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INDEX.

	PAGE
A Great Mathematical Question	E. M. 158
“A Great Ransom”	W. T. P. W. 330
A Plucked Brand	E. E. N. 238
After Death	J. W. S. 137
Danger Ahead!	E. A. 129
“Digged Deep”	E. A. 267
Divine Love	A. J. P. 22
Found at Sea	G. W. G. 52
Fragments	- 56, 84, 134, 317
“From Darkness to Light”	Anon. 33
“Full Assurance”	J. W. S. 107
God Speaking	E. A. 13
“God is Satisfied, and so am I”	W. M. 321
God's Facts and our Feelings	Geo. C. 18
Gone, Gone for Ever	J. R. M. F. 249
“He was Wounded for my Transgressions”	F. M. 290
“How Should Man be Just with God?”	J. W. S. 212
“I am Satisfied too”	G. W. F. 68
“I Come Quickly”	E. H. C. 219
“I Don't Think Much of Him”	L. H. F. 318
“I have to meet God”	E. H. C. 46
“I Hope I am Not a Hypocrite”	J. M. H. 272
“I Keep Asking Him”	L. 194
“I Want Something”	G. W. F. 9
“I Want to be Right with God”	E. A. 326
In the Rapids	271
“It was meet that we should make merry and be glad”	W. G. B. 96
M. Renan's Fatal Illness	J. W. S. 292
Old Joseph	K. E. C. 246
Over Six Thousand Warnings Unheeded	J. N. 216

	PAGE
Poetry—Fellowship with the Father	M. S. S. 308
Past, Present, and Future	C. E. P. 83
“Rejoicing in Hope”	M. S. S. 196
The Love of Christ	M. S. S. 133
“Quarterly Accounts”	E. H. 241
Rahab and her Relations	W. T. P. W. 1
Saved from Destruction	E. H. C. 309
Simon Peter, Fisherman, and Apostle	W. T. P. W.
Chap. I. Conversion and Consecration	” 57
” II. Companionship with Christ	” 85
” III. The Dual Confession	” 113
” IV. Sifted as Wheat	” 141
” V. Pentecost, and His First Sermon	” 177
” VI. His Second Sermon	” 197
” VII. Further Ministry	” 225
” VIII. Cornelius and his Household	” 253
The Coming Harvest	E. H. C. 274
The Debt Paid	E. E. N. 304
The Dying Infidel's Confession	S. M. A. 25
The Message of a Dying Man	E. A. 164
“The Plank Bears”	Anon. 175
The Precious Blood of Christ	W. T. P. W. 296
The Saving Name	J. W. S. 29
The Shut Door	R. B. 111
“The Star of the East”	W. G. B. 78
The Two Great Devisers	J. W. S. 159
The Work and Effect of Righteousness	E. H. C. 74
“Therefore came his father out and entreated him”	W. G. B. 37
Three Contrasts	A. J. P. 281
“To-morrow we Die”	J. M. H. 307
Twenty-Five Years Since	T. R. D. 169
Two P. and S. Companies	J. R. 39
“What! Is it only to Touch?”	G. W. F. 99
“Wine and Milk”	E. V. G. 191
Ye Will Not	M. W. 135

THE GOSPEL MESSENGER.

RAHAB AND HER RELATIONS.

(Read JOSHUA ii., and vi. 1-25.)



HERE is something peculiarly interesting in the history of Rahab, because it shows how the grace of God can go out to one who had no claim upon Him. Rahab belonged to an accursed race, a heathen family, and to a doomed city,

the judgment of which certainly came, though it was delayed for a few days. In two verses of the New Testament you have the two sides of Rahab's history. Hebrews speaks of her faith, "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace" (Heb. xi. 31). James speaks of her works, "Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?" (Jas. ii. 25.)

What marked Rahab? She had faith, and because she had faith in God she takes her side with God's people, and perhaps that is more than you have ever done yet, my reader. Have you ever taken your side with God's people? They were very few, but Rahab had the sense in her soul that they were

God's people, and she said, "I am going to be with them." She had little intelligence, and she did many things that could not be commended. She did not speak the truth, but we must remember that she was, at the moment of her awakening, in the midst of wickedness and idolatry. She had not then learnt the store God sets on truth, but she had learnt that judgment was coming, she desired fervently to escape it, and it is beautiful to see how God met this woman.

In chapter ii. we see that Joshua sent up the spies, and that all that was in his mind, as he said, "Go, view the land, even Jericho," was to spy out the defences of the enemy; but God had this in His mind, that He would make these two men evangelists to a poor, anxious, sinful woman in a doomed city, and she herself was thus a focus of blessing to others. It is interesting also to notice that Rahab's name comes into the line of the direct ancestry of the Saviour (Matt. i. 5). God delights in grace. That is what we may learn from this history, and the more needy, the more undeserving the creature is, the more He delights in showing mercy.

Let us now look a little more closely at Rahab. She had been a wicked woman. God does not hide her character, but the spies come to her, and she at once takes her stand on God's side. The king of Jericho wants to get hold of these two men. How easy for her to have delivered them up to the king, but she has the sense in her soul of the deep necessity

of being identified with God's people, the paramount necessity of it.

In the New Testament, God puts Rahab and Abraham side by side (see Jas. ij, 21-25). Abraham believed God when He had not got a people at all, and Rahab believed God when He had a people, but when that people had not an inch of the land that He had given to them. Then it was that she said in her heart, "They will have the land by-and-by, and I must be with them." She sides with God, has faith in God, and so, my reader, must you. If you are going to escape the judgment of God, you must side with God, and with God's people too. "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace." You will certainly perish, my dear reader, if you do not do as she did, take your place really with God's people now.

In verses 9-13 of our chapter, we read how Rahab opens her heart to the spies. She is the very picture of an anxious soul who wants peace, pardon, and the knowledge of salvation. She begins by saying, "I know that the Lord hath given you the land." She, as it were, says, "I know we are lost, undone, ruined." My friend, do you know yet that you are lost, undone, a ruined sinner, with destruction before you? Rahab did not know how she was to escape, but she had a great desire to escape. My unconverted reader, judgment hangs over you, have you ever desired to escape it? Oh! unbelieving soul, thank God you have still another opportunity

of coming to the Lord. Rahab's words, "Your terror is fallen upon us," show that the terror of the Lord was creeping over the people of Palestine, and it is high time that the terror of the Lord was constraining you to flee to the Saviour. I have no warrant for saying that God will let the sound of the gospel trumpet ring in your ears for another seven long days, as the sound of the priests' trumpets did in the ears of the people of Jericho. I can only say to you, my reader, your only safe course is to get NOW all that God can give you—salvation to-day. The people of Jericho put a bold face on it, and so may you, but you know in your heart of hearts that you have to meet God. You may manage to keep the gospel out of your heart, but you cannot keep God from having to do with you in a day very close at hand.

The Lord had let the tidings of His victorious power go into Jericho, and Rahab says in her heart, "I know there can be no hope for us, but in Him." Then was it that faith sprang up in her soul, and she cast herself on the goodness of God. She got the sense in her soul of the omnipotence of God. She confesses Him thus, "The Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath." She knew Him to be the living God, and she had been an idolater, but now, fully alive to the weight and glory of His name, she says, "Swear unto me by the Lord, since I have showed you kindness, that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house, and GIVE ME A TRUE TOKEN." How eloquent this

plea, "Give me a true token." There is only one token that God gives. It is what speaks of the blood of Christ. "The blood shall be to you for a token," was His word to Israel on the Passover night (Exod. xxii. 13). God has but one token of safety, of security, and salvation for the anxious soul, and that token is the precious blood of His own dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But Rahab thinks of others besides herself. You will always find wherever there is a downright anxious soul, a soul that has the sense, too, of the grace of the Lord, it invariably takes in others besides itself. Faith, working by love, in Rahab's heart makes it expand. "I want an assurance from you," she says, "that the Lord will not only bless and save me, but will also bless and save those that I am connected with." "Give me a true token that ye will save alive my father, my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death" (ver. 13). The moment the gospel finds an entrance into a soul, that soul gets anxious about other people too. As soon as there is a link with God, and the soul has the sense of having to do with God, it immediately wants others to know Him too.

I ask you then, my reader, have you ever yet been brought into the presence of God with deep desires, not only for your own blessing, but for that of others also?

The spies answer Rahab thus, "Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it

shall be, when the Lord hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee" (ver. 14). That is, as it were, "May we die, Rahab, if you do not live." The Lord makes Himself responsible for the safety of the soul that trusts in Him. How sweet to hear the Good Shepherd say of His sheep, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John x. 28). The blessed truth of the gospel is this, that the Lord Jesus Christ has absolutely gone into death, that He might deliver us from the just judgment of God, and bring us, in association with Himself, into the place where He now is as the risen, victorious, ascended Man. It is Christ taking our place, accepting all the responsibility that was ours, and shedding His blood for us. God knows the value of that blood, and we must trust it.

Rahab, as she pled with the spies, was really in the spot of the greatest danger of all, "for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall" (ver. 15). But see what follows. The men, let down by a cord through her window, ere they go away say, "Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt *bind this line of scarlet thread in the window* which thou didst let us down by; and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, *and all thy father's household*, home unto thee. . . . And whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him" (vers. 18, 19). That is, they

make themselves responsible for the absolute security of every soul in that house whereon the scarlet line was.

Now mark Rahab's simple answer, and beautiful faith, "ACCORDING UNTO YOUR WORDS, SO BE IT. . . . AND SHE BOUND THE SCARLET LINE IN THE WINDOW" (ver. 21). She bound the scarlet line in the window right off. There was not an hour's delay. She put it there at once, she did not wait until they came into the land. It was real faith. That scarlet line was the evidence to her of her absolute security; she put it up immediately. Her faith was beautiful. They say, "We will be security for your safety," and she says, "According to your words, so be it"; and you, my friend, will never be at peace until you rest on two things—the word of God and the work of Christ. The work of Christ has all been done, and now the Holy Ghost has come into this world to tell us God's thoughts about that work, and we have to rest on the word of God.

If you had asked Rahab what she meant by the scarlet line, she would have said, "That scarlet line is to me the evidence that I shall be saved. I have the men's word, and the evidence of the scarlet line." And you, my reader, have to rest on the work that Christ has accomplished, and on the word of God about that work.

Rahab heard the word, believed the word, and, acting on it at once, she got beneath the shelter of the scarlet line.

Passing now to chapter vi., we find that Jericho

is strictly shut up, and all its doomed but unbelieving people are inside, while God's host compassed the city without, the priests bearing the ark, and blowing with the trumpets of rams' horns. What fools the men of Jericho must have thought them, as they cynically beheld them walking round the city, and blowing rams' horns by the space of seven days. To me, those seven days are an expression of the wonderful patience of God. His long-suffering is always salvation. As those trumpets were blown, what did they say? "Judgment is coming; Jericho must fall; you had better get under the shelter of the scarlet line." They were warning notes, they emphatically indicated God's attitude. God was waiting in patience for seven long days, giving the people of Jericho one last chance. Did they take it? Alas, no! Rahab did, and her family did, but the rest went on in their unbelief to judgment. I warn you, my unsaved reader, "Flee from the wrath to come." Do not say, "I will wait and think about it." What did Rahab do? She had already got under shelter of the scarlet line, nor was her faith in it misplaced, for I read, "Rahab the harlot SHALL LIVE, she and all that are with her in the house" (ver. 17); "and Joshua SAVED Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household and all that she had" (ver. 25).

Rahab was in downright earnest, so she got in all her kindred. I ask you, are all your kindred converted yet? There is shelter for them and for you under the blood of Christ. Oh, then,

shelter your precious soul under that blood now; do not, I beseech you, delay. "Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had," and Joshua means the same as Jesus, Jehovah the Saviour, and Jesus will save you just now if you turn round to Him. The blast of the gospel trumpet is still sounding, saying, "Get under shelter of the scarlet line, for judgment is coming." There is only shelter under the blood. May your fate, my friend, be like Rahab's. "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not." Blind unbelief held the inhabitants, but God's judgment fell and overwhelmed Jericho. God grant that blind, fatal unbelief may not hurl your soul into an eternal hell! Turn round, I beseech you, to the precious blood of the Saviour, and get the knowledge now of the eternal security which it alone can give.

W. T. P. W.

"I WANT SOMETHING."



WILL you go and see a young man in
 ——— Street, who is far gone in
 consumption, and who is not happy?"
 These words were addressed to me
 by a lady at the close of a meeting.
 On hearing a few more particulars,
 I said I would go there, God will-
 ing, on the following day.

On entering the house his mother told me he was very low, and at once showed me into his room. As I looked at the poor wasted form I saw plainly there was not much time to be lost, the little span of life which was yet to run, I felt sure, might be counted by hours.

Looking to the Lord for a word which would come direct from Himself, I took my seat by his bed-side, and after a few inquiries of the mother as to the poor body, I put the plain question to him, "Are you afraid to die?" He fixed his gaze upon me, but made no reply. Again I asked him, "Are you afraid to meet God?" He again fixed his anxious eyes upon me, and said slowly and deliberately—

"I *am* afraid to die—I *want something*."

Feeling the importance of a real work in the conscience, I said to him, "Yes, indeed, you do want something, for it is a solemn thing to meet a holy God, who will not pass over one sin. He must condemn sin wherever it is found; even when He put it upon His own blessed Son, He condemned Him for it, and if such was the case, how can you stand before Him, with sin upon you?"

"But," he said, "I know Christ died for sinners, and I know I am one, but *I want something*."

I quickly realised that I was speaking to one who had been passing through deep exercise, and who was in the condition of soul in which we find so many—knowing their need, and knowing that

Christ has done a work to meet that need, but, owing to looking into themselves for assurance, instead of simply believing the Word of God, which gives the assurance, are kept in a state of distress and uncertainty.

How many there are in this condition, and how many are satisfied to remain in it till perhaps a death-bed brings them to see the necessity of having something more than uncertainty to face eternity with.

I opened my Bible and turned to John iii. 14-16, and pointed out that *God* was the Giver, *Christ* the One who was lifted up upon the cross, and that *whosoever* believeth on Him gets the blessing.

"I know all that," he said, "but still *I want something.*"

I turned to John v. 24, "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."

"Yes," he said, "but I do not know that I have got it. *I want something.*"

I thought how helpless is man in such a case as this, and looking to the Lord, I again turned to my Bible, and read Isaiah liii. 6, "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, but the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all."

"'All we like sheep have gone astray!' is not that true of you?" I said.

"Oh, yes," he said, "I have indeed gone astray."

“ ‘We have turned every one to his own way’—you to your way, I to mine. Is not that also true of you ?”

“ Yes, indeed, it is quite true,” he replied.

“ Listen now to the next words, ‘The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all.’ Is that true also ?” I inquired.

He paused for full half a minute, and I could see the struggle which was taking place within him. He then deliberately said,—

“ If one is true, the other must be true also.”

“ Well, then, where are you ?” I asked. “ Will God charge upon you what He has already put upon Christ, and for which He condemned Him upon the cross ?”

With a look of intense relief depicted on his face, he exclaimed,—“ No, He will not ; He put my iniquities on Him, and they are gone.”

“ Well,” I said, “ are you now afraid to meet God ? Are you now afraid to die ?”

His reply was, “ I know now that I am saved ; I know now that Christ took my sins.” And he lay quite exhausted on his pillow, panting and coughing.

I felt it was time to leave him alone, and knelt in prayer, asking the Lord to give His word an abiding place in his soul, and left him.

The following day I saw him, and it was most refreshing to see the simple hold he had got of the work of Christ, and the way in which he rested on the Word of God, which told him of that work.

The day before his death a lady who called to see him was pressing the truth on his mother, who in reply said, "I know He is a Saviour for all, but I cannot say He is *my* Saviour."

He was listening, and exclaimed earnestly, "O mother, can't you say He is *your* Saviour?"

When next I called, he lay in his coffin, where he had just been placed, and I rejoiced to think that his spirit was with the Lord. For three days he confessed with his mouth, and believed with his heart, and rejoiced in hope of the glory.

Oh, how full is the love and grace of God! How suitable for our need, and what rest to those who receive it!

G. W. F.

GOD SPEAKING.



DID you ever notice, dear reader, the way in which the epistle to the Hebrews begins? "God" is the very first word. Not a god, but "God" in the absolute—the everlasting God, the God of glory, the almighty God, the self-existent One, the I Am, the Creator and Judge of the Universe.

God—how commanding and solemnising for the soul! God—omnipresent and all-wise! God—the searcher and reader of all hearts! God—before whom every knee shall bow, and to whom each

tongue shall confess! God—with whom *you* must have to do!

Have you yet entertained this solemn and important question? Has it yet commanded your attention? Has it produced a movement in your heart and an exercise in your conscience? Utterly careless and indifferent before, are you now awake to the solemn fact that you stand in relation to God as a being responsible to Him for all your words and actions, and that there is a day coming when all must have to say to Him, all must render an account to Him?

We cannot say, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die," and there is an end of us; for it is written, "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue confess to God" (Rom. xiv. 11). There is a day coming, dear reader, when you have actually to stand before God, your knee to bow to Him, and your tongue to confess to Him. Is not that a fact of infinite importance? But how will you stand there? and how will you meet Him? and what will you have to say for yourself? "I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear" (Isa. xlv. 22, 23).

God has spoken. At sundry times and in divers manners God has spoken by the prophets. All down the ages the voice of God was heard through

the prophets. Prophets were raised up when things were going, or had gone, to the bad, and addressed the people, to awaken conscience, and to press the claims of God. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, portrayed the coming of the Lord in righteous and awful judgment (Jude 14, 15). So did Malachi; so did the long line of prophets from Enoch to Malachi. The authority of God—the supreme God—they maintained, and pressed on the consciences of the people the solemn question of their responsibility to Him.

But this is not all. God has taken other ways and means of addressing man. Hence we read, "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Heb. i. 2). God was not satisfied with speaking by the prophets, men of like passions with ourselves, but He has come near to us and addressed us in the Person of His Son. The eternal Son, the everlasting "Word, became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten with the Father), full of grace and truth" (John i. 1, 2, 14). "God manifest in the flesh," has spoken to us. What importance and blessedness attaches to this great fact? In Him thus we do not witness again the terrible sight at Sinai, when God came down, and the people trembled, but we see the grace that could display itself in the lowly form of "the Man Christ Jesus," to whom the most erring might come, and learn that it was ever His delight to speak words of grace and truth. "Come unto me,

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

In His voluntary humiliation, we are not allowed to forget His glories as a divine Being. We read, "Whom he hath appointed heir of all things." Who but a divine Being could be the appointed heir of all things—the universe of God?

But more. "By whom also he made the worlds." Creation is ascribed to Him. That lordly One was the Creator of all.

But deeper glories yet. "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." It would be blasphemy to say this of any creature, angel or archangel; for who could fully present the glory of God, or be the image of the essential Being of God, but One of whom it could be said, "And the Word was God," "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us" (John i. 1, 14).

Not only is He the Creator of all, He also "upholds all things by the word of his power."

If what has been said of Him fills the heart with adoring worship, what follows will draw from the hearts of His ransomed myriads the new song of everlasting praise,—"**WHEN HE HAD BY HIMSELF PURGED OUR SINS, SAT DOWN ON THE RIGHT HAND OF THE MAJESTY ON HIGH.**"

What blessed words are these! The soul that has felt the burden of sin, and knows the agony of a convicted conscience, and bowed to the authority of God, and owned the claims of His Word,

only knows the peace-giving and soul-saving power of those precious words.

This blessed One, then, has been to the cross, has taken His people's sins, borne them, made purification for them, put them away in a way that fully glorified God; and having done it, "he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." See Him enthroned on high, above every created being, He Himself the Creator, at the right hand of God.

What but peace and joy could fill our hearts as we in faith behold Him, believing that He on the cross took our sins, put them away, and now is in heaven without them, and the glory of God shining in His face.

Reader, God has spoken unto you by His Son. He has shown you who He is, what He became, and what He has done, and where He now sits, and now He presents Him to you as the Object for the faith of your soul. *Will you trust Him?* If so, you can appropriate the blessed truth to yourself that He purged your sins, God having laid them on Him when on the cross, and that He is now in the highest heaven without them. They are gone—forgiven and forgotten for ever (Heb. x. 17).

What blessed peace flows from the knowledge of this! Sins borne and put away; sins forgiven and forgotten by God; Christ glorified the proof of it all—the Word of God filling our hearts with the assurance of it. Well may we ascribe to Him the praise and glory for ever and ever. E. A.

GOD'S FACTS AND OUR FEELINGS.



WHEN, in His Word, God states a plain fact, it is our wisdom to bow to it, and believe it, even though our understanding may not at the time be able to grasp it, nor our experience exactly coincide with it. "God is His own interpreter," and to the soul that patiently waits upon Him, He will, in His own time, most surely "make it plain." But should He never in this world be pleased to do so, it is for us to believe it all the same, because of its unerring Author.

If you take your Bible, and turn to the third chapter of John's Gospel, you will find, in the last two verses, that God has there recorded four present, solid facts. Let us place them in order thus:—

1. "The Father loveth the Son."
2. "And hath given all things into his hand."
3. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."
4. "He that believeth not the Son . . . the wrath of God abideth on him."

Now, I repeat, these are four *facts*; *i.e.*, they are no mere human opinions, nor are they based upon any experience in us. They are unalterable *facts*. How *any* fact, when believed, may affect *you*, is another thing: that *is* a matter of your feeling or experience. For instance, the news of the vic-

torious entrance of the German forces into Paris, a few years since, produced, no doubt, a vast variety of experiences, as it reached the ears of different persons in different lands; but the fact remained unalterably the same. *The experience was produced by the fact believed: the fact was not dependent upon the experience.*

Take another illustration. A certain young man is to enter upon large possessions and high privileges when he comes of age. One morning his father addresses him thus: "Let me congratulate you, my son! You are of age to-day." "Pardon me, father," he replies, "but I think you are mistaken." "How so?" inquires the astonished father.

"Why, for three reasons. In the first place, I don't *feel* that I am twenty-one. Secondly, I was only this very morning looking at myself in the glass, and I'm sure I didn't *look* like twenty-one. Lastly, I know it to be the firm opinion of many of my very intimate companions that I can't possibly be more than about eighteen, or nineteen at most. How can I, therefore, be of age? My friends do not *think* I am, and as for myself, I neither *feel* like it, nor *look* like it."

Now what, think you, would a wise father do in such a case? He would simply turn to the family register; and if the plain record there did not assure his foolish son, nothing could.

"But," you exclaim, "who would be so absurd as to talk like that?" I reply, Beware, lest *you* are found manifesting like folly, or worse. For no one

can deny that there are multitudes of professed believers in Christ to-day, who pursue precisely the same line of argument, and that in regard of the plainest facts of God's Word. Now, if the father's written testimony in the family register is enough to assure the son of his real age, and that altogether apart from his feelings, surely the *written Word of God*, "that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," ought to be sufficient to give us full assurance of our eternal blessing. Notice in this verse (Matt. iv. 4) how Christ connects "*It is written*" with the "*mouth of God*"; for this is how faith ever reckons.

And now, for the sake of any troubled reader, let us look at the four facts, before referred to, in John iii.

1. "*The Father loveth the Son.*"

Now, do you believe that fact?

"Oh, yes!" you say, "I do."

But do you *feel*, then, that the Father loves the Son?

"It isn't what I *feel*," you reply, "I *feel* sure He does, for the simple reason that *God's Word says He does*. It is not a question of what *I* think or feel. It is a fact; and, as such, I believe it."

2. "*And hath given all things into his hand.*"

"Well," you say, "and I firmly believe that fact also."

But is it because you *feel* it, or because you *SEE* everything put into His hand?

"Neither," you reply, "but I am fully assured of it. *God* has declared it."

Now, then, pass on to the last fact.

4. "*He that believeth not the Son . . . the wrath of God abideth on him.*"

Again I inquire, Do you believe that fact also, viz., that the wrath of God abides upon the unbeliever? And again, perhaps, you answer in the affirmative. But supposing the unbeliever does not *feel* it! Ah, you respond, but the wrath abides upon him all the same for that. His *feeling* it would not make it true, neither would his not feeling it make it untrue. There stands the fact recorded, and "the word of our God stands for ever" (Isa. xl. 8). But, you say, "I am not an unbeliever—I really do believe on the Son of God." Well, then, just notice the fact which, before, I purposely omitted, viz.:—

3. "*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.*"

Now, in a preceding verse in this chapter, we read: "He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true" (ver. 33). And remember that God has not only given a distinct testimony concerning His beloved Son; but has, again and again, stated the plainest facts concerning those who really believe on Him. "If I could only believe I was saved, I should be saved," said an anxious soul one day, "but *I have not faith enough* for that yet." Now, plausible as this may look at first sight, it is *not the gospel*. God does not say, "If you can only *have faith enough* to believe that you *have* eternal life, you shall have it." That

would be to make a saviour of your faith, and to shut Christ out. But, believing on His Son, He states a simple fact about you, viz., that you **HAVE** everlasting life, and leaves you simply to set to your seal that "*God is true.*" If the unbeliever has the wrath of God abiding on him, whether he *feels* it or not, so, in the thoughts of God, has the true believer everlasting life, whether he *thinks* he has the feeling that rightly belongs to it or not. At the same time, it should be added, Scripture does not recognise such a thing as a man believing on the Son of God without being affected by it. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself" (John v. 10). The *hath* of this verse is as important on the one side as the *hath* of John iii. 36 is important on the other; for the Holy Ghost has linked both with believing on the Son of God. A divine fact believed *by* the soul will be accompanied by a divine effect *in* the soul.

GEO. C.

DIVINE LOVE.

OPEN of divine love it is that describes to us so briefly, yet so graphically, the scene that lies behind the curtain of time.



The aged apostle, John, imprisoned for his Master's cause, is in the island of Patmos. He sees a vision. Event after event

takes place. Strange thrilling scenes he sees. Judgment after judgment is being poured out upon the world, which had almost forgotten the existence of a God—whose only idea of Him, in whom they lived and moved and had their being, was that of a God of the heathen, taken up with his own pursuits and pleasures.

But the kaleidoscope turns, and he sees a scene of contentment. A king is reigning in righteousness—the lion is eating straw like an ox, and a little child is leading them. Christ reigns for a thousand years.

Again the scene changes. Hell seems let loose upon earth, and mad warfare is being made by overwhelming force upon the people of God. Fire comes out of heaven and the enemies of God are destroyed. The devil is cast into hell to be tormented night and day.

Again the scene changes, and mark this last great drama in the history of man well, for every unbeliever, who dies in his sins, will be there.

The great white throne in its spotless purity is seen. The earth and the heavens flee away. Before God, the dead, small and great, stand with solemn awe in space. The countless small with their forgotten histories, and the great, who have "stalked luminous across the stage of time," alike see the books opened and they themselves judged according to their works.

Their good works then, as never before, seem now dry, polluted, and sinful. That which they

vainly hoped on earth would count for them, goes against them. Sin, which they had rolled under their tongue as a sweet morsel, starts up giant-like, black and damnable. The boldest have no thought of framing an excuse. They have none.

Friend, this scene will be a reality. If you die unsaved, it will be the most awful reality you have ever known. "*Whosoever* was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Is your name written there?

Let every infidel rage, they cannot disturb the calm imperturbability of the Word of God. God has spoken. The unbeliever must meet all this. But love divine shows us still further.

In hell, the easy-going sinner of earth lifts up his eyes in torment. Far away is Lazarus—the beggar man—happy and comforted. The earnest importunate prayer rises from the parched lip of the lost sinner. It is a small request—one drop of water. No answer can be made to his prayer, for the great gulf is fixed.

Now-a-days the Christian and the infidel rub shoulders together—the mere professor with his deceiving show of piety can sit next door to the real possessor, and sing the same hymns, and listen to the same ministrations, and place his unholy offering on the same plate.

But there! all is changed—the great dividing, impassable gulf is fixed.

It is matchless love that thus shows us sin and its true deserts. If it leads thee, dear reader, to face

thy sins, if it leads thee to the loving Saviour now, if it leads thee to wash away your countless sins in His precious blood, heaven will rejoice. And these scenes are plainly writ down for us in Holy Scripture by One who loved the sinner so much that He travelled from glory's heights to Calvary's depths for his eternal salvation. Now as you read this reach out the hand of faith, to him "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). May God grant it. A. J. P.



THE DYING INFIDEL'S CONFESSION.



SOME years since, three men were accustomed to meet together with the object of seeking to persuade each other that there was no God and no eternity. Especially were they anxious to persuade themselves that there was no judgment to come, and that therefore they had nothing to fear for the future.

Conscience, no doubt, often gave the lie to their reasonings and false hopes; for a man never says in his conscience "There is no God," however much the fool may say so in his heart.

These three men were, however, unable to persuade themselves that there was no death, nor yet to escape its relentless grip; for one of the three

was called soon to give account of the deeds done in the body.

As death stared him in the face in its dread reality, his infidel theories failed to satisfy him, or to calm his fears. On the contrary, he began to find that he had been indeed a fool, and in anguish of soul he looked forward to that lost eternity which was now so real to him.

One of his friends named Sam —— visited him when dying, hoping to persuade him to stand firm to his infidel delusions, but the dying man turned to him with these terrible words—"Oh, Sam! Sam! I'M A LOST MAN." His friend — whether through sheer hardness, or in the spirit of bravado, I know not—replied to him (beginning with an oath), "Bill, don't give up now, man."

But Bill had to "give up." He had soon to "give up" that breath which he had used to deny the truth of God; he had to "give up" that life which had been spent without God and without hope in this world. Christless he entered eternity.

Not only so, but his brave friend, within one short week after witnessing the death of his companion, had himself to "give up," for Sam —— died suddenly a week after Bill, and joined him in that eternity of woe where all infidelity finds its doom.

The third man is still living: an old man now, and hardly daring to profess infidelity, and yet going on apparently careless and hardened. The mercy of God still lingers in his case, as in that of many a poor deluded infidel, and lifeless professor

who has the form of godliness, but denies the power of it.

But God's long-suffering is not for ever: death claims its victim some time, and the door of mercy is then closed for eternity.

It is equally true of every child of Adam as well as of the poor infidel, that he is "a lost man"; and you, dear reader, whoever thou art, *must* make the all-important discovery some day. Never canst thou know thyself *saved*, without first learning and owning that thou art *lost*. Nothing less than this describes thy true state before God by nature; but, thank God! it is also true that for the salvation of the lost, and none others, the Son of God came into the world as Saviour,—even as He Himself said, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

One of old truly said, "They that go down to the pit CANNOT hope for thy truth." Yes; reader, there is a place where no ray of hope ever enters. Once there, hope is gone for ever; naught is known there but remorse and despair, for it is the region where—

"Light shall revisit thee no more,
Life with its sanguine dreams is o'er,
Love reaches not yon awful shore—
For ever sets thy sun."

But God is not willing that thou shouldst perish. Has He not at infinite cost to Himself provided a Saviour? Was it not His own blessed and eternal Son who, as man, and for man, died upon the

cross? Was not the full weight of the holy judgment of God against sin borne by Him there? There He finished the work, and God has accepted Him, the perfect sacrifice, and raised Him from the dead. To Him every knee must assuredly bow: through Him is now offered to thee and to all, the eternal forgiveness of all sins. There is no other Saviour, and no other way of escape from the torments of hell, but by receiving Him with all the confidence of thy heart, and confessing Him with thy mouth as **THY** Saviour.

What but His finished work of infinite value before God could remove a single sin from God's sight or give acceptance before Him?

Hast thou availed thyself of it, dear reader, by believing on Him to life eternal? or art thou content to go on and make the fearful discovery when it is too late that thou art "a lost man"?

"You who laugh, and scorn, and sneer,

How will you do?

When the trumpet's blast you hear,

How will you do?

Can you then God's terrors brave?

Say you have no soul to save?

When you sink beneath the wave,

How will you do?"

THE SAVING NAME.



HAVE heard that, when Grant of Arndilly was lying on his dying bed, he said that, if he had to live his life over again, he would preach but twenty minutes at a time, and *all about Christ!* And, yet, few of the dear servants of God had been more faithful than he, in that very ministry, during the years in which he laboured in the gospel.

But now, on his dying pillow, he could clearly see what was the one chief theme and subject—the one grand office of the preacher of the gospel. He would preach "*all about Christ,*" said he.

I remember meeting, on the Bridge of Perth, in 1868, that well-known Scotch evangelist, Duncan Matheson. I had seen and known him in the days of his strength, when his massive frame endured any amount of toil, and when his stentorian voice commanded silence over noisy crowds. His frame was now shrunken by disease, and the once sonorous voice little more than audible. He was slowly moving homeward along that bridge, whilst his heart, fresh as ever in the work of his Master, urged him to whisper its uppermost desire—"*Preach Christ,*" said he, "*preach Christ.*" These were his last words to me, for soon afterwards he passed away, at the early age of forty-five, from fields of abundant labour here, to the presence of

that Christ whom he loved to proclaim in days of health, and in the hour of death as well. Wise and happy man!

Now, here we have the testimony of these two men, as the result of their ripe, varied, and honoured experience, that the great truth to be proclaimed, always and everywhere, is Christ—a once dead, but now risen and glorified Christ! And why?

Because they had learned, as have many more beside them, that Christ, the living, coming Christ of God, is not only the one all-sufficient source of supply for man—fallen, guilty, undone man, as also for the weak and needy believer, but that God, in His Word, presents Him as the supreme object of His love and counsels.

Hence we find in the words of John the Baptist as fine a summing-up of the gospel as can be conceived: "*Behold,*" said he, "*the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world*"—a statement which, the more it is analysed and studied, the richer and deeper it appears. Again, Paul uses the name of the Lord Jesus Christ about five hundred times in his New Testament teachings! and he it is who says that "*in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*" (Col. ii. 9).

If, then, the early servants of Christ laid such stress on the preaching of Christ Himself—His person and work—how comes it that He is preached so little to-day? Is He not the only Saviour and the only food of the soul? and yet other themes are commonly presented, with the necessary result

that sinners are left to perish, and saints to starve!

Intellectualism, for such is one of to-day's features, relegates Christ for speculations that pander to the vitiated taste of man; and, whilst flattering his pride, and feeding his self-sufficiency, leaves him in a more deadly spiritual morass than it found him. It carries no warning note to the sinner; it cheers no desponding spirit; it dries no falling tear; it proffers certainty to no doubting mind; it takes from you all you have, and gives nothing in its place. How can it?

Rationalism, for such is its goal, is bound by narrow limits. It is confined to the scope of the human mind, and that, again, to little more than the grasp of the microscope or the range of the telescope. What is perceived within their limited boundaries can be apprized by reason. That is all.

But "*who by searching can find out God?*" He is wholly outside these limits, and we are beholden to Him for a revelation of Himself, if indeed He is to be known at all. Now, Christ is that revelation. "*The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*"

Otherwise, all were total darkness in time, and hopeless despair for ever. None but the Son of the Father's bosom could make the Father known,—no display of His power, no mere statement of His will, no angelic messenger could announce the Father. But the Son has done so. Now, thank God, we have light and

sunshine! People may and do shut their eyes to it, perhaps increasingly so in these days of proud and foolish intellectualism, but such must bear, alas, their own judgment, and may you, my reader, not be amongst them! But the Light shines! God is revealed! Justice, in its myriad claims against sin, has been satisfied in the death of Christ—that atoning death, and mercy is now free to act. “*God is just, and the justifier of him that believeth on Jesus,*” for He who died is risen, all the work completed, and now lives in glory, set forth to be a Prince and a Saviour now, and the Judge by-and-by. Other saving name there is none, absolutely none, in heaven or on earth; but there is infinite fulness in Him, and a present and precious salvation for the greatest sinner.

No wonder, then, that these two dying men should have commended the preaching of Christ. They had learnt His worth. They had proved, in the wars of the Lord, the more than folly of speculation and conjecture. Their weapon was not intellectualism, but the sword of the Spirit; their power not that of reasoning, but Christ, who is both the wisdom and power of God; not argumentation, but the truth. They had turned from the uncertainties of religious speculations to the deep and solid verities presented in the person and work of the Son of God.

Stay your heart, dear reader, on Him who still gives rest to the weary, peace to the troubled, and salvation to the lost.

"FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT."

(Acts xxvi. 18.)



ONE of the earliest things I can remember is, when quite a little girl, learning the third chapter of St John's Gospel for my father. How my little mind wondered when I came to the eighth verse, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." To my childish imagination these words of Jesus about the wind and the Spirit seemed marvellous and incomprehensible.

I grew up like other girls, brought up under Christian influences, religious after a fashion, moral and amiable. But God was not in all my thoughts; I desired not the knowledge of His ways; self, and not Christ, being the centre around which my thoughts and interests revolved. When about seventeen years of age I left home, and went to reside in a remote secluded part of the country. Here in a remarkable and most unexpected way I was awakened by the Spirit of God to a deep sense of being unsaved. I had very little conviction of sin; but I had discovered, to my utter dismay, that I knew not and loved not the blessed Son of God, and that if I died as I then was I should certainly perish.

Eternal things then became great realities to me, and I longed to be a true Christian. I remember particularly one night reading the forty-ninth Psalm. Oh! how I wept over these verses, "For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others. Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless, man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish. This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah. Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling. But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for he shall receive me." Oh, how I envied the sweet Psalmist his assurance that God would redeem him from the power of the grave; how I longed to be able to say the same.

I remained in this state quite two years, most miserable and anxious about my soul, yet outwardly gay and unconcerned, and going on with the world. But God knew all about me, and at last His time came to speak peace to my troubled soul. In the autumn of last year a dear servant of Christ visited Dublin, and preached the glorious gospel of the grace of God. I attended his meetings, and through the ministry of the Word light broke into

my dark soul. It seemed now all new to me, and as though I had never heard it before, that "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."

I got thereafter in a general way to know Jesus as the Saviour of sinners, but I had not yet become personally acquainted with Him as my own precious Saviour, consequently I was at times very unhappy, and had not settled peace with God. One evening—never shall I forget it—I knelt at my bedside and besought God, for Jesus' sake, to fill my soul with joy and peace in believing—the joy and peace that I knew were the portion of the soul that rests in Jesus alone for salvation. How shall I praise Him for the abundant and wondrous way He answered my prayer! In the course of the next two days the Spirit of God filled my soul with floods of light, and love, and joy, and peace, to overflowing. I saw Jesus hanging on that cross of shame and agony, taking my place there, and making a full atonement for all my individual sins, as though I were the only sinner in the world to be saved. "He loved me, and gave himself for me," was the language of my heart and lips.

Oh, how I now repented of my past life of sin and forgetfulness of God, in the presence of such matchless grace and compassion. Jesus became infinitely precious to me as my now risen glorified Saviour, and I rejoiced in the thought of knowing Him thenceforth, during my pilgrim journey

through this world, as my Friend, my Advocate with the Father, and my great High Priest, ever living to make intercession for me. I got the blessed sense of being sealed by the Spirit of God, and the consequent assurance that I should never perish. The early part of the second of Ephesians was the joyful experience of my soul; and now, abiding in Christ, I longed to walk even as He walked when here on earth. What can be compared to the rest, joy, and infinite satisfaction of "first love" to Christ? Would to God it were not so often "left," as it frequently is, by the child of God!

And now, dear reader, that I have told you in a few brief words the story of my conversion, let me, in all love and faithfulness, ask you this solemn question, Have you ever yet passed from death unto life through believing in the precious Saviour, the Son of God? "Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again," are the words of Jesus. Remember that sinful and far from God though you be, He yearns over you with infinite love and compassion, for He willeth not the death of the sinner, but rather that he should "turn from his way and live." He is "rich unto all that call upon him." Come now to Jesus, for He waiteth to be gracious. He alone can give you what you need, pardon, peace, and rest. "Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious." ANON.

"THEREFORE CAME HIS FATHER OUT,
AND ENTREATED HIM."

LUKE xv. 28.



AM at a loss to know which to admire most, the "compassion" which impelled the father to run and kiss the younger son, while he was yet "a great way off": or the desire after him which drew the father out to *entreat* the elder son.

And can it be that you, my reader, are untouched by such varied grace? "The grace of God that *bringeth salvation* unto to *all men* hath appeared" (Titus ii. 11), that grace of God which brought Jesus into this world, as the whole parable (Luke xv. 3) shows, to "receive sinners and eat with them." Nay more, to *seek* and to *entreat* them, that He may find His joy in bringing salvation to them, and bringing them into it. "*Eating with them*" (ver. 2), making them at home in His company, and finding His joy in theirs—"His delights were with the sons of men" (Prov. viii. 31), that is, Wisdom's, the Son of God, who

"Dwells in His bosom, knoweth all
That in that bosom lies,—
And came to earth to make it known,
That we might share His joys."

Can it be, I say, that you are untouched by the riches of such grace? Mark that father! The

servant has returned and told him of his son's demeanour, when he heard the cause of the merriment—that “he was angry, and would not go in.” And, instead of raising his father's resentment, this is the very thing which drew him forth to entreat his son—“*therefore* came his father out.” What grace! How it displays the attitude of God towards this world, “To wit, that God was, in Christ, *reconciling* the world unto himself, *not imputing* their trespasses unto them.” And that this is His attitude still, the remainder of the passage (2 Cor. v. 19-21) shows, “and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. *Now* then we are ambassadors for Christ, *as though* God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God.” To think of GOD *beseeking* us—beseeking *sinners*! And that after the world has rejected and murdered His Son! What grace! What matchless grace!

“Oh! lovely attitude! He stands
 With open heart, and outstretched hands.
 Oh! matchless kindness, and He shows
 His matchless kindness to His foes.”

And is it possible that thou, my reader, hast treated *God* so?—in self-righteous satisfaction despising grace, and such as feel they have no goodness of their own, only vileness and *unworthiness*! Dost thou hold aloof from Him who receives *sinners*, and communes (eats) with them? Dost thou fancy thyself aught else, and that He can deal

with thee on any other principle than that of grace, of free, sovereign grace, of *undeserved* favour? Then know thou that "*all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" and that He justifies "freely [that is, undeservedly] by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii. 23, 24), *and thus alone.*

"Open the door, He'll enter in,
And sup with you, and you with Him."

W. G. B.

TWO P. AND S. COMPANIES.



LUKE xv. opens with a reference to two companies, each composed of two classes, the initials of which correspond. But beyond the initials, the similarity goes very little further. Let us consider them.

The first company was composed of publicans and sinners. No good Jew, having any respect for himself, would like to join that company. The publicans were very sincerely hated by every Jew of upright conduct who loved his country. They collected the Roman tax, each buying a district for a certain sum, and extorting from the people as much as they could gain. Thus the misfortune and shame of the Jews was the means of gain and

luxury to the publicans. There is no wonder that they were hated by all.

