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The Gospel Messenger.

“APPARENTLY INJUDICIOUSLY.”

COLONEL W—— had for a good many years led a quiet and somewhat secluded life, after retiring from the army. He was closely connected with one of our most famous ducal families; but, after his conversion to God, finding that life in London society was no longer congenial to him, he retired into the country, and in his rural home associated with a little band of Christians, with whom he was in sympathy. Happening to have occasion to go to the Continent, and wishing to be in London for a day or two before starting, he wrote to his nephew, the Duke of ——, asking him if he could put him up.

Knowing his uncle's indisposition to mingle in gay society, the duke wrote back to say that he was always delighted to see him, but that he ought to mention that there would be a dinner-party on the night on which he proposed to arrive, and that the house would be filled with company that might not be congenial to him. The colonel replied that he would be glad to make use of his nephew's hospitality, without participating in the entertainments to which he referred. He would have dinner by him-

self in the sitting-room attached to his bedroom, and would be glad of a quiet evening, if left to himself.

The arrangement was made, and the colonel was just preparing to spend an hour alone with his Bible, when something seemed to say to him, "You are probably the only man in this house who knows anything about the way of salvation, and here you are preparing to spend a quiet evening in selfish enjoyment of your privileges, while these poor souls around you may be perishing for the lack of the help that you alone can give."

So strong was the impression that he rang for the footman, and sent a message to the duke that he had altered his mind and would come down to dinner. On entering the drawing-room he was introduced to a particularly gay, and, as he judged, thoughtless young lady, whom he was asked to take in to dinner. She was a beautiful girl—one of the belles of the season—and about the last person that he would have chosen to be thus thrown into contact with; as it seemed so unlikely that he would have any opportunity of saying a suitable word to her.

But he bethought himself that he had left his room much against his own inclinations, and with the desire to be of service to some human soul, and this was the person to whom, in the providence of God, he had been introduced; and therefore it was to her, he concluded, that he had to deliver his message. As, however, it was uncertain if he would be able to converse with her afterwards, it seemed

to him as if there was nothing else for it but rush to the point at once.

And so, not without betraying some little agitation and embarrassment in his manner, he contrived to blurt out a very personal question as to the spiritual condition of his new acquaintance on the way to the dining-room. He had no sooner uttered the words than his judgment told him that he had made a grave mistake, and, as seemed probable, had done harm instead of good.

As for the young lady thus addressed, she made no attempt to conceal her indignation. Setting him down as an intolerable fanatic, she deliberately turned from him, took no sort of notice of him all through dinner, and occupied herself all the time with a young officer who sat next her on the other side, and who was a companion much more to her taste.

The poor colonel spent a miserable hour over that dinner table. He thought he had made a mistake in being there at all; it was no place for him. How was it possible for him to do his Master's work amidst such unfavourable surroundings? And so, as soon as he could rejoin the ladies in the drawing-room, he sought the young lady out, and expressed his regret at his injudiciousness, hoping, at the same time, that she would not allow the claims of the Master to be prejudiced by the blunder of the servant.

She received his apology with a distant bow, and at once turned away. And after a few more miserable moments in the drawing-room, the colonel found an early opportunity of retiring to his room, oppressed

with the thought that he had made a double mistake ; he had been injudicious in appearing at all, and still more injudicious in “ speaking unadvisedly with his lips,” though with the best intentions.

His stay on the Continent extended over several weeks, and while still on his travels, he received a telegram which had pursued him from place to place, containing a message to this effect :—“ Would Colonel W—— visit at once a young lady residing in Paris, to whom he spoke about her soul, apparently injudiciously, at a dinner-party at —— House, as she is very ill.”

Without a moment's hesitation he set out for Paris, and found the poor girl, whom he had seen in all the pride of health and beauty only a few weeks before, far gone in what is commonly called “ galloping consumption.”

He had no sooner entered the room than she stretched out both hands eagerly towards him, exclaiming, “ My dear Colonel W——, I have to thank you for my soul's salvation. But do not think I have brought you all this way merely to express my thanks. I wanted to explain to you that the very thing that made your effort seem so injudicious was the very thing that God used to save my soul. It was just because the time seemed so inappropriate, and your procedure so extraordinary, and because I saw what an effort it cost you to speak as you did, that I became more and more impressed with a conviction of your sincerity.

“ Had you spoken at a time when circumstances

might have seemed to invite a 'goody' talk from a man making a great religious profession, I should have looked on the whole thing as cant, and probably it would have made no impression on me. But I kept asking myself, "What could make that man speak to me in that ridiculous way? Why should he have made such a fool of himself? Evidently it cost him a great effort to blurt out those absurd inquiries about my soul; what could he do it for? Surely he must have believed what he said, and believed it intensely. But if he is right, I must be all wrong.' So the thing kept working in my heart, until at last I began to read my Bible for myself and to pray.

"At last the light broke in on me, and I found the salvation that you had spoken to me about. I gave myself fully over to the Lord, determined to serve Him, by His grace, as faithfully as I had served the world. I had hoped for a long life of usefulness, but God has willed it otherwise. Only a few days after my conversion I caught a chill, which brought on pneumonia, and that has been followed by this terribly rapid decline; and now the end is very near.

"Thank God, and, under Him, thank you, I have nothing to fear from death, and I am happily awaiting the summons. But I did want to say to you ere I pass away, Go on! Be instant out of season as well as in season. Don't mind if you seem to meet with rebuffs and discouragements as you did from me. You may be quite sure that your work will be ultimately rewarded. Thank you a thousand times for the saving of my soul."

ANON.

CONVERSION.

TO many the word "conversion" has an unpleasant sound, for it signifies a change from one course to another—from the ways of the world to those of God, and this change the natural heart does not like.

Hence some would apply the word to the heathen or to the Jews, and endeavour to escape its application to the professing Christian. No doubt it relates to the Jews and to the heathen, but conversion to God is absolutely necessary to every man under heaven.

What is conversion? It is in Scripture a turning to God, and this turn must take place in the history of every soul of man in order to his entrance into heaven. The fact is that man is in a state of alienation from God; every man, let his circumstances be what they may—the man of Christendom, or the man of Heathendom—his heart is by nature opposed to God, and, indeed, hates Him.

One thing is preparatory to conversion, and that is the "new birth." This is the distinct work of God's Spirit in the conscience leading to the change in heart and ways, which are seen in conversion.

At the new birth, a disposition is produced which hates sin and loves God; indeed, a nature is implanted which makes the presence of God no longer repulsive and fearsome, but attractive and blessed, so that the effect, in conversion, is godliness of life.

Hence the Lord in His faithful ministry here below said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 3).

This note was taken up by His servants in the Acts. The apostle Peter said, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out," as he preached in Solomon's Porch immediately after the great day of Pentecost.

This audience was, no doubt, composed of Jews; but in chapter xi. 21, we find that, as the result of the labours of the scattered disciples, a great number of the Grecians believed and turned to the Lord (the word turned is that used for converted), and these Grecians, though Jews by birth, were so mixed up with Greeks as to speak their language. Conversion, therefore, was affecting others besides those of the Jewish nation.

This was extended to the Gentiles, in chapter xxvi. 20, when Paul preached that they should "repent and turn to God (conversion), and do works meet for repentance."

Finally, we read that the Thessalonians "turned to God from idols." Hence, whether we have regard to the Jews under the ministry of the Lord, or to the Jews, Grecians, and Gentiles under that of the servants who followed Him, the self-same primary truth of conversion was insisted on in its necessity. It is the first step in the divine life of every child of God, then and now. And, indeed, the after-life of the believer is but the evidence of his conversion to

God. There may be, alas, many a slip (for who is sinless?), but he has the grace and power of the Spirit to support him all his journey through, so that he may resemble the light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

There are, no doubt, varied degrees in the energy of this life in different souls, yet conversion is a tremendous reality wherever it exists.

We speak of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus; and we are familiar with the incidents of his apostolic career; yet, wonderful as was the grace that wrought in him, as a vessel, his conversion was of the same kind as any other. The effects were mighty, and the change was both radical and thorough, but the Power by which it was produced was the same as in all other cases.

Now this change is not only necessary, but, spite of the possibly unpleasant sound of the word describing it, it is unspeakably blessed.

Conversion to God is, at first, being put right with Him, and that implies pardon, peace, reconciliation, and the sense of His favour. It is, therefore, a precious experience.

To be right with God is an infinite joy and blessing. It is the Spirit-given result of the work of our Lord Jesus in death and resurrection; by faith, we have peace with God through Him. We joy in God; we are His children. All this is blessed, and fills the heart with praise.

Then there is the privilege of outward testimony and service, and also of suffering for Christ's sake.

But in all this needed exercise the soul is sustained and supported; while, at the close, the coming of the Lord, and being with Him for ever, is the portion of the converted soul.

Reader, are you such?

J. W. S.

"I SANG IT TRUE THE NIGHT."

"Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully."—LUKE xix. 5, 6.

A LARGE audience was gathered together on the evening of 25th September 1904, in Freemasons' Hall, Edinburgh, to hear Mr H. G——, a servant of the Lord from Canada, preach the gospel. He spoke sweetly and powerfully on the tale of Zaccheus coming to Jesus, and, after describing the unsatisfied state of the rich man's heart, commented much on the desire that was in that heart to see Jesus, and how that wish was effected. The climbing of the sycamore tree demonstrated the earnestness of the man who sought to see Jesus, and the Lord's words, "Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for *to-day* I must abide at thy house," unfolded the deeper desire of the blessed Lord to meet the cravings of the one who sought to see Himself.

God's way of salvation through faith in Jesus was simply unfolded, and the preacher then pressed the

importance of immediate decision, "To-day" being the only certain moment in which the unsaved sinner could find and know the loving Saviour. The wisdom and obedience of Zaccheus were commended to the imitation of his audience, pressed home by the assurance that any who really received Jesus would know that night what Zaccheus knew, as the Lord said to him, "*This day* is salvation come to this house" (ver. 9). The only qualification necessary to ensure the knowledge of a present salvation was for the sinner to take his true place before God as "lost," and then grasp joyfully the blessed tidings that fell from the Lord's own lips, namely, that "the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which *was lost*" (ver. 10).

The preaching concluded, I gave out the well-known hymn, "I've found a Friend, oh, such a Friend," and, before singing it, urged upon the audience the gravity of singing such words, unless they were the true expression of the heart's faith and feeling. If they had not decided for Christ, I begged them not to sing it; on the other hand, if they had found the Saviour, I said, "Sing it with all your heart."

An after-meeting was held, in which I came across a tall, fine-looking girl of seventeen, who most readily and earnestly entered into conversation with me. She appeared to have some little difficulty as to confessing Christ, though she averred that she now believed in Him. I thereon read to her this scripture, "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth,

and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that 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. 8, 9, 10). These verses helped her greatly; she saw that everything turned on believing in her heart, and confessing with her mouth, and that she could get right with God only in her *heart*, and then she could get right with man through her *mouth*, by confession. Joy filled her soul, as she said, "I do believe in my heart that Jesus died for me, and that God has raised Him from the dead; and henceforth I trust I shall not be ashamed to confess Him as my Lord with my mouth."

The meeting broke up, and she went toward her home with her sister, a Christian young woman of some years' standing, who had brought her to the Hall for the first time that Lord's Day evening. Little was said till a point was reached where the two sisters had to part company. She then took her sister's hand, grasped it for almost a minute, saying nothing; and then, with much emotion ejaculated, "Jeanie, when the Doctor gave out that hymn, and read the verses, I said to myself, 'I'll sing it true the night; I'll decide for Christ, and be a Christian henceforth.'"

"And did you sing it to-night, Jennie?" was Jeanie's reply.

"Oh, yes, *I sang it true the night*," was her emphatic answer.

"Then you are converted, and are a Christian, like me?" said Jeanie.

"Yes, I am," she replied; "from to-night I am determined to be the Lord's, and to follow and serve Him."

The sisters parted, and the young convert went to her place of service. She had been there not two weeks, having come from the south of Scotland to gain some practical experience in housework, that, in a few months, she might return to keep her father's house, as her mother was dead, and the old grey-haired man greatly prized her presence and assistance.

No sooner had Jennie reached home than her confession of Christ took practical shape. She had an intimate, but unsaved, young friend, in a hamlet near her home, and to her that night she thus wrote:—

"EDINBURGH, 25th September 1904.

"MY DEAR AGGIE,—You will be pleased to hear that I have to-night found Christ. Oh, Aggie dear, we are all sinners, but Christ died to save sinners, and all we have to do is to believe that He died to save us (you and me), dear Aggie. God so loved us that He gave His only Son to die for us, and His promise to us is that, if we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved. The man that was speaking to-night at the meeting made the way of salvation so plain, my only desire was to confess to Christ that I was a sinner, and take Him as my Saviour and Friend.

' Christ is the Saviour of sinners,
Saviour of sinners like me.'

A hymn was given out, and the speaker said, 'Now only think what you are saying. Let none sing this hymn who cannot really sing it truly.' The hymn was :—

' I've found a Friend, oh, such a Friend,
He loved me ere I knew Him ;
He drew me with the cords of love,
And thus He bound me to Him.
And round my heart still closely twine
Those ties which nought can sever,
For I am His, and He is mine,
For ever and for ever.

I've found a Friend, oh, such a Friend,
He bled, He died to save me ;
And not alone the gift of life,
But His own self He gave me.
Nought that I have my own I call,
I hold it for the Giver :
My heart, my strength, my life, my all,
Are His, and His for ever.

I've found a Friend, oh, such a Friend,
All power to Him is given
To guard me on my onward course,
And bring me safe to heaven.
Th' eternal glories gleam afar
To nerve my faint endeavour.
So now to watch—to work—to war,
And then to rest for ever.

I've found a Friend, oh, such a Friend,
So kind, and true, and tender ;
So wise a Counsellor and Guide,
So mighty a Defender.

From Him who loves me now so well
 What power my soul can sever ?
 Shall life, or death, or earth, or hell ?
 No, I am His for ever.'

Oh, Aggie dear, how sweet the last verse is. Read this hymn, please. I sang this hymn truly from my heart. Oh, Aggie dear, do come to Christ. None are too young. If either you or I should die to-morrow I am sure we should like to go to heaven. Well, we must live so that if we were called from this world we would be ready to go to be with Christ. Oh, Aggie dear, only believe on Christ, and thou shalt be saved. I cannot write more to-night, but will write soon again ; so, with love, I am your loving friend,

JENNIE S—.

" P.S.— Oh, Aggie, the Saviour's love for you is far greater than mine. He loved you so well that He died that you might have everlasting life. Please read John iii. 14, 15, 16. God bless you. I pray that you may soon be brought to Christ.—JENNIE."

Two days later she had occasion to send her sister Jeanie a post-card ; its closing words were :—

" From Him who loves me now so well
 What power my soul can sever ?
Shall life, or death, or earth, or hell ?
No, I am His for ever."

The next day she wrote to her father :—

" MY DEAR FATHER,—You will be overjoyed when I tell you that I am converted. I was at the meeting on Sunday night with Jeanie. Oh, father, if you had only been there ! The way of salvation was made so plain. I have taken Christ to be my Friend and Saviour.

'I've found a Friend, oh, such a Friend,
 He bled, He died to save me ;
 And not alone the gift of life,
 But His own self He gave me.
 Nought that I have my own I call,
 I hold it for the Giver :
 My heart, my strength, my life, my all,
 Are His, and His for ever.'

I have no time to write more, but will write soon again.
 I hope you are keeping well. Give my love to C——, and
 with love to yourself, I remain, your loving daughter,

JENNIE S——.

"P.S.—Oh, for a closer walk with God."

The following Lord's Day Jennie again had the privilege of hearing the Word of God twice, in the Hall where she was converted. Three days afterwards she was taken suddenly and seriously ill, and then, for a few days, was received into the house where her sister lived. While there, she said to Jeanie, "What a good thing it was that I was converted that night. How bad it would have been to have to seek Christ now I am feeling so ill." And ill indeed she was, for typhoid fever was beginning to do its deadly work in her system, and, when manifestly present, it was arranged that she should be transferred to the Fever Hospital. This took place on 10th October. That morning, about five o'clock, she said to her sister, "Daylight and darkness are all the same to me ; I am so happy in my Saviour's love ;" and then she quoted the lines—

"If I should pass through death's dark vale,
 My Saviour's with me then."

To this her sister rejoined, "Do you think the Lord is going to take you, Jennie? Would you be afraid to go?"

"Oh, no," she replied; "I'll then be with Jesus in glory. It's all right, Jeanie. If I am taken, perhaps Adam, and Tom, and Jim" (referring to her brothers) "would be converted, for they all liked me." *

Her sojourn in the hospital was less than a fortnight. On Lord's Day morning, 23rd October, when those around thought she was to rapidly convalesce, she died—quite suddenly from heart failure—the very day month of her conversion to the Lord.

And now, my dear reader, what about your soul? Have you yet found the Lord? If not, the foregoing true tale might surely press the words "make haste" on your memory, and lead you to immediate decision for Christ. This paper falls into your hands just as 1905 is beginning its course. Did 1904 close and leave you in your sins and in ignorance of Christ? Let the first month of the new year mark the all-important moment of your complete surrender to the Lord Jesus.

Imitate the writer of these simple letters, the first and the last she ever wrote, after her conversion. She was wise to decide when she did—wise to confess her Lord simply, boldly, and without delay. Truly, like Abel, she "being dead, yet speaketh." Heed her appeal to her friend, "Do come to Christ . . . only believe in Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

W. T. P. W.

* Since this was penned tidings of the conversion of one brother has come to hand.—ED. G. M.

"THE DEVIL'S CHAINS WERE SNAPPED."

"Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"—ZECH. ii. 2.

"**A**Y, sir, my heart is full to overflowing when I think of the mercy of our blessed God and Father to a poor rebel sinner such as I was. I will very gladly, as you wish to hear it, tell you a little of my life's history.

"Thank God I was blessed with a praying mother ; this, I am sure, will be one of my many themes for praise throughout eternity.

"When a young man I entered a large wholesale establishment in London, very soon to find myself the centre and leader of a band of young men as godless as myself. Our evenings were spent in riot and evil living, every penny of our money being spent in the devil's service.

"Having served my term in London, I determined to see other cities. One day I saw an advertisement in a paper telling of an opening in Dublin, which appeared to be exactly to my taste, and without taking the trouble to give any notice, I forthwith started off to the station accompanied by my sister, a dear Christian girl, who came to see me off.

"At the ticket office I found I had only sufficient money—less threepence—to take me to Chester. I don't know why, but that booking clerk gave me the threepence necessary to make up the amount from

his own pocket. My sister guessed my money-less condition, and tried to press some upon me, but I was all too proud to accept help from her; and so, with an appearance of high spirits, I bade her, the only one I loved in the world, good-bye.

“What a day that was, I shall never forget it. I had not a penny in my pocket to get food, and all the world was so cold. I almost began to feel that Satan was a bad master to serve.

“Arrived at Chester, I at once sought out a pawnbroker’s to try and get rid of my watch and chain. This was about the only thing of real value I had in the world—’twas a mother’s gift, and I had kept it as a sacred trust; but now money I must have, and my watch must go. Strange to say, I could not get a single Chester pawnbroker to take my watch and chain; they looked at me and then at my proffered pledge, and then declined it.

“After wandering about for hours, weak from hunger and worn with care, I by chance tried a jeweller’s, and after much ado, obtained a £10 loan on the watch and trinkets. With this sum in my possession, I managed to pay my way to Dublin, and generally set myself up and present myself suitably, when next day I applied for the situation.

“Strangely enough, I was taken on immediately and placed at the very work in which I had excelled in London; and very soon I made my mark in Dublin, and was recognised as a most pushing business man.

“But to return to early Dublin days. I soon discovered that the way to ingratiate oneself with the

principals was to assume a distinctly religious tone. And so it happened that, after the first week in my new quarters, I felt it might be a good move if I complained that I had been placed in night-quarters with a set of young fellows whose conduct exactly tallied with mine whilst I was in London.

"The chief to whom I complained at once took the hint, and I was quartered in another part of the building, with three or four godly young men as my companions. I had not bargained for this, but was certainly being thrashed for my miserable hypocrisy ; for, on the very first night, these young fellows pressed me to accompany them to a prayer-meeting, from which I pleaded to be excused, because of a sudden attack of neuralgia. The next night it was a Bible-reading, and to this invitation I must needs invent some other excuse. They at least soon saw beneath the mask I was trying to wear.

"I presently found myself in Dublin as in London, the leader of a thoroughly bad set. We spent our Sundays in open revelry, and our evenings in making ourselves a nuisance to the neighbourhood we might select for our incursions. Matters became at last serious ; we found the police had been set to watch for us, and again and again I was very nearly caught, and only by the merest chance escaped.

"One Sunday night some half-dozen of us had, after drinking ourselves into a state of partial madness, assaulted the police and generally interfered with foot-passengers. A crowd gathered, constables were called up, and we scattered and fled in all

directions. I found myself hastening along strange streets and quite alone, and yet fancied I heard the hue and cry behind me.

“At that moment I passed the open doors of some meeting-house or chapel, and for shelter I walked right in, and sat down amongst the congregation. I cannot tell what the speaker said, but I was spell-bound. The mighty power of God laid hold of me, and I sat a stricken sinner.

“The meeting over, any who were anxious were invited to remain for further help. I remained. I dared not move. Presently the speaker came and sat by my side.

“‘Are you saved, my friend?’ said he.

“‘No, indeed, I am not,’ I replied.

“‘Do you wish to be saved?’

“‘Oh, sir,’ I said, ‘I came in here to escape the police, but I find myself face to face with a holy God, and I am lost!’

“‘Friend, ’twas for the lost Jesus came—’twas for the sin-burdened Jesus died.’

“‘Yes, yes, I know all that, but I am such a great sinner. My sins are as a great mountain before me, and shut me out from God.’

“‘No, no, it is not so. Your very need and many sins only make you just the one suitable for all there is in the sinner’s Saviour, for He “came to call—not the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” See, my brother—oh! ’tis a matchless sight—that blessed Jesus, God’s blessed Son, the Holy One, hangs there on that cruel tree. From those loving hands and

feet and brow and side streams forth the precious blood, and it flows and flows to you. See, it covers the mountain of your dark sins—for "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin."'

"And as this dear servant of God spoke, the devil's chains were snapped, the heavy burden upon my soul was gone, and light and joy filled my once poor dark heart.

"Yes, sir, and all this happened more than forty years ago, and God has been, oh! so good to me. He has not only made me to rejoice in His great salvation, but has permitted me to tell others to their eternal blessing of this same grace which has saved me."

Such was the story told me by my aged friend of his own conversion to God, and in the November number of *The Gospel Messenger* for 1904, under the title, "Only a Word in the Train," will be found an illustration of the way God used him to others.

On the last Sunday in October I received my early copies of *The Gospel Messenger*, and expecting to meet my friend I thrust a copy in my pocket, proposing to myself to place it in his hands, and at the same time saying, "I wonder if you will recognise the little story, 'Only a Word in the Train,' which you will find in this number of the magazine?"

I duly reached the room in which the meeting was to be held, and my friend, whose story I have told so briefly, sat by my side. Before us on the table were the bread and the wine—tokens of the death of the One "who loved us and gave himself for us."

We had just finished singing a little hymn of praise to our risen Lord :—

“ His be the Victor’s name,
Who fought the fight alone ;
Triumphant saints no honour claim,
His conquest was their own.

By weakness and defeat
He won the meed and crown ;
Trod all our foes beneath His feet,
By being trodden down.

He hell in hell laid low ;
Made sin, He sin o’erthrew ;
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,
And Death by dying slew.

Bless, bless the Conqueror slain,
Slain in His victory ;
Who lived, who died, who lives again—
For thee, His Church, for thee ! ”

My friend arose to give thanks and praise, and dwelt much upon the sufferings of Jesus. How His deep love to His own led Him into such depths of woe. Said he, “ O Lord, we think of Thee with Thy blessed face marred more than any man’s. O Lord, we see Thee there. *Oh, that lovely, lovely face,* and they *spat* upon that lovely, lovely face——” He hesitated, sat down, soon sank into unconsciousness, and before the day closed was “ for ever with the Lord ”—gazing, without a veil, on that lovely, lovely face, to the eternal joy of his happy ransomed soul.

Reader, what of your life ? Are you a living fraud ? You may be cut off suddenly like my friend. He had

often wished he might pass away from the Lord's presence amongst His own on earth to the Lord's presence amongst His own in glory, and God granted the desire of his heart. But what about *you*? There are more sudden deaths than lingering sicknesses, and it may be your turn next. *Do*, I pray you, seek the Saviour now. “Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.”

G. W. H.

“DO WE BELIEVE?”

