Jesus came and tasted death to deliver man. He has destroyed Satan's power, therefore the moment that I see that Christ died

for my sins and rose again, Satan has no power to hold me any longer.

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Glorious Deliverer! Man dies because he is a sinner. Jesus became a Man that He might die. By His death He *destroys* the captor and *delivers* the captive. Death, as the wages of sin, was the sword, in Satan’s hand, that kept man in bondage all his lifetime. By dying, and receiving sins’ wages, Jesus destroys the power of Satan—destroys “him that had the power of death”—and delivers the one who now confides in Himself.

Christ came to deliver. “Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?” Yes, Christ delivers. He came to deliver, to rob the mighty of his prey. Come to Him, then, now, and let Him deliver you, let Him save you by His work on the cross, which met all the claims of God, and broke all the power of the enemy. The devil seeks to keep souls from looking up, because he knows that if you see Christ in glory you will get deliverance from his power. You will be delivered if you simply CONSIDER CHRIST JESUS. W. T. P. W.

D E A T H .



DEATH! Death! all around us, and yet people go on just the same, cherishing the idea that everybody is mortal but themselves! In any daily paper may be seen a long list of persons just dead, and yet it seldom enters the heads of the readers that *their* names may appear on that list, even on the following day! Cemeteries grow fuller and fuller every year; funerals take place by the score, and yet people like to connect the time of their own decease with a far-distant day!

Yea, the very name of Death has dropped out of polite society, and "If anything should happen to him," is substituted for "If he should die."

Thus Satan succeeds in keeping the thought of death in the background, and in persuading souls to put off preparation till it is too late.

Even when he cannot succeed in doing this, in many cases he gains his point by inducing them to prepare in the wrong way. Oh, solemn, solemn thought! to prepare for death, to prepare for eternity, to prepare to meet God, and at the end to find out that the preparation has been of the wrong sort, and is of no avail!

Many, indeed, are the ways by which misguided men and women seek to make good their title to heaven; many are the paths which they, in all sincerity, perhaps, map out for themselves, but just

as it was said in bygone times, "All roads lead to Rome," so all these ways and paths have a common termination, *Death*, "and after this the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27).

There is the Religious Path, for instance. How many there are that walk in it! It seems to be a favourite path with those who desire to reach heaven. We find some who followed in that path in Matt. vii. 22. The day of reckoning comes, they boast of their religious deeds, their wonderful works, &c. But the Lord sums it all up under that one word, "Iniquity," and says, "Depart from me." Yes, the path of religion without Christ is a deceptive path as much as others. It ends in death, and after death the judgment!

I witnessed a sorrowful instance of this, not long ago. I had gone, with a fellow-student, to the room where the bodies which are brought to the hospital for educational purposes are placed, to see if there were any newly arrived. Several coffins were there, and advancing towards the nearest, we lifted the lid. It was a sad spectacle that presented itself to our sight. There lay the body of an aged woman, cold in death. A string of beads around her neck, and a crucifix on her breast, told only too well upon what her hopes for eternity had been founded. These symbols of a religion apart from Christ had been her resource in her dying hour. One cannot say positively whether her spirit is in the region of bliss, or the region of woe, but certain am I, that if her religion (external symbols) was

all she had to trust to, she is now awaiting the sentence of eternal doom; while if, through the Lord's mercy, she is with Him, it is *in spite of* that religion, and because, underneath it all, there was a glimmering of faith and trust in the blessed Saviour.

Beloved reader, religion, whether it takes the form of crucifixes and rosaries, or "saying your prayers" and "doing your best," or sacrament-taking and confirmation, or reading the Bible, and Sunday-school teaching, will not save you. You may even be a great preacher, and yet be unsaved (1 Cor. ix. 27). You may suffer a martyr's death, and wake up in hell! (1 Cor. xiii. 3.) All these things are but devices which Satan employs to keep you out of the right way. The Lord Jesus never said: "This is the way," or, "That is the door," but "*I* am the way" (John xiv. 6), and "*I* am the door" (John x. 9). It is by a living Person (no longer hanging on cross or crucifix) alone that you can be saved. "If a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death" (John viii. 51). All other ways, however, end in death. "There is a way that seemeth *right* unto a man, but the *end* thereof are the ways of *DEATH*" (Prov. xvi. 25).

Another way which men imagine will lead to heaven is the Way of Philanthropy. Those who walk therein hope to obtain salvation by helping their fellow-men, relieving the poor, tending the sick, contributing to charitable institutions, or bequeathing a fortune to an hospital. Alas! alas!

that men can be so deceived! Philanthropy is of no avail as a way to heaven.

Others walk in the Path of Morality. They always pay their debts, and endeavour to live up to the standard which they consider a sufficient one. They hope to remove every ground upon which God can judge them. Alas! unless aroused in time they will discover when it is too late, that *one* sin is enough to sink them in hell for ever, and that a life as holy as the life of the angels which stand in God's presence, could not put away that *one* sin. Scripture declares that, "It is the *BLOOD* that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. xvii. 11), and that "Without shedding of *BLOOD* is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). Religious exercises, philanthropic deeds, and a moral life, are not "blood." There is absolutely *no* virtue in them to atone for *one* sin. But there is One in whom is plenteous virtue (Luke vi. 19), and whose blood can cleanse the soul from *all* sin (1 John i. 7).

Others, again, do not seek any way to heaven. They do not think about the future. Eternity, heaven, hell, and judgment, are not realities to them. But they cannot quite shut their eyes to the fact that *death* is all around them. They may seek for pleasure, fame, or riches, but "the end of those things is death" (Rom. vi. 21). They may interest themselves in politics, and try to improve the world which has yet to answer for crucifying the Son of God, but death comes at last. Men may cry, "Liberals for ever!" just as the minions of Nebu-

chadnezzar said, "O king, live for ever!" But that monarch's life came to an end, and so will theirs. "Great Babylon," which Nebuchadnezzar built, and in which he gloried, has crumbled to dust, and so will the things in which men pride themselves now. They themselves will soon be forgotten for ever. "For what is your life? It is even as a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away" (James iv. 14). Let me tell you of two or three persons whom death recently overtook, not in any unusual way, but as a warning to those who are not prepared.