With these were gathered the sinners. But some will exclaim, Are not *all* sinners? Yes, so the Word of God describes us, when it says, "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not" (Eccles. vii. 20); and again, "All have sinned" (Rom. iii. 23). But there are some sinners whose outward conduct is so irreproachable that they do not know themselves as sinners (though now it has become customary to own in a formal way that *all* are such), neither would most of their fellow-men dare to charge them with being sinners. On the other hand, there are many who are openly and shamelessly wicked. Now, men judge by the outward appearance (*God* looks upon the heart), and they measure men's sins as they affect the community at large, so they look upon the latter class as sinners. It is doubtless in some such sense that the Spirit of God speaks of sinners as a class going along with the publicans, and the two classes were suited enough to each other to form one company.

Turning to the next company, we see the P. stands for Pharisee, a man who was as much the ornament and glory of his nation as the publican was its blot and disgrace. They formed "the most straitest sect" of the Jews' religion. In the righteousness of the law some of them were esteemed blameless. In all religious observances they were most strict and accurate. Tithes were

paid even of the smallest matters. Phylacteries, long prayers, almsgiving, and other things, set them constantly before the eyes of the people as a model class of men.

With these went along the scribes, which formed as perfect a contrast to the "sinners." These were they who were perfectly instructed in the law of God. All their boast was of it. They were also able to publicly instruct others, showing what was man's righteousness, and what was sin against God.

These, then, are the two companies, in their double classes, brought before us in this wonderful chapter. Now, let us see why they are introduced here.

They surround the Lord Jesus, the blessed Son of God, who was then upon earth, the perfect expression of all God's infinite grace. The very heart of God unfolded itself in Him. Never had there been such a moment in the world's history. God had often pleaded with men by the mouth of His holy prophets,—warning, exhortation, and tender entreaty had been poured through their lips. But now, in the Person of the Son, man stood face to face with all that God is. What effect had this upon the two companies named?

The publicans and sinners *drew near for to hear Him*. It was not that the presence of Jesus left sin undetected. Far from it. No one could stand sincerely before Him without feeling the awfulness of sin. But along with this there was the pre-

cious sense of grace that attracted and won the heart to Him. Thus it was with these. They could not disguise their sin; it appeared in all its hateful deformity; and yet, spite of it, they were drawn near to Jesus to listen to His words.

We can guess both a publican and a sinner who might in that day have formed part of that company, and we would like to give a little of their personal history to our readers.

The publican's name was Levi. He was sitting one day collecting his taxes, when Jesus passed by him, and said to him, "Follow Me." Probably until then he had been, as other publicans, devoted to his money, counting it his one ambition to grow richer. Now, in the Person of Jesus, an object presented itself which commanded all his thoughts and affections, and he left all, and followed Him. What a day was that for Levi! Instead of calculating how much he could extort from his fellows, he now considered how he could bring them into blessing. He made a feast for Jesus in his own house, and placed before Him many publicans. Doubtless he judged that the One who had so revealed Himself to him, and so absorbed his mind and heart, was able to do the same for others who were in his own position. See, then, a poor despised publican, called by Jesus, rejoicing in His grace, attached to Him, and devoting himself in the interests of Christ to seek the blessing of others.

The sinner we refer to is spoken of in chapter vii. of this book, a poor woman of the city, whose

name is not mentioned. Her sins were many, the Lord said, who knew them all. Yet, drawn by the grace of Jesus, she ventured within the proud pharisee's house, where He sat at meat, and standing behind Him, she bathed His feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair, covered them with kisses, and anointed them. It was a strange enigma to Simon the Pharisee, but the Lord would explain it. It was thus she would express her love for Him whose grace had won her heart. The very depth of her guilt enhanced to her the greatness of that grace. Her debt was immense, yet surpassing in immensity was the mercy that remitted it. From His own lips this poor sinful woman was privileged to hear the announcement, "Thy sins are forgiven;" "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." See a poor vile sinner, known to be such, confessed as such, both by her own actions and the Lord's words, pardoned, saved by faith, and sent in peace. Oh, marvellous sight!

Reader, do you now wonder that publicans and sinners drew near for to hear Him?

But what effect had this grace upon the second company? Surely *they* will hail it with joy! Alas! alas! it is said "*they murmured*,"—murmured at the display of God's goodness and its attractiveness to the poor! We fancy we hear the pharisee exclaim, "If such are to be received, where is the worth of all my religion?" and the scribes chiming in, "And where is the benefit of all my knowledge of the law?" Together they combined

to assert that such grace was contrary to God's holiness. "This man," they said, "receiveth sinners and eateth with them." They believed that they understood God's character, and the worth of their own righteousness. In fact, they were ignorant of both.

Yet some who live in this nineteenth century will exclaim, "And is it consistent with God's holiness to receive such sinners?" Oh! dear reader, let us lead you by the hand a little lower down the stream of time. See that very Saviour, whose words were welcomed by poor sinners, against whom Pharisees murmured, see Him upon the cross of Calvary. Hear His cry, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Now learn the consistency of God's holiness with His grace. The very One in whom that grace had had its perfect expression, now seals it in deepest agony and with His precious life's blood. The sins which grace freely remits are all borne by Him in His own body on the tree. The sin which the Pharisees thought must be abhorrent to God, and which was ten thousand times more so than they thought, is all judged in His spotless Person. God is glorified there. Murmur no more, proud Pharisee! Utter no more complaints, learned scribe! God's holiness is established infinitely beyond the reach of temple ceremonies; His righteousness is vindicated as it never was by the law. God's grace is triumphant against all the accusations of its foes; it reigns through righteousness.

Let us hear, then, the conclusion of the whole matter. A poor vile sinner that would blush to lift his face among men, and that could not stand before God, attracted by grace, comes, in the confession of his utter sinfulness and wretchedness, and is received, pardoned, saved, and blest. Wherefore? Because God is careless about sin? For ever perish the thought! Because Jesus died for sinners. All our blessing is of the grace of God, and all is founded upon the death of Jesus.

Man's proud heart lifts itself against the grace of God; delighting in his own righteousness, glorying in his own works, he thinks no more is needed. He is ignorant both of himself and also of God. We would not dare to speak of ourselves such words as we now quote. They are the words of the gracious Jesus as to this very class. *He said,* "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! . . . Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. xxiii. 29, 33.)

Dear reader, with which company do you place yourself?

"Let one in his innocence glory,
 Another in works he has done,
 Thy blood is my claim and my title,—
 Beside it, O Lord, I have none.
 The Scorned, the Despised, the Rejected,
 Thou cam'st to this heart of mine;
 In Thy robes of eternal glory
 Thou welcomest me to Thine."

“I HAVE TO MEET GOD.”



T the close of a bright summer, a young man, who had been holding some special meetings on the beach at the sea-side town of —, was asked to visit an old schoolfellow dying in consumption. Before seeing him the mother called

him aside, saying, “Do you know, my boy is so good; if any one is going to heaven *he is*. He has been always obedient to me, and never done any harm.”

A few remarks having passed, he went to see his friend. After sitting with him a moment or so, the light went out, and they were left in the dark. He suggested getting another lamp, when the sick one said decidedly, “No, we can talk better in the dark;” and then added, “I’m so miserable. I’m afraid to die. *I’m such a sinner*. What shall I do? My mother thinks I’m good, but she doesn’t know. On Sunday evenings, when she thought I was at church, I used to slip off to the hotel, with a lot of other fellows, where we smoked, and drank, and spun yarns.”

His visitor thought of his mother’s words. What a contrast! “*So good*.” “*Such a sinner*.” And he earnestly presented the gospel to him. But although he was very anxious, there seemed to be some hindrance in the way of his laying hold of the truth.

Many days passed by. At times it seemed as if

the light would break in, but still doubt and fear held sway. On one occasion he found him sitting up and dressed. He was slightly better, and had been out for a little in the sunshine. But it had been almost too much for him. He was much excited. Inquiring what was the matter, he narrated how that one day, when outside the house for a few minutes, one of his old companions met him and said, "You are looking ill, old chap; cheer up." To this he replied, "I'm very bad, but what troubles me most is, *I have to meet God*, and I am not ready." The other, who professed to be an infidel, laughed at him, saying, "Well, I don't believe in all that trash. If you go on moping like that, you'll die, and there will be an end of you." But he replied again, "*I have to meet God*, and you have to meet God too, and you know it. There is a hell and a heaven." But with a laugh and a sneer the sceptic passed on.

Two days later the latter was seized with rheumatic fever, and was taken to the hospital, where he lay for a week or so, getting rapidly worse, when one day, waking out of his sleep, he uttered an awful shriek, and passed into eternity.

The other, not knowing this, had called at the house the day after the funeral, and the young widow had told him of the sad occurrence. As the sick man repeated this painful story to his old schoolmate, he added, with a look of despair, "He has gone to hell, and if I die as I am I shall go there too."

His friend read and prayed with him, and left.

Calling again a few days after, he found a great change had taken place. He was sitting in his room, and his countenance was lit up with joy. "Oh," exclaimed he, "I've got it now; what a fool I was before. It is so simple. 'He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life.'" It appeared that he had been much occupied with this scripture, in a pamphlet that had been given him. He then continued, "I have had seven friends to see me to-day, and I've told them all about Christ. One lady wept for joy, for she had been praying for me for years. Another fellow—oh, such a hypocrite—told me I must hope for the best. But I told him I was past that now. But when I spoke of Christ he was so indifferent, I am sure he was not saved. He talked to me in such a goody goody way, I felt sure there was nothing in it."

The next evening his friend called again. He was much worse, and was removed to the ground floor. Gasping for breath, he said, "Here I am, you see; you know what this means."

"Yes, I know you're going home."

"Yes, but I should like to have been here a little longer, to tell some about Christ and His love." And then, after a pause, "Do you remember how we used to go to that meeting-room every Sunday morning when we were boys? How I should like to go there now. I used to think the meetings so

dry, when they broke the bread. But I see it now. I should like to do that to remember Him."

As it was evident that death was approaching, his friend lingered by his bed-side. Presently he said, "*Is all well?*"

"Yes, I feel as if I had a rope right round me, and I'm sure He won't let it slip." With his friend's hand clasped in his, he soon became unconscious, and quietly passed away to be for ever with the Lord (2 Cor. v. 8).

His brother, who was also present, the remainder of the family having left the room, said, as he saw the end had come, "I'd like to die like that."

Dear reader, would not *you* like to die like that? But can you say, "I've got it *now*"? It's a grand thing for those who can. Death is here, and may come to you sooner than you think. Take heed that it does not find you unprepared. Scripture says, "*After this the judgment*" (Heb. ix. 27); not *after* this salvation. You must have *salvation before death*, or you will never have it at all. You may have it to-day, and you could not have it on better terms. It is free as the air you breathe. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10). And if still unsaved, *you're lost*. But, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, *thou shalt be saved*. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is

made unto *salvation*" (Rom. x. 9, 10). If thou *shalt* confess, and *shalt* believe, thou *shalt* be saved. The *three shalt*s go together. The gospel is very simple, if men would only be simple about it.

Maybe others are saying for *you*, how good *you* are. But that won't take you to heaven, and you know it. God knows how bad you are, worse than you like to think. But you must come out in your true colours if you wish to be saved. If you were good you would not need a Saviour at all. Christ died for the bad, and you must take the sinner's place if you would be saved by Him. Respectability, morality, or religion will never put away your sins. Nothing but the precious blood of Christ can do that.

There was a way to earthly privilege and blessing before God once, on the ground of obedience, but man utterly failed, and that way was closed when they refused Christ. He is the only way to eternal blessing now, a Saviour glorified. If any scoff at His name, and call truth *trash*, they may meet the death of the ungodly with an awful shriek, like the one of whom we have written, to find a Christless hell for eternity beyond the dark portal of the grave. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal: vi. 7). But if any man heareth His voice, and believeth on Him who sent Him, eternal life is his now, condemnation gone, and he *is passed* from death unto life. Such, like the subject of this narrative, will be able to say at the

last moment, "I feel as if I had a rope right round me, and I'm sure He won't let it slip."

What is your case, dear reader? Face this momentous question, sooner or later, you must. Death is the sinner's sure wage. *All* have earned it. You are one. But Christ, the sinless One, has been there, and has robbed it of its awful sting for every one that believeth. Victorious on the throne of God we point you to Him alone.

"Only trust Him, only trust Him,
He will save you now

Oh, what a bright moment, when, ceasing from yourself and your own wretched doings, you turn the eye of faith to Him! There is life in a look. And light from the glory of God will fill your soul. Have you looked? Can you say with our young friend, "I've got it now; what a fool I was before!" Surely it is folly to live without Christ. Alas! what irretrievable folly to die without Him. Then trust Him now, poor troubled heart! Receive Christ now in simple faith, and you will have Christ for your Saviour, Christ for your object, Christ for your model, Christ for your hope, Christ for your all, both now and evermore.

"My hope on nothing else is built
Than Jesus and the blood He spilt;
I dare not trust the stoutest frame,
But wholly lean on His great name:
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand."

FOUND AT SEA.



EAR DOCTOR W.,—The following extract from a letter written by the late Dr G——, telling his mother of his conversion to God, which took place during his voyage round the world in the "Anglesey" in 1854, will, I think, not

merely interest you, but may be thought worthy of a place in your monthly magazine, as illustrating the blessed grace of God which goes after the lost sheep "until he find it." As you know, the dear doctor fell asleep in July 1890.—Yours, &c.,

A. F. R.

THE "ANGLESEY,"

Tuesday, 24th October 1854.

MY DARLING MOTHER,—I can no longer refrain from telling you what I had thought of leaving till the end of my letter—a thing in comparison of which everything else I have told you sinks into *nothing*. It is this—and I know it will rejoice your heart :—Since I have been on board this ship, the Lord has had mercy on my soul ! When I was in England I was *not* a Christian. You know I made at one time a profession of religion. I think this was partly from my being ill, and partly from being surrounded by Christian friends, but I was not really *converted*. It was not God's work in my soul, and therefore it did not stand,—the fact is, I

had an idea that *professing* to be a Christian was *being* a Christian. I soon found that there was no *life*, that I was not regenerate by the Spirit, but I did not like to acknowledge it to myself or to others. No wonder then that, as you well know, there was no *fruit*. At last I made up my mind that I was not a Christian, and whenever I was taken ill, or the idea of death presented itself to me, I felt that I should be lost—that I should go to hell.

I had very solemn convictions, earnest longings to be a Christian, especially at Guernsey, and, in fact, always from time to time. I felt I never could know the gospel better than I did then, and I feared the only thing that would bring me to Christ would be my deathbed, and that I knew was a fearful uncertainty, and I at times pictured myself dying in the horrors of despair. At last I found it was so evident that I had not a "new life," that I gave up all pretence, first to myself, and I intended gradually to do so to others. I made no efforts against sin; I was prayerless, and took no interest in God's Word (except as affording matter for an argument sometimes). I was on equal terms with those who were careless about God. When in London I went to theatres. This is a sad story, my darling mother. Well, I came on this voyage, hoping to gain health so as to enjoy the world. The only preparation which I regretted I was not able to make, was that I had not learned to dance as I wished. I came on board this ship in

hopes, in thoughts, in manners, in conversation, a worldly man.

Now comes the wonderful part of the story. When we had been out about four weeks (*i.e.*, about three weeks ago), the Lord commenced a work in my soul. I cannot tell you how it was, nor can I ascribe it to any particular cause (that man falling overboard made a great impression upon me, but I had found peace in a measure before that), I can only say it was the wonderful mercy of God, and it was the work of His Spirit, but the result was that, for the first time in my life, I had saving faith in Jesus Christ. I felt that my sins were forgiven on account of the atonement He made on the cross, and at last I had perfect joy and peace in believing. My darling mother, what wonderful mercy is this! that, just when my case seemed hopeless, when I was getting further away than ever from God, when I was, as it were, trying to escape from Him, that He should have chosen that time to have mercy on me,—that He should, as it were, have *pursued* me, as if He were determined to have mercy on me in spite of myself. This is indeed mercy!

Well, my darling mother, my joy and thankfulness were indeed great, as you may suppose, when I found I was saved, and that I could apply to myself all those blessed truths which I had so long known of and *coveted*. Certainly the first "ingredient," if I may so say, in my joy, was the sense of being *safe*, that I could not be lost, that my sal-

vation was no longer an uncertain thing, that God's Word was pledged for me to the end; He whose power is infinite. Now I had the wonderful joy of knowing that I could look upon God no longer as an angry Judge, but as a Heavenly Father,—that I could hold communion with Him as such.

Perfect joy and peace for the first time in my life were then the first result in me, as I suppose in almost every one, of salvation. Perhaps the next result (for I know you will like to hear all my "experience") was, that everything of *this world*, its joys, its occupations, its affairs, at once sank into insignificance,—into *nothing*, became no longer worth a moment's consideration, and no longer possessed any interest for me. Next, I began to feel that; having found such great happiness myself, I could not but tell others of it, that I must confess Christ before men, that I must speak of Jesus to poor sinners. This appeared formidable at first, but I thank God that He strengthened me for this, and enabled me to take at once a decided part for Him. I had this additional difficulty (at least so it seemed to me), that, as I said, I had behaved as a worldly man during the first part of the voyage, so that I thought people would not understand the change that had taken place in me. There were two men who, I thought, would be more likely than others to scoff at anything good. The Lord enabled me to speak to these among the first (one was Mr P—; the other a young man, the third officer of the ship), to

set forth the gospel fully before them. He graciously ordered it that not only did they not scoff, but the Word evidently touched their consciences.

I had a conversation with Mr R——. He, alas! is a thoroughly worldly man. He advised me to keep quiet, and not to speak to the people, "for fear of bringing ridicule on the cause." You may judge of what sort he is. I feel it very trying being in the midst of unconverted people. I have nothing in common with them. Their hopes are all for *time*; mine are for eternity. I feel that I have now nothing more to do with the world but to tell them of the way of salvation, and warn them of the wrath to come, and that entire separation from the world, even from its best things, is the only right and happy way—is what God will bless. I hope I may find letters from you in New Zealand. My darling mother, I am now in a way and a degree that I have never been before,—Your most truly grateful and loving son,

G. W. G.



"Christ was willing to be given up to death for us, in order (as man) to gain the victory for us over death, and over him who had the power of death. By man came death, by man came resurrection. Glorious victory! Complete triumph! We come out of the state where sin and its consequences fully reached us. Evil cannot enter the place into which we are brought. We have crossed the frontiers for ever."

J. N. D.

SIMON PETER, FISHERMAN, AND APOSTLE.

CHAPTER I.

CONVERSION AND CONSECRATION.

(JOHN i. 19-42 ; LUKE v. 1-11.)



HIS scripture in the fourth Gospel without doubt gives us the moment when Simon Peter, the fisherman of Bethsaida, first met and got to know the Lord Jesus, whom to know is life eternal. No more important epoch in a man's history could possibly be than this—the moment when he is brought into personal contact with the living Saviour. Hence there is a most important question which each one of our hearts should ask and answer before God—viz., Have I been brought to have to do with this living Saviour?

If you have not yet been brought to Jesus, my reader, give me the joy that Andrew had in his day, as he led his brother to Jesus—give me the joy of bringing you to meet that Saviour in

this day. This is the evangelist's work in the Gospel.

Let us see now what led to this warm-hearted man—Simon the son of Jonas—being brought to the Lord, for the links in the chain that lead to conversion, whether his, or yours, or mine, are ever very interesting.

The Lord had sent to Israel at this moment a servant who roused the people from end to end of the land. No smooth-spoken prophet was John the Baptist. He spoke to people of their sins and of their need, and multitudes were aroused and gathered round him (*see* Matt. iii. 1-12), until he, as it were, shook them off at the feet of the Saviour. John preached repentance. "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," was the clarion note that reached the conscience of the multitudes that heard him. Thoroughly awakened by his preaching of coming judgment, John then told them, in answer to their query, "What shall we do then?" (*see* Luke iii. 1-14), all that they should do, or should not do. To the publicans he preached, "Exact no more than that which is appointed you;" to the soldiers he said, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages." He said, moreover, "Now also the axe is laid to the root of the tree;" and if an axe be laid to the root of a tree, down it must go. In a way, therefore, John foretold the ruin of the nation. If the axe were laid to the root of the tree, moreover, it would show what was inside

the tree, and it might be rotten to the core. If the axe of God's Word lay open—as it does—the heart of man, it shows it to be rotten to the very core (see Mark vii. 20, 23).

It was strong language John used as the multitudes came out to him. "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" fell not only on the ears of the common people, but also on "many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism." How they were going to escape the damnation of hell was urgently sought of them, as I would ask it of you, too, my reader. It is a query that must be faced, alike in John's day, and in ours.

John could not give his hearers pardon, nor preach forgiveness, but he told them if they were repentant they would go down under the waters of Jordan, and be baptized, confessing their sins; and they did so. As he was thus baptizing, there came to him a Man whom John knew to be the sinless One. He had no sins to confess. He was the only sinless man there ever was in this world, but He asked to be baptized of John—took His place, though sinless, with the remnant that was turning round to God, and, as He came up out of the water, the Spirit of God came down upon Him, like a dove, and a voice from heaven proclaimed, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17).

After this John sees Jesus one day coming unto him, and he gives this lovely testimony of Him,

“Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” John got the sense in his soul, Here is the One who can really bless man. You get the atoning work of the Lamb of God first, and then that He is the One who baptizes with the Holy Ghost. We must learn these two things, first, that Jesus is the One that can take away our sins, and then that He is the One who gives the Holy Ghost, and blesses. The Lord puts away sin in two ways—He puts away the sins of His own people by dying for their sins upon the cross, and then for those who, alas! refuse Him, He baptizes them with fire—that is, judgment sweeps the whole scene. Oh, come to Him, my unsaved reader, while you can get the forgiveness of your sins, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and escape the certainly coming baptism of fire, the judgment which is rapidly nearing.

John's first testimony to Jesus seems to have had little effect—no one followed the Lord—hence we hear his voice again raised as he says, the day following, “Behold the Lamb of God.” I do not think John is exactly preaching here; he loved his Master, and saw His moral beauty, and as he stands and says, “Behold the Lamb of God,” he becomes the channel of introducing to the Bridegroom the nucleus of the Bride, as those two disciples were detached from himself, and followed Jesus.

I grant you the Bride, the Church, was not formed till afterwards, but I have no doubt you

get here the nucleus of that which becomes the Bride. One of the two who heard John speak was Andrew, and I am inclined to regard the other as the man who wrote this Gospel, the one who does not name himself save as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," John the son of Zebedee.

The Baptist spoke in a lovely, meditative manner, as his eyes rested upon that incomparable Man, the One whom he knew to be Jehovah, the One who came to take up the whole question of sin; and as he says, "Behold the Lamb of God," those two disciples turn, and, leaving John, follow Jesus. And thenceforward John disappears, and Jesus fills the whole scene.

Jesus turning saw those two disciples following, and said to them, "What seek ye?" Searching question! Is it fame you are seeking, my reader, knowledge, power, or riches? The Lord asks you this from the glory to-day. Can you answer Him as these two did? "Master, where dwellest thou?" *i.e.*, We only want you, we want to know where we can be always sure of finding you. "They came and saw where he dwelt." Capernaum is the place called "his own city" (Matt. ix. 1), the place in which His most mighty works were done, and concerning which, at length, he is fain to say, "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day; but I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for

the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee" (Matt. xi. 23, 24). The higher the privilege the more terrible the judgment when it falls on one who has not answered to the privilege.

"They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour," that is, there were two hours of the day left. Oh those two hours with Jesus! I ask you, Have you ever spent two hours with Jesus? I am sure if you have, you have come out and tried to take somebody else back to enjoy what you enjoyed. These disciples did. There comes out at once personal testimony, and let me tell you that quiet personal testimony is often worth far more than public preaching. That quiet man, Andrew, of whom we hear no more, save that he companied with the Lord till the end, became the means of the conversion of the most prominent man of the twelve, the record of whose life and ministry has such a large place in the Scriptures, and who became afterwards the means of the conversion of three thousand souls in one day.

It is beautiful to see how Andrew goes at once to testify of the One he had found, and he begins at home. "He first findeth his own brother Simon." He begins from the centre, and works out to the circumference.

Andrew not only finds Simon, "but he brought him to Jesus." Happy service! Have you, my reader, been brought to Jesus yet? If not, let me lead you to Him now. Come to Him now!

I think I hear that stalwart fisherman speaking that day, and saying to his brother, "We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ; come to Him, Simon," and he came.

It is not a question of having an immense amount of knowledge here, but it was a Person who was known, and to Him Andrew brings his own brother Simon. "And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone." This was a wonderful moment in Simon's history. He gets into the presence of the Lord, and what does he learn? He learns that the One whom he had never seen before, and, as far as he knew, had never seen him before, knew all about him. Jesus knew what Simon was, and He knows what you are, my reader. He knew that Simon was a sinner, needing a Saviour, and He knows that you are a sinner, needing a Saviour too. The Lord says to Simon, "Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone." What does the changing of his name mean? In Old Testament times the changing of the name was very frequent. God changed Abram's name, and Sarai's; He changed Jacob's too; Pharaoh changed Joseph's name, and Nebuchadnezzar Daniel's, and the King of Egypt changed the name of the last King of Judah.

The changing of the name, then, implied that the one whose name was changed was the vassal, the subject, the property of the one who so changed it.

The Lord said, as it were, Simon, you are Mine, spirit, soul, and body, and I shall do what I like with you. "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live," was being fulfilled in the Galilean fisherman's history. Simon heard the voice of the 'Son of God' then, and though perhaps at the time he did not know the meaning of what He said, yet when he writes his first epistle afterwards he had found it out, for he says, "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, . . . ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house." What is a stone? A little bit of a rock. And what is a Christian? A little bit of Christ, for he is a member of Christ.

Believers now in the Lord Jesus Christ are linked with, yea, united to Him. Peter was learning this truth, slowly I admit, but the necessity and blessedness of it are apparent as, by-and-by, we hear him saying, "To whom coming as unto a living stone, . . . ye also, as living stones, are built up"—that is, Christ communicates that life which is His to us, and we become an integral part of that house which God is building; and is not being a living stone a very different thing from being a dead sinner? Do you ask, How am I to get this life? You must get into personal contact with Jesus. Andrew brought Peter to Jesus, and Jesus said to him, "Thou art Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone"—you are a living stone, Peter, and you belong to Me from this moment.

And will not you, my reader, belong to Him to-day, will not you trust Him now?

The whole question of sin is settled by the death of Christ. He went into death and annulled it. He destroyed him who had the power of death. He took sin upon him, and put it away, and now at the right hand of God He says, "Look unto me, come unto me." If you come He will give you eternal life on the spot, and make you a living stone. Peter then, that day, had life communicated to him from the Son of God. "He passed from death unto life" as he stood before the Son of God that day. His soul was for ever linked with the Lord from that day. I do not say that he followed the Lord then, but here you get the moment of Peter's conversion, he is quickened with the very life of Jesus, and becomes "a living stone." This then is the account of HIS CONVERSION.

For a time we hear no more of Peter, he had evidently gone back to his earthly calling, but now we will turn to another eventful day in his history. We find it in Luke v., where you get what I may call HIS CONSECRATION. In this chapter he sets out to follow Jesus; yes, forsakes all, and follows Him; and it is a happy moment for us when we forsake all and follow Jesus. The Lord goes down to Peter in the very midst of his business. He Himself was, as ever, going on with His mission of grace and mercy to souls, and in order to more advantageously speak to the multitudes who were thronging to hear Him, He uses Peter's boat as a pulpit.

In John i. He sought to teach Peter one lesson, namely, this, "Peter, *you* belong to me," though evidently Peter did not then fully learn it. Now He teaches him another lesson, namely, "Peter, you, and *all that you have*, belong to me." He steps into Peter's boat, does not ask for it, because it belonged to Him, and then He says, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." He will not be beholden to any man, so He is going to pay Peter now for the use of his boat. Peter says, "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing, nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net." Peter obeys, for he knows now something of who He is who spoke, and, as a result, found that he never had taken such a haul of fish in all his days.

Thoroughly "astonished" thereat, and awakened thereby to a sense of his sin, Peter "fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." He saw now not two boatloads of fish, but the Godhead glory of the Son of Man, the Messiah, the more than Man, Son of God. He saw the application of Psalm viii. 4-8 to his Master as the fish obey Him. He is convicted about his sin, his guilt. He had never had the truth of his sinful state raised before. He had to learn what he was. He had learned something of what Jesus was in John i., and something more of what he was in Luke v., and now he had to learn his own good-for-nothingness, his guiltiness, but he felt too, I cannot do without Thee, O

Lord, and he gets as close as he can to Jesus' knees, while he says, "Lord, depart from me."

Jesus sweetly calms his troubled conscience as He says unto him, "Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men." This troubled soul is sweetly calmed by the Lord's own blessed ministry, "Fear not"; and to every troubled soul, in this our day, He says now, "Fear not."

"And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all and followed him." No doubt most people would have thought Peter a most improvident man, would have said he had better go to market with his fish first, but Peter heeding the call "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. iv. 19; Mark i. 17), gave up all that had hitherto entranced him, in the day when it was most bright and prosperous. He had a heart to be for the Lord, and the Lord only. Christ eclipsed everything in his soul, and he leaves all to be near that Saviour, to be His companion, and His servant, as He passes through this scene. Happy choice, blessed submission of faith, and answer of affection!

Now, my reader, if Jesus says to you to-day, "Follow thou me," what will you say? Let it be, Lord, from this day forth my heart is thine! The Lord grant it.

W. T. P. W.

(To be continued if the Lord will.)

"I AM SATISFIED TOO."



ANNIE B— was the only child of her mother, and she was a widow—a bright intelligent girl, and one who was the subject of many prayers.

For several years I had known her mother and aunt, who were both decided Christians. Annie had through them been in contact with the truth from her very infancy, but it appeared to have made no real impression upon her.

She was a thoughtless girl, who, when spoken to about her soul was always ready with a light and careless answer—"Time enough to grow good," or some such expression.

She was not by any means constitutionally strong, and having got a severe cold, she found it difficult to throw it off. Her mother, anxious about her, took her to one of the leading physicians, who prescribed, and said she would be better in a little while.

However, she did not improve, and after a considerable time was taken to another doctor, who declared her to be hopelessly ill, both lungs being affected.

About this time, I met her aunt, who told me, with tears, of the sorrow which had come upon them. I asked if I might go and see her; she thanked me, and said they would be glad.

I called on several occasions, but failed to gain admission to the poor girl, who I heard was rapidly sinking. She did not like to be spoken to, and consequently did not wish to see me, so I could only lift my heart to the Lord, and join with others in prayer for her.

One day a marked change for the worse came, and she feared she was dying, and without Christ. Oh, who can tell the awful solemnity of such a position—the very light and truth she had been so long in contact with, only enhanced her condemnation! To pass into eternity from the midst of the Gospel light which shines in this day, in which the truth as to salvation is so widely preached, without having accepted the message which it brings, is indeed awful to contemplate, and thoughts such as these arose within her.

She was now most anxious to see me, and begged of her uncle to send for me. Hearing of the change, and of her desire to see me, I arranged to call that afternoon at an hour which would be convenient to her.

On entering her room I found her propped up in a large chair, her mother seeking to place her in a position in which the poor weary body might find some ease. I sat down beside her, and after a few inquiries as to her state of health, I put the direct question, "And now, what about your soul?" Her poor anxious face is now before me, as she shook her head and sorrowfully said, "I am not prepared to die."

"Is not that a solemn condition to be in?" said I. "What a solemn thing to have to do with a holy God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and who is now looking into the very secret chambers of your heart. He not only knows all that you have done, but He knows what your thoughts have been, and what He says of your heart is this,—'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I the Lord search the heart' (Jer. xvii. 9). What a solemn thing, that even now He is searching your heart."

I could see by the play of her features that the Word of God was having its effect upon her, and felt sure that she was having to do with the One who was telling her all that ever she did (John iv. 29). I then solemnly asked her, "Now in the presence of God, who is here, and in the light of what He has said about your heart, what have you to say for yourself?" She lifted herself in the chair, and with an energy which surprised me, said, "*I deserve to go to hell, sir.*"

"Thank God," I said, "that you have reached this point, and now I want to tell you of another thing. I want to tell you what God's heart is, and what His thoughts about you have been."

I then pointed to the love of God who gave His Son to die, and quoted John iii. 16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Using several other

passages, I told her of the perfection of the work which the Son had accomplished, and which had so perfectly satisfied God's holy and righteous claims about sin, that He can now be just and the justifier of the ungodly—of the one who believeth in Jesus, and that upon the ground of His work. He is sending out a message of peace to every poor sinner who will receive it; a message which comes to us where we are, finding us where we are, and tells us 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, 39). Also, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. i. 15).

"Now," I said, "are not you a sinner, and does not that word '*sinners*' describe you far better than if it were 'A. B.,' for I know another of your name, and it might mean her, but that word '*sinners*' takes you in? Now, if God is perfectly satisfied with what Christ has done, I ask you what have you to say?" All this time she was listening as one for whom life and death were hanging on what she heard. I repeated my question, "God is perfectly satisfied with what Christ has done, and I now ask what have you to say."

Again she lifted herself in the chair, and with clasped hands said, "I am satisfied, too." Then falling back in the chair, she burst into a flood of tears. The joy which filled her heart could find no richer way of expressing itself, and the calm rest-

ful expression on her face spoke volumes which words could not convey.

Her mother, aunt, and myself could not refrain from mingling our tears with hers; we were a feeble expression of the "friends and neighbours" who were called to rejoice with Him who found His sheep, or of those who were called to have part in the "music and dancing" which told out the father's joy in having his lost one found—that precious one who was dead and alive again.

I sat for nearly an hour with her, and deeply did my soul enjoy the power and grace which had so manifestly come in, and brought this precious soul into perfect peace.

During the interval, till she departed to be with Christ, I was a constant visitor at the house, and the simplicity of her faith, the fulness of her joy, and the brightness of her testimony to those around her, filled the heart with admiration.

When asked by a friend, who was surprised to find her rejoicing, when she had found peace, she replied, "On last Saturday evening." "And what gave you peace?" Her answer was, "It was when I came to know that God was satisfied with what Christ had done."

In speaking to another, she said, "I always knew I was a sinner;" but until that evening I never felt that God was looking into my heart."

One day, finding her low and seemingly depressed, fearing that Satan was tempting her, I asked if she ever had fears for the future? She

looked reproachfully at me, and replied, "Oh, no, I am never afraid of anything." In this happy condition she shortly departed to the Lord.

And now, dear reader, one word for you. As God looks into your heart, and sees all that is there, and tells you what He thinks of it, what have you to say? Is it, "I deserve to go to hell"? And if so, as you hear the blessed tidings that God is perfectly satisfied with what Christ has done, is your answer, "I am satisfied, too"? If not, you are yet in your sins, the judgment of God is impending over you, and the wrath of God may at any moment overtake you. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. ii. 3.)

"Awake! awake! thou sleeper,
 Why still amongst the dead?
 The day of grace is passing,
 Soon will its hours have fled.
 The grace which thou art slighting
 Soon, soon, will cease to flow,
 From righteous indignation
 Then whether wilt thou go?
 Awake! awake! thou sleeper,
 No longer slight the call,
 Nor trifle with the judgment
 Which on thy head may fall.
 E'en now the clouds do gather,
 Which soon may burst on thee,
 Awake! awake! O sinner!
 To Christ, the Saviour, flee."

THE WORK AND EFFECT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.



HE prophet Isaiah, speaking of the future blessing of Israel, says, "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (Isa. xxxii. 17, 18). The spirit of this beautiful scripture is applicable now to every believing one.

"The work of righteousness shall be *peace*." There is not much peace in this world. The lack of it is a constant complaint from many lips. Sin has disturbed everything, and everybody. The peace of nations, the peace of families, and the peace of the individual, is constantly disturbed. When the world might have had peace, in its blind folly it refused it. A Child was born, a Son was given—the Prince of Peace (Isa. ix. 6); but the heart of man warred against Him, and killed Him. There has been no peace for the world since, neither will there be till He returns again.

But man's work that took peace away, was met by God's work that brings it back for all who will have it. There are two sides to the cross of Christ. It was God's work of righteousness, that men might have peace. The precious blood that was shed pleaded, and pleads still, for the guiltiest of

the guilty. Man's boasted righteousness showed out its true character at Calvary. The religious hatred of the human heart could go no further. But when man's righteousness utterly broke down, God brought out His. On the ground of the atoning work of Christ, God displays His righteousness from that moment to this, in justifying guilty man. Peace is the consequence. "The work of righteousness shall be peace" (ver. 17). God is just, "and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26). "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. v. 1).

No other work is needed to obtain *peace*. One work only is sufficient, the work of God. And peace is the portion of all who submit to the righteousness of God. Tens of thousands, ignorant of it, are going about to establish their own. Man is very slow to learn his own utter nothingness, and his work's utter worthlessness. Self-righteousness is deeply planted in the human heart. The utterance of Job, "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go," forms a great part of the religion of millions.

Peace is worth having. Ask any believer you please what he would exchange it for, and you will get some idea of its worth. Rubies will not buy it. Neither will they exchange for it. But God gives it freely. It was made by the blood of the cross (Col. i. 20). It is yours, reader, the moment

you receive God's testimony to Christ's finished work. Now only is the time to obtain it. If you miss it this side of the grave (and death may summon you at any moment), you will be a stranger to it for ever. "Being justified by faith, *we have peace,*" *i.e., now*, here in this world.

But this is not all. The prophet adds, "And the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever." God's love is the cause, Christ's finished work the channel, righteousness the result, quietness and assurance for ever the effect for *every one that believeth*. Submit yourself, then, to the righteousness of God (Rom. x. 3), and you shall not only have peace with Him, but every doubt and fear shall be banished from your heart, and blessed assurance become your present and everlasting portion.

Not only do thousands of souls lack peace, because they seek it by their own righteousness, but thousands of believers have no quietness, no assurance, through self-occupation. They have never accepted, in simple faith, God's thoughts about Christ, and His finished work. They are sheltered by His blood, yet after all in measure are clinging to, self, and their own self-righteousness in addition. The result is unrest instead of quietness, uncertainty instead of assurance. ..

Is the wondrous atoning work of Christ of so little value after all, that although God exalted Him to the highest glory, a doubtful and uncertain salvation is the only result for us? Nay, doubting soul. Look away to yon bright glory. Behold the

Son of Man at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Think of God's estimate of His finished work. Look no more into your own wretched heart, or at your own legal doings. Let Christ have all the glory of your salvation. Cast yourself unreservedly on Him, and Him alone. He is *all*, and His blood cleanseth from *all* sin (1 John i. 7). *You believe on Him?* Then bow to Him, submit to Him. Let it be Christ henceforth, without that miserable appendage of *self*, which was judged once and for ever in His cross. *Quietness and assurance for ever* will be your blessed portion.

"And," adds the prophet, "my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." And this too is the portion of the believer. "My people." All believers now belong to God. We are His for ever, bought by the precious blood of Christ. And we are *brought to God*. In His presence, our hearts in communion with Him, we find a peaceable habitation for our souls, when all is turmoil and disturbance in the world around; a sure dwelling, amidst all the insecurities of life and property to which man is exposed; and a quiet resting place, though still in a scene of sin, unrest, rumour, disease, misery, war, and death. We have not to wait till we enter the glory to enjoy these blessings. Truly we *shall* enjoy them there for ever without let. But it is our blessed privilege by faith, and in the power of the Holy Ghost, who dwells in the believer, to enjoy them now with God.

“THE STAR OF THE EAST.”



EW residents on the east and south coasts of England will easily forget the night of 10th November, and morning of 11th November 1891. One of the most terrific gales within the memory of man then swept around our coasts, attended with great loss of life at sea. The force of the wind was registered “12” or “hurricane” at the Lowestoft observing station that morning—a most unusual occurrence—and many of the inhabitants of that town were awakened by the high wind, while some hearts turned to God “for those at sea.” Amongst others, the writer prayed from time to time for both the local and Scotch fishermen—numbers of whom he knew were out that night—and especially for certain brethren in the Lord with whom he was acquainted.

Three Scotch boats were out with such on board. November 10 had been a specially bright day, following a rough one, and with the exception of some long “mares’ tails” in the sky, there was no appearance of the coming storm. Allured by the lovely day, almost every herring boat put to sea, for rough weather that season had greatly interfered with the fishing. Amongst other Scotch and English boats, “The Star of the East,” hailing from Musselburgh, N.B., sailed forth with a crew of eight strong men, commanded by “auld Watty

Brown,” who had fished at Lowestoft for thirty years.

Amongst other Christians on board this boat was one who, in a prayer-meeting the *previous* night, had given out the following hymn, reading only these lines:—

“O Lord, how blest our journey,
 Tho’ here on earth we roam,
 Who find in Abba’s favour
 Our spirit’s present home.
 For where Thou now art sitting
 By faith we’ve found repose ;
 Free to look up to heaven,
 Since our blest Head arose.

“In spirit there already,
Soon we ourselves shall be !”

His speedy departure seeming to be before him, as the proverb says, “Coming events cast their shadows before.” However this may be, toward eight o’clock, on 10th November, the wind rose, and gained terrible force in a most rapid manner. The boats had shot their nets early, and by the time (about eleven P.M.) they deemed it necessary to haul them in, and run for safety, “The Star” had made a good catch. Although the wind was high, and it was felt that taking the harbour mouth would be exciting, no apprehension seems to have been entertained as to the result. So much so that when R—— (who gave out the above hymn) proposed to cook some mackerel for breakfast, the skipper replied, “Never mind ; we will soon have breakfast comfortably in the harbour !”

On nearing the harbour the waves were seen to be running high, dashing completely over the North Pier lighthouse, and rebounding seawards with terrific force, making the entry a very dangerous affair, as is usual when there is a strong wind from S. or S.W. at Lowestoft. Just as "The Star," well to windward, was about to take the harbour mouth, a tremendous back wave was seen to be rushing on her bow. A cry came from forward, "Put the helm hard up," which was promptly done by the skipper and R——; but in vain, she did not answer her helm, and in another moment was dashed with awful force against the North Pier Extension, broadside on. The hull cracked "like a nutshell," and the foremast snapped off, probably damaging or killing some of the poor men in its fall. In less than five minutes all was over. The third wave completed the work of destruction. One only survivor was left to tell the tale, who, after being washed about in the entrance of the harbour for an hour on a piece of the wreck, was rescued. The rest of the devoted crew were drowned, or shared the fate of their vessel, not one body having been recovered, the old skipper's "sou'-wester" being the only relic found.

One other living record of that awful night remains. Another Scotch boat, "The Jennies," followed "The Star of the East," and sailed safely into the harbour. In passing the mouth, her crew thought they heard cries from the direction of the North Pier, which they took to be cheers of

“bravo!” at their success. But the more practised ear of the skipper discerned that the cries were too low down; and he thought he saw through the thick darkness (the hour was about half-past four A.M.), and the heavy drifting rain, the form of a hull beneath the extension, and replied, “That’s no the cry of ‘bravo!’ that’s the cries of a crew suffering.”

