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The Gospel Messenger.

MUOKLE KATE.



FROM the numerous traditions which I have heard respecting Mr Lauchlan M'Kenzie, the eminent minister of Lochcarron, Ross-shire, I give the following, on the authority of a late eminently godly minister in Ross, who was an eyewitness of the principal scenes, but has since been taken to join his brother, to rejoice in his glory, and to share his reward.

Not far from the Manse of Lochcarron there lived a wicked old sinner, who was supposed to have been guilty of every crime forbidden in the Decalogue, except murder. Owing to her masculine dimensions, this woman was commonly known by the name of "Muckle Kate." "She was an ill-looking woman," Mr Lauchlan used to say, "without any beauty in the sight of God or man." It is not surprising to hear that such a character never entered a church, and that every effort on the part of the minister failed in inducing her to give even an occasional attendance at the Gospel preaching. Plan after plan was tried, but in vain; entreaties, tears, innumerable visits, and appeals to her conscience almost without end,—all failed to move

the heart of one who seemed to have reached that fearful point spoken of by the apostle, when he declares respecting those who have been wholly given over by the Spirit, that "*they cannot cease from sin.*" At length, Mr Lauchlan adopted a plan which could have occurred only to an original mind, but which sets before us in the strongest light the intense desire of the devoted minister to save an immortal soul.

It was customary among the Highlanders during the last century to assemble at nightfall in each other's houses, and spend the long winter evenings in singing the wild old Gaelic melodies, and relating to each other the legendary stories of the district. This practice is not yet extinct in some parts of the country, though, like most of the other old Highland customs, it is gradually wearing away. The women brought along with them each her distaff and spindle, while the men were sometimes employed in mending their brogues, or weaving baskets and creels. This is called "*going on kailie*"; and Kate used to devote herself to the practice with all the eagerness of an old gossip.

Well acquainted with Kate's evening habits, Mr Lauchlan, who had a great turn for poetry, composed a Gaelic song, in which all Kate's known sins were enumerated and lashed, with all the severity of which the composer was capable. This song Mr Lauchlan set to music, and privately sending for some of the young persons who were known to "*go on kailie*" with Kate, he took great pains

to teach them the song, instructing them to sing it in her hearing on the first opportunity. It was a strange, and, as some may perhaps think, an unwarrantable way of attempting to win a soul; nevertheless it was successful. The appeal went home to the old woman's conscience, backed with all the force of astonishment; the suddenness of the stroke, coming as it did from so perfectly unexpected a quarter, gave both point and poignancy to the blow; the shaft had found the joint in the harness, and, driven hard home by the Spirit's own hand, it sank deep down into that old and withered soul, which had hitherto resisted every impression.

Kate's conviction was now as extreme as her careless hardihood had once been. Her agony of mind was perfectly fearful. The bleak scenery of Lochcarron was in strange unison with her feelings. Among the dreary mountains of that lonesome western wilderness runs up the small estuary from which the parish derives its name; and as the long Atlantic billows break upon its shores, and the brown hills stretch on behind in one interminable sea of heath, the traveller scarce knows whither to turn, that he may relieve his painful sense of solitude—to the waste of waters that stretch before him till shut in by the frowning heights of Skye, or to the lonely moors that undulate behind him, dark, and desolate, and bare. It was among these dreary wilds that Kate now spent the greater portion of her time. And why did she seek these wilderness retreats? She sought, like Joseph,

"where to weep." The solitudes of Lochcarron were heard to resound for hours together with the voice of wailing, and well did the inmates of the lone bothies amid the hills know from whose lips those cries of agony were wrung. They were uttered by the solitary mourner of the moors—the once hardened "Muckle Kate." She had looked on Him whom she had pierced, and now she mourned for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and was in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.

A long and fiery ordeal was appointed to the reclaimed profligate. Deep as her conviction was, it never seemed to subside; weeks, months, and even years passed away, and still the distress of the convicted sinner was as poignant and fresh as ever. "Never breathed a wretch like her; there might be hope for others, but oh! there was none for Muckle Kate!" This was wonderful indeed in one whose age was between *eighty* and *ninety* at the time of her conviction; for those who know anything of human nature are aware that, of all spiritual cases, the most utterly hopeless is that of one who has grown old in sin, whose conscience has become impervious to the truth, and whose whole soul is unimpressible by either the Gospel or the Law. To awaken feelings that have been *dried up* by age and sin, require a miracle in the world of grace. Kate's was, indeed, a special case; she was "a wonder to many"—a wonder to her neighbours, a wonder to unbelievers, a wonder to

the Church, a wonder to her astonished minister, and, most of all, a wonder to herself. But all has not yet been told. Are my readers prepared to hear that *she wept herself stone-blind*? Yet this was actually the case. Poor Kate! Those sightless eyeballs weep no more; the wail of thine agony no longer rings amid the solitudes of thy native hills; for God Himself hath wiped away all tears from thine eyes; and when the green graves of Lochcarron shall have disgorged thy blessed dust, thou shalt tune with ecstasy thy voice to the harp of God, as thou standest on that crystal sea in the place where there shall be no more pain, neither sorrow nor crying; for the former things shall have passed away.

The excellent minister on whose authority I relate this story stated that he was called on to assist in dispensing the Lord's Supper at Lochcarron, on one occasion during Kate's long period of darkness. While walking with Mr Lauchlan among the moors, he heard at a distance the moanings of a female in great distress. "Hush!" said the stranger minister, "do you hear that cry? What is it?" Mr Lauchlan knew it well. "Never mind," replied he; "that woman has cost me many a tear, let her weep for herself now." He kept his eye on her ever afterwards, however, and was exceedingly kind to her, watching like a father over every interest of the old woman, for time as well as for eternity.

During one of her visits to the Manse kitchen,

while waiting to converse with the minister, it is said that her attention was attracted by the noise of a flock of ducklings which drew near the place where she sat. Not aware of the presence of any other person, the poor blind woman was heard to exclaim, "Oh, my poor things, ye're happy, happy creatures—ye haena crucified a Saviour like me; it would be well for Muckle Kate to be a duck like you; for oh, then she would have no sin to answer for—no sin, no sin!" The anecdote may appear frivolous; not so the feeling which it expresses, for many is the awakened sinner that has shared in blind Kate's desire, and would gladly have exchanged being with a dog or a stone, for then he would have had "no sin to answer for—no sin, no sin!"

In the third year of her anguish Mr Lauchlan was exceedingly anxious that she should sit down at the Lord's Table, and accordingly urged every argument to induce her to commemorate the dying love of Christ. But nothing could prevail upon her to comply. "*She* go forward to that holy table! *she*, who had her arms *up to the shoulders* in a Saviour's blood! Her presence would profane the blessed ordinance, and would be enough to pollute the whole congregation! Never, never would she sit down' at the table; the communion was not for her!" The minister's hopes, however, were to be realised in a way that he never anticipated.

The Lord's Day had arrived, the hour of meeting

drew nigh, but Kate's determination still remained unchanged. I am not acquainted with the exact spot where the Gaelic congregation assembled on that communion gathering; the tables were, however, spread, as is usual on such occasions, in the open air among the wild hills of Lochcarron. Did any of my readers ever witness the serving of a sacramental table at which there sat but one solitary communicant? yet such a sight was witnessed on that long-remembered day, and poor Kate and Mr Lauchlan were the only actors in the scene.

The tables had all been served, the elements had been removed, the minister had returned to "the tent," and was about to begin the concluding address, and all were listening for the first words of the speaker, when suddenly a cry of despair was heard in a distant part of the congregation—a shriek of female agony that rose loud and clear amid the multitude, and was returned, as if in sympathy, by the echoes of the surrounding hills. It was the voice of "Muckle Kate," who now thought that all was over—that the opportunity was lost, and would never more return! The congregation was amazed; hundreds started to their feet, and looked anxiously towards the spot whence the scream had proceeded. Not so the minister; Mr Lauchlan knew that voice, and well did he understand the cause of the sufferer's distress. Without a word of inquiry he came down from the tent, stepped over among the people till

he had reached the spot; and taking Kate kindly by the hand, led her through the astonished crowd to the communion table, and seated her alone at its head. He next ordered the elements to be brought forward, and replaced upon the table; and *there* sat that one solitary blind being, alone in the midst of thousands—every eye of the vast multitude turned in wonder upon the lonely communicant—she herself all unconscious of their gaze. Oh for the pen of Bunyan or of Boston, to trace the tumult of feelings that chased each other through that swelling, bursting breast! The secrets of that heart have never been revealed; but right confident am I, that if there be one text of Scripture which more than another embodies the uppermost emotion in her mind during that hour of intense and thrilling spiritual excitement, it must have been the sentiment of one who knew well what it was to have been humbled in the dust like Kate: "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."

The words which Mr Lauchlan chose as the subject of his address were well-nigh as extraordinary as any part of the occurrence; they were the words of Moses to Pharaoh (Exod. x. 26): "There shall not an hoof be left behind"—a manifest accommodation of the words, "Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost." The leading idea was, that all who had been given in covenant by the Eternal Father to

the Son, were as safe as if they were already in heaven, and that not one soul should be forsaken or left to perish—"No, not so much as Muckle Kate!" This extraordinary service was ever afterwards known as "Muckle Kate's table"; and it is said, that by that singular address no fewer than *two hundred souls* were awakened to spiritual concern, which ripened in many instances into deep and genuine piety. The minister to whom allusion has been made was himself acquainted with nine of these inquirers, who traced their earliest impressions to that table service, and all of whom were at the time of his acquaintance with them, eminently godly characters. "Muckle Kate" herself lived about three years after her first communion, possessed of that "peace which passeth all understanding," and manifesting all the marks of a close and humble walk with God.

Her death is described as having been peculiarly happy. Not only was she satisfied in regard to her eternal safety, she had attained that enviable point at which assurance had become so sure that she ceased to think of self; and so wholly was she absorbed in the glory of her Redeemer, that even to herself she was nothing—Christ was all in all. The glory of Christ was her all-engrossing motive. The inexpressible joy that was vouchsafed her served but to quicken her departing soul to more rapturous commendations to others of that Saviour whom she had found; and when at length the welcome summons came, and she stood upon the

threshold of eternal glory, ere yet the gate had fully closed upon her ransomed spirit, the faltering tongue was heard to exclaim, as its farewell effort in Christ's behalf, "TELL, TELL TO OTHERS THAT I HAVE FOUND HIM." Lay the emphasis upon the "I," and behold the world of meaning condensed into those dying words. Compress into that "I" those ninety years of sin, and you catch its full force. "Tell them that the worst of sinners—the drunkard, the profligate, the Sabbath-breaker—tell them that I, even I, have found a Saviour's person, even I have known a Saviour's love." "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."

T. F. M.

"THE WAY OF CAIN."*



DARESAY a great many of you have taken the ground of being worshippers. Is it in Cain's way or Abel's? That is a serious, a most important question. I do not know any question more important. Observe that Cain draws near, but upon what ground? He brings to God the outcome of his own diligence—the fruit of the earth. And you may say, Was he not doing right? was he wrong in giving to God the fruit of the diligence of his life?

* Extracted from "Two Leaders with Many Followers."

But stop! Do you know what Cain really did? If you understand that,—and I think we have all gone in the "way of Cain" to begin with,—you will see he entirely overlooked the fact of the fall. It is the fashion now-a-days to overlook the fall. He overlooked the fact that he was outside God's presence, as a sinner, and because of sin. It pleased him to forget the fact that sin had come in between God and man, and that man was a sinner, away from God. It is sin that shuts man out from the presence of God, and Cain was outside God's presence. How then is he to draw near to God? He must draw near in the way that suits God, and that is in keeping with the character of God.

Abel, knowing that he is guilty, and unable to draw near to God as he is, sets the death of another between himself and God. He recognises the judgment of sin, and has faith in a sacrifice by which expiation of sin is effected. Cain has not the conscience of sin, for he brings as his offering the fruits which are a sign of the curse. His heart is blinded, and his conscience hardened. He takes for granted that all is well between him and God, and that he will be received. Why should he not be? The just sense of sin and ruin is completely wanting, as also any knowledge of the right way to draw near to God.

You may turn to me and say, But how could Cain know the way that suited God? I reply, How did Abel learn it? That he learned it, is certain. There are two men sitting side by side to-night in this

room, and one has learned the way to God and the other has not. Wherein lies the difference? Are not both sinners? Yes! Were not Cain and Abel equally sinners in the sight of God? They were. The Spirit of God reveals the secret of the difference in each case. "By *faith* Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh" (Heb. xi. 4). I wonder if you ever heard a dead man speak yet? You say, A dead man speak? That would be the last man I would expect to listen to. A dead man speaks to you to-night, and he plainly says, You will never get to God if you don't go in the way I went. What does Abel say? He tells you the truth in the simplest language possible: I put between my sinful soul and God the dead body of a sinless victim offered in sacrifice.

Abel teaches us the way to God most clearly, as he puts between his guilty soul and God the body of the victim offered in sacrifice. He had the knowledge that death was upon him, and that he was a sinner out of God's presence. Death was ahead of him, as well as judgment. You may say, But how did he learn it? He had heard how God had dealt in righteous judgment with his parents in the moment of the fall. His parents had doubtless told him the sad tale of sin, and its judgment, which Genesis iii. records. You too have learned the truth from your parents. Whether it has yet brought

forth fruit in your life is another question. God knows that, and you know too. Clearly the parents of these two young men had told them of how they had been driven out of the garden of Eden, and of the way in which God had clothed them with the skins of beasts. Abel had believed and deeply profited by this lesson, while Cain ignored it.

Abel, so to speak, is heard saying:—I am a sinner, I am under sentence of death, and I know the wages of sin is death; and the only way I can draw near to God is by putting between Him and me the dead body of a sinless victim; that sacrifice I will offer, and upon that ground I will draw near to Him. BY FAITH he offered unto God "a more excellent sacrifice." And he found he was accepted. You have the very kernel of Christianity foreshadowed in his action. You have the truth of the cross, and of the death of the Lord Jesus for poor sinners like you and me. Abel's action most simply points to the cross, and to the death of the Saviour in the room and stead of the guilty sinner. That is the lesson I learn from his action.

Now Cain's road, on the other hand, only ends in rejection, death, and judgment. It never leads to God. Abel's path leads certainly to the knowledge of acceptance with God. "BY FAITH Abel offered unto God a MORE EXCELLENT sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was RIGHTEOUS, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh." He is one of the

wonderful cloud of witnesses to the value of faith, found in Hebrews xi., and if I put him in the witness-box, and inquire, Abel, what have you to say? he replies, I am accepted. By whom? By God. How were you accepted—on the ground of your works? I had none; I brought forth nothing but sin. I am accepted on this ground. By faith I put between my guilty soul and God the dead body of a spotless victim. I offered the firstling of the flock, and the fat,—the excellence thereof,—and God accounted me righteous. He accepted me in the value and excellence of my offering. That is a good testimony from a dead man.

Cain is dead also, but he does not speak. Ah! no, Cain has no helpful cheery voice from the dead. God gives you His commentary about him. The Holy Ghost says:—"Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain." And yet Cain's way is the popular way, mark that! It is the way ninety-nine men out of every hundred go to-day. Go down the street and ask the first man you meet if he is *sure* that he is on his road to heaven. With complacent self-satisfaction his answer will be: "Nobody can know that with certainty, but I am doing my best. I am religious, and take the sacrament, and give of my substance for God's work. What more can I do?" Take the second man, he will say: "I don't like that sort of question put to me. Of course I am not what I should be, but I am not so bad as many, and God is merciful." A third man will reject you and your query with

scorn, and if you put the Gospel before him, will put it aside. It is a solemn day we live in.

Cain's way has great attractions for multitudes, for, mark you, he was religious! I don't think he was a sceptic—an infidel. I do not think he was a hypocrite. He was the man who inaugurated mere human religion, and became the leader of countless thousands of men, who start and continue their course in life by ignoring the fact of the gravity of sin, and of the reality of the breach that sin has brought in between God in His holiness, and man in his guilt. Cain ignored the truth of the fall. I can draw near to God—he practically said—on the ground of that which I can myself do, on the ground of that which I have produced,—and he digs and delves, labours and tills, toils and sweats; he reaps his corn, and presses his wine; and with a well-dressed sheaf, and a flagon of well-pressed wine, he draws near to God. And then what is the result? God does not accept his sacrifice nor him. Why? He was bringing the fruit of the ground, already cursed. The curse of God had fallen upon the earth previous to this, and that Cain ignored also. The ground came in for the curse by Adam's sin. Creation has shared in the fall of Adam. He was creation's lord—but he fell, and as a result vanity has come into the scene, and now the earth shares in the fortunes of her fallen lord.

All this Cain forgot, as well as that he was a lost man, a ruined sinner, and at a distance from God. And, my friends, it is a very easy thing to forget

that ; it is very easy for you and me to ignore it. Man needs to wake up to the fact that he is a sinner. You say, Who do you mean ? I mean you, myself, and every man. God has left no man out. Man as man has sinned, and between your soul and God there is at this moment—if you have not yet been born of God, and brought to Him through the blood of Jesus—a distance, a terrible distance, and it is a good thing when a man feels it. Cain ignores the distance. In calm indifference of soul he chooses to draw near to God. And people to-day walk in “the way of Cain,” and think that by their own doings, their prayers, their religious exercises, and by a meritorious life, they may draw near to God.

Such cases abound. I saw a lady, a few days ago, who said, “I wish I could die.” “I hope you will not,” I replied, “for I don’t think you are ready.” “But I think I am ready,” she rejoined, “for I say my prayers regularly. Will not my prayers avail ?” “No, your prayers will not avail. Man does not get to God and receive forgiveness of sins by his prayers. Scripture says, that ‘without shedding of blood is no remission’ (Heb. ix. 22). And again it says, ‘To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness’” (Rom. iv. 5).

The man who verily thinks that by his prayers his sins can be washed away, is truly in “the way of Cain.” He thought that the activity of his life, and the fruits gathered from it, could fit him—a sinner—to stand before God ! What folly ! If you

are in "the way of Cain," may God arrest you to-night. That road ends in eternal ruin, depend upon it. "WOE UNTO THEM! for they have gone in the way of Cain," says the Holy Ghost. You had better get into the way of Abel. What did Abel do? He presented the firstling of his flock. He learned by faith that there must be between him and God the spotless victim, that tells of death undergone. That victim he offered, and God accepted him.

Now, how can you and I get salvation? Only by faith in God's blessed Son. The lamb offered by Abel was a striking type of the Lamb of God. "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world," said the Baptist (John i. 29). As I look back at the cross, I see the wonderful truth that between two malefactors there died the sinless, spotless Man—the Lamb of God—for hell-deserving sinners. What then shall I do? Shall I endeavour to put myself right with God by my own endeavours, or shall I put between my soul and the holiness of God the wonderful truth that Jesus died, and died for me? I will follow Abel. I was in "the way of Cain" for a good many years, until I found that the way of Abel was the best,—that it was the way of salvation,—for it is God's way, being of faith.

What is faith? Faith is the principle that links the soul with God. Cain is the leader and first exponent of what I may term natural religion, for spite of his sin—yea, because of it—man is a

religious being. He has the sense that there is a supreme Being, and knows he must appear before that Being sooner or later, and he gets filled with the thought that he must propitiate Him, and do something that will fit him for God's presence. Hence he often strives in order to do that something. Many a young man has done that, when he has found out through practical failure that he is a faulty creature. Many a young fellow sets out from his father's house with his pockets well lined. He finds the world a fine place as long as he has plenty of money. While you have plenty of money, you will be asked out, and much made of. But let the resources dry up, and you are not able to do as you formerly did. How shortsighted will your friends become! When the nap of your coats and the silk on your hats have become worn, and you are a little shabby, it is strange how suddenly your old chums fail actually to know you. The world seeks you when you are a pigeon to be plucked, and whenever that is done it throws you over. The world wants you as long as you can be of use to it, and no longer. When that day arrives, it bids you good-bye. That is the world. There is many a man who has experienced that, and has learned what a disappointing thing it is. Then it often is that a man, weary of the world, seeks rest in natural religion. He tries "the way of Cain." A round of religious exercises is commenced, in the hope that these may expiate his sins. "I will appease Him with a present," is

man's thought of God. But this is fatal folly, for "without shedding of blood is no remission" is God's irrevocable dictum. Works never saved a man yet, nor ever will.

How absolutely in contrast with this is God's way of dealing with needy man. He loves to bless him, and his need only becomes the occasion for the display of God's grace. This is displayed in the cross of Jesus, which is the perfect answer to all our need as guilty sinners before God. What you could not do, Christ has done. There has been laid down before God the spotless life of Jesus, in order to our redemption, and to bring to God the guilty sons of men, who simply believe in Him, and trust in Him, and who, like Abel, put Him as the sacrifice between their guilty souls and God. If you have not believed in Jesus, turn to Him now. Come to the Saviour now, yield your heart to Him. His blood cleanses from all sin. Truly, "it speaketh better things than that of Abel."

Observe that God accepts Abel on the ground of his sacrifice, and does not accept Cain on the ground of his works. What was the next thing? "Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell." Is not that strange? I have known people get terribly angry when they have heard a simple Christian say he knew he was saved. You may ask me, Are you saved? Thank God, yes; saved for time and eternity. Christ has died for me, given Himself for me, and it is alone through Him

that I am saved. Ah! says one, I don't believe that. Don't you? But, my friend, I do. I know it certainly, on the same authority as Abel. Had you met Abel coming away with a beaming face, and said, You look happy, Abel! would he not have replied, "I have a good right to be so; I am accepted by God, and know it"? But what have you done to ensure this? Nothing. I have brought to God nothing that I did. God has accepted me on the ground of the death of another, and He has told me so.

It was this assurance of acceptance by God which Abel possessed that so provoked his elder brother. "Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth?" If a man says, I don't believe that any one can know he is forgiven, then I know he is not forgiven himself. If you were forgiven, you would know what I know, viz., the joy of a present salvation through faith in a glorified Saviour, and the precious privilege of serving Him. Acknowledge that you are in "the way of Cain," and you may get out of that way. That is what I am here for to-night. I want to get you out of "the way of Cain," and into the way of Abel. I want to get you to know and to enjoy the truth of God's salvation. But how is that obtained? By the acceptance first of the fact that you are ruined, and then by the acceptance of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. If there has never sprung up in your heart trust in the Lord Jesus, and if you

have not yet found salvation, then I beseech you to listen to the voice of Abel, that dead man who yet speaks. What does he say? "Trust the sacrifice, sinner; put between your guilty soul and God the body of the spotless victim. Between my soul and God I put one that was the type of Him who is to be placed between your soul and God, and I am accepted." Truly "he being dead, yet speaketh."

Cain's voice, we have seen, is silent. Cain had the same opportunity of securing acceptance and blessing as Abel, but he missed it. Mark that! "And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen. If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin (or, a sin-offering) lieth at the door." The Lord says in effect to Cain: You can go and do as Abel did. Follow your brother. Why don't you take his road? Alas! Cain did not like it; and a little while after, he "talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him."

Do you know why he slew him? Four thousand years after this terrible murder, God gives the reason for it. In 1 John iii. 11 and 12, He says, "This is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And *wherefore slew he him?* because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."

"PAINT ME AS I AM."



LIVER CROMWELL was sitting before an artist to have his portrait painted. Years of anxiety had traced many a furrow upon his brow. Fearing the artist would flatter him by the omission of the furrows, Cromwell said, "Paint me as I am. If you leave out the scars and wrinkles, I will not pay you a shilling."

Perhaps the reader has often been to the photographer, and your desire has been to obtain an exact portrait. But did it ever strike you that God, in His holy Word, has drawn the full-length and accurate portrait of every man?

You will find it in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. It is thy own portrait, my reader, therefore fail not to look thereon with deep attention. God has drawn it that thou mayest know how thou appearest in His sight.

In that scripture we read:—"There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways:

and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes."

"But," say you, "I have never committed these deeds." That may be quite true. But remember that it is written, "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance. but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. xvi. 7).

Do you, my reader, acknowledge the foregoing scripture to be a portrait of *your* heart? Then I am sure you will not wonder that Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Perhaps a reader says, "What shall I do to be saved?" The answer is distinctly written by the pen of Divine inspiration:—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 6).

C. H.

WHITHER BOUND?



O a glorious eternity, or to the lake of fire? If in doubt, there is no time to waste. Get the questions settled now.

On being presented with a little Gospel book during his holiday, a young man expressed much annoyance, and said, "One cannot have an outing without 'Kingdom

Come' being presented." He was not a scoffer, but heedlessly drifting—to what? It was the love of God that led His servant to present the booklet, and it is the love of God that leads the writer to address you now. Will you resist? "Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. xxvii. 1). God is holy—would you have it otherwise if you could? How then are you to meet Him? In all your sins, as He sees them? "From the sole of the foot even unto the head, . . . wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." If so, what must be the result? Note, "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27). Prepare then to meet thy God. Flee from the wrath to come! How very inconsistent you have been! How so? In ignoring the claims upon you of One who met God in judgment about sin. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. ii. 3.)

You ask, possibly, What am I to do? What was the burden of the apostle Paul's ministry? "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ" (Heb. xx. 21). And again, "Or despisest thou the richness of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of

wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. ii. 4-6). What were the Saviour's words to His disciples? "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name" (Luke xxiv. 47). Again, "God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts xvii. 30). "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah i. 18). "To him that worketh not, but believeth in him that justified the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 5). "This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent" (John vi. 29). "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).

E. F. M.

DISOBEYING ORDERS.



ERRIBLE indeed is the account of the recent railway accident at Battle Creek. One train was returning from Chicago going eastward, bearing passengers to their homes from "The World's Fair"; and the other was on its way to the great city, carrying a precious living freight,

all anxious to feast their eyes upon one of the world's masterpieces, "The World's Fair." The two trains collided.

But how did it happen? perhaps my reader inquires. Only through the driver of the east-bound train disobeying orders.

Orders had been given for him to stop at a certain point to allow the Pacific express to pass; but instead of obeying, he disobeyed; and the ill-fated train dashed into the other, causing terrible loss of life. In a moment they were hustled into eternity.

The scene that followed is too awful to describe. It happened in the dead of night, when most of the passengers were asleep; then the train took fire, and many were burned past recognition.

Oh! dear unsaved reader, let this solemn circumstance speak to you. Heed its warning voice; it speaks to thee. "For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not." Refuse not Him that speaketh, we beseech you. Disobedience often meets with its awful reward, as we have seen in this case. But what shall be said of those who refuse the voice of the Living God?—that voice which to-day pleads so tenderly, saying, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. i. 18). Like those journeying to "The World's Fair," you too may be on the search for enjoyment, and "the pleasures of

sin for a season." Thousands are hastening at express speed to endless ruin. Satan drives that express; its cars are filled too with all the latest improvements the world can give; in its sleeping-cars you will find all the latest inventions to give ease of conscience along the journey. Many are fast asleep already, knowing not of the awful awakening soon to be theirs. And how soon may the awakening come! not, as they think, in the morning light, with the golden sunshine shedding its radiance far and wide,—but in eternity! *In hell!* where eternal sorrows dwell. Ah! then it will be too late; disobedience will then receive its due retribution.

One of the passengers thus describes the scene:—"We were awakened by a terrible crash, about four o'clock this morning, and before we knew it the roof of the car had fallen in, and everything around was afire. Then the cries of agony from the poor victims rang out in heart-rending appeals for aid. Oh! it was frightful, and the memory of it can never be erased from my mind."

We write not these things to terrify; we would fain draw the curtain over the scene. But oh! unsaved reader, that we could press upon you the far worse fate that awaits you, if you will go on in your sins, a rejecter of Christ and God's salvation. It can only be the worm that never dies, the fire that is never quenched, and the agonies of the lost in hell for ever!

"All about us," said another, "were men, women, and children, held fast in burning embers, slowly

roasting before the eyes of their *would-be saviours*. No water was at hand, and the fire had almost burned itself out."

Would you have a Saviour from the wrath to come? Then listen, while we point you to Jesus. In yonder glory He sits at God's right hand, waiting to receive all who come to Him. Once upon the cross He suffered for sin; there He tasted the bitterness of death, the forsaking of God, and bore the judgment due to the sinner. "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." Now risen from the dead, He lives at God's right hand; and through Him forgiveness of sins is preached, and all that believe in Him "are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 38). Will you not come to Him now, dear friend? He will receive you, and blot out all your sins. Do not refuse to obey His call, for remember He will not aye say "Come." If you refuse, He will have to say, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh."

The "would-be saviours" could only look on, horror-stricken, but were powerless to render aid. Christ, the blessed "would-be Saviour," as He looks upon the sinner, is all-powerful to aid, and "mighty to save." Refuse Him not, or yours must be the woes that know no end.

E. E. N.

GOLD.



WHEN the Spaniards landed in South America, in the year 1513, they crossed the Isthmus of Panama and rested on the shores of a bay, to which they gave the name of St Michaels. Here they found a considerable quantity of gold, and

afforded the ignorant natives no small amusement by the greedy way in which they endeavoured to possess themselves of the precious metal.

Observing this unaccountable passion, one of their caciques, or chiefs, informed them that, far away in the sunny south, there lay a land called Peru, where gold was so plentiful that the most common utensils were made of it; but he said that ere they could reach that golden shore they must journey for six long days over a desert waste, and then sail for many miles over a wide expanse of ocean; that they must expect, in other words, difficulties and dangers before their prize could be obtained.

Enough! Such information fired their thirst. What were dangers or difficulties when such a goal awaited them? The end would compensate for all the pains, and they would be able not only to enrich themselves with boundless spoil, but they could report to their mother country, and to the

friends left behind them, the proud result of their daring attempt.

The attempt was made. The cacique had not minimised the difficulties of the way, nor had he exaggerated the wealth of the land ahead.

Pizarro and his bold companions succeeded at length in reaching Peru ; and, by means more foul than fair, in acquiring the stores of gold already reported to him. He found that report to have been perfectly correct ; he acted upon it, and reaped his harvest. And yet we read, and we see abundantly verified, that "the love of money is the root of all evil," and that "they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition" (1 Tim. vi. 9). Pizarro was killed by his companions ! Jay Gould of America said, as he surveyed his sixty millions of dollars, that he was the most miserable devil on earth ! Gehazi died a God-stricken leper ! Ananias and Sapphira died under His judgment ! Judas Iscariot went and hanged himself ! The love of money was their besetting sin, and the millstone about their necks ! They were assuredly drowned in destruction and perdition. The flow and ebb of that murky deep carried them away, and left their memory as a beacon to all who would follow in their foolish and hurtful track ! Yet mammon is worshipped to-day more heartily, perhaps, than ever. His shrine commands countless hosts of devotees ; and, for his false and fleeting favour, myriads are content to

sacrifice name and fame, to risk destruction's perilous waves, and to launch their little barque on its treacherous waters!

What is gold? A metal! And wherefore is it such a prize? Just because, without a little of it, the wolf of need howls at the door!

Then if, by a little of it, that wolf can be scared away, is more needed? No, not *needed*, but *wanted*! and why? Just because pride assumes the place of contentment, and asserts his insatiability. Ah! pride, greedy and discontented pride, did not you lead Eve to steal the forbidden fruit, telling her that she should be as God! and did not you bring about, in some way unknown to us, the fall of Satan? (*See 1 Tim. iii. 6.*)

What will *pride* not do!

Now gold is a splendid tool in the hand of pride, and this tool, with which "*the love of money*" is so closely connected, has been a rare instrument of apparent wealth, but of real ruin. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

"Gold that perisheth" is how Scripture speaks of it; and yet the race for that perishing article is as hot, ay, hotter, than ever! The possession of perishable gold is the one consuming passion of the day. Oh, how poor, how ignoble!

And supposing, dear reader, that you could gain the whole world,—not a Peru, nor an Australia, but all that there is beneath the sun,—would you be content? Then, further, if the price you paid for this was the loss of *your soul*, your passing gain

would be everlasting loss. Your soul! Yes, "What shall a man give in exchange for it?"

Oh, let me tell you of a city of gold, a city where that metal is so plenteous that the street is paved with it! Gold is so common there that it is trodden under foot! But that is spiritual? Yes, it is. Still it is actual. It means that need of every kind, and care, and want itself, are altogether unknown. "The city has no need."

True, "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth." That is certain. This city is absolutely pure; a fit home for God and the Lamb, and a fair dwelling for such as have washed their robes in His blood. That blood removed their defilement, and fitted them for its holy and happy precincts. Have these happy abodes no attraction for you? If Peru, with its perils and death, captivated the greed of Pizarro, shall not this golden city win your heart, my reader? Its gates are opened wide for such as we; and a welcome, warm and kindly, awaits there all who enter by faith in the blood of the Lamb. Enter! enter!

Note well, your future for ever must be either in that city of gold or *without* it; and without that city is to be under "eternal judgment." "Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Rev. xxii. 15). What company! "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still." What an eternity! Oh! render honour to Christ!

"TO WHOM BELONGEST THOU?"*

(1 SAM. xxx.)



O whom belongest thou, and whence art thou?" says the king here to this stranger, and gets for answer, "I am a young man of Egypt." I am a worldling. Egypt in Scripture is the figure of the world — where Satan reigns. Egypt is the type of the world as a sphere of sin, lust, and folly, and holds every man until he is converted and brought to God. This man says, "I am a young man of Egypt"; but he goes further — "servant to an Amalekite." Amalek has a large place in Scripture. It is the flesh, used by the devil to keep a man away from God. He does not care how he keeps you, or how he holds you. He is not careful as to the means by which he maintains his grip of you. "Divers lusts and pleasures" are his tackle. With one man it is money, with another the wine-cup, with another the gambling-hell, with another the card-table, with another the race-course. With others it may merely be the football field, the cricket field,—or something yet more refined, as music, painting, sculpture, and the like; but Satan uses the flesh to be your keeper.

It is a very small matter what comes in between your soul and Christ. If there be, as it were, but the thickness of the finest piece of gold-leaf between

* Extracted from "A Young Man of Egypt."

your soul and Christ, where are you? You are on your road to eternal judgment. It is better far to own that you are the servant of the Amalekite, than to shut your eyes to your real state. This young man fully owns his, saying, "And my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick." I think that is very touching. He was left to die like a dog in the field, because he could not be of use to his old master. The devil eventually treats all his servants badly. Look at the prodigal in Luke xv. As long as he had plenty of money, he was "Hail fellow! well met." As long as his funds held out he was sought for, but afterwards "no man gave unto him." I daresay some of you know the same thing. What a nice fellow you were when you had plenty of money. Everybody was your friend. When your money ran out, some of your boon companions—your quondam friends—put up their glasses, and even then did not see you. They simply dropped you when you were of no more use to them. When you want the world, the world does not want you. That is the example you get from this scene.

What a tale! "My master left me, because three days ago I fell sick." I was of no more use to him, and he left me to die like a dog in the field. You know the story of Beau Brummel, the man who said to royalty, "George, ring the bell." He was the leader of Europe's fashion. The cut of his coat and the shape of his collars were copied, and so favoured was he by royalty that he made a bet

that he would ask a royal prince to ring the bell, and he did it. The prince, offended by the request, nevertheless complied, and the bell was rung. When the footman came, the command was given, "Order Mr Brummel's carriage," and from that moment he fell. You know how he died. In a dirty low garret in Paris, felled by the most loathsome disease that can attack a man—small-pox—he lay alone and neglected, with none to soothe him, or close his dying eyes. That is just an illustration of how the devil treats his servants. You had better change your master. It is far better to be on Christ's side.

The young Egyptian, encouraged by David's grace, makes a clean breast of his sins. "We made an invasion on the south . . . and we burned Ziklag with fire." He says in effect:—I know who you are, the one against whom I have sinned; but I know that there is enough grace in your heart to forgive all, even though I helped to put the flame to your city. The man who owns his sin always gets blessing from God. The man who owns his true state is the man who receives mercy invariably from God. Oh that you might own your sin, and, if you have been until now a man of the world and amongst those who are serving the flesh and the devil, would now change your master! God is giving you a fine chance to-night.

"And David said to him, Canst thou bring me down to this company?" He says, as it were, Will you have a new master? That is the proposal God

makes to you to-night. Young man, will you have a new master? Unconverted, unsaved man, will you have a new master? It is a very fine answer that David gets here. "Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company" (1 Sam. xxx. 13). He wants to be sure of his own safety, and of his full and final deliverance from the captivity which had been so galling to his spirit. "Canst thou bring me down to this company?" is Christ's word to you also. Wilt thou be converted, and go back to your old friends, taking God with you? The Lord converted me at ten o'clock one Sunday night, and what did I do? I went straight away home to my lodgings in the north of London, where was a young fellow who lived with me. He had been that night at the meeting with me, but at the close of the preaching he went home, while I stayed, and was converted.

When I got home he was seated in front of the fire, and tears were rolling down his cheeks. He was anxious to be saved. I said, "Well, Tom, how is it with you?" He turned, and said, "I see how it is with you. I know it by your face." "Thank God!" I replied, "I am saved. I believe in Jesus, and He has saved me." And then what did I do? I tried to bring my friend to Jesus, and within twenty-four hours I had the joy of seeing him at the Saviour's feet, and seeing him on the Lord's side. There is nothing more glorious and blessed

than, first of all, to come to the Saviour, and then to bring men to Him.

"Canst thou bring me down to this company?" the Lord Jesus Christ says to you to-night. Will you be Mine from this night forth? is the query. "Swear to me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and *I will bring thee down to this company,*" said the Egyptian. Assured of salvation, he would willingly serve. So is it with the redeemed soul now. But you need have no doubts as to the Lord's purpose regarding you. He will not kill you! Christ kill you? "The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke ix. 56). Kill you? Oh no! The Son of God came in grace to bring you life. Kill you? Who would dream of putting a question like that to Christ now? Yet it is in some hearts to-night. To all such doubting believers, what does the Lord say? "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand" (John x. 27).

The young Egyptian brought David down to his old company, and what was the result? They were found "eating, and drinking, and dancing." That is just what the men of the world are doing now, "eating, drinking, and dancing." They forget the past, and do not fear the future. They ignore sin, and hope that there will be no judgment, but judgment comes. What follows? "David

smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day, and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode on camels and fled" (ver. 17). Some of them—four hundred young men—got away, but, in the day when the Lord comes in judgment, there will be no camels for you to flee on. There will be no way of escape then; you may be perfectly sure of that, "For when they shall say peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. v. 3). You had better get to Jesus now. If you are wise you will turn to the Saviour now. If you belong to Him to-night, you can enter on His service straight off.

Get under the flag of salvation, and become one of those who gladly own Christ as their Master. I know that your old comrades may call you a turncoat. Never mind that. When I was converted I was to have sung at a concert, but I wrote to the conductor and said, "The Lord has saved me, and if I come down to your concert I shall have to sing about Christ. I cannot sing about anything else now; I must sing about Christ, and if I do so I am rather afraid I shall spoil your concert." I did not go, and when people asked where I was, the answer was given that it was feared that my head was turned. It was better than that, my heart was turned, and I wish you had the same complaint. I wish you would turn round and start for the Lord. I have such a good

Master, and such a good service now, that I can heartily commend Him and it to you. It is a magnificent thing to be a servant of the Lord, and I pity the man who is still on the devil's side. I implore you, Get out of that damnation corps—the company serving under the black flag of eternal damnation. Get to the Lord, and if your course in life be long or short, there is nothing but sweetness and gladness in it.

Look at what follows here! Look at the spoil they got. And what about the two hundred who were stopped by the flood of the brook Besor? Ah, they got the same reward as those who went to the battle! David was faithful and considerate to those whose weakness had detained them. "As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: THEY SHALL SHARE ALIKE" (ver. 24). The rewards are yet to be distributed for faithful service, and, as David did not forget the men who abode with the stuff, so Christ our Lord says, "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. xxii. 12).

The truth of *reward* for service is very fully developed in the New Testament. It is never a motive for devotedness, but is always a holy incentive. No action done for Christ can ever be forgotten, "For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward" (Mark ix. 41). Again we read: "A

certain nobleman (Christ) went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come" (Luke xix. 12, 13). When the Lord returns one man can say, "Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds" (ver. 16). He is set over ten cities. Another says, "Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds" (ver. 18). In this case the *ability* of the servant would seem to be equal, but their *devotedness* or their zeal differed, and the reward is proportionate—rule over ten cities, and five respectively. On the other hand, we read, "Unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability" (Matt. xxv. 15). Here the ability differs, and the talent committed in trust is in view of that. When the Lord returns the first can say, "Lord, thou deliveredst unto me *five* talents; behold I have gained beside them five talents more" (ver. 20). The second says, "Lord, thou deliveredst unto me *two* talents; behold, I have gained two other talents beside them." To each of these, whose *ability* differed, but whose devotedness was equal,—for each had doubled his capital,—the Lord says, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been *faithful* over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (vers. 21, 23). The ability differed, but the devotedness being equal the reward is identical.

To serve such a Master is joy indeed. Forget

not that He says: "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour" (John xii. 26).

In conclusion, I implore you to turn to the Lord now, and then if your friends should call you a turncoat, I will tell you what answer you should give them. Just say to them, "Imitate me, and you will be on the right side of the line, and will have the right Master." May you give your hearts to Jesus now, and from this moment forth be able to say, I am on Christ's side through infinite grace, and am seeking to serve Him, the best of Masters.

W. T. P. W.



"LET US NOT BE WEARY."

(GAL. vi. 9, 10.)



E who works in the field of the world
Must work with a faith sublime;
For the seed he sows, must lie in the
earth,
And wait for God's good time.

But nevertheless the harvest is sure,
Though the sower the sheaves may
not see;

For never a word was spoken for Him
But will ring through eternity.

ANON.

"LA GRACE DE DIEU."



HE grace of God!" What a strange title the above sounds as a subject for a play in three acts! but such was the startling announcement which recently met the writer's eye in one of the large cities of Canada.

"The grace of God!" How sweetly these words sound in the believer's ear! What volumes they tell of the heart of Him, who "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). "*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men*" (Titus ii. 11). Popular Christianity to-day rejects "the grace of God," as of old they rejected Him whom the God of grace had given, "a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord;" so men to-day—fools that they are—are calling down vengeance upon themselves by rejecting "the grace of God."