No. 1 was a young man whose every prospect seemed fair and bright. Eminently successful in everything he put his hand to, he went through his medical career with honour, and was appointed to an important post in — Hospital. Many were the congratulations of his friends and fellow-students as they separated for their summer vacation. On my return to the hospital after four or five weeks, the first thing which met my sight was an announcement that his funeral would take place the following day!

No. 2 was a porter on the railway. He had started out one morning just as usual, in good health and spirits. That afternoon I saw his lifeless body being carried to the mortuary.

No. 3 was a lady who was going on a journey. On reaching London, she took a cab, but before reaching her destination she was in eternity. A sudden death was her lot.

My reader, to *you*, would a sudden death mean sudden glory, or sudden woe ?

Awful as death is in itself to those who are un-saved, there is something worse. There is the "resurrection of damnation" (John v. 29). There is the "second death" (Rev. xxi. 8). As I was standing in a room this morning, surrounded by twenty corpses and scores of dissevered limbs, the thought seemed appalling that the God who had created them will one day reconstitute them, and raise them up, those who are saved, to share in His glory at the coming of the One who saved them; those who died without Christ, to share in the dread sentence of condemnation when the great white throne of Rev. xx. 11 is set up. But so it will be !

Take your choice, my friend, as to when you rise again ! If you come now to the Saviour, as a guilty sinner, pleading the value of His blood, He will receive you, and save you, and (if you should die) raise you up when He returns for His own, an event which may take place any day (1 Thess. iv. 14-17 ; 1 Cor. xv. 52 ; Phil. iii. 20, 21). If you go on in your present state of carelessness and indifference, if not open rejection of Christ, you will be left in your grave till the thousand years of millennial blessing shall have rolled by (Rev. xx. 5). Then you will be summoned from your resting-place, by the voice which now pleads with you so lovingly, but which then will be most terrible ; in company with all your fellow-unbelievers you will

have to stand at the bar of One who is now a gracious Saviour, but who then will be a dread Judge; you will have to hear the sentence of doom from One who now invites you to "Come," but who then will bid you depart. And as eternity is ushered in, with all its untold blessing and happiness for the redeemed, you will be consigned to the lake of fire for ever and ever. Terrible, terrible thought! Hell will be peopled, not only by demons, but by men and women who once had salvation within their very grasp. Yes, within their very grasp, but having failed to grasp it, they will be left to gnash their teeth in awful remorse for an eternity as endless as the existence of God.

E. V. G.

"I COME, I COME!"



HE remembrance of dear Bessie H——'s last days are sweet to memory, and still fresh is that New Year's morning 1883, when I was sent for, as she wished to see me. I knew that she was ill, but not for one moment did I think she was going to die. I never shall forget her look, as I entered her room and stood by her bedside, and said to her, "You are very ill." "Yes, very," she answered, and then with great emphasis added, "I'm not happy, oh, I'm not happy. I'm not happy."

For many weeks we had talked on the subject of salvation, and I had hoped that dear Bessie was a saved soul. Therefore I said, "How is that, dear? I thought you believed that Jesus died for you. I fear now that you do not." With great earnestness she replied, "Yes, I do; I do believe that Jesus died for me, but I'm not happy, I cannot, oh, I cannot lay my sins on Jesus."

"No, dear," I replied, "you cannot, nor can any one. God in mercy has done it. Listen to His own word: 'All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all' (Isa. liii. 6). And another scripture says—'As many as received him, to them gave he power (or privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name' (John i. 12). Now you think a minute, dear, that the Lord Jesus had sins upon Him, when on the cross. He had none of His own; whose were they, then?"

"Mine," she answered, "mine."

"Yes, indeed, yours, and if He bore the punishment, how much is there for you to bear?"

"None," she said, "none."

I repeated a verse of—

"Just as I am, without one plea."

She took up the last line with great earnestness, and said,—

"I come, O Lamb of God, I come, I come."

The next day when I went to see her she said, "This pain in my head is agony, but I ought not

to complain, Jesus bore more than this for me, yes for me, for me." I replied, "Thorns pierced His sacred head."

"Ah," she rejoined, "He has a different crown now."

She had awful nights of suffering, as her malady was an abscess in the head. One morning I said to her, "There will be no pain by-and-by."

"No," she replied, "nothing of the kind. If I could not look beyond this pain it would be dreadful, but 'How sweet the name of Jesus sounds.'"

On the following Friday evening as I left her I said, "I will ask the Lord to give you a quiet night, and He will if it is good for you."

"Yes," she answered, "I know He will."

I never saw dear Bessie again, for when I went the next morning it was only to look on the lifeless body.

Some time in the night the abscess had broken, and after that she had some quiet sleep. On waking, seeing her mother was not in the room she called her, and said, "Mother, I'm dying, I'm going, to be with Jesus—going home—home," and breathed her last.

Thus trusting in what the Lord Jesus had done and suffered for her, she could calmly say, "I'm going home—home." The last word was scarcely audible, perhaps it was finished in the presence of that dear Saviour who had died to save sinners.

J. D.

THE POWER OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.



HE necessity of the death of a substitute is taught everywhere in Scripture, from Abel down to Christ. This was why Abel's sacrifice was accepted, and Cain's rejected. Abel in his sacrifice recognised the fact that he was a sinner, and that God was holy, and that His claims must be met. Cain in his sacrifice took no account of his fallen and sinful state, nor of God's holy and righteous claims, and therefore God had no respect to Cain and to his offering; but to Abel and to his offering he had respect.

Abel's offering was a foreshadowing of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary, and every sinner, who, in faith, puts that offering between himself and God, as meeting the claims of God, and his own deep need as a sinner, is accepted of God. Abel stood or fell with his sacrifice. God accepted the sacrifice, and him by virtue of it. God has accepted the sacrifice of His Son, and we (believers) are accepted with God by virtue of that sacrifice; yea, *in Him risen from the dead*, who offered the sacrifice (Eph. i. 6, 7).

When Israel were in Egypt, God said, "I will execute judgment: I am the Lord" (Exod. xii. 12). Then He told the Israelites to take an unblemished lamb, and kill it in the evening. "And they shall

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take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it." So they did as Jehovah commanded them.

And what more? Listen! Mark it well, dear reader: "For I (the God of judgment) will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be *to you for a token* upon the houses where ye are: AND WHEN I SEE THE BLOOD, I WILL PASS OVER YOU, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt" (verses 12, 13).