And has this solemn disaster, which brought woe to many a fond heart and home, no voice for us? Most assuredly it has.

Does it not say to the Christian, “So live day by day that if you were suddenly called away, there would be no regrets that your work was unfinished?”

And does it not speak in loud tones of earnest and solemn warning to the unprepared, unsaved reader to “PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD”?

Does not our Lord Himself apply a disaster which happened in His day in this very way to unrepentant sinners? They would fain have looked upon its poor victims as great sinners, upon whom God’s signal and swift judgment had fallen, and thus have accredited themselves with superior virtue. But our Lord says to them—“Those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but *except* YE REPENT, YE *shall all likewise perish*” (Luke xiii. 4, 5).

Nor let any reader think in a similar way about

the men who lost their lives in "The Star of the East." For the writer has grounds to believe they were all converted men. Two of them were known by him as such, and concerning the rest he has had the testimony of other Christians to that effect. So that he trusts they passed from that scene of desperate strife with the raging elements to be for ever "with the Lord."

Yes. God "now commandeth *all* men everywhere to *repent*." And He has a right to do so, for all are responsible to Him, and none so much as those in this land of Bibles, and free proclamation of the gospel of His grace. And God now commands repentance, "because he 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. 30, 31).

My reader, God has made this solemn appointment and a previous one—death (Heb. ix. 27)—with every unsaved person. These two are fixed *for you*, if you are unsaved, and God will keep them.

Just as "The Star of the East" had two *fixed* points before her that she reached that night—the Lowestoft South Pier light and the North Pier Extension wall, against which she was broken to pieces, just as she had those points before her throughout that voyage—yea, from the moment she left the builder's stocks—so with yourself,

my dear unconverted, unsaved, unblessed reader, DEATH and JUDGMENT are the FIXED goals towards which you are certainly being hurried forward. And you know not the moment you may reach the first. Then turn, without a moment's further delay, in repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, who was "once offered to bear the sins of many," and then when He "appears the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 28), you will go to be for ever with Him, and escape the two awful appointments which await the sinner, but which were borne by the Saviour for all who believe with the heart to salvation.

W. G. B.



PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.



Y faith I look where Christ has gone,
 And see, upon His Father's throne,
 A Man with glory crowned ;
 His brow is marred, and on His side—
 Whence flowed the cleansing purple
 tide—
 And hands, and feet, a wound.

Here is the record of the past—
 Fruit of my sins that bound Him fast
 To that degrading tree ;

In every wound I read my guilt,
 And thank Him that His blood was spilt
 To set my conscience free.

I look again : and now I see
 That blessed Man engaged for me,
 His hands uplifted high.
 Before the throne of God He pleads,
 God's great High Priest, He intercedes,
 And so preserves me nigh.

Once more I gaze upon that face,
 And lo—as if to leave His place,
 He seems about to rise.
 Recalling His "I quickly come,"
 I learn His thought—to fetch me home,
 To praise Him in the skies.

What *love* ! He washed my sins away,
 Thus boldness in the Judgment Day
 For me there doth remain.

What *grace* ! now occupied with me,
 He wills I should His glory see,
 When He returns again.

C. E. P.

"I SAY now to the sinner, Christ has died, and the blood is on the mercy-seat, and you will be received if you come. If he accepts the invitation, I can tell him more. Not only has the Lord Jesus put away sin, but He has borne all your sins, and confessed them as if they were His own ; and they are all gone."

J. N. D.

SIMON PETER, FISHERMAN, AND APOSTLE.

CHAPTER II.

COMPANIONSHIP WITH CHRIST.

(MARK i. 28-37, iii. 13, 22; MATT. xiv.)



HE next thing we find in the Gospel narrative is that the Lord enters Peter's house at a most opportune juncture. He comes out of the synagogue, where He had just been casting an unclean spirit out of a man, and *forthwith* (a characteristic word of Mark's Gospel) He goes to Peter's house, and "Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever," and they tell Him of her. It was most natural that they should tell the Lord of the sick woman, and He heals her with a word.

Now, it has often been taught that a man must remain unmarried in order to fully follow the Lord, but here we learn that Simon was a married man, and he was a man who had affections large enough to take in his wife's mother, not only into his heart, but into his house. We live in a day when mothers-in-law are often at a discount; not so here, and God has not recorded this in the pages of His Word for nothing.

I have no doubt Peter's wife was in a tremor that day. Her mother, possibly (for we do not read

of children) the dearest object, save her husband, that she had in the world, lay sick of a fever. Another Gospel (Luke iv. 38) says, she was "taken with a great fever," but Jesus "stood over her, and rebuked the fever, and it left her," and He "took her by the hand, and lifted her up," and "she ministered unto them," instead of being ministered to. She was a useful mother-in-law that.

Do you think it was by chance that the Lord went there that day? I believe not. If we go back a few days in Peter's history, we remember that he had given up all to follow the Lord, and having abandoned his earthly calling so to do, it is quite possible that his wife might have felt somewhat anxious as to ways and means, and may have thought, if she did not say, "How are we now to be cared for and supported?" The Lord comes into her house—her home—takes her mother by the hand, and heals her with a word; and as the loving daughter sees the mother healed and restored, she must have felt quite assured as to the wisdom of her husband's action in fully following the Lord. And I doubt not, before Peter left again to accompany his Master in His labours, he got a word of this sort from his wife, "You follow Him fully, Simon; I see well you are on the right track; He has the heart and the power to care for us in all things."

This scene is so like the Lord. He ever loves to put His servants at rest at home, as well as to set

them free to follow Him. It is sweet to think that He has His eye on the oft-times solitary wife at home, with her cares and burdens, while the husband, called to labour in public, is frequently and necessarily away. Ye wives of evangelists, and other servants of the Lord, note how the Lord thinks of you!

Passing on now to the third chapter of Mark, we find the special call which Peter received of the Lord. After a night spent in prayer (see Luke vi. 12), the Lord selects those who should be His companions in His pilgrim pathway here. We read, "He ordained twelve that **THEY SHOULD BE WITH HIM.**" I know nothing more blessed than that!

People think it is a wonderful thing to be saved, to escape the damnation of hell, a wonderful thing to go to heaven, and so it is: but to go to heaven in Scripture is always to be with a Person. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord"—"to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better"—is the language of Scripture.

To be with Him, to enjoy companionship with the Lord Jesus Christ, is what God calls us to, and here these men in a very special way were called to be with Him. Have you been called to be with Him, my reader? You are not called to be an apostle, but the eternity of a Christian is to be with Jesus. But for you, my unconverted friend, what is your eternity? To be with Jesus? Alas! you do not know him! To be in glory? You have no title to it! Your future is very different. I

fear there will fall on your ears a sadly solemn word, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Perhaps you say, I do not believe God ever made hell for man. Nor do I. The Lord Jesus says it was "prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41). But some men are such fools they prefer the company of the devil and his angels, to the company of Christ. See where you stand, my unconverted reader, and think of the contrast between your portion, and that of the true follower of Jesus.

"He ordained twelve *that they should be with Him.*" "Ah! but," you say, "one was a traitor." Well, do not you be a traitor! God help you, and me too, not to be traitors! Judas's history has its lessons for all of us. It is like a beacon light put on a dangerous coast, to keep the watchful mariner off the sunken rocks—to teach our souls to be in no wise like him.

In this place again (Mark iii. 16) you get Simon's new name emphasised, and in all the gospels it is so. His name always comes first on the list (see Matt. x. 2; Mark iii. 16; Luke vi. 14; John xxi. 2); not that he had any authority over his brethren, or was made a sort of primate, as Rome would fain teach us. It was his natural fervour, and warm-hearted impulsive earnestness, that put him always in the front rank. If there be a crowd, Peter will get through it; if it be a confession of who the Lord is, Peter is the spokes-

man. I grant you his very impulsiveness drew him oftentimes into danger, and ended in his denying his Lord at a later date; but still Peter's is a wonderful history of devotion to the Lord, and where he failed, the Lord in infinite wisdom and faithfulness tells us about it, and puts him, too, before us as another beacon light, lest our small barks should also be stranded on the selfsame rocks that damaged his.

Nothing but devotion of heart to Christ personally will do for us. A mere creed is of no value whatever. Unless there be affection of heart that puts us near Himself, and, if we have got away, leads us back to Him as quickly as possible, our confession of Him is valueless to us, and nauseous to Him. Peter learned a blessed lesson at this point of his history—*viz.*, The Lord wants me to be with Him, He wants my company. Have you learned yet, dear reader, that the Lord loves your companionship and desires to have your affections?

Now let us go on to the eighth chapter of Luke for a moment. There is a remarkable scene here, and again Peter comes to the front (Luke viii. 41-56). How beautifully the Lord responds to every call and every need! If you have any difficulty about the affection of Christ, about how He would respond to your call, and your need, these lovely Gospel narratives ought to settle your difficulty. Look at this man Jairus, who had a dying daughter! He comes to Jesus about her. The Lord responds at

once. Then the people throng Him, and press Him, and a woman who had spent all her living on physicians, and had only got worse instead of better, comes and touches His garment. Just like to-day. People spend their lives going about to all sorts of spiritual doctors, instead of simply coming to Christ; and, of course, get no better, for religion cannot save them. Religion can damn you very easily if you are content with religiousness, without having ever come to a personal Saviour to be saved. This woman heard of Jesus, and she came to Him; and when she came she touched; and when she had touched she felt; and then she came forth and confessed Christ. She got all she wanted. She was healed immediately she touched the Saviour. So would you be if you were to do as she did. Jesus then said, "Who touched me?" And the Lord, looking down from glory, now says, Who is touching Me? And will you not touch Him, dear friend, and get life from Him?

And now, poor dear blundering Peter puts in a word about the multitude, and says, "Master, the multitude throng thee, and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?" In all this throng, Lord, how can You ask who it is that has touched You? But Jesus said, "Somebody hath touched me; for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me." That is always the way, if you only get near enough to touch the hem of His garment, virtue will go out from Him, and you will be healed, you will get all you need. The Lord will never shake you off; He

will encourage you to come forth and confess Him. Only try Him, just come to Him, and touch Him. The virtue that comes out of Him always heals the soul that just simply touches Him in faith.

The woman comes out and confesses what she had done, and why she did it, and what the effect of it was. She had faith in His goodness, faith in His heart, faith in His person, and see what the Lord says, "Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith had made thee whole; go in peace." Peter learned a good lesson that day, that a throng might press his Lord, and yet nobody really touch Him, whereas the faintest touch of faith secured the fullest blessing.

Next, in Jairus' house Peter gets another lesson, as he stands by and sees the Lord annul the power of death. He had seen Him heal his mother-in-law, he had seen how faith must be in exercise if blessing is to come, and now he learns that He is the One who quells the power of death, that death cannot be in His presence. Jesus has power over death. He only met it to annul it, for He was the Lord of life. The thieves who were crucified with Him could not die till He had died: and when He died, He annulled the power of death, broke its bands, demolished the bars of the tomb, and came up out of it. Hence it is to a victorious triumphant Christ I call on you to come now, One who is alive for evermore. I have to do with a victorious Saviour, One who went into death that He might annul it, and did so by dying. He took my sins on Him

as He went into it, and put them all away. Ah! Peter was learning blessed lessons of the moral glory of his Master, as he heard Him say, "Maid, arise!" and then bid her be fed.

Now turn to Matt. xiv., where we get another very blessed lesson taught. Peter walks on the water in this chapter, and we will inquire what led to it. Herod had beheaded John the Baptist, "and his disciples came and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus." What a right and suited action!

Have you been burying some dear one? And did you too go and tell Jesus, pouring out your sorrow into His sympathising ear? These disciples did. I think I can see two roads that day, and the two companies who were on them. On one road come up the sad disciples of John, who had lost their master; on the other the disciples of Jesus return, flushed with success, from their first missionary tour (*see* Mark vi. 30, 31). The two companies meet in the Lord's presence. The Lord says to them, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile." How morally lovely is this call! Alike to successful labourers, and to disheartened disciples, is it made. By each alike it was needed, but a desert with Jesus can be no desert.

Then comes the feeding of the multitudes, and the way in which the Lord sends the multitudes away,—a very different sending away from what it would have been if the disciples had had their way.

They would have sent them away to buy bread for themselves, sent away hungry thousands to be witnesses, as it were, against Christ. He sent those many thousands away happy, satisfied, so many witnesses to the tenderness of His heart, and the divine glory of His person. While the Lord does this, He constrains His disciples to take ship and go to the other side.

I can see the Lord's beautiful wisdom in sending His disciples away, at that moment, out of the way of an element for evil, for John vi. 14, 15, tells us that the multitudes would have taken Him by force to make Him a king, and the disciples too were intent on the kingdom. They would have heartily entered into the thought of the multitude to exalt their Master on an earthly throne (see Matt. xx. 20-23; Acts i. 6). But the Lord could take no kingdom, nor could He reign while sin was here, not put away from God's sight. The disciples' constant thought was the earthly kingdom. Not so the Lord's! He knew He must die, and accomplish atonement, ere the day of the kingdom. So now He sends His disciples away out of temptation. The Lord is always so wise, we may well trust Him—trust His love and His wisdom in all His ways with us.

He Himself went then up into a mountain to pray. That really is where He is now, as it were, on the mount, in intercession, for Scripture says, "He ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Heb. vii. 25). The disciples, dismissed at eventide, were by this time on their way to Capernaum, "tossed

with waves" and "toiling in rowing," as Mark vi. 48 informs us. The Lord came to them "in the fourth watch of the night." The distance they had to go was only about ten miles, but they had been nine hours doing "five-and-twenty or thirty furlongs"—a little over three miles. We make little progress if we have not the Lord *with us*. The Lake of Tiberias is well known for its sudden and violent storms, and they were caught in one; but in all their difficulties and dangers the Lord had His eye upon them. He was above in intercession, and in the fourth watch He comes to them. If in the first part of this chapter—Matt. xiv.—you have the sympathy of His heart, and then, as He fed the multitude, the power of His hand displayed, now, as they were toiling, storm-tossed and miserable, what music was in His voice that comes to them above the raging of the wind and waves? "It is I, be not afraid." And as they heard the tones of His voice, Peter, ever energetic, fearless, and full of affection, says, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." Look at the energy and the love of that man's heart. It is very refreshing. You have the Master going over the stormy deep, and then, in answer to the word "Come!" you see the disciple imitating his Master, and Peter upheld by divine power, "walked upon the waters to go to Jesus." Only faith and love will act thus. It is an action the Lord admires.

But now we read, "When he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid, and beginning to sink,

he cried, saying, Lord, save me!" Why did he sink? Was the water a bit more unstable when boisterous than when calm? Certainly not. You could not walk on the stillest mill-pond a bit better than on the stormiest wave that ever surged, without divine power. The power of Christ can sustain you and me in the most difficult circumstances, and nothing but the power and grace of Christ can sustain us in the most easy circumstances. Then, as Peter cries out, the Lord "caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"—Peter had faith, though it was little. Have you and I, dear reader, as much as he? As soon as the Lord got into the ship the wind ceased, and John vi. 21 adds, "Immediately the ship was at the land whither they went." How beautiful! How calm everything is as soon as you get into the presence of the Lord! And now they worship Him, saying, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God." Peter had learnt Him as Messiah in the 1st of John; he had learnt Him as Son of Man, and Lord over the fish of the sea, in Luke v.; and now as he sees more of the moral glories of His person, he gets another most precious lesson, that this One who is the Messiah, and the Son of Man, is also the Son of God.

Let me ask you, my friend, have you ever been bowed in worship before the person of the Lord Jesus? Have you ever cried out to Him, "Lord, save me!"? And, if He has saved you, have you ever gone down on your knees and worshipped

Him, saying, "Lord, of a truth thou art the Son of God!"?

May the Holy Ghost lead out your heart and mine to worship the Lord Jesus, as Son of God, in a fuller, deeper way; and if you, my reader, have never really worshipped Him yet, may He lead you to bow down before Him to-day and praise Him, and worship Him for all that He is, and all that He has done, and thus glorify Him, for He says, "Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me" (Ps. l. 23).

W. T. P. W.

(To be continued if the Lord will.)

**"IT WAS MEET THAT WE SHOULD
MAKE MERRY AND BE GLAD."**

(LUKE XV. 32.)



GHUS closes this wonderful scene—the most wonderful picture that was ever painted. What is its subject, do you ask? God laying Himself out to recover wanderers, those that are at a distance from Himself, either in immorality, or in cold, self-satisfied morality. "Yet doth he devise means that his banished be not expelled from him" (2 Sam. xiv. 14). And if it were not so, "we must needs die," die in our sins, die in our ruin and wretchedness, in our lost condition, and distant position; that position of distance to be "fixed" for all eternity, as it will be for those who

hold out to the last against all His endeavours and entreaties, as we read in chap. xvi., in the case of the "rich man."

Yes, my reader, it is solemnly and sadly true, that if you refuse to go into the house, like the elder son in chap. xv., you will have to be turned into the hell so graphically, but terribly, described in chap. xvi.—"For the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Ps. ix. 17). And are you of the sect of modern Sadducees, or of their dupes, who deny that there is such a place as *hell*? Allow me to ask you, Who knows best, they and you, or the Son of God?—the One who came from the unseen world into ours that He might lift its curtain for us, and make us know the certainty of heaven and hell, the end of good and evil; and that He might deliver us at the cost of bearing judgment at the hand of a holy God, that He might deliver us from the torment of the one, and introduce us into the bliss of the other.

"A picture," do you say? with the short-sighted logic of all such cavillers. Granted; but a picture of what? "Eastern imagery?" Granted; but of what? Pictures portray something; imagery represents something, not that which has no existence. And the picture of Luke xvi. 19-31 portrays an awful and endless reality that we might escape it. Oh, be warned! Thank God you are not in that flame of torment, where so much as a drop of water to cool your tongue will be denied (ver. 24).

You may be where you are perishing with hunger (chap. xv. 17), and I thank God if you feel it. But you are still where the fulness of the Father's house is offered, not "bread enough and to spare," as for a hired servant, but—the "fatted calf," with "music and dancing"; all the delights and joys of heaven for a prodigal or a professor; and the best robe, the ring, the shoes, to fit you for the house, to remind you of your Father's love, and to give you a standing in His favour, as well as His embrace and kiss at first meeting.

And not only is Luke xv. a picture of God's grace in recovering the sinner, but of His joy in receiving him.

What a drama is being enacted on the vast stage of this world. And the chief actors, who are they? Wonder of wonders, God in Three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—all engaged in the work of each individual sinner's salvation and reception. And what a scene is that on which the curtain falls at the close! (verses 25-32.) Picture of *God entreating* and *man refusing*—self-righteous man, too. And soon—how soon—the curtain will indeed fall on this vast drama. God still beseeching (2 Cor. v. 20), man still refusing. Christ coming again from heaven will close it, and all rejecters, refusers, and neglecters will be for ever excluded; the last word of the chief Actor being, "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this my son was dead and is alive again: and was lost and is found."

“WHAT! IS IT ONLY TO TOUCH?”



ON hearing of the illness of F. H—— I had a great desire to go and speak with him, for, from the knowledge I had of him, I felt certain he was not a Christian, in the true sense of the word, and all the solemnity of such a condition came

before me. Drawing near to the grave, and without hope as to the future, who can measure the awful gravity of such a position?

The young man of whom I write was one who had been carefully brought up, and in the various relations of life was all that could be wished for. Having also a respect for the things of God, he was usually found at the church which he attended. With all this the Lord Jesus, as the *Saviour of the lost*, had no place in his heart, nor had he any true sense of his *own lost condition*.

My first desire to call upon him was somewhat checked by my not knowing his family, and the objection which I was pretty sure would be raised to his being visited. However, after waiting upon the Lord, I sent a request that I might see him. At first they demurred, not wishing, as they said, to have his mind alarmed; but after a few days, sent for me, saying F—— would be glad to see me.

After a few inquiries as to the body, I opened the subject which was uppermost in my thoughts.

I found him full of the hope of recovery, and though I spoke plainly and faithfully to him, it did not appear to make the smallest impression. He spoke lightly, and even carelessly, and evaded most carefully every word which brought the truth home to his conscience. I told him he was upon a sick-bed, which probably he might never leave alive, and asked him if he was prepared to meet the One whom he and all of us had so offended. He said, in reply, it was only a slight attack he had, and that there was really no occasion to look so seriously upon it. Oh! how difficult it is to reach the natural heart. Truly we can say, it is "impossible to man," but blessed be His name, "possible to God."

When leaving, he expressed a wish that I should call again, which I promised to do, and went away with a heavy heart.

A few days passed, and I began to think it was time to see him again, when I received an urgent message, saying he would like to see me *at once*. I gladly responded, and called the same evening.

The doctors had broken to him that morning that there was little hope of his recovery, and as the thought of meeting God came before him, his past life and future prospects made him tremble.

He said, "I have been reading the book you gave me, and it has made me uneasy. I have been longing to see you again; and when the doctors told

me to-day that I was not likely to recover, I sent at once for you.”

Seeking to draw him out, I asked what he wished to see me for? He earnestly looked at me, and said, “Cannot you say something to comfort me?”

I sat down with a heart overflowing with thankfulness to the Lord who had evidently begun to work in his soul, and told him the sweet tale of the love of Christ. For many days I visited him, and sought to put the truth before him, both as to his own ruined state, and as to the perfect work of Christ, which alone could meet that state; but each day, if possible, I left him more wretched than before.

One day as I was leaving town to preach the Gospel at some distance, and did not expect to be back before a late hour, feeling the time was short, I asked a friend to go and see him; and I cannot do better than give her own account of the way in which this precious soul was brought into perfect peace, and enabled to rejoice with exceeding great joy:—

“On entering the house I thought he was dying, as again and again I heard the question put to him, ‘Oh! Fred, won’t you say one word to give us some hope?’ with no reply but violent coughing. When I entered the room the poor fellow looked at me, and turned his face to the wall, and, as we all thought, slept; while his sorrowing sister, and others who were present, recounted all that

had been done for him—physician after physician prescribing, and still he was no better. Oh! what a picture of our hopeless, helpless condition. We are not able to reach the blessing ourselves, and we have no friend who can help us (John v. 7).

“Mark v. 24-34, which I had been reading that day, was pressed on my mind. Man's efforts of no avail, but there was a turning-point in the history of this poor woman. When she heard of Jesus, she said, ‘If I may touch but his garment, I shall be whole.’ She leaves physicians behind, and presses forward through all hindrances to reach Jesus. Let man's efforts come in the way of *help*, as the physicians, or in the way of hindrance, as the crowd, each and all are as nothing; press through the crowd she will, for she said, ‘If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole.’

“One of those present said that a visitor had told F——, that ‘*if*’ was a good word, for too great confidence amounted to presumption. I quoted John v. 24, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.’ I said, ‘Surely the man who said, “If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean” (Luke v. 12), limited the grace of Christ, though not His power; but this poor woman's ‘*if*’ referred to the fear of not reaching Jesus. But she touches Him, and is made whole, for there was not one shade of doubt

upon her mind. ‘If I may but touch, I shall be made whole.’”

“At this moment the dear young man turned round, and with the most intense anxiety depicted on his face, fixed his eyes upon me, and said, ‘*What! is it only to touch?* Oh, my! Oh, my!’ He then lay back, uttering now and again incoherent words.

“His sister, dreading the result of a fit of coughing, begged for silence, when he laid his finger upon his mouth, and there was perfect silence for half an hour. The silence ended in a work of grace, for he turned round, raised and clasped his emaciated hands, and cried with a loud voice, ‘Lord Jesus, I desire to touch you by faith.’ Again there was silence. He looked so calm and peaceful, his eyes closed, but his lips were moving as if in prayer.

“After a little rest he said to his sister, ‘Where is my beloved mother? help her to come in.’ She, too, was an invalid; and then, his countenance beaming with delight, he said, ‘Mother, I am happy now—never before this day.’ She said, ‘What makes you happy, my own dear child?’ ‘Now I am a child of God,’ he replied; and raising his hands, and passing one over another, as if to show how it was done, added, ‘because Jesus has put all my sins away,’ and then lay back quite overcome. When a little stronger, he said to his sister, ‘Send and tell Mr F—— that now I know the Lord; his prayers for such a heedless sinner have been heard and answered.’

"Later on in the day, when I was about to leave, he said, 'Do write on the wall over against me that I may read it again and again during the night, that this day at twelve o'clock I found Christ.'

"One present said, 'No, but He found you.'

"'No,' he said; turning to me, 'You tell them, I cannot speak.'

"I replied, 'Perhaps the Lord has given him that word, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. xxxi. 3), but it is only to-day he has believed it.' He smiled, and faintly uttered the words, 'Yes, yes.'

"I said, 'Now he won't ask for the writing on the wall; he can see by faith his name in the Lamb's book of life.'

"He then pressed my hand, and said, 'It is enough.'

"Next day, after a happy night (which he said beforehand he dreaded as dark), his heart was overflowing with delight at the prospect of soon being *with Him*. He said, 'Oh! I shall wave the palm of victory in the presence of my Saviour.' Then, referring to Mark v. 28, he said, 'No literal touch now, Jesus is risen, the object of faith.'

"The bitter grief of one to whom he was engaged pressed upon his heart; he called her and said, 'My own beloved, I was to have been yours for *time*, but I belong to the Lord Jesus for eternity.' Overcome in a measure, he lay back, feeling, he

said, extreme weakness, and truly his poor pallid face giving expression to his intense suffering. He once said, ‘Oh! I have no rest;’ but immediately checking himself, added, with beaming face, ‘*but surely I have rest.*’ He repeated over and over again the words ‘*with Him.*’ They were the last words I heard him utter, when taking a final leave of him, for that same night he departed to be with Christ, which is far better.”

Such, dear reader, is the beautiful simplicity of the grace of God; it comes down to meet us in all our deep need, applying itself to every aspect of our condition, leaving nothing for us to do, Christ having done everything; for well He knew that if there was even the smallest thing left for us to do, it must remain undone for ever, and we must be lost. It is only to touch. Such was the discovery this poor burdened one made, and such is the discovery which you, poor burdened one (if my reader be such), may make at this moment; the touch of faith brings virtue from Christ; sin is put away, the conscience purged, and the heart made perfectly free to be at home in the very light of God’s presence, and to rejoice in hope of the glory. All this is “to him that worketh *not*, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom. iv. 5).

I shall long remember the beaming face which looked upon me, when late that night I returned, and having driven round to inquire how my young friend was, I was ushered into his room. He was

wearied waiting for me, for he was longing to tell me of the peace and joy which filled his heart, and how simple it all was. He had sent three messages for me that day, none of which, of course, I received; but now, as I had at last come, he was happy. I could but sit down beside him with a heart filled with praise and thanksgiving to the Lord, and listen to what in broken sentences he was able to tell me of the love and grace which sought and found such a sinner as he was.

The last time I saw him, he took leave of me saying, "We shall not again meet here, but we shall there," pointing upwards. The next morning when I called, a crape hung upon the door; he had gone to be with the Lord.

"O anxious one! He's still the same,
 Though now upon the throne,
 Who glorified the Father's name,
 And did for guilt atone.
 The touch of faith draws virtue still
 From Him the "Light" and "Love,"
 Who seeks thy empty heart to fill
 With blessings from above.

Thou trembling one, put forth the hand,
 And touch that Source divine;
 No longer halting, doubting stand,
 But make salvation thine.
 Put forth faith's empty hand and take
 All that God's love can give;
 The Eternal Son thy refuge make,
 And to Him henceforth live."

"FULL ASSURANCE."



WHAT is the very thing I would so much like to have," may be the exclamation of the reader.

You may have heard others, perhaps some of your friends, saying that they have it, and this new joy has stirred your own heart with an irresistible longing to enjoy a similar blessing. They, young or old, as the case may be, have undergone a remarkable change. They came under conviction of sin when, to all outward appearance, they had not been particularly guilty of any,—at least nothing that might perhaps be called flagrant,—yet they were crushed and broken down by a sense of guilt, as they would never have been by the loss of a fortune, it was so heavy. This part of their history struck you.

Then, as passing from under some heavy load, or from darkness to light, suddenly they declared that they had found relief from their load, and light for their darkness, pardon for their guilt, and the divinely given assurance of their salvation.

If their first stage perplexed you, still more so does the second. For, after all, when we remember that sin attaches to all, to the most moral as to the most immoral, that each is guilty *before God* in one way or another, it is conceivable that this sense of sin should be felt and owned by all. It is a

common matter to say, "*Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners!*" a common custom to admit that we sin daily, in thought, word, and deed. That is conceivable and proper; nay, it is incumbent. It is the bounden duty of each one to acknowledge his guilt at the awful peril of perdition, for "*Except ye repent,*" says the Lord, "*ye shall all likewise perish.*" Take note and warning, reader! But the other stage—that of "*full assurance*"—how can that be reached?

Well, thank God, it is *not an attainment*; that is, it is not the result of *effort*. It does not come as the mysterious consequence of fastings, prayers, vigils, confessions, absolutions, or the like. It is not purchasable at the mart of works, charities, sacraments, or religious observances. It cannot be found in kirk or cloister, meeting or monastery, nor acquired by bestowal from the consecrated hands of bishop, priest, or presbyter. *It is God's free gift!*

"*Full assurance,*" in all the deep and blessed wealth of that charming grace, comes from God Himself, apart from any desert on the side of the recipient whatsoever.

But let us clear the ground as we go on.

The two words "*full assurance*" are found together thrice in the New Testament. We have first, the "*full assurance of understanding*" (Col. ii. 2); then the "*full assurance of hope*" (Heb. vi. 11); and lastly, the "*full assurance of faith*" (Heb. x. 22).

Doubtless the "full assurance" you seek is the last—that of *faith*.

Well, notice it is *faith*, not *feeling*. How many say, "Could I only *feel* saved, then I should be fully assured." But such a thought is utterly wrong, and is really, though unintentionally, infidel.

For instance, if I said that I could not believe your words until I felt what you said to be true, I might as well call you a liar at once. Nay, it behoves me to accredit you with the truth, whatever my feelings may be. And how much more is God to be accredited!

Well, God speaks, the believer takes Him at His word, and has the "full assurance of faith." Thus—"He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24).

Read that most precious verse again and again, dear reader, not only because it has been blessed to immense numbers of doubting souls, but because it contains the words of the Son of God. You may reckon on its every syllable, and rejoice in the "full assurance" it conveys.

Take it into your chamber, and, in the holy seclusion of God's presence, ponder each part and weigh each statement, until, in simple but adoring faith, you apprehend that, having heard Christ's word, and believed on God who sent Him, everlasting life is yours now, condemnation is escaped,

and that you have passed from death unto life—all, observe, on His authority.

He speaks, you believe, and the Word informs you what is yours. It is the gracious work of the Spirit of God, who loves to bear witness to the truth of Scripture.

But this is "*full assurance of faith*," and is the very thing that caused such joy to your friends. Now, also, shall it not be to yourself?

Now what about the two other assurances?

I remember being furnished with a good illustration of all three by a dear old Christian out in Nova Scotia.

"Suppose," said he, "a man living in the backwoods was hastily called to New York. He is wholly ignorant of railways, engines, and cars, but a neighbour tells him to go to the station, purchase a ticket, enter a car, and in due time he will reach his destination. He takes his friend at his word. This is the '*full assurance of faith*.' Having taken his seat in the car, he is told by some intelligent fellow-passenger all about the mechanism of the engine and road, &c.; then he begins to appreciate the skill and comfort of the wonderful means of transit. This is the '*full assurance of understanding*.' And then, as he gradually nears the end, he anticipates his soon arrival, and enjoys the '*full assurance of hope*.' Still it is the same assurance, viewed from different points—that of faith, understanding, and hope."

So, too, possessing faith's assurance, the soul

sets to work diligently to learn the way, and appreciate the treasures of the word and grace of God, whilst hope cheers and sustains amid all the needed trials, until the happy home is gained—the Father's house on high.

The moment you believe, you are entitled to "*full assurance.*" You start with that, and learn its grand foundation as you advance on faith's journey.

J. W. S.

THE SHUT DOOR.

"Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the straight gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and has shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity."—LUKE xiii. 23-27.



WAS lately at a distance from home, having walked to my destination. My business done, I went to the railway station near by to take the train back as far as it would serve to shorten the way. As I was getting my ticket I heard the train come in below, and knew it was too late to reach the platform before the door was closed; so went quietly down stairs and stood before the closed door. Standing there I could

see the people who were waiting to come through, some of whom looked pityingly at me, seeing my case. I was sorry I had taken the ticket, as I thought there would be a long time to wait for another train. However there was some delay, and an official coming near, I pleaded, "Can't you let me in?" Without a word he opened the door, and as quickly as I could I got into the train,—not that there was any need to hurry, for it did not start at once, only I was so glad to be *in it* after my experience of standing before that closed door, and expecting to be kept out.

This brought to my mind the facts made known in Luke xiii., for there are times in the history of souls when those future scenes seem present realities. It shows the power of God's Word, who, by His Spirit, makes a certain future the means of awakening the soul to flee to the refuge He has provided in Jesus. Have you, dear reader, fled to Him? If not, may God bring this future scene before *your* eyes now, and draw the contrast between my situation and yours, if you should begin to stand before that shut door.

A time is coming, we know not how soon, when the Master of the house will rise up and shut the door. Then, people who would not be saved now, will begin to stand without—they are in earnest about salvation then—and to knock at the door, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us." Will He? Nay, He answers, "I tell you, I know you not whence ye are: depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity."

SIMON PETER, FISHERMAN, AND APOSTLE.

CHAPTER III.

THE DUAL CONFESSION.

(John vi. 23-71; Matt. xvi. 13-28, xvi.)



N these scriptures we have recorded Peter's dual confession of the Lord Jesus. It is a thing of the greatest importance to the soul to confess Christ boldly, for the Holy Ghost has said in our days, "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." Now when Peter made his confession in John vi., which I believe was previous to the confession in Matthew xvi., the Lord Jesus Christ had not died, nor did Peter think that He was going to die. What is so beautiful to see, is that his heart was deeply attached to Christ. His was no mere head knowledge of who Jesus was; that is made quite clear by the glowing, burning confessions he makes.

We saw in our last view of this affectionate man that when Peter walked on the water to get to Jesus, he did not quite get to Him, but that Jesus got to him, and that was what he wanted.

His one desire was to get near Jesus. When the Lord was taken into the ship, immediately they were at the shore whither they would go, and the disciples then discovered that He was the Son of God. This was the day previous to that which we get recorded in the end of the sixth of John. In that chapter we find the Lord giving forth startling, yea marvellous ministry, as He says, "I am the living bread," and "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."

Get hold of this clearly in your soul, my reader, that unless you have eaten the flesh of the Son of Man, and have drunk His blood, *you* have no life in *you*; and do not think that this means the communion—the Lord's Supper. Nay, nay, this is the substance; the Lord's Supper is the shadow. This is the reality, the communion is the figure. A man might eat the Lord's Supper a thousand times, and yet spend eternity in hell, but no man could eat the flesh of the Son of Man and not have eternal life. When the Lord said this, He knew that He was going to die, and to rise again, and go, as man, to the right hand of God,—that He was going to do a work whereby man might be brought to God, a work which enables the believer in Him in righteousness to go to the spot where He now is; and therefore here the Lord presses the necessity of knowing Himself, of eating Himself, saying, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (ver. 54).

Again, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him" (ver. 56). In plain words He says to the believer, We are one. In view of the gravity of this matter, let me ask you, my reader, Have you ever yet eaten the flesh, and drunk the blood of the Son of Man? That is a question that you must answer to God, and to Him alone.

It is a very happy thing to eat the Lord's Supper with the saints of God, but that is only the symbol; whereas what the Lord means here is, we must accept Him in His death, and feed on Him in death. Thereby only can we get life to our souls.

The result of this ministry of the Lord's was that the Jews murmur; and He then says, "Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?" (ver. 61, 62.) He has ascended, and consequently we are immensely better off than if He were on earth. If He were on earth now—say in Jerusalem—He would not be also in Edinburgh; but being in glory, the Holy Ghost has come down to dwell among us, and to abide in each believer, and He gives us the sense of the Lord's presence no matter where we are located.

The result then of the Lord's ministry, was that "from that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (ver. 66). They had been looking for, and hoping that He was going to set up a kingdom, in Messianic power, and glory; and when He talked to them of His death, that did

not suit them at all, and many left Him. Indeed, I suppose the defection was very great, for He turned round, and looking at the twelve, said unto them, "Will ye also go away?" (ver. 67.) To this query warm-hearted Peter fervently answers, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Splendid testimony, grand confession, made too at the moment of general defection! Peter, as it were, led the forlorn hope, as he said, Go from you, Lord? Never! "We believe and are sure that thou art the Holy One of God" (New Translation). I wonder if you have ever confessed the Lord after this fashion, my reader. There was no "I hope," nor "I think," but "WE BELIEVE and ARE SURE." None of that half-heartedness of the nineteenth century, in which people are uncertain about everything, except that they cannot be certain about anything that relates to the Person of Christ, and to the things of eternity, was seen in Peter. Fatal folly is all such blundering in matters of momentous and eternal import.

Do you believe after Peter's fashion, my friend, I ask, or are you a nineteenth century doubter?

There was one standing by that day who was detected by Peter's exclamation, for the Lord turns round as He heard the beautiful, burning confession of Peter's soul, and says, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" I believe in that moment when so many were slinking off, the thought in Judas's heart was, "It is time for me to

go too ;" but then he thought he would follow the Lord a little longer, and make gain ere leaving Him. He would put the Lord in such a position that, though of course He would easily extricate Himself from it, yet he—Judas—would gain money by his act. Judas loved money, not Christ. His God was gold ; his master, Satan ; his end, an eternal hell.

Is there no one who reads these lines who loves money more than Jesus ? Brother of Judas, thou art detected here. Beware, beware, God is giving thee thy warning. Wilt thou spend thine eternity with Judas, or with Jesus ? Which ?

Turn now, my reader, to Matthew xvi. After this noble confession of Peter's which we have been considering, the Lord had gone up to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and there had blessed the daughter of the Syrophœnician woman. Then he had gone to Galilee and Decapolis, and northward to Cæsarea Philippi. This place must not be confounded with the Cæsarea on the borders of the Mediterranean, the Roman seaport capital of Palestine, where Peter preached so successfully afterwards (see Acts x.). Cæsarea Philippi—now known as Baneas—was a town outside the limits of the land of Israel, situated at the foot of Mount Hermon, close to the most easterly source of the river Jordan.

The Lord had gone out, on to Gentile ground, when He elicited the marvellous confession which this chapter discloses. When He had fully reached

this outside place, He asks His disciples, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" Jesus likes to know what men think of Him; whether the hearts of men had risen to the moment, and the occasion; if they had found out who He was—and so He puts the question. And they answer, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." This was only supremely careless indifference. Men might have known, and should. Eighteen months before, John the Baptist had declared who He was, and crowds had flocked to Him; but now, after these many months,—in which He had visited "every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God" (Luke viii. 1), months of unwearied testimony by lip, life, and miracle, that had proclaimed God, blessed man, and defeated Satan,—the tide had turned, and instead of receiving Him as the Messiah, they did not even know, or care to know, who He was! Alas, for poor, blind man!

Almost invariably in the Gospel narratives the Lord speaks of Himself by the title of the Son of Man. He calls Himself a King but once (Matt. xxv. 34). He was a King, but as yet uncrowned, and throneless. Unrecognised by the nation in His proper glory, He now asks His disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?"

Your eternal destiny, my reader, depends upon the answer you can give to this question, "Whom say ye that I am?" Be you what you may, if you

do not know and confess Him as the Son of the living God, you are still in your sins. You may be the most religious person in the world, and the most intelligent to boot, but what is all your knowledge worth if you do not know Christ? The person who is not right about Christ, is right about nothing. Ah! my friend, if you pass into eternity ignorant of Christ, yours will be an awful eternity. The Lord's query to *you* therefore, just now, is this, "Whom do *ye* say that I am?"

Peter comes magnificently to the front again, at this juncture of national indifference to the Messiah. In the buoyancy and fulness of his heart, as well as in real faith, and true attachment to the person of His Lord, he answers, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Heaven-born deliverance! and how grateful to the ear and heart of the blessed Lord it must have been. It was a beautiful confession, and carried with it lovely consequences. Equally so does confession of His name now, for "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," is the word of assurance to us in this day. Blessing rich and full always follows simple and true confession of Christ.

Observe what the Lord says to Peter immediately on his confession, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." The soul that knows Jesus as the Son of the living

God, He, Himself, declares to be blessed of the Father. No doubt Peter had learned much of the Lord, as he had followed that lovely, and blessed life of devotedness, and self-sacrifice, but the Father had taken hold of that uncultured, and unlettered Galilean fisherman, and taught him the truth that the blessed Man he was following was the Son of the living God. The Father Himself alone can teach you this blessed truth, my friend. No university curriculum, no human teaching, can impart to your soul this knowledge of the Son; but the Father loves to teach the willing, and Christ-seeking soul, the divine and moral glories of that rejected One, who is at once His eternal Son, the lowly Son of Man, and, blessed be His peerless name, the Saviour of the lost.

Do you, my reader, confess that He, the spotless Son of Man, was God's Son, ever God's Son, though born here in time? Good indeed for you is it if you thus confess Him, for it is written, "Whoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (1 John iv. 15). Note, it is the confession of His person, not of His work. There are many who know something of the work of Christ, and tell you they are clinging to the cross, but yet they are often in doubts and fears? Why? I believe the reason is that they have not a deep or adequate conception of the fullness of His person. They have not fully in their souls the sense of the divine glory of His person, as being the Son of the living God, as well as being

a true, real, veritable Man, holy and sinless, and hence able to be a sacrifice for sin. To all such I commend the poet's lines:—

“How wondrous the glories that meet
 In Jesus, and from His face shine ;
 His love is eternal and sweet,
 'Tis human, 'tis also divine !
 His glory—not only God's Son—
 In manhood He had His full part,
 And the union of both joined in one
 Forms the fountain of love in His heart.”

It is the inscrutability of the glory of His person that is the guarantee to faith of the divinity of Jesus, divinity which His self-renunciation—in emptying Himself and assuming humanity—might have hidden from the eyes of unbelief. But His divinity, and the fact that He is the Son of the *living* God, is proved by His resurrection from among the dead. The life of God cannot be destroyed, and the Son of the *living* God cannot be overcome of death ; nay, by going into it He overcomes and destroys it. Hence it is as risen from the dead that He begins the work of which He next speaks—the building of His Church.

After saying that the Father had revealed this truth to Peter, the Lord goes on, “And I also say”—not “And I say also,” invert those two words, the Father had spoken, and now He Himself has somewhat of grave moment to say to Peter—“I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” What did the Lord mean

by this? He confirms Peter in his new name, a stone. But where was this stone to be built? On the rock. "Upon this rock will I build my church." Rome has tried to make out that Peter was the rock. A poor rock would Peter have been! Peter was far too much like you and me. No, no, Peter was a stone, but Christ was the rock, Christ, according to the confession of Peter here, the Son of the *living* God.