Oh! think, dear reader, if you are still among that company, what "the grace of God" has done. He "so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son." And how did man shew out his thoughts of God's priceless gift? "They hated me without a cause," were the Saviour's solemn words. Hated and rejected was that blessed Saviour, who had come in tenderest pity to save poor ruined

man. They would not have God, neither did they want His Son, so they nailed Him to a cross, putting Him to the utmost shame and degradation! Was that not enough to close the heart of God for ever, and bring down eternal vengeance upon their guilty heads? Most surely. But oh! the wonders of the grace of God. From the glory, where the earth-rejected Saviour now lives, God has sent down His Spirit, and through His servants is proclaiming salvation to whosoever will. Scoffers, despisers, and rejecters, may now receive pardon and forgiveness from the "God of all grace," through that risen and glorified Saviour.

"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), is still God's gracious message.

Whatever man receives from God must be solely on the ground of God's rich grace. For man is a *sinner* (Rom. iii. 23); *guilty* (Rom. iii. 19); *under condemnation* (John iii. 18); with *the wrath of God* abiding on him (John iii. 36). How then, you say, can he be saved? "The grace of God," is the answer. He, by the gift of His Son, has made it righteously possible for man, who by nature was "far off," to be brought nigh, and that by the blood of Christ (see Eph. ii. 13). Therefore it is "not of works, lest any man should boast." "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. ii. 8). Men may refuse "the grace of God," sport

with it, treat it with levity, and "*act*" it, but if "the grace of God" is rejected, nothing remains for them but "*the wrath of God.*" How are you treating His grace, dear reader?

Soon the day of grace will have run its course, and the sweet call of mercy give place to the thunders of divine judgment; then shall come upon every grace-rejecter those words spoken by the prophets: "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in nowise believe, though a man declare it unto you."

See that you despise not "the grace of God"!

E. E. N.

MERCY FOR ALL.



WHEN the terrible Indian mutiny had been quelled by the prowess of the British soldiers, the disbanded rebels everywhere sought hiding-places from the dreaded retribution of the victors.

After a while Her Majesty the Queen graciously proclaimed an amnesty. However, this amnesty was not universal.

There were certain leaders of the revolt to whom no mercy was extended. Excluded by name from the pardon proclaimed to others, these miserable men knew that it was useless to submit; and

therefore hid themselves in the jungle, and fought desperately to the last.

Sinful man has revolted against his Creator. Instead of executing wrath, God sendeth forth a proclamation of mercy. Unlike the Queen's amnesty, which was limited, God's message of grace is unto all. The vilest sinner out of hell need not despair, though his hands are stained with crime, and his whole being is saturated with iniquity.

This may seem past belief, but just listen to these words: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as SCARLET, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like CRIMSON, they shall be as wool." Remember, too, that the Lord Jesus specially charged His ambassadors to preach this gospel to *every creature*. The last message Jesus sends to the sinner runs thus: "*Whosoever will*, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17).

The question may be asked, "How can God be just, and yet forgive the offences of the sinner?" Scripture gives the following simple and definite answer: "Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24-26).

WISDOM UNDER THE SUN.

"This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me : There was a little city, and few men within it ; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it : now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city ; yet no man remembered that same poor man. Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength : nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard. The words of wise men are heard in quiet, more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools. Wisdom is better than weapons of war : but one sinner destroyeth much good."—ECCLES. ix. 13-18.



IN this short story of the siege and deliverance of a city, does not the preacher preach to us to-day ? Surely we may learn from it by analogy. Is it not a picture of many Gospel truths ? Let us seek to gather a few practical points for the blessing of souls.

"There was a little city, and few men within it." What is that but a picture of this world ? From man's point of view the world is great, and the race of man numerous ; but from God's point of view, it is but a little city indeed, and the fifteen hundred million or so inhabitants few indeed, when one thinks of *Him*, and compares them for a moment, for instance, with *the innumerable* company of angels who surround His throne. Before Him, "the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as *the small dust* of the balance ; behold, He taketh up the isles as *a very little thing*. . . . All nations are before him as *nothing* ; and they

are counted to him *less than nothing and vanity*' (Isa. xl. 15-17).

"And there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it." In like manner a mighty foe has come with all his force against the city of this world. Satan has besieged it, and it is surrounded with the great bulwarks of sin. The enemy reigns on all hands, and misery reigns within. The whole human race is utterly powerless against him. If left to our own resources, so vast are his bulwarks that he has succeeded in building around us, his success must have been complete. Our condition is "without strength." Poor, guilty, lost sinners, shut up under sin and Satan's power, the only prospect before us is death, judgment, and the lake of fire. Such is the state of this little city, with every inhabitant in it.

"Now there was found in the city a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man." And so it came to pass in this poor world, when the siege had lasted four thousand years, a way of deliverance was opened. A poor wise man was found in the city; even Jesus, the Son of God. A poor and needy man (Ps. cix. 16), in whom dwelt all the wisdom of God. And what all the efforts of the whole human race were utterly unavailing to accomplish, *Jesus did*. By His wisdom, He delivered the city. Not by His might, nor by His power; this He laid all aside. But crucified through weakness, He glorified God in death, and broke the whole power of the

enemy! The cross is the true wisdom of God. There Jesus, the Lamb of God, died to take away the sin of the world (John i. 29). That will be the glorious consummation at the end of time, the fruit of the travail of His soul, when the complete deliverance of heaven and earth from the whole of Satan's power will be seen, and a new heaven and a new earth will shine forth, wherein righteousness shall dwell (2 Pet. iii. 13).

"Yet no man remembered that same poor man." How forcibly this reminds us of the treatment that Jesus has received at the hands of a thankless world. He has wrought a mighty deliverance by His wisdom, whereby not only eternal results in the future are secured, but whereby any and every sinner in the little wicked city of this world can escape out of it now, break through the whole power of the enemy, and rejoice in the perfect liberty of God's great salvation. But, alas, no one naturally remembers the Deliverer. We are so used to, and blinded as to, our true state, that we are utterly careless about it, and are content to remain in it. Many put on the garb of religious profession, but remain in their sin and misery, the victims of Satan's awful power.

But, blessed be God, that same poor Man, Jesus, the Son of God, who lived in this little city, and died in grace for sin and sinners, lives again on high in the glory of God, a present Saviour for every one who believeth. But for grace, not one would remember Him. When He died, all forsook

Him. But, His name be praised, grace works. Has it wrought in you? Have you discovered your utterly hopeless and lost condition, surrounded on all hands with the bulwarks of sin? If so, remember now that poor-wise Man, the triumphant Saviour in the glory of God. There is a present way of deliverance for you through His finished work—the wisdom of God. By faith in His name, you may know now that *all your sins are forgiven* (1 John ii. 12), for a way is open through every bulwark right into the glory of God. You are in darkness here, and exposed to death and eternal woe; but *believe on Him*, Jesus, the Son of God, and you will come into His marvellous light, and *have now eternal life*. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me *hath* everlasting life” (John vi. 47).

“Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless, the poor man’s wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.” Again, how true! “By strength shall no man prevail” (1 Sam. ii. 9). We are “*without strength*” (Rom. v. 6). But when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. v. 6). *Here is wisdom*. Wisdom is better than strength. Your own strength, whatever form it may take, can only shut you out for ever from God. Wisdom brings you to Him. Christ suffered for our sins, that He might bring us to God (1 Pet. iii. 18). This is true for every believer. But, alas, the poor man’s wisdom is despised. Work, work, work, do, do,

do, hope, hope, hope, are the words of the day, and thousands go on with them to the bitter end. But wisdom, a full salvation for all, without money and without price, through faith in Jesus' blood, is despised on all hands. The words of man prevail, the doctrines of men are disseminated broadcast, and the mass accredit and devour them. God's words, which endure for ever, are not heard. Man is deaf to the voice of the Blessed Son of God. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24).

"The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools." God's word is always true. The voice of the ruler among fools in the day of health, pleasure, and folly is heard often enough on all hands. But in quiet the scene is changed. When sickness comes, and the death-bed, and the sinner begins to realise that life is ebbing, death at the door, and eternity beyond, then it is that the words of wise men are heard. At such moments the Lord's servant oft finds his opportunity to tell out the precious words of Jesus in the ear of the poor perishing sinner. And then it is that the novel, is laid aside for the Bible, and the ear is opened to hear the blessed tale of God's grace. Though, alas, such is the awful hardness of men's hearts, that even then many are found who will be daring enough to

push the truth from them, and to face death, God, and eternity without a Saviour.

"Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroyeth much good." Yes, indeed, all the military power of the world, with all its boast and panoply and glory, could never deliver this poor benighted city, the world, from the awful power of Satan, its prince and god. Wisdom alone can do that. Or to apply it otherwise, all men's weapons of war, when used, are for death. Life is turned into death thereby. Man in health and strength perishes before them, only too oft to enter eventually on eternal death, the lake of fire (Rev. xx. 14, 15). But through wisdom we pass out of death into life, for the Lord is risen (John v. 24; Col. iii. 3, 4).

And one sinner destroyeth much good. All the misery of this sin-stricken city came in by one man, Adam. He disobeyed God, and sinned. But the wisdom of the second Man, the last Adam, the dead and risen Christ, can meet our state and need. Sinner, how is it with you? Are you still part of this poor beleaguered world, or have you found wisdom's way out of it? It must be one or the other. Christ is the wisdom of God for every one that believeth (1 Cor. i. 30). If you have learnt the wisdom that is now found in Him above the sun, a blessing belongs to you which eclipses all beneath it. May you indeed be assured of this, for His blessed name's sake, and henceforth follow His steps, till He come.

Pages for the Young.

WALTER.



WHEN about seven years old I was first sent to school. In these days the Bible was freely taught in Scotland, and the classes opened by praise and prayer. One of the first hymns I remember being taught to sing was one which perhaps you know—

“Lord, a little band and lowly,
We are come to sing to thee;
Thou art great and high and holy,
Oh! how solemn we should be.”

Our teacher was a kind man, and we all loved him. There were six or seven boys in my class. One in particular I can fancy I see now. His name was Walter. He had clear blue eyes, a broad forehead, and a sweet expression on his face. He was dressed in a green tartan frock. The master sometimes had fun with us. One day Walter had a bun,—cookies, we call them,—and the teacher asking him for a bit, he simply and generously gave it all into his hand. The master took it, and pretended he was eating it; then laughingly returned it, saying that he was a good boy, and he only did it in fun. Of course we all laughed. Soon however Walter had to leave school, as his parents

were removing to Aberdeen. A few days afterwards our teacher, when we were all gathered together, told us, with tears in his eyes, that the ship Walter sailed in was wrecked, and all were drowned. He told us also how Walter loved Jesus, and how He had taken him suddenly by a watery grave to be with Himself, which was "far better."

We all felt very solemn, and a lump rose up in our throats, to think that our companion had perished so sadly.

Now, let me ask, dear children, Are you ready to die? You may not even have to lie on a sick-bed, and have no time at last to repent. Some boys bathing at Inverkeithing last summer were drowned in presence of their comrades, and in view of people on the beach, who could have rescued them. They had been calling out pretending they were drowning, but, alas! they got into deep water, and when they cried in reality there was none to help. Oh! be saved by faith in Jesus now; don't wait till you grow up, for sin's power grows stronger, and the world more enticing, and you may perish like the silly moth which hovers round the candle flame.

"Remember death may find you,
When you're young;
Now friends are often weeping,
And the stars their watch are keeping
O'er the grassy graves where sleeping
Lie the young."

It would be an awful thing to die in your unbelief and sin, and go to meet God, awaking, like the

world-loving rich man we read of in Luke xvi., in hell, "being in torments," never, never to get out again. Life is very uncertain. A father told me that one morning his wife kindled the kitchen fire and left his little daughter beside it in her night-dress. The mother left her for a few minutes, when she heard piercing screams. On rushing back, she found her darling child enveloped in flames. She died a few hours afterwards. Oh! what sorrowful hearts are to be found on the earth.

A bright school-girl was on her way home from Princes Street railway-station. She had been a little late, and the train was moving off. She caught hold of the carriage to jump on, but missed her hold, and fell in between the platform and the wheels. She was killed. What sorrowing hearts must have been at home when the corpse was carried in!

We all grieve, and are very sad, over people's suffering bodies, but how little we think about, and mourn over lost souls! Ah! dear child, you have a soul; God has given it to you, and you must exist for ever. You have sinned against God, and deserve sin's wages, which is death. But God's only begotten Son has been on earth, and died; He bore sin's punishment—out of love to you. He does not wish you to perish, but to believe on Him and live. Trust Him, and know His everlasting love. When you, in your heart, believe His great love to you, you cannot help loving Him back again. You do not *try* to love those who *love* you, but can't help

loving them. Believe, then, in God's love in Christ Jesus to you. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." We love Him, because He *first* loved us.

A dying child was asked by her doctor, "Do you love Jesus?" No answer; she was very weak. Again he asked, "Do you love Jesus?" No answer. "Does *Jesus* love you?" Her eyes opened, her lips parted, and with a sweet smile she threw up her hands, saying, "Yes! yes!!" God grant that this may be your confession, and that you may love Him who first loved you.

T. R. D.

"AWFULLY GOOD!"



CHILDREN'S Gospel Meeting was held lately in Dublin by a servant of Christ who takes a great interest in the spiritual welfare of the young. He spoke from four verses, in all of which the word *behold* occurs. "But if ye will not do so, *behold*, ye have sinned against the Lord; and be sure your sin will find you out" (Num. xxxii. 23); "*Behold* the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29); "*Behold*, thou art fair" (Song of Solomon i. 15); "*Behold*, the

bridegroom cometh" (Matt. xxv. 6). He opened the wordless book then, and showed how the black page tells us what we are by nature, "dead in trespasses and sins"; the red page, what the blood of Christ can do for us, making us like the snowy-white page, whiter than snow; and then the golden page, a picture of divine righteousness, and the glory to which the children of God are hastening home.

After the meeting was over, I had a chat with some of these same little boys and girls on what the preacher had been saying. "Well, Kathleen," said I, "what does the white page mean?" "It means," said little Kathleen, in a very sober tone of voice, "that we must be awfully good." "Oh! no," said Litton, her brother; "it means that if Jesus has washed our souls in His precious blood, our sins are all gone, and we are whiter than snow."

And now, dear children, I want you to tell me which of these dear children answered right. I hope I hear you all saying, "Litton gave the right answer." Yes; Kathleen evidently had not understood the words of the preacher, and thus answered as she did. If a child loves the Lord Jesus as his own dear Saviour, who loved him and gave Himself for him, he will, through love to Jesus, find it his joy to be "awfully good,"—like his Saviour, who, when down here on earth, *always* did those things which pleased His Father, and who has left His people an example that they should follow His steps (1 Peter ii. 21).

M. S. S.

FIVE SMOOTH STONES.*

(1 SAM. xvii.)



OW the onlookers must have wondered as they saw David go out with only these five smooth stones to meet yon enormous man. Remember he was but a stripling—a lad of seventeen, yet in faith in God he goes out to meet this

tremendous man that is coming forth to meet him. I do not wonder that Goliath, when he saw him, his sling, and his five smooth stones, disdained him. We are told, "And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance." The giant, so to speak, snuffed at him. What could that youth do? Ah! my friends, do you know that God always uses simple instruments, and by ways and means that man does not approve, He saves man. God's way of giving you life is that another Man should go into death for you. God's way for us to get into heaven is quite opposed to man's idea. Man's thought is that it is by his own works, God's way is by another Man—His own Son—going down into the depths of death for you.

But these five smooth stones, what could they do? Saul, no doubt, when he saw David take

* Extracted from "Jonathan ; or, A Good Start."

them up and put them into his bag, said, What a fool! The idea of that stripling going out to meet that giant with these five stones is absolute folly. One stone was enough, however, to slay the giant with. But, to apply this,—How can men be saved? Only by the cross. Now-a-days men scout the idea of salvation by the cross of Christ. This is nothing new, for, wrote the apostle Paul, “We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness” (1 Cor. i. 23). In these days as then, the preaching of the cross is to the learned Gentile downright folly. Folly! Ah! but what is it really? “Unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks,” it is “Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” I fully admit that “the preaching of the cross is to *them that perish* foolishness; but unto *us which are saved*, it is the power of God.” Do you think it foolishness to believe that the dying agonies of Christ can be the eternal safety of those who believe in Him, and by His atoning work are thus righteously brought to God?

Men say the cross is folly. But believe me, it has brought me to God. It brought Paul to God. It brought the dying thief to God, and it has brought millions to God. Thank God, for the cross! “God forbid,” says Paul, “that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” So say I with all my heart! I know very well it is despised. But don’t you forget this—that Christ crucified is the wisdom of God, and the

power of God, and there is only one thing which can lift men out of their sins, and bring them to glory, and that is the death of the sinless Son of God. It was for sinners that He died on Calvary's tree, and there is no other name whereby we must be saved. There is no other way to glory but the blood-stained pathway thus opened up through the dying agonies of Christ. You may smile at David's stone, and laugh at Christ on the cross, but be fully assured of this, that you will spend eternity in hell unless you are born of God, and washed in the blood of the Son of God. I speak plainly. You have immortal souls. Eternity is before you, and I ask you, Where will you spend it? You are spending your life in sin, and the wages of sin is death. Where will you spend eternity?

Here, then, we have the truth of the cross in figure. David took the five smooth stones, and the giant, seeing the youth of ruddy and fair countenance, disdains him. "Am I a dog," says the champion, "that thou comest to me with staves? and the Philistine cursed David by his gods" (ver. 43). The idea of that youth coming out to him with such childish weapons was more than he could stand. So spake the foe of Israel then, and so did Satan think when he led on man to put Christ on the cross. He looked for easy and absolute victory. He met with utter defeat. "And the Philistine said unto David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air,

and to the beasts of the field. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied." David, in effect, says to the giant, "The battle is really not between you and me; it is between you and God. I am here for God."

As the giant presses forward, David says: "This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that THE LORD SAVETH not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands" (vers. 46, 47). Mark that! the Lord saveth. You cannot save yourself; I cannot save myself. It is the Lord who alone can save me. God alone can meet the need and ruin of man as a sinner, and I am shut up to accept God's Saviour. "And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth" (ver. 49). He did not think of such a weapon as a sling. He was looking for arrows, and had protected himself with a great big shield; but the stone slung by David went up with a curve, and just struck the

giant on the forehead,—on the spot he least expected it. Satan little thought that the death of Jesus would annul death, and that by His being made sin, so sin would be put away, or he would not have plotted for 'His death. "So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David. Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith" (vers. 50, 51). That was absolute victory. He cut off his head with his own sword. Christ too has, so to speak, cut off Satan's head with his own sword. Do you know what death is? It is the wages of sin consequent on man's sin and guilt, and Satan can wield it as a sword over man's conscience. Death is the judgment of God upon man as a sinner, and when it suits his purpose, the devil can hold over man the solemn truth that he is going to die.

It is complete deliverance to a soul in bondage to see that although the wages of sin is death, yet death is the doorway to life—death is the pathway to peace and blessing. You and I can only be delivered by death; you and I can only be saved by death. The gates of hell are closed, and the gates of glory are opened for us, by death. Our death? Thank God, no! but the death of the sinless Man, upon whom death had no claim, yet who died "the just for the unjust."

When Satan led the world on to put Jesus to death, he committed the most senseless and short-sighted act that he ever could have done. But he is not the only actor at the cross, for Jesus voluntarily goes into death, and having so done, He meets the claims of God on man, sustains the judgment due to him in righteousness, and then He rises from the dead, and that, you will observe, on the ground that there has been a wonderful victory accomplished. In the spot where every other man has been defeated, Christ has won the victory. Death has claimed and held every other man. "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection. from among the dead" (1 Cor. xv. 21). He went into death, and then came up out of it, victor over it, and thank God He is my Saviour. I wish he were yours. You may have Him to-night.

There is a remarkable New Testament scripture, bearing on this point, I should like you to notice. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also likewise took part of the same (that is, he became a man), that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death—that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 14, 15). Wonderful tidings! You and I die because we are men. He became a man that He might be able to die. He could have passed up into glory from this earth at any moment of His history, for death had no claim

on Him since He was sinless, but then He would have left every man behind Him. He says to the one who believes in Him, I came down and died for you, I bore your judgment, and died your death, and I bring you to God in righteousness. I bore your judgment that I might deliver and redeem you.

Just as David cut off Goliath's head with his own sword, so by death—which is what the devil terrifies a man with—does Jesus deliver the soul that trusts in Him. Death, which was the wages of sin, has now opened the way of life for me, for "AS it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall be appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 27, 28). Death opens the pathway to glory for the believer now, because in the death of the Saviour atonement has been made. That atonement has been presented, and God has accepted it, and what has been the result? God has raised from the dead, and glorified the blessed Man, who died on the cross. His exaltation is God's answer to the sufferings of the Saviour, and is the proof of His absolute victory over every foe of God and man. Hallelujah!

Now observe what follows the giant's death in the scene before us. "And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled," and Israel "spoiled their tents" (vers. 51-53). The enemies are dispersed, and nothing remains to the

men of Israel and Judah but to possess the spoil which David's victory has gained for them. David then comes back, and is led before Saul. And what has he got with him? He has the head of the Philistine in his hand. He is the victor, and has the proof of his victory in his hand as he goes to the king, and walks through the ranks of Israel. He has the giant's sword in one hand, and his head in the other. He does not say a word; he does not need to. The sword and the head that he carried told the tale of his victory more eloquently than any word, and at this point Jonathan's heart was captured.

There are five points about Jonathan here which are worthy of note. When David came into the camp, do you know what Jonathan was doing? He was *trembling*. Oh, you say, How do you know? Well, verses 11 and 24 tell me they were all afraid and fled; and Jonathan, though he is not named, was in the camp. At that point he was Jonathan *anxious*. When David went forth to meet the foe, and when Jonathan fixed his eye upon him, he was in a *hopeful* mood—he was Jonathan *hopeful*. As he looked on that wonderful conflict, and presently saw the giant fall, and his head lopped off with one stroke of his own sword, he was immensely relieved. "Thank God!" I am sure he would say, "*I am delivered,*" and he would draw a long breath. Don't you tell me he did not take a long breath, as he got the sense that the foe was overcome. Then he was

Jonathan delivered. What is the next thing? As they brought in the spoil of the tents, he was *Jonathan enriched.* The climax is soon reached, for his heart is completely captured, and Jonathan became *devoted.*

I greatly wonder whether any of you have become really devoted. "And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul" (xviii. 1). What attracted Jonathan? It was the sense he had of the personal charms and self-sacrifice of David. Here is one of whom I know nothing, but who, seeing our distress and misery, has "put his life in his hand"—as it says in the next chapter—and at the risk of his life has saved my life. Love to David sprang up in his heart, until, as Scripture says, "he loved him as his own soul." It was the love of David that begat love—"We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John iv. 19). I don't ask you to-night to love Jesus, but I can tell you that Jesus loves you.

"Love, only love, Thy heart inclined,
And brought Thee, Saviour of mankind,
Down from the throne above ;
Love made Thee here a man of grief,
Distressed Thee sore for our relief,
O mystery of love !"

GOD'S LAST APPEAL.



PREACHER of great celebrity the other day gave expression to a very pithy, weighty sentence. He said, "*What was once infidelity outside the Church, is now the higher criticism inside the Church.*"

Satan from the beginning has sought to impugn God's Word. He began his deadly work in the garden of Eden, when he uttered the first great infidel question, "Hath God said?" Once he has succeeded in weakening and impairing the authority of God's Word over the minds of men, he has an almost omnipotent lever for evil at his disposal, but for the almighty power of God.

Now, God's last great appeal to man is by His written Word. If that fails, all else fails. If that does not influence, nothing else can. Oh! Satan knows right well that he gains just in proportion as the Word of God diminishes in the eyes of men.

And at the present day the battle rages. Never has this precious volume—God's heritage to man—been so assailed as at the present day. Never has it been so subjected to such microscopical examination from cover to cover. Never has the voice of hatred so heralded forth its *seeming* mistakes as at the present. And never has it received such confirmation as of late—if such it needed. Dis-

coveries in Egypt, discoveries in science, discoveries in many fields of research, have unexpectedly brought stubborn facts upon the critics, which only prejudice and hatred to divine truth could shuffle out of.

And, alas! the easy-going indifferentism of the present day—"the Christian charity," which is only such in name, which will forego any truth in order not to be thought narrow or bigoted—makes it difficult to discern which is friend or foe.

What was infidelity in Tom Paine is now "Higher Criticism" in the hands of the Rev. Dr So-and-so. Oh, friend, beware of any, whatever robes he may wear, if he in any way weakens the authority of God's Word—whether from Genesis to Revelation—or in the truths it teaches; whether it be the total depravity of man, the all-sufficiency of Christ's atonement, or the eternity of punishment of the damned.

We state again, emphatically, that the Bible is God's last appeal.

This receives confirmation from the Saviour's own lips—confirmation from a source which will be strange and new to many.

It is found in the brief, telling parable, which fell from the Saviour's lips, of the rich man in the lake of fire—Dives.

The rich man on earth is now bankrupt in eternity. His faring sumptuously every day had come to an eternal close. His short, selfish, butterfly-life had ended. The inexorable march of

time had brought about what is described by Christ with such startling brevity: "It came to pass that . . . the rich man died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments."

Afar off, and happy, he sees the repulsed mendicant Lazarus. Now he is tormented and thirsty. Crying for one drop of water, Abraham reminds him of the impossibility of his getting it,—the GREAT gulf is fixed for him for ever!

Then—and oh! here is a voice for you, dear reader—he prays that Lazarus may be sent to his five brethren to warn them of their danger. What is Abraham's answer? "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them."

Moses and the prophets in Christ's day were equivalent to the Scriptures in our day—the Bible.

Well, but the rich man had had Moses and the prophets in his day of opportunity, and he had heeded them not; so he prays further, and urges his request, saying "Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent."

He thought that if his brethren were startled out of their carelessness by an apparition from the dead—that if their ghostly visitor, knowing with certainty the awful realities of eternity as in the case of the rich man, and the happiness and joys of heaven as in his own case—sought by the earnestness and vividness of his speech to arouse them from their awful slumber, that surely it would encompass the desired end.

But no. Abraham replies, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."


He takes his stand firmly upon this, God's last appeal to them. If they attend not to that, nothing can move them, nor avert the calamity into which their brother had fallen.

Oh, dear unsaved reader, we would earnestly warn you to pay heed to the blessed Word of God. A strange dream may affect you for a few days, a sad and sudden calamity may sober you for a few months, but nothing can divinely affect you for eternity but the Word of God.

Oh, take it up in sober earnest, and study it. It can make you "wise unto salvation." Learn therein the first great lesson for a sinner to learn,—that you are hopelessly lost, as far as your own strength and power goes. Learn that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Study it, till you can rejoicingly say, in company with the apostle Paul, and thousands more besides, "I KNOW whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain."

GOD'S PROCLAMATION TO ALL.

 **B**E IT KNOWN." So commences the glorious proclamation of forgiveness in Acts xiii. 38, 39. It is a well-known scripture. Scarcely any other has had more Gospel addresses preached from it, and never once too often. Thousands are with Christ through it! May the number be much augmented, by God's grace, through these feeble lines, and to Him be all the praise.

"*Be it known*" is God's emphatic statement. Be it unknown, hidden, covered with rubbish, be it got rid of altogether, if possible, says Satan. Alas! how successful he has been in stopping souls both from reading and believing it. God says, "*Be it known.*" It is His blessed and eternal Word. It prefaces the most glorious news. "*Be it known*"—what wondrous grace!

Now, if the Queen of England, or the President of America, were to indite, and publish a proclamation, who would not stop to read it? If we were suddenly confronted with a proclamation in every house in the realm, beginning with "*Be it known,*" and signed by the highest in the State, who would dare to treat it as a thing of nought? *This* proclamation comes from Him who is higher than all. God says, "*Be it known.*" And it is in every Bible, in almost every house in the land. Who was it to be made known to?

"Unto you, therefore, men and brethren." Who were they? You may reply, "Well, they were Jews." True. "Ah, but I am a Gentile." Read verse 42, "When the Jews were gone out . . . *the Gentiles* besought *that these words might be preached to them.*" Are you a Gentile of that type? The mass of the Jews despised it; and the Lord's servants preached it to the Gentiles. The testimony has gone on from that day to this. *Unto you, therefore*, it comes to-day. It matters not who you are, or where you are, it comes to you. Be it known *unto you*. It is a proclamation for every nation, and for every sinner under the sun. It is the announcement of grace, and grace flows to all. It is no question whatever of your nationality, or your position in society, or your moral or religious state. You may be a professing Christian, a heathen, or a Jew; you may rank among the highest or the lowest; you may be a model of outward religious consistency and of unimpeachable moral conduct, or you may have sunk to the lowest depths of degradation and rebellion against God,—but His proclamation begins, *"Be it known unto you."*

"What am I to know?" replies some unknown reader.

"That through this man is preached unto you." This Man! What man? The Man Christ Jesus, Himself the Son of the Living God. The Man who died for the guilty; but who will damn the impenitent (Matt. iii. 12). The Son of God, who became a man, to die a felon's death, that such as

you might escape an eternal hell and dwell with Him in glory. The lowly Jesus, the perfect, holy, spotless Lamb of God, who gave Himself a sacrifice for sin on Calvary; who took and drank to the bitter dregs the cup of judgment that you, sinner, so richly deserve. Jesus, who exhausted the flames of Divine wrath, by Himself being made sin, who knew no sin. The one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all (1 Tim. ii. 5, 6). The spotless Man who died at Golgotha, amid the derision and scoffs of the world of the ungodly, abandoned by God and man. *Through this Man is preached.* Through Him, and through no other. Through Him, and Him alone, in that He has finished redemption's work, is preached unto all, preached *unto you*, what? The very thing of all others that every sinner needs, and which every sinner must have or perish eternally. What is that?

"The forgiveness of sins." Sinner, you need forgiveness; you know you need it. You *must* have it, or your case is hopeless. How do you think to get it? Maybe a vague hope is floating in your mind, amid thousands of foolish and sinful thoughts (every one of which, if unpardoned, such is the holiness of God, would damn you eternally), that somehow or other you may get off in the judgment day! So Satan befools thousands. Forgiveness in the judgment day! Now, *now*, now, NOW, says the everlasting Word, is the day of salvation (2 Cor. vi. 2). Did you never read or

hear that? *Now*; you must have salvation *now*. Not in the judgment day, but *now*. *Now*, sinner. Do you not know what *now* means? It means *now*, the present moment. And why? For to-morrow may be for ever *too late*!

The devil whispers, "Time enough yet." Ten days ago a Christian, who had learnt the value of *now*, was sitting writing a letter, his wife by his side. Suddenly his head fell back, and he was gone. Where? To be *with Christ* for ever.

A young woman last spring was walking hurriedly through the crowd in a large city. She dropped suddenly on the pavement. She was dead, gone from this world—where? We heard nothing of her state; God knows it. If unforgiven, lost; if forgiven, saved. Another was waiting on the railway platform. She dropped down also; dropped dead. *Dead*!

Suppose you were to drop dead just *now*, are you *forgiven*? No? Then *you* would be lost. After death the judgment (Heb. ix. 27). And all who die in their sins, will be raised in them, judged for them, and damned for ever, without a ray of hope. "Through this man is preached unto you *the forgiveness of sins*." Sinner, think of it; consider it *now*. The forgiveness of *sins*—all thy sins; all those horrible sins, deep-dyed as scarlet or crimson—sins in thought, word, or deed,—that maybe (unless your conscience has been seared) have often filled you with shame and sorrow, but against which you have again and again found yourself powerless to cope.

Without forgiveness, and that now, your case is utterly hopeless. Through Christ it is preached unto you. Not through what you are, have been, or hope to be; not through what you do, have done, or hope to do; not through your religion or your works, either of the present, past, or future; not through your baptism, or your confirmation, or your partaking of the Lord's Supper; not through your tears or your prayers (however right all of these may be in their place),—but through this Man, Christ Jesus, who died for the guilty, the hopeless, and the lost, is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins this day, this hour, this moment—*now!*

"And by him all that believe." Note it well. Make no mistake. The salvation of your never-dying soul and your eternal welfare depends upon it. *By Him*, the Christ, the Lord, the glorified Saviour on the throne of God,—*"by him ALL."* Note, too, that word *"all."* *"All that believe."* There is the link. The work of redemption is accomplished; the Saviour is on high; and by Him *all that believe*. That is the all-important question for you this moment. Do you *believe*? Not, do you merely credit it as a fact; millions do that, and are not one whit nearer salvation or the glory of God. You may believe it with the head from the earliest moment of knowledge till your dying breath, yet sink for ever in the depths of hell. Demons believe, says the Scripture, and tremble (Jas. ii. 19). Maybe not a reader of these

lines ever doubted for a moment the facts of the Gospel,—but do you believe? Do you believe what God says from the heart?

Some may say, But are there two ways of believing? Yes, there are, the wrong way and the right. Millions believe in Christ, and millions believe in Mahomet, and millions believe in Buddha and other false gods. But will that meet the soul's need? *Never!* But if you shall verily and truly take God at His word,—if you believe God as Abraham, as David, as Paul, as Peter, or John,—then what saith the Scripture? “By him all that believe are justified.”

“*Are justified from all things.*” Oh, the magnificence of God's grace, and the simplicity of God's Gospel! Do you believe? *Yes.* Then the link, so to speak, is on. Belief is not the Saviour; Christ is that. But by believing, Christ is ours; He is our known Saviour. He died for all (2 Cor. v. 14, 15). The sinner who believes can say, “Then I know He died for me. I believe what God says about Him, because He says it, and cannot lie. I trust the truth of God. I rest on His infallible and eternal word. *I believe.*”

And then comes the magnificent declaration of the great and universal proclamation of the God of all grace. “By him all that believe are justified from all things.” Note it well again. Not simply forgiven; it takes in all that, and how much more? But *justified*. Cleared, freed, discharged by God Himself from all things; and accounted just by a

just God, as though no guilt had ever been incurred. Justified from what? *All things*. Reader, let it sink into the depths of your soul. May the Holy Ghost indite it there indelibly, eternally. "*Justified from all things.*" All that believe *are*. We think we see the transports of your joy, poor believing sinner, as we remember our own when we first realised this blessed, wondrous fact.

God proclaims now to any and every sinner in this poor lost world, "By him all that believe are justified from all things." Sinner, hear it. Sinner, stop and think. Whither are you bound? On the broad road to eternal perdition? You are going down the inclined plane to hell. Singing, dancing, joking, sporting, it may be, on the broad, easy way to hell! "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and *many there be* which go in thereat" (Matt. vi. 13). And Satan takes good care to keep that gate wide open. He never slumbers at his post. He keeps that road well paved and lit. You have only to keep straight on, sinner; it is easy walking, always down hill, and plenty of false light. But "if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matt. vi. 23). And the end, the blackness of darkness for ever (Jude 13).

Stop, traveller, stop; there is danger ahead! We warn you by the horrors of hell, and beseech you by the mercies of God, *stop!* Not another step, as you value your life. Stop! Have you stopped? Well, now read this proclamation of God. Read it

slowly, carefully, attentively; note every word; *every* word, mind:—"Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 38, 39).

Now, have you read it? Yes. Carefully? Yes. Now think, *that is the Word of God, who cannot lie* (Titus i. 2). And *if you judge yourself* as a guilty lost sinner before God, and *believe that*, you may have been hitherto the deepest-dyed sinner that ever trod the soil of Europe or America,—the biggest hypocrite that ever entered a church, chapel, or meeting,—the darkest heathen in Asia, Africa, or elsewhere,—yet God says, and means, *you are justified from all things!*

You may doubt, fear, twist, turn, or wriggle in your thoughts, as you probably will, and Satan will help you, but there stands the nearly nineteen-century-old proclamation, inscribed with indelible letters on the everlasting page of the everlasting Word of the everlasting God, as true to-day, and for ever, as when the Holy Ghost indited it; and every self-judged sinner who believes it, is one of the *all*. And all that believe are, *are*, ARE justified from ALL THINGS!

Now, tell us, friend, is there a flaw anywhere to be found in that document? Many a man has been pauperised, and many a man has been enriched, through a written document. Here, so to speak, is a Gospel document, that will make you richer than

Cæsus, or all the Rothschilds together. Eternal riches are found here, the present and eternal portion of *every one that believeth*. Guilty, lost one, you who are burdened, troubled, heavy laden with sin, *believe God*. "It is finished." Jesus died. Jesus rose. Jesus lives. By Him, the living Saviour, triumphant on God's throne, *all that believe are justified*.

How blessed to go on till the end of your days with those soul-emancipating words, "are justified," following Him through whom they come, and then to carry them with you into His Own presence for ever. And "from all things," every sin, every transgression, every iniquity, every offence, every failure, every shortcoming, everything. And "from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

Troubled one, have you believed the glorious proclamation of God ?

E. H. C.

"WITH CHRIST, WHICH IS FAR BETTER."



UCH were the oft-repeated words of one who fell asleep in Jesus last November. When told that the doctor feared she would not recover, she said, "It is all well, Jesus is my Saviour, He died for me," and then asked to have her favourite hymn read, "'Tis with Believers Well."

Her last words to her mother were, "Don't fret, mother, I'm only gone before, you will come soon ; and to depart and be *with Christ* is far better."

Reader, are you prepared to meet death ? Could you say, "It is *all* well, Jesus is *my* Saviour ?" If not, oh, think of eternity ! Christ Jesus says, "Come unto me." He is waiting to receive you. This dear one could say, it was because the Lord loved her He took her to Himself. What a testimony ! How the love of Christ cheered and comforted her amidst all her sufferings. Only a few hours before she passed away she asked for the 4th of Hebrews to be read, and repeated that beautiful verse, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." She could, indeed, anticipate with joy the rest that awaits those who are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

Reader, can you look forward to that rest ? You may be ushered into eternity at any moment ; what would then be *your* portion ? With Christ, which is far better ? or with the devil and his angels, banished for ever from the presence of God ? Oh, may you ponder these lines, and may you be led to accept *now* your portion in Christ ; to-morrow may be too late. God says, "Behold *now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

SURE OF HEAVEN.



DOES the Word of God give a person to know divine certainty of going to heaven? If it did not, it would not be a perfect revelation from God to meet the need of our souls. But, blessed be God, it does, and my reader may be a happy possessor of that certainty. Peace with God, and certainty of going to heaven, may be possessed by believing the testimony of God.

Let us now turn to Scripture. "And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And *you*, that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet *now* hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unproveable in his sight" (Col. i. 20-22).

Peace through the *blood* of His cross—peace made by Christ Himself by the shedding of His precious blood—is now preached to every one—to you, my reader. Do you believe such glad tidings? No language could be plainer, or more simple, or more comforting. No surer ground could be given, nor could faith desire to rest on aught more solid. Believing in the precious blood of Christ gives perfect peace, and certainty of heaven.

I remember some forty years ago asking an aged

Christian, nearing the end of her life, if she was "sure of going to heaven." Quickly, and without any hesitation, was the reply, "As sure as the blood of Christ can make me." Reader, could you give the same answer, not resting on anything but the precious blood of Christ? How one longs to see souls simply resting there, and at peace with God, with a divine certainty of heaven.

I once had the great pleasure of seeing a poor woman, whom I was asked to visit, pass from unrest and uncertainty into rest and certainty. Never shall I forget the change on her countenance. It was clouded and miserable when I entered her cottage, bright and beaming with peace—expressive of perfect peace—before I left! She was in real trouble and anguish of soul. She greatly desired and longed for peace with God. She had heard again and again of the precious blood of Christ which cleanses from all sin, but there was no peace; and the simple reason of her not having peace, arose from her looking within, and wondering if it was shed for her, if she valued it enough, and such-like reasonings. This was her state for some considerable time, and these thoughts kept her from the peace which her exercised conscience desired, and which came like a flood of light when she for the first time saw that God did not say, "When I see your feelings are right, or that you have a right estimate of the blood, I will pass over," but "*When I see the blood, I will pass over,*"—for "*the blood shall be to you for a token upon the*

houses where ye are: and when I SEE the blood, I will pass over you" (Exod. xii. 13). "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls: *for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul*" (Lev. xvii. 11).

The soul is not free in life, and in adoring worship, where the value of the blood is not known. The more I dwell upon the blood—the shed blood of Christ, God's dear Son—the more is my soul called out in praise to God.

The blood of the cross, beloved reader, came from a spotless victim. The Son of God, who suffered on the cross, can alone atone for our sins; and not only is there peace and joy in believing in reference to the forgiveness of our sins, but there is joy and peace in the holiest with God, when the soul perceives that it is God's delight to have us there, as it is ours to be there with God.

Fellow-traveller to eternity, where will that eternity be spent? God's Word settles that question. Under the shelter of the precious blood of Christ we are safe for heaven, and our eternal home will be with Christ—where Christ is, and we shall be like Him. Not under the shelter of that blood, eternity will be spent where Christ is not, in that place prepared for the devil and his angels.

My reader, think of this, and remember peace is made. You have not to make it. Christ alone could, and did make it, by the blood of His cross. Joy and peace come by believing what He has

done. Oh, that you may be able to say, "I am sure of heaven, as sure as the blood of Christ can make me." And consider, it is not only "sure of heaven," but God has reconciled us unto Himself now by the death and blood of Christ,—therefore, before we get to heaven, "we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Rom. v. 11).

That the God of peace may bless this short, simple, and blessed message of peace to your soul, my reader, is the earnest desire of the writer.

J. M. R.

YE'RE A' WELCOME HAME.

TUNE—"The Auld Hoose."



E needna think it's no' for you,
An' syne ye'll lea't alane;
He bocht an entrance wi' His
bluid—

An' ye're a' welcome hame.
Ye needna hanker on the road;
If sae, He's no to blame;
"Come unto Me," He says to a'—
For ye're a' welcome hame.

Ye're a' welcome hame, &c.

The beggar man wi' tattered claes,
The queen wi' silken train,
Wha pleads the merits o' His bluid,
Will hae a welcome hame.

The rich, the puir, the young, the auld,
To Jesus are the same ;
“ Come unto Me,” He says to a’—
For ye’re a’ welcome hame.
Ye’re a’ welcome hame, &c.

Ahint the clouds the sun is bricht,
An’ whiles oor herts are fain
To lea’ the struggle o’ this warl’
An’ flee tae yon bricht hame.
The mansions o’ the blest are there ;
Wi’ herts a’ free frae pain,
We’ll gang when His guid time comes roon’—
For we’re a’ welcome hame.
We’re a’ welcome hame, &c.