Nothing could be more simple. The blood was to be shed, and sprinkled on their houses, and Jehovah said, "*When I see the blood I will pass over you.*" The blood outside was to meet His holy eye, and screen them from judgment; while His word about that blood filled their hearts with sweetest peace and assurance that no judgment could touch them. And so it was. Where the blood was sprinkled they were safe, but where there was no blood the judgment fell. Nothing but blood could shelter them.

The paschal lamb prefigured Christ; "for Christ *our passover* is slain for us: therefore let us keep the feast" (1 Cor. vi. 7). "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious

blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. i. 18, 19).

"*The precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*" Dear reader, are you sheltered by it? Can you say, "In whom I have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins"? (Col. i. 14.) What a shelter! what a redemption!

Add nothing of yours to it, for it is the blood and nothing but the blood, that shelters and redeems. "When I see the blood I will pass over;" "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." You have, in faith, to accept the testimony of God about the blood. The blood meets the eye of God, and satisfies Him. Of this, the resurrection of Christ is the proof; and the word of God about the blood gives us the most blessed assurance that we are sheltered and redeemed, and we give thanks. Can you give thanks to God that you are thus sheltered and redeemed?

Again: it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul (Lev. xvii. 11). A complete satisfaction has been given to eternal justice for all that was chargeable to us. "I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your soul, for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

Again: "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). What could so cleanse us, but the blood? What could fit us for the eye of God, but the blood? Thank God, such is its efficacy, it renders the foulest clean,

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and makes him fit for the eye and presence of God.

But more; we who have no righteousness of our own are made the righteousness of God *in Christ*, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. v. 21). The risen and glorified Christ is our subsisting righteousness before God. We have become God's righteousness in Him. God sees us *in Him* accepted; His work on the cross having glorified Him about all that we were, and all that we had done. "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. ii. 10). We are justified, have peace, stand in God's favour, and rejoice in hope of God's glory" (Rom. v. 1-3).

Such is the believer's present and eternal blessedness. But mark it well, dear reader, how we owe it all to the blood of Christ—the life-blood of our divine Substitute. It is the *blood* that shelters from judgment (Exod. xii. 13). It is the *blood* that maketh an atonement for the soul (Lev. xvii. 11). It is the *blood* that obtained remission (Heb. ix. 22). It is the *blood* by which redemption was accomplished (Heb. ix. 12; Col. i. 14; Eph. i. 7). It is the *blood* which is the righteous basis of our justification (Rom. iii. 24, v. 9). It is the *blood* that cleanses from all sin (1 John i. 7).

Now, with thankful hearts, we 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 for ever. Amen" (Rev. i. 5, 6).

Throughout eternal ages our song will be, "Thou art worthy . . . for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation," &c. (Rev. v. 9, 10).

God has set forth Christ a mercy-seat through faith in His blood. How important the inquiry, dear reader, as to whether you have approached that mercy-seat, and trusted that precious blood.

If you have, it is well with you; but if not, like Cain of old, it is not well with you. E. A.

"THE WAYSIDE" BECOME "GOOD GROUND."



THE following striking instance of a way-side hearer's heart being changed into good ground, for the Word of God to take root in, has just reached me from a correspondent. I will give you the account of it in her own words.

"It had been my custom," writes my friend, "every month or so to visit a dear old soul, who for many years had been a regular attendant at church, and who by the strict observance of her religious duties hoped it would be all right with her when she came to die.

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“If asked what part of the Word we should turn to, it invariably ended in our taking the fourteenth of John. The ‘many mansions’ she loved to hear about. But there was no apparent growth in her soul.

“After an absence of a few months I again called on Mrs B——. The welcome was the same, only *now* her face was beaming with delight. An inward joy was there.

“‘What is it makes you so happy?’ I said.

“‘It is a little book. I have saved it for you, and been wishing for you to come in that you might see it. Such a nice little book, you never read anything like it before.’

“‘What is its title?’

“‘Oh, my memory is bad. Only a little book. It came in an envelope by the post. I read it two or three times. It has done me so much good. I am so happy.’

Too aged to move quickly, at length the book was produced from a place of safe keeping, and she held it up in her hand as she came to me.

“‘Safety, Certainty, and Enjoyment!’ * I see,” I exclaimed.

“‘How did you know the book?’

“‘Why, I lent you a copy of the same a long time since, and you read it and returned it to me without comment.’ And without its having produced any impression.

“‘Oh, but it could not have been the same as this. You have not read *my* book.’

* Broom & Rouse, 15 Paternoster Square. Price 1d.

“ ‘Yes, I have, and know it well.’

“ But not until I assured her the writer was personally known to me, could she be convinced the two books were the same.

“ Now she saw her safety in Christ. No longer trying to be good, she had learned to trust another, and settled peace was now her portion for the few years granted to her. Only a few weeks since she passed away to be for ever with the Lord. In her last hour, ‘the only son of his mother, and she (very many years) a widow,’ was standing over her weeping. She exclaimed with surprise,—

“ ‘What are you crying for? For me, for *me*? when I am so happy. Don’t cry for me.’

“ Soon after she quietly fell asleep.

“ The same little book has gone on another mission, it is in the hands of an anxious soul.”

So far my correspondent, and now to draw the lesson from her dear old friend’s case. What is remarkable about it is simply the totally different effect produced by the very same little gospel book at different times.

The first time it was given her the effect was *nil*. And why? Because her heart was not in a state to receive the truth it contained—truth specially suited to bring an anxious soul into peace and joy, and which has been often used of God to that end. And what was there in this old woman’s *state* which hindered the word from working? She was *self-righteous, self-satisfied*. “By the strict observance of her religious duties, she hoped it would be all

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right with her when she came to die.” Was she singular in this? By no means; it is the case of thousands in the religious world around us. Nor is it novel. Adam and Eve were the first self-righteous, self-satisfied sinners. The fig-leaf aprons, the invention of their own hearts, and the works of their own hands, were what they relied on; and I doubt not, with as implicit confidence as that of the strictest Ritualist of to-day. But would their works stand the all-searching test of the presence of a holy God? Not for a moment. Immediately they heard His voice they hid themselves. They were afraid. Why? Because they were naked. However satisfactorily they hid this fact—the knowledge of which was the result of their sin—from each other, they knew they could not hide it from God by their own works. Their works, their aprons, were the very proof of their guilty knowledge, for in innocence they required none, they had no shame in one another’s presence, nor fear in God’s (read Gen. iii. prayerfully, and see for yourself). And so with the religious professor and formalist. His very profession, the very forms he relies on, the good works (Scripture calls them “*dead works*”) he practises so assiduously, are but proofs of a *guilty* conscience, which he seeks to appease.