THE correspondence which has lately appeared in the London *Daily Telegraph* has brought to light a remarkable variety of opinion as to what English people believe. “Oxoniensis” letter raised the question of “Christian Belief.” Now Christian belief must necessarily depend on a Christian revelation, and raises two questions. Whom, or in whom, are we, as a professedly Christian people, to believe? And what? The only book that can give light upon these two questions is the Bible. Apart from that book all is darkness as to the Supreme Being (save the light creation affords as to His eternal power and godhead) and man's moral and spiritual condition, and as to what (for man) lies beyond the grave.

The effort of man's spiritual enemy has always been to set that book aside as a revelation from God,

or to raise such questions and doubts about it as to destroy its authority. To give up the Scriptures as being that revelation is to give up the foundation of the Christian faith. It is the Scriptures the Holy Spirit of God livingly applies to men's consciences and hearts. The Psalmist writes, "The entrance of thy words giveth light" (Ps. cxix. 130), and the apostle Paul says, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 17).

The strongest proofs of the truth and of the inspiration of the Scriptures are those found in its own pages. The creation of light before the sun, as stated in Genesis i., and the rotundity of the earth (Isa. xl.), while all the world until comparatively recent years believed the contrary are, amongst others, strong proofs; to which may be added the preservation of the Jews as a people distinct from others for two thousand years.

Returning to the question—

WHO IS TO BE BELIEVED?

It is the Supreme Being revealed in Scripture as Creator and as Saviour. Not a Supreme Being of men's reasonings or imaginations, for that would give a hundred gods and more, but a Being who is revealed to man in the Scriptures, and livingly in and by Him who bears the name of "the Word of God"—the Lord Jesus Christ. "No man has seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John i. 18). "He that hath seen me hath seen the

Father" (John xiv. 9). This is He who in the Scriptures and in the Person of "the Son" is the object of faith. The apostle Paul says, "I know whom I have believed" (2 Tim. i. 12). Then as to

WHAT IS TO BE BELIEVED?

This involves the question of man's moral condition and what means or way of recovery or salvation for man is found in the Divine revelation.

It has not been sufficiently noticed in the letters published that man's condition is of a twofold character. First, he is, as a creature in responsibility to the Creator, guilty of numberless sins—or in other words, a sinner before God and needs forgiveness. Second, he is in heart and disposition a morally ruined creature, the springs of his moral being are poisoned by sin, and he is a corrupt fountain, "for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matt. xv. 19), so that he "must (to use the language of John iii.) be born again."

Now the Scriptures are a testimony from God of a work done (the atoning death of Christ) which God, in the gospel, sets forth as a propitiatory (or mercy seat) for "faith in his blood" (Rom. iii. 25), and by which He can righteously forgive sins to every repentant sinner. No one during Christ's lifetime came to Him with repentance but got what the woman in Simon's house got—"Thy sins be forgiven thee: thy faith hath saved thee. . . . go in peace" (see Luke vii. 48-50)—and no one now can turn to

God in repentance and confession of sins—one of the marks of repentance—but will get the same. In connection with this it is most striking that the New Testament opens with the call for repentance by John the Baptist, and by Christ, and this call is continued through the apostles. “But 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 hath raised him from the dead” (Acts xvii. 30).

There is no real Christian faith that is not accompanied by repentance. There may be a mental assent to the truths of Christianity—an educational faith. While this may lead to a measure of self-culture in restraining the passions and in self-improvement, yet it is powerless to implant in man spiritual life, so affecting him in the moral roots or springs of his being that the principles taught in the “Sermon on the Mount” become not only possible but congenial to him. This educational faith is the faith found wanting (ineffective) in John ii. 23-25, and is immediately followed by the remarkable third chapter teaching the necessity of new birth. This it is that meets man’s actual, moral, and spiritual condition. Hence our Lord’s solemn words to Nicodemus—“Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye *must* be born again” (John iii. 7). This is the sovereign act of God by His Spirit, and it is in this way (and having purgation of his sins by the blood

of Christ) that man becomes a “new bottle”—to use the figurative word of Matthew ix. 17—and can be a recipient of the Holy Spirit, as taught in John iv. where Jesus says, “If thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of him and he would have given thee living water,” which, for the believer, “shall be in him a well (a fountain) of water springing up into everlasting life” (vers. 10, 14).

Now, the question raised by “Oxoniensis” as to the honesty and reality of professed Christian belief, testing it by the Sermon on the Mount, can be answered. A mere mental, educational, or ecclesiastical faith will not stand that test, but the regenerated man made capable by the Spirit, can; for, although not perfectly, as seen in his Master—the Lord Jesus Christ—yet he seeks such perfection, and there will be seen in his life some or many of the lovely features of divine life in man there taught. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Gal. v. 22). These are not found in the natural man but are seen in the spiritual man—the one “born of the Spirit,” and these are the fruits contemplated in the Sermon on the Mount.

It may be said no one can effect new birth for himself—that is so, and no one can command the gift of the Holy Spirit, but is it not written, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that

ask him?" (Luke xi. 13). And it may be added, that though man is not responsible in respect of "new birth" and the gift of the Holy Spirit, yet he is responsible to repent and believe the gospel. This is the platform upon which he can meet God and find Him "a just God and a Saviour"; and from such the gift of the Holy Spirit will not be withheld, but, the rather, freely given, as freely as God forgives the sins of them that turn to Him.

God delights to give. He has proved His love to man in the gift of His Son "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life"; and the scripture already quoted (John iv.) shows from whom the priceless gift of the Holy Spirit can be got, and what the effect of that will be in the recipient.

Faith then becomes, by the Holy Spirit, a living force in our souls and a power in our lives, and we shall know what it is to possess the "Christian faith"—and the reality and joy of a living Christianity.

F. S. C.

FRAGMENT.

I GET in Christ the revelation of my place with God, and that, consequent upon the blessed truth that He has taken away the sin that shut me out from the presence of God, and has gone up before the Father, that I may have the very same place that belongs to Him as the Son of the Father.

J. N. D.

"THE HAPPIEST PERSON I EVER SAW."

A MILITARY officer, young, full of energy, health and spirits, went out one day to bathe. Plunging fearlessly in, but miscalculating the depth of the water, his head came in violent contact with the ground, and in an instant he was paralysed. Injury to the brain and spine reduced him in a moment from vigour to helplessness as complete as a new-born infant. The unfortunate man would have found there a watery grave, but that his leap had been witnessed by some people, who rescued him and bore him to hospital.

When the poor sufferer realised the full extent of his injury his agony of mind was terrible. He cursed his misfortune—and cursed the action of those who drew him from the water. Why did they not let him drown? What use was life to him now, a helpless log that he was? Why didn't they let him die? He wished he were dead. And so the wretched man raved, in his misery and despair; and no one could soothe him, for he would listen to none.

Mrs B——, one of the visitors at that hospital, was told of this sad case, and entreated to say something that would bring him peace and comfort.

Walking slowly down the ward in which he lay, on her way to visit another patient, she simply said, very quietly, as she passed the officer's bed, "The

happiest person I ever saw in my life was a woman who was completely paralysed, and who had lain on her back for twenty-five years." She did not add another word, but passed on ; and he made no sign that he had heard.

Another day, on passing his bed, she repeated the words without comment ; still there was no sign or movement, and she passed on.

A third day she was there, and once more she said, just in the same manner, "The happiest person I ever saw in my life was a woman who was completely paralysed, and who had lain on her back for twenty-five years."

But this time the officer was watching her, and when she had finished speaking, he said, "This is the third time you have repeated those words. Who was that woman ? Tell me about her."

Thankful for this first awakening of an interest in something beyond his own trying circumstances, Mrs B—— related the story of the one alluded to ; one to whom Christ was precious ; poor, almost blind, but intensely happy ; rejoicing in having God, and, having Him, wanting nothing more. She told the story without any remarks of her own, and then quietly turned away to visit another patient.

When she next appeared in that ward, it was evident the officer was eagerly on the look-out for her ; and as she came near, his first words were, "Tell me about that woman again."

With deepened interest he listened to the strange and touching story, and now Mrs B—— saw that

the time had come, for which she had so earnestly prayed, when he would not refuse to listen to God's message of love. Opposition had vanished.

About this time some one slipped a card over the screen by the side of his bed, having on it "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). Little by little the light broke in upon his soul, with the consequence that life and happiness came also. He became a changed man, for, as he told Mrs B——, "The text and the story had done their work." To say that he was perfectly contented with his lot does not express one-half the truth. He thanked God for what had befallen him, and acknowledged that it was the best thing that could possibly have happened him, and that he would not have had it different if he could.

When Mrs B——, before going abroad, called to take leave of him, he said to her—"When you tell the story of the happiest woman, tell my story also, and say that you knew another paralytic who, though he lost all that he most valued on earth, yet, having found Christ, he found far greater happiness than he had ever known before."

Soon afterwards he died, rejoicing. It was no leap in the dark, as when he plunged into the shallow water, ignorant of its depth, and not knowing what was below the surface. He knew that the plunge into eternity would only land him safe with the One who had loved him and died for him. One

for whom he had never cared when all went well with him, but whom he had learned the love of when drawn aside from the world by what the "world" would call an accident. So, he fell asleep in Jesus.

Surely, on hearing a narrative like the foregoing, we must exclaim, "What hath God wrought" (Num. xxiii. 23). What a miracle of love and mercy. It is for our profit that He sends trials and sorrows. Submission to God's will and confidence in His love can take all bitterness from sorrow, and can bring a flood of ineffable happiness into the soul. But deep, true, lasting happiness is only found by the Christian who, "reconciled to God" (2 Cor. v. 20), is reconciled to His will, and knows that "all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. viii.).

ANON.

IF I look at my sins in connection with the claims of God as a Judge, I find, in the cross, a perfect settlement of those claims. God, as a Judge, has been divinely satisfied—yea, glorified, in the cross. But there is more than this. God had affections as well as claims; and, in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, all those affections are sweetly and touchingly told out into the sinner's ear; while, at the same time, he is made the partaker of a new nature, which is capable of enjoying those affections and of having fellowship with the heart from which they flow.

C. H. M.

“ABOVE FORTY YEARS OLD.”

[“The man was above forty years old on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.”—ACTS iv. 22.]

THOSE who have preached the gospel and laboured for the conversion of the souls of men and women have had to confront the appalling fact that few indeed are delivered from Satan's power who have passed their fortieth year in the service of sin. What a sight it is for angels and for men to witness when a sinner “above forty years old” is seen upon his knees crying to God for mercy and salvation.

Forty in Scripture is the numeral which sets forth “perfected probation in responsibility to God.” Many proofs of this might be given, but it will suffice to recall the solemn fact that for forty years God proved Israel in the wilderness—showering His mercies upon them, feeding them with angels' food, and meeting their every need. But the people hardened their hearts, so that, at the expiration of the forty years, God was grieved with that generation, and said, “They do alway err in their hearts, and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, *They shall not enter into my rest*” (Heb. iii. 10, 11).

God's governmental dealings are the same with “a man only” as with “a nation” (see Job xxxiv. 29).

But none need despair. *If the forty-year-old sinner is only prepared to bow, God is prepared to*

bless. We have seen the wonderful grace of God among the aged lately in a most marked way; as though He were gathering up the fragments before the final closing of the "door of mercy." So that if my reader has passed his or her probationary period, so to speak, and is not yet saved, I desire to record the following narrative for your encouragement and help, trusting it may lead you to cast yourself upon the mercy of God that He may yet pardon you.

It was during the Tent season just closed. We had pitched the Gospel Tent at P——, and found it a very hard place indeed. Spiritual darkness and deadness seemed to have settled upon the people generally, but soul-concern could be seen upon the faces of a few. One woman particularly struck my attention, and, as she left the tent, I asked her if she would like me to visit her. "I wish you would, sir," she replied, her miserable face putting on a decidedly hopeful look.

Finding her cottage next day, I took my seat inside, to seek to help her in her soul trouble. "I hope you won't mind, sir," said she, "I have asked my father-in-law to come in and see you too—he is as troubled as I am. I have been telling him all you have told us at the Tent. See, here he comes."

Looking through the window, my eyes alighted upon a poor old man on crutches, feeling his way along the garden rails toward the house. With great difficulty he entered and took his seat.

Poor old man! totally blind! one leg off at the hip! the other leg straight, having no knee-cap!

the left shoulder crippled and fixed! seventy-two years of age—what a wreck of humanity!! Who would have picked up one so useless (humanly speaking) but the God of all grace?

"Then you too are troubled about your sins, Mr P——," I inquired.

"I am indeed, sir, and have been for two years past, ever since the blindness came on," he replied, turning his sightless eyes to me.

"Ah! then I see God has spoken to you loudly before by the accidents which have crippled your limbs. But it was not until He had closed your eyes to the things of earth that you began to think of the things of heaven, eh?"

"Yes, that is about it, sir. I know I have been a hard, hard sinner!" And here the tears gushed out of those sightless eyes. A more pitiable object I had never seen!

"Do you think He will forgive me, sir?"

"Of course He will," I replied, turning to Acts xiii. 38, 39. "Hearken to what He says — 'Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man (Christ Jesus) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.'"

"A lady once told me that before, sir, and read it out of her Bible, but I can't get hold of it, somehow, for myself, though I want to."

"Well, now, let me try and help you. In the first place, have you repented?"

"I have told God what a sinner I am, sir, and asked Him to forgive me many a time. Is that repenting?"

"Yes, if you are downright sorry for your sins?"

"I am that, sir!"

"Well, then, *repentance* is the first thing and *belief* is the second, for the Lord Jesus Himself preached, 'Repent ye and believe the gospel' (Mark i. 15). And this verse I have read to you says—'*All that believe are justified.*' Now if you have repented, the next question is—do you believe?"

"Yes, I do, sir!"

"What do you believe?"

"I believe that Jesus died for me, a poor old sinner!"

"Thank God! for He says, 'All that believe are *justified*'—do you know what that means?"

"Not exactly, sir."

"The word justified means cleared. God would have you know that through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are as clear of your sins as Christ Himself is clear, for 'He was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ' (Rom. iv. 25, v. 1).

¶ "But now I have another thing to show you which is necessary to salvation, that is *confession*. Turning to Romans x. 8-10, I read: 'What saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach. That if thou shalt *confess* with thy mouth Jesus as

Lord (R.V.), 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.' Is that clear to you?" I asked.

"Yes, sir; but how must I do it?"

"I will show you how unbelieving Thomas did it, and that should help you (John xx. 26-29). When Jesus rose from the dead, He showed Himself to His disciples, but Thomas Didymus was not present and would not believe that He was risen, so that the Lord Jesus, ever gracious, had to come again into their midst. 'Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side; and be not *faithless* but *believing*. And Thomas answered and said unto him, *My Lord and my God!* Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast *seen* me, thou hast *believed*; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.'

"Now, Mr P——, if Jesus stood before you in person you could not see Him, for you are blind; but now, having believed on Him, you are, according to His Word, one of the blessed, and He is only waiting for you to confess Him as Thomas did, and He will save you all along the journey home."

The old man had sat with his cap on until this, but lifting up now the only sound limb he had, and removing his cap, the tears rolling down his cheeks and tears in his very words, turning his sightless eyes

upward, as simple as a child, he cried—"My Lord and——' what else did he say, sir?"

"My Lord and my God!"

"My Lord and my God!" repeated the old man, and we verily believe Mr P——'s name was, at that moment, confessed by our Lord Jesus Christ in heaven. For did He not say, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. x. 32)?

Turning to the daughter-in-law, who had witnessed all this, and whose tears were flowing freely, I began to inquire about her difficulties. "They are all gone now, sir. I can see it all so plain now, and can now say He is 'my Lord and my God,' for I do believe that Jesus died for me."

The poor old man hadn't a knee that he could bend, but his head and, we believe, his heart too was bowed as we knelt down and thanked God for His mercy in saving them both in that cottage that day.

What a miracle of grace, "for the man, and the woman also, were above forty years old." Praise God for all!

Now don't delay longer, my reader. God in His mercy and grace is waiting to bless you if you only "*repent.*" Come to Him now, just as you are, whatever your age, or how many your sins. Don't wait until He has to smash you to pieces, and close your eyes in blindness, so as to make you bow! Better, though, that He should do this than allow you to close your eyes in death—without His pardon—only to wake up in hell. "He doth not afflict

willingly nor grieve the children of men." "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).

I beseech you, reader, to press into that word "*whosoever*," for it means you, *young or old*. Begin this New Year with God, and you will spend eternity with Him.

E. E. C.

FORTY YEARS OF ANXIETY.

IN her eighty-eighth year and not yet at peace with God, was the sad state of an old lady in Norfolk. She had several conversations with a Christian friend, who elicited the fact that for forty years she had been anxious about her soul and longing for the assurance of the forgiveness of sins.

Her anxiety deepened, and being in the dark as to God's way of salvation, she bethought herself that perhaps she prayed too little. To remedy this, she made her way more frequently to her bedside and often stayed longer than hitherto. Alas for her hope! No peace resulted; and one day as she was kneeling there, the thought flashed across her, "I am like the Pharisees, who made long prayers, and the Lord said, 'Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.'" She arose from her knees more perplexed than ever.

Not long after this her Christian friend again called upon her and sought to present to her Jesus, the risen Saviour, as the One who has done the work and has satisfied God as to every charge of guilt He had against her. But her old cry prevailed: "But, sir, you know I cannot feel it." He left her after pointing out to her that it was not the inward look for feelings but the outward look of faith to Christ that gave assurance and peace.

Two days after this, as she was meditating upon the message from God she had heard, light broke into her soul, and for the first time in her long life she was able to look away from self and look to Jesus, the Saviour of sinners. Immediately she was set at liberty, and her heart was filled with joy.

Now her heart was so full that she longed to be able to let her friend, who had so faithfully presented the gospel to her, hear the good news. A letter must be written, and sitting down she thereupon wrote the following happy testimony:—

"SIR,—I am sure you will forgive me for writing to you when you know what I am going to tell you. The blessed Lord Jesus Christ has shown me that I *am* saved; not that He will save me, but He *has* saved me. Now I can say I am pardoned and free and 'This is the Saviour for me, Oh, how I thank Him, and you, too, that I know I am saved, and may the Lord Jesus increase my faith! I felt that I must write to you as the time seemed so long before I expected to see you.—Yours sincerely, M. L."

Thus the long-suffering of the God of all grace was manifested towards one whose life had been extended far beyond its allotted space, bringing her soul out of

doubt and anxiety into the joy of the assurance of salvation and the knowledge of forgiveness of sins.

Perchance, unknown to all but God, you, dear reader, have been longing to have that certainty as to your soul's salvation, which your Christian friends speak of with such joy. You have, doubtless, often examined yourself and your conduct until, dissatisfied and discouraged, you have been on the verge of despair.

Turn your eyes and your heart away from yourself and look to the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone can meet your need. His work at Calvary's cross perfectly met all God's righteous claims, and now God has placed Him at the right hand of the Majesty on high, as an expression of His perfect and complete satisfaction. It is the delight of God to say to every one who trusts His beloved Son, "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more."

If, however, you have never been in anxiety about your eternal welfare, consider the intense importance of availing yourself of the present opportunity, which will never be repeated throughout eternity. Mercy, pardon, salvation, and eternal blessings are within your reach, for they are all found in Christ. Moreover, God's message to you involves either your acceptance or refusal. Have you obeyed what God **COMMANDS**? for "God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts xvii. 30). If so, you will be prepared to receive what He **COMMENDS**, for "God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8).

TWO PICTURES.

No. 1.

A YOUNG lady, the daughter of worldly and wealthy parents, was induced by a Christian friend to accompany her to a prayer-meeting, and while there God's Spirit convicted her of sin, and she returned home deeply anxious about her soul. Her parents were dismayed at what they termed her folly, and for a time they tried in vain to induce her to return to the gay assemblies in which she used to find so much pleasure. At last, by promising to buy her the finest dress in the city, they induced her to attend one more ball—only one. She went—and returned home again without one desire to be saved.

It had been a cold night in winter, and being thinly attired she caught cold, which ended in fatal illness. A short time before she died she asked that her ball dress might be brought to her bedroom. It was brought, and, turning to her weeping parents, she said, "Father, mother, do you see that dress? It is the price of my soul; by its purchase you bribed me to go back into the world, and now I am dying, and I am lost."

Let us draw a curtain over that painful scene. Wealth and luxury were there and every comfort that this world could give, but it was a Christless household, and from it a Christless soul was passing out into eternity—out into the darkness for ever.

You agree with me that this is a dark picture. It is, but it is a true one ; and it will as certainly be true of you if you die unsaved. Turn with me to picture No. 2, but ere you do so ask yourself this question—Where shall I go when I leave this world and pass out into Eternity ?

No. 2.

Maggie was a member of our own Bible class, and had been converted at an early age.

Her quiet consistent character, both at home and in the workshop, made it manifest to all that she was on the Lord's side, and those who came in contact with her soon learned that Maggie was a Christian. Sought and found herself, she sought others, and I well remember how she longed to see her brother Alec saved too.

Life was full of promise. Her hand and heart were solicited and won by one whom she both loved and respected, and the two young hearts looked forward soon to have a place for themselves, which they could call "Home." But a brighter Home had been prepared for her by Another. At the age of twenty-one she developed a complicated chest affection, and a serious operation at the Royal Infirmary was the result. After a short rally her strength declined, and her widowed mother and weeping friends saw in a short time she must leave them for ever.

Just twelve years ago, one cold day in the month of December, I stood beside her bedside for the last

time. The fair hair had all been cut away from the fevered brow ; her pale face was lined with suffering and pain ; but over all was a beautiful expression of peace which I shall never forget.

I bent down and whispered, "Maggie, on what are you resting for Eternity?" The heavy eyelids slowly unclosed, and in broken words came the answer—the last words she ever spoke to me—"I—am—resting—in—His—love."

A few days afterwards she was safe in the Happy Home above.

It was the last time I saw her on earth, but I know I shall meet her in the Gloryland. Shall I meet *you* there?

This story has been written, and this paper placed in your hands, dear young friend, with the prayer that you also may get ready. Youth will not always last. Time is flying. Death is busy.

ARE YOU READY TO MEET GOD?

Decide now, I pray you, and you will find in the Lord Jesus everything worth having. He gives peace for the conscience, and joy for the heart ; a life of sweet fellowship may be your portion down here, and then the glad joy of all Eternity in His presence.

L. L.

A MAN can no more run from his own shadow than he can get away from the fact that HE MUST MEET GOD !

ART. C.

GOD'S DELIGHT IN CHRIST.

IF I love God, I want to be holy as He is holy ; the desire of sanctification has no limit at all. Is it a wonderful thing that the effect of God letting me know His plan of associating me with Himself hereafter, should be the desire for association with Him now? Has that Christ who has brought His love to you piecemeal, as you could bear it,—has He no jealousy, think you? No desire to see your heart's affection linking itself around the God who has associated you with Himself? Does He see the pulse of thought through you beating for God? You cannot hide yourself from Him. He, the Good Shepherd, leading and watching every individual sheep; not one lock of wool taken from a single sheep that He does not see. Does He see rolling through your minds unceasing thoughts of Himself and the glory awaiting you? your heart dwelling up there, and your walk corresponding; or, like Jacob, halting on the thigh because the flesh needs crippling?

God has spread an expanse of glory—all wrapt up in Christ for us: are our hearts there? God has described and told us of the golden city; Christ the light and the joy of all there: He would have us occupied with that which is the centre of His thoughts, and that is Christ. Are we following in His wake? Is His Christ the centre of our thoughts, and the hope of His coming connected with every

motive and act? There may be failure—there may be something which cannot cling to me in the presence of Christ, but He won't let me off that hope. What is your hope for to-morrow? Is the future of your mind at all like His? A poor feeble reflection it may be, but it must be a hope having its spring from that which is the centre of God's thoughts, and that is Christ.

Has it ever come into your mind what sort of a thrill the delight of God in Christ must cause in heaven? And is it, indeed, true that we are accepted in the Beloved, and that God loves us as He loves Christ, because we are in Him and He is in us? What in *you* can interfere with the delight of God in His Son? His delight in believers is not in themselves, but in connection with Christ and redemption. His blood has washed all my sin away, my soul is in Him—one with Him; all my guilt and misery judged on the cross. Oh, it makes one feel very little; it sinks one into insignificance as being nothing and Christ everything; God looking on His Son with ever the same delight, seeing His members and loving them as such. It is pure grace from first to last.

G. V. W.

FRAGMENT.

WHAT a heart has Christ. No heart so unselfish as His. He loves to give away all He *can* give away. He might have converted every one Himself, just as He called Saul of Tarsus from the glory, but He would not. He loves to work by others. J. N. D.

THE WAVE SHEAF.*

IF you will refer to Leviticus xxiii. you will there find a beautiful and instructive type of what is given us in Acts ii. The seven Feasts of the Lord there given are the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Wave Sheaf, and the Two Wave Loaves : the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles.

