

THE
GOSPEL MESSENGER:

A Monthly Magazine.

EDITED BY
W. T. P. WOLSTON.

VOL. VI.

1891.

EDINBURGH:
GOSPEL MESSENGER OFFICE, 7 BRISTOL PLACE.
LONDON:
G. MORRISH, 20 PATERNOSTER SQUARE.



INDEX.

	PAGE
A Chunk of Gold	J. R. W. 140
"A great way off, his Father saw him"	W. G. B. 150
A Motto—"Till He Come"	W. T. P. W. 84
A Soul's Awakening	A. J. P. 181
A Soul Saved and a Heart Won	W. 29
"Am I on the Right Road?"	J. R., B. 68
An Ancient Sermon	E. A. 160
An Important Word of Two Letters	E. H. C. 298
Boast not Thyself of To-morrow	A. E. B. 157
Breakfast-Time	E. H. R. 106
"But the Father said"	W. G. B. 212
Careless and Godless	J. W. H. N. 78
"Christ Jesus Came"	J. W. S. 141
"Entertainments All Day, Not a Dull Moment"	P. H. S. 132
Fragment—On Repentance	W. T. P. W. 56
From Death unto Life	T. K. 8
"He Arose and Came"	W. G. B. 124
"He Stole it away in the Meeting"	W. T. P. W. 19
How an Actress got Saved	J. W. H. N. 129
How should Man be just with God	E. H. C. 187
"I'm a Lost Man"	E. H. C. 41
"I . . . Me . . . My"	W. G. B. 82
"I Should Like to Die Clean"	L. L. 48
"In the Field"	W. G. B. 249
"It is Well with my Soul"	E. E. N. 106
"Jesus is Precious, Jesus is Precious"	M. D. 61
No Title but the Blood	E. H. C. 246
Not Religion but Christ	J. W. S. 207
"Not Yet"	J. A. D. 51
"One Thing I Know"	J. W. S. 238
Peace with God	E. E. N. 28
Peace with God	E. E. N. 112
"Prepare to Meet thy God"	E. A. 293
Profession or Possession?	E. E. N. 44
PAGES FOR THE YOUNG.	
Blessed Assurance	T. R. D. 305
"I'm Bad, but You's Good"	Y. Z. 214

	PAGE
POETRY—	
Good Tidings - - - - -	J. V. 252
Now - - - - -	W. H. S. 111
The Hearing of Faith - - - - -	A. M. 308
The Precious Blood - - - - -	J. V. 54
The True Servant - - - - -	M. S. S. 280
Religion without Christ - - - - -	G. F. E. 65
Sin - - - - -	J. W. S. 38
Sincerity - - - - -	A. J. P. 108
Small Cords - - - - -	M. M. 270
"Something Else" - - - - -	E. V. G. 1
Supremely Selfish - - - - -	A. J. P. 267
"The Bridegroom Came!" - - - - -	J. W. S. 101
The Call of the Bride—	
Part I. The Bridegroom - - - - -	W. T. P. W. 169
II. The Bride's "Jewels of Silver" - - - - -	" 197
III. The Bride's "Jewels of Gold" - - - - -	" 225
IV. The Bride's "Raiment" - - - - -	" 253
V. The Bride's Decision - - - - -	" 281
The First Train, the Best Train, and the Worst Train	J. N. 194
"The Flood Came" - - - - -	J. W. S. 57
The Gold-Digger's End! - - - - -	* * * 324
The Hypocrite's Hope - - - - -	W. T. P. W. 71
"The Kindness of God" - - - - -	W. T. P. W. 85
The Question of Questions - - - - -	J. W. S. 309
The True Object of Faith - - - - -	E. A. 23
The Two Ends - - - - -	W. T. P. W. 331
The Two Stone-Breakers - - - - -	Wm. H. 99
Three Divine Appointments - - - - -	W. T. P. W. 165
To-morrow may be too late - - - - -	E. H. C. 318
Trial and Triumph - - - - -	Extracted 153
Victory! Victory! Victory! - - - - -	E. H. C. 135
"Watchman, What of the Night?" - - - - -	A. 80
Watchman, What of the Night? - - - - -	W. T. P. W. 123
Weighed and Found Wanting - - - - -	G. F. E. 14
What think ye of Christ? - - - - -	T. R. D. 314
"When he came to himself" - - - - -	W. G. B. 46
"Whom Say ye that I am?" - - - - -	R. A. S. 442
"You may go Farther and fare Worse" - - - - -	J. N. 35
"You must not Alter the Bible" - - - - -	S. 145

THE GOSPEL MESSENGER.

"SOMETHING ELSE."



HE grey shades of an October evening were beginning to fall over the city of London. The dim daylight was gradually giving way before the still dimmer twilight, rendering more and more difficult the task of two young men, as they bent over their books at — Hospital.

"Well, I have done for to-day," exclaimed one, and suiting the action to the word, he shut up his books, and prepared to go home. "Good-night, old fellow," he continued, "I will think over what you said, though I don't care much about that line of things."

His companion did not reply. "Poor E——," he sighed to himself, "*his* line of things will soon be ended. Why will not men think of eternity? Although so shrewd and sharp as to everything this side of life's horizon, many seem stone-blind to their eternal future."

Reader, stop for a moment, and consider. You will soon be in eternity. You are rapidly passing onward. Every beat of your pulse, every throb of

your heart, every tick of your watch, tells you that you are GOING! But whither? Soon you will be GONE! But where?

Not many minutes had elapsed since the words above recorded were uttered before E—— appeared once more.

"Oh, I am glad you are still here, B——," he began, "for there is some one in the colonnade wanting to see you,—a Salvation Army girl. She will not say what her errand is, or send a message by any one else."

"Thank you, E——. I will go at once then."

As the young man spoke, he rose, put away his books, and went to see his visitor. A few moments brought him to the lodge, where she stood waiting.

"You wish to see me?" he inquired.

"Are you Mr B——?"

"Yes; but I have not the pleasure of knowing you." *

"Nor I you. But perhaps you remember this."

So saying, the young lady pulled from her pocket a little piece of paper, and put it into his hands. At once he recognised it as a prescription that he had given to a woman for her cough, some months before, and on which was his name and address.

"It is the owner of that who wants to see you," said the girl, "she is very ill, and asked me to come for you before she died. If you can come with me now, I will show you the way."

"I will do so," replied Mr B——. "Is it far from here?"

"It is near P——; we can get there in half an hour, if we take the Underground Railway."

"Let us start at once then, and on the way you can tell me more about the woman."

"It is not the woman for whom you ordered the medicine who wants to see you, but a young person, probably her daughter, who was nursing the other when you attended her. She says you gave her a little book, and spoke to her about salvation. A comrade of mine, with myself, came across her to-day, just after the doctor had been, and told her there was no hope. We stopped a little while with her, and my comrade is there now."

"Well, what did you say, or do while you were with the poor invalid?"

"Oh, we prayed with her, and sang—

'Down at the cross where my Saviour died,
and told her to trust the blood.'

"Ah! there is virtue indeed in the precious blood. It speaks of a life laid down for us, a sacrifice which opens the way for God to shower down all the wealth of His love upon undeserving sinners, and to save with a complete salvation all who trust in Jesus. Do you think the poor woman we are going to see knows the value of the precious blood?"

"Yes, I think she is all right, but she does not feel so happy as she might. She keeps saying, 'Yes, I trust the sprinkled blood, but there is something else, something else!' But we told her there is nothing else, and that she ought to feel happy,

and keep trusting in the blood. But she only replied—"I *can't* feel happy, and there *is* something else.' And then she asked me to come for you, and said you would tell her."

By this time the two had nearly reached their destination. A few steps farther took them into a little back slum, within a few minutes' walk of one of the most fashionable parts of London.

Words would fail to describe the state of that slum. Making the most of the little light that remained, our two friends pursued their way, now passing between groups of half-naked children, playing upon heaps of refuse; now pushing through a crowd collected to witness a drunken brawl. At length they came to the house they were seeking. It was one of the most miserable kind. Filled with the odour of gin and tobacco; cobwebs everywhere abundant; the floors and stairs broken and filthy—the sight was enough to sicken the least sensitive. Fortunately, however, neither of the two visitors was unfamiliar with such places, and without much difficulty they managed to climb the dilapidated staircase, and find the dark, dingy, comfortless attic, where the object of their search lay.

It was a few seconds before their eyes got accustomed to the dismal light, but when they were able to see, a pitiful sight met their gaze. On the bed lay a young woman, whose face told the oft-repeated tale of the ravages of consumption. It was only too evident that she was dying.

"I am glad you have come," she said, in a weak voice, "I knew you would."

"I am pleased to have been able to do so," replied the visitor, "but why did you send for me?"

"Oh, sir," she answered, making a great effort to speak, "you gave me a little book last May, and told me the blood of Jesus would make me safe; but there is *something else*. What is it?"

"There is nothing else needed for salvation but resting on the work which our blessed Saviour did when He shed His precious blood. You may stake your soul on the value of that, and be eternally safe. Nothing that we could do could procure salvation for us, but even though we are such ungodly sinners, Christ died for us. He undertook to settle the question of sin, and He settled it by going to the cross for us. His settlement has completely satisfied God, and has set Him free to offer full and free pardon to all who believe. You are one of these, are you not?"

"Yes, yes," was the feeble reply, "but there is *something else*. Sir, I am dying; can you make me *sure* that I am safe?"

"No; but God can, and He has taken pains to do so. He first points us to the blood of Jesus as the ground of our *safety*, and then points us to His own infallible *Word* as the ground for our *assurance*. It is as if He said, 'See, in order that you may be *sure* that it is all right with you, I make a definite statement about all you who believe in My Son. *You are all justified from all things* (Acts

xiii. 39). This is absolutely true of every one who trusts in the finished work of My Beloved Son.' Do you see? Christ's work *for* you makes you *safe*, and God's word *about* you makes you *sure*."

"That's it! That's it!" gasped the dying woman, the tears trickling down her face. "That is what I have been trying to remember. But I see it now. Yes, sir, that is what the book you gave me says."

With these words she turned round, and pulled from under her pillow a crumpled, well-thumbed copy of the little book called "Safety, Certainty, and Enjoyment," doubled back at page 21.

"Here," said she, giving it to one of the Army girls, "take it to the window and read it. I remember it all now. 'The sprinkled blood makes us *safe*. The spoken word makes us *sure*.'"

Those were the last words that fell from her lips. Kneeling by her bedside in prayer and praise to God, the three visitors saw her head fall back, and within ten minutes of her last utterance, she was "absent from the body, present with the Lord." She had passed from the misery of the London slum into the joy of Christ's own presence.

After reverently closing her eyes, Mr B—— turned to his two companions, and said, "You see now what the 'something else' is. She was *safe*, because under shelter of the blood of Christ. But she had 'something else' to make her *sure*, and that was God's unchangeable *Word*. Yes, the *work of Christ* for our salvation, and the *Word of*

God for our assurance. Will you keep the little book, and study it well in remembrance of this solemn occasion?"

The young man then took his leave, thanking God for His grace in allowing him to witness, not only the cleansing power of the blood of Christ, but also the *assuring* power of the Word of God. Vividly came the scripture to his mind: "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).

Dear reader, one word with you in conclusion. Do you possess the absolute certainty of your soul's salvation?

Let us suppose that you are trusting to the work of Christ alone for safety. You would shrink with horror from relying upon anything else, whether good works, a moral life, or religious observances. Yet you are not *sure* that you are saved. You have not got the "something else." You do not rest upon *what God says* about all who believe in Jesus. For He says: "By him *all* that believe *are* justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39).

Resting your faith upon this, you can say, "Thank God, then *I* am justified from all things, for *I* believe in Jesus, and *God says* all who do so *are* justified."

Nothing but *God's Word* can afford a solid, stable basis for assurance. Peace founded on happy feelings will vanish when the feelings change. Assurance based upon our own assumed sanctity will

break down when we fail. But the Word of God stands firm.

Let every servant of God, then, "preach *the Word*" (2 Tim. iv. 2). Let nothing take its place. Experience, relating as a ground for assurance, is worse than worthless. It creates despair in those who have not had experiences like those described, and fosters pride in those who have. Nothing but the solid ministry of God's own Word will produce results that will *last*.

And if Satan should ever whisper in your ear, dear fellow-believer, that it is presumption to speak with *certainty* as to our salvation, just quote to him a "Thus saith the Lord," and remind him that he who *believes* God is not so presumptuous as he who *doubts* Him.*

E. V. G.

FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE.



TWELVE years have elapsed since the events of this little story, now recorded, took place. I was then stationed in the district of N——, in the heart of India, and living without the fear of God. A Christian friend, who had resided near me for about five years, had never

* In case any of my readers should wish to read the little book, "Safety, Certainty, and Enjoyment," above referred to, it may be well to mention that it can be had of the publisher, Mr A. S. Rouse, 15 and 16 Paternoster Square, London. Price 1d.

ceased to pray with me and for my conversion, and at last his prayers were answered in the following manner.

On a cool October morning, a number of the Europeans resident in the locality assembled in the cemetery, to witness the consecration, by the Bishop of C——, of an extension of it. The bishop was accompanied by Captain P——, chief magistrate of the district. After walking in procession round the boundaries of the annexed ground, a hymn and prayer concluded the ceremony.

As we dispersed, Captain P—— asked me to accompany him to a neighbouring river, and give my professional opinion as to the practicability of throwing a masonry dam across.

As we stood with a Hindu subordinate magistrate, close together, between some trees and the river, a shot was fired at him, from behind me, and the bullet passed near our heads. Captain P——, who faced the would-be assassin, instantly snatched a riding-whip from my hand, and rushed at him. As I turned, a second shot took fatal effect, and Captain P——, who had broken the whip over the man, staggered backwards, dead.

For the first time in my life, I felt conscious of the awful reality of having to meet God unprepared. I might be in eternity in a moment, and my soul lost for ever.

I bent for an instant over the prostrate body of my friend, and seeing that life was extinct, I slowly retreated towards my horse, facing the

murderer, who followed me up, pointing his revolver at me. By this time the Hindu magistrate had escaped, and I rode off rapidly to the police station for assistance.

Suffice it to say, that after a fierce struggle, in which he killed another man, this perpetrator of a double murder was captured.

It may be explained here, that the assassin was a Mahomedan fanatic, and his object was to kill, not Captain P——, but the Hindu magistrate, for dismantling a mosque, and he affirmed that he shot Captain P—— only in self-defence.

Deeply moved by these events, I went, as desired by the widow of Captain P——, to tell her how her husband met his death. She was, however, so overwhelmed with grief, that she could not see me; so the bishop, who was with her, came to me in the drawing-room, and, after narrating the facts to him as above, I requested him to pray for me. This he earnestly did, commending me to God, who had mercifully spared my life, that He would work a work of grace in my heart to His own glory.

That evening Captain P—— was interred, with impressive ceremonial, by the bishop, in the cemetery, at the consecration of which he had assisted in the morning. The criminal was tried, condemned, and eventually executed.

During this time I suffered great distress of mind, and could scarcely sleep, the thought recurring, that I, who was not ready for death, had

been mercifully spared of God, while P——, who was a Christian, had been taken instead.

I thus realised that God had, as it were, given me a new lease of life, in which to confess Christ, otherwise I had undoubtedly perished in my sins, and suffered eternal damnation.

My Christian friend, who had so long prayed for me, at this juncture sought again to lay plainly before me the way of salvation. One day, while in great distress of soul, he handed me a little magazine, *God's Glad Tidings* for September 1878. In an article entitled, "The Justice of God," it was clearly explained, that, "there is none righteous, no, not one," but that, "being justified *by faith*, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1).

I pondered these words several days, and *tried* hard to have faith, but still remained in doubt. One night having tossed about sleepless, in great trepidation, lest this call should pass and my soul be lost for ever, I came to an end of myself and all *trying*, and cast myself entirely on the mercy of God.

Instantly light flashed into my soul, and, quickened by the Holy Spirit, I knew, that having believed, I *had* faith, was therefore *justified*, and had passed from *death* unto *life*. I shall never forget the blessed peace which filled my soul, as I sprang out of bed, and knelt down, praising God, whose mercy endureth for ever.

I lay down with a calm sense of rest, never before experienced, and have ever since enjoyed

settled peace. It is now with humbled yet thankful spirit, that I acknowledge God's goodness in using my feeble testimony to the awakening and blessing of others.

Should this simple story of how the Lord brought me to Himself meet the eye of any careless, indifferent one, such as I was, I would earnestly beseech that one to decide for Christ at once, while God waits to be gracious, ere he is suddenly overtaken by eternal judgment.

God's invitation is clear and distinct, "Whosoever *will*, let him take of the water of life *freely*" (Rev. xxii. 17).

Then "how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation" (Heb. ii. 3).

There are two aspects in which this great salvation is presented to us,—viz., the constraining love of God, manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ; and what the apostle aptly terms the "terror of the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 11, 14).

The first is exemplified in that marvellously gracious utterance of the Lord Jesus:—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16).

God looked down from heaven, as we read, and saw that there was none righteous among the children of men, no, not one; in that "all had sinned and come short of the glory" of God (Rom. iii.) Was His arm therefore shortened that it could not save? No, thank God! "For when we

were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 6). And "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us."

Surely this is enough to constrain all the love of our hearts in return !

The other aspect presents forcibly the awful consequences of rejecting God's freely offered salvation, with the object of mercifully arresting and compelling attention. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God *abideth* on him" (John iii. 36)

Let no one delude himself that there is any escape. "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee *shall* bow to me" (Rom. xiv. 11). How terrible the position of those who have to confess too late that "Jesus is Lord." We are told regarding the rich man that "in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments;" and that "there is a great gulf fixed," which they that would pass cannot (Luke xvi. 23-26). Sinner! can you say "the love of Christ constraineth" me? If not, then, as in my own case, I adjure you by the fear of eternal condemnation to accept Christ now.

Christian! cease not to pray for unconverted friends, for, as I have shown, "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James v. 16).

Tract and book distributors, be encouraged, and continue to sow in faith. "Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. vi. 9).

T. K.

WEIGHED AND FOUND WANTING.

(Read Dan. v.)



HE city of Babel or Babylon, where the scene of this graphic picture is laid, was built more than two thousand years before Christ by Nimrod, the first monarch spoken of in Scripture (Gen. x. 8, 9).

It was rebuilt and remodelled by Nebuchadnezzar about 600 B.C. History records of this magnificent city, that two million builders were employed to build it, it was sixty miles in circumference, and had twenty-five gates on each side of the city, and between every two gates a tower of defence, springing up into the skies. From each gate on the one side, a street ran straight through to the corresponding gate on the other side, so that there were fifty streets fifteen miles long. Through the city ran a branch of the river Euphrates. On either end of the bridge that spanned the river, was a palace, the one one and a half miles round, and the other seven and a half miles round.

Nebuchadnezzar erected in the midst of the city a mound 400 feet high. It was built out into terraces, supported by arches, on the top of these arches was a layer of flat stones, on the top of that a layer of reeds and bitumen, on the top of ~~that~~ ~~two~~ layers of bricks closely cemented together, ~~next~~ to that a heavy sheet of lead, and on the top

of that the soil was placed. The soil was so deep that a Lebanon cedar had room to anchor its roots.

There was also in the city a temple of Belus, the god of the Babylonians, with many towers, one of which was an eighth of a mile high, where the astronomers consulted the stars. In that temple was a magnificent image, the cost of which alone would be in our money over ten million pounds.

Such was Babylon, the queen of cities, and, amid such surroundings, we can well conceive Belshazzar's banquet to have been a royal one, and worthy of such a city and such an empire.

"Belshazzar drank wine before the thousand" (v. 1). It was a great feast, with a sumptuous table, decked with choicest dainties, sparkling wine cups, brilliant goblets, and golden vessels. Youth, beauty, royalty, fashion, and music, all combined to make a fascinating scene of enjoyment for the natural heart.

Fill high the chalices, pour out the ruby wine, drink to the health of the king, drink to the glory of Babylon, was the word; and king, and lords, and wives, and concubines were all as merry as heart could wish.

But hush! what means that deadly pallor on Belshazzar's face, that look of terror in his eye? Why is he trembling like an aspen leaf, and whence that writing "upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace"? (v. 5.) Ah! Belshazzar, GOD SPEAKS TO THEE — "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin." Thy kingdom is numbered, divided, and

given to another, thyself weighed in GOD'S balances, and found WANTING.

Dear reader, this is one of God's *true* pictures, and I ask you to look at it steadily. It has been painted by a divine hand for you and for me (Rom. xv. 4; 2 Tim. iii. 16).

The scene is laid in Babylon's marble palace, but it points on to eternity. "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans *slain*" (v. 30). What a sequel to that gorgeous banquet. Swiftly the judgment came. That night his soul was required of him (Luke xii. 20); through the portals of time he passed into the ocean of eternity, and the curtain falls on Belshazzar. Centuries have rolled away; empires and thrones, kingdoms and dynasties, have risen and fallen; great kings, conquerors, and mighty men have played their part, and passed off the scene, and still "Belshazzar's feast" speaks to you and to me, dear reader. You may be young, just entering on life's course; a golden future rises up before you in which wealth, fame, honour, position have no small place. You are just being introduced into a new circle of acquaintances, new associations, and surroundings, and your heart beats high, with brilliant hopes and expectations. Your character may be beyond reproach; you may be highly esteemed by your friends for your morality, your uprightness, and your religious tendencies, but have *you* learned, dear young friend, what Belshazzar had to learn, *was too late*, that **YOU** have

been weighed in Jehovah's balances, and that YOU, too, have been found WANTING ?

But, you say, surely there is an immense difference between those barbaric times and the enlightened days we live in, and you would never draw a comparison between an idolatrous king's drunken orgies, and the refinement, the moral culture, the highly intellectual taste of the polite society of the nineteenth century. Let God's balances settle that question. See them swung across this vast universe from Adam to YOU. None are left out (read Gen. vi. 5; Zech. vii. 12; Jer. xvii. 9; Rom. iii. 10, 23). Are you willing to own that the scriptures quoted are true of YOU, as most surely they are, for God has said it, and, oh, dear unsaved one, let His unchangeable and eternal word sink deep down into your heart. If you have been led to take this true place, we can tell you of good views, glorious, blessed tidings, far surpassing all your golden dreams, compared with which your sunniest visions are but glittering fables. You thought of wealth, God offers you freely—honour (John xii. 26; 1 Sam. ii. 30); position (Rom. viii. 17; 1 Cor. iii. 21, 23; Eph. ii. 4-6); prospects (2 Cor. v. 1; Phil. iii. 20, 21; 1 Thess. iv. 15, 18; Rev. xxi. 1, 4). Think you the *present* possession and *enjoyment* of these living realities will not far more than compensate you for refusing earth's gilded dross? And, friend, remember it costs YOU nothing, but it cost the Son of God *everything* (2 Cor. viii. 9; Matt. xiii. 44, 46).

Because of *your* sins and *mine* He had to take the place of abandonment. Can you recall that *heaven-absorbing* scene, and fail to be moved to your heart's centre? (Matt. xxvii. 46; John xix.; Ps. xxii.) Where is He *now*? "Crowned with glory and honour," as the answer to Calvary's woes; enthroned in the highest heavens, as the result of His perfectly finished work. Do you know Him there? Soon the *only* worthy One shall wield the sceptre of the universe, the once despised and *still* rejected Nazarene will presently take His rightful place and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. And you will be with Him, dear young fellow-believer, you who have refused earth's glittering bubbles and chosen wisdom's unfading treasures. But you are still left for a little while in the wilderness, and He who gave up ALL for you that He might have you in glory with Himself, desires your company *along the thorny road*. Shall the force of His constraining love, so *dearly proved*, be enough to make this the highest privilege on earth to you? Others around you are weary and heavy laden, as you *were*. They need the Saviour, will you point the way to Him? Bruised and breaking hearts desire to see Jesus, will you let them know that He is seeking THEM (John i. 46, iv. 29; Matt. xi. 28; Dan. xii. 3), and that He is coming quickly? (Rev. xxii. 7, 12, 20.)

"HE STOLE IT AWAY IN THE MEETING."



HIS title, dear reader, may seem a little strange, but if what it involves has not yet taken place in your history, I trust it may now come to pass. You will be an immense gainer by losing what the speaker, whose words I quote, referred to.

There are moments in the history of certain places, as well as souls, when God comes very nigh unto them. Such was the case in the town of L—— some years ago, when a wave of Gospel blessing rolled over the inhabitants thereof. God's Spirit was working blessedly, and in some streets there was scarce a house that grace did not visit and save some therein. In some cases whole households were blessed. The Gospel meetings, held in large halls, were crowded with attentive listeners, anxious inquirers, or rejoicing believers, many of them but just converted. Truly they were blessed moments—"times of refreshing"—such as one longs and prays to see again.

Among my auditors, one Lord's Day evening, I observed a young person very deeply affected as the preaching went on. The tale of the Lord's dying love, of the value of His blood, and of the interest of God in man's salvation, completely commanded her soul; and tears flowed freely as she eagerly heard the Word. An "after-meeting"

being announced, I observed that she kept her seat, so at a fitting moment I drew near and got into conversation with her. She was still weeping profusely, but no look of anxiety was on her face. Inquiring of her why she so wept, she replied, "Oh ! I can't help it, after what I have seen to-night."

"And what have you seen to-night—yourself a lost sinner, and Jesus a living, loving Saviour?"

"Yes, that's just it. I never saw things before as I see them to-night."

"Then the Spirit of God has shown you yourself to-night as an utterly lost, ungodly sinner in God's sight?"

"Yes, I see that most clearly. I've seen that I am utterly helpless and lost," and here the tears rolled faster than ever.

"And what else have you seen?"

"I have seen that Jesus loved me, when I was a poor, wicked sinner; and that He gave Himself for me, and died for me on the cross, bearing my sins, and God's judgment of them."

"That is a blessed thing to have learnt. And now, tell me, how many of your sins did Jesus bear on the cross?"

"I believe He bore them all, every one of them," she replied.

"And how many of them did He blot out from God's sight, by His precious blood, when He so hung on the cross?"

"I believe He blotted them every one out," was her emphatic reply, "for it says, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'"

"Good. That is faith. And if He died, for them all, and blotted them all out when He shed His precious blood for you on the tree, how many do you suppose He forgives you to-night, now that you believe in Him?"

"I believe He forgives them all, every one," she replied, with a fresh flood of tears, which had, however, the manifest appearance of tears of joy, as indeed they were.

"Quite right, my dear friend," I rejoined; "you have a Divine warrant for knowing that. To a poor sinner, weeping at His feet, the blessed Saviour once said, '*Thy sins are forgiven; thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace;*' and He says the same now to you, depend upon it. Of all who trust in Him it is truly written, '*In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace*' (Eph. i. 7). And, if I understand you aright, you are now, for the first time in your life, assured that your sins are all blotted out, and forgiven through the finished work and present grace of the Saviour?"

"Yes, thank God, I am quite sure about it now," she replied, and her face, radiant with joy, bespoke the inward sense of the Lord's forgiving love.

"That is an immense mercy, and now that the Lord Jesus has so greatly blessed you, may I ask how much of your heart are you going to give to Him?"

"I couldn't give Him any," was her sincere and simple, but, nevertheless, to me astounding answer.

"Couldn't give Him any?" I replied in amaze-

mept. "What can you mean? Here you sit and tell me that, for the first time in your life, you have learnt that Jesus has borne *all* your sins on the cross, sustained *all* the judgment due to them and you, blotted them *all* out, and forgiven them *all* this night, and then you add that you 'couldn't give Him any' of that heart of yours that should be His, entirely His, henceforth."

"I have none left to give," was her quiet reply, "HE STOLE IT AWAY IN THE MEETING."

"Ah! I see what you mean now. He won your love by the revelation of His own."

"Just so; while you were speaking to-night of Him, and His love in dying for such as me, before I knew it I was drawn to Him, and my heart is His, not mine, henceforth."

Reader, has your heart yet been stolen? You are just beginning a New Year. Most likely many a kindly voice has wished you a "Happy New Year." With all my heart I wish you the same. Would you have a certain receipt for it? Taste the love of His heart,—“the love of Christ that passeth knowledge,”—and let Him, in return, simply and unreservedly, have the love of yours, and this year and every other shall be truly happy. For “blessed are all they that put their trust in him,” and each such one may add, “Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Ps. xvi. 11).

W. T. P. W.

THE TRUE OBJECT OF FAITH.



ANY souls truly awakened to a sense of their need have not peace, because, instead of looking at the true object set before them, they are looking within, trying to find something there that will give them rest. We

know it ends in the saddest disappointment. Nothing within, or that flows from self, can give peace to the guilty conscience, or rest to the weary breast.

The object for faith lies outside the range of self, and self's-doings, altogether. We are, in ourselves, hopelessly ruined. Satan seeks to hide this, and man to disbelieve it, but there stands the fact, that man, in himself, is guilty, and under God's just sentence of death and judgment, and utterly helpless to remedy that condition.

It is the object of this paper to set before the reader the one only true object for the faith of the soul.

I call the reader's attention to one short verse. It is as follows:—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on ME hath everlasting life" (John vi. 47). Now don't turn away from this verse, and say, "I am familiar with that verse, I have known it for years, and yet I have no peace."

My friend, if you have known it for years, you as yet have not believed it, or else you would talk differently.

There is one word I want to call your attention to. It is the little word, *Me*, ME, ME. Look at it, dear friend, and ask yourself who the "*me*" is of that short passage of Scripture. It is not yourself. Who is it? It is the true object for the faith of your soul, which lies outside the range of self altogether, and yet, when the soul ceases to look at self, to trust self, and looks to that object, that divine object, it gets salvation. "Look unto ME, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. xlv. 22).

Who, then, is the "*me*" of John vi. 47? In the first place, it is the eternal Son of the ever-blessed God, He who was co-existent, and co-eternal with God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God" (John i. 1, 2). Beloved reader, what an object for your faith is here! One who was with God, yea, who was God from all eternity. Can you trust Him—trust Him who was eternally Divine? How worthy is He of your trust!

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth" (John i. 14). The "*me*" then of John vi. 47 is the "Word become flesh," and dwelling here as a man below. Marvellous fact! For us blessed reality! See Him the lowly babe; mark His every footstep as the perfect man, lowly, dependent, obedient, and subject to God; the Man

of sorrows too, an outcast in the world His own hands had made, and at the same time, "God over all, blessed for evermore." He was "Immanuel," "God with us," "God manifest in flesh," "the brightness of God's glory, the express image of his person" (Heb. i. 3). He was very God and very man, the "me" of John vi. 47, the perfect glorious object for faith! Oh, my reader, how worthy of your trust is He!

But see Him in Gethsemane's garden. He bows in agonising prayer. "Father, if thou be willing remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done," breaks upon the ear. The holy Sufferer bows again, and prays more earnestly, and His sweat is, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. What cup is this He is talking to the Father about, the anticipation of which brings His soul into such unutterable anguish? The cross, with all its suffering at the hands of man and Satan, and, lastly, at the hand of a holy God, where He, in infinite love, took our sins, bore them, made them His own, confessed them, and endured the judgment and wrath of God due to us because of them,—the cross, the accursed tree, is the only answer. Look at the cross, dear reader, and you will see what the "cup" was that He was speaking to the Father about in Gethsemane.

But hark! "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," breaks upon the ear. Thank God, soon it is followed by "It is finished," after which He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.

Who is this? It is the "me" of John vi. 47—the One you are called upon to trust. Won't you trust Him? Can you say, "Thank God, He died for me—*me*, the sinner; *me*, the guilty one; *me*, the unjust one; *me*, the helpless one—He loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*? Can you look at Him by faith, and say, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all"? If you can, I know the happy result. *Salvation is yours*. If you see that your sins were transferred to Him, then there is an end of them; they are gone, and gone for ever.

But He is risen from the dead, and has gone back to glory. There now is *the enthroned One*. The man of Gethsemane, the man of Calvary, the man of the tomb, is now enthroned in glory. God put Him there, showing to the universe His acceptance of the work of the cross, and His delight in the One who, in accomplishing that work, glorified Him about sin, and laid the imperishable ground of the believer's justification.

Christ, then, is in glory, the crown of glory rests upon His brow, the glory of God shines in His face; there He is exalted as man to the highest place, the object of heaven's worship, and, thank God, the object of the poor needy sinner's faith too. From those heights of glory He is saying to-day

to every troubled soul, "Look unto *me—me*,"—the "me" of John vi. 47,—"*unto me*, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth."

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (John vi. 47).

Mark it well, beloved reader, who the "*me*" is, and then mark what the believer has. What is it that he has? "*Everlasting life.*"

In John v. 24, it adds, "*And shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life.*"

Marvellous verses these, dear reader, and we would commend them to you to ponder, and weigh well in the presence of God, remembering at the same time that, "*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away.*"

In conclusion we would ask, Is not the "*me*" of John vi. 47 enough for your heart, and the mighty work of the cross—the blood of the cross—enough to speak peace to your conscience, and the imperishable Word of God enough to fill your soul with sweetest assurance that you, if you believe on Him, are saved, and that you have eternal life?

Yes, thank God, it is enough for time, and it is enough for eternity! Believe then and be saved.

"Faith is ~~not~~ what we see or feel,
It is a simple trust
In what the God of Love ~~has~~ said
Of Jesus as the just."

PEACE WITH GOD.



A YOUNG woman was dying. A minister visited her, and after making inquiries about her health, said, "I fear there is not much hope of your recovery."

She replied, "I am told there is none, sir."

"Well, then," said he, "have you made your peace with God?"

"No, sir."

"Do you not think it is time you began to do so?"

She answered, "It was made by Jesus when He died on the cross."

Reader! have you peace with God? Peace we could not make,—our sins had separated us from a holy God; but the Lord Jesus Christ "made peace" upon the cross. He shed His precious blood, making full atonement for sin, that He might give peace to all who believe on Him.

"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1).

"Peace, what a precious sound!

Tell it the world around:

Christ hath made peace!

Our souls are brought to God

By His atoning blood,

And crowned with every good:

Christ hath made peace!"

A SOUL SAVED AND A HEART WON.



MORNING'S shooting expedition—an accident—an internal injury—and a dying bed! Words how few and easily written, and yet they describe events of eternal moment to an immortal soul!

Life was a very pleasant thing to Colonel G——, for it was made sweet to him by all that a man values here below. Rank and wealth were his, the affection of his relatives, the esteem of his friends, and the respect of his neighbours—he possessed them all to an uncommon degree. But now he is laid upon a bed of sickness, soon to become a bed of death, and sees slipping from his grasp all the earthly treasures which his heart had so valued. The prospect before him was not a pleasant one, for though a man of strict integrity, upright, honourable, and generous, he was yet a stranger to God and to His salvation, and the thought of meeting Him had no pleasure in it. We like not to hazard our welcome to the house of one who is a stranger to us.

Unwelcome, however, as the thought of death was to him, he felt that he must meet it with a soldier's courage, so he nerved himself to die.

Conscious of integrity, what had he done, forsooth! that could make him fear death?

Colonel G——'s sister was a Christian, and she

loved him with a true sister's love. How terrible if he should die without Christ! she thought, and urged by the fear of it, she besought God continually to save him in any way—to deliver him from going down to the pit—to save him in His own way—and God heard her, for He loves to hear and to answer prayer.

She often spoke to him about Christ, and of the danger of putting off the soul's salvation, but he appeared unmoved, yet she waited on, hoping, trusting, often fearing, knowing not how the answer to her prayers was to come, for the time was shortening, and yet he showed no sign of repentance or of brokenness before God.

Believing that it must be the Spirit of God only who could convince him of sin, she, one day, read to him Romans iii., and through it an arrow from God's quiver entered his conscience, and rankled and festered there.

"None righteous, no *not one*,—all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" then had not he sinned, and was not God holy, and how should he meet Him? At last the proud man was completely broken down, and from the anguished depths of his broken heart he owned himself a lost sinner before God, for God had taken him in hand, my reader, and *He* does His work thoroughly. How sweet it is to trace His ways with one upon whom He has set His blessed heart to deliver him!

A servant of God living in the town one day went to visit him, a stranger to him except by name. A long time he had cried to God for a

message and an opportunity to deliver it, and at last God opened the way. Sitting down by the sick man's bed, after a little while, he asked him gently, "Colonel, are you afraid to die?"

"Indeed, I am not."

For a moment the Lord's messenger was disappointed. Had not his Master given him a message, but had he come to deliver it to a man who did not feel his need of it?

Again he asked, "Are you afraid to meet God?"

"Ah, that is the thing! I am afraid to meet God, for I am a sinner—a great sinner. Oh, I am a great sinner, and I fear to meet Him in my sins."

Gently the answer came, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*, of whom I am the chief" (1 Tim. i. 15). The sick man closed his eyes as if pondering the words, then slowly asked, "Can you give me a token that that verse is for *me*?"

"There shall no sign be given them, but the sign of the prophet Jonas, for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. xii. 39, 40).

"There is one thing I cannot believe, and that is, that a man can know his sins pardoned if he has not got a deep sense of the presence of Christ and a full enjoyment of Him, and I have not got that."

"Ah, you are reversing God's order, looking for the feast before you have got the robe on, that fits

you to enjoy it," replied the visitor. "You must first of all believe God's message about His blessed Son and the perfection of His work on the cross, and then you will have the enjoyment."

"But can you not tell me how I may know that the work of Christ is accepted for *me*?"

"Yes, God has said (Isa. xliv. 22), 'I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.' 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins' (Isa. xliii. 25)."

Once more the listener closed his eyes, God's voice was speaking to him, and he must needs listen to it.

"You know you are a sinner?" the visitor asked.

"Yes, a great sinner."

"Do you believe the Lord Jesus bore your sins?"

"Yes."

"Where were your sins when the Lord Jesus was on the cross?"

"They were on Him, God laid them on Him."

"Where is He now?"

"At God's right hand in glory."

"And the sins, where are they, are they still upon Him?"

"Oh no! He could not be upon the throne if they were."

"Then where are they?"

Another pause! the day of life is dawning—the clouds are vanishing—at last the light has broken

in. "Oh! they are all gone," he cried, "blotted out by God! I never thought of that. Thank God! they are *all* gone. Oh, let us praise Him! help me to praise the Lord." And with glad hallelujahs they praised the God of Love.

Loud songs filled heaven's high courts that day, for had not the Father's voice been heard, "Let us . . . be merry . . . for it is meet that we should make merry and be glad;" and there was joy in the presence of the angels of God, for the heart of the Father and the heart of the Son rejoiced.

Yes, the sinner was saved, my reader, saved for ever by the Saviour-Son of God. Do you know Him? He is Jesus: the Father's only Son, His delight! Behold Him, the Lamb of God, as He sits in the midst of the throne! once the humbled man, now the exalted one—the object of heaven's worship—the theme of saints' and angels' songs. Would you know Him? Then gaze upon Him as He is, ten thousand rays of glory beaming forth from each thorn-wound on His blessed brow!

What mean those wounds, sinner? They tell of that hour when Jehovah was pleased to bruise Him for you and for me. Do they not whisper to your heart, "Trust me, sinner, for I have suffered for thee!—suffered that thou mightest eternally rejoice. Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger" ? (Lam. i. 12), and must it be all in vain for you? "Come unto me, all ye that labour

and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28), "for him that cometh unto me, I will *in nowise* cast out" (John vi. 37).

Well, you have followed my story so far, and I can almost fancy I hear you say to yourself, "How well it was that that sick man heard the gospel! now he will be resigned to die!"

Resigned to die! Ah, it is a great deal more. Come with me and listen. Some days have now elapsed, and that strong man, laid low in the glory of his strength, is dying. See, a young man stands by his bedside, watching with sad interest the changes in the dying face. Hark! they are speaking. "The last has come, Colonel, you are about to pass into eternity—to meet God."

"I know it, doctor."

"There is just one question I should like to ask you; if you were restored to perfect health, would you wish to remain here?"

"Not for worlds."

"Why?"

"Because I have a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." And he is gone! *Jesus* had won his heart from earth and its attractions. Has He now yours, my reader? Would you like Him to win it? Then remember Him as He hung upon the cross, crushed beneath the burden of our sins. Where were your sins then? "Laid upon Him," do you answer? He is in heaven now, without one sin upon Him, then ask yourself in God's presence where yours are now. W.

"YOU MAY GO FURTHER AND FARE WORSE."



WHEN in a village situate far up the Yorkshire dales, I was struck with seeing the above maxim framed in a shop window, which was evidently intended to arrest the eye of probable customers passing by. Being a little desirous of making some acquaintance with a person of such sagacity in the business affairs of this life, I looked up the shopkeeper. After commending him for his wise policy in the things of time, I ventured to ask him if he had yet considered, with equal wisdom, the infinitely more important interests of his immortal soul for eternity.

But no such sagacity was forthcoming in that direction, for he showed no small amount of indifference to the subject. Clearly our friend was leaving GOD out of his reckoning. After laying the gospel before him, as simply as I could, I had to pass on, assuring him that unless he was wise enough to receive Christ as his Saviour, in this day of God's grace and mercy, he would certainly "go further and fare worse," which, if he went far enough, would be to the eternal lake of fire.

Dear reader, if you are travelling on the same road, we wish to say, "May God arrest you!"

People are keen enough in amassing this world's goods, but when it becomes the question of eternal things there is too often no such aptitude.

Business, where there is any, must of course be attended to; but let nothing lead you to neglect your soul's all-important eternal interests. This is an age when people "mean money," and we cannot do without money, which is all right in its place; but we do most earnestly beseech you, do not be like that rich man of whom we read, "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought *within himself*, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And 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? So is he that layeth up treasure for *himself*, and is not rich toward *God*" (Luke xii. 16-21).

There was no harm in enlarging his barns if necessary, but the man was evidently only considering *himself*, and had left out *God*,—but *God* had not left him out.

Now, dear reader, you may not have a business to attend to, nor may you "mean money," as the world's phrase has it; but let us inquire, have

you yet been wise enough to lay up treasure for yourself in heaven, and to be rich toward God? If so, you have known yourself to be sinner enough to need a Saviour, and have received Him. You have trusted His precious blood, which cleanses from all sin and shelters from all judgment; and we trust your heart is being satisfied with Himself till you see His blessed face in glory. And if so, we wish you "God speed." But if still amongst the indiscreet ones (and oh, do take it in, dear soul!), you are on dangerous ground. "You are going further to fare worse," in the eternal lake of fire. Nay, may God in His rich grace grant that that place may never be your eternal destination.

Yet note, the responsibility rests with yourself, seeing that God in His love has provided all that is necessary to meet His holy claims and your sins' deep need.

And do remember, God may soon have to say to thee, "Thou fool, this night *thy* soul shall be required of *thee*!" Then what will you do? "Escape for thy life" *now*, and "don't go further to fare worse."

"This only thou canst do—
Believe in Christ and live;
Fly to the shelter of His blood,
And peace with God receive."

S I N.