The next case of self-righteousness, and self-reliance is that of Cain, who “brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to the Lord” (Gen. iv. 3). Proof that he felt his guilt, and desired to pro-

pitate God. But how? With the fruits of the earth on which the curse of God rested. Fruits, albeit, wrung from that ground by the sweat of his brow. And so through all the sad list, from Adam to Cain, his son, from Cain to the Pharisee, who went up to the temple with a publican to pray (Luke xviii. 9-14),—a parable of our Lord “spoken unto certain which *trusted in themselves that they were righteous*, and despised others” (verse 9): from this Pharisee, through Saul of Tarsus, whose perfect ground for confidence in the flesh he recounts in Phil. iii. 4-6, down to the most modern form of Ritualist, “who, by the strict observance of religious duties, hopes it will be all right with him when he comes to die.”

But, my reader, you may not go so far as this. You may only be trusting to an ordinary amount of religious respectability, strict teetotalism, the social improvement of the world, being “as good as my neighbour,” “paying my way,” or “doing my best.” You may only be trusting to some or all of these, that “it will be all right with you when you come to die.” But if such is the case, be assured, and that on the authority of the God with whom (and not with your fellow-sinner) you have to reckon (Rom. xiv. 11, 12), be assured it is *all wrong with you*. As wrong with you as with your first parents, when they had nothing more than their *self-made aprons* to cover their nakedness before God. As wrong with you as with Cain, when he “brought of *the fruit of the ground* an

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offering unto the Lord” (note Gen. iv. 5, first clause). As wrong with you as with the Pharisee in the temple when he stood, in all his self-justification, *unjustified* before God. As wrong with you as with Saul of Tarsus, who with all his reasons for confidence in the flesh, *was the chief of sinners*. As wrong with you as with our poor old woman, who, though a regular church attendant, and communicant too, I believe, *had no joy, and did not grow*.

And now let me ask you, if a religious professor, have *you* joy, do *you* grow? And if not, why? Be assured if you have never rested for your soul's salvation on the *finished* work (John xix. 30) of Christ, *by* faith—if you have never trusted His shed blood, of which God witnesses that *IT* cleanses from *all* sin (1 John i. 7), and believed in Him who shed it—in Him “*that liveth and was dead, and is alive again for evermore*” (Rev. i. 18)—be assured *it is all wrong with you*, and if you will not accept this testimony now, on the infallible authority of the Word of God, you will wake up to the truth of it at the great white throne of judgment (Rev. xxi. 11, 15), when it will be too late for ever, and when it will be no more possible to have your name written in “the book of life” (verses 12, 15).

But do you say, Is there no chance for me? Yes, dear anxious soul, as much chance as for our first parents when they had owned themselves guilty (naked) before God. “Unto Adam and to his wife did *the Lord God make* coats of skins, and clothed them” (Gen. iii. 21). As much chance for you as

for Cain if he had accepted it. "A *sin offering* (Heb.) lieth at the door" (Gen. iv. 7). As much as for the Pharisee, who might have gone down to his house justified as well as the other, had he taken the same place as the publican, "God be *merciful* to me **THE sinner**" (Luke xviii. 13, 14). As much as for Saul of Tarsus who, in "the glory of that light," "above the brightness of the sun at noonday," "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," at His right hand, surrendered all confidence in his "own righteousness which is of the law," and rested wholly, and implicitly, and entirely, in "that which is through *the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God, by faith.*" That is, he gave up his own right-doing and himself as well, and believed in the right-doing of God in raising up Jesus our Lord from the dead, after having delivered Him to die for our offences. For He had so satisfied His claims, and glorified God in His death, and that for our sins, that God in simple right-doing raised Him again. So that being justified (*i.e.*, cleared from all charge) by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is as much chance for you as for the dear old woman who gave up resting in her observance of religious duties as her hope of salvation, and rested on *the WORK of Christ for safety, the WORD of God for certainty*, and lived to please, worship, and serve Him, and thus found *enjoyment*.

W. G. B.

MR UNGODLY.



FOUND him in a cottage, one Sunday afternoon, and rather abruptly questioned him as to the forgiveness of sins. He was old, wore a smock-frock; and had been reading in a large-type New Testament.

“Are all your sins forgiven you?” I asked.

“I can’t say they are,” he replied in a troubled voice.

Allowing one sin per day, I made a calculation that this aged sinner had added up a considerable score.

“Let us see, one sin each day is three hundred and sixty-five in a year, and you have lived—how many years?”

“But there has been more than one each day, sir.”

“And you do not know they are forgiven?”

“Well, you see, sir, I’ve been reading this Testament, but somehow I don’t seem to understand it.”

Taking the book, I turned to Romans v., and pointed to verse 6—“CHRIST DIED FOR THE UNGODLY.”

“Whom did Christ die for?”

“Why, for all of us.”

“But was it for you? Look at this verse now. Whom does that last word mean—‘UNGODLY?’ Are you Mr Ungodly?”

M

This name seemed to rather startle the poor fellow, and he began, like many more, to try and prove he was fairly good.

“I’m not so very bad, sir.”

Now the text did not say anything about

MR NOT-SO-VERY-BAD,

so if the old man was to be known by that name, he certainly was not mentioned. The Not-so-very-bads are to be found in every church and chapel, and in almost every house. But there are none of that name in heaven, nor are they spoken of in the proclamation of grace.

“You see, my friend, this verse says,—‘Christ died for the ungodly,’ so own your name, and receive the blessings obtained by that death. Mr Ungodly is the person spoken of. Mr Ungodly deserved to be punished because of his ungodliness, ‘for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness’ (Rom. i. 18). But though God hates ungodliness, He loves the ungodly, and in His love He gave His Son Jesus Christ to take upon Him the penalty of ungodliness, that the ungodly might be saved. Are you Mr Ungodly? If so, Christ died for you, and wants you to believe it.”