The first four teach lessons every Christian should learn, and must enter into if he is to be intelligent. The last three relate only to future Jewish history—the Feast of Trumpets typifying Israel being waked up to seek the Lord ; the Day of Atonement their individual repentance before God (see Zech. xii. 10-14) ; and the Feast of Tabernacles their future national glory. The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread go together, and are full of instruction for us. The first is the type of the death of Christ—the blood being put upon the lintel and the door-posts—that shelters the soul from the righteous judgment of God. The unleavened bread is the holy separate walk that should characterise those who are sheltered by the blood of Christ. The wave sheaf and the two wave loaves go also together, one indicating Christ, and the other the Church.

What then is the Wave Sheaf? Christ, risen and

* *Extracted from "The Church : What is It?" Chapter ii., A Notable Birthday. See p. 4 of cover.*

accepted before God for us—it could not be anything else. We read: “When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring *a sheaf of the first-fruits* of your harvest unto the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it” (Lev. xxiii. 10, 11). The full harvest was coming on, but God gets the first-fruits of it. God gets a great deal more out of the death and resurrection of Christ than we. We get a great deal, but God has infinitely more. “And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings” (ver. 14).

If we clearly see what God has found in Christ, then we understand much better what we ourselves find in Him, for the greater includes the less. If all the claims of God in righteousness are divinely met and He infinitely glorified in Christ's death, how much more easily are all the needs of my conscience and heart met? The reason why many believers to-day are in uncertainty as to forgiveness, salvation, and acceptance, is because they do not see what the death of Christ has effected for God. Following our type, observe what occurred on “the morrow after the Sabbath,” in which Christ lay in the grave. The priest brought the Wave Sheaf to be accepted for Israel, but when the priest was waving the sheaf, what had taken place? “At the end of the Sabbath,

as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week," the blessed Lord rose triumphant from the tomb, having accomplished the glorious work of redemption. His was "resurrection from among the dead," the pattern and type of His people's resurrection. That very morning the true Wave Sheaf had risen from among the dead, "become the *first-fruits* of them that sleep" (1 Cor. xv. 20), and had said to Mary Magdalene, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John xx. 17). That Wave Sheaf was accepted for us who believe, hence we read: "He hath made us *accepted in the beloved*" (Eph. i. 6). What is the acceptance of a Christian? It is the acceptance before God which now is Christ's—no less, and it could not be more.

What a wonderful thing that the believer stands before God in association with the Man that is alive from the dead. Just before His death, He said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth *much fruit*" (John xii. 24). He was the unique, solitary corn of wheat, the only sinless Man that ever lived in this world. He went into death, met all God's claims, and annulled Satan's power, hence, regarding His Assembly, could say to Peter, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Satan was vanquished. He who was the Son of the living God, by undergoing death, abolished it. But Christ is risen from the dead, death is annulled, He is now the risen victorious Man at God's right hand, and

we are accepted in Him. That is the teaching of the Wave Sheaf.

With the Wave Sheaf there were certain offerings to be presented, viz., the Burnt Offering, which prefigured the devotedness of Jesus, Godward, even to death; and the Meat Offering, which denotes the devotedness of His life in all its perfection for God. He appreciated all the beauty of the life of Jesus, and all the devotedness of His heart, even unto death: they were sweet savour offerings that all went up to God. Note carefully that there was no Sin Offering and no Peace Offering—which is the basis of communion—offered with the Wave Sheaf, because it represents Christ personally, who “did no sin,” and never was out of communion with God.

Now look at the Wave Loaves: “And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number *fifty* days; and ye shall offer a *new* meat offering unto the Lord” (Lev. xxiii. 15, 16). There we reach the day of Pentecost, which is the fiftieth day after the waving of the sheaf of first-fruits. Then we read: “Ye shall bring out of your habitation *two wave loaves* of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be *baken with leaven*; they are the *first-fruits* unto the Lord” (ver. 17). Here we have in type the day of Pentecost, and what originated then. There was a *new* meat offering of *two* wave loaves *baken* with leaven. In Acts ii. we have the

antitype—God's people gathered together by the Holy Ghost, and presented before Him in connection with all the preciousness of Christ in life, death, and resurrection. The passover is His death; the wave sheaf His resurrection; the two wave loaves baken on the fiftieth day—the Holy Ghost forming the Church of God.

But why two loaves? There are not two Churches of God on earth—the Jewish and the Gentile. The very fact of there being two loaves—not one—is remarkable. The mystery of the Church was hidden, and this type does not reveal the secret, which could not come out till Christ had died, risen, and gone on high. Then the “one loaf” is plain enough. Hence I judge it does not typify Jew and Gentile Churches, as some have thought. When God demands witness, His regular way is “two” witnesses. Christ was risen—the wave sheaf. Christians—the two wave loaves—are competent witnesses of the power of His resurrection. We must not forget that the truth of the Church was “kept *secret* since the world began, but *now* is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets (of the New Testament), according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith” (Rom. xvi. 25, 26). Again, we read of “the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been *hid* in God” (Eph. iii. 9). Further, Paul tells us of “the mystery which hath been *hid* from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints; to whom God would make known what

is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. i. 26, 27). Hence we do not find the full truth of the mystery in our type—it was hidden.

The thought of the "two loaves" then, I judge, is competent testimony—God would have a real, true testimony to what Christ was and had accomplished. The two loaves were a testimony that there had been a harvest, and God had already got the first-fruits, for on the day of Pentecost "Christ, risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. xv. 20), was before Him in heavenly glory. These two loaves are then presented before the Lord. They are composed of very different elements—fine flour baken with leaven. The "fine flour" is the figure of the blessed holy humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the even expression of all perfections in a sinless Man. The "leaven" expresses what we are by nature, corrupt and corrupting. "They shall be baken with leaven; they are the first-fruits unto the Lord," is a wonderful statement. The Wave Sheaf—Christ—was first-fruits, and now it is the two loaves that are first-fruits. The figure of the "fine flour" brings all that is connected with the holiness of Christ as a Man before the eye, and both the Christian individually and the Church collectively stand before God in all the value and acceptability of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why, then, was there leaven in this *new* meat-offering? Elsewhere we read, "No meat-offering, which ye shall bring unto the Lord, shall be made

with leaven; for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the Lord made by fire" (Lev. ii. 11). Leaven symbolises the evil of nature, and honey the sweetness of nature. Neither will do for God. There is nothing in you and me that will do for God. It is only Christ that will do for God. Why then do we find the leaven here? Because, though you may be born of the Spirit, washed from your sins by the blood of the Son of God, and sealed by the Holy Ghost, there is still the evil of the flesh in you. You have a new nature as born of God, but you still have the old nature in you; hence the opposition of the two which every one born anew is conscious of (see Rom. vii. 14-25). Two natures are in the Christian; one craving evil and the indulgence of self; the other loving Christ and delighting in the will of God. But is the flesh always to work? No; for we have received the Spirit that we might not do the things that we would (Gal. v. 17; see also vers. 24, 25).

Leaven, in Scripture, be it observed, is always a figure of evil. I know people have tried to make out that it means good; but that is twisting Scripture. It is only and always evil. In the parable in Matthew xiii. the woman hides leaven in three measures of meal. That is not the gospel converting the world, as many teach, but the solemn fact that professing Christianity which God set up pure has been all corrupted, for leaven implies what is evil there, as elsewhere in Scripture.

Evil is in every believer, but knowing that Christ

has been judged for his sin, he judges it in himself and refuses it. Sin is recognised by God as in me, but it is *not* supposed to *work*. The existence of sin in the Christian does not give a bad conscience; that comes if we allow it to work. The good conscience is gotten by the cleansing power of the blood of Christ; and that is hinted at in our type, as we read: "Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats *for a sin offering*, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace-offerings" (ver. 19). Where you have, in figure, the Church presented before God in all the perfections of Christ, though in the believer the existence of evil is recognised, you have the *one* goat for a sin offering. God recognises the fact that evil is in the believer; but it is supposed not to work, and its presence is met by the blood of the sin offering. There is no imputation of sin whatever; but you are before God in all the value of the work of Christ. The two lambs of the peace offering provide the basis of communion and worship. You cannot make too much of Christ, and what He is. Consequently we are told: "The priest shall wave them with the bread of the first-fruits for a wave offering before the Lord, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to the Lord for the priest" (ver. 20).

Having learned the meaning of the type, let us now see its blessed fulfilment in the antitype as given in Acts i. and ii. There Christ is risen from the dead, gone into heaven, God accepts Him for His people, and the Holy Ghost comes down and falls

on the one hundred and twenty gathered believers, and then adds to them three thousand new-born souls, and thus that day for the first time was constituted the Assembly of God. The start of the Church is intensely interesting, as showing how the saints were drawn together. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with *one accord* in one place" (Acts ii. 1). The nucleus of the Church was small indeed, but from that day a deeper and larger work was to go on, in which Christ is to see of the travail of His soul. His Assembly by the descent of the Spirit of God was formed; and therefore, again, I say assuredly that the day of Pentecost was the birthday of the Church of God, because it had never existed before. From Abel downwards individual saints and servants of God had existed, but they were not in the Church. John the Baptist, and the thief on the cross, died before the Lord Jesus was risen to be the Head of it, or any one could be united to Him. It was due to Christ, who had so glorified God in death, that there should be an adequate answer to His sorrows and sufferings; and He finds that answer in the Assembly, which is His body, as she is also His Bride, the New Jerusalem.

It is a wonderful thing to be part of Christ's Assembly. The unconverted are not. If you are a mere professor or confessor of Christ, and possibly a so-called "Church member," but yet in your sins, you are outside all this. But if you are a Christian, born of the Spirit, redeemed and cleansed by the

blood of Christ, and indwelt of the Spirit, you are in Christ before God, and a member of His body on earth. What a lift to the soul it is, and what a sense of favour it obtains when it can truly say, I am accepted in Him—God sees me in Him—I am part of His Bride so dear to His heart.

Scripture is full of types of this blessed truth of the Bride. Eve was the helpmeet of Adam; think of the Assembly as Christ's helpmeet. Rebecca was in figure the object of the Father's choice; the subject of the Holy Ghost's care, as the nameless servant carried her across the desert; and the object of Isaac's love—for "she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death" (Gen. xxiv. 67). What a wonderful thing to see the Church as the helpmeet and comfort of Christ, and may I not say what wondrous favour that you and I should be part of the Church?

In Acts ii. we get the kernel of Christianity; the Holy Ghost came down from an ascended Christ in glory to unite to Him and to one another all that believe in Him. They are also living stones in the building which Christ builds. God made the presence of His spirit very manifest in both its corporate and individual aspects, when "suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting . . . and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (vers. 2-4). Christianity consists in the individual possession, and the corporate indwelling of the ever-abiding blessed Spirit of Truth.

W. T. P. W.

AN EVANGELIST'S CONFESSION.

BROWNLOW NORTH was at one time, indeed all through his early life, a very marked specimen of the thoughtless and dissipated aristocratic worldling. He was for many years supposed to be the heir to a noble title, but a late and unexpected marriage came between him and his hopes.

When he was no longer a young man, he and a friend were staying at a shooting-box in Scotland. Their day's sport was usually followed by an evening debauch; and in one of these his friend dropped down dead. The terrible event was God's message to the heart of this hardened profligate. The awful thought laid hold of him—"If I had been called away, instead of my poor friend, I should have been damned."

This led him to think seriously about his soul, and, falling at this critical time under the influence of an earnest Christian lady, he was by her led into the full light of the gospel. No sooner did he feel himself to be a changed man than he began to set about trying to win others to realise the same blessedness. In process of time he became one of the most noted preachers of that period.

It happened on one occasion that he was to preach in Inverness. Just as he entered the building, a note was put into his hands, the contents

of which were somewhat to this effect :—" Brownlow North, you miserable hypocrite ! Do you remember what took place at —— on such a date, and the part you bore in it ; also at —— on such a date, and again at —— on such a date, and the part that you took on each of these occasions ? " Pretty full details of what did happen were given, and then the letter concluded : " Now, you wretched hypocrite ! you know that every word in this letter is true ; will you, after reading it, dare to go into that pulpit, and rant and rave, and preach what you call the gospel ? "

Poor Mr North felt the force of the letter keenly, but he put it into his pocket, and when the time for his address came, he read the familiar words : " This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. " He paused, and then, with deepest feeling, added—" Of whom I am chief. "

" My friends, " said he, " when I entered this building to-night, a letter was put into my hands. I do not know who the writer may be, but he is evidently one who knows a great deal about my career in the past. This letter refers to three distinct occasions, on which it charges me with participating in scenes of riot, and excess, and wantonness. I will not pollute your ears by referring to the contents of that letter further than to say as much as this. And the writer concludes his most painful communication by saying, ' Now, you wretched hypocrite ! you know that all this is true ; will you, after reading this

letter, dare to go into that pulpit, and rant and rave, and preach what you call the gospel?'

"Dear friends, there are three things that I have to say about this letter. First, it is all true. Would to God that I could deny the charges it makes. Would to God that I could undo the past, but that is beyond the power of even God Himself. God knows it is true, and I confess with sorrow and shame that it is true. And the second thing I have to say is, it's all forgiven! God knows it is forgiven, and I know that it is forgiven. And the third thing I have to say is that, if God, for Jesus Christ's sake, can forgive the sin of such a sinner as Brownlow North, there is not a sinner in Scotland, there is not a sinner in this wide world, too great for God to forgive him all his sins."

There were few dry eyes among those present as he uttered these words, with the most intense feeling.

Reader, your sins may or may not be as glaring as Brownlow North's, but they can be forgiven freely by the same pardoning God, if you but come to Him in true repentance. Should you die unforgiven, there remaineth nothing for you but the blackness of darkness for ever. Now, His mercy would fain woo you for Himself. Be wise in time.

ANON.

FRAGMENT.

SALVATION is a golden chain which stretches from everlasting to everlasting, and every link of that chain is Christ.

C. H. M.

FOUR BEHOLDS.

(See John i. 29-37, xix. 1-8 ; Acts xiii. 38-41 ; Rev. i. 7.)

THE word "Behold" occurs in all these four passages ; and when God says to men "Behold," you may depend upon it, it is wise of the hearer to heed what God says. The "Behold" in each of these four scenes is different, but they are all connected with Christ. You say, "What is the difference?"

1. "BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD."

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," is surely a proclamation of the deepest possible importance for men to hear, because it announces what this Lamb of God has come to do, viz., to take up the question that lies between man's soul—*your* soul—and God. And what question is that? Sin. Now *you* will never be able to settle the question of your sin before God. Men have tried it all along the line for six thousand years, but never yet has any man managed to set himself right with God as regards sin.

Sin is the will of the creature—the outcome of man's condition of distance from God. It is sin that has sundered man from God. It is sin that keeps you away from God. You may not think very much about it—you will after the day of your death. You may never yet have been troubled

about your sins ; they have never given you a sleepless night—take care lest they give you a sleepless eternity. They never caused you to shed a tear. Take care lest you are found with a tear in your eye for eternity, and no hand near to dry that tear. Sin is an awful thing. Nothing could remove it but the death of God's Son. Possibly you have hitherto taken life lightly, and trifled with the grace of the gospel ; trifle no more, and if God, in grace, say to you, "Behold the Lamb of God," you look at Him.

It is of the last importance to understand this scene in John i. John the Baptist, according to God's commandment, had preached repentance, and pressed upon men their sins ; and they had been so affected by his preaching that multitudes came out, owned they were sinners, went down into the waters of Jordan and were baptized. They did not know how to get forgiveness, for John could not then tell them how to get rid of their sins, though he bade them own them. He knew that there was One coming that could remit sins, but he had not yet seen Him.

One day John saw a Man coming to him—it was God in grace drawing near to him in the person of Jesus—and the moment John saw Jesus, the Spirit of God led him to indicate who He was, and he said, "*Behold* the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." There was the One who could touch the sin-question. He who can touch the sin-question and settle it according to God, can be none other than the Son of God. Hence the

Baptist adds, "I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God." If you have doubts in your mind as to who and what He was, you have another question to settle, viz., the "Son-question."

The Jews said before Pilate, "By our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God" (John xix. 7). He *was* the Son of God. He did not make Himself anything, He *was* God's Son, and as such He was owned by the Father at His baptism—at the moment when John cried, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John was commissioned of God to announce the mission of that blessed One, who was the Son of God and the Lamb of God. Now, how does Christ take away the sin of the world? He has not done it yet, because the world is full of sin. He has taken away the sins of His people—of those who, through grace, have been brought to recognise who He is, as well as what He has done. He is the Son of God. You have your doubts on that point? You will find out before long who He is. It will be then a little bit too late for you to get the "sin-question" settled; but be sure of this, you will have the "Son-question" absolutely settled one day. Get right as to the "Son-question," and you will soon be at ease as to the "sin-question," and learn that He has blotted all yours out.

There are two ways in which Christ takes away sin. By His death He puts away sin, for it is written: "But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice

of himself. And 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 he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 26-28). He was the only One who could come into the scene, and play the part of Mediator between God and man. But He does not settle the "sin-question" only by the cross. The sins of His people He puts away by bearing the judgment due to them on the cross. As the Judge by-and-by He will judge the unbeliever in his sins, and the lake of fire be the issue. There is coming a day when men, who have declined the blessing of grace, must accept the judgment that they might have been delivered from.

In the scene at Jordan we are bidden to look at Christ as the One who can meet our case, and settle the "sin-question" now. John says, "This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me." He perceives the divine glory of His person: "And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God" (John i. 30-34). He was the blessed

Son of God and the Lamb of God. John baptized Jesus: but Jesus saved John. Has He saved you?

John must have had his eyes opened to see who Jesus was—the One who could baptize with the Holy Ghost, that is, confer blessing, as in the case of Cornelius. But He is going to baptize in a day to come with fire, that is, judgment. You must either be justified by Jesus, or judged by Jesus; cleansed by Jesus, or condemned by Jesus. You must, at some time or other, have to do with Him. He dies for sinners, and then, having gone on high, He baptises with the Holy Ghost, that secures blessing. It is of the last importance that you should be clear as to the “Son-question.” Is He God’s Son, or is He not? The Lord said to the Scribes, “How say they that Christ is David’s son? And David himself saith in the Book of Psalms, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?” (Luke xx. 41-44). They did not know how to decipher such an enigma, but now it has all come out—He was as man, David’s son, and from all eternity, God’s Son. Get rid of Him, and you have no Saviour. You can make light of Him, and put Him from you, but it will be to your eternal loss. You have now a wonderful chance of salvation, do not miss it, like Pilate.

“Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!” It is not here

the "behold" of testimony, but the "behold" of a loving heart. "And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus." They said, Good-bye, John, we are going to follow Jesus. You turn your eye on God's Son, become man that He might take up this wonderful character as the Lamb of God, who alone could settle the question of sin. The presentation of the Person of Christ is that which wins hearts to Christ. The ministry that takes men off the preacher on to Christ, is the right kind of ministry, and if it does not effect this, it is bad ministry. John's ministry detached men from himself, and attached them to Christ. Have you thus got to Jesus yet? If not let me urge you to lose no time. He is now set down at God's right hand, but the question of where He is makes no difference to what He is—He is the same Jesus. John saw Him on the banks of Jordan; I see Him on the throne of God. You bow to Christ; God's Spirit will tell you what Jesus is.

2. "BEHOLD THE MAN."

Now let us go from Jordan to Pilate's hall. It is a very different scene. At Jordan it was the beginning of the Lord's ministry; this is the end of His history, when He is going to offer Himself up as the Lamb of God. "Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him." See that cruel lash fall upon the back of the Son of God, who, if He had spoken the word, could have destroyed all His haters and

murderers. Man then crowned Him with thorns: God has now crowned Him with glory. What would *you* put upon His head? "They put on him a purple robe, and said, Hail, King of the Jews, and they smote him with their hands. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the Man." One day Pilate will be led by the mighty hand of God, to stand before that once thorn-crowned Man to hear very solemn words from His lips. All is going to be reversed by-and-by. But Pilate then said, "I find no fault in Him." Then why did he not clear Him? Pilate was afraid of the world, and that is what *you* are afraid of—afraid of what your friends will think and say. The Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God." Pilate said, "Behold the Man"—the Man of grace, of love, of sympathy, of holiness, of righteousness; Man after God's own heart. Never was there a man like Him. He is a Man I can trust, a Man I can love, because He has loved me, even unto death.

"Behold the Man!" Pilate had a wonderful chance that night to come out on the Lord's side, but he missed it. And *you* have had many an opportunity of coming to and coming out for Christ, but you have missed them all. The world has come in, and some human influence has held you back. What would Pilate give for your chance to-day, for your opportunity of receiving Christ, and confessing Him. He might come out and say, "Behold the Man," but it was the "Behold" of indifference, of

unbelief, of worldly wisdom ; not the "Behold" of affection, or love, or confidence. What will you do with Him, Pilate? I will sign His death-warrant, lest I should lose the favour of Cæsar. And he signed at the same moment Christ's death-warrant and the warrant of his own eternal damnation. True, he "took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person : see ye to it," but that will not deliver his guilty soul. You will never wash your hands of Christ, but He could wash your soul of all your many sins. You cannot wash your hands of Christ, because you must yet meet Him. Better trust Him and have a Saviour. To you I would say, "Behold the Man," and beholding Him, trust Him simply.

3. "BEHOLD, YE DESPISERS, AND . . . PERISH."

In Acts xiii. there is a solemn "Behold." Paul is preaching to a company he never preached to before. He is telling the story of the death and resurrection of Jesus to the men of Antioch. He is beginning his big missionary tour. He has not reached Europe yet. At this point he is still in Asia. He has gone out to people who have never heard of this blessed Saviour, and he lets them know the lovely tidings, as he says, "But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption" (ver. 37). Christ is a risen Saviour now. Everything is in resurrection, and in connection with the Person of God's blessed Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Note the proclamation — "Be it

known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins" (ver. 38).

God might have drawn the sword of retributive righteousness from the scabbard, and smitten His foes, but He let it stop in the scabbard. When men had slain Jesus, put Him in the tomb, and sealed it, God took Him out, sent an angel down to roll away the stone, and then took Him up into glory. Then after ten days the Holy Ghost came down, and proclaimed the gospel of God's salvation. He filled vessel after vessel with joyful tidings, first Peter, and then Paul, a man who had been a bitter opponent. That is what God loves to do; He picks up His enemies, pardons, blesses, saves, and makes friends of them. He picks up the devil's slaves, turns them inside out, and makes them the most blessed servants of Christ. What a wonderful thing to belong to a risen Saviour. There is in Him forgiveness of sins for you, justification—the clearing away of all that has been a burden to you, and then the setting you down before God in righteousness.

"And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (ver. 39). You are not merely forgiven, but justified. Why does God justify you? Because you believe in His Son, who died for your sins, and has been raised again, because God has been glorified about the very question of your sins. "He 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). I have no doubt Paul saw some of his self-righteous hearers knitting their brows at these glorious tidings, and he says, "*Beware* therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; *behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish.*" There are to-day, as then, two classes, believers and despisers. A man first neglects, then rejects, then despises, and at length finally perishes.

It is a very solemn "Behold" that. In the first two we are told to look at Christ; this third says—You had better look at yourself, at your own future, "For I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." What work is that? The work of the gospel, by which the person at your side gets saved, and you not. Heed the Word of God to-day. You have the Word of God now, you may not have it to-morrow. It may be all too late to-morrow, and why? The Lord is coming.

4. "BEHOLD, HE COMETH WITH CLOUDS."

There is another kind of "Behold." "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him" (Rev. i. 7). Forget not that—"every eye shall see him." You cannot escape that. You may escape the gospel, escape forgiveness of sins, justification, and God's salvation—you may escape all these, hug the world, and cleave to the world, but mark you

this—"every eye shall see him." The One who was crowned with thorns, and whom you have heard proclaimed as the Lamb of God—the One who has been out of sight for nearly two thousand years, He is coming. When? It may be to-night.

There is in heaven now a seated Saviour; another hour and He may have risen up, and the knell of doom have sounded in your ears. That occurs "when once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are" (Luke xiii. 25).

An open door and a seated Saviour go together; and a risen up Saviour and a closed door go together. Do you understand? I hope so; if you do you will say, I will get in at the open door by faith before He rises up to shut it. That would be the path of wisdom and of faith.

"Every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him." You say, they were very wicked. What do you think of yourself for refusing Him? They were awful people that clamoured for His blood: what do you think of yourself for trampling that blood under your feet—the blood that might have cleansed, saved, and redeemed you? If they were bad, a dozen times worse is the soul to-day that refuses and rejects Jesus. They never heard the gospel—you have. "And all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him" (ver. 7). Do you know what the effect of seeing Christ now is? The heart

gets touched and attracted, and there is not a "wail," but worship. But by-and-by there will come a wail—a wail of sorrow. That wail will spring from the lips of many a man that discovers when too late, that he has lost his opportunity, and missed Christ.