HERE is but one barrier between man and God, one thing that stands in the way of the enjoyment of His presence, and that is SIN.

It is very important to know that the only thing that debars from His smile is sin.

Had He hated us ; had He closed the door against us on account of our ignorance or weakness ; had He made heaven dependent on our efforts ; had He failed to furnish means, full and ample, for our welcome,—then our prospect were dark indeed.

But, blessed be His name, there is on the side of His grace no lack nor deficiency ; nor has He made the way difficult for us. All is plain and simple. On His side there is no difficulty, and on ours only one ! Granted that one is large, larger, indeed, than we think, yet there is but one.

Now, the word "*Sin*" covers much ground, and lies at the root of our every sorrow. Sin has completely transformed man, and changed him from his "upright" original into a moral deformity. He is corrupted and ruined in every spring of life, and thought, and feeling. He is "alienated from the life of God."

What is sin ? Is it merely the violation of conscience, or the transgression of the law ? Is it only the infringement of social order or domestic tran-

quillity? Is it no more than what may affect my relations with my fellows? Nay; it is all that, but much, very much, more!

Sin makes me a law-breaker, and an enemy to public and private peace, injurious to others and fatal as to myself. But it does more; it places me in direct antagonism with God! Therein lies its chief and most bitter sting.

What is sin? *It is the movement of a heart opposed to God!* It is therefore much more than the transgression of the law—an act that is outward and ostensible—more than the commission of crime, no matter how flagrant! Its source is in the bosom; its fountain-head in the very heart of man; and its outflow and results are in his thoughts, and words, and ways. “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.*”

We little realise the nature of *sin*. We may see it around in forms hideous and revolting. We may hear it in the long weary groans of an agonised creation. We may witness it in the tears of childhood, or in the pangs of maternity; but withal we take in but feebly the far-reaching malignancy of sin. It is, therefore, no small barrier, no insignificant chasm, which may be easily removed by us. Do you think that reformation of conduct from drunkenness to sobriety, from debauchery to chastity, from dishonesty to fair-dealing, from falsehood to truth—important as they are—can remove the barrier between God and man? Never!

The lopping off the leaf does not touch the root ; and man can do no more. He may reform his ways, but how can he remove sin ; how can he relieve his heart of that which is its very nature, or creation of that which is its plague ? Impossible.

But what man cannot do God can, and, through grace, He has done ! Harken, surrender, to this ever-blessed statement,—“*The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin*” (1 John i. 7). That precious blood is the provision God has made for the complete removal of the one tremendous barrier between Himself and us — “*sin.*” “*All sin*” is cleansed by the blood of His Son, so that what the sinner never could do is effected by God for him. See the awful chasm filled up by this God-made provision !

What now stands in the way ? Clearly nothing on God’s part, and to learn this is to place the soul far on the road to peace.

“But my unbelief,” says the anxious one, or “my coldness,” or “my want of love,” or “my doubts and fears.” Well, what of all that ? Unbelief, coldness, &c. &c., are fully comprehended by that immense word *sin* ; and assuredly sin is not cleansed by your faith, or love, or aught else, but by the blood of Jesus.

Hence when you accept the value of that blood, as declared by God, you will rest upon it as your *only and perfect foundation*. It is all-availing. Now, dear reader, “behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world ;” and, as you behold Him, remember that He is God’s provision and our perfect Saviour.

J. W. S.

"I'M A LOST MAN."



DEAR Christian boy, living in the village of E——, died rejoicing in the Lord. Ere passing away he spoke freely to his father of the One he knew and loved. His words left such a deep impression on him, that he became greatly concerned about the eternal welfare of his soul.

A resident in the village, named L——, hearing of his troubled condition, called one day to see him, when he met him at the door in tears, exclaiming in great distress, "I'm a lost man; what must I do to be saved?"

Entering a room, they spent some time together, speaking on the subject of salvation. L—— read to him several verses from Isaiah liii., explaining also how Christ came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, bearing its judgment on the cross, and was now presented as a Saviour for the lost, that whosoever believeth on Him might receive the remission of sins (Acts x. 43). Concluding with prayer to God to bless His word, and having invited him to the preaching of the gospel, he left him somewhat comforted.

After this he attended several gospel meetings, when L—— had many opportunities of again pointing him to Christ and His precious blood. But the impression, though real at the time,

appeared to gradually die off, and he excused himself saying that he could not yet live the life of a Christian, that he had a wife and family to keep, and that he must go with the world and its ways in his calling, or he would soon be a sufferer in this world's goods.

L—— spoke to him faithfully of the solemnity of trifling with his soul, and with God's word and ways; reminding him of the warning, "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke xvii. 32), who looked back and was lost; and how the Scripture said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. vi. 33); and that the friends of the world were the enemies of God. But not liking this plain speaking, he soon ceased to come and hear the Word.

A few years ran by, and it seemed as though he had chosen the things of time, and was left to follow them, to reap eventually the fruit of his folly, when the Lord again spoke to him, suddenly and loudly. He lost his situation. Then two more dear children fell ill, and died very happily in the Lord, both beseeching him, like the former one, to meet them in heaven; which again wrought deeply upon his feelings.

Yet still he went on, and prosperity in this world seemed to come to him more than before. But the time came when this changed, so that he lost his all, and had the greatest difficulty in securing a livelihood for his wife and family. Yet

he continued to pursue the old path with the old companions, apparently deaf to the Lord's voice, "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not" (Job xxxiii. 14).

At last the Lord's hand was laid heavily upon him, and he was suddenly called to face death and eternity. It was then that his awful condition as a guilty and lost sinner before God came again before him. Bowed in deep self-judgment in His holy presence, he confessed his sins without reserve. Light broke in, and dispelled the darkness in his soul. Looking away from self, he saw in Jesus, the Son of God, a Saviour for the lost. He believed on Him; knew Him henceforth as the One who died for him; and rejoiced in the great salvation of God.

His illness was severe, but all was calm within. The enemy sought hard to rob him of his joy; but he was heard to say, "You cannot have me now, Satan, for I am delivered and saved; although you may harass and distress me, I have escaped out of your hands."

He seemed to dread getting well again, feeling how wrong his former life had been, and the necessity of treading a different path, and his own weakness in having to encounter the difficulties of the way. But his illness was short. A few more days, and the Lord took him out of every trial, to be with Himself for ever (Phil. i. 23).

Dear reader, how does it fare with you? May-be God has spoken once, yea twice, to you, and

you perceived it not. Take care. Death is before you. Each sinner's turn must come. You may shrink back at the thought, but you have to face it. You may stave it off in your mind to a distant future, but time runs swiftly on, and all is uncertain. It may stare you in the face when you least expect it. Are you ready to meet it? "Beware lest he take thee away with his stroke, then a great ransom cannot deliver thee" (Job xxxvi. 18). There is one way, and one way only, of deliverance, and that is, *through Christ*. Plead guilty now at the bar of God. Confess your sin before Him. May He give *you* to say, "I'm a lost man; what must I do to be saved?" The answer is simple, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," &c. (Acts xvi. 31). "To him give all the prophets witness, that, through his name, *whosoever* believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). *To-morrow may be too late.*

E. H. C.

PROFESSION OR POSSESSION?



NOW often, alas, Satan succeeds too well in rocking his dupes to sleep in the cradle of religious profession, to the lullaby of "Peace, peace, when there is no peace!"

I was much struck in passing through a Warwickshire churchyard, to read the following

epitaph on the tombstone of a young lady who had died at the early age of nineteen,—

“In the observance of her religious duties
She was regular and exact,
Without ostentation or bigotry.
In her person she was lovely,
In her manners and deportment
Modest and unassuming.

She was dutiful to her parents, affectionate to her friends,
Grateful to her benefactors,
Mild and benevolent to all whom she approached.
And as she lived beloved,
So she died lamented by all who knew her.”

Such was the inscription. I know not how she had lived ; but if without Christ, she died without Christ, and must spend eternity without Christ in that place of “outer darkness” with the lost. A person may possess all the above qualities and yet be Christless.

Reader! what are you trusting in? Your works, or Christ's work? We do not say you are irreligious or profane ; but if only a professor, you are LOST. God's Word declares “that ALL have sinned, and come short of his glory” (Rom. iii. 23). All alike need to prove the cleansing value of “the precious blood of Christ.” Have you ever owned yourself a lost sinner, and trusted the precious blood of God's dear Son?

Good works, almsgiving, deeds of benevolence, will not save you. “By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified” (Rom. iii. 20). For “without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. ix. 22).

"WHEN HE CAME TO HIMSELF."

(LUKE xv. 17.)



HIS was the real crisis in this young man's history, and it is the crisis in the history of every soul. He had reached a turning point before, when he "began to be in want;" but that in itself did not turn him to his father, his only source of real relief. It is when a soul is in want, and a man comes to himself, that he turns to God. A sense of need is not in itself sufficient. How many who feel a sense of need seek to drown it in dissipation. Or, on the other hand, to allay it by "turning over a new leaf," that is, leading a more moral life; or even quiet it with outward religious observances.

No, a man must "come to himself," that is, be brought to feel his helpless and destitute condition, and that with a sense of the goodness there is with God to meet it. "When he came to himself he said . . . I perish with hunger," and that while in his father's house there was bread enough and to spare for hired servants even.

Have you, my reader, ever been thus "in want," and "brought to thyself"? Depend upon it, the time will come when you will feel your need and come to yourself; if not in this world, in the next, in eternity, when it will be too late, if not in time.

The difference between the younger son in Luke

xv. and the rich man in Luke xvi., is that the former came to himself when mercy was to be had ; the latter, when he was beyond the reach of it, even to obtain a drop of water to cool his tongue in his torments. But he felt his need. "Have mercy on me," he cried. He had come to himself, he felt his condition to the full ; "I am tormented in this flame," he said. But it was too late. Awful, awful, solemn words, "TOO LATE." O reader, dear unsaved reader, pause ! Turn before it is too late with you for ever. Turn to Him who will have mercy, "to our God, for he will *abundantly* pardon."

See how earnest the rich man becomes. How he intercedes not only for himself, but for others (Luke xvi. 27). How he values the gospel message, its messengers, and its warnings then, for others, when he realises that it is all too late for himself, and he settles down in eternal remorse. That was the effect of "coming to himself" when too late. But repentance is the result of "coming to one's self" in time ; for we find the younger son say, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son ; make me as one of thy hired servants."

This, then, is repentance, and it is "the *goodness* of God that leadeth thee to repentance" (Rom. ii. 4). The evidence of it here was the profligate's confession, "Father, I have sinned."

"I SHOULD LIKE TO DIE CLEAN."



EARLY in this year I was called to the sick-bed of a relative, suffering from a second attack of the Russian influenza. There was much prostration, and consequently great perspiration. One day I ventured to ask the medical attendant

if the patient might not be wrapped in blankets before the fire, and the body quickly sponged. He replied, "No, I should fear a chill." Then to assure me he was not unmindful of cleanliness, he said, "I wash my hands many times during the day, indeed I was saying to a friend only a few days ago I should like to die clean."

Just then an interruption occurred, but I could not forget the doctor's words, "I should like to die clean." Yes, he would like to meet death with a clean body—that body that in the grave would so quickly become corrupt and crumble, but oh, what about his soul being clean! His soul that must live for ever! Had he ever thought, I wondered, of the necessity, the importance of the cleansing of his soul to meet that holy God of whom Scripture says, "The heavens are not clean in his sight; how much more abominable and filthy is man!" (Job xv. 15, 16.) "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one. Man dieth and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" (Job xiv. 4, 10.) The question

indeed is, "Where is he?" If unwashed in the precious blood of Christ, he is awaiting the doom of the lost; but if thus washed, he "is clean every whit" on the Lord's own testimony (John xiii. 10).

I knew the doctor to be an excellent man morally, and seeking to do good from a moral standpoint—and truly this has its estimate, and value for earth, but morality in all its varied bearings has nothing to say to the soul's deep need of reconciliation to God. All the moral stepping-stones used as a means of approach to God will one day be proved of the same material as the house built without a foundation in Luke vi. 49. The Spirit of God also has written for our obedience, "Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar." The altar typifies Christ. Man has nothing to bring to God, but his sins. "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf" (Isa. lxiv. 6).

One day I found the opportunity of speaking to the doctor alone—his remark continued to press upon my spirit, "I should like to die clean." In the course of our conversation about the patient, I asked, "Doctor, are you a Christian?" "I hope I am," he said; then he added, "I wish and try to be one." Ah! well I knew he would have no doubt about it, and there would be no wishing or trying, if he were really converted to God. For God has said, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly (not good people), his faith is counted for righteousness,"

and "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." The doctor had not tasted this blessedness for himself, so I spoke to him of the work of Christ, and gave him the well-known, and much-owned little book, "Safety, Certainty, and Enjoyment," which he promised to read.

"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). We get a beautiful illustration of this in 1 Cor. vi. 9, 12. The two first verses contain a list of evildoers of almost every kind—then follow the samples of grace, "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Beloved reader, do you know what it is to be washed, sanctified, and justified? Can you say, "Unto him that loves us, and has 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" (Rev. i. 5, 6)? Time is fleeting, Christ is coming quickly, death is here, still the invitation goes out, "Whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." Oh, dear soul, be in earnest, to-morrow may be too late. Come to Christ now—He has said, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

L. L.

"NOT YET."



EXT week I am going to N—— races, and I intend having a jolly time,"—and the speaker, a tall fine-looking young man, rubbed his hands with evident satisfaction at the prospect before him, as he addressed himself to a young friend of his, who was a Christian, and who had often spoken to his Christless friend about his soul.

"Are you?" answered his friend, "but, T——, next week might find you in eternity, and if you do not trust my *Saviour* you——"

"That's enough," T—— interrupted; "that nonsense again! Look here, J——, I am young and strong, and I mean to enjoy life! Ha! ha! me turn a Christian! *Not yet*, at any rate. Oh no; I intend driving to N—— races next week, where I mean to enjoy myself! It's *pleasure*, not *preaching*, I want," and with a sarcastic laugh he hurried away.

Oh, dear unsaved reader, do not turn a deaf ear to the loving entreaties of the *sinner's Friend* (like poor T——), but "come now," for "behold, *now* is the accepted time; *behold*, *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2). As you read this paper, do not you hear that loving voice once more whispering into your heart,

"Come unto Me, come unto Me ;
Oh ! shall He call in vain ?"

Oh, I entreat you not to be like poor T——, whose answer was *Not yet* ; or like Felix, who said (see Acts xxiv. 25), "When I have a *convenient season* I will call for thee." *Come now !*

"Just as thou art, without one trace
Of love or joy or inward grace,
Or meekness for the heavenly place ;
Oh, needy sinner, come."

Dear reader, *remember* "He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Prov. xxix. 1). Oh, put off no longer ; there is tremendous danger in delay. Trust *Jesus now*. "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).

A little more than a week after poor T—— expressed himself in such a reckless manner, he had passed into eternity, I fear, unsaved.

He caught cold, which in a very short time developed alarming symptoms, through neglect, and all the hope the doctor gave, when called in, to his poor godless mother was, "Well, he has a good constitution, and he may pull through."

Surrounded by relatives and friends who were strangers to *grace and to God*, there was no one to speak a word to dying T—— about his soul. He gradually grew worse, and, on the night

previous to the great race day on which he was going to enjoy himself so much, as his mother stood by his death-bed along with some relatives, T—— turned his eyes, now almost glazed in death, and, with such an anxious look, said, "Mother, I'm dying." His mother, almost broken-hearted, tried to soothe him, but without avail; and with the lines of anguish deepening on his brow, he cried in pitiful tones, "I'm dying! oh mother, mother, pray for me!" And with these words on his lips T—— passed into eternity.

Whoever you may be who read the story of poor T——, remember God's time to save you is *now*. Oh, dear friend, is the *precious* Saviour not worthy of the confidence of your heart. I am sure He is. You have nothing to do; all is done. Only "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). May you by the grace of God say—

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

If you cannot say that, I pray you earnestly not to forget that

"To-night that gate may close, and seal thy doom;
Then the last, low, long cry, 'No room, no room!'
No room, no room!
Oh, woeful cry, 'No room!'"

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.



H, the "precious blood" of Jesus
 Is everything to me,
 It tells me of salvation,
 Of pardon, full and free.
 I know that I'm forgiven
 All through that precious blood ;
 I'm on my way to heaven,
And I have peace with God.

Peace for the guilty conscience,
 Peace for the heart opprest ;
 The precious blood of Jesus
 Alone can give me rest.
 Where art thou, careless sinner ?
 Oh, let me counsel thee,
 The storm of wrath is coming,
To Jesus quickly flee !

Oh may the Holy Spirit
 Thy lost condition show ;
 There is one place of shelter
 Amid earth's sin and woe,
 One only place of safety
 From th' o'erwhelming flood,
 One spot where God can meet thee,—
'Tis underneath the blood !

Great is the power of Satan
 And numberless his wiles ;

But I am trusting Jesus,
My Saviour on me smiles.
“Dear soul, I paid thy ransom,
I paid it on the tree,
My arms of love are round thee,
Dear child, ‘abide in Me.’”

And I am saved for ever !
“For ever,” saith the Lord ;
“My sheep shall never perish,”
Oh blessed, blessed word !
Lord Jesus, Thou hast bought me,
Redeemed me for Thine own,
My heart is Thine, dear Saviour,
Oh, keep me, Thine alone !

And as I journey onward
To that bright home above,
Though many be my trials,
I’ll rest upon *Thy love*.
My never-changing Saviour
Thou “faithful” art and “true,”
Help me to tell the “story,”
So “old,” yet ever new !

The “precious blood” that “cleanseth”
Still all my theme shall be,
Until that wondrous moment,
When Thy dear face I see !
That face once marr’d and bruised,—
That brow, once crown’d with thorn,
Now radiant in glory,
Which “many crowns” adorn.

Then shall I fall before Thee
In adoration deep,
And praise Thee for the mercy
That found Thy wand'ring sheep !
But Thou hast " other " lost ones,
Astray on mountains cold,
Oh teach me, gracious Shepherd,
To guide them to Thy fold.
Strong is Thy loving purpose,
" Them also I must bring,"
And they too, safely gathered,
For aye Thy praise shall sing.
When thou mak'st up Thy " jewels,"
To shine in beauty fair,
Of all our own dear lov'd ones
May none be wanting there ! J. V.

FAITH is the soul's *reception* of a divine testimony. Repentance is the *result* in the soul of the reception of that divine testimony. God said, " So shall thy seed be," and " Abraham believed God." That was faith. " Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown," cried the prophet. " So the people of Nineveh believed *God* (faith), and proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth." This was repentance for the Lord Jesus says, " They repented at the preaching of Jonas." Repentance is the afterthought which the soul has when it hears God's voice. It is self-judgment, self-loathing. It is taking God's part against myself, ever a blessed, though for the moment, a bitter process. W. T. P. W.

"THE FLOOD CAME."



LONG threatened comes at last," and so the Flood, long threatened, came too! Noah, of whose life but little is recorded, is known to us in the double character of a preacher and shipbuilder. He combined these two qualities: he was "*a preacher of righteousness,*" and, moved with fear, he "*prepared an ark to the saving of his house.*"

The theme of his preaching was, no doubt, what was the manner of life men should live who were to be visited by such a judgment as the Flood; whilst his daily toil was the construction of the ark, after the fashion communicated to him by God, whereby he and his house should escape.

Without the latter the former would have been self-condemnatory; for what reliance could be placed on a man who told others of a coming danger against which he made no practical provision for himself! None whatever!

Such a preacher could have no real faith in that which he preached; and to charge him with hypocrisy would be fair and just.

But for a long century did this faithful servant of God proclaim the advent of judgment; and yet, for as long did his message meet with rejection and unbelief. The people of that day, engaged as they were with their eating and drinking, their

marrying and being given in marriage, lightly regarded tidings so absurd and so unwelcome.

Noah might preach as he liked, and exhibit all possible confidence in the truth he announced, by his daily labour, so that his faith and works went hand in hand; but all to no avail!

The wiseacres of that day ridiculed the Flood in prophecy; just as the wise men of this day deride it in history.

Perhaps then as now, they declared that such a weight of water would affect the gravity of the earth, and make her change her orbit—so that some collision or fearful catastrophe would inevitably occur. Such a derangement of the laws of nature could not happen without serious mischief. The idea of a Flood, Noah may have heard, was too monstrous to be accepted. How could such an event take place? Where could sufficient water be found? and many other kindred questions may have been propounded to him by the scientists of the day.

Be that as it may, the preaching and building continued as years passed on.

The world took its way; Noah, "*warned of God of things not seen as yet,*" steadily pursued the path of faith.

God's warning outweighed man's mockery; and, if God had told Noah that the Flood should come, he could close his ears to the infidel contradictions of science.

There may be, and there are, such things as *the*

laws of nature, but there is also—and let the men of the nineteenth century believe it—there is THE LIVING GOD!

God, who created, is always above creation!

And so "*the Flood came!*" Yes, it came, but not unpredicted; it came, but not unforecasted by long years of faithful testimony to the ear and to the eye of man. Noah's voice was heard, and Noah's ark was seen—the double activity of his patient, God-honouring faith was visible to all.

And, yet, "*they knew not until the Flood came.*"

"*They knew not!*" How so? Why their ignorance? Where lay the fault? Certainly not on the side of Noah. He did all he could to warn them. Their ignorance was the result of their own perverse unbelief; the blame rested on their own shoulders. It came and "*destroyed them all!*" None escaped but Noah and his house! That judgment made short and summary work of all their reasonings.

To assert that they did not believe that the Flood could come did not prevent it coming. It came! To argue the physical impossibility of such an event did not make it impossible! It came! God was behind the scenes.

It came and destroyed them all—their unbelief and arguments to boot.

Unbelief of coming judgment cannot destroy the judgment. God survives all human unbelief.

And so, if to-day, mockers should be heard saying, "*Where is the promise of his coming*" (as,

indeed, has been predicted of them), let them, and let all, remember that "*the day of the Lord will come!*"

The advent of that day has been announced long—longer far than the coming of the Flood—and *come it will!*

As then, so now, unbelief derides, and scepticism mocks, and the world pursues its course of eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, and building—displaying total unconcern—but "*the day of the Lord will come.*"

So says God! And so proclaims His faithful Word!

And, therefore, dear reader, as Noah provided for his future, so do you! He had to labour long years at the work of the ark. You may find shelter and security all prepared! His toil cost him much—you may find salvation free!

His place of safety was only for time—yours for eternity!

His was a perishable ark of wood—yours the Son of God, who became man, who died to accomplish redemption, who lives in glory able and willing to save, but who is *coming again in judgment.*

Redemption's work is complete, and a full and blessed salvation may be yours now—whatever you are—if only you believe in Jesus. His name is salvation. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

"JESUS IS PRECIOUS, JESUS IS PRECIOUS."



MOST people live for the present; "things seen and temporal" occupy the mind, the "unseen" and "eternal things" have but little, if any, place in their thoughts. What treasures they have are here, they have nothing beyond, and thoughts of leaving this scene and meeting God are unwelcome, and only tend to render them wretched.

Such are like J. G., the C—— butcher, who, when asked by a fellow-passenger in a railway carriage, "J., what about your sins? How are you going to meet God?" replied with great emotion, "I cannot meet God, oh! I cannot meet Him." "But, J., you *must* meet Him." Again, while his powerful frame seemed convulsed, he said, "Oh! I cannot meet Him. I cannot meet God." Poor J., in this he had no choice, for within three weeks from that date he went into the presence of God (I am afraid unprepared), and *did* meet Him. Solemn thought!

What a contrast to all this was the case of Mrs B., the subject of the following narrative:—Her title to heaven was clear, her treasure was there and her heart also. She longed to be there herself to see the face of Him, "whom not having seen she loved," and though she suffered much bodily pain

from congestion of the lungs, would frequently repeat the words at the head of this paper, "Jesus is precious, Jesus is precious. I soon shall see His face and be like Him."

What think you, dear reader, was the ground of this confidence? Was it her morality, uprightness, and honesty? She had all this, and much more; but had it been the ground of her hope, it would have been a foundation of sand, and would certainly have given way. But she had rested her soul on that work which Christ accomplished on the cross, wherein He perfectly glorified God and bare our sins. The empty sepulchre is the proof to us that the work is accepted. God raised him from the dead, and faith in this gives peace with God (Rom. iv. 25, v.). This was the sure foundation on which she built her hopes for time and eternity, and thus it was she was enabled to triumph in view of her departure. She had found peace and satisfaction in Him, and with joy and singing waited the moment when she should be with Him.

She said to the doctor, a day or two before she departed, "You always told me, doctor, that I should get better, but I am going home to glory. Are you going?" "I hope to," was the reply. "It is useless *hoping* about it, doctor. You are either bound for glory or the place 'where their worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched'" (Mark ix. 44). Solemn thought! There is nothing between the brightest glory and the blackness and

darkness in the fathomless depth of the "Lake of Fire," and each individual member of Adam's fallen race is either a glory-bound saint or a hell-bound sinner. Reader, which are you?

We do not set much value upon that which is merely visionary, and would be wary of what may appear imaginative; yet we do think that some get glimpses into the unseen ere they enter.

One evening she said, "I have had such a nice time with Him this afternoon. I saw His hands and feet as if they had been nailed to the tree, and oh! the crowns, the beautiful crowns upon His head." Then she would have us sing that little hymn commencing—

"We know there's a bright and a glorious home,
Away in the heavens high,
Where all the redeemed shall with Jesus dwell,
But will you be there, and I?"

The last words she uttered here were, "Give me away, let me go. I long to see His face and to be with Him." Thus she departed, and was "absent from the body, present with the Lord."

She had been "given away" before by her beloved father (who is also with the Lord) to form a relationship which, while happy in itself, was only for *time*. Now she calls upon the one to whom she was thus given to "give her away" to the One with whom, on the ground of His death and resurrection, she had a new and eternal relationship. Precious portion! blessed prospect! Well might she say, "Let me go."


And now, dear reader, how do matters stand with you? If suddenly called into the presence of God, would your portion be that of Mrs B., or the butcher? Perhaps you say, like one of old, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his" (Num. xxiii. 10), but like that same one you may not care to live the life of the righteous, for we read of his end shortly after this in company with the enemies of God (Num. xxxi. 8), and you may wish to have your fling at pleasure here, and then go to heaven when you die, because you don't want to go to hell. But you must be converted to enter heaven. The story of the cross may be no new story to you, but beware, I entreat you, lest you carry the precious truths of the gospel with you into the lake of fire, where they would certainly augment your pain for ever. Let me entreat you, as one who loves you. Take sides with God against yourself, and decide for Christ now. The work is finished, and God is satisfied, and so may you be. This dear woman could say, "Jesus is precious. I am going home to glory." She had rested her soul upon that which another did for her, and she was saved and satisfied, and you will be if you accept Christ as your substitute. He has fully met the claims of God's throne, and glorified Him about the question of sin, and as the poet says—

"Payment my God will not twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine."

Your title to come is that you are a sinner. "This man receiveth sinners" (Luke xvi. 1). You need Him, for you are lost. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." The time He bids you come is *now*. Believe on him, and you are saved (Acts xvi. 31). Neglect it, and how shall you escape? (Heb. ii. 3.) M. D.



RELIGION WITHOUT CHRIST.

ONLY wait a bit," said an intelligent young Scotchman to a fellow-workman in London, who had just confessed Christ, in reply to some remark of his companion, "wait till you hear what some of our learned scholars say about these things; you'll not be long here till you learn that those old wives' tales are out of date, and far behind the age. I know all about it, you know. When I first came here, fresh from Montrose, I had a lot of it in my head. I was brought up as 'strict as a Covenanter'; as for 'religion,' I had it pushed down my throat ever since I can remember. What with psalm-singing, kirk-attending, long prayers, and Sabbath-keeping, my young spirit was almost crushed out of me. Of all the days in the week, the Sunday was the dowdiest and most dreaded. To have the Psalms, the Proverbs, and the prophets

administered at regular intervals, like a dose of medicine, only served to embitter me against the whole thing, and I firmly resolved that as soon as I was free from the 'house of bondage,' I would bid a long farewell to religion. My belief is that it's nothing but 'blind superstition.' "

As we have often heard the candid young Scotchman's sentiments expressed by others, and as the writer passed his early days in pretty much the same atmosphere as he describes, we desire to give our judgment plainly as to it.

Sombre faces and sombre services characterised the Lord's Day. We almost dreaded their return; but, dear reader, what was the secret of it? It was religion without Christ, nothing more than a Jewish ritual; prayers without life; Christianity misrepresented; Satan's grand counterfeit for the precious gospel of Christ. What a hypocrite I often felt as I knelt in that *Christless* circle, for I *knew* I was a sinner; and I *knew* the whole thing, as far as I was concerned, was a solemn mockery. How I longed to know for myself the rest and peace to which Jesus invites all the weary and heavy laden (Matt. xi. 28). This desire *was* answered in God's own good time, and then I learned that the gospel was not a dark, gloomy, dismal ritual, to be hung round your neck to keep you in the dark caverns of despair, but a bright, sunny, joyous reality, which streamed into your whole moral being, and thrilling your soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Ritualism and law-

keeping, forms and ceremonies, received their death-stroke at the cross. The true believer in Jesus is introduced now, not to a set of doctrines or creeds, or ordinances, but to a living *person* at the right hand of God.

Reader, do you know this blessed risen Saviour? I don't say, Have you had a religious training, or bent your knee at the family altar? for you may have had one and done the other, and at this moment be under the just judgment of a Holy God. But do you know the *Man* who trod the winepress of the wrath of a sin-hating God? He stood ALONE in the darkness of Calvary, and drained the cup of judgment to its bitter dregs, and that fierce storm He voluntarily went into that you, poor sinner, might never feel its withering blast.

Children of religious, but unconverted parents, will you throw away the casket where the most priceless jewels are stored because *they* have failed to unlock its treasures to your gaze? Will you turn your back on the Scriptures of truth which bring you life, light, and salvation, and which unfold the heart of God towards you, because *they* have never tasted its living streams? Happy indeed that family circle, where Christ is known and appreciated! Nothing more lovely on earth surely than a home-gathering around the Word of life, whether for prayer or edification, praise or worship. But God *will* have reality, *He* is not mocked. Soon our little sand-glass will have run out, and we shall pass off the

Dear reader, can you look up and say, "Yonder is my home"? if not, He still invites you. Keep Him outside no longer. "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). He will not only come into *your* circumstances to share your joys and sorrows, but He will make you *His* guest to share *His* joys, to participate in all the delights of the Father's house, and the Father's bosom, and all this to be entered upon and enjoyed in an ever-increasing measure. *While yet* your pilgrim feet tread life's rough highway, delay not another moment; your weal or woe for eternity may hang upon your immediate acceptance of Christ, so freely offered to you in the gospel. Do you know your need? Do you confess your guilt? Have you learnt your helpless condition? Then heaven's royal feast is spread for YOU (Luke xiv.). "And all things are ready." Come.

G. F. E.

"AM I ON THE RIGHT ROAD?"



“**E**M I on the right road for Dundee?” I was asked by a poor haggard-looking man of middle-age, and who had apparently toiled many miles that day, as I was quietly walking along one of the public roads in Fifeshire

a few years ago, leading to the ferry of the above-mentioned town.

"Yes; you are on the right road; and you have so many miles to walk yet," I replied, pointing to a milestone just opposite. "Are you on the right road for heaven?" I then asked.

"I can't say that I am," he replied, with his eyes turned to the ground.

"Why not? The work has all been done that will fit you for heaven. 'The blood of Jesus Christ his (God's) Son cleanseth us from all sin' (1 John i. 7)."

He then told me how he had that morning left a Christian man (known to myself), who had several times spoken to him about these things. He said that he had been used to live a life of tramping from one place to another, and occasionally worked for a few days when he got work, but it was only a few days, as he felt so unsettled that he could not remain many days in one place. I felt interested in the poor man, and I was convinced that God had been working in his dark heart, and more especially when he told me that the last person who had given him a few coppers, and spoken kindly to him was the above Christian man, and after walking eighteen miles I was the next one who should have the same story to speak to him of—viz., Christ and His finished work.

I took out my Testament and pointed him to a few scriptures—notably John iii. 16, and 1 John i. 7, and then added: "It is only the blood of Jesus

that can fit you for heaven. No matter how bad a sinner you have been, the blood of Jesus will cleanse you. 'Without shedding of blood there is no remission.'"

We then parted, 1 John i. 7 being again given him as a parting word, with a simple gospel book and his ferry fare. The day will declare the fruit of this "word in season."

A word with you now, dear unsaved reader.

You, too, like this poor tramp, are travelling "the broad way." But, let me ask you, did you ever consider where it will lead you? Turn to Matt. vii. 13, and you will there read that the Lord says, "Broad is the way that leadeth"—where, reader?—"to destruction."

What an end, to your pleasure-seeking, your vanities, and follies, and sin—"destruction"! Ah! sinners laugh now, and turn up the lip, and put on a dignified air, when spoken to as to their souls' condition; but the time is fast approaching when God says, "I will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh" (Prov. i. 26). "There is a way that *seemeth* right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. xv. 25).

But, my reader, there is at this moment a Saviour who is waiting—yea, longing—with all the love of His heart, to receive you. His precious blood has been shed; and it is only on the ground of that shed blood that a sinner—religious or irreligious—will ever enter that bright and blessed scene where Christ is the centre and joy. It is "not of works,

lest we should boast." but "by his grace he hath saved us."

Yes; Christ is the door of entrance into heaven—"I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." All are alike welcome—it is "*any man*."

I would entreat you, dear reader, to come to Jesus now, for "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation;" and rest assured that, coming to Him, He "will in *nowise* cast you out" (John vi. 37).

"All things are ready," come;—
To-morrow may not be;
O sinner, come, the Saviour waits
This hour to welcome thee."

J. R., B.

THE HYPOCRITE'S HOPE.

"Can the rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow without water? Whilst it is yet in its greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb. So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish: whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web."—JOB viii. 11-14.



THESE verses, beloved reader, are solemn and searching. They show the necessity of being real, for "the hypocrite's hope shall perish." How different all is as to the path and hope of a real Christian. This is sweetly given to us in Romans y. 1, 2: "*Therefore being justified by faith, we*

(real Christians) have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ : by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

A Christian's present portion and hope are here described; he is justified, has peace with God, stands in grace, and rejoices in hope of glory. This belongs to every simple believer in the Lord Jesus.

Do you say, "Oh, that is worth having"? You never said a truer word in your life; and now I would ask you one question: Would you like to have it? "Whom do you mean?" do you ask. I mean you, dear unsaved reader. I am not speaking to those who are Christians, but to those who are not. "That is a very straight line," you say. It is, but which side of it are you? Do you say, "We are all professing Christians"? I do not care a bit what you profess; the devil does not mind a bit your being a professing Christian; nay, more, he will help you to be such. Are you a professing Christian, and nothing more? Then you are a hypocrite! Are you a professor of Christ, and not a possessor of Christ? Then I want to show you your hope. "What hope?" you say. The hypocrite's hope.

We have seen in Rom. v. 2 the Christian's hope, viz., "the glory of God," and he rejoices in that hope. We see the hope of the man who is not a Christian in the verses at the head of this paper. It is a false hope. Before the sharp sickle of death

comes, and you are carried from time into eternity, see to it, my reader, that your hope is not this. Is it mere profession without reality? There is no root then; nothing to sustain the profession; you are like the rush, or the flag without water—wither away you must.

Mark the 13th verse: "So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish." "*So*;" mark that word. "Ah," I hear some one say, "I am not a hypocrite." What are you then? A Christian? "No, I have not cared anything about these things." Totally careless are you? Well, you shall perish in just the same way. "*SO* are the paths of *ALL that forget God.*" This sweeps the scene entirely; there is not one left; not one. If you are not in full association of life with Christ Jesus, you, too, shall perish; "All that forget God;" *i.e.*, every simple, careless, unconverted man or woman.

Do you say, "Oh! but I am not this careless person?" What are you then? "I make a profession of Christianity; in my earliest days my mother instructed me, and as I grew older I became a teacher in the Sunday-school, and member of a church, and now that I am advanced in years I have a good hope." What is your hope? Are you converted yet? Have you received Christ? Has your heart tasted the sweetness of knowing His love? Has your soul been washed through the cleansing power of His blood? If you have not been savingly brought to God, the Word of God

classes you on the same ground as the openly careless. If it is *profession* merely with you, and not *possession* of Christ, it is only hypocrisy; and remember, "the hypocrite's hope shall perish."

Oh, what a thing for you to wake up by-and-by in the lake of fire, and then discover that you have been all wrong! Is it not better to get a burning word of warning now, and wake up in time, while still you can turn round, while still you can get off this road, that, notwithstanding all its pretensions, leads straight down into the pit? Would to God I could tear away the garment of external form from every unsaved, unconverted soul, that all might see where they are, and whither they are going; and that nothing—no form, no external rites, no profession of Christianity—nothing but a saving knowledge of Jesus, will avail them anything. Knowing something *about* Him will not do, you must know *Him*; this only is eternal life. Is it not better to have the conscience cut to the quick *here*, and the remedy applied *now*, than to have the conscience cut to the quick in the light of eternity, and to find out then that you are, what REALLY YOU ARE NOW, an utterly lost person? What an awful thing to find this out when it is too late, when there is no remedy!

But, dear reader, I hope you have no desire to be a hypocrite, and at least from this moment, if never before, will be in real earnest about the salvation of your precious soul. Are you anxious to be saved? then hearken to the Word of God I now quote

"For when we were yet WITHOUT STRENGTH, in due time Christ died for the UNGODLY. 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 towards us, in that, while we were yet SINNERS, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 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. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement (reconciliation — margin)" (Rom. v. 6-11). God has received the atonement, we receive the reconciliation.

In this passage God shows us our natural state in four aspects: "*Without strength,*" "*ungodly,*" "*sinner,*" "*enemies.*" What a picture of each unsaved soul! Yea, shall I say, of you, reader? It was my state once, but, thank God, it is not now. Is your case too bad for God? No. He perfectly meets your need by His blessed Son. You are without strength to do good, though with plenty of strength to do evil. What then? How does God meet a sinner, "*WITHOUT STRENGTH?*" Have you learnt your own helplessness? Then listen: "*When we were yet without strength, Christ died.*"

It was after four thousand years of probation, to try if man had any strength for good, then Jesus

came. The time when He came was remarkable. He appeared "*in due time*," i.e., when it had been proved that man was utterly helpless. "*In due time* Christ died for the *ungodly*." What a word! What is the ground of a sinner's salvation? "Christ died!" How can I have any hope? "Christ died!" But I am "without strength." "Christ died!" For whom? THE UNGODLY! Look at it! Oh, look at it! Drink it in in all its sweetness, "Christ died for the *ungodly*." Have not you been without God all your life? "Christ died for the *ungodly*." Do you care to come in among that class now? Did He die for the godly? Where was such a man to be found? There was not one really godly, not one whose mind and ways met the mind of God; and then, because of that, Jesus came in and died for those who had not met the mind of God, viz., "the *ungodly*."

"But," you say, "how am I to be sure Jesus died for me?" Suppose your name were written there in the Word of God, would you be more comfortable, or sure that Jesus died for you? No! Because the moment you were going to take the comfort of it to yourself some one might step in and say, "There is some one else of the same name, it does not mean you, He did not die for you." But the title "*ungodly*" no devil in hell can take from you; he cannot say it is not your character; and, if it is your character, then Christ has died for you. Tell me, did you ever think of this, that *Jesus died for you*? Oh, did you ever think of it, *He died for you*?

But God commends His love in a peculiar way, the total contrast of man's. The apostle names three characters. First, "*a righteous man*," that is, a man that one can say nothing against, except that he is rather hard, one who gives every man his due and expects the same in return, who would pay to the last farthing and claim to be paid to the last farthing. Is he one who gains the affection of people? No. Does the heart go out after such an one? No. He may win respect, but will one die for him? "*Scarcely*," the apostle says.

But, secondly, give me "*a good man*," one like John Howard or George Peabody, one who will sacrifice himself or his wealth for the good of others, what men call a philanthropist; will any die for such? "*Peradventure*," he says. But, thirdly, "God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were SINNERS, Christ died for US." It comes with a sort of gushing warmth about it that goes straight to the heart. Are you *a sinner*? Christ died for you. Oh! what wondrous love!

And now there is a fourth aspect in which we appear "enemies." Are you "without strength"? Christ died for you! Are you "ungodly"? Christ died for you! Are you "a sinner" going on in all the lust of the flesh? Christ died for you! Are you an "enemy"? He laid down his life for you, that He might reconcile you to God! Oh, will you not say, "I have been an enemy, but I ground my arms from this hour, for I see that, when I did not care for Him, He cared for me; I was exposed to

the wrath of God, and His Son bare that wrath for me; Jesus has been my substitute; Jesus died for me! How deep is His love to me; I see it all. No longer can I be numbered among the ranks of His foes. His love has laid hold of me; that cross on which my Lord expired has made peace for me, that cross has delivered me, that cross wins my heart. I have discovered the deep untold love of God to me, my heart is caught, caught by the love of God." All this a simple believer in the Lord can say. How great the change when you believe? You are "*justified by his blood*," "*saved from wrath through him*," "*reconciled to God*," and can now "*joy in God!*"

What were we? "Without strength," "ungodly," "sinners," "enemies." But we have heard and believed the Glad Tidings. What are we? "Justified," "saved," "reconciled," we "joy in God," and all because "Christ died for us." These are blessed realities! How different from "the hypocrite's hope."

W. T. P. W.

CARELESS AND GODLESS.



HE had lived for himself! his whole life being spent in sin and folly. He had made money his god, and, like the rich fool in Luke xii., had no thought of eternity.

God had often spoken and as often had he turned a deaf ear to His loving voice, choos-

ing rather the gold that perisheth than the true riches which endure for eternity. He was an old man of nearly eighty when the writer visited the village in which he lived, and still seemed to have no thought of eternity. Some gospel meetings having been announced, he was earnestly invited to attend on the following day, his reply being, "I will go and see what he talks about," but ere morning dawned his soul had passed from time into eternity! Careless and godless he lived!! Careless and godless he died!! Unconverted reader, God is not mocked. You have often listened to His gracious pleadings, and to-day still finds you in your sins. Remember that though God in grace has borne long with you, yet the day is not far distant when the door of mercy will close for ever. Still God waits to bless you. His arms of love are wide open to receive the returning prodigal. Oh, then, why not come to Him now? "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).

"Canst thou reject Him, His love despise?

Pardon He offers to thee.

Canst thou reject such a glorious prize:

Wilt thou neglect it so free?"

"WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT?"

(ISAIAH xxi. 11, 12.)