Peter is very fond of the word "living." In his epistles we get a "living hope" (1 Pet. i. 3); "a living stone" (ii. 4), and "living stones" (ii. 5). It is a grand thing, in this world of death, to be introduced into a circle of living realities.

Observe what the Lord says to Peter, "Upon this rock I *will* build my church." It had not been begun to be built then. I think I hear you say, "But I thought the Church began with Abel." Not at all; there had been, without doubt, saints of God from Abel onwards; but when does the Church, the body of Christ, begin? The Church the Lord speaks of here could not be built until the rock—He Himself—had been laid as its foundation, that is, until He Himself had gone into death, annulled it, had come up out of it, and gone into glory, and from the right hand of God had sent down the Holy Ghost to unite believers—the body here—with Himself the living Head there on high.

Remark that it was not Peter who was going to build, it was the Lord who was going to build;

and "I *will* build," not "I have been building," are His words. Christ's assembly, His Church, commenced to be formed on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost came down; and from that day until the moment when the Lord comes into the air to gather up His people (*see* 1 Thess. iv. 15-18), the Church is being formed.

The Church was the peculiar thought of God from all eternity, but the truth about it never was fully unfolded until the apostle Paul's ministry. The first intimation about it, in all Scripture, we get, however, here from the lips of the blessed Lord to His beloved servant Peter.

The Lord says further to Peter, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." How did Peter get these keys? By the sovereign grace of Christ undoubtedly, but nevertheless they are committed to a man that is evidently going on. He was a man that was earnestly going forward, and I believe that it is always the man that is earnestly going on, in settled affection to the person of Christ, who gets light, and gets further truth. Peter, of course, had a very special place given him by the sovereign favour of the Lord, and was in that sense "a chosen vessel," but the character of the man must not be lost sight of.

But do you think, my friend, that Peter had the keys of heaven? God forbid! Peter had no more to do with the keys of heaven than I have; it is "the keys of the *kingdom* of heaven." This king-

dom relates to earth, whereas the Church belongs to heaven. The kingdom of heaven is the administration of the Lord's things here on earth, while He, who is the King—as yet unrecognised, and disowned—is in heaven.

In all the great pictures that men have painted you see Peter with the keys hanging at his girdle, and the sheep gathered round about him. But men do not feed sheep with keys, nor do they build with keys. The use of a key is to open a door, and when that is done the key has no more service. The figure has been misconstrued. The Lord Himself was going to heaven, but He was about to have a work carried on here on earth, and through Peter's administration "the kingdom of heaven"—a term only found in Matthew's Gospel, and there never said to be nearer than "at hand"—was to be inaugurated. I believe Peter used one of these keys when he spoke to the Jews in the second of Acts, and he used the other key when he went down to the house of Cornelius in the tenth of Acts. The keynote in Acts ii., when he spoke to the Jews, was "REPENT!" They had to judge themselves, and own their sin in crucifying their Messiah; but when he went to the Gentiles the ward of the key, that fitted the hitherto firmly locked door, that barred them from blessing was 'BELIEVE.' "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever *believeth* in him shall receive remission of sins."

The Lord further says to Peter: "And whatso-

ever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." This is a question of administration, on earth, and in the assembly, not of how a man gets to heaven. Peter gets a peculiar place of administration down here on earth, to act in the assembly for Christ, as the whole believing company does afterwards (*see* John xx. 23). If you want to go to heaven, you must get to Peter's Saviour, and let Him save you, as He did Peter, and if you get into His assembly on earth, you must be careful to walk rightly, or, even yet, your sins may be bound again on you by that assembly putting you away from its midst (*see* 1 Cor. v. 13).

From this moment the Lord alters the character of the testimony concerning Himself, and "charged his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Messiah." From that moment He forbade them to preach Him as being the Messiah. Why? He knew the nation would not believe, and He never likes to give more light when it is rejected, because the greater the light the greater the judgment. Then we read: "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." So far from taking the kingdom, He announces plainly that He is going to die. This Peter could not understand, so took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord ; this shall

not be unto thee." He could not understand that the Lord must die. How the one who could heal the sick, cleanse the leper, open the eyes of the blind, make the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak, still the storm, and raise the dead to life again—how He could die, Peter saw not, hence he says, "This shall not be unto thee, Lord."

What a volume of instruction is in the Lord's answer as "He turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me." A moment before it had been: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona;" and now, favoured disciple as he was, the Lord treats him as Satan because He saw behind this dear disciple's words, the temptation of Satan himself. Yes, it was the enemy using Peter as a vessel. Satan can often make even a servant of God do his dire work. But the Lord saw the author of the suggestion, and He says, "Get thee behind me, Satan." If we are going to follow Christ, we must accept His pathway of shame and sorrow here. If we refuse the cross, we shall not have the crown. If we refuse to follow a rejected Lord, we shall not know much of the joy of His company. "If any one will come after me," He then adds, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." Poignant words for Peter to hear, and equally addressed to us.

Then Jesus says, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own

soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul!" Oh, my friend, what will it profit you if you lose your soul? What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Only think of the blackness of despair that must seize the soul that has lost everything. The things for which you have bartered your soul, you must leave them all, and then lose your soul too. Ah! my unsaved reader, you are paying a terrible price for those pleasures of sin which endure for a season. You are going on with the world, and the flesh, and the devil, and you are denying yourself heaven, and glory, and eternal joy, and the company of Christ. And the Christian, what is he doing? He is denying himself certainly the pleasures of sin for a season, but he is denying himself also a thorny pillow on his dying bed, he is denying himself the judgment of God, and denying himself an eternal hell. Surely, my friend, the Christian has the best of it. When are you going to be one?

After these pointed queries, the Lord reveals the future blessedness of those that are His, as He says, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then shall he reward every man according to his works," adding, "There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." And six days after, Peter, James, and John did see Him coming in His kingdom, when He took them up to the high mountain, and that blessed Son of Man was transfigured before them (Matt. xvii. 1-9).

It was a perfect miniature picture of the kingdom; Moses was there, a figure of those who have died and gone into the grave, and will be raised by the Lord; Elijah, a figure of those who will never die at all, but will be caught up alive—though changed—to meet the Lord in the air when He comes for His saints; and Peter, James, and John, figures of the living saints, on earth, in the millennial day.

Moses and Elias are talking with the Lord about His decease, to be accomplished, when Peter, "not knowing what he said" (see Luke ix. 33), but evidently enraptured with the sight of Lawgiver, Reformer, and Messiah, standing together, desires the kingdom to be established then and there, so says to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." But in this he is putting the Son of God, the Saviour, Moses, the lawgiver, and Elijah, the reformer, all on one dead level, and God could not stand that. Immediately, therefore, "a bright cloud overshadowed them," and a voice breaks forth from the cloud, and says, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

Peter most certainly does not shine here. Moses was the lawgiver, but the law could not save a man. Elijah was the reformer, but reformation cannot save a man. Only Jesus, the Son of God, can save, but, blessed be His name, He saves any and every man that comes to Him. Will you not come to Him, my friend? God emphatically

says, "Hear ye him;" there is only one voice to be listened to now, and that is the voice of my beloved Son, "hear him."

When Peter and his fellow-disciples heard these words they fell on their face, and were sore afraid, but Jesus touched them, saying, "Arise, and be not afraid." Why should they be? Looking up, "they saw no man save Jesus only." Of Him none need be afraid. Have you heard His voice yet, my friend? "The hour is coming, and now is," the Lord says, "when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." The Lord grant that you may listen to His voice now, yes, hear, believe, and live. The voice of Moses may arouse you, that of Elijah deepen your sense of sin, but the voice of Jesus will sweetly calm your troubled heart if you hear it.

W. T. P. W.

(To be continued if the Lord will.)

DANGER AHEAD!



N America there is an ingenious contrivance to act as a warning. Often in large cities the railroads run under many bridges which are not sufficiently high to admit of the breaksman standing erect on the top of the cars as the train passes under. There is a break connected with each car,

which is worked from the top. Of a dark night the breaksman would be struck by the bridge, and knocked off, and perhaps killed, if it were not for these signals.

They are constructed in this way. A wire is stretched from one side of the road to the other, and connected with a post on either side, and from this wire hangs a number of ropes, low enough to strike the breaksman in the face, or about the head somewhere.

As the train passes along, the breaksman coming in contact with these ropes knows that a bridge is near, and stoops so as to pass under the bridge in safety, knowing right well if he does not he will be struck by the bridge, knocked off the car, and perhaps run over and killed. He therefore heeds the warning, stoops, and passes safely under.

The Word of God is full of warnings of danger ahead. God has graciously hung out all along life's road signals of warning. They are danger signals, they tell of what is coming. Like the rope striking the face of the breaksman they are not very pleasant at the time, but they are mercies in disguise, because they warn people of their danger before it is too late.

Did you not hear of that terrible collision the other day? So many were killed on the spot. That warned you of death. Did you not hear of the execution of that murderer a little ago? That warned you of coming judgment for this world,—for *you*, if not saved. Of an autumn day have

you not witnessed the falling of a leaf? Once it was a bud, then it broke forth into a leaf, then it turned yellow, and fell. You are that leaf, as it were. You came forth into this world an infant bud, you developed into manhood or womanhood, and now, it may be, your days are in "the sere and yellow leaf"; God grant it may not be "the canker and the worm"—a guilty conscience, death and judgment.

A man in the Western States, whom the writer knew, when dying, said to his son, who was by his bedside, "Oh, George, *I am on the wrong road, and it is too late!*"

What a frightful discovery to make when it was too late! Who can tell the agony of that man's soul at that moment! Too late! Eternally too late!

Had he not been warned by God and man? Yes, many a time; but he had not heeded the warning. He had rejected the Word of the Lord, spoken evil of His people, refused every warning; and now, as he was about to enter that long dark night of eternal sorrow, his bitter cry was, "Oh, George, *I am on the wrong road, and it is too late!*"

Friend, think of God's danger signals. From your childhood have you not been warned of coming judgment, and of your need of a Saviour? Has not God in various ways spoken to your heart and awakened concern there? You remember that faithful sermon you heard preached some time

since, which you felt to be the voice of God to you? That tract too you read, and the kind word from your Christian friend who yearns over your soul? But have you heeded the warning? Have you listened to His voice? Have you with all your heart turned to Him, and sought forgiveness at His hand through the Lord Jesus?

If not, beloved reader, heed the warning NOW; do not, I beseech you, turn a deaf ear to His gracious voice. "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart" (Heb. iii. 7, 8). "Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. xxvii. 1).

This poor man in the Western States hardened his heart, and was lost. His own lips testified to his folly, and bore witness to the awful discovery that he made when it was too late! *Be not like him.* Be wise in time, and you will thank God for eternity. Come to the Saviour now—to-day—before death and eternity overtake you in your sins. Remember

"There are no pardons in the tomb,
And brief is mercy's day."

Do not put it off. Procrastination has damned many souls. Many are lost for ever who intended some day to be saved; but they delayed, and life's thread was broken, and they went down into darkness.

Then remember what the Saviour suffered on the cross. See those agonies, those unutterable woes that He endured! Hear that cry, "My God

my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Think you that all this was for nought? Or was it not to save you from the pains of eternal judgment?

Reject not, I entreat you, a salvation that has been obtained at such an infinite cost. If you do, sorrow and everlasting remorse, added to Divine judgment, will be your portion for ever. "*How shall ye escape if ye neglect so great salvation?*" (Heb. ii. 3.) Oh, friend, heed the Divine warning, for

"To-night may be thy latest breath,
Thy little moment here be done;
Eternal woe—the second death—
Awaits the grace-rejecting one;
Thine awful destiny foresee—
Time ends, and then Eternity!"

E. A.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."—EPH. iii. 17, 18, 19.



"T passeth knowledge," Saviour,
That wondrous love of Thine,
Its depth, what line can fathom?
'Tis measureless, divine.

It brought Thee down from heaven,
From glory's bright abode,

To seek and save lost sinners,
And make them nigh to God.

"It passeth telling," Jesus,
For, oh! what tongue can tell
The depths of love and mercy,
That in Thy heart e'er dwell?

"It passeth praises," Saviour,
Yet, Lord, these hearts would bring
Their meed of praise and worship;
Of Thee they e'er would sing.

Reveal Thy love, Lord Jesus,
To us e'en here below,
That we in some faint measure
Its depth and height may know.

Dwell in our hearts, blest Saviour,
And root us in Thy love,
That so our hearts may ever
Be set on things above.

Soon in yon realms of glory,
When at Thy feet we bow,
Of all Thy love's deep fulness,
The breadth and length we'll know.

M. S. S.



"CHRIST, seen in glory, is the spring of energy to Christian life, as Christ making Himself of no reputation is the spring of Christian graciousness of walk: the two parts of Christian life which we are too apt to sacrifice one to another, or, at least, to pursue one forgetful of the other."

J. N. D.

YE WILL NOT.



*Y*e will not come to me." How very touching are these words spoken by our blessed Lord! Man's will, ever at variance with God since Adam's fall, loses no opportunity of displaying itself. Long before a child can walk we see it asserting its *will*.

Weeping over the favoured city of Jerusalem, the loving Saviour's words are, "How often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens, and ye *would* not" (Matt. xxiii. 37). I *would*, ye would not. Mark the words of Thomas, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not [not "cannot"] believe."

Reader, are you one of those to whom the Saviour pathetically says, "Ye *will* not come to me that ye might have life?" (John v. 40). Oh, pause and consider ere it be too late. While you are unwilling, He is so willing—waiting with hand stretched out to receive all who will come. Grieve then His heart of love no longer, He is *not* willing that any should perish (2 Pet. iii. 9). Soon the day of grace will be over, then for those who have so persistently refused His loving call it will be for ever too late, and "what will ye do in the day of visitation?"

You may possibly have had twenty, thirty,

or forty years' grace, but I could not say you will have five minutes—five seconds more. Oh then, delay no longer, yield to Him at once. "*Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.*"

It may be this will meet the eye of one who, like the writer, was willing and long wished to be assured of salvation, who found no comfort in reformation and sacraments. To such a one I would say, open your Bible and turn to Rom. x. 9. "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." "*Shalt believe,*" "*shalt confess,*" "*shalt be saved.*" Do not wait for feelings, the very moment you believe and confess you *are* saved.

If you cast yourself unreservedly on the mercy of God, you will find nothing against you.

"All the billows rolled o'er Jesus,
There they spent their utmost power."

"He himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree." We were helpless, but God has "laid help on one that is mighty." He has fully paid our debt, and God is too just to demand payment a second time.

I beseech you, despise not His loving invitation. He says, "I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Rev. xxi. 6). And at the very close of the precious book, ere His lips are closed for centuries, it is Jesus Himself who is speaking and repeating His offer, "Whosoever *will*, let him *take* the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17). Reader, *will you take it?* M. W.

AFTER DEATH.



WHAT comes after death?"

"Resurrection!"

"Yes, but where to?"

"Hell!"

Then silence for a moment, as the terrible reply recoiled upon the speaker.

"A short conversation," the reader may say.

It was so. I was hastily passing a group of young men who loitered at the outskirts of a Scottish village one Sunday evening. They seemed full of mere animal spirits, and thinking little indeed of the subject which I took the bold liberty of introducing, in a way so informal, upon their attention.

They were doubtless taken by surprise. In a moment their wild hilarity was arrested, as their minds were thus suddenly directed to the great hereafter.

Now I regard such surprises as valuable acts of service. By them one does not "cast pearls before swine," but the rather he fulfils the exhortation to be "instant in season, out of season." For in our day of immense religious formality, people expect to be preached to at stated hours, and never else—just as we anticipate the arrival or departure of a train, as advertised in the timetables, and only then; so, to break up such lifeless formality by an unexpected declaration of the

Word of God, may prove, in His grace, a means of reaching some thoughtless soul, and of leading him to conviction of sin and conversion to God.

Saul of Tarsus was converted by such a surprise when on his murderous way to Damascus.

I have heard of a certain preacher being asked how it happened that he was, to all appearance, so much more blessed to souls than another who was more highly educated, more eloquent, and whose sermons were so full of argument and logic. He replied that Satan knew the exact point to which his neighbour's logical sermons would carry the audience, and therefore warned them against that point before it was reached; whilst he, in preaching, beat about zig-zag, and perplexed the audience, so that he caught them on the backcoming. His point was, not logical conclusions, but the salvation of souls.

"You say that I am a rambling preacher," said George Whitefield; "yes, but I am rambling after you!" God blesses "out of season" surprises. The devil loves formalism. Ah! but souls must be awakened, and, even at the charge of rudeness, it becomes the servants of Christ to seek, by all means, to reach the perishing and careless souls around.

But now, what does come after death? That young man said "Resurrection," and he was quite right. Every one shall rise again. "All that are in their graves shall hear his voice [the voice of the Son of God], and shall come forth [that is resurrection], they that have done good to the

resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation" (John v. 29). There can be no exception; all that are in their graves—from Adam downwards, for death does not end our history—all shall come forth.

He was right. I was surprised that he answered my question so quickly and correctly. He did not believe in "annihilation," or a reduction to nothing. No, he believed in a state after death—a state into which death introduces; and how did he describe that state? "Hell," was his awfully solemn reply.

The thought of heaven, or blessedness, did not enter his mind. Perhaps, poor lad, he reasoned from his present condition to its future equivalent—from what he was now to what he should be then—from sin now to "hell" then. Dark premonition indeed!

Look at these three words—"Death," "Resurrection," "Hell"!

How appalling! How awful!

Yet such words are, no doubt, mirrored on the conscience of many a hopeless man and woman, to their anguish and despair.

They have sinned; and, putting cause and effect together, they can see no way out of the fearful but accurate conclusion.

They have heard and understood the verse which says, "As it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27)—and have thereby obtained only misery; but they

have never heard, or at least understood, the verse that immediately follows, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." Had they done so, their fear would be gone! Thank God for that verse! Death is followed by judgment; quite true, but not all the truth, for Christ died, was made sin, bore the judgment, was once offered as sin-bearer.

The "as" that attached to us in verse 27 is answered by the "so" that attaches to Christ in verse 28. The balance is perfect, the substitution complete!

But for whom?

For the believer in Jesus;—"and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation"—so ends our verse! But how different the prospect!

Instead of looking for death, resurrection, and hell,—to look for Jesus and salvation; to anticipate not death, but the longed-for change that shall take place "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," and then to meet the Lord, and be for ever with Him!

To the unbeliever there is—Death, Resurrection, Hell!

For the believer who lives till Jesus comes—the "change"—"caught up"—"with the Lord!"

Let me urge you, dear reader, to believe in Jesus, for that supremely important act makes all the difference between an *eternity in heaven*, and an *eternity in hell*.

SIMON PETER, FISHERMAN, AND APOSTLE.

CHAPTER IV.

SIFTED AS WHEAT.

(LUKE xxii. 31-34, 54-62 ; JOHN xxi.)



HE contrast in Simon's history between Luke xxii. and Matthew xvii. is exceedingly striking. Our last look at our apostle was in Matthew xvii. on the mount of transfiguration, where he was in the presence of all the brightness of the glory of the Son of Man, and where his heart, always impulsive, was really desirous of doing his Master honour, for, in spite of what we read in Luke xxii., Peter loved his Master dearly.

Here we have something very different, but it is a scene that is of the deepest moment for us, perhaps of deeper moment than that which took place in Matthew xvii., for we shall never, in our earthly pathway, behold the Lord, as Peter beheld Him that day on the mount, but we shall all have the temptation, some day or other, to do as Peter did in Luke xxii., that is, to deny the Lord.

There are many things very interesting in the history of Peter between Matthew xvii. and Luke

xxii. which we may study with much profit, but we pass on now to the moment in this man's history, when, forgetful of the Lord, full of himself, and tripped up of Satan, he drops into a course which every upright mind must reprehend.

Scripture gives us these sorrowful details for our profit, and here lies the difference between Scripture and every other book. As a rule biographers tell us only the good, the sweet, the attractive side of a character. They think they should draw the veil of charity over the defects, and shortcomings of the one whose memoir they are writing, and this often has a very depressing effect on a young person, who, reading the life of a godly man, gets up from it and says, "I must give it all up, for I can never be like him." But Scripture invariably gives us the dark side, as well as the bright; and what does this bring out? Only the grace of the Lord, who can take a saint out of the slough into which he has fallen, and make him a more useful vessel than ever before; for this fall breaks the neck of Peter's self-confidence, and he learns not only what he is, and what he can do, but he also learns, as never before, what his Master is.

If there could have been an occasion when the Lord needed the loyalty of those who loved Him, this was the moment. "The Passover day had come, and the Lord knew He was going to die. Judas, six days before, had sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver, the price of the meanest slave. Judas, alas! loved money, and lost his soul for

ever, and many a man to-day does the same, puts money before Christ. Do not you, I beseech you, my dear friend, follow Judas' example, and share his fate for ever.

It is an intensely solemn fact that every man or woman, who is not in the company of Christ, is in the clutch of the god of this world, and sooner or later, must learn the power of the evil one. In this scripture the Lord would teach us that even a saint, away from Christ, is in the power of Satan. Up till this moment the Lord had flung His sheltering wing over His disciples, but now He says to them, as it were, You must shift for yourselves, I am going away; and to those who come to take Him in the garden He says, "This is your hour and the power of darkness."

Judas, doubtless, before the Passover had his feet washed, when the others had theirs (John xiii.), and at the supper he received the sop from the Lord, and then he passed out to consummate his wretched work of betrayal. Thereon the Lord turns to Peter and addresses these words to the disciple whom He knew would deny Him, but whom He loved; and further, knew that in spite of everything, that disciple loved Him devotedly.

"Simon, Simon," the Lord says, "behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted (restored), strengthen thy brethren." Simon got his warning here; if he had only taken heed to it, what a dif-

ferent sequel would have been recorded! If he had only been chaff, and not really "wheat," Satan would not have wanted to sift him: it was because he was the real wheat that Satan desired to get him in his power. Satan does not tempt an unconverted person, he tempts a child of God, but he governs and controls entirely the unconverted—drives them before him at his will. Man talks about being a free agent, but there is no such thing as being a free agent. Man does not see that he is in the power of Satan while still unconverted. Man is blind, and does not see his danger. A blind man sees nothing of his circumstances, he may be on the edge of a precipice and be quite unmoved, because he does not know his danger. Such is the condition of the unawakened, and unsaved reader.

The episode in Peter's history now before us, is that of a child of God, and of what depths he can fall into through self-confidence.

First observe that the Lord warns him. Then note two other most touching things, the Lord's prayer *for* him before he fell, and the Lord's look *at* him after. "Satan hath desired to have you," is divinely met, in grace, by "but I have prayed for thee." The Lord made use of Satan to break the self-confidence which was the cause of Peter's fall, but the Lord's controlling hand was upon the enemy, even so, and he was allowed to go so far and no further; and I believe that when the day of Pentecost came, and Peter, restored, and happy in his Master's love, was the means of three thousand

souls coming to Christ, and being saved, the devil was heartily sorry that he had not left him alone in the high priest's hall. But for that bitter experience he would never have been enough broken down, repentant, humbled, and self-emptied, for the Lord to use him in that marvellous manner.

See what follows the Lord's warning. Peter answers, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death." Think of that! No sooner has the Lord said, "Satan hath desired to have you," than Peter says, "I am ready." You get the secret of Peter's fall in these words. Had Peter been right, instead of saying, "I am ready," he would have prayed, "Lord, do Thou keep me; Lord, do Thou help me; Lord, do not let me fall under Satan's power," but he was self-confident, and self-confidence is, I believe, the cause of all our failure, whereas self-distrust is the secret of our getting on with the Lord.

If Peter had learnt not to trust himself, but to cling to his Master, and keep near his Master, what we are looking at here could never have happened.

After this solemn warning we have the lovely teaching, from the Lord's lips, which we find recorded in the 14th to the 16th of John. Then the wonderful prayer of the 17th of John fell on Peter's ears. The Lord thereafter went over the brook Cedron, with His disciples, and then, taking with Him the favoured three, Peter, James, and John, who had been with Him when He raised Jairus' daughter, and were with Him in the holy

mount, and had then seen His glory, He went apart to pray.

When in the garden, we read, He "began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy, and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. And He went forward a little, and fell on the ground and prayed." When He comes to the disciples He finds them sleeping. Think of it! The Master praying, and the servants sleeping. The Master is agonising before God, showing the perfection of human dependence, in that moment of unparalleled sorrow, while the servant is sleeping. Such is human nature. Peter slept in the presence of the glory of the Lord, on the Mount of Transfiguration, and he is sleeping now in the presence of His sorrow. Well can we understand His rebukeful query, "Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation" (Mark xiv. 37, 38).

Then He adds, "The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak." That is exquisite grace. He sees these three disciples sound asleep, at the very moment when He might have expected them to be watchful with Him in His sorrow, though they could not share it. He longed to have those He loved with Him. But His plaint on the cross was, "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness" (Ps. lxxxviii. 18). Sadly therefore does He say to Peter, "Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour?"

And then so tenderly adds, "The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak." The day of the Holy Ghost had not yet arrived when they would be strengthened to suffer for Him under every circumstance.

The Lord having gone away and prayed for the third time, Judas, the betrayer, comes again on the scene, and with him a band of officers and men with swords and staves. Peter now takes up a sword, and cuts off the ear of Malchus, the high priest's servant. Then they surround the Lord and take Him, while His last act, ere they bind His blessed hands, is to touch the wounded ear of the servant and heal it. Then they bound Him, and led Him away, and "all the disciples forsook him and fled," though all had said they would never deny Him, and Peter had vowed, but a little before, "I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death." Ah, how little Peter knew of himself! When the Lord, in perfect human dependence, was with God in prayer, His poor disciple was sleeping, when he should have been watching and praying; then afterwards he was fighting, when he should have been quiet; and now he is running away when, if ever there was a moment that he should have stuck to his Master, this was the moment, but "they all forsook him and fled." Afterward we see Peter following "afar off," and then again we see him in the high priest's hall, where there was a fire, and he warms himself by it.

Peter and John both follow Jesus, but John, known to the high priest, went in with Jesus. Then he sees Peter at the door, and speaks to the maid that kept the door, and thus gets Peter in, and I cannot but believe that when John and Peter were again inside, John made straight for his Master, to get as near Him as possible, and may the Lord keep us near Him too! To be near Him is the only place of safety for the soul that knows Him. I believe, had Peter been near Him that day, he would never have fallen.

First we read that Peter "followed afar off," and then when he got inside the high priest's hall, where the servants and officers, who had taken Jesus, had kindled "*a fire of coals,*" Peter sat down among them, as though one of themselves, and warmed himself with the servants.

What steps we see in Peter's downward course, leading to his denial of the Lord he loved! First declaring he was ready to die for Him, although the Lord had just told him that Satan was desiring to have him, and that He was praying for him; next sleeping when he should have been watching; then fighting when he should have been quiet; then following afar off when he should have been near; and now sitting down, side by side, with the enemies of Christ, and warming himself. With such a prelude one can only expect what followed.

I believe the little maid to whom Peter first denied the Lord, questioned him at the door, as he came in, and then followed him up to the fire, and

questioned him again, and that then Peter went and sat down at the fire among them all, as though he were not interested in what was going on. There he was, among the enemies of the Lord, far away from Jesus. No wonder Satan was too strong for him, and if we, who are the Lord's now, will go among worldlings and seek to warm ourselves at the world's fire, we can only expect to be tripped up by Satan too. A fearful position, indeed, was it for Peter to be sitting at the fire among those who had just taken his Master prisoner, and, having bound Him, were plotting for His death. Well did the old Scotchwoman say, "He had no business there among the lackeys." No, he had no business among the servants of those who were going to murder his Master.

No doubt much banter went on, as they asked him, again, and again, if he were not one of His disciples, and at last Peter denied with oaths and cursings that he had ever known the Lord. Poor Peter! Old habits are easily revived. Fishermen and sailors, notoriously, are great swearers, and what had probably been Simon's style of language by the Sea of Galilee, before the Lord called him, comes out again now.

When, for the third time, Peter has denied his Master, whom at bottom he really loved, the cock crows again. The cock had already crowed once, and Peter might have remembered the word that Jesus had said to him, and been warned by it. I ask you, my Christian reader, Is the cock crowing

for you to-day, that is, is the word of the Lord speaking home to you to-day about something? Oh, if so, give heed to it, get nearer to Jesus; may God draw you nearer to His blessed Son, that you may not go on, as Peter did, to still greater lengths. Peter heeded not the first crowing of the cock, but went on to deny Him again, with oaths and cursings; and then I think I see that man, as the cock crowed a second time, and he pulled himself up to remember that he had done the very thing his Master had said he would do.

Peter loved his Master in spite of everything, and now, as the cock crew, and he called to mind what Jesus had said, he turned toward Him, and Jesus turned and looked at Peter. What did that look say? Was it a look of anger, or withering scorn? Did it say, as it were, Contemptible miscreant, can you deny Me at such a moment? No, no, I believe it was a look of unutterable, albeit wounded, love. That look said, Peter, do you not know Me? I know you, Peter, and I love you, notwithstanding your denial of Me. It was a look, I believe, of tender changeless love; and more, I believe Peter lived on that look for the next three days, till he met his Master again in resurrection, and communion was restored.

Peter went out then, and "wept bitterly." Repentance did its proper work in his soul, as he saw his folly and sin in the light of his Lord's love. Here is the difference between repentance and remorse. Repentance is the judgment of my sin that

I have in the light of love, and grace known. Remorse is produced by viewing the sin in the light only of its probable results. Repentance begets hope, remorse leads only to despair. Repentance leads the soul back to God, remorse drives it to deeper sin, and further into Satan's hands. This is all illustrated in the consequent pathway of Peter and Judas. Judas, who did not know what grace was, went out and, in remorse over his consummate wickedness, hanged himself; Peter, who did know what grace was, and who knew better than ever then how deeply the Lord loved him, went out and wept bitterly. The last thing Peter had done was to deny his Master, and the next thing his Master did was to die for Peter; and if He had not died for Peter, he never could have been restored nor saved.

Are you saying, my reader, But I do not know if He died for me? Listen, He died for sinners! Are you a sinner? Then you may look back and see how, when betrayed by a false friend, and denied by a true one, and forsaken by all,—yea, at last, forsaken by God also,—He died for sinners; and if you know that you are a sinner, and you want Him, you may know also that He died for you.

Peter must have been very wretched as he wept that day, and learned later on that those that stood by smote Jesus, and derided Him, and sent Him bound from one high priest to another, and then on to Pilate. Before Him they clamour for His blood, and Pilate, reluctantly enough, but afraid of Cæsar, finally sends Him forth to die.

The Lord of glory is crucified between two thieves, and dies, praying for His murderers, atoning for their sins; and then His body is taken down by hands that love Him, and they bury Him in a new tomb. The whole Sabbath day He lies in the grave; but the resurrection morning comes, and Peter and John, told by Mary Magdalene that the Lord had been taken out of the sepulchre, run both together to the sepulchre, and Peter is outrun by John. I know some tell us that Peter was an older man than John, but I do not believe that was the reason that John came first to the sepulchre. I believe the remembrance of his denial of his Lord was what made Peter's footsteps slack now, for a bad conscience, and an unhappy heart ever tell on the Christian's pace.

Reaching the sepulchre the two disciples find it empty, for an angel had come down and rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre. To let the Lord out? Far be the thought! Not so, but to let you and me look in, and see an empty tomb, and know that we have a risen, a victorious, a triumphant Saviour, who has taken the sting from death, and robbed the grave of its victory.

John did not go into the sepulchre, he only looked in; but Peter went right into the sepulchre—as a Jew defiling himself—in his desire to know the full truth. He found everything in perfect order. There had been no haste. The napkin that had been about the Lord's head was wrapped together in a place by itself. Furthermore, "he beheld the

linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass" (Luke xxiv. 12).

If still any doubts lingered in his mind as to the fact of the Lord being risen, they were shortly after fully dissipated by the touching message which "a young man" gave the Galilean women to carry to him. The Lord Himself, one feels assured, knowing His servant's sorrow, inspired the heavenly communication: "Go your way, tell his disciples, *and Peter*, that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you" (Mark xvi. 7).

In Luke xxiv. we read that two were going to Emmaus that same day, and "Jesus himself drew near and went with them," as they talked about Him. Arrived at home, for I take it they were man and wife, they constrained Him to come into their house, and He then made Himself known to them "in the breaking of bread." Although shortly before it was "toward even, and the day far spent," so that they judged it too late for their wondrous companion and teacher to go farther that night, it was not now too late for them to return at once all the way they had come, right back to Jerusalem—some eight miles—to tell the disciples the wonderful news they had to impart. Like bees that have done a good day's gathering, they return to the hive to share the spoil. They "found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them," and had their joy confirmed, as they were met by

the news, "The Lord is arisen indeed, and *hath appeared to Simon.*" What passed that day between Simon and the Lord I know not. God has flung a veil over this interview in resurrection, between an erring servant, and a Master incomparable in grace. This I know, that confidence between Peter and the Lord was perfectly restored as the result of this meeting.

Do you ask me, How do you know? Because, in John xxi., to which we will now turn, when the seven disciples had gone fishing, instead of simply waiting for Jesus, and, after a night of fruitless toil, saw Him in the morning standing on the shore, as soon as Peter knew it was the Lord he was in a very great hurry to get to Him. He could not even wait till the boat got to the shore, but cast himself into the sea, the quicker to get to Him; and he would not have been in such a hurry to get near the Lord again, if he had not been fully restored to Him in his conscience, with the full sense of perfect forgiveness. Luke xxiv. 34 records what I should call his *private* restoration. Afterwards comes his *public* restoration, but I would not give much for the public restoration of any one to privilege, either in service, or at the Lord's table, if there had not been full private restoration to the Lord Himself first. Communion and intimacy with the Lord are of the greatest importance for the saint. Nothing can make up for their lack.

The advocacy of Christ had been all-prevailing in Peter's case. "I have prayed for thee" found

its answer in deep contrition after his failure, and then, at the first opportunity afforded, confession was followed by full forgiveness and restoration. We should ever remember that contrition and confession, real and genuine, must be the prelude to forgiveness and restoration. But "I have prayed for thee" was the procuring cause of Peter's restoration, even as the Lord's "look" was the means of producing the right moral state that led up to it.

Now in John xxi. comes the *public* restoration. Peter is down in the old scenes of youthful fisher-life again, and anew trying his hand at the now long since abandoned business, but he has caught nothing, and the Lord comes and says, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes." As soon as Peter finds out it is the Lord, he makes for the shore where Jesus is, and what does he find? "A *fire of coal*, and fish laid thereon, and bread." How Peter must have thought of that moment when he stood by "*a fire of coals*" and denied his Master! And now, as he sees not only the fire of coals, but the fish and bread, would he not be feeling—"See how the Lord loves and cares for me."

"Come, and dine," says the Lord, but not a word about his failure is at that moment addressed to Peter. I daresay his brethren may have looked askance at him. There is a proverb among men—"Never trust a horse that has once fallen;" but it is just the reverse in Divine things, and it is just

when a man has been thoroughly broken down that the Lord can trust him. This we shall now see beautifully illustrated in Peter's history.

When they had dined, the Lord says to Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me *more than these?*" referring, I suppose, to the other disciples, for Peter had said, "Though *all* should deny thee, yet will not I." The word the Lord uses for "love" implies love in a general sense. Peter replies, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Here Peter's word for love implies special attachment to a person. The Lord thereupon gives him a charge, saying, "Feed my lambs," but follows it by a second query not so comprehensive as the first. This time it is merely "Lovest thou me?" and no comparison with others is suggested. Again Peter answers, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee," still sticking to his word implying special affection. The Lord thereon says unto him, "Shepherd my sheep." Then the Lord again changes the form of His question, and saying the third time, "Lovest thou me?" uses Peter's own word for "love,"—"Hast thou indeed this special affection for Me?" is its meaning.

Three times Peter had publicly denied Him; three times the Lord asks him if he loves Him. And now Peter is broken down entirely, and replies, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." He, as it were, says, "Lord, Thou canst look into my very heart; Thou knowest whether I love Thee or not; though all

else might doubt my love, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I do love Thee." It was enough, the springs of self-confidence and self-esteem, so ruinous to us all, had been touched; and now the Lord fully restores him, and, as publicly as He had been denied by him, puts him in a place of confidence and approval, as He sweetly says, "Feed my sheep." He says to him, as it were, "I can trust you now, Peter; I am going away, but I put into your care those I love best, my sheep and my lambs, to shepherd them and to feed them."

How well Peter fulfilled that trust his after-life proved. No greater proof of confidence could a friend show me, than to commit to my care, in his absence at the antipodes, those his heart loved best.

This then was Peter's public restoration; and not merely was it his restoration, but the Lord giving him a special charge, thus showing His full confidence in this now humbled, self-emptied, and restored man. What could be a fuller proof of the confidence the Lord had in him? Let us not forget that He is ever the same, so we may well sing:—

"Astonished at Thy feet we fall,
 Thy love exceeds our highest thought,
 Henceforth be thou our all in all,
 Thou who our souls with blood hast bought;
 May we henceforth more faithful prove,
 And ne'er forget Thy ceaseless love."

(To be continued if the Lord will.)

A GREAT MATHEMATICAL QUESTION.



YOUNG man, well known for his mathematical knowledge, resided in a village where a dear old minister of the Gospel was working. Whilst the minister was going his round visiting, he met the young scholar, and after a brief conversation addressed him as follows:—"I have heard that you are celebrated for your great mathematical skill: I have a problem which I should like you to solve."

"What is it?" very excitedly inquired the young man.

The minister replied, with a solemn tone of voice, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

The young man returned home, and endeavoured to shake off the deep impression fastened on him by the problem, but all in vain. Again and again in his business, in his studies, and in his pleasures of sin, would that question forcibly return to him, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Blessed be God, it finally resulted in the conversion of the young man, who in after-life became an able preacher of the Gospel he once neglected and rejected.

Reader, have you ever faced this query of the Lord Jesus? If not, do so now. Look to the cross of Christ and live. Cast yourself upon

Christ, for the salvation of the soul is by resting alone upon Him, and depending wholly upon Him. Sinner, you are nearing eternity, and neither your sins nor your good works can save you. The Saviour cries, "Look unto me, and be ye saved." It is not doing, but leaving off doing; nor is it working, but trusting in the work which Jesus has done, that saves the soul. Trust, and in that self-same moment you will be saved. Swifter than the lightning flash the deed of grace is done.

E. M.

THE TWO GREAT DEVISERS.



Twould be interesting, though perhaps bordering on the curious, to inquire into the various ways Satan seeks to hinder the salvation of souls. That he does hinder is awfully certain; for we read, for instance, that "those by the wayside are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved" (Luke viii. 12).

This is conclusive! Where the Gospel has been heard, but not received effectually, Satan, by some means, obliterates the word and prevents the salvation of that soul. "Lest they should believe and be saved," are the words. He hinders belief. He steps in, as it were, between the ear and the

conscience, between the external reception and the deep inward conviction, between that which appeals to the outward senses, and that which divinely affects the soul. He knows full well that belief and salvation are inseparably connected, and that to obviate the second he must prevent the first. Hence he devises means whereby the soul shall not believe the word it has heard.

Now, it would be interesting to learn what those means are, but they are varied and countless. He has acquired vast experience of the weakness of the poor human heart, and, long ere this, has learned how to apply the appropriate snare. Each heart has its own bent, and the temptation that would succeed in one case, might fail in another. But the enemy has many resources, and can draw from a plentiful treasury. He has that wonderful storehouse called the "world," with its innumerable attractions of wealth, and fame, and friendship. He has that other source so fruitful and fatal called the "flesh," with its many allurements of pleasure, both of mind and body; and, with rare skill, he can insert a little wedge of either between the hearing of the word and the believing it—a wedge just sufficient to hinder the salvation, and secure the damnation of the soul. No doubt, dear reader, you are aware of the kind of wedge that your enemy has succeeded in placing between your soul and its salvation! Small or great in itself, it is the devil's effectual bar to your blessing, the subtle means he has devised for your ruin.

It may be that he throws difficulties in the way of your hearing the word preached; it may be he persuades you that you are "good enough"; it may be he assures you that you have "plenty of time"; it may be he points out the many claims that your business, or your family have upon your attention, or perhaps, having heard the word, he has led you to discredit and reject it, or to set it aside for some other matter.

Your own memory must complete the case. Suffice it to say that he "works in the children of disobedience," and "keeps his goods in peace." It would be well, indeed, if you awoke to his plans, and saw how really you may have been his dupe. There is, alas, such a close connection, such a mighty link, between the natural heart and Satan, that, just as the key to the lock, so his evil suggestions find a welcome and ready response. The heart by nature loves evil and hates God. It finds pleasure in sin, and furnishes therefore a fertile soil for every seed that the enemy may sow; and of this fatal capacity he takes quick and full advantage. Yet, for the sins of which that heart is thus guilty, he bears none of the judgment. Nay, "every one of us shall give an account of himself to God," and, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." It will be impossible when before "the great white throne" to shift on to Satan the sins charged against yourself. You must bear your own judgment on that day. Why did you listen, why yield to him? Why did you

not hear when you could, why not believe? Why live on in sin and pleasure? Why follow the course of the world, why indulge in fleshly tastes and passions? Yes, why did you?

Stay, dear reader, why do you? You are not yet in judgment, you are now in responsibility. Your day is not yet over; open your eyes and look; give your heart to wisdom in this your day of privilege. "We are not ignorant of his devices," said the apostle Paul to the Corinthians, whose eyes had, through grace, been opened, and who had escaped from his snares by hearing and believing the Gospel. Yet the devices of Satan are awful facts, so subtle, so hidden, so injurious, so profoundly malevolent, so fearfully in keeping with the character of God's enemy and man's destroyer. Oh! dear reader, never slight, nor ignore, nor despise these dark and dangerous devices of Satan.

But there is another Deviser, and happy it is to turn to Him. "Yet doth he devise means," we read, "why his banished should not be expelled from him" (1 Sam. xiv. 14). Now, this is a lovely statement about God.

First, there are "His banished"; second, they should be expelled from Him; but third, He doth devise means why they should not. This last is His gracious and blessed device and work.

First, who are His banished? They are men like you and me; men who, sprung from Adam, had inherited an evil, God-hating nature, and had

freely followed their own ways and the suggestions of Satan.

Banished from the presence of God we had found our pleasure in a world that knew Him not, and in the flesh that is at enmity to Him.

In that place of absolute banishment return was, alas, as unsought for as it was impossible. Sin had separated us infinitely from God. The impossibility, from our side, of bridging the chasm was apparent, for the awful reason that the wish to do so did not exist. Sin was at once the cause of banishment, and the shackles of voluntary distance.