You are going to stand face to face with Jesus yet. "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him." How near? So near that the lineaments of His face will be stamped upon your memory for ever. You are going to stand before Him, and there will be no advocate then, no mercy. Oh, careless sligher of Christ, beware lest you too late see that you have despised grace, and put yourself without the reach of Christ. As you then leave His presence to pass to your eternal doom, the very last thing that will be impressed on your memory will be, I have seen Jesus. He who has so often said, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest," will then say, "Depart from me; I know you not."

You had better just now make up your mind for Christ. Say, from this hour, "Christ for me."

W. T. P. W.

FRAGMENT.

How utterly insignificant and worthless for careful consideration are the greatest events that take place in the world, conversion excepted, compared to the position of a man who finds at the hour of his demise that he is a lost soul.

"In hell he lifted up his eyes."

H.

“IF I DIE TO-NIGHT.”

A GOSPEL meeting was held in the coach-house at N—— R——. The audience had dispersed, and the preacher, Mr B——, who was just starting to drive to a friend's house near Norwich, to be ready for the early train to London next morning, found that he had left something behind, and returned to the coach-house to seek it, where the young coachman and his wife were putting out the lights.

Mr B—— said to him, “Have you decided whose side you mean to be on for Time and Eternity?” The coachman, R—— H——, answered, and said he hoped to go to heaven, but there was time enough yet ; and, looking at his wife, added that they were yet young, and need not trouble about such things yet a while.

Kindly but gravely the evangelist said : “I entreat you, don't trifle with eternal things. How do you know that this night your soul may not be required of you? Will you do this for me before you go to bed to-night? Take a sheet of paper and write on it these words, *‘If I die to-night, I shall go to hell,’* and pin it over your bed.”

R—— H—— promised readily that he would do as he was asked. Mr B—— hurried off, and the coachman and his wife went to their house in the yard.

After supper they were retiring to rest when the wife said, "Oh, Robert, you've forgotten to do what you promised to the gentleman."

"So I have ; I'll do it now," he said ; and kneeling down by the table, began to write carelessly across the paper in large text hand, "*If I die to-night*"—then he stopped and looked at the words ; they were solemn and serious. What if he did die ? Death seemed nearer, more real—" *If I die to-night !*" As he pondered, the clock in the yard struck ten. It sounded like the knell of his departure. Mechanically he wrote on, "*I shall go to hell.*" He started and trembled. There, in his own handwriting, was the answer to his thoughts. His sins passed in review before him. Could he pin that paper over his head and sleep ? What should he do ? His eyes seemed glued to the paper. As he looked, a tear fell—then another, and blurred the last dread word. He looked hastily up ; his wife was stooping over him, her eyes full.

Drawing her to kneel down beside him, they wept together over their thoughtlessness and their danger. The sins of their past lives came to remembrance. Hitherto they thought they had not been wicked people, and had felt that if they kept out of bad company and did their duty all would be well. Though they had been indifferent to God, they had not opposed ; but all looked different now. Together they cried to God for mercy, but no light came, and in this state of mind they both continued for a fortnight.

At last their unhappiness became so great they determined to sit up all night and search the Bible, to see if there could be mercy for them. As the clock in the yard struck hour after hour and still no light came, they felt as if their day of grace was passing fast. They seemed to find nothing in the Bible but what confirmed their worst fears. "The soul that sinneth it shall die," "The wages of sin is death," and similar verses.

Four o'clock struck, and in despair R—— H—— pushed the Bible away and sat with bowed head. The candle had burned out, and the morning light was coming in. At last he raised his head, saying, "Ah, wife, surely I have heard of a Saviour for sinners like us. Surely the Bible tells how God can pardon sins through the blood of Christ;" and pulling the Bible again towards him, he read just where, when pushing the book away, it had fallen open, "*I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins*" (Isa. xliii. 25).

Yes, there were the words plainly enough. How was it that he had not seen them before? Trembling and joyful he pointed them out to his wife.

"See, that's what we want." They thought they would look and see if there was more to confirm this. Turning over the leaf, in the next chapter they read, "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins. Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee" (Isa. xliv. 22). The light burst upon them both.

"It is enough, O LORD. We do come to Thee now, through Thy Son, our Saviour." In joyous thanksgiving they praised God for His pardoning love to so great sinners; and as the clock struck five, they blessed Him who had sent them light and joy, and turned the sound which had been so terrible to them into a token of the beginning of a new and better day.

The wife has now gone to her rest, but R—— H—— still lives to testify of the Saviour he that night found, and of the happiness which then came to them.

S. A. B.

"IS GOD UNRIGHTEOUS, WHO TAKETH VENGEANCE?"

"**G**OD is too merciful to send any of His erring creatures to hell!"

Such a statement is often heard to-day, but is it correct?

Let us examine it.

First, it says that God is merciful; second, that His creatures are sinful; and third, it admits such a place as hell.

As to the first, it is divinely true that God is merciful. His written Word announces that blessed fact, both in the Old and New Testaments. He is "merciful and gracious;" He is "rich in mercy."

And every one of us, as he reviews his life, whether long or short, must assuredly own that he has proved great mercy at God's hands.

But is He so merciful that He cannot punish the sinner, or mete out to him the exact measure of award which his sins, according to the standard of absolute holiness, justly deserve. That is, is God more merciful than holy, and is His love for the sinner greater than His abhorrence of sin? That cannot be truly asserted; nor could God show grace to the sinner unless the claims of His justice were first fully satisfied.

Now, for the true knowledge of God we are shut up to the Bible, because that precious book reveals to us His mind. It is His word. It tells us what man is and what God is. No doubt we may see, unless our minds are blinded, His power and God-head in the fair creation around, whose wondrous mechanism asserts His creatorship; but, apart from power and design, if we would know what God is, we are beholden to the book which has been, and is to-day the target of Satan—God's enemy and ours.

If, then, we turn to the Bible in order to find our inquiry answered, we shall see that, if grace reigns, it reigns through righteousness; or, in other words, that but for the settlement of the claims of justice in respect of sin (and that, of course, in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ) there could be no grace for the sinner,—no blessing at all. God must be just in justifying him who believes in Jesus.

Now let us face the truth of the justice of

God. It is all very well to speak of His love; but do not let us overlook His justice.

Justice is not mere impartiality, nor is it judgment; it is righteousness; and, by reference to the Epistle to the Romans, which elaborates our present inquiry, we find that ere love is mentioned at all, righteousness is revealed and established. We start on a solid basis—the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. His work on the cross, in all its infinite value, that is the manifestation of God’s righteousness, precedes the statement that “God commendeth his love” (chap. v. 8). Such is the Divine order, and indeed what family, or business, or State could be properly regulated which did not have justice for its base principle of action? We must be just before we should be generous.

If, then, God is just, He must deal with sin. To this solemn fact the cross (where the Just suffered for the unjust) is the fullest witness, though we may trace, all through the Scriptures, various punishments inflicted on the wicked. Hence we affirm that God is not too merciful to punish His erring creatures.

Nay, reader, He forsook His own Son, when bearing sin on the cross, in order that you might avail yourself of the atonement then made. And, mark, the rejection, nay, the non-acceptance of the Lord Jesus as a personal substitute is the deliberate refusal of the greatest mercy that God could show.

Receive Him by simple faith, I pray you, nor risk the dread alternative!

Now, a word as to “God’s erring creatures”; it

is perfectly true that some have erred more than others; but, whatever the measure of aberration, we read in the same Epistle to the Romans: "They are all gone out of the way;" again: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Some have sinned more than others, and some have come more short of the glory of God than others, but, be the shortage what it may, all have done it; all are responsible, and all shall give account to God. Moreover, the expression "erring creatures" is far too mild a way of stating facts. If we are erring creatures we are guilty sinners, wilful, wicked rebels against God, who deserve not mercy but judgment.

And last, as to "such a place as Hell!"

"We are all going to Heaven, where there are degrees of reward," said a man to me the other day. "There's no Hell," he added.

Heaven there is, but no Hell! "How do you know—who told you that?" I asked him.

The Bible speaks of Heaven, but it also speaks of Hell—not very often indeed, but more than once or twice, and of "everlasting punishment," and of "eternal judgment," and of "the lake of fire," and of One who, perforce, must say—"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

"And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works, . . . and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. xx. 12-15).

"The fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death" (Rev.'xxi. 8).

Reader, face these revealed facts, nor allow your mind, I beseech you, to be deceived by the reasonings of perverted men, or the treachery of your own heart, as to the awful holiness of God and the necessity that is therefore laid upon Him to judge all evil according to the nature of that holiness.

It is blessedly true that "God is love," and that He is "rich in mercy." It is equally true that "our God is a consuming fire," and that "the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." "God is not mocked, whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." All equally true!

Justice and mercy are maintained in perfect balance, but when man refuses the overtures of mercy, and persistently takes his own wilful way of sin and impenitence, there remains for him nothing but "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." Justice, stern and inexorable, must take her way, and how shall the sinner escape? Reader, "if you would flee from God, flee to Him" without delay!

"Look to Jesus, look and live;
Mercy at His hands receive;
He has died upon the tree;
And His words are, 'Look to Me.'"

PRAISE HIS NAME.

(TUNE—"Be in time" Songs of Victory, 460.)

THERE'S a Saviour on the throne,
Who for sins did once atone,
By the shedding of His blood,
Praise His name.

God now righteously forgives
Every sinner that believes
In the Christ that ever lives,
Praise His name.

**Praise His name, praise His name,
To the world He came that sinners He
might save.*

*Jesus once in wondrous grace
Bore the hiding of God's face,
Took in death the sinner's place,
Praise His name.*

Oh, that Saviour now above,
On the cross declared God's love,
By the shedding of His blood,
Praise His name.

God who raised Him from the grave,
Reckons righteous, and will save,
All who trust the Son He gave,
Praise His name.*

And that Saviour now on high,
Ever liveth to supply
Suited grace to those He loves,
Praise His name.

Day by day that grace is shown,
In His care for all His own,
Soon He'll take them to His home,
Praise His name.*

ANON.

A RACE FOR LIFE.

IT was an uninhabited tract of country in Russia, across which ran a highroad now obliterated by deep snow.

As far as eye could reach stretched an expanse of pure white, interrupted with vast forests of majestic pines standing out in bold relief against the indigo sky and glistening snow ; for it was night, and the moon was shining still and cold.

Over the snow came the tinkle of bells, and drawn by three magnificent horses, a sleigh shot swiftly by. Its occupants were a nobleman, his wife and child, and a faithful servant.

They had a long journey before them that cold night, but the horses were fresh, and the travellers well cloaked in furs. The sleigh bells tinkled merrily—but some other sound seemed to have attracted the travellers' attention. They strained to catch it, and

their faces grew pale with fear. It ceased, then again was borne on the wind, this time the sound was unmistakable. In a hoarse whisper came the dreaded word, "Wolves."

Owing to the extreme cold and lack of food, the wolves were starving. Their natural cowardice had vanished, and they were following on the travellers' track. These knew the wolves must gain on them, and that it was now a race for life.

In the distance they could already see dark specks emerging from the forest. The count urged on his noble horses, and they sped across the hard snow.

But the wolves were swifter still. Steadily they gained on the horses. On they came, nearer and nearer, till the travellers could see their fierce eyes and long red tongues; nearer still, till they could imagine they felt their hot breath.

There was but one thing to be done. They quickly cut loose one of the horses. The ravenous brutes leapt upon the terrified animal, and it was immediately torn to pieces. Meanwhile the travellers pressed on. But again the wolves bore down upon them. They were forced to sacrifice another horse, which shared the same terrible fate as its companion. The count cheered on his one remaining horse, which plunged forward as though conscious that the lives of all depended upon him.

There in the distance the anxious travellers could distinguish the lights of home. Oh, welcome sight. But the wolves! Once more they were bearing down upon them. Would they overtake them this last

half-mile? The servant saw there was no hope. Turning to his master he said, "Sir, you have been a good master to me, you will provide for my wife and children, I will give my life for you," and before the count could restrain him the noble fellow leapt amongst the wolves, fighting till overwhelmed by them he fell. The servant's struggle with the wolves caused a few minutes' delay in their pursuit.

With one supreme effort the exhausted horse reached the home, and the gates clashed to upon the travellers, leaving their baffled pursuers howling without.

With a long-drawn breath the nobleman murmured, "Safe." Yes, but at what a cost! His devoted servant had met with a terrible death in order that he and his family might be saved.

Can such a deed ever be forgotten? Yes, as the years roll by it will slip from the world's memory. But there is one deed which neither Heaven nor earth will ever forget. It is the death of the Lord Jesus.

The love of this nobleman's servant, great as it was, if compared with the love of Christ, is but as the tiny raindrop compared with the fulness of the ocean.

Jesus was the eternal Son of God, yet laid aside His glory, and in deep compassion for sinful men and women came into this world that He might rescue them from their impending doom.

But men hated the holy Son of God and brought Him before Pilate demanding that He should be sentenced to death. They arrayed Him in purple and crowned Him with thorns, thus mocking at His

kingly claims. Their bitter hatred culminated in nailing Him to the cross of Calvary. But there were sufferings infinitely greater than those he endured at the hand of man. He bowed His head under the rod of God's judgment, and bore the wrath due to the creature's sin.

Oh, reader, are you not filled with amazement as you consider such love as this? Has the thought never flashed in upon your soul that Christ loved even *you*, and died that *you* might escape the judgment due to your sins? Can you yet refuse to accept salvation purchased at such a cost? Do but let the magnitude of this love into your heart, and it will impel you to come to Jesus who says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37).

L. M. B.

FRAGMENT.

GREAT and small are only terms in use amongst men, and cannot apply to Him "who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven" as well as "the things that are on earth." They are all alike to Him "who sitteth on the circle of the earth." Jehovah can tell the number of the stars, and, while He does so, He can take knowledge of a falling sparrow—He can make a whirlwind His chariot, and a broken heart His dwelling-place. Nothing is great or small with God.

C. H. M.

"I'VE GOT OIL TO-NIGHT."

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took *no oil* with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour."—MATT. xxv. 1-13.

"**I**'VE got oil to-night." The speaker was a young woman whose face was radiant with joy, spite of profusion of tears which were rapidly flowing down.

Fully fifteen years have rolled away since these striking words fell on my ear, one Lord's Day evening, in the Town Hall of a royal burgh in Mid-Scotland, where I had been preaching on the Lord's Second Coming. The scripture before us that evening is given in the verses which head this paper, which I would beg my reader to ponder.

We had been studying this picture of Christendom at the moment of the Lord's return. Some were seen to be ready for the Bridegroom at His return, others were not. The Lord says of the ten virgins

(who evidently prefigure professing Christians, of whom there are countless numbers to-day), "Five of them were wise, and five were foolish." The folly of the foolish, who took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom, lay in this, that they took their lamps—the mark of profession—and took *no oil* (whatever that may mean) with them.

The wisdom of the wise lay in this, they "*took oil* in their vessels with their lamps." The first thing with the foolish was their lamps, which made them look like those who were really ready, and the last thing with them the oil—the essential necessity for the maintenance of the light. That, forsooth, they disregarded. On the contrary, with the wise the first thing was the oil, which *they took* in their vessels with their lamps. The all-important necessity of having the oil was paramount with the wise—how otherwise could the light of the lamp be maintained? The oil, so frequently spoken of in the types of the Old Testament, is without doubt a figure of the Holy Ghost, which no unbeliever to-day possesses, and which every real believer in the Lord Jesus does possess. The possession of the Holy Ghost is an integral part of Christianity, and the person who has not received the Holy Ghost is not, in the true sense of the word, a Christian.

On the day of Pentecost we found that Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 38). Repentance, remission of sins, and reception of

the Holy Ghost were all bound up together for the Jew in that day.

Again, in another discourse Peter says: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that *obey him*" (Acts v. 30-32). Obedience to the gospel is followed by the reception of the Holy Ghost.

Again, in the house of Cornelius, to the Gentile company Peter thus proclaimed the truth: "To him (Jesus) give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word" (Acts x. 43, 44).

That is to say, he said that if they believed in Jesus they would receive forgiveness of their sins. As a matter of fact, having believed they received not only forgiveness, but likewise the Holy Ghost; for he says in verse 47, "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, which *have received* the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

When narrating this wonderful scene at Jerusalem at a later date, Peter says: "And as I began to speak the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning" (Acts xi. 15). "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I that

I could withstand God" (ver. 17). The forgiven believer, therefore, be it noted, receives the Holy Ghost.

We read also from the pen of the apostle Paul: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. i. 13). Christ is the object of faith, and when the soul believes in Him it receives the Holy Ghost, the seal of forgiveness, and the pledge of security. It is the sinner who believes the gospel of his salvation, and the believer who is then sealed with the Holy Ghost. The sinner has proclaimed to him what he needs—forgiveness, pardon, peace, salvation in Christ—and bowing to the truth and believing it, the Spirit of God seals his faith, and he becomes the possessor of the oil.

These precious truths we saw clearly that night in the Town Hall, and thus were able to understand what it was that fitted the soul to welcome the Bridegroom. The foolish, too late, found out that they had no oil, and were told to buy for themselves. "And while they went to buy the Bridegroom came; and they that were *ready* went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut." The ready ones were those who had the oil—none other. Too late the other virgins came saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us." The solemn answer came back, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not." They were outside, and outside for ever. Such is the awful future of the one who is not the possessor of the oil when the Lord comes.

The meeting closed, and many remained to be spoken with, others going away. Among these was the young woman whose words I have quoted. She left the hall, went into the street, and after a minute or two returned, and, coming up the steps to the landing outside the hall, where I was then standing, she accosted me abruptly with the words, "I've got oil to-night." Total stranger as she was to me, I inquired what she meant, and got for answer, "Oh, I've found Jesus to-night. My sins are all forgiven, I know I am saved, and that I have got the Holy Ghost now. I have only been a hollow, false professor of Christ until to-night. For some time I have been a church member, but my eyes have been opened to see my true state, and the Lord has, in His mercy, led me to Himself, blessed, and saved me, and I can truly say 'I've got oil to-night.'" Her face gave ample testimony to the truth of her statement, expressing as it did, the joy that now filled her heart in the possession of Jesus, and God's salvation. She was indeed the illustration and the answer of the apostle's desire, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace *in believing*, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xv. 13).

For the previous forty-eight hours my young friend had been a deeply anxious soul. That Sunday was a never-to-be-forgotten night in her history, but it had been preceded by two very memorable days and nights of contrition, repentance, and soul-agony. It appears that on the Friday, while occupied near

her father's house about some domestic matter, she had incautiously approached a very large and deep tank of water, which was not railed in, had missed her footing, and fallen in. The tank was full, and its depth exceeded her height. As she fell in, and the cold waters closed over her, in a second the whole of her life came before her, and she was convicted that all her religious profession was utterly worthless, and that she was a sinner going to be drowned and damned. Her horror was indescribable, and doubtless added energy to the efforts which she made from the bottom of the slimy tank, in her endeavours to reach the edge. This mercifully she effected, after some time got out unhelped, and immediately ran—not to her room, to divest herself of her dripping garments, but—down the street, to the house of a Christian young woman whom she knew, and whom she urgently implored to tell her how to get saved. Her bodily comfort was nowhere; the need of her guilty, sin-stained soul was paramount.

Her friend tried to calm her, and pointed her to Christ, but all in vain. She passed two sleepless nights of the deepest agony of soul, and gladly came to the hall on Sunday night to hear the preaching of which her friend had apprised her. The end you know. Awakened to a sense of her sinful and guilty condition, by water, she was brought into peace with God and joy in the Lord through simple belief of the gospel, and thereupon to the reception of the oil—the Holy Ghost.

Not long after her conversion she married, and

became the mother of a large family; and a few months since she fell asleep in Christ, having borne a bright witness for the Lord in her life, and in her death.

The history of God's dealings with souls is wonderful, nor is this one of the least striking that has come under my notice. Reader, do you think anybody could write the story of *your* conversion? Twelve men at Ephesus once had this question put to them, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (Acts xix. 2). Allow me to ask you that question. What will your answer be? If you cannot answer in the affirmative, give no sleep to your eyelids till you can happily say, "I've got oil!"

W. T. P. W.

"IF THOU HADST KNOWN."

THE sun is setting over the ancient city, Jerusalem. The shadows are lengthening as a little group of travellers wend their way over the Mount Olivet. Descending the slope of the hill, within sight of the city, a halt is made. The Leader of the little band, Jesus of Nazareth, stays, and, resting upon one of the boulders, He looks across the valley. There is the city which had so long been God's centre upon earth, and there is the temple, with the smoke of the evening sacrifice now rising from the altar, reminding Him of the supreme sacrifice He was so soon to offer—even Himself.

The followers draw aside and watch Him, for they realise He is deep in thought. A look of inexpressible sadness and longing comes over His face and large tears roll down His cheeks. A solemn hush falls upon the company, and each one feels as though it had been said to him, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

Jesus, the eternal Son of God, the despised Messiah of Israel, is weeping. Not on account of His own rejection by His people are those tears falling, but because of the awful picture that rises before His soul at this moment. He foresees—for He is divine—that very city in a few short years besieged, captured, and laid even with the ground. He knows that a fearful disaster must, as the inevitable consequence of His rejection, overtake that nation, and those who at the moment are plotting His capture and death will reap the dire consequences of their folly.

A deep sigh escapes Him, and His lips move. Not to those around does He speak, but to that city He says, "IF THOU HADST KNOWN, even thou, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace——" He pauses. That sentence can never be finished. Who can say what joy would have been theirs had they known Him, or who could express the delight it would have been to His heart had they received Him? Fresh tears fall from His eyes as He slowly adds the solemn utterance—"But now they are hid from thine eyes" (Luke xix. 41, 42).

It is late in the afternoon on a Lord's Day. On the banks of a river in the West of England lies the lifeless form of a young girl. As she entered the boat that afternoon, full of youthful vigour, she little thought that soon she would be in eternity. She had been anxious about her soul but had never decided for Christ, and on this occasion had chosen a boating excursion in preference to a gospel meeting. Who can say whether in those moments of struggling, her heart trusted Christ, the only Saviour; whether with her last breath she called upon the name of the Lord? We know not; but, as we think of that one in death's cold grip, tears fall from our eyes, and irresistibly the solemn words fall from our lips, "If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace."

My unconverted reader, it is possible that in a few hours some one may be looking into your coffin—may have to see your now fair form stretched in death. Think! if you die as you are now, heedless and careless as to your soul of priceless value; if you still refuse and slight Jesus the Lord, it would be concerning you that those heart-breaking words would be uttered, "IF THOU HADST KNOWN, even THOU, the things that belong unto thy peace! BUT NOW THEY ARE HID FROM THINE EYES."

It is a few moments after the Lord's coming for His people has taken place. The whole redeemed company have gone to be with Him, but there is a

vast multitude left behind, desperately anxious about their eternal welfare. At last, though alas! too late, they have awakened to the fact that eternity is a reality. They fully intended to be saved; they had heard the gospel preached and were conversant with its terms; they knew Christians were right, but they had never accepted Christ for themselves. There is a fearful dread in their heart as they now eagerly grasp the first Bible they can find with a faint hope that perchance there is still some means of salvation. The book opens at the Gospel of Luke, and one reads aloud until, with a look of horror, it is thrown down as the reader despairingly repeats the words, which have struck him with awful personal application, "If thou hadst known, even thou, the things that belong unto thy peace! BUT NOW THEY ARE HID FROM THINE EYES."

This picture is not a stretch of imagination, for the Lord Jesus Himself, when here on earth, said of that moment when God's day of grace is over, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord! Lord! have we not prophesied in thy name? . . . Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you! depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

One word more. Through the long-suffering of God it cannot yet be said of *you* that "now they are hid from thine eyes." It was true of Jerusalem; it may have been true of that young life suddenly cut off; it certainly will be true of those who are left for judgment when the Lord comes: but you are still

within reach of the things that belong to thy peace. "What things?" you ask. REPENTANCE towards God and FAITH towards our Lord Jesus Christ. The FORGIVENESS of your sins and JUSTIFICATION before God. These are the things that belong to thy peace. To know Jesus, the living Saviour at God's right hand, is to enjoy peace; for He "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."

"Acquaint now thyself with him and be at peace, thereby good shall come to thee."

F. S. M—H.

THE HEADLESS NAIL.

A CLERGYMAN had been recently appointed to his first living. One day he entered the churchyard while the sexton was at work digging a grave. Just then the man found a skull.

The clergyman stooped to pick it up, and was absorbed in meditation when his attention was suddenly arrested. Piercing the temple of the skull was a headless nail.