ARK ! it is the mocker Ishmael,
In a mirthful tone and light,
Calling to the faithful watchman,
" Watchman, tell us of the night."
And the watchman answers ever,
Faithfully, in words of love,
" Come, return, and know, and serve
Him,
Seek the Lord who reigns above.
Oh, the day ariseth, scoffer,
Morning comes and also night ;
For the wicked all is gloomy,
For the blessed all is bright.
Yea, the morn ariseth, scoffer ;
Faintly, faintly, even now,
Can we see the coming glories,
Can we hear the trumpet blow.
'Tis for those that love Him, Dumah,
'Tis for them, and not for thee.
Scoff away, and, if thou darest,
Scoff at dark eternity !
Night is coming, too, thou mocker,
Night of misery and fears ;
Life is passing, yea, full quickly,
Numbered are thy fragile years.

Oh, be wise and hasten, hasten,
 Rise to meet the coming day,
 Now at once, oh, do not linger,
 Time shall quickly flee away."

Oh, that watchmen all were faithful,
 Oh, that every one would say
 To the dying souls around him—
 "Rise, for Christ may come *to-day*!"
 But the watchman still is speaking,
 And his message is to thee,
 "Jesus calls the lost and weary;
 Says to sinners, 'Come to me.'"
 Oh may ye who hear the message,
 Hear glad tidings told around,
 Seek the Lord, who knows and loves you,
 He who frees the captives bound!
 List, all ye who fear the future,
 Ye who dread eternity,
 Jesus speaks of love and mercy;
 Offers pardon full and free;
 If thou heedest what He speaketh,
 Thou shalt dwell with Him above;
 And be evermore surrounded
 With His glory and His love;
 If thou wilt refuse the message,
 Then, rejecter, thou shalt be
 Through the long eternal ages
 Steeped in hopeless misery.

"I . . . ME . . . MY."

(LUKE xv. 29.)



is the centre, *Me* the subject, and *My* the circle of the human heart. *Self* and its interest in a word. And nowhere does this come out more plainly than in the self-righteous. Note this elder son. How does he address himself to his father? Is

it, "Father, I have sinned"? Far otherwise—"And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends."

If in the younger son we see a divinely drawn picture of the sinner—such as "drew near unto him . . . for to hear him" (ver. 1); in the elder son we have as unmistakably the portrait of the murmuring Pharisees and scribes (ver. 2). "But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots," he murmured, "thou hast killed for him the fatted calf" (ver. 30).

There is nothing which self-righteousness resents so much as grace, for grace gives it no place. His father had never rewarded the many-year, self-imposed, and self-extolled service of this elder son with so much as a kid; and now "*as soon as this thy son*"—as if he were not his own brother—is come, who has utterly disgraced the family name,

and dissipated its resources, he would say, "thou hast killed for him the fatted calf." How galling to his self-esteem! "As soon"—without waiting to take *my merits* into consideration—"as this your son was come," you killed for him the best beast in the stall, that always reserved for an *honoured* guest. Share it with his father in such company as this "he *would* not."

No, it was not his father's company, and what gave him pleasure, that he cared for, any more than the younger son had done when he said, "Give *me* the portion of goods that falleth to *me*," and then betook himself to the far country, and to the lowest of company to be found even there. The elder son's words: "Thou never gavest me a kid that *I* might make merry *with my friends*," show it. His heart was as far away, though he was ever with his father (as to outward position), his heart was as far away from his father as was the younger son's in the far country, and much more difficult to recover. And thus it ever is with the formalist. He uses religion as a means of benefiting himself, and to enable him to go on with a heart at a distance from God, while his religion quiets his conscience.

The writer's mother once, in giving away tracts, offered one to a Catholic priest, not having noticed what he was in the passing crowd. The priest drew back, exclaiming, "I *have* a religion!" "Thank God, *I have Christ!*" was the reply. And thank God, the young priest found Him too; for, coming up to my mother some years after, he re-

minded her of the above brief conversation, and told her he had never been able to shake off the effect of her words till he had sought and found Christ too.

How great a contrast to the mere formalist is the true Christian! His language is, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet *not I*, but Christ liveth in me (Gal. ii. 20). When the soul has tasted that the Lord is gracious, it can say, "The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me," then only it can say, and that with joy, "*Not I* but *Christ*," and finds in *Him* its object; lives "by the faith of the Son of God," that is, finds its centre in Him, its subject in His love (who "loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*"), and finds its circle in His interests; responds to His call, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost."

W. G. B.

A MOTTO.—"Till He come" is the motto of a true watcher for Christ. He says to Peter, "If I will that he tarry *till I come*, what is that to thee? Follow thou me" (John xxi. 22). Again, to the rest in Thyatira, He says, "That which ye have hold fast *till I come*" (Rev. ii. 25). To all His servants He says, "Occupy *till I come*" (Luke xix. 13). The Holy Spirit may well add, "Ye do show the Lord's death *till he come*" (1 Cor. xi. 26). Thus we are taught to follow, to hold fast, to serve, and to remember Him. For how long? say you. "Till I come," He replies.

W. T. P. W.

"THE KINDNESS OF GOD."

"And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake? And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba. And, when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant is he. And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet. And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar. Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar. Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant! And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely show thee the kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually. And he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am? Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house. Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons. And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micha. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth. So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet."—2 SAM. ix.



IN this chapter we find a lovely expression that might well touch any heart,—“the kindness of God,”—the very last thing our hearts would have discovered. We might think of the wrath of God, of His sternness to execute righteous judgment, or His severity to punish sin; but “the kindness of God,” who would have thought of this? Have

you tasted it, beloved reader, or do you wonder that the Spirit of God should have used such a term, considering who are the objects of His kindness? This is how God gratifies His own heart,—viz., by bestowing His love on those who deserve none. He saves the *guilty lost* sinner.

Here we have a lovely picture of the *grace* of God, which comes out to the perishing. David is a figure of God, seated on His righteous throne, and he turns to ask, "Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God to him?" and God says, "Is there one of the lost children of Adam who has not tasted My love, is not blessed, saved, that I may lavish My love upon him?" From Saul David had received the very worst treatment. Saul hated him because he believed David to be God's man. But the day of persecution is over; Saul is dead, and David is firmly established on his throne. No bitter memories fill his heart, but, as one ready to bless, he inquires, "Is there one of the house of my bitterest foe, that I may show him the kindness of God?" Seated on His throne of righteousness, God seeks objects for *His* favour.

In Eden the enmity of man's heart first appeared. Man believed the devil's lie rather than God's word; his rebellion, then declared, ran on century after century, till on Calvary's cross man consummated his guilt by slaying the Son of God. Such is the history of man as reviewed by the Spirit of God. You may seek, my friend, to patch up your

character, but God is holy, and you must stand the test of His holiness. God's character had to be vindicated before He could righteously bless one of the fallen race of Adam. The day comes when every foe will be trodden under foot, but *now* the foes are sought that they may be blessed. But you will not allow you are a foe! Are you the friend of God? "A man that hath friends must *show* himself friendly." You say you love the Lord in your heart, secretly; but Scripture says, such an one "must *show* himself friendly." Was Mephibosheth really one of David's foes? He kept out of David's way. He had to *be sent* for, which shows the old feeling of the house of Saul lurked in his bosom. When Adam sinned, he hid himself amongst the trees of the garden. God came and called, "Adam, where art thou?" It is the same story still; man seeks to hide himself from the presence of God.

To Mephibosheth David said, "I will surely show thee kindness for *Jonathan's* sake." Jonathan here is a type of Christ; and it is the fact of Christ having died and risen that gives God a righteous platform, from which He *can* proclaim pardon to the sinner. God and sin cannot meet save for judgment. Sin could not be in His holy presence; but, beloved reader, when you die, you *must* stand in His presence, and exactly as you are. If you have lived all your days without God, you will be eternally without Him, and will see God only to hear that fearful word "DEPART," which

will righteously consign you to the lake of fire. Oh, seek now to lay hold of the true character of God! He can only bless according to His nature. The claims of His throne must be maintained. "The throne is established by righteousness" (Prov. xvi. 12), and "Righteousness is the habitation of his throne" (Psalm xcvi. 2). So it must be for Christ's sake, if you get blessing.

Christ died, "the just for the unjust," and this is why God can now come to you, a guilty sinner, and offer *you* salvation full and free. The cross of Christ has put away the great barrier that stood between God and man. Sin hindered God coming out to man, and man going in to God. That question, however, was fully gone into and settled on Calvary between God and His Son. Before He died as the victim for sin, Jesus uttered those precious words, never to be forgotten, "It is finished!" And now you, a poor vile sinner, are invited into *His* presence, who is "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." The question of sin is settled on the cross in a way that satisfies the throne of God, and meets the conscience of the sinner. *He* is satisfied. It is not enough you should be; God, the creditor, *must* be satisfied, and then you *ought to be*. He has raised Him, Jesus, from the dead, who gave Himself as the sacrifice for sin; and thus God proves every claim on His part has been fully met. Christ, *my* substitute, He who died for *my* sins, is raised, and by faith I *now* see Him seated on the very throne of God, and thus God can

righteously say, "Is there one enemy of Mine unsaved, that I may show him My kindness?" Is my reader unsaved? Then I have good news for *you*, salvation for *you*, ruined sinner though you be,—yea, because you are a ruined, good-for-nothing sinner. God grant that your eyes may be opened to behold it, and your heart to taste its joys.

Ziba (verse 2) is a useful witness, and can tell King David of such an one as he seeks, and he describes truly his condition: "Jonathan has yet a son, *lame* on his feet." "Lame!" How did he become so? This it is important for us to inquire.

From chap. iv. 4, we learn that "Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of his feet. He was five years old when the tidings [of their death] came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth." They fled because they now feared David, who they judged would surely requite Saul's guilt on his posterity. Thus man reasons toward God, and Adam, having believed the devil's lie, found he was naked, and sought to flee from God. At five years of age Mephibosheth became lame, but *you* were born so. "Lame!" What does it mean? It pictures man in his weakness. Have you not tried to mend your ways, and to please God? Made all sorts of good resolutions, and broken them as soon almost as they were made? You are lame! helpless! impotent! There is nothing in you but sin!

Romans iii. 12 gives the verdict, "There is none that *doeth* good, no, not one;" and Romans vii. 18 confirms it and gives the reason, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) *dwelleth* no good thing." If there is *no good in you*, it cannot come out of you. So you had better cease trying to extract what is not in you, and instead thereof come to Jesus simply.

But Mephibosheth was not only lame in his person, he was at a distance. "Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar." But David said, "Where is he?" Look at the grace that seeks a careless heart! All this time there was not a throb in the heart of Mephibosheth; he was utterly careless about David. How often do souls plead, "Oh, I must do something, feel something, before I *can* come to Christ?" Had Mephibosheth one desire, one feeling with regard to David? Did he do anything? *All* was on David's part. Mephibosheth was in Lo-debar, and you are in the world, away from God, a sinner, a beggar, living on the devil's charity, fain to fill your belly with husks (worldly pleasures) in the "far country," as the Lord Jesus puts it; engaged with every little bit of passing vanity the devil can cast before your eyes, as a bait to engage your mind, lest one thought of God should enter there. With some it is music, others painting, some dancing, and some science—everything or anything that will detain the heart in the "far country."

Like fugitive Cain, men seek to be happy *without God*. He built a city, and *in it* originated all that which now so engrosses man in the world. Jabal went in for COMMERCE, "and was the father of such as dwell in tents, and have cattle;" Jubal for PLEASURE, "he was the father of such as handle the harp and organ;" and Tubal-Cain for SCIENCE, or the more intelligent appliances of the mind of man, being "an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron" (Gen. iv.). This three-fold cord was made not to be quickly broken, and all to keep man in peace without God. But you say, "I have to earn my bread." So have I; but how is your heart engaged? Is it *engaged* with the things of this life, or are your affections set on things above, whilst you are careful to "provide things honest in the sight of all men"? "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord" (Rom. xii.).

Dear unsaved reader, your heart is at a distance from God, but, though your heart has not one throb for God, His yearns over you; He knows your heart and life, your proud will that would blame Him rather than humble yourself before Him; but His eye is on *you*, that He may show you His kindness. But what is the kindness of God? Let us look for a little at Titus iii. 3, and learn what it means. First, we get a picture of the condition of man without God: "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice

and envy, hateful, and hating one another." Here is the language of a heart that has humbled itself in the presence of God ; to such an one God will unfold His kindness. "*Foolish,*" who can escape this characteristic ? "*Disobedient,*" this feature first showed itself in Eden, when man would do *his* way, rather than God's. Since then disobedience has largely developed itself. We see it in the servant to his master, the child to the parent, and how constantly in the creature to God. "*Deceived,*" by whom ? The god of this world. "*Serving divers lusts and pleasures.*" "Oh, I have only enjoyed that which was suited to my station in life," you may say ; but what does God say of these things ? "*Serving divers lusts and pleasures.*" I do not deny there is pleasure in the dance, the race-course, the theatre, and the wine cup ; but sin is mingled with all : they are "the pleasures of sin." In them all the creature is following the bent of his own will—that is, sin. "*Living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.*" What grace in God to *seek* one who has been hating, not his neighbour only, but God Himself !

Such is the picture the Spirit draws of unsaved man ; but, when this was his state, "the kindness and love of God appeared," more truly the "philanthropy of God," not that which seeks to raise the masses of men, by educating and improving the old fallen nature, which, alas ! helps to blind man to the fact that his nature is a condemned thing before God, and cannot please God. "The

philanthropy of God" showed itself in another way altogether, namely, in giving Christ to die for man: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." The first thing God does is to save us, and that not by any act on our part, but by what He has done. Do not say you know "the kindness of God," if you are not saved; first He saves you, *then* you get to know your Saviour-God: "By grace we are saved . . . not of works lest any man should boast." It is: "To him that worketh not, but believeth." Believeth what? "That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4).

But to pursue our chapter. "King David sent and *fetches* Mephibosheth." He did not say, "Let him come to me," but sent and fetched him. In the same way God acts towards the sinner. His Word deals with the conscience, the soul feels as if personally addressed in the midst of the congregation. The preacher knew nothing of the workings of the heart, but God, the searcher of hearts, did, and was thus, by His Word, singling out the soul, and sending home the arrows of conviction. "David sent," and God, by His Word, speaks home to the soul, and Christ died to *bring* us to God. He took my place in the day of His death, and now He gives me His place in the glory of God. The moment the sinner believes in Jesus, Scripture says of him, "Accepted *in* the Beloved."

"When Mephibosheth was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence." Does he excuse himself? Nay. How real a thing it is when the soul is brought into the presence of God; it sees itself as God sees it: conscious of guilt, the soul is quiet. David broke the silence, and said, "Mephibosheth." He named him by his *own* name. How his heart would throb. "He knows all about me," he would say; "he has called me by my name." He did not say rebel, fugitive, though both were true; his character he does not give him, but his own name "Mephibosheth" meets his ear. And what were the first words which Saul of Tarsus heard when, blinded by the sight of the glory of God, Jesus spake to him? "Saul! Saul!" His own name! Thus God makes the sinner feel He speaks to *him*.

Mephibosheth said, "Behold thy servant!" and Saul said, "Lord, what wilt *thou* have me to do?" Their hearts were captivated by the one in whose presence they were.

"Behold thy servant!" David replies, "Fear not." Is there a trembling soul reading this paper, faint-hearted, yet believing? "Fear not," for God says, "I will surely show *thee* kindness;" not for anything in you, but for Christ's sake. "If I only had deeper feelings of love to Christ, a softer heart, then I might think He would bless me." Is this the language of your heart? No, He would not; your feelings would not help, but hinder; it is because of Christ, because of that

which He did, that God can bless you. No experience, however good, would help in your salvation ; what Christ is, and has done, is the ground of it all. "But how am I to know I am saved?" Because the Word tells you, "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life." It does not say, "*feels it hath*," but "*hath*." God says so. Not for *your worthiness*' sake, but for Christ's sake. He is worthy.

Mephibosheth utters but one word, but it is a word of tremendous self-judgment,—“What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look on such a dead dog as I am?” “A dead dog!” What so loathsome? Is there any question of worthiness here? Assuredly not! He has done with himself, and accepts thankfully undeserved favour. “Do thou likewise,” beloved reader. And David said to Ziba, “I have given to thy master’s son *all* that pertained to Saul; thou, therefore, and thy sons, shall till the land for him. And Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.” Why are we told all this? Because God delights to recount what resources He puts at the service of one whom His grace has saved: “Life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, for ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s” (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23). When you have received Christ you have *everything*.

And further, “Mephibosheth shall eat bread *always* at my table.” How? As an alien, a stranger? No, “As one of the king’s sons;” and “Thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master’s son may have

food to eat." All the rich provisions of the king's table are his now. For a little time? No! "ALWAY" (verse 10), and "as one of the king's sons," for a new relationship is formed; no longer is he a rebel, a fugitive, but a child of the king: "Know ye not that ye are all the *children* of God by faith in Christ Jesus." You are a child of God the moment you truly believe in Jesus, and there is no fear of your ever being turned out.

"So Mephibosheth *dwelt* in Jerusalem." Jerusalem is a symbol or type of the presence of God, the place of blessing. He never left it, nor can you leave the place His grace has given you,—viz., "Seated in Christ in heavenly places;" but God wants you to *enjoy* your privileges, and to know, as to the communion of your soul, the delights of His presence. "I have lost my sight of Jesus," I hear some one say. What has caused this? Your walk tells on the communion of your soul; see what has caused this; judge the sin that has made you lose the consciousness of your Father's smile. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive." He desires you should ever enjoy the riches of His grace.

You feel your weakness, and so you should. "Mephibosheth . . . was lame on both his feet," and continued so all his days. His nature was not changed; and are you discouraged, young believer, because you find in you that same bad heart, lust-ing after what you have declared yourself dead to? Your heart is bad, and ever will be; the flesh is in

you ; but the sense of this, and sorrow on account of it, is a sign of life, not of death, and Scripture prepares us for all that which so troubles you, and makes you almost doubt if you have believed to the saving of your soul. The old nature is in you, though you have believed, and have the life of God in your soul, but your privilege is to live out Christ, and *reckon* the old nature dead. Do not obey its dictates. Christ is your life, and He the only One you have to obey. Let Him guide you : "He calleth his own sheep by name, and *leadeth* them." Be careful and prayerful. Own your utter weakness. You have *in* you the Holy Ghost, and He will be power for you to live like Christ and testify for Him.

"Mephibosheth did eat *continually*." He enjoyed his privileges, and thus had power to meet responsibility when it came. In chapter ix. we see him feeding ; in chapter xvi. the kingdom of David is upset, the king has fled, and Mephibosheth is left behind in Jerusalem, and David, deceived by Ziba, repents of what he had given to Mephibosheth ; but our David will never do so, "for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Does this change Mephibosheth ? No ! In chapter xix. we find David returned ; and what had been the moral state of Mephibosheth during his absence ? He had "neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed till the day he came again in peace."

He was a true mourner, his heart abode true to

David. A lovely picture of an unworldly saint! He held *no fellowship* with those who were pleasuring in the day of the king's absence. How rebuking such a word, such faithfulness! His trust in David was unfeigned. He had been slandered. "He hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king, but my lord the king is as an angel of God; do therefore what is good in thine eyes" (chapter xix. 27). Have you been slandered? Learn from Mephibosheth, he trusted his case in the king's hands; he had learned his grace, and would trust his righteousness. David now would have divided the land between Mephibosheth and Ziba, but the former said, "Let him take *all*, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again." He cared not for the riches now that he had David. How important the principle here! Many a saint has lost his peace, by asserting his rights and contending for earthly property. May we follow the footsteps of Mephibosheth, and be true mourners in the day of our Lord's rejection, accepting no place but that which is given Him, while in spirit we are with Him where He is—for "as he is, so are we in this world."

"Oh largely give, 'tis all Thine own,
The Spirit's goodly fruit :
Praise issuing forth in life, alone
Our living Lord can suit."

THE TWO STONE-BREAKERS.



Y the side of a country road in Cornwall, near the Land's-End, I noticed one morning an aged man breaking stones. I offered him a gospel booklet. He took it, and a few words passed between us, when looking up with a beaming face he said, "I am saved, sir." "Saved, are you!" I replied; "How do you know that?"

"I *know*," said he, "that blessed Lord Jesus up in heaven as my Saviour."

"Thank God," I answered, and we shook hands as fellow-travellers on our way to the glory where our Saviour is. After a little further talk about Himself and His finished work, we parted.

A few miles farther another aged stone-breaker attracted my attention. I accosted him, giving him a book, and presently asked him, "Are you saved?"

"I could not say that, sir," was his reply, "but I hope I will be saved."

"May I ask the ground of your hope, friend?"

"I am doing the best I can, and God is very merciful," was his answer.

"He is merciful; but the road you are taking *leads to hell*," I said to him; "you cannot mix your works and God's mercy."

But alas! my reader, the poor old man seemed only the more to cling to his own wretched "text," totally ignorant of God's "text,"—not prepared to

own himself a *helpless* as well as an *ungodly* man (Rom. v. 6). You will find Christ died for those who are "*without strength*," unable to do what is *good* for God, and "*ungodly*," having already done what is *bad*.

With which of these two men, my reader, are you seen by God at this moment? To outward appearances they were just two poor aged stone-breakers, each of them "having sinned and come short of the glory of God;" but before Him, one, having accepted Christ, and knowing Him by faith, could say, "*I am saved*," "*I know*." He spoke not of his doings, his thoughts, his feelings, or the like, but of the blessed Saviour and of His work upon the cross. With the other it was, "I hope to be saved"; "I am doing," &c. The former was on his way to *glory* with Christ, and knew it; the latter on his way to *hell*, and did not know it.

Oh! beloved reader, on which road are you?

I entreat you, if hitherto you have sought to mingle what can never be mixed together, viz., God's mercy and your works, drop your own doings at once, and rest before God in what Jesus has done. Note, in Titus iii. 5, a converted man (Paul), writing to another converted man (Titus), can say, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." The works that are to follow salvation, to mark the saved man, are referred to in verse 8 of same chapter. May you from this moment be able to say, "I am saved;" I *know* that blessed Saviour."

WM. H.

"THE BRIDEGROOM CAME!"



HE parable of the ten virgins is familiar to us all, and we know who it was that condescended to style Himself as the "Bridegroom." It is the blessed Lord.

This beautiful parable presents to us the state of Christendom before and after the coming of the Lord for His people. It does not convey the thought of judgment, as connected with that coming, so much as the joy awaiting His people at that moment; and therefore He assumes the graceful title of Bridegroom.

When Christ comes as Bridegroom, the eternal joy of His people begins. But if the state of Christendom—that is, of the vast profession of the name of Christ—be contemplated, there must be a large element of what is only profession, and therefore only nominal.

Hence we find two kinds of "virgins"—the wise and the foolish. In the warning of the parable (see Matt. xxv. 1-13), the condition of the foolish is described first, as if to show us how large a place they, alas, hold in Christendom; and how easy a thing it is not only to profess Christianity, but to pass current as the genuine thing.

Their attire, their occupation, their object, are all apparently identical. A casual observer would fail to distinguish a particle of difference between these

wise and foolish professors. It would require a close and minute examination to find out that the only difference lay in the fact that the foolish "*took no oil with them!*"

That was their one deficiency—the one thing that they lacked! In every other respect they were outwardly up to the mark, yet for the absence of this one thing they were branded "*foolish!*"

Hence *the oil is of essential importance!* To lack it, is to lack everything! No amount of profession—no amount of religion, no matter how abundant, or self-denying, or conscientious, can form an equivalent to *the oil*.

Just as the blood on the lintel was an absolute necessity for the preservation of Israel from the plague, so the presence of the oil is a pre-requisite—a "*sine quâ non*"—to the Christian.

Pause, dear reader, and say—"Have you this oil?" Be certain. Be dubious of all else; be sure of this.

What is the oil? It is the Spirit of God. Have you received the Spirit? You may reply that you cannot tell. Well, have you been "born again"? for this is His work, and it is a work so real that ignorance of it is impossible.

We know when we are stricken by some felt contagion—when wounded by some accident—when oppressed by some heavy burden; and we know when the Spirit of God has convicted us of sins committed, and of sin inherent. There is no malady, nor wound, nor burden so certain, or so

intolerable as that; and it is the first work of the Spirit of God in the soul. Have you ever felt this work? This is assuredly connected with being "born again."

No doubt the Spirit does more—much more, for the soul—for, having believed the blessed gospel, we are sealed by Him for the day of redemption, and He is the earnest of the coming glory. *He is the oil!* Blessed possession! Therefore without Him,—without His work in "new-birth," and His sealing and indwelling,—without the oil, we are Christians in name only, and not such in truth.

Again, dear reader, say, "*Have you the oil?*"

The wise, observe, took oil in their vessels with their lamps. Fair garments, and a faultless profession sufficed them not. *They took oil.*

True, "they all slumbered and slept." The delay of the expected Bridegroom induced careless ways, and the long dark hours of night-time led to forgetfulness of His coming. The whole company, the entire profession, was marked by unworthy disregard of the object of their call. They had gone to meet the Bridegroom, and, because He had tarried, they had fallen asleep! Such is an historical fact!

But at midnight, sounding through the dreary darkness of that solemn hour, an awakening voice was heard, crying, "*Behold the Bridegroom!*"

Another historical fact! Oh! charming and treasured voice that has thus proclaimed the approach of the Bridegroom! How welcome to the

ready. How honoured of the Lord! "*Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps*—for, if the lamps were right, all would be right; everything turned and hinged on that! An awakening, a stir, a commotion, a glad discovery, or a rising dread, marked the moment.

Another historical fact. "*A dread.*" Yes—see, the foolish say, "*Our lamps are gone out.*" Alas! the flickering but oilless flame had speedily perished, and the charred and blackened wick refused to burn more. The dread becomes a reality. The foolish are left in midnight darkness. However, we read that "*they went to buy.*" They are in earnest now—but *too late!*

Just then "*THE BRIDEGROOM CAME!*" And His advent was the crucial and final test of the state of all. He came! and "*they that were ready went in with him to the marriage.*" "*The ready.*" Are you one of them,—forgiven, justified, a child of God, a member of Christ? "*Ready!*" Some were ready, and they knew it. And they went in with Him!

Then "*the door was shut!*" Shut against the unready! shut against the oilless virgins! shut against the nominal professors! shut against all who have no oil, and have never received the Spirit!

"*The Bridegroom came!*" Not yet an historical fact, though presented to us in that way in this word-picture of the ten virgins. But it will be a fact past and accomplished very soon,—sooner

perhaps than we think. The day and hour is wisely concealed, but the command to "*watch*" is given. "*Watch therefore.*"

"BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM!" is the cry to-day. May it sound out far and wide, so that slumberers may awake, and the unready obtain from the hand of a giving God the oil that they need.

Soon, very soon, the solemn words, "THE BRIDEGROOM CAME!" will be declared. He came, and the ready entered with Him into the eternal joys of His presence.

He came, and the door was shut,—shut for ever on many who to-day may grind at the same mill, or toil in the same field, or bend at the same throne, or worship in the same church, and hope for the same heaven. Why? *Because they lacked the oil.*

Must you come, kind and gentle reader, on that day to find, alas! a closed door—permanently and eternally closed—the iron bolt of which is formed by the withering words, "*I know you not?*" Must such a repulse be yours? Shall you not rather now, in time, get ready by coming to Him in faith who still bids you welcome,—welcome to His blood, to His heart, to the joys of His bright eternal home?

"*The flood came and destroyed them all.*" Solemn record of history. "*The Bridegroom came . . . and the door was shut,*" will shortly be placed on its page as well.

And will you be shut in or shut out?

BREAKFAST-TIME!

"MOTHER," said a factory girl, as they were eating their breakfast, "last night I was at the mission, and some one came up to me, and asked me to decide for Christ. I felt almost inclined, but did not stay *then*, for I mean to go again to-night." In another moment she fell back dead! There had been time to rest, and time to take a meal, but, like so very many now-a-days, no time for Christ.

E. H. R.

"IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL."



OME time ago a sad colliery explosion occurred in the Rhonda Valley. The physicians found plenty of work as the mutilated remains of many a poor fellow were brought to the surface. It was a sight never to be forgotten; on every

hand cries and groans were to be heard, and many a kindly hand was there to seek to relieve, if possible, the poor sufferers. How true is the Word of God, "Ye know not what shall be on the morrow." How many that day left their homes, little thinking that they would never re-enter them alive. Maybe many a Christ rejecter was there, and now their last chance is gone, their last opportunity past.

Eternity is begun—but where? If unsaved, my reader, where would you spend it, should death summon you at this moment?

One poor fellow was brought up fearfully wounded, his moments on earth were numbered, and as the cage neared the surface he was heard singing a verse of that well-known hymn—

"When peace like a river attended my way,
When sorrows, like sea-billows, roll ;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to know,
It is well, it is well with my soul."

They laid him out, but he was past all human skill—he was dying. With his dying breath he was heard giving warning to his unsaved comrades around him. Oh that men would be wise and heed the warning, but "every one turneth to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle."

With his last breath he sent the following message to his widowed mother, "It is well with my soul."

Reader! is it well with you? well, with eternity before you, and a lifetime of sins behind you? well, with the wrath of God hanging over your guilty head? and well with the judgment of God just near? Oh be wise! come now, and trust in Jesus and His precious blood, and it shall be "well with thy soul."

"What cheering words are these!
Their sweetness who can tell!
In time and to eternal days,
'Tis with believers well."

SINCERITY.



T was recently said of one who had just passed into the shadowless realm of eternal realities, — one whose great talents had been employed in a lifetime of active revolt against God and His truth,—"Well, at any rate no one can doubt his sincerity."

"Sincerity!" I thought, with some bitterness of soul,—"Sincerity! why will men not have common-sense?"

Look at that ship tossed like a toy on the raging storm. She is making for the port of refuge—running the gauntlet of the winds and waves. It is night, and black indeed is the darkness, which seems in league with the elements.

The captain, well-nigh out of his reckonings, mistakes the wrecker's false cruel light for that of the lighthouse at the pierhead of the friendly haven of security. *In all sincerity* he puts his noble vessel's prow straight for the cruel surf-swept rocks. Will his sincerity save one timber from straining and cracking, or one precious life being engulfed in the angry waves? *Never.*

Conscience is lulled into sleep behind the terms honest doubter, sincere, and the like. Oh! fellow-travellers to eternity, beware! Satan's false peace is thus produced. Jeremiah of old could exclaim, in the bitterness of his soul, "They have healed

the hurt of the daughter of my people *slightly*, saying, Peace, peace ; when there is NO peace." Ah ! there was the biting sting, — "Slightly ;" "No peace."

'Tis the *heart* that is infidel, and a perverted head readily lends its powers to discuss the case in favour of the heart, but to the eternal discomfiture of the soul. Said a phrenologist in the course of his lecture, "I cannot tell you the future of a boy with a well-developed and evenly balanced brain unless I know something of his heart." Scripture, with its incomparable analysis, says, "The *heart* is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked : who can know it ?" (Jer. xvii. 9.) Yes, it is the heart that is infidel, and the heart must be reached for your eternal blessing and mine. Saul of Tarsus, changed from the mad persecutor to the zealous apostle of the Gentiles, writes, "With the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness" (Rom. x. 10).

Sincere belief in error will not reap the advantages of truth. Satan rejoices to find such in his ranks, for nothing succeeds like sincerity.

Friend, let a stranger beg of you to carefully consider your future. Time marched along with unwearied foot yesterday what are to-day the highways of a past eternity. Soon, soon thy moments of time will have hurried thy soul into a future eternity. Then address thyself to this question of deepest import. Find out what God has said in truth about you. Tried at His bar, you are found guilty for a lifetime of sin. Condemned already,

is your present portion ; and " without shedding of blood is no remission," is the dictum of Scripture. " Faithful are the wounds of a friend," wrote Solomon of old. No false compassion, or unfaithful love, stays the hand of God in penning our true, loathsome condition in His sight, " for *all* have sinned and come short of the glory of God " (Rom. iii. 23).

But, blessed be His name, side by side with the disease is the remedy. In brilliant contrast to the dark rebellion is His love. If there is a hell, the flames of which are lit by His hand in justice, there is a heaven, whose gates are opened by that same hand, for Jesus has died. If there is the impending doom for the impenitent, there is the way of escape for the repentant. If the debt is beyond our settling, there is the free gift, without money and without price. Jesus has died ; God is satisfied, nay, glorified ; and the vilest sinner out of hell, trusting in Him, is eternally and righteously saved. For the precious blood has been spilt that God " might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus " (Rom. iii. 26).

Let not a false cry of sincerity lure you, like the treacherous will-o'-the-wisp, on to death and judgment ; but see to it, as you love your soul, that your hopes are built upon an imperishable foundation, even Christ and His finished work, according to God's revelation—His Scriptures.

NOW.



OW is salvation, God's free gift to sinners,
 Thus pleads the Spirit with a ruined
 world,
 To-day receive the Saviour crowned
 with glory,
 In patience waiting, on the Father's
 Throne.

"Not yet," the world makes answer lightly smiling,
 Not yet, there's pleasure still to find and taste;
 When found, perchance, we'll listen to Thy warning,
 Till then we pray Thee trouble not our peace.

"Late, late!" the Spirit cries, still pleading,
 The day of grace is wearing fast away,
 Late, late, yet not too late. O souls! take warning,
 The blood still speaks and wrath is still restrained.

"To-morrow" we will listen to Thy counsel,
 Will give attention to our souls' deep need.
 But as they speak, upborne on Time's spread pinions,
 They're swept into the vast Eternity.

"Too late, too late!" O awful cry, what means it?
 Whence comes the word that strikes our startled ear?
 From hell's dark mouth proceeds this tale of woe,
 Of souls beyond Christ's reach for evermore.

"Too late, too late!" again the cry is heard,
 From the White Throne this time the wail proceeds,
 A world of lost ones standing there unite
 To tell the history of their fatal error.

"*For ever lost!*" out from the lake of judgment
 The wild cry rings from tempest-driven souls;
 Then from the shore, beat by the waves eternal,
 Comes back the echo, "*Lost for evermore.*"

W. H. S.

PEACE WITH GOD.



YOUNG woman was dying. A minister visited her, and after making inquiries about her health, said, "I fear there is not much hope of your recovery."

She replied, "I am told there is none, sir."

"Well, then," said he, "have you made your peace with God?" She paused. He continued.

"Do you not think it is time you began to do so?"

"It was made by Jesus when He died on the cross," was her simple but scriptural reply.

Reader! have you peace with God? Peace we could not make,—our sins had separated us from a holy God; but the Lord Jesus Christ "made peace" upon the cross. He shed His precious blood, making full atonement for sin, that He might give peace to all who believe on Him.

"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1).

E. E. N.

WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

"The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye; return, come."—ISA. xxi. 11, 12.



WATCHMAN, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" This is the word of the scoffer, the sneer of the unbeliever, not the inquiring word of one desiring to know; and I find the counterpart of this scoffing question in the New Testament Scriptures, where Peter says, "There shall come in the last days scoffers," walking, not in the faith of Christ, not in the hope of the Gospel, not in the love of God, not in the light of eternity, not in the light of the judgment-day, but walking, like you, who know not Christ, after their own lusts, after their own wills, saying, as you say, "Where is the promise of His coming? It is all very well for you preachers to talk of the coming of Christ, to say He is soon coming. Why, Paul talked of looking for Him, and the Thessalonians were turned from idols to wait for Him, and eighteen hundred years have rolled round since then, and all things continue just as they were; and you tell us of the Lord's coming, but it is all a delusion; better spend your time on other subjects."

Stop! though you may scoff, He is coming,—“The morning cometh, and also the night.” He may be

here ere you lay down this paper. He knows Everything around only impresses more deeply than ever on my heart the solemn fact,—“The coming of the Lord draweth nigh,”—gives certainty, overwhelming certainty, to the conviction that that day is at hand. These are the last times; you are in the last days, and the very fact of your scoffing does but add to the proof, for the word of God tells us in the last days scoffers shall come. But ere He comes what has an evangelist, what has a preacher of the Gospel, to bring out now? What must he tell you but that Jesus, the Holy One and the Just, came down, took that wondrous journey from the throne of God to the cross, to make a way of escape for you from the darkness of the coming night; that He died to make a way of escape for you; that He is willing to receive you, waiting to receive you—“If ye will inquire, inquire ye; return, come.”

But should these lines meet an anxious soul, an inquiring heart, I have “glad tidings” for that anxious one, good news for that inquiring one. “What are the glad tidings? What is the good news?” you ask. Wherever I see an anxious soul, a Christ-seeking soul, I have this to tell him, that the Christ I speak of is a sinner-seeking Christ,—a Christ who seeks sinners, a Christ who saves sinners, a Christ who receives, and who pardons, and who blesses sinners. And, ah! if you are an anxious Christ-seeking soul, I tell you of this sinner-seeking Christ; and who so suited to

meet as a sinner-seeking Saviour, and a Saviour-seeking sinner? They are just the ones suited to each other. But if you are one of the class that Peter speaks of, a "scoffer," not ready to meet God, not ready to face eternity, unprepared to stand before the judgment-seat, my solemn duty, dear reader, is to warn you to beware,—to tell you solemnly, faithfully, "The morning cometh, and *also the night.*"

"Oh, but," you say, "you have often talked about the coming of the Lord before, and we see no signs of it; things go on exactly the same as ever." Mark what the watchman says. He says, for the comfort of the saved soul, "The morning comes!" Fellow-believer, there is a morning coming for you, a bright, a sunny morning,—a morning without clouds, a morning of unmingled joy and blessing, a morning when you shall rise to meet your beloved Lord in the air, when you shall gaze upon Him in all His beauty, the One whom you have never yet seen face to face. For the warning of the unsaved, the watchman adds, "and also the night."

There are three distinct classes of people nowadays. Firstly, people who know and love Christ; secondly, people who *profess* to know Christ but who do not; and thirdly, people who do not care for Christ, do not want to know Him; and it is to this last class I speak now. To YOU who do not want Christ, I say, Christ wants you! CHRIST WANTS YOU! "I never thought of that," you say.

True, for the thoughts of the unconverted are all wrong.

O dear unsaved soul, I want *you* to be converted to Him. It is your soul I am longing after. I want you to be saved *now*. I know how the word of grace meets some hearts, and the word of warning meets others, and, oh! I would tell out both to you, for there is a day coming, soon coming, when there shall be no more word of grace, no more word of warning, no more Gospel preaching for you,—an hour coming when you shall have heard or read the Gospel for the last time. And oh! tell me, if that hour came this day, where would this last Gospel word find you and leave you? I ask you, as you must give account before the judgment seat, how does your soul stand before God? Are YOU ready to meet the Lord if He comes—if He comes to-night? He may come. Will you be glad to hear His voice? The heart that knows Him says, "Ah! yes, I shall be glad to hear that voice; I know His voice. It will be no strange voice to me. Do you tell me the morning comes? Joyful, happy news! It is the moment of deep, unbounded joy, when my eye shall light for the first time on that blessed Saviour."

But, ah! if there is a morning of such unmingled joy to the Christian, what about you who know not Christ? Is there any charm for you in that morning? None whatever! There can be no charm for a worldly, Christless heart in that morning; there can be nothing but terror in that morning for

you; for that is the morning when the wicked shall be like ashes under the soles of His feet; when "The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings," and "all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble." He will arise, with healing in His wings, for those who in the long night of His absence have feared His name, have trusted Him, have fled to Him for shelter; but for you, Christless one, what has the Sun of Righteousness to do with you? Then one of His beams will blind you for ever.

The soul that knows not Christ prefers the night, loves the night: "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light." The darkness suits the sin-loving soul, the dark night of Jesus's absence is the very atmosphere that suits the pleasure-loving soul, the Christless soul. The morning is the atmosphere that suits the soul that knows Christ, that is looking for Him, and waiting for Him; and "the morning cometh," but ah! there is something more, "and *also the night.*"

He is coming, and coming quickly. He lingers, Peter tells us, because He is "long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." He is not slack concerning His promise, but He lingers, not willing that YOU should perish, but the moment is coming when He will delay no longer, when He will rise up and shut to the door, when the day of His grace will be over, the door will be shut, and, oh! what will it be to find yourself shut out then? You,

who vainly think you will be a Christian some day ; you who think you will go on with the world now, and turn to Christ some day, what will it be to you to find the door *shut* and yourself *outside* ? No more offer of mercy, no more day of grace, no more gospel preaching, no more Christ for you. Oh, the bitter, dark agony ! Oh, the terror of that day ! to find the Master of the house has risen up and shut to the door and you are *shut out*. You, who meant to go in, but who put it off ! O Christless, unsaved soul, I beseech you, in the light of that coming day of judgment, awake ! awake ! arise, be warned in time, flee this very moment to a living, loving Saviour. "Turn ye, turn ye." "*Return, Come.*" Oh ! "RETURN, COME."

O scoffing soul, are you determined to go down into that awful place, that terrible pit, the abyss of hell ? Still the door is open into the Father's house. There are none too hardened for His grace to soften, none too far off for Him to meet, none too bad for Him to justify. Turn ye, turn ye to Jesus now. Why put it off a moment more ? He is saving others, He will save you. He is saving many in these last days, and why ? Because the time is near when the doors shall be shut. The Lord is sending out warning notes of grace before that hour comes, before the day of His long-suffering comes to a close.

What is the meaning of the great tide of blessing that has rolled on since 1858 over the world ? The Lord has been working in a very special and

marked manner; everywhere He has been stirring up men's minds; the Gospel has been preached, not only by those in the pulpits, but faithful men everywhere have been going forth with the tidings of grace, and the warnings of judgment to come. Men of all ranks, men of high degree and low, have gone about proclaiming the Gospel, seeking to win souls. "What is the meaning of this great change, these vagaries?" you ask. This the night comes; the night draws near; and we see already shadows, dark shadows of the coming night, for side by side with this vast tide of blessing what has arisen? Another tide, deep and dark, is rolling its waters also over the world. Rationalism, Ritualism, and Spiritualism combined, are rampant now in a way hitherto unequalled; and all paving the way for the man of sin—Antichrist—the false Christ—soon about to appear.

From all this I am persuaded the Lord is at hand. The cry has gone forth, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh." A few years ago little was heard about the Lord's coming, it was a subject few thought of. Now it is spoken of on every hand, and the reason is, that the time is fast approaching. God's testimony of grace too is heard on all hands, and many souls have believed the glad tidings and are saved. It is this urgency of the charity of God, and the universality of its manifestation, that tell me the Lord is near.