The wrinkled face seemed to brighten a little as I went on to explain how, as soon as Mr Ungodly “believeth on him (God) that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom. iv. 5). He is no longer without God, and so ungodly; he has God, and is therefore godly.

He is no longer unrighteous, and so without righteousness; he has the righteousness of God, and therefore is righteous.

The dear old fellow lifted his hand from his knee and brought it gently down again, as he quietly said, "I can see that. Thank you kindly."

It was so simple that he could not help seeing it when the Spirit of God opened his eyes.

"Ungodly." Is there a Mr, Mrs, or Miss reading this? If so, let me address a few words to them.

Mr UNGODLY, certain ancestors of your family met with a violent end, for in early days God brought "in the flood upon the world of the ungodly" (2 Pet. ii. 5).

Mr UNGODLY, your life is uncertain, for the Book says, "The ungodly are like the chaff which the wind driveth away" (Ps. i. 4).

Mr UNGODLY, when the Judge comes, it will go hard with you, for "the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment" (Ps. i. 5).

Mr UNGODLY, your way is a way of death, for "the way of the ungodly shall perish" (Ps. i. 6), and that perishing will be with awful terror; for as all your family were destroyed in the old world, so "the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Pet. iii. 7).

Mr UNGODLY, there is hope to-day! Let me repeat the good news I took to your aged namesake,—

“CHRIST DIED FOR THE UNGODLY.”

“To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom. iv. 5).

ANON.

“DOST NOT THOU FEAR GOD?”

(LUKE XXIII. 40.)



HIS question was first heard upon Golgotha's hill, and sounded forth from the lips of one malefactor into the ears of the other one beyond the person of the Son of God, who hung bleeding and dying between them; and now it is put to you—

“DOST NOT THOU FEAR GOD?”

seeing thou art in the same condemnation with this Christ-rejecting world,—that same condemnation spoken of by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself when He said, “He that believeth not is condemned already” (John iii. 18).

These two who were being put to death with Jesus—the one on the right hand, and the other on the left—were but receiving the due reward of their deeds,—sinners, of course, and needed a Saviour. But a far greater condemnation rests upon every unbeliever now. Theirs was a question of breaking the law, and getting the penalty of death. The one from whose lips this question

came had learned not only that "the wages of sin is death," but that there is also "after this the judgment." This it was which brought forth that cry, and prepared him to receive another important truth, that the "gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The issue now is a far more important one, for this world has not only broken every one of God's laws, but worse than that. Look at that person hanging upon that middle cross. It is none other than the Son of God.

Yes, this world has denied and crucified the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer instead. It has "killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead." This world, of which every unbeliever is a part, is guilty of the blood of Jesus Christ, God's only-begotten Son; and now in the face of this, the question is again asked,—

"DOST NOT THOU FEAR GOD?"

Is there no reason why you should fear God? Know ye not that God is holy, and only such as have clean hands and a pure heart can stand in His holy place?

Yes, dear reader, there is every reason why you should fear God—

"For God must visit sin
With His displeasure sore,
For He is holy, just, and true,
And righteous ever more."

Do you think God has forgotten that scene upon Calvary's hill, when both Jew and Gentile, ener-

gised by the power of Satan, cried out from their evil hearts, "Away with him! crucify him!"

You may say you were not here in the world then; you may say you had no part with that God-hating, Christ-rejecting mob of two thousand years ago, but it will avail you nothing. If you are found linked with this world in the day of the Lord, or should you die in your sins, "know thou that for all these things God will bring you into judgment" (Eccles. xi. 9). "Know you not that the friendship of this world is enmity with God?" (James iv. 4,) and that the "Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" ? (2 Thess. i. 7, 8).

These are solemn facts, dear reader; and if you have not yet learned that you are a guilty sinner, may God in His mercy carry these words in power to your heart and conscience, and give you that fear of Him which is the beginning of wisdom. Being born of the seed of Adam, you are a child of wrath even as others (Eph. ii. 3). By practice God has proven all to be under sin, and the whole world guilty before Him, having broken all His commandments and come entirely short of His glory. (Read Rom. iii. 9-23.) But above everything else stands the crowning sin of the rejection and murder of the Son of God.

And now, dear unsaved reader, if you have been brought to see yourself in the same condemnation

with this world, let me point you to that same wondrous, blessed person who filled the eyes of that dying thief on the cross. The One whom God declared to be His Son, in whom He found all His delight; the One of whom Pilate could only say, "I have found no cause of death in him;" the One of whom the thief could say, "This man hath done nothing amiss." Yes, let me point you to that One who "hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God," and tell you, as God has already told you, that "through THIS MAN (Christ Jesus) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and that by HIM all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 38, 39).

Here is manifested the rich mercy and grace of God; for instead of permitting just judgment to fall upon this earth at that time, He ushered in a day of grace by proclaiming salvation to every guilty sinner through faith in that precious blood shed by wicked hands upon Calvary's cross. By faith that guilty thief found perfect cleansing in Jesus' blood; and so may you, by taking your place before God as a guilty sinner, and owning Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, as did the thief.

God declares that "the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin," and this cleansing you may have, but not by works, for "by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourself; it is the gift of God" (Eph. ii. 8).

It was too late for the dying thief to work, but

faith in that One who was then finishing all the work for salvation upon that middle cross brought forth those gracious words from the lips of Jesus, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Faith in Him, dear reader, will bring you peace, forgiveness of sins, and will give you an entrance into the glory with Christ at His coming.

For nearly two thousand years God has been long-suffering, and not willing that any should perish; but His day of grace will soon give place to His day of judgment; and so "TO-DAY, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart," for "how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

C. H. B.



NOW OR NEVER.



Now opportunity is within your reach to-day, my reader, which you may never have again, a golden opportunity for obtaining the greatest boon which, tomorrow, may be beyond your grasp!

Let me quote a striking passage to illustrate what I mean. "*Seek ye the Lord WHILE he may be found; call ye upon him WHILE he is near*" (Isa. lv. 6).

Observe, the Lord may be found *now*, and that He is near *to-day*! He may be found as a Saviour, in all the living fulness of His grace, and in all

His perfect suitability to your state to-day. Yes, "to-day," but not always!