Yet, spite of all, He doth devise means. Wonderful fact! He is "just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." The death of Jesus, furnishing the perfect ground of satisfaction, and meeting fully the entire question of sin, has enabled Him to justify all who through grace believe. Hence, His banished need not be expelled from Him. Nay, instead of righteous expulsion in sin, there is an equally righteous forgiveness in grace. The doom justly deserved is as justly escaped by faith, and the banished is welcomed home.

Satan is silenced, the believer is saved, and God is glorified. Then, in a secondary sense, how patiently does God employ those means for reaching His banished! It is He who, in deepest grace, opens the closed ear, and wins the heart; for the conflict is not only between God and Satan, but there is all the sinful opposition of the heart as well.

“How came you to be saved?” was once asked of an aged Christian.” “God did His part, and I did mine,” he replied. “Indeed, how much did you do?” was put to him. “Ah!” said he, “God saved me when I was doing all I could to prevent Him.”

A true statement, for the will is in direct opposition until, by the Spirit of grace, the need is felt, and then like the prodigal, the Father's, face is sought, His kiss felt, His forgiveness known, and the treasures of His home enjoyed!

How interesting will it be, in the happy by-and-bye, to trace how each banished one has been thus led home, and to discover all the means so kindly devised for his blessing! What endless praise will ascend to God the Father, and God the Son, through the ages to come, for the devising of such means whereby such banished ones should be favoured with such blessing!

J. W. S.

THE MESSAGE OF A DYING MAN.



HE words of dying men are to be had in remembrance, whether they die in their sins or fall asleep in Jesus. As a rule, they speak the truth, and what they utter is more or less descriptive of their own condition, and what is immediately before their souls. Earth, and man, and his doings and judgment of things are receding, giving place

to God and eternity, so what they say is not said in the light of man's judgment of things, or in the fear of man, but in the light of God's judgment, and with eternity fully in view.

For instance, a man was dying in the Eastern States. He was an infidel; his apprentice was a consistent young Christian, who sought to live Christ before him. Just before he died he said, "*Awful! awful! awful!*"

With this poor man earth and man had gone from view, and he spoke in the full light of eternity, and of the consequences of his life of unbelief. A life without God must result in an eternity without God—of blackness and darkness, and that must be awful! awful! awful!

While in Canada a little ago, the writer was staying at the town of D——, and while there two Christians called on him, one an old man, the other a young man. The elder was particularly happy in the Lord, and was full of what he had found in Him for as many years; his only anxiety was about others, especially his own children.

After a few hours they left to go on farther, and when they reached their destination they stopped at the house of one who had known the Lord a good many years, together with his beloved wife.

They had only been there about a couple of days when the elder was taken with "La Grippe," which resulted in pneumonia, and ultimately carried him off. He felt conscious that he was going home. He had long known the peace-speaking power of

the precious blood of Christ, so he had no fear. Death to him was but the door of exit from his poor tabernacle of clay, and this sinful world, into the presence of his Lord and Saviour. Instead of being awful! awful! awful! it was blessed! blessed! blessed! Instead of darkness and despair, it was joy unspeakable and full of glory. Instead of the frowns of the Almighty, it was the smiles of a loving Father. Instead of the sword of divine judgment, it was the music and joy of heaven. Instead of demons and the damned, it was unfallen angels and the countless myriads of redeemed. He could step out of time into eternity, with a light and happy step, known only to God's people—those who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Oh, the happiness, the bliss, the unutterable joy, of a soul finding itself in the presence of God and the Lamb! to be at home there, welcome there, happy there, and fit to be there through the Saviour's blood.

This dear old Christian was about to taste of that joy, but before he departed his heart went out to his beloved children, some of which were unsaved. He yearned for their salvation, and from the door step of paradise he would send them a parting message. Oh, what weight it should have with them! It is to be fondly hoped they will heed it, and meet him there.

Calling Mr N—— to him, he said, "I want you, after I am gone, to send a message to each of my children. I want you to send them these

words, '*Eternity! eternity! eternity! where will you spend eternity?*'"

Shortly after he was in the presence of his Lord and Saviour. Earth's toil was over, his pilgrimage run, and his portion the undisturbed rest of God for ever.

"That rest secure from ill,
 No cloud of grief e'er stains,
 Unfailing praise each heart doth fill,
 And love eternal reigns.
 God and the Lamb shall there
 The light and temple be,
 And radiant hosts for ever share
 The unveiled mystery."

Wisdom would dictate to every soul to heed the words of this dying man, and to accept this solemn message from one who was about to pass into the presence of God. It is fools who hate knowledge, and who mock at sin, and "He who being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Prov. xxix. 1). It is to be fondly hoped that the reader of these lines will not follow such a course, for "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7). "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee" (Job xxxvi. 18). But, "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee" (Job xxii. 21); "The prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself, but the simple pass on and are punished" (Prov. xxii. 3).

Be that prudent man, dear reader; if not saved, take shelter in Christ, the Rock of Ages, trust in His precious blood, and have peace with God.

You can appreciate the difference between a man passing into eternity with "*Awful! awful! awful!*" upon his lips, and a man with joy of heart, saying, "*The blood of Christ, shed for me, a poor sinful man, has cleansed my conscience of all guilt, and I go in peace.*"

But make sure that you are saved. Let it be heart work with you. Let the solemn realities of eternity fill your soul, and what it must be to spend eternity away from the presence of God. Rest not until you can truly appropriate the following verse of a spiritual song:—

"Hallelujah! 'tis done!
 I believe on the Son;
*I am safe through the blood
 Of the crucified One.*"

Remember that time is fleeting; soon this generation will give place to another; and in the light of this, how weighty and solemn is the message of the old Christian from the very brink of the grave,—"*Eternity! eternity! eternity! where will you spend eternity?*"

"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 judgment, but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24).

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS SINCE.

“Declare his works with rejoicing.”



HE redeemed of the Lord are oftentimes constrained to speak of His marvellous grace, and know in measure the force of the apostle's words, “We cannot but speak of the things which we have seen and heard.” By such testimonies the

Lord is glorified, and to this He enjoined one upon whom His power was exercised, saying, “Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.” Have you, dear reader, anything to tell of the love and compassion of the Lord Jesus to your soul?

I feel constrained, after years of blessing, to recount what is indelibly written upon my heart. The memorable event which happened twenty-five years ago was one which turned the whole current of my life, for up till then

“I lived for myself, I thought for myself,
Of myself and none beside;
Just as if Jesus had never lived,
As if Jesus had never died.”

But “he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”

Far as my memory can reach, my first impressions of God were got at my mother's knee; and as time rolled on, under sound Bible instruction, and an

evangelical ministry, I learned something of His fear. When about the age of fifteen, I stood by the side of my dying father. He held my hand in his, saying, "When God takes me away, be kind to your mother." I replied, "We must just trust in God." I retired to bed much solemnised, for he was a kind and loving father, and to lose him would be a sore trial. An hour later my mother bent over me with tearful eyes, crying, "Tom, you are an orphan now." That night I felt, as never before, that I had to do with the living God, and began to pray with the conviction that He heard me.

About three years after the death of my dear father, Richard Weaver, the converted collier, visited our city, and was mightily used of the Holy Spirit to lead souls to Christ. Partly from curiosity, and to please my mother, whose influence has followed me for weal all through life, I went to hear him speak. The great hall was packed from floor to ceiling, and I had to stand in a passage during all the service. His unpolished preaching grated sorely upon my ears. He pealed forth judgment, hell, and damnation; and told stories of drunkards and blasphemers either being cut off in their sins, or being converted; shouting and singing, with his hand at his ear, like to rend the roof. All was new and unpalatable to one accustomed to smooth and logical pulpit eloquence. An inquiry meeting was announced, and I made for the door. Though I would scarce acknowledge it then, I believe my conscience was reached. After I was blessed my-

self, nothing delighted me more than Richard's preaching, and to point souls to Jesus over an open Bible at the after-meeting.

My way home from this strange scene that night led through one of our public parks, where throngs under the beams of a glorious sunset, loitered beneath the trees, bright in their summer verdure. At cross-roads a knot of people surrounded a young preacher. I was surprised to discover he was the son of our family doctor. I stood awhile, when, finishing his discourse, and linking his arm in mine, he walked homeward with me. After a few general remarks, he made a faithful inquiry, whether it was well with my soul? I could not answer him. Nearing his residence, he begged me to go in with him and pray. I willed to refuse, but could not. What he prayed I remember not; all I know is that while kneeling at that chair I felt God's claims, and resolved to be a Christian. For several weeks I was so correct I hardly dared to smile; prayed, and read my Bible scrupulously, and was most careful in my speech. Alas! I neither knew myself nor God. I thought of God as making a demand upon me, and that I could, by an effort of my own will, alter my life to please Him, and become His child. Oh, how many comfort themselves with just such a creed. To all such I earnestly cry, You are blind; you are yet in your sins; your sin remaineth. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins," and "Ye must be born again." Your guilt must be met

by *another*, and you must be quickened by the Spirit of the living God into another life.

Other two years passed, finding me an active member of a Christian association, regular at the Fellowship, and Bible-Class meetings — but still unsaved. About this time there was a distinct work of the Holy Ghost amongst believers. Many were discovering better things in Christ, and the riches of His Word; getting, too, into the liberty of the Gospel; receiving thereby assurance of union with Christ, and eternal life, along with the truth of His personal return and reign. My dear mother had attended these meetings for Christians, and repeatedly urged me to go. Unknown to me, she had asked special prayers for the blessing of a widow's only child. Very reluctantly, I at last consented to accompany her one Monday night, for I thought I had plenty of religion on Sundays; and so I had, but then I had never known Christ. It is Christ who saves and satisfies, never religion, though the word means a "binding-back"—and what binds the soul back to God save the love of Jesus?

But I was about to taste a new life, and was upon the threshold of the glorious discovery that the Son of God loved *me*, and had given Himself for me. The preacher was a young medical student, in after-life known as Mackay of Hull. His fire, his eloquence, his power, and the plainly spoken truths he uttered, all commanded me as never before. He who opened Lydia's heart, to attend unto the things

spoken by Paul, opened mine that night, and I saw with newly opened eyes the Son of Man glorified, for God had been glorified in Him. When leaving the room, the preacher laid his hand kindly upon my arm and asked if I was the Lord's. I confessed at once with my mouth the Lord Jesus, for I believed with my heart that God had raised Him from amongst the dead. My mother was astonished at my sudden illumination, but her cup was full, she had received the joy of her heart—I was saved Yes, and I gloried in it, and began to

“tell to sinners round,
What a dear Saviour I had found.”

My title was clear, and my confession distinct. My old companions either became believers, or gave me the cold shoulder. Dear soul, are you afraid of the consequences of owning Christ? If there be no confession, there will be no salvation. To obtain righteousness there must be heart-belief; for salvation, mouth-confession. “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

My mother had long been my guide; now God was about to use me to lead her more fully into His word and way. My mind was fully opened to the authority of Scripture, and I began to judge myself and things around in the light of it. She naturally looked forward to my filling my father's place in the denominational congregation to which she was firmly attached, having passed through the great Disruption of 1843, which shook religious Scotland to its centre. But I was graciously put

into a different school, for in reading Scripture I found all true believers called "members of His body;" that "believers were the more added to the Lord;" "the Lord added the saved;" "All that believed were together;" "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." Such distinct teaching I could not reconcile with the "mixed multitude" of a modern church. But further I read that "the true worshippers worship the Father in spirit and in truth," and that "the Father seeketh such to worship him." I longed to mingle my thanksgiving with those who gathered every "first day of the week to break bread" and commemorate Christ's death "till he come." A few months afterwards found my mother and myself gathered with a few believers in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, proving the truth of His word, "There am I in the midst." "And having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day."

What the Lord has done for me He is able and willing to do for you, my reader. Believe on Him whom God has sent. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him."

"Then will you not prove this wonderful love,
That flows from God's heart so free,
Which led Him to give, that sinners might live,
His Son to be nailed to the tree?
The Gospel is free, God sends it to thee,
Believe God's wonderful love."

"THE PLANK BEARS."



SHIP was wrecked on the coast of Cornwall. All hands went down save one sailor-boy, who was washed on to the shore, barely living, and who lay bruised and ready to perish for weeks on a sick-bed.

He was visited by a young man, who strove to lead the sailor-lad to Christ, who died for sinners, and to show him that He is the only anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, and that He alone can deliver from the storm which destroys both body and soul in hell.

"Suppose," said the missionary, "that when your vessel was in pieces round about you off the coast, and you felt yourself sinking, exhausted, beneath the surge—suppose you had caught hold of a plank as it floated by you, and felt that, as you clutched it, it bore your weight, and held you up till relief could come, you would thank God for that plank, would you not?"

"Yes, sir," gasped the boy; and then he was made to understand that the plank was a figure of *Christ*, bearing up or delivering the sinner from the wrath to come.

Many years rolled away, and the Christian missionary toiled on, miles and miles from the southern coast, in the midst of a northern city. One day he was again in a sick-room. Everything showed that it was also a room ready for a death.

They moved about silently and solemnly, as men who can say, "O death, where is thy sting?" (1 Cor. xv. 55.) The sufferer was very nearly gone. The visitor, true to his old calling, bent down to whisper to the dying man words about the great salvation, and the life after death.

"Is it well with your soul?" said the old missionary. At once there was a sudden glance of the eye, that had begun to fix, and the head turned round, and a last flush covered the white face, and then a smile—such a smile! "God bless you, sir! It is well. *The plank bears, sir! The plank bears!*" And so it did. It had borne him ever since, and having believed in Christ, the Son of God, he had been saved from eternal wrath.

Reader, do you believe in Christ *alone* for the salvation of your soul? If so, happy, thrice happy are you. Without Christ you will become a wreck, and be lost in the blackness of darkness for ever. He now waits to save you. He is ready to forgive you, and to bring you to God (1 Peter iii. 18). "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). And "in this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him" (1 John iv. 9). "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, 6).

ANON.

SIMON PETER, FISHERMAN, AND APOSTLE.

CHAPTER V.

PENTECOST, AND HIS FIRST SERMON.

(Acts i.-ii.)



E left our apostle, in the end of John's Gospel, on the banks of the Sea of Galilee, sweetly and happily restored to the favour and sunshine of the presence of his blessed Master. There we saw what really made Peter a servant. And now the Spirit of God, in the opening chapters of Acts, brings before us this servant doing a wonderful work.

The difference between Peter in the High Priest's hall, and Peter on the day of Pentecost, is this: in the High Priest's hall, where you have him denying his Lord, Peter was full of himself, in the second of Acts he was "full of the Holy Ghost"—and there is an immense body of truth underlying such a statement. A man full of himself God must humble, whereas a man full of the Holy Ghost God can trust, and use for His glory. I can, therefore, quite understand, though the Lord had said to him, when He called him to follow Him, "Henceforth thou

shalt catch men," why we do not hear of his catching them till Acts ii. But then what a catch! Three thousand men in one day! Let us see how it came about.

The writer of the Acts of the Apostles is the same as the writer of Luke's Gospel—"the beloved physician" of that name. In fact, the Acts is an appendix to that Gospel, and written to the same person—the high-born Theophilus. Let us turn for a moment to the Gospel of Luke. In the last chapter we find the disciples had got back to Jerusalem, and the Lord, addressing them after His resurrection, said, "These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me." That means the then whole revelation of God, the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures. The Lord thus puts His stamp of approval on the Old Testament Scriptures from end to end; and if you do not believe in them implicitly, it is clear that you are not keeping company with Christ. Then we read that He "opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." That is beautiful! Before the coming of the Holy Ghost, too, observe it is that He opens their understanding to understand the Scriptures; and I doubt not it was this opening of his understanding that enabled Peter to do as he did in the end of the first of Acts.

Then the Lord goes on to say, "Thus it is written,

and thus it behoved Christ to suffer." It was the necessity of love that He must die if man were to be brought to God. There is but one doorway into heaven, and that is the doorway of death; not your death, but the doorway of the death of the Son of God. And consequent on that death and resurrection, "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Begin, says the Lord, at the very worst spot, the spot where they would not have Me, the spot where they scorned and spit upon, and slew Me; begin there, but go out to all nations. Then the Lord led the disciples out as far as Bethany, and "lifted up his hands and blessed them; and it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." His hands, uplifted in blessing, have *never gone down since*. In *Exodus xvii.*, where it was a question of conflict between Israel and Amalek, if Moses held up his hands Israel prevailed, but if Moses' hands fell Amalek prevailed; so that we read that Aaron and Hur stayed up Moses' hands. But with our Jesus, blessed be His name, no one has any need to hold up His hands, they are kept up eternally in blessing. He loves to bless. It is His joy and delight.

Now let us turn again to the Acts of the Apostles. When Luke wrote his Gospel, he began, "Most excellent Theophilus;" when he wrote his second letter, he began simply "O Theophilus." I do not for a moment think that Luke was a Radical, or a

society-leveller in the least, but I take it he knew that Theophilus thought far less of his worldly position and title when he last wrote to him, than when he got his first epistle from him. The knowledge of a rejected Saviour alters entirely a Christian's estimate of things—right enough in themselves—here below.

The Lord had been taken up, as we have seen in the end of Luke; in the first of the Acts we have this re-stated with a little more detail. We read there that the Lord, after His resurrection, and before His ascension, was seen of His disciples for "forty days, speaking to them of the things concerning the kingdom of God." All that He says and does is "through the Holy Ghost." I believe we see here what the Christian will be in the eternal state—full of the Holy Ghost, and acting entirely by Him; and, further, what we should be even now, as "dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. vi. 11). We have recorded in Scripture that the Lord was seen ten times in resurrection, five times on the first day of the week, and five times afterwards. He showed Himself for forty days. Why forty? Because forty was the full time of probation and testing. And there is thus the most absolute testimony as to the truth and reality of the resurrection—now, alas! so frequently denied.

This time being over, the Lord tells them not to "depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me" (see

John xiv.-xvi.). He then said to them, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." Look how beautifully the Lord defines the circle now. The fact is, the Cross, with all its wondrous fruits for God and man, having been accomplished, every dispensational barrier had been thrown down; and salvation, like a shining river, could go out to the ends of the earth, beginning at the guiltiest spot of all, but ever widening and flowing out and on till, thank God, it reached us benighted Gentiles. If you do not yet know and possess God's salvation, my friend, I have grand news for you. You may have that salvation to-day. Take care you do not miss it; for if you do, you will inevitably taste damnation to-morrow, and for all eternity.

From the Mount of Olives the apostles go back to Jerusalem, and assemble in the upper room, and you have the roll-call once more named, and Peter again heading the list. And while they wait, what do they do? They have a prayer-meeting! There was blessing coming, but, while waiting for its coming, we find them praying. And let us not miss the meaning of this. If there is to be real blessing in the Church, or among the unsaved, we must have the moral condition of soul that leads up to it; you must have the heart bowed constantly in prayer if the life is to witness for God.

Peter then stood up in the midst of the disciples,

and said, "This scripture must needs have been fulfilled," and he quotes from the 69th and 109th Psalms.

I understand, says Peter, from Scripture, that some one else must come in to take up the "ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." He must be chosen from the ranks "of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us." How lovely that is! Look at the beautiful intimacy of Jesus with His own. The expression, "went in and out among us" breathes volumes for the affectionate heart.

Then they selected two men, and turn and look to the Lord for the expression of His choice, and, according to Jewish order, they cast lots. Peter based his action on the known word of God, and I have no doubt God approved the action, founded on His word, as it was, Matthias being chosen.

Now we pass on to the second chapter. What peculiarly marks the day of Pentecost is the coming of the Holy Ghost personally to earth, to abide in the believer, and in the assembly. This is the kernel of Christianity. By the death of the Lord Jesus the way had been laid open, back to God. Sin had been put away, the grave opened, death annulled, and the Lord Jesus having ascended to the right hand of God, as Man, and anew received the Holy Ghost in that place of exaltation, the way was prepared for the Holy Ghost to come to earth

to take the place of Jesus, and reproduce the life of Jesus in His disciples here below.

So we read that "suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." The house was filled, and they were all filled. You have the indwelling of the Spirit of God in them personally, and also the Holy Ghost dwelling amongst them collectively, a truth of the utmost importance alike for this day, as for that. I doubt not the cloven tongues indicated that God's testimony was no longer to be confined to the Jew only. His testimony was to go to the ends of the earth, hence a divided tongue, and of fire, because it was to judge all that was contrary to God (fire is ever a symbol of judgment), to break man down, break up his pride, and take away what is opposed to God.

While we have the tongue of fire sitting on these men at the beginning of this chapter, we find the tongue of fire doing its work in the three thousand men at the end of the chapter, pricking them to the heart, and bowing them down low before the Lord in confession of their sins, and of His name.

Then follows a wonderful scene, as "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (ver. 4). The manifest contrast with Genesis xi., in which, because of the pride of man, we find

God confounding men's tongues, is very remarkable. Here, because of the perfection in obedience of the humbled Man—Jesus—who, in every possible circumstance, and with utter will-lessness, had been absolutely devoted to, and had perfectly glorified God, there was a temporary reversal of Babel, and the apostles, empowered by the Holy Ghost, could speak in all sorts of languages that they had never learned, and all the various nationalities who were in the city came up and had to hear about Jesus. God, so to say, rang the bell in this remarkable way just to gather souls to hear of His Son. Blessed God of all grace.

Now we see what follows. Those that hear are amazed—as well they might be—and say, "What meaneth this?" While some inquire honestly, What means this—and it is most blessed to inquire honestly what does God mean—yet, alas! others mocked. How sad, my friend, to be ranked amongst the mockers, either then or now. Do not forget that if you mock in the day of His grace, God can do similarly in the day of your calamity. (See Prov. i. 20-33.)

Now, hear what Peter has to say, "Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken unto my words." There is something perfectly beautiful in the bold way this man speaks. He has such a sense of his Master's love, and grace, and pardon, that he can stand up now and face the whole world for his beloved Master. So he continues, "These are not

drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." The devil will invent any reason to get rid of the testimony of God, but usually shows his folly therein, and specially so here, for it was the custom among the Jews not to break their fast before the morning sacrifice, therefore they had not eaten, much less had drunk. Peter says, as it were, This is the first instalment of the prophecy of Joel. He knows now how to handle the Scriptures, and thus he cites from, rather than directly and literally quotes, Joel. I have no doubt the complete fulfilment of Joel's prophecy (chap. ii. 28-32) remains for a future day, when the Jews are again in Palestine—a restored people—hence Peter is careful not to say it is the fulfilment. Just before the Messiah, the Son of Man, comes out in judgment of the earth, Joel's prophecy will be fulfilled. But you, my reader, if you miss salvation now, will never come in for it then. You will never be converted, when the Lord comes by-and-by to set up His kingdom upon earth, if you refuse to take Christ now. The day of blessing, of which Joel speaks, is for those who have never heard the Gospel of a heavenly Saviour. All present rejecters of Him will be judged, not blessed, then.

Peter then goes on to give a lovely testimony to the Lord:—"Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." He calls attention to

the beautiful life of his Master, what He had been doing, how on every hand He had been blessing men, as they well knew. But then what a charge he makes! He charges boldly home on them their guilt. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel, and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Terrible impeachment! They were guilty of the murder of their Messiah, and of the refusal of the Son of God. Only seven weeks before they had refused to have the Lord, and had chosen Barabbas, a robber and a murderer, instead of Him. They had cried, "Away with him, crucify him," though even Pilate, the Roman governor, had declared Him innocent.

You may say, my unsaved reader, I never cried, Away with Him! But have you ever taken your stand on the side of the Christ whom the world rejected then, and rejects still? This day it is true for you that you must receive or reject Him. You did not help to nail Him to the tree, with your hands—true; but what about your sins, which helped to place Him there? And has He not been standing at the door of your heart, knocking, and saying, Let Me in? Yes, and you have refused to let Him in till this moment; you have refused to give Christ His right place in your heart. God have mercy on you! God save you! They had said in that day, "Let him be crucified"—that is, get rid of Him. And what does your attitude to Christ now mean? Many a time you have had Him pre-

sented to you for your acceptance, and up till now your desire has been to get rid of Him; and you have managed to put Him away from you. Peter's solemn charge has a terrible application to you, dear unsaved reader.

But the Man whom the world refused, God has raised from the dead, and seated at His own right hand. Peter could remind his hearers that they had crucified Him; gambled for His garments under His dying eyes; turned carelessly away when they saw He was dead; set a seal upon His tomb; and, when it was found empty, had paid "hush-money" to godless watchmen to say they slept while His disciples stole His body. The watchers took the money and did as they were taught. The lie was believed for seven weeks, but now God sends Peter to proclaim that He is alive! He could not be holden of death; He went into it, but came up out of it, annulling its power, and gaining title to set its captives free.

Then Peter quotes David, and shows how the Psalm could not refer to him when it said, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption," for David had seen corruption, but the flesh of the Lord saw no corruption. Death had no claim on Him; but when God gave His Son, and man in his wickedness killed Him, by dying He annulled the power of death, and put away sin, which brought in death. As death came in by sin, so sin was put away by death; and the Man who died—and died

for me, I am thankful to say — God has raised from the dead, “whereof,” as Peter says, “we all are witnesses.” If you were to seek for them, my friend, you could easily find twelve witnesses now to the fact that there is a risen Saviour.

But Peter continues:—“Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens, but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool; therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” The work of redemption is done, the power of the devil is broken, and the Holy Ghost has come down to let us know this, and that the Lord sits on high till He makes His foes His footstool, and meantime He is gathering out His friends. Are you among His friends, my reader?

There is direct variance, Peter urges, between the house of Israel and God. They put the Lord in the tomb, and God has put Him on His throne in glory; and there He is in heaven till His enemies are made His footstool. Peter opened the door of the kingdom of heaven that day, as he unfolded the truth that the King is in heaven. He was commissioned to unlock the Jewish leaf of the door that day, and what is the result? “They were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter

and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They are awakened to a sense of their guilt, sin, and danger; and in reply to their query Peter says, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins"—that is, judge yourselves, own your guilt, acknowledge your true state, "and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." If you own the Lord I own, you will get what I have got. "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are *afar off*, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." The Gentiles are brought in there; God is sovereign in His grace; and how we should bless Him that it is extended to us, and that He has called us.

Peter then adds, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." But you say, "How can I save myself?" By coming to Jesus, who is the living Saviour, and clearing out of the world which is under judgment. "You are in wrong company this day," he as it were says; "come out from among them."

It was a noble address, and much blessed of God, for we read, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added about three thousand souls." This was grand fishing, indeed; and how Satan must have bewailed the hand he had in fitting the fisherman for his glorious work!

There is a lovely contrast here I would note between the reign of law and that of grace. The

day that Moses brought down the law graven on tables of stone—only to find it broken already—three thousand men died by Levi's sword—three thousand law-breakers were hurled into eternity unblest. The day the Holy Ghost came down to witness to an ascended Saviour, three thousand souls were brought to that Saviour, and were blessed and saved by Him; three thousand took their stand boldly for the Lord, having judged themselves, believed the truth, and received forgiveness of sins, and the Holy Ghost as the seal of their faith.

What follows is noteworthy. "They continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." This is very charming. I believe if you had gone to the breaking-of-bread meeting you would have found them all there, and if you had gone to the prayer-meeting you would have found them all there too. At the start of Christianity the prayer-meeting and the breaking-of-bread meeting were co-extensive. The activity of the grace of God was lovely. They were so fresh and so happy in the Lord's love that they could not get on without meeting daily. And they had wonderful testimony outside, for they were "praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

This was then the result of Peter's right use of the key that day; and now, my reader, may you be like one of these three thousand—believe the

Saviour, receive the Saviour, and confess the Saviour, and then you will know in your heart that you have received the forgiveness of your sins, and the Holy Ghost to dwell in you, as the seal of that forgiveness.

(To be continued if the Lord will.)

W. T. P. W.

"WINE AND MILK."



“YOU seem to have got something that I am a stranger to. You all seem so full of joy, and to be so satisfied, while I feel miserably out of it.”

The speaker was a lady who had come to stay for a short time in a Christian household. Kind, amiable, and in every way estimable, she was yet unconverted, and it is no wonder that she felt “miserably out of it,” when the members of the family with whom she was staying gathered one evening, as was their custom, to sing some hymns together.

Poor lady! Though possessed of everything that people in general would consider essential to happiness, she had not yet come to the spring of all true happiness. She had not drunk of the Gospel “wine and milk,” symbols which are used in scripture to set forth the two blessings of joy and satisfaction.

Are any of my readers in this condition? You may have drunk deeply of this world's streams, but you have not found them enough to quench your thirst. To your friends you may always seem full of happiness, as merry and lively as possible, but to true, lasting, settled joy, you are a stranger. Oh, may God help me to point you to the Fountain whence wine and milk flow freely night and day!

Listen to this invitation: "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy WINE and MILK without money, and without price" (Isa. lv. 1).

It is God who speaks. Are you thirsty? Then it is to you that He addresses His invitation. He offers freely as a gift that which you could never purchase by efforts of your own. Joy and satisfaction are His to bestow, and are to be had for the taking.

"But where am I to go, to get this blessing? To what fountain must I betake myself that my soul-thirst may be quenched, and that I may drink of the streams of wine and milk?"

Turn with me to Genesis xlix. 10-12, for an answer to that question. The dying patriarch is on his bed; the words that he utters are his parting words. His sons stand all around him. He looks upon Judah, and predicts that to him should belong the sceptre "until Shiloh come." Who is Shiloh? None other than the Lord Jesus Christ. "It is

evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda" (Heb. vii. 14), and to whom else could it be said that "unto him shall the gathering of the people be"?

Now notice what is said about Shiloh in verse 12. At His coming, what would He be like? What would He bring with Him? Listen: "His eyes shall be red with WINE, and his teeth white with MILK."

Here then we learn that the wine and milk follow in the wake of the Lord Jesus Christ, and are to be found in Him alone. Oh, friend! if you are a stranger to joy and satisfaction, it is because you are a stranger to Him. In His presence is *fulness* of joy (Ps. xvi. 11).

If, then, you ask me to point you to the fountain whence the Gospel wine and milk flow forth in all their freeness, I point to *Christ*, and I say, "*He* is the Fountain; stoop down, poor weary sinner, and take your fill, for it is free to such as you."

Yes, it is in Christ alone that God has treasured up joy and satisfaction for the hearts of men.

"Oh, Christ, He is the Fountain,
The deep, sweet well of love;
The streams on earth I've tasted,
More deep I'll drink above."

The Bride, in the Song of Solomon, knows something of this. She thus begins her description of Him in chapter v. 10: "My beloved is *white* and *ruddy*." It is the same truth that we get in Gen. xlix. 12, that from Him flow the milk in its whiteness, and the wine in its redness; and it was the deep draught that the Bride had taken of that stream that led her thus to praise her Beloved.

Oh, reader, is He *your* Beloved? Have you tasted of His love? If so, you will know how incomparable is the way in which He fills and satisfies the heart.

So much for the way in which *we* may get joy and satisfaction. Now I turn to another subject, that of *Christ's* joy and satisfaction.

We read in Song of Solomon v. 1, that there is wine and milk which *He* drinks, in the garden of His beloved. What can this mean? Simply that He takes such pleasure in the heart that has unfolded to His love, and that continually basks in the sunshine of His affection, that *He* turns to it to find *His* joy and satisfaction.

Oh, infinite love! First, to provide "wine and milk" for *our* refreshment at the cost of His own life, and then to produce in us, by His Spirit, "wine and milk" which can serve for *His* refreshment.

What untold blessedness is found in having to do with *such* a Saviour!

E. V. G.

"I KEEP ASKING HIM."



ONE Lord's Day, a few weeks ago, after a brother and myself had been preaching the Gospel in a little room in the country I addressed an aged woman, who seemed to be much interested during the meeting, and said to her, "Have you got this

eternal life?"

"Well," she replied, "I keep asking Him for it."

"But," I said, "God says in Rev. xxii. 17, 'Who-soever will let him take of the water of life freely,' and instead of *taking*, you keep asking Him for it."

"But have I not to keep praying for it?" she asked.

"Well, now," I said, "suppose I ask you for a drink of water, which you draw and offer to me but still I keeping asking you for it in spite of the fact that you are inviting me to drink, what would you think of me?"

"I should think you did not want it," she replied,

"Yes, so you would, but that is just the way you are treating the blessed Lord Jesus. He has thrown open the door wide, and is saying 'Come unto me,' but still you are shivering without the door, and asking for admittance."

Alas! how many people do we find who are seeking salvation in the same way. Ah! if you only knew His heart, poor sinner, and knew how He wants, yea, how He yearns to bless you, you would no longer stand outside praying and knocking for admittance. Hear His gracious words when He says, "He that believeth on the Son (not he that prayeth), hath everlasting life." How blessed! Accept then God's gift.

"Hark the voice of Jesus calling :

Come, ye laden, come to Me,
I have rest and peace to offer,
Rest, thou labouring one, for thee ;
Take salvation—
Take it now, and happy be."

“REJOICING IN HOPE.”

Rev. v.



AND shall I be amongst that throng,
 All clothed in robes of white,
 And help to swell that glorious song
 Of rapture and delight ?

And shall I see my Saviour's face,
 All radiant as the sun,
 And dwell through all eternity
 With God's beloved One ?

I shall, for I have been redeemed
 With blood of worth untold,
 The blood of Christ, the Lamb of God,
 More precious far than gold.

What rapture when I first behold
 Jesus, my precious Lord,
 What rapture, yea, what bliss untold,
 That moment will afford !


I'll gaze in glory on the wounds,
 From whence once flowed the blood
 That cleansed my guilty, sin-stained soul,
 And made me nigh to God.

And there "for ever with the Lord,"
 As I retrace the past,
 How shall I praise Him for His grace
 To me from first to last ?

SIMON PETER, FISHERMAN, AND APOSTLE.

CHAPTER VI.

HIS SECOND SERMON.



N Acts iii., if I may so say, God rings the bell the second time to gather the people together, that He may continue His testimony to His beloved Son. In the second chapter it was by the coming of the Holy Ghost, and the miraculous gift of tongues, that this testimony was produced. Now we shall see how it was maintained.

Peter and John, evidently bosom friends, and peculiarly linked together all through the gospels, went up together at the ninth hour of the day to pray. They had been partners in business in olden times, had caught fish together on the Sea of Galilee, and now they were partners in a new business, and go out together, not to catch fish, but men.

It is very nice to mark this, that they go up together to pray. It is sweet to see how frequently prayer is recorded as ascending to God in the Acts. In the first chapter we find the disciples continuing "with one accord in prayer and supplication," and then praying about the choice of a fresh

fellow-worker. In the second chapter we find the disciples continuing stedfastly "in prayers." In this chapter—iii.—we have Peter and John going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, and in the fourth chapter we find them praying again, and being all filled with the Holy Ghost. (See also chapters vi. 4, vii. 60, viii. 15, 22, ix. 11, 40, x. 2, 9, 30, 31, xi. 5, xii. 5, 12, xiii. 3, xiv. 23, xvi. 13, 25, xx. 36, xxii. 17).

I believe we have here the secret of the power of the moment. The servants and the saints were continually dependent upon God. They looked to Him to work, and He did work most blessedly.

The incident in chapter iii. is familiar. "And a certain man, lame from his mother's womb, was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms." The next chapter tells us that this man was forty years old. Forty, we have seen, is in Scripture the number of perfect probation. Every one knew him, he was no longer a child, and he was in a condition that no one could meet or reach; and now he *is* met by the power of the Name of Jesus. Forty years old, and well known, no one could dispute the fact of his being healed. A notable miracle was to be wrought, and God takes care to have it well attested. The poor lame beggar is the type of a sinner who has got nothing if he has not got Christ. "And Peter, fastening

his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them." I have no doubt his heart beat high as he heard Peter's words. Doubtless he thought to receive something of them, and he did not know what that something was. He was like many a one now casting about to get money. Look what the Lord gives him. "Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." How his heart must have sunk as he heard the words, "Silver and gold have I none," and thought—They are two paupers, just like myself.

But, observe, that ere he has time to be thoroughly depressed, Peter goes on to bid him to "rise up and walk." And then we read that Peter "took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength." The power of the Name of Jesus is manifested in the healing of the physical disability. The power of that Name thrills through him, "and he, leaping up, stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God." I understand his radiant joy, and I can understand too the radiant joy that a sinner feels, when the Gospel meets him, and he finds his sins forgiven—washed away through his Saviour's blood. It is beautiful to see it in each respective case, and this man goes into the temple "walking, and leaping, and praising God.

And all the people saw him walking and praising God: and they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him." And if you were to go home converted, my friend, all your friends would be amazed. If you go back a totally new man, would they not be thoroughly surprised? and what a testimony would it be to the power of Christ! I do not know anything more powerful as a testimony to the grace of God than the fervent joyous life of a devoted Christian.

Then you find that the man holds on to Peter and John. He knows where the power is, and I do not wonder at his keeping close to them. The next day, when they were taken prisoners, this man goes boldly into the council, and says, Though silent, I am a witness to the power of the Name of Jesus, I am the one who was healed.

In the next verses of our chapter Peter again charges home the guilt of the nation on their consciences, but at the same time shows how the grace of God can override the guiltiest act of the guiltiest nation on the face of the earth. Observing how the people marvelled, for "all the people ran together unto them, in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering," Peter says to them, "Why marvel ye at this?" It was only what Christ is worthy of. Peter had this in his soul, My Master is worthy of anything, there is no limit to the power of His name. The people marvelled

because they had no faith; and the reason why Christians so often marvel now, when the Lord works mightily, is because they have so little faith. They were looking at the instrument, a very foolish thing to do in things divine. God almost always uses base and foolish things to work His ends. It was at the blowing of trumpets of rams' horns that Jericho's mighty walls fell down. It was into the hands of the three hundred men that lapped that the Lord delivered the hosts of Midian in the days of Gideon. What we want is what Peter had here. He was full of the Holy Ghost, and his heart was full of Christ, as to his affections and confidence, and this is exactly what we want now.

Then Peter tells his tale. "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus," or rather his "servant" Jesus it should be. You do not find Peter preaching Jesus as the Son of God. That was reserved for Paul. Peter preaches Him as His servant Jesus. When we come to the ninth chapter of the Acts, where Paul is converted, he at once begins the ministry of the Son of God. "And straightway he preached Jesus in the synagogue, that he is the Son of God" (Acts ix. 20).

Peter's point here is clearly this—Jesus is in glory, the One who was once here on earth, is now in the glory. Then he comes down on their consciences, as he says, "Whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was

determined to let him go." He does not speak of Judas, though no doubt Judas was the immediate instrument of delivering Him up. "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just"; they denied the One whom he asserts to be the Messiah, and whom God declares to be the Holy One and the Just.

See how fearlessly he proclaims the truth as he says, "Ye denied the Holy One." It is possible some one may have retorted, "Why, Peter, you are very bold, it is only a few weeks since, that, in the High Priest's hall, you denied Him." Yes, Peter would say, alas! it is true that I denied Him, but I have bitterly repented of my folly and sin; I have met Him, and owned it all to Him, and He has forgiven me. I have had it all out with Him, and I have learnt that He has died for me, that I might be forgiven, and I am forgiven. I have met Him, and have had an hour alone with Him—yes, alone with Him—and all is forgiven, and effaced.

How charming and effectual is the work of grace in a real heart. Peter illustrates this beautifully, for now that he is cleansed, and forgiven, his conscience is purged, and though it was only seven weeks and a few days, since he had denied his Lord, yet now he can fearlessly turn round and charge his hearers with the sin which he himself had been guilty of. "Ye denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go." They helped to seal Pilate's doom, as well as to murder their own Messiah. "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just" is a terrible charge against

them, while withal it is a precious testimony as to who and what his Master was, the Holy One of God. Face your sins, Peter, so to speak, says, go down before God, and face your iniquities. "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of Life." Terrible indictment!

But you, my reader, may say, Surely you do not charge me with such an awful sin? Well, I ask you, have you ever taken your place on the side of the murdered One? If not, you are still on the side of His murderers. "He that is not with me is against me," the Lord says. It was the world or Jesus, in that day, it is the world or Jesus, in this day. I appeal to you, how does it stand with you, my friend?

When Peter says, you "killed the Prince of Life," I can imagine their souls trembling, because they knew it was true. There was no gainsaying this charge of the Holy Ghost's. What an indictment! "Ye killed the Prince of Life." True, He suffered Himself to be slain; but Peter says, you killed Him. And now look at the chasm between the world and God. Look how opposed are the thoughts of the world, and God's thoughts of Jesus, "whom God raised from the dead." Could there be a greater contrast?—You killed Him, but God raised Him from the dead.

Now then, my dear reader, on which side will you range yourself, on God's side, or the world's? There is no middle ground between the world and

God, not one step. Satan would like to make you think that there is. He does not mind your being religious. If you do not get converted, and come to Christ, you may be as religious as you like, for he knows that you may be a professor of Christ, while not a possessor of Him; that you may be a perfect encyclopædia of Biblical knowledge, and yet go to hell. Every man goes there that is not savingly converted. If you have been a formalist till now, just turn to the Saviour now, at once, just where you are, and as you are, and learn His grace. There is no satisfaction, or salvation in mere religiousness, you must know Jesus. Peter informs the Jews that day, that they and God had taken two quite opposite courses. You put Him into a grave, God took Him out of it, "whereof we are witnesses,"—and further, He has put Him into glory. Nor this only, "His name through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know. Yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all" (ver. 16). And only faith in His name can do anything now for you, my friend. It is His name, and faith in His name alone, that secures blessing for the soul. This man rose up, and walked in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and, my unconverted reader, I say to you, In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise out of your bed of sins, and come to Him. You may be saved this very moment if you have faith in the name of Jesus.

At this point of his discourse, Peter brings in the

balm of grace as he says "Brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." On the cross Jesus had prayed, "Father, forgive them," and now Peter, following in his Master's steps, is led to proclaim forgiveness. Here is the way of escape he opens, "Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Do you want your sins blotted out, my friend? Nothing but the blood of Jesus can blot them out. And how can you get this blessing? By repentance, and turning to God, having faith in the name of the Lord Jesus. What is repentance? Repentance is this, I judge myself. What is conversion? Conversion is this, I turn round to the Lord. It is illustrated in the parable of the prodigal son. He was converted when he arose and came to his father. He was confessing his sins when he said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee." He was repentant when he said, "I am no more worthy to be called thy son."

Repentance is the judgment which the soul passes upon itself in the presence of God, believing the testimony of God. Repentance is not the stepping-stone to conversion. Repentance is taking God's part against myself, and judging that what God says of me is true, believing His testimony. Faith is the soul's reception of a divine testimony; repentance is the result in the soul of that reception. Some one has well said, "Repentance is the tear drop in the eye of faith." Very wisely and rightly then did Peter preach and press this whole-

some moral process upon their souls, with this end in view, "that your sins may be blotted out."