Beloved, unsaved reader, listen to me. I know that you are *a lost soul*—a LOST SOUL, and I know

the night cometh. A night that has *no morning*, a long, long dark, endless night, into which no ray of light shall ever come. Oh ! lost, lost soul, *YOUR night has NO morning*. The night of the Christian is illumined by the love of Jesus, and is terminated by a morning that has no evening, "for there shall be *no night* there." Oh, think of that scene, that happy scene, "the city had no need of the sun, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof;" and, "there shall be NO NIGHT there." Now listen to me, "The morning cometh, but *also the night*." Oh ! what a night, Christless soul ! You pass into eternity without Jesus, and what is it ? All night ! all night ! Is there no morning ? No, none ; no morning to that fearful night ! Oh, I appeal to you, I entreat you ; for a few passing hours of pleasure here will you risk that night that has no morning ? How very long one single night of sleeplessness and pain seems here ! Possibly you may have known such a night, when you tossed restlessly on your bed. You could not sleep ; in vain you tried this side and that, and in every way sought sleep. How long the night seemed, how slowly the minutes seemed to go by ! The clock in your room strikes the half-hours, and a year seems to have gone by before the half-hour chimes ; a perfect cycle follows, and then the clock strikes the hour ; you could not have believed the night could be so long. How you watch for the first approach of morning. How gladly you welcome the first streak of light coming through a

crack in the closed shutter, the day is coming at last, there is a morning to this long night. But, oh, what will it be to be chained to your bed in hell, in impenetrable gloom, *for ever*? Is there no morning? None, none! No light coming? None!

In the terrible darkness of that awful scene, as another has vividly portrayed it, you may hear the eternal ticking of hell's clock, as its long pendulum sways from side to side, seeming to say only the terrible words, *ever—never, ever—never, EV-ER—NEV-ER, EV-ER—NEV-ER, EVER-LASTING—NEVER-ENDING, EVER-LASTING—NEVER-ENDING!*

Oh, tell me, friend, will you risk this awful eternity, this never-ending hell? Will you risk it for some bit of pleasure here, some few hours of following your own will and way? Oh, return, return, come! Oh, wandering one, return *now*, come to Jesus, *now*. THAT NIGHT has not yet come; oh, return, you shall receive a welcome to the arms of that blessed Saviour. The voice of Jesus speaks, "Will you not come to me?" Oh, return, return! There is no guilt so great that the blood of Christ cannot cleanse it, no depth of wickedness that it cannot meet,—you cannot be too bad for Christ.

Dear soul, are you arrested on the slippery road to hell? Do you say, "I have been trifling with eternity too long; I must turn, I cannot face this Christless eternity, I cannot bear the awful reality of it"? Oh, have you come to yourself, wandering one? Then I have good news for you, there is

bread enough and to spare in your Father's house. Have you said, "I will arise, I will go to God; I cannot bear to meet God in judgment, I cannot bear the thought of the night without a morning." Lose no time then; the prodigal, in Luke xv., did not say, "I will arise another time," but, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

Would you like to follow this prodigal home, and see how he is welcomed? "When he was yet a *great way off*"—that is just where an anxious soul feels itself, "a great way off." But do you think God does not see the turning in your heart, the desire to be Christ's? The father "RAN" to meet the returning prodigal. God, as it were, runs to meet the returning soul. The sinner comes slowly along, saying, "How will He meet me? What will He say? Will He have me?" The father *ran*. Are you the one returning? The father *ran*, that is how God meets you. The prodigal comes along sad and slowly; he sees one on the road; "It is my father," he says; a moment more, "He is coming to meet me;" another moment, "He runs;" a few steps farther he is on his neck, he kisses him!

The first thing the returning soul gets is a kiss, the kiss of peace. What does that kiss say? It says, God's heart remains unchanged. That kiss tells that all is forgotten, that all is forgiven. Is there a hard word? Is there a question, "Why have you been so long? Where have you spent

your time and your substance?" No! The returning soul has judged itself, it has brought the sledge-hammer of self-judgment down on itself, "*Father, I have sinned.*" And does not God like to hear that confession, those softened words? He does! And what is the answer? "Bring forth the best robe," that is Christ; bring the fatted calf, kept for some great occasion, bring it, kill it, "let us eat and be merry, for this my son was *dead* and is *alive* again; he was *lost* and is *found*. AND THEY BEGAN TO BE MERRY." This is the grace that meets the returning sinner. Oh, if you have never bowed before, will you not bow to Christ now? Shall it not be said of you, that the heart that had long fed itself with the husks the world can give, but was empty still, dissatisfied, having no rest, is filled to the brim, satisfied, at rest henceforth?

Oh, when I see Jesus in that bright morning, that coming morning, will YOU be there? In that blessed home, that scene of joy and rest, oh, tell me, will you be there, and I? I shall. I know that I shall, but will *you* be there? A little time, and the morning comes; no more sorrow then, no more pain for the heart that loves Him, but with Him, and like Him, for ever!

What a future! We did not deserve it, but He gives it! Will you take from the loving hand of Jesus that free salvation NOW? The Lord grant you may, so that, in the bright morning when He comes, you may be with Him, and with Him for ever.

“HE AROSE AND CAME.”

(LUKE XV. 20.)



WISH to call your earnest attention to the fact, that he went *as he was*. He had said, “I will arise and go to my father,” and he went. Unlike many who follow these words Sunday after Sunday, but never go—have no desire to go—have not “come to themselves”—in fact, do not feel the misery of their condition—have not even “begun to be in want,” that is, to feel the vanity, the emptiness of everything here to satisfy the craving of an immortal soul.

And not only did he arise and go, but he went *as he was*, and owned what he had done, and what he was. He had “sinned,” and was unworthy.

The fatal mistake which so many make of trying to make themselves better, more fit for God, before going, is well illustrated by the following story of the beggar and the painter:—

A celebrated painter was engaged on a great picture of “The Prodigal Son”—a picture which he intended should be a masterpiece, and establish his reputation. He had already painted in all the accessory objects. The father’s house was seen in the background, with the calf in the stall. The servants had the robe and ring and sandals in readiness, even to the father running forth with outstretched arms to embrace his long-lost son. But

the son, the central object of his picture, was lacking. A blank occupied the space where he should have stood; for the painter had never yet seen a subject sufficiently destitute and degraded to sit for a model of what he considered his prodigal should be.

One day, when walking the streets of London, his eye lighted on a broken-down, dishevelled, ragged, filthy creature. He thought he had never seen such a wretched object in his whole life before. He was filled with delight. "Here," thought he, "is the very man I want. At last I have found a model that will come up even to my idea of what the prodigal was like."

He went up to the man, and, accosting him, made him an offer of a sum of money which would be a prize to such as he, providing he would do exactly what he told him, and sit as a model for a picture he was painting. As an evidence of his good faith, he produced a sovereign, and gave it to the man, who, as may be supposed, readily consented. "But," said the painter, "mind you come to me *just as you are*; do not alter or improve your appearance in the smallest particular. I want you just as you are." Having laid these strict injunctions upon him, and appointed the time for the first sitting, he gave him his card with his name and address.

No sooner had the gentleman left him, amazed at his good fortune, and gazing at the sovereign in his hand—he had not possessed such a sum all at once

for years, if ever, and then so much more in prospect!—no sooner was he alone than he began to think what he should do. First of all, he would go and have his fill at a cook-shop. Having done this, and feeling somewhat easier and on better terms with himself, he began to consider his condition. A mirror, hanging on the wall, reflected his dirty face and unkempt hair. Why, even he was shocked at the filthiness of his appearance. "This would never do," thought he. "What, go to a gentleman's house in such a state as this!" And then his garments! He began to examine them one by one. The coat was out at the elbows, patched and torn and greased all over, and held together over his naked chest by some odd pieces of string. His trousers broken at the knees, frayed out at the bottoms, and two odd boots, through various rents in which his crippled feet protruded.

"This would never do." He must rig himself up a bit, to make himself fit for a gentleman's house. So off he went and got a piece of soap, and at the nearest pump he washed off as much of his dirt as he could. At a barber's he had his long matted hair and beard cut and made decent-looking; and with the remainder of the sovereign he procured a suit of clothes and boots at a slop-shop. When arrayed in these, and having duly admired himself, in a condition in which he had not seen himself for years, he awaited the time appointed for going to the artist's studio.

He presented himself at the address he had re-

ceived in due time, and rang the bell. A footman answered the door, and asked his business. "Please, sir, the gentleman as lives here told me to come to sit for he to paint." "You are not the man," replied the servant. "Yes, I be," responded the beggar. "No, you are not, replied the servant, "you cannot be the man. My master told me to expect a dirty beggar in rags and tatters." "I be the man," asserted the other, and produced the artist's card in proof. "But I thought it would never do to come to a gentleman's house without cleaning myself up a bit." "That is just what my master did not want you to do," answered the servant. "But I will tell him you are here, and see what he says."

When the servant announced the model's arrival to the expectant artist, he rushed out, without hearing more, to bring in the object he had so long sought, and had found at last—the model which would enable him to paint in the prodigal in his great picture. What was his dismay when his eyes fell on the made-up man before him. He had lost his ideal. "You have spoilt it all, you have spoilt it all. I told you to come *just as you were*," he exclaimed, and without waiting to hear the wretched man's explanations, he ordered his servant to thrust him out of doors.

How many make this grave mistake. They go to the pump of morality, temperance, or legality to cleanse their ways, or to the slop-shop of religious observances—religion without Christ—to fit them-

selves for God. These things only spoil them for God and for His grace. The more unworthy the objects, the more glory their salvation brings to God. The chief of sinners will be the brightest trophy of grace for eternity. Not that I would say one word against true temperance, morality, or religion in their proper place, but that is after, and not before, salvation (see Eph. ii. 8-10),—not to procure salvation, but the proofs and fruits of grace already received.

“Confession is good for the soul,” is a true saying. It is the invariable accompaniment of real repentance. It is due to God. Paul preached “repentance toward God,” as well as “faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” And it is the forerunner of forgiveness. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John i. 9). And again, “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy” (Prov. xxviii. 13).

“Once as prodigals we wandered,
In our folly, far from Thee ;
But Thy grace, o’er sin abounding,
Rescued us from misery ;
Thou the prodigal hast pardoned,—
Kissed us with a Father’s love,
Killed the fatted calf, and called us,
E’er to dwell with Thee above.”

HOW AN ACTRESS GOT SAVED.



AN actress in one of the provincial towns, whilst passing along the streets had her attention arrested by singing in a cottage. Prompted by curiosity to look in at the open door, she saw a few poor people gathered together singing—

“Depth of mercy, can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?”

The tune was sweet and simple, but she heeded it not, for the words had rivetted her attention, and she stood motionless until invited to enter. She remained during a prayer which was offered by one of the company, and which, though uncouth, was sincere. She quitted the cottage, but the words of the hymn followed her, and she resolved to procure a copy of the book containing it. The book procured, she read and re-read the hymn. Her convictions deepened; she attended the gospel-preaching, and there resolved henceforth to quit the service of the devil. For some time she excused herself from attending on the stage, but one day the manager called upon her, urging her to sustain the principal character in a new play. She had sustained it in other towns with admiration, but now refused to do so, and stated her reasons. At first the manager ridiculed her scruples; but this being unavailing, he represented the loss which her refusal would be to him, and promised if she would comply with his

request on that occasion it should be the last. At length she consented, and when the time came appeared at the theatre. The character required her on entering to sing a song, and as the curtain rose the orchestra began the accompaniment. She stood before the audience like one lost in thought; the music ceased, but she did not sing; and the band, supposing she was embarrassed, commenced again, and then paused for her to begin, but she opened not her lips! A third time the air was played, and then, with clasped hands and eyes suffused with tears, she sang—not the song of the play, but

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

A stillness fell upon the audience; the performance ended. Then some mocked, while the greater part were bathed in tears; and many from that memorable night were led to consider their ways; and the actress henceforth sought to serve the Lord, who in such a singular way had plucked her as a brand from the burnings.

Reader, whoever thou art, however deeply steeped in sin, though thy sins rise up mountains high, threatening every moment to carry thy soul into a Christless eternity; yea, though thou hast long pursued the paths of sin and folly, mercy is still reserved for thee! Pleasure lover! though thou hast long wandered from thy God, seeking to drown the

voice of conscience in the gaities of this poor Christless world ; yea, though thou hast long closed thine ears to the fond entreaty of the loving Saviour God, mercy is still reserved for thee ! Christless religionist ! though thou hast despised God's great love, preferring, through the pride of thine heart, the good works and religious ordinances thou boasted in ; yea, though thou hast long refused God's free gift of salvation through Christ, mercy is still reserved for thee ! But beware, oh, careless trifler, for though God has borne long with thee, He will not be mocked. Thou hast heard the good news of free grace, until it seems a worn-out subject, and yet thou intendest to receive Christ some day. Oh take heed to thy soul's salvation to-day ! for God has said, " He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever " (Psa. ciii. 9). Still He waits to be gracious ; and though thou hast long trifled with God's grace, mercy is still reserved for thee ! God in infinite love and grace still offers you pardon. The work of redemption is finished, and God is eternally satisfied. " Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved " (Acts xvi. 31).

" Nothing but mercy 'll do for me,
Nothing but mercy—full and free ;
Of sinners chief—what but the blood
Could calm my soul before my God ?
Save by the blood He could not bless ;
So great, so pure, His holiness."

“ENTERTAINMENTS ALL DAY, NOT A DULL MOMENT.”



URING the autumn of last year, I visited the popular Lancashire sea-side town of B——, to which thousands upon thousands of rich and poor alike annually resort. The greater number, alas! it is but too evident, go not only

to derive benefit from the bracing sea air, but to find something that may for the time being help to gratify their poor unsatisfied hearts.

One day passing the Winter Gardens, one of the many places of amusement to be found in B——, I was much struck by seeing a large sign-board exhibited with this announcement, “Entertainments all day, not a dull moment.”

I thought, “How like the devil that sounds, ‘Not a dull moment.’”

Pleasure seeker, be warned! The god of this world, *i.e.*, the devil, is endeavouring to sink your poor deluded soul into hell, by trying to fill you with the fleeting pleasures of this poor doomed world, and he therefore uses every imaginable means to effect this. The gaily-decked ball-room is one of the many, the concert another, a nigger entertainment a third,—anything and everything he would occupy you with, and *not a dull moment* will he let you have if he can possibly help it, so that your *eternal future* may be hid from view.

Perhaps you say, "Is it not true that the Bible says, 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes?'"

Yes, that is so far correct, but I ask you to turn to Eccles. xi. 9, and read the whole of the verse, the latter part is very solemn indeed: "But *know thou*, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

Ah! yes, my friend, God's judgment will come at the end of all your pleasure-seeking here, and will seal your doom. Not glory with Christ, but damnation with the devil; not heaven, but hell—eternal hell, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark ix. 46). Surely such a destiny is terrible! Maybe you never thought it possible to be led on and on to such an end as this; but if your eyes are opened to see the danger to which you are exposed, and you are willing to escape such an awful eternity, thank God there is hope for you.

Hearken to, and believe these loving and blessed words, "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); also Jesus says, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28). Therefore confess your sin and guilt to God; take your place before Him as a guilty, ruined, helpless soul, and say in

the words of the poor publican, "God be merciful to me (the) sinner." Turn then at once to Christ, He is the only ransom whom God has provided to deliver you from going down to the pit, and "To him give all the prophets witness, that, through his name, *whosoever* believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43; see also xiii. 38, 39). Thus trusting in Christ, you will be everlastingly secure. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1, 29-39).

Blessed, precious security, for nothing can separate you from His love.

Dear reader, I earnestly and solemnly beseech you to consider well what your *eternal future* will be. Remember! All the glories and joys of heaven may be thine for ever, if thou wilt but come as a poor guilty sinner to God, and really believe in Jesus; on the other hand, if thou dost refuse to do this, and art content to have "the pleasures of sin," which are only for a season, all the burnings of a quenchless fire in hell will be thy portion for all eternity.

"O Christ, what burdens bowed Thy head,
Our load was laid on Thee;
Thou stoodest in the sinner's stead,
Didst bear all ill for me:
A Victim led, Thy blood was shed;
Now there's no load for me."

**"VICTORY ! VICTORY ! VICTORY !
THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB."**



— G — had been brought to God in early life, and for over fifty years sounded out the glad tidings of salvation. He was well known and respected as a Christian, whose walk and ways were a daily witness to the truth which his lips confessed. The father of a large family, seven sons and three daughters, he sought to train them in the ways of the Lord. Family cares and personal affliction caused him to pass through many exercises, which were sanctified to him in the Lord's grace.

At the close of his earthly pilgrimage he suffered from a severe illness, and the poor body became racked with pain. In the midst of all he manifested the spirit of Christ in many ways, often blessedly expressing his heart's confidence in God. On one occasion, one of his daughters said to him, "I wish I could do something to relieve your suffering, father."

"My dear," he replied, "you can't relieve me. 'Every man shall bear his own burden' (Gal. vi. 5). 'Let patience have her perfect work' (Jas. i. 4). He will not lay upon us more than we can bear. 'All the promises of God,' in Christ, 'are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us'" (2 Cor i. 20).

A fellow-labourer having called in one day to visit him, reminded him how many years he had enjoyed the privilege of preaching the gospel, which elicited the reply, "It is not what I have done through grace, *but what Christ has done for me*, that sustains me now."

"Well, dear brother, doubtless you would like once more to preach the gospel of God's grace."

"I could preach to them *now*, if they would only come to me."

On the last Sunday before he passed away to be for ever with the Lord, he remarked to his daughter, "What must have been the agonies of Jesus!" His spirit longed to depart, yet he expressed his readiness to wait the Lord's time, desiring that all the will of God should be done in him. Oft, with the joy of anticipation, he would say to her, "We must part, but we shall meet again, where there will be no more partings, but we shall be for ever with the Lord."

His mind was bright and clear to the very last. To his beloved wife, with whom he had lived nearly fifty-six years without ever having been known to give her an angry word, he said, "My dear, you will miss me, *but cling to Christ*, and do the best you can."

Some three days before he fell asleep, he asked the doctor calmly whether he thought it would be long before the end. At last the day came. His family gathered round him. A heavenly smile lit up his features. And shortly before his spirit fled

from its earthly tenement, gathering his last remaining strength, he said, “Victory! victory! victory! through the blood of the Lamb—Jesus has won the victory—Jesus the Conqueror will reign—Jesus the Conqueror *must* reign.

Mercy’s full power we then shall prove,
Loved with an everlasting love.”

The doctor, who was present when he passed away, said it was truly falling asleep, and not death.

All his earthly affairs had been carefully settled. He had set his house in order, and arranged even the details of the burial of his poor worn-out frame.

“Victory! victory! victory!” “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. xv. 57). Is this *your* triumph cry, dear reader, “Victory through the blood of the Lamb”? Nought else can give you rest of soul, confidence in view of His speedy return, or assurance and joy, if death should be near. His victory is ours, the victory of *every one that believeth*. Yes, as this dear old dying saint said, “Jesus has won the victory. Jesus the Conqueror will reign. Jesus the Conqueror *must* reign.” He knew it, was assured of it, and rejoiced in it. Can *you*? Satan is a defeated foe. The victory is *the Lord’s*. Jesus has triumphed gloriously over all the power of the enemy. Salvation now is free, free for all, free for *you*. Believe, troubled soul, on His all-glorious Name. His *precious blood* will cleanse you from every guilty stain. “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). But the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin (1 John i. 7).

Behold the Lamb! 'tis He who bore
My sins upon the tree,
And paid in death the dreadful score—
The guilt that lay on me.

"Victory, victory, victory, through the blood of the Lamb!" Blessed news! Joyful news! Will you trust Him—Jesus—even Jesus, the Lamb of God, the risen Christ, the mighty Conqueror, the coming Saviour?

"The sting of death is sin" (1 Cor. xv. 56). But this happy aged pilgrim, with the eye of faith fixed on Him who came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. ix. 26), feared not death. He could look beyond the dark portals of the grave. Its terrors were gone. For him it was but the entrance to the presence of the Lord (1 Cor. v. 8). That relentless enemy of fallen guilty men had lost its sting.

Just as Samson found honey in the carcase of the dead lion, so the believer finds sweetness for his soul through the victory of Jesus over the roaring lion—the great enemy of our souls (Judges xiv.). Will *you* participate therein? The blessing is for all. But salvation's day is *now*. Cease from yourself, and the wretched efforts of your poor deceived heart, and believe on the Lord Jesus, the holy Lamb of God. Then may you shout with

all His own:—"Victory, victory, victory, through the blood of the Lamb!"

Jesus *has* won the victory, whether you believe on Him or not. *Soon he will return for all His own* (1 Thess. ix. 15-18). And when shortly after the Conqueror reigns, and reign he must, and will (1 Cor. xv. 25),

"Mercy's full power we then *shall* prove
Loved with an everlasting love."

E. H. C.

A CHUNK OF GOLD.



STORY is told of an adventurous miner who some years ago penetrated into the death valley in Colorado, U.S.A., and found the skeleton of another miner. A wooden pail was lying near it, and in the pail a chunk of gold of great value.

The miner got the gold. It cost him his life, and very likely his soul, to obtain it; he left the gold, with his bones beside it, as a monument of warning.

Dear reader, is there not a voice in this for you? What is your object in this world—surely a valley of death, where gold and dry bones lie side by side? Is it Christ, or gold, you are seeking? If gold, have you heard the Word of the Lord? "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the *whole world*,

and lose his *own* soul? Or what shall a man *give* in exchange for his soul?" (Mark viii. 36, 37).

The *whole world*! a chunk of gold of great value surely. But your soul is of more value. God asks you these two questions. Can you answer them? Did you ever try? Where is the profit?

I once asked a great astronomer this question. He could answer all questions which required great learning and intellect. His answer was, "I give it up." He could answer it now, for he is in eternity. He was cut off in the midst of his days. Stricken with fever while travelling in the train, he was carried to an hotel; and passed, in an unconscious state, into eternity!

If your object is Christ, the "Wisdom of God," then the "merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst *desire are not* to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace" (Prov. iii. 14-17).

Christ is God's chunk of gold, of priceless value.

"Let His dear Name fill all our songs;
Let His sweet praise employ our tongues;
O let us sing, and sing again,
'Worthy the Lamb, that once was slain.'"

"CHRIST JESUS CAME."



STRIPPED of his raiment, wounded, half dead, disregarded by priest and Levite, there lay, between Jerusalem and Jericho, a poor helpless man! Friendless, forlorn, and dying, he could but bewail the folly of the journey that he

had taken from the city of God to that of the curse. His course had been "downward," and each step only increased the descent. Perils abounded. The eye of a watchful enemy eagerly followed him; thieves fell upon him, who not only appropriated his goods, but murderously assaulted him. They then fled, and he lay down to die.

"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, *came where he was*, and when he saw him he had compassion on him." So we read in Luke x. 33 to the undying honour of this Samaritan. Such an act of honest charity redounded to the credit of this stranger.

A "stranger"! Yes, and more, for the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. Religious animosity and pride of caste had placed an insuperable barrier between these two nations, and mutual disdain kept them apart. Yet, on this occasion, *compassion* reigned in the heart of the Samaritan, and outweighed all such feelings. Humanity overcame pride, and love led to supernatural kindness. Man may, after all, deal thus with his fellow; but

the story has a far deeper meaning than any such act of human kindness.

For just as the Samaritan came where the way-laid man was lying, and did for him all that compassion could do, so "*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom,*" said Paul, "*I am chief*" (1 Tim. i. 15). Was ever man more deeply wounded, or more thoroughly stripped of all religious raiment, than he who could truly call himself *the chief sinner*? Was ever compassion more rich than that demonstrated by Him who came into the world to save sinners? Never! Yet the blessed fact is divinely true and unspeakably welcome.

Paul gently draws aside the curtain of his soul, and while frankly and truthfully declaring himself the chief of sinners, he discloses a heart of infinite gratitude as he writes of such a Saviour. He points upward to the glorified Man, the Son of God, now passed through death and resurrection, and seen in heavenly glory, and rejoicingly says, — "*It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*" He had proved the compassion of this more than good Samaritan, had felt His undeserved but perfect healing, had learned the entire suitability of His grace to his own lost condition, and could therefore proclaim that faithful saying, that favourite maxim, and one worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. The fact had been more than life to him; he therefore commended it to

universal acceptance. *He came!* He, the Creator, came,—came into manhood, suffering, rejection, ignominy, crucifixion, and death! *He came!* Raised out of death, ascended, and known in glory as "the Man Christ Jesus," His blessed brow is now crowned with honour and glory. *He came!*—but He came to save.

Such was the grand specific object of His first coming. His second coming will be in judgment. But—

*"He saw us ruined by the fall,
Yet loved us notwithstanding all."*

And, in proof of that love, He gave His soul an offering for sin, in order that by His sacrifice we might be saved. Oh! what tongue can describe the heights and depths of such grace, or the fulness of the compassion that induced our heavenly Saviour to take such a journey in order to find us where we were—to come right down to our place under the judgment due on account of sin, and to bear that judgment; to make us His own thereby, and never leave us until His grace shall end in glory—His and ours—with, and through Him!

It is a charming story, and will engage our ransomed souls for ever. The love of Christ, in all its ten thousand details, will be our endless and untiring theme in yonder sunny land of song, just as even here, and now, we have learned its first exquisite notes, and can lisp a little of its melody—this "faithful saying"! There is nothing that makes a man value God's salvation like feeling his

own personal demerit—the more the better. The lower down you go in self-depreciation, the more correct will be your appreciation of the work of Christ; the blacker you see your sins, the greater will be your value of the blood of Christ. Don't shrink from going down before God, for down you are, stripped, wounded, more than half dead, undeserving, without a claim; therefore own your case. Paul said he was the chief sinner,—a true testimony,—and hence his high estimation of God's redemption, and hence too his sunny cloudless life as a Christian.

Christ Jesus came to save sinners—only such! and He accomplished the mighty work on Calvary. That coming is a fact—a blessed fact—authenticated by the thankful experience of myriads of ransomed souls, and confirmed by God Himself. It is divinely true.

Dear reader, get to know the grace of His first coming, else you must feel, in endless shame, the condemnation of His second coming in judgment; get to know the meaning of God's faithful saying, that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”—to save you! Then can you sing—

“We bless our Saviour's name,
Our sins are all forgiven;
To suffer once to earth He came;
He now is crowned in heaven.

Lord, let us ne'er forget
Thy rich, Thy precious love;
Our theme of joy and wonder here,
Our endless song above.”

"YOU MUST NOT ALTER THE BIBLE."



WE were just at the end of our voyage. The good ship that had brought us many thousand miles was anchored safely, and on the morrow the tender was to take us on to land once more. We numbered some three hundred souls, and, after three months' battling with wind and water, found that there were no gaps in the muster-roll of emigrants, of all shades and grades, who had braved many dangers in search of a new home in this transient scene. The medical officer in charge sat in his dispensary, musing over the past and present, and thinking of the future. A shade of sadness tinged his thoughts. For three months, while on the one hand compelled, on behalf of the Government, to administer law, and see justice done to all, it had been his pleasure to temper all with grace, and to endeavour to preach by act and word, the Gospel of the grace of God.

To some, blessing had accrued. Others had appeared to have been stirred, but seemed now to be intoxicated with the new scene just opening before them, and the bright visions of success in this life which they promised themselves. A large number, callous and hardened at the start, had apparently remained so throughout.

What were to be the ultimate results of that three months' work amongst souls? How many

had been stony-ground hearers? How many had allowed the thorns to come in and choke the Word? Thoughts of this kind were found in the superintendent's cogitations.

By-and-by, one and another came to make a farewell request, or get a few last words of instruction. To each he spoke of God's request, and on each he pressed the Word of Life.

At last there came one who had been often in the doctor's thoughts, and the subject of his prayers.

R. B. had regularly read his Bible during the time he had been on board. His behaviour had been in every respect exemplary. He had punctiliously attended the Sunday morning "prayers," and had always been an attentive hearer at the preaching in the evening. He had never been absent from the young men's afternoon Bible-class, and had pretty regularly taken his place amongst the few, who met for reading and prayer twice weekly, in the luggage-room, as the only place where a little quiet and seclusion were to be had. But *was R. B. saved?*

This question had presented itself often to the doctor's mind, and had as often remained unanswered.

Now was the time—if ever—to find out whether the man had any foundation whereon to rest. Was he trusting to the rotten planks of good works, or was he in that ark which—surely a model of beauty—is the perfection of security?

The question was asked.

"Well, doctor," said B., "it's of no use for me to try to deceive; I must tell the truth. I'm not safe; I wish I was."

Here were two most estimable things, viz., *honesty*, and *desire for salvation*, and any soul, possessing these, is not far off from the desired haven.

The plan of salvation was again put before B. as plainly as the speaker could state it, but—

"All the speaking seemed in vain,
The wished-for peace he could not gain."

At last B. was taken to the fifth chapter of John's gospel and 24th verse, as follows:—

"Now, look here, B. It says, 'He that heareth my word.' You've heard that; I'm witness to it."

"Yes."

"Next it says, 'and believeth on him that sent me.' Now, you have said that you believe that God sent His Son to die for you."

"And I do."

"Then read the next few words, 'hath everlasting life.' Have you got it?"

"I can't say that I have."

"Well, then, I must alter this verse a bit to suit you. I'll run this pen through these words."

"But you must *not*, sir."

"Why not? you give the lie to them. Anyway, I can put in a '*not*.' I'll make it, 'hath *not* everlasting life.'"

"But you must *not* alter the Bible, sir."

"Then, B., you *must* believe the Bible. It is God's Word to you and for you."

And B. *did* believe the Bible, and was soon kneeling down, and thanking the Lord that his soul was saved. And in his own simple language he was heard to say, "I thank Thee that, having come here for medicine for the body, I've found medicine for the soul, and got rid of the burden of my sins which has troubled me so long."

Now in Romans x. 9 it says, "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." And this verse is called to our mind by the fact that, within five minutes of the time that B. left the dispensary, one of the Christians on board put his head in at the door and reported that S., the greatest swearer on board, had just passed the word, "The doctor has got B. converted."

B. had evidently not delayed long to "confess with his mouth the Lord Jesus."

Dear reader, year after year has rolled away. Many opportunities of hearing and reading the good news have been afforded to you,—warnings have been sent, entreaties have reached your ears. It may be that your earthly voyage is just near the end. To-morrow—yea, this night—you may have done with this scene. Whither do you go? You may have been as moral and as religious as B. was, and, unlike him, be trusting to your morality. If

so, that *ignis fatuus* which you are following will lead you on into an unknown country, where, a "horror of great darkness" chilling your soul, you will bewail too late your error.

Whither do you go? Go *you must*. Whither do you go? Don't put off the answer. Delays, ever unsatisfactory and dangerous, are intensely so here. The "sick-bed delusion" is being exposed every day. "Can you pull me through, doctor?" says the young man, as eternity, for which he is unprepared, stares him in the face. "Can you pull me through?" says the middle-aged man, racked with pain, troubled about the concerns of his family, torn with anguish, and harassed with regrets. "Can you pull me through?" feebly murmurs the aged sinner, as—all the powers of life waning—he feels the grip of "the last enemy."

These are the words of dying men every day, as they feel—the present slipping from beneath them—their insecurity for the future.

An old sailor whom we had known was buried to-day. A week or two ago he was walking about, but felt his strength waning. "It's a good thing," said he, "that I haven't left the consideration of eternal things until now. I couldn't give the necessary attention to them now. My mind couldn't grasp them now. It's a mistake to put it off until sickness comes along."

Reader, again we say, GO YOU MUST. WHITHER DO YOU GO?

There may be no precursory sickness, no further

warning. Delay not, we beseech you. By delaying, you lose heavily in this life, inestimably in the future.

God grant that there may be found in you those two estimable things which we found in B. Firstly—that *honesty* which admits the condition in which you are as an unsaved sinner. Secondly—that *desire* which that admission should assuredly bring. Then we have but one word for you, as for B., “You *must* believe the Word of God;” and it says, “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.”

S.



“A GREAT WAY OFF,* HIS FATHER SAW HIM.”

(LUKE xv. 20.)



OW every word in this wondrous parable brings out the fulness and freeness of grace! Nor is it to be wondered at, for God is the God of *all* grace, and the *Father* of mercies. So that we might expect the unfolding of God's heart, by the Son of His bosom, which this parable is, to

* The same word in the original as “far” in “far country,” which shows how far the father hastened to him.

abound and overflow with grace. How that father's heart yearned over that son! How God's heart yearns over poor sinners, little as they think it. How can they, when law is deeply embedded in all our hearts? That is, that God will be to us in accordance with what we are to Him. Grace acts from itself. It is not called forth by any worthiness in its object. God finds the motive for His grace in His own heart. How that father's heart went out towards that son, and welcomed the first approach to a return! How God's heart goes out towards the poor sinner, and fosters and strengthens, then welcomes the faintest drawings towards Himself!

What riches of grace are contained in that single expression, "*a great way off, his father saw him.*" How it speaks of God being on the look-out, as it were, for the sinner's approach. Not the trembling sinner on the look-out for a kindly glance of His eye, a favourable moment to draw nigh, but the other way round altogether; God on the look-out for the first motion in the sinner's heart towards Himself. With what interest He watches the effect of all His agents: the famine, the treatment of the "citizen," of the rest ("and no man gave unto him"), of the want, &c. If such His interest in His "banished;" if He thus devises "means that his banished be not expelled from him" (2 Sam. xiv. 14); small wonder that He should, as it were, "make merry and be glad," when He gets the sinner home; or that His Son should inform us, "There is joy in

the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

But not only did he see him a great way off, but he "had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him." Dear unsaved reader, I would ask you, What do you think fills the heart of God towards sinners, towards you? Is it anger, or is it pity? True, He is "angry with the wicked every day." He hates his sins, but pity fills his heart towards the poor slaves of sin and Satan.

And what is this running, and falling on his neck, and kissing him, intended to represent? The willingness, the alacrity of God to forgive and to receive the repentant sinner.

What a moment, what a meeting for both, the father and the son, God and the sinner, whilst all heaven rings again with responsive joy! May it be yours to cause heaven and the heart of God this joy, and to receive for yourself this welcome, ere you lay this paper down, dear unsaved reader, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

"The wanderer no more will roam,
The lost one to the fold hath come,
The prodigal is welcomed home,
O Lamb of God, in Thee !

Though clothed in rags, by sin defiled,
The Father did embrace His child ;
And I am pardoned, reconciled,
O Lamb of God, in Thee !"

TRIAL AND TRIUMPH.



ANY years ago, the daughter of an English nobleman was providentially thrown in the way of some believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and, by the grace of God, through their instrumentality, brought to a saving

knowledge of the truth concerning Him. Her father was almost distracted at the event, and sought by all those means which his wealth and station afforded him—such as temptations to extravagance in dress, travelling in foreign countries, leading her to places of fashionable resort, and even by threats—to divert her mind from things unseen and eternal. But all in vain; her heart was fixed. The God of Abraham had become her shield, and her exceeding great reward, and in His strength she resolved that nothing finite should deprive her of her infinite and eternal portion in Him, or displace Him from her heart.

O wondrous love!—O how divine
The grace that did her soul refine,
And purged away the dross :
Of heavenly food led her to take,
And, for her dear REDEEMER's sake,
To count all things but loss.

At last the father decided upon a final and desperate expedient by which his end should be gained, or his daughter ruined so far at least as

her prospects in life were concerned. He made arrangements for a grand festivity, to which a number of the nobility were invited, and it was understood that during the evening the daughters of different noblemen would entertain the company with singing and music. The father had determined, that if his daughter, when called upon, refused to comply, she should be publicly disgraced and cast out of the family. The day arrived, and at the appointed hour, the party assembled; and well knowing the real object of their meeting, many a heart beat high with the hope of winning back the young lady to their company. To her it was a solemn moment, but with peaceful confidence did she await it. As the crisis approached, different individuals, at the call of the company, performed their parts with the greatest applause. At last the name of this daughter was announced;

And thus her father's house became
The one in which her SAVIOUR'S name
She boldly must confess.

There was a solemn silence. Every eye was fixed upon her to see how the scale of destiny would turn. Without hesitation she rose, and with a calm and dignified composure took her place at the pianoforte. After a moment spent in silent prayer, she ran her fingers along the keys, and then with an unearthly sweetness, elevation, and solemnity, sang, accompanying her voice with the notes of the instrument, the following stanzas:—

No room for mirth or trifling here,
For worldly hope or worldly fear,
 If life so soon be gone ;
If now the Judge is at the door,
And all mankind must stand before
 The inexorable throne.

No matter which my thoughts employ,
A moment's misery or joy ;
 But, oh, when both shall end,
Where shall I find my destined place ?
Shall I my everlasting days
 With fiends or angels spend ?
Nothing is worth a thought beneath,
But how I may escape the death
 That never, never dies ;
How make mine own election sure,
And when I fail on earth, secure
 A mansion in the skies

The minstrel ceased. She arose from her seat amid profound silence. The solemnity of eternity was upon that assembly ; and, without speaking, they dispersed. The father was overwhelmed, and wept aloud ; and, when left alone, sought the counsel and prayers of his daughter for the salvation of his soul. She gladly directed him to the Saviour. He believed and rejoiced, and henceforth it became the great work of his life to spread the glad tidings of salvation, and to endeavour to win souls to Christ.

O how portray the wondrous scene ?
He who so long content had been
 At Satan's shrine to bow,—
Resolves to give his future hours,
To consecrate his wealth and powers,
 His all, to JESUS now.

Thus the higher, even the divine life, in the soul of this dear young Christian lady was made to triumph over all that wealth and nobility of station, the world's high life, and the highest that it knows, could bring to bear against it.

Reader, has the word of life ever reached your heart? Have you been reconciled to God by the blood of Jesus? It is a terrible thing for a sinner to appear before God in his sins! Has the solemn question of sin been settled between you and God? If not, listen now to the voice of mercy,—“Be it known unto *you*, therefore men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the FORGIVENESS OF SINS, and by him all that believe ARE JUSTIFIED FROM ALL THINGS” (Acts xiii. 38). God declares unto you a blessed truth, even the *forgiveness of sins*, through Him who suffered, the Just for the unjust; who for the sinner's sake was forsaken by God upon the cross; whose solemn cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!” testifies both to the terrible character of sin in the sight of a holy God, and to the unspeakable grace, love, pity, and compassion both of the Father and the Son. Will you receive the message of mercy, accept the offer NOW made to you, and so be saved? Or will you, by turning away, bring upon your soul the added and awful guilt of *grace despised*, mercy trampled under foot, forgiveness *refused*, and Christ rejected? One or the other you must do now. Clearly, you either receive, or you do not receive, the declaration God now makes to YOU by

His word. In the former case, believing GOD, believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, you are saved; in the latter case, you are "condemned *already*," because you have "not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John iii. 18). Be persuaded, take to your heart the message of love now, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 3).

Sovereign grace o'er sin abounding,
Ransom'd souls the tidings swell!
'Tis a deep that knows no sounding—
Who its height and depth can tell?

Extracted.



BOAST NOT THYSELF OF TO-MORROW: A WARNING TO PROCRASTINATORS.



— was employed by a large firm. He was a steady, hard-working young man, had held his situation for several years, and was respected by his employer. He had been married some little time when his wife was suddenly taken very ill, and had to undergo an operation in the hospital.

Feeling anxious as to the result of the operation he spoke about his trouble to a young man whom he knew was a Christian, and who was employed in the same firm. He was told that it was no doubt God's voice speaking to his soul, and he was urged earnestly to accept there and then God's

priceless gift—eternal life. The Gospel was put before him in a simple way, the young man he went to, feeling led by God to speak to him. He was spoken to of God's wondrous love in the gift of His only beloved son, that whosoever believed in Him should not perish, but have eternal life; of God's righteousness demanding the death of the sinner, but of His wondrous grace in giving His only begotten Son to die, and how that, through Jesus bearing in His own precious body the punishment of sin, God could justify and declare righteous all that believed in Him; that salvation was God's gift, all of grace from first to last, and was not obtained by works of righteousness which we had done. After having heard this, he expressed his astonishment at the simplicity of the Gospel, and confessed that he had never heard it spoken of so simply, though he was also heard to say afterwards, "There will be plenty of time for me when I get old." His wife, who had meanwhile been the subject of much prayer, was in God's mercy restored to health, and things went on for a time much the same as before.

The young man who had spoken to him, still feeling deeply concerned with regard to F——'s soul, as well as his responsibility to God, wrote to him *beseeking* him in even plainer language, if possible, than before, to accept Christ as his Saviour, finishing the letter with the words, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. xxvii. 1). Not many weeks

after this F—— happened to run a nail in his foot, which he thought little of at the time, but which ultimately caused him to be taken to the hospital, where he fell into convulsions, and after two days of intense agony, died of lockjaw. With what fearful reality was the scripture proved in his case, and how terrible the consequence of the wilful rejection of Christ.

And now, dear reader, how is it with your soul? Have you been cleansed in the precious blood of Christ, and thereby obtained forgiveness of all your sins, or are you, like this poor young man was, —a Christ rejecter? Are you likewise saying, "There is time enough yet," forgetting the fearful warning now before you, resulting, may be, in your perishing for ever in hell-fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. You cannot say you have not been warned. Oh, we beseech you, fly to Jesus. Take shelter beneath His precious blood, which cleanses from all sin, and is the foundation of every joy and everlasting bliss. Oh, believe in Jesus the Son of God, who came down to this earth, from His throne in glory, to suffer and to die, in order that you might live for ever with Him in the glory to which He has gone back. He is the only one who can meet your need and satisfy your heart for ever. Trust Him *now*. "Behold *now* is the accepted time; behold *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

"*To-day*, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Heb. vi. 7).

AN ANCIENT SERMON.



BELOVED reader, if you had been on Mars' Hill about eighteen hundred and forty years ago you would have beheld a solemn and interesting sight. God had sent His servant Paul there, who had gone about their fine streets, and whose "spirit was stirred in him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." But we must not suppose that Paul was any mere sight-seer. He was at Athens for God, and to testify for his Master, Jesus Christ.

First he repairs to the synagogue, for the Gospel is "to the Jew first"; and then to the market-place, where he reasoned every day with those who met him. And, be it observed, it was not about their fine city, its magnificent situation, its strong fortresses, its schools of learning, nor its wealth and prosperity, that he discoursed, *but he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.* He proclaimed a Saviour—Jesus, and the solemn fact that the day is coming when "all who are in their graves shall hear his voice, and come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."

But this did not suit the men of learning of that day. Man's mind, for the most part, runs counter to the revelation of God; hence it reads, "his way" and "his thoughts" are to be *forsaken*,

"and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him : and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon " (Isa. lv. 6-8).

Now Athens in those days was one of the seats of learning. Philosophers of every school were to be found there. " The Greeks seek after wisdom ; " and these poor men were groping their way, in matters too high for man to reach, apart from the lamp of revelation ; for who by searching can find out God ? or who by working can save his soul ?

These men listened to Paul, and called him a babbler, or chatterer. Now Christ crucified is to the believer both the *power* of God, and the *wisdom* of God ; but to those men of worldly wisdom *it was foolishness*.

Reader, what is Christ crucified to you ?—the power of God, and the wisdom of God ? or foolishness ? Which ? If you say the former, it is well ; if the latter, it is not well, for there is no salvation apart from Christ, and Him crucified.