Note that solemn word, twice stated, "*While*." Does not the fact of its repetition redouble its importance? Would the Spirit of God use it with unnecessary frequency, or pen a word twice over unless He had reason for so doing?

It is golden "*while*"—short, indeed, when one thinks of that by which it is followed—"Eternity!"

Yet in this "*while*," this "*little while*," must our state for eternity be decided, your eternity!

In order to a happy eternity the Lord must be found. He must be sought and found during this little while, else eternity is spent (but never exhausted) in sorrow.

Hence the value of this moment, and its infinite importance.

You, my reader, a sinner lost and guilty, stand in need of salvation. Where can it be found? Nowhere but in the Lord—in Jesus the Lord! None other name is given. Yet, thank God, that name, that winning, charming name, is given, and is all sufficient.

His name is like ointment poured forth; and His blood is precious.

Friend, have you sought Him and proved His worth? Oh! what grace if you should have done so!

But, if not, be assured that seek Him you must, and find Him too, and that "*while he may be found*," or never!

Awful fact, NOW OR NEVER!

Perhaps you say it is no gospel to be told to seek the Lord, and you say rightly. But the Bible is not all gospel! It does contain much good news, but also much warning, and suits its addresses with divine wisdom and adaptability. It warns the careless; it cheers the desponding; it liberates the bound; and it saves the lost.

And therefore in the same chapter we read, thrice over, in one verse, the word "*come*."

Now, that is a lovely word, and in this case, it is used by God Himself, "*Ho, every one that thirsteth, COME ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; COME ye, buy, and eat; yea, COME, buy wine and milk without money and without price.*"

Is that not gospel? Why, the word "*come*" is full of it! and then think of the condition of those invited—those that thirst, and that have no money! Such are made welcome to this plenitude of blessing.

It is God's call! Oh hearken.

There lay, bleeding, as he thought, to death, in an Indian jungle, a young British officer. His palanquin had been attacked by robbers, himself badly wounded in the fray, his goods deported, and his native servants turned to flight, in quest of help, leaving meanwhile their master. In their solicitude for help they cried "*Ho!*" giving a long protracted sound, and adding other words thereto. Assistance came. The young man was found, carried to the nearest station, and treated successfully.

He was a Christian; and, in his convalescence, he called to remembrance the plaintive cry of his servants. He learned that the word "*Ho*" signified *intense desire*. He compared it with the first word of our verse, and found it the same. Wonderful coincidence! These native servants were full of solicitude for the help of their wounded master, and therefore used that cry. But, reader, that same cry is used by God, as, in deepest grace, He shows His intense desire for the blessing of man. Think of Heaven making use of such a cry! Oh! the deep earnestness of God in the matter of our salvation. Let His cry sound in your inmost soul, "*Ho! every one that thirsteth, COME!*"

And come yourself; yes, come!

Put these two truths together—God's full invitation, as expressed by the word "*come,*" and also the fact that the space of time for accepting the same is limited by the other words, "*While He may be found.*"

A limited space! perhaps very limited! Who can tell how soon the "*little while*" may pass? Time flies! Eternity hurries on!

And the soul! "*What shall a man give in exchange for it?*" It outvalues the worth of a thousand worlds. Yes, reader, your soul! Oh! then to-day, now, while He may be found, seek, come to, believe in the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, the one only Saviour whose precious blood still avails, and who still makes you welcome.

J. W. S.

“I WANT YOU TO COME TO JESUS,
MOTHER!”



UCH were some of the words of a dear child of God in answer to the anxious inquiry of a fond mother, as to what she had to say just before her eyes were to be closed in death. The dear soul had only that minute realised that her earthly pilgrimage was o'er, and that she was very soon to be ushered into the presence of the One who had loved her "even unto death." Having assured her husband, whom she dearly loved, that the prospect of death was happiness to her, it became her mother's turn to elicit some word that might be treasured in memory of her first-born. "I want you to come to Jesus, mother," was her dying appeal. He had been proved infinitely precious in time, and was going to be her all-absorbing theme in eternity. So what had she better to tell her inquiring friends than of Him who had saved and satisfied her; and the remaining interval of freedom from intense agony was occupied in asking her beloved husband to deliver the same simple message, to those she knew were strangers to the power of Jesus' name. What a sermon!

Dear reader, how would it be with you were you suddenly to discover that your earthly career was about to close, and that in a few hours you would be ushered through death into eternity? Would you be able to hail with joy your anticipated de-

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parture, and like this dear young woman, exclaim, “I’m dying! I want to die! Pray that I may soon be released!” and then to testify, with calm assurance, that the One who had saved her, and washed her in His own blood, was the alone worthy *One* to commend to the earnest consideration of those who perhaps had no thought of *their* death, or any serious concern as to where *they* would spend eternity. Well, if not, be warned! “Now is the accepted time, *now* is the *day* of salvation!” “How shall we escape if we *neglect* so great salvation?”

All *may* come. All need a Saviour; and oh, what a Saviour Jesus is! What a precious name the name of Jesus is! And remember, sooner or later, all *must* bow and confess to the power of Jesus’ name! Blessed are they who do so NOW!

“To Him give all the prophets witness, that *through His name*, whosoever believeth on Him, shall receive remission of sins.” J. R. H.

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(LUKE xv. 14.)



S we trace the downward course of this young man, we find that he receives the first check “when he had spent all.” It was a sad history, but a very common one in this world of ours. He had accepted all that he could get; spent it in self-gratification; used it to place distance between

himself and his father; and never turned one thought of love and gratitude towards that father, who had dealt so indulgently with him. And oh, my unconverted reader, is it not thus that you have treated God? Do you not owe Him life, and breath, and all things? And to what purpose have you used them?

It was just at this point, "when he had spent all," that "there arose a mighty famine in that land." "How unfortunate! What an unlucky fellow I am," perhaps he said, "I could have borne this when I had plenty of money, but just to happen when I have spent my last penny!" But how truly can we, who know Him, say, "Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living." Prosperity has but been used to sever us further from Him. He will try adversity. "And he began to be in want." Have us He will, cost what it may to Him or to us. God has *set His heart* on rebel, wandering sinners.

Instead of turning to his father, the prodigal turned to the world for relief, the world over which he had spent his all. And so he is allowed to learn what the world is. "And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine." What an occupation for a well-born Jew! The most loathsome and degrading. How low he had sunk, for "he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him." He

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discovers the hollowness of the world's friendship now.