We’ll meet wi’ frien’s we kent langsyne
Wha frae oor herts are ta’en ;
They cou’dna bide, for Jesus ca’d
Them up to His ain hame.
We’ll meet them, an’ we’ll welcome be
Whaur Jesus is to reign ;
We’ll gang when His guid time comes roon’—
For we’re a’ welcome hame.
We’re a’ welcome hame, &c.

A WISE CHOICE.*



SCRIPTURE says, "By *faith* Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter."

And what was this wonderful energy that wrought in his soul this change?

It was faith. Faith is the principle that links the soul with God. It is that mighty principle that sees beyond the things of time, and looks right into eternity. The fact was this,—in some way or other—for the producing circumstances are not told us,—the Spirit of God had wrought in that man's heart, and he looked through time into eternity.

Oh! would to God that you too would take a deep long look right into eternity; for although you are here to-day, you cannot tell how soon you will be in it. It lies before you, just as Moses knew it lay before him; and he looked right into eternity, and he measured in the balances of the sanctuary what he had for time, and what lay before him in eternity. By grace he was able to do this remarkable act,—he gave up the present, in view of the future. "By *faith* Moses, when he was come to years, *refused* to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, *choosing rather* to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Refusing and

* Extracted from "Moses; or, Refusing and Choosing."

choosing! Every man must do the same. Every one of you must refuse, and you must choose. Either you refuse the world and choose Christ, or you refuse Christ and choose the world. I quite admit that at that moment the present realities of the Gospel, in all their sweetness and fulness, had not come out as they have to us now; but Moses saw enough to make him see and say this: "There is something infinitely better than what I have just now; I will go in for it." But what about your position, Moses? What about your place in the court and the palace? "These things are hindrances in my road, and I will cede them," is his reply.

I have no doubt that the devil suggested to him, Why don't you keep the place that providence has placed you in? Undoubtedly providence had placed him in that position. But remember providence is one thing, and faith is another. While no doubt the providence of God had placed him in a lofty position, he was part and parcel with those who were not God's people. He saw that the thing of the utmost importance was to be of, and to be identified with, those who were God's people. There are some people in this world who belong to God. Do you belong to Him? Then distinctly understand this: If a man does not belong to God, Satan claims that man. People do not like that doctrine; they think it very strange. You are not your own, man! Oh! no. "The god of this world" claims you, holds you, and binds you, if

you do not belong to God. Moses felt it, and knew it, and he chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." He said: "Let me be among God's people; I had rather have affliction with God's people, than have the favour and fawning of the world, and all that the children of the world can lay at my feet." He was wise.

But possibly you may say to me, What did he give it up for? I grant you he gave up an earthly court and crown, and the company of earthly courtiers, but Scripture tells us "he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." I wonder if you ever thought of the company that Moses got into afterwards! I do not know whether you ever thought of it, but it is worthy of notice. In the gospels we read there was a certain occasion when the blessed Lord Jesus Christ was transfigured:—"And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke ix. 30, 31). Ah! Moses has his recompense there. He is in the company, not only of the people of God, but of the Son of God! I want you, my friends, to follow his steps. I want everybody here this evening, who has not yet turned to the Lord Jesus, to do, in principle, what Moses did. It comes to this,—a man has to refuse and to choose.

When I was converted to God myself, what did I do? I refused, and I chose. You may say to

me, How did it come about? I will tell you. I was going to be a lawyer, not a doctor, and I had gone up from the south of Devon to London to go on with my legal studies, and I got into a meeting where a servant of God was preaching. That is thirty-three years ago. It was on the 16th December 1860. The dear servant of God who was preaching that evening brought out very simply the importance and the blessedness of being a Christian. Every seat in the hall was filled, and I stood in the aisle the whole of that evening. As the preacher—who has now gone to glory—went on, I said to myself, That man is right; he is right, and I am wrong. But there was more than that, I got the sense that that man knew God, and I did not—that man was saved, and I was not—that he was going to glory, while I was going to hell—that he was going to be the companion of Christ, and I knew I was going to be the companion of the devil perfectly well.

You ask, Were you a terribly gross sinner? I was exactly like you, an unconverted young man—a man full of the world. I admit that at that time there was not a pleasure of the world that I had not dipped into. I tasted of “the pleasures of sin,” but they never satisfied me, and that night I was a convicted man—an awakened man. I found that I was on the wrong road altogether—that I was all wrong. I was pulled up. God pull you up, my young friend. God arrested me. God arrest you!

The preacher at the end invited anybody who would like to have a conversation with him to wait behind, and I waited. Ten years before I had seen the preacher. Curious are the links in the chain of God's grace to an unconverted soul. This servant of His had come down to Devonshire to preach, and stopped in my father's house. He wanted to go to a place five miles away to see a friend, and my father let me drive him. When we got home he said to me, "This has been a beautiful drive, and here is a little remembrance of it," and he handed me a mother-of-pearl handled knife with four blades. Now a four-bladed knife is usually thought a great deal of by a lad of ten, and I prized it accordingly.

As I entered the door of the hall that night in London, and heard who was to preach, I felt I had a certain link with the speaker—beloved C. S. I listened with real interest to his solemn, searching address on Solomon building the temple,—since published under the title of "Great Stones and Costly,"—and I thought I would like to resume my friendship with himself.

After a few words with him, he introduced me to a young man of about my own age, who simply asked me, "Are you a Christian?" "No, sir," I answered, "I am not a Christian." "Oh, you are not a Christian! How is that?" I said, "I don't know, but I am not one." "Don't you want to be one?" "Yes, I should like to be one." "Well, what have you to do to become one?" "I suppose

I have only to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." "Yes, and do you believe in Him?" "I do; we all believe in England." "Yes, but tell me, what do you believe?" Well, I confess I was struck with that question when he put it. I had been brought up in a Christian family. I had a Christian father and mother, a converted brother, and several Christian sisters, but I was not a Christian myself. I never was more puzzled than when he put that question, "What do you believe?" After a pause, I said, "I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." "And to save you?" "Well, I hope so, among the rest." "Do you believe in Him?" "I do." "And are you saved?" "Oh, no, I don't *feel* saved; and I can't expect to be saved until I *feel* I am saved." My young friend said, "Stop, you think you really need saving? You know you are a sinner?" I know it, and, what is more, I'd give the world to be a Christian." "But you have nothing to give, you have only to receive;" and then he put the Gospel very simply to me.

I was on the verge of believing the Gospel, and accepting God's way of salvation, when an old acquaintance stepped up, and whispered in my ear, "Remember you have to sing at a concert in Devonshire (I used to sing at concerts, chiefly comic songs) in Christmas week, and you have many other similar engagements that week. Now no man can serve two masters. You could not be a Christian and fulfil all your worldly engage-

ments. You had better put off being a Christian for a fortnight, and then when you come back to London you can believe the Gospel and be a Christian." On went this subtle yet damnable temptation, for it was the devil who whispered, "No man can serve two masters;" and I recollect I said at the time, "That is true, I have served you too long. You are a bad master, and I will serve you no more." And, thank God! I made up my mind then and there. The scripture which the devil quoted to hinder me really helped me to decide for Christ.

"And you do believe in Jesus?" said the young man who was conversing with me. "I do believe." "And what do you believe?" he asked again. "I believe that Christ died to save me." "And do you think the Lord is willing to save you?" "Yes, I think He is." "And has He saved you?" "Ah no! I am not saved yet; I don't *feel* saved." I was waiting for experience. All of a sudden he said: "I see where you are; you are just in the position of the man of whom the apostle James says, 'Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble'" (Jas. ii. 19). Who does not believe that there is a God? Every young man in this hall does so. "Thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."

That verse pierced me through. I saw in a moment the ground I was on, and the company I was in; and I am not ashamed to confess, in the

face of you all to-night, that when I saw my company I fled. Fled! To whom? To the Saviour! I saw where I was. I saw I was practically the companion of those who, while they believe there is one God, tremble under the sense of His judgment, knowing that they are eternally lost. "The devils also believe, and tremble," pierced my conscience to the uttermost. They and I were on common ground. The young Scotchman who was speaking with me said, "There is this difference between you and them; there is no mercy for them; they are beyond it. There is mercy for you, and God grant that you may taste it." "What must I do to be saved?" burst from my lips. "You have only to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." I thought, Can I believe that Jesus died for me? Yes, I do believe, and, thank God! I made up my mind for the Lord on that spot,—found Him as my Saviour, received pardon and peace on the spot, was filled with joy, and have never for one moment repented my choice.

You do the same to-night, I implore you. I *chose Christ*, and I *refused the world*, with the same breath. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather,"—and you must choose. Make your choice to-night. Would you not rather choose Jesus Christ, and "suffer affliction with the people of God, than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," and then suffer their penalty for ever?

Moses saw where he was. He saw he was going down with the tide. Are you going down with the tide, or are you not? Can you tell me the difference between a dead fish and a living one, in the water? I think most of you could. A dead fish is easily enough known. It goes with the stream, but you generally find the living fish with its nose up the stream. Moses knew he was going with the stream, and every unconverted man is going on with the stream,—going on with “the pleasures of sin.” They are only for a season, however. I do not deny that there is pleasure in sin, for God says there is pleasure in sin; but, stop! there are penalties connected with sin, which all who go in for the pleasures of sin are exposed to. The pleasures of sin are only for a season; they do not really satisfy. No young man in this hall who is unconverted is really satisfied.

Just settle down for five minutes and think, in the midst of your folly, and giddiness, and godlessness,—think for five minutes, and you will become unhappy. Your conscience will act. Three months before I was converted I was in a ballroom, and in the middle of a waltz with a young lady we paused before a chiffoniere where there were some lovely flowers. “Are not these flowers lovely?” she said. “Yes, they are beautiful,” I replied, “but they are very like us.” “What do you mean?” she asked. “They are cut, they will be withered and dead to-morrow.” I had a conscience, you see. “Oh! what do you mean?” said she, perfectly alarmed.

"Never mind," I answered, and we got into the whirl of the waltz once more. But the remark stuck to her conscience; she saw death was ahead of her. Death and damnation were before me, and I knew it full well. I knew that death and judgment and hell lay before me. I am thankful to say that my remark was used by the Spirit of God, and was like seed dropped into good ground. It rankled so in her conscience, that she had no soul-rest till she came to Jesus. When God brought me to Himself, and I was preaching a few months afterwards in the town where she lived, she came to hear me preach, found Christ as her Saviour, and then told me how she was awakened in the ballroom.

W. T. P. W.



TRYING OR TRUSTING—WHICH?



"TRIED to be religious for three days, and became so thoroughly sick of it that I gave it up," said a gay young officer once to me.

"I wonder that you tried for so long," I replied.

"How so?" said he; "I thought you were religious too."

"Yes," I said, "but mine is not a religion of *trying*. It is, and has been for many happy years, one of *trusting*. An immense difference!"

My gay young friend had, no doubt, been sickened by sin. Gaiety, instead of satisfying, had nauseated his soul and burdened his conscience. The pleasures of sin (and they are admitted by the Bible itself) are not only short-lived, but they leave their scar and stain behind them; so that, disgusted by the positive wretchedness they produce, the soul has recourse to *religion* in order to find, in its reputed comforts, the relief that its burden demands.

The pity is that such people do not first ask themselves, "*What is religion?*"

Now that is a fair question. The word "*religion*" means an adherence to certain rules; and the more strictly you adhere to these rules, the more religious you are. The world contains thousands of religions,—that is, thousands of classified rules for the observance of the worshippers. These rules may be good or bad; they may be Christian or cannibal; they may be true or false;—no matter, they form a religion; and obedience to them is the duty of the religionist. Such is the meaning of the word "*religion*."

Then, does it follow that religion, as such, comforts the mourner, restores the fallen, or saves the sinner? Certainly not; it may but add to his misery. There may be a change of diet, so to speak, but it is only a change of poison. And if you observe the faces of people who are thus religious, you will see poison written on their every feature. They show the presence of an indwelling

bondage. They are enslaved. Yes, the Bible speaks of the "pleasures of sin," but never of the "pleasures of religion." Never! In fact it is a question whether the devil may not lead more to hell by the regulated road of "religion," than he does by the slimy slough of sin.

"Sick of *religion*," after three days' fair trial! Most intelligible! Looked at from this point of view, three days was a long period for a wild young spirit to remain in fetters, for fetters they were.

"Legion" tried the same, and added to his chains a good deal of penance beside; he cut himself with stones; he cried day and night in the mountains and tombs, and was one of the most miserable men on earth.

The fact is that "*religion*" is not the secret. Well, can it lie in *infidelity*? Would the throwing up of the whole thing, and disbelieving the existence of God, and judgment, and hell, not cause relief to the conscience? No! Infidelity is but a cold negation, and signally fails to meet the sob of the poor, distracted, sin-laden bosom, or brighten the clouded heart of fallen man. No, neither Rome with her superstitions, nor Rationalism, with its addition and subtraction sums, is able to comfort the soul that has learned its own deep depravity. Sin cannot thus be cleansed away.

Ah! what yonder prodigal wanted, as he lay destitute and friendless by the swine-trough of sin, was a friend, a heart, a hand of pardoning mercy.

Oh! did such exist? A FATHER!! Granted *that*, and all would be well. We remember the lovely story as it fell from the lips of Jesus, the Friend of Sinners—how, with a father's kiss on his brow, and arms of love thrown around his sin-worn shoulders, the repentant prodigal poured out, by willing constraint, all the dreary tale, and how forgiveness was followed by the robe, and ring, and sandals, and the fatted calf, and the glad hospitality of the father's love, and how they began to be merry!

Merriment! Yes, endless joy! Every want supplied, and every craving met. Three days of this, and the merriment continued. Mercy and merriment are a standing contrast to rules and wretchedness. The law passes a curse. Grace, reigning through righteousness, creates everlasting joy. The prodigal was never "sick" of this "religion"! Never!

You may call Christianity a "religion" if you please, and say that it has rules and commandments too; but it tells of a Father, who loves; of a Saviour, who died and rose; of a Spirit, who dwells within the believer, filling him with joy and peace.

This is life and liberty!

Let me urge you, dear reader, to "*rise and come to the FATHER.*" "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).

J. W. S.

TREMBLING.



It is a fact asserted by the Word of God, that all will at length acknowledge Christ to do Him homage. And it is a fact too that the realities of eternity will lay hold of every soul, sooner or later. In short, every soul will at length be convicted of its sins, of the reality of God, and of eternal judgment.

It is a melancholy reflection that so many—perhaps my reader amongst the number—think little about the enormity of their sins, pay little heed to the flight of time, slight God's revelation of His love, and Christ's work and precious atoning blood. Their indifference is but short-lived. Earnest, and downright earnest, they will be one day.

There will be no unbelievers in heaven. There, all will sing the praises of Him whose worth they first learned on earth. To *His* praise alone is due their place in glory, as they will stand faultless in His presence with exceeding joy. There will be no unbelievers in hell. The flames of hell will have taught them what they *would* not believe on earth. There no scepticism remains, no infidelity exists. There, no disbelief in the atonement of Christ lives, nor doubt as to the eternity of punishment. But, alas! their belief, rather than lightening their load of grief and unavailing regrets, only

dismisses bright hope, and drops them into the arms of everlasting despair.

The apostle James, urging upon his readers the deep need of reality, says, "Thou believest that there is one God ; thou doest well,

THE DEVILS ALSO BELIEVE, AND TREMBLE."

There seems almost a startling, fierce irony in the phrase, "Thou doest well." He seeks to waken up to the need of reality the head-believers, the lip-believers, whose canting talk carries with it nothing but the condemnation of a false profession. Outward works with James are the result of inward faith. And mark, works must not be the outcome of fear, but of faith. There have been plenty of "dead works," the offspring of fear, since the day when Cain offered a bloodless sacrifice, the result of his own toil. The law said, "Do, and live ;" an impossibility, not because the law was lacking, but the sinner was impotent. The Gospel says, "Believe, and be saved ;" and the result is—works of faith are the happy, spontaneous outcome. "Believe, and do," is what the apostle urges.

With startling force he emphasises "Thou doest well," with the expression "The devils also believe, and tremble." Miserable demons long accustomed to look forward to their final doom, do not seem to grow therefore callous and indifferent. They tremble ! And yet it may be my reader is filling up his short life of sin and pleasure in easy indifference, almost contemptuous unconcern.

Let me draw your attention to another scene.

Aged, and emaciated with long toil and privations, with the marks of persecution upon his person, stands the great Apostle of the Gentiles. Once the chief of sinners, now not a whit behind the chiefest of the apostles, Felix, who had summoned him to his bar, saw little in his outward appearance. Undaunted, nay, compelled by the love of Christ, Paul reasoned—as I would fain reason with you—of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. Smaller and meaner did Felix appear in his own eyes, and greater and grander did the prisoner appear, as the words of the earnest evangelist rang into his heart, and convinced his conscience. The barbaric splendour of his own court paled before him, as there loomed before him that GREAT WHITE THRONE, before which he *must* appear, naked, unmasked, without an advocate to plead his cause! And, oh! how horribly dark and contemptuous and lustful his life appeared to him, as the prisoner at the bar by his burning eloquent words obtained such a moral ascendancy over the mean truckler and mal-administrator of Roman justice! Forsooth! as Paul reasoned of righteousness and temperance, there sat beside the judge, the evidence of his guilt,—Drusilla, his paramour,—torn from the embraces of her lawful husband!

And now the cordon of persecution was drawing closer and closer round "Paul the aged," soon to end in months of incarceration in the imperial city

of Rome,—soon to end in trial before the impious, wicked emperor, Nero,—soon to end in martyrdom, the last stroke of physical agony only introducing him into the blissful presence of the One who in the height of his mad career of blasphemy and persecution, albeit religious, had struck him down to the dust, and then bound him to Himself for ever! Thrice-blessed Saviour!

One turns from such a bright sunset to inquire what were the results of his address. Only this—

FELIX TREMBLED.

Alas! he put away from him the warning voice. He cried, "Go thy way for this time: when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." Never do we read of that season occurring. Two years did the prisoner remain in his power. At the close of that time, Portius Festus came into Felix' room. Scripture is fatally silent about the fate of the trembling procrastinator.

Reader, we would plead with you not to trifle or tamper with the searchings of your heart—with your anxiety about your sins, your future. Thank God, when you are awakened and alarmed. Do not push away the warning, like Felix. Do not close your eyes, and slumber on. If this printed page speaks to you,—if you see the infinite superiority of the prisoner at the bar to the judge upon the bench,—if you would fain have the faith and the peace Paul enjoyed in such circumstances, read on whilst we introduce you to another scene.

Years back the devil made an attack upon Paul and Silas at Phillippi. Successful he doubtless thought he was,—but we shall see. At midnight, in the inner prison, dark and noisome, with their feet fast in the stocks, their backs bleeding from the stripes laid upon them by the brutal jailor, they were so happy, that perforce they must pray and sing praises to God, and the prisoners wondered as they heard their song of worship.

Suddenly there was a great earthquake. The foundations of the prison were shaken. Every door was opened. Every prisoner's band was loosed. The jailor—awaking from his sleep, and knowing he must pay the penalty of the prisoners' escape by his own death — was preparing to anticipate his fate by committing suicide. Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do thyself no harm; for we are all here."

THE JAILOR TREMBLED,

brought Paul and Silas out, and fell before them, saying, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" He trembled,—not with the despairing dread of the damned demons, nor the momentary dread of the careless Felix,—for fear begot in his soul a desire for God's salvation.

The process was divinely rapid. Brutally he had scourged God's servants just a few hours previously; at midnight, wrapped in unconscious slumber, rudely awakened by the earthquake, God in grace visited his soul with a moral earthquake.

Saved from suicide, he becomes anxious,—not about his prisoners' escape, not about his own life being imperilled,—but about his own soul's eternal salvation. It seems too rapid for our ken, but, thank God, His grace and His power worked thus in his soul.

And, oh! reader, listen to the sweet, gracious, simple answer that fell from the lips of the servants of God: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

Was Satan successful then in locking the preachers up in prison? No, the jailor was converted,—the first man in Europe whose conversion is recorded.

He simply drank in the message, and, believing and rejoicing, he washed the stripes his own hands had inflicted, so shortly before, and set meat before them. Thus quickly and sweetly did he evidence his faith by his works.

Yes, belief in Christ, and Him alone, was the means of his salvation. Christ had died—had finished the work of salvation. Salvation is "not of works, lest any man should boast,"—it is "to him that worketh not, but believeth."

Then, dear unknown reader, may you with more light and knowledge than the jailor, possess the same simple trust in Christ, and the same simple trust in the Word of God. So shall you be able to rejoice in the knowledge of a present salvation. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

A. J. P.

AWFUL! AWFUL! AWFUL!



FRIEND of mine was relating to a company of us the account of a man's life and death, who, like a good many more, had lived an infidel, but who did not die an infidel.

In life he had refused the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God; reason, corrupt though it was, was to him a much better guide than the sacred Bible, that had guided so many thousands into the haven of eternal rest. But such men have to die; like other men they come under the divine sentence, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27); and "there is no discharge in that war." They have to succumb to the inevitable—that is, *to die*. "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit: neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those who are given to it" (Eccles. viii. 8). The prince and the pauper, the rich and the poor, the young and the old, have to lie down and die; and the tremendous question is, What comes after death? Some would say, Nothing! or at least they hope so; for their creed is, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." But God says, "*After death comes the judgment.*"

A snail might as well contend with an elephant,

as for man to contend with the awful reality of God, sin, death, and after this the judgment. And supposing he contends in his life with all the powers of his being, he gets old and wrinkled nevertheless, and he dies, and fulfils the divine appointment. He goes hence, and, as far as earth is concerned, is seen no more; but taking up the sacred volume, the Word of God, we read, "*But after this the judgment.*" He is but a creature after all, a responsible creature, who has to do with God, and in dying he but enters eternity to give an account to his Judge. "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. xiv. 11, 12). What folly to resist the Almighty! and how absurd to murmur against that which is inevitable, because man is a sinner, and which is fully in accord with the principles of justice!

Would the murmuring and reasoning of a condemned criminal change his sentence, or alter his doom? Not in the least. It is the inevitable consequence of his crime, and of the laws of justice. Thus it is with man, "*It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.*"

But the Word of God does not stop there. It goes on to say, "*So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation*" (Heb. ix. 28). But the infidel, who denies the Word of God, refuses to own his own

responsibility, and therefore knows nothing of the consolations of the Gospel, and the peace-imparting power of the blood of Christ. He is left to the wild waste of the imaginations of his own unsubject mind. As well might a ship put to sea without rudder or compass or chart. Thus left, no wonder the sinner when he dies goes down into eternal darkness; for to live without God, and in the denial of His Word, can only ensure a death without Him, and eternal judgment beyond.

The man whose dying words are at the top of this article thus lived and thus died. In life he had professed to be at perfect peace, and that his principles gave him the greatest satisfaction; but when the closing moments came, and the veil was removed from his eyes, and he saw the fearful mistake of his life, then it was he was heard to say, to the astonishment of his wife, "*Awful! awful! awful!*"

Yes; a life of sin without God is awful! to die in one's sins is awful! and how fearfully awful must it be to discover that there is nothing before the soul but the blackness of darkness for ever!

Beloved reader, ponder these words, and, if unsaved, flee to Christ the sinner's friend, and be saved, and thus thy prospect will be the glory of God for ever (Rom. v. 1-3).

E. A.

INNOCENT BLOOD.



THE shedding of innocent blood is a grievous sin in the sight of God. Cain offered a bloodless sacrifice, and rose up against Abel, who offered of the firstlings of the flock, and slew him. It was innocent blood. And the blood is the life (Lev. xvii. 14). He had done nothing to deserve death at his brother's hand. The Lord said unto him, "What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground" (Gen. iv. 10). It was the work of Satan. Cain, who was of that wicked one, slew his brother (1 John iii. 12). God's judgment came upon him, and he became a hard toiler, a fugitive, and a vagabond in the earth (Gen. iv. 12). He is a picture of the world that has shed the blood of Christ, and offers false worship, toiling and wandering away from God. "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain" (Jude 11).

Manasseh shed innocent blood, very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another (2 Kings xxi. 16). The judgment of God came upon His people, for his sins, "and also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the Lord would not pardon" (2 Kings xxiv. 1-4). "Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols

of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood. . . . Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people" (Ps. cvi. 37-40). Again, "Also, in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these" (Jer. ii. 34). And again, "Behold," saith the Lord, "I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle. Because they have forsaken me, . . . and have filled this place with the blood of innocents" (Jer. xix. 3, 4).

And again, in Matt. xxiii. 33-39, we find the righteous blood of God's servants and saints of old charged upon His guilty, earthly people; and in Rev. xviii. 6 the false Church, drunken with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus. Fearful retribution is yet coming upon both.

In all this we see the holy jealousy of God. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Ps. cxvi. 15). Neither will He allow men to shed innocent blood with impunity. "The life of all flesh is the blood thereof" (Lev. xvii. 14) And He watches over the lives of His creatures.

Further, when Israel came into Canaan, the Lord ordained cities of refuge for the shelter of the manslayer who killed his neighbour ignorantly, whom he hated not in time past, or accidentally (Deut. xix.), that he might escape the avenger of blood, "that innocent blood be not shed in thy land, . . . and so blood be upon thee."

Fearful is the judgment of God on the shedders

of blood, as revealed in Scripture. But there is one act of man, standing out in all its awful enormity, that puts all other wickedness into the shade, and that is the shedding of the blood of Jesus, God's own Son. In infinite love He sent Him. Man, in the deep-seated wickedness of his heart, exclaims, "This is the heir, come let us kill him" (Matt. xxi. 38). Holy from the cradle to the cross, yet the world shed His blood. Judas, His betrayer, cried in the agony of remorse, "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." And the heartless answer of the chief priests and elders was, "What is that to us? see thou to that." And all this for thirty wretched pieces of filthy lucre! And Judas hanged himself. "He remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken of heart" (Ps. cix. 16).

"I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it," said the poor blinded heathen Pilate. "Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matt. xxviii. 25). Fearful, indeed, has been the retribution already on that guilty race (Matt. xxii. 7), but yet more terrible will it be in the future (Matt. xxiv. 21, 22). They shed the innocent blood.

And not only so, but the whole world stands guilty at the bar of God, and subject to judgment (John i. 10; Acts xvii. 29-31; Rom. iii. 19). The wrath of God is already revealed from heaven. If the blood of Abel cries for vengeance, how much

more the blood of Jesus, acknowledged as innocent by His betrayer, and by His judge? Alas! poor world, that lieth in the wicked one, guilty of innocent blood, what wilt thou do in the day of righteous vengeance? Thy guilt, like Israel's, is not found out by secret search; the murder of God's Beloved was a public act before heaven and men. No proofs are needed; thou professest thyself to celebrate His birth and death. The presence of the Holy Ghost on earth is a full witness to thy damning guilt. Where then, sinner, will you be? When Manasseh filled Jerusalem with the blood of innocents, judgment came. The Lord would not pardon. Alas! for all those who pass heedless on their way, and are overtaken by the pouring out of the threatened wrath of God. They shall not escape (1 Thess. v. 3). There will be no pardon then. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. xii. 19).

But, oh, the magnificence of the grace of God, flowing without bound at this present moment to a lost and guilty world, on the ground of the infinite worth of that same innocent blood. Crying for judgment on all the impenitent, it pleads for mercy for all till judgment come. Under His blood you may find shelter to-day, and in Him a tower of salvation—a city of refuge. The ignorant, the careless, and even the wilful, may find a refuge in Him to-day. There is no limit to the efficacy of His precious blood; it cleanseth us from all sin (1 John i. 7). It speaks to-day before God, on be-

half of all, and long-suffering grace stays off the execution of judgment richly deserved. Woe to that man who despises the forbearance of God! Woe to that heartless professor who tramples the blood of Christ under foot! Woe to him who dares to stand before God, unsheltered by the innocent blood of God's holy One!

Will any soul dare to plead its own innocence in His holy sight? Away with such blind folly and unbelief. The day of innocence was truly short-lived. One couple only ever knew it. That mantle was left in Paradise. None ever wore it outside. The robe of Divine righteousness alone can clothe you before God to-day. Christ is that. The Holy One, Jesus, the Lamb of God, without spot or blemish, has died. Innocent blood has been shed, and it alone can cleanse your guilty stains, and in Him alone can you meet the eyes of a holy God. Sinner, will you stand there? Will you let self go, both bad self and good, and trust now for eternity to the precious blood of Christ? Men risk and venture much in this world for gold and honour. But with Christ all risk and venture are gone, and eternal wealth and honour are yours.

Innocent blood has been shed. The whole world is guilty. God will by no means clear the guilty in the day of judgment. He will not pardon them in that day. But pardon, full, free, and eternal is offered *now*. None can afford to despise it; to do so is to reap the fruit of your folly in endless woe. Dare you? Sinner, we plead with you while it is

called to-day. Repent of your sin, judge yourself before God, and flee while you may to the city of refuge, to *Christ*. To-morrow may be too late.

God's love has been manifested, His grace is revealed. The Father waits for returning prodigals. The Son seeks you, poor lost one. The Holy Ghost, maybe, is working in your conscience now. Angels are looking on. We pray you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, be ye reconciled. The music will strike up and the dancing begin (Luke xv. 25), so soon as you have returned. What a happy change from the degradation, poverty, and wretchedness of this world of sin!

The innocent blood cries for vengeance. The innocent blood pleads for mercy. Vengeance on the impenitent, mercy for the penitent. Trust therein in self-judgment; it will meet all your need. Washed in that precious flood, every spot shall be removed, every stain blotted out, every scar, every wound of sin be for ever healed. Whiter than snow shall you, hitherto a wretched, conscience-stricken sinner, stand with joy and liberty before Him, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, in whose sight even the heavens are not clean. Praise Him, praise Him ten thousand times, yea, praise Him for ever and ever, all ye saved ones, for the infinite value of the precious blood of Jesus. May He give *you* now to join in the praise.

A LIGHT FROM HEAVEN.*



LET us see the remarkable way in which the Lord meets Paul. It is a most charming history. He goes on his way to Damascus, and all of a sudden, as he nears the town, he is challenged. "Suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven" (Acts ix. 3),

"above the brightness of the sun" (xxvi. 13). What was that light? It was the light that shone from the face of the Son of Man in glory. Wonderful light, indeed, was it; brighter than the sun at noonday. Think of that! You know what the sun is at noonday, and in an Eastern climate too. It was at noonday, when the sun was shining in all its meridian splendour, that the light of the sun was put out by a brighter light. Well might Paul say, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6). It was the glory of God in the face of Jesus shining on him; and what was the effect? That wonderful light blinded him for the time being, and "he fell to the earth." The Lord had met him. The history of his self-will, of his sin, and of his wickedness, under the garb of religion, was over.

* Extracted from "A Young Man named Saul."

What grace, that Christ should pick up this man, who had been His most bitter opponent on earth, and make him a vessel of grace to others. What a marvellous thing also is it that the grace of Christ should take up men like you or me, who have been bitterly opposed to Him, and turn us, from being the servants of sin and the devil, to be His servants. That grace met Paul. It has met me; may it meet you to-night. If you are unsaved, unconverted, may the grace that saved Saul, and saved me, save you now!

Overwhelmed by the light, "he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (ver. 4.) What a moment in his history! when he hears that all-commanding voice—a voice absolutely human, but intensely divine—the voice of a man, but which he felt was the voice of God—the voice of a human being speaking to him in his mother-tongue (Hebrew) from glory. Nevertheless, it was the voice of the eternal God to that man's soul and conscience. He who spoke was Jesus. The exalted man was God's eternal Son, who had veiled His essential glory,—His Godhead glory,—in human form. He now speaks from heaven to Paul and to us, and it is of vital importance not to despise His sayings. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven" (Heb. xii. 25).

Whence did Jesus speak to Paul? From heaven! and, young man, on the road to hell, a voice from heaven speaks to you, and I ask you, Have you heard and obeyed that voice? "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" No doubt Saul was amazed. How could he be persecuting Jesus? It was a wonderful question. Could you persecute Jesus? I believe you could. Perhaps you have done so. If your history were published, it might come out that you had been persecuting Jesus. Did you not laugh at that man who works in the same building with you for his being converted? Have you not jeered at your own brother who was converted, and was seeking to serve the Lord? Have you not ridiculed the sister who sought to speak for Jesus, and to live for Him? Why persecutest thou Me? says Christ. In that moment Saul learned that the saint upon earth and the Saviour in glory were really one. He, the head of the body, in heavenly glory; and they, the members of it, here on earth. He learned the identity of the people of Christ on earth with the blessed Saviour in heaven. What a revulsion took place! The time of his self-will is for ever over, the man is humbled in the dust; and not only does he fall down in the dust materially, but he gets down morally, by the side of Job, in dust and ashes. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job xlii. 5, 6). Yes, that man is down in dust and ashes before God. He has seen

Christ. He has seen the heavenly Saviour. Have you seen Him? Has your eye ever seen Him? Oh! if never before, let the eye of faith turn to the Saviour in glory this night.

Saul turns at once to the Lord. He is humbled, broken right down in the dust. Now observe his changed attitude. "And he said, Who art thou, Lord?" He does not say, Who art thou? He says, "Who art thou, Lord?" He knows Him. That voice had done its work. "Verily, verily, I say unto 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" (John v. 25). He heard that voice, and lived. He was a quickened soul from that moment. He had the sense that he was in the presence of One who knew all about him. Were you ever brought into the presence of the Lord really, and got an answer as he got it? "And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." Has He to say to you to-night, "I am Jesus, whom *thou* persecutest"? If you have never loved Him, followed Him, or got to know Him, or serve Him, His voice speaks to you from glory to-night, and He says, Do you want to know Me, and to do My will? Then, as He reveals Himself as Jesus to your soul, you will understand the wonderful revulsion of feeling that passed over that stricken man's soul, as he learned that the One who had arrested him, the One whose light blinded him, was the Jesus whom he had been persecuting. He had looked upon Jesus as an impostor, and thought

that he was doing God service in getting His name wiped off the earth. And while he was busily bent on his murderous tour, he was arrested by God's glory shining from the face of that same Jesus. I say again, What a revulsion of feeling took place in his soul. He saw in a moment what he had been doing during the whole of his life. He saw the criminality of his conduct, the fulness of his sin, the terribleness of his guilt; and I have no doubt he felt what would be the consequences of his folly and sin. Have you not sinned precisely in the same way? I believe we all have. We all have been opposed to Christ more or less, though our opposition may not have taken the fiery demonstration of a Saul.

There will be a mighty revulsion of feeling when you are truly converted. I don't believe in the conversion that does not change a man, and if you really turn to the Lord there will be a downright change in your life. If there is not, you may seriously doubt whether you have been converted or not. Was not Paul changed? Look at him! "And he trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (ver. 6). He is at once obedient. You have immediately dependence and obedience, the characteristic features of the new life that was started in his soul. Quickened by the life-giving voice of the Son of God, risen from the dead, the existence of that new life in his soul was

demonstrated by the question, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" I have done my own will till now, but from this time forth I am Thine.

The Lord Christ says, "Rise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles," who did not care for the gospel, "unto whom I now send thee." And what was he to do? "To open their eyes," he got his mission, "and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts xxvi. 16-18). Prostrate on the ground, and blinded, he asks, "What wilt thou have me to do?" Go to the Gentiles, says Jesus, and "open their eyes."

That is what a man wants first of all. Have your eyes been opened to the fact that you are a man on the road to an eternal hell? It is a great thing when a man gets his eyes opened. He sees his danger. Are your eyes opened to see your need of Christ, and to see your danger? May God open them to-night, and turn you from the power of Satan to God! What is the state of the man who is not converted? His eyes are shut, and he is under the power of Satan.

Paul knew full well the terrible power that had blinded him, till this heavenly light illuminated him,

and he got his mission, to go to the Gentiles, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light"—thank God for that!—"and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Hearing these words, he rises and goes forth with a mission to carry the most lovely news that ever mortal man could bear. What news? That there was a Saviour in glory, who had power and grace to save the worst man in the world; that there is a Saviour in glory for the most godless young man in this hall. If you turn to Him, and have faith in Him, I will tell you what you get,—“the forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith.” And who are they? They are called saints frequently in the New Testament. There are two classes in this hall—in this world—to-night—the saints and the sinners. And who are the saints? Those who are in heaven, you reply. Thank God, there are some there, but there are many still on earth, and I would like to see you among them.

Up to this point Saul had been persecuting them. “How much evil he hath done to thy saints,” says Ananias to the Lord about him. But who are the saints? Those who belong to Jesus! You would not perhaps liked to be called, or take the ground of being, a saint. I will tell you why. If you call yourself a saint, those around about you will look to see whether your walk and conversa-

tion is like that of a saint, i.e. saintly, suited to God. Quite right. I think it is perfectly fair. Observe! I am either a sinner on my road to eternal judgment, or a saint on the way to glory. Every man in this hall to-night is either a hell-bound sinner, or a glory-bound saint. Which are you? That is a terrible sharp line to draw, you say. Yes, I admit it, but so long as it defines the road you are on, it suffices. I say again, every young man in this audience is either a hell-bound sinner in his sins, or a glory-bound saint through faith in the blood of Christ. Which are you? I am not hell-bound; through grace I am heaven-bound. Go with me to glory! I won't go with you to hell. Come with me to Christ: I won't go with you to judgment. It is far better to heed the message this man got, as he rose up out of the dust, than to disregard it.

W. T. P. W.

"THE PRECIOUS BLOOD."



RIGHTFALL was coming on. As the traveller looked round, nothing but miles of waving grass met his gaze. He had travelled across the broad prairie from early morning on horse-back, and as he rode he smoked continually.

It was now time to dismount, tether his horse

and bivouac for the night. This done, he set himself to gather dried grass and light his fire. He opened his match-box, and found to his dismay and amazement that *only* one match remained after his day's smoking. His life depended upon the fire, and the fire depended upon this single match. A biting wind was blowing; wild beasts were prowling about. Death was on the wings of the blast, and death was in the roar of the fierce brutes.

In such a plight, for what would our traveller have sold his single match? In the streets of New York matches could have been bought by the gross for a cent or two. A strip of wood—a little ignitable preparation on the tip! Yet how priceless! Gold would not have bought it. And how carefully he shielded the flame from the wind, and how relieved he was as he saw the fire take a firm hold of the fuel.

And now, dear unsaved reader, let me seek to draw from this simple illustration a lesson or two of the utmost importance. You too are journeying. Life's little day for you will soon be spent. Sin, decay, and death are stamped on the whole human family. And for you, like our traveller, night is coming on—for you the night of eternal wrath!

Oh! now in your days of health and strength, now in God's days of salvation, prepare for the future. Come, is it not worse than blind folly to go on another moment unprepared? Unforgiven sin must be punished. The great white throne must be faced. God must be faced by the sinner.

And, like our traveller, there is *only* one thing that can save you from the danger ahead. "The *precious* blood of Christ" (1 Pet. i. 19). "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7).

Alas! there are thousands upon thousands who value lightly what God calls *precious*. "The precious blood of Christ." What a profound mistake!

What you perhaps set great store by now,—good works,—will look paltry and insignificant as eternity with its momentous issues lies within reach of your deathbed. Then, you will not want the sandy foundation of good works, but a solid foundation under your sinking feet.

Hear what God says of salvation by good works. "NOT OF WORKS, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 9). "*But to him that worketh* NOT, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 5). "*Not by works of righteousness which WE have done*, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Titus iii. 5).

Even the Old Testament believers, walking in dim light of unfulfilled types and shadows, could read in Isaiah lxiv. 6, "All our *righteousnesses* are as filthy rags;" and on the great day of atonement in the jubilee year, the captives waiting for release were told, "Ye shall do NO WORK in that same day; for it is a day of atonement" (Lev. xxiii. 28). Infraction of this met with instant death.

And, think you, now you stand, not in the starlit night of a Jewish age, but in all the splendid light of Christianity; not by the side of a typical sacrifice on the great day of atonement, but in the presence of the great sacrifice of Christ—the finished work on the cross,—that the object-lessons of "NO WORK" are not intensified? Christ is the fulfiller of the types, the Chaser-away of the shadows. Well does the Christian poet sing God's truth in these lines:—

"Till to JESUS' work you cling
By a simple faith,
 'Doing' is a deadly thing—
 'Doing' ends in death."

Friend, there is absolutely nothing to shelter you from the wrath of God but the "*precious blood.*"

Bow then to God's Word, and dismiss from your mind the thought of any merit by your fancied good works. Luther, toiling up the steps of St Peter's in Rome, rose from his knees, as, like a clarion note, there sounded in his inmost soul what proved to be his battle-cry for the truth of God—"Justification by faith." Though papal bulls were hurled at his head, though a world of monks toiled and prayed for his destruction, God's truth was everything to him. So may it be to you, dear reader.

In conclusion, let me once again earnestly invite you to unwaveringly trust the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work, His shed blood. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

"I'LL SOON BE HIGHER UP."



ND so he was, for he only lived a few more hours. "What a terrible accident!" "How very sad!" and similar expressions, were on the lips of most people in the quiet neighbourhood of E——, South Australia, while the subject of these remarks was spending his last few moments on earth.

He had left his house in full health and spirits, gone down his own paddock, and commenced sawing a limb off a large tree which had been felled previously. He had not worked long when, without the slightest notice, the tree rolled toward him, and a branch, overhanging him as he sawed, struck him with a crushing blow, and left him helpless on the ground. For three long hours he lay there without any human aid.

One can just faintly imagine his experience as he lay in that lonely paddock, with the eye of God resting on him, knowing, as he did, that he had not long to live. .

Terrible as those three hours were, I believe they were the most profitable hours he ever spent on earth, for

JESUS SAW HIM LIE THERE.

JESUS MET HIM THERE.

JESUS SAVED HIM THERE.

His wife, wondering at his delay in returning,

went in search, and found him as before described. When she saw his poor pale face and helpless condition, she wrung her hands in bitter agony, while she cried, "Oh! William, I'm afraid you will die. Fly to Christ." And as she spoke she stooped to hear his faint voice say, "It's all right now, take me home that I may die in bed."

We would like to have been near to comfort the poor woman, and do what we could for the sufferer; but how sweet to know that Jesus was there first! It is so like Him—the first to see, the first to run, the first to speak, and the only One who can bless and comfort permanently.