Paul is brought by these philosophers to Areopagus, or Mars' Hill, the highest court in Athens, and there he is confronted with a large company of those who represented the *learning* of the day. It was a solemn and interesting moment,—human learning pitted against the Gospel of God.

Paul discourses ; the man of God is alone in testimony for his Lord. Mark the heads of his sermon. God—to them the unknown God—God, and man in relation to Him as a responsible being, form, as it were, the first part.

Man's sin, and God's call to repentance, with the assurance of forgiveness, form the second.

The day of judgment, the appointed Judge, the risen Christ in glory—the Man rejected from the earth, but enthroned on high,—form the third.

With what fervency the man of God speaks, and with what power he deals with the conscience of his hearers. God is supreme; man is a creature, and, alas! a sinful, fallen creature; and, solemn fact, he has to give account of himself to God; for it is written, "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God" (Rom. xiv. 11).

In the light of this, what more right than the sinner's repentance, repentance toward God! Could you conceive of anything more consistent? A creature getting into his right place before his Creator, owning His authority, and confessing his sin. How could God meet a guilty sinner save in judgment, if he did not take the place of repentance? And mark, heaven rejoices when he does. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke xv. 10).

It is a blessedly interesting sight to see a sinner repenting. The world may not think much of it; but heaven does, and rejoices over it. And why? Because another fallen rebellious creature has got into his right place with God, has recovered himself, and God is left free to come forth in *grace*, on the ground of the precious death of His Son, and pardon and save. Those unjealous beings

in heaven rejoice in the sinner's blessing, and in the exercise of God's grace on his behalf.

Beloved reader, do you know what repentance toward God is?—repentance to *salvation* not to be repented of. True repentance goes with something else, viz., "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." A repentant sinner sees that God has provided a sacrifice, and that the blood of that sacrifice has made atonement for the soul. By faith he reposes in that blood, and in Him who shed it, and the blessed result is—*salvation*.

Oh, sweet thought, sweeter still as the years roll by, is that of God's salvation for a poor sinner who deserved it not! And wondrous thought, that while it only cost God but a word to call into existence the universe, it cost Him His own dear Son, and that Son His life-blood, to save one poor sinner! No wonder then that heaven rejoices, for all the mind of heaven is one. If you are not saved, dear reader, I would beseech of you to obey the command of God to repent. His *goodness* leads to repentance, and heaven rejoices when you do. In the light of that dreadful day of judgment He commands all men—you—to repent. Will you repent? Will you return? Will you seek His face? Will you trust in Jesus and His blood? Oh, how interested are the three Persons in the blessed Trinity in your salvation! God the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world; God the Son died, the just for the unjust, that we might be brought to God; God the Spirit is here

to convince of sin, to testify of Jesus, and to lead the sinner to trust in Him. Let it be said to-day in heaven,—yea, while you read these lines,—that you obeyed the command of God to repent, that you turned to Christ in faith, and that you accepted, without reserve, the testimony of God the Holy Spirit, that God will remember your sins and iniquities no more for ever (Heb. x. 15-18).

But to return to Paul. As is usually the case, the preaching of the Gospel split the congregation up into three parts: first, “some mocked”—mockers; second, others said, “We will hear thee again of this matter” — procrastinators; third, “Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them”—believers.

Reader, in the light of eternity, I ask you, To which of the three classes do you belong?—to those who *mocked*? to those who *procrastinated*? or to those who accepted the Gospel, as the message of God to them, *and believed*? Let not the sun go down again before you are ranged before God with those who believe in His blessed Son.

In the day of judgment, where will the mockers have their portion? *In hell*. And in that day when the voice of mercy is heard no more, where will the procrastinators be? Alas! *in hell*. And in that day, what of the believer? Thank God, he will be “*for ever with the Lord*.”

E. A.

THREE DIVINE APPOINTMENTS.

"God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake (watch) or sleep, we should live together with him."—1 THESS. v. 9, 10.



THESE two verses in Thessalonians make plain and clear the place which the grace of God gives to a believing soul now. It is quite impossible that we can quietly or calmly think of things to come, which the Word of God plentifully brings before us, if we are not, in our own souls, clear before God as to present salvation.

The Spirit of God here brings out God's appointment for the believer in Jesus. The Gospel has brought salvation to men ruined and undone in their sins; and when the apostle says here, "God hath not appointed us to wrath," he is speaking of the coming day of tribulation. The Lord coming like "a thief in the night," will be the nature, and character of His apparition, by and by, to the world; but he comforts the believer by saying, "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now mark how simple it is, "God hath not appointed us to wrath,"—whom does he mean by the "us"? Every believer, every one who through grace believes in the Lord Jesus Christ—God has appointed us "to obtain salvation by our Lord

Jesus Christ, who died for us." He died for me, is what faith says. Yes, He "died for us, that whether we wake or sleep,"—when He comes back in the air to gather up His own people,—whether we are alive on the earth, or in the grave, it makes no matter; ' we should live together with him."

Now, before going further, let me ask, Are you ready for the Lord's coming? and if He came to-day, would you "live together with him"? Would you live with Him? You say, "I am trying to live *for* Him." That won't do; I don't get eternal life by trying to live for Christ; I get salvation as a poor lost sinner by simply accepting that which the grace of God presents. Jesus has become man, and then having displayed perfect goodness, love, grace, and holiness all through His life, He was cast out of the world—that is, He was sent back to the spot whence He came, by the way of the cross. He wrought thereon the work that gives you and me title to go where He has gone. Thank God, I know that I am going. When will you say, "I know that I am going?" If you do not know, I say, in the language of the hymn—

"Haste, traveller, haste."

It is time you knew, because, beloved reader, the coming of the Lord will settle everything. His return—and it may be to-night—will settle everything for your precious soul. If you do not "live with Him," you will know in eternity what it is to die without Him. Oh, what a solemn thing! What a blessed thing to live with Him, the One

who died for us, gave Himself for us, went down to death for us, bore our sins in His own person on the tree, agonised for them, atoned for them, blotted them out with His own precious blood, met all the claims of God in respect of them, and then going into death, and into the grave, He takes the sting out of death, and breaks the bars of the tomb; He rises and goes into glory, and He says to us, who know Him, I am coming back for you, that "where I am, there ye may be also."

Thank God, we have not been appointed to death, and to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us. Blessed be His name, praise His name! Believe on Him, and get hold of the benefit of His death,—and what is that? Salvation, pardon, peace, righteousness, before God. Get hold of all the benefits that accrue from the wonderful death He has died, and the atonement He has made, and then you can say, "He died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him."

I would just like to add, dear reader, that if you are not ready to keep this blessed appointment, you will certainly have to keep two other sad appointments which God has made for man. One is recorded in Hebrews ix. 27. It reads thus: "It is *appointed* unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." The other is found in Acts xvii. 31. "He hath *appointed* a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness."

Here, then, unsaved sinner, you may see ap-

pointed by God—first, the day of your death; and second, the day of your judgment, and that will mean the second death, which is the lake of fire. You know not the day of either of these appointments. God does. They may be very near. Neither do we know the day of our appointment, but it could not come too soon. It is to *live* with Jesus; to be ever with the One who has saved us. Your appointments are to *die* once, yea, twice. In the first death you pass out of man's sight. In the second death you pass out of God's sight for ever. Awful thought! For ever sundered from God, who is love, and in whose presence is "fulness of joy"! Do be persuaded to come to the Saviour now. He is waiting, and willing to bless you. Linger not in the hope of getting better, or making yourself fit for Him. All your fitness is to know your need of Him. Your sins are no barrier. But for the death of Jesus they would be an insuperable barrier. for "without the shedding of blood is no remission." But, thank God; Christ has died. His blood atones for, and cleanses from every sin. All you have to do is to simply come to Jesus, just as you are. You trust Him. He will save you. "Look unto me, and be ye saved," is His own blessed word. Look then to Him and live. Yea, be saved, and know it too. If you are wise, you will believe the Gospel *now*, and securing the first appointment, will quite possibly escape the second, and may rest assured you can never undergo the third (see John v. 24).

W. T. P. W.

THE CALL OF THE BRIDE.

"And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and his men's feet that were with him. And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on. And he said, I am Abraham's servant. And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses. And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath. And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell: but thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son."—GEN. xxiv. 32-38.

PART I.—THE BRIDEGROOM.



HE twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis gives a most beautiful illustration of the Gospel of God, now presented by the Holy Ghost to the guilty children of Adam. It is a pictorial representation of the time in which we live. In the bygone ages, Abraham desired for his son Isaac that which would be a joy and comfort to him; and at this present time, God does the same for His Son. He is seeking that which shall be the source of endless joy to His only, His well-beloved, Son, Jesus. And what is that? A BRIDE.

The Son's Bride, with her jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, is what I desire to call your attention to; and, beloved reader, rest assured this has not been left on record merely as a family

transaction in the history of Abraham's descendants, but because it is fraught with the deepest interest to us now, and is full of instruction and beautiful simile.

In the beginning of this chapter we have Abraham giving directions to his sworn servant, to go to his country, and to his kindred, and take a wife from thence unto his son Isaac.

In this servant we have not only a ready and faithful, but also a prayerful, messenger; and need we wonder then that his mission from Hebron to the distant city of Nahor in Mesopotamia was so prosperous? No; we can but share, as it were, in the faithful messenger's joy, as he recrosses the desert, taking with him to his master's son the one who shall be so dear to his heart. And in these days there is One who has come from heaven's far-off land on a similar errand—the Holy Ghost. He has come down to us. Angels have been passed by, and to man, fallen man, has been delivered the Gospel message of peace; and from the family of Adam the Holy Ghost is gathering out those who shall form the Bride, and He is leading across the pathless desert of the world this Bride for the Son, to whom the Father has given "*all things.*" Safely is He leading her onward to that happy moment when she shall be presented, radiant with the jewels that have been given her by her long-expected Bridegroom, the Lord of all.

Have you ever thought that there is a living Man, seated on the throne of heaven, waiting and

longing for the time when the Church, His Bride, shall be associated with Himself in glory, and when He shall share all the honour and dignity of that throne with the one for whom He died? So it is. "Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it;" and of Him individually the believer can say, "Who loved me, and gave himself for me." How happy and blessed are they who form an integral part of the Church! Reader, can *you* look forward with joy to the meeting of the Bride and Bridegroom? Can you picture the scene, and share by anticipation in the joy, when all heaven shall be in ecstasy, because "the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready"?

Twice in Scripture do we read of ecstatic joy amongst the heavenly hosts. First, at the birth of the Lord, we are told: "And suddenly there was with the angels a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men" (Luke ii. 13, 14). And again at the marriage of the Lamb: "And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she

should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. xix. 5-8).

Do you wish to form part of the Bride here described? I do not now ask, Do you want salvation? or, Do you want to escape from hell? No; I ask now, Do you want what God calls you to? Do you desire to possess the honour He here offers you? Will you have the dignity and glory He puts at your disposal? Will you accept it, or refuse it? *Which?* Can you for a moment hesitate? Oh, better far spend eternity as the happy Bride of the Son of God, in the brightness of heaven's glory, than spend it in the darkness of hell. Better far be bound to Jesus with the cords of love, than be bound in hell with the cords of your own sins!—for in one state or other must eternity be spent.

But let us return and look in detail at what is here written. The scene represented is in the distant country of Mesopotamia, and the servant is there telling a tale that will allure one to leave all that is dear to her in her native land, and go to be the bride of him whom she has never seen, but of whom she hears such wondrous tidings.

This servant's mission is very simply and clearly told. He is a true and faithful servant; his sole desire is to serve his master. He says, "O Lord God of my master Abraham, *I pray thee*, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city

come out to draw water: and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master" (verses 12-14).

What a beautiful example this is to each servant of God! Would that we all were more prayerful, more dependent on God for the success of all we undertake in His service, then might we look for an equally blessed result. He *prayed*, nor had he long to wait for an answer; for we are told, "And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her; and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up." Mark here the eagerness of the servant in his master's work: "And the servant *ran* to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray, drink a little water of thy pitcher. And she said, Drink, my lord; and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking" (verses 15-19).

Rebekah, type of the sinner, meets the messen-

ger thus at the well. And does not God delight to meet you, dear soul? Yes, you think you have something to do, that you must get into a certain condition, before you can get into the presence of God; but, you are mistaken. Rebekah, going just as she was to draw water, is met by Abraham's servant; and so, too, the sinner, just as he is, has presented to him, and must receive from God, His testimony to the Person of the Lord Jesus.

What does drawing water signify? It is the action of an unsatisfied soul, an expression of thirst. We have in the New Testament an account of one who came to draw water at Samaria's well, and to whom the Lord said, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The truth taught figuratively here is the necessity for you to have Christ now as your own, and to be satisfied with Him, for it is He alone who can satisfy the cravings of the needy soul. As the servant met Rebekah, so would the Lord meet you. "Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher" is the first address of the seeker to the sought one.

So, in the 4th of John, when the blessed Lord would win the confidence of Samaria's erring daughter,

"Give me to drink" is the gracious word that began an interview which did not end till, *convicted* of her sin, and *commanded* by His grace, that *revealed* heaven's best gift (Christ) to earth's worst sinner (herself), she left His side only to bring others back with her to that sacred place of blessing, by the words, "Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" Such, my reader, is the lovely way Divine Grace stoops to win man's heart. It has won mine. Shall it not win yours also?

Having secured her attention, got into her company, and gone with her to her mother's house, the servant begins to unfold his mission; and see his earnestness: "I will not eat till I have told mine errand." And what doth he tell? And he said, I am Abraham's servant. And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly, and he is become great; and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses. And Sarah, my master's wife, bare a son to my master when she was old: *and unto him hath he given all that he hath.* And my master made me swear, saying, . . . Thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and *take a wife unto my son*" (verses 34-38).

His first care, you see, is to unfold the tidings about this only-begotten son; *i.e.*, he presents distinctly, a PERSON enriched with all that the father's love could give, and concerning whom he had *purposes* which deeply concerned one of those

who, for the first time, heard of this would-be bridegroom, Isaac.

What a type of Christ! We must not forget, too, that in Gen. xxii. we have in a wondrous figure the death and resurrection of Jesus, as of that scene it is written, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises, *offered up his only begotten son*, . . . accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure" (Heb. xi. 17-19).

Thus it is not till Christ has died, risen again, and ascended into heavenly glory, that the Holy Ghost comes to seek the heart of the Bride for the absent one.

Before Isaac gets *his possessions, or his bride*, he is the risen heir; and thus is he a type of our Lord, who had first to die for His Church before He could have her with Him in glory. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 24). How far the antitype exceeds the type I need not say. How wonderful it all is! and how blessedly true! What the restraining arm of God saved Isaac from, His own beloved Son had to endure. He hung on the cross, He died a shameful death, He descended into the grave, as the Church's Representative; and blessed be God, He rose again entitled to claim "his own" in virtue of His atoning death, and blood-shedding.

What does the Holy Ghost reveal of that only

begotten Son of God? All that the Father hath is His: "Unto him hath he given *all* that he hath." The Man in the glory is the One to whom the Father has given everything. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John iii. 35). He "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. 9-11).

Scripture abounds with testimony that all has been given to Jesus; but there was one thing yet in the mind of God, of deeper and greater value than all that had been given, a priceless gift in the sight of Jesus, and that was a "Bride" to be His helpmeet. How wonderful is the thought, that the Son of God so loved that Bride as to come down to earth, and give up His life, in order to possess her! He loved the Church—loved her with so great a love that we are told that He "for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame." For her He left His Father's home on high; for her He became a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"; was mocked and scourged, and at last crucified between two malefactors. But the fruit of all His sufferings is that He shall have a spotless Bride for ever seated by His side in glory. All has been done to win her, and she shall be His. That was what sustained His heart while here on

earth; that was what He looked onward to in the midst of all His untold, His unutterable agony, while doing His Father's will, and paying the costly price demanded by a righteous God to redeem those who are to form His Bride. Costly indeed, was the ransom! Great indeed was His love. But it is joy to know He shall have full recompense for all His labour, all His sufferings; that His heart shall be fully gladdened, when He shall have the Church, His Bride, with Himself in glory.

“He and I in that bright glory
One deep joy shall share;
Mine, to be for ever with Him,
His, that I am there.”

Oh, beloved reader, will you be there? God wants you to share this joy and love, and to rank with Him to whom He has given all things. But you say, “Can this be for *me*? Does God mean this for me?” My answer to this question is very simple. How did Rebekah know she was the one the servant wanted for Isaac? She could have no doubt on that point, for she stood by as the servant (see verses 42-52) detailed to Laban how he had prayed to the Lord that he might meet the “appointed” one at the well, and recognise her by this sign, that when he should ask water for himself alone, she should not only yield this request but volunteer water for the camels also. Now Rebekah knew that she had exactly corresponded to this wanted personage, having said, and done

thus, to the letter, and therefore must be the one the servant was in quest of.

If you have any doubt whether you are the one Jesus wants, just tell me—Are you a sinner? “Yes.” Then listen: “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to *save sinners*” (1 Tim. i. 15).

“Yes, but I do not know whether I am ‘appointed’ to be saved, or, in other words, if I am among the elect.” Very likely, and I did not know that, the night I came to the Lord, but I knew something far more to the point, viz., that I was “*lost*.” Do you know and acknowledge that? “Yes, indeed I do,” you may reply. Very well, hear the Saviour’s words, “The Son of man is come to *seek*, and to *save* that which was *lost*.” (Luke xix. 10). Now what do you think? Are you the wanted one? You own you are a “sinner,” and, further, a “lost” one, and God says it was for such Jesus came. How can you escape the conclusion that He wants you? It is impossible to do so. Whether you want Him and are willing to accept God’s wondrous salvation, is the only open question. He offers it now to you, and it only remains with you to accept or reject His offered gift.

The exalted Son of God is patiently waiting till the last heart shall be won for Him. Say, shall your heart be won for Jesus? Shall the strong chains that bind you to the world, and the slavery of Satan, be broken, even now, by the tender accents of the Bridegroom’s loving voice, saying unto you,

"Come unto me"? Can you look back on the dark scenes of Golgotha, and see all that He suffered there to win you to Himself, and yet refuse to give Him your heart's affections? Surely not.

I ask you in God's name, and as a herald from heaven's far-off land, Will you come to Jesus? I take up the words of Rebekah's friends, and say to you, "Wilt thou go?" Let yours be the heart that joyfully responds, "I will go." Look at His beauty, He who is "the chief among ten thousand" and "altogether lovely," and rejoice in the truth that you may be *His*. He lingers over you with deepest patience and strongest love; He is knocking at the door of your heart; oh, soul, open unto Him. He lures you with all the deep affection of His true heart of love; He would draw you to Himself. Again His accents fall upon your ear, calling you this day, and saying, "Come unto me."

Let your response be that of Rebekah's, when she unhesitatingly said, "I will go." What decision there is expressed in these three words, "I will go"! And will you be less decided than she? Her vista was one of earthly joy, tarnished with earthly sorrows, and ending with death; but that which is now offered to you is perfect, unending, unclouded joy, and glory with Jesus in heaven. God, in grace and mercy, proposes to lift you from your present state of degradation, in which your sins have placed you, and deliver you from the eternal future of misery which awaits every unsaved soul. He

invites you to association in all the love and glory of heaven, as the Bride of the Lord of all.

This, then, is the call which now by the Gospel falls on every sinner's ear. That which fits the sinner for the presence of God is provided also through the finished work of Jesus, and doubtless typified by the "jewels of silver, jewels of gold, and raiment," which the sworn servant gave Rebekah, and of which I shall treat, with the Lord's help, in future pages of the *Gospel Messenger*.

W. T. P. W.

A SOUL'S AWAKENING.



T was a truly terrifying time; one not to be adequately pictured by words.

On the 15th of September 1874, the "Hoogley," a large East Indian liner, left Rangoon, bound for London, laden with rice.

The 15th of September is the date fixed by Lloyd's Insurance Clubs for ships leaving India, when it is supposed those terrible whirlwinds—the cyclones—are past and gone.

However, three days later the crew were alarmed. They were becalmed—the Indian Ocean like a glass, and the sun shining with all its Eastern splendour in a cloudless sky. The *awful* calm—for it could be described by no other word—they were convinced, was but the prelude of a terrible

storm. The rigging now became the resting place of hundreds of quails blown, no doubt, off the land by the terrible cyclone.

At three P.M. the barometer was convulsed. A slight wind began to blow and the sky was obscured by the blackest of clouds. At four P.M. the deck was cleared, and everything made tight and taut. No more could be done but trust in God. The breeze had developed into a strong gale, and the sea was now lashed into a storm. The water was breaking over the ship with tremendous force and fury. One tremendous sea carried away the deck house, and broke into the main hatch. The chief officer, seeing the danger, called for volunteers, and at the risk of their lives they succeeded in closing the hatch. They all securely tied themselves by ropes to the ship's side. All through the black night the storm raged. Food and sleep were out of the question. Any moment might be their last. Every nerve was strained to its utmost tension. The next morning, about eleven A.M., a tremendous sea caused the "Hoogley" to heel over, and turn on one side, her masts lying in the water. Despair seized the crew. Being securely tied to the ship's side, they were prevented from being swept away. To add, if possible, to their despair, they saw a tremendous sea or two sweep over a large wooden American ship—the "Aracan,"—which had left Rangoon with them. She foundered quickly before their eyes, no escape being possible for the unhappy crew.

At this awful juncture an Irish sailor grew boisterous in the face of death, crying out, "If I am going to die, I am going to die happy." A German rebuked him, saying, "Don't you fear God?"

Up to this point, the subject of this narrative, Benjamin B——, for five years a sailor, had never thought seriously about eternity. In his own words he said, "Then the fear of God took hold of me, and shook me to my very foundations; I trembled to meet God. My heart went up in earnest prayer (not for myself) to Almighty God, to save my poor old mother the sorrow of losing her son."

In the presence of such a scene he might well call God the *Almighty* God. It seems almost too marvellous to relate. God heard his cry. Yet not marvellous. At two P.M. the wind was not so strong. At three o'clock the cyclone was gone, and not a breath of wind. With superhuman exertions the crew cut the topmasts away, got the cargo trimmed, and the ship righted. At last they got some refreshment. Part of the wreckage was washed ashore on the Andaman Islands, hence they were gazetted as "*Lost*." They had lost all, save their lives, and the clothes they had on their backs.

After a six months' passage they arrived in London in a sad plight, their food being chiefly a large tank of stale, and mouldy bread, mixed up with vermin. Benjamin B—— proceeded to his house—a Northern watering-place. The exposure and want brought on inflammation of the lungs, and for a long time he hovered between life and death.

Death again was faced by him. Not amid the terror and excitement of a raging storm, but quietly, and face to face, he measured that king of terrors. He was graciously restored. Man's will is stubborn, and his heart rebellious against God, and our friend, raised from the very gates of death, went in for a life of pleasure. Drinking and gambling filled up his nights. His gains at the gambling table were considerable. But all the time he was unhappy. He tried, again and again, to break the chains the devil had bound him with. But in vain! From the gambling table and the drink he would go home, and by the side of his bed cry to God to keep him from it. Good resolutions were broken as soon as made, and clean pages were quickly blurred and blotted. Man cannot be his own saviour.

Benjamin having married, moved away to a large industrial town. Infidelity was now the quieter of his conscience, or rather the gagger of it.

One Sunday evening a bright, bold, street preacher took his attention. As he moved away, a Christian worker put a booklet into his hand, which contained an invitation to a Gospel meeting. Some weeks after he was on his way to hear one of his infidel lecturers—to bolster up his conceit in what the quondam infidel—Thomas Cooper, calls “that blasting, brutifying thought that the grave must be my ‘end all.’”

As he passed along he was invited to hear the Gospel preached in the very place the notice folded

in the little book had mentioned. It was raining very hard. He thought he might as well go in. So in he went.

It happened that a very popular preacher had drawn away nearly the whole of the congregation from this little hall that evening. Benjamin found the audience consisted of some children, two men, and a woman.

A little man preached that night from some part of Paul's Epistle to Timothy. After the discourse was over, the preacher quickly advanced to the only "raw material" in the room—our friend, Benjamin, and asked him, "Are you saved?"

He answered with a scoff—threatening to knock the questioner down, who reasoned and talked with him, whilst our friend aired his shallow, flippant, infidelity.

All the time Benjamin B—— was longing to be assured his sins were forgiven. Whilst the sophistical lies of the infidel were on his tongue, his heart was bursting within him. The gas was turned out, they talked so long. A man will often tell out the secrets of his heart in the dark. See Nicodemus as he came to Jesus by night. Our friend at last came out with the whole truth, that after all, deep down in his heart, he believed the Bible was God's book, and that he longed for peace.

Now the preacher could get at him. He drew his attention to the third chapter of John's gospel—that chapter of all chapters, for it contains the 16th verse—"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." A verse of a hymn our friend had often heard the Methodists sing, and which he had often made sport of, came into his mind :—

"There is life in a look at the crucified One ;
There is life at this moment for thee ;
Then look, sinner, look, unto Him and be saved—
Unto Him who was nailed to the tree."

The whole truth flashed into his soul. His wanderings in the dry places of the earth for rest had only brought vanity, vexation, and void. His sins were troubling him. Jesus had died on the cross for sinners. He was one. He would accept Him as his Saviour. He exclaimed, "I see it; I am saved." The preacher and another friend went on the road home with him through the pelting rain, and parted from him, not believing in the genuineness of his case. But our dear friend now preaches the gospel he once despised, and has testified for some years now by his life and lips of the grace that he has tasted.

This little narrative is sent forth in the hope that it may interest and help souls who are in the same case as Benjamin B—— was in. His Saviour can be yours here and now, as you read this paper. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

Religion is played out in this nineteenth century, but Christ is not. Trust Him, then, dear reader, and you will never repent it.

A. J. P.

HOW SHOULD MAN BE JUST WITH GOD?



OW should man be just with God? is a question proposed by Job many hundred years ago (Job ix. 2). But he was slow to arrive at a right answer. Sincere, but full of reasoning, his active mind suggested many plans, but his awakened conscience told him all was in vain. How many are like him! Thousands to-day, troubled about this momentous matter, seek to be just with God after their own fashion, instead of bowing to His blessed word. All Job's efforts and plans ended in the *abhorrence of self* in the presence of God, when God Himself met his case, and accepted him (Job xlii. 6-9). He will do the same to-day for any reader of these lines, who comes to the same point, and cries with Job, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." It is there God meets us in His grace, and the answer to Job's question is, "*God is just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*"

In Job ix. and x. we find four roads which suggested themselves to his mind in his difficulties, but which he soon discovered to be of no avail. They set forth strikingly the modern experiences of many a troubled soul.

Firstly, he said, "If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it

shall also prove me perverse. Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life" (Job ix. 20, 21). This is the road of "*self-justification*." The thought had arisen in his mind, "If I justify myself before God, what then?" And the consciousness of his own condition brought the reply, "Mine own mouth shall condemn me. If I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse." "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." The mouth lets out what is there. He might justify himself; he might say I am perfect; but a sinful heart, deceitful above all, and desperately wicked, would soon betray him. The lips would be sure to utter what was there, and very soon give the lie to his own boasted righteousness. "Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul; I would despise my life." Ah, it is no good for that old incorrigible I to talk about perfection, dear reader. The man who talks like that clearly does not know himself; he does not know his soul. He deceives himself. Job was so sensible of this, he adds, "I would despise my life." And well he might. Think of talking of *perfection* in a sinner in the presence of a holy God! Perfection in the flesh is a total setting aside of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. "If I *justify myself*." Well, God will judge me, that is certain. "But if I judge myself," what then? Why, God will justify me. The *self-justified* are judged; the *self-judged* are justified. There is the difference. Say not, then, as Job at

one time did, "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go" (Job xxvii. 6), even after he had confessed its worthlessness; but let your righteousness go at once, and 'submit yourself to God's (Rom. x. 3). None other will do before Him.

Troubled, Job thought of his short span of life, saying, "Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good. They are passed away as the swift ships; as the eagle that hasteth to the prey" (Job ix. 25, 26). He considers the three swiftest things that his eye had ever beheld, the post, the ship, and the eagle. Swifter than the camel with the post sped across the wide expanse of his native land; swifter than the swift ships disappeared beneath the horizon of the mighty sea; swifter than the king of birds pounced upon its prey, his days were passing away, and *he saw no good*. Death was rapidly approaching, and his soul was daily troubled with the momentous question, "How should man be just with God?" Reader, you are in like case. Your short span of life is all but run. Death is before *you*, and *you* must meet God. Are *you* ready? How, *how* should man be just with God?

A second thought suggests itself to Job. Suffering in body and in circumstances, and with the consciousness of God's hand upon him, he says, "If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself," what then? How shall I get on if I travel this road? Supposing I ignore the thing, take it as a matter of course,

leave God out altogether, and just look at it as if it were a mere accidental circumstance. How many souls, dealt with by God, try to throw it off thus! But it is all no good. Conscience pricks him. He might *say* it, but what would be the result? Firstly, he adds, "I will be afraid of all my sorrows." And, secondly, "I know that *thou* wilt not hold me *innocent*." Ah, yes, Job, it is no good. There is no getting out of it in that way, and *you know it*. And you too, sinner, may think to try the same road, but it is all in vain. There is no road back to innocence. Innocence was in Eden only, and is lost for ever. You have a conscience, knowing good and evil, and naturally you have the evil. Troubled in soul, you might try and forget it, and say so; but *fear* will still reign in your heart, and *God* will not hold you innocent. It is righteousness you need, not innocence. Have it you must to stand before Him. Your own is worse than useless. God's is now revealed; to it you must submit (Rom. i. 17, iii. 22). God alone can justify you.

But stay, another thought, I will cleanse myself. I see it is no good justifying myself, and ignoring facts. I am in the difficulty, and it must be faced. Just with God I must be. I am not right now anyhow. I know I am not fit for His holy presence. Sin has defiled me, and He cannot look upon me thus I know. I will *cleanse myself*. What could be more reasonable? I am black with sin; I will make myself white. Surely all will be right then.

Surely I can be just with God thus. Hope for the moment springs up within the heart. But what can I wash myself with? Ah, Job, that's the question, a question as yet far beyond Job, intelligent as he evidently was.

And that is the all-important question for you, dear reader. Washed, cleansed, you must be, but with what? Hear Job's conclusion, as he weighs the matter seriously in his deep distress. "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt Thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me" (ix. 30, 31). Of nothing purer or more cleansing than snow water can he think, yet so deeply ingrained is sin, so hopeless his condition, that cleanse himself as he may, he would still be before God as a man plunged in a black ditch, his own clothes abhorring his filthiness. Oh, sinner, sin is far deeper and blacker than you think. Snow water cannot cleanse you. Yea, "though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee very much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God" (Jer. ii. 22).

Washed you must be, but it is only God who can do it. All your moral and religious efforts to cleanse yourself are in vain. The road of mere reformation in the flesh leads straight to hell. The one thing you need is *the blood of Christ*.

"*Nothing but His precious blood
Can do fallen sinners good.*"

"The blood of Jesus Christ, his (God's) Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7).

Job, almost at his wits' end, exclaims, "My soul is weary of my life," &c. (Job x. 1). Sinner, have you ever been there? Have you ever found sin to be such a terrible plague, as to exclaim that? Never was a soul brought to God without knowing something of it. It is when we get quite to our wits' end, when we learn God's thoughts about us, and despair utterly of ourselves, that He meets us in grace, and we learn what He is, a Saviour-God.

But stay, Job has a fourth road. One more thought suggests itself. He sees that self-justification, ignoring of his real state, and reformation are no good. No, dear reader, none whatever for any of us; these three roads lead straight to the lake of fire. But, thinks Job, supposing that I were to throw conscience overboard altogether, and live in sin. I was conceived in it; do what I will it clings to me, and I cannot get rid of it; why should my life be one long groan? How will it be if I let slip the rein and go on in it; I'm not the only one? Ah, it is all in vain. I cannot get away from God. If I sin, what then? Perhaps He will be merciful, and take no notice of it! No, that is impossible. God is holy, He cannot pass it by thus. "If I sin, then *thou* markest me." I may treat it lightly, ignore it, justify it; but *God never*. "And thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity. If I be wicked, woe is me," &c.

Job is getting to his wits' end. His misery is so

great, that as he thinks of the day when he was born into the world, he exclaims, "Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me! I should have been as though I had not been," &c. (Job x. 18, 19). But he had to go yet deeper still, and when he had learnt to abhor himself, God accepted him (Job xlii. 6-9).

Ah, sinner, sin is *sin*, and God marks it. Live in it, and He will damn you. Every sin that you have committed in thought, word, or deed, has been marked by Him, and the smallest unpardoned would sink you into hell. To go on in it is folly, madness. Death, its wage, is at your door, and judgment after—judgment eternal. Sin is a foul blot before God. A sinner you are, and if you die in your sins, your case is hopeless.

Try which you will of these four roads, they all lead to one goal. If you justify yourself, you will be judged. If you ignore your state, you will be judged. If you cleanse yourself, you will be judged. If you live in sin, you will be judged. But if you abhor and judge yourself, God will justify and accept you. How?

God is "just, and the justifier of him which *believeth in Jesus*" (Rom. iii. 26). "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24). "Now being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. v. 9). "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness"

(Rom. iv. 5). "By him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39). "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. 25, v. 1). "Being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus iii. 7). "It is *God that justifieth*, who is he that condemneth?" (Rom. viii. 33, 34.)

The question is plain, and the answer is plain. Will you receive it? The moment a guilty but self-judged sinner *believes in Jesus*, he is justified by God's grace, *through Christ's blood, in Christ Jesus, on the principle of faith, from all things, to walk henceforth in Christ's footsteps, till He come, abounding in good works, and hence practically justified in the sight of all.*

Reader, are *you* just with God?

E. H. C.

THE FIRST TRAIN, THE BEST TRAIN, AND THE WORST TRAIN.



RECENTLY when a gentleman and I were looking over the well-known "Bradshaw's Guide" map with its vast network of thousands upon thousands of miles of railways covering the face of the country, he remarked that on the great original railway opening day, sixty-six years

ago, he had the honour of being a passenger in the first railway train that ever ran on the face of the earth, which started from Darlington in Yorkshire, in the year 1825, when he was a boy of nine years old.

After my aged friend, to whom I had never spoken before, had given me descriptions of the carriages used in those days, and the accommodation provided, I rejoined, "Well, Mr A——, have you yet had the honour of being a passenger in that best of all trains—the train for glory?"

"Yes," said he, "praise God, I have been in that train for well-nigh sixty years, for I have received my Saviour, who is 'the way, the truth, and the life.'"

"Then," I added, "you and I are fellow-passengers from man's ruin on earth to the joys of the Father's house above, and we will praise the Lord together."

Friend, you may not have travelled in that first railway train, but let us ask are you a passenger in the train for heaven, or are you still in the train for hell—in the *best* train or in the *worst* train—the *up* express or the *down* express—yes, which are you to be found in to-day? If in the devil's train, and you may not know it, you have only to keep your seat and ere long that train will reach its final and eternal destination—hell flames!—Dear unsaved reader, if you are still really in the *worst* train, oh wake up, we beseech you, and change trains. All, without exception, are either in the

up train or in the down train. To those in the *worst* train the cry is "ALL CHANGE!" To those in the *best* train the word is "NO CHANGE!" All have sinned; the wages of sin is death; after death the judgment; then beyond that great white throne of judgment is the lake of fire, that never shall be quenched, and the worm that never dies. All who, in the day of God's grace, receive Jesus as their sin, death, and judgment bearer, and get their sins washed away in His precious blood, are in the best, the divine train.

But all who keep their seats and refuse to change, remain in their sins, have death and judgment and endless misery for their portion. Do not, we implore you, let that portion be *yours*. Think, dear soul, of the love of Jesus in dying for you. Think of what it cost Him to purchase for you a free ticket for and a seat in glory. Then lose not another moment of time in taking your seat in the heavenly train, which is filling fast. Still there is room. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

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

THE CALL OF THE BRIDE.

"And the servant brought forth *jewels of silver*, and *jewels of gold*, and *raiment*, and gave them to Rebekah"—GEN. xxiv. 53

PART II.—THE BRIDE'S "JEWELS OF SILVER."



THE effect of the Word of God, when it for the first time really reaches the soul of a sinner, is to raise the question of fitness for the presence of God. Am I fit to go to God? is the query which the awakened soul will put to itself, and answer in the negative when the Gospel call has aroused it to the invitation of God. Now the perfection of the Gospel of God is this—that not only does it call the sinner to God, but shows the soul the way to come, and the ground of access to Him. In other words, it provides that which fits the guilty sinner to stand in God's presence, cleansed, forgiven, and happy.

Further, before the soul is called on to decide for Christ, it has brought before it the tale of His work, and its effects for all who believe God's message about His beloved Son. This truth is strikingly illustrated in the verse at the head of this chapter. Having found the one whom he wishes to gain as a bride for Isaac, Abraham's servant brings out the things which were at once the pledges of the reality of his message, and the answer to any question of poverty, or unfitness, to respond to his call, by reason of the lack of these

things. The jewels of silver, jewels of gold, and raiment, were suited to the glory of the sphere whence they came, and to which she was invited; and once accepted, and worn by Rebekah, would make her personally suitable to the scene, and home, to which she was called. These gifts must have for ever silenced her fears (if she had them) that she did not possess the attire, and the ornaments, that the bride of such "a mighty man of wealth" should possess. Nay, more: she receives, and possesses them, ere she has to decide whether, or not, she will accept the call to be the bride of Isaac.

Let all this have its application to you, dear reader. God wants you for His Son, and the Holy Ghost tells you, in the Gospel, what Christ has done by His death to fit you for the presence of God.

But you may say, "God may be willing to receive me, but I am quite unfit to go to God. How can I, who am such a sinner, go to be with Jesus in glory?"

Let not the question of unfitness keep you back, for God does not invite you without putting before you the jewels, and raiment, that will fit you for His presence, and for the place He calls you to. It is *He* that fits you, bear that in mind; you cannot fit yourself. All your attempts to fit yourself will but end in your being clothed in filthy rags.

Rebekah has listened to the messenger, she has received the gifts; he has told her about his

master's son, of the wealth and honour of him who is sole heir of all his father's possessions; he tells her also that he has come to seek a bride for him, and Rebekah at length discovers that *she* is the one whom he seeks. She is asked to be the bride of Isaac. Does the thought cross her mind of her fitness? or is the question asked, "Does he wish me?" We are not told so; but, trembling, doubting one, the heavenly Bridegroom wants *thee*. Art thou willing to go? Wake up, O sinner, to see that it is *thee* He wants. Rebekah may think of the riches and honour that shall be hers as the bride of Isaac; but great as they were, they pale before the glory that shall be yours when in association with Christ in heaven.

We read in verse 53, that "the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah," thus fitting her with the bridal raiment suited to the high station about to be hers. Reader, do you want that which will fit you to be the Bride of the Lamb? It is all ready for you, offered to you, as Rebekah's was to her. Will you accept, as she did, 'jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment'? How rich and how rare are these jewels! Let us look at them separately.

The jewel of silver is the first in order; and as we gaze on its beauty we see engraven upon it, in sparkling letters, REDEMPTION. Gold is the symbol of DIVINE RIGHTEOUSNESS, while RAIMENT tells of a suited covering. Thus you see the believer has

three things: 1st, Redemption; 2nd, Righteousness; 3rd, Raiment; and they are all free gifts; you have not to purchase them; you are not to work for them. The servant *gave* them to Rebekah, and she *received* them in the simplicity of faith, which always appropriates what love provides.

The meaning of the Jewels of SILVER we learn in Exod. xxx. 12-16, where we read of silver in connection with making atonement, or giving a ransom for the soul, *i. e.*, Redemption. "When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a *ransom* for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them. This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary (a shekel is twenty gerahs): an half shekel shall be the offering of the Lord. Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the Lord. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, *to make an atonement* for your souls. And thou shalt take the *atonement money* of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord *to make an atonement for your souls.*"

In Exodus we have the first mention of redemp-

tion, and in Revelation we have the last. It is found all through Scripture, till it culminates in that magnificent song of heaven: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and *hast redeemed* us to God by the blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. v. 9). The blood of Jesus is the believer's redemption money—that, dear reader, is the jewel of silver He offers *thee*. Wilt thou accept it? Thou must either be redeemed or be eternally lost; and as it was of old, so is it now, "The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less." The same for the rich, the same for the poor, every one must have the same Saviour, the same salvation through His sacrificial death, the same redemption price, and that is Christ. Christ from first to last, we owe all to Him. He alone is our Redeemer, our precious Jewel of Silver.

On turning to Exod. xxxviii. 25-27, we read: "And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation was an hundred talents. . . . And of the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the vail; an hundred sockets of the hundred talents, a talent for a socket." The boards of the tabernacle (type of the believer) rested on the sockets of silver, or, in other words, had a foundation on redemption, and figuratively teach us that everything rests on atonement. Precious indeed in the sight of God is this fair Jewel of Silver; and shall we fail to value the heavenly gift?

How often is redemption brought before us in Scripture! Let us look at a few passages in the New Testament: and first in that epistle which gives the foundations of man's relationship to God after he has sinned. I allude to Rom. iii. 23-25, where the Holy Ghost says, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through *the redemption* that is in Christ Jesus · whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation *through faith in his blood.*" Man's sin is met by God's grace, which provides a Redeemer, and a redemption based on the shed blood of that Redeemer. The sinner has only to believe in Jesus in order to enjoy present, and eternal redemption from the consequences of sin that God must judge.

After man's sin, and before God's judgment of him, and it, at the great white throne, Christ steps in, bears sin, and is made sin on the cross; sustains God's judgment in respect thereof, fully satisfies all the claims of God's righteous throne, makes propitiation, or atonement, and effects redemption for every poor sin-stained soul that trusts in Him. Mark, redemption and purchase are not the same. If I *buy* a slave, the slave is mine, and is still a slave. If I *redeem* a slave I take him out of the condition in which he was a slave, and the moment I redeem him, he is a slave no longer, but a free man through the redemption which I have effected—perhaps at a great cost to myself—but which he now rejoices in. Mere *purchase* would still leave

his fetters on him, but *redemption* means their being for ever knocked off and the man set free.

Now this is exactly what the Gospel does: it delivers the sinner who believes from the righteous judgment of God—Christ having borne it—and from the present power of Satan—Christ having overcome him. What a blessed Redeemer! and what a redemption! Who would not have Him and it when both are to be gotten by faith?

Again, we read: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and *redemption*" (1 Cor. i. 30). How plainly it is stated here that Christ is made our redemption; but do you believe it? Are you willing to be redeemed?

Again: "Christ *hath redeemed* us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. iii. 13). What more could He do for us? He has redeemed us "once for all." Once is sufficient, for that *once* has satisfied the righteous claims of God.