His first act was to withdraw and conceal the nail. Then, turning to the gravedigger, he asked if the latter knew whose skull this was? Yes, the sexton had himself known the man. He had kept an inn, and had been a heavy drinker. One night

he had taken an unusual quantity of spirits, and on the following morning was found dead in his bed.

From further inquiries the clergyman learnt that the dead man's wife—a woman who bore a good character—was still living. But she had married again the day after her husband's funeral, and this had given her neighbours offence.

The clergyman, having formed his conclusions, visited the woman and questioned her about her late husband. Hearing the same account, he suddenly produced the nail, and said in a peremptory tone, "*Woman, do you know this nail*"?

The woman was confounded at this unexpected evidence of her guilt. She at once confessed to the murder of her husband, was arrested, and afterwards suffered the utmost penalty of the law.

Such a record is a solemn illustration of the words of Scripture, "Be sure your sin will find you out."

Every sin, from the cruel murder perpetrated in darkness and secrecy to the evil thought cherished in the heart, must sooner or later be exposed.

Reader, listen! It is written, "*Every* tongue shall confess to God." But though the exposure of *your* sins *must* be made, you have a choice as to *when* it shall take place.

In the atoning death of the Lord Jesus the righteous basis has been laid on which God can show mercy to the guilty. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin.

Hence, he who confesses to God *now*, in the day of His grace, receives a free pardon. "If we con-

fess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The one who believes on the Lord Jesus may know that the punishment of his sins was borne by Christ at Calvary.

But if a man enter eternity without having availed himself of God's way of salvation, he will be arraigned at the bar of Divine Justice. To his dismay he will discover that not one of his sins has escaped the eye of the holy God. Speechless will the sinner stand, as one by one his sins are exposed; speechless will he listen, as the sentence falls from the lips of Christ the Judge.

And how terrible the sentence, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment."

Reader, you must meet God. When shall it be? Now in the time of His grace? or in ETERNITY in the day of His judgment?

Make a wise choice, we beseech you, before you lay down this paper.

M. L. B.

FRAGMENT.

IF God had merely swept away all men in anger, there would have been no love; if He had spared all in mercy, there would have been no righteousness. But Christ giving Himself up to death, and to the bearing of God's wrath on the cross, there is perfect righteousness against sin, and perfect love to the sinner. God was there fully glorified in all that He was,

J. N. D.

**"HE SAVED OTHERS, HIMSELF HE
CANNOT SAVE."**

THE chief priests and the scribes and elders of Israel little understood the significance of their own words when they said mockingly to Jesus on the cross, "He saved others, himself he cannot save." "The passers-by reviled him, wagging their heads, and led the way in saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, *come down from the cross*" (Matt. xxvii. 39, 40). The religious leaders took up the cry, and said: "He saved others, *himself he cannot save*. If he be the King of Israel, *let him now come down from the cross*, and we will believe him." And the thieves crucified with Him, reiterated the cry, casting the same in His teeth (Matt. xxvii. 44). And again a little later others, when they heard His cry, said, "Let be, let us see whether Elias will *come and save him*" (ver. 49).

What a deeply solemn scene! Jesus, the Son of God, on a cross between two thieves, the object of the taunts and derision of those He came to save. One who might have called on His Father, and presently He would have given Him twelve legion of angels to escape the hands of His foes. One, the majesty of whose presence caused those who came to take Him to step backward and fall to the ground (John xviii. 6). One who could have put forth

divine power, and have smitten every foe with a word. But One who passed through all, that He might by death on the cross glorify God as to the whole question of sin, and save sinners, guilty and lost.

Perfect in His obedience, not a word escaped His blessed lips against His tormentors, in the midst of all His sorrows and suffering. All was borne in perfect meekness, the wickedness of His enemies in crucifying Him only eliciting these precious and memorable words, “*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*”

The very thing His enemies bade Him do, namely, to save Himself, and come down from the cross, was the one thing He could not do, if such as they were to be saved. “Let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.” Little did their dark minds and wicked hearts realise the folly of their own words. Of what avail would it have been to believe Him if He came down? How could their sins be put away from before God, apart from His death? How could He save others, if He saved Himself? Impossible. “If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross,” said the passers-by. It was because He was the Son of God that He was there to glorify God, to overthrow the enemy’s power, to save them. None other than the Son of God could do it.

Precious Saviour, nothing moved Him. During three awful hours He bore the judgment of God against sin, as well as the repeated taunts and

mockeries of His enemies. "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani," was His heart-felt bitter cry, as He drained the last dark drop of that dreadful cup ere He yielded up the ghost. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Ah, why indeed? One answer only can there be. That God might be glorified as to the foul blot of sin, that in righteousness He might display His grace and make known His love to *every sinner that believeth*. "He saved others, himself he cannot save," cried the mocking priests and others. Never were words more true, but in a very different sense to the thought of those who uttered them. He could not save Himself if others were to be saved. And wondrous love, God spared not His Son but delivered Him for us all; and He, having offered Himself through the eternal Spirit without spot to God, was made sin and died.

"If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him." That He could not do, if to believe Him should be of any value. But He did a far more wonderful thing than that. Instead of *coming down from the cross*, *He came up from the grave* (1 Cor. xv. 4). And though His own *received Him not*, God *received Him up* in glory. From thence He saves others on the ground of His finished work, from that day to this. Even ere He commended His Spirit to His Father on the cross, one of the reviling thieves proved the power of His word and the efficacy of His mighty work, and passed into paradise to share His blessed company for ever. What a Saviour Jesus is!

Reader, do you know Him? Are you one of His saved ones?

Blessed, faithful Lord, He finished the work given Him to do, and His precious blood was shed. And now He sits a triumphant Victor and Saviour at the right hand of God, and His Spirit works in power in the hearts of men. The enemies of Christ said they would believe Him if He came down from the cross. Will you believe Him now that He has come up from the grave, *the living Christ in glory*? For nearly nineteen centuries God has waited in His rich grace, offering pardon and salvation full and free to a lost world. But soon, very soon, the hour of grace will have passed, and the hour of judgment have come. Now and now only is God's time for sinners to be saved. "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2). God offers you Christ as a *present* Saviour. What think ye of Him? Will you in blind folly and unbelief continue on the side of the world that mocked and crucified the Lord of glory, or do you believe in Him as your Saviour and Lord? Delays are dangerous. Procrastination is the thief of time. To-day, even now, the present moment is the moment for decision, for ere to-morrow you may be in eternity, and then it will be too late!

"Too late, *too late*, how sad the sound

For anxious human ears!

But *now* glad tidings loud resound,

God has a Saviour for us found,

And in His death a righteous ground,

To banish all our fears."

“He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God,” said they derisively. Ah! God is not mocked. His trust in Him was not in vain. He *did* deliver Him, but it was not from dying, but *out of death itself and all the enemy's power*. If He will have Him! *If!* It was the delight of His heart. God was delighted to receive in glory Him whose delight it was to do His will on earth. For He said, “I am the Son of God.” They did not believe it, but He said it, and He said the truth. And “he was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. i. 4). The Son of God is now in the glory of God. And priests, elders, scribes, all, whether Jew or Gentile, are invited to believe on Him now.

Others said, “Let be, let us see whether Elias will come and save him.” But it was to God, infinitely greater than the Jewish prophet, that Jesus cried. And *He saved Him, not from, but out of death and the grave*, the Man in whom He was well pleased, and presents Him now as *the Object of faith in the glory*. And there is not a need of any soul but what He can meet. *Himself He could not save*, for He would save others. By His death and blood-shedding is the only way. *There is no other*.

All our efforts and ways, all our doings and works, all our righteousnesses after the flesh, are utterly valueless to meet God and His claims. All have been met once for all by Christ on Calvary. And the

whole benefit of His work is put to our account the moment we believe on Him. His blood cleanseth us from all sin, and He Himself becomes our righteousness before God for ever. What we are not He has been, a holy Man, and hence what we could not do He has done. That is, He, the Holy One and the Just, poured out His soul unto death at Calvary, to put away sin *by the sacrifice of Himself*. So perfectly was every question met and settled there, that God glorified Him, and the great question for your soul now is, *What think ye of Christ? Do you believe in His Name?* To all who do, God says, *"Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."*

"Himself He could not save,
 He on the cross must die,
 Or mercy could not come
 To ruined sinners nigh ;
 Yes, Christ, the Son of God, must bleed,
 That sinners might from sin be freed."

E. H. C.

THE SOLDIER'S VOTE.

SOME years before his death, the late General Wauchope, or Colonel, as he was then, was persuaded to contest, at the forthcoming Parliamentary election, the county of Midlothian with Mr Gladstone.

A large political meeting had been held in Edinburgh, at which he had spoken, setting forth his

opinions on the points at issue. As he closed, to the surprise of all present, a man, apparently of a humble position in life, mounted the platform and addressed the company as follows.

"Friends," he said, "I don't know anything about politics, but one thing I know, when I was wounded in battle, he," pointing to the Colonel, "came to me; he gave me water out of his own bottle, and, at the risk of his life, carried me to a place of safety, and yon's the man I mean to vote for."

The whole audience, as may be supposed, was thrilled at the touching story, and although, ultimately, the gallant Colonel was unsuccessful in his candidature, we may well believe it was not the fault of the honest soldier.

When I read this, I remembered how, long years ago, One came to me in my need, and how with pierced hands He held living water to my dying lips. I remembered how He, the Lord Jesus Christ, brought me to a place, not of safety only, but of deep joy and blessedness, and I could but ask myself if I had been as loyal to Him as was that old soldier to his officer. I do not indeed mean merely the giving Him the vote of a passing hour, but by life and lip testifying that He, God's Altogether Lovely One, was my heart's choice.

But you perhaps, my reader, if you ask yourself the question, may be able to give a better answer than any I could find to it. I trust so, for He is worthy. To-day is given us the unspeakable privilege of owning Him in His rejection; to-morrow, it may

be, the world will be at His feet, His enemies be made His footstool, and our opportunity of testifying, where all is against Him, be for ever passed away.

L. R.

FROM THE PRISON TO THE PALACE.

("This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. . . . Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen."—1 TIM. i. 15-17.)

EVIL-MERODACH, King of Babylon, in the first year of his reign lifted up the head of Jehoiachin, King of Judah, and brought him forth out of prison; and spake kindly unto him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon, and changed his prison garments; and he did continually eat bread before him all the days of his life. And for his diet, there was a continual diet given him of the King of Babylon, every day a portion until the day of his death, all the days of his life" (2 Kings xxv. 27-30; Jer. lii. 31-34).

This incident is recorded in identical language in the close of the Second Book of Kings, and in the book of the prophet Jeremiah. It is an unusual thing to find a double record of an event in Scripture, so we may conclude that there is some special lesson to be learned. We may gather from it a striking picture of grace, and an illustration

of the way of God's grace to-day. It is the story of a journey from the dark depths of a dungeon to the glories of a royal palace.

Two persons are prominent. One the head of the mightiest empire that ever existed, the empire of the "golden head"; the other a captive in a dismal dungeon. Profane history tells us a little about the potentate; Scripture gives us a brief summary of the life of the prisoner. He "did evil in the *sight* of the *Lord*." Sin led to bondage. Seven-and-thirty long years he was a helpless captive. No doubt he had planned many an escape and vainly tried to break his bonds.

How like his history to yours! You too have done evil in the *sight* of the *Lord*. It does not say in the "sight of man." Perhaps no one can lay a finger upon you outwardly. You are moral, upright, a regular communicant, a Sunday-school teacher, perhaps a generous, kind, benevolent person. Yet there is that secret sin, that sin which none but the piercing eye of God has seen. The eyes of the Lord are in *every place*, beholding the *evil* and the *good*. Men saw the good, He alone saw the evil. Now, sin and bondage go together; sorrow and death follow in their train. A judgment-seat lies beyond for the "secrets" of man. We would fain hope that you earnestly long for deliverance. You say, "Yes, but all my efforts are in vain." Yes, and every day the task will be more difficult. A judge condemned a prisoner to forge a link every day to the chain hung on his body. As the weight increased

he was less and less able to get free. So with you. You ask, Is there no way of escape? None by your own efforts. You are as helpless to deliver yourself from the thralldom of sin as Jehoiachin was to break his prison bonds; but, thank God, there is a way of escape, there is deliverance for the captives, but *another must free you*. Let us see how Jehoiachin got free.

Profane history tells us that Evil-Merodach governed the affairs of the kingdom of Babylon during the time that the mighty King Nebuchadnezzar lost his reason, and ate grass like the oxen. When his reason returned, and he resumed the reins of government, Evil-Merodach was imprisoned in the same prison with Jehoiachin. There he became acquainted with the sorrows of the captive. On the death of Nebuchadnezzar he became heir to the throne, and the reins of government again passed into his hands. He signalled his accession by an "act of grace"; he visited the dungeon once more, but this time it was to take the captive out and set him on a royal throne. Let us trace the steps of this act of grace.

We read first of all that in the first year of his reign he lifted up his head, then brought him forth out of prison, and spake kindly to him. Can you not imagine the captive's feelings when he heard the mighty king had sent for him? Such a message meant either life or death. How intensely relieved he would be when the head that had lain low on a dungeon floor was "lifted up," and the

doors of his prison house were thrown open. He was "brought forth"; but, above all, how his heart would beat with joy at those "words of kindness," those "good things" which the margin tells us he spake with him.

Before we go on any further with this touching story, let me tell you of another King who sits on a throne far more glorious than that of Babylon. He too has visited a dungeon full of captives. For three-and-thirty years He sorrowed and suffered, and tasted by personal experience the misery sin had brought in. He was not deposed, but came as a willing visitor to this dungeon home where the captives of sin, Satan, and death lay in all their misery. Before He went back to that glorious throne which was His by right, He announced that He was sent to "preach deliverance to the captives," and to "set at liberty" them that are bruised. In order to do this, He had to undertake to pay the ransom price of every captive. Over each cell He saw written, "None can by any means redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him." Then He came and announced that He had come to give "*His life a ransom for many.*" His life! "All that a man hath will he give for his life." Here is One who had no evil of His own. One free from bondage. One upon whom sin, Satan, and death had no claim; of His own voluntary will paying the ransom price of that deliverance He proclaimed. One who could say, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death."

Shall I tell you His name? It is Jesus! *Jesus!! JESUS!!!* He bore that name because of the mighty work of emancipation He had undertaken. The millions paid by England for the emancipation of the slaves pale beside the price He paid. Silver and gold availed not. Life was forfeited, and life must be given. "*The precious blood of Christ*" was the ransom money. Calvary's cross in the blackness of darkness tells how He ransoms His captives. He enters their dungeon, bears their punishment to give them a righteous claim to be free. Now we can say to you—"Come forth." "Come out." Words of kindness await you—matchless words of kindness, telling how "God so loved" that He "*gave his Son,*" and how that Son so loved, that "*he gave himself.*" *Himself!! The price is paid, you may go free.* Jesus is no longer on Calvary, no longer paying the price. He is seated a "crowned" King on the throne of the Majesty on high. When He took His seat there, His very first act was to throw open the door to three thousand prisoners in one day. This was an act of grace indeed! Evil-Merodach's name is associated with grace to one—Christ with grace to untold myriads.

For nineteen centuries free pardon, full forgiveness have been daily and hourly coming from His palace. He proclaims "liberty" even for you. Just let Him put His blessed arms under *your* head. He waits to "*bring you forth,*" to breathe His words of loving-kindness in your ear. "God commendeth his love to us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died

for us." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Ah, there is no end to His words of kindness. He does not, however, stop with words at your prison door.

This lovely story of Evil-Merodach gives us still further illustrations of the love that delights to bless as well as to deliver. He never rested until the prisoner was freed from the dungeon and seated in the palace. So we are told that he gave him a "throne above all other thrones."

"Changed his prison garments, and cared for him." "All the days" and "every day," all the "days of his life until the day of his death." This surely was salvation to the uttermost. This was no niggardly act of grace. Each step unfolds fresh and fuller expression of grace abounding.

And so, if you will lay your head in the blessed bosom of Jesus, He will not only breathe words of kindness, and relieve your burden and break your chains, but He will let you know that that bosom is to be your resting-place for ever, and His blessed hand will minister to your necessities to the very last step of your earthly journey. His care will never cease, for "having loved his own, he loves them to the end," and waits to welcome you to His palace, and seat you in His throne.

He is not satisfied for you to be the secret subject of His love and care. He will presently set your throne above all thrones. For has He not said, "A

seat on my throne" awaits those who respond to His grace. The day will soon dawn when the redeemed and the Redeemer, the ransomed and the Ransomer, will be displayed in glory, and He will publicly own you as the "ransomed of the Lord."

But even now He will change your "prison garments." He would destroy every trace of your prison house. You are not to be a ticket-of-leave man. You say, What do you mean? Just this, a ticket-of-leave man is out on his good behaviour, and he is liable to be sent to prison again if he fails in his duty. Not so does Jesus treat His ransomed. He delights to strip you and to clothe you. You in your rags may do for the prison. Nothing less than the best robe will suit the palace. He does not cover your rags with a royal robe. He says, like He did to Joshua, "Take away the filthy garment." Jesus is no longer on the cross. He is risen—nay more, He has ascended, and is in the presence of God. Each believer is accepted in the Beloved, and is made the righteousness of God in Him.

The best robe is *now* upon all them that believe. The bolts and bars of your prison home are broken for ever. The palace garments are yours, nay, more, Jesus has charged Himself with every step of your journey. Every day and all the days a gracious provision awaits you. He is at the right hand of God, a great and gracious priest, saving to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. A bounteous store of present blessings is yours, and royal glory by-and-by. What a story of love and grace is thus unfolded. Grace to the vilest and grace to the end. H.N.

WAITING FOR YOU.

(Tune—"Blessed Assurance," S. S. & S., No. 500.)

1. "JESUS is waiting," patiently still,
Waiting that heav'n with sinners may fill;
Wash'd in His blood, they're fast pressing in,
Leaving you still in darkness and sin.

* *Waiting for you ; yes, waiting for you ;
Others have come, but why have not you ?
Oh, you'd not linger if you but knew
What there is waiting, waiting for you.*

2. Angels are waiting, wond'ring to see
How unbelieving still you can be,
Longing to make this anthem resound,
"Let us be glad, My lost one is found." *
3. Loved ones are waiting : think of the tears
Shed over you with anguish and fears ;
Think of their cry as once more they bow,
"Lord, save to-night!" then come to Him now.*
4. Hell too is waiting. Oh, sinner, think,
You are now standing just on the brink ;
Only one step—the line may be crossed :
Only one step—for eternity lost.*
5. "Jesus is waiting." Hear it again ;
Let Him no longer tarry in vain ;
Once more He calls you ; once more we say,
"Jesus is waiting." Come while you may.*

ARRESTED IN TIME.

IT was a sad story that was told me by two servants of the Lord, as we sat together in a railway carriage in the south of England a few months ago, and the artless way in which it was told made it all the more deeply interesting to me, so that in passing it on, in printed form, I trust that it may serve both as warning and blessing to many.

“We were travelling,” they said, “by the London and South-Western Railway about a year ago, and had beside us a young fellow whose dejected appearance struck us very forcibly. We longed to know something about him so as to help, and by God’s grace to rescue and lead him to Christ. After a short preliminary conversation, in which we sought to win his confidence, we learned that, tired of the restraints of home, and wishing to have his fling and enjoy the world, he had left his parents’ roof, had gone to sea, had spent a few years in going from place to place, had been sickened by sinful habits, and then had returned to this country a humbler but most unhappy man. Having landed at a certain seaport, he felt that his best course was to make for home, tell out in the ears of his father and mother the wretched tale of his sins and folly, and seek to obtain if possible their forgiveness, and then spend his succeeding years in a way that would make some

amends for the cruel and heartless way in which he had treated them.

“Well, he made for home. He reached the village and looked for the little cottage of his infancy and boyhood, but it was gone! His heart sank within him. The walls of that little dwelling of sorrow had been destroyed; no vestige remained. He wondered if the downfall of the house was an evidence of a greater loss. What of father and mother? Where could they be? How could he find them?

“Alas, he had never written them, nor could they learn his whereabouts. He had treated them with awful cruelty. He made inquiry of some neighbour, only to find that, crushed by grief, both parents had died, one shortly after the other. Killed by sorrow they had dwined and died, and the sad tale was told.

“This was the cause of his dejected appearance; but, poor fellow, so wretched did he feel, and so utterly unable to rectify his fearful mistake, that he could see no better thing to do than to commit suicide. He was on his way to carry out that awful deed. We felt that we must do our best to prevent such a thing. We took him under our care; we prayed to God for and with him; we told him of another home where death is unknown, and where even he could find a welcome; how even his dark sins could be all washed away by the blood of Jesus, and that he might become a child of God through faith in Him. We kept him with us in a home for six weeks, and believe that he repented before God of his past career.

He gave evidences of a new life, and went again to sea, where he still is, we hope and believe, a truly converted man."

A sad but not very uncommon story, I thought, as I could only thank God heartily for His grace to such an out-and-out prodigal, and for giving so much real charity to these two dear servants of His whom it was my privilege to meet on that occasion: then we parted.

I have given their story as nearly as I can remember in their own words, and I need hardly say that it made a great impression on me.

What struck me, apart from feeling the wanton cruelty of a child leaving his home and never informing his parents of his existence, was the contrast presented between the remorse which was leading him to a suicide's grave and the blessed repentance which led him to turn to God, and find in the blood of His Son cleansing from his sins and frank forgiveness too.

The contrast is most striking. Remorse is, indeed, sorrow for sin, but there may be plenty such sorrow which stops short of repentance. Remorse is little more than wounded pride; and, when the wound is healed by the lapse of time, the unbroken will and unsubdued passions break forth again as bad as, or perhaps worse than ever.

The drunkard, for instance, has keen remorse when the effects of the drink have passed away, but the taste remains, and he returns to his wallowing.

Remorse is but transitory, though it may be so deep, and produce such hopeless misery that it ends

in suicide. Such was the case with Judas Iscariot. Repentance, on the other hand, is not only sorrow for sin, but is also the judgment of it in the presence of God. It is a "repentance not to be repented of." Sin is seen as exceeding sinful, and as having been committed not only against man but against God.

This makes sin, every sin, very serious. It is an awful thing for a creature to violate the law of God—to be lawless and unsubject to Him! Such is sin! But repentance, when true and real, leads to certain forgiveness. The publican in Luke xviii. cried, "God be merciful to me *the sinner*," and went down to his house justified. David, the guilty monarch of Israel, quailed under the prophet's charge, went down into the small dust of repentance before God, as we read in Psalm li., and found forgiveness, as we see in Psalm xxxii., and David ended his days with a song of salvation.

Finally, the prodigal of Luke xv., as we all remember, flung his guilty self on his father's bosom, told out the dreary tale of his prodigality in terms of deepest repentance, and found a welcome to the bosom and board of that tender father against whom he had sinned. Such is grace.

The story of sin—be that sin what it may—is always distressing, because, though sin may have its pleasure for a season, it is demoralising and degrading, and must leave its bitter consequences behind.

The story of grace is always interesting, because, coming as it does from the very heart of God, it meets, on ground rendered perfectly just by the

blood-shedding of the blessed Saviour, the poor guilty sinner who in penitence desires salvation.

Thus it was with the young wanderer above, and so it may be with any reader of these lines who in like manner repents before 'God. "He that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy."

"None shall seek who shall not find ;
 Mercy called whom grace inclined ;
 Nor shall any willing heart
 Hear the awful word 'Depart.'"

J. W. S.

FOUR LOOKS.

(Read Ps. liii. 1-3 ; Ps. cii. 17-21 ; Isa. xlv. 21, 22 ;
 Num. xxi. 6-9.)

IN these Scriptures we have four looks. Two of these looks are on God's side, and two on man's part. I will show you presently the two looks that had better come on your side ; but first of all we will see the looks on God's side.

1. THE SEARCH-LOOK.

Psalm liii. opens very remarkably, because it expresses what is in the heart of many a person, viz., this thought—I do not want to have to do with God. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (ver. 1). He was not quite such a fool as to say it with his lips, because his folly would have

been too manifest, too patent to the ears of others, and they would have said what he would not have cared to hear. Is that bold but secretive person reading this paper? He is a fool. *I* do not call him such—*God* does. *God is*, and sooner or later you have to meet Him. You say, *I* hope not soon. *I* hope to meet Him very soon. You need not be afraid to meet Him, and when you learn what you are, and what He is, and also His attitude towards you, you will not be afraid of Him.

The attitude of man towards God is awfully solemn, indescribably sad; the acme of it is reached when a man's heart gets so under the power of Satan that he tries to convince himself there is no God. It will not do. The heathen in Paul's time knew better. Paul went through the town of Athens, and saw scores of altars, and at length was arrested by seeing one with the inscription, "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD." That is the God I want you to know, and I will tell you why. The Lord Jesus said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3).