A young Frenchman of property, who led a gay, spendthrift life, had cause to suspect his butler of stealing his wine. To keep a check upon its use, he marked each cork with the date when the bottle was drunk, and the initials of the friends who had partaken of it. At last the end came. He had “spent all,” became bankrupt, and was sold up. From the wreck of his once considerable estate, only a few worthless odds and ends, in some old boxes, remained to him. One day he bethought him to examine their contents. On opening one he found it full of the corks which he had marked. He looked them over, and read the initials of friend after friend; and amongst them all there was *not one* who would do him a good turn, or say a good word for him now. And this is but a too faithful picture of the world, to which so many cling. My reader, are you “in want”—in soul-want? Turn then to the Lord now and find

“What an earnest and seal of unspeakable bliss,
Is conveyed in the Father's affectionate kiss!
The LOST one is found, and the servants must bring,
At the Father's command, the shoes and the ring,
And the very best robe, and the fatling and wine,
(What a change from the rags, and the husks, and the
swine),
With music and dancing—'tis something so new,
Such a fulness of blessing—and *nothing to do!*”

W. G. B.

CHRIST OUR TREASURE.



THOU our Treasure art, Lord Jesus,
 Thee most worthy we proclaim ;
 All our fresh springs now lie hidden,
 In Thy peerless, precious Name.
 We rejoice in Thee, Lord Jesus,
 Glory only in Thy Name ;
 Thou hast ransomed us from Satan,
 From contempt and endless shame.
 In the light, Lord, where Thou dwellest,
 There we rest e'en now in Thee,
 Sharing with Thee all God's favour,
 Full, unlimited, and free.
 Keep us, Saviour, ever keep us,
 Walking in the light with Thee,
 Ever singing, ever making
 In our hearts sweet melody.
 This our joy that Thou dost love us,
 This our boast that we are Thine,
 Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Thee
 Of Thy heritage divine.
 Yea, Lord, in the desert keep us,
 Journeying on by faith, not sight,
 With our garments undefiled,
 Ever spotless, ever white.
 Soon, in glory, we shall meet Thee,
 Know the fulness of Thy love,
 Spend eternity, Lord, with Thee,
 In the Father's house above. M. S. S.

A WORD FOR THE HUSBANDMAN.

“Blessed are they that SOW beside all waters.”—ISA. xxxii. 20.



“**N**E that observeth the wind shall not SOW; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not REAP. . . . In the morning SOW thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good” (Eccles. xi. 4-6).

“They that SOW in tears shall REAP in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bearing his sheaves with him” (Ps. cxxvi. 5, 6).

“Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that REAPETH receiveth wages, and GATHERETH FRUIT unto life eternal: that both he that SOWETH and he that REAPETH may rejoice together” (John iv. 35).

“The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few: Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest” (Matt. ix. 37).

“Let us not be weary in welldoing, for in due season we shall REAP, IF WE FAINT NOT” (Gal. vi. 9).

“Watch not the clouds above thee;
Let the whirlwind round thee sweep.
God may the seedtime give thee,
But another's hand may reap.

Have faith, though ne'er beholding
 The seed burst from its tomb ;
 Thou know'st not which may perish,
 Or what be spared to bloom.

Room on the narrowest ridges
 The scattered grain will find,
 That the Lord of the harvest coming,
 In the harvest sheaves may bind."

These verses were sent to me some time since by an unknown contributor. As the year closes they come with great sweetness to the heart, and should cheer the dear fellow-labourers that have scattered the *Gospel Messenger* so assiduously and prayerfully in the past. They should stimulate writer, editor, and scatterer to fresh energy should the Lord tarry a little longer. The work of the gospel is unspeakably blessed, but it has its trials and its hindrances as well as its fruits and rewards.

Many a labourer is apt to get discouraged and say,—“I see no fruit of my toil.” What is God's reply to such a plaint? “Blessed are they that sow beside all waters.” It is blessed if only to sow. But that is not all. “They that sow in tears SHALL REAP in joy.” When, is not added. If we are not suffered of the Lord to see the harvest now, we shall assuredly by and by. But even now the fruit of our labours often appears; and I have lately received a letter, part of which I append, which speaks for itself, and should be a real cheer to the heart of some Somerset fellow-labourer who may have thought his labour in vain. It is dated 15th September 1890 :—

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“I had reason to believe that my soul was quickened in the year 1859. I was in my teens, and two years previous to an early marriage. During the year 1874 a bitter trial came to our domestic hearth, when I sought to cast the burden upon the Lord, feeling sure that the grief would be somewhat assuaged; but, to my horror and dismay, no answer to my prayer came, nor relief to the circumstances. I then felt like one utterly cut off from God, and, sad to relate, I ceased to pray, and quite despaired of ever obtaining mercy.

“In the above state I remained five years, when an occasional longing to be a real Christian entered my heart. That desire deepened to severe convictions of sin. The long estrangement from God became intolerable. I wanted a Saviour, but the answer appeared to be “You are cut off for ever,” and my soul was filled with anguish. I looked on every side—there was no help. I made an effort to speak, but no one understood, and my heart failed within me. I dreaded the daylight, and avoided my fellow-creatures; the burden of sin was great; my life was a weary life, and of course I feared to die because of the unknown future.

“While in the state above described, in the early part of June 1889, I took a morning walk by Grosvenor, Bath, and met a gentleman who briefly asked me to accept a small book, and he passed on. I grasped the book, but felt very sorry that he did not say a few words to me about my soul.

“On looking into its pages I read the words—

‘No man of greater love can boast,
Than for his friends to die;
Thou for Thine enemies wast slain!
What love with Thine can vie?’

“Again I read, ‘He wants you to know Him in grace, to know Him now. He is seeking you with outstretched arms. Oh, come and taste the blessedness of belonging to Him, of having Him as the friend that sticketh closer than a brother.’ I also read of the security the believer in Jesus has, that ‘as he is, so are we.’ In a word, that little book

was *The Gospel Messenger*. The article was entitled, 'Christ's Three Appearings,' written by yourself. It brought a message of Divine love to my weary soul, and enabled me to bend before the throne of grace with earnest cries and tears for mercy. I at once was encouraged to search the Word, and to plead the promises. Day and night I sought the Lord, asking that I might be made 'free' through the blood of Christ; also that the remaining years of my life might be spent entirely to His glory.