We are redeemed by the blood of Christ, but, oh, remember, Divine judgment will inevitably overtake you if you are not sheltered by that precious blood. To be without the shelter of the blood will be as certain judgment to you, as it was to the Egyptians, on the night of the Passover in Egypt; but yours will be eternal judgment.

Have you ever thought of the extent of the meaning of *Redemption*, and how it affects you?

What does it mean? It means that you may be set free from the judgment due to you on account of sins. "The wages of sin is death." O sinner, will you not flee to the refuge from the wrath to come?

Then, in Eph. i. 7 we read, "In whom we have *redemption* through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Here we have not only the redemption in the Beloved, but we have the forgiveness of sins, and it is according to the *riches of His grace*.

Again, as it were, does the heavenly Bridegroom open the casket, and anew offer to you this precious jewel of silver. Do not undervalue it, it may not again be offered; do not refuse it, lest, to the pangs of hell, be added the bitter remorse, that redemption from its flames and torment had once been offered you, but you refused to be redeemed.

Again, in Col. i. 14 we read, "In whom we have *redemption* through his blood;" and in Titus ii. 14, "Who gave himself for us, that he might *redeem* us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." What did He give? He *gave Himself*. To redeem whom? *All* who will receive this silver jewel of redemption. Christ Himself is the half shekel of the sanctuary; yea, He is the sanctuary itself where all may find rest and salvation.

In Heb. ix. 12, we have it spoken of as an *eternal* redemption. "But Christ being come, . . . neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his

own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained ETERNAL REDEMPTION for us."

The Spirit of God also speaks of it as a present, known, precious, and *perfect* redemption; Christ was perfect, therefore His work was perfect. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not *redeemed* with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. i. 18). You see it is no mere hope of redemption that is offered to you, it is a blessed certainty, "*Ye know.*" Mark it well, beloved fellow-believer: "*Ye know*" it, for the precious blood of the Son of God *has* been given to redeem you.

If you simply believe in Jesus, you are entitled to swell that song of heaven which rises to the ascended Lamb of God. "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and *hast redeemed* us to God by thy blood" (Rev v. 9).

What a note! "*Redeemed to God!*" If you believe in Jesus you are not only redeemed from judgment and the lake of fire for ever, but "*redeemed to God*" NOW. I have not reached heaven yet, but I have reached God, every simple believer in Jesus can truly say It was to effect this He died. "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might *bring us* to God" (1 Pet iii. 18)

Dear reader, do you believe these blessed truths of God? Let me urge you not to despise them. Your own eternal ruin—spirit, soul, and body—will be the sure result if you do. As the servant “gave” the “jewels of silver” to Rebekah, so do I bring to you the tidings of God’s gift to the world—His Son, a Redeemer, a Saviour. Oh, be entreated to accept this blessed Saviour now, and enjoy “redemption” as a present portion. The slave cannot redeem himself, nor can you. “None of them can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him” (Ps. xlix 7). If you cannot do it for your brother, much less can you for yourself. You must let another do it for you. The only One who could do it is Jesus. He Himself said when here, “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to *give his life a ransom for many*” (Mark x. 45). Observe, He said then it was only for “many.” When, however, He had died, borne sins, and the judgment of God, the Holy Ghost delights to declare the yet wider aspect of His wondrous death, declaring it to be “for all.” Note these words, I pray you, concerning “God our Saviour, who *will* have (*i.e.*, desires) *all* men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; *who gave himself a ransom for all*, to be testified in due time” (1 Tim. ii. 3-6). Glorious tidings these for anxious souls. Are you an anxious soul seeking salvation? Believe then

these words about Jesus. His work of redemption is finished. "*He gave himself a ransom for all.*" See the cost of our redemption. Himself! Can you refuse any longer to trust Him? Nay; trust Him simply; receive Him as your Redeemer—as your redemption—your ransom—and then go on your way, not ashamed to wear the priceless and sparkling "jewel of silver" sovereign Grace has given you, always singing—

"My Redeemer! oh, what beauties
In that lovely name appear;
None but Jesus, in His glories,
Shall the honoured title wear.
My Redeemer,
Thou hast my salvation wrought."

W. T. P. W.



NOT RELIGION, BUT CHRIST.



SOME thirty years ago there went from Scotland to America a young man under deep religious impressions. He had been awakened to a sense of guilt, but could, by no means, find peace. And it was this he wanted.

His life was miserable. He carried about a conscience troubled, and a soul full of despair. He could look back on sins committed, and had to look forward to a judgment seat. All was bad behind, and all was dark ahead. He had

committed sins against God, and God was to him unknown.

Such a state he could not endure, but sought relief therefrom by adopting the life of a missionary. Leaving his native land he sailed for America, taking along with him an immense supply of tracts, calculated to awaken and profit others, whilst, poor man, he was in spiritual darkness himself. He did not go saying, like Paul, "I am sure that when I come unto you, I shall come on the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ;" no, but with the hope that, in carrying a Gospel in which he did not fully rely for himself, he might, somehow, find peace through his labour for others.

He hoped to find peace through his works! A vain, but not uncommon, hope. Oh! what multitudes, both of men and women, enter upon a religious life, as they say, in order that thereby they may obtain rest of soul!

Reader, such a rest cannot be found in a "*religious life*." Peace with God cannot be bought by our good works. It is not to be found in "the church," in the monastery, or in the convent. It is not to be found in labours in the closet, or in labours in the slums. It is not to be found in preaching to the heathen, or in ministering to the Christian.

Peace with God is found in none of these things.

Yet this young man had the idea that, if only he went away, and laboured for the conversion of

others, he himself would, in like manner, by some unknown reflex action, be converted too.

It was a grand mistake! For, after doing all he could for some time, and feeling that he was "no better, but rather grew worse," he returned to his native country; and, being in Edinburgh, he attended the meetings of a well-known evangelist, when he heard, and, through mercy, believed the truth, and found, there and then, by faith, what all his labours failed to give him. On the very first occasion of his hearing him, this servant of Christ read from the eighth chapter of Proverbs, verses 22-36, beginning with the words, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old; I was set up from everlasting, or ever the earth was. . . . When he prepared the heavens, I was there," &c.

Suddenly stopping, the preacher looked round, and solemnly said, "Who is speaking here?" He repeated the question, still looking at his audience. Our friend supposed that he had heard some interruption, and wondered why no one responded to the preacher's query.

But his wonder soon gave place to a very different feeling. After a pause the evangelist answered his own question by saying, "Christ is speaking here!" On hearing these words this deeply anxious auditor found peace with God, and his long weary years of seeking, and toil, and travel in quest of rest, came to a happy and final end. Faith came by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

Now, what is there in the above passage to give such perfect peace to an anxious soul? It does not unfold the plan of salvation, nor expound the truths of the Gospel. No, but it speaks of Christ; it turns the eye and the mind on Him; and this is where the soul finds relief. Self-occupation, in all its forms, is misery; Christ-contemplation is joy and peace. "They looked unto him and were lightened" (Ps xxxiv. 5); or, as dear M'Cheyne used to say, "When I look around I am distracted; when I look within I am miserable; but when I look above I am happy." A true and most blessed fact.

Well, if Proverbs viii does not present such a foundation for soul-rest as we find, for instance, in Romans viii., yet it places Christ (in the form of Wisdom) brightly before us. It presents Him, in His own proper eternity, planning and executing creation in concert with God, just as we read in Gen. i. 26, "God said, Let us make man"—the blessed Godhead co-operating in this mighty work. Then Jesus could say, "I was there"! What a wonderful statement when we think of the depths of humiliation into which He came.

He who once sat wearied at the well of Sychar, and asked for a draught of its water, was, at the same time, He who, in view of the stretching of the heavens, and the founding of the earth, could truly say, "I was there"!

He combines in His own person infinite power and infinite grace; and whether in the exercise of the one, or the display of the other, it is always

the same Wonderful Person. The Word of God may point Him out to us, in self-surrender under judgment for our sins on Calvary, or simply "speaking," in the omnipotence of creatorial power, and "it stood fast"; but in each case, so widely different, it is the self-same Jesus. He who could say, in reference to creation, "I was there," can say exactly the same as to the atoning work of Calvary. Man had nothing to do in creation, nor has he aught to do in atonement, save, indeed, committing the sins that formed the occasion for it. Both are the work of God—the one a work of power, the other of pure and absolute grace. We never placed a finger, or added a touch, to the work of creation; neither did we ask God to work in the grace that freely sent His Son, our blessed and willing Saviour.

And thus, as the glory of the Lord Jesus, "the wisdom of God," was presented in the reading of Prov. viii. to our friend, it pleased the Spirit of God to engage his mind with the all-sufficiency of Christ, and that in such a full and mighty way that the difficulties and anxieties of his busy, weary years were ended there. then and for ever. Yes, years of fruitless toil gave place to present and abiding satisfaction; and futile works, that had peace for their impossible object, made way for that divine and blessed peace from which works flow as the simple and sure effect. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

J. W. S.

“BUT THE FATHER SAID.”

(LUKE XV 22.)



ALL hung on that. What would his father say? It was of comparatively little importance what the son said, or for what place he would ask. Very right that he should confess his sin; for “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.” Confession is the evidence of repentance. (See also Prov. xxviii. 13)

But the son could not finish what he had intended to say. How could he? For his father had seen him when he was yet a great way off; had had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him. Was that the way servants were hired? No, he must let his father have his own way, and give in accordance with the dictates of his own heart “Bring forth the *best* robe, and put it on him,” &c

And what is all this intended to represent? The way that God receives sinners.

The Pharisees and scribes had murmured against the blessed Lord, saying, “This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them.” And so the Son of God’s bosom, the declarer of the Father, draws this picture to show, not only that God receives sinners, but the way in which He does it. For grace asks for nothing and gives all, and the best of everything too.

Dear reader, do you believe that God is thus

waiting to receive sinners, and to bless them? that He has everything in readiness for them; even the calf fatted for the feast; joys ready prepared?

On the rugged Yorkshire coast stood a little cottage, inhabited by a poor widow. Her only child, a son, the hope of her old age for comfort and support, had forsaken her years ago. In his hard-heartedness he had followed his own will, and run away to sea. But that mother's heart never gave him up. Many a prayer had gone up from her lonely bed, on windy nights, as she lay awake, and listened for his hand upon the latch; for she never locked her door, but left it on the latch, "for," said she, "he may come back some night, and I would not have him find my door closed against him. And if he only comes back to die, I'll gladly nurse him."

One night she heard a hand upon the latch, and a footstep on the floor below. "Charlie, is that you?" she said. "Yes, mother, I've come home to die. Will you have me?" "Yes, Charlie, and welcome."

That mother's love is but a faint reflection of God's yearning over sinners. Will you prove it, dear reader?

"Everlasting glory
Unto Jesus be,
Sing aloud the story
Of His victory.
How he left the splendour
Of His home on high,
Came in love so tender,
On the cross to die.

Yes ! He came from heaven !
 Suffered in our stead,
 Praise to Him be given,
 First-born from the dead.
 Jesus, meek and lowly,
 Came the lost to save ;
 He, the victim Holy,
 'Triumphed o'er the grave.

Christ the Lord is risen,
 Sing we now to-day !
Freed are we from prison,
Christ our debt did pay.
 Sing aloud, and never
 Cease to spread His fame,
 Triumph, triumph ever
 In the Saviour's name ! ”

W. G. B.

Pages for the Young.

“ I'M BAD, BUT YOU'S GOOD.”



“ **W**HAT hath God wrought ! ” So we sometimes exclaim when some hardened sinner becomes a humble saint—when some fierce persecutor becomes a preacher of the faith which once he destroyed, or when “ out of the mouth of babes and sucklings he ordains praise.”

It is of the latter that the following truthful little narrative tells.

In the beginning of 1886 little James D—,

owing to a family bereavement, was sent to stay for a time with an aunt at a town some distance from his own home. "Wee Jamsie," as he was called, was only seven years old, but being so small, looked two years younger.

Neither in his own home, nor in the one he had come to, was the Lord Jesus known or loved, so as was said of Samuel, it was also true of him, "he did not yet know the Lord" (1 Sam. iii. 7), but he was not too young for the purposes of God's grace.

One Saturday, while standing in a neighbour's workshop, watching the swift-flying shuttles of the hand-loom weavers, a Christian woman near whose loom he was standing, and whose heart was at the time enjoying a sweet sense of the love of God, spoke to the little boy a few words about the blessed Lord Jesus. He looked up at her with a puzzled expression on his face, and asked—

"But who is that?"

"Oh, Jamsie, don't you know about the Lord Jesus?"

Jamsie shook his head and again asked, "Who is He?"

"Did you never hear, Jamsie, about the One who lives up in the bright, bright glory, who always sees us, and who loves us so?" asked Mrs M——.

"Oh, is that the good Man who lives up in the sky; I've heard about Him, but I never knew His name before;" and then, in rather a surprised tone, he asked, "Do *you* know Him?"

"Yes," replied Mrs M——, with a smile, "and I

love Him, and would like you to know and love Him too, Jamsie."

During this conversation Mrs M—— had paused in her work, but being the bread-winner for her little household, she knew that she must work constant and hard. Then, seeing the little boy looking so interested, she said, "If you like to come to my house to-morrow afternoon, I will tell you more about the Lord Jesus."

Jamsie readily promised, and wearied for the time to come round. It seemed long, but at last it did come, and he hastened off to the garret room of his new friend, to hear the wonderful story of Jesus and His love.

Mrs M—— was alone at the time, and drawing the little boy close to her, she began to tell him, in simple words, of that wonderful love that was filling and overflowing her own heart, of how He had left the bright glory to come and die, to bear our punishment, of how He had been nailed upon the cross, and put into the grave, of how He rose again, and is now in the glory as Saviour. It was the first time that the story had fallen upon the little one's ears, and he listened with breathless attention, his earnest up-turned face and eyes fixed upon his friend, showing that it was all sinking deep down into his heart.

Let me ask you, who are reading this, Is it thus *you* have received the Gospel of the grace of God? If so, if you are indeed the Lord's, is it your delight to speak of Him even to the *little ones* who

cross your path? Remember it is written, "Blessed are ye that sow beside *all* waters" (Isa. xxxii. 20).

"But does the Lord Jesus know *me*?" Jamsie asked earnestly,

"Yes, dear boy, He knows and loves you."

A shadow crept over his young face as he said falteringly, "Ah, but—but *I'm bad*."

"Jesus knows that," said his friend, "but still He loves you."

"But I've told lies," continued Jamsie, with his eyes still fixed upon her face.

"Jesus knows that, but *He loves you*," repeated his friend.

The little boy's voice sank to a whisper as he said, "But I've said bad, bad words, too."

"Yes, Jamsie, the Lord Jesus knows how bad you are, but He died for you, just because you were bad, and because He loves you. He wants you to let in His love, and to be His," said his friend earnestly.

Jamsie was silent for a little, and then he burst out, "Oh, I want to love Him, and to be His; what'll I say to Him?"

It was Mrs M——'s turn to be silent now, for it was the first time that an "inquirer" had turned to her to ask the way, and she was afraid to tell him wrong.

"I do so want to love Him," again pleaded Jamsie earnestly; "tell me what to say."

"Well, Jamsie, just tell the Lord Jesus so," she answered simply. "He will hear you and make you His."

As they knelt together in that little room, Jamsie covered his face with both his hands, and sobbed out, "Lord Jesus, I'm bad, but You's good, and loves me ; make me Yours."

It was a touching, but a solemn scene, for Mrs M—— felt that this was the work of the Spirit of God in the child's soul, and with bowed head, and in broken words amid her tears, she, too, prayed and commended the little one to God. And if it was said by the heavenly messenger about Saul of Tarsus, "Behold, he prayeth," so also it was said now.

A look of peace rested upon Jamsie's face as they rose from their knees, and after a little more talk, he kissed his friend and bade her good-night. But after going half-way down the stair he returned and asked earnestly, "If I feel turning bad again, what'll I do ?"

"Just tell the Lord Jesus, Jamsie."

"But if somebody's in at Aunt Ellen's, and I can't get kneeling down and telling Him, what'll I do ?"

"The Lord Jesus always sees, always hears, always loves you, and He is always near to help you, dear Jamsie ; you can speak to Him in the house, or on the stairhead, or on the street, or anywhere, and He always listens, whether you kneel or not."

Greatly comforted, the little boy again kissed her, and departed. When he reached his aunt's, several people were in gossiping about the news of

the day. Soon his aunt undressed him and put him to bed, tucking him well up in the blankets. Jamsie lay quite still for a little while, then he suddenly sat up in bed, and with beaming face exclaimed, "Oh, I'm that happy, *for Jesus loves me.*"

All were startled, some laughed, but others brushed the tear from their eye. "Have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" (Matt. xxi. 16.)

Jamsie now longed to hear more about the Lord, and watched for every opportunity of getting his friend alone, so that he might hear of Him, and very sweet were the talks they had together.

It was after one of these talks that Jamsie suddenly inquired, "But when will we see Jesus, *I would so like to see Him?*"

"Well, Jamsie, we shall see Him soon, for before He went away up to the glory, He said that He would come again and receive us unto Himself, and He won't forget to come; some day—maybe ere long—He will give a shout that none will hear except those who love Him; but every one of them will hear it, even though they have died and been put in the grave; they will hear His voice, and be raised in a moment, and both they and we shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord, and then we shall be for ever with Him, and shall for ever see Him."

Mrs M—— had spoken slowly but earnestly of what was the joy and hope of her own soul. The little boy had been drinking in every word, and

the light of her face was reflected in his. Some time later on in the day, while in the workshop, where he was a general favourite, he stood gazing absently into the fire.

One of the workers, an old man, noticing his absorbed look, said to him kindly, "Now, Jamsie, take care and don't burn yourself at that good fire."

"No, no, I'll not burn myself," said the little boy, slowly; then looking up into his face, he asked eagerly, "Will it be long till Jesus comes, and we'll all fly up?"

The old man was quite taken aback by surprise, for though a professing Christian, he was neither looking nor longing for the Lord, and, shaking his head, said, "I can't tell you that, Jamsie; was you expecting to fly up?"

"Yes," said Jamsie, confidently; "whenever He comes for me."

"Well, you will need to be a very good boy then."

"Oh! but it's Jesus that makes me good, for I asked Him."

"And what did you say?" asked the old man with much interest.

The little boy coloured deeply at being called upon to make such a public confession, for the other workers were listening; but covering his face with both his hands, said, "Lord Jesus, I'm bad, but You are good, and loves me; make me good, too. Amen."

The tears ran down the old man's cheeks as he answered, "The very thing, Jamsie, the very thing; there is no fear but you will fly up when Jesus comes."

How true that "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise."

One day another Christian remarked, "Isn't it kind of the Lord Jesus to love us so, Jamsie?"

"Yes," he replied, "but it is our turn to love Him now."

And he was right, for "we love him because he first loved us" (1 John iv. 19).

Jamsie was but poorly clad, for all his friends were in humble circumstances, and knew well what straits were. One cold day, as he took his accustomed seat beside his friend in her little room, he looked at his worn-out boots, and remarked, "See the big holes in my boots; I wish I had a pair of new ones."

Mrs M—— looked compassionately at the old boots and sighed. How gladly she would have bought him new ones, but she had a hard struggle as it was to make both ends meet, and knew that she could not, so she only said, "Well, Jamsie, we can tell the Lord about it."

"Can you tell the Lord when you are needing new boots?" Jamsie asked in astonishment.

"Yes, dear boy, I tell Him all my troubles; He likes us to do so."

"We will tell Him just now then," said Jamsie, in a decided tone. And together they knelt, while,

in his simple, childish way he told the Lord of his old boots, and asked Him to send him new ones. Mrs M—— followed, putting in the clause, "If it be Thy will"

After they rose from their knees, Jamsie stood for some time thoughtfully looking out at the window, then he asked, "Will He just drop them right down from the skies?"

"Oh, no," replied his friend, smiling, "I don't think He will do that, but He will maybe put it into somebody's heart to buy them."

An hour later she was busy at her work, when the door opened, and Jamsie's bright face peeped in. "I'm to get them," he whispered.

"Get what?" she inquired.

"My boots!" he exclaimed, astonished that she should have forgotten already.

"How did it happen, Jamsie?"

"Aunt Ellen told me just now to wash my face, for she was going to take me to the shop to buy me a pair; *but it was Jesus made her* ' And off he set to get ready.

"This is the confidence that we have *in him*, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us" (1 John v. 14).

One evening, after another of their talks, he asked suddenly, "Where do you get to know all this about the Lord Jesus?"

Mrs M—— rose, and going to a chamber, brought out a small New Testament, with gilt edges.

"This is where I get to know about Jesus,

Jamsie; this is His book, it's all about Him; and I am going to give it to you, and you will by-and-by learn to read it for yourself."

Jamsie took the book with reverence, though he could not read it. He felt that it was a treasure, since it told of the One whom he had now learned to love.

Shortly after this, when in the house of another Christian, he noticed the bookcase, with its rows of books, and asked, "Is all they books about the Lord Jesus?"

"Oh, no, Jamsie; some of them are, but not all of them."

"I have a book," said the little boy, "and it is *His* book, for it's all about Him."

Speaking of it afterwards, this Christian said, "There was such a look of holy joy in that child's face that I felt like pulling all the books out of the bookcase, and burning every one which was not all about Him."

Yes, it is true that "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God perfects praise."

Jamsie soon found his way to a little room where one who loved the Lord gathered in a few little ones weekly to tell them of Him. Very cheering to that one's heart was the eager, earnest face of the little boy, telling as it did of the opened ear and the receptive heart.

More than once, too, during the singing he unconsciously drew all eyes upon him by the energy with which he sang the hymn he learned first, and of which he never tired—

“Jesus loves me though I’m bad,
And He waits to make me glad,
Waits to fold me in His arm,
Keep me safe from every harm”

But these happy times were soon to end. One day he came to his friend with a very grave face, and the tears evidently not far away. A letter had come from his father to say he was coming to take his little boy home again.

“Well, Jamsie,” said Mrs M——, soothingly, “that won’t take you away from the Lord Jesus, He is able to keep you there, just as well as here.”

Jamsie covered his face to hide the tears, and sobbed out, “But I’m feared I forget Him, for they doesn’t love Him there.”

“Maybe that is why He is sending you home, Jamsie, that you may tell them of Him.”

The little face grew bright again. He had not thought of this, and from that moment he was eager to go.

His Christian friends parted from him with tears, for he had become very dear to them. Very distinctly had the Master’s voice been saying to them, “Feed my lambs,” and they had been tasting of the sweetness and privilege of doing so.

It is with the earnest desire that others of His own may thus hear His voice, and turn with fresh interest to care for *the little ones*, that this story is told; while once again we would transcribe those precious words, “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings THOU hast perfected praise.” Y. Z.

THE CALL OF THE BRIDE.

“And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and *jewels of gold*, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah.”—GEN. XXIV. 53.

PART III.—THE BRIDE’S “JEWELS OF GOLD.”



WHEN the servant comes to call Rebekah, he brings out the things that fit her for the sphere to which she is called. We have seen the value of the “jewels of silver,” viz., *redemption*; now let us look at the “jewels of gold.”

Gold, in Scripture, is used as a symbol of *Divine righteousness*. As such, it occurs in many of the types of the Old Testament, specially in the articles in the Tabernacle and Temple, which are symbolic of God’s righteousness in government and judgment.

Take, for example, the Ark of the Covenant. “And they shall make an ark of shittim wood; two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with *pure gold*; within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make a crown of gold round about. . . . And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee” (Exod. xxv. 10, 11, 16).

Now the Ark of the Covenant was the throne where God manifested Himself in righteousness, if

any could, in righteousness, draw near to Him. God, who was to be approached, is holy—infinately so; and holiness is a nature which delights in purity and repels evil; hence He sits on a throne, which judges in righteousness, and with authority, the evil that holiness abhors. Further, the law—the testimony of what God required of man—was in the ark, but, thank God! it was covered by the mercy-seat. Another has well said, “Suppose an ark with no mercy-seat. The law would then be uncovered; there would be nothing to hush its thunderings, nothing to arrest the execution of its righteous sentence. Could a nation of transgressors stand before it? Could a holy and righteous God meet sinners there? Could mercy reign, or grace shine forth from such an ark? Impossible! An uncovered ark might furnish a throne of judgment, but not a seat of mercy.”

But God knew this better than we, and hence we read: “And thou shalt make a mercy-seat of *pure gold*: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, *in* the two ends of the mercy-seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end; even *of* the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof, and the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; *toward* the mercy-seat shall

the faces of the cherubims be And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark, and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee" (Exod. xxv. 17-22).

The mercy-seat thus formed the basis of the throne of God, as the cherubim (made of the same piece), which were its supporters, did its sides. Both were of gold—*pure gold*. Thus in the ark, and its covering, and supports, we seem to have a marvellous connection of human and Divine righteousness in the Lord Jesus. He was perfect in human obedience and love to His Father, and lived perfectly up to the responsibility of man according to God. But He also glorified God All that God is was glorified by the Son of Man, and not only does the Son of Man go righteously into the glory of God, but by His going to the Father righteousness is proved; and we can go where He is, in virtue of Him, and His work for us.

The shittim wood and the tables of the law are in the ark, but all is clothed with the gold—God's own righteousness.

The cherubim, who always in Scripture are connected with the judicial power of God, or are the executors of the will of that power, are of gold also, and the direction of their faces is important. *Inwards* towards the mercy-seat Why? Because they could thus see that which the moral nature of God demanded should be on the mercy-seat, if man, a sinner, is to draw near to a holy God who hates

and must judge sin. But what do they see on the mercy-seat ? *Blood.* Yes, blood must be put upon the mercy-seat, as the witness of the work of atonement done for those who had failed in responsibility before God. The claims of His throne must, and can, only be met by blood—the sign of death having been undergone—and when the blood is sprinkled, the cherubim gaze upon it, as expressive of the satisfaction of God in that, which enables Him to permit the sinner to approach to Himself.

What a comfort to see, thus, that God's claims in righteousness are met by the blood of atonement, and we draw nigh to a mercy-seat sure of acceptance in righteousness !

We have the same truth taught by the use of gold in the New Testament. For example, turn to the book of judgment, which the Revelation most emphatically is. There the apostle John says : "I saw . . . in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and *girt about the paps with a GOLDEN GIRDLE.*" John had often seen Jesus, had often enjoyed sweet companionship with Him, had heard His life and peace giving words, had lain his head on His loving bosom, knew Him well ; but now, when he sees Christ, he sees Him with a garment down to His feet, and he recognises Him not. Once John had seen Him lay aside His garments, and in lowly grace wash His disciples' feet. Now His attitude is altered. The garment down to the feet shows priestly discriminating

judgment, the golden girdle Divine righteousness, as displayed in Christ, where He now is.

He threatens with judgment those who have departed from Him. Priestly discrimination and judgment are here brought out. It is no longer grace meeting man's need, but judgment meeting him as he is.

That the "golden girdle" signifies Divine righteousness is clear from Isaiah xi. 5, where the Spirit of God, speaking of the judicial dealings of Christ in righteousness with the earth, which usher in the millennium, says, "And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins."

Again, the Lord says to the Church of Laodicea, "Because thou sayest, I am *rich* . . . and knowest not that thou art . . . *poor* . . . I counsel thee to buy of me *gold* tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich" (Rev. iii. 17, 18). What a solemn call! And who is it to? To the professing Church, accounting itself rich, without having Christ, as the righteousness of the soul, by faith.

Reader, are you a mere professor? or do you really possess Christ as your righteousness before God? If the former, you had better heed the call of Christ in glory to possess yourself of true and approved righteousness by buying it of Him. You must have to do with Him in order to get it.

Now in order to stand before God, man must have a righteousness suited to God. Do you think man has any righteousness? No; yet he must be right-

eous to stand before a righteous God. Man may say, "I will work it out, I will fit myself for the presence of God," but when he stands before God he finds he has no righteousness: "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. lxiv. 6). Ah, why does man not take God's word for truth, and seeing that he can never possess righteousness of his own, accept what God has provided, and so freely gives?

"There is none that doeth good, no, not one," is written against man once, yea, thrice, by God (Ps. xiv. 3, liii. 3; Rom. iii. 12). Nay, more, it is written, "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. iii. 10). Spite of this, many serious souls drop into the snare laid by Satan, and "being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Rom. x. 3). Dear reader, are you one of this class? If so, may God use this paper to show you the utter folly of your course.

Now the essence of the Gospel is this,—that when man is utterly helpless and guilty, and can furnish no righteousness suited to God, so as to be able to stand before Him, then God comes out, and by the work of the cross—the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus—confers on every one who believes in Jesus, divine righteousness, which enables the soul to stand before God in unclouded peace. When man has no righteousness for God, then God has righteousness for man.

This is the burden of Romans iii, to which I would direct my reader. Should you think that in order to stand before God there must be *works* on your part, how does verse 20 dispel such an illusion : "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight ; for by the law is the *knowledge* of sin"—not the blotting of it out. The law can recognise, detect, and measure the sin, and then can only condemn the sinner, so that it is clear the law can afford no help, and confer no righteousness. Whence, then, is it found, if not in man's own efforts to keep the law ? The answer is plain. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, *unto all* and *upon all them that believe* : for there is no difference, for *all have sinned*, and come short of the glory of God" (verses 21-23). All have sinned, and come short of yielding what was due to God, and then, all being manifestly without righteousness, God manifests His righteousness *to all*, and confers it *upon all that believe* (not who *work*) It is of the last importance to see that we are to be saved by "*words*" not "*works*." See Acts xi. 14.

This *aspect* of this manifested righteousness is *unto all*, i.e., it is universal ; its *application* is to *all that believe*. Here is a limit. "All them that *believe*." But why this limitation ? Because "*righteousness*" is not by "*works*" now, but by *faith* on our side, even as it is of *grace* on God's part, as it is

written: "Being justified freely *by his grace*, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (or mercy-seat) through *faith* in his blood, to declare . . . at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24-26). The righteousness of God is declared to be this, that He is just in justifying the one who believes in Jesus. This is no new doctrine, for "Abraham *believed* God, and it (his faith) was counted to him for righteousness;" and at a later day, David also (Ps. xxxii.) "describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. iv. 3, 6, 7).

Now the point of all this is, that it is God's grace, and not man's good behaviour, which secures these blessings to the poor guilty one. Did you ponder these words of the Spirit of God, dear self-righteousness worker? "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). If I work for you at £1 per week, it is only right and fair you should pay me when the work is done; this is *debt*; but if, when the work I should have done I fail to do, and then you come and give me £5, that would be *grace*. Just so does God act. Unable ourselves to

do anything but sin, Christ has come in grace, and on the cross borne sins, and been made sin. The judgment due by God to sin has been sustained by Jesus, and He has glorified God about sin.

The proof of this is clear, for God raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead ; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 24, 25). Then what now is this justifying righteousness of God ? Simply, WHAT IS DUE TO CHRIST. Our due, and the due of sin, Christ took and sustained on the cross. The judgment that was due to us fell on Him. The moment He bare "the sins of many" (Heb. ix. 28), God in righteousness forsook Him ; hence His cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?" What is the answer to this cry ? God raises Him from the dead, and then, in righteousness, accepts, and connects with Christ every one who has faith in Him.

To make it plain. Christ took *my place* in death, and judgment on the cross, and now I get *Christ's place* before God, by faith in His blood. Is this right ? Clearly so ; it is due to Christ that if He took my position to extricate me from it, I should share His position, if, in grace, He be willing to share it with me. God, therefore, against whom I have sinned, is "just" in now justifying me, because Jesus has been delivered and condemned for my sin, and then raised by God, in proof of His satisfaction, and delight in Him, and His work of redemption for me. I might go further, and say He would be unjust to Christ to condemn me for

those very sins for which He condemned His Son. Nay, He is righteous, "faithful and just," as John puts it, and shows His righteousness by justifying every soul that clings in faith to His beloved Son. He judges sin, and justifies the sinner who believes in Jesus. Thus is God's righteousness declared.

How beautifully harmonious is every part of this wondrous way of possessing a righteousness suited to God, needed by man, provided by God, and possessed by the believer!

A threefold cord of righteousness now binds the believer to God, and the Scripture says, "A threefold cord is not quickly broken." The various strands of this golden cord of righteousness are—(1) *Grace*; (2) *Blood*; (3) *Faith*.

1. God's GRACE is the SOURCE of justification.

"*Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*" (Rom. iii. 24).

2. Christ's BLOOD is the MEANS or BASIS of justification.

"Much more then, *being now* (not hoping to be by-and-by) *justified* by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. v. 9).

3. The soul's FAITH is the PRINCIPLE of justification.

"Therefore *being justified by faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1).

Now if these be the true sayings of God, where have you room for "works"? Nowhere, at least in Romans. Some one will say, What about James?

Does he not say, "Ye see then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith *only*"? Yes, he says this, and it is most needed. But do not for a moment think that Paul and James clash. The truth is this. In Romans you are justified *before God*, BY FAITH, and that only; in James you are justified *before men*, BY WORKS. God can see faith, men cannot, but they can see works. God must see both, and surely will see works, when faith exists.

But there is more than this. Not only is the believer justified *from* all offences by faith in the Lord Jesus, but "they which receive abundance of grace, and of the *gift of righteousness*, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 17). The "*gift of righteousness*" is to be "received," you notice—not earned, as many suppose. When received by faith, the possessor is assured he shall "reign in life." This sweetly accords with the expression, "justification of life," which flings a flood of light upon the present standing of the believer. "So then as it was by one offence toward all men to condemnation, so by one righteousness toward all men for *justification of life*. For as indeed by the disobedience of the one man the many have been constituted sinners; so also by the obedience of the one many will be constituted righteous" (Rom. v. 18, 19, New Trans.). In verse 18 we have the *aspect* of Adam's path and Christ's, given us in contrast. Adam's involves "condemnation," Christ's "justification of life." In verse 19 you have the *effects*. Adam's disobedience constituted all his

family "sinners" Christ's obedience constitutes all who are His (and we are His by faith in His blood) "righteous."

Then, the moment I am linked with Christ by faith, I see (1) that I am, through His work, justified from all the offences, and sins of my old life, as a child of Adam, and (2) that I am the possessor of a new life, called in Romans vi 23, "eternal life," and that I have "justification of life," and hence shall "reign in life," being constituted "righteous" by God Himself, in virtue of my association with Him who died and rose again, and is now at God's right hand in glory

Christ is my subsisting righteousness before God, as says the Spirit in 1 Cor i 30, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is *made* unto us wisdom, and *righteousness*, and sanctification, and redemption"

We also read in 2 Cor v, "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"

The truth therefore is, that Christ is the believer's righteousness before God, and the believer is also made the witness, as well as the subject of God's righteousness, inasmuch as he is brought into the same place of nearness to God, in life and glory, as Christ Himself (viewed of course as the Man who died and rose again). The believer and Christ are viewed as one, and as Christ is the righteous One, all His are viewed as possessors of a righteousness in Him, which is suited to the glory of God where

Christ now is. On the cross Christ identified Himself with us in our sin, shame, guilt, and death. By His atoning death all we had done and been was forever swept away from before God. Rising from the dead, the head of a new family, He associates with Himself in life, standing, and place before God in glory, all who trust Him, and whom therefore He calls His "brethren."

In conclusion, I would only now ask you, beloved reader, have you yet accepted the "jewels of gold" the Gospel messenger brings to you? Have you yet received the "gift of righteousness"? If not, I would urge you to delay taking so important a gift no longer. Come to Jesus as you are. Receive Him, and, in receiving Him, you will receive all, and far more than I have written of, for all that God can give you in blessing is wrapped up in the person of Christ, and once you receive Him you receive all.

"The risen Christ had ended
 Righteousness of *law*
God's righteousness was something
 Quite distinct, I saw
 That MAN above— whose dying
 Closed the things of old
 WAS HEAD OF GOD'S CREATION,
 Channel of the *gold*

That MAN was in the glory,
 I in Him up there,
 Before His God and Father,
 I was *thus* brought near
 The Place I found was opened,
 Where was wealth untold—
 The MAN beginning all things,
 In Himself the *gold*"

"ONE THING I KNOW."



IN this day of religious doubt and confusion, and removing of ancient landmarks, it is infinitely happy, and calculated to strengthen faith, to turn from the many thoughts of man to that which God has spoken. It is only as we listen to Him, only as we, in simple earnest faith, come to His Word, in order to find therein something on which the soul may rest, that we find relief from the vexed questions of the day.

I have quoted above, a saying of that blind man whose case is so elaborately given in John ix. This man was born blind, and had reached maturity, ere the Lord Jesus effected his complete and astonishing cure. He not only gave him sight natural, so that he could present himself sound to his parents and neighbours, but He gave him sight spiritual, as well, so that he could see, in his Healer, the Son of God, and worshipped Him, too!

But the cure was performed on the Sabbath day, and, thus, a handle was, apparently, given to the enemies of Jesus to condemn Him for breaking the Sabbath. They said accordingly, "*He is a sinner.*" A sinner, forsooth, for doing good on the Sabbath day! Alas, the religionists of that day had forged their own superstitious chains, and placed themselves under cruel bondage. "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." God

would share His rest with man, for such was the grand idea in the Sabbath (see Gen. ii. 2; Exod. xvi. 29), but man turned that rest into thralldom, and himself into a slave!

Well, these enemies informed the blind man (now healed) that they knew Jesus was a sinner. They could prove it. How then could a sinner do such miracles? How could One, who had, as they alleged, transgressed God's law, have power bestowed on Him so that He could remove life-long blindness? Impossible. It was in this dilemma that they placed their victim. Their question seemed unanswerable, and his difficulty hopeless. How could he successfully vindicate his Healer when so many wiser than he condemned Him? They had the advantage of sight, and learning, and wealth, and they could apply all the resources of criticism so as to arrive at a perfect and self-evident result!

He was ignorant, and poor, and hitherto dependent on the charities of others! The battle was desperately unequal; the odds against him were enormous; and, yet, spite of all, he came off the victor. Never did general select a more perfect field of battle, or gladiator choose a more suitable weapon. This poor man felt his inability to meet the questions of the enemy. To contend on their field of "scientific criticism" was only to court defeat; and, therefore, instead of allowing them to choose the ground, he took up with wondrous wisdom a position which he knew to be im-

pregnable ; and, planting his foot thereon, he dared all his foes !

What a sight ! one poor, ignorant, friendless man facing confidently a world ! One confronting a thousand ! aye, and putting them to flight, too ! Wherein lay this wonderful courage ? What enabled him to smile, like a hero, before the field was fought ? What rendered him consciously invincible ? Learning ? No. Crowds of followers ? No. Bold self-assurance ? No. There he stood, hailed, besieged, alone, *knowing but one thing !*

Yet, that "*one thing*" he knew ; yes, he had (as the Greek word signifies) the inward consciousness of it. It was as certain a fact to him as his own life. If only "*one thing*," he knew it, and could stake all thereon. This one fact was worth a bushel of theories, this one bit of experimental knowledge was of far more practical value than the mere brain-acquired lore of ten universities. He could speak experimentally of *one thing*. This was his vantage ground.

One thing received from God is of infinitely more value than all that you can receive from Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, or all the schools of religious learning put together. Man can never, in the things of God, give you *absolute certainty* ! God alone can do that. Hence, dear reader, in order to enjoy perfect certainty in such things, betake yourself, not to man—his words, or his writings—but to God and His Word. On so doing you will find what you want. Kindly analyse our

sentence, "*One thing*," not many things, but one; not many truths, *but one*; if many, so much the better; but, better one than none—one thing.

"*I*" in my own personality, independently of another human being, irrespective of parent or child, husband or wife, priest or pastor, as though another being did not exist on earth, I myself.

"*Know*," yes, I am certified of it, deep down in my inner consciousness,—I possess it not as seen in a book merely; I hold it, as received from no mere creed, confession, or declaratory act whatever, but as communicated by God to my soul! "*One thing I know*, that whereas I was blind now I see!"

Very well, you who once were blind are thankfully conscious of your newly given eyesight, and others can witness the bright sparkle of your eye. They may not believe how, or *from whom*, you received it. Never mind, the witness is there; and you can testify to the fact, and to the Healer.

I would therefore affectionately ask you to consider these four words, "*One thing I know*," and by grace to lay hold in like manner of at least one thing—one solid stem for your soul—one everlasting fact of Scripture obtained from God Himself, so that your fragile bark may not be tossed on the rising tide of doubt or reasoning, or superstition.

David slew Goliath with *one stone*. True, he had four others in reserve, but one sufficed.

One truth known in divine power is more than a match for all the unbelief of the day.

"WHOM SAY YE THAT I AM?"

MATT. xvi. 15.



WHO is He at whose birth the air was filled with angels, and over whose couch hung a celestial star? (Luke ii. 15; Matt. ii. 9.)

Who is He, before whose infant feet the wisest men of the world bowed in adoration and worship? (Matt. ii. 11.)

Who is He for whom Herod slew hundreds of children in order to reach the young child's life? (Matt. ii. 19.)

Who is He whom "John the Baptist" proclaimed the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world"? (John i. 29.)

Who is He at whose baptism the heavens were opened above His blessed head, and on whom the Spirit of God descended in the form of a dove, while the voice of "Jehovah" like the voice of many thunders proclaimed from the open heavens, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"? (Matt. iii. 17.)

Who is He at whose word the tempest became still, the billowy waves placid, the winds hushed, and there was a great calm? (Mark iv. 37.)

Who is He that healed the sick and leprous by a word; that could say to the man with a withered hand, "Stretch forth thy hand," and it was restored whole? (Luke v. 12, vi. 6.)

Who is He who raised the daughter of Jairus,

healed the centurion's servant, restored to life the son of the widow of Nain, cast out a legion of devils, gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and speech to the dumb? (Luke vii. and viii)

Who is He who feeds at one time five thousand, and at another time four thousand men, besides women and children, from a few pounds of bread, and a few fishes, which a lad could carry in a basket? (Matt. xiv 15, xv 32)

Who is He that calls forth from the tomb of corruption to life and health Lazarus who had been dead four days? and who once while praying was answered by a voice from heaven in the hearing of many people, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again"? (John xi. 43, xii 28)

Who is He at whose trial nothing could be found against Him; whom Pilate declared to be innocent, calling for water and washing his hands, saying he was clear of His blood, "for he found no fault in him"? and when on the cross to whom the dying malefactor by His side also testified, "This man hath done nothing amiss"? (Matt. xxvii. 24, Luke xxiii. 41.)

Who is He at whose crucifixion the sun refused to shine, the land being wrapped in midnight darkness, and when He had said "It is finished," "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom," the earth quaked, the rocks were rent, and the tombs were opened, "and many bodies of the saints which slept arose," and came forth out of the tombs, after his resurrection?

and to whom the Roman centurion bore witness, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God"? (Matt. xxvii. 50.)

Who is He who on the third day burst the bars of the tomb, was visited by angels, seen alive by "Mary of Magdalene," "and the other Mary," and afterwards by all the disciples, when "he shewed unto them his hands and his side"? (John xx. 11; Matt. xxviii. 1.)