That "God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets that Christ should suffer," was no excuse for the nation's guilt. God really sent Jesus to be a Saviour, Peter says, and you showed your guilt, and the evil state of your hearts by murdering Him; but God knew what was needed, and what He had foreordained. Christ must needs suffer, the Scriptures said, "it behoved him to suffer." It is all fulfilled now, therefore repent, and believe, and get your sins blotted out, and then God will send Jesus Christ back again. A lovely Gospel for repentant sinners to listen to was this indeed, and the next chapter shows that two thousand souls at least turned round to the Saviour, and got forgiveness of their sins. The word was mixed with faith in those who heard it that day.

We must bear in mind that the Jews were always looking for the kingdom, the millennial reign of the Messiah. Very well, says Peter, the millennium will come, but it will come in connection with that Jesus whom ye have crucified, and "whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, of which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." If you are going in for the kingdom, you must have God's King—the Lord Jesus.

Then he presses on them some scriptures. Jesus was the One to whom all the prophets gave witness; Moses had said unto the fathers, "A prophet

shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you." Even on the mount of transfiguration God had said concerning Jesus, "Hear ye him," but alas, they did not. Yet see how grave are the issues that hang upon hearing the voice of this Prophet, "And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." Now, that Jesus was this indicated Prophet is plain, for Peter goes on to say, "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days." Everything depends, he says, on how you hear Him. Nothing could be plainer. To hear Jesus is to secure salvation. To deafen the ear, and harden the heart against Him, is to seal the soul's eternal doom.

Listen, my undecided readers, to this warning voice, for Peter's sermon was not only for the people of Judæa in that day, it is meant for you and me to-day. It is worldwide in its application. You know, my unsaved friend, that you have turned a deaf ear to the Lord's voice up till now. Do you say, I have made up my mind not to be converted? Then, you may, at the same time, make up your mind to be eternally damned, for Peter warningly says, "It shall come to pass that *every soul* which will not hear that prophet *shall be destroyed* from among the people."

Then he goes back to quote the beautiful cove-

nant word of God to Abraham, "And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed," and with the most touching grace thus concludes his address, "Unto you first, God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." It was a charming peroration, and contained the most beautiful Gospel that could possibly fall on their ears. Little wonder that many of the people believed. But not so the leaders, as chapter iv. tells us.

In chapter iv. we find that the priests, and the captain of the temple, joined with the Sadducees in persecuting the apostles. Two very different companies were these, the priests, and the Sadducees. The Sadducees did not believe in resurrection, angel, spirit, or in a future state, in fact, they believed nothing (see Acts xxiv. 8). They were the Rationalists of that day, and if you are like the Sadducees, my friend, you have nothing to rest your soul upon. But the devil will put these two opposing sections together, in order to fight against the truth, and the servants of God. These men were preaching a risen Saviour, One who had gone into death, and annulled it, and come up out of it: and that One, I rejoice to say, is my Saviour. No wonder that the devil, and all his servants, were "grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from among the dead" (ver. 2), for the soul who knows a living, triumphant, and victorious Saviour, for ever passes out of his clutches.

“Howbeit many of them that heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.” It says nothing about the women and children, and if we may judge of the companies who heard the Word in that day, by the companies who listen to the Word to-day, there must have been a grand lot of conversions, for there are always far more women and children than men ready to hear, and, thank God, to believe the Gospel too.

Men often think the Gospel is only for women and children, but what fools such will look in eternity, who, having despised the Gospel now, then find themselves, when too late, eternally damned. Oh, be a man for Christ now, come out boldly for Christ now.

The common people had the Gospel presented to them in the third chapter, the leaders are going to get it now in the fourth. “On the morrow, their rulers, and elders, and scribes, and Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? Then Peter, *filled with the Holy Ghost*, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of

Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole." The secret of Peter's power here was, that he was full of the Holy Ghost.

But did you ever hear of such utter folly as putting a man in prison, and trying him for a good deed—healing a cripple? God brings the man in, as it were, to give witness to that council. I do not expect he was invited by the council, for he was an awkward witness. Look at him now, whole! Yesterday he was a poor cripple until three o'clock, now he is a hale man. And what had done it? The power of the Name of that Jesus "whom ye crucified," that was their guilt, "whom God raised from the dead," there was God's righteousness.

And now for the application, "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner." And what was the stone? Christ, of course, but Christ in glory, as the Head Stone of the corner. Here Peter is in conflict with these poor, foolish builders, and there are plenty of them in our days, people who are building without Christ. The Lord had said, speaking of Himself as the Stone—(see Matt. xxi. 44)—"Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." The corner stone, about to fall, is the exalted Christ, coming by-and-by in glory, and destroying the godless Gentiles in the day of His wrath. Those who fell over it and

were broken, were the Jews, stumbling over Jesus in His humiliation. Ah, take care that you, my friend, are right as regards that Stone, for Peter goes on to say, "Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name, under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved."

You yield your heart to Jesus now, and you will find your sins blotted out, and that you are pardoned and forgiven; yea, built then on the Rock that can never be shaken, because you are built on Him who died and rose again, and you will find that that Name is everything to you now, and will be your joy for ever, the Name of Jesus. The Lord give you to know, my reader, the power of that Name. God will have that Name to be honoured, the name of the glorified Saviour. The Lord give you grace to trust Him now, and know that you are saved by Him, and by Him alone, the Chief Corner Stone. The one only Name "given among men whereby we must be saved" will then be your delight, and you will learn to sing truly and joyfully :—

"There is a name I love to hear,
 I love to sing its worth ;
 It sounds like music in mine ear,
 The sweetest name on earth.
 Jesus ! the name I love so well,
 The name I love to hear,
 No saint on earth its worth can tell,
 No heart conceive how dear."

W. T. P. W.

(To be continued if the Lord will.)

“HOW SHOULD MAN BE JUST WITH GOD?”



WELL, how?

Granted that God is infinitely holy, and man utterly sinful, how can man approach God?

Fire and water cannot be reconciled; there is in the nature of each that which renders infusion impossible. And yet far less can sinful and guilty man, as such, come into contact with God. The moral distance between each must be eternal, unless God find out a way in which He can, consistently with His own holiness, bring the sinner near.

But how can this be done? How can the impossibility mentioned be overcome? How, without taking from infinite holiness on God's side, or improving man's condition on the other, can the boundless chasm be bridged?

That is the grand question. It may well perplex the infidel, and tax the mind of the reformer. The one may scout the whole thing as absurd; and the other may skilfully invent all kinds of religious plans to meet the difficulty, but neither can the contempt of infidelity, nor the many devices of the religious human brain, solve the question, *“How should man be just with God?”*

First, God cannot abate one iota of His holiness, in order to meet the sinner. That essential ele-

ment of His nature may not be diminished on any pretext whatsoever. The holiness of God stands immutable. There is therefore no hope on that ground.

Second, The condition of man is such that it cannot be mended. His nature is essentially evil. He may, no doubt, be reformed, or outwardly altered, so that the drunkard may be made sober, or the adulterer chaste; but the nature—the springs within, the heart itself—remains the same. It is incurably wicked. There is no hope therefore in this respect either. No hope! Is the case hopeless? Most certainly it is on the above grounds; and yet happy is it when the soul has been led to the discovery of its own total hopelessness.

Have you, dear reader, really learned that you cannot lessen God's holiness, so as to enable you to meet Him; and, on the other hand, that you cannot lessen your own sinfulness so as to enable God to come nearer to you. Have you truly discovered that the chasm is infinite? that these two words, of three letters each, express two principles that can never coalesce—GOD and SIN?

It is well if you have, for a dawning of that truth is the first shining of the light of heaven's day upon the soul. But yet all this only goes to make the answer to our question the more intensely interesting—*"How should man be just with God?"*

Notice, first, it is not "How should man be just

with *man*?" That is an important question too, and worthy of a large place in the moral world of to-day, but our question is more important still. Neither is it, secondly, "How shall man be *as good as he can* with God?" Nay, for that is only human merit—a thing that cannot be! If otherwise, why did the blessed Lord tell Nicodemus that he, one of the best of men, must be born again?

Mark, "*just with God*" is the demand, and nothing short of that will do.

Well, how? The infidel may well give it up, or the mere religionist sink in despair; yet there is a way in which man—you or I—can be "*just with God*," and that without the smallest modification of the sinfulness of our nature, or of God's absolute holiness.

One splendid statement, in Romans iii. 20, furnishes the divine and perfect answer, viz., "That he (God) might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

Blessed answer indeed! In it we find that God is viewed as "*just*," and the believer as "*justified*." The two, hitherto immeasurably separated by holiness on God's side, and guilt on the sinner's, are now brought righteously together, so that no charge of inconsistency can be preferred! And how? Just because between the justice of God, and the judgment of the sinner, comes the cross of Christ! At that cross all the judgment was borne, and—

"Justice now demands no more,
And mercy yields her boundless store.

Therefore our answer speaks of "the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

That Name, in all its sweet and living charms, tells of the ground on which God, in undiminished holiness, can bless the sinner, spite of undiminished guilt. "The blood of Jesus" is the ground!

On that ground the dying thief, repentant and believing, entered paradise unchallenged. His perfect title lay in that precious blood! He could plead no human merit, nor did he need any! He had no time for improvement, nor could he if he had! That blood-bought title needs no improvement. It is divinely sufficient.

"I have no other argument,
I need no other plea,
It is enough that Jesus died,
And that He died for me."

Yes, it is enough to satisfy every claim of God, and therefore to calm every fear of my soul. Mark, "God is just"—just—just! "and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

If you truly believe in Jesus you are justified on terms of divine satisfaction. Thank God for such an answer.

"The perfect righteousness of God
Is witnessed in the Saviour's blood ;
'Tis in the Cross of Christ we trace
His righteousness, yet wondrous grace.
God could not pass the sinner by
His sin demands that he must die ;
But in the Cross of Christ we see
How God can save, yet righteous be."

OVER SIX THOUSAND WARNINGS UNHEEDED.



THOMAS L—— was a carter at a factory in the country. Early one February morning several years ago, when Thomas was driving his cart over a bridge nearly covered with water from a highly flooded river, the bridge suddenly gave way, which submerged man, horse, and cart. The horse never came up, but when Thomas rose he clung for nearly an hour to a corner of the bridge, with only his head above water, powerless to help himself on account of the strong current rushing down the meadows, and his inability to swim. Shouting loudly for help, amid the falling snow, and blocks of ice floating past him, he attracted the attention of two men, who, at great risk to their lives, rode in on horseback, and with a rope rescued him from a watery grave. Thomas remained at an adjoining farmhouse for some days in a very exhausted condition, and when recovered was spoken to kindly, yet solemnly, about the state of his soul, but he appeared not to have heeded God's solemn warning to "be ready" for the eternity he had so recently reached the very verge of.

Five years later the writer met Thomas, crossing the same bridge, then rebuilt, and driving the identical cart once submerged. Asking Thomas what would have become of his soul had he been

drowned—as his horse was—he plainly showed not a little indifference, though he admitted having crossed the new bridge over *six thousand* times since the old one was washed away, and that he had thought of his narrow escape on every occasion.

After all, it is to be feared that he remained *rescued only from the water, but not from the fire*, and, strange to say, apparently without one single spark of anxiety about his soul!

Neither entreaty nor warning seemed to move him, and he was therefore fervently requested to think about the eternal lake of fire ever afterwards when crossing that bridge, until his soul was saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But well saith the scripture: "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," and "The God of this world hath blinded the minds of those that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. iv. 4).

Our unsaved reader may not have had the kind of warning to turn to God, which carter Thomas had, but has he not had *some* warnings by such as sickness, at preachings, in conversations with God's people, in reading God's Word, tracts, periodicals, and the like.

Yes, it may be by thousands! Permit us to beseech you not any longer to run the awful risk of unheeding the warning voice of a loving and holy God once too often, lest you find yourself in eternity and on the wrong side of your last opportunity to be saved, and do remember (as was said

to carter Thomas): "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that *without remedy*" (Prov. xxix.). Noah, of old, was warned of God of the coming flood, and it came. Lot was also warned of the coming fire, and it came. By taking heed they both found refuge, *as directed of God, and were saved*. God "spared not the old world, but saved Noah, . . . bringing in the flood upon the world of the *ungodly*; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ENSAMPLE unto those that after should live *ungodly*; . . . 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."

Friend, when that fire bursts out how will it be with your immortal soul? Will it find you rescued from many things, but not from the *fire*?

By the holiness of God do be warned to flee from the wrath to come. By the love, grace, and mercy of God do be encouraged to take up your true responsibility *now* as a lost sinner, and trust the precious blood of Christ which can alone cleanse away your sins, clear you of all judgment, and bring you to eternal glory. Yes, by faith receive that blessed Saviour *to-day*, and ere long you will be with Him and like Him for ever, where flood and fire can never come.

"I COME QUICKLY."



EARLY nineteen centuries have rolled away since Jesus in glory uttered these momentous words. Every hour brings us nearer to their accomplishment. And yet the world at large buys and sells, and lives on for self, its vanities and needs, as though they never had been uttered. There stands the solemn sentence, inscribed four times indelibly on the eternal page of Scripture. Let the infidel sneer, let the mocker mock, let the sceptic laugh, let the false-hearted delay, let the indifferent ignore, let millions doubt, let worldlings pursue their way, *yet Jesus*, the glorified Man of the eternal counsels of God, saith to all, "Behold, *I come quickly*; and my reward is with me, *to give to every one* according as his work shall be."

All Scripture testified of His first coming. *He came*. The same Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, testify also of His second coming. *He will come again*. Centuries have rolled into the past, nations have risen and fallen; wars, revolutions, famines, &c., have filled the page of history since the promise went forth. A world seething with wickedness abuses the grace that delays His return; but *the moment will come*. Quickly, quickly, saith the word of Him *who cannot lie* (Titus i. 2). With the Lord a thousand years is as one day. Some two thousand have run by since the exiled

prophet received the message in the isle of Patmos. Every moment brings us nearer to the fulfilment of His word. Where is the wise man, where the scribe, who can tell us *when*? *No man knoweth the day nor the hour* (Matt. xxiv. 36, xxv. 13), is the solemn announcement from His own blessed lips.

Reader, what effect have these words on you? Much there is to take place ere His manifestation in public glory to judge the nations and reign, but as you read these lines He may descend in a moment from the throne of God to claim His own (1 Thess. iv. 15-18). Are you one? Would His rallying triumphant shout thrill your heart with unutterable joy? Would the voice of the archangel be your summons to the heavenly glory? Would the trump of God be the joyful sound that your soul had long awaited in this poor world of sin? What a moment! Myriads raised, myriads changed, myriads together rapt to glory, all the redeemed of God! Every churchyard, graveyard, cemetery, urn, every resting-place of the dust of His saints, in a moment shall yield its dead! Every living believer on the broad expanse of this our planet will be then, and in a moment changed! (1 Cor. xv. 51.)

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. xv. 50). But divine power, that raised Christ, shall raise His sleeping ones, change His living ones, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. xv. 52). The Lord Himself shall

descend from heaven with a shout (1 Thess. iv. 16). All His own shall hear. He shall descend; we shall ascend. Changed into His blest image, the countless throng of sinners saved by grace, washed from all their guilty stains in His own most precious blood, in a moment shall behold their Lord! The feeblest that has touched the hem of His garment by faith shall be there. In the twinkling of an eye, swift as, or even swifter than, the lightning flash, the air will be thronged with His purchased ones, *caught up to meet Him* (1 Thess. iv. 17). Will you be there?

Oh what a glorious moment for the redeemed of God, when Christ shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied! Patiently He is seated at the right hand of the Living Majesty, *the Man* whom God delighteth to honour. Infinite mercy and longsuffering stay the longed-for moment of His return. God is not willing that *any* should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Hence the still wide open door. Oh, sinner, enter while you may!

"Room, room, still room,
Oh enter, enter *now!*"

Swiftly the hand of time goes round the world's dial! Swiftly the last ray of light in the day of grace is about to pass away, and the awful night of judgment and vengeance of Almighty God ensue! Woe to the man who neglects His salvation till it is too late! Listen now, we beseech you, to the warning cry, "Behold, I come quickly;

and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. xxii. 12). "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. x. 37). Come now, poor troubled heart, to the Saviour while you may. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is *kindled but a little*" (Ps. ii. 13). Now, *now* is the day of salvation. *A moment more*, and the hour of grace may have passed and gone for ever (Matt. xxv. 10).

"*Surely* I come quickly" (Rev. xxii. 20). *Surely*. Sinner, beware. What power will open for you the once closed door? Your case will be hopeless! Oh the agonising remorse of the soul that meant to enter in, but put it off, and put it off, and put it off, till it was *too late*! Oh the agony of the memory of love neglected, grace rejected, mercy despised, *Christ* forgotten, till it was *too late*! Mercy waits upon you, grace pleads with you, love lingers for you. Dare you continue heedless on your way?

"My reward is with me," to give every one *according to his works*. Are yours fit for His eye? Maybe you are one of those who are crying, "Lord, Lord, have we not in thy name done *many wonderful works*?" (Matt. vii. 22.) But, alas, it is your estimate of them, and not His. Alas, it is but the way of Cain. Are your works the fruit of *faith*? Is it love to His Name, in response to His constraining love, that has produced them? Or are they the wretched efforts of your unregenerate heart to propitiate God? Arouse ye, thoughtless

soul, the world is guilty of the shedding of the blood of Christ, and no sin-stained works of yours can atone, or help to do so, for your guilty stains. No work but His can aught avail to entitle you to dwell with Him.

Many are the wonderful works of Christless professors that well-please themselves, and their professing neighbours, but what will Christ's estimate of them be in that swift approaching day? Then shall He say to many, “ I never knew you ; depart from me, ye that work iniquity ” (Matt. vii. 23). His reward is with Him. He will reward *His own* for even a cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple, even the very smallest act which is the fruit of faith. And He will reward the worldling and the professor with judgment according to their deserts. He will give every man according as his work shall be.

Not a single thing can you do to please God until you are saved. “ They that are in the flesh *cannot please God* (Rom. viii. 8). All your efforts are in vain, and hopeless. You *must* have a Saviour first. *Christ is He*. Have you received Him? Your sins may be many; His precious blood will blot them out. Your conscience may be troubled; His finished work will give you peace. Your heart may be dissatisfied; He will more than fill it. Your soul may be miserable; He will fill you to overflow with unspeakable joy (1 Peter i. 8). It is Christ you need. Guilty and lost you are, if unconverted, one among millions. *Christ died for*

all (2 Cor. v. 14, 15). Believe now, just as you are, as a sinner confessed, on His blessed Name; and you shall be saved. If He died for all, and the Word of God says it, you are included. You are one of the all. Do you take God at His word? Yes? You hesitate. "Surely I come quickly." Beware. Do you then believe Him? "Abraham *believed God*, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." You *do*? "Now, it was not written for his sake alone, . . . but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 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: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. iv. 23-25; v. 1, 2).

By faith, without a single work, past, present, or future, we are justified. The accomplished work of Christ is the sole ground. All the wondrous value of that work is, so to speak, put to each believer's account. He is justified, has peace with God, access into grace, where he has a totally new standing before God; and joy in a new hope, the glory of God; and is called to glory in tribulation, as he seeks to follow the One who saved him; abounding in good works, until he reaches glory

Dost *thou* believe?

E. H. C.

SIMON PETER, FISHERMAN, AND APOSTLE.

CHAPTER VII.

FURTHER MINISTRY.

(Acts iv. 23, viii. 25.)



THE connection between the early part of Acts v. and the end of chapter iv. is easily apparent. In the fourth chapter we hear of the apostles, and those with them, having a prayer-meeting, and we get the result. "When they had prayed,

the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all *filled with the Holy Ghost*, and they spake the word of God with boldness" (ver. 31). This was the normal condition of things at the beginning of Christianity. Every one possessed the Holy Ghost, and knew it. As a Divine Person He was on the earth, and dwelt in every believer. The Church was a large company by this time. Five thousand *men* had been converted, but we do not hear of the introduction of a woman till the fifth chapter. Afterwards we hear of numbers of men and women being added.

It must have been a lovely spectacle that met the eye, in these Pentecostal times, recorded in the

end of Acts iv. The Church then made everything of Christ. It was not a community, formed and maintained, on a dead level, by law, but the result of the working of the grace of God in the heart, so that every one was thinking of everybody else—no one of himself. It was the spontaneous outcome of Divine love in the believers, as they found out the place of blessing and privilege they had in Christ. We read that, "With *great* power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and *great* grace was upon them all" (ver. 33). Great power and great grace are here seen, and the two ever go together; wherever you have great power, you will find great grace.

"Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the price of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." I have little doubt there was a common fund. Very likely many a young believer lost everything by becoming a Christian, but they counted it all joy to suffer shame for Jesus' name. Yet none were allowed to lack, for all were supplied by the love of the rest. Those who had goods came and laid them down at the apostles' feet, as they liked; there was nothing to compel, it was all voluntary.

This you have Barnabas beautifully illustrating (vers. 36, 37). He makes a beautiful start, for

there is the complete surrender of all that he had to Christ. I wonder if you, my reader, have started so. I do not believe there is a real start, if Christ has not become everything to the soul.

In chapter v. the imitation of this lovely attachment of heart to Christ is before us. Undoubtedly Barnabas was looked on as devoted to the Lord. Things among men are very often merely imitative. We have such hearts that even the desire to seem devoted may be imitated, and, evidently, Ananias and Sapphira desired to appear as devoted, in the eyes of men, as Barnabas really was. Alas! they did not think of how their actions would appear to the Lord. Ananias posed as one who would appear more devoted than he really was; but God will not be mocked. Ananias appears in the guise of a man devoted to the interests of Christ. Peter comes to the front again, and, led of God, at once detects this unreal state of matters.

"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?" Did that man tell a lie? We do not read, at that moment, of any words being spoken. He came and laid down his money at the feet of the apostles, for the common need of all. But God was there, and He could not be deceived. Peter simply says, "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost" (vers. 4, 5). This man wanted to appear to possess a devotedness that was not real,

but God was in the midst of His assembly, and the unreality was detected, exposed, and judged by Him. How solemn! Yet, if there be anything that it is truly blessed to learn, it is that God *is in the midst* of His people, in the bosom of the assembly, and He will have reality. What burning thoughts must have possessed Ananias's soul at that moment, as he felt—God has detected me!

“I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified,” God had long ago said, as He judged the impiety of Nadab and Abihu (see Lev. x. 3). They offered strange fire, and died. Again, Achan took of the accursed thing, and died too (Josh. vii.).

Here Ananias dies, for the Lord will have reality. The two priests betrayed impiety; Achan, cupidity; Ananias, unreality. These lessons are solemn. The Lord would have every one of us weigh them in His presence, and feel that it is a solemn thing to enter God's assembly, and to take His name upon our lips. I believe the nearer we get to the truth, the more sure we are to be detected if we are not real. If you want to have mammon inside, with a cloak of religiousness outside, do not you come to the Lord's table. Do not come near the place where the Lord is, for you will be detected. Such is the lesson of Acts v.

A little later Sapphira comes in, “And Peter answered and said unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.” She is bold, and defiant in her lying.

“Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?” God knew what had taken place—they had talked over the matter, and made an agreement. What did Peter mean by tempting the Spirit of the Lord? How could they do that? Israel tempted God in the desert, saying, “Is the Lord among us, or not?” (Exod. xvii. 7.) They were not sure of His presence among them. Ananias and Sapphira, evidently, were not sure if the Lord was in the assembly after all. But God was there! The great, the grand truth of the Acts is, that a Divine Person is dwelling on earth in the bosom of God’s assembly. The Lord showed that His Spirit was there, by unveiling the heart of both husband and wife to His servant Peter, and then judging the evil and the evil-doers.

But, you ask, had Ananias and Sapphira been really converted? Were they Christians? I do not know. They were, outwardly, members of God’s assembly on earth, and they were unreal in the position they occupied. The hand of the Lord came upon them in judgment; and, as a direct result, “great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.” The assembly itself, and those outside it too, were greatly moved. All felt God’s presence was there, and, as a holy consequence, “of the rest durst no man join himself to them.” People were not in a great hurry to come into God’s assembly in those days. Those who wanted to be thought some-

thing of, said, It will not do to go in there; if we are not real, we shall be found out. I fancy I see a number of half-hearted souls, hangers-on, round the divinely gathered company of that day, and when the news comes out that God would not have unreality, they feared to go in.

But what do we find also? Plenty of real souls. "Multitudes both of men and women," "were added to the Lord." Here, after Sapphira, we have the fact noticed of the introduction of women into the assembly, and they come in, in multitudes.

I believe the lesson we have to learn from such a solemn scene is, that God's eye is on us. He keeps a long look-out, and eventually always deals with unreality; but if a soul is simple and honest, it says, and loves to say, like the Psalmist, not only, "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me," but adds, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. cxxxix. 1-24). The simple and dependent soul that clings to the Lord is always safe, and always kept.

Then we read more of Peter's ministry. He was evidently greatly used, as the Lord's messenger, both for the healing of the bodies of men and the blessing of their souls. Bitter opposition rises, and Peter and the rest of the apostles are cast into the common prison. But the Lord would not have His work put a stop to by Satan's servants; the angel

of the Lord opens the prison doors by night, and brings them out, and says, "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life" (ver. 20). Oh, what a commission! How beautiful for the angelic messenger of God to give these dear men this lovely message. "Speak all the words of this life." Do we know the words of this life? Then we too have a lovely commission, which takes in the whole circle of truth, as our testimony. "All the words of this life." It means all about Christ, all about redemption through Him, all about forgiveness of sins, all about sanctification, and the presence of the Holy Ghost, —all the things that belong to Christ.

After this you have Peter before the council, on a second occasion, and the high priest asks him, in a supercilious way, "Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in *this name*?" Ah! my friend, you will have to own "this name" yet. God has raised Him who bears it from the dead, and the day is not far distant when every knee shall bow to Him, angels, men, and demons. Have you confessed His name yet? The day is coming when you must, if you have not. You had better do it now, willingly, in the day of grace, and be saved, rather than be compelled to in the day of judgment.

The high priest says, "Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine" (it was lovely doctrine, for it was all about Jesus), "and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." Oh, Satan is a crafty master. He

knows how to urge a man on to a deed of darkness, and then come and give him good reasons for it. This high priest was the very man who had condemned the Lord, and round him were the people who, in Pilate's hall, had clamoured for His blood, saying, "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matt. xxvii. 25); and now he says, forsooth, "*Ye intend to bring this man's blood upon us.*" Ah! my friend, His blood must be upon you, either as a shelter from judgment and as bringing you to God, or, as crying for vengeance because of His murder!

Had not these men clamoured for the blood of the Saviour? Yes; and, as far as they were concerned, had brought about His death, and they now wished also to put His servants to death.

Observe now Peter's answer, given by the Holy Ghost,—"*We ought to obey God rather than men.*" These religious leaders of men were opposed to Christ. The apostles were not setting themselves up against the civil power. That a Christian must never do. But Judaism was an ecclesiastical principle, judged of God, and set aside, and here acting in opposition to Christ.

Then Peter once more boldly presses home their sin upon them, saying, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Let me draw you, my friend, from the toils of the god of this world, and bring you bended low at the feet of this

Prince and Saviour now. Is not a Saviour just what you want? It is! and what you need God sends to you. He is a Saviour in glory to-day for every anxious soul that wants Him. God gives repentance, and forgiveness of sins through Him, not to Israel only, but to any needy sinner that will bow to Him. Believe Him now, and get these two deep blessings,—repentance, and forgiveness of sins. Have you never bowed to, never owned Him yet? Are you still a guilty sinner, an opposer of Jesus? Ah! it is high time you were brought to repentance, for there is something else coming—judgment! It is looming in the distance, but, meantime, we preach repentance and forgiveness of sins.

What is repentance? Owing that what God says of you is true. Repentance is the judgment that the soul passes on itself. It receives the testimony of God, and when a soul believes there is a Saviour in glory, and that it has never yet bowed down to that Saviour, I believe an arrow of conviction goes through that soul.

Peter was repentant when he said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Job, when he said to God, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee," was repentant, for he adds, "Wherefore I abhor myself" (Job xlii. 5, 6).

Some one has well said, "Repentance is the tear-drop in the eye of Faith." If you are brought to repentance, self-judgment, and contrition now, I know the hand that will wipe that tear from

your eyes. It is the hand that was nailed to the tree for you! I know whose voice will whisper, "Fear not, thy sins are forgiven thee." But if you go on heedless and unrepentant, O sinner, and wake up in hell, you will have tears in plenty, but no hand there to dry them.

There is forgiveness of sins *now*. When I see my ruined and lost condition, and bow to Jesus, I get forgiveness, and then the Holy Ghost sheds abroad the love of God in the heart.

Peter's testimony cuts his hearers to the heart; but, alas! they did not repent. This is proved by what follows, for if we turn now to Acts vii., we find Stephen witnessing for Jesus, and martyred for his faithfulness. Thereafter a general persecution broke out against the saints (chap. viii. 1-4). I have no doubt Satan thought he had done a good stroke of business when he sent Stephen out of the world, but Satan always outwits himself. Numbers went out preaching the Word. Philip, who had been among the seven deacons, ordained by the apostles to look after the poor in Jerusalem, found his office interrupted by the persecution. But he evidently had a gift from Christ, and a warrant to preach from the Lord. He made such good use of his gift, that in the Acts ~~xi.~~ we find that he has graduated, and has a degree conferred on him. There he is called "Philip the Evangelist." A noble degree indeed! Here, in the eighth chapter, Philip, turned out of diaconal work, begins a far higher service, and, going down to Samaria, preaches

Christ. As a result—and it is just the right one—“there was great joy in that city” (ver. 8). Yes, when Christ is preached, and Christ is believed, there is always “great joy”; and if you have not great joy, it is because you have not given Christ His right place in your heart. The man that is happy in the Lord has the right to look bright. Some believers in Jesus are joyless, because they are so little looking to Christ. They are occupied with themselves, their circumstances, their bodies perhaps, something that is not Christ. They have too much of Christ to be able to enjoy the world, and too much of the world to enjoy Christ.

Now we have the devil coming in to imitate God's work, and he gets Simon the sorcerer, to profess conversion, that he may spoil it, and cast discredit on it. But the devil is always outwitted. Simon's case does not really fling discredit on Christianity at all. What does a bad bank-note prove? That there are plenty of good ones. Even so, a false professor of Christ is really a testimony to the truth, of which he knows nothing, but which tens of thousands rejoice in, or he would not have falsely essayed to join them.

Simon Magus was a miracle lover, and lived to influence the people's minds thereby. But Philip was preaching Christ, something that met the deep need of the heart of man, and Simon was distanced. “Then Simon himself believed also; and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done”

(ver. 13). But the faith of a man who sees miracles and believes is not divinely produced faith; for what I believe, because I see it with my eye, is not faith at all. I have no doubt when Simon confessed the Lord, and Philip baptized him, that Philip thought he had caught a great fish, and would have brought him into the assembly; but the Lord had His eye on His assembly, and on His dear servant, as well as on this daring sinner, so, by means of Peter, He brings out his real state.

The apostles Peter and John had come down from Jerusalem and having laid their hands on the Samaritan believers, they had received the Holy Ghost. "And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God." How solemn for any one who is a mere professor of Christianity? Are you only a mere professor of Christianity? "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter," is a Spirit-blown trumpet note that may well awaken you from your awful delusion. With what divine clearness does Peter look into the man's soul, as he says, "Thy heart is not right in the sight of God." I ask you, Is your heart right with God? Shirk not this

plain question, I beseech you. Peter's last words to Simon are, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity."

And when Simon gets these solemn words said to him, what does he do? Fall on his knees, and cry to God for mercy? No; he would have his praying done by proxy, like thousands in Christendom to-day. "Pray ye to the Lord for me," is his answer. You pray for me, Peter, he says. I do not hear that Peter did pray for him, and we hear no more of him. I fear he had a grand opportunity of salvation, and missed it. Do not imitate him!

Ananias and Sapphira, we see, were detected inside the assembly; Simon is detected outside it, never getting in. May I ask, my friend, Is your soul right with God? If not, do not sleep to-night till this question is happily settled in the affirmative. Are you still in the gall of bitterness, or are you in the happy position of a child of God, having Christ as the joy of your soul, having Christ as your life, your object, your guardian, going through this scene, and the coming Bridegroom to take you up to be with Him?

If you have never known Him in this way yet, the Lord grant that this day may be the beginning of your thus knowing Him, and having the joy of that knowledge.

W. T. P. W

(To be continued if the Lord will.)

A PLUCKED BRAND.

"Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"—ZECH. iii. 2.



It was indeed "a brand plucked out of the fire." I met him in a western town some time ago, and put to him an oft-repeated question, "Do you know the Lord Jesus?"

His quick and energetic reply was, as he warmly grasped my hand, "He is my Saviour!"

Is He your Saviour, dear reader? The Lord Jesus is not only a Saviour, but all who trust His precious blood are entitled to know Him as their own Saviour.

Let me tell you of his conversion, and how he first became acquainted with the Saviour. He had been rescued from the lowest depths of sin—yea, from the very jaws of hell. How matchless the grace! how wondrous the love flowing from the heart of God to poor perishing sinners!

His history had been a sad one. Drink had brought him into poverty and guilt, his wife to an asylum, and his children to the workhouse.

"The wages of sin is death," God's Word declares; "and after death the judgment."

Reader, in whose service are you? Remember, if unsaved, the wages of sin which you are surely earning is DEATH.

One night he was returning home from the public-house unusually late. On his way he had

to cross a railway, and, in passing over the rails, he stumbled and fell across them. Unconscious of his danger, there he lay for some hours, and slept.

My unsaved reader, you too are sleeping, heedless of your danger, on the brink of eternal ruin. May God, in His mercy, awaken you to the sense of your danger before it is too late!

He was suddenly aroused by feeling a hand roughly laid on his shoulder, and by being quickly drawn on one side. Thinking it was a policeman, he bade him be gentle, and he would go quietly along with him. A voice called out to him to lie perfectly still, and, to his horror, the next instant a goods train rushed past, with some twenty or thirty trucks attached. He was now thoroughly sobered and awakened. Well he might be. Had he lain there another minute, his Christless soul must have been ushered into a lost eternity.

Deeply conscious of the inevitable death that must have been his, had not a kindly hand rescued him, he staggered to his home. A friend's hand did it, you say. Be it so; it was God's hand that was outstretched to save that poor drunkard, and pluck him as a brand out of the fire. The thought of what might have been haunted him. He could neither sleep, rest, nor go to work. God had spoken to him, and he could not close his ears to that voice. The thought of what must have been his portion, had not a gracious hand rescued him, filled him with terror; yea, hell, with its yawning gulf, had opened its mouth upon him, and one

more step would have landed him there for ever. Soon after this he was brought to know the Lord as his Saviour

“God speaketh once, yea twice, but man perceiveth it not.” Has He spoken to you, dear reader? Yea, how often He has. Why still turn a deaf ear to His call? While the still small voice of mercy sounds in your ears, bow to Him who speaks. Bow you must, either in time or eternity; now, as a poor guilty sinner, in repentance owning your need, and trusting in the Saviour’s blood for salvation; or then, when repentance will be too late, and remorse unavailing, for you are eternally damned. Oh! which shall it be? God waits to be gracious. “Come now, and let us reason together,” He saith; “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).

Jesus, the sinner’s friend, the sinner’s Saviour, invites you. Listen to His loving call: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. xi. 28); “Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out” (John vi. 37). Delay not. Linger not, for “now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. vi. 2). “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

“QUARTERLY ACCOUNTS.”



HAVE no doubt most of my readers have had some experience in the matter of what are called “Quarterly Accounts.”

I was visiting a friend of mine just at the time of the year when these accounts are sent in. My friend asked me if I would call and pay some for him. I was going out, and therefore could do so.

I called at Number One, and said, “A friend of mine owes you an account; must you have it settled?”

“Yes, if it is owing,” he replied.

I said, “Yes, it is, but can you not be merciful, and let my friend off?”

“Well, no; if he has had the stuff, and owes me the money, he ought to pay.”

“Then you mean to have it settled?”

“Yes, if we can get the money.”

“But,” I said, “if I pay it for him, will that satisfy you?”

“Oh, yes,” he replied, “if the account is paid, that will be all right.”

“And my friend will be clear?”

“Yes.”

“You owe an account to God; have you been able to settle that?” I then continued.

“I am afraid not,” he replied.

“Do you not know that we are all by nature in

debt to God? What makes our case so bad is, that we have no means of meeting His claims; and remember, they are just, and God must have them settled, for God is righteous."

"I was once in your position," I added. "I found I could not settle the claims God had against me; but I found that while God was just, yet at the same time He was the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Now, thank God! I know that all that God had against me has been settled by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ."

I left him, begging him never to rest till he rested in the only thing that could satisfy the claims of a holy God, the death of Christ.

God's good news to you is, that—no matter how great be your debt—he that believeth on His Son shall not perish, but have everlasting life. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16).

Dear reader! it may be you sometimes think of the time when you will have to face this account, for the Word of God says we must, every one of us, give an account of himself to God (Rom. xiv. 12). Man is looked at as a steward, and will be asked to give an account of his stewardship, and he has been found guilty of wasting his Master's goods.

This is true of man from the first. Read Genesis the sixth chapter and the fifth verse, "And God

saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." There has been no improvement since this, for if you take Israel as a nation, they were put in the most favoured position,—brought out of bondage the most cruel, and brought into a good land watered with the dews of heaven, and flowing with milk and honey. God, speaking of it as His vineyard, says, it was in a very fruitful hill; He fenced it, and gathered out the stones, planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it; and also made a wine press therein, and looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes (Isa. v. 2).

And the further you get in the history of man, the same thing is seen. For when God, in love to this poor world, sent His Son, man said: "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours." And if you read the first and second chapters of Romans, you will see what man is, and what he has done; and Rom. iii. 10, 12, says that "there is none righteous, no, not one: they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

If then you bow to the Word of God, you must see that, by nature, all are lost. A holy God has weighed us in the balances, and found us wanting. Then it is that the love of God shines forth upon this scene of deep moral darkness; for from our

side there was none that could help, but God said, "Deliver him from going down to the pit; for I have found a ransom;" and that ransom was His only begotten Son. He, by His death, has satisfied every claim that God had against us; and now God is just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

Is not this "good news," that a holy God is just, in forgiving a lost, guilty, unjust steward, that had been wasting his Master's goods, if he believes in the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Perhaps you say, "Yes, but I must try and do my best to pay." What can a man do, if he has not got *anything to pay with*? How can a man do anything if he has no strength? There may be a difference in the amount the two creditors owed—one, five hundred pence, the other only fifty—but in one thing they were both alike, they had nothing *to pay with*. How was their case met? They were both freely forgiven (see Luke vii. 41, 42).

God has found out the way to freely forgive every one that believeth. The debt has been paid by His Son. Jesus has finished the work of redemption, has died upon the cross, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God;" and now God is saying, not, I will make you pay what you owe, but, I can now freely forgive every one that believes in My well-beloved Son and the work He has finished.

Let me ask, Have you accepted this full and free discharge from all that is against you? Thank

God! there is this one way of clearance, *but* only this one way. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). Refuse this one way, and there is nothing for those that reject but the righteous judgment of God, and this you must meet. You will stand before the great white throne (Rev. xx. 11-15), and what will you be able to plead? That you had no way to meet the account that was against you? Nay, you will be standing before the very One that came into the world to pay what you and I could not pay, and you would not believe in the work He had finished!

Ah, dear friend! you will be like the man invited to the feast,—the wedding garment was provided, but he had not availed himself of it. He went in to the feast, in his own dress. But the King came in to see the guests. He saw there a man which had *not* on a wedding garment. He said, "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).

May you now accept His offer of mercy, and be saved through believing in the name of the only begotten Son of God!

OLD JOSEPH.



NEAR a Worcestershire village, in a tumble-down thatched cottage, lives old Joseph. He is an old man, about seventy years of age, but such a bright, happy Christian.

The visit we paid him, one lovely spring afternoon, left a deep impression upon us. There he was, dear old man, lying on a dirty bed in an attic. We went up a rickety staircase into this uncared for chamber. A bed, a table, and one chair was all the furniture. The old man looked up as we entered, and uttered a note of thanks to the Lord for our visit.

"Bless Him," he said, "He never forgets me." And then he began to pour out a volume of praise to the Lord for all His love and goodness to him, and for bringing him to a knowledge of His love in coming down to save him. "I used to think of Him as being very far off, but now he is nigh me; I just tuck my head under the bedclothes, and have a long talk with Him."

We remarked that everything was very dirty and uncomfortable around him.

"Yes, it is," he said, "but I think the Lord is just leaving me here to have a little taste of His sufferings; not much you know, but just a little, so that I may have a little idea what He suffered."

His daughter now came in, and began, in a whining tone, to tell us that she was not able to get any better food for him, nor to make him more comfortable. We knew that this woman and her husband and family were a great trial to him. She was, I need not say, unconverted, and there were constant broils and disputes amongst them. They were more like wild beasts than human creatures, and fought and quarrelled over their food, which could get the largest share being the chief dispute.

The poor old man in his attic could hear all this, and it would have been indeed hard to bear had he not been trusting in One who could raise him above all circumstances, and keep him in perfect peace. In the attic in which he lay was a window covered with cobwebs. Old Joseph looked towards it, and said, "I like to look at that window, and think of the blessed Lord looking down at me through it; it's a comfort, you see, to know that He sees me."

Although he could not read, old Joseph in his way had been enabled to bring many to a knowledge of his Lord and Saviour. He often had tracts given to him, and his plan was to ask any one he met in his walks to read them to him, and then he was able to get a word for the Lord, and to earnestly urge them to come to Him before it was too late.

Upon being told that a dear Christian lady, who had been his chief friend since he became a Chris-

tian, had gone to be with the Lord, he said, "Well, the Lord hasn't gone."

Dear old man! he had only known the Lord in his old age, but the seed sown had taken root downward, and bore fruit upward. We left him, asking ourselves whether we should have felt so happy or contented in like circumstances.

And now, dear friend, are you, like old Joseph, trusting and rejoicing in the finished work of Christ, or are you trying to get to heaven by your own righteousness? Oh! be wise before it is too late, and come to Jesus just as you are, in all your sin and misery. He has said, "He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out," for "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Stand before His cross, and *behold Him* made sin for you, that you might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Shelter yourself under the blood which was shed for you on Calvary's cross. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin."

"Precious, precious blood of Jesus,
Shed on Calvary;
Shed for rebels, shed for sinners,
Shed for me."

And remember that Jesus said, when on that cross, "*It is finished!*" All who believe in that finished work are safe for time and eternity; and all they should live for now, like old Joseph, is to utter forth His praise.

GONE, GONE FOR EVER.



YOUNG man suddenly awakes out of a dreadful dream, and rushes to see where his parents are; in madness he searches for them—they are gone!