But the fool said he did not exist. You leave God alone—He will prove His existence, and will also tell you His nature, His character. But first of all He will make your character and nature known to you. Why does a man say in his heart, "There is no God"? Because the heart is corrupt—sin has corrupted it. Man's daily life is only the outside; God begins with the inside. Reformation will not put

you right with God, because the heart is corrupt. The solemn thing is this—man is wrong in his heart. Thence came the thought, "There is no God." Listen to His reply, "Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity." 'These are scathing words. They fit man uncommonly well. You are possibly on too good terms with yourself to think so, but when you see yourself you will find their application.

Look back on your life, and will you deny "abominable iniquity"? Why, you did your own will, took your own way, and never thought of God—left Him out altogether. But God labels things rightly, calls evil "abominable iniquity," and then adds, "There is *none* that doeth *good*" (ver. 1). You say, I have not done all I ought to have done, but I will try and do *better*. You are too late. When I left school I knew the import and relation of the three words, good—better—best. When people tell me they are doing their *best*, I say, Yes, doing their best to damn themselves. Let God speak, "There is *none* that doeth *good*."

You say, I cannot allow that. You would not like to admit it, since it cuts the legs from beneath you, robs you of your self-righteousness, and lowers you in your own eyes. You had better get down to the spot where God can meet you—"There is none that doeth good." With some exceptions, you consider, and *you* are that exception. Are you? Then God tells lies. You say, Oh, I would not like to say that. No, you would not like to put it down in black and white like that. You may depend upon

it God has not written in His book what He does not know all about.

"God looked down" we read in verse 2. He was looking at you when you were not looking at Him. Presently I am going to ask you to look up, but we will see God's two downward looks first. "God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were"—*many*? No, to see if there were "*any* that did understand." Have you never got under the eye of God yet? In the Russo-Japanese war in the East, we are told that the plans of one of the opposing parties have been frequently detected and frustrated by the searchlight of the enemy. It revealed what was going on.

Reader, God has turned His searchlight from heaven on to earth; its beams have taken me in, and they take you in, and what do we read? "God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were *any* that did understand, that did seek God. *Every one* of them is *gone back*." He turned the light all round, on patriarchs, priests, kings, and people, and He turns it on to your heart just now, and what is the discovery? "Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is *none that doeth good, no, not one*" (ver. 3). You say, "I do not like that language." I dare say not. A prophet said once, "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. lxiv. 6). What means that Isaiah? Our *very best* will not do for God.

If your best will not do for God, my friend, what about your worst, your sins? Do not make a mock

at God, and do not make light of sin. Face the situation, face God, face your state, face the truth about yourself, and you will find you will have to own this—"Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Filthy, what is that? Polluted by sin. You may not be very cognisant of what the sin is; we become stupefied by the presence of sin in our hearts and lives. And we take little note of our sins, but God notes them, and He says, "The thought of foolishness is sin" (Prov. xxiv. 9).

When a man gets a sense of what sin is before God, he does not extenuate it, and when God says "filthy," he replies "Filthy indeed." The last chapter in the Bible says, "And he which is filthy, let him be filthy still" (Rev. xxii. 11). Fancy going into eternity a sinner in all the filthiness of sin, and abiding therein for ever. That verse also says, "He that is holy, let him be holy still." What is that? There is such a thing as getting rid of the filth, the guilt, the burden of sin, but—solemn reflection—there is such a thing as a man going into eternity in all the filth of the sins of time, and carrying his guilt with him. Forget not, however, that sin and God never meet except for judgment. I want you to ponder God's words—they are not mine—"There is none that doeth good," and then He emphatically clinches the statement with "no, not one."

But what about that nice amiable young lady who reads this, and whose walk has been most decorous,

and her behaviour without stain? Of her God says, as of every other, "There is none that doeth good, no, not one." The whole family is irretrievably lost, for every member of the family is in this condition. Can no one get out of it? That is another side of the subject altogether. God sees what man is, and while his state is described in the striking language of this Psalm, it is corroborated in many places in Scripture.

We live in a day, however, when men do not believe that they are in this condition, and they are preached to, and taught that this is not their real state, and that it is only the lowest and most degraded sinners that are after this sort. Nay, nay. Adam was a fallen, corrupted, ruined man ere he begat a single child, and all his family are fallen too. What was true of the first child is true of the last. The first was Cain, who slew his brother, and he has many followers. He went in for religious works, and for bringing to God the fruit of a cursed earth, but he was rejected. Many think they can get to God on the ground of diligent work. Abel brought the slain lamb—he owned the truth of the fall. He put between his soul and God the blood of a sinless victim. "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). It stirred up enmity in Cain's heart, and he slew his brother. There is only one gospel all through Scripture, and it is connected with the blood of Christ.

2. THE LOVE-LOOK.

Now turn to Psalm cii. You say, Psalm liii. has robbed me of everything. All right, if you take the ground of being destitute, here is comfort for you. "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer" (Ps. cii. 17). Sin has robbed us of love, goodness, righteousness, holiness, yea of everything that we need to fit us for God's presence. Now when you are truly "destitute" God steps in, in the fulness of His grace, to show how He can meet that destitution through the gospel, through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. How He loves to meet need and misery! He loves mercy and not sacrifice.

"This shall be written for the generation to come" (ver. 18). Thank God, we are in it. "And the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord." Yes, all Christians can praise the Lord, for He has delivered, pardoned, saved, redeemed us, brought us to Himself, and enriched us with all His love can give us in Christ. A Christian goes through this world praising and blessing God for all he has got in His blessed Son.

What blessed tidings we get in Psalm cii.—"For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary." This is quite another kind of look. This time it is not to find out what man's state is, but to see how He can meet it. It is not merely heaven here, but the spot of His highest holiness. From thence God looked down—"To hear the

groaning of the prisoner." Have you been groaning as a poor wretched sinner? God has heard your groans, and His desire is "to loose those that are appointed to death." The state of man is made plain, that he has nothing whatever with which to approach God, when he is in sin, bondage, and corruption, with death hanging over him. You may not think yourself a prisoner, but you are in the prison-house of sin, and are the slave and dupe of Satan right up to the moment Christ sets you free. Have you ever tried to escape your jailor? Any one who has set himself to get free has found out his weakness, his powerlessness. Man is a captive in the chains of sin.

The Lord Jesus, the very first time He came out to preach the gospel, said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke iv. 18). That is what Jesus came to do, that was His mission, He came down to preach deliverance. Perhaps you have not got it yet; I hope you soon will.

Whatever you have before you in this world, there is one thing you cannot get over, Death is before you. You may try to parley about the matter of sin, and argue how it came in, and why God let it come in; but you cannot get over the fact that you are surrounded by graveyards. Why do men die? You say, Disease carries them off, or some sudden judg-

ment of God. And who shall tell whether you may not be the next one to die? You are "appointed to death." There are two appointments an unsaved sinner has to meet—Death and Judgment—the grave here, and wrath hereafter, for "it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27).

Fellow-Christian, you and I have only one appointment. What is that? "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. v. 9). That is a fine appointment, and I am sure of this—God will keep us to that appointment: I have no fear of that.

Thank God, there is salvation for any one that would like to have it. God wants you to have it, His grace presents it to you. He looks down to see if there is a prisoner He can loose. If you are an anxious sinner He has His eye upon you. What He wants to give you is life and liberty.

3. THE SAFETY-LOOK.

Now we will consider another look—the sinner's look for salvation. It is not God looking down to see what He could do, but God telling you what *you* have to do. He has distinctly said: "There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, there is none beside me" (Isa. xlv. 21). I could not be happy unless I knew God was a just God, and would not look over sin. But all His righteous

claims have been met. Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus God's grace now comes out. His claims against us have all been satisfied by Jesus, so "that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26). You must meet God in one of two ways—either as your Justifier, or as your Judge. You are going to have to say to God, either as the One that justifies you now, or judges you by-and-by.

You say, Already I am convicted of my sin and guilt. Then see how God comes in to meet your case. When you see the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, all becomes perfectly plain and simple. God is a just God, He does not give up His claims. "The wages of sin is death." Who died on the cross? Jesus. Whose sins were there laid on Him? Not His own. He had none. He bore the sins of many. Observe the *as* and the *so* of the Scripture already quoted. "And *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" (Heb. ix. 27, 28). How many? I do not know. Who is among the many? *I* am, thank God. I groaned in my misery, and He set me free. "*Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth*" (Isa. xlv. 22) is God's blessed call. There is the sinner's "look"—the anxious' soul's "look." It is not God looking *at* you, but you looking *to* God.

"All the ends of the earth" are called—that is wide enough. Do you inquire, How can I tell whether He died for me? Are you a sinner? Yes,

a wretched, guilty, self-condemned sinner. Whom did Christ die for? Sinners. Take the ground of a sinner, and you may have the sinner's Saviour. "Look unto me" is His word to you. All you have to do is to trust Him, confide in Him, yield your heart to Him, and believe Him. He settled the question of sin when He died on the cross; you look to Him and are saved as you look.

4. THE LIFE-LOOK.

We read in Numbers xxi. that the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and many died. But when they confessed their sin, God said unto Moses: "Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he *looketh* upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole; and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, *when he beheld* the serpent of brass, *he lived*" (ver. 9). How simple was the cure. One look—and life followed. So is it with the believing sinner to-day. It is not only that your sins are forgiven, but you get life. Do not put off, do not delay to look to Jesus. If you want to be saved, settle the matter this very hour. Turn to the Lord, heed His word—"Look unto me, and be ye saved." It is not *hope* to be saved, but *be ye* saved. How rapid was the cure. "When he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." It is Christ lifted up—Christ dead and risen. You turn to Him, you look to Him,

and what is the result of looking? Salvation and life.

Looking is another word for expressing confidence. You trust the Lord, and you may sleep soundly to-night, in the knowledge that you are forgiven, saved, are the possessor of life, and have the Lord as the portion of your heart. He has looked on my state, and has met it by the death of His Son, and now He says, "Look unto me, and be saved," and I have looked, and am saved, and, as in the case of Israel, he that looked lived, so I can say that I live.

Reader, God has taken His two looks at you. Have you taken your two looks at Him? If not, take them just now.

W. T. P. W.

FRAGMENT.

THE Israelite was not partly sheltered by the blood, and partly exposed to the sword of the destroyer. He knew he was safe. He did not hope so. He was not praying to be so. He was perfectly safe. And why? Because God had said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." He simply rested upon God's testimony about the shed blood. He set to his seal that God was true. He believed that God meant what He said, and that gave him peace. He was able to take his place at the paschal feast in confidence, quietness, and assurance, knowing that the destroyer could not touch him, when a spotless victim had died in his stead.

C. H. M.

A SOLDIER'S HEROISM.

IT was a time of war, and England had sent her armies over sea to try to check the power of France. Many acts of heroism were performed, and we would tell again the story of one noble deed.

An English officer, accompanied by a soldier, was reconnoitring one day, when by mistake he rode up to a small body of French cavalry. The Frenchmen were dismounted, but on recognising the officer's rank, they quickly mounted and started in pursuit. The two English soldiers might yet have escaped had not some more of the enemy's soldiers cut off their retreat.

"Your only chance, Colonel," said the orderly, "is to make for that ravine."

But the ravine was narrow, and there was room for only one horse to enter. The Colonel gained the opening in safety, but turning round beheld a terrible sight. The devoted soldier, in order to gain time for the officer to escape, had placed himself across the entrance of the ravine, and thus nobly he fell under the enemy's sword.

We applaud such a deed, and yet it but faintly reminds us of a much greater act of love, an act far above the deed we have recorded, even as the heavens are far above the earth.

The soldier's life was sacrificed to save a life of greater value. But what shall we say of the love

that led the Son of God to lay down His life? He stooped to become man, and died that He might save those that were not only infinitely His inferiors, but that were also His deadly enemies. Such love as this passes all understanding.

Yes, the Lord Jesus left His home of love to become a man and tread this cold and dreary world. He who had ever been used to command, learned "obedience by the things which he suffered." The object of His Father's love, He became the object of man's scorn and hatred. He was the "Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Through such a pathway He went on to Gethsemane and to Calvary. At the cross He suffered not only at the hand of man, but also at the hand of God. His soul was made an offering for sin. He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Thus He suffered that He might save man from the consequences of sin.

"Sin's bitter judgment He bore on the tree,
Dying to save, dying to save ;
So that the sinner might justly go free,
His precious blood Jesus gave."

Now God has highly exalted the Lord Jesus, and from heaven He sends to man the message of His love.

Dear reader, have you ever thanked the Lord Jesus for the work He did upon the cross? Can you say, "He loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*"? If you cannot say this, we beseech you not to spurn His love any longer. He desires to bless you, to

make known His love to you. Oh! let the story of His love draw you to His feet. Then will you hear Him say, “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.”

M. L. B.

“PEACE—MY PEACE.”

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”—JOHN xiv. 27.

TWO things are brought before us here. The first is the fact of peace, though there may not be earthly blessing and prosperity, like the Jews, but trouble outwardly; the second is that which characterises the peace. “My peace” is what He has Himself, and the extent of it. Being thus characterised, it implies that they had it not while He was with them. They lacked nothing: they had purse and scrip, &c. He could speak peace in the forgiveness of sins; but this peace, *His* peace, was not before given to the disciples.

Peace shuts out trouble as to the realisation of it. It is not peace of conscience with God here, but that which could not be disturbed by the knowledge of God. It is not peace without God, and it is independent of all circumstances. So much trouble as there is in circumstances, the peace could not be secure if it could be altered by them.

This peace is the possession of such quiet as to be undisturbed about other things. It is peace with God in the sight of His righteousness and His holiness, and it is an absorbing thing. Suppose I am at peace with some one I do not care much about, I may be troubled enough about other things. The peace does not absorb my affections. When we have the peace itself; we may acquaint ourselves with God. The soul so satisfied with its own peace desires nothing else. It knows God, and finds nothing to disturb it in God or out of God.

This peace will keep God between the trouble and us, instead of the trouble coming between us and God. Such is our danger, and such the remedy.

Mark the extent of the peace—"My peace;" and how thoroughly well He knew what He had, that He could give it them. He had been tried, rejected, had suffered; "He had not where to lay his head," "hunted like a partridge on the mountains," "the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" and yet He knew so well the blessedness He had that He could speak of it to leave it to them. There was an unclouded rest in God, and God an unclouded source of blessing to Him, in all His path of sorrow and trouble, so unlike that which any one else ever had. But "thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee," &c., was known experimentally by Him; and was there ever uncertainty as to whether His Father heard Him? No, there was an unclouded certainty. Nothing

could bring it into question. He need not put it to the test by throwing Himself down from the temple ; this were tempting God.

The two expressions in the verse explain each other ; "peace," "my peace," &c. "Let not your heart be troubled." I am giving you My own peace. What we have, we know to be His ; not the knowledge of what we are with God, but what He is to God. We cannot have peace if we have the thought, When I come to know God, what will He think of me ? I must know God in order to have peace.

If the Lord came this moment, would you have peace, and be able to say, "This is our God, we have waited for Him" ? If you have the consciousness of liking anything that God does not like, you cannot be at peace. Even if you have found peace of conscience about your sins through the blood of the cross, it will destroy your communion and peace of heart if you like anything that God does not like. If there is anything not given up in the will, there cannot be peace. If you have peace, then if God came in your peace would stay.

Peace is never imperfect : there can be no flaw in it. If anything comes in and produces an uncertainty, it cannot be peace. Water in a dirty pool may look clear at the surface, but, if it is stirred up, the dirt comes to the surface ; and so with the heart.

Christ gives us His peace, and can wrath disturb it ? Did He not know the wrath due to our sin ? He bore the wrath. Did He not know the sin ?

"He was made sin," &c. Did He not know God? He came forth from Him.

How can we have peace? Because He has made it "by the blood of his cross." He has expiated sin. The question that agitates your heart He settled between Himself and God, not on His own account, but for us. He was the Son of God. In the presence of wrath He settled it; in the presence of holiness, too, He made His soul an offering for sin. God spent His Son for us; and can He fail to claim us as the objects of His love? He has bought us at an unspeakable price.

He has seen the sin, judged the sin, put the sin away in Christ. Peace is made, peace is given, peace is known by the "blood of the cross." Is it a thought of mine about my getting this peace? No. He says, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." He knows what God's wrath is; what God's righteousness is; what God's holiness is; what all His requirements are; and we have the assurance of His peace from His own mouth. Have I earned it? No; He has earned it. Can He deceive me? What is my warrant for expecting the favour of God? If you have believed what wrath is, you will value the favour of Christ. Christ would rather give up His life than God's favour for us.

If Christ is your peace, He is as sinless for you as He was in Himself. He "of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30).

J. N. D.

"IT'S ALL LUCK."

WHO is there to-day that has not heard of those magnificent American falls "Niagara," which with untiring energy pours forth such a mighty volume of water, the sound of which can be heard over twenty miles distant?

Some little distance above the falls on the bank of that mighty river, a rock is frequently pointed out to the traveller, known as "Redemption Point." It is only a little cape jutting into the water which one might easily pass unnoticed, but beyond it no human being, launched on that broad river, has ever been known to escape death.

It was into this boiling torrent that a seeker after worldly honour and fame dared to plunge some years ago, hoping to do battle with the swift current, and reach the lower bank in safety.

Webb was a man of no ordinary calibre. In his daring he had swum the sea which rolls between England and France, and many another feat had added honour to his name. Now with unsatisfied desire for fame, he determined to risk his life in the foolish and ill-advised attempt to swim Niagara. While preparing for that fatal plunge he turned to those standing around him, saying,

"IT'S ALL LUCK,

and the END I do not think about, I'll take my chance!" Fatal delusion! yet in how many hearts

his words find an echo! No! you do not care to think of

YOUR END.

Yet, depend upon it, "*it must come,*" and though the flush of health may be on your cheek, every heart-throb brings it nearer. Who knows? You may even now have reached "*Redemption Point.*" God may be pleading by His Spirit, offering salvation to you Now! Pass that, and your helpless, hapless soul must be lost FOR EVER.

Thousands upon thousands thronged the banks of the river on that memorable day. Their hero appeared, took his accustomed dive into the boiling current, rose again as usual, to float and strike out as he had often done before, but he was

PAST REDEMPTION POINT.

The eddying waters had him like a straw in their iron grasp, hurling him into the vortex he had so madly braved—LOST, in the sight of thousands who stood in safety round him—safe themselves, but utterly powerless to save him.

Oh, my reader, you and I are silently, yet surely, carried upon the breast of time's rapidly flowing river. Take care! lest, half dreaming, you *pass Redemption Point*. Every one has a last opportunity, yours may be NOW. Miss it, and your precious, priceless soul must be swept "*past Redemption Point,*" into the vortex of eternal damnation.

Will you not trust Jesus NOW? His death, His

resurrection can put you beyond the reach of judgment and land you safely in eternal glory.

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isa. i. 18). J. W. H. N.

OH! PRAISE THE LORD.

TUNE—“There is a calm” (Sacred Songs and Solos, 563).

THERE is a tale of blessed, wondrous sweetness,
That God so loved the world, by sin
undone;
To prove His love, so vast, so great, so
boundless,
He gave His Son, He gave His Son.

Refrain.

That tale has thrilled my heart with heavenly
gladness,
A sweeter story ears have never heard,
Has chased away all fear, and gloom, and sadness—
Oh! praise the Lord, oh! praise the Lord.

The story tells how Jesus once has suffered,
To put away our sins of scarlet dye,
Himself a victim, unto God once offered,
To bring us nigh—To bring us nigh.

The work is done ! and Satan's power is broken,
The Lord has triumphed—death by dying slain,
Death's sting, and victory from the grave has taken ;
He lives again !—He lives again !

The glory claimed the earth-rejected Jesus !
As victor now He sits upon the throne.
Oh ! sinner, bow to Him who died to free us ;
Him worthy own—Him worthy own.

He has prepared a home for those who love Him,
Has sweetly whispered, " I will come again ;"
The Spirit and the bride respond, with gladness,
" Come, Jesus Lord." Amen. Amen.

J. W. H. N.

A STRANGE CHOICE.

" Will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews ? Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber."—JOHN xviii. 39, 40.

No, no ! " not this man ! " He is too good, too tender-hearted, too compassionate of the poor and distressed, much too willing to relieve and comfort all who mourn : He must not live. Besides, He possesses some supernatural power by which He heals all manner of diseases. Even leprosy has yielded to His touch, and many poor demoniacs have been delivered from their torments simply by a word from His lips. Then again, it is a well-known

fact that He has actually raised dead persons to life, and we cannot deny it. A year ago at Nain He met the funeral of a young man about to be buried. He was the only son of a poor widow woman, and when this man Jesus saw her sorrow, He bid her dry her tears and then brought her son to life again, overwhelming her alike with wonder and with joy. And then, instead of getting the young man to follow Him and spread the news of the miracle He had wrought, He just delivered him to his mother, and went His way.

Now, how can we suffer a man so full of kindness as this to live in our midst? And besides all this, He preaches the gospel to the poor, and to all who desire it He declares the forgiveness of their sins, and many of the publicans and of the common people are quite taken up with Him. Many a heart has He made to leap and sing for joy as it has found in Him all it needed for present and eternal happiness, but *we* do not want Him and we will not have Him; let us rather have Barabbas. He is a murderer 'tis true, while this Jesus has never taken away life, but has seemed delighted to impart or to restore it; and he is a robber, while this man is the most upright and benevolent person our city has ever seen, his whole life appears to have been spent in doing good to all who have come in His way, dispensing the choicest blessings to the most needy ones. Barabbas, too, stirs up sedition, and we are only sure of our peace or property so long as he is in prison, but we will have him out and let him go at large rather than this meek and lowly,

unassuming and innocent man shall be permitted to live any longer.

Reader, you remember this scene, when they killed the Prince of Life, denying "the Holy One and the Just," and desiring a murderer to be granted unto them. What says YOUR HEART to it all? Has Jesus or Barabbas the chief room there? In words you would not say, "Away with Jesus, crucify him!" but in the secret of your soul how is it with you? Do you try to dismiss the thought of Him from your mind, like "the fool saith in his heart, No God"? or do you vainly fancy that though you mingle in the crowd of His bitterest enemies, and make yourself their boon companion, He will not yet search you out and deal with you as one of them? Oh, remember, He looketh at the heart, and although He now in His marvellous long-suffering delays His deserved vengeance, He will presently enter into judgment with all who have not received and owned Him as their Saviour, believing on Him to the saving of their souls. And He is now witness whom you choose—Himself with all His lowliness; with all His glory; or the world, with all its vanity, and its impending doom, for by-and-by, concerning all those who rejected and despised Him, He will utter those dread words, "Those mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me!" Again, dear friend, what is the response of your inmost heart? What the answer of your outward life?

"DO YOU KNOW HIM?"

THE train from Aberdeen to Edinburgh was ploughing its way through deep masses of snow, which had fallen, and were still falling, one forenoon in winter, nearly forty years ago. A keen wind drove the icy flakes through every crack, and with all the comfort which a first-class carriage, and plenty of rugs and hot-water pans, could supply, it took me all my time to keep myself warm.

At one of the stopping stations in Stirlingshire an elderly gentleman entered the carriage, which hitherto I had had to myself. His silvery hair and attenuated frame could only speak of greatly advanced age, and I wondered why he should select so stormy a day for travelling. A remark from him as to the inclemency of the weather led me to say that I rather wondered that a man of his age should be travelling on such a day. To this he replied, "Your observation is very just, but business calls me to Edinburgh to-day—most important business."

"It must indeed be such," said I, "to cause you thus to brave the elements."

"Yes, sir," he rejoined, "my business is most important. I am proceeding to Edinburgh in relation to the publication of a book of the deepest possible interest to me."

"And what may be the subject of the book?" I ventured to inquire.

"It is a book on which I have laboured for a great many years, to *prove the existence of God*," was his emphatic rejoinder.

"That indeed is a subject of surpassing interest," I replied, "and may I inquire, sir, Do you know Him?"

The effect of this question almost startled me. The old gentleman drew a long breath, pursed his lips, fell back into his seat in deep and serious thought, and then said, "That is a very serious question, sir."

"Undoubtedly," I replied, as I waited for an affirmative response which had not yet come; "but it would never occur to me that a man would sit down and write a book to prove the existence of a Being he did not himself personally know, and know well."

"Ah, therein lies the difficulty. How can we be sure that we know Him?"

"Well," I replied, "we already possess a book which declares and proves His existence most emphatically and most blessedly, and if you have drawn your evidence from the scriptures of truth, your ground is sure, and your arguments will be conclusive. But I venture to think that unless you know Him yourself personally you will fail to convince your readers."

A long conversation followed, and I was greatly interested in this elderly stranger, who long since has passed to his rest, while his exhaustive and logically conclusive book (which came into being

soon after this conversation) is still to be had for the buying.