Who is He who after appearing among His disciples for the space of forty days, "and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God," "led them out as far as to Bethany," and, having blessed them with uplifted hands, "was parted from them and carried up into heaven"? (Luke xxiv. 50.)

Who is He whom the dying martyr Stephen saw when he "looked stedfastly up into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God"? (Acts vii. 55.)

Who is He of whom Paul speaks, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord"? (1 Thess. iv. 16.)

Who is He of whom the same apostle writes, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking ven-

geance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with *everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power"? (2 Thess. i. 7.)

Who is He that John the apostle saw in the revelation given to him in the isle of Patmos, of whom he writes, "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth, and he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book the four living creatures and four-and-twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, 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. 6.)

Who is He of whom the same apostle adds, "And the kings of the earth and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the *face of him that sitteth on the throne*, and from the *wrath of the*

Lamb; for the great day of *his wrath* is come, and who shall be *able to stand*" ? (Rev vi. 15.)

Reader, what sayest thou ? Do you answer with Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God ?" the One you know now, and in whom your heart finds perfect rest, while you wait the moment that will take you into His own presence, where there is "the fulness of joy," and the "pleasures for evermore." Are you waiting for Him to come in the air as your Saviour and Lord ? Or is it that you still *reject* His love ? content to find your pleasure in a world that has yet to answer for the *crucifixion* of the Son of God ? If so, His coming can only bring to you "*everlasting punishment*" in the "*lake of fire*." Decide now while He waits in grace, *to-morrow may be too late*.

"'Tis the Lord, wondrous story,
'Tis the Lord, the King of Glory ;
At His feet we humbly fall :
Crown Him, crown Him, Lord of all."

R A. S.

NO TITLE BUT THE BLOOD.



— B —, a young girl working in a manufactory, became very anxious about her soul. Each time that she attended the Gospel preaching, her misery increased, and more than once she wept bitterly, as she listened to the solemn warnings of judgment on the impenitent, mingled with the invitations of God's rich grace.

Her companions in work wondered what was the matter with her. Content with the form of godliness, and without the sense of their lost condition before God, they could not understand L——'s unhappy face and constant tears.

"What ails you?" says one. "What do you cry so for?"

"I'm afraid I shan't go to heaven," answered poor troubled L——.

"Not go to heaven! Why, they will let you pass the door of heaven like the rest."

Poor girls! they sought in their ignorance to comfort their young workmate; but all was in vain. Blinded by Satan, they had no idea of their need of the true and only title to enter the glory of God,—*the precious blood of Christ*. Like thousands more, they *hoped* to go to heaven on the ground of religious form, and, as they judged, a comparatively harmless life. But this was poor consolation for the troubled one. No really anxious soul's fears were ever allayed by such like vanity. L—— B—— had heard the Gospel too often to be so easily deceived. She had no hope of entering heaven's gate thus, and her heavy heart and tearful face continued to tell of her deep unrest of soul.

One day, however, after the Gospel had been announced, the preacher had a conversation with her. The moment of deliverance was at hand. The Word of God did its work. The old, old story of His boundless love reached the heart. A

living Saviour and *His precious blood* was what she wanted, and that was the blessed news announced to her. She left the room, and went home, crying bitterly

A day or two later, two Christians met her in the street of the little town. It was scarcely necessary to ask her of her state. Her countenance, bright with joy, spoke for itself, and told of the peace within that had succeeded days and nights of soul trouble. The lips at once confessed Christ, and the knowledge of God's grace, and the value of *the precious blood*, as that which had cleansed her from her sin.

But Satan, loth to lose his prey, made one more effort to rob her of her joy. As evening came on, he assailed the young believer, and doubts and fears filled her soul. An almost sleepless night was spent in Doubting Castle, and between five and six in the morning she rose to find out the preacher, and to seek comfort in her fresh trouble. A few plain Scriptures, and a little explanation of the value of the finished work and precious blood of Christ, soon dispelled the mists, and the young soul was happy and free. Her bright face, &c, told to all around, and to the surprise of her work-mates, who could not understand it, the reality of the work of God in her soul.

Dear reader, how do you expect to enter heaven? Are you vainly thinking that you will be let pass like the rest? Be assured your hope is utterly vain. The door will be shut close and fast against

you. The form of godliness and a harmless life are no title there. The only passport to the eternal glory of God is *the precious blood of Christ*. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission," and no entrance there (Heb. ix. 22). Your righteousness is nothing worth. It is Christ you need. "Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). "The blood of Jesus Christ his (God's) Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). *Will you trust the blood?*

E. H. C.

"IN THE FIELD."

(LUKE xv. 25.)



ALTHOUGH *outwardly* near, as his father owns ("Son, thou art ever *with* me," ver. 31), the elder son was as far off *morally*, "in the field," as the younger son had been in the "far country." Yes, "the field is the

world" (Matt. xiii. 38), although "he drew nigh to the house" (ver. 25)—so nigh that "he heard music and dancing," the sounds of the merry-making of the father over his "son, who was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found" (ver. 24). Picture of God's joy—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, uniting to rejoice in what their combined action had effected, the Son "coming to seek that which was lost" (chap. xix. 10), the Holy Ghost to find (ver.

8), and the Father to receive the penitent (ver. 20). As they say, "Let *us* eat and be merry," that is, let us have communion and joy in the happy result of our labours. "To the counsellors of peace is joy" (Prov. xii. 20).

Though the elder son is so nigh as to hear the sound of all this, and though he is informed of its meaning (vers. 26, 27), he *will* not join in his father's joy. Not only had he no heart for that which so gladdened his father's heart, but he resents it. "He was angry, and would not go in" (ver. 28). How different with the other in his destitution; "for," as another has said, "he was hungry, and could not stop out, while the elder was angry, and would not go in."

And thus it is ever with the worldling, whether a religious professor, or an irreligious profligate. *He hates grace.* The elder son *resents* it, when manifested to his confessedly (ver. 21) unworthy brother (vers. 28, 30). The younger son *abuses* the grace shown him by his father in dividing to him his living (ver. 12).

And where art thou, and what art thou, my reader? Have you ever answered for yourself God's first two great questions to man (Gen. ii. 9, and iv. 10),—the two great questions He asks of all, and would ask of you? If not, answer for thyself now *to Him*. The first, "*Where art thou?*" Away from God, in the world which is His enemy (Jas. iv. 4), and hiding from Him. But be assured He will have thee dragged from thy hiding-place

in the day of judgment, when neither rocks nor mountains shall suffice to hide thee "from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; [when] the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. vi. 12-17, xx. 11-15). Come forth *now* therefore, and whether thou art an empty professor (like him of Matt. xxii. 11) or a needy profligate, thou wilt find that *God* has a *covering* for thee in *grace*—a perfect covering, the best robe (ver. 22), as He had for thy first parents when they came His own righteousness (Rom. iv. 5, 22, v. 2); even forth from their lurking-place (Gen. iii. 21), and that on the ground of blood-shedding, for thee, of the precious blood of Jesus which cleanses from all sin (1 John i. 7).

The second question, is "What hast thou done?" You know you have not served God and kept His commandments (ver. 29). Empty, hypocritical profession will not avail thee in that day of which we have spoken. Own the truth, confess *thy sin*, for "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive," &c. (1 John i. 9), and give Him the joy of making merry over thee, and have for thyself that joy which finds but its commencement here. "And they began to be merry" (ver. 24).

"'It is meet,' we hear Thee saying,
'We should merry be and glad,
I have found my once lost children,
Now they live who once were dead'"

GOOD TIDINGS.



H say, hast thou been to the Saviour,
 Who life everlasting will give ?
 He asks nothing hard of thee, sinner,
 'Tis only to *trust Him* and *live* !

For, free as the glorious sunshine,
 Yes, free as the light, and the air,
 Is the blessed redemption of Jesus,
 Oh, what with *His* love may compare ?

How simple God's "way of salvation,"
 Not "trying," or "doing one's best,"
 But, just in *believing on Jesus*
 The weary and sinful find rest !

"'Tis finished," oh, word fraught with meaning,
 How precious the message it tells,
 In our ears the glad music is ringing,
 Like chiming of sweet silver bells !

Proclaiming release to the captive,
 Poor slaves of the tyrant set free,
 The power of Satan was broken,
 When Jesus expired on the tree.

The Saviour has purchased thy freedom,
 But priceless the ransom He gave ,
 Then trust in "*the Blood*," all-atoning,
 Of Jesus, the "mighty to save !"

THE CALL OF THE BRIDE.

"And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and *raiment*, and gave them to Rebekah."—GEN. XXIV. 53.

PART IV.—THE BRIDE'S "RAIMENT."



WE have looked at the "jewels of silver" and "jewels of gold"; now, I would desire to direct your attention to the bride's "raiment." But let me first say it is of no use hearing the Gospel unless it produces an effect upon you, unless it shows you what you are, and what God is, and what He has done for you. Unless it turns you to the Lord for salvation, the effect of your hearing the Gospel is but to add the weight of deepened responsibility to your already sin-burdened soul.

God is calling you in this hour of His grace to association with Christ in glory; He is offering you a place with Christ. Christ could not have a place down here because of the sin, and wickedness of man, so God offers us a place with Christ in glory. He offers you a part or portion with Christ. Abraham's servant travelled from Canaan to Padan-Aram to obtain a bride for Isaac; Christ is in glory, and the Holy Ghost came down from heaven at Pentecost, and, from that time till now, His constant effort has been, and is, to lead souls to yield themselves to Christ. There have ever been, and will be, hindrances and difficulties in the

way ; for Satan is ever busy in trying to keep you out of the blessings God has for you—the great blessing of being “one with Christ.” But what breaks down all the opposition of Satan, and the human heart, is the discovery that God wants to bless you. Do you believe that God really wants, and is waiting to bless you ?

Reader, do you possess that which fits you, and gives you a true title to be in the presence of God ? Have you the bright hope before you of this glory with Christ ? Before you can stand in His presence you must have on suited raiment ; the courtly Robe of Heaven must be yours—and that is Christ. God has provided it for you, and I, as the ambassador of God, now offer you in His Name CHRIST, THE RAIMENT.

Oh, sinners, and all ye workers *for* salvation, better far cast away your own self-made clothing, which is useless before God, and accept that which He, in His grace, and mercy, has provided for you ; provided for you without money, and without price. Your own raiment—in the way, I mean, of good works, almsgiving, religiousness, or morality—may do well enough to clothe you in the sight of your fellow-sinners ; but they are no covering in the sight of a God who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity ; and, sinner, you must be clad suitably for God, or be eternally lost.

There is a great difference between working *for* salvation, and working *from* salvation. The first is your own futile attempt to clothe yourself ;

the latter is a labour of love, because God has already clothed you, and made you fit for His presence, and service.

The first covering, or raiment, we read of in Scripture, is the fig-leaf "aprons" of Adam and Eve; and what avail were they when the guilty ones heard the voice of God, saying, "Where art thou?" They knew they were naked, and they tried to hide themselves from God. The miserable knowledge obtained by their sin had but taught them they were now unfit for the presence of God. You, whose life has been one long pathway of sin—sins of so deep a dye that you blush at their remembrance—mark, it was *one* sin only that made Adam unfit to stand before God. *One* sin drove the guilty ones from the Garden of Eden; *one* sin brought death into the world: what then about your numberless sins?

Can you brave the presence of a sin-hating God in nothing but your nakedness, and burden of guilt? Adam and Eve hid themselves, for they could not stand in His presence in their nakedness. But oh, the love of God's heart! No sooner was clothing needed, than He, in mercy, and love, provided it. "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Gen. iii. 21). How different is their clothing now! Instead of an "apron" in which God has not put one stitch—the whole thing being paltry human effort—each is arrayed in a "coat" in which man has not put one stitch, for the Lord God made, and

conferred the suited garment. What grace! and what a lesson to workers for salvation now! And, sinner, Adam's need was not greater then, than yours is at this present moment; and God is as willing now to clothe you as He was to clothe Adam and Eve.

But do you *know* your need? Oh, what can cover the nakedness of your guilty sin-stained soul? I do not address you as a *poor* sinner, but as a *guilty* sinner, in need of clothing, in order to fit you to stand before a sin-hating God. Doing your best will not do it: it but discloses the sense of your guilt, and need, by arraying yourself in what you think will suit God; but it will not do. Your own clothing is filthy rags in the sight of God: you are but trying to hide behind your works, as Adam tried to hide himself from God behind the trees of the garden. But you, like he, will yet be drawn from your hiding-place, and obliged to own yourself to be naked, and undone before God; obliged to confess your own clothing to be valueless.

The apostle Paul's striking comment on this is found in 2 Cor. v. 1-3: "For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven (if so be that being clothed we shall not be found *naked*)."

This last clause is very solemn. The apostle had fears that some in Corinth might be found like

Adam—*naked*—when they were clothed, *i e.*, when in resurrection. Though resurrection should bring soul and body together again, so that he called the person clothed, nevertheless he fears they may be found *naked*—in other words, Christless—not having that covering for the whole man which fits it for the presence of God. How awful to be a mere professor of Christ here—to have on a lovely garb of morality, so-called good works, and religiousness, so as to pass current as one of Christ's people; to die, that is, to be unclothed; to rise again, alas, not in the first, but the second resurrection, that is, to be clothed, and then find yourself in the holy blaze of the great white throne a *naked sinner*, never having been washed from your sins in the blood of Christ, nor having had Him as your clothing before God!

Reader, are you clothed? have you Christ as your raiment? or do you think you will be accepted as you are?

Look at Matt. xxii 11 “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 his servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” We have here a warning, as well as the truth of the end of this dispensation, for it is the guests here, not the bride,

but the warning is for all who have not on raiment. "How camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?" The king gave him an opportunity of telling the reason why he had no wedding garment on, but what is the result? what the consequence of this meeting between the king and his guest? The man was *speechless*. How camest thou in thus? Was there no provision made for the guests? Was there no raiment for thee? Yes, there was the robing-chamber, and there were garments provided, as is the custom in the East, but the man neglected the provision made, and the result was the command, "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness." Oh, soul, will you be warned ere it be too late? God would fit you for His presence; Christ is the garment, the royal raiment He has provided for you; therefore, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."

The man here described did not want a robe; he may have been one of the "good" mentioned in verse 10; his life may have been a blameless one; he may have been a dutiful son, or a kind husband and father, a useful member of society, one of whom his country was proud; then what need had he of a robe? The king would surely acknowledge him as he was; his deeds were sufficient to recommend him to his sovereign, and so he passes in; but what is it to find? Ah, what indeed? His unworthiness; and that there is nothing left to be done but to bind him, and cast him forth.

Professor of Christianity, have you been con-

verted? Have you on the garment that fits you to stand before God? If you were to die this night, would you be naked in the presence of God? I beseech you to ask yourself the solemn questions, and not to rest till you have truthfully answered them: Have I been born again? have I fled to Jesus? have I found Him? have I Him as my covering, my raiment? Can you say, *Yes*? If not, oh, precious soul, beware; be warned thou hast detailed before thee in these verses an event in thine own history, the moment when before God thou must stand, and find the clothing of morality to be of no avail. Thou wilt find thou art not in Christ, therefore thou art still in thy sins. Thou wilt hear the question asked, "Friend, how camest *thou* in hither?" and thou, *thou* shalt be speechless. Oh, what a moment when thou discoverest the true state of thy precious, but *eternally lost* soul. No excuse hast thou to offer; thou wilt be speechless. No extenuation can be offered by thee. It is too late, thou standest before the King, then forced to be a Judge, and the awful silence is broken by the command, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Oh, be warned! What is God's command now? It is "*Clothe him*;" clothe him with the raiment I have provided for his need. Now God is doing as we have recorded in Zechariah. "Joshua was clothed with *filthy garments*. . . And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying,

Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and *I will clothe thee with change of raiment.* And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments" (Zech. iii. 3-5). But if you reject His provision, then it will be "*Bind him.*" What a contrast! Clothe him with Christ, put upon him the "best robe", and "Bind him" with the cords of his sins and "cast him into outer darkness."

Oh, ye unsaved souls, wake up to the reality of your perilous position! Why does the Spirit so often warn you? Why does He so often bring your own case, as it were, before you? Why? Is it not because God always *warns* before He judges? Is it not that He gives the unsaved soul often the opportunity of escape, though, alas, he heeds it not? Yes, He is a God of mercy *now*, though one day He will be a God of judgment to those who scorn and reject His proffered mercy. God warns, but man goes on, and on, and on, and heeds it not. We have but to look around us in order to see the truth of this.

What are those agonised accents from yonder bed of death? It is an unsaved soul finding out with his latest breath that he has scorned the offer of salvation, that he has left unheeded all the warnings of a gracious God, till it is *too late*?

Oh, what must it be to be swept into eternity without one ray of hope? Care ye to die thus?

Come to Jesus. "Come, for all things are now ready." The silver is for thee, the gold for thee, the raiment for thee. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." Abraham's servant brought raiment to Rebekah, and she received the gift—I bring you Christ, will you receive Him?

In Luke xv. we again find mention of raiment; "Bring forth the *best robe* and put it on him." Had it been left to man to choose the raiment, he might have been content to robe himself with the garments that holy angels wear, but God gives more befitting raiment to the Bride of the spotless Lamb of God. She shall be arrayed in the *best*—the glorious robe of the "King of kings"

You know the beautiful story of the prodigal son here given, but have you observed, it was not till "he began to be in want," that he thought of his father's home, and the joy and abundance there. *Want* is the discovery the soul makes, when in the far country, away from the Father's house. But the last thing man does is to turn to God for help; he will try all other expedients first, ere he goes to the only true Source of help and succour

The prodigal, like too many in the present day, goes and joins himself to a citizen of that country. And who is that citizen? Satan! And oh, how successful he is in providing for the wants, the lusts, of sinners! He does his utmost to keep you away from the Father's house of plenty; and how often he is successful, too! He gilds over the husks to make them fair to the eye; but when the sinner

eats of them he finds out they are bitter to the taste, they are unsatisfying, they are but husks; and yet such is the morbidness of his appetite, he fain would fill his belly with them.

The prodigal is brought to a sense of his need before he says, "I will arise and go to my father." Ah, he has found out that he is helpless, and in need of food, and raiment, and he comes just as he is; in his rags and poverty he comes, and is he refused? *No! He is first welcomed, and then clad.*

Many try to clothe themselves before they go to God; they have found out their need of God, but they think that before going to Him they must better themselves; but man must come just as he is, and be beholden to God for all. Come as you are; it is thus God delights to receive you.

"I have sinned," said the prodigal. Have you known the moment when you found that you have sinned, found that you were undone, and lost, and naked; when you have gone down before God with the words, "Father, I have sinned"? I call this the grandest moment of a sinner's experience on earth, when he gets before God, and finds out that the One whom he has offended and sinned against, and whom he thought was against him, is *for* him, is waiting in grace to receive him, is on his side.

"*I have sinned.*" It must be individual confession; it will not do to rest satisfied with, "We have sinned." No; you must get alone with God, and, forgetting all else in the deep penitence of

your soul, own to Him, "I have sinned." Sooner or later the awakened soul passes through this searching conscience-work, this conviction of sin, ere it is clothed, and is at peace. This precedes the clothing in the case of the prodigal before us.

"I have sinned, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." Ah, this is the man God clothes. I urge you to consider your own individual case; it is of paramount importance, this humbling yourself before God. The ploughshare of conviction must go deep down in the soil—the deeper the furrow the surer is the seed to be safe, and the brighter the prospect of a harvest of golden grain. What is the result of the prodigal's confession? It is the command to "bring forth the best robe and put it on him." Oh, what love! "Bring forth the best robe." Prodigal, will you have Christ? He is the *Best Robe*. "Put it on him." He was not even asked to put it on himself, it was put on him; all was done for him, he did nothing but receive his father's gift of love. And your case is the same: God has done all; He provides the raiment, and, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." The first Adam, who was unfit for the presence of God, has ended his history in the death of Christ, and in the second Adam the believer is gloriously complete.

The claims of God have all been met, and after the darkness of Calvary, the bright rainbow of God's acceptance shines forth to man; the Corn of Wheat fell into the ground so that in resurrection

He might be able to say, "I ascend to my Father, and to *your* Father." What blessedness it is to be found in Christ!" "accepted in the Beloved!" Again, I say unto you, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ;" stand in that which God gives you, and have peace; throw away the fig-leaves, and God will clothe you with Christ. Precious raiment! Sinner, come to God as thou art, and hear Him say to thee, "Take away the filthy garments from him . . . Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment" (Zech. iii. 4).

It has been said there are two steps to be taken "Out of self into Christ, and out of Christ into glory;" but it seems to me there is but one step needed. Will you take it? It is, "Out of self into Christ," to abide there for ever, in all the fulness of His perfection.

What a place! To stand before God "accepted in the Beloved," the One who is the joy of God's heart! What have you done to merit this? *Nothing*; but Christ has done all. "That ye have *put off*, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts . . . and that ye have *put on* the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. iv. 22-24), is the truth of the new position in Christ. "Put off" and "Put on." It is the blessed substitution of Christ for self, the result of that work when "he who knew no sin was made sin for us."

If you are wise you will not slight, but gladly receive, the instruction of the Lord Jesus, who says, "I counsel thee to buy of me . . . white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear" (Rev. iii. 18)

See how He wants to clothe you with that which alone can make you suitable to God "White raiment!" How different from the repulsive "filthy rags" of "our righteousnesses." You would not admit one clothed in "filthy rags" to your house and table, and will God? No Then away with all that springs from, or savours of self, and array yourself in all the perfection of Christ, and His work for sinners.

The Raiment, then, that is offered to you, is Christ, and having Him you have redemption, and righteousness, and peace. Christ is all, and I have that which fits me to be of His Bride, when I possess the jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and the raiment It is Christ, Christ, Christ—all Christ; Christ from first to last, Christ for time, and Christ for eternity; "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever Amen"

Once again I ask, "Wilt thou go?"—go across the desert to Him? Oh, the joy of knowing that God has forgotten my sins, and given me liberty to forget myself, and let my thoughts be all given to my glorious Bridegroom! "Wilt thou go?" Would that I could hear you say, "I will go" God can hear you say it wherever you are. Oh,

give Him the joy of listening to thy whispered "*I will go.*"

Decide for Christ; you have heard all about Him who is the silver, and the gold, and the raiment. He has been offered to you freely, and shown to be the only way you can be acceptable to God, and fitted to be the Bride of Jesus. Will you accept His gifts? Will you have Christ?

"Wilt thou go?" is God's challenge to your heart. Can you refuse? Will you not come to Jesus?

God presents Christ to you now as an object of faith. Rebekah did not see Isaac until the journey across the desert was accomplished, but he came to meet her when the desert sand was left behind; he came to meet her when she had reached the green fields of Canaan.

*"I shall see Him in His beauty,
He Himself His Bride will meet,
I shall be with Him for ever,
In companionship complete."*

Oh, Christless soul, can you risk spending a joyless, hopeless, loveless eternity, without Jesus? I charge you by the joys of heaven, to which God invites you, and by the horrors of hell, of which He warns you, "Be ye reconciled to God"—"Put on Christ."

You have but to decide, and honestly say from your heart, "I will go," and He will receive you and welcome you and fill your heart with joy and love. Oh, come to Jesus! Accept the gifts offered to you in God's well-beloved Son; accept the silver, the gold, and the raiment, and know that hence-

forth you are an integral part of the Bride of that Son, "to whom the Father hath given all things." Let yours be the joyful words: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her *jewels*" (Isa lxi 10)

W. T. P. W.

SUPREMESELFISH



UCH is the man of the world. From such the Psalmist of old cried to his God to deliver him. "From men of the world which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes" (Ps. xvii. 14).

Their desires are fully satisfied, the cup of their portion is filled up to the brim—no cankering care on account of pressing needs is theirs. Yet the Psalmist knew that though their own couches were soft, they would not think of softening other people's lot; that though their own storehouses and barns were crammed with creature mercies, they would not dream of filling the hands of the hungry.

Now-a-days a man must be *decently* liberal to save

his character, but how many an inward grumble is there whilst the sleek hand doles a golden guinea or two out of the well-filled purse? Yes! the Psalmist knew how to describe them in one short verse. And the race has by no means died out yet.

But let us narrow the circle, and yet widen it

Centuries after the Psalmist wrote, the apostle Paul of the Gentiles was treading thoughtfully the streets of the far-famed Athens. He marked their numberless altars. Their heathen superstition drove them to an absurd zeal in their religion. Fearing lest they had omitted some god who would punish them for their forgetfulness to do him honour, they had reared an altar, inscribing it "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD."

The earnest spirit of the devoted apostle could no longer keep still. When he was brought before the high court of Athens—Areopagus—he declared to them the God whom they thus ignorantly worshipped. He told them that He gave to all, life and breath and all things. That in Him they lived, and moved, and had their being. That even their own poet had declared, "For we are also His offspring."

Then the apostle brought the claim of that God before them, with the result that, whilst some mocked and procrastinated, others believed.

Now, friend, you may not have your horses and hounds, your town and country house. You may not be able to boast the position of a man of the world, but you owe to God your being—the air

you breathe, the water you drink, the health you enjoy, and ten thousand things more

Do you ever thank Him? Are you ever grateful? If not, you are supremely selfish and ungrateful

I know many who are greatly blessed by God, yet who never thank Him for their food, never commend themselves to Him in prayer, never seek a place of worship, even take His holy name in vain, and whose whole life is a course of self-seeking and pleasure. If any such read these lines, take these thoughts to heart, and remember that you cannot be pleasing to God till you honour His well-beloved Son—till you can subject yourself to His rightful claim over you as Lord.

As the apostle spoke of a coming day of judgment, and a present command to repent, so we would press upon you repentance for your life's history of selfish sins, and to come to Christ as a poor, lost sinner, and receive Him as your Saviour and Lord, and then seek to live a life that has reference to the God who so richly blesses you every moment of your life. 'Behold now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation.' You cannot approach God save through Christ. Your sin forbids it, but the precious blood of Jesus can cleanse you from all sin—God grant it may. Your ingratitude is rendered ten thousand-fold more ungrateful when you neglect the love of God by not availing yourself of such a Saviour. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

SMALL CORDS



T was almost midnight on Christmas Eve, 1889, and the augmented staff of the Post Office in a northern town were straining every nerve to overtake the enormous pressure of work which that festive season brings them. With a van in the outskirts of the town two postmen were busily engaged delivering parcels.

“ Parcels to right of us,
Parcels to left of us,
Parcels in front of us,
Still without number,”

said John, in a tone that tried to be cheery, although the drooping eyelid and weary brow, with an occasional uncontrollable yawn, told of a frame exhausted with overwork and worry.

“ Plague the whole of them,” returned the other with an oath, “ I wish I was home.”

His voice was thick and his gait unsteady, for, added to the fact that he, with the others, had toiled without intermission since four o'clock in the morning, he had not displayed courage enough to refuse “ tastes ” which a generous but unwise public foolishly proffered.

“ Don't swear, James,” said John, gravely, “ it won't further our work any ”

A volley of coarse oaths greeted his quiet rebuke, to which he sensibly made no reply.

James lifted some parcels from a hamper, and held them up so as to ascertain their addresses by the light of the lamp on his breast. As he jumped down with them his foot slipped, and he fell heavily to the ground, his head coming in violent contact with the edge of the pavement. The lamp was smashed, and the parcels were scattered about in the mire. In an instant John replaced the mail matter in the van, and with difficulty made room in it for the prostrate form of his co-worker. It was now impossible, John reasoned with himself, to attempt continuing the work further. The majority of the houses were shut for the night, and for some time past considerable delay had been caused by having to wait until bolted doors were unfastened. It was imperative that the injured man's bruises be attended to as quickly as possible, so, after filling his official time-bill, he directed the driver to repair to James's home.

Next day found James with a bandaged head and an accusing conscience, tossing restlessly on his bed. Friends supposed his fall was the result of accident, accelerated by the long hours he had been on duty, but well he knew that if his brain had not been muddled by the mocking stimulant, in all probability it would not have occurred. An attack of influenza, which at that time assumed an epidemic form, aggravated his bruises. As he lay there, aching in every joint, and a feeling of intense weariness overpowering him, the Spirit of

God strove with him, as it had done over and over again, to have done with all earth's glittering shadows, and vain pleasures, and to rest his weary sin-burdened soul on the man Christ Jesus. He was thoroughly out of heart with himself, and was "almost persuaded now to believe," when his reverie was disturbed by a companion calling.

"Dreadful thing this influenza," said his would-be helper. "I had a touch of it myself, but not nearly so severe as you, and the thing that benefited me most was a good glass of whisky. I know you are among teetotallers, so I just brought you a little drop," and he produced a small bottle of the fiery opiate. "There now, have a good drink, and slip it under your pillow for future use;" and he watched the sick man take a draught of his elixir.

"Doesn't that feel like the right thing now?" he continued, as he noticed James's eye brighten, for in truth the love of drink had grown to be his besetting sin. "They've been giving you tracts too," went on his quondam friend, as with cynical smile he lifted a little booklet from the coverlet. "'The Way of Salvation Made Plain'"—reading the title—"well, it's enough to give a fellow the blues, being continually dinned at with this religion."

"You're right there," returned James, whose thoughts of eternal realities were now banished. "You have done me a world of good by your visit and your medicine. Slip the tract into the fire, and then I'll rest in peace."

In peace ! vain delusion, when he had at that moment added another to the many times he had turned his back on the God of peace ; had rejected the One who made peace through the blood of His cross, and who was willing even then to fill him with all joy and peace in believing.

Neither the whisky nor the doctor's remedies succeeded in combating the disease, and in a short time alarming symptoms of pneumonia appeared. For days the sufferer restlessly tossed his head to and fro on the pillow, while words of wild delirium and weary moans came from the hot parched lips. Scene after scene of his past life rose up before him with vivid distinctness. Now he is a sweet fair-faced boy at his mother's knee. He feels again the touch of her soft hand as she strokes his golden curls. He hears the melody of her voice, as she tells him of the Babe of Bethlehem, and of the multitude of the heavenly host who sang of peace on earth, and goodwill toward men. She tells Him that that Babe was the Son of God, the King eternal, and He had come from the heights of glory into this sin-stained world, that He might raise man from the corruption into which he had sunk, and unite him with Himself in glory. And though so high and holy He did not despise the little children, but gathered them in His arms and blessed them, and said of such was the kingdom of heaven. And the mother prayed earnestly and tenderly that her little James might be one of the jewels in the Redeemer's crown.

But the scene changed. He was a boy at school, mixing with rude boys, hearing their coarse words, and seeing their mean actions. He repeated their words, he followed their ways, grew passionate and disobedient. Another vision flitted across his fevered brain. It was a darkened room, and a group of friends with tear-bedimmed eyes clustered round the bed whereon lay the form of his dying mother. One by one the departing saint motioned her children to her and blessed them, as did the patriarchs of old. Now he knelt before her, and her hand was on his head. Her once silvery voice was changed to a hoarse guttural sound, but the words came from a heart bright with the glory she was soon to enter, yet quivering with solicitude for the dear ones she was to leave behind. "James, my son"—the words came slowly and with laboured breath, but each one, even at this distant time burned into his soul—"you will soon have no mother to care for you, and to pray for you, for in a short time I shall be in heaven with Jesus, and I would like to be sure that you would meet me there. You have a sinful heart, and you need to be washed in the blood of Christ, or you must be separated from your mother for ever. Do not think there will be time when you grow older to trust in Jesus, but come now, before your heart gets harder, and be washed, and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus. Your brother Robert has been saved by grace through faith, and after I am gone listen to what he says,

for he will give you good counsel." She heard him sob out a promise that he would fulfil her desire, then indistinctly she murmured—

“ And when at last they reach that coast,
O'er life's brief journey driven,
May we be found, no member lost—
A family in heaven,”

and her ransomed spirit winged its way to realms of bliss. All the anguish of that grief was experienced again, the bitterest drop of it being that he had disregarded the chief desire of his mother's heart, and neglected the great salvation of which she yearned he might partake. And of the Christian brother into whose care she had specially entrusted him—how had he acted toward him? For a time after her death, when his heart was crushed with sorrow, he found solace in Robert's society, but as time assuaged his grief, the gulf between them grew greater, and more firmly fixed. At length he scoffed when Robert admonished him about his ways, laughed as he prayed for him, and mocked when he wept over the hardness of his heart. Now on his bed of languishing no rest did the weary youth have from his tormenting thoughts. Incident after incident came to his mind with photographic exactness, in all of which a pardon, full, perfect, and free, had been offered him; but he had spurned them all, and put off to a more convenient season the one important reality of life.

Should any one read these lines whose case in

any wise answers to this one we are recording ; if they have often been exhorted to come to Jesus, to trust His finished work, to accept Him as their own Saviour, and they have as often turned a deaf ear to such entreaties—have imagined there would be time enough by-and-by — perhaps when laid aside by sickness, and a Saviour became a necessity, we would entreat such to be warned by this episode, which we heard from the lips of the sufferer, of the dangers of such delay, and the horrors of an illness where the memory is loaded with remorseful accusings of conscience, and the soul dreads it may be about to return to God who gave it, with the burden of a lifetime of sin upon it.

God in His rich mercy raised up James even after the good doctor had despaired of his convalescence. Slowly his strength returned, and he was advised to hasten his recovery by a sojourn in a salubrious country district. It might reasonably be thought, after the anguish of heart he had endured during his delirium, that his first act, on the return of consciousness, would be to seek pardon from the God against whom he had offended. But the wail of the Man of Sorrows when on earth, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life," is re-echoed to-day, for with returning health James' desire for forgiveness of sins waned. At the rural retreat to which he went he met some former companions, and his genial open nature quickly made more. With them he indulged in revelry and dissipation

On his return to town a kind friend met him at the station "How are you now?" she asked gently, but with a look in her eyes that betokened an inquiry alike for his spiritual, as well as his physical state

"A viler sinner than ever," he returned doggedly.

They reached their abode in silence, a fervent prayer ascending from her heart meanwhile that he might no longer procrastinate

"Won't you come to Jesus now?" she asked tenderly

There was a long pause, during which the tempter busily plied his hitherto successful devices for the enthrallment of this soul At last faith gained the victory, and giving her his hand, he answered firmly, "Yes, I'll trust Jesus now," adding, in a wavering tone, "if He will have me."

"Oh," she cried, joyfully, "you need not doubt His willingness to save you, for He says, 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out'"

Some assert that these words are meant for the believer and not the sinner Most certainly they are precious for the saint, who feels his old froward ways clinging to him, and fears that the Lord, on their account, may disown him, but without doubt they have been used of God, in hundreds of cases, to give assurance of acceptance to trembling souls Thus it was in this case The peculiar charm of the words acted as healing balm on an open sore Not all at once did James enjoy the fulness of the blessing At first the light glimmered, and he

appeared to see men as trees walking. At night he accompanied his friend to a Gospel meeting, and drank in as never before the preaching of the blessed Gospel. But still fears clung to him; he was so unworthy, so depraved, and had so often made light of the invitation, it seemed impossible he could be forgiven all at once. Yet such is the grace of God—no matter how vile the sinner—the moment he by faith accepts Christ as his Saviour he is transformed into a child of God. During the singing of a hymn at the close all doubts vanished, and peace, rest, and joy reigned in his breast. As the music trilled and swelled, with pause and cadence, his voice blended in harmony with the others, for the words gave appropriate utterance to the feelings of his heart.

This is what they sang :—

*"Blessed assurance—Jesus is mine !
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine !
Heir of salvation, purchase of God ;
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood .*

*Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture burst on my sight ;
Angels descending, bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.*

*Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Saviour am happy and blest,
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love."*

Then followed that season of testing, when older Christians trembled lest the seed which he had received with joy might have fallen on a rock, and having no root, might wither away.

The sequel proved that the Word had found a good soil, as with honest heart he began to bring forth fruit with patience. His former companions were met now only to be told of the redemption of his soul, and earnestly entreated that they too would flee for refuge. Very sweet was the daily fellowship he enjoyed with his brother, and other brothers in Christ sprang up all around.

What a network of influences were employed in bringing James to the feet of Jesus! His childhood's training—his mother's prayers—his Sunday school recollections—his brother's constant care for his soul—the times he had been taken to hear the Gospel faithfully proclaimed—the evangelists who had reasoned with him of judgment to come. The One who could command more than twelve legions of angels used a scourge of *small cords* to accomplish His work. Surely in this case we see how another and another small cord was added—cords of love—ere the wanderer was driven to the fold.

We know of many around whom a similar fabric of small cords is being wound, and we beseech such to allow God to bring back their soul from the pit and enlighten them with the light of the living, lest haply they one day stand speechless and hear the awful words, "Bind him hand and foot, and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." Rather now let the ear be opened, and the instruction sealed, and the captivated heart be bound in the "bundle of life."

THE TRUE SERVANT.

“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to day, and for ever”—**HEB.**
xiii 8

“I am among you as he that serveth”—**LUKE** xii 27.



HE served us in the past,
The blessed Son of God,
In rich, unwearied, matchless grace
This sinful earth He trod
To minister He came
To sinners, lost, undone;
Jesus on Calvary's cursed tree
For us salvation won.

He lives to serve us now
In priestly robes arrayed,
He cleanses us from every stain
Contracted by the way
Our Advocate on High,
He pleads His precious blood,
A full and perfect sacrifice,
To satisfy our God

Again He'll gird Himself
To serve the faithful few,
Who have through earth's long dreary night
Kept His return in view
The waiting, watching ones,
Who through "the little while"
Have kept their garments undefiled,
Shall meet their Master's smile

THE CALL OF THE BRIDE.

"And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things. And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master. And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go. And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master. And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, WILT THOU GO WITH THIS MAN? And she said, I will go. And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men. And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them. And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man. and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way. And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi; for he dwelt in the south country. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her. and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."—GEN. xxiv. 53-67.

PART V.—THE BRIDE'S DECISION.



WE have, in previous pages, been looking at this chapter, and seeing how simply and sweetly the Gospel is therein foreshadowed and illustrated; and now, in referring to it once more, I avow, most distinctly, my object is not to unfold the Gospel in its doctrinal view, but to get your soul, my reader, if possible, brought to a distinct point before Christ.

The Lord help me to pen, and you to peruse, this paper as if indeed it were the last occasion on which I could appeal to you, or you have the opportunity of receiving Christ.

I find, then, here one question · the person most interested gets one simple question put to her, to which she must make, on her own responsibility, one answer—Yes or No.

The narrative is very simple, the type equally beautiful, the application heart-winning. The Father of the Lord Jesus Christ offers to give you eternal glory in association with His Son. Consequent upon the death, resurrection, and ascension of His Son—which are the proofs of God's love on the one hand, in giving that Son to die, and His righteousness on the other, in raising and glorifying Him, as man, in token of His delight and satisfaction in the work He has accomplished for sinners—there has come from heaven a divine messenger, the herald of a divine message, and it falls now on your ear. It is this: God wants to have you for His Son, He does not come and press upon you that you want His Son, that possibly may not be the case consciously, for many do not care to have Christ, as they are not aware of their lost and needy condition as sinners. When people really want anything they cast about till they get it, but if they are indifferent they are passive.

It is perfectly true you want a Saviour; but salvation is not the thought there God here proposes to you to share the glories of His beloved

Son Do you not see to what glories and dignities you are invited? Instead of being left to die in your sins, and then pass unpardoned and unblessed into outer darkness, to be the miserable companion of the devil and his angels (Matt xxv 41), God wants you to enter into relationship with Christ now, by faith in His name, and then be the sharer of His joys through the endless cycles of eternity's blissful day

This is the message Abraham's servant brings, in type He comes from Canaan, where Isaac abides The father sends his servant to the far-off land to get one, *if he could*, to cross the desert to be the Bride, of the unseen, and unknown Bridegroom Three things are necessary if you are going to be a sharer of the glory of Christ—redemption, righteousness, and raiment; but “jewels of silver,” “jewels of gold,” and “raiment,” the very articles which typify these three things, the servant brings out and offers to Rebekah Silver is the type of redemption the only way the soul can draw near to God is on the ground of redemption I need righteousness, and gold is the symbol of Divine righteousness. “Raiment” speaks for itself, and these three things I must have

Christ is all these and more, and if you will have Him as such, your eternal blessing is secure.

I address you as a messenger from God “Bold ground,” you say Yes, but no more bold than blessed In the name of my Master I come, and want to win you for Christ I want to win you for

Christ as you read this paper. O unsaved man, unsaved woman ! my message is this—I want you for Christ. God wants you for Christ

“Oh, but I am such a sinner !” True, that is quite true. “I cannot, as I am, draw near to God.” False The veil is rent, the blood is shed, and sprinkled before God, the new and living way exists, and you are bidden to come to God just as you are.

Nevertheless, mark, her friends do not say, “Wilt thou go ?” before Rebekah has received the jewels and the raiment. If it be the question of what will fit me for the Father’s house, could anything be better than what He sends ? The Gospel tells you that Christ came into the world, and it tells you, too, what He has done. The law tells me what I ought to do, and smites me because I have not done it. Law tells me of myself, the Gospel tells me what Christ is, and what He has done.

Are you going to have Christ ? You have often heard about Jesus, but are you on your way to Him ? I want this to be the moment of your betrothal.

What I want now is *decision*. Redemption is accomplished, the blood has been shed, and the claims of God have all been met by the cross. That which the sinner needs has been wrought out for him by Jesus, and now it is for you to accept the Gospel message, for you in the truthful integrity of your soul to say, “Come what may, I am

going to be Christ's." You may have some time to wait ere you see the Lord Jesus face to face; the desert may be long in crossing, but one sight of Him will more than make up for all the toil, or trouble of the way.

Rebekah hears the message one day and starts the next. Many have put off coming to Christ for ten days, and have spent them in hell, and eternity to boot. I beseech you to come now to Jesus.

Notice here how that arch-enemy of present blessing—procrastination—appears.

The servant "rose" and said, "Send me away unto my master." Rebekah's relations reply, "Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go." They want the moment of decision deferred, and you want that too, don't you? "Some day," you say, "but not just now." You want to defer it. This is the plausible voice of the devil. If you are not turned to the Lord, your back is towards Him; you are still in your sins, and they will bring you to judgment. Ten days are most insidious. Felix was a man of *ten days*. "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." Ah, poor Felix, when will his convenient season come? He never had a more convenient season. Oh, turn now to Jesus! Oh, ye halters, who are not yet decided for Christ, take Felix as a warning!