A young woman is suddenly aroused by something, she knows not what; she runs to find her mother—she is gone!

A husband finds out, on rising, that his wife is absent; he rouses all in the house to search for her; her clothes are undisturbed—she is gone!

The train is dashing furiously along the rails with its living freight. Where are the driver and fireman? Gone!

A steamship is ploughing the waters in mid-ocean;—the captain and some of the crew have suddenly disappeared; a search is made for them—they are gone!

Numbers are missing from the factories, both masters and employés. No one knows why they are absent—they are gone!

The papers are teeming with advertisements for missing friends. Rewards are offered; search parties are instituted—they are gone!

Three young men, in search of their friends, meet in the street. One remarks that he believes the resurrection has taken place, and that all the Christians are "caught up" (1 Thess. iv. 17).

"You don't say so," reply the others.

"I do; I am afraid it is too true. Let us go and see if some others are at home, and if they are we may yet be safe."

They go; but, to their horror and dismay, these friends, too, are all gone!

"Oh, I am dreadfully afraid it is too true, and that we are left behind to perish in our sins! Do you know," says the first, "I had intended some day to decide for Christ, but I always thought some great prophetic event was to take place before His coming,—that the world was to be converted, or the Jews would go back to Palestine,—and I used to think when these things began to happen it would be time enough to turn religious. True, my father used to say that there was not a line of prophecy to be fulfilled before the Lord took all His people away, and that when they went no one would see them go; but I never believed him, and now I find all he said to be terribly true."

"Well," replied the second, "to tell you the truth, I never paid any attention to that kind of thing. I called all who were Christians, and who believed in the Bible, fools and lunatics—in fact, I would not walk on the same side of the street with one if I could help it. If any dared to speak to me about being saved, I literally scoffed at them, and told them to shut up. If I am lost, I cannot help it now; all I can say is, it is my own fault."

"The whole lot in my house are gone," remarked

the third. "When I got up this morning I saw no one about. I looked everywhere for them, and could only wonder what had become of them. Now you solve the mystery for me. Well! well! I never thought it would come to this. When I saw them all going off to their meeting, I used to think what a lot of fools they were. They often spoke to me about salvation. I took it all in, of course. I used to let them talk till they were tired, then I would inwardly laugh at it, and make fun of them. If I ever came across one of these religious fellows, I always managed to give him a wide berth, and was always ready, with others, to call him a fool. I now find I am the fool. What can we do?"

Nothing. The die is eternally cast. The summer of life is ended, and the mighty harvest of opportunities and privileges gone for ever—for ever!

Dear reader, this is only at present a terrible picture, but it will be a true picture of thousands who have heard the Gospel and refused it.

Think for one moment! not a single prophecy has to be fulfilled before the Lord takes all His people away,—that is, those who have believed in Him as their Saviour. The Lord may come at any moment,—solemn fact! He is waiting till the last soul is brought into His Church, and how soon that will be none knows. It may be the last soul has been gathered in, and that now, this moment, He is about to come again and receive His people

to Himself (John xiv. 3). "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor. xv. 52). How soon? In a moment. When? Perhaps the next.

Are you ready, dear reader? If not, you are in a dreadful position,—exposed to being left behind. Remember that when the Lord takes His people out of this world, the door of mercy is closed, salvation is gone; and all left behind, who have heard the Gospel, will be lost (2 Thess. i. 8). The Lord says, Now, not to-morrow; for this very moment—not the next—Mercy's door may be closed.

The Lord still mercifully cries, "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." There is nothing to do but simply to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, as having suffered for your sins. The Lord help you to believe this ere He comes, which may be even while you are reading this. Indecision is terrible in so great a matter as salvation, because its consequences are eternal.

To you, my dear reader, I would, in all affection, say:—

"Haste, traveller, haste, the night comes on,
And many a shining hour is gone;
The storm is gathering in the west,
And thou art far from home and rest.

Haste, traveller, haste!"

SIMON PETER, FISHERMAN, AND APOSTLE.

CHAPTER VIII.

CORNELIUS AND HIS HOUSEHOLD.

ACTS X.—XI. 1-18.



HERE is a peculiar interest attaching to this section of the Acts of the Apostles, because it shows the way in which the Gentiles step into blessing. It shows the way in which you and I can get saved, and opens up the manner in which those who had no claim on God whatever get God's salvation.

It is a very interesting occasion when the Gospel comes out first to the Gentiles, and very beautiful to note the way the Lord sends to an anxious man the blessing he wants. Evidently the eye of God is on this scene,—on the man who was anxious for light, and on the servant who was to carry the light to him. We find that both were praying. Cornelius was praying when a vision came to him (x. 30), and Peter was also praying when a vision came to him (xi. 15). A very interesting lesson this for preachers and listeners! Cornelius was, I believe, a truly converted man when he got that vision. He was, however, without peace, and with-

out the sense of pardon, but deeply desirous of getting that which he had not yet. He knew nothing about the accomplishment of redemption, and the coming of the Holy Ghost.

Cornelius was a Gentile undoubtedly, and by his very connection with the famous Italian band must have been a man of noble birth. He had moral features, too, which were very lovely. He feared God "with all his house." There are very few people of whom that can be said. "With all his house" would include his servants and children. Added to this remarkable statement we find, moreover, that he gave "much alms to the people." He was a benevolent man, much interested in others; a man who thought of others, as well as of his own soul's need. Regarding that, we are told he "prayed to God alway." This Gentile centurion, then, could not have been an unconverted man, for an unconverted man has no fear of God before his eyes. Cornelius, on the contrary, was a prayerful man, a man in whom the Spirit of God had worked, and had wrought in his heart spiritual desires. He is a type of hundreds and thousands of Gentiles to-day. He was an awakened man,—an anxious, pious, prayerful, and God-fearing man; but had you gone and asked him if his sins were forgiven, he would not have dared to say so, because the testimony of the Gospel, and the preaching of forgiveness to the Gentiles, had not gone out up to that moment.

It would have been as wrong for Cornelius to say, in the beginning of this chapter, that he was

forgiven, as for you and me now, if believing on Jesus, to say we do not know it. But although Cornelius knew not this great blessing, it is clear that most fervently he desired it, for he tells Peter that the angel had said unto him, "Cornelius, thy prayer is heard" (x. 31). What does that mean? That God read his heart, and knew what he desired—light. Bear in mind that he was not a Jewish proselyte. He had not embraced Judaism, though the Jews evidently thought well of him; but clearly he had never bowed to the yoke of the law. Christianity had just begun to be heard of, and the Jews loudly claimed to be still under the law of God, so that I can understand this pious man wondering where the truth lay.

Tidings of Jesus had gone out,—tidings of His death, and of His resurrection; for some time before the scene laid in our chapter, Philip had announced the glad tidings to "all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea" (Acts viii. 40). Cornelius, therefore, must have heard about Jesus; but evidently he had not heard the full truth, and I believe the prayer of that man was, Lord, give me light, and wonderful light for him was then in store.

In this exceedingly interesting, awakened state, a man born of the Spirit (he could not have been acceptable to God otherwise, yet the angel said to him, "Thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God"), touched, anxious, wrought on by the Spirit of God, but not knowing the full truth of the Gospel, burning for

light, desiring to have it, praying to God for it, he got a vision. As he prayed, "a man stood before me," he says, "in bright clothing, and said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the seaside; who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee" (x. 30-32). In order to be saved, he was not told to *do* works, but he was to *hear* words, when Peter came. "He shall speak to thee." And when Peter relates the tale in Jerusalem, he says that the angel had said to Cornelius, "Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall *tell thee words*, whereby *thou and all thy house shall be saved*" (xi. 13, 14). Mark that now! What God bids Cornelius do, is to listen to "*words*, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." Many souls think that if they are to be saved, it is by some kind of works; but, when God opens the way to the Gentiles, He precludes the thought of works, as He says to this anxious man, Send for my messenger, who shall "*tell thee words*." No man was ever yet saved by *works*: and no man was ever saved without believing *words*—the words of God. . .

In speaking of being saved, I am using the word as Scripture uses it. By being saved, I mean, a man not only knowing that he is set free from his sins, and that he is pardoned, but that he is brought to God,—that he is united to a living triumphant

Saviour, who died on the cross for him, and is ascended and accepted for him, and who has sent down the Holy Ghost to make his emancipation known to him. ..

No sooner has Cornelius heard from God what he is to do, than he does it. This shows the earnestness and the fervour of the man. "Immediately therefore I sent to thee," he says to Peter. He will not wait a day. He does not say, I will think about it. Many a man has said, I will think about it, I will "hear thee again of this matter," and, blinded by Satan, and snared by procrastination, has gone to hell for eternity. Well did Rowland Hill say, "Procrastination is the recruiting officer of hell." Cornelius was no procrastinator.

Look at this earnest seeker! No sooner has the angel departed than he obeys the divinely given instructions (x. 7, 8). He feels that not a moment is to be lost; and, my reader, can you afford to wait another day to get the concerns of your soul settled? The moment this man hears God's word he sends off his three servants, on their forty miles' journey by the sea-coast, to Joppa. Travelling was not very rapid in those days, and they stayed no doubt somewhere for the night (ver. 9), but Cornelius was not long kept waiting. God loves to meet an anxious soul, and ofttimes does it straightway.

Now, let us see how the Lord was preparing His servant to meet this exercised and obedient Gentile. Peter went up to pray on the housetop; and he did

pray, for he says in the next chapter, "I was in the city of Joppa praying." It was the sixth hour, noonday, not the time people generally go up to pray. Once Peter had been told to watch and pray, and he did not, with the result that he fell; now we find him praying, and the Lord speaks to him in a vision. He "saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth; wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter, kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice; and the vessel was received up again into heaven" (vers. 11-16). Some have imagined this to be the Church, but I do not believe that is the thought here. Peter was not the vessel through whom God was going to bring out the truth of the Church; that was given to Paul. I believe the vision was given to teach Peter the lesson, that the Cross had done away with all the barriers that had previously existed between Jew and Gentile, and that the grace of God was going out to each alike, and that the same cleansing power was to bring both into blessing.

But Peter could not interpret the vision; and while he was doubting what it should mean, the men sent

from Cornelius stood before the gate. At this moment, while Peter thought upon the vision, God does not send an angel—a servant—to call him and tell him about the messengers who stood before the gate; but “the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them” (vers. 19, 20). How beautiful this is. I believe Peter now begins to get an inkling of what the Lord means by the vision. It was to teach him that with God there was henceforth to be no distinction between Jew and Gentile. Peter had been a good Jew up till this time; but the special thought of the Church is that “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all” (Col. iii. 2); and Peter was the vessel chosen of God to begin this work, and to call in the Gentiles, although Paul was distinctly the Apostle of the Gentles.

Under law, God had forbidden the Jew to mingle with the Gentile. Now the Lord taught Peter that that day had gone by,—that what God had cleansed, he was not to call common; and at once he began to carry out the truth, for we read that he called the men in and lodged them (ver. 23).

We have been saying that Peter was a very impulsive, ardent, incautious man, but it is striking to see how cautious he became here. He took with him six brethren (x. 23, xi. 12) to be witnesses of what God was about to do; and I have no doubt

these six men had a warm heart to Peter ever after, for taking them with him that day. I should be thankful to any one who took me where the Lord was going to bless and save a whole houseful of anxious souls.

While Peter and his companions are journeying to Cæsarea, Cornelius is very urgent to get others blessed as well as himself. He is anxious to get light for himself, but he is very anxious too for others, for when Peter arrives we read, "Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends" (ver. 24).

As Peter was coming in, we find that Cornelius worships him; that is, he pays him deep reverence. Peter lifts him up, and they go into the house together, and Peter finds "many that were come together." The house was full of souls that God was going to bless. Peter then says, "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for." Peter has learned his lesson now, he has got the key to the difficulty that he pondered over on the roof. When he had gone down and obeyed, he saw quite clearly, that the grace of God was going out to the ends of the earth.

Then he probes Cornelius, and tries to find out his state of soul, as he says, "I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?" It is a good

thing to let a soul, anxious about divine things, speak out for itself. Cornelius tells his own story. He says, "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house." Here you have another indication of Cornelius's moral state, he was fasting as well as praying; pouring out his soul to God, and fasting till the ninth hour. Then, having told of the angel's visit, Cornelius adds, "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." I do not know anything more cheering to one who loves souls than to get an audience like this, all anxious to hear. Peter, before he began to preach, knew there was not a listless soul among that company, not a procrastinator, nor a scoffer; he knew he had a company of downright, earnest, seeking, longing souls, only wanting to know the truth. "Now are we all here present before God to hear." Oh, what an audience! Anxious listeners make earnest preachers; longing hearers make it easy to preach. Ah, have you never yet been anxious about your soul? The days of your anxiety will surely come, my friend.

Then Peter begins, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him." It is a question now of the grace of God going out world-wide; wherever there is a soul looking to God, that is the soul God will bless. "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he

is Lord of all): that word ye know," adds Peter. He knew full well that Jesus was Lord of the Jews, but it never seemed to have got into his soul before that He was Lord of *all*. But He is Lord of *all*, and you, my friend, will have to give an account to Him hereafter.

In the compass of one short verse (ver. 38) Peter brings out the truth which Matthew opens with, and unfolds in his Gospel, "They shall call his name Emmanuel; which being interpreted is, God with us." The preaching in the house of Cornelius brings before us three great truths: first, "God with us" (ver. 38); then "God for us" (vers. 40-43); thirdly, "God in us" (vers. 44-47). God with us was the whole life of Jesus, "who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with him, and we are witnesses of all things which he did in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree." Peter does not charge his hearers with having any part in the crime of slaying Jesus, but he details the truth nevertheless.

"Him," he next says, "God raised up, and shewed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead." Here we get the second wonderful truth, viz., God for us. The One whom man refused, God raised up, and put into glory.

There was no doubt about His resurrection; the preacher himself had seen Him, and had eaten and

drunk with Him. Peter remembered the piece of broiled fish and of an honeycomb which they had given Him after His resurrection; and he remembered too the fire of coals with the fish laid thereon, and bread, when Jesus had called him and his six companions to come and dine with Him, on the shores of the Lake of Galilee; and he brings out now the truth—rich beyond all expression in its fruits—the beautiful, blessed truth of the death and resurrection of Christ. His death met the claims of God, while His resurrection displayed His absolute victory over death, and sin, and all the power of Satan.

In the moment of His death He did a work which absolutely and eternally glorified God about sin and His resurrection is God's answer to that work. It is the demonstration of the satisfaction and delight of God in Christ's work, as well as the proof of the complete victory which Christ has won in the very domain of death, for it is annulled. But more than, and because of that, He it is "which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead." It is His victory, as Man, over death that gives Him title to judge (see John v. 21-27). But, ere the day when He will judge, comes the day in which He saves. Concerning this, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."

Long before man is to be judged for his sins God unfolds two things; first, that forgiveness is offered to every soul that believes in His Son, and secondly,

that He sends the Holy Ghost to dwell in the believer. Is not that wide enough, broad enough, to take you and me in? Is not forgiveness of sins the very thing you need and desire? That is the very thing God proclaims to you.

Christ is risen, man slew Him, God raised Him, we have seen Him, says Peter, He is going to be the Judge of the living and the dead by-and-bye; and in the meantime "whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." This is what Peter proclaims to his audience, and they were anxious, truth-seeking souls. Cornelius was a man wanting light, wanting to know how to be forgiven, and how to get saved. He wanted to hear God's words, and what were these words? "Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Do you believe on His name, my reader, do you rest your troubled soul on that blessed One? Then forgiveness of sins is yours.

Now see what follows. "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." They got the seal of God, the seal of the Holy Ghost. Now what does the Holy Ghost seal? Not doubts, not fears, surely; He always seals faith. He dispels my fears by telling me that the One, who is to be the Judge by-and-bye, died on the cross to save me; He dispels my doubts by turning my eye off myself on to Christ, and the moment my eye is on Him, and the work He has done, I get rest and peace.

The moment, by simple faith, my eye is on the

Person of Him who is Son of God, and Son of Man, I derive blessing from the glory of His Person, and I get all the benefit of the work He has accomplished. I get the Person of Christ for my heart, and the work of Christ for my conscience. Your heart can never rest save in a Person, while your conscience can only be calmed by knowing the work that He did.

It is most important to see that the unfolding of these truths and the coming down of the Holy Ghost are intimately connected. The Holy Ghost has come to minister these truths to the believing soul. What led to the gift of the Holy Ghost in the second of Acts? They believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. What brought in this plentitude of blessing in Acts x.? They believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. They heard of Jesus, of His death and resurrection, the power of His name, and forgiveness through His name, and, like simple souls, they believed the word, and God gave them the Holy Ghost on the spot. They did not get the Holy Ghost to help them to believe, but they got the Holy Ghost as the seal of their simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Holy Ghost has come down here to tell me God's thoughts about Jesus, and the moment I believe in Him, I receive the forgiveness of my sins through faith in Him, and the Holy Ghost comes and takes up His abode in my body. The believer gets the seal of the Spirit, not merely as an influ-

ence to give him a bit of comfort for a moment, but to be the abiding, indwelling Comforter. He is the seal of faith, and the earnest of future glory. If you bought a hundred sheep, the mark you put on them does not make them yours; it only shows to all around that they are yours. It was the money you paid for them that made them yours. Similarly it is the blood of Jesus that redeems me, cleanses me, brings me out of darkness into light, sets me free, brings me to God, and makes me a child of His. What is the next thing? The Lord gives me the Holy Ghost as His seal that I am redeemed and blessed, and belong to Him. The possession of the Spirit does not make me His, but it is the seal that shows that I am His.

In this sermon of Peter's, then, you get three things: first, God with us, that is the life of Jesus; then, God for us, that is the death of Jesus; then, God in us, that is the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Then Peter says, we cannot keep these people out of their privileges. "Can any one forbid water," he asks, "that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" No, he says, they are forgiven, they have the Holy Ghost, and they must be let into the House of God on earth. Here is the second occasion on which Peter uses the keys of the kingdom of heaven. He opens the door afresh this day as thus he brings in the Gentiles. He has no authority to let people into heaven, but into the kingdom of heaven, as a scene of profession on earth,

he lets them enter, I apprehend, by the door of baptism.

I have no doubt that these people had repented before Peter went down to them, but, having received God's testimony to the name and work of Jesus, they know they are forgiven, know they are saved, and they receive the Holy Ghost to dwell in them. That is the privilege of every simple soul to-day. You may know you are forgiven and saved the moment you simply believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and God then gives the Holy Ghost to dwell in you, as His seal and mark that you belong to Him.*

W. T. P. W.



"DIGGED DEEP."



IN a day of lip-profession like the present, it is very important to take heed to our Lord's words in Luke vi. 46-49, "Every tree is known by his fruit." "Why call ye me Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

An outward profession, when the heart has never submitted to God, and a calling of Christ, "Lord," when His word has no place in the heart, is idle

* These Papers, now concluded, together with some Lectures on Peter's Two Epistles, will shortly be published (*D. V.*) in a volume entitled, "SIMON PETER: HIS LIFE AND LETTERS." J. Nisbet & Co., London.

mockery. "Who hath required this at your hand?" . . . "It is iniquity, even the solemn meeting." . . . "I am weary to bear them." "When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear" (Isa. i. 12-18).

God will have reality, the conscience and heart must be affected. Conviction of sin, conversion, repentance, confession of sin, faith in Christ, all tell of the great moral change in a man that really possesses God salvation.

"O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance," said John the Baptist to the respectable religionists of his day.

"And now, also, the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (Matt. iii. 7-10). And what fruit is that? Repentance toward God. The Son of God said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke xiii. 1-5).

Yes, the man who builds his house so that the storm of the future will not affect it, must "*dig deep*." The word must take hold of the heart and conscience; there must be the submitting to God and His righteousness; there must be the confession of one's sins and vileness; there must be the standing in the presence of God stripped of every shred of self-righteousness; there must be the turning by faith to the Crucified One for salvation; there must

be the open confession of the Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of a God-hating, Christ-despising world. "If thou *shalt* confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and *shalt* believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 8-10).

Ah, friend, there must be reality! Has there been reality with you? Have you been with God about your sins and the judgment-day?

In Matt. vii. 24, the man that "*digs deep*," and builds his house upon "*a rock*," is called "*a wise man*." The man who builds his salvation on his morality and outward respectability is not digging deep; that is only sand.

The man that builds upon mere religiousness is not digging deep. He is building his house upon the sand, and when the flood arises, and the stream beats vehemently upon that house, immediately it will fall (Luke vi. 49).

The man who is relying for salvation on sacramentalism is the opposite of being a wise man; he is a fool, for he is building on sand, and not upon a rock.

The man who is relying upon his promises to turn over a new leaf is building on sand; for where in the first Adam book can you find a new leaf? Though there be ten thousand leaves, they are all stained and defiled with sin. There is not a new leaf in the whole book to turn over. "*Ye must be born again*."

Yes, you must dig deep. You must dig through the stratum of mere morality, the stratum of mere outward religiousness, the stratum of the figment

of "sacramental grace," the stratum of being better than your neighbour, the stratum of supposed good works, the stratum of turning over a new leaf, the stratum of noble ancestry, the stratum of law-keeping, the stratum of self-righteousness; and when you are stripped of all in which you are placing confidence, and see yourself vile, sinful, ruined and helpless, you will come to the solid rock—CHRIST.

Ah, yes; Christ, and Christ alone, is the Rock of our salvation.

This is the Rock—the strong and imperishable Rock of Ages, upon which a poor, vile sinner can build his house for eternity. "For other foundations can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. iii. 11).

And mark you what the Saviour says about such a man. "Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house; and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock; and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: *for it was founded on a rock*" (Luke vi. 47-49).

My reader, are you that man? Are you building on Christ, "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification?" that Christ of God "who suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (Rom. iv. 25; 1 Peter iii. 18).

Have you come to Him? Have you heard His sayings? And are you doing them? E. A.

IN THE RAPIDS.



THREE young men were bathing one summer day in a beautiful river. They allowed themselves to float down the river towards a waterfall some distance below. Two of them at length made for the shore, and in doing so they found that the current was much stronger than they had supposed. Immediately they had landed, they hailed their companion still floating down the river, and urged him to stay no longer, but make for the river's bank. Several had by this time gathered to the river-side, and, seeing the young man's danger, they urged upon him to at once make for the bank, or he would certainly be carried over the waterfall. He began to see his danger and made for the bank. But, alas! the current was too strong; his utmost energies failed to resist its power; he was in the rapids. He cried loudly for help, but no help was near. He was beyond the reach of the most powerful arm, and his own was helpless. The current bore him on over the waterfall, and into the boiling abyss below. He was drowned.

How like the way in which many are damned for eternity! In the morning of their life, when youth and health was theirs, they had been warned to flee from wrath to come. The warning fell on listless ears. It was pleasant floating, and so

by time's swiftly flowing stream they were carried along. But death and judgment suddenly rose up to view; the soul had to meet with God, and the long forever of eternity had to be entered. The soul was in the rapids, and presently it was hurled into a Christless and a hopeless eternity. Reader! are you ready to meet God?



"I HOPE I AM NOT A HYPOCRITE."



FEW weeks since, in a town in the North of Ireland, lay a young man of twenty-three, dying of consumption, which became rapid in the end. Some time before he had seemed to be impressed with the reality of eternal things at a meeting, but it passed off. Thereafter the writer, and other Christians, only knew him as one stoutly built up in his own system of religion,—but *Christ* was not there.

We heard of sudden weakness, and we called, and found him much changed—both in body and spirit. He found that his religion was a foundation of sand, and it was evident that he was granted "repentance toward God." He deeply regretted his wasted life, and said, "I don't like to sneak into heaven,"—"I hope I am not a hypocrite." He felt it "*mean*" to take all from Christ, and receive Him, when all else had failed him.

We saw how the Lord was thus speaking to *the living*. He cared for no visitors but those who could speak of Christ. We judged it well rather to follow the workings of the Spirit of God, which for several days wrought in showing him his need, and his ruin, and his "backsliding" as he confessed to. But the Lord's Day before he was taken, I felt led in prayer to thank the Lord that "there is joy in heaven over *one sinner that repenteth*." He suddenly grasped my hand, saying, "Oh, I never saw that so before—to think that there could be joy over *a worm* like me, there."

I rose, assured that "faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," was dawning. Each day after he seemed to get more of the "light of life." Wednesday evening after that Lord's Day I felt free to speak entirely of God's satisfaction in Christ's work, and how *He* had "set forth Christ a propitiation through faith in his blood." I quoted, "God is satisfied with Jesus; I am satisfied as well," and pressed, "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life."

"I believe! I believe! I believe! I *have* everlasting life; I am resting on Christ, as I rest my head on this pillow," was his utterance.

I expressed pleasure in hearing him speak about "a worm like me." He added, "the *vilest* worm."

That Wednesday night, and till nine o'clock next morning, he expressed at intervals his faith in Christ.

His Christian mother, during the night, began to read some poem to him which spoke of the beauti-

ful place that heaven is. He said, "Don't mind that, mother; read 'Jesus, lover of my soul,' and added, "I love ——; she showed me the way."

He became unconscious at nine o'clock, Thursday morning, and went to be with Christ at one o'clock.

The *grace* of God in saving him, the *government* of God in not, as he longed, leaving him to testify for long here,—both struck us much. I had told him that perhaps he would only get the opportunity to "go home to thy friends, and tell them what great things God hath done for thee, and hath had mercy upon thee." And so it was.

May you, dear reader, learn how needful it is to come to Christ in health, and be *for* Him here.

J. M. H.



THE COMING HARVEST.



N Matthew xiii. 24-30, the Lord likened the kingdom of heaven to "a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way," &c. &c. *Great multitudes* of men were gathered together listening to His teaching (ver. 2). In ver. 36 Jesus sent them away, and went into the house. Then "his disciples came unto him, saying, *Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.*"

We would like to bring our Lord's explanation of this wonderful scripture before our readers. To the mass who heard it, we fear it remained a parable. But in ver. 51, at the close of His teaching, Jesus saith unto His disciples, "Have ye understood all these things? They say unto Him, *Yea, Lord.*" We trust that many who may read these lines may be found amongst the number who can add their "*Yea.*"

Jesus answered and said unto His disciples, "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world [age]; and the reapers are the angels" (vers. 37-39).

The sower then is the Son of Man, Jesus; and He sows good seed. Wondrous grace, the Son of God, in human form, down here in this poor world, occupied in sowing good seed! And, blessed be His name, this sowing has gone on from that day to this. It is true that the world rejected Him, and He has gone away, as we learn elsewhere, but the Son of Man is still sowing good seed. And *the field is the world.* Many would tell us the field is the Church. But where did they get this idea from? It is directly in the teeth of Scripture. So oft many judge of Scripture by the state of things around them, instead of judging of things around by Scripture. Jesus Himself said, "The field is the world." This should settle the matter once and for

ever, for all who own the authority of His Word. The Son of Man sows good seed in this poor world. This is "his field" (ver. 24).

Then we are told who the good seed are, "the children of the kingdom." Believers. All who then and now receive the Lord's word. Have you received it? No one is a child of the kingdom in the natural state. Adam's fallen race, without exception, has no part nor lot in the matter.

But other seed was sown (ver. 25). Tares sprung up amongst the wheat. And "the tares are the children of the wicked one" (ver. 38). Hence we find a mixed crop. The servants of the Son of Man were negligent—"men slept,"—and an enemy got to work. Hence the state of the kingdom of heaven. Wherever the rule and authority of heaven on earth has been acknowledged, true and false have been found mixed. That part of the world which owns to-day the Lordship of the Man Christ Jesus, is peopled with converted and unconverted, believers and unbelievers, possessors and professors, Christians and worldlings. Tens of thousands without the new birth, and with a mere form of godliness, have entered the kingdom externally. It is an enemy's work. And we are at no loss to discover who the enemy is. "The enemy that sowed them," saith the Lord, "is the devil." Satan always works where God works. No sooner does the Son of Man sow good seed, than the enemy at once seeks to introduce the bad. Hence, far and wide, we find the outward acknowledgment of Christ's authority,

but the heart of millions far from God. We fear the crop of tares has grown more prolifically than the wheat. Reader, which are you? The Lord well knows wheat from tares, if men do not. You may own Christ with the lip, and be a daily professor of His name, and outwardly acknowledge the rule of heaven to the end of your days, but if you have never *heard His voice*, and believed on Him that sent Him, you are still in the darkness of nature, without His precious gift of eternal life, and in danger of eternal condemnation (John v. 24).

Many go on with eyes fast closed as to what is coming. A sowing is always in view of a harvest. God's harvest may be delayed, but it will surely come. The harvest is *the end of the age* (not world, see new translation), and the reapers are the angels. The day draws rapidly near. It is grace to sinners that holds it back. The day of the harvest of the wheat will be the day of the destruction of the tares. The Son of Man will surely have the wheat gathered into *His barn* (ver. 30). It is a wonderful barn. Who would not be one of the sheaves! His barn is on high; it is the glory of God. All the wheat will be shortly harvested there. The end of the age draws nigh. The reapers are ready; they only wait the word of command from the Master.

“As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world [age]. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather forth out of his kingdom all

things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (vers. 40-43).

The Son of Man will ere long send His angels forth. What an awful moment for this poor world! Woe to the Christless in that day! "They shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend [*margin*, scandals], and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." And elsewhere we read, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven *with his mighty angels*, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power," &c. (2 Thess. i. 7-9). None shall escape. The sickle of judgment is sharp, and will do its work without fail (Rev. xiv. 14, 15). Until the harvest the wheat and the tares grow together in the world. It is not the time to root them up yet. Separation from evil in the house of God is another thing altogether. But in the time of harvest, the Lord will say to the reapers, "Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn" (vers. 28-30). Bound in bundles, the ungodly, who know not God, and who obeyed not the Gospel, but lived

for time, and self, and iniquity, will be cast into a furnace of fire. Awful doom! "There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth," saith the Lord (ver. 42). And that awful judgment is eternal (Matt. xxv. 46).

We appeal to you, dear reader, to weigh these matters solemnly, whilst the day of sowing continues, and ere the harvest come, and judgment ensue. Now is the day of salvation. Probably you own the authority of the Lord, glorified at the right hand of God. But do you know Him as your Saviour? Do you love Him as the One who loved you, and gave Himself for you? Can you say, Jesus is mine, and I am His? Alas, it is only too true of a great multitude to-day, like the Jews in our Lord's day on earth, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. xv. 8, 9). The Lord looketh on the heart. Is your heart right with Him? Your head may be full of doctrine, your moral character amongst men may be irreproachable, but, *to be saved*, you must confess Jesus Lord with the mouth, and *with the heart* believe that God raised Him from the dead (Rom. x. 9).

Run not away with the vain idea that it is only those who live in open iniquity, on whom the judgment of God will fall in that day. Scripture says, "It is iniquity, even the solemn meeting" (Isa. i. 13). God's thoughts are not as ours. Even that which is *highly esteemed* amongst men, is *abomina-*

tion in the sight of God. Even the thought of foolishness is sin. The righteous only will escape, and in the natural state there is none righteous, no, not one (Rom. iii. 10). God only can count us righteous, and that by faith. God is just, and the justifier of him which *believeth in Jesus* (Rom. iii. 26). To be found amongst the righteous, you must bow to, and believe the Gospel of His wondrous grace.

And in the day of harvest, when the Christless shall be judged, "then," adds the Lord, "shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of their Father" (ver. 43). Caught up to meet Him in the air (1 Thess. iv. 17), before the final closing in of the age, and the execution of judgment on men on the earth, they shall appear with Christ in glory, when He shall be manifested as Judge (Jude 14, 15). Every saint, as well as every angel, shall accompany Him in His glorious train (Rev. xix. 14; Matt. xxv. 31). And as the sun shines forth in the heavens, so will all His saved ones shine forth with Him, the Sun of righteousness, in that glorious day. He shall judge His foes, and establish the kingdom (Zech. xiv. 1-11).

Knowing that these things must shortly come to pass, we press upon every soul, that reads these lines, our Lord's closing words, "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." Soon it will be too late.

A Saviour in glory says to you—"Come unto me." Never did a burdened soul respond without receiving rest. Come to Him now while you may, and salvation is yours.

E. H. C.

THREE CONTRASTS.

“Woe unto them! for they have gone in the *way* of Cain, and ran greedily after the *error* of Balaam for reward, and *perished* in the gainsaying of Core.”—JUDE 11.

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the *way*, and the *truth*, and the *life*; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”—JOHN xiv. 6.

“THE WAY OF CAIN.”



HE first man born of a woman into this world was the first being to tread this road, and Scripture has called it by his name. It is the road that leads farther and farther away from God. “And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord.” It is, in short, the straight road to hell.

Cain took the initial step—*out of the presence of the Lord*. He builded a city and called it after his son. The same chapter that records this (Gen. iv.), also records the first example of polygamy. The coarseness of sin soon appears; the way of Cain is the down-grade to hell. The result of Lamech's polygamy was at least three sons, who all made their mark upon their age—nay, upon all time.

Jabal “was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle.” He was the first who shaped the calling of agriculturist, and its kindred pursuits.

Jubal “was the father of all such as handle the

harp and organ." He was the founder of the musical profession.

Tubal-Cain "was an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron." He was the father of inventions and engineering. You say, "What harm in all this?" No doubt they altered the aspect of affairs for the better—their city was more comfortable. Perhaps rivers were spanned—articles of domestic comfort brought into common use—the sweet sound of the harp and organ charmed the ear at holiday and leisure time—commerce was set on its basis—in short, the rudiments of the world were there, developing in this nineteenth century into such scenes as Oxford Street, London, and Broadway, New York, present, with their theatres and music halls—luxuries that once destroyed the Grecian and Roman empires, and may yet destroy the English.

"Well, but what harm in all this?" you cry. Just this—all these things were used to forget God—to please themselves alone.

Look at those waving fields of fast-ripening grain—at those sleek cattle chewing the cud of contentment—at that farm-stead with its signs of rustic plenty. The good hand of God is not withholden or niggardly in bestowing His creature mercies. But the curse of Cain, alas! is often upon a scene like that. Forgetfulness of God is there.

Look at that busy shop. See the bustling shopkeeper courteously and assiduously attend his

customers. He is shrewd, honourable, well-spoken of by all as a thorough-going, sound business man. But again the curse of Cain is often upon such a scene. God is forgotten.

Once more, step in imagination into that theatre. Mark the animated faces as they crowd pit, and gallery, and dress-circle. Listen to the ringing cheers, or the musical laugh, as they watch the well-turned actors. How far away from their thoughts is God! How unwelcome the thought of death and judgment to come! The curse of Cain is upon the brow. They hurry on, careless and heedless, to the eternal burnings. Nay, they will even pay to have their time whiled away thus. Soon they will all be in eternity. But where?

“I AM THE WAY.”

The Lord Jesus had gathered His disciples round Him, and was having His last, loving talk with them. He tells them He is leaving them, but will come again for them, and receive them unto Himself. Thomas—the doubting one—asks the dark question—“Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?”

Yes, that is the great, grand question to be solved. Which is the way to heaven? One says, prayers, ordinances, Bible-reading, weeping is the way. The Lord Jesus had just instituted the Lord's Supper, and had given them a new commandment. But He does not mention these things. He says, “*I am the way.*”

Despairing sinner, look not to means but to a Person, who was once in death, but now is at God's right hand in heavenly glory. That is *THE WAY* which precludes all others. He is *the way* to the Father, and to heaven.

Simon Peter was taught a fundamental lesson in those words, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterward."

Yes, the Lord Jesus *alone* had to meet the full tide of God's wrath against sin. *Alone* He had to enter the darkness—to endure the hiding of God's face. *Alone* He had to die—His blood had to be shed.

God is satisfied with His perfect work, and now the believer in Jesus can know Him as *the way*. The worshipper, too, enters "into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, *by a new and living way*, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, *his flesh*" (Heb. x. 19, 20).

Have you believed on Jesus, the Son of God?

"THE ERROR OF BALAAM."

Balaam's error was that whilst knowing the reality of eternal things he tampered with them for reward. Unconverted ministers and professors of religion, beware. The hireling prophet said, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." Yet he was unprepared to live the life of the righteous. How then could he expect to reap a different harvest from that which he had sown?

Perhaps you have seen the last days of godly parents. You have marked their peace and joy in departing. And inwardly you have longed for the same end. You believed in the reality of *their* Christianity. Ah! you must be converted yourself. You must live *for* Christ or else you cannot die *in* Christ. If you sow the wind, you will reap the whirlwind. What of *your* last end?

Again, Balaam said, "I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh." He was speaking of Christ prophetically, and concerning Israel.

If you go on, as you are, you know that when you see Christ, and "every eye shall see him," it will not be near, but afar off, on the great, white throne of judgment. Oh! the moral distance between the righteous Judge and the ungodly sinner!

Poor, misguided Balaam sold his never-dying soul for earthly gold. What are you doing?

You are troubled about your sins—about your soul. But your business, your family, your pleasure, your sins, keep you from Jesus. The curl of the lip, the sneer, keep others from the Saviour. Their reward is applause and popularity, and they damn their souls for that. As you love your soul, consider well these things. You would have the respectability of religion without the cross.

And what of Christ? He says,—

"I AM THE TRUTH."

He is the revealer of the Father—the truth about Him. And more if you come to Christ, you will

know what an utterly unworthy, contemptible life you have been leading—you will learn the enormity of sin. The poor bat-like infidel thinks everything is out of joint, and sadly needs squaring. If he came to Christ, he would get the solution to every question. How can he find out truth, when he has never come to *the truth*—Christ Himself, the Son of God? Come to Him then as you are, and instead of being a sham professor like Balaam, you will become a real possessor.

"PERISHED IN THE GAINSAYING OF CORE."

Now, as in the days of Moses, men are bringing their thoughts to the Word of God, and by them judging it. In Numbers xvi. we read the sad history of those who allowed their own thoughts to work in the things of God, and the solemn lesson of their punishment. God had ordained the priests with Aaron, the High Priest, to offer the sacrifices. These Levites, who had work to do in connection with the tabernacle, but were not allowed to offer sacrifices, presumed to dictate to Moses in the matter, and really to God. They thought they were quite able to offer these sacrifices, and to do without the office of the priesthood.

Has this not its counterpart in this speculative nineteenth century? Do not even ministers from their pulpits question and even deny the necessity of the atonement—therefore of the eternity of punishment, and therefore of the inspiration of Scripture. The fundamental truths of Holy Scrip-

ture are like stones in an arch, if one be taken away, the whole arch is destroyed.

Aaron, the High Priest, is a type of Christ, and the summary way in which God punished those who presumed to impose their own thoughts upon His word, teaches us the lesson in type and shadow as to what God thinks of Christ, and what an awful thing it is on our part to seek without Him to worship God, and reach heaven. It will end fatally.

Let me briefly describe the end of Dathan, Korah (Core), and Abiram.

A test was made on a certain day. Aaron, and the priests of God, took their censers with fire in them and incense thereon, whilst two hundred and fifty of the rebels' supporters took their censers with *strange* fire, and all alike stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Moses by the direction of God warned the children of Israel to separate themselves from the tents of the malcontents.

Then Moses told them *a new thing* would happen—the earth would open her mouth and swallow them up. Their scientists might have answered, "Our text-books of science do not tell us that such an event, as you describe, has ever happened—therefore we do not believe it, do not trouble ourselves about your gloomy prognostications." That is *pari passu* with the reasoning of the present day—the ostrich's trick of burying her *head* in the sand when overtaken in the chase, and

therefore fancying her *body* is not seen. And shallow infidelity echoes such reasoning to the full. That shuts out God, and therefore the miraculous must disappear. Even the Creator of nature's laws cannot, must not, vary them in a single instance. But the earth in Moses' day *did* open her mouth, and swallow them up alive, and thus sudden destruction came upon them. And more, fire came from above and destroyed the two hundred and fifty with their arrogant claims. Judgment from above and judgment from beneath quickly answered their blasphemies. How the Israelites fled terror-stricken at their cry as judgment overtook them? The censers of the two hundred and fifty were beaten into broad plates and become the covering of the altar—an object-lesson to all, that Aaron alone, and the God-appointed priests, were to offer at that altar. What a striking lesson in type and shadow that Jesus, the Son of God, is the alone way of approach to God. Ye who say that Christ is man, and not God, beware. Ye, who would fondly dream of getting to heaven by your imitation of Christ, rather than on the ground of His sacrifice, and atonement at Calvary's cross, beware. Christ is infinitely precious in God's sight—He is the only and all sufficient way to God. He says,—

“I AM THE LIFE.”

The way of Core is *death*: He is *the life*. Past death and resurrection, He is the Giver of eternal life to those who believe on Him. Out of Him

nothing but spiritual death reigns, and systems of religion, where He is not known as the One who made atonement on the cross, are dead and damning. Their churches are sepulchres where dead men are galvanised into a ghastly semblance to life.

“He that believeth on ME *hath* everlasting life” (John x. 47). Precious Saviour—winner of salvation—communicator of eternal life to those who believe on Him! Many know the wondrous joy of possessing that life, and how the Holy Ghost thrills their souls as He speaks to them of Jesus, and leads them by faith and in spirit into the Father’s house, there to drink the cup of wondrous joy and fellowship, with the Father, and the Son. By-and-by all these things will be theirs without alloy, nought to disturb or destroy this wondrous communion, when they shall see His face and be with Him for all eternity.

Friend, let not the worthless husks of religious reasoning rob you of these profound joys, but believe *now* in the Son of God. He is *the life*.

If Satan has his way—the way of Cain, Christ is *the Way*. If Satan propagate his *error*—the error of Balaam, Christ is *the Truth*. If Satan leads his religious dupes to *death*—the second death, perishing in the gainsaying of Core, Christ is *the Life*.

“I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John xiv. 6).

“HE WAS WOUNDED FOR MY TRANSGRESSIONS.”

(ISAIAH liii. 5.)



YOUNG girl lay dying in the south of England. On the wall at the foot of the bed was the text, “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.” Often whilst alone had she repeated this text over to herself, but never before had it so struck her. Again her eyes sought the words, and she read, “He was wounded for *our* transgressions.” Well did she ponder these words, as again she repeated them. Her eyes were opened to see herself a lost sinner, and in need of a Saviour, and she accepted Him just as she was. “Yes,” she said, “He was wounded for *my* transgressions, He bore the judgment of God against sin. My sins were borne by Jesus.”

Calling her mother upstairs, she asked her to read the text at the foot of the bed. The mother began to read, “He was wounded for *our* transgressions—” “Stop! mother,” said the dying girl; “I used to read it like that once—but now it is all so different—and I will read it my way. ‘He was wounded for *my* transgressions, He was bruised for *my* iniquities; the chastisement of *my* peace was upon Him, and with His stripes *I* am healed.’”

Jesus died for *me*, mother." Shortly after this dear girl departed peacefully to be with Jesus.