Far be it from me to say that the old gentleman did not know God; but the hesitancy in the confession thereof was what struck me greatly at the moment, because to know God and to enjoy Him is the vital question for every soul of man.

The Shorter Catechism opens well with, "What is man's chief end?" And the answer is also good, "To glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever." But how can any man glorify and enjoy God if he does not know Him? Sad indeed is the state of the man who, like Pharaoh, has to say, "Who is the Lord?" evincing thereby ignorance of Him, and then follow it by the bold confession, "I know not the Lord" (Exod. v. 2). That man is in a condition of darkness, distance from God, and spiritual death.

My reader will very probably say, "But Pharaoh was a heathen." True, but what better is the professing Christian who, more responsible, but not more enlightened, has also to say, if he speak honestly, "I know not the Lord"? To such an one would I fervently and affectionately say, in the words of Eliphaz the Temanite: "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee. Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart" (Job xxii. 21, 22).

Not to know the Lord is confessedly to admit that you do not know or believe the gospel. Now the gospel is wrapped up in the Person and work

of the Lord Jesus Christ. Moses brought the Law to man—the revelation from God of what man ought to be. Jesus has brought the revelation of what God is to man. He declares God, and the revelation of what He is perfectly meets man's condition. Hence we read: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John i. 17, 18). Jesus has interpreted the heart, the nature, the thoughts, the desires of God. God is love, and that love has shown itself in Jesus. The attitude as well as the disposition of God toward man at this moment is absolute grace, which blots out his sins through the work of the cross, and brings the hitherto lifeless sinner into the knowledge of Himself, through the effectual work of His Spirit, quickening the soul, and leading it to believe on Jesus, once dead for sins and sinners, but now alive before God, and the life of all who trust Him. To know Him there is life eternal. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23). This eternal life Jesus communicates to all who believe in Him.

Did you never ponder, my reader, the words which He spake to His Father: "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent"?

(John xvii. 2, 3). Life eternal here, you notice, consists really in knowing the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Eternal life, therefore, is not so much the thought of *being*, as of *knowing*.

We can only know God as He is seen revealed in Jesus, and if brought to know the Lord Jesus the revelation of God is made good to our souls, and eternal life is possessed. “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life” (1 John v. 11-13). All who thus know the Son of God are entitled to say: “And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life” (1 John v. 20). Reader, do you know Him?

Tell me not that He cannot be known; rather listen to the testimony of an unimpeachable witness, Paul the Gentile apostle: “For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim. i. 12). Were I you I would not lay my head on my pillow to-night till I could say, and say truly, “I know whom I have believed.”

FREELY.

SOME time ago a converted officer, anxious to let others know of the blessing which had reached him, took a large sheet of paper, on which he wrote the word

Freely, FREELY, FREELY,

three times, and pinned it outside his tent door. When asked his reasons for doing so, he said, "That is how God saved me." The way God saved that officer is the way He can save you.

The word "freely" means without any cause or reason on your part. In one place in the New Testament the word "freely" is translated *without a cause*. Please bear the meaning of this word in mind whilst we look at three places where the word "freely" is found.

In Revelation xxii. it is connected with a *free salvation*. In Romans iii. with a *free justification*. In Hosea xiii. with a *free restoration*.

The New Testament closes with the salvation of God compared to a fountain. On one side is written, "*I will give.*" On the other, "*Let him take.*" The very last message sent to this world is about this fountain.

The twenty-first of Revelation shows us what a wonderful and glorious place Jesus has in store for His people. The twenty-second chapter tells us that He wants you to share the joys of that white-robed

throng and golden-streeted city. From His home in glory He sends you a direct personal message. It begins, "*I, Jesus.*"

Now let me impress upon you that you must not treat this message with impunity. It may reach you through the pages of *The Gospel Messenger*, but it comes from a glorious and gracious Saviour who desires your blessing. The King may send a message by a menial, but, if it is from the King, the message is the great thing, not the messenger.

This message from Jesus is the very last He has sent. There is always something touching about a last message. Do you remember the last message your dying mother sent you?

But perhaps you are saying, Are you sure the message is for me? Let us see. It is addressed in the first place to those who are athirst. This word describes an unsatisfied longing, a craving desire, a weariness of soul fainting for something to satisfy. Do you feel happy, truly at rest? every want of your spirit met? or are you craving for you know not what to give your soul satisfaction? If so, it means you. Revelation xxi. 6 says, "I will give to him that is *athirst* of the fountain of the water of life *freely*."

"Ah," some one says, "that does not describe me. I have often wished I had the longing I hear some people have, but my heart is as hard as a stone." Listen, my friend, there is a message for you: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." "Whosoever" must mean you, for it includes anybody and everybody, you among the number.

The water of life flows as freely for you as the man who is thirsty. All you have to do is to "take" what Jesus is giving. Do not raise difficulties as to the way you shall take the living water, or how you are to come, and what you are to bring. The message is to you. The fountain is free. It is a *living* fountain. You will get life with the first draught. It is a *giving* fountain. Its waters flow for those without money and without price.

There is a well-known watering-place with a fountain famed for its healing virtues. On one side of this fountain there is a beautiful metal drinking cup, a nice tessellated pavement, and everything to please the most fastidious taste, but the entrance is barred except to those who can pay. Picture to yourself a poor old man, worn and weary, who had walked a long distance to reach this fountain, gazing at the entrance which only opens to the magic touch of a silver key. He had heard the waters were free. He has nothing to pay. Do you not think he would be glad to hear that there was another side to that fountain, a side for the very poorest. He discovers there is another road, a back way, up rather a dirty turning, but there is no barrier on that side, no entrance fee. It is the poor man's side, but the same water, the same healing stream, flows from the one fountain. This is like God's salvation for "whosoever will."

If you have tried to get happiness, by what you can bring to God, and are still miserable, try another way. I admit it is a very humbling way, but it is

the way that every saint has travelled at one time or other. That road is named "Repentance toward God." If you come as one of the "Whosoever," having faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you too shall find that its healing waters flow freely for you, even you, and you need not go disappointed away, because you have neither merit nor good works to offer. For all such this free-flowing, life-giving fountain stands open. "I will give," God says, and He will keep His word. "Let him take" is man's responsibility. Mind you do not disregard the message, or you may find yourself where no drop of water shall ever cool your parched tongue.

Perhaps you feel that your guilt is too great a mountain. "God," you say, "is holy. I am a wretched guilty sinner." Let us then turn to Romans iii. There we find our word *freely* again. It is connected with the judgment of God upon the sin of which you are guilty. We are told elsewhere of a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. That fountain is the blood of Jesus. That precious blood was shed to show how God could be just and yet justify the guilty sinner. God has not lightly passed over your sins. He has righteously dealt out the full measure of judgment due to them on the head of the only Man who never had any sins of His own. He has found a way of justifying freely through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. The Son of His love was both willing and able to endure the judgment. The sinless One has been made sin. The only One who had a title to live has died, has shed

His life blood for those who deserved death and judgment.

It may be, however, you are one of the most miserable class to be found in this world, perhaps you are a backslider. Once you enjoyed God's love, now you are wretched. There is a special message for you—another "*freely*" just suited to your case. You will find it in Hosea xiv. 4: "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely." These words should be written in letters of gold: they are addressed to a backslider like yourself. Let us look at the eleventh chapter of Hosea as a proof of this. There God says, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." God taught them, healed them, drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love, liberated them from their slavery, and fed them with His gracious hand.

Do you not recollect when this was true of you, but alas, like Israel of old, you have hewed out broken cisterns which can hold no water, and turned from the living fountain. What is God's message to you—you who have fallen by your iniquity? It is this: "Take with you words, and turn to the Lord." That means, tell Him all about it. Tell Him the root of your departure. Tell Him the steps of your downward course. Do not say, He knows all about it. He does. Still He says, "*Take with you words.*" Confess the truth.

Jesus has died for such as you, and God is faithful and just to Him to forgive. "*I will love them freely.*" You say, "Is that true of a poor wretched back-

slider?" Thank God, it is. The salvation that reached you at first is a free salvation, the justification that is yours by the grace of God is a free justification, and now a free restoration awaits you. If you doubt it, go straight to God. Tell Him the truth, the whole truth, and you too shall discover that the love that met you is the love that is ready to meet you again, for He has said to the backsliders, "*I will love them freely.*"

H. N.

THE GREEK ARCHITECT.

A ROMAN Emperor once engaged a Greek architect to build him a splendid amphitheatre which should surpass in size and grandeur those that already existed, promising the architect fame and honours if his work should be well done.

The genius of the Greek produced the Colosseum. To-day it stands in ruins; still majestic, though its magnificence is a thing of the past. Centuries have rolled by since the men and women of Rome thronged there to see the inhuman fight of the gladiators, or witness the heroic death of Christian martyrs. Its marble benches have long since been torn up, and its wall has crumbled beneath the decaying hand of time.

Let me tell you about the opening celebration of this marvellous edifice.

Preparations had been made for a great display, and when the day arrived the Colosseum was crowded with spectators. The Emperor himself was there, and near him sat the architect.

An expectant murmur ran through the vast assembly as a door in the arena opened and there entered a little band of Christians who were ready to die rather than deny their Saviour. At their appearance the Emperor arose and said: "The Colosseum is finished; we have come here to-day to commemorate the event, and to do honour to the architect who has constructed this wonderful building. We will celebrate the triumph of his genius by the slaying of these Christians by the lions."

As the applause died away the Greek leapt to his feet and, with a voice that rang through the building, said—"I also am a Christian."

But his confession of Christ had touched a spring that opened the flood-gates of the fiercest passion. For a moment all were speechless with astonishment. Then the approval of the admiring multitude became suddenly a torrent of uncontrollable hatred. He was seized and flung into the arena below, where the noble band of Christians were awaiting death. Then the gratings slid back and the half-starved lions were let loose.

Thus the Greek architect chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He looked forward to the heavenly recompense.

Reader, can *you* say, "I also am a Christian"? Perhaps you have hesitated to enrol yourself under Christ's banner because you have thought of the hardships His soldiers must endure. It is true that all Christians, if faithful to their rejected Lord, must suffer while on earth, some even to death; but they can look forward to an *eternity* of perfect happiness.

Now *eternity* was once compared by an old preacher to a great clock with a pendulum so vast that, as it swung, it said "tick" in one century and "tack" in the next. Imagine the day that such a clock ticks out! A day of eternal happiness for the Christian, but a day of everlasting misery for the lost.

Weigh, then, the two possibilities carefully. Put into one scale earthly suffering—though it lead even to martyrdom—but, with the suffering, put the certainty of a joyous eternity. Into the other scale cast the handful of pleasures to be gathered in time and to be followed by an eternity of woe. Which scale is the heavier?

Surely it were wise to turn to the Lord Jesus for salvation, to avail thyself of His atoning death, and obtain the forgiveness of thy sins, and "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

Oh, reader, let this simple story speak to thee. Enrol thyself under Christ's banner, and fear not the storm of persecution that may rage against thee. Christ Himself will support thee amid the tempest, and will soon take thee into His presence, where there is fulness of joy, and where there are pleasures for evermore.

THE SOLDIER'S RESOLVE: A MISTAKE.

IN the year 189—one of our Highland regiments was stationed in a Scotch garrison town. A work of God commenced among the men, and not a few brave soldiers of Her late Majesty Queen Victoria became “good soldiers of Jesus Christ.”

Great indeed is the honour—open to you, dear reader—of serving the “Captain of Salvation,” and, under Him, carrying in the enemy’s land the banner, on which, with His own blood, He has inscribed His sweetest name of—Love.

Among the recruits to the latter company was a young man who had served Satan faithfully, found him to be a hard master, exacting to a degree, and offering small return in this life, while his prospect for eternity was black as black could be. Delivered from such thralldom, and brought under the beneficent sway of the Lord Jesus Christ, he longed for the blessing of his comrade, Charlie —, who had been a boon companion, and was now a special object of solicitude.

A kind-hearted, jolly fellow, but without Christ, the new-born soul oft-times spoke to him of Jesus. Oh the charm of that name! It belongs to One who is the beloved of God’s heart, and the chiefest treasure of the hearts of those who know Him. It throbs with love, it speaks of forgiveness of sins, it proclaims salvation, it is the pledge to the simple

believer of all the blessing that the God of love can bestow.

Reader, do *you* know Jesus? Do *you* love *Him*? Can you say with us, "He is the chiefest among ten thousand . . . yea, he is altogether lovely. . . . This is my beloved, and this is my friend"? (Song of Solomon, v. 10-16).

Going into his room one morning, our friend was surprised to find Charlie packing his kit.

"Hallo!" said he, "what's up now?"

"I am under orders for India," replied Charlie, "am having a month's furlough before going, and am off home to-morrow."

Feeling that it might be his last opportunity, the Christian urged upon him the claims of Christ, and the need of his immortal soul.

"Look here, Bill," replied Charlie, "I know you are right, and when my time in India expires, and I return, I will be a Christian."

"But, Charlie," pleaded Bill, "who gave you a lease of your life? You may be called into eternity at any moment, and what about your soul?"

Charlie replied, "I mean to have a month's spree, Bill, go to India, and be a Christian when I return, but not before."

Next day, with several other men, he left for his home. Arriving at a large junction, and finding that they had a considerable time to wait for a connection, the party adjourned to a place of refreshment. Charlie ordered "drinks all round"; his companions wished him "good luck"; he raised his glass, and addressing

his friends, said, "Here goes the first glass of a month's right good booze——" The glass dropped from his hand, and he fell upon the floor—dead. His soul had passed into ——?

Reader! had it been *you*, where had *your* soul gone? Stay a moment! lay not aside this paper, nor turn the page, but consider. It might have been *you*; *you* may be the next. Where will *you* spend eternity?

We can imagine some one saying, "*The Gospel Messenger* is ever and anon narrating some such terrible incident as this." Yes, friend! we tremble lest in mad folly, blinded by Satan, *you* should longer trifle with *your* soul, and add yet another to the appalling list of the devil's dupes, who meant to be saved, but perished through procrastination.

Be assured, dear unsaved reader, your position is precarious. As you read these lines, you are on the verge of eternity, and on the brink of hell. The mercy of God has kept you out of it, until this moment; but it will be at your peril, yea, at the risk of being for ever lost, if you trifle with that mercy one moment longer. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. xxvii. 1), is the solemn admonition of the Word of God; whilst in Proverbs xxix. 1 it peals out still another note of warning, "He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

Oh the incomparable love of God! Not only has He provided salvation, and put it within the reach

of all, but over and over and over again He warns those who neglect His "great salvation," of their tremendous danger.

The other day we stood by the grave of one who was called away just as suddenly as Charlie, but, thank God, he was ready. While a young man he trusted the Lord Jesus Christ, became a happy possessor of salvation, a child of God and an heir of glory. Saved by sovereign mercy, he was a happy man! When, in the prime of life, the summons came, he was in the company of the Lord's people, and he went to delights for ever in the company of his precious Saviour, whom he knew and whom he loved.

Beloved friend! let us plead with you. Think, oh think of *your* soul's eternal destiny. You are keen as to this world's interests; you pursue with almost frantic excitement that which concerns this life. What about *your* sins?—*your* soul?—Eternity? God loves *you*. "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). Jesus died for *you*, for "Christ . . . died for all" (2 Cor. v. 14). The Holy Spirit urges *you* to-day, saying, "To-day if *ye* will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Heb. iii. 7-8). All heaven is interested in *your* blessing. Satan alone seeks your doom. We beseech you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who died to save *you*, who, alive and glorified at the right hand of God, waits to bless you; by His dying agonies, by His longsuffering grace, by the shortness of time, by the uncertainty of

life, by the reality of eternity, by the value of your never-dying soul, come to Jesus to-day as a needy, guilty, helpless sinner; believe in Him, rest your soul upon His finished work, and you shall know the sweetness of God's Word, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts xvi. 31).

W. B. D.

SAVED.

DO you understand the meaning of that word? Look yonder, there has fallen into the river a weak woman. She cannot swim, bravely she battles for life, but it is an unequal contest, and at last she throws up her hands despairingly.

But an eye has watched the struggles from the bank, and with the quick energy of a man who knows what he is about, coat and boots are cast aside, and, bracing his body for a plunge, he swings through the air, and almost before you can think the thought, the woman is on the bank—**SAVED!**

Or again, the black night is made lurid as the fire licks with a myriad tongues yon dwelling-house, and wraps devouring jaws about rafter and beam.

Presently there appears at an upper window a face blanched white with terror, the bulging eyes mutely calling for help. Into that doomed building there dashes the fireman, and before it totters to earth in

the embrace of its conqueror, that girl is placed beyond the reach of harm—SAVED !

Such instances as these you can understand, but when the great God speaks of salvation, what does He mean ? Is it salvation from the water, or salvation from the fire ? I answer, both.

“How will you do in the swelling of Jordan ?” is a question asked of old, and it is just as pertinent to-day, for men still die, and many, alas, are overwhelmed by the chill waters of the river of death. But God’s salvation is equal to this, and those who possess it are not submerged by the waters ; they pass through dry-shod ; death has no victory over them.

But beyond the river, at the other side of death, what is there for those who are without a Saviour ? Our eyes cannot pierce the veil, but God has revealed even this unto us. After death “the judgment,” and “whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” Ah ! that is our just desert without exception, and from this doom God’s salvation alone can save us. It saves alike from the water and the fire—the just penalty of our sins.

You have a past with its sins, a present with its need, a future with its judgment ; and because of your past, present, and future, you need salvation. Thank God you have not far to go in search of it, for it is in Jesus the Lord, and He comes nigh to you. Seek Him to-day and thou shalt be saved.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

READER, the above is a momentous question. At the end of that road on which you are travelling, you must meet God. Are you prepared for the interview? The apostle Paul realised the seriousness of this inevitable meeting when by the Spirit of God he said, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27). The dread of what is beyond the grave makes man afraid of death. He feels that the sins of a lifetime must condemn him in the righteous eye of God, and he knows that "the wages of sin is death."

Possibly you may have heard the story of the nobleman who was about to die. By his bedside stood a favourite jester, whose quips had many a time lightened his leisure moments, but were of no avail now in the presence of the king of terrors. Fixing his eyes upon the fool, the dying man said—

"Tom, my friend, I am about to leave you."

"Going far, master?"

"Yes; a long way."

"When are you coming back?"

"Never again."

"Never coming back! And what provision have you made for this journey?"

"None."

"Where are you going?"

No answer.

The jester gazed in consternation for a few moments, and then sadly exclaimed—

“You are going on a long journey ; you don’t know where ; you are never coming back ; and yet have made no preparations. ‘Ah, master ! who is the fool now ? Better take my cap and bells, and you will not look so out of place on reaching your destination.’”

Alas ! how often do we find it so ! Man is very careful to make all necessary arrangements where earthly affairs are concerned ; but when the destiny of his immortal soul is touched upon, he is strangely indifferent.

And why should such be the case ? Eternity ! and where you will spend it, is surely a very important subject, and well worth considering. Then the present is the only opportunity you may have to settle the great question. No man can count upon a day. “Now is the accepted time ; now is the day of salvation.” To-morrow may be too late.

Remember the rich fool in Luke xii. He left God out of his calculations, and his plans for the future were all wrong. This night thy soul may be required of *thee*. God has claims upon you, and His claims cannot be ignored. There is a reckoning day coming ; how will you stand then ? Oh, sinner ! do not put this matter of your eternal welfare off, like Felix (Acts xxiv. 25), till a more convenient season, which may never come.

The devil encourages indecision. Procrastination is one of his chief assistants. Satan cannot deny that you are lost ; that you need to be saved ; but,

he says, "There's plenty of time." Do not listen to him, my friend. "Get right with God" now. "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." He, blessed be His name, meets all man's deep need, by dying in his room and stead. Then what hinders you from closing with God's offer? "The *gift* of God is eternal life" (Rom. vi. 23). You know you are a sinner; you know that "the soul that sinneth it shall die"; that "without shedding of blood is no remission." What then? God knew all this; knew it was impossible you could be saved by your own efforts. What could a sin-stained soul bring that could be acceptable to the living God?

Ah! but Jesus stepped upon the scene. He came in wondrous love to satisfy the claims of God. His spotless life ended in atoning death.

"Now there's no death for me."

"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). And is God satisfied with the work of Jesus? Yes, the living proof of salvation is Jesus at the right hand of God. The Man who bore our sins has them no longer; He put them away on the Cross. And now listen to what God is prepared to do: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts xiii. 38, 39).

Could you have a fuller proclamation of glad

tidings, than the above, my reader? The work is all accomplished. God has been glorified in the death of His Son. Where do you come in? Just simply trust God's Word. Take Jesus as your Saviour, and believe in Him to the saving of your soul. You will then be right for eternity. He has pledged Himself to bring every believer safely home. Hear His blessed words: "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, 28).

Oh, what love is His! "Love that transcends our highest thought." May the sense of this love so influence you, my unsaved friend, that you will be constrained to embrace the salvation of God, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember, time is short; eternity is long.

P. D.

BRANDED BY MERCY.

AWAY in one of the most beautiful islands of the West Indies nestles a small town not far from a well-known volcano.

In that town lived John —. He was a shrewd man of business. Commencing in a very small way, he had gradually risen, till at length he possessed one of the best shops in the neighbourhood.

By his straightforward dealings he had won the confidence of the merchants, and his credit was good.

Having married, he settled down to enjoy the well-

earned fruits of his industry. Plans and schemes for the future were filling his mind. He was saying to himself, "What shall I do?" With much goods laid up for many years, his barns were all too small.

But in these plans God had no place. And now God was about to speak to him. For some time there had been but little rain. Parched and thirsty, the very ground seemed to cry out for rain, and at last it came. In tropical abundance the heavens seemed to pour out their treasured store.

Quickly the little stream flowing by his house became an angry torrent. Higher and higher the waters rose, till at length overflowing its banks, it burst in uncontrollable fury upon John's homestead.

How shall I describe the terror of that moment! In the dark hours of the night, amidst torrential floods, the sleepers were awakened.

Where should they flee for safety? To whom should they appeal for help? How near had death come, and yet they were saved. But as the morning broke, the light shone down upon a ruined man.

Stunned by the calamity for a moment, he was unable to do anything, but as time passed on his energy recovered. Again he made another start. Moving to a fresh spot, he opened in business, and after a few years, he was once more in comfortable circumstances.

Yet, strange to say, indifference and carelessness still marked him; in fact, he was now pursuing an openly wicked course. In the midst of it, God again spoke to him.

Some miles away on the slopes of the mountains are situated the Botanical Gardens. The curator is busy in his office. Suddenly he springs to his feet. Astonishment is depicted on his face. Look, his eyes are fixed upon a small tube of quicksilver. What does it mean? The barometer was falling in an altogether unprecedented way. He carefully examines the instrument. Yes, it is in good condition. Anxiously he watches it. Slowly it falls lower and lower. What should he do? One thing at least suggests itself; and quickly round that island, from town to town and village to village, flashes the warning message: "Atmospherical disturbance threatening, beware!"

That night the hurricane in all its unspeakable fury burst upon them. Death and destruction were the finger-posts that marked out its trail. Sweeping across the island, it left a broad track of broken homes and broken hearts behind.

Amidst the darkness of those midnight hours, amidst the deafening scream of wind, amidst the deluge of rain, the home of John —— was struck; and as the cyclone passed on in its path of might, it left a ruined family behind.

Within that man's heart another storm was raging. Impotent in the presence of omnipotent power, his hand had been forced to relinquish what it had grasped so tightly.

Like a wrecked and stranded vessel, the morning found him. Would he humble himself before God, or would he still brave His displeasure.

A few more years passed, and I stood beside him. "Come with me," he said, "and I will show you something." Entering his house, he handed me a large smooth stone; then turning to me, said, "Do you see this," and pointed to his forehead, upon which was a long dark scar.

What did it mean? What was the connection between the stone I held and the scar upon his face?

The volcano had been in eruption, and from it fire and destruction had been belched. Amidst the rocks and debris thrown up was this stone. White with heat, it had fallen at his feet, grazing his face in its downward flight. Another inch, and he would have been crushed.

I seized the occasion to plead with him about his soul, but all in vain. The laws of nature were alone answerable for it all, and God was shut out. As I left him with a sorrowing heart, I said, "The brand of mercy has been put upon you; when we next meet, you may be bearing the brand of judgment."

Reader, has this story of God's patience no voice to you? How many warnings and pleadings have you neglected?

Remember, if you die in your sins a Christ neglecter, upon your brow shall be placed the indelible stamp of God's wrath. Will you not turn to Him ere you put down this paper? Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ will admit you into that happy throng of whom we read—

"His name shall be in their foreheads."

DEPENDENCE.