Perhaps you think you will turn to the Lord when you reach your deathbed. Delusive hope, for you may never have one. I heard lately of a

procrastinator whose constant reply to earnest Christian friends, when they spoke to him of his soul's salvation, and urged him to come to Christ, was, "I am sure that God is so merciful, that if I turn to Him, even on a deathbed, He will hear my prayer and save me, so I shall wait till then." Though repeatedly warned, this was his refuge, and so on he went, till he came, not to his deathbed, but, as was his wont, into the hunting-field. While the hounds were in full cry after the quarry, his horse leaped a hedge, on the farther side of which were lying some sheep. Disturbed, and frightened by the sudden apparition of the horse, the timid creatures fled in all directions. Their scampering off alarmed the usually sure-footed steed, who fell, flinging his rider. Three words burst from the lips of the falling man—not "God have mercy!" but, addressing the sheep, "Devil take ye!" They were his last words, for he broke his neck, and died on the spot. And you may rest assured that the devil took not the sheep but the procrastinating sinner who cursed them. Reader, be sure of it, procrastination is the thief of souls, as well as of time, and I quite agree with Rowland Hill, who termed it "the recruiting-officer of hell."

God may never give you the opportunity of repentance on a deathbed. Now is the only time you can be sure of finding Christ.

Sinner, I warn you these are facts, stern facts. "But what do you want me to do?" you may

reply. I want you to yield yourself to Christ just now. I want you to make sure of eternity, and not put off, even until to-morrow (which never comes), the momentous matter of getting really hold of the salvation of God.

Ye young ones, I appeal to you. It is vain to say, "Let me die the death of the righteous." If you are going to die the death of the righteous, you must live the life of the righteous. It is vain to suppose you can get Christ when you like: you must get Him when you may, and that is just now.

"And her mother and her brother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten, after that she shall go" (ver. 55). Such was the procrastinating speech of that day, and how solemnly is it echoed by many a soul now-a-days. Do you say, "I will decide for Christ in a few days at the least, at most ten"? Ten days hence! Oh, no! It must be *now* if you want to be with Christ in glory; if you want to be with that rapturous throng around the Saviour; if you want to join the chorus, "Worthy is the Lamb."

What does God say? *Now*. Jesus will have you *now*. I earnestly implore you not to delay. I lay no claim to being a prophet when I say you may never have another Gospel message, and another day of grace, in which to be saved. Really, my dear reader, you can have no idea of the joy of being Christ's, or you would not delay a single hour in turning to Him, receiving the par-

don of your sins, the salvation of your soul, and the sweet heart-thrilling assurance that He is yours, and you are His. Do you know that Jesus loves you, and wants you, wants to claim you as His? "Jesus . . . having loved his own which were in the world, loved them unto the end." Oh, to be His own loved one—His *very own*! Nothing changes that love of His. Jesus wants to have you numbered among His own, *His very own*.

Will you yield? Let not Satan deceive you with *a few days, at the least ten*. Now is the time.

Well, what is the servant's answer to be—"Send me away, for I have failed"? Oh, say, must I go and tell my Lord that I have failed—failed to win your heart for Him? Shall it be so? Oh no, no, give me the joy of saying to my Lord, "That heart is Thine, Lord!"

What was Rebekah's answer when her relations said to her, "Wilt thou go with this man"? She firmly said, "*I will go*." No one else can decide for you. You have a soul, its eternal welfare depends on your answer. You have a soul to be saved or lost. Oh, will you let any one, anything, come in between the Lord and your soul? Decide, decide, *now*.

Jesus wants you, Jesus is waiting for you. Oh, let nothing hinder you from coming to Him. "We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth," was the word then; it is you that are concerned now. Wilt thou go? dear soul, wilt thou go? Oh, say, "I will go!" Yes, have Christ, be Christ's! Shall

He be thine? What say you? "Wilt thou go?" The Holy Ghost puts the question to you, it is not my question. God's question is, "Wilt thou go?" Wilt thou go to meet Christ and be His? Give me thine answer; oh, let there be no more delays. How can you tell you will have time to decide to-morrow? To-morrow is God's, not yours. "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Let there be no more procrastination. God lingers over you; again and again He lets you hear these words, "Wilt thou go?" "Wilt thou go?" "I will go," says faith, "I will go," says the decided heart, "I will go," says the earnest one.

"I will go;" this is the calm, quiet resolution of the soul that wakes up to see the glory that is offered, and the grace that offers it.

What is the absolute alternative if Christ is not received? The dreary darkness of an eternal night, in which the only light is that shed by the lurid flame that is never quenched, the only companions sinners and devils as wretched as yourself, and the only occupation vain regrets over the folly and unbelief that have landed you in a spot beyond the reach of the hand of God Himself.

All depends on yielding yourself, or not, to Jesus. If the language of your soul is "I will go," you will thank God to all eternity.

Would you like *all* to be saved but yourself? Would you like all to be included, and you excluded from that blessed number, who surround the Lord Jesus in unfading glory? Surely not Then halt

no longer, but give a decided answer to the query which again I put—nay, which God in His sovereign grace once more puts to thee.

Soul, "wilt thou go"? Thou canst hardly say *no*, when to remain as you are is to be eternally lost. What is thine answer? "Ten days hence." Beware, the clemency of God will not last for ever. Ten days hence, and the door of heaven may be closed for ever against thee, and in vain shall thy piteous cry be, "Open unto me." But, thank God, there is yet another answer thou canst give, "I will go." Let it be thine.

Rebekah had never seen Isaac when she decided to go to him, but she believed the report of Abraham's servant. And think you not that as they journeyed across the desert many a question was asked concerning the one to whom she was going? And would not her heart grow warmer, and warmer towards Isaac, as she heard his praise? And shall it not be so with you? The Holy Ghost, we are told, "will take of the things of Christ and reveal them unto you." Oh, listen to Him, let no trumpet-sound of earth deaden His voice. He would tell you of God's well-beloved Son. Oh, learn of Him of all the gentleness, love, and grace of Jesus, and of His glory, too; and as each beauty bursts upon thine admiring gaze, know that He may be thine, and if thine, then shall the jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and the raiment become more precious to thee because they are *His* gifts.

Did Rebekah stop the camels to pick up the

agates of the desert? I trow not; and wilt thou linger by the way to gather the withering pleasures of a death-doomed world?

Oh, no! Haste thee on to the joy, the satisfying and endless joy that is to be possessed only at thine Isaac's side. Be unfettered, be but a sojourner and pilgrim here; heaven is thy home, speed thee on to it. And what shall the meeting be when thou shalt see Him face to face? Wonderful as was the story you listened to by the way, yet your astonished soul in wonder will exclaim, "The half had not been told."

There are three things the Lord has done for us. He loved us, He gave Himself for us, and He has washed us from our sins. Why has He done thus? "That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blame." What a glorious Bride shall the Church be in that day when "the marriage of the Lamb has come"!

Rebekah goes, she commits herself to the guardianship of the nameless servant, and at eventide she sees Isaac coming; and what is that but a simple type of the meeting with our Lord? Isaac was comforted when he received his bride; and have we not read of Jesus, "who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame"? His joy will be full when He has His Bride in glory with Him. And is that blessed hour near? The last step of the journey may be indeed most near;

this night it may be that "he that shall come will come." He is coming. Three times in Rev. xxii. He says, "I come quickly." Are you ready? "Wilt thou go?" "I will go," is the only answer suited to such a call of grace.

And now, in conclusion, I would say, Let all know you are Christ's. Confess Christ. Own Him. To confess Him with the lip is as important as to believe with the heart. What a blessed thing it is to belong to Christ, and then go our way singing—

"The Father, from eternity,
 Chose us, O Jesus Christ, in Thee,
 In Thee, His well-belovèd ;
 And we, as given to Thee— Thy Bride—
 In Thee, Lord Jesus, do confide :
 Thy love remains unmovèd.
 From Thee daily
 Strength receiving—to Thee cleaving,
 Blessed Jesus !
 May we all show forth Thy praises.
 Before the world we'd make our boast,
 That Thou, in whom is all our trust,
 Art Lord of life and glory :
 And soon Thou'lt bring us to that place
 Where we shall see Thee face to face,
 And, glorified, adore Thee.
 Amen !—Be then
 Praise and blessing, never ceasing,
 To Thee given,
 Here, and when we come to heaven."

W. T. P. W

These papers are now published in book form, entitled, "The Call of the Bride," and can be obtained at the *Gospel Messenger* Office, 7 Bristo Place, Edinburgh.

"PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD."

"As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God —ROM XIV 11



OD 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 those 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 owlet 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 saves, but this blessed Christ. Faith in Him secures all the blessed results of his death, and the believer is "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.



AN IMPORTANT WORD OF TWO LETTERS.



E daresay our readers wonder, as they see the above title, to what little word we are about to refer. Well, it is a very weighty one in human conversation, though, if taken by itself, having scarcely any significance. It occurs

very often in Scripture, and in many connections of deepest moment for all. It is the word *No*. Let us dwell briefly upon a few passages.

Firstly, in the book of Psalms we read, "The fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God*" (Psa.

liii. 1). The words "*there is*" are in italics, and not there. It is simply "*no God.*" The fool, *i.e.*, the man who is foolish in contrast to the one who is wise, says in his heart, "*No God*" Not with his lips; maybe he is not bold enough for that (though there are many now-a-days who go even so far), but *in his heart*. And this God reads. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Who can know it? God; only God. Nothing is hid from Him. He is reading *your* heart at this moment. What does He read? Perhaps you rebel against such a pointed question. Then it is clear you are one of those foolish people.

It is utter folly to keep away from God. To say "*no God*" now is to come before Him in your sins very shortly. You *must* face Him then; there is no getting out of it. Strange that men should want to get rid of their best Friend. God is for us, not against us, though against sin. But you fear the light, that is what it is. But He is love as well as light. Have to do with Him *now*, judging yourself, and confessing your sins, and He will meet you just as you are, and save you for His own glory. To say, "*no God,*" to shut Him out from your heart, and to cleave to this world and its follies and lusts, is to love death and eternal woe.

But perhaps you are not so foolish as to say "*No God,*" but are rather one that owns Him, and His authority, having been brought up to do so. You go every Sunday, perhaps, to church or chapel;

you have daily prayers at home; you are upright, respectable, and respected, and seek in all things to do your duty. You are not a careless worldling, but a religious professor, and you think God is merciful, He gave His Son to die, and so on, and you hope that if you do the best you can it will be all right in the end. But what is all this (and are there not tens of thousands in such like condition?) but a mere external acknowledgment of truth, and *your own righteousness* the ground of your hope for the future. What saith the Scripture? Here this important word "*no*" comes in a second time. "There is none righteous, *no not one*." Dear reader, we must be plain with you. If the above is your confidence it is false; you are going on every day blindfold down the broad road straight to the lake of fire. God's righteousness is now revealed, and He will have none of yours. You must submit yourself to His. And where will you find it? *Alone in Christ*

And what is necessarily the condition of souls, who either shut out God or trust in their own righteousness? "*No peace*" (Isa. lvii. 21) "There is none righteous, *no, not one*" (Rom. iii. 10). "*All have sinned*, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23). The only truly righteous before God are those who are so accounted on the principle of faith, and walk in faith practically here below. The rest form part of the world that lieth in the wicked one; are amongst the wicked. Doubtless there are great moral differences in one sense, but

when it is a question of standing before God, and title to His glory, "there is *no difference*." All are sinners, ungodly, enemies, without strength, wicked; and "the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is *no peace*, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isa. lvii 20, 21). Every unconverted heart is a complete stranger to it.

Now, is this your case, dear reader? If so, where will you turn to obtain peace? There is but one true answer to this momentous question, where we have already pointed you. To *Christ*. "I, even I, am the Lord: and beside me there is *no saviour*" (Isa. xliii. 11). Seeing the way that thousands seek to save themselves, or trust more or less to some other foundation, one would think that such a scripture had never been written. Alas, how many are trusting in their own religiousness, or morality, or to some institution of Christianity instead of to Christ! And how many are adding somewhat, or something to Christ, as a kind of makeweight. But what could be plainer than the precious word, "But beside me there is *no saviour*." This is the blessed declaration of the Lord Himself, the One who could say, "*I, even I, am the Lord*." He came into the world as the *Saviour*, saying plainly, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John viii. 24). He is the "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5).

But this is not all. Since we are sinners, to put

away our sins He must die. "Without shedding of blood there is *no remission*." "Hence he gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. ii. 6). He laid down His life. His precious blood was shed. And now He lives again, the risen and exalted Christ on God's throne. This is He who is declared to be a Prince and a *Saviour*. There is *no Saviour* beside Him, and *no remission of sins* but through His precious blood. Have you believed on Him?

No peace is your portion both here and for ever, without an interest in Christ. It is not enough to *know* that He is the Saviour, or that His blood was shed, you must *believe on Him*. "Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). Christ hath made peace through the blood of His cross (Col. i. 20). "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. 25, v. 1). Have you?

Moreover, He not only died for sins, but for sin itself. The whole judgment of God fell upon Him both for sin and sins, so that not only are our sins forgiven when we believe, but it is our privilege also to know deliverance now from the dominion of sin itself. God looks upon the believer as having died with Christ to sin, and as being alive again in Him, whom He raised from the dead, and we are exhorted so to reckon. (Rom. vi. 1-12). What is the result? There is now therefore *no condemna-*

tion to them which are in Christ Jesus. What a wondrous change, completely delivered both now and for ever from all condemnation. Christ Himself has taken the believer's place on the cross, and borne our judgment once for all, and we now are in Him, who has passed from under it, and out of death, and is gone into the blessed presence of God as Man.

“*No condemnation !*” O my soul,
 ’Tis God that speaks the word,
 Perfect in comeliness art thou
In Christ the risen Lord.”

And this being our blessed case through faith, it is our privilege to enjoy the love of God. “There is *no fear* in love ; but perfect love casteth out fear ; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.”

The writer was once visiting a person who was living in what John Bunyan calls “Doubting Castle,” and to meet her case, quoted the above text, adding the question, “Do you know what that means ?” She paused a moment, and then replied, “I suppose when I love God perfectly, I shall get rid of my doubts and fears” “Yes, certainly you will, but as that will never be until you arrive in glory, you must make up your mind to doubt the remainder of your life here.” Our readers may easily picture the blank look of astonishment upon her countenance. “Now just look at it the other way for a moment. (Souls always begin with themselves, until they learn better.) Think of God’s love instead of your own. It is His love that

is perfect, not yours. Yours will never be, until you are in heaven. But think of His perfect love expressed in the gift of Christ to die for us, and now flowing from the glory where He is. Believe and enjoy that, and all your fear will be banished for ever." It was quite a new thought for her, and it is to be hoped that she learned to look at it thus, and to enjoy it in forgetfulness of self.

If any of our readers are in such like case, may you do the same. You will never enjoy assurance as long as you look in. You might as well look into an ice-well to find warmth, as into your own poor heart to find love to God. But think of God's great love to you; believe it; take Him at His word about the finished work of His Son, and you will have peace with Him, and the Holy Ghost will shed abroad God's love in your heart, and you will love Him spontaneously without effort in return. And "*there is no fear in love.*"

Lastly, if left here for a while, we are responsible, as saved ones, to bring forth fruit in our lives to the glory of God. The only power for this is the Spirit who dwells in the believer. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, . . . But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is *no law* And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. v. 19-25).

Pages for the Young.

BLESSED ASSURANCE.



BOBBY could not romp and play about like most boys, for he had a weak back, so he had to be wheeled in a little coach for a long time. Do not think, however, that he was unhappy. Pain and weakness had made him think of

God, and as his parents were always telling him of the Lord Jesus, he trusted Him, and was ready to confess that He had died for him, and saved him, though he was only a poor little sinner.

I hope, my dear little reader, that you too have found out your need of the Saviour; because, unless you know Him, you will never reach the beautiful home on high that the Bible speaks about.

My friend Bobby had two stirring brothers, who were always moving out and in. There was also a little baby, who took up a deal of mother's attention. Besides these there was a big black dog in the house called Rorrie, who would rush out to the gate and bark at any dog passing upon the road. He was a kind beast, and all the boys liked him. One day Bobby's mother gave him some meat baby had left, and told him to give it to the dog. Rorrie, of course, was pleased to see

the dish, and, as Bobby brought it toward him, whisked his tail, and leaped up with his great fore paws upon the little lad. He was a big heavy fellow, and our young friend was knocked over upon the floor. He cried out, "Mamma, my leg is broken." Fortunately his father was in the house, and no time was lost in laying him upon a bed. The limb began at once to swell, so a surgeon was sent for. Bobby cried to his mother to kneel down and pray to Jesus to spare him. He said he did not want Jesus to take him to the "happy land," as he did not want to leave her yet. The mother trusted the Lord, and the prayer was answered, for he lives yet. It was a bad fracture, and more skilful aid had to be called in. After the surgeon had set the leg with splints, and Bobby had wakened out of the sleep caused by chloroform, he felt so much relieved that his little heart praised the Lord and thanked the doctor too. He looked up and asked if he might sing. With a sweet voice he slowly sung this verse, making every word very distinct—

"Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine !
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine !
Heir of salvation, purchase of God ;
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long."

The doctor turned aside, for tears filled his eyes. The touching pathos of the song, and the bright faith of the little patient, were not things to be

met with every day. You may be sure that this gladdened his mother and father very much, and they will not be surprised, if their son is spared to be a preacher of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What think you, dear reader, made this lad so bright, so ready to confess the Lord? Simply this, he had found out that he was "without strength, and guilty before God," but believed that "Christ died for the ungodly," and that "God *so loved* the world, that he *gave* his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The question may be asked, How can I be *sure* of salvation, and possess this blessed assurance? The reply is simply, "God cannot lie. His word cannot be broken" (John x. 35) Trust then to what Scripture says about yourself as a lost sinner, and about Christ as the Saviour (for Christ Jesus came into the world to *save* sinners), and peace will be yours. But lose no time. Take the advice of a dying man "Make *sure* work about your soul." You must either be trusting the Lord or not. There is no half way. At this moment you are fit for heaven or hell, which is it? Only receive the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be able to sing with others, saved by grace—

"Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Saviour am happy and blest,
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love"

THE HEARING OF FAITH.



CHRIST, I hear
 Thy cry, "'Tis finished," pealing !
 Words to me dear,
 For there I find my healing.
 Suspended high,
 On Thee the curse descended,
 And Thou didst die,
 And so my soul befriended.

Thy cross is bare ;
 Thy grave, O Christ, is empty !
 And now I share
 The love of Him who sent Thee.
 'Tis only so
 That sins can be forgiven
 And sinners go
 To dwell with Thee in heaven.

By God thus seen,
 I need no other fountain :
 Blood maketh clean,
 Blood moves sin's mighty mountain !
 Yes, blood alone,
 And not poor man's oblation ;
 No tear, no groan,
 Christ's blood is God's salvation !

THE QUESTION OF QUESTIONS.



WE live in a day of great questioning. Almost everything is called in question, and things which once passed current as certified facts, are no longer allowed to assert themselves, but must be subjected to question.

We may enjoy, or we may deplore, the avidity shown for this, but we cannot prevent it; and, indeed, it is our wisdom to make each question turn us afresh to the dear old Book, whose truth holds its own, and which yields comfort and strength, and light and food to the dependent spirit.

But, after all, this tendency is not confined to our day. Let my reader turn, for instance, to the Gospel of Matthew, and let his eye run down chapter xxii. He will there see how the blessed Master Himself was pursued by questions even in His day.

Some had to ask Him whether tribute should be paid to Cæsar, some were perplexed as to a future state, asking how it could be, since they knew of a certain woman who had seven husbands, and which of these men, said they, was to claim her as his wife then; others, again, asked which of all the ten commandments was the greatest.

No doubt each questioner was honestly puzzled by his own question, and must have been surprised by the simple and perfect answer given by

the Lord. He quietly, and with divine wisdom, solved each difficulty, and met each inquirer. To Him no question was perplexing, no riddle insoluble. If man were ignorant, He was wise; if man could not discern the truth, He could announce it.

Oh, what a wonderful thing, what a boon inestimable, what a mercy divine to have One in our midst perfectly able to state the whole truth on every subject and every question. One to whom a poor unhappy Peter could say, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee"—the love that is unknown to others, nay, that may justly be doubted by them, that love—that poor feeble, flickering spark—is known to Thee! Or, again, One of whom a sneering Pharisee could soliloquise and say, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who, and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for she is a sinner." But, as the following story of the creditor and his two debtors shows, it must have been plain to the questioner that "this Man" knew, not only all about the flagrant sins of the woman, but also the equally detestable self-righteousness of the Pharisee! Or, yet again, One who could declare, as no one else dared to assert, "I speak that which I have seen with my Father" (John viii. 38). Or, finally, "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John i. 18).

And we have had such an One in our midst, here on earth, where sin, with all its dire concomitants

of unbelief, and spiritual darkness, and enmity against God, and total alienation of heart and life from Him, abounds and multiplies. We have had One who could declare the Father—One who, on account of His eternal relation as Son, dwelling in that bosom, and fully intimate with all its love, could declare, nay, express or be the living *exegesis* of the Father; One who could, therefore, say, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John xiv. 6).

How could they "entangle in his talk" such an One? Yet they essayed to do so—only to find His perfect wisdom, and to see His perfect grace.

Well, then, the questions above mentioned over, we find the Lord submitting one to them—one, I need hardly say, of infinite importance, not only as coming from Him, but as bearing on the condition of those addressed: "What think ye of Christ?" said He.

Now, of all conceivable questions—and they are legion—this stands out far the most commanding of all subjects, or topics, or themes of that day, or of this. The truth of Christ as revealed in the Book of God, is immeasurably supreme. May I therefore beg of you, dear reader, to face this question, "What think you of Christ?"

It applies to yourself. Your salvation from an eternal hell to the glory of God hinges on your truthful answer. How do you stand in relation to Christ? What place has He in your heart? Have you proved His saving grace, or felt the cleansing

power of His precious blood? Has His love ever entranced your soul? Have you yet seen beauty in the despised Nazarene—the lowly Jesus—the Son of man, the Son of God? What, oh what, think ye of Christ? You must have right thoughts of Jesus. Now, many view Him only as a martyr; many only as a model, many as an exquisite figure of history; many find pleasure in reading the divine record of His lowly life, and painful death, and are moved to tears thereby.

“I oft read with pleasure, to soothe or engage,
Isaiah’s wild measure, or John’s simple page,
But oft as they pictured the blood sprinkled tree,
Jehovah Tsidkenu was nothing to me,”

is the lovely poetic description given by dear Robert M’Cheyne of the effect of such a perusal upon him, while as yet Jesus was “nothing” to him. But a nature religionised is not a soul born again. More is needed. Others, alas! in awful numbers, pay Him no regard, nor trouble themselves about Him. Their first approach to Him will be at the great white throne to find that He, the Son of Man, is the appointed Judge—their Judge, too!

But what, my reader, think ye of Christ? Yes, of Christ? Yes, of Christ Himself, the once crucified, now glorified, and coming Christ of God—what think ye of Him?

Oh! it is not a matter of this religion or that; this creed or that, this confession or that—all such things are incomparable and secondary. If Satan

can succeed in engrossing your mind with such points, he has won the field. No, no, it is not religion, but Christ; not creeds nor confessions, but Christ.

Yonder "dying thief" knew nothing of these, but he owned the Lordship of the crucified Jesus, and was found that day in paradise. Demons owned His authority, and pleaded for respite from their doom. Men proved the life-giving power of His hand, and the peace-giving sweetness of His words.

Angels celebrated His birth, and worshipped Him as their Lord. The wide universe is indebted to Him for His creatorial fiat. And God has set Him forth as His beloved Son in whom He has found His pleasure, by whom He was glorified on earth, and that work finished which was given Him to do. He carries highest credentials, and wears brightest crowns. Wise men saw Him in the manger; Stephen saw Him in glory. Have *you* seen Him yet?

A Roman soldier pierced His side on Calvary; John beheld Him as the Lamb once slain in the midst of the throne on high.

Myriads of sinners, once ruined and guilty, can now sing, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, . . . to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever" (Rev. i. 5).

Reader, can you? He is worthy of all the praise of heaven. May your lips be found joining in that blest and becoming tribute.

J W. S.

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?



WO men stood looking in at a print-shop window. They were total strangers to each other. One of them suddenly put a question, "Where did they get *that face?*"

Before replying, the other quickly scanned the array of various representations in painting, engraving, and photographs, in order to know to which the speaker referred. Without hesitation he judged the remark applied to a picture of Christ and the rich young ruler, who was depicted turning sorrowfully away from the rightful claims of the Lord over himself and his substance. He then replied, "I suppose it is an imaginary face; it is a good one notwithstanding."

"Yes, it is all imagination," was the rejoinder of the first speaker.

The tone in which it was uttered caused the one addressed to look the speaker full in the face, while making the emphatic remark, "*Though that face be imaginary, the Christ of God is no imagination, He is a reality.*"

The eyes of the querist flashed, as he hissed out, "It's all stuff, there is no such person."

"If there be no Christ of God, my friend, then you and I are damned for ever"

"Go back to the School Board and learn better; it's all imagination"

“Not all the School Boards in the world could teach you or me our need of Christ. The Spirit of God alone can teach us that.”

By this time they had moved along the street. Again the scoffer cried, “Nonsense! What about the Jew; will he be saved?”

“Never you mind the Jew, get your own soul saved. The question for you to answer before God is, What think ye of Christ?”

And thus they parted, the unbeliever turning off impatiently to follow his own way, and the Christian, with a sad heart, praying God to use the testimony for His still rejected Son. Scripture abounds in momentous questions, many of them still unanswered. The last time Jesus taught in the Temple, when the Pharisees or rulers were gathered together, He asked them the duplex question, “What think ye concerning the Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, David’s. He saith to them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit on my right hand, until I put thine enemies under thy feet? If therefore David call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, nor did any one dare from that day to question him any more” (Matt. xxii. 41-46). Full well they felt that He spake as never man spake, with an authority which, while convincing the gainsayers, carried with it all the force of truth, causing the hearers either to bow or resist.

Reader, let me ask how is it with you? Have you owned that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing have you life through His name? (John xx. 31.) The Scriptures declare that Christ is David's Son and David's Lord. He is the seed of David according to the flesh, being born into time as the Son of Mary, of the house and family of David. He is David's Lord, because out of Bethlehem came the Ruler of Israel, whose goings forth were of old from everlasting (Micah v. 2; Rom. ix. 4), "over all God blessed for ever." Become man, so holy, so lowly, He was unknown and rejected both by His own people and the world (John i 10, 11), was "cut off," as Messiah (Dan. ix. 21) and His life taken from the earth (Acts viii. 33). Yet He came to *die*: not for that nation only, but that He might gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad. His was the blood of atonement.

Christ's death is the basis of righteousness and peace, so that God is just and the justifier of him that believeth. But His cross and grave are empty, and He—exalted by the right hand of God, and to the right hand of God, the place of honour and distinction—sits at that right hand waiting till His foes be made His footstool. He is waiting, too, His revelation in glory. "For who may abide the day of his coming; and who shall stand when he appeareth, for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' sope." Who will be able to stand? Again, a grave question is asked (Psa. cxxx. 3), "If thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who

shall stand?" Could you? Could I? Alas! no. God says, "Not one" (Psa. xiv. 3). An awakened conscience utters "Not one." The host of the redeemed cry, "Not one." The lost in torments will re-echo, "Not one." God speaks in His holiness, "There is none righteous, no, not one."

But stay! who is He who, coming up out of the river of Jordan, has the heavens opened upon Him, the dove of peace and purity abiding on Him, and the voice of the Eternal Father saluting Him with these memorable words, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." *He could stand* in God's sight. He could enter the holy place without blood, for He did no iniquity, neither was guile found in His mouth. "He knew no sin" (2 Cor. v. 21). "He did no sin" (1 Pet. ii. 22). "He was without sin" (Heb. iv. 15). "In him is no sin" (1 John iii. 5). This is the Man Christ Jesus, the One Mediator, the One Ransom. Your salvation can only be in virtue of His blood and sacrificed life. Oh! believe Him, confess Him, and you will be saved.

God's glad tidings concerning His Son are for you. His work is perfect, His love infinite, His power illimitable, His word immutable, His wisdom infallible, and His claims indisputable. Oh! trust Him *now*. He died to save you, He lives to save you; His will is salvation, His mission was salvation; to trust Him will be *your salvation*, salvation from eternal flames, salvation from

Satan's present power ; salvation to have part in Christ, for Christ, and with Christ "For the grace of God, which carries salvation for all men, has appeared, teaching us that, having denied impiety and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, and justly, and piously, in the present course of things, awaiting the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all lawlessness, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous for good works."

Reader, "what think ye of Christ" ?

T. R. D.

TO-MORROW MAY BE TOO LATE.



SHORT while ago the telegraph flashed the news far and wide of a terrible catastrophe in Spain. The following is an abridged account by an eye-witness :—

"At eight o'clock in the morning of the 11th September, I was on duty at the Town Hall at Consuegra, when a terrific storm, accompanied by thunder and lightning and torrents of rain burst upon the town. When the storm was at its height, the mayor startled me and my comrades by appearing in the balcony of his residence, and shouting, 'Guards, guards, hurry down to the

river; the waters have overflowed, and are inundating the houses.'

"We ran down, and succeeded in saving some thirty persons, the water being up to the neck in some instances, and continuing to rise with frightful rapidity.

"Many people in the houses through which it was rushing in angry torrents did not seem to realise the full extent of their danger. It was in vain that we begged and prayed them to abandon their dwellings. The storm and rainfall having somewhat abated, they seemed to believe that the worst was past, and steadily refused to follow our advice, though we insisted all we could.

"We knew by this time that a fearful disaster was impending, as the water was rushing down into the valley in all directions from the mountain gorges. Thus the day passed, and when night fell, many of the people, in spite of all our warnings, went to sleep as usual in the threatened houses all along the banks of the swollen river. The flood continued to rise by leaps and bounds, and carrying everything before it with resistless fury, overwhelmed nearly the whole town. Houses were swept away before their sleeping occupants could make any effort to save themselves. It was an awful sight to see the now thoroughly terrified people climbing on to the roofs of the houses, and shrieking for help, which it was then impossible to render. The houses collapsed one after another, and with their occupants were swept away.

"In one of the public halls, sixty persons were found dead. They had been overtaken by the flood in the midst of the festivities of a wedding."

Thus, dear reader, were hundreds of our fellow-beings suddenly ushered from time into eternity to meet God. Surely so solemn an event should lead those who remain to earnestly consider their latter end. You, too, if unconverted, are exposed to danger, and a far more awful one than the inhabitants of this Spanish town. The judgment of God is already resting upon the world, and its execution will not be long delayed. The day is at hand. Now is the time to escape from it. Warning after warning was given from morning to night to the infatuated inhabitants of Consuegra, but, alas! many paid no heed, and reaped on that dreadful night the fruit of their own folly and unbelief. Those who realised the danger to which the others were exposed used their utmost efforts to convince them of it, but in vain. Deaf to the warning voice of the heralds of safety, some even, in their infatuation, went fast asleep on the very eve of the dire calamity, and in a moment were overwhelmed.

What a picture of the way thousands treat the momentous question of their eternal salvation to-day! Judgment threatens the world of the ungodly. God has sent forth the heralds of His great salvation to warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come. For hundreds of years past the Gospel trumpet has been sounded, and sinners exhorted and persuaded to flee for refuge to the

only place of safety—to *Christ*. But tens of thousands turn a deaf ear to the message of grace. Infatuated with the world, its pleasures, follies, rewards, the voice of the servants of God is unheeded, and judgment oft scoffed at. Men, lulled last asleep by the enemy of souls, daily pursue their ordinary course of life, with scarce a thought as to the dread future at their doors. Sinner, arouse thee, judgment is at hand. Awake! awake! or thou wilt be lost eternally. God is about to fulfil His word. Now only is the day of salvation, An irremediable disaster is impending, and there is but one way of escape. Salvation full and free is offered thee now in Christ. How wilt thou escape if thou dost still neglect it?

We beseech you by the mercies of God give heed to the voice of warning while you may. The day of grace is fleeting past. God in mercy holds back the judgment stroke. But soon will it fall. The flood came at last in Noah's day; the flood came at Consuegra; the flood of God's wrath is about to come on this poor world. Unsaved and careless one, you are sleeping in the threatened house. Awake! awake! Flee to the mountain top—*flee to Christ*. With outstretched arms of love He waits to receive you. His voice of love invites you,—Come unto Me. Come then to the Saviour; make no delay. *To-morrow may be too late.*

Many at the last moment at Consuegra climbed to the tops of their houses, shrieking for help, when

the flood came ; but alas ! it was too late. The hour of grace and warning had passed. They had turned a deaf ear when entreated to flee, and now there was none to help. It was *too late* Those that would yet have helped to save them, if they could, were powerless. The affrighted people clambered to every point of vantage they could find, but all was in vain. The rushing waters covered all. Houses and families were swept away by the remorseless torrent

And many a careless sinner of to-day will seek a refuge in vain in the awful day of judgment No cry for mercy will then be answered It will be too late.

“ Too late ! too late ! how sad the cry
For anxious human ears ! ”

None will be able to save his fellow in that day. Many shall cry, “ Peace and safety ; then *sudden destruction* cometh upon them . . and they shall not escape ” (1 Thess. v. 3). Dare you, dear reader, run the awful risk ? Dare you leave the voice of warning unheeded, and let another day pass, without thinking sincerely of your eternal salvation ? God has provided a refuge in Christ, His Son. A triumphant Saviour in glory will meet your deep need His precious blood, shed upon the cross, cleanseth us from all sin (1 John i. 7). And in Him there is *no condemnation* (Rom. viii 1) Bow, then, now to Him. Believe on His blessed name, and you shall never come into the judgment of God. It has

fallen already upon Christ for every one that believeth.

"In one of the public halls sixty were found dead. They had been overtaken by the flood in the midst of the festivities of a wedding." Alas! how forcibly this reminds us of the solemn words of our Lord Jesus Christ, "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, *marrying and giving in marriage*, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and *knew not until the flood came, and took them all away*; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. xxiv. 37-39).

It was so in Noah's day. It was so at Consuegra. It will be so again when the Son of Man cometh. Little did the joyous party assembled to celebrate the marriage at Consuegra think that their end was so near. And little do thousands to-day, assembled for such-like, and other festivities, think of or realise the danger that threatens them. We do not suppose that those who were thus overtaken were greater sinners than others, any more than those upon whom the tower of Siloam fell; but the hand of God is over all. And if, in His inscrutable wisdom, He allows so solemn an event to happen, surely it is that others may take warning from it, and be found in Christ, ere it be too late.

Once again, therefore, dear reader, we warn you to flee from the wrath to come. "God hath appointed a day, in the 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. 31). But the risen One is a *Saviour still*, a Saviour for you. Will you receive Him, or will you refuse Him? You will refuse Him at your peril. To live another day without Him is to run the risk of eternal judgment. To die without Him is to come into that judgment for certain after. We beseech you, then, to receive Christ now. He is the One you need. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John i. 12). And once you are a child of God, you may take to your comfort and joy the blessed Scripture, "Herein is our love (or love with us) made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17).

E. H. C.

THE GOLD-DIGGER'S END!



IT was a sorrowful sight. A strong man lay dying! He had seen life, such as the world calls it,—life, which the Holy Ghost designates, as "the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. xi. 25).

Now he was dying! "It is appointed unto men once to die; but after this the judgment" (Heb. xi. 27).

Some fifteen years previously he had returned from Australia, where he had spent the best years of his life in quest of the "gold which perisheth." And, though he had been amongst the few successful ones, who, in the palmy days of the Australian gold fields, had obtained in abundance that which they left home and kindred to toil for, it had not brought him happiness.

Men forget that they are in a world where sin has entered, separating man from God, the true source of all happiness, and involving him in death and judgment. The voice of Jesus they care not to hear, as He cries in love and mercy—"Whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord; but he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death." Or, as in the attractive grace of His heart, He presents that which He possesses wherewith to enrich precious souls with for ever, saying—"Riches and honour are with me: yea, durable riches and righteousness: my fruit is better than gold; yea, than fine gold, and my revenue than choice silver" (Prov. viii).

But men seek Him not, and when here, He had to say, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life" (John v. 40).

Yet with Him is "the fountain of life," at which the thirsty are invited to drink freely (Rev. xxi. 6).

How many have risked their souls in the eager hunt for the "gold which perisheth," who, had

they come as needy sinners to Jesus, would have been enriched for all eternity !

Many a time did this poor man's wife wish he possessed not that for which he had travelled so far, as night after night he would stagger home drunk, or as, in her care for him, she would brave the faces of his ale-house companions in seeking to persuade him to come home. Then would follow those awful nights of delirium tremens, when it appeared as though the devil made sport of his victim, as the poor drunkard would rise from his sleepless bed, and seizing anything his hands could lay hold of, commence to clear the room of the demons he declared were in this corner or that.

But his faithful wife had died the previous year, and now the ill which she had sought to save him from had come—a drunkard's death.

It was thought that his wife's death would speak home to him, and cause him to think of his soul's salvation. Often had she said with tears, "There may be light at eventide," when thinking of his evil course. For a time it seemed to weigh much with him ; but soon the power of evil asserted itself, and the drink was again resorted to.

Now his sister was sought to nurse him.

A short time before it was apprehended that death would soon end his history here, her son, who was a Christian, came to see his uncle. He was then able to sit up, and the young man spoke to him of the great blessing of being saved : of know-

ing the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour. He listened; but evidently had no thought of his great need of salvation, for when his nephew declared, how he had found Christ sufficient for time and eternity, he replied—"Well, I hope you will stick to it."

But who can tell what passed through his mind at that time, as he heard of the sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ to save and to satisfy? How, maybe, the devil whispered, as he has done many a time—"This may do for him; but it won't do for you. You decided to take your chance years ago, and you need not be disturbed now." Or, it may be, as conscience recalled a life darkened by many a sin, the poor man decided to die with them buried in his bosom, hardened by them to face every consequence, rather than seek mercy at the hands of a Saviour-God. "He that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief" (Prov. xxviii. 14). "But whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy" (Prov. xxviii. 13).

A Felix trembled as Paul reasoned "of righteousness, temperance, and *judgment to come*," but instead of repenting and finding mercy, he said, "Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee" (Acts xxiv. 24, 25). He deferred to judge himself, though trembling at the thought of God's judgment, and took the consequence in his own hands.

King Agrippa's conscience woke as he heard the same witness relate his conversion and the story

of a Saviour's grace; but he sought to hide his convictions by jestingly saying, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

The deep blessedness of the apostle's joy and yearning desire of his heart, is touchingly declared in his reply—"I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds" (Acts xxvi. 28, 29). How many have been as near having salvation, and yet have missed it for ever! The devil knew exactly what bait to present to hinder decision for Christ.

Fellow-traveller to eternity, has your choice been made? Or are you like one of old, of whom it is written, he "cared for none of those things"? (Acts xviii. 17.)

"O turn ye, O turn ye, for why will you die,
When God in great mercy is coming so nigh?
Now Jesus invites you, the Spirit says, Come,
And 'all things are ready,' O, sinner, come home"

Sadly indeed did the young man's heart sink within him as he thought of his poor uncle on the verge of eternity, not only unprepared, but totally indifferent. Still he cried to God to awaken the poor dreamer; to open his eyes to his lost condition; but, even as he did so, he seemed to dread what the end might be. The sequel will show that his fears were not groundless.

A week or more elapsed when, receiving a letter telling him of a change for the worse, he hastened to the bedside of his relative. There lay the

strong man of apparently iron frame; his chest heaving and his eyes glazing, and every now and again throwing up particles of his fast-breaking-down lungs.

What an awful sight! Sitting down beside the bed, the young man sat as it were petrified. No word could be utter. "Say something to him," said some one standing by. But nothing could he say. He tried to remember a verse of Scripture, but it were as though the Bible had never been written: no verse could be recall. At last he remembered that it was written, "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). But the words seemed to have lost their meaning. In fear and trembling, yet remembering it was God's word, he uttered those blessed words—"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 oh! what a feeling of dismay filled his soul! It were as though a stone wall had been built up between him and the bed whereon the dying man lay, as the precious word of God bounded back upon him. Never will be forget that feeling while life lasts, that of being in the presence of a lost soul! May God awaken every reader of these lines to the value of their never-dying souls, "For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, or what shall a man

give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark viii. 36, 37.) But the end came, and your end will come also, reader—oh, that you may be wise now, and come to Jesus for salvation while you may, that a lost eternity be not yours!

"God have mercy on my soul," said the dying man, as he was being raised to make him more comfortable.

"The Word of God says, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved' (Acts xvi. 31)," said his nephew, as he stood, with a sorrowful heart, at the foot of the bed. "Why—that's—what—we've—heard—ever—since—we—were—children," broke forth from the dying sinner, in faltering words, as with a ghastly sneer he looked at the speaker.

A feeling of intense pity filled the young Christian's heart, as the devil seemed to belch forth this mocking taunt from the mouth of his poor victim.

"It is one thing hearing it; it is another thing believing it, uncle," replied his nephew. "Go—out—of—the—room," said the dying man. With a prayer to God that he might be given a last word, the young man lingered awhile, and seeing nothing more could be done, he said, "I am going, uncle. I don't know that I shall ever see you again; but I want you to understand that the Lord Jesus Christ will save you, if you come to Him." These were about the last words, as far as memory serves, which were spoken as he bade his

relative farewell, only to learn by the next post, the sorrowful tidings that he had died, a few hours afterwards, "as he had lived." "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some they follow after" (1 Tim. v. 24). "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" (Rev. xxi. 8).

Reader: Where wilt thou spend eternity?

* * *

THE TWO ENDS.



It is always good to look at the end of things. The end is often nearer than we think. God has said, "The end of all things is at hand" (1 Pet. iv. 7). This we should give earnest heed to. The end of 1891 is upon us. How shortly since it was the New Year! Now it is just passing away. So is it with us. We are passing away. Whither? is the query.

Have you, my reader, yet been converted? If not, it would be well for you to just now ponder the Spirit's query, "What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (1 Pet. iv. 17.) His answer is found also in Scripture. The

ungodly "are the enemies of the cross of Christ, WHOSE END IS DESTRUCTION" (Phil. iii. 18, 19). They have walked in the flesh, and "THE END of these things is death" (Rom. vi. 21). This is, indeed, a sad end; for "after this the judgment" is but the eternal sequel that has no end. Remember, judgment is eternal!

But, thank God, there is a different end to life's history here. Balaam, wicked soothsayer that he was, knew it, and said, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." It was not, however; for he lived a sinner's life, and had a frightful death—slain as the enemy of God's people (Josh. xiii. 22). The end of the saint of God is very different: "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for *the end* of that man is *peace*" (Psa. xxxvii. 37). Yes, peace and life eternal are the portion of the godly. "But now, being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness and *the end* everlasting life" (Rom. vi. 27). That is a splendid end.

Hell is the sinner's terminus; heaven, that of the saint of God. Friend, which line are you on? Which terminus is before you? Before the end come, make sure of your end, I beseech you.

Come to Jesus now, and all shall be forgiven. Come as you are, in your sins, and your guilt. "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out," are the sweet words of Jesus. Act on them, and your end will be "everlasting life."