Possibly the reader is anxious about his soul, and says, How I wish I could be saved, as that girl was. What is it that hinders you accepting Christ? You may be saved as you read these lines. Jesus is saying, "Come unto me." He bore the judgment of God against sin. God can never look over sin. You may perhaps think lightly of what you may call little sins, but they are all recorded against you. Sin must be judged; and if your sins are not judged in the cross of the Lord Jesus, and for ever put away, you will have to be judged for them, for God does not overlook sin.

Let me earnestly entreat you *now* to come to Jesus. He will not turn you away. Come just as you are. The prodigal in Luke xv., "when he came to himself," said, "I will arise and go to my father;" and "he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." Let this be the day when you come to yourself, and may you receive the Father's kiss of forgiveness. Do not linger—there is no time to spare; the Lord Jesus is coming—soon the day of grace will be closed. Come *now*, just as you are. You may come as you read these lines.

I was preaching the Gospel, not long since, and many young people were present. One young girl was seen to be weeping bitterly during the meeting. At the close I went down to have a word with

those who were anxious about their souls. This dear girl said, "It was whilst you were speaking I knew what a sinner I was—and for a long time I have been anxious about my soul. Now I know that Jesus is *my* Saviour, and I can say"—and the tears again came into her eyes as she said it—"with his stripes *I* am healed."

May you, dear reader, be able to say the same, and to go on your way singing.

"Love moved Him to die—
On this I rely.
My Saviour hath loved me
(I cannot tell why),
But this I can tell,
He loved me so well
As to lay down His life—
To redeem me from hell."

F. M.

M. RENAN'S FATAL ILLNESS.



HE *Times*, in its account of M. Renan's fatal illness, says:—"It followed on some weeks of debility and suffering. At 2 A.M. on Sunday (2nd Oct. 1892), four hours before death, he turned to his wife and said, 'Why are you sad?'

'Because I see you suffer,' she replied. 'Be calm and resigned,' replied the dying man. 'We undergo the laws of that nature of which we are a mani-

festation. We perish; we disappear; but heaven and earth remain, and the march of time goes on for ever.' He soon lost consciousness, and in a few hours was dead." These are the last reported sayings of this famous French religious infidel. He wrote, besides many other less known works, the "Life of Jesus," and was stigmatised, as the result, the "*Great European Blasphemer*."

A man of immense learning, Renan's literary style was highly polished. Yet his life was chiefly spent in attacking Christianity, as commonly understood, and his "*magnum opus*" was an infidel assault on those four records in our precious New Testament which furnish us with details of the life of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. For that work he acquired far-reaching notoriety as a scholar and thinker. And yet, by many, his criticisms are condemned on account of their "*want of gravity*." They were often light and flippant, and thus failed to carry conviction. Lightness, or flippancy, on the part of a religious critic, is not only highly culpable, but its presence indicates total spiritual inability to take so serious a task in hand. The Spirit of God is never light, nor flippant, nor trifling, and the last words of M. Renan betray the same gross flippancy that marked him all through.

He speaks of the "*laws of nature*," and adds, "*we perish; we disappear*," meaning evidently that, according to these laws, man comes to nothing—is annihilated. For he says, "*but heaven and earth remain, and the march of time goes on for ever!*"

Heaven, earth, and time continue for ever, but we (men) perish and disappear!!

He contrasts the temporary state of man with the eternal state of heaven, earth, and time! He would clearly have us believe in human annihilation.

But how does he know that heaven, earth, and time are eternal? Are they not also a manifestation of the laws of nature? Are these not quite as much in nature, and therefore contingent upon its laws, as man is? Most certainly! Yet, whilst they abide, man forsooth becomes extinct! The earth, which was made for man, continues; but man himself, its lord, must perish!

Is that not flippancy? How does he know that heaven, earth, and time go on for ever? Who told him so, or that we perish and disappear? Whence the source of his knowledge? Now, in point of fact, the very opposite is the case! We read in Scripture, to which book M. Renan, doubtless, professed to appeal, that "*heaven and earth shall pass away*" (Matt. xxiv. 35), and, again, "*the things that are seen are temporal*" (2 Cor. iv. 18). Whilst, as to man, his resurrection from the dead—the opposite to annihilation—is plainly taught,—"*All that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation*" (John v. 29).

"We disappear," no doubt, from the present temporal scene by death, but that is not such a disappearance as would justify M. Renan in con-

trusting it with the assumed permanence of heaven, earth, and time.

In the truest sense man is permanent (for death only changes his condition), and heaven, earth, and time (that is, the range of things temporal) are transitory, they "pass away"!

The last words of this flippant infidel are simply a turning of things upside down, and placing "darkness for light" and "bitter for sweet."

Contemplate such a cloudy sunset! Think of dying with such a lie, such a perversion on the lips! What ray of light brightened that dying pillow? What word of comfort soothed the heart, or dried the tears of that poor weeping wife? M. Renan's candle went out in darkness, as another loud and earnest warning to all that they should avoid the snares of religious infidelity, and infidelity more subtle (because profoundly hypocritical) than the bold and flagrant coarseness of one that denies all religion.

Reader, if you want a life of joy, a death of sunshine, and an eternity of glory, do, oh! do believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, whose atoning death alone, but fully expiates, whose life in glory is our security, and for whose advent we wait with girded loins, and burning lamps. Believe in, and live for Christ

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST.

(Read JOHN xix. 16-42.)



T is an old story, but to some of our hearts it will always be a new one, that Jesus died for us. In glory they "sing a new song;" and what is it? "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.).

God has said, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." You will never have your sins remitted except by blood. You may go on in folly or in fancy, despising the blessing, yea, trampling it under your feet, but there is no redemption but by the blood.

The Holy Ghost inspired the Scriptures, guiding the pens of those who wrote. It is a common thing for men, and even good writers too, to heap up words, and multiply adjectives, but a qualifying term is very rarely used in Scripture. In 1 Peter i., however, we read of the "*precious* blood of Christ." The Holy Ghost stamped that blood of the Saviour as being precious. Precious is it to the heart of God always, precious to the hearts of the saints too. Is it precious to you, my reader?

God has told us a great deal about the value of that blood. It is a great thing to get hold

of the fact that the blood of Jesus was actually shed; in plain language, that He died. The apostle John brings Him out, in his gospel specially, as Son of God, so in it you get nothing of the agony in the garden, nor of the forsaking on the cross. It is the death of the *Son of God* that is recorded.

If some friend or relative of yours dies, the first thing you wish for, is to hear something about his last hours. Four times over God gives us an account of the death of His Son. He knows how dull our hearts are. Once was enough for the account of creation. Twice do we get the account of Jesus' birth; but God says, so to speak, "I will make it a moral impossibility for you to mistake the meaning of the death of my Son." Four times over, therefore, does He rehearse it.

Man had his way when Jesus died, but the Scriptures were fulfilled, and Pilate wrote over His head: "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." He was that, and far more than that. He was "King of kings, and Lord of lords," who was hanging on that tree. All the rabble gather round Him, and gamble for His garments before His dying eyes. He speaks with affection to, and of His mother, and at length says, "I thirst." Much more than natural thirst was that. He was dying there under the judgment of God.

You have the sentence of death in yourself, as a sinner, my reader, and assuredly you will be a

corpse in a little while, if the Lord tarries. The seed of death is in you. The whole of your life is a confirmation of this statement, for it is one constant battle against death, even from the day of your birth. If your mother had not then swaddled you, where would you be? In death. If you had not continually supplied the body with food and raiment, where would you be? Dead. Now death is the fruit of sin, and the reason why you are marked for death is because you are a sinner. But the wonderful truth revealed in God's Gospel is that the One on whom death had no claim has actually died. He it was who alone had life in Himself, and that life He voluntarily laid down.

But, you say, why did He die? He died for me, of that I am sure, if no one else is. He took up the question of man's sin, there on the cross. Betrayed by a false friend, denied by a true one, forsaken by all, not one left to comfort Him, alone; and more than that, at that moment forsaken of God, He bore the sins of sinners, and the judgment due to them. Marvellous is the record of His death. "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost" (ver. 30). Another gospel tells us that He yielded up the ghost "when he had cried again with a loud voice" (Matt. xxvii. 50). I have seen many death-beds; some have died in great agony, others not, but all died of exhaustion. Here, however, was a man who Himself gave up His life in His full strength, and in

the moment of departure cried, "It is finished." What was finished? I cannot tell you; no man could fully answer that question. He had come to glorify God—"It is finished"; to bring low the power of Satan—"It is finished"; to accomplish redemption—"It is finished." What tidings for you and me. Wonderful words, indeed! "It is finished."

Have you been thinking, my reader, that you have something to do for your own salvation? Christ has forestalled you,—*"It is finished."* Did heaven hear these words? Surely; and what joy they produced! I believe, too, that they rang down to the depths of hell. There they produced consternation. *"It is finished"* was the dying Victor's cry, and for nearly two thousand years the Holy Ghost has been proclaiming, *"It is finished,"* to sinners on earth, for their faith and acceptance. Let those words sink into your heart now.

But those religious people that hated Christ in their hearts, and compassed His death, must needs have His body taken away, that *their* Sabbath might not be desecrated. The Roman soldiery go out and break the legs of the slowly dying thieves. I do not think the devil thought what he was doing that day, for he sent one of them, who believed in Jesus, to glory certainly some hours sooner than he would have reached there otherwise. True, he despatched the other unbelieving one to hell sooner than he thought or wished, and God alone knows how soon you, my unsaved friend, will be there,

if you go on in your sins. Let me beseech you not to delay coming to Jesus. Believe the simple story of the cross, and get salvation now.

When the soldiers came to Jesus they saw that He was dead already; but one of the soldiers, incredulous I suppose, "with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." Now this is an immense fact that Jesus died. He was seen to be dead. You are not dead yet, although death is ahead of you. Would it not be a great relief to find that some one had died for you? This blessed Saviour has done so; "And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true, and he knoweth that he saith true, *that ye might believe.*" What stress God lays on this death of His Son; and why?—"That you might believe."

But, you say, I do believe it. Are you saved, then? You must have to do with a dead Christ. A living Christ could not help you. Apart from His death, He would be a barrier between the soul and God; for His life was the perfect expression of what God required. He was holy, righteous, and perfectly sinless, and I know that I am just the very opposite. Hence His perfection only condemns me. He was absolutely fit for God; we are utterly unfit. How can our case be met? He must die, as He said, "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). If He, on whom death had no claim, had not died, there could have been no blessing, and no salvation for

you and me, but His death has changed everything. The strongest thing in this world is death. It has overcome everybody but that blessed One, whereas He has overcome death and annulled it. The apostle John, who saw the Lord's death, and thereafter saw Him in resurrection, bears record, that ye might believe. Why? Because God knew very well *that there is not a man in this world who would not doubt it.*

And now we read, "A bone of him shall not be broken;" this refers to the passover. Genesis is the book of creation, but man brings in death by sin, and the first book of Scripture, therefore, is very largely a register of deaths. Exodus, on the other hand, is the book of redemption. There sinners and slaves are redeemed by blood, a striking type of the work of the Lord Jesus. The blood was put outside on the door-posts, where God could see it (see Exod. xii.). Death was the sentence upon man; Jesus bears it, annuls it, rises from death, and the Holy Ghost comes down to tell us all about it. Moses and Israel only saw a lamb, God saw Jesus, and I see Jesus by faith. The blood is seen coming from the side of the dead Saviour. The blood of the paschal lamb was to be sprinkled and trusted. Here is the antitype. Can you trust the Saviour's blood?

God is careful to say that the tomb of Jesus was "a new sepulchre wherein was never man yet laid." One reason for this statement is beautiful. In 2 Kings xiii. we read, "And Elisha died, and they

buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year. And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha. And when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet" (vers. 20, 21). It was due to the Lord that His grave should be a new one, but Jewish infidelity as to His resurrection is silenced by the record of its being "new." Had it not been so they would have said that what happened in Elisha's day had happened again, and that the body of Jesus had been put into a prophet's tomb, touched his bones, and revived. All this unbelief is checked by the record of a "new tomb." From this tomb, on the resurrection morn they find the stone rolled away, and an empty sepulchre and a risen Saviour are the irrefragable proofs of the value of the work done by Him, and for us, in the moment of His death. Resurrection is the triumph over death of Him who went into it that He might annul it.

In the Gospels you get the facts of the life of Jesus; in the Psalms you get His feelings; and in the Epistles you get the fruits of Christ's work. Christ personally is the One you trust. You believe in the person of the Lord. His person fills the heart, and His work satisfies the conscience. Both must be met. The heart craves an object. The difference between the book of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon is this, that in the former the

heart is too large for the object—the world, whereas in the latter the object—Christ—is too large for the heart. When once the person of Christ fills the heart, it is at leisure to survey His work and its fruits. In the Epistles these are unfolded. God is now your justifier, because the judgment you deserved fell upon Jesus, so in righteousness God can justify you. Can you trust Him? is the only question now.

The Gospel is worthy of God, and divinely fitted to meet man. "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" (Rom. v. 8, 9). In chap. iii. 24, I learn that I am freely justified by His grace. There are three separate parties to my justification. God in His grace is the spring of it; Jesus justifies me by His blood, and on my part there is faith. *Grace* upon God's side, *blood*—the atoning work of Jesus—on His side, and *faith* on my side. I am cleansed by His blood, justified by His blood, and in Ephesians we read, "In whom we have *redemption through his blood*, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (chap. i. 7). I have been a slave, but now I am out of bondage, redeemed by His blood; He has paid down the ransom price of my deliverance, and as a result all my sins are forgiven.

Precious blood, how infinite its efficacy and value. Will you not trust it, and it alone? W. T. P. W.

THE DEBT PAID.



HE thirty-second Psalm declares the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. In the Epistle to the Romans, chapter iii., the good news is unfolded how God can be just, and yet the justifier of him that believes in Jesus. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (vii. 24). Does the reader know the blessedness of transgression forgiven, and sins covered? Sin God cannot pass over, it must be judged, and the sinner receive his righteous reward; but in the cross of Christ we learn the wondrous story how God can forgive the guilty sinner, and yet act in full consistency with His own character as righteous and holy. "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."

In a fishing town in the West of England there lived a man with his wife and family. One day, while out shooting, he met with a serious gun accident, which deprived him of the means of gaining a living for them; throwing them all into the greatest poverty and need. The wife in her distress went to a gentleman who lived near, to ask him if he could aid them. He listened to her sad story, and then asked her the unexpected question,

“Do you owe money to any one?” She replied, “Yes, sir, I owe a bill over there,” pointing in the direction of a butcher’s shop close by. He went in with her, and asking for the bill, duly paid all that was owing. The question was now asked if there was any one else to whom she was indebted; she replied by telling him that there were bills also owing to the baker and grocer. Having paid theirs likewise, he again asked if there was any one else that she owed money to; she replied, “No, sir, that is all I owe;” then handing her the receipts he said, “Now, my good woman, take these receipts and go to your home.” With a glad heart she departed, rejoicing that the debts were paid. Does the reader exclaim, “How glad I should be if all my sins were forgiven, like the poor woman’s debts were paid”?

Let us see on what ground they were paid.

1st, She owned she was a debtor.

2nd, She received the testimony to the debts being paid (the receipts).

3rd, She went away happy in the knowledge of it.

Are these three things true of you, dear reader?

1st, Have you owned yourself a sinner to God?

2nd, Have you received His testimony to the finished work of the Lord Jesus?


3rd, Are you rejoicing in the knowledge of accomplished redemption?

Perhaps you say, “I do not *feel* my debts are paid, that my sins are washed away; if I did, I

should be happy." The fact of the debt being paid did not rest in the woman's feelings, it was an undeniable fact whether she felt it or not, the receipts were the witness. Would you be assured as to the fact that your sins are put away? Then turn to God's Word—that Word "which liveth and abideth for ever,"—and there read the glad tidings for yourself, "That through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe (not feel) are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 38). Again, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. x. 17).

But the Gospel of God does not end with the debts being paid, it brings not only "out of" but "INTO." Out of ruin, sin, and bondage; into pardon, nearness, and liberty. Let me finish my story. After the woman had gone to her home, the gentleman returned to the shops, and asked if they knew where she lived; receiving a reply in the affirmative, he ordered the butcher to send her some meat, the grocer to send some grocery, and the baker to send some bread. Such is the heart of God. He not only meets the sinner in his ruin and need, and sends him away forgiven, setting him at rest as to the PAST; but gives him the PRESENT knowledge of the favour in which he stands, and with a bright FUTURE before him, he "rejoices in hope of the glory" to come (Rom. v. 1, 2). May the reader be able to do so too!

"TO-MORROW WE DIE!"



WEALTHY manufacturer, in the midland counties, said to his confidential clerk one Saturday night, "We cannot settle our accounts to-night, but must do so early in the morning." On the Lord's Day morning, therefore, they re-

sumed their work, which occupied them until three in the afternoon, when dinner was announced.

"Let us eat and drink," said Mr D——, "for to-morrow we die,—not," he added, "that I have any thought of dying for some years to come."

The next morning, when at breakfast with his family, a friend called and said—

"Mr D——, have you heard of the death of Brown?"

"No," said he; "is he dead? It is very different with me; for my part I am so engaged in business that *I could not find time to die.*"

Uttering these words, as he rose from the table, he went into the kitchen, and while putting on his boots, fell on the floor a corpse.

* * * * *

A Scotch minister, upon his deathbed, was asked if he thought himself dying. "Really, friend," he replied, "I care not whether I am or not; for if I die, I shall be with God—and if I live, He will be with me."

Reader, which of these two men are you most like?

"FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER"

(1 JOHN i. 3).



HY Christ is ours, blest Father!
 Thy holy, spotless One,
 To us He is most precious,
 Thy well-beloved Son.

Thou lovest Him, our Father,
 Because it was His joy
 To do Thy will most holy,
 From all eternity.

And Thou, O God, dost love Him,
 Because in richest grace,
 His life He gave most freely
 When standing in our place.

We love Him, God our Father,
 Because He first loved us,
 And gave Himself a ransom
 For us on Calvary's cross.

We know Him now exalted
 At Thy right hand on high,
 Our hope, our rest, our treasure,
 Our everlasting joy.

Oh, grace beyond all measure,
 That sinners such as we
 Should have the same blest Object,
 Most glorious God as Thee!

SAVED FROM DESTRUCTION.



ANY of our readers will have heard of the sad disaster which recently occurred in Switzerland. Suddenly the lower end of the glacier of Bionnay became detached from Mont Blanc, and fell into the torrent beneath, carrying away with it the little village of that name. The masses of ice and the wreck of the village formed a dam, which held up the waters for some time, until they suddenly broke through the obstruction and burst like a cataract into the mountain stream, known as the Bon Nant, which flows by St Gervais les Bains.

Here stands a large hotel, at an altitude of about 2,000 feet above sea-level. At about a quarter-past two in the morning the people in the hotel were awakened by a terrific noise of rushing water, and the crashing of rocks one against the other. Then a furious gust of wind drove through the gorge. The next moment a torrent of water, carrying with it fragments of rock, trees, and *debris* of all description, hurled itself upon the hotel. Of the five buildings of which it was composed three were utterly destroyed, another was nearly so, while the fifth remained almost untouched, owing its safety to its position, which was high above the course of the Bon Nant.

Many of the visitors and the employés were ushered into eternity in a moment, over a hundred persons losing their lives either here or in the village, through the catastrophe.

Now we do not for a moment suppose that these persons who were thus suddenly cut off were greater sinners than others; but surely the Lord would have those who remain take such solemn catastrophes to heart, that they may repent before Him, ere *their* summons into eternity shall come. On the occasion of a catastrophe in our Lord's time, He said—"Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke xiii. 4, 5). But alas, thousands are occupied with the natural causes of *the accident* (!) and lose sight of what God has to say in it altogether.

Man's life is always uncertain. He has no lease of it. All are exposed to be called out of this world by the way of death at any moment, from one cause or another. Whether a man may die from a malady, from the decay of nature, or be cut off suddenly by an unforeseen calamity, is impossible to foresee, and the summons oft comes unexpectedly. Death is an inexorable foe. The sinner must receive sin's wages. "It is appointed unto men once to die" (Heb. ix. 27). Death may in some instances be staved off for a while through care and human skill, in the mercy of God, but

there is no getting rid of it. The great question for each is, Are you prepared to meet it?

Little did the villagers at the foot of Mont Blanc, and the visitors and employés at the hotel in the gorge beneath anticipate, when they went as usual quietly to rest, that they would wake in eternity! They had probably no more thought of dying than has the reader of these lines. But in a moment they were overwhelmed. Fast asleep, in the dead of night, the awful avalanche of water and mud and *débris* came down from the heights above, and swept them away. Reader, what a solemn picture of the wrath of God! It is revealed from heaven, and hangs over the guilty lost race of man. Now is the world's dark night. Millions are fast asleep, in false security. Life on the earth hangs, as it were, upon a thread. Who can tell the moment when the door of grace will be closed for ever, and the awful avalanche of God's wrath again sweep the world of the ungodly?

Once already has His solemn judgment overwhelmed the whole human race (one family excepted) (Gen. vi., vii.). But, alas, how many are *willingly ignorant* of it! Again, God threatens judgment, not by a flood of waters, but by the bowls of His wrath and the intervention in power by His Son. But, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and

destroyed them all" (Luke xvii. 26, 27). How is it with thee? Has the enemy of God and of thy precious soul lulled thee into false security? Art thou found to-day amongst the class who cry, "Peace and safety," as though no judgment were hanging over a lost world? "Many," says the Word of God, "shall cry peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, . . . and *they shall not escape.*" Art thou, my reader, among *the sleepers* in this day of grace?

In a moment the merciless torrent of the swollen Bon Nant did its deadly work. Scores who were in the way of its course were buried in the descending deluge in a moment. No warning but a furious gust of wind, which a terrible deluge of rushing waters and mud and crashing rocks, followed so quickly—an irresistible falling mass,—that most even of those who may have been aroused from their unconscious sleep, but awoke to a few moments of awful anxiety, and then were overwhelmed. *And after death the judgment* (Heb. ix. 27).

Reader, if thou hadst been one, where wouldst thou be now? The Lord knows the secrets of all hearts, and many of those who were thus suddenly ushered into eternity may have been believers on the blessed Son of God. If so, sudden death for them was sudden bliss. But, alas for all who were *unprepared!* Ushered into eternity in a moment in their sins, *to stand before God* in the day of His awful judgment, and to hear the sentence of ever-

asting banishment into the lake of fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched (Mark ix. 44-48). God says it, and means what He says. Oh, sinner, flee to the shelter of the blood of Jesus now. Shed for rebel sinners on the cross, the vilest may be cleansed in that blood, and be made whiter than snow. The self-righteous and the religious professor need it as much as the abandoned and the profligate. Its virtues are without fail for all who trust them. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7).

Some marvellous escapes are reported, says the account of the accident. The mercy of God, through human instrumentality, opened a way of escape. Those who heard of it, and availed themselves of it at once, escaped the death that overtook the rest. A moment more, and they too would have been too late. A resident physician, through his extraordinary presence of mind, saved the lives of some fifteen persons. On hearing the noise of the approaching torrent, he hastily opened the door of all the bedrooms nearest his own, and rousing the inmates, succeeded in leading them through a window to a place of safety.

How forcibly this illustrates the simple Gospel! A man realising the impending danger, rouses the sleepers, throwing the door of escape wide open before them, and leads them to a place of safety. Sleeping sinner, on the brink of death and eternal woe, arouse thee. Death and judgment are swiftly approaching. There is not a moment to be lost.

Now is the time, or it may be *never*. Christ is that door. There is a place of safety. It is in Him who died for us and rose again. Remain slumbering and sleeping another moment, and the door of escape may be closed, and your eternal doom sealed. Awake, awake! "God hath appointed a day in which *he will judge* the world in righteousness *by that man* whom he hath ordained, *whereof he hath given assurance unto all men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts xvii. 31). The day is nigh, even at thy doors. Flee to the only refuge while thou mayest. The coming Judge is a present Saviour. He died for rebel sinners, the ungodly, the lost. Sinner, on the brink of endless woe, the blessed Son of the living God calls to thee from the glory, *Come unto Me*. None other can save thee from the coming wrath. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John xiv. 6); "*Now is the accepted time*" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

All who heard the physician's voice, and fled by the door to the place of safety to which he led them, were delivered from the awful torrent which swept scores away. All who hear the Lord's call, speaking to heart and conscience through His servants, in His grace, flee to the Saviour, and are safe from the wrath of an offended God. Love it was that provided so great salvation at such a cost, viz., the life's blood of His own dear Son. Love it is that holds back yet a moment the long-threatened stroke. Love it is that calls thee, sinner, to arouse

thee while thou mayest. Love it is that has opened wide the door of salvation through the finished work of Christ. Love it is that bids thee find a present refuge and everlasting salvation in a risen Christ, triumphant on the throne of God.

The hairdresser of the establishment also improvised a bridge over which twenty persons safely crossed to a sheltered spot, where they were all rescued alive. It was a critical moment. Their lives were in the greatest jeopardy, when a friend pointed them to the improvised bridge, and they were soon in a safe shelter. Again we remind *thee*, reader, of the awful danger to which *thou* art exposed. It is a critical moment for this poor world. But there is a way of safety out of the doomed place. Christ is the bridge that will carry safely over all who trust to Him. And a *safe shelter* is alone to be found in Him who bore the stroke of Divine justice and judgment on our behalf on Calvary. Raised and glorified, Christ is crowned on the throne of God, a safe Shelter, a present Deliverer, an everlasting Saviour *for every one that believeth*. All who crossed the bridge that spanned the gulf between the endangered building and the place of safety on the other side, were rescued alive. All who wake up in the day of God's abounding grace, ere the besom of judgment shall sweep the guilty nations of the earth, and flee from this world of sin, and darkness, and death, to Christ, the only bridge of safety, are already completely sheltered. He is risen out of death, and those who are found

in Him, are beyond death and condemnation, and will surely be rescued from the whole scene of the enemy's power, to enjoy eternal life with Him in the everlasting glory of God, instead of being swallowed up in the awful gulf of everlasting woe.

Once more, foolish sinner, careless worldling, sleepy professor, we call to thee in the name of a Saviour-God. By His infinite mercies, in the name of Jesus Christ who died and rose, by the glories of heaven, and by the horrors of hell, we appeal to thee. Flee from the wrath to come. Flee now. Flee to Christ. A moment more, and thy lot may be eternally sealed. Procrastination is the thief of time. The last grain of sand in the hour-glass of thy short span of life will soon have run through. The beat of the pulse of thy life on earth will shortly cease. The last breath in thy body of sin and death will soon be drawn. Eternity is before thee, at thy very door. Thy life is as a vapour (Jas. iv. 14). All that is of true and lasting value appeals to thee to be decided for Christ. If thy tongue wags in argument, instead of confessing Him as thy Saviour, Lord, and All, it is but a further proof of God's Word, as to man's fallen condition, and the natural hatred of thy heart to Christ. Lovingly a Saviour in glory, Jesus the Lord, pleads with thee about thy precious, never-dying soul. Be wise while 'tis called to-day.

“Dark though thy guilt appear,
And deep its crimson dye,
There's boundless mercy here,
Do not from mercy fly :

Oh doubt no more His word,
 There's pardon full and free,
 For Justice smote the Lord,
 And sheathes her sword for thee.
 Come, come, come."

To talk of thy works, thy religious doings, thy Christless profession, is vain. No sin-stained works of thine can atone for sin, or aid one iota in thy salvation. It is Christ thou needest, and Christ that thou must have. Thousands seek to live Christ in order to get Christ; we must receive Christ to live Christ. We receive Him by faith, and then we live by faith of Him. The danger is imminent. The warning comes to all who read these lines. It may be the last. Here is the Gospel message. Neglect or despise it, and thou art without excuse. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). Saved now, saved for ever, saved to follow in His steps, saved to glorify His Name, saved to await His return, and then saved into the everlasting glory of our Saviour-God.

E. H. C.



OUR place, our standing before God, is no longer in flesh. It is in Christ. Christ, as man, has taken quite a new place, to which neither Adam innocent, nor Adam sinner, had anything to say. The best robe formed no part of the prodigal's first inheritance at all; it was in his father's possession, quite a new thing.

J. N. D.

“I DON'T THINK MUCH OF HIM!”



ONE evening, coming out of a cottage where the Gospel had been preached, I noticed a young man watching with some curiosity the small congregation as it dispersed. Having spoken to him, I invited him to be present the next

evening on which there would be a Gospel service there, that he might hear about the Lord. He replied—

“I don't think much of Him. God forgive me!”

Further conversation revealed, that though outwardly a professor of religion, and attending a so-called place of worship, his answer was but a declaration of the true state of his own soul—he saw no beauty in Christ that he should desire Him. I could not but think of the multitudes who like this young man, “don't think much of Him,” though the same solemn sentence may not have fallen from their lips.

But I would ask you, my reader, as God's eye rests upon you, remembering that “all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Heb. iv. 13), does He see written in your heart, yea, does He see written in every act of your life, “*I don't think much of Him.*” You may attend to all the outward forms of religious observance—you may be moral, up-

right, amiable, respected by your friends, you may utter the prayer, "God forgive me," as did the one of whom I write; but, refusing Him whom God alone has set forth as a Mediator between Himself and man,—all such prayers are but a vain repetition, and God's one solemn searching question, "What think ye of Christ?" (Matt. xxii. 42,) must reveal to you that you are still of that company who see no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. Is this your case? If so, pause and weigh well the consequences.

He bears the only Name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved (Acts iv. 12). "God also hath highly exalted *him*, and given *him* a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 9-11). Those who through grace bow now, through *Him* receive the forgiveness of their sins, and by *Him* are justified from all things (Acts xiii. 38, 39). You *must* bow—for God, who cannot lie, has spoken it—now to receive the forgiveness and the pardon He is so ready to bestow, or, in a little while, have to acknowledge the glory of His Person, and the righteousness of the eternal judgment which He will visit upon you.

Pause—with all earnestness—I say, dear reader, and consider, are you prepared to go on another

day without *Him*. It may be, ere another sun rises, you will have to face death—to face judgment, to see every tie that binds you to earth, severed for ever. Will it be without *Him*? It is not yet too late for you to make the same wondrous discovery made in the fifty-third of Isaiah by those who once saw no beauty in *Him* that they should desire *Him*, viz., the discovery of their deep need of *Him*, and of His willingness to meet that need. Look back in simple faith and take up the language which was theirs, and thus individualise it as to yourself, “He was wounded for *my* transgressions, he was bruised for *my* iniquities,” and then go on to the next step, having received the testimony of God as to the value of His work, “by whose stripes I am healed.”

If you want to see beauty in *Him*, you must first learn to see your own ruin. It could be said of the woman in Simon the Pharisee’s house, “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven: for she loved much, but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little” (Luke vii. 47).

May the readers of this little paper have their eyes anointed with eye-salve that they may see, firstly, their own need; secondly, the beauty of *Him* who has met it, so that instead of the language of their hearts being, “I don’t think much of *Him*,” it will become, through grace, He is “the chiefest among ten thousand,” “yea, he is altogether lovely” (Song of Sol. v. 10, 16).

"GOD IS SATISFIED, AND SO AM I."



OME years ago a friend of mine attended a Gospel preaching in the west of Ireland. What was the text I do not know, but the preacher quoted that wonderful verse in Romans iv. 5—the scriptural definition of *grace* as contrasted with

debt,—"To him that *worketh not*, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." The most amazing statement here, where all is amazing, is that God justifies the *ungodly*. How can He do it, and yet be righteous, or consistent with His own perfect, blessed nature? For it is written of Him, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Hab. i. 13). Has God then changed? Impossible; but, as Romans iii. 21-26 teaches us, God is now *just*, and the *justifier* of him which believeth in Jesus.

Amazing truth! blessed truth! that through the cross and blood-shedding of our Lord Jesus Christ, God can now in perfect consistency with Himself justify the ungodly when he believes in Jesus.

Hardly less wonderful is it to read, that this blessing of justification is to him that "*worketh not*," but believeth, and it is his faith not his works for which he is counted righteous.

Thus, God justifies
 the ungodly
 that worketh not,
 but believeth on Jesus.

Hence, the way to be saved is
 not by good works,
 not by becoming good,
 not by deserving it—

that would be not grace but debt (Rom. iv. 4); but
 the way to be saved is

by believing in Jesus
 without any goodness
 and without any works.

This is what Scripture calls grace not debt (ver. 5).

Through the mercy of God, this text fixed itself
 in my friend's mind, his eyes were opened to under-
 stand the grace of God, and he knew that he was
 saved.

How delightful it is to be able to tell others
 what great things God has done for you, and how
 one longs that they too should know the Gospel or
 glad tidings of the grace of God. So it was with
 Mr S——. He spoke to many about their souls.

Among others he spoke to Mr F——, a gentleman
 of independent fortune, who was bent on enjoying
 the world, but only to meet with a flippant reply.

Some time passed on, and one day Mr S——
 received a message to say Mr F—— was seriously
 ill in Dublin, and wished to see him.

Of course such a message admitted of no delay,
 and Mr S—— travelled up by the night mail. He

arrived in Dublin early in the morning, and went straight to his friend's house.

Telling me the story afterwards, he said he would never forget that sight. There was this great strong man sitting up in bed with his head bandaged, and as soon as he saw his friend he said, "S——, I am dying, and I am not ready to meet God." What a solemn moment! a soul awake at last to eternity, and all its reality, awake to the thought of having to meet the living God, and yet awake to its unfitness for His presence.

Reader, how would you like to find yourself face to face with God? Scripture says, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. x. 31).

Mr S——, awed with the solemnity of the moment, and feeling deeply his responsibility to minister the right word to this seeking soul, was much cast on God, and in answer to his prayer Job xxxiii. 14-24 came into his mind. Opening his Bible he read:—

"God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword. He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain: So that his life abhorreth

bread, and his soul dainty meat. His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen, stick out. Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers."

"Stop," said the dying man. "I know you can find almost anything you like in your Bible, but I am not going to believe that is in it."

The words were so applicable to his case, he thought his friend was inventing, and it was not till he was shown the Bible, and read the words himself, that he was satisfied, and Mr S—— allowed to proceed.

"If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness: then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom."

Having read thus far, the visitor took the place of the interpreter, and proceeded to tell the man, whose very condition at that moment was a witness to the truth of God's Word, of the ransom God had found. How His own Son had come into this world, how He had done God's will here, how He had glorified Him, and then died the just for the unjust. How He had borne our sins in His own body on the tree, how He had cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," how He was buried, but that God had raised him up the third day and glorified Him, because God was satisfied, and glorified by what He had done, and that now

all who believe in Him are saved. Then feeling he had delivered his message, he went away.

Next morning he called again, and found the patient sitting up in bed like the day before, but this time he got a very different greeting.

"S——," he said, "I see it all. God is satisfied, God is glorified, God is satisfied, and so am I."

Who can tell the joy of that moment? Mrs F—— afterwards told Mr S—— that after his visit her husband was very restless and uneasy, deeply thoughtful too, till suddenly about four A.M. he exclaimed, "I see it all, God is satisfied, God is glorified, God is satisfied, and so am I."

What a blessed way to learn the value of the death of Christ, to see that God is satisfied and glorified in what He has done, and to be at rest. Satisfied, because God is satisfied.

The sick man then asked Mr S—— to buy him a Bible, and from that day till his happy death three weeks afterwards, the Word of God was his constant study and enjoyment. Old things had indeed passed away from him, all things were become new. His horses and hounds were sold, as well as other things in which his soul at one time delighted, and his mind was set on things above.

Reader, have you heard God speaking to you? Have you hearkened to Him? Remember He has found a ransom. On the other hand, "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee" (Job xxxvi. 18).

“I WANT TO BE RIGHT WITH GOD.”



WHEN souls are exercised about their condition, “the fear of man” is often a hindrance to them. What their friends and fellow-workmen will say of them, and about them, they are fearful of, and Satan acts on that fear, and terrifies them with the thought of the finger of scorn. But he never tells them of the joy of God’s salvation, nor of the power of the grace of God, which is able, after they are saved, to sustain them in the presence of the world’s ridicule and scorn.

In conversing with an exercised soul, a few days ago, this was referred to, what people were saying, and what they would say, when she replied, “*I do not care what they say; what I want is to be right with God.*”

This was an excellent reply, and indicated a right thought as to God, and a right judgment as to man. God was given His right place, and man was put into his proper creature-position. What right have any of us to place the creature before the Creator; and to fear the finger of scorn rather than Him who is the Judge of the universe? “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. x. 28). “Unto man he (God) said, Behold, the fear of the

Lord, that is wisdom ; and to depart from evil is understanding " (Job xxviii. 28).

The great desire of our hearts should be, *to get right with God* ; for if we are not right with God, we are wrong in every sense of the word ; we are wrong in time, and we are wrong for eternity. If we continue unsubject to God in our lifetime, we cannot expect to be right with Him in eternity. To die in our sins, is the sure way of spending an eternity in outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Dear reader, by all means get right with God. " Acquaint now thyself with him (God), and be at peace ; and thereby good shall come unto thee " (Job xxii. 21). Fear not man's frown, but make sure of God's everlasting smile. Fear not the finger of scorn—it is harmless, but see that you fear God, which is the beginning of wisdom. Fear not to lose the friendship of your boon companion, but " acquaint now thyself with God, and be at peace : and thereby good shall come unto thee." Fear not to meet the world's rejection, but step out with a full, clear, bold confession of the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord. He who has loved you enough to die for you, and to endure the agonies of the cross to save you, will cheer and preserve your heart amidst scorn, and will, by His own sustaining grace and presence, infinitely more than make up for worldly loss and shame. " Fear none of these things," the Saviour says. He will stand by you. In Him you will have rest, and

peace with God through His precious blood, though in the world you may have tribulation (and why should we not since He has been cast out?), "but," says the Saviour, "I have overcome the world" (John xvi. 33).

Oh, it is of such infinite and eternal importance that we should be right with God!

A man indifferent about God, and his own salvation, is not right with God.

A man that does not absolutely submit to God, and His holy Word, is not right with God.

A man in his sins and guilt, is not right with God.

An unrepentant sinner is not right with God.

A man who quibbles at the Word of God, is not right with God.

A man who is not born again, though a church member, or an eloquent divine, is not right with God.

A man trusting to his own righteousness for acceptance, is not right with God.

A humanitarian, who scorns the need of the atoning and sin-cleansing blood of the Lamb, is not right with God.

A man who hides behind the failures of the professing Church (for with God has he to do), is not right with God.

A loose liver and pleasure seeker is not right with God.

A man, or woman, who has been baptized, and regularly goes to the table of the Lord, yet has not been converted, is not right with God.

But, thank God, there are some who are right with God—right in time, and right for eternity.

The man that has submitted to God's righteousness, that has owned, in repentance, his sins and inherent vileness, that has turned to God, and trusted God's Son, the One who suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that we might be brought to God—that one is right with God—right, because he is forgiven of his sins (Acts x. 43)—right, because he is justified from all things (Acts xiii. 39)—right, because he is accepted in the Beloved (Eph. i. 6, 7)—right, because of being born of God (1 John v. 1)—right, because of being a child of God (John i. 12, 13)—right, because of possessing eternal life (1 John v. 13)—right, because of being “in Christ,” where “there is no condemnation” (Rom. viii. 1)—right, because of possessing the Holy Ghost, the earnest of the glorious inheritance (Eph. i. 13, 14)—right, because he desires now to walk with God in holiness (1 Thess. ii. 10)—right, because that now his hope and expectation is the coming of God's Son from heaven.

Beloved reader, by all means get right with God. Lie not down to rest until you can lie down as one who is right with God; until you can commit your spirit, soul, and body, to Him, and thank Him for His great salvation.

By all means, and before all things, get right with God.

“A GREAT RANSOM.”

“Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.”—JOB xxxvi. 18.



WHEN the Lord Jesus was upon earth He said, “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). In saying this He not only showed the love

of His heart, but one purpose of His incarnation. Up to this point in man’s history on earth the solemn word of the Psalmist had been absolutely true, “None can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him” (Ps. xlix. 7). The vassal of Satan, and the servant of sin, man—every man—was a captive, and needed redemption. But none could redeem his brother, for he himself needed redemption. Nor could any give to God a ransom, for he, like all others, needed to be ransomed. In due time the Saviour appeared. Being Himself sinless, and hence free from the sentence of death and judgment, which lay upon man, He could, if He would, become the ransom.

Blessed be His precious name for ever, He was as good as His word, which we have already quoted. He died on the cross, bearing sins, made sin, sustaining the judgment of God, drinking the cup of His wrath to the very dregs, and exhausting the

vials of God's righteous indignation against man's guilty condition and ways. In thus dying, He made atonement for sin before God, defeated Satan in his own domain—death—annulled it, broke the bonds of the tomb, rose victorious, and ascended in righteousness to the very throne of God, where as Man He now sits.

What follows on this? The Holy Ghost comes down to give His witness to God's thoughts of the value of the atoning, redeeming, and ransoming death of Jesus. Hear His testimony. "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. 5, 6). What good news are these! Jesus had said He would give His life "a ransom for MANY." The Holy Ghost here asserts that He "gave himself a ransom for ALL."

Nor is this all. God is able now to say of the man who heeds His testimony, "Deliver him from going down to the pit; *I have found a ransom*" (Job xxxiii. 24).

Let me now ask you, my dear reader, Are you yet ransomed? If not, let me beseech you to at once believe the Gospel. Oh, let not the year of grace 1892 pass away, and leave you as it found you, in your sins, unsaved, and on your road to the pit. Heed the call of love, the voice of grace, the tender wooings of Jesus, the Saviour. Elihu's counsel, which heads this paper, is very good. It is strikingly solemn, too. He says, "Because there

is wrath, BEWARE lest he take thee away with his stroke; then a great ransom cannot deliver thee." Why? Because it will be too late. Die as you are, and you miss life, eternal life, and will only taste wrath for ever.

Let me ask you affectionately, Are you going yet once more to refuse a living, loving Saviour in glory? If so, you must be prepared to face the inevitable consequences—they are not bright—the pit, with the devil and his angels as your companions, and the wrath of God, as your portion. Oh, be wise in time, and then you will be able to take up the song of the delivered man in Job xxxiii. Just hear what he says. "He singeth before men, and saith, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not: HE HATH REDEEMED MY soul from going into the pit, and my life shall behold the light" (Job xxxiii 27, 28, Revised Version).

How blessed would it be if you too could similarly sing this triumphant note. It simply sounds out the value of the "great ransom." That ransom still avails before God for any soul that will rest on Him who is both the Mediator and the Ransom. God grant that you, my dear reader, may simply confide in, and then boldly confess the virtues of His dear Son. Then can you sing on earth, as surely as in glory,—“HE HATH REDEEMED MY SOUL FROM GOING INTO THE PIT.”