"Three weeks thus passed away, when two verses of Scripture were applied to my heart with both sweetness and power, 'All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him' (Ezek. xviii. 22); and 'But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness' (Rom. iv. 5). I had not one good thought to offer to God, so that such a complete forgiveness well suited my helpless case. My joy in the Lord Jesus Christ as *my Saviour* became excessive. I could only praise Him day and night, with such words as 'Bless the Lord, oh my soul;' 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits unto me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.'

"Being with gay worldly people, I felt unable to speak of sorrow or joy in their presence, but longed to speak of the things of God to a *real* Christian, but did not know where to find one. I went often to church, and greatly wondered that no one spoke of a personal salvation, of the Spirit's teachings, of sins put away for ever, as you had explained in *The Gospel Messenger*; also that sinners were not invited to listen to the gospel sound. But the want of Christian fellowship led me often to private prayer, to talk with God, also to search the Word; and many very blessed times I had alone with God, especially before the duties of the day commenced. The early morning's communion with God, and the sacred awe that filled my soul, will ever be remembered; great peace was mine. But I still felt untaught with regard

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to the Word. I wanted so much to see you, or write to you, but did not know to what people you belonged, and Edinburgh was too far off to see you face to face ; but I was confidently assured that your God was my God.

“ However, strange to relate, the early part of this last summer (1890) a large gathering of God’s people took place at ———, two miles from my native place, and a lady spoke to me about my soul. I told that lady that I had found Christ to the joy of my heart, but that I could find no one to understand me. She kindly sent me some books to compare with Scripture, which proved helpful. And what more can I tell you, save that I was received into fellowship on the Lord’s Day morning of August 17th of the present year, having been led by God’s grace to see my place clearly with those gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“ I still hope some day to see you in the flesh. All that I have written will never convey to your mind the worth of your words to my soul, as you pointed out to poor sinners a present Saviour, yearning and waiting to save. The joy I felt at finding a people who believed in the forgiveness of sins, and the Spirit’s teachings, was unbounded ; it brought such rest and quiet to my soul.

“ The little pamphlet given me at Bath (*The Gospel Messenger*, May 1889) is still precious to me. I carried it in my pocket all last summer ; its pages are soiled and worn, but the truths are more precious to me now than at the time I first read them.

“ On the Lord’s Day morning that I was received into fellowship, the hymn was sung containing the verse—

‘ No man of greater love can boast,
Than for his friends to die,
Thou for Thine enemies wast slain,
What love with Thine can vie ? ’

My cup of happiness was full, especially as I took a retrospective glance at the time that I first beheld those words, and remembered that in those days of ‘ small things ’ I used

to repeat to myself constantly, in order to comprehend the full meaning of the words—

‘Thou for Thine enemies wast slain !
What love with Thine can vie ?’

“If the above lines, prayerfully written, will help one poor, seeking soul, or strengthen your own soul in telling of the Saviour’s love to the heavy-laden sinner, may God have all the praise.

“May God our Father ever bless and keep you. That I may be kept ‘walking worthy of the Lord’ ‘till He come,’ is the sincere prayer of

Yours in Christ,

* * *.”

This is but one of the many cases that from time to time God brings under one’s notice of how anxious yearning souls are met by the Word of His grace. Go on, therefore, dear scatterer of the Gospel seed, let nothing discourage you. Sow the seed. God will bless it.

But perhaps the reader of this is still an unsaved soul. Dear friend, the foregoing words can then have no application to you. You can sow nothing but “to the flesh,” and of that God says you will reap “corruption.” But, I would ask you, have you no desire to be the Lord’s? Let the experience of the writer of that letter be yours. Did not the beauty of the quoted verse strike you? Let me cite it again for your special benefit—

“No man of greater love can boast,
Than for his friends to die ;
Thou for Thine enemies wast slain !
What love with Thine can vie ?”

What love indeed! This is the love of Jesus—His love to you and me, poor wretched sinners of the Gentiles. Will not you believe it? I do from the bottom of my heart. “Thou for Thine enemies wast slain,” is the sweet truth of the Gospel in a single line. The Gospel is the unfolding of God’s love to man when he lived in sin and hatred, at a distance from God. That love showed itself on the cross. Jesus died—died for sinners—for His foes, His opposers, for me,—and not for thee, reader? Ah! be in earnest at last; be real, be true to your own poor immortal soul; be in time too. Don’t despise grace any longer, and risk judgment for ever. Come to Jesus now. Come just as you are. It is still blessed and true that He is yearning over you, calling you, waiting for you. With outstretched arms He still says, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Heed His word, obey His call—come to Him. One look of simple faith at Jesus, and your many sins are all forgiven, your guilty soul cleansed and justified, your conscience purged, your heart relieved, and you—yes, you—who have hitherto been the slave of sin, and the dupe of Satan, stand on new ground, viz., that of redemption, and are a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus, an heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ.

On the other hand, just go on simply as you are going, living in your sins, and the day is not far distant when you will most certainly die in them, be buried with them, rise again and stand before

God in them, be judged for them, and, as a natural consequence, find that as you never parted company with your sins in time, they and you are companions for eternity. Dear friend, the outlook of an unsaved soul is hopelessly sad. Well might Dante write over the portal of hell,—“He who enters here leaves hope outside.” Yes, the bitterest part of hell’s eternal judgment is the deep and ever deepening sense of its unalterableness. Hope has been the relieving angel of man in every sorrowful circumstance. Hope has helped the shipwrecked mariner, the struggling bankrupt, the defeated soldier, the sick-child-watching mother, the toiling gold-digger, the straining racer, the aspiring student, to hold on and go on; but the solemn fact is patent, that when the great gulf is “fixed,” hope is no more, and despair possesses the lost soul.

Only think for a moment, my friend, of what it would be to be LOST FOR EVER, and I am sure you will turn to Jesus now, and then you will be saved for ever. Is not that better? Thank God! it is. One simple look of faith at the Saviour brings immediate blessing to the soul. His work, not yours, it is that atones for sins. His love, not yours, it is that furnishes redemption. Well, then, just believe on Jesus now, as you read this little paper, and eternal life is yours. God grant you to be decided for Christ from this moment. Amen!

W. T. P. W.