The sad tidings reached me in the evening, so I hastened to the scene. I had known William for years, and often had spoken with him about God's love, Christ's death, and the necessity of immediate salvation. But he still spoke, as many others do, as though salvation was only meant for great, big, black sinners, and not for people who go to church, say prayers, pay their debts, &c., though God says, "There is no difference."

As I entered the room, a Christian who sat by the bed-side said to him, "Do you know who that is?" He looked long at me,—for his eyes were getting dim,—and said, "Yes, it's Mr W——." Bending over him, I inquired, "Is it well with your soul?" Clear and distinct was his reply: "It is well; I'll soon be higher up." I read a portion of God's Word, and we prayed and thanked God for having saved his precious soul, and made

him so happy, and for creating the desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.

Amidst the tears and choking sobs of the sorrowing friends could be heard his voice of thanksgiving and his "Amen" to our words of prayer. We parted, not to meet until, around our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall, with all the saved, together sing, "Unto him who hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

Reader, if it had been your case, where would you be now? Is it well with your soul? However men may differ upon other subjects, all are agreed as to the certainty of death. "It is appointed unto men once to die" (Heb. ix.). We believe this. Why, then, not believe all?—"After death the judgment."

It is a solemn thing to die and be buried; but there is something more solemn, and that is to be raised again in your sins. Don't wait for some accident to decide you for eternity; you may be cut down without any warning. We sound in your ears this wholesome warning: "Fly to Christ." There is no time to be lost. Your eternal destiny trembles in the balance. *Heaven or hell*—which? Jesus paid the sinner's debt. Trust Him NOW as your Saviour, and you will be able truthfully to say—It is all right now, it is well; "I'll soon be higher up."

J. J. W.

WHAT COMPANY DO YOU KEEP?



It is truly said that "a man is known by the company he keeps." We will tell you something about two men who, when released from prison, went at once to *their own company*.

Many centuries ago, King Herod put the apostle Peter into prison at Jerusalem, intending after Easter to behead him, as he had already slain James, the brother of John. The king did it in hatred to the Lord Jesus and His people. When Peter was in prison, chained and asleep between two soldiers, the angel of the Lord smote him on the side, raised him up, caused his chains to fall off, and led him out of prison into the city, the doors opening of their own accord.

Thus liberated, and left in the street by the angel, where did Peter go? He went to *his own company*, who were in the house of Mary, the mother of Mark, praying God to set Peter free (Acts xii.).

But, in passing, just mark particularly that soon after this wicked act of persecution, the angel of the Lord, in judgment, smote King Herod, and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost. The angel smote Peter for *blessing*, but Herod for *judgment*, and "shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

This intervention shows how solemn it is for

any one to interfere with any of the company of the Lord Jesus Christ! He tells us that "it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea" (Matt. xviii. 6). Better far to be in the company of a Peter in prison, than of a Herod on his throne! Infinitely better is it to belong to the Lord's company than to Satan's company, "for if God be for us, who can be against us?"

Not very long afterwards, when the apostle Paul was in the city of Philippi, labouring in the Lord's work, the masters, the magistrates, and the multitude, in hatred rose up against him, beat him and cast him into prison, the jailer, as instructed, making his feet fast in the stocks, after he had pushed Paul into the inner prison. At midnight when Paul and his companion Silas prayed and sang praises to God, there was a great earthquake which shook the foundations of the prison, causing every man's chains to be loosened.

When the magistrates discovered their mistake in imprisoning Paul, they went to him and begged him to go out of prison. So he left the prison, but where did he go? He went to *his own company*—to the house of Lydia—the house of prayer.

Reader, were it your lot to be let out of a prison, to which company would *you* go? Would it be to the despised followers of the Lord Jesus, or would it be to the deceived followers of Satan? We ask would it be to the company you would like to be in throughout all eternity?

Well was it for the Philippian jailer that ere judgment overtook him, he was brought to his right mind—in short, that he left Satan's company and got into God's company, by taking his place as a needy, helpless sinner, and as a convicted one accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour, to the salvation of his priceless soul. Through the rich mercy of God he got into the happy company of those praying and praising prisoners.

. Now, dear reader, we ask you plainly, which company are you really in to-day? Because if you leave this world a rejecter, or even a neglecter of Christ, your eternity must be with Satan, where misery never, never ends, and where loneliness never ceases in blackness and darkness for ever. But if you leave this scene amongst the Lord's redeemed ones, it will be to dwell where joy never ends in the thrice happy company that never breaks up, and where the Lord Himself is ever in the midst to lead the praises.

May you *now* become one of God's company before it be too late, for it is written, "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

"Happy they who trust in Jesus ;
Sweet their portion is and sure,
When the foe on others seizes,
God will keep His own secure.
Happy people ;
Happy, though despised and poor."

THE STING OF DEATH.



WHAT is death? When God said to Adam, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," He uttered no vain threat. Adam ate thereof, and that day he died!

True he lived on some hundreds of years outside of the garden where God had placed him, but he lived outside the presence of God. It was a life of banishment, so far as circumstances went, from the face of God. He was thus separated from God. Death means separation; and, in the first instance on record, Adam was separated outwardly from God.

Death, that of the body, is the severance of the link of body and spirit. The life is not touched, but the condition in which it existed here is altered.

The "second death," in which, after resurrection, body and spirit are reunited, is the definite separation of the man from God, not only as to outward circumstances, but morally as well. This is the final punishment of the "lake of fire."

The first death is destroyed by the "first resurrection"; the "second death" remains. There is no "second resurrection" to destroy it. We find no such expression as *second resurrection*. "Second death" signifies a final and unalterable state of exclusion from the face and under the wrath of God. Death means more than dissolution, or a

decay of vital energies and powers. It is the sole fruit of sin. Apart from sin, the idea of death is to us impossible. Creation itself has been brought into the bondage of corruption through man's sin. Hence, in tracing the turbid stream to its source, we find ourselves at sin. Sin is the fatal fountain-head, as it is also the sting of death. Extract the sting, and death is then resolved to simple dissolution.

But why dissolution, if the sole cause of death be gone? Just because flesh and blood—a body animated by the soul as at present—cannot inherit the kingdom of God. But is sin gone? No, it is not actually gone. Our sins, if believers, were borne by the blessed Lord on the cross, where also He was made sin for us; and we are forgiven, justified, and bid to reckon ourselves dead to sin, as being in Christ; but yet, *as to fact*, sin is not gone. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. Hence the body is mortal and corruptible, and cannot inherit that kingdom.

But *in God's sight* sin is gone, and with sin the dread sting of death. The worst part of death—in fact, death itself, in all that makes it dreaded—is gone to faith as well. Hence we can say, "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." That victory is ours now, and death becomes but the hand that opens the door into realms of bliss.

"Death is ours," and for this infinite boon we are the debtors of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us under judgment for sin.

J. W. S.

SIN; WHAT IS SIN? WHERE DID IT COME FROM?



OD is good, and does good. Sin is not of God. Creation was of God, and man was set upon earth, endowed with authority over the works of His hands. He was encircled by every token of God's goodness to His creatures, he had nothing to wish for to complete his happiness. To wish for further good was impossible; nothing was lacking, not a good thing could have been suggested to him that he did not possess. He was a perfect creature—without a will—no need for a will—where everything was perfectly good. For him God's will was supreme and sufficient.

Into this happy scene, sin was introduced by God's inveterate foe—Satan. Under the guise of a serpent wily and subtle, he gained the ear of God's creature, suggesting a course of disobedience to which Adam and his wife responded by the exercise of will on the side of evil. Not needing a will on the side of God, the only will man *could* entertain was on the side of sin—and *he did it!!* Thereby sin came in, for the exercise of freewill in man is sin!

Satan introduced it to spoil God's creation. It brings in its train death and judgment. It is a gigantic evil, which rears its hydra-head in opposition to God Himself, and would fain dethrone Him

from His supremaey in the universe. Imagine the result if this could be the case. With all the restraint that is brought to bear on the activities of sin, what do the gaols, and poorhouses, the cemeteries and graveyards, the reformatories and the police-courts bear witness of? Let sin gain the unbridled mastery, and hell would be—upon earth — a convincing exhibition of its effects. Selfishness and greed, pride and hypocrisy, lust and folly, infidelity and untruth are some of the fruits of this heavy-limbed tree.

The consideration of its results in time or eternity, makes it plain that when God proposes to deliver a man from sin, and its power and effects, He works for his very highest good ; and thus it is not the deprival of something that is merely harmful, but withdrawing and delivering from that which must prove fatal to him.

A sin, therefore, cannot be estimated by our thoughts of it (for every mental and moral faculty has likewise been impaired in man thereby), but is divinely estimated according to God's thought of the principle which it represents. Little sins and great sins appear as alike in this respect in the sight of God. Just as a single drop of the liquid from a bottle of poison contains all the elements found in the larger quantity, so does a single sin contain those elements of self-will and self-pleasing that are component parts in every sin.

The root-principle from which these fruits spring of opposition to and hatred of God, is in-

grained in every child of Adam. It is the poison that was introduced into the blood at the Fall, and is communicated by birth to each and all. Sin is hereditary, and until the history of Adam's race is closed, it will remain in man what it ever was, the active principle of antagonism to God. David says, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. li.). It may be curbed by the outward restraints of refinement, education, and a religious profession; or it may be uncurbed as with the drunkard, the swearer, or the libertine. But, curbed or uncurbed, there it is,—the judgment of God is ever against it,—and here comes in the need for our deliverance both from its judgment and its power.

CAN GOD PASS OVER SIN?

Can He tolerate that which asserts itself as a sort of second God in the universe? Never. Every soul that is connected in God's account with sin must be also connected with its judgment,—infinite and awful. This was prefigured in all the sacrifices under the Jewish economy. It was also told out in the blood of the pascal lamb on the night of Egypt's woe. It was foreshadowed in Abel's blood-stained offering. It was indicated, moreover, in a more public way when the earth groaned and rocked beneath the swelling waters of the flood, and when the polluted and polluting cities of the plain were blasted with their baptism of fire. And, once more, it was told out in thrill-

ing, telling, and terrible reality when Christ as the believer's proxy, stood charged with the believer's sin, and sustained the relentless wrath and the hot judgment of the Holy God against it. "Thou art holy," said He, as the biting penalties of sin flew upon His soul, and thus He justified His God in the very moment that He was forsaken of Him (Ps. xxii. 1-3). Reader, God cannot pass over sin. If He spared not His own Son, when made sin for us, think you that *you* will be spared if you continue in sin? As God is God, and as God is true, "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

CAN I CHANGE MY CONDITION BEFORE GOD?

What saith the Scripture? The Spirit of God, using Jeremiah as His mouthpiece, says, "Though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much sope, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God" (chap. ii. 22). Describing Job's condition, we read, "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me" (Job ix. 30, 31). Isaiah cries out that there is no soundness in our state under God's eye—all is sinful corruption—abominable in the sight of God. The prophet Jeremiah thus sums it up, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then" (and oh! how hopeless the word is—THEN) "may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. xiii. 23). "The heart is deceitful above all things, and

desperately wicked" (chap. xvii. 9). In the New Testament Paul confirms this. "There is none righteous . . . none that doeth good, no, not one," he echoes from the 14th and 53rd Psalms; and then clenches the fact from his own experience when he says, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth *no good thing*" (Rom. iii. 10, vii. 18). It is no use deceiving ourselves by talking about developing the good that is in man, for there is none to develop: it is idle to speak of fanning the inward spark into a flame,—“there is no light in him,” says Jesus, God’s Son (John xii. 10). Sinful flesh cannot be improved or mended, that which is born of the flesh is flesh. You may turn it, and twist it, you may impose penance on it, and punish it as you will, but it is flesh still, and “they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” God has given it up as an incurable thing; it is not under probation, but under judgment, and “he that believeth not is condemned already.” No reformation will do, no resolutions can touch it, as in the sight of God. “Ye must be born again.” He Himself expects nothing from it, He has condemned it.

WHO SHALL DELIVER ME?

cries the burdened soul. “I am all wrong. I am a traitor to my God. I have loved what He hates, and hated what He loves. I have lived in self-will and independence of God. Ah! woe is me, I am undone. Would to God, I had never been born,

rather than have come into this fearful state. Where must I turn for refuge? Escape I must, for the fires of hell are burning in my soul already; the miseries of an undone eternity are kindled now,—oh, *where shall I hide, what must I do to be saved?* Go on in sin I cannot, I *dare* not; hell is too awful already. If I amend my ways, my God is still my Judge, and He has already declared that all my righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and *I am as an unclean thing under them* (Isa. lxiv. 6). What must I do?"

Softly and sweetly the answer is heard from the Gospel of God, "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. v. 21). "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. viii. 3). Sin appeared in its worst form when it nailed the Incarnate Son of God to the wooden cross. But it was then that Jesus was dealt with before God as though He, the sinless One, had been Sin incarnate instead of the Incarnate Son, and the whole of God's judgments against sin passed mercilessly over His soul. Every form of sin in the world; every hideous shape that it could take in man was (through His matchless grace) there taken up in His own Person, and the condemnations thereof overtook Him; every kind of crime that sinners could ever be forgiven was confessed by Him as though He had done them all, and the terrible threats of Justice were awfully

verified and substantiated in the wrath that caused Him to cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."

Yes, thank God, while we were yet sinners Christ died for *us*. He has in grace taken part in life of flesh and blood in order that He might bear the condemnation that rested upon us in *our* life of flesh and blood. And His death for our sin has for ever ended the believer's history before God as a sinner. In God's account the death of Jesus is the judgment on Adam's fallen race: fully borne and utterly exhausted for all who trust in Him. "It is finished."

Now, since God in righteousness has dealt with sin at the cross, and has been fully satisfied, yea infinitely glorified in Jesus' cross, and death, and blood-shedding, it has cleared the way for Him to act according to His own purpose and grace. He has raised that Man from the dead, who put sin away by His death; He has set Him in glory to express His supreme satisfaction in His atoning work; and has sent down the Holy Ghost to announce that it is now a righteous thing with Him to put Man in His glory (John xvi. 10).

Moreover, through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and in Him all that believe are justified from all things. The Gospel of God

is His power unto salvation to every one that believeth. Blessed is the man that believes God's record of His Son. For he knows that his sins have been borne by Jesus, and atoned for by His blood; and though he still finds sin dwelling within him, in faith he reckons as God reckons, that it has been already judicially dealt with (Rom. viii. 3). So that just as his Saviour has died to sin (never to have that question raised again), and now lives unto God, so for him the great sin-question is over, sin has lost its hold upon him, he reckons himself dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Life is for him now connected with Christ, not with sinful Adam; a life which is triumphant over the whole power of sin and death, and yet a life that is lived in dependence upon God; which has the Holy Ghost as its power, and which permits of fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (1 John i.). What a complete deliverance! My judgment borne by Another; the death that was my due already passed in the death of Christ; my whole connection with sin and a sinful race dissolved *before God*, and true *to faith* now; and a connection divinely formed in my soul with the Man whom sin can never touch, who lives after the power of an endless life.

Reader, he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. Dost thou believe on the Son of God ?

Soon, very soon God will vindicate the cause of Jesus against the world that murdered Him, and sad beyond all telling will it be if you should fall under His avenging wrath because you obey not the Gospel of God (1 Pet. iv. 17). To-day, His blood, speaking better things than that of Abel, calls not for vengeance but for the righteous pardon of those who confide in its efficacy; to-morrow *your* blood may sprinkle His garments, and stain His raiment as a witness of His holy vengeance upon those who *will* have their fling of sin (Isa. lxiii. 3).

Oh! let not the hour chime again before you take your place as a lost sinner, and put your confidence in Jesus' precious blood. Sing with me,

“ Precious, precious blood of Jesus,
Shed on Calvary ;
Shed for rebels, shed for sinners,
Shed for *me* ! ”

Precious blood that hath redeemed us,
All the price is paid ;
Perfect pardon now is offered,
Peace is made.

Though thy sins are red like crimson,
Deep in scarlet glow,
Jesus' precious blood can make them
White as snow.

Precious blood, whose full atonement
Makes us nigh to God !
Precious blood, our song and glory
Praise and laud ! ”

THE COLONEL'S CONVERSION.



WE had not met for some thirty years. He was now in failing health, if not, indeed, dangerously ill; and pleasant as it was to grasp again each other's hand, and prove that former days of early friendship remained the same, yet the changed appearance wrought by advancing years, and the ravages of a heart-affection detracted not a little from that pleasure.

"Did I ever tell you," said he, in course of conversation, "how I was converted to God?"

"Well, you may have done so," I replied, "but, if so, I have quite forgotten it, and should be charmed to hear it once more."

And I confess, dear reader, that I am fond of hearing the account of God's saving grace as it reaches the poor guilty soul of man, and leads him to a knowledge of His great salvation.

Let us remember that this is *God's work*; that no power short of this can effect it; and that, while our sins make it necessary, if we are to spend our endless future in His blessed presence, yet, as the power, so also is the deep and infinite love on His side too.

What a mercy that "God is love"!

"Five and thirty years ago," went on my friend, "I was coming home from India on leave, an

utterly careless fellow, thinking only of fun and folly. I noticed on board our ship a certain young officer, who was likewise returning on leave, and who always carried about with him a Bible. This seemed to me a most extraordinary thing. What could he want with a Bible at all hours of the day? It is certainly not just the book that young men generally hug in that kind of way. Well, on a certain occasion we happened to be sitting together on a seat on deck. He held out the Bible, and said to me rather abruptly, 'Do you know what book that is?'

" 'A Bible,' I replied.

" 'It is THE WORD OF GOD,' he answered, and added no more.

" 'The Word of God'—'the Word of God,' I repeated to myself, 'then it is the truth, and all it says must be true.' "

Yes, and how could it be otherwise, my reader? How could "God, who cannot lie," declare in His Word that which is false?

Impossible! "Let God be true and every man a liar." Believe me, it is an immense thing to give God His proper place as true, and holy, and mighty, and gracious, as also to take our own place as guilty and sinful.

Wisdom's children always justify her at all cost to themselves. Therein they are wise!

The Bible is the Word of God. Not only are there bits of that Word in it, not only is the divine in it, but it is the declaration of His mind, and

kindly written by Him, through human instruments, used and inspired by Him for the very object of reaching us, even us, alienated as we are from Him by wicked works and evil hearts.

Thank God for the Bible! Now, this fact was the first arrow of conviction that ever reached the soul of that young man—"All that the Bible says must be true!" Several days passed without further conversation, but they met again at last.

"'Do you believe the Word of God?' was the next query of the young officer.

"'Yes,' said I.

"'All of it?'

"'Yes.'

"'The fifty-third of Isaiah?'

"'Yes.'

"'The sixth verse?'

"'Yes—but what is it exactly?'

"'“All we like sheep have gone astray——” Do you believe that?'

"'I do, and I own it too.'

"'“We have turned every one to his own way——” And that?'

"'Yes, indeed! I have, alas, turned to my own way!'

"'“And the Lord HATH LAID on him the iniquity of us all.” Observe it says, “*hath laid*,” “HATH LAID,” not shall lay at some future time! Yes, the work is done! Christ is dead and risen! Atonement was wrought in the shedding of His precious blood! God asks for nothing more! Do you believe that?'

"I rose from my seat, and went straight down to my cabin, and there, alone, falling on my knees, I poured out my heart to God and blessed Him, for having saved me, for 'faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.'"

How simple, how perfect! Such is the tale of that Colonel's conversion to God five and thirty long years ago—now to all appearance a dying man!

"Doctor," he said to his medical attendant, "there is no death for me, it is only to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord—at home with the Lord—no death, no death!"

Beautiful! and wonderfully real too. You see thirty-five years were surely long enough to test the genuineness of the event on ship-board! Had that been mere excitement, imagination, a vision, or aught else of the kind, the wear and tear of more than a quarter of a century would have produced a mighty change! But no! the Bible was still, and more than ever, the Word of God to his soul, the force of its truth, and the solidity of its foundation being only the more fully realised!

"Oh! to know that our blessed Lord Jesus is now an actual man in glory—a man, not a mere spirit—but possessed of flesh and bones, as He said to His disciples in Luke xxiv. after He was risen, oh! what comfort that gives! And also that we shall be present with the Lord!" were some of his words, as he poured out his heart full of praise

and confidence and rest, in my hearing. The Word of God was the rock of his assurance. Happy man!

Now, reader, that Word may be, and is, rejected by many; may be, and is, discredited, and torn to shreds by the worse than foolish hands and lips of thousands who do so to their own destruction. They will find, however, that though heaven and earth will pass away, that Word shall never pass away! Let not the devil in this awfully dangerous day filch from your conscience that Word which is able to make you wise unto salvation. "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life" (John v. 24). J. W. S.



TWO GREAT MISTAKES.



HAT we are saved by grace, through faith—and that not of ourselves—and not of works, is the simple teaching of the Word of God (see Eph. ii. 8, 9, and Rom. iv. 5). Also, that grace, which brings salvation, teaches us to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; not to get saved, but because we are saved (see Titus ii. 11, 12). Now the two great mistakes of which I wish to speak, are these.

First of all, faith is put in the place of the Saviour. It is by faith in Christ and His finished

work that we are saved. The right faith is the faith that trusts in the right person, and that person is the Son of God, who became a man, that He might be my Saviour, and who died on the cross for my sins, and is risen again and gone into heaven. And just as one look at the brazen serpent in Numbers xxi. gave a bitten Israelite life, so one look of faith at the glorified Man in heaven saves the poor sinner, and gives him eternal life (see John iii. 14-16). The first look gives life, and every look after is the power of living (see Heb. xii. 1-3). Now since this is so, consider how evil the teaching must be, that occupies a poor sinner with his faith, and that tells him he is saved only while he keeps on believing. Consequently, instead of looking unto Jesus, he gets occupied with himself, and his faith, and wonders if he has the right faith, and if he is believing in the right way.

Secondly, salvation is put at the end of the Christian's course, instead of at the beginning. Many think the servant of Christ is trying to save his own soul, and that he only preaches and teaches to secure heaven for himself at last. What a very great mistake! No man ever got to heaven, or ever will get it by his own works, or because he deserves it; on the contrary, it is all of grace, all undeserved, and the truth is that no one ever does any good thing till he is saved.

I learn from Romans iii. 10—"There is none righteous (or good), no, not one." I learn from

Romans iii. 12—"There is none that doeth good, no, not one." I learn from Romans vii. 18—That I cannot do good, and that there is no good in me.

How different is the language of the believer, the Christian, when as a saved man, he speaks, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 13).

Reader, are you saved?

W. M.

"FOOL IS HIS NAME, AND FOLLY IS
WITH HIM."



HE had possessions in a fruitful place, and was very great. He had thousands of sheep and goats; he belonged to a privileged people. And he had a handsome and intelligent wife. But he himself was a churl, and evil in his doings, living

in thorough selfishness, scraping gold together, and utterly indifferent to the claims of God (1 Sam. xxv. 2, 3). His name was Nabal, which means "a fool" and as his own wife said of him, when he openly manifested his character, "As is his name, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him" (ver. 25).

What a striking picture of the flourishing man of this world! How many thousands are enjoying innumerable blessings, given to them of God, surrounded with luxury, but living entirely for self,

the heart set on this world, and the claims of God and His Son forgotten and refused. How many are churlish and evil in their doings like Nabal.

David, the anointed of God, the future king, was in need. Rejected, he and his followers were hungry. It was the time of sheep-shearing, when Nabal's business was at its best, and David sent him a gracious message of peace, and a request for a portion. "Greet him in my name; and thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity, Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be to all that thou hast . . . ; give, I pray thee, to thy son David" (vers. 5-8).

Hear his reply, "Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? . . . shall I then take *my* bread, and *my* water, and *my* flesh that *I* have killed for *my* shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be?" (vers. 10, 11).

And to-day a greeting of grace comes down from the very glory, a message of peace from the Son of God. It is sounded forth far and wide; but, alas, how many thousands are answering in blind infidelity, and in the selfishness of their hearts, "Who is Jesus? who is the Son of God? Shall *I* give up something here for one *I* have never seen?"

It was all *I* and *my* with poor Nabal. So utterly wrapt up in himself, that he calls even the very water, which flows freely for all, *my* water, and would hold even that from the anointed of God. Nabal reigned in Nabal's heart, and David had no place. So is it with us all in the flesh; we don't

want Christ. Self reigns. Deceived by Satan, sin, and our own hearts, *I* and *my* are the ruling principles which govern us; and God and Christ are shut out. What does it matter to the poor blind selfish worldling that Christ has been anointed with the Holy Ghost, but is now rejected, and coming again as King? What is all that to me? oft says the prosperous man of business in the great and thriving cities of this world. The *heart* is set on other things.

However, when David received the reply of Nabal, he said, "Gird ye on every man his sword." And he girded his on also. He would judge the sender. Fool was his name, and folly was with him, and his folly should come on his own head. Sinner, selfish worldling, prosperous man of this world, living without God, and refusing the claims of Christ, *behold the Judge standeth before the door* (Jas. v. 9). The sword is girded, yea, outstretched o'er the poor world, and o'er your guilty head. Who knows how soon it will be executed? Little did the deluded Nabal dream of the danger to which he was exposed, little did he think he was so near death in the midst of his prosperity. And little do thousands to-day dream of the judgment that is hanging over them, and that at any moment they may be overtaken by death, called from the midst of their prosperity, selfishness, and worldliness, to meet a stern and inexorable Judge.

Oh, selfish, careless sinner, how truly do the words of Nabal's wife apply to you: "Fool is his

name, and folly is with him." You live for self, time, and sense; you reject Christ, salvation, and glory. Remain impenitent to the end of your short span of life, and your folly will cost you an eternity of woe, and you shall for ever own the justice of these words.

Now, as judgment was looming over the head of Nabal, one of the servants came to Abigail, his wife, with sound advice,—“Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do, for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him” (1 Sam. xxv. 17). And we would press these words home upon the hearts and consciences of our readers. Judgment is coming upon this world of unbelief and selfishness, *now know and consider what you will do*. Evil is determined, and will reach you among the rest, if you go on without God and Christ. “*The day of judgment is appointed*” (Acts xvii. 31). Will you be wise like Abigail, while it is called to-day (2 Cor. vi. 2). She made haste (*see also vers. 23, 42*) and went to meet David (1 Sam. xxv. 18-20). Hear her confession, as she falls at his feet, “Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be”; and then intercedes for Nabal. Sinner, will you haste, and take that place? There is no time to be lost; delays are dangerous. Have you had to do with God Himself? Have you taken your place in truth before Him, in self-judgment at the feet of Jesus? Have you ever owned that *you* deserve the judgment of iniquity?

There and there only is the spot where mercy will meet you, and grace through righteousness put your iniquity away. "I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thy handmaid" (ver. 28). The sense of sin, and the prayer for forgiveness to-day, are the sure proofs of God's work in your soul; and if that is what you have been brought to through grace, there is a way of blessing and salvation for you *through Him*. Judgment is at the door, but God be praised, the Judge has taken the guilty culprit's place.

Hear the glorious news! Herald it to earth's remotest bound! The Son of God, the gift of His love, came into this world of sin. His name is Jesus. And He gave Himself, a sacrifice, at Golgotha. Divine justice smote the sinless One. He died; His blood was shed! Enough, *God is glorified thereby*. Sin's judgment has been borne. He lives again, for ever lives, Jesus, the Christ, our Lord, in glory above. Are your sins burdening your conscience in God's presence; are you filled with dread and fear at the thought of His holy and righteous retribution; are you longing for pardon and deliverance? Believe on His blessed name. Trust *now* in Him. His blood was shed for such as you. It cleanseth us from *all* sin (1 John i. 7). The vilest, the guiltiest, the most selfish, are made whiter than snow in that precious flood. Take then your place at His feet; hide nothing, confess all, own your desert, and look to Him alone just as you are. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

Now hear the answer of David to Abigail:—"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou . . . go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person" (1 Sam. xxv. 32-35). And shall it be less for you? Nay, nay. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. v. 6). You can go in peace to your house; your voice is heard, and henceforth you are accepted in the Beloved (Eph. i. 6); in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace (Eph. i. 7).

Then Abigail came to Nabal. And how was he occupied? At the very moment that, but for Abigail's intercession, he would have been smitten, he was feasting like a king, merry, and very drunken. And how is the world occupied to-day? Living in surfeiting and drunkenness, merriment, and folly, without God, without Christ, and without hope, at the very moment when judgment is threatening. And in the morning, when Nabal was more sober, his wife told him. And his heart died within him, and he became as a stone, and ten days after, the Lord smote him that he died (1 Sam. xxv. 36, 37). Truly, fool was his name, and folly was with him. Take care, sinner, lest the Lord smite you. Sporting, frolicking, dancing, drinking, living in merriment and feasting, take care that your heart does not become hardened like a stone,

and unsoftened by the love of Christ, you die in your sins, and are damned. Thousands perish so. Of every one it can be truly said, "Fool is his name, and folly is with him."

See, in conclusion, what is recorded in verse 39: David said, "The Lord hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife."

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7). Nabal sowed folly and sin, and reaped its fruit in the judgment of God. Abigail sowed wisdom, &c., and reaped the fruit in blessing and privilege. Follow the course of Nabal, poor selfish worldling, and you too will meet the righteous retribution of a holy God, in death, judgment, and everlasting woe. Be wise while 'tis called to-day. Bow before, and believe on the anointed One of God, Jesus, His Son in glory on His throne, and pardon, peace, and acceptance are yours now; and in the future you shall form part of that glorious company, viewed in the day of glory as the bride, the Lamb's wife (Rev. xxi. 9).

Nabal, so to speak, is written on every soul of man who lives for self and refuses Christ. "Fool is his name, and folly is with him." Take warning, then, from him, and learn, while you may, from Abigail. Come to Jesus now, in the hour of His rejection, and in the day of His manifestation you shall most surely share with Him the glorious fruits of the wondrous and blessed purposes of God.

THE MILLENNIAL END.



AR and wide, from shore to shore, the "Millennial Dawn" has been circulated. Thousands have read it, and hundreds have been ensnared by its subtle, soul-damning doctrines; but, however, bright the "Millennial Dawn" may shine be-

fore the eyes of those who seek to pare down the solemn truths of the Word of God, thereby seeking to falsify its plain and unmistakable statements,—casting a blot too upon the character of God, who is a holy and righteous God, "Light" as well as "Love," and who must punish sin in a way consistent with the claims of His throne,—eternal joy, or eternal woe, must be the portion of all when life's short day has run its course; and for those who falsify the Word of God, and with their "larger hope" theory lend themselves to the devil to alter what God has written, no "Millennial Dawn" shall ever greet their deluded sight. "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Rev. xxii. 18, 19).

The millennial morning will soon dawn in all its brightness and splendour, but before that time Christ will have come, and taken His blood-bought people out from the midst of the lifeless profession existing on every hand to-day. No bright "Millennial Dawn" will there be for this world, until the besom of destruction has swept over it, and out of His kingdom the Son of Man shall have gathered "all things that offend, and them that do iniquity." Men may dream, and with wild fancies indulge in the delusive hope that ere long the millennial morning will dawn, and with it the reign of peace and prosperity; but that reign will be the reign of righteousness, and no unrighteousness, or unrighteous man, shall ever be permitted to mar that fair scene, and escape instant judgment (see Isa. lxxv. 20).

When the "Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in his wings," all the wicked shall disappear before His brightness; for the day of the Lord, the Scripture saith, "shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Mal. iv. 1, 2). No "*day of trial*," as some fondly dream, will mark that day of brightness, man's trial is over, and he has been found *Guilty* (Rom. iii. 9, 23). *Guilty of the rejection of the Son of God*, just like the condemned prisoner, all he waits for now is the execution of the

sentence! "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John iii. 18, 19). Into the hands of His Son whom man rejected (and to-day rejects), God has committed all judgment, that all should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father (John v. 22, 23). He has 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). Mark, it will be *in righteousness*! Not in unrighteousness, as it would be if the judgment of sin be not executed upon every unbeliever, and upon all who live in sin, without Christ.

What will it be if all are judged by the righteous Judge "*on their own merit*," as we are told? Nothing but condemnation, under the wrath of God for ever! "All have sinned," and thus to be judged on their own merit cannot bring other than the dread sentence of Him who judgeth righteously, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Before the Lord comes *with* His saints, and they are displayed with Him in glory, He will previously have come for them (1 Thess. iv. 16).

Then, suddenly as a thief in the night, will He come upon a lost world asleep in false security, dreaming of peace when there is no peace. "For when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. v. 3). Many then, rocked to sleep in the devil's eradle to the sweet music of the "Millennial Dawn," will wake up, alas! too late, to find the longed-for dawn but a phantom that has disappeared; with nothing before them, but the woes that await the lost, at the millennial end.

Now every morn has an eve, and every day has its night, and what pen can describe, or tongue tell, what must follow the close of that bright day of millennial glory and blessedness?

In graphic and unmistakable language, the scene is depicted in the book of the Revelation. The thousand years having run their course, the dark shadows of the millennial eve begin to appear, like a dark cloud flung across the evening sky. Satan appears on the scene. Gathering the nations of the earth together as the sand of the sea, he marshals his armies against Christ and the beloved city, which for a thousand long years has held up its head, the centre and capital of the universe. But who ever fought against God and prospered? Defeat and overthrow is what they reap. It is the last final contest between the powers of evil and of God. "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about,

and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. xx. 9, 10).

Following upon the judgment of Satan is that of the wicked, the great white throne is set up, and before Him, from whose face the heavens and the earth have fled away, the wicked stand. Multitudes who have lain in their graves during the thousand years of Christ's reign will come forth at the bidding of the Son of God, to appear at heaven's tribunal for judgment. Upon that throne of unsullied whiteness sits Him, who once trod this earth, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," whom man hated and hanged on a cross. Oh! Christ-rejecter, how will you meet Him there? And as the wicked small and great stand there, the books are opened, and yet another is opened which is the book of life. Judgment according to merit there will be, but who can stand before it, when the books are opened, and every man is judged according to his works? They testify against him, for in that unerring record every sin of thought, word, and deed will be found. And in the book of life, the professor's name, which stands out boldly to-day in church or chapel register, nowhere will be found: "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." There is no restitution there, no perfection to be

arrived at; and what of man's merits? He has them, he loved sin, and its wages must be his,—*Death and judgment.*

Into that scene where "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain," no unsaved soul shall enter. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. xxi. 8).

Be not deceived, dear friend. Heed not those who by feigned words, and fair speeches seek to delude the simple. Christ is coming! and with His coming the sure judgment of God upon all who are unsaved. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. If unsaved, we beseech you to trust Him as your Saviour NOW. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." But mark! there will be no gospel, or hope for you after death, or if Christ comes and finds you unprepared.

"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; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe" (2 Thess. i. 7-9).

DEATH—A MESSAGE TO THE BEREAVED.



OW terrible are the ravages wrought by that cruel monster and king of terrors—Death! The friends whom we dearly loved in life, and carefully watched in illness, pass away, the earthly friendship is closed, we can minister to their wants no longer, and are only left to mourn their loss!

It may be they have been cut off suddenly; no premonition of what was coming, but stricken down in a moment without warning; our hearts bleed at every fresh memory of a happy relationship for ever sundered on earth.

Dear reader, we affectionately ask you, have you traced the hand of God and heard His voice speaking to you in some sad bereavment? Do you know that He desires your greatest sorrow to be the means of your greatest blessing? He wounds, that He may heal.

"God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not" (Job xxxiii. 14). How often has the "still small voice" of conscience whispered to you that you are by nature and practice a sinner! You have been impressed with a sense of the precarious position that you occupy; that

DEATH FOR YOU WOULD MEAN A LOST ETERNITY; and that at any moment it might overtake you.

But you have closed your heart against the love of God ; you have turned aside from the gracious entreaty of our Lord Jesus Christ, and shut your ear against the pleading of the Holy Ghost. In fact, you have incurred an enormous risk ; but God would not permit you to go on thus. He has caused this great sorrow to come upon you in His infinite mercy and love, that He may constrain you to consider your latter end, and apply your heart unto wisdom ; that He may deliver you from going down to the pit, He Himself having "found a ransom" (Job xxxiii. 24) in the blessed One "who gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. ii. 6). We are reminded by this sad event, that, as the penalty of sin, ALL MUST DIE that are unsaved.

It is a gruesome fact, but fact it is. Not a child of Adam's race can escape. Friend ! you may be in health and strength, prospering better than ever, yet it may be that even now the fatal dart is levelled at your heart. Should it lodge there to-day,

ARE YOU READY ?

It is not simply that you will die, but

MEET GOD YOU MUST—ARE YOU PREPARED ?

"Now God commandeth all men everywhere to repent : 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 raised him from the dead" (Acts xvii. 30, 31). Your eyes

shall see His face, your ears shall hear His voice; and individually He will retrace with you that history of your life known only to Himself and you. HOW WILL IT FARE WITH YOU THEN? And then—

ETERNITY—WHERE WILL YOU SPEND IT?

Eternity is a reality. You have an immortal soul that shall exist as long as God Himself—WHERE? These are solemn questions, but they have to be faced and answered.

Mother! you have lost your darling child, and your heart bleeds at the remembrance of the sweet little object of your deepest affection wrenched from your side. Just as the shepherd carries the little lambs over the stream, in order that the unwilling mother sheep may follow; so has God in His tender love removed your little lamb to His house on high that He may lead you thither also. Will you still withstand His grace, be banished from God's presence and heaven's delights, and be separated from your child for ever and ever? Think once more, we entreat you, of God's unbounded love. He knew your condition, He gauged the depth of your need, and He spared not His only begotten, and well beloved Son that He might redeem you and bring you to Himself. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16).

Take your true place as a sinner; accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, and salvation

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

NEED NOT DIE.

If the Lord tarry, He may put you to sleep to await His coming. Yes, "we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" (1 Cor. xv. 51). If we go before, there is no sting or terror; and if we remain, we have the happy sense that

IN ANOTHER MOMENT WE MAY BE IN GLORY.

And should our friends who "believe in Jesus" be taken from us, we "sorrow not, even as others which have no hope" (1 Thess. iv. 13-18). We shall meet them in the air when Jesus comes; and for ever in the Father's house we shall with them swell the eternal song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. v. 12).

Dear friend!

WILL YOU BE THERE?

We assure you of our deepest sympathy with you in your intense grief and heartfelt sorrow. But we beg of you to heed God's voice at this time; to heed that which may be the last call of His grace, and not miss that which will in all probability be

YOUR LAST OPPORTUNITY OF BEING SAVED.

"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God

hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 23-26).

God's remedy is more than sufficient for man's ruin, and it is all of Himself. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 8, 9), and "Now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

May God in the riches of His grace, by His Holy Spirit, lead you, as a lost sinner, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, trust in His precious blood, and rest your soul upon His finished work, even now, for His peerless name's sake. Amen.

"Time is earnest, passing by ;
Death is earnest, drawing nigh :
Sinner, wilt thou trifling be ?
Time and death appeal to thee.

Life is earnest ; when 'tis o'er,
Thou returnest—never more !
Soon to meet eternity,
Wilt thou never serious be ?

Oh, be earnest ! death is near ;
Thou wilt perish, ling'ring here !
Sleep no longer, rise and flee,
Lo, thy Saviour waits on thee !"

FIVE WORDS.



THROUGH the beautiful country lanes of South Devon, one evening, a covered carriage might have been seen rapidly travelling. Its destination was Colonel B——'s mansion. Its occupant was a lady, dressed like a woman of the world, —her mind occupied, no doubt, with the dinner-party to which she was invited.

Little did she dream that she would never reach the end of her journey, or that she was so soon to be ushered into eternity.

The horse shied, overturning the carriage. The coachman and horse escaped unhurt, but what of the lady? She was rendered unconscious. In a very few minutes her heart ceased its beating, and she was—GONE!

Just for a minute or two she had recovered consciousness, and uttered five words—her last on earth.

How loving sorrow-stricken friends wait for and prize the last words of their expiring friends! The most magnificent of dying utterances was that of the Son of God. Amid the throes of death, enveloped in the utter gloom of Calvary, after having drained the cup of wrath, which was put into His hands by God, to the last dark dreg, He cried—"IT IS FINISHED!" What words! They rent the vail of the temple. They cleft the dark-

ness. They inaugurated the Gospel day. They vindicated the everlasting righteousness of God. They made salvation possible for you, unknown reader.

Five words were the last that escaped the lips of a man as suddenly ushered into eternity as this lady. He had learnt the value of Christ's dying utterance. Sweetly, and with confidence, did he pronounce his last words on earth—"*Departing to be with Christ!*" One moment on earth—the next in the presence of Jesus!

But what of the lady's last five words? They were these—"*I have lost my shoe!*" One's heart sickens to think that in such a moment her thoughts were occupied with a dainty shoe. What of her soul? What of her sins? What of her eternity? She was never known to have confessed Christ as her Saviour on earth. Sadly is it to be feared that her next five words, uttered in eternity, would be—"*I have lost my soul!*"

Peter, walking on the water, looking at the wind instead of Christ, began to sink. The unstable water could never sustain him upon its surface once his eye was off Christ. As he sank, what was his earnest, piercing cry? Three words—"*Lord, save me!*" How suited to the occasion! Would that these too had been the lady's, uttered in simple faith in Christ!

What do you think would be your *last* words on earth? You too must experience the realities of eternity; and we would desire to put ourselves

beside you, and earnestly and affectionately inquire if you are prepared to meet God. Meet Him you must.

Job of old knew that a man must be *just* with God, but HOW that could be accomplished he knew not (Job ix. 1). To justify himself was worse than folly in his eyes, for he says, "If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse" (verse 20). Again, to forget it all, and live an easy merry life was no better, for he says, "If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness and comfort myself; I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent" (verses 27, 28). Again, reformation was no use—the mere turning over a new leaf—for he says, "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me" (verses 30, 31). And then he bewails that there is no daysman who can put his hand both upon Job and God.

Self-justification only leads to God's condemnation of you; take, then, your true place as a vile, guilty sinner.

Forgetfulness of your sins, of God, of eternity, is folly in the extreme, for that only, at the best, gives you a false peace. It does not avert the storm of judgment that lies before each Christless soul in the near future.

Reformation, turning over a new leaf, doing the best you can, good works, &c., are worse than

useless; "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. lxiv. 6).

Poor Job longed for a daysman. *We* can point you to One—Jesus. In His own person, at the cross, He settled the whole question of sin. Now God is "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." "There is ONE MEDIATOR between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. ii. 5, 6).

There is only *one* way to God,—that is, through the Lord Jesus Christ. There is *only* one means of justification,—that is, simple belief in God's Son. "There is NONE OTHER NAME under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

A. J. P.

THE difference of a single letter in the soul's faith either saves or damns it. It all lies between a "D" and a "K." *Words*, God's words, when believed, save a man; *works*, his own works, damn him. Cornelius was told to send for Peter, "who shall tell thee *words*, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts xi. 14). He did so, heard, believed, and was saved. Many rest on their works, forgetting God's words, "Unto him that *worketh not*" (Rom. iv. 5); "Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 9); "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Tit. iii. 5).

Reader, are you resting on words or works? That letter "K" has damned millions.—W. T. P. W.

"GO, BRING THE YOUNG MAN AGAIN."

(Read 2 Samuel xiii. 23-33, xiv.)



HE narrative contained in these two chapters shows, most beautifully, the way in which God acts now, in His grace, and in His desire to bring back the sinner to Himself. There is one great point though, in which this narra-

tive differs from, indeed is entirely in contrast to the Gospel ; because whatever God does is righteous, and if He loves, it is righteous love ; whereas the narrative shows us love travelling faster than righteousness, and the sequel is, that there is a complete revolt, and David's throne is upset, as we see in chapter xv. If God shows love, if God saves me, He does it righteously ; He saves by His grace, and He saves utterly, but He saves righteously.

David brings back this young man, but He brings him back unrighteously, without judging his sin, and the consequence was he got bold ; and that is what people who do not believe in hell now are, they are bold, and defy God. Absalom was a murderer. However deep might be Amnon's guilt, there was no excuse for Absalom. He was a murderer ; and yet you hear him saying in the end of chapter xiv., "If there be any iniquity in me." His sin had been unjudged, he had been brought back unrighteously, his conscience was hardened, and as a consequence, the moral

character of the throne of David was destroyed; and where the moral character is destroyed, power is gone, and the throne is upset—it provokes a revolt, as chapter xv. tells us.

Now God cannot make light of sin, though He has only love in His heart for the sinner. You have outraged God's character, and God's throne, but you have not changed one whit the heart that fills that throne; and though you may be a sinner of the deepest dye, yet you are an object of the love of God; His love has not been destroyed by your sin. And so we see in David, his heart yearns after the runaway.

Will you notice that it is recorded three times, "Absalom fled"? Why did he fly? Because his conscience, then fully alive to his guilt, told him that, though his father might be king, yet he himself was a murderer, and that there was nothing, in righteousness, for a murderer but death. So he fled, for sin makes cowards of us all, and when a man has sin upon his conscience, he feels he cannot face God. It is a solemn thing, my friend, to have to face God in your sins. Have to do with God you must; you cannot evade it; and you have sinned. I do not care how much or how little, but you have sinned, though it may not be like Absalom. But what is sin? Sin is man following the desire of his own heart; and have not you done that? You know you have.

Here the purpose of his own heart makes Absalom a murderer, and he flies from the presence of the

king. And have not you got away, have not you fled from God? Does not your conscience still keep you at a distance from Him? But oh, do not you desire to get back to God? May His word bring you back just now. Why is the Gospel preached? Because the world is away from God. If you were not away from God why need the Gospel be preached to you? The Gospel tells you that you are away from God, but that His love wants to bring you back. *God wants to have you.*

"Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us *to God.*" Not to bring us to heaven, nor to bring us to peace, but to bring us to God; and no soul is brought to God till it is brought to trust the blood of Christ. Observe that the grace comes all from God's side. Have you been seeking to know God? God has been beforehand with you. He has been seeking you. He gave His own Son for me long before I ever had a thought about Him; and now the cross tells me God wants to save me; and the cross tells me God can righteously save me. Are *you* unconverted, with a weight of sins upon your conscience? God wants to bring you back to Himself. The soul of David longed after Absalom; three years had Absalom been away! and how long have you been away? Twenty years? Thirty years? Three-score years? Well, I do not know your age, but this I know, that if unsaved, you have never been near God yet. You have spent your life at a distance from God, but He wants to have you

brought back; God wants to have the link of relationship formed between Himself and you.

Cast your eye back for a moment over life's pathway, and tell me what relationship has there ever been yet between your soul and God? Has Christ been uppermost? Has He had a place in your thoughts? Has He had a place in your plans? Has He been your object? The soul that is unconverted, and honest, says, "No, God has had no place in my thoughts hitherto; my plans have all been formed without Him; Christ has not been my object." But you *must* meet God. Why not meet Him now in grace, when in the love of His heart He wants to save you? Can you meet Him in judgment? In your sins? Nay! Oh! when is so good a time to meet Him as this very moment?

The reason man does not accept God's offer of mercy is because he does not care for it. Why did not the men in the Gospels accept the invitation to the feast? Because they were like you, who remain unsaved; they did not care for it, they had no heart to come, and you have not cared to be saved. If the heart had been right, the man with the yoke of oxen would have said, "The oxen are very fine, but I can wait until to-morrow to prove them;" and the man with the piece of ground would have said, "I can wait till to-morrow to go and see that;" and the man who had married a wife would have said, "I am going to a feast, my dear, and you had better come with me," *i.e.*, he would

have gone himself and taken her with him. But they had no heart to go, and you have no heart for Christ's invitation; but though your heart is all wrong, God's heart is nevertheless towards you.

David's heart was towards the prodigal, but he said, "If my heart bring him back, my hand holds a sword that must be planted in his bosom as soon as he returns." Then Joab comes in, through the wise woman of Tekoah, as you read, and the end of it is that David gives way and brings his son back without judging his sin. But does God bring back His prodigals without judging their sin? No, no. He has judged it in the cross of Christ.

Until the cross, where Christ suffered and bare sin, there was a barrier between man and God. Until the cross of Christ God was behind the veil; God dwelt between the cherubim (executive of His righteousness), and there was a thick veil between man and God. The high priest drew near once a year; went inside that veil, alone, with blood of others; but he came out again, and the veil remained. But when Jesus died; when man had nailed Him to the tree; when man had done his worst—for it was man's hand that drove in those nails, it was man's hand that planted the crown of thorns upon that peerless brow, it was man's hand that plunged the spear into that blessed side—then, I say, when man had done his *very worst* against Him, God seized that very moment, in His matchless, His exquisite, His infinite grace, to do His *very best* for man. Christ, in that hour of darkness,

when God's righteous wrath, and man's unrighteous wrath alike fell on His blessed head, did a work that enables God to come out in righteousness, and in love to man, and save the vilest.

When Jesus died, not only the rocks were rent, but he who entered the temple next found the veil rent from the top to the bottom. Why from the top to the bottom? Because it was God's hand that had done it. If man had rent that veil it would only have been to bring swift destruction on himself; and if man goes into God's presence now without Christ's blood, what must it be but sure destruction to him? But God Himself breaks down the barrier. The cross, where the Holy One died for the sinner, opened the way into God's very presence. "I am the way," says Christ, and if you seek another way you are on the wrong way.

David's love, as we have seen, outstrips his righteousness, but when God brings back the sinner, He brings him back in righteousness. The cross of Christ tells me this, that God's grace reigns now, in the place where death reigned before, and it reigns through righteousness, not at the expense thereof. Instead of death falling on the guilty soul, death falls on Jesus—the death of the cross, death in the dark shades of Golgotha—and that death opens the way into God's presence for you and me.

If I were not brought to God in righteousness, I should be afraid some day He would rake up the question of my sins; but when I know my sins

have all been taken up by my substitute, Jesus, and that He has borne every one of them, not as I know them, but as God knows them, then I know that I escape the penalty due to them, through sovereign love indeed, but love that is based on righteousness.

Do you believe this story of the cross? Then do you not see in it how God loves you? Yes, He wants you. He tells me first of all that He has gauged my guilt, and that Christ took the full weight of that guilt on Him when He died. Truly, "mercy and truth meet together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

The wise woman of Tekoah said, "We must needs die," *i.e.*, the moral of her story is, *Make haste*; and the moral of my story to you is, *make haste*, for you may soon die, you know not how soon, and you must meet God. "Yet," she says, "doth he (God) devise means that his banished be not expelled from him." I have told you God's means. I know they find no acceptance in the eyes of man. "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness," but the cross of Christ is God's only way of salvation. Christ maintains the character of the throne of God in righteousness, while He manifests the character of the heart of God in its deep, deep love. Can you, my friend, agree with a lunatic who once thus exquisitely expressed it?—

"Could I with ink the ocean fill,
Were every blade of grass a quill,

Were the whole heaven of parchment made,
And every man a scribe by trade,
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry :
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky."

Blessed man ! whatever else he did not know, he knew the love of God, which "passeth knowledge."

Now there comes the contrast between the narrative and the Gospel, between the king's message and God's message. The king's character breaks down ; love reigns at the expense of righteousness ; God's love reigns through righteousness. The king's message is, "Go, bring the young man again," but "let him not see my face." What is God's message to you ? "Bring him, bring her, to *Me*." "Christ suffered that He might *bring us* to God." Luke xv. says that while the returning prodigal was "yet a great way off, the father saw him, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

After two years Absalom gets the kiss, but how long has the sinner now to wait for the Father's kiss ? Two years ? No ! Not two seconds ! What do you find when you come to God ? That He has open arms for you ! I think that prodigal must have stood still in downright, sheer amazement when he saw his father *run* ; and he kissed his unwashen cheek ; kissed him in his rags ; fell on his neck and kissed him ! What wondrous grace ! God's own heart proposes the plan for our salvation. God gives up His Son to die ; God's hand raises Him from the dead. God sends down the Holy

Ghost, and God now Himself sends out the message, inviting the sinner to come near. It is all wondrous grace and love. In David's heart there is love, but not light. In God there is both. He has shown me up in my true character. He has to make no discoveries of me by-and-by. He has discovered my true state, and love comes in and meets that state. Light shows me my sin, love puts that sin away.

Oh! will you not turn to this One; the One in whom both love and righteousness are combined? Will you not receive Christ at once? With Him everything is yours. May you receive His grace, and taste the joy of it, and be a witness and confessor of how good is God, how perfect His way. Oh! my unsaved friend, do not you miss the day of His grace, the day of His love now, and be left to face the day of His terrible judgment.

W. T. P. W.

"THE OMNIPOTENCE OF LOVING-KINDNESS."



UCH was a famous saying of a devoted and highly gifted servant of Christ, long since passed away; but, though he be gone, the saying is well worth repetition.

"*Loving-kindness*" a word that is used about thirty times in the Old Testament, and connected on each occasion with

God—is a truth that may well command attention and reach the heart.

The word "*love*" is winsome, and the word "*kindness*" is full of tenderness; but here we have the two combined, as though neither could express sufficiently the feeling of the heart—God's heart!

A kindness that is loving! Ah! reader, that is something to be valued in such a world as this. There is an omnipotence, too, about such a kindness.

Did you ever hear the following couplet?—

"Love and terror only harden
All the while they are alone,
But the sense of blood-bought pardon
Soon dissolves the heart of stone."

That, if true, proves its omnipotence.

What I mean is, that "*loving-kindness*" has embodied itself, and, by the most wonderful self-sacrifice that could be made, has sought to win over enemies to friends, sinners to saints. Hence we read, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus ii. 14). This refers, of course, to our blessed Lord, who, as the embodiment of that "*loving-kindness*," sacrificed Himself for our redemption. Thus it is a pardon bought by blood—bought at the infinite but necessary cost of all that He was. Now, *that is love*! It is the love of God!

Oh, think of it, friend! Place yourself by the

cross of Jesus, and view Him there under the agony of divine judgment against our sin,—there necessarily, for "without shedding of blood there is no remission"—there willingly, for He said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;" and, again, "I lay it down (His life) of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John x. 18); but there, in deepest and most wondrous love, in order that the poor sinner, whose sins demand eternal death, might through faith in Him inherit everlasting glory. Thus it was with one who was actually beside Him during that awful hour. He, a thief, and a sinner, like all others, had the vision which I suggest to you, dear friends, with the glorious result that, overpowered by its mighty spell—convicted, converted, and confiding—he passed that day to be with the Lord in paradise. What a result for him! But

"There may you, though vile as he,
Wash all your sins away."

If the omnipotence of the cross was proved to the *dying thief*, why not to you? Your heart may have resisted the terrors of law and threats of coming judgment; you may hitherto have refused submission to authority,—but here is a love that seeks to woo and win, to draw and bless, to redeem and save you! Can you still hold out?

But the other day I heard of one, thus overpowered, who fell on her knees and said, "Lord Jesus, I thank Thee ten thousand times for dying for me." Her gratitude was beyond the power of

language. Words could not communicate the fulness of her heart. She had through grace the sense of a blood-bought pardon !

And I may safely say, that if a *sight of Calvary* fail to melt your hard and stony heart, and break it into a thousand pieces, nothing else can. The cross is God's great centre of attraction. He makes everything of that as the ground of blessing and the way of salvation. It is, moreover, the full expression of love and the channel of boundless grace. Oh, how it suits the sinner too ! No, nothing else can win, or bless, or save. The dread judgment-seat may terrify ; the awful sentence may appal ; and then departure into everlasting fire may wither up every hope, and lay the lost foul in the agonies of hopeless despair—all fearfully true—but not one, or all together, can win the heart, or reach the affections, or kindle a spark of love.

That was the work of the cross. The tender bosom that accepted the stroke of infinite justice, offered at the same time a sweet and perfect shelter to the offender. That proffered shelter being spurned and rejected, then there remains an only but an awful alternative. It must either be infinite judgment on the sinner's substitute, or else eternal judgment on the sinner himself—one or other !

May your heart, dear reader, be won by the love of Christ. May the prayer of David, in Psalm li., be your prayer to-day, " Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy LOVING-KINDNESS ; according

unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions."

That sinful monarch had no plea but God's loving-kindness and tender mercy, and alongside these he laid his own transgressions. Let David's plea be yours. It is all availing.

"I ask no other argument,
I want no other plea ;
It is enough that Jesus died,
And that He died for me."

J. W. S.

"EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM."



THE words at the head of this paper were quoted at an out door preaching in London. A certain sceptic in the crowd seemed much irritated by the statement, and declared that he could easily prove that it was false.

As his repeated remarks excited considerable interest among the people, the sceptic was challenged to do so.

"Well," said he, "suppose I were to commit a murder to-night, I should be arrested, proved guilty, and executed ; and according to your Bible I should go to hell. Now," he continued, "the Lord is not there, and so I should never see Him."

"Wait a moment," was the reply. "To take your own illustration, if you were to commit the

crime of murder, you would be arrested and thrown into jail. But would it therefore follow that you would never see the judge? Of course not! You would be kept in jail until the day of assize, when you would be brought forth, and made to stand before the judge. So hell is but the prison-house where the impenitent sinner will be confined till the day of judgment. On that great assize day he will be brought before the throne, upon which the Lord Jesus Christ—the righteous Judge—will sit to judge the dead, small and great. Then will the sinner experience the truth of Scripture, ‘Every eye shall see him.’”

To this the sceptic was unable to reply, and, elbowing his way out of the crowd, he gave vent to his rage in a volley of oaths.

Now, while the unbeliever hates, and puts far from him, the thought that one day he will behold the Lord Jesus, the believer looks forward to this event with great delight. Listen to the Apostle John, as, in an ecstasy, he says, “We shall see him as he is.”

What is the secret of this great difference? The Christian knows Christ as his Saviour, and naturally desires to see the One of whom he can say, “He loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

The unbeliever sees in Christ only a judge, and conscience assures him that a righteous judge can but pass upon the sinner a sentence of condemnation.

Now, though this is true, there is no reason for

despair. The Lord Jesus has not yet taken the office of judge, for to-day He is at God's right hand, a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins.

Say not thou, "I am too depraved," — for, having Himself borne the stripes due to the sinner, Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The Son of God, whose word shall never pass away, saith: "Verily verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24).

Knowing that his scarlet sins have been washed away in the precious blood of Christ, the Christian, as he hears the solemn announcement, "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him," can calmly say, "Even so, Amen."

C. H.

SIX CRIES OF THE LORD JESUS.



SEVERAL times in Scripture it is recorded that the Son of God raised His voice and cried aloud, and to six of His cries I would seek to draw your attention.

First at the opened grave. Lazarus had been buried four days. Corruption was doing its deadly work—already his body was

stinking. His sisters were sorrowing. Divine sympathy was also there, for "Jesus wept."

As He stood at the mouth of the grave, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." Why did He raise His voice? Was not *His* whisper omnipotent? Methinks *His heart* was stirred. He loved to relieve the sorrow of Mary and Martha. He rejoiced to bring His friend Lazarus back to His and their company. But more than that, did it not give Him positive delight to use anticipatively the power that was His, through His own death and resurrection?

He was the Resurrection and the Life. If righteousness was not to be perfectly satisfied by the work He was about to do, love must have remained dumb in the presence of sin's havoc—death and corruption.

So He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." Death gave up its prey—the dead man came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes—a fit picture of man's state, "dead in trespasses and in sins"; while Jesus stands declared as the only One who can come in and bless as Victor over death.

Again Jesus was at Jerusalem. The great crowds had come, and were about to go. The feast days had almost run their course. There He stood in the presence of the gorgeous temple—the One whom all the magnificent ritual pointed on to—the more than fulfiller of the types, and sacrifices, and shadows.

But the great crowd of unsatisfied worshippers—for religion, however magnificent and ornate, can never satisfy the soul—knew Him not.

His heart was moved once more. He stood forth—nothing to distinguish Him *outwardly* from the crowd—yet He cried, “If any man thirst, let him come unto ME, and drink”; and He prophesied not only satisfaction of heart, but overflowing rivers of blessing to others, to the one who stooped and drank.

Ah! nothing can satisfy your deep, deep need but coming to Christ. “Let him come unto ME.” How gracious and unencumbered with terms, is the invitation! Solomon, with all his great efforts to find an earth-born happiness, had to cry, “Vanity, vanity, saith the preacher, all is vanity.”

Reader, if unsatisfied and troubled, fly to Christ. You will find rest and satisfaction and peace in Him.

Yet a third scene. The matchless ministry of grace in the person of Jesus is about to close. Ere He withdraws Himself from the world around Him, that so utterly failed to recognise Him; ere He speaks such words as we read in John xiii.—xvii., words every child of God loves and prizes beyond measure,—He turns to the unresponsive world, and gives them His last sad, solemn, yearning warning.

They little thought as the words died away on His lips, that it was the close of His ministry on earth,—that the next they would see of Him would be in Pilate’s judgment hall. Yet so it was.

And His heart again found vent in crying aloud: He told them in disbelieving Him they disbelieved in God. He told them He was come a light into a world of moral darkness; that His mission was one of grace, and not of judgment; that He came to save the world; that He did not speak of Himself, but as the Father commanded Him; that His words would judge them in the last day (John xii.).

And so the message closes. It fell upon dull ears; the light shone upon darkened eyes; there was no beauty, that they should desire Him.

And oh! how awfully solemn to think that these sweet, tender, gracious words of loving entreaty will start up in judgment on the souls of the impenitent at the last day (John xii. 48.)

Will it be possible, as the guilt of the sinner rises black and hideous before his dazzled eyes at the great white throne, that *such* words as "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," will fall like a death-knell upon his troubled soul? Will that be sadly possible?

And methinks when the damned soul tosses about "weary and heavy laden" in the lake of fire and wanting "rest" as never before, that these gracious, tender words, once rung in his ears on earth, will sting his conscience and memory like scorpions. God save you from such a doom. His love desires to do it, and pursues you with the warning even now.

But, again. Christ once cried aloud in deepest, darkest agony. Wicked hands had scornfully cruci-

fied Him. God had come in and cleared the cross of the crowds of jeering, cowardly fanatics by throwing around it at mid-day a pall of darkness.

He put to the holy lips of Jesus the cup of judgment and forsook Him—left Him to sink in the waters, in which there was no standing!

For three hours the holy Jesus was drinking that awful cup till He drained it to its last, dark drop; and as it fell for ever from His lips, He cried with a loud voice, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Reader, if ever I was convinced of the eternal hell my sins deserved, it was when I gazed, and gazed, and gazed with awe and wonder upon *that* scene. He was forsaken because my sins were upon Him. Blessed be His holy name there is no death, no hell for me.

Then His lips parted again, and He cried with a loud voice, "IT IS FINISHED!" The veil was rent. The darkness vanished. Nature witnessed to the value of the work in the rent rocks and the quaking earth. Satan's dominion immediately had to yield its trophies to the efficacy of that work, in the open graves and the risen saints. But Jesus died. He died in all the sunshine of God's infinite favour. Blessedly does He cry *with a loud voice*, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."

He lay in the grave the whole paschal Sabbath day, and then triumphantly rose from the dead—the standing proof of the satisfaction of God Himself

in His work. The throne of the eternal God was covered with a fresh glory. God could now "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26).

Ah! that old woman, when dying, had got this in her soul. She said she was trusting in the *justice* of God.

"No, no," replied her visitor, "surely you mean His *mercy*."

"No, it is HIS JUSTICE I am trusting to. If He fails His word to me, a believer in Jesus, why, I would lose my soul, but *God* would lose His character."

Yes, God can now righteously bless, and delights to do it; and sooner will the precious blood of Christ lose its efficacy, and the word of God its value, than the vilest sinner, trusting Christ, be lost.

Dear fellow-believer, let me remind you, that the blessed Saviour has not uttered His last cry. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven *with a shout*, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we be ever with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17).

Happy, hourly prospect! Again His heart will delight to break this time the silence, not of the grave, but of the heavens. We shall hear His voice and be with Him for ever.


In the little interval may you and I, read.

Christian reader, be seeking by voice and pen, by tract and Gospel magazine—as the Lord enables us—to make these blessed tidings known.

To the unbeliever, I would say, do not lay this paper down till you have come to Christ as a poor, lost, hell-deserving sinner. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

A. J. P.

**"IF YE WILL ENQUIRE, ENQUIRE YE:
RETURN, COME."**

ND took his journey into a far country," are words used by the Lord Jesus in the story of the Prodigal Son, to describe the distance the sinner is from God. The son, once at home with the father, is now a long distance from him, and what has put him there? Sin. It is sin that has separated man from God, corrupted and alienated his being. So that he is not only "far off" from God, and stranger to Him, but he is also corrupted in his being, his heart being deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.

But the time came when the prodigal was stopped in his mad career, and what is true in the parable is true of every one that ever has been, or ever will be, converted. Reverses, affliction, brought this young man to himself. And such is the way of God in multitudes of cases.

It may be that the reader cannot understand the reverses and afflictions that have come upon him. They have been either sent or permitted of God, and for this reason, He wishes to awaken your soul, to cause you to think seriously of where you are, what you are, and where you are going. It is love divine that leads Him thus to deal with you. He wishes you to return; in fact, to be saved.

The young man "began to be in want." Friend, have you ever known the meaning of those words for yourself? Has a "famine" come upon that which once delighted your poor heart, and *appeared* to satisfy, but which in reality was a delusion, and are you beginning to realise that there is something wrong between you and God, that you have wronged your Creator, that the distance between Him and you is not that in which man was created, but is the fruit of sin? Are you beginning to be in want? If so, thank God for it; it is but the beginning of brighter days. The discovery of your condition as a sinner, and your distance from God, may be painful, but now necessary, for in the discovery you acquire a sense of need which ends in turning to God. "I must turn to my God," said a young man, upon whom God allowed the waves of affliction to roll, which swept everything away that his heart could cling to. It resulted in his salvation.

The prodigal turned for the moment to a citizen of that country, but further degradation only awaited him from that quarter. The company of swine and the withholding of the husks that the swine

ate, only increased his misery. Can the world, the citizens of the "far country," assist a soul that is in need? Can they appreciate the trouble and exercise and distress of one that is beginning to be awakened by God to a sense of his great moral distance from Him? Not at all. They can only misunderstand it all. No man gave to this awakening prodigal.

But it worked good for him, for it says, "And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father."

Where, indeed, is the sinner's resource? Is it in his fellow-men? No. Where is it? *It is in God.* "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help" (Hosea xiii. 9). "Salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah ii. 9). "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. xlv. 22).

And has not God shown His love in the gift of His Son, the Lord Jesus, and already met the need of guilty man in the atoning death of Christ, and provided that which will fit him for His holy presence? "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. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 9, 10).

If God can save, these verses show us *how* God can save. "He sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Sin caused the distance; the removal of the sins by the death of Christ opens the way for the return of the repentant sinner.

"He began to be in want." Have you, dear reader? "He came to himself." Have you, dear reader? "He arose and came to his father." Have you, dear reader? Have you returned, or are you on your way back to the Father? The work which is the righteous ground of God justifying a sinner was accomplished on the cross, when Jesus said, "It is finished," and bowed His head and gave up the ghost; while the blessed God of all grace, through the gracious operations of His Holy Spirit, creates in the heart a sense of need, which leads the sinner to retrace his steps back to God, and to trust in the Saviour who died for him. And the love that purposed man's salvation, and gave Jesus to die for sinners, *now* waits to receive *all* that return. God says, "If ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come" (Isa. xxi. 12).

Thus we read, "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

What a reception by the father! Wonderful picture of God receiving the sinner just as he is! And on the bosom, and in the ear of the father, were the true place to own in confession the greatness of his sin.

The father would fit him for his house. Thus we hear immediately following the confession of the son the father's voice, saying, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it: and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry."

The "*best robe*" is a lovely figure of Christ, and all a gift—"the gift of righteousness" (Rom. v. 17).

The "*ring*" is a figure, perhaps, of the unending love of our God and Father."

The "*shoes*" clearly speak of relationship, as in the Eastern countries only the members of the family wear their shoes in the house; the servants leave them at the door.

The "*fatted calf*" beautifully expresses the communion of the children with the Father in the relationship into which He has brought them.

It is a present relationship that we stand in with God the Father. "Beloved, *now* are we the sons of God." The kiss, the best robe, the shoes, the place at the Father's table, the joy of His presence, the light of His blessed countenance, are all ours now, if we have returned. It is for us

to simply enjoy the relationship and place we have. The father, as he looked at his son, was happy to have him there; and the son, as he looked at the father, could but overflow with thankfulness and praise.

It is thus with God and His people. The believer has joy which is unspeakable and full of glory. But what shall we say of the joy of God the Father! He fills the presence of the angels with His holy joy when a sinner repents,—a joy which but deepens when he is received and fitted for His presence, a joy which will be an “exceeding joy” when the Saviour presents them before the presence of His glory, and a joy that will fill the heart of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, through the eternal ages.

Beloved reader, will you return as a sinner confessed to this blessed God, who so loved you as to give His own Son to die for you? Will you furnish all heaven with an occasion for rejoicing by your return? The blessed God but waits to run forth to meet you, to kiss you, to pardon you, to clothe you, to put the ring and shoes on, and to bring you into the very bosom of His family as a son, not a hired servant, and make you perfectly happy in His love, and rejoice over you for ever. Oh! my friend, I beseech you to come. God says, Come; the Lord Jesus says, Come; the Eternal Spirit says, Come. Oh! won't you come?

ANON.

MEROY'S BANQUET.

A PARABLE.



N a certain city a terrible famine prevailed, and multitudes were dying of hunger. The angel of Mercy beheld the sufferings and destitution of the citizens, and, moved with pity, determined to prepare a banquet to which all the poor should be received without demur.

The tidings soon spread throughout the city that Mercy's banquet was ready, and report was made of the richness of the provision.

But what caused the greatest astonishment was that the terms were—"Without money and without price."

As may be supposed the needy came in great numbers from every quarter.

Seeing so many wend their way to Mercy's banquet hall a certain gentleman named Presumption thought he would like to pay the place a visit. Accordingly he drove thither in his chariot of righteousness drawn by his six horses of pride, and bade his servant ring the bell.

Mercy herself graciously opened the door, and, beholding his horses and chariot, she questioned him thus:—"Art thou poor?"

"Oh, no," said Presumption, "I am rich, and increased with goods."

"Art thou miserable?" said Mercy.

The gentleman coloured to the roots of his hair. "Miserable," quoth he, "I have need of nothing."

Then did Mercy sigh, and said, "Art thou blind?"

"Blind!" replied Presumption, "wouldest thou insult me? No; I can see clearly."

Mercy questioned once again, "Art thou naked?"

Presumption could no longer conceal his anger, and, sitting erect in his chariot, said, "Naked! didst thou say? Seest thou not the goodly Babylonish garment in which I am clothed?"

At this answer the angel of Mercy sadly replied, "This banquet is not for thee; it is prepared only for the destitute."

Presumption now drove away in a great rage; but, notwithstanding the rumbling of his chariot wheels, I could hear the voice of Mercy crying in solemn and plaintive tone—"Thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

"And the door was shut."

Then did I remember that it is written: "He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.

He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away."

OLD FACTS STILL TRUE.



HERE are certain facts that are incapable of change, certain truths that never alter. On the other hand, ideas and suppositions that may have been accounted as facts have been proved thoroughly false, and under the hand of time and the march of intellect have been utterly discarded.

But truth is truth always, and, whether pleasant or unpleasant, whether it meets our wishes or otherwise, it remains ever the same. And for this we may be truly thankful. Only fancy, if it were possible for some great fact connected with daily life, such for instance as the succession of the seasons, to become false, what would become of us? Could the farmer not reckon on summer following spring, how could he cast his seed into the furrow? The risk would be too great.

The summer may, doubtless, prove sadly unpropitious, and his expectations as to harvest may be blighted, still he builds on the fact that, as summer follows spring, so he may proceed with his sowing. Nor is he disappointed. And, if a weather-prophet should announce to him a wet summer, does he then abandon his seeding? Certainly not. The prophet may be right or he may be wrong, but the farmer reckons on the great and universal fact of seed-time and harvest. Now if this be true in the

transitory things of time, how much more in those of eternity !

There are in the Word of God certain solid facts that are immutable. No weather-prophet, nor critic, nor philosopher may filch them from us, or persuade us by his learning or wisdom that they must change. Let us stick firmly and faithfully to them. They are simple, and fundamental, but infinitely important.

1. *Sin*—its awful and eternal demerit.
2. *Atonement by Blood*—its absolute necessity.
3. *Repentance*—apart from which there is sure perdition.
4. *Faith in a dead and risen Saviour*—with present justification.
5. *Unbelief*—and eternal punishment.

These are five, and only five, of the many mighty facts of Scripture which allow of no change nor alteration. They are of vital moment ; and it is just because of their tremendous importance, that our enemy, the devil, and many of his tools, are doing all they can to deny, in some way or other, their significance.

"We know better now," it is said by such. "We have the light of criticism, and the accumulated learning of nineteen centuries, and we consider that the Bible-theory on these points is inaccurate."

Ah ! that *theory* is so unpleasant. It condemns sin, and declares judgment, and thus crosses the proud will of man ; hence it must be set aside !

A'as ! for the same book tells of love and grace,

and God's pardon and favour—the one no more than the other. Its balance is perfect; its truth infallible. Why play with one fact, and leave the other untouched? What is unpalatable must be taken with the other—"God is Light," and "God is Love."

I happened lately to be at the station of C——, a junction for B——. I heard from the lips of an old porter what I had heard from him twenty-five years before—"Change here for B——." The words and the accents were identically the same. For a quarter of a century had this man announced his message without a single variation, and thousands upon thousands of passengers must have been rightly guided by it. He stuck to his fact. Had he varied it, on the idea that the times had changed, or science altered things, what mischief he would have caused!

M'Cheyne, of lovely memory, said that every Gospel sermon should have three *R*'s—Ruin, Redemption, and Regeneration (meaning new birth), and he was right.

Friend, stick fast to the grand old facts of the Bible. If you should be still in your sins, believe them; if, through grace, you are a child of God, hold on to them. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, my word shall not pass away."

ETERNITY!



NOT ONLY once does this momentous word occur in the Scriptures, though its equivalent often does. It will be well to quote the verse in which it is found, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth **ETERNITY**, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isa. lvii. 15).

It is upon that one single word, dear reader, I desire to fix your most earnest attention. You will observe it is no ordinary word, and its occurring but once in the sacred Scriptures adds to its importance. It is full of solemnity for you and for me; yea, for the whole human family.

We speak of infinite space, and the undiscovered and undiscoverable depths that are there, and the worlds on worlds existing there. God, who created all, and who "fills heaven and earth," and is everywhere present, alone can comprehend it. God, too, *inhabiteth eternity*, for from "everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (Ps. xc. 2).

But I wish to speak of eternity in relation to man—to you and me, dear reader. We are endowed with an immortal, and therefore an imperishable, spirit. We are to live on for eternity. We may cease to exist here, in the conditions we find our-

selves in, but we live on for ever. We can never cease to be. In that respect we are like the fallen and the unfallen angels, who never can cease to be. The wicked would like to believe as true, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," and that is an end of us; but they know, in the deep depths of their being, that this can never be. Ah, no! though blinded by Satan, they know they have to live on for eternity—they can never cease to be.

A man, executed in Germany years ago for various offences, as he was about to lay his head upon the block, exclaimed, in anguish of soul, "*Eternity, O how long!*"

Theories may do very well in life, but in death the most hardened are conscious that eternity—the unmeasurable ages of eternity—is before them. Well might the poor man, as he placed his head upon the fatal block, cry out, "*Eternity, O how long!*"

Supposing we could take all the leaves in the wide world, and count a hundred years for every leaf; then gather up all the sand on ocean shores, and count a thousand years for every grain; then divide the oceans, lakes, and rivers into drops of water, and count a million years for every drop; then number the rays of light and particles of air in infinite space, and count a billion years for every ray and particle; then putting these vast figures together, and allowing these numbers of years to run their course, *you have but the beginning of eternity!* Oh, how vast it is! And, oh! tre-

mendous reality, beloved reader, you and I have to spend that eternity in heaven, or in hell!

Does not the question at once force itself upon us, "*Where shall I spend eternity?*" What fatal madness for us to evade it, to neglect it, and to succeed in so disposing of it, as to settle down and be at home in the mere trifles of this poor passing world! Oh friend, if you are doing this, awake to your madness, reflect upon that *eternity*, and, like a rational being, ask yourself the solemn question, "*When I have done with this short life, WHERE shall I spend that undying eternity—in heaven or hell?*"

Perhaps to-day you may pass out of time into eternity; and if so, beloved reader, *what then?*

We read of a time that is coming, when the nations shall be assembled before the Son of Man, when He will sit upon the throne of His glory, and He will say to those on His right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"; but to those on His left hand He will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. xxv. 31-46).

What more solemn and soul-awakening than these words, coming as they do from the lips of the blessed Son of God, He who could weep over unrepentant Jerusalem, and who, to save us from "*eternal judgment*" (Heb. vi. 2), died on the cross

of Calvary? To save us, He, blessed be His name for ever, interposed His precious blood,—

“O groundless deep ! O love beyond degree !
The offended died to set the offender free !”

But if He is rejected as Saviour, and His precious blood treated as a thing of naught ; if all the love of God manifested in the dying Lamb of God, and the beseechings of God in the Gospel, and the strivings of His blessed Spirit, are refused, and despised, and slighted ; oh, sad and awful thought ! righteousness must take its course, in the eternal judgment of the unrepentant !

Beloved reader, are you saved ? are you reconciled to God ? are you sure of eternal happiness ? If not, make haste to be saved ! Jesus stands ready to receive and save all who come to Him. God is ready to justify from all things the one who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. If not saved, *will you be that one ?* Delay not, I beseech you.

“Return, O wanderer, to thy home,
The Spirit calls for thee,
There are no pardons in the tomb,
And brief is mercy’s day.
Return ! Return !”

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life : and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John iii. 36).

E. A.

ARE YOU THE MAN?



N the window of a shop, some time ago, I saw the photograph of a young man in a large frame. Underneath the picture, in bold letters, it was announced that the young man, who answered to the above photo, would hear of something to his advantage in Brisbane. Evidently the youth had been lost sight of—nobody knew where he was. Perhaps he was wandering about from town to town, homeless, forlorn, and desolate. Yonder in Brisbane a fortune, it may be, awaits him. The young fellow might have thought, like many a one who reads this paper, that no one cared for him. Ah! my friend, let me tell you, ere I go further, that the blessed God cares for you, yea, He loves you. If I tell you that eternal blessing waits to be made yours, perhaps you can scarce believe it. But so it is, God is longing to bless YOU, a helpless, hopeless sinner.

Many young men no doubt saw the photograph in the window, and also read the announcement beneath it, but, as *they* did not answer to the description, the good news was *nothing to them*.

Let us suppose that thè man to whom it applies passes down the street; he has left his wretched lodgings in search of a bit of work. Sauntering along, he sees a small crowd of people collected round a shop-window. Making his way to the

front, what does he see? His own photograph straight before him. As he gazes at it, his misery is only intensified. It brings to mind his present condition, and he is almost ready to sink down on the footpath, as he thinks on his state, when his eye catches sight of the announcement. See the expression of his countenance change from one of despair to joy. His heart leaps within him, and he loses not a moment in presenting himself, and claiming the promised blessing. If it had been the photograph of some one else, would the promise have cheered his drooping spirit? No. He would have said, "Yes; that is good news for some one, *but not for me.*" What entitled him to the blessing was that *he* answered to the photograph.

The blessed God has hung out a photograph with an announcement of blessing underneath it, and if you answer to the description, the blessing is for you. Open your Bible, and turn to 1 Timothy i. 15: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "Oh," you say, "that is just what I have been looking for these years. Salvation! Oh, how I wish it was for me!"

Look at the photo, dear reader, and in God's presence compare yourself with it. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save SINNERS." That is the description of those whom God wants to bless. Do you know that you are a SINNER? I don't mean, Do you admit that you are one among a great number? but have you found yourself a poor, vile,

hopeless sinner in God's presence? Remember, each sin is noted by Him. Every foolish thought, idle word, and wrong action is recorded with divine accuracy in heaven. God is holy, and cannot pass over sin. The dark, heavy load of your sins, my unsaved friend, is sufficient to sink you down to hell. How will you do? Listen! "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Blessed announcement! The Son of God, in love to you and me, died at Calvary. He took the guilty sinner's place, and met every claim of divine righteousness. His precious blood was shed to cleanse away our sins; and God can now forgive and bless the sinner, and yet be righteous. Redemption is accomplished, peace made, salvation proclaimed. The One who died is now alive again, and is seated at this moment at God's right hand. To Jesus I point you; He longs to pick you up in grace, and save you.

Perhaps some one will say, "Oh, yes, I know that I am a sinner, and a black one too; my great fear is that the Lord Jesus would not receive me—I am too bad." Ah! my friend, listen to His loving words, and banish your fears, "Him that cometh to me I will in *no wise cast out*." The man who read the notice in the window did not stand and say, "But I am not fit to be seen, my clothes are all in rags." No; *he answered to the description*, and that was enough. Come, sinner, to Jesus! Come, in all your rags and your sins, and you will prove His willingness and power to save. The Apostle

Paul tells us of how he once presented himself as answering to the photograph, and was eternally blessed,—“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, OF WHOM I AM CHIEF.” Jesus invites *you*. No matter how many your sins, His precious blood can wash them away. With loving, outstretched arms He waits to receive and pardon you. Turn to Him, and trust Him now.

W. L.

THE GREAT ELECTION.



“*OR*” or “*against*,” is the great question on election day? Who is the candidate? What cause does he favour? Is he a worthy man? are important questions to be answered, ere the choice is made, and the candidate elected.

Another election! does the reader exclaim? No, dear friend, our subject is not a coming election, but one that has passed by long ago; but though ages have rolled by since then, yet it directly concerns you, so listen to us awhile.

The great election day has passed by long ago, but still hundreds and thousands are giving their consent to the choice that was then made.

Jesus and Barabbas were the two who stood before the people on that memorable day. The choice was an important one, for One stood for God, the other was Satan's man. The rule of Heaven, or the choice of Hell was to be decided; blessing or

cursing was what they had to choose between that day. Which man should be chosen, was the great question.

As on all election days, the excitement was great on the day of which we speak. The streets of the city were thronged by people, all intent on one thing, and that to give in their vote. At last the moment has arrived when it is to be taken, and Pilate comes forward and asks the question, "Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?" and the united cry arose from that vast assembly, "*Barabbas!*" Surprised at such a choice, the Roman governor inquired, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" "Let him be crucified," they all cried out. "Why, what evil hath he done?" was next asked of them; but the cry grew louder and higher as they all shouted out, "Let him be crucified." Their vote was recorded,—recorded on earth, and recorded in heaven! There it stands to-day in heaven's record; Jesus was rejected, and Barabbas chosen,—chosen by priest and people, by rulers and rabble, by Jews and Gentiles. Oh! awful choice: "Not this man, but Barabbas!"

They had their desire. The man of their choice was given unto them; while He who had done no evil was put to shame, mocked and spit upon, and nailed to a cross, and hung between two thieves. No voice was heard in His favour, no vote recorded for Him, except it be that of a dying thief, who, hanging at His side, gave this testimony: "This

man hath done nothing amiss." Never has the world repented of that awful choice, or confessed its sin to God; and to-day, if another election of a similar kind were to take place, the same cry would be heard, and the same verdict be given: "Not this man, but Barabbas."

Reader, on whose side are you to-day? Have you ever disowned the world, against which the solemn charge is placed of the rejection and murder of the Son of God,—a charge which has yet to be answered to before God's tribunal? Or are you still going on with that world, thus giving your consent to its dreadful act and awful choice? When the righteous Judge calls the world to account, and the solemn charge laid against it is heard, there can be but one issue, one sentence; and that *Guilty*, with the fearful penalty—THE LAKE OF FIRE.

But listen to those sweet words, as they are heard falling from the lips of the blessed God: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Though yours has been the terrible sin of the rejection of Jesus, oh! trust Him now, and that sin, though of scarlet dye, shall be blotted out beneath that precious blood shed on Calvary. "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."

THE SILENCED FOE AND THE SAVED SINNER.



AND he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him" (Zech. iii. 1). Consider, reader, this remarkable scene! Joshua was clothed with filthy garments (ver. 3). What a striking picture of the sinner's state before God! He who ought to have been clothed in spotless white, covered with garments steeped in filth, standing in the holy presence of the angel of the Lord, and the arch-enemy of God and man, Satan, the adversary, there to resist him! What will be the issue of such a solemn state of affairs?

Firstly, what will Joshua say for himself and those he represents? Not a word. How is this? Is there no excuse or remedy for the filth? None whatever. His mouth is stopped, he is convicted and silent in the presence of the Lord, waiting to hear the accusation of the foe, and the sentence of the just Judge.

And what saith the adversary? What, silent also! How is this? Does he not behold the filthy garments? Surely. Has he any question as to making his accusation good? There could be none. Is he not well aware that Joshua's case is without remedy? Unquestionably. Why then does he

not accuse? Ah, the Lord Himself, the Judge, has taken the guilty culprit's part. Here lies the solution of the Gospel enigma, that only faith can understand. Where is the earthly judge who can silence the accuser, clear the guilty culprit, and maintain his character for justice? Such an one is not to be found. But God has found a way, as we shall show, and here it is strikingly illustrated in relation to Joshua, Israel's high-priest. Yes, God can save, yet righteous be.

Joshua is silent; Satan is silent; but "the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" (ver. 2.) And Satan answered not a word. Sinner, see *yourself* pictured by Joshua. There *you* stand, clad with the filthy garments of sin, in the presence of infinite holiness. Dare you open your lips to justify yourself before God? Have you the least shred of an excuse for your state? Steeped in sin, you deserve the judgment of God. Your condition convicts you hopelessly before Him. If He dealt with you on the ground of what you are, or what you have done, nought but endless banishment and woe could be your portion. If He allowed the adversary to open his lips against you, your eternal doom would be sealed.

But, oh, what surprise and joy must have filled the heart of the mouth-stopped Joshua, as he heard the Lord's words, rebuking and silencing the foe, and telling of His gracious choice and delivering

power! And what surprise and vexation must have filled the adversary as he saw his prey plucked from his greedy clutch, and the fire of richly deserved judgment. "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"

Have you ever heard and believed the word of the Lord, the word that silences the enemy, and assures you that you are delivered from everlasting fire? A brand fit for the flame is every sinner, filthy with sin, upon the face of the whole earth, but the Lord's grace has plucked many out. How can these things be? Is God unjust? Nay. God has devised a scheme whereby He can deliver us in righteousness. Joshua was protected and delivered on the ground of what God would do. We are delivered and blessed on the ground of *what God has done*. He looked upon us in our miserable, guilty, and lost estate, and gave His Son, His only begotten, to bear for us the judgment we deserved. Jesus died on Calvary. There He bore the curse on our behalf; there He once for all exhausted the judgment of God, and glorified Him. On that ground alone, *His finished work*, God rebukes and silences Satan, and saves the lost. God is "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26).

Reader, is your heart rejoicing through His blessed word? Are you still trembling with a guilty conscience, dreading the accusation of the adversary? Or are you rejoicing, knowing that the enemy is silenced, and that the fire of judgment

is behind you for ever? Are you still a brand fit for the eternal burning? or are you *plucked out* by the mighty arm of the Lord, through His infinite grace?

But there is much more. "And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord stood by" (vers. 4, 5).

Not only does the Lord set Joshua's *conscience at rest*, but his *filthy garments were taken away*; and the Lord's own word assured him that *his iniquity was caused to pass from him*, and that *He would clothe him with change of raiment*. So is it with every soul who believes in Jesus. Do you believe in Him? Then, are *your filthy garments removed for ever*, *your sins eternally blotted out*? for the Lord says, "Thy sins and thine iniquities will I *remember no more*." "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. iv. 7, 8). And God clothes us with Christ. He, so to speak, is our best robe before Him. God hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. v. 21).

And not only so, but Joshua was crowned with a pure mitre upon his head. He was fitted by the

Lord to be His priest. So also, believers in Jesus are set apart to be priests to God, a holy and a royal priesthood (1 Pet. ii. 5-9). We are mitred, so to speak, to worship and serve Him. We are cleansed, clothed, and crowned through the riches of God's grace; cleansed by the precious blood of Christ, clothed with divine righteousness, crowned to worship Him.

"And the angel of the Lord protested unto Joshua, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts; and I will give thee places to walk among those that stand by" (vers. 6, 7).

Here follows responsibility. Made meet in every way for the presence of God, we are called henceforth to walk before Him, and worthy of Him; *to walk in His ways*. Walking in our own ways, we clothed ourselves with the filthy garments of sin, and were in danger of the eternal fire (Rev. xx. 15). But now, reclothed with garments of His own providing, we are called to walk in the steps of His Son, and to glorify Him in all our ways. Privilege, blessing, and reward are the consequence, both now, and in the eternal future.

Sinner, how is it with you? Where does this little paper find you? Does the eye of a holy God still behold you in garments of filthiness? or are you cleansed, clothed, and crowned, and walking before Him to His praise?

E. H. C.

TWO SEALS.



WHEN a document of importance is approved it is signed and sealed. Let me ask the reader, Have you approved God's record concerning His Son? Have you believed His testimony? Do you believe the Gospel? "He that hath believed his testimony (Christ's) hath set to his seal that God is true" (John iii. 33). Everybody has either believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, or he has not. There can be no neutrality. The reader is therefore either saved or lost *now*. "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son" (John v. 10). If you *believe* God's Word you have fixed your seal to it. The believer is secured by two seals. If a man does not believe God, then he shuts himself outside the door of salvation, he closes heaven against himself, he opens the gates of hell wide, he lays up for himself everlasting wrath. Reader, pause, lest you find yourself in hell!

To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is to set *your seal* to His testimony. "He that believeth on him hath the witness in himself" (1 John v. 10), and "shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24). So that the believer is not only saved now, but has *God's guarantee* that he will be saved from coming

wrath. "Much more then, being now *justified* by his blood, we *shall be saved from wrath* through him. For if, when we were *enemies*, we were *reconciled* to God by the *death* of his Son, much more, *being reconciled*, we shall be saved by his *life*" (Rom. v. 9, 10). Such a person, by God's grace, has had his eyes opened, is turned from *darkness to light*, from the *power of Satan to God*, that he might receive the forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified through faith in Christ the Lord. (See Acts xxvi. 18.)

For the believer's inheritance I would refer you to Ephesians i., where we learn what the second seal is. First, the word of truth is presented, the Gospel of Salvation, then the believing it, after which, "*Ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest (pledge) of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession,*" &c. (Eph. i. 13, 14). May those who have these two seals, continue to explore that vast inheritance by faith, annex, and enjoy it.

I turn again to the *unbelieving, unsaved* reader. May your eyes be opened to see that in your present condition, like a dismasted and rudderless vessel, you are drifting on and on, to be finally wrecked and sink into everlasting gloom, forgotten by men, abandoned by God. But listen! the voice of wisdom cries to you amid the din of mirth and revelry, and the accusations of a guilty conscience. "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself:

but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it" (Prov. ix. 12). The Lord Jesus Christ, once the sin-bearer, now exalted a Prince and a Saviour, wants thee, poor self-engrossed, sin-stained worldling. Oh! how He suffered on Calvary's cross! Think of His bleeding hands and feet, His thorn-crowned brow. Think of all the scorn men heaped upon Him—of His patient grace—of His soul-consuming agony as *sin-offering*. Canst thou refuse such love, or despise such grace? See Him there, the Son of God, become man, to die for thee, the sinner! Gaze on Him till thy heart is melted, and owning thy *guilt* and unworthiness, look up and by faith see Him at God's right hand in heaven, a proof that God is glorified, that atonement *is* made. He waits until those who have trusted Him are gathered round Him in yonder glory, and till His *enemies* are made His *footstool*. "If thou shalt *confess* with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe *in thine heart* that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 9).

"Our sins were all laid on Thee,
 God's wrath Thou hast endured;
 It was for us Thou sufferedst thus,
 And hast our peace secured.
 Thou hast bestowed the earnest
 Of that we shall inherit;
 Till Thou shalt come to take us home,
 We're sealed by God the Spirit."

HAVE YOU COUNTED THE COST?



WILL a Rothschild with his millions—will an Alexander the Great, with his enormous conquests, profit by their gains if they lose their souls, and pass into eternity bankrupt sinners? A thousand times NO. "What shall

it *profit* a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark viii. 36.)

And what about you? Dear, unsaved reader, neither sleep, eat, nor drink till the important question of your soul's salvation is settled. You are travelling on to the great, grand terminus of life's highway—ETERNITY. Every beat of your heart, every throb of your pulse, every tick of the clock, all tell the tale that you are travelling. And how soon the terminus may be reached—how soon?

You may love your sins—you may love the life you lead of living as you list—have you counted the cost? Ah! there will be plenty of time in hell to count the cost, for there sins are for ever torturing the conscience, lashing it with their leaded thongs of awful remembrance. Your sins cannot comfort you in moments of depression—cannot cheer you on a deathbed.

You, keen business man, count the cost. You, giddy girl, count the cost. You, young man, sowing the wild oats of sin, and shame, and lust, count

the cost. You, who are training young lives, you fathers and mothers, by all that is sacred in such relationships, count the cost—treading the broad road yourself, and training little toddling feet to follow you in your awful journey.

And it won't do to shrug your shoulders and say, "This is a little too extreme." An infidel may pooh-pooh the thought of JUDGMENT TO COME, but even *he* cannot deny the existence of DEATH, in view of the churchyards and cemeteries of this weary, weeping world. What havoc has sin wrought? A whole world treading, to the grim march of time, the road to the grave and judgment, and the lake of fire. God says, "It is appointed unto men once to die, *but after this the judgment*" (Heb. ix. 27). This is not extreme. It is true to the letter.

But we have grand, good news for you, dear reader, of One who did not count the cost of procuring salvation full and free for poor, vile, hell-deserving sinners. Ponder this magnificent verse, which has given peace of soul to thousands upon thousands, and which the noble Luther called "the miniature Bible"—"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). Yes, thank God! His deep, boundless love desired to bless the sinner. He spared His only begotten Son from His side, and during the awful three hours of darkness round Calvary's central cross, He dealt out the

judgment due to sin upon the holy head of Jesus, so "that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26). "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet, peradventure, for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 6-8).

And now the work of atonement being finished, God offers you, as a free gift, His salvation. If you toss this paper aside, or even lay it aside respectfully, and fail to close in with God's offered mercy, what a desperate case yours must be. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. ii. 3.) To ensure our eternal destruction it does not take us openly to *reject* this salvation, or to outwardly *insult* the God who offers it in such marvellous love, but simply to **NEGLECT**. The five foolish virgins *only* neglected one thing—the oil in their lamps. Outwardly they were all right, and till the testing moment arrived passed muster with the five wise virgins. The Pharisees *only* neglected the inside. But, alas! how fatal.

And these are the sort who oftenest are the most offended when a serial such as this is put into their hands. It is sadly, solemnly true that thousands are treading *religiously* the broad road to everlasting despair. Bunyan spoke of Religion

walking in her silver slippers. Unknown friend, whether you are an out-and-out sinner or a religious sham, do not put aside this warning. It may be your last warning. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2). Christ is coming quickly; judgment is looming ahead. Pause in your busy rush of life and ask yourself, "Where shall the end of all these things be?" Oh! now, this moment, ere it be too late, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

A. J. P.



ROMANS shows how man is brought to God in righteousness. In chaps. iii., iv., v. 1-11, we have our sins and iniquities exposed, and then perfectly met by the blood of Jesus and God's righteousness. He is "just, and the justifier (not the judge) of him that believeth in Jesus." What I have *done* is first met; then what I *am* is dealt with. This is treated of in chap. v. 12-21, where the two heads, Adam and Christ, are seen. I cannot be in both. If in Adam, I am condemned; if in Christ, I have "justification of life." Chap. vi. gives the two masters, sin and God. I cannot serve both; but I am "free from sin" by being "dead with Christ" and "alive with God, in Christ Jesus." In chap. vii. the two husbands appear, the law and Christ. I cannot belong to both; as a believer, I belong to Him who is alive from the dead. This gives liberty and deliverance.

W. T. P. W.

FORGIVENESS.



FORGIVENESS! what a precious word!

So very full of love,
The kindest I have ever heard
Who did its sweetness prove.

The purchase of my Saviour's blood
Forgiveness is *assured*,
Its spring the very heart of God,
Which my poor heart allured.

The perfect work whereby 'twas wrought
He had Himself designed,
(He knew our doings all are naught,)
And satisfied *His* mind.

Thus pardon met our very need,
As helpless, hopeless, we
Were cast on One who fain would bleed
To end our misery.

Without a word in self-defence,
We had no works to show,
God blotted out our dire offence
For Christ endured the woe.

The prodigal in view of it
Retraced his weary steps,
And learned its consummation sweet
Upon his father's lips.

"I will arise," the spendthrift said,
"And to my father go,
With all my sins upon my head,"
And fast the tear-drops flow.

But will a sire receive a son
Who caused his heart such grief?
Conflicting thoughts arise, but one
Yields somewhat of relief.

"I will a hireling's office seek,
To earn a crust of bread;
Maybe he will e'en pardon speak
'To one so nearly dead."

Come to himself, he turns and leaves
Those scenes of sin and shame,
In his sire's "*goodness*" he believes—
Will call upon his name.

While yet a great way off, behold,
The parent's eye discerns
The one to sin and folly sold,
Who now his misery learns.

With beating heart the father runs
Swift to that moral wreck,—
That faded figure is *his son's*—
And falls upon his neck.

Kiss follows kiss in quick descent,
A long-sought joy is gained,
Parental love now finds its vent,
Nor can it be restrained.

Unseen adoring angels stand
In presence of such love,
The deep joy felt on every hand
Pervades the scene above.

The fatted calf, so long reserved
For some dear, honoured guest,
Is killed for him, and straightway served,
That guest has come—*the best*.

"'Twas meet that we should merry be,
And glad," the father said,
"For he is found, once lost to me,
He lives who once was dead."

Thus all the joy and all the love
Is here most strangely seen,
In Him—enthroned in light above—
Who had offended been.

'Twas *His* desire, 'twas *His* delight
To win that lost one o'er,
And make his life with blessings bright,
That he might stray no more.

Oh, sinners, would ye but believe
How God, in richest grace,
Delights to pardon and receive
All those that seek His face,

Ye would not your return delay
For one brief moment more,
But turn to God this very day,
And His blest name adore.

A MEDIATOR AND A RANSOM.

Read Job xxxii. and 1 Tim. ii. 3-7.

..PART I.



THE truth of the Gospel could scarcely be more beautifully expressed than in this passage in Timothy. It is a paragraph that contains a volume of truth in a very little space, and if a soul once get the real meaning of it—lays hold of it for itself—it puts it into possession of peace with God.

In Job xxxiii. we have the very same thought illustrated by Elihu. Job was as busy as ever he could be, justifying himself, and goes the length of saying, "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go" (xxvii. 6). He could not hold out, however, for at the end of the story he is obliged to put his hand on his mouth and say, "Behold, I am vile" (xl. 4). The Lord seems to say, "I will never let you go, Job, till you have given up those filthy rags—your own righteousness; then I will justify *you*, I will give you My righteousness." When *you* get into the presence of God, my unsaved reader, like Job, *you* must say, "I am vile."

Job went a little further still in chapter xlii. 5, 6, and said, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth **THEE**: wherefore I *abhor* myself, and repent in dust

and ashes." One of the strongest words in our language is "*Abhor!*" "*I abhor myself!*" Have you let go your own righteousness now, Job? "Ah! I repent in dust and ashes!" he replies. A sight of God produces this.

Only the presence of God can enable any to let go their own righteousness; not that they have really any to let go, only they think they have. When you have got to this place, to *abhor yourself*, then what a comfort it is to turn round and find that *God loves you*. Is it not wondrous to find Him revealed as God our *Saviour*, instead of our Judge?

The common thought is that God is our Judge, and so He is; but who made Him a Judge? Who put God on the judgment-seat? You did! I did! The sin and guilt of man have forced God into the place of judgment. God must judge sin, or else He and man would be both alike, neither of them thinking much about it, and there would be no righteousness; but, so far from His desiring to take the place of judgment, why, even here to Job He says, "I desire to justify thee" (xxxiii. 32).

This is an answer to a question put by Job in the ninth chapter, when Bildad was putting barbed arrows into him, insinuating that he was a hypocrite, and informing him that "the hypocrite's hope shall perish," and, further, that "God will not cast away a perfect man" (viii. 13-20). In chapter ix. 2, Job replies, "How should man be just with God? If he will contend with him

he cannot answer him one of a thousand"—much less the other 999 sins. More, he says, "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me" (ix. 30, 31).

Job saw it was all of no use to contend with God. He knew very well, however much he might try to justify himself before his friends, yet in his heart of hearts he knew he could not stand before God. And when he has learnt this thoroughly, the grace of God comes in and shows him how he can be justified, how he can be saved; and that, beloved friend, is what I want to show you. How *you* can be justified: how *you* can be saved, and how you can know it, too; and I would go further, and say, how you may be saved *just now*, for God's salvation is a *present* salvation.

Does the salvation of a sinner rest on what he can do? No! On what Christ *will* do? No! but on what Christ *has* done. The sinner is utterly helpless, he can do nothing. Christ can do nothing more, for He *has* done everything. "It is finished," is the dying Saviour's legacy to a lost, helpless, guilty sinner. The grace of God pursues a man, seeking his soul; it goes after him, when he does not care a bit about it; seeks him, that He may save him. He pursued Saul of Tarsus when he only hated Him. He is pursuing *you*, following *you* in grace to-day, though you do not care for Him, and though you have not

yet been brought to care about the salvation of your own soul.

You ask, "Why do you single *me* out?" I will tell you. Because I want *you* to be saved. Oh! let His grace, let His goodness, who is thus pursuing you in love, win your heart for Him just now.

There are four different ways that Elihu speaks of in this 33rd of Job in which God goes after a soul, and I have little doubt that almost every reader of this paper has been sought, in one or more of these ways, by God, and will silently range itself in one or other of these classes. You will know, in your own soul, if any or all of these ways have been true of you.

But, first of all, God brings out the person of the Saviour. It is all very well for me to tell you to come to Jesus, and to believe on Jesus; but you say, I want to know who He is.

Now, in chapter ix. 33, Job had said, "Neither is there any Daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both." What Job calls a "Daysman," Paul calls a "Mediator." What depths of blessing are in the statement: "There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5). He is one who, in the dignity and majesty of His own person, reaches up to the glory of the throne of God,—One who can meet the heart of God, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, One who can come down to all the degradation, and misery, and sin, and sorrow,

and wretchedness of man. One who, by reason of the very glory of His own person, can lay one hand in righteousness on the throne of God, and lay the other hand in tender love on the shoulder of the poor sinner.

"But," you say, "do *you* know such an one?" I do! I do! His name is JESUS. *Jesus*, the *man* Christ Jesus. Elihu here presents himself as the type of Christ; and as Job had sighed for the Umpire, or Mediator, he now steps in and fills up the gap between Job and God, saying, "Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead; I also am formed out of the clay" (Job xxxiii. 6). That is, I am a man!

Such is Christ, a man, a real man; the One to whom, for whom, the heavens were opened more than once, when He was on earth, and whom the Father's voice from heaven proclaimed to be His own beloved Son, yet laid in a manger. The reputed son of Joseph, the carpenter; actually the son of Mary; and really in His nature the Son of God. The reputed son of Joseph He must be, in order to claim the throne of David; actually the seed of the woman He must be, to redeem man; but really the Son of God He must be, if He is to meet the claims of God!

Oh! think of being *loved* by this One. Son of God! Son of man! If Son of God, what is there He has not power to do? If Son of man, He can understand and meet the needs of my heart. Trace Him through His life. Was there ever such

a One? Think of those unknown thirty years at Nazareth. We get glimpses of it which let us know that, spent as it was at home, it was a life of perfection. He was the only One who ever lived a life absolutely suited to God, perfectly pleasing to God.

When He emerges into public life, at His baptism, the heavens are opened for the Father's voice to be heard proclaiming His pleasure in Him. Jesus is One who, in the dignity, beauty, and moral glory of His own person, delights the very heart of God; but One whose heart is so ineffably tender, that there lives not the poorest or most wretched sinner who could not go to Him, and tell out to Him all his woe and sin.

He bore my sorrows in His life, that He might sympathise; He bore my sins in His death, that He might save. This is the "Daysman," the "Mediator," this is "the man Christ Jesus." This is the One that God presents for your acceptance this very moment, dear unsaved one. Are you afraid of such a One? The hypocrite might be afraid of Him, the Pharisee, the Sadducee might be afraid of Him; but should there ever be a trembling sinner afraid of Christ? Never! Never! "My terror," He says (verse 7), "shall not make thee afraid." But ah! impenitent, hardened, and careless reader, there is a day coming when the terror of the Lord *shall* make you afraid; there is an hour coming when, if you despise His love and mercy, you *shall* quake before

Him. But now is the day of His grace, and "My terror shall not make thee afraid" is the soft and thrilling word of the Saviour to the chief of sinners now.

Perhaps you say, like Job here, "I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me" (ver. 9). That is a lie to begin with. Never was there one innocent since the pair God put in the garden of Eden sinned and fell. If you are innocent, you have no need of Christ, the Christ of Scripture, the only Christ that I can present to you—the One who died because you are not innocent—died to make atonement for your guilt.

I commend my Saviour to you. Christ brings such boundless happiness to the soul, such well-springs of unfathomable joy. There is nothing good, nothing really happy, out of Christ. Have you everything the world can give you? its luxuries, its pleasures, its gaieties, its smiles? Soon you must leave them all behind, and pass away alone into eternity; and if you have not known Christ in time, will you ever know him in eternity? No, never! If you have not slaked your thirst at the fountain of the water of life in time, think you that you will ever get one single draught through the dewless ages of eternity? No, no! never! If you will not have Christ in time, you cannot have Him in eternity. If you enter eternity without Him, you must spend its long, its gloomy, its endless ages without Him. The

Word of God tells you so. It is *now* you must be His, if you would be His *then*.

But Job says, "He findeth occasion against me, he counteth me for his enemy; he putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths" (vers. 10, 11). Well, and do you not think it is a good thing for God to mark the paths of a man when he is going farther and farther from Him; to mark his paths and arrest him?

Elihu replies, "In this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters?" (vers. 12, 13.) I will tell you the truth about God—show you the injustice of your thoughts of Him.

I would ask you, Has the fear of the Lord ever made you tremble yet? "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Have you never felt it yet? If you are quarrelling with His greatness and grace, you are very far from having this wisdom. It is true that ruin and wretchedness are all around, but who has made the ruin? It is man that has caused it, aided and abetted by Satan. It is not God who has caused it; but it is God who has come in to repair the breaches, to remedy what man has ruined. Nay, more than this, man has ruined himself, and God brings in redemption through Christ. If I come to the cross, what an answer do I get to the thought that God is my enemy! Why, He has bruised His own Son that He might deliver me! So far from

having a hard thought towards us, Elihu shows us here four ways which God takes to seek to deliver us.

W. T. P. W.

(To be continued.)

"ALL WE WANT FOR ETERNITY."



ON the 31st March I called to inquire for P. D. O., who had already suffered, and that most patiently, for three years, in order to see for myself how he was, and to learn if there were any hope of ultimate recovery.

He had, a few weeks earlier, passed through a severe attack of the "influenza" epidemic, by which his frail body had been sorely reduced,—an attack so prostrating that at times his mind would wander, and then he could neither exercise it himself, nor allow others to speak or read to him. Indeed, so thoroughly was he then unfitted for work, that he could not even think of the Lord, or of things dearest to his heart. There was, he told me, but one fact on which he could rest, viz., "that underneath were the everlasting arms; overhead a glorified Christ; and himself between them."

But by this time the dire effects of the influenza had passed away; and, other symptoms being favourable, he cherished the hope that, if it were the Lord's will, he might yet be raised up; and

spoke of taking a change of air to Rothesay when the season had advanced a little.

There was at work, however, another form of disease, the true nature of which was, perhaps, unsuspected by him. Other eyes could see, if his could not, the subtle inroads of consumption, made all too plain by the tickling cough of which he was conscious, and which refused to yield to treatment.

At the close of my visit we had a season of prayer together,—one of those memorable occasions, known to many of his fellow-labourers, when his soul poured itself out in customary fulness, unction, and power before the Lord; and then I bade him farewell, cheerfully and even hopefully.

Three weeks passed, and then I received from him a pencil note, written in a shaky and feeble hand, and dated 23rd April, as follows:—

“MY DEAR BROTHER,—A word. I have been getting worse since you were here—had Dr B. and Dr L. here yesterday—can hold out no hope of recovery—both lungs affected. Tell dear G. and H. I ask your prayers for special grace to hold up my soul. Love to all. Farewell. P. D. O.”

His sudden “Farewell” took me by sad surprise. I had hoped against hope, and had often looked to the Lord that He might, even yet, spare a servant so promising, and so devoted, as he. But such hopes were crushed by the sorrowful tidings of this letter.

I felt that the end could not be far distant, and hastened to make one more visit to his now dying

bedside,—again to grasp his hand and hear his voice.

Accordingly on the 7th May I found myself beside him. His appearance was greatly altered and awfully reduced. The strong, kindly old grasp of the hand was almost the only outward mark of his former self. But that still remained: it was truly characteristic. He was able to speak but little, and slowly, but with perfect coherence. A rather better night's rest had strengthened him, and therefore he was able, in a measure, to converse freely on subjects that were mutually dear. Amongst other matters, I mentioned to him a passage from which I had heard him preach, viz., "*What, then, shall I do with Jesus?*" "Ah," he replied, "*several souls have been saved by that!*"

He then paused, and, as though casting a glance both backwards and forwards, he calmly said,—"*But what is all our little work? We must go home . . . through the Blood of the everlasting covenant!*"

A true and happy confession, I thought, and a clear testimony to the blood of Christ as the only passport to the kingdom of God. Service the most devoted—ways the most irreproachable—a life the most blameless—furnish no title thither! What, indeed, is all our work? It is, at best, but the fruit of grace; and, even then, how imperfect! Hence our only, but all-sufficient title—the title of the "dying thief," or the martyr Paul—the title of the feeblest believer, as of the most

pronounced—is solely in the blood of Jesus. That is the one truth by which to die, while we cannot afford to lose one part of the whole word of God by which to live. We live by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God. We die victors, by faith in the blood of Christ!

I recalled to memory how much he had been used of the Lord in leading souls to Him, especially in his own neighbourhood, and so I asked him if he could tell to how many he had been thus instrumental. He answered that for a long time he had kept a record of the particulars of each of his meetings, but that latterly he had given up doing so. But he mentioned, with evident gratitude, a case just reported to him, of a conversion under his preaching some seventeen years previously, and of which he had never heard until then. This happened at the very dawn of his evangelistic labours. Such instances of the Lord's favour to him filled his heart with joy and thanksgiving.

Then I alluded to the path of faithfulness being narrow, and to the fact that, in paying due regard to the truth of the Church, the sphere of the evangelist is apparently limited. He replied quickly, "*That's not the point; it is Christ's path.*" He said these words with determined emphasis. "*But,*" he added, with deep feeling, "*I think Christ will soon come and take His bride home. Things, everywhere, are in a fearful state. The devil seems to have taken possession of men.*"

A true witness every way, I felt; but, if true, how solemn! Things around hopelessly evil; and Satan's power terribly evident. Nothing remaining now but the coming of the Lord for His bride! That coming may be very near. Till then it is "*the path of Christ*" for each of His people, and the honest, faithful effort to lead souls to Him.

I asked him if he had any parting message for the unconverted, which I might pass on. He made a very long pause, and then, with striking deliberateness, said,—"**THERE'S PLENTY! NONE LIKE CHRIST TO LIVE FOR, AND LABOUR FOR, ON EARTH! NONE LIKE CHRIST FOR A DYING BED, AND ALL WE WANT FOR ETERNITY!!**"

Without a word of comment, I give to you, dear reader, this last message, and not the least noble sentence, of one whose Christian life for eighteen years had given bright confirmation to its every syllable. Yes, I give it to you, with the prayer that you may make it as a living voice to your inmost soul, so that your life may take more distinctly the form of one who can also declare, that *there is none but Christ to live for on earth.*

Ten days of suffering followed, and then, still in the prime of life, the dear patient sufferer was taken home, to be "*absent from the body, present with the Lord.*"

"For ever with the Lord!"

Amen! so let it be:

"Life from the dead is in that word,

'Tis immortality.'

CONVENIENT INFIDELITY.



OWADAYS it is a very fashionable thing to doubt the Word of God. To admit it in many instances means the stern rebuking of sins, which is certainly unpleasant to the human heart. *Therefore it is best to deny what is so unpalatable and unpleasant.* Such is the lax philosophy of thousands, who, freed from all moral restraints, do pretty much what they like. They remind us of Passion, in the inimitable picture of Patience and Passion which Bunyan has so skillfully drawn.

Unwilling to wait, foolishly prodigal as to the present, criminally careless as to the future, she gratifies her every whim and desire and lust. And it is this desire, which often makes Passion infidel in creed.

Ah! sir, poor cold infidelity may deny punishment to come, but it cannot explain the presence of death in this world. It is dumb even upon the very threshold of inquiry. Denying revelation, it perplexes its blind infatuated followers with more distracting problems than ever.

But even the Bible—which they profess to have exploded, which is out-of-date, “a mere pack of lies”—makes statements which are undeniably true. For instance, it tells us (and who can deny

it ?), "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

The besotted drunkard finds out bitterly and sadly the truth of this on a premature death-bed. The libertine and debauchee at length learns that the poison of fleshly lusts, though it may work more slowly than a dose of arsenic or opium, does not work the less surely.

Oh! sir, bitter and sad are the death-beds of the wicked. Many a conscience, seared by shame and lust, has spoken at the last in tones of thunderous remorse, never to be silenced for eternity—the message losing nothing of its first startling power and vehemence, as the monotonous ages of a lost eternity pass on in dreary sequence. Written upon many awakened consciences by a pen of living fire stand the imperishable words of Scripture—terrible in their awful, retributive truth—"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Yes, we know that sin is insidious and fascinating, but the punishment is sure and terrible. It is something like the snare of opium. The Chinaman takes at first the poison willingly. A small quantity produces pleasure; a little more, death. But whether in larger or smaller quantity, its essence—poison—is the same. Little by little the fatal habit gains insensibly in power upon the victim, till at length, a moral and physical wreck, the inebriate drops into a wretched grave and a hopeless eternity.

So with sin. The same poisonous essence, which finds its extreme outcome in murder, is found in the hatred of a rival, or even the envy with which one may look at another's possession.

"Can this be possible?" you exclaim. I wish I could show you sin as God sees it. It has wrecked His fair creation. It has filled the gaols, the lunatic asylums, the infirmaries, the cemeteries of this world. It has slain its millions. It has dotted the maps with battle-fields. It has made every street of our cities boast of a doctor's brass-plate or two. It is responsible for the necessity of the legal, the military, the naval professions. Look where you will, it has worked sad havoc.

More than this. You may live a strictly moral, outwardly blameless life; yet you know that death at any rate lies before you, that you cannot evade it. Why is this the case?

Let your conscience answer. Is it not that *you* are a sinner? Sin has done all, and more than I have described. But to be personal, it has a finger upon *you*. It is drawing the furrows upon *your* brow. It is whitening *your* locks. It is bending *your* back. *And some day the end will come.* And you are not so easy about it after all, are you? Come, face the fact.

My heart ached for a young infidel I met the other day. At an open-air Gospel-meeting he turned up, asking the usual stale-stock questions. I told him plainly—as he loudly declared the Bible was exploded, and Christianity was exposed

and proved to be a sham, descended merely from heathen superstitions — that his infidelity had neither kept him sober, nor clean-mouthed, nor would it keep him from the grave. He was tipsy, and every other word was an oath. "Well," said he, "when I've had about seventy years of it in this world, I shall be quite resigned to die."

"Yes," I replied, "*resigned*, because you can't help it."

I certainly did feel the hollowness and sinfulness of infidelity. He would do as he liked, was the young man's boast. Not when death comes, nor when the last trump sounds, nor when the great white throne is set up, nor when the great gulf is fixed, thought I.

And the Bible, the exploded book, is the only one that discloses to man what lies behind the curtain of time. To refuse the light of revelation, is to walk then in utter darkness.

We have spoken of the presence of sin in this world. It is undeniable. Of the presence of death. That, also, is undeniable. But, to the poor infidel, they are sad facts that cannot possibly be explained by his theories. And in view of them both, his creed cannot comfort him, or stifle his conscience. His conscience! How did he get it? That also to him is but lamely explained by education and environment.

And sin and death, as patent in this world, carry him to the end of life's little journey, and the future is shrouded in a worse than Egyptian

darkness, and his creed and inner consciousness maintain a sphinx-like silence. Most unsatisfactory! Profoundly perplexing!

Well, after all, the words of THE BOOK are marvellously true: "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." It asks also, "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world?"

Yes, "the preaching of the cross" is foolishness to you. Why, that is what the Bible says! Again it hits you off.

Well, friend, THAT WORD has opened my eyes; has given me to know the thrice-holy God to be a pardoning Saviour-God. In the light of Scripture every difficulty has vanished; my future is bright, my present is happy.

Let me tell you briefly how this can be.

Sin certainly abounds in this world; yet we read, "Where sin abounded, *grace did much more abound.*"

God Himself has taken in hand the sin-question. Not only has sin filled the gaols, the lunatic asylums, &c., but it has emptied heaven of Jesus, the Son of God. It nailed Him to that accursed tree. It filled the tomb "wherein never man before was laid."

He did no sin (1 Pet. ii. 22), *He* knew no sin (2 Cor. v. 21), *in Him* was no sin (1 John iv. 5)—is the threefold testimony of Scripture; yet, in

boundless, infinite love, He took the sinner's place, He glorified God, He made atonement for sin! And now God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26).

Ah! if we want to see sin in all its blackness and heinousness, we must not look at the police records, or in the slums of our great cities, but at the cross of Calvary.

Scoffingly an infidel said, "If you Christians had not the cross, you would have very little to speak about." To that we could add our hearty, Yes. Sin must be an awful thing, if, before God could forgive the sinner, the Son of God must not only leave heaven's glory, but die a malefactor's death on the cross.

Nay, more than that, God Himself has to forsake Jesus in the hour of His bitterest need, and add infinitely to His suffering, by pouring upon His holy head the cup of His wrath and judgment against sin.

Oh! sir, in imagination, stand and view the crucifixion. Hear the jeering, scoffing crowds, as they revile the Saviour of sinners. Marvel at His God-like patience, as He sweetly prays, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Nay more, stand till the darkness thickens round that cross, and, whilst the superstitious crowds grope their way home, remain and wonder. At length you hear bursting from His heart and lips, that awful cry, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?"

Listen till you hear the three thrilling words, "IT IS FINISHED!"—till He bows His head in death, slain in His victory,—till in wonder you see the veil of the temple rent by a mysterious hand from the top to the bottom. It is the hand of God Himself!

And NOW Jesus is on the throne. He is in brightest glory, "crowned with glory and honour." Every knee must bow to Him, and every tongue confess His name. Such is the Father's righteous and just decree.

And now, God invites the vilest sinner to trust in Jesus, and learn in trusting Him that He was their Substitute at Calvary's cross,—that He bore their sins in His own body on the tree,—that, as the prophet Isaiah writes, "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" (Isa. liii. 5).

Oh! trust that blessed, risen, glorious Saviour, and know that He reveals the heart of God to the sinner; and learn how the question of sin has been righteously settled, how God can maintain His holiness, and yet reveal His love, and bless poor sinners, and make them "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

"Rest, my soul, the work is done,
Done by God's Almighty Son;
This to faith is now so clear,
There's no place for torturing fear."

"HE WILL NEVER LET ME GO!"



RS W. was very young, only twenty-three years of age, yet dying of consumption. When first I visited her she was in her little kitchen, sitting propped up by the fire; but it was plainly visible that the terrible

disease was fast doing its work, and that she had not long to live.

I asked her, should she die, what had she to rest on? did she know the Lord Jesus Christ as her Saviour? "Well," she replied, "God is very merciful, and since I have been ill I haven't used any bad words; and yesterday the clergyman came to see me, and he told me that, as I had been baptized and confirmed, he would give me the sacrament, and then I should be all right, and need not fear."

I asked her if she remembered for how many sins God turned Adam out of the garden of Eden?

"Oh! yes" she said, "that takes me back to my Sunday-school days; one sin."

"And that was?"

"Disobedience."

"Have you ever disobeyed God?"

"Oh! yes, I have many times."

"Well then, supposing we say you have committed one sin every day of your life."

"Yes," she said, "and lots more than that."

"Well, one a day would be 365 in a year. How old are you?"

"Just twenty-three."

"Now multiply 365 by 23, that makes 8,395. If God turned Adam out of an earthly paradise for one sin, how are you going to stand before a holy God with, to say the very least, 8,395 sins upon you? God is a merciful God, and He has shown His great mercy and wondrous love in sending His own beloved Son to take upon Himself your sins, and to die for you; but God is righteous, and God is just, and if you despise His grace, there is no other way of salvation for you."

I then read Romans iii. from verse 9, showing how God has concluded and proved both Jew and Gentile to be all under sin, as it is written, "There is none righteous, no, not one." With these words I left her, promising to see her soon again, but for three days was hindered from going.

On the third day she sent one of her little children to ask if I would come and see her, she was so miserable.

With a thankful heart I heard this, feeling that God had indeed begun a work in her soul, and that He would finish it to His own glory. Earnestly looking to Him that I might be no hindrance to His own divine work, I went with the little girl to see the poor mother. She was a fair, pretty woman; and as I went into the room, her face was much flushed, and her large grey eyes looked earnestly towards me, as though I could give her

peace. My heart ached for her, and again I cried to Him who hath said, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out."

Opening my Bible I read John iii. 16, and sought in a few simple words to put before her that the same One who had concluded all under sin, had provided a way of escape, and a righteous ground upon which the sinner could stand before God a saved and justified person, through the death of His beloved Son. I pressed the fact that it was God's love that gave nothing less than His own beloved Son. Mrs W. heard, and received the word, and again I left her.

The next day, on going into the room, it was a very troubled face that met my gaze, and she said so sorrowfully, "I have lost it all. I thought I had believed, and felt at rest about it yesterday; but I got in a temper this morning, and it has all gone. I am so miserable." Poor woman, she was looking in at herself, instead of to Christ and His finished work, and Satan was taking advantage of her failure to fill her heart with doubts and fears.

I asked her, if Christ's work was enough for her yesterday why it was not for to-day. "Oh!" she said, "I can't *feel* it, and I want to."

I took a shilling from my pocket, and said, "You need a little extra milk, will you buy some with this?"

"Oh! thank you very much," she said, "I will be so glad of it."

"Do you believe it is yours?" I continued.

"Oh! yes," she said; "I have no need to doubt your word."

"But you cannot feel the shilling, for it is in my hand."

I then read John x. 27, 30, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them;" and said, "You did hear His voice yesterday?"

"Yes, I thought I did."

"Well, the Lord Jesus says of His sheep, 'I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.' Now, you are in His hand. This shilling is in my hand, it is yours, and you believe it though you cannot *feel* it.

"The Lord Jesus says in John v., 'He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life.'"

She interrupted me with, "Yes, I do believe God sent His own Son to save me."

"Well then, that is all your part. Now this is God's part, and He says *hath*—that is, you *have*, not may have, if you hold fast, but '*hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life.' Now we will go back to John x., and see you there held fast in His hand, for He says, 'My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck out of my Father's hand: I and my Father are one.'

"Now, you believe this shilling is yours while held fast in my hand—do you believe your life,

the new life He has given you, is held fast in His hand? Why should you doubt His word, the living God, and you do not doubt mine, a poor, failing, fellow-creature?"

"Oh!" she said, "I see it now. I haven't to hold on; but Christ holds on to me, and He will never let me go."

From this time she gradually grew weaker. I went to see her every day, and she was always so glad to have just a verse or two from God's precious Word, as she could bear it read to her, and always wanted to be prayed with. To every one of her neighbours who came in she used to speak of Jesus.

One Sunday afternoon I went to see her I found her room fairly full of people, and, like a coward, I thought, "I can't read before all these people;" so, after a few inquiries about her health, I was leaving her, when she roused up, and said, "You haven't read a word! oh! won't you read to me? All last night, when the cough was so bad, these words you had read to me, 'For he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,' came over and over again to me, and they were such a comfort."

I felt the rebuke, and, looking to the Lord to enable me to forget myself and be His messenger alone, I read and prayed with her. Some of those in the room seemed interested, and I felt thankful the Lord had prevented me from leaving that room without giving His message.

On the Sunday following I went, thinking to see her as usual; but on nearing the house I saw all the blinds were lowered, and found she had passed away about ten minutes before.

Her husband's mother asked her, a few minutes before, was it all right with her. She looked up, and said, "Yes, I am quite safe, for it is the precious blood of Christ I rest on; I cannot doubt that." And turning to those in the room she besought them to come to Jesus at once, and then passed away to be with Christ, "which is far better."

E. L. C.



A TESTIMONY TO A RIGHTEOUS MAN.



E gathered with sorrowful hearts around the grave of a beloved brother, one November day, in the Grange Cemetery, Edinburgh, for we thought of the Christian wife and the three fatherless girls left in this cold heartless world, filled with sin, sorrow, death, and pain.

For them we were sad, but for our brother, we could only say "He is taken away from the evil to come; he enters into peace, he rests, walking in his uprightness. He is 'absent from the body, present with the Lord.' He is in the best place

(paradise), with the best person (Jesus); he still lives with Him (Jesus)."

A comrade, in the confession of Christ's name and grace, spoke a few simple, truthful, tender words of Gospel testimony to the unsaved around the grave.

Another Christian asked us to sing the last hymn our departed brother had sung with us at the Lord's Table,—

"O Jesus, Lamb of God,
Who, us to save from loss,
Didst taste the bitter cup of death
Upon the cross."

A short prayer for the widow and her bairns followed, that God would bless and comfort them, and that we all might be warned, saint and sinner, by the sudden death of him whose remains we had just interred. We left the body to the care of Christ, and slowly dispersed to our respective homes.

Amongst those that stood in the dispersing company, I noticed a gentleman whose past history had been blighted by drink, bringing disaster both for soul and circumstances. I inquired how he fared. He replied to my question, and added, "I could not believe my eyes when I saw the notice of C.'s death. What was the matter with him?"

"Influenza," was my reply.

"Oh," said he, "he was a good man. I wished I had listened to him when he warned me. He came into my shop when I was on the road to

ruin, and took his little Bible out of his pocket, and urged me to stop in my downward career. I laughed him to scorn, and it ended in vain. I would have been a different man to-day, if I had only listened to him. Yes, C. was a *good man*."

I answered kindly, "If you are ruined for this world, you can get your soul saved, it is not yet *too late*."

"Yes, I know that," he said; "it is all right with my soul now, and I have not tasted drink for five months; it is all right with my soul."

A few more words, and we parted. I fervently hope it is all right with his soul.

What a fine testimony was this over the grave of a Christian, as to faithfulness and love for the souls of men. In view of that dread day, when the sinner, whether he be a drunkard or a sober man, shall stand before God,—may we be found warning men, and, more than that, seeking to win poor guilty sinners to the precious Saviour, who died to atone for sins, and rose to be a living, loving Saviour for the worst of Adam's race.

"Oh, what can equal joy divine?

And what can sweeter be,

Than knowing that this Christ is mine

To all eternity?

Safe in the Lord, without a doubt,

By virtue of the blood;

For nothing can destroy the life,

That's hid with Christ in God."

A MEDIATOR AND A RANSOM.

Read Job xxxii. and 1 Tim. ii. 3-7.

PART II.



HE four ways God takes to reach man's soul are very interesting.

First, "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not" (verse 14). The voice of God has been heard by you. He has spoken, and you have not heeded. Perhaps twice this very week you have heard the voice of God through His Word. Tell me, are you converted yet? Have you come to Jesus yet? No, you have not! You are then still unsaved. You have heard the word of God, but you have not perceived it; you have let it go by you unheeded.

Some of us, who know the Lord, can look back and remember how many times He spoke to us and we did not listen. We were engulfed by the whirlpool of gaiety and pleasure, and His word was nothing to us, His voice was not perceived. But has He given you up, given up His pursuit of your soul? No; and if His voice has been till now unheeded and uncared for, let me urge you to come to Jesus now: listen to His voice this hour, I beseech you.

Though you may have fortune, favour, yea, everything that the world can place at your feet,

you know that anything this world can give cannot fill your heart. Your heart is empty still, if you have not Christ! You are unblessed still, if you have not Christ! You are unsaved still, if you have not Christ! You are lost, *lost*, if you have not Christ! You do not like the word "lost"? But it is true. Does it sound harsh? God says it. There is no middle ground; the word of God fixes you either still among the *lost*, still among the *dead*, still among the *unsaved*, *without Christ*; or *found*, *alive*, *saved*, having Christ. "This my son was *dead* and is *alive* again, he was *lost* and is *found*," says the Father (Luke xv. 24). Do not turn and seek to apply this to your neighbour. It is *you* I am talking to. *YOU*. I want *your* soul, just now, for Christ.

You may say, "Why are you so much in earnest, why are you so anxious?" I will tell you. I am persuaded of the reality of heaven and its blessedness; I am persuaded of the reality of hell and its torments; I am persuaded of the reality of the salvation of God,—and can I be anything else but earnest, very much in earnest? I beg of you, awake! I entreat you by the terrors of a coming judgment-day. I entreat you by the light of an open heaven. I entreat you by the darkness of that gloomy scene the portals of hell disclose. I implore you where you are just now, affectionately implore you, entreat you—pause, consider, rush not headlong into that terrible abyss. Hear, hear the word of God, once, twice

spoken to you! Will you turn your back on His love? Will you turn a deaf ear to His voice, that voice that speaks as never man spake?

Secondly, But God has another way: "In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumbering 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" (vers. 15-17). When the eyes are heavy with slumber, God goes to the slumbering one, and awakens his soul by a dream. I could tell you of many a one who thus has been met by God. It may be that you can remember some terrible dream, something that caused you to awake trembling and affrighted. But tell me, did you heed the warning voice? did you turn to God with the morning light, or are you still unheeding? Further, will you still go on despising, rejecting?

Thirdly, There is another way God has of pursuing a soul: "He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword" (verse 18), *i.e.*, He preserves from sudden danger. Well do I remember, when I was a boy of sixteen, a brother of mine fired at and shot a partridge. The bird, wounded mortally, flew awhile and then fell into the water. "Fetch it," he said, and I plunged into the sea, and swam a long distance sea-ward to secure it. The bird was not worth sixpence, but I risked my life, risked my soul, to

get it. Only the mercy of God brought me to shore; a few more yards, and I must have sunk; for I was quite exhausted, the distance was long, and the tide strong against me. But He spared me, that He might save me. He has saved me now. Perhaps you can remember a time when He thus delivered you from some sudden peril. He spared your life to save your soul; but tell me, is it saved? Not yet? Then see, He has another way of reaching your trifling and careless heart.

Fourth, "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" (vers. 19-22). This is a way God constantly takes to awaken a soul. One is laid on a sick-bed; perhaps a careful physician has done all that human skill can do, and tender relatives have watched around that couch, and lavished every loving care upon the sufferer; but the case seems hopeless, and the soul is trembling on the very threshold of eternity. God steps in. "I must have that soul," He says; "I will bless the means, I will bring back that one from the very gates of hell."

Can you remember some such time in your history, when your life hung as by a thread, and

perhaps you remember that you were very peaceful then, quite calm in the view of death, not afraid to meet it, whereas you say you do not feel that calm and peacefulness now? Ah! Satan knows well enough how to give a soothing draught to a dying sinner. Perhaps he told you you had never done anything in your life that was much amiss, that you were as good as your neighbours, and God was very merciful. But tell me, was your soul washed *then* in the blood of Jesus? Was the ground of your peace, that He had met death and Satan for you? Or were you just deluded by Satan? He knows how to administer an anodyne to a dying soul—how to make a death-bed easy. Think you his power is not exerted then?

Friend, have you never heard that word of God, "The wicked have no bands in their death"? Go down on your knees and thank God you did not die then. I can very well remember the time when I was thus laid low. Had you that peace, you ask? Had you that balmy feeling? No! not I! I knew the truth too well. I knew I was lost! yes, lost! I knew that if I died, I should be lost for ever; and my cry was, "Lord, spare me, and I will serve Thee."

Perhaps you have thus been brought back from the brink of the grave, but are you brought to Jesus? God delights to carry by the lips of some one the message of His love and grace to a soul thus on the very verge of eternity. Thus we read, "If

there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness (or duty), then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom" (vers. 23, 24). "One among a thousand" perhaps only will speak the word of the Gospel of peace; nine hundred and ninety-nine will pass by your bed with never a word of Jesus, never a message from God for you. But one may bring you that message, "Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." Ah! this blessed Jesus has opened a doorway. God has found a ransom. God has estimated it. God has provided it, and He sends out the wondrous message, "Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom."

CHRIST is the RANSOM; He is also the Mediator. "He gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. iv. 6). This is one of the most magnificent statements in all the Word of God; I hardly know anything to equal it. "He gave himself a ransom for all." The moment your heart believes in Christ, liberty is yours, peace is yours, salvation is yours, blessing is yours, everything is yours. This is the glad tidings that was "to be testified in due time." Thank God, it is due time still. The due time still runs on, and Christ is still waiting to receive you; not now as a Judge, but as a Saviour. The One who has met the claims of God, is your Friend and Saviour.

There He is alive now in heavenly glory for you to trust in; and the moment you trust in Him, you

get a present salvation. All God asks of you is to believe in Christ.

"Will there not be works?" you say. Of course there will be works. "Will there not be a change?" you ask. Of course there will be a very mighty change! I have very little belief in conversion where there is not this mighty change, a perfect revolution. Instead of having self for a centre, you have Christ for a centre; instead of having self to think about, and self to be seeking to please, you have Christ to think about, and Christ to please, and Christ to serve, Christ—who has given Himself a ransom for you.

With regard to works, they come in their right place. When we know Christ, we seek to please Him. We work for Him, not to get life, but because we have got it. "His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth: he shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him; and he shall see his face with joy" (vers. 25, 26). The soul is new born, prayerful, enjoys God's favour, and gazes on Him with joy. All fear is gone, and we do not labour to work out our own righteousness, for "he will render unto man his righteousness" (ver. 26). "You cannot justify yourself," God says, "but now I can justify you, because I have righteously condemned and dealt with your sins in the Person of your blessed substitute on the cross;" and the consequence is, when your soul is brought to God, the blood of Christ washes your sins away, you know

you are saved, and your heart is left free to please and serve, and follow Christ.

The knowledge of all this grace produces beautiful results in the way of confession, as the delivered man sings before men of what God has done. Hence we read, "*He singeth* before men, and saith I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it was not profit unto me; he *hath redeemed* my soul from going into the pit, and my life shall behold the light" (vers. 27, 28, *Rev. Vers.*). What a lovely confession! Have *you* ever sung this out in the ears of men?

It is scarcely possible, but there may be reading this a soul who has never heard the voice of God speaking before; never heard the Word of God simply preached; never been aroused by a dream; never been preserved from sudden and imminent danger; never been brought back from sickness nigh unto death, from the brink of the grave. If you are such a one, let me say, you have read the Word of God now; you have heard the voice of God; you have seen the Gospel simply presented—and you are responsible *now*; responsible to take your place before God in simple and honest confession of your guilt to Him, and of His grace to you before men. What a lovely confession, "*He hath redeemed my soul from going into the pit, and my life shall behold the light.*" It is the knowledge of a present and full salvation. If you are looking only to Christ, resting only on Christ, why, it is what His death has secured for you, that you

should *know* the forgiveness of your sins—know what his death has done for you. “God hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” There is nothing more to be done, nothing more to be waited for. Christ can do no more, and you can do nothing at all.

When an anxious man asked, “What must I do to be saved?” the answer was, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” It is all that God asks from you. Christ has gone up on high in all the perfection of His work for us; and God delights to say, as the fruit and consequence of His death and finished work, “Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.” If He says that in the Old Testament, He says in the New Testament, “Who gave *himself* a ransom for all.” Oh! what a Saviour! and God would “have all men to be saved.”

I would tell the whole world if I could gather them together to listen to me, that when men's efforts were utterly useless, when they could do nothing, Christ “gave himself”; and ah! if there is one word that could touch a heart that has never been touched before, it is this, *He gave Himself! He gave Himself!* And if He gave Himself unsought, unasked, uncalled for, has He not a claim upon your heart? Shall not your heart be Christ's from this moment? Has He not a claim upon it? I can only say, if I had been undecided up to this very moment, I would decide for Christ

now. Oh ! had I ten thousand hearts, I would give them all to Christ this moment.

And now, dear reader, if you believe in Jesus, do not be ashamed to own Him ; do not be ashamed to confess Him ; do not be ashamed to go home and make a stand for Him. He was not ashamed to stand for you, and to be scorned, and derided, and spit upon ; He was not ashamed to die between two malefactors for you, and do not you be ashamed to own Him. May God give you henceforth to know rest and peace in Himself, and to boldly confess the worth of His Son.

W. T. P. W.

A SOLDIER'S CONFESSION.



YOUNG convert thus writes :—" I have felt many times I would like the Lord's dear people to know the way and the means He used in bringing me to Himself, to know Him as my own dear Saviour. I joined the army on the

1st December 1887, and lived a careless and indifferent life, caring for only the things of this world. Regardless of my immortal soul, I continued this course of life until the month of June 1890, though several months before then the Holy Spirit was striving with me. Sometimes I would be on my knees before the Lord, and another day as careless as ever. Often those words have come

to me, 'My spirit shall not always strive with man.' I knew it was the Spirit of God that was striving with me, and I used to dread the thought of the Spirit of God leaving me to myself; but, blessed be the Lord, 'it was the Shepherd seeking the lost sheep. He sought me, and He found me.

It was one Lord's day the latter end of June 1890 that the Lord spoke to me again, while I was at the regimental church. It was nothing that was going on in the services, but a verse of a hymn that I had often heard my dear mother sing, and had sung it myself when a boy. The words were these:

'One there is above all others,
Oh! how He loves.'

I shall never forget that moment, so real was it, as if the Lord had spoken to me from the glory. They were not singing this hymn, and it was not then that I found peace, although I got it the same day.

"I was stationed at the time in the Isle of Wight, at Sandown, and myself and two other men were put in charge of a small battery or fort; and this day, after we had returned from church, and had our dinner, one of the men went to the gate, and the Lord had sent some one with a message for my soul, for some one had put a book through the door of entrance into the fort. My comrade going to the door saw it, picked it up, just looked at it, and then gave it to me. This book was 'THE GOSPEL MESSENGER.' The Lord had sent

some one with it, as a message to my soul! The piece which was used of the Lord for my conversion was, '*How a sinner can get saved*,' Vol. V., No. 6 of 1890. It was shown that 'as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Those words in John iii. 14-16 brought peace to my soul, as the writer was showing so plainly about the Israelites, how they only had to look to the brazen serpent; and I could see it so plainly, that I was to look to Christ by faith, and live, and I knew I was born again.

"Before that I had not realised what sin was in God's sight, nor yet what a sinner I had been. Then all the sins of my past life seemed to rise up before me, as they had never done before, and I seemed in more darkness than ever. Satan was using all his power, and telling me that I had only been deceiving myself, and that it was impossible for the Lord to forgive me, for I had been too bad. Not knowing what to do, I was almost despairing about what I had been. The Lord then spoke to me in a still small voice by His Word, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin;' and I said, 'Yes, Lord, it does,' and a sweeter peace filled my soul than had ever done before. And since then I have not doubted my conversion. All praise be to the Lord, who works in mysterious ways. When I think of all His love to me, I can but praise


Him. All His dealings with me have been wonderful this last year again. He has led me in to fuller light, giving me to know Christ as the object of my heart, and gathering me out to His precious name.

"I feel, dear brother, in writing these few lines, showing you the Lord's dealings with one so unworthy, that you would be able to praise Him, and thank Him, that your work of faith and labour of love is not in vain in the Lord. To Him be all the praise and glory, for He is worthy. I would love to know the dear one who put the book through the gate. I have the book still, and it is very precious to me.—I remain, your affectionate brother in Christ,

A. M."



THE FLYING SERAPHIM.

HEN flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged" (Isa. vi. 6, 7). Surprising mercy! a heavenly messenger, a holy seraphim, sent direct from the Lord Himself upon His throne, to tell Isaiah, a poor sinner on the earth, that his iniquity was taken away! But do

not you imagine, dear reader, that *you* need a seraphim to come to *you*, ere you can know that your sin is gone. It is not by the action and testimony of a seraphim to-day, but by the sure action of the Holy Ghost, and the testimony of His everlasting Word, that *we know* (1 John v. 13).

But how came this all about? "In the year that king Uzziah died," says Isaiah, "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke" (Isa. vi. 1-4).

No wonder Isaiah cried, "Woe is me!" &c. (ver. 5). This is the One, sinner, with whom you have to do, *the Lord*, above whose throne stood the seraphim. Such is His infinite holiness, that even these wondrous creatures, who have never known sin, veil their faces and their feet in His glorious presence. Though holy themselves, and ever dwelling in a scene of holiness, they can neither gaze upon Him, nor stand or walk before Him, without covering their faces and their feet. "Holy, holy, holy; Holy, holy, holy," cries one to another unceasingly around His throne, "the whole earth is full of his glory." He who sits thereupon, the

Lord, Adonai, is "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy" (Isa. lvii. 15). And the posts of the door (or thresholds) moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. The glory of God in judgment is there (Rev. xv. 8).

As Isaiah gazes upon this wondrous vision, beholding the enthroned One in His glory, and hears the attendant seraphim celebrating His holiness, whilst the house (or temple) is filled with smoke, he takes his right place before Him, the only place where mercy can reach a sin-stricken sinner in this world. "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (ver. 5). Not a word issued from his lips in self-justification, or on behalf of the people to whom he belonged. Filled with awe at the holiness of God, and conscious of his sinfulness, and unfitness for His presence, he cries in the bitterness of his soul, "Woe is me! I am undone, I am unclean, I dwell amid the unclean." 'Tis enough. The sense of the holiness of the Judge has brought the sinner to self-judgment. His case is hopeless, he can do nothing, and nought but the awful woe of holy and just judgment looms before his soul. He owns he deserves it, crying, "Woe is me!"

Reader, have you ever taken the same place as Isaiah? Have you ever bowed your heart in self-

judgment in the presence of infinite holiness? Have you ever seen yourself an undone, unclean, lost one in the presence of God? A sinner you are, for all have sinned; and if you come before Him thus in the day of judgment, eternal woe will be yours. "Woe unto the wicked!" says the scripture, "it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him" (Isa. iii. 11). To meet the claims of holiness, you must be holy; and that you are not, but the very opposite. How then can you meet Him? You cannot. It is impossible. Own it then candidly and honestly before Him, and the mercy which reached Isaiah, as we shall see, shall meet you also from this day.

"Woe is me!" was Isaiah's wail. "Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged" (vers. 6, 7). The moment Isaiah was self-judged, mercy met him. The seraphim are apparently the agents of mercy from the throne of the Lord; one flew immediately from the Lord to Isaiah. But it was mercy reaching him through righteousness. This is beautifully presented in the vision, and all-important for the sinner to apprehend to-day. Note carefully what the scripture says: "Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar." Now the altar is

the place of sacrifice, and it is here mentioned in the vision for the first time. But neither the seraphim nor Isaiah went to the altar to offer a sacrifice when the latter cried, "Woe is me!" The sacrifice had been offered. The claims of the holiness of God had been met. The fire had consumed the sacrifice. The seraphim had flown to the altar, had taken the live coal, and flown back again to the throne, and there waited till Isaiah cried, "Woe is me!" Immediately the heavenly messenger flashed like lightning through space, straight to the sin-stricken one. In perfect righteousness, the claims of holiness having been met and satisfied, mercy dispensed her bounteous store. The righteous Lord delighteth in mercy. And the seraphim laid the live coal on Isaiah's mouth, and he heard the message from the Lord, high and lifted up upon His throne: "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."

What a blessed picture of the simple Gospel! Are you crying, sinner, "Woe is me! I am undone, I am unclean, I am lost"? Ah, praised be the Lord's name, you need no holy seraphim to offer a sacrifice, neither need you to bring one yourself; nay, you have none that you could bring. But more than eighteen hundred years ago, Jesus, the Son of the living God, offered Himself a sacrifice for sin upon the altar of God. On the true altar, Calvary's cross, the Lamb of God's providing, without blemish and without spot, was offered once for all. The

holy fire of God's judgment fell, but instead of consuming the sacrifice, the holy sacrifice consumed the fire and exhausted it. Jesus was judged; Jesus died and bled. In infinite holiness, God, before whom holy seraphim veil their faces and their feet, hid His face from His beloved, as the claims of righteousness were preferred and met. Enough! "It is finished!" God is glorified; Jesus is raised and exalted at His right hand, and mercy flows through righteousness. Mercy waits to pardon, justify, reconcile, and save.

Take then your place, sinner, whoever you may be, in true repentance before Him, and believe God's testimony to the worth of the sacrifice of His Son, and, swifter than the swiftest seraphim ever flew through space from the Lord's holy throne, He will forgive you all your sins for His name's sake. The moment you believe His word concerning the finished work, its value will be applied to you, and He Himself say to you, "Thy sins and thine iniquities will I remember no more," and, "Thine iniquity is taken away, thy sin purged" (or expiated). Have you bowed, and believed? Hear again His precious word to all such. Christ "was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. iv. 25, v. 1).

Do you doubt it? Do you think that Isaiah for a single moment doubted whether he was cleared? Impossible! His lips were touched with the live

coal, and he heard the seraphim's voice assuring him of the cancelling of his sin. And the Word of God assures you of forgiveness and justification the moment you believe. God cannot lie, and you dishonour him if you allow a single question as to the truth of His Word.

Forgiven, and justified, you are reconciled to God, and are His child. You belong to Him; you are the purchase of the precious blood of His dear Son. You are no longer your own, but bought with a price (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20). Now, as soon as Isaiah's sin was put away, he heard the Lord's own voice, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And we read, "Then said I, Here am I; send me" (Isa. vi. 8). Two things are important to observe here. The Lord wanted a servant, and He said, "Whom shall I send?" and "Who will go for us?" Mark it well, for it brings before us His grace, and our responsibility. The Lord sends His servants; but we are not mere machines, and He wants willing ones. Hence He adds, "Who will go?" Isaiah, grateful for the immense mercy shown him, answers unhesitatingly, "Here am I; send me." He fully recognises the two points which come out in the Lord's word. "Here am I," showed his willingness to go; "send me," recognised it was no good going unless the Lord sent him. Fellow-believer, we do well to weigh these words. Saved, we are saved to serve. And we can all serve in some way or other. But we need the same two willingness every whit as much as Isaiah.

"IF CHRIST CAME TO CHICAGO."



HERE is a feeling pervading the nations that some great event is going to take place, which is not without foundation. Before Christ came into this world more than eighteen hundred years ago, there was a general feeling that something was going to happen; and now, just before He comes the second time, there is a similar feeling, in some more intelligent and definite than in others, —but there is the feeling something is going to happen, something unusual and striking, and something that will greatly affect the affairs of this world!

The above was the advertisement of a new 18c. book. It may be sensational in its character, but its title is wonderfully suggestive—" *If Christ came to Chicago.*" I have not read this book, but wish only to speak of the title. It suggests the fact that Christ—the earth-rejected One—is coming. He, who has been hidden in the heavens so long, is coming back,—first to claim His people; and, at the close of the great tribulation that is to come upon all the world (Rev. iii. 10), He will appear in righteous judgment upon the apostate nations, at which time He will find a remnant of Israel and of the nations ready to receive Him.

It is not merely a question of Christ coming to Chicago, and how He would be received, and what

He would do if He came; but of the *fact* of His coming,—first, to receive "His own"; and then in awful judgment, by which the millennial age will be introduced (Isa. xl. 1-12).

Now then, it is of all importance for us to see that when Christ comes it will be, first to claim "His own," when they will be "caught up to meet him in the air" (1 Thess. iv. 16-18), and so be for ever with the Lord.

Observe the event which is immediately before us, and which is so soon to happen (we know neither the day nor the hour), is the Lord's descent into the air, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.

This being the case,—the undoubted fact revealed in the Word of God,—the great question with us is, "*Are we ready to meet Him?*" Are we really amongst those designated "His own," and a part of the "Church of God," formed by calling out from the world a people redeemed by the blood of Jesus, and separated to God; who have been converted to God, to serve Him, and to wait for His Son from heaven, even Jesus, the deliverer from the wrath to come? (1 Thess. i. 9, 10.)

Now, while there may be other questions of great importance, yet this is the greatest of all—"*Am I ready to go in with Him to the marriage when He comes?*" There is to be a company that

will be *ready*, and a company who will not be ready, and who will be shut out for ever (Matt. xxv. 1-10). Oh, then, how great the importance of being ready!—that is, being saved. If the reader has not been born again, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and sealed by God the Holy Ghost, he is not ready. An empty religion without a personal acquaintance with Christ is of no avail. “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again;” “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John iii. 1-8).

Christ is coming—not to Chicago,—but He will descend, and the saints, dead and living, will ascend to meet Him. What a moment for the Saviour, and for them; for the Redeemer, and the redeemed! He comes to claim those for whom He died; and they, by virtue of His blood, ascend with him to enjoy the unclouded light of the presence of God for ever.

Dear reader, if that event were to take place *to-day*, would *you* be amongst the number that would be caught up to meet the Lord? or would you be left behind? What an awful thought—*left behind!* If unsaved, may the Spirit of God give you to feel the awfulness of what it would be to be *left behind*, and your doom sealed for ever.

Now—*to-day*—you can have your happiness sealed for ever, by turning to God, trusting in His blessed Son, and being saved. Then, what joy it would give you to wait for God’s Son from heaven.

"THE LORD IS MY ROCK."



FEW years ago, while staying in a little Norfolk village not far from the sea coast, it was my privilege to meet with a dear child of God, whose quiet testimony to the abounding grace, and unceasing care of her Father in heaven spoke in most powerful language to my soul. Being young in the Lord, and not much instructed in His ways of dealing with His children, I was glad to sit at this dear disciple's feet, and learn from her own lips the secret of her peace and tranquillity, while her frail body was prostrate with pain and weakness.

When I first became acquainted with her she had been for twenty-nine years confined to her bed with a distressing spinal complaint, a helpless and confirmed invalid; her dwelling a humble cottage, her comforts few, her surroundings bearing witness to the fact that she had few to care for, or sympathise with her. Expressing my sympathy with her in her affliction, no word of complaint escaped her lips, but, pointing to a text which hung at the foot of her bed, she soon gave me to understand that her peace was based on no fragile foundation. Subsequent visits and conversations proved that it was no mere surface work with her, but that as she had drunk deep at the

wellsprings of divine grace, so she was morally fitted not only to rise above her own afflictions, but to be a dispenser of the living water which filled her own soul to overflowing (John vii. 38).

"It is very seldom I sleep at nights," she said, in reply to a question put to her; "the little sleep I do get is generally in snatches through the day, but the nights are often very precious seasons to me. As I lie awake in the stillness of the evening hours, I can see my text, for, as you see, it is illuminated, and can be seen quite clearly in the dark; and it brings *Himself* before me, and I think of all He has done and suffered for *me*, and how He comforts and sustains me; although my poor body is often weary, yet it is *His* presence *with me* that fills my heart with gladness; and then it will soon be all over, and I shall be with Him, where pain and sorrow and affliction can never enter."

Could I pity her, and lament that one of the Lord's dear ones should thus be made to pass through the furnace? Surely not. Was she not unconsciously ministering to my soul's needs? I had been thinking, as many do, that trials and afflictions are so many marks of the Father's displeasure on account of our inconstant ways, and that, on the other hand, exemption from them was as positive a proof of His favour. But here was a living witness to the contrary,—a witness to the matchless grace that could take up a poor, vile, undeserving sinner, and lift her, not only clean out of her sins, but above her circumstances;

and, while *still in the midst of pain and suffering*, enable her to taste and feed upon, *as a present thing*, the heavenly joys of the Father's house, the blessed portion for every true believer through the ages of eternity!

And what was the text that gave her so much comfort through the weary hours of midnight gloom? "The Lord is my rock" (2 Sam. xxii. 2).

Dear reader, can *you* truthfully take up this language, and like David, the man of God's choice, when celebrating his victory over all his enemies, and singing his song of deliverance, say, "The Lord is my rock, my fortress, my deliverer. . . . He is my shield, the horn of my salvation, my high refuge, and my Saviour"? If so, happy are you. May you know increasingly, as you journey along through the dreary wilderness of this world, what it is to draw more largely upon Him, as He is variously presented to us in *His* precious imperishable Word, and to live in the practical realisation of those heavenly truths which are given to be appropriated *now*. (Compare Eph. i. 3, 4, ii. 4-10, iv. 14-17; Phil. i. 9, 10, iv. 8, 9; Col. ii. 2, 3, iii. 1-4; 1 Thess. i. 10, v. 5-8.)

But perhaps you confess yourself a stranger to all these things. You have never known the quietness and peace of souls which is the birthright of *every one* who responds to the Saviour's invitation in Matthew xi. 28, "Come unto me"; and yet that weary, burdened heart of yours often longs for that soul-rest to which all your life long you

have been a total stranger. It may be you have sought it earnestly; agonisingly you have prayed; diligently you have striven, eagerly you have inquired, how you might find relief from the intolerable burden of your sins. You have tried morality, philanthropy, law-keeping, and theology in all its various forms and phases, but your heart is unsatisfied still. In vain, amid the confusion of tongues around you, can you find a pilot to direct you to the "haven of rest." Does this describe you, dear unsaved one? Do you know yourself as a "lost sinner," seeking a "Saviour"? Then, cheer up, dear friend, it is for *you* this little paper is sent forth, that *you* may be led, through grace, to plant your feet firmly down on the Rock that can never be moved.

Our desire, in recording the above little incident, is to encourage you to venture boldly on the measureless grace of God that could produce such fruits in a weak and helpless sufferer in such unlikely circumstances. Refreshing to the heart as it may be, and surely is, yet, dear anxious one, we do not ask you to build your hopes upon any experience either of yourself or others; but we ask you to listen to the words of Him who cannot lie, "who spake as never man spake"; and while you listen to those words, may you be enabled in simple, childlike, confiding faith, to roll your heavy burden upon *Him*, who at such infinite cost to Himself completed redemption's work on the cross of Calvary. "Whosoever cometh to ME, and heareth

my sayings, and *doeth* them, I will show 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 upon a ROCK" (Luke vi. 47, 48).

And what *are* His sayings, do you ask? I quote you two of them, and may you *rest* your *soul* this moment on His sure word, and find the rest and peace you have so vainly sought elsewhere: "Him that cometh to ME, I will in *no wise* cast out;" "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall NEVER PERISH, neither shall any pluck them out of MY HAND" (John vi. 37, x. 28).

Hitherto you have been building your hopes for eternity upon the sinking sand of human hopes and expediency. Even now you feel its foundations giving way beneath you; already you hear the sullen roar of God's holy judgment-flood, as it threatens to sweep you and your frail refuge into the dark caverns of endless woe; but Jesus asks you to trust *Him*. When? Now! yes, now! although you have never thought it worth your while to come to Him until you had exhausted all your fancied resources. Come to Him, in your need, your misery, in your sins of crimson dye, with your accumulated load of guilt, with your doubts and fears,—*just as you are!* come and learn that the resistless torrent of God's undying grace is still flowing as freely to-day as when the blood of

expiation streamed from the Saviour's side nearly two thousand years ago !

And now, dear friend, if you have thus taken Him at *His* word, and cast yourself upon Him as your *own personal* Saviour, let me point you to a picture that will show you the other side of the Gospel. In the 15th of Luke I find that the Father's eye never lost sight of his erring Wanderer. At the first movement towards Himself, He runs to meet him ; while the kiss, the ring, the robe, the feast, all betoken the love that has been waiting to lavish itself upon the object of its delight. And this is the God that poor sinners have to do with. " Let us eat and be merry," says the Father. Why ? Because the lost one is found. There is joy in the heart of God when an undeserving and unworthy sinner sues for mercy at His hands.

The poor prodigal little dreamt of the reception he would receive. Little did he know the heart that was already yearning to imprint the kiss of reconciliation upon the lost one's brow. " There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth " (ver. 10).

" Could I think that in the glory,
Ere of Him I had a thought,
Christ was yearning o'er the lost one
Whom His precious blood had bought ?
That it was his need that brought Him
Down to the accursèd tree,
Deeper than His deep compassion,
Wondrous thought !—His need of me.

NOW, AND THEN.

(Read Luke xiv. 15-25, xv. 11-32, xvi. 19-31.)



N this discourse the Lord Jesus brings before us earth, heaven, and hell,—earth with its hindrances, heaven with its happiness, hell with its horrors; and all divinely real. The hindrances are real, and you yourself, my dear unsaved reader, are the very witness that they are so, otherwise you would have been converted before now. You cannot say you have not been called, sought, and invited. “Oh,” you say, “I have been hindered.” Take my advice then: take a flying leap over the hindrances of earth, and taste the joys of heaven, lest eternity find you in the horrors of hell.

In the fourteenth Luke, we have the invitation; in the fifteenth, the man who accepted the invitation, and how he was welcomed; and in the sixteenth, the man who would not accept it, and from whose eternal future the Lord draws aside the veil. And who was this last? I believe he was the elder brother of Luke xv., the one who would not go in, though the father came out and entreated him. Why would he not go in? Because he was too good; he would not go in with such company—he refused to have to do with the younger brother whom grace had saved, and the brothers are sundered for all eternity.

He who will not go in when called by grace, must taste the terrible truth of the sixteenth chapter—find himself *outside for ever*; and let me tell you this, my unsaved reader, you cannot find yourself in hell without having *passed the open door of heaven* to reach there. How terrible! To carelessly pass heaven's open door, with its joy and its gladness and its love, to spend eternity in the lake of fire!

In the fourteenth chapter, the Lord gives us the paltry excuses of the heart of man; in the fifteenth, the irrepressible love of the heart of God; in the sixteenth, the eternal misery of the one who made the excuses. He shows us earth and its madness, heaven and its merriment, hell and its misery. You are on earth now: where will you spend eternity? "In heaven, I hope," you say. Make *sure* of it, my reader, make sure of it.

Have I put a false colouring on these chapters, or what do they teach? Is it not *madness* to refuse God's grace, and slight God's mercy, though the "excuse" of chapter xiv. be polite? Does not chapter xv. show a scene of divine gladness—the joy of God over the sinner's salvation, and the sinner called to share that joy for evermore? And is not chapter xvi. the scene of man's misery—utter, eternal misery—as he is seen to fall from the lap of luxury to the pit of hell?

The Lord presents here the piteous condition of the lost soul—its cry for help, its wail. Look! What is all it dares even appeal for? There is

given here the circumscribed extent of the prayer of a lost soul in hell. *One drop* of water! *One drop*; and it is denied. Why? Because the guilt of the sinner has landed him in a spot where the mercy of God cannot reach him.

Do you ask, "Is my guilt so great that it cannot be pardoned?" Not now! *Now* there is no blessing God does not offer you freely; *now*, but not *then*. Then there is only left for you one thing, to mourn throughout an endless eternity your own terrible folly in rejecting the offer of God's salvation.

Now, it is all mercy and no judgment; *then*, it will be all judgment and no mercy. *Now*, Christ offers you everything His love can give; *then*, He can only judge you. If you refuse His *love*, you must taste His *power*; if you pass by the open door of heaven, and make light of the voice that bids you come in, there is nothing left but the terrible future of which Luke xvi. is the picture. The rich man dies, and, I dare say, everything that could make a death-bed easy and painless surrounded his—every luxury his money could buy; but he dies! Money cannot keep off death. When death comes in, that cold, pale, grim monster, what terror will seize your soul, you that are Christless, unsaved, unpardoned, unblessed! Do not think that you are going to have a long time to prepare. You may be swept off in a moment, having no time for anything. Mark the rapidity of this scene. He dies, and is buried, and in hell he lifts up his

eyes. Look at the transition. Life, death, burial, hell, torments! This is the Lord's own solemn picture of the end of an unconverted man. Do you tell me it is but a picture? True; but if the picture is so terrible, what, oh what will the *reality* be? Can you brave it? Dare you risk this awful future, this terrible hell?

There is thirst in hell, but there is *no water*. Now, if any man thirst, there are rivers of living water wherewith to slake his thirst—*now*, but not *then*. Oh, will you not drink now, and live? Will you be there, and find even one drop denied you?

"Son, remember!" Yes, memory will go down with you there. You must leave your money, leave your pleasures, leave everything you have prized and valued on earth behind you; but you will carry two things down with you—*your sins* and *your memory*! You may try to stifle convictions now, to cover up your sins now, to hush the voice of conscience, and it is quite possible you may succeed. It is quite possible you, who have neglected the Gospel, may come to a death-bed, and conscience give you no warning word; for the wicked have "no bands in their death, but their strength is firm." Yes, you may come to a death-bed, and have no fear to die, and yet you are *Christless, unsaved*. Why is this? Because your conscience has been stifled so long, that at last it gives you no warning cry; and mourning friends dry their eyes, and say, "He died like a lamb, died like a lamb!" Alas! *died and was damned!*

"Son, remember!" remember amid the flames of hell, remember those Gospel preachings when you wished the preacher would have done, when you thought him mad because he sought to warn you, and seek to draw you into a place of safety.

"Son, remember" how you despised the love of God; when the portals of heaven stood wide open to receive you, how you refused to go in.

Think of reviewing a lifetime in which you did your best to damn your immortal soul, and to know you had *succeeded*! Is this true? Is it a reality? Is it a fact, that by-and-by, in eternity, you must cast your eye back over your history, and, as the long dark night of eternity rolls on, you must remember that you refused to let God save you? Yes, it is but too true of every Gospel-neglecter, or Gospel-rejecter. Are you such, my reader?

Can you bear to picture yourself in that scene of ceaseless woe, with all your joys gone, all your pleasures gone, all your friends gone, while you have waked up to find yourself a sinner in your sins? Memory reigns supreme there. Memory brings back all your past life, your wasted opportunities, and you say, Will it go on? Will it never end? Yes, it goes on, it goes on, it will *never* end.

The Lord tells here the past, the present, and the future of a soul in hell. "*Remember*"—how that word fills up the *past*! "*Tormented*"—that is the terrible, the everlasting *present*. "*Now thou art tormented.*" "But," you say, "is there *no* escape?" Listen! "*Fixed*"—there is the *future*, "a great gulf

fixed." What does that mean? That God Himself cannot then bridge it over; He has then, I may say, no power to show you mercy. Your portion is settled for ever: memory crushing you with all the scenes of your lifetime, which is for ever *past*, beyond recall; torment, sorrow unspeakable in the *present*; and for the *future*, "a great gulf fixed" between you and those eternal scenes of joy and gladness, in which you too might have been, had you not refused to share them.

But, thank God, now there is pardon, now there is room, now there is a welcome in the Father's house for you, now God's invitation is going out to call you to His great supper of salvation.

God's feast is a feast of joy, a feast of salvation. He Himself provides the feast; He spreads on the table that which divinely meets the needs of the guests. But besides meeting *your need* as a sinner, God has a deeper motive. He wants to gratify His own heart by having you as a guest.

What a grand thing it is to know that God wants *me* for His guest! He wants my company. In Luke xiv. the great thought of the heart of God is, He wants to have you, He wants to have you for His own. Though man has sinned and gone away from Him, His love remains the same; He comes out in the 'energy of His grace, and entreats you to come to Him, to be His guest. I find the kind of company, too, who accept the invitation, the poor, the maimed, the halt, the blind, —i.e., those who could bring nothing to the feast,

It is on earth the invitation comes. Earth is the waiting-room, in which the fate of the soul is decided, either on the one hand for glory, or on the other for the dark, the bitter gloom of the lake of fire. Who shall decide?" With *you*, my reader, lies the responsibility.

Perhaps you are saying, "I must wait a more convenient season." Take care, lest it never come. Take care lest, like Felix, your faith may be in a convenient season which never comes. He trembled once, and you may have trembled once in your history. There are moments when God puts the Gospel before a soul in such a way that it is almost constrained, almost persuaded to believe; but the soul puts it from him, does *not* decide, and the moment never recurs again.

I ask you, my reader, do you accept or do you decline God's invitation? Either you must accept it and go in, on the ground of being a lost, ruined sinner; or you must refuse, like the elder brother, who did not like this ground.

Earth has its rank and stages, but in eternity all are gone. If I ask Nicodemus, the moral man, How came you here in heavenly glory with Christ? "Oh," he would say, "it was the blood of Jesus!" Woman of the city, how came you here? "It was the blood of Jesus!" she replies. Paul, the blasphemer, the persecutor, how came you here? "The blood of Jesus" is again the answer that thrills through heaven; "that blessed, precious blood of Jesus!"

If I look, too, on the terrible dark side which Luke xvi. speaks to us of, it is all the same. What took the rich man to hell? His sins. Look at the category, in Revelation xxi., of those who find themselves in the lake of fire for eternity. "The *fearful*, the unbelieving, abominable, murderers," &c. &c. What brought each one there? His sin. All rank, all difference, is gone then. *Sin* consigns the unbelieving sinner to *hell*, and *blood* brings the believing soul to *glory*; all else is set aside.

Where, then, will *you* be found for eternity? Will you be found among the number of those who tread that golden city with Jesus? Do you accept or refuse His invitation?

We have looked at the man who would not go in; turn now, and look at the man who did go in. He says, "I will arise and go to my Father" (Luke xv.). That is decision. There comes a moment when the soul decides. Do not suppose you have to fit yourself before you come. Christ meets you where you are and as you are. Christ knows all about you, and He knows too He is the only One who can meet your need, and so He asks you to come to Him. The prodigal said, "I will go"; there was decision, and, oh, how the Lord yearns to meet a returning soul, how He loves to greet that soul, to bid it welcome, to show out all His love to it!

You may be returning with a weary heart, with a slow footstep; but I read, "the father *ran*, and fell on his neck and kissed him." What does that kiss tell? It tells of unchanged affection.

The heart of God has never changed towards you. And what did the father say? Why, he did not speak a word. With reverence, I might say the father's joy was too deep for utterance.

There is no reproach, no word about the past. If you go to *hell*, you must remember the past through eternity; there it is, "*Son, remember.*" If you come to God *now*, the past is all forgiven, all blotted out, no memory of it remaining, and not a word to remind you of it; for God delights to say, "*Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more*" (Heb. x. 17).

True, the prodigal was not worthy, but why did he get the kiss? Because he was worthy? Not at all, but because the father loved him! The prodigal does not say, when he comes to his father, "*Make me a servant*"; and very rightly, for if he had made a bad son, I do not think he would have made a very good servant; and another thing, if you come back to God, you have no business to tell Him what He shall say to you, and how He shall treat you, and what He shall make of you. No, no! you have just to leave Him to do as He likes; and what does He do? He folds you to His heart in the tenderest embrace of love! The Lord sees the first returning thought of the prodigal's heart, the very first; and why? Because, I believe, from the very day the prodigal left his father's house, the father never left his post, as it were, of watching the road for his son's return. And oh,

how he welcomed him, all unwashed as he was, in all his rags!

"Bring forth the best robe," he says to the servants; and that is my province. That is the Evangelist's work, *i.e.*, to tell you of Christ, to ~~seek~~ to display His attractions before you, to tell you that you have nothing to do, but that Christ has done all for you. Christ Himself is the best robe. There is the best robe for the worst sinner.

"Put shoes on his feet" too. God said to Moses, "Take off thy sandals." Grace says, "Put shoes on," *i.e.*, "I will provide him with fitness to tread those courts above." The law says, "Take your shoes off, you are not fit." Grace says, "I will make you fit."

And then there is the merriment, the joys of heaven; and oh, who would be fool enough to put aside this, and risk what the sixteenth chapter gives? Will you not come to Jesus, hear Him say all is forgiven (and the *all*, you know, is a great deal in *your* case), and taste the gladness of heaven?

"They *began* to be merry." And we never hear that they left off; there was no end. We begin down here, but it goes on, and on, and on, through the countless ages of eternity.

Only come to Jesus, and then you will taste the sweetness of a present and eternal salvation.

"THE PREPARATION DAY."



LL was excitement on that preparation day, about one thousand eight hundred and sixty years ago. Centuries have rolled by since that time, but years nor ages can ever obliterate the record of that day's transaction.

It was "*the preparation day*," when the sons of Israel made preparation to keep the memorial of their deliverance out of Egypt, when under the shelter of the blood of the lamb they went out freed from the oppressor's yoke and bondage. And was this the cause of all that was taking place on that memorable day, which stands out, never to be erased from the page of this world's history? Nay. It was indeed "*the preparation day*," when God's Lamb was being prepared for the sacrifice, and His blood about to be shed to accomplish a deliverance far greater and wider-reaching than that out of Egypt.

"A lamb without blemish and without spot" was He; for only such could meet the claims of a holy God. "Knowing no sin" (2 Cor. v. 21); "he did no sin" (1 Pet. ii. 22); for "in him is no sin" (1 John iii. 5). Yet He was made a sacrifice for sin upon the cross. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his

mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken" (Isa. liii. 7, 8).

On the eve of that preparation day, full of love for His own,—whom having loved in the world, He loved on to the end,—Jesus gathered them around Himself in "a large upper room furnished," where the last supper was partaken of together. And there too He instituted that supper—the Lord's Supper—of such deep meaning to those who have tasted of His love. Having taken the bread, He broke it, and gave it unto them, saying, "This do in remembrance of me." And also the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. xi. 23).

When supper was ended, full of love and tenderness, His last loving act was rendered to His disciples, for, taking a towel and basin of water, He stooped low to wash their feet; and then into their ears poured those sweet messages of comfort and love, which thrill our hearts even now as we read them (see John xiii. to xviii.).

At last the hour had come when He must give Himself up to die; and leaving the house with His disciples, He entered the darkness, and passed over the brook Cedron, into the garden of Gethsemane, where the shades of a still darker night were gathering. In the garden He poured forth

His soul to the Father, praying that if it were possible the bitter cup of wrath might pass from Him; but in calm submission to His holy will He could say, "Not my will, but thine be done." Then a band of men, headed by Judas, one of His disciples who had betrayed Him, came and seized Him; submitting to their will, He allowed Himself to be bound, and they led Him away to imprisonment and death. First of all they led Him to the high-priest, who, instituting a mock trial, judged Him to be worthy of death. Next they led Him to Pilate the Roman conqueror, that he might give sentence against Him. Pilate sought to release Him, but they were loud in their acclamations that He should be crucified. At last the choice was to be finally made as to which they would choose—Jesus, or Barabbas; the Saviour, or a thief; the Lord of life, or a murderer. The die was cast, a robber was chosen, and Christ rejected. Oh, world, is this thy choice? "Not this man but Barabbas," was the united cry; and thus God's beloved Son was refused, and the One whom Heaven has accepted, rejected by Jews and Gentiles. Reader, what is thy choice? on whose side art thou? That of the world which rejected Him, of which act it has never repented, or on the side of Him whom God has exalted above all heavens?

Herod and his soldiers set Him at nought, and found their pleasure in mocking Him. Behold Him as He comes forth, clad in royal vestments; not as a mighty conqueror treading His enemies

beneath His feet,—that He will do in a later day; not honoured with kingly honours, but crowned with a crown, and that of thorns! Men bow before Him, as though to do Him homage, but it is done in bitter mockery. Soon every knee shall bow before Him! but here, all come forward to pay a tribute of dishonour to the Son of God, as though to see which could put Him to the greatest shame. At last they nailed Him to the cross, where priests and people, barbarian soldiers and malefactors, railed on Him; until thick darkness at noon-day wrapped the scene, as though nature veiled itself, when, amid the sorrows of that cross of shame, the peerless Lamb of God bowed His head in death.

Such was the scene enacted on that preparation day of old, when God's Lamb died that shameful death, bearing sin's great load. God was there glorified in putting away sin for ever; and there the sinner's deep need was met in the shedding of that precious blood which cleanseth from all sin.

And what now remains? The eternal fruits of that day's toil,—fruit to the glory of God, and fruit to Jesus, "for he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."

That preparation day and its results can never be forgotten throughout eternity. *Your* eternity hangs on it. Where will you spend it? In heaven, or in hell?

E. E. N.

THE DEVIL'S WILL-O'-THE-WISP.



GRAND business man was Mr ——. He carried on a very lucrative business in the North of England, which by dint of his perseverance and business abilities developed into a large concern.

Mr —, like many thousands more, and, maybe, like you, dear reader, did not take time to consider this question of questions asked by the Lord in Mark viii. 36, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose *HIS OWN SOUL?*" Mark well these words, friend, for it is *your own* soul that is in question here. Yes, *your* very own. Supposing you had gone into Mr —'s place of business one morning, and asked him how business was going along, most probably he would have let you know, also he might have told you that he was expecting to do a good day's business. Ay, like many more, he had *great expectations for time*.

If you had spoken to him about his soul, and asked him what were his *expectations for eternity*, he very curtly would have told you that he had *no time* to think of these things, as his business required all his time.

"Poor dupe of the devil,
Who dangles daily 'fore the eyes of men,
Those gilded baubles—*Power, Gold, and Flame* :
Will-o'-the-Wisp, that lures the sinner on
Until God's day of grace is past and gone."

Mr —— was absorbed in his business to the exclusion of eternal realities. He left *God out* of his thoughts, like that very successful business man in Luke xii. 20, who had much goods laid up in store for many years, and who said to *HIS SOUL*,—"Soul, take thine ease," &c.; but God said, "*THOU FOOL*, this night shall it be required of thee."

"To lose one's wealth *is much* ;
 To lose one's health *is more* :
 To lose *one's soul*, is such a loss
 As no man can restore."

One morning Mr —— was at business as usual, to all appearance in good health, and doubtless looking forward to a good day's business.

In the course of the forenoon he had occasion to go into his private room. Being exceptionally long in coming out, and having something to ask him, one of his assistants knocked at his door. Getting no response, he opened the door, and there, to his horror, he saw his master sitting in his chair. *DEAD!* The doctors attributed his death to heart disease.

"He was laid in a Christless tomb,
 Now bound in death's dark chain,
 To wait the terror of his doom,
 The *Judgment* and the pain.

Oh! Christless shroud, how cold!
 How dark, oh Christless tomb!
 Oh, grief that never can grow old!
 Oh, *endless, hopeless* doom!"

"Howsudden!" you may exclaim. Yes! but how

solemn too; for "it is appointed unto men once to die, but *AFTER THIS THE JUDGMENT*" (Heb. ix. 27).

Fellow-traveller to Eternity, let this be a loud voice to thy soul. It may be your time next. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. xxvii. 1).

Oh! dear reader, consider the priceless value of this present moment of time, for "*Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation*" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

What would the lost in hell give for *one moment of time*? Said a wealthy worldly lady on her deathbed, just with her last breath,—"*A million of money for a moment of time!*"

Reader, Time is flying; with lightning-like rapidity, *Eternity draweth nigh*.

I beseech you to honestly think—

"Where will you spend Eternity—

In heaven, or in hell?

Wilt thou among the blest be found,

Or with the lost ones dwell?"

May you, by God's grace, take your true place before God, owning, like that poor man in Luke xviii. 12, what you are, and accept God's salvation. Then you can sing—

"Death and judgment are behind me,

Peace and glory are before."

Ere you lay aside this paper, rest *your* precious

soul on the *living*, unchanging word of the living God, which says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

"Salvation, now *this moment* !
Then why, oh why delay ?
You may not see to-morrow,—
NOW is *Salvation's Day*."

J. A. D.

ARE YOU SAVED ?



NEAR friend, are you saved ?

"Well," you reply, "I hope so."

I do not hope I am ; I know I am.

"Oh, but I am working for it."

I am not.

"Not working for it? then you will never get it."

Yes, I shall ; I have got it now ; and as you say you are working to get, I tell you, you will never get it.

"Why not?"

Because the blessed Lord Jesus came down into this world, and was born into it, walked about it, and then went to the cross, and died. In the darkness of those three hours that Jesus hung upon the cross, God met and punished sin. There were no prying eyes to see Jesus "smitten, stricken of God, and afflicted." When the darkness rolled away, all that remained to be seen

was the blessed Son of God. Was He alive? No, He was dead; but just before He died He cried, "It is finished!" This is how peace was made. And now there remains no more to be done. You have only to leave off working (because it will not save you), and trust to the precious blood of Christ; and poor guilty sinners who come to Him are cleansed, and made fit to dwell with Jesus for ever. Well, what have you got to do to get salvation? You have simply to come to Jesus, own yourself a guilty sinner, deserving nothing but the lake of fire, believe what God says, trust in the finished work of Christ, and then salvation is yours.

"But how may I know that I am saved, and that I shall not be judged, and be cast into the lake of fire?" you reply.

The Lord Jesus said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24). This is the Gospel; and if you believe it you are saved.

"How simple the Gospel is!" do you say?

Certainly it is! Most earthly positions and prizes have to be worked hard for; but the Gospel is got by just believing what God says, and by trusting in the blood of Jesus:—

"Precious, precious blood of Jesus,
Shed on Calvary;
Shed for rebels, shed for sinners,
Shed for me."

If you are a sinner, you are just the very person Jesus came to save. He came "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Do you believe?

"Yes," you reply. "I believe that Jesus came down into this world, and went to the cross, and died for me. I do believe on Him."

Then you are saved; God's Word says you are. "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). Some one has thus stated the Gospel:—

GOD'S MESSAGE FROM ABOVE.

"That all who in the Son believe
 Shall never perish, but receive
 Life endless and divine;
 No condemnation e'er shall know,
 From death to life they pass below,
 And then in glory shine.
 'Tis not of works; let no man boast
 Save in His name, who saves the lost,
 The Lord our righteousness!
 Poor sinner, now from working cease,
 And claim from God a blood-bought peace,
 And Jesus, Lord, confess."

A.

IF salvation be of grace, works cannot avail. Did they avail, grace would not be grace, and a meritorious effort on man's part would supersede grace. "By *grace* are ye saved," is a very simple and plain statement.

W. T. P. W.

"THOU ART THE MAN."



NATHAN'S parable; as he confronted the guilty David, was very touching and heart-reaching.

"And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man; and he spared to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that had come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die" (2 Sam. xii. 1-6).

It was then that the faithful prophet hurled the dart at the guilty king, hardened in his wickedness; which sent divine convictions into his conscience, and laid him low in the dust before God, to abhor him-

self and his sin. "Thou art the man," was Nathan's faithful word.

Sad, awful, and aggravated was David's sin, and correspondingly deep must be the conviction and repentance. And deep and genuine it was, as the 51st Psalm, assures us. "I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned; and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest."

"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." Every sin that is committed is against God, and He will have to say to man about his sins, "God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccles. xii. 14). "God will bring them into judgment" (chap. xi. 9).

Have you realised this solemn fact, my reader, that, in the first place, your sin is directed against God; that it is an outrage upon Him; and that God will bring you into judgment? You may have sinned against your neighbour, or against yourself, but primarily it is against God,—*"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned."*

Tremendous fact this, for all who are disposed to ignore the claims and judgment of God: *"But know thou, for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."* And God says what He means, and means just what He says. As well might you contend with the lightning's flash, as to contend

with this fact. God will be God, in spite of all the cavillings of men ; and when He judges, He will be vindicated in His judgment.

Before Nathan went to David, he was hardened in his sin, and blinded by it, and his anger was kindled against the robber of the poor man. He said, "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing he shall surely die." In these words David pronounced his own condemnation, and the condemnation of every sinner under heaven ; for "the wages of sin is death," and "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment" (Rom. vi. 23 ; Heb. ix. 27).

Death and judgment are the portion of each and all. It is no question of some one else having sinned, but, as in David's case, "Thou art the man."

You may be eloquent about the sins of others, but, nevertheless, "Thou art the man."

You may be able to depict certain sins, in all their awful deformity, and never have thought of your own ; now God speaks to thee, and says, "Thou art the man."

You may have helped to send missionaries to heathen lands to convert and save them, and you may never have been converted yourself. The voice of God is heard in the words of Nathan the prophet, as He looks at thee, saying, "Thou art the man."

Moralist—"Thou art the man."

Religionist—"Thou art the man."

Unsaved church-goer—"Thou art the man."

Unconverted Protestant—"Thou art the man."

Unconverted Roman Catholic—"Thou art the man."

Infidel—"Thou art the man."

Atheist—"Thou art the man."

Materialist—"Thou art the man."

Drunkard—"Thou art the man."

Unconverted Pope, cardinal, priest, bishop, preacher—"Thou art the man."

It is the arrow of the Almighty God for thee—"Thou art the man."

Oh, that it might work in thee what it wrought in David—sorrow, self-loathing, bitterness of spirit, self-judgment, real repentance toward God. "I have sinned against the Lord," cried the convicted king. "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin," is the language of the now awakened sinner. What but mercy would do for him?—pure, sovereign, and undeserved mercy? And what but the death of God's Son, and His shed blood, could be the ground upon which that mercy could righteously reach us?

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

God, who is rich in mercy, responded to David's confession of his sin. David said, "I have sinned

against the Lord." The Lord, by Nathan, replied, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin ; thou shalt not die." How genuine it was too : "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord ; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin " (Ps. xxxii. 3, 5).

Yes ; "and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Blessed, peace-giving words ! They remind us of the words of the Saviour to the woman, in Luke vii. 48-50, "Thy sins are forgiven. . . . Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace."

And surely we can add, in the language of Psalm xxxii., "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."

To be without guile before God is to make a clean breast of everything. Is it thus with you, my reader ?

"*Covered.*" What can cover the sinner's sins and iniquities ? Can tears ? Oceans of them would not. Would promises of self-amendment ? Nay ; for human promises are made to be broken, which only adds to the awful list already recorded.

Oh, what can cover the sins of the sinner, and hide them from the sight of a holy God for ever ?

What ?—*The precious blood of Christ.*

On this ground alone could God forgive the sins of David ; and on this ground only can God forgive your sins, dear reader, if they are yet unforgiven.

"Covered." Blessed thought for every truly repentant believing soul! *"Covered!"* yes, thank God, and covered for ever!

"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (Rev. i. 5, 6.)

E. A.

MEDICINE FOR THE HEART.



HIS was the need of a poor African chief named Sekoni, who was met by David Livingstone, the great explorer, on his travels through that dark land. He came one day to Livingstone, having heard that many of his subjects had been cured of their ills by the medicines that he had, and asked the missionary if he would give him medicine to cure his heart, which was full of hatred, envy, murder, and sin. Livingstone held up the Bible, and told the poor black chief that Jesus was the medicine for the sin-full heart.

It may be you, my reader, are like this poor African chief, possessed of a heart full of sin, which is the cause of sorrow and distress to you. If so, thank God there is a Physician that can cure you, there is medicine you can take that will rid you of the burden of sin.

The prophet Jeremiah (viii. 22) said, "Is there

no balm in Gilead, why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" and we may raise the cry to-day, Is there no balm for the wounded heart, is there no cure for the sorrows and burdens of the weary? Yes! a thousand times, yes! Praise God, there is, and this Physician is Jesus. Precious name! There is indeed a healing balm in His name. That poor woman in Luke viii. 43-48 came to the great Physician, when no earthly doctor could cure her, and only touched the hem of His garment, and she was cured immediately, and went away body and soul leaping for joy, not only because her body was healed, but her soul was saved. That man with the withered hand in Mark iii. 5 did not even touch Him, but at the word of the great Physician was made perfectly whole. Also the woman of Luke vii. came to Jesus, not with a sick body, but with a sin-sick soul, a wounded heart, a heavy burden, an incurable disease, eating her very vitals, and sin like a cancerous growth devouring her very life. She came to Jesus, and He, blessed Man of sorrows, blessed Son of God, oh, how delighted He was to apply the balm to her distressed heart, even this precious ointment, "Thy sins are forgiven thee."

Now, my dear friend, is this anything like your case? Is this the condition you are in? Then I beg thee to come to Jesus, the great Physician. Do you feel your heart to be like the poor African chief's? Then come to the Saviour, and He will

give rest and forgiveness, and peace to thy burdened heart. Oh, how my Saviour delights to say, "Peace unto you." His blessed mission (see Luke iv. 18) was to heal the broken-hearted, and to set at liberty the bruised. Then come, poor broken-hearted sinner, and Jesus will say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." I imagine you saying, Will Jesus receive a poor unworthy sinner like me? Yes, dear friend, Jesus's special patients are unworthy ones, and He says, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Think of what Jesus has done for us, how He has shed His precious blood, how He has suffered untold agonies for us, how He has died on the cross, for poor unworthy good-for-nothing sinners like me and thee. Think of all this, then ask the question, Will He receive me? and thine own heart will answer, Yes. Then come to Him at once; find rest by trusting in Jesus.

Only this day a person said to me that she had a day or two before been converted at a meeting, and had come with her burdened heart to Jesus, and lost the load of her sins. She added, "My heart feels, oh, so light now!" What a perfect cure!

While Jesus is bidding thee come, accept His invitation. He asks thee to do nothing, for He has done all that is required; and what He desires of thee is to put out the hand of faith, and receive salvation. Then, peace and rest will be thine.

THE CLOWN.

"A vision of the night."



HE performances at a theatre in East London were at their height at Christmas-tide. The house was flashing with lights and decorations, and filled from floor to floor with laughing faces. It was the season of pantomiming; and clowns and pantaloons and their companions were in full activity. Between two and three thousand of the young and the old, the rich and the poor, were congregated in different parts of the house. Among them all, how many were truly converted? how many ready to die? How many would wish to die in such a place at such a time? Among them all—every one immortal—there was not one thought of God, of Christ, of immortality; all was frivolous and foolish—most unfitting occupation for men and women who had to prepare for eternity and the immediate presence of God. If Christ comes speedily, will He find any of His in such scenes?

For many nights, stretching into months, the same scene was repeated. But as the winter passed away, the pantomime of the season passed with it, and clown and pantaloon had to seek other means of earning bread for themselves and families.

It is only with the former that I have to do.

His occupation at the theatre closed with the pantomime ; but he had other means of living. He was accustomed to appear at concerts and harmonic meetings, and there sing in character, as it is termed, combining a mixture of singing and speaking which is very popular with the uneducated and the ungodly in East London, and in hundreds of other places beside. He had, however, noted with uneasiness that his popularity was waning, his greatest efforts coldly received, and the proprietor of the music-hall paying his salary grudgingly—before he had left for the pantomime season ; and whether he would be engaged again he did not know. He therefore resolved to obtain, if possible, some new highly-spiced entertainment for the multitude, that should make him a greater favourite than ever. Of course he could not pray over the matter, nor ask the guidance and direction of the Father in heaven ; indeed he had no belief in Him, never thought of Him or of Jesus : he was willing to labour—in his profitless way—for the bread that perisheth ; he knew not of, nor cared for, everlasting living bread.

The recent revival of religion at the east of London was then at its zenith ; to the poor and the ignorant the pure Gospel was preached with amazing power, directness, and success. Places of worship were open every evening in the week ; and many earnest and gifted servants of God were found to lift up Christ, holding Him before the sinner as the only but all-sufficient refuge. Many

were brought out of darkness into marvellous light, and the meetings were much spoken of in the locality. This gave the clown the idea he was seeking; he resolved to attend some of the meetings, in order to produce a burlesque of them at the music-hall. He neither thought nor cared for the awful wickedness of his purpose; nor of its probable consequences upon the souls of those who would hear him, and would thus be hardened against and inclined to mock at the extraordinary outpouring of the Gospel at that time. He was truly "past feeling," "dead in trespasses and sins."

The place he had chosen to visit was a large hall, roughly fitted up for preaching the Gospel among the very poor. There was a great gathering; and he stood unknown and unnoticed. The service commenced with some singing, which he thought could be distorted to serve his purpose, and which he carefully noted. The hymn was followed by reading from the Bible; which he felt, instinctively, he had better let alone, partly from doubt as to how such a burlesque would take, partly from a lingering dread of subjecting "his mother's book" to such treatment. It was well it was so; for no man ever yet mocked or laughed at that Book without regretting it "in this world or that which is to come." No man ever despised the Spirit's teaching and was wise "unto salvation." The reading was followed by prayer, which was also barren of results for his purpose. The second

hymn promised better; and then the first address was given.

The speaker was a short-sighted, dark little man, with a slight impediment of speech and hesitancy of manner, which seemed to promise just what the scoffer had come to seek. But as the preaching went on, the preacher grew earnest; his subject filled his mind, his voice cleared and strengthened, and he held the vast audience with great power. Nor was the clown insensible to the influence there present. The text chosen was "*Prepare to meet thy God!*" and the theme of discourse the absolute need of fitting preparation on the part of all men before their inevitable and compulsory meeting with God. The address concluded with a stirring appeal to hearts and consciences concerning their personal condition and fitness if called suddenly to appear before God.

The discourse rendered the listener so uncomfortable, that he lost the opportunity of gaining ideas from the hymns between the two addresses, as he felt it necessary to leave the building in order to drown the uneasy feeling within by intoxicating drink. But he returned in time for the second address, to find it quite as unavailable as its predecessor. The second theme was the eternal righteousness of God in His dealings with sinners, founded on the text "*Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*" During this address, the clown was made to feel keenly, that if the speaker was uttering truth, his own personal condition was

perilous beyond thought of conception. An after-meeting was announced for those who wished for private direction or special prayer ; but the inclination to gather material for mockery had left him, and he quitted the meeting in deep concern of soul. He felt that he could not then return to any of his haunts of dissipation, and he consequently returned home early, to the unspeakable astonishment of his wife and children.

He shared their evening meal with them for the first time for several years, and then retired to rest without one thought of petition or of thankfulness, and was soon in troubled sleep, and dreaming.

His "vision of the night" commenced with a confused mingling of the scenes of his nightly life, rapidly changing without order or design, but gradually deepening and settling into order and plan, and so forming an abiding impression on his memory. He saw houses, theatres, and music-halls, within and without, at the same time. But the usual foundations had no place in his dream : in their stead, theatre and music-hall seemed to stand upon a sea of clear coruscating wine ; and as he gazed in wonder on this new foundation, he saw that the crimson wine was a fierce fire of unutterable brightness, a deep-red wine of fire, on which was standing every theatre, and music-hall, and supper-room he had ever entered. He saw further the faces of his former companions who had been dead for years, just as they were when living ; and, as they stood singing and acting as

of old, they seemed to sink slowly but certainly into the wine of fire beneath. As they sank, he saw the faces change from laughter and mockery into an expression of hopeless and awful suffering, and the despairing eyes gleamed with terrible consciousness as they sank slowly and were lost to view in the unfathomable deeps of the wine of fire.

The vision continued; and he saw *himself* appear upon the mimic scene, and heard the roar of laughter that always greeted his appearance on the stage; but he knew, also, that even while performing his part, he was uneasily conscious of the fire-wine upon which he was standing, and while frantically gibbering for the amusement of the audience he was in awful fear of the fiery unfathomable gulf beneath. He dreamed he began to sink into it, while the laughter of the unconscious audience was still ringing. As he sank, he still attempted to sustain his part, though his tongue was almost cleaving to the roof of his mouth, and every limb trembling and quivering with mortal fear. Then a horrible dread came upon him; his mocking song changed to a wild shriek of agonising pain; the first touch of the fierce fire was upon him, and the anguish was unbearable. A hopeless awful scene of utter abandonment took entire possession of all his being; and as he sank deeper and deeper into the everlasting burning, he knew that he was lost—soul and body;—that the fire-wine into which he was sinking

was "the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God!"

The awful mental suffering induced by his "vision" awoke him from his slumber, and he lay trembling so violently that the bed shook beneath him. Through the window the grey dawn was faintly visible; and with every limb quivering he rose, to fall upon his knees by the bedside,—his first sensation one of overpowering thankfulness that he was not yet cast irrevocably into the red wine of fire. The deep breathing of his still slumbering wife and children sounded like the sweetest music in his ears, seeming to assure him of present safety, and of opportunity for repentance and escape. He had no doubt of the truth of the vision; no question of the awful reality it represented crossed his mind. He saw how awfully and repeatedly he had sinned; and if he were cast into the wine of fire, he had no defence to make, no plea to urge, nothing to complain of; he knew that he was guilty, as he knelt, self-condemned, before the holy Almighty God.

He wandered hither and thither, through the day; miserable beyond words to express, but unknown where relief and help were to be found. But at night-fall he was again at the place of meeting; where, after singing and prayer as before—no attempt at mockery now—an address was commenced from the words, "*This man receiveth sinners.*" The speaker began with a graphic portraiture of the modern types of those whom our

Lord received in the old time ; and then proceeded to show how, by a life of spotless holiness on earth, joined to such personally unmerited suffering as the world never witnessed before or since, the Redeemer acquired the right to redeem and " save, even unto the uttermost, all that come unto God by him ;" that He has exercised the right thus acquired through all the intervening years and centuries ; that His arm was not shortened that it could not save, nor His ear heavy that it could not hear. If they who were present were willing to repent of their sins and believe on Him, their iniquities need no longer separate between them and their God, nor their sins turn away His face from them ; because it was as true now as ever it was, that " this man receiveth sinners."

The actor saw it all—for the Lord opened the eyes of his inner man. He saw that the portraiture of the life of a guilty sinner was an exact reproduction of his own life ; and, as the preacher proceeded, he saw also with inexpressible astonishment and delight that " Christ died *for the ungodly*," and that he, therefore, was included among those the Redeemer came to save. When the preacher asked who among them was willing to receive freely offered pardon and peace, he felt that he was willing—" *made willing*" in the day of Christ's power ; and tears streamed freely down his face, as he sank upon his knees in unfeigned penitence and earnest believing prayer.

So he found peace in believing ; and from his

own lips I received the story of his being brought up from "among the dead" by his awful "vision of the night."

C. J. W.

DYING FOR ME.



WE are told that one of the wickedest men in the town of Dundee was converted through the following hymn :—

"Jesus, my Saviour, to Bethlehem came,
Born in a manger, 'mid sorrow and shame ;
Oh ! it was wonderful ; blest be His name,
Seeking for me, for me."

Well, you may say, what was there in that verse that could have touched the heart of a sinner ?

A fair question ; but I think that I can tell you. It was a sense of grace on the part of the blessed Lord, and it is always grace that touches. Was it not grace, pity, love that led Him who was rich to become poor, that we through His poverty might become rich ? Indeed, it was ! Think of the greatness of His wealth before He became man, before He was laid in the manger, amid all its shame and sorrow ; before He knew, in real and deep experience, the poverty of His lowly and lonely path on earth : then contemplate the extent of that poverty. Was any so poor as Jesus ? He had not where to lay His head, although He created all things. He had a borrowed birthplace and a borrowed

sepulchre. The fox and bird were better off than He!

But this was in order that we should become rich. That was His gracious object in becoming poor.

Now, could there be a more touching story than that? It fell like balm on that hardened sinner's ear, and melted his heart as sunshine melts the ice. Such a story was, perhaps, new to him. It was unlike his long experience. One man may be kind to another, and show him a good turn; but here was something altogether different from mere human kindness. It is one of those facts that are stranger than fiction!

But the hymn continues:—

“Jesus, my Saviour, on Calvary's tree
Paid the great debt, and my soul He set free;
Oh, it was wonderful! how could it be?
Dying for me, for me.”

Greater grace by far! The manger of Bethlehem told a lovely tale; and I gladly own, dear reader, that I am fond of drawing aside its exquisite curtain and gazing adoringly, in spirit and heart, on the form of that lowly babe—Immanuel!

Volumes of grace are hidden behind that curtain, and mysteries of love concealed and yet displayed in the first step of Him of whom we read “the Word became flesh.” Yet, with all its deep attractions, it is outshone by Calvary! The cross is the climax and crown of all self-surrender! Wonders are learned at Calvary that could never be acquired

at Bethlehem—never! You may ask me, How? Well, at Bethlehem we see the beautiful condescension of Jesus, the Son of God; but, while at Calvary, we see that and more: we also learn the terrible fact of human guilt and enmity to God. And this is as important as it is solemn. The cross proves two things—man's total ruin, and God's infinite love. Hence we read that "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Notice, here we have what is called *Substitution*—one standing for another. Sin being proved in the words "while we were sinners," love is also commended in the other words, "Christ died for us."

That is Gospel! Our sin met by Christ's death! Does that not touch the heart? And, mark, we do not read here how fearful was the death He died; not only as to the agonies of crucifixion, but the still greater agonies of sin's judgment under the wrath of God. This it was which formed the bitterest but necessary ingredient of His dreadful cup of woe.

Nature may admire the grace of Bethlehem, but only a sin-convinced conscience can appreciate the sacrifice of Calvary. My heart may be attracted by the first, but my guilty soul finds relief and pardon at Calvary alone.

"Oh, it was wonderful! how could it be?
Dying for me, for me."

And the poor sinner of Dundee was saved through

the simple but ever-affecting story told by our little hymn. Yet the same story told in, perhaps, a thousand different ways, has reached the ear of countless sinners, of countless places, and has led them to the knowledge of God. The blood of the Lamb is their song of salvation. And if so with them, why not with you, dear reader? Shall it be that such innumerable witnesses to the one saving name are unworthy of your regard, and that, although all heaven resound with His praise, you must pursue your own dark and slippery way, to find out, when too late, that you closed your heart against your best of friends and only Saviour! Sin not against your own mercy. The rather, pay one visit to these two places—Bethlehem and Calvary—yes, in the secret of your chamber, let the Lord conduct you to where all His grace and love were displayed, so that, even to-day, your heart may be touched and broken by a divinely given sense of His love.

Jesus now lives to save. Will you not sing?—

“Jesus my Saviour, the same as of old,
While I was wand’ring afar from the fold;
Gently and long did He plead with my soul,
Calling for me, for me!

Jesus, my Saviour, shall come from on high,
Sweet is the promise as weary years fly;
Oh, I shall see Him descending the sky,
Coming for me, for me!”

"AT LAST I HAVE HEARD OF JESUS."



IN the sixteenth century there was at Trinity College, Cambridge, a young doctor, of serious turn of mind, and whose tender conscience strove, although ineffectually, to fulfil the commandments of God. The more he strove, the more he found that he came short of God's holy law, and was more than ever convicted of being a sinner. "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. iii. 20), and it can only curse those who fail in any of its requirements.

Thomas Bilney, for that was his name, applied to the priest, who prescribed fasting, vigils, masses, indulgences, and other useless things that can never meet the need of a soul. The poor doctor went through all these practices with great devotion, but found no consolation.

Weakened by fasting, and his purse emptied, with anguish he exclaimed, "Alas! my last state is worse than the first!"

No wonder that doubts sometimes entered his mind: "May not the priests be seeking their own interest, and not the salvation of my soul?" but being still in darkness, undelivered from priestly rule, he refused the thought, and fell back under their heavy yoke.

But God never leaves an anxious soul long to grope in darkness. Light divine is by some means

brought, which gives peace and joy to the soul, and which brings deliverance from the thralldom of men who know not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

About that time Erasmus, a very learned man, had translated the New Testament into Latin, and this found ready acceptance in England and on the continent of Europe. But this very book, which was filling souls with light and peace and joy, and giving the knowledge of salvation to souls everywhere, was strictly forbidden by the Romish priests, and called "the source of all heresy." Darkness hates the light; for light makes manifest the darkness. A religion that is founded on the rejection, or perversion, of the Word of God, cannot be of God.

This precious volume was sold in secret, for Jezebel was in power; and many bought it, though "the wolves in sheep's clothing" raved against it.

Bilney took courage, urged, as he said, by the hand of God, went to the house where the book was being sold, bought it with fear and trembling; then hastening back, shut himself up in his room.

What a moment that was for Bilney! Shut in with God and His sacred Word, and having as his teacher the Holy Spirit, what could hinder his blessing!

The precious book is opened, so full of light and comfort for such as Bilney; and yearning for that knowledge which the Scriptures only can give, his eyes, directed no doubt by God, alight on a verse

so suitable to his case, which scattered the darkness, and in the revelation of the Saviour to him, spoke peace to his soul: "*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).

He meditated on these blessed words, which were as oil upon the troubled waters of his soul. They calmed the tempest that had raged so long. A great calm succeeded the storm, and the darkness gave place to the "light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God" (2, Cor. iv. 4).

"What! St Paul the chief of sinners, and yet St Paul is sure of being saved!" The verse was read again and again. "O assertion of St Paul, how sweet art thou to my soul!" he exclaimed. "I also am like Paul," he uttered with deep emotion; "and, more than Paul, the greatest of sinners! . . . But Christ saves sinners. At last I have heard of Jesus!"

Before, he had heard of rites and ceremonies, penances and fasts, vigils, pilgrimages, masses, and indulgences, and they had utterly failed to meet the need of his soul, as all human works must do; but now, he had heard of *Jesus*, and that He had come into the world to *save sinners*. He was a sinner, and therefore He came to save him. He now knew and felt the power of those wonderful words: "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 " (Isa. liii. 5).

" Jesus Christ ! " he cried with holy fervour ; " yes, Jesus Christ saves ! " Yes, blessed be His name for ever, *He saves*. When on the cross His enemies jeeringly said, " He saved others, himself he cannot save " (Matt. xxvii. 42), the emissaries of Satan never uttered a truer word. " He *saved* others " ; and, we can add, He *saves* them still. He is still mighty to save, and His precious blood mighty to cleanse. But if He *would* and *does* save others, He could not save Himself, such is the mystery of Divine love, for He had come to die. Salvation is the purchase of His atoning death. His blood must flow ; " for without shedding of blood there is no remission " (Heb. ix. 21).

" I see it all," said Bilney ; " my vigils, my fasts, my pilgrimages, my purchase of masses and indulgences were destroying instead of saving me. All these efforts were, as St Augustine says, a hasty running out of the right way."

Now the light had illumined Bilney's soul, it must shine out through him to others. Timid before men, but mighty in prayer, and with a special discernment of people's spiritual whereabouts, he, under God, undertook and accomplished the conversion of the celebrated Latimer, who after a long life of devotion to Christ was burnt at the stake. Bilney was privileged to suffer in the same way, and will, with his fellow-martyr, in the resurrection receive a martyr's crown. " Be thou

faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life " (Rev. ii. 11).

Dear reader, I know not how it is with you, but I place the story of Bilney's conversion to God before you, praying that you with him may exclaim with joy of soul, "*Jesus Christ ! yes, Jesus Christ saves !*"

E. A.

LAISH.



FIVE spies of the tribe of Dan came to a town called Laish. And they "saw the people that were therein, how they *dwelt careless*, after the manner of the Zidonians, *quiet and secure*; and there was no magistrate in the land, that might *put them to shame* in anything; and they were far from the Zidonians, and had *no business with any man*" (Judges xviii. 7). And they returned to their countrymen, and reported that it was a *very good land, a large land*, and a place where was *no want of anything* that is in the earth (vers. 9, 10). And in verse 27 we read, the Danites "came unto Laish, unto a people that were at *quiet and secure*; and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire. And there was *no deliverer*, because it was far from Zidon, and they had no business with any

man; and it was in the valley that lieth by Beth-rehob."

What a striking picture is Laish of the poor world at large to-day! It was situated in a very good and large land, where there was no want of anything, and its inhabitants dwelt carelessly, after the manner of their nearest neighbours, quiet and secure; and, as there was no magistrate, and no king (chaps. xvii. 6, xviii. 1, xix. 1), did that which was right in their own eyes (Judges xxi. 25); and no one put them to shame, for they countenanced each other's doings. And as to business, their nearest neighbours being a long way off, they were just shut up to their own circle and selfishness.

And what is the poor world of to-day but a modern Laish? Though under the power of Satan, and the dominion of sin, we see on all hands what a good and large land the cities and villages of this world are built in; where there is no want of anything, but where a faithful Creator-God has provided for every need of His creatures, the earth on all hands teeming with His bounty. But the inhabitants, how are they dwelling? *Carelessly*, after the manner of their neighbours, quiet and secure (as they think). And although there are mostly kings and magistrates, are not the vast mass living for time and self, doing their own will as far as they dare, daily indulging in their own unrestrained thoughts under the plea of liberty, in insubjection to the authority of God and His Word, and oft to those He has placed over them? whilst all kinds of

evil practices and departures from the truth of God are sanctioned by custom, and approved because the mass follow them, and no shame? And how many are saying, I mind my own business, and I leave other people to mind theirs! which means, in short, I follow my own sweet will, and delight in my own way; and I don't want, and I don't mean to brook, any interference on the part of others! In two words, we may sum it up broadly: In this world "self" reigns, and Christ is (though oft proffered) refused. The world of to-day is indeed a modern Laish, lying in the wicked one (1 John v. 19); without God, without Christ, and having no hope (Eph. ii. 12).

But the eye of God was fixed on careless, selfish, godless Laish, and solemn and sudden judgment was in store. We read, "And the children of Dan went their way: . . . and came unto Laish, unto a people that were at quiet and secure: and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire. And there was *no deliverer*, because it was far from Zidon, and they had no business with any man" (vers. 26-28).

And the eye of God is fixed too on this careless, selfish, godless world of to-day (and fixed on you); and though judgment is His strange work, and mercy His joy, and though abounding grace lingers till the last moment, judgment is appointed, and judgment will come. Tens of thousands are doing what is right in their own eyes, living quietly and securely, saying, "Peace and safety," but sudden

destruction will surely overtake them (1 Thess. v. 8). And in that day, as in the day of the calamity of Laish, there will be *no deliverer* for the guilty. They shall not escape (Heb. ii. 4). The inhabitants of Laish lived far from Zidon, and had no business with those who dwelt there, but were, so to speak, wrapped up in themselves, so that when the foe came they cried in vain for help. And the men of the world, who have kept aloof from their neighbours, who might have shown them in the days of their prosperity the folly of being careless in the present without providing against the future, will find, when judgment sweeps the scene, that they have forsaken their own mercies, and that it is too late to find a deliverer.

But, dear reader, though you may not care to have to do with us, as may be, you think us, far too religious, we see your danger, and would have to do with you, and warn you, ere it be too late, of the threatened judgment of God (Acts xviii. 30, 31), and of the consummate folly of dwelling carelessly, quiet and secure, immersed in the pleasures, follies, and business of this life. Judgment is at your very door (Jas. v. 9). This world is doomed, as certain as the world in Noah's day, or Sodom and Gomorrah, Babylon in Belshazzar's, or Jerusalem in the time of the apostles (Gen. vii., xix.; Dan. v.; Luke xxi.). There will be *no deliverer* then, as there was none at Laish. But, thank God, there is a Deliverer to-day, a Saviour and a great One (Isa. xix. 20), if you will only turn to Him. His name

is *Jesus*, which denotes a Saviour, for He shall save His people from their sins (Matt. i. 21).

You may follow the course of the nineteenth century, without a single blush of shame; but this poor shameless world will surely be put to shame, and you along with it, in the presence of the Lord. The tables will be turned then. An infidel world, with a hypocritical religious garb, put the Son of God to shame in the past, and pursues the same fearful course till to-day; but soon the Son of God will return in power, to the utter discomfiture and eternal shame of all His foes.

You may seek to find a refuge for your uneasy conscience in a religious profession, but no plea of church or chapel going, or religious morality, will stand you in stead at that moment. God wants reality. Sham Christians can be counted by thousands, miserable counterfeits of the enemy, miserable sinners confessed; but on the threshold of true Christianity stands inscribed, "*Ye must be born again.*" If you think that means your baptism, you are labouring under the greatest delusion. It is a distinct operation of the Spirit of God in the soul. And without it, you can neither see, nor enter the kingdom of God (John iii. 3-5). Oh, sinner, when will you be real? God sees behind your religious mask; He knows you, and that *thoroughly*. The whole depth of iniquity of your desperately deceitful and wicked heart has been fathomed to the very bottom by Him (Jer. xvii. 9). Then, when *will* you look eternal realities in the

face, and face them? You *must*, but alas, alas! if you face them in your sins, nought but eternal perdition can be your sure and irretrievable portion. But if you face them to-day in self-judgment before God, He presents you a Deliverer, His Son, Christ Jesus the Lord, a present and everlasting Saviour for every one that believeth! Then *look to Him*, to Him alone, poor burdened sinner, doomed inhabitant of this Laish world, and *be ye saved* (Isa. xlv. 22).

And what a salvation! God's salvation! God's salvation for the guilty and the lost, the careless sinners of this ruined godless world! God's salvation, full, free, and eternal, prepared for and proffered to all, everywhere. All the price is paid; *the blood*, the *precious blood* of His Son, was the cost. Slowly the centuries have rolled away into the past since the day that He laid down His life, and still He sits at the right hand of God in glory, a living, present, and eternal Saviour, with arms of mercy outstretched, through the righteousness of God, to welcome all who flee to Him. And grace triumphant reigns. What a God is our God! What a Saviour is our Saviour! Oh, careless, heedless sinner, what think ye of Christ's blood? Without it, there is *no* remission; with it, *full and eternal* remission. Sinner, trust in the precious blood while ye may, and follow the precious Saviour till He comes,—for the modern Laish is doomed!

"I COME QUICKLY."



THREE does the Lord Jesus say these words in the final chapter of Scripture. Let me quote them.

(1.) "Behold, I come quickly. Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (Rev. xxii. 7).

Here we have the value of keeping the prophetic word pressed on us. Prophecy deals with the earth, and reveals the solemn fact that the besom of judgment is about to sweep this godless scene of man's sin, pride, and folly, ere the Son of Man can "reign in righteousness," as He most assuredly will do. Solemn fact for "men of the world, which have their portion in this life" (Ps. xvii. 14). If you are of such, my reader, it is about time you woke up to see your imminent danger.

(2.) "And, behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (ver. 12). This is surely sweet encouragement to every labourer for Christ. Go labour on, my brother, my sister, in Christ. Your Master will not forget your toil, and your reward is assured, even though your success be apparently small. He will say, "Well done!" by-and-by, to the "faithful and good servant," even though he may not have been as successful as some others. Toil on, work on, pray, preach, visit, exhort, plead with souls, and seek to win them for Christ. The

rebuff day and the reproach day will soon be over, and the reward day is at hand.

(3.) "Surely I come quickly" (ver. 20). This is what the loving heart wants. We want to see Him face to face, and soon, very soon, we shall. Fellow-saint, "quickly" is His word. Are we waiting and watching for Him? He is at hand. While you read this He may be here. Our future is assured. The next thing we are certain about is this:—"The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17). Glorious prospect! Heavenly hope! Eternal rest! Who would not be a Christian in view of this?

But there is a solemn side even to this blessed truth. What is it? Our blessing will be the world's doom. The day of the Gospel will then be over for ever. This should make us deeply earnest now to gather in the lost ones.

Reader, if you are not yet saved, let me finally and affectionately urge you to bow to, and believe in the Lord Jesus, that you may be ready for His second advent, for He does not lightly say thrice—

"I COME QUICKLY."