NOW nothing can be more truly blessed than the position of hanging in child-like dependence upon God, and being entirely content to wait for His time. True, it will involve trial; but the renewed mind learns some of its deepest lessons and enjoys some of its sweetest experiences while waiting on the Lord; and the more pressing the temptation to take ourselves out of His hands, the richer will be the blessing of leaving ourselves there. It is so exceedingly sweet to find ourselves wholly dependent upon One who finds infinite joy in blessing us. It is only those who have tasted, in any little measure, the reality of this wondrous position that can at all appreciate it. The only one who ever occupied it perfectly and uninterruptedly was the Lord Jesus Himself. He was ever dependent upon God, and utterly rejected every proposal of the enemy to be anything else. His language was, "In thee do I put my trust," and again, "I was cast upon thee from the womb." Hence, when tempted by the devil to make an effort to satisfy His hunger, His reply was, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Again, when tempted to cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple, His reply was, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." When tempted to take the kingdoms of the world

from the hand of another than God, and by doing homage to another than Him, His reply was, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." In a word, nothing could allure the perfect man from the place of absolute dependence upon God. True, it was God's purpose to sustain His Son; it was His purpose that He should suddenly come to His temple; it was His purpose to give Him the kingdoms of this world; but this was the very reason why the Lord Jesus would simply and uninterruptedly wait on God for the accomplishment of His purpose in His own time, and in His own way. He did not set about accomplishing His own ends. He left Himself thoroughly at God's disposal. He would only eat when God gave Him bread; He would only enter the temple when sent of God; He will ascend the throne when God appoints the time. "Sit thou at my right hand, *until I make thy foes thy footstool*" (Ps. cx.).

This profound subjection of the Son to the Father is admirable beyond expression. Though entirely equal with God, He took, as man, the place of dependence, rejoicing always in the will of the Father; giving thanks even when things seemed to be against Him; doing always the things that pleased the Father; making it His grand and unvarying object to glorify the Father; and finally, when all was accomplished, when He had perfectly finished the work which the Father had given, He breathed His spirit into the Father's hand, and His flesh rested in hope of the promised glory and exaltation.

"BECAUSE I'M NO' SAVED."

ABOUT a year ago I had occasion one night to pass through Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, on the way to the Caledonian Station. The night was wet and cold, with a piercing east wind blowing from the Firth of Forth. As I was passing along, I heard a voice in the dark saying, "Will you buy a box of matches, sir?" I replied, scarcely looking from under my umbrella, "No, thank you, my boy."

"You might," the voice answered. There was something in the soft plaintive way in which this was said which attracted my attention, and impelled me to stop and speak to the boy. Looking at his pale thin face, which bore unmistakable evidence of being often hungry and his body poorly clad, I said, "Why are you out so late in such a cold wet night? You would be better at home."

"I have no hame," he answered.

"No home," I said. "Where are your father and mother?"

"They are both deid," he replied.

As I looked into that pale pinched face I felt a tear start to my eye—to me it told a tale of suffering and sorrow—and I said to him, "Would you like to die?"

"Na, I wouldna," he answered.

"How is that?" I said.

"Because I'm no' saved," was his sad reply.

This answer was to me wholly unexpected, and yet one fraught with the deepest meaning. After speaking a little with him as to the way of salvation and the all-sufficiency of the work of Christ, I was compelled to leave him, as my train was almost due.

Perhaps if the same question was put to you, my reader, which was addressed to this boy, your answer might not be very widely different. How or when this boy learned that without salvation he dare not face the question of death or of meeting God I know not, but he knew that the question of his salvation had to be settled. Death is God's appointment for man, and is "the wages of sin," for we read, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." It may be that you have (recognising the fact that you must sooner or later die) made a will for the disposition of your property after death, but what about your soul after death? Your soul is you yourself—and you must live on through a *never-ending* ETERNITY, either with and like Christ, in perfect blessedness, or away from His presence in inexpressible anguish.

Which will it be with you? If you have not, up to the present, seriously considered this question, I would, with all love to your soul, beg of you to do so. The thought of the blessed God for all men is that they should be saved. "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John iii. 17). Indeed, in the Epistle of John we read that "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world"

(1 John iv. 14). Every question of my sins has for ever been settled; Christ died for our sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. He was made *sin* for us, He who knew no sin, in order that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Wonderful love, that Christ should leave the glory of God and come into this poor guilty world in order that man might have access into all the blessedness of the Father's house, and that whilst still here we might know what it is to be delivered from the fear of death, and in spirit already enjoy a sweet foretaste of these joys which will be ours for ever—not because of what we do, but altogether on the ground of what Christ by His death and resurrection has accomplished for us.

J. B.

"IT WAS YOURSELF THAT DID IT ALL."

I KNOW but little of her history, my reader, and can tell you still less; but this much I will tell you, that once she was young and beautiful and beloved, and now she was old and unlovely and desolate. Without a friend and without a home, poor Peggy went to spend her few remaining years in the Union Workhouse. There were many others in that dreary place who, lonely like herself, would

have been glad to sometimes speak a kindly word to her, but by her violent temper and unloving ways she soon drove them all away from her.

I well remember the trim little figure in its gown of blue cotton, and the once comely face, now disfigured with lines of pride and ill-temper, as she walked all by herself about the Workhouse grounds. But God loved her, and His heart pitied her, so He raised her up one friend in the person of the kind doctor who attended the institution. He was a Christian, and, like his blessed Master, had a pitying heart for those who were sorrowful and lonely. He longed that this poor sinner should know the Lord Jesus, the "Sinner's Friend," and so he took advantage of every opportunity to tell her of His love. At first he told her the story which little children love to hear, of how the

"Holy Jesus, meek and mild,
Once was born a little child.
In a manger He was laid ;
With no pillow for His head,"

because His place was amongst the poor of the world. Then he told her of His life as a Man amongst men, how He cleansed the lepers, fed the hungry, raised the dead, and received every poor sinner (the very vilest) who came to Him. Then came the story of that last dread moment when the Son of God hung upon the cross between two thieves bearing the weight of the sin of the world, when the holy God hid His face from His own Son, so that

He cried out in the bitterness of His anguished soul, "My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Then, when the work of atonement had been fully done, how the Victor's cry, "It is finished," rang out so that heaven and earth could hear it.

You know the story, my reader, do you not? You have often heard it, but perhaps it has never yet touched your heart. Do you not remember how the very sun in the heavens refused to shine for shame when God's holy Son was bearing our sins, nailed to a malefactor's cross? Have you ever hidden your face for one moment because you were ashamed to think that it was for your sins He suffered there?

Peggy listened quietly, interestedly, because she saw it pleased her friend to tell her, but as yet she felt not her need of a Saviour, so the blessed story of His love found no echo in her heart. But the Good Shepherd had gone out over the dark mountains of sin to seek His poor lost sheep, and was soon to bring her home on His shoulder rejoicing. The time went by, and Peggy grew older and more feeble. At last she became very ill, and was taken from "the old women's ward" to the Workhouse hospital, and soon the terrible truth dawned upon her that she must die. Her terrified soul quailed at the prospect. To meet God, the God she had so sinned against, she dared not, with the weight of sin now pressing upon her. Her thoughts went back to the days of her wasted youth, of her sin-blighted womanhood, until thought was an agony too great to bear.

The hospital nurse, who was, like herself, a Roman Catholic, sent for the priest in the hope that his being with her would bring her comfort and help her to die. He came to her, and, having anointed her, told her that now she need not fear.

Peggy thanked him for what he had done, but still cried out in her agony, "Oh ! that is not enough. I am a great sinner, I am afraid to die. My sins ! my awful sins ! how can I meet God ? I dare not die." But the gentle Shepherd had tracked her footsteps all the way, and now upon the brink of the precipice He saw her stand. I have told you that He loved her, for He had given His life to save her and could not do without her ; so He drew near to her, called her by her name, whispered sweet words of love to her, set her upon His shoulder, and bore her away rejoicing.

"Then all through the mountains thunder-riven,
And up from the rocky steep,
There arose a cry to the gates of heaven,
Rejoice, I have found My sheep.
And the angels echoed around the throne,
'Rejoice, for the Lord brings back His own.'"

She lived for a few more days, and all around her could see the change. No more oaths and curses, no more angry words, but quietly, peacefully she lay awaiting the end.

At last the glad moment came, the nurse watching by her bed, when suddenly the half-closed eyes opened, her face shone as if a glory-beam had touched it, and stretching out her withered arms she

clasped her hands and said softly, "*Ma seacht mile gra*" (my seven thousand times beloved), "it was Yourself that did it all!" Then she lay quietly back on her pillow, closed her eyes, and fell asleep.

W.

CURED, CARRIED, AND CARED FOR.

(Read Luke x. 25-37.)

IT is a great thing to see clearly that the possession of eternal life flows not from that which you and I do, but from that which the Lord Jesus Christ is and does. External existence you will certainly have, but that is not eternal life. For a man to spend eternity in hell—do you call that eternal life? I do not. If you die in your sins, without eternal life, where will you spend eternity? It could not be with Christ—you do not know Him. It could not be with God, for you would be wretched with Him, in your sins. Your eternity will be solitary.

The point the Spirit of God has in relating this remarkable interview between the unbelieving lawyer and the Lord Jesus is this—that it brings out the way in which God can bless. It brings out the character of God. It shows plainly what man is, where man is, and the condition man is in; and it shows, likewise, how futile is mere religion to help him. And when it has shown the condition of man,

and that human religion cannot help him a bit, then we get Christ coming in, under the figure of a Samaritan, and doing all that was necessary, and I do not want any more.

I will tell you what He does ; first of all He *cures* me, then He *carries* me, and then He *cares* for me. That will do for me—I want no more than that. Fancy, *cured* by Christ, *carried* by Christ, and *cared for* by Christ, for time and eternity. Does not that do for you? If not, the reason is this—your eyes have never yet been opened as to what you are as a sinner before God.

You will probably say, I should like to have eternal life. It is a wonderful thing to possess, but the question is, How are you going to get it? Eternal life, according to the unfolding of Scripture, is association with Christ. He is the eternal life, and you could not get it apart from Him. “We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life” (1 John v. 20). Eternal life consists not exactly in *being*, but in *knowing*. It is the knowledge of divine Persons. It subsists in the knowledge of God’s blessed Son. “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John xvii. 3). Now, seeing what it consists in, how can you get it?

This lawyer was pretty intelligent. He had read the Old Testament Scriptures, and to a certain point

he believed them, because infidelity was not a thing that was current among the Jews. It is reserved for this cultured twentieth century to cut up and set aside the Scriptures. Not so the Jews. They revered the Scriptures; and although that man had no real link with God, he had read the Scriptures, and knew them, and when questioned by the Lord he gave a good answer, for the Lord says, "Thou hast answered right." The man had no real interest in his question, but there was the Lord Jesus passing among men, and this unawakened man thought it a good opportunity to test Him. Will He pit His judgment against what Moses said?

"Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (ver. 25), was his opening query. I think you ought to wake up to inquire how *you* are going to inherit eternal life, for you are passing on to eternal damnation if you do not get eternal life. You must meet God, for you are a responsible creature, and your sins are your own, and are on you to this hour, if you have not yet found Christ.

This man says, "What shall I do?" He thought it lay with himself; he thought he was competent to earn it, he thought he could put himself right with God. He had heard of the grace of Christ, and how the blessed Jesus had been unfolding the heart of God, so he comes with this question, and the Lord answers him very simply. He puts *him* a question. You may have thought that man was deeply in earnest, but he was not, as he said, "What shall I do?" Jesus replies, You are a lawyer, you know all

about it. "What is written in the law? How readeſt thou?" (ver. 26). Now a lawyer was a perſon educated in the Scriptures, whoſe buſineſs it was to read to the people the Word of God. A good bit of it had ſtuck to his memory, and he ſays, "Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy ſtrength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyſelf" (ver. 27). He answers very well.

The Lord then ſays to him, "This do, and thou ſhalt live" (ver. 28). Ah, the moment he hears that he began to wince, becauſe he had a conſcience. So have you, ſo has every man. It is of no uſe to ſay, But we all fail. If you are going to draw near to God on the ground of legal obligation, and being what you ought to be, you muſt neceſſarily come under the curſe of the law if you fail. "Whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James ii. 10). Law is law; grace is grace. Every creature of God ought to have kept the law. Have *you* done it? You will have to own, I have not done it. No, you have not, nor have I. If you ſaid, I have loved myſelf with all my heart, it would be the truth; or, I have loved pleaſure, or eaſe, or comfort,—everything relating to myſelf. It is that which fills every man's ſoul till he is converted. What place has God had in your life? You muſt admit, There has been a good deal of ſhortcoming.

Did any one ever keep the law? Only One—a Man who, when He had done it, died for the man that

had broken it. He could say, "The Father hath not left me alone ; for I do always those things that please him" (John viii. 29). Even when a child of twelve, and found by His parents in the temple at Jerusalem, He said, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke ii. 49). There has been one man, thank God, that has answered to this—get hold of that—but *you* are not the man, *I* am not the man. And if I am not the man, I shall not do for God ; and yet I am going to spend eternity with Him. How is that? I have known the touch of the Good Samaritan—I hope *you* will get it. And who is that? The One that comes and tells out the heart of God to man, when he is utterly ruined, and good-for-nothing. We have all broken down in responsibility, and are guilty, because in connection with the law there was condemnation. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight : for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. iii. 20). Then there is another side to the law, if you are going to take that ground before God : you must be perfect in all the affections of your heart God-ward and man-ward. Who would take that ground? Could you or I go to heaven on the ground that we had loved our neighbour as we ought, even if we leave God out of the question? Impossible, only Jesus has done this—no one else, and I must go to Him for salvation, so must you.

You may say, Why did the Lord tell him, "This do, and thou shalt live"? Because He always took people up on the ground upon which they came to Him. If they came to Him in their need, He met

them in mercy. If they came to Him in self-righteousness, He had to break them up, and expose them to their own eye, and perhaps to other people's also.

"The wages of sin is death ; but the *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23). What I could not earn, did not deserve, and could never merit, thank God I have got. God gave it to me in His love, and I was wise enough to take it. You receive the Lord Jesus Christ, you give Him His right place, you take the place of being the poor needy sinner that you are, and let God come out in His love and goodness, and show what He is.

"But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?" (ver. 29). That question gave the blessed Lord the opportunity of unfolding this pictorial representation of Himself, and His own activity in grace to needy, guilty man. "And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho" (ver. 30). Now mark—it was a downward course, and it is a picture of every man's history, yours and mine, but the Jew in particular. Jerusalem was the place of blessing, the spot where God's temple was, the place of royal grace. Jericho was the place of the curse, and the traveller was on the road to the spot where the curse of God lay. Mercifully he never got there—I trust *you* will not. That is the road you are on.

By the way he fell among thieves, "which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead" (ver. 30). That is an exact picture of man's condition as a sinner. He has

departed from God. Adam got away from God, and all his posterity. He "fell among thieves" in the Garden of Eden. I see here the allegorical representation of it. Adam gets away from God through disobedience, and he loses his life, and everything that fits him for God's presence, everything worth having. He gets a conscience of good and evil. He goes behind the trees to keep out of God's presence, and although he had on the apron of fig leaves it was no real covering, and when God says, "Where art thou?" he says, "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, *because I was naked*; and I hid myself" (Gen. iii. 10). Had he not dressed himself? Yes, but his dress did not suit God; it might do for the relationships of life, but it would not do for God.

This traveller was stripped and naked, and he looked like a dead man. The thieves had sorely wounded him, too. Ah, what wounds sin has made. Are you a sin-wounded person? Sin has come in between you and God, and you are at a distance from God. You are afraid of God, you would not like to meet Him. Let Jesus save you now. Yours is a bad case; it is exactly like mine. We were both in our sins, on the road to that moral Jericho. That man was robbed, stripped, wounded, and left lying like a dead man in the ditch. "And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side" (ver. 31). You say, What a heartless man. No, he was not heartless; that was not the reason why he passed by. Why did he turn away? Righteousness compelled

him. He says, I could not touch him, or I should be defiled and spoil my own position. The man looked as if he were dead, and the priest was bound not to touch the dead, so knowing he could not help him, he passed by. That priest came down "by chance"; and "the law entered, that the offence might abound" (Rom. v. 20). Jesus did not come down "by chance"; He came on purpose. It was God's thought from eternity to send His Son. The law came merely to raise the question of righteousness, and show man that he had none.

"And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side" (ver. 32). The Levite goes nearer than the priest, but has to say, "I cannot help him." The law cannot help you, religion cannot help you. Nothing connected with what you ought to be is of any value to you before God. What Christ solves the question. It was not want of affection on the part of the priest and the Levite, but they were debarred by God's own injunction from touching the dead, and the wounded man looked like dead.

The poor stupid lawyer thought he could get eternal life by something he did. It was a mistake. You may have faith in the priest, but he will not help you a hair's-breadth toward God. Many a man has put his conscience into the custody of some one else, but it will not do. Religion cannot help you; nothing that springs from yourself can put you right. There is only one that can help you, and who is that? Jesus, and He loves to bless the needy.

“But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was” (ver. 33). Why a Samaritan? The Jews disliked the Samaritans. The woman of Sychar said to the Lord, “How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans” (John iv. 9). Man dislikes God; the natural man is opposed to God. Men do not want God. Bring God into men’s sphere of life, and they are very much disturbed, and will tell you it is not the place, or the time. And more than that, men have the idea that God is against them. Even Job thought “he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy” (chap. xxxiii. 10). It was a great surprise to me that God’s blessed Son should leave those heights of glory, come down into this world, get hold of a sinner like me, save me, bless me, bind up my wounds, fill my heart with peace, joy, and gladness, and then carry me to a safe place, and say, I am coming back for you one of these days. He is coming back, and He has given me wonderful blessing in the meantime. Who would have thought Jesus would have done that?

“As he journeyed.” That journey was made on purpose—“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.” “The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” (1 John iv. 14). Thus it was that “he came where he was.” That is beautiful. There he was in the ditch; and where has Jesus come? Sin had put us at a distance from God; we were under sentence of death. I see Christ

on the cross, by the side of the thief, dying under the curse—"he came where he was." If Jesus had not come to the very spot where you are, He could not have reached you. The priest could not come, nor the Levite, but Jesus came to bring out the truth of the love of God, and the deep desire of God's heart for the blessing of man. Nothing held Him back—He was not restrained. He could go right into death, and annul it. He tasted death as the judgment of God upon man, that He might take you and me out, and bring us to God. He was not Himself defiled, though made sin. He could take sins, bear sins, own sins, confess sins, and die for sins, blotting them out by His own precious blood; and then He—the undefiled One—rose from the dead, having annulled death.

Then we read, "He had compassion on him." There is love in the heart of God for you that you have never dreamt of. You have gone on all your days the slave and victim of sin, and are about to pay the forfeit with your life. The Lord knows the end of your pathway. But here was love in His blessed bosom, and as a consequence He laid down His life for His enemies. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8).

How close He comes. "We read, "And went to him." There is no blessing for you unless He touches you; He must touch you. You say, Have I not to draw near to Him? Yes, in a certain sense; but this is the expression of the marvellous way in which

the love of God comes down in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, to meet us in our need. He "went to him, and bound up his wounds." What wounds were these? In Psalm cxlvii. it says, "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds" (ver. 3). Are you a broken-hearted person because of your sins? He said in Luke iv. 18, that He came to bind up broken hearts. He "bound up his wounds." He had with Him the very thing that would bind up those wounds, and He poured in "oil and wine." The oil soothed the wounds, and the wine was poured down his throat, and it brought him to life, it cheered him. He opens his eyes to discover he is an object of interest. Have you never known what this teaches you in figure? You have missed a great deal. If you have the gaping wounds of sin, and the sense of judgment coming, and that you are unfit for God, what a wonderful thing to see Jesus in grace coming to you, and to see that "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).

That wounded man felt, I have found a friend. You trust Him, and you will feel similarly. Fling your own efforts overboard, leave yourself in His hands, let Him have His way with you, let Him bind up your wounds.

The next thing we read is that He "set him on his own beast." What is that? You have no power, but Christ can give you power. You will

receive the Spirit of God, who will carry you along. He cures him first of all, and then He carries him. You may say, I am so weak and feeble. Yield yourself to Him; He will carry you, and do with you as with the rescued man; for He "brought him to an inn, and took care of him." They must have had a wonderful evening together, those two; and I have had a wonderful time in my history in the sense of how the Lord has taken care of me.

"And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee." Has not Jesus departed? He has; He has left this scene, and what has He left behind? The "two pence" and the "host" may represent the Scriptures and the Holy Ghost, and "the inn" the spot where the saved soul is cared for. It is the way God puts His people together down here, and cares for them, comforts them, and furnishes all they ever want. Cured, carried, and cared for is really Christianity. Some folk are only half cured, because they are trying to cure themselves. They never get the joy of God's salvation.

"When I come again," is a sweet word. Christian, are you waiting for Jesus? He is coming again, the One who has blessed us, brought us to God, and filled our hearts with joy, peace, and gladness—He is coming again. I dare say the poor man was very sensible of all he had received, but had scarce time to thank his benefactor. We shall have time in

eternity to thank Him: we shall soon see Him face to face, but *now* we have time to thank Him, praise Him, and speak well of Him in His absence. That man could say, I was taken up by a wonderful friend, and I owe everything to him. I can say the same. Jesus has saved, blessed, and cleansed me; delivered me from Satan's power, washed away my sins, given me the Holy Ghost, and furnished all I need on the road home, and He is coming back presently, and I shall see Him face to face. Can you say likewise?

"Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him." This lawyer had the sense of what the truth is. "Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise." Be not a worker for salvation, but get the sense of what Christ is, and then be the expositor of it. If you receive the Lord Jesus Christ, eternal life is yours, and you will live here to be the unfolders of the grace of God to those that know not that grace. How sweet when we can say, I know Him. How blessed to be able to speak of Him as the One that has met all the need of our souls. May you be able to say, I have eternal life, for Jesus has given it me, and now I know what it is to belong to the Lord; He has cured me, carries me, cares for me, and He is coming for me.

"The Shepherd's bosom bears each lamb
O'er rock, and waste, and wild;
The object of that love I am—
And carried like a child."

ALONE WITH GOD IN A PRISON CELL.

“THREE months with hard labour” was the sentence pronounced by the judge. A hardened criminal would not have minded that very much, but to the prisoner at the bar it was a terrible blow.

He was led away from the dock, and presently found himself dressed for the first time in prison garb, and in his cell alone. Then the full shame of his position dawned upon him; this was the result of his waywardness and sin, and what would the end of it be?

The thought of it brought him down to his knees, and he groaned aloud before God. Then and there he made his decision, and it was that from that time he would quit the service of Satan.

Now that was a good decision to make, but it did not give him the peace he sought. He discovered, as many have done before him, that resolutions with regard to the future cannot wipe out the sins of the past. There lay his black record. How could that be met? Could he in any way make amends for that?

“You ought to have prayed before you got in here,” sneered the warder, who saw him on his knees; “but perhaps better late than not at all.”

But the prisoner heeded neither jest nor scorn; his whole desire was to be right with God.

There were two books in his cell. One of them was

a book of instruction as to how to live right, the other was a Bible. To the former the anxious soul turned. He read there deceptive words, for the writer knew not God's way of salvation, and advised his readers to fast and pray in order to secure the pardon of God. Ah! thought that lonely reader, I have been praying without fasting, that is why I have not got the peace I seek. I will fast as well as pray. And fast he did. Much of his food was returned untasted, and while he continued to perform his allotted prison task he felt his hand getting weaker, his step less firm, until at length it seemed that he must sink to the ground through sheer exhaustion.

Then he reached his extremity; he had resolved and sorrowed, prayed and fasted, but he was still a stranger to peace. He knew of nothing else that he could do; nor did the book which he had read so carefully instruct him further. Then it was with a despairing cry that he took up the Bible. Ah! blessed book of God! if he had turned to its pages sooner, how much agony would he have been saved. It was not a familiar book to him, and he scarcely knew to what part to turn, but God had His eye on that penitent sinner, and the book fell open at 2 Samuel xii., and the first sentence that met his anxious gaze was, "*The Lord also hath put away thy sin*" (ver. 13). That was enough for him. The heavy burden rolled away, the clouds uplifted, and his astonished heart beat forth its gratitude to a pardoning God.

He had still to learn how God could do this, and

yet be righteous ; but for the moment it was sufficient for him that God had spoken such words, it mattered little to whom they had been spoken at first, they were there for him, and he embraced them in all their peace-giving power.

But he did not long remain in ignorance as to how God could pardon and yet remain the just God, for that long-neglected book became his cell companion, and therein he read of Calvary, of the precious blood, and of the resurrection of Jesus, whom Christians gladly own as Lord. He read of His exaltation and glory also, and that marvellous story of redeeming love which shall enthral a full heaven eternally opened his eyes. All became as plain to him as the daylight which streamed through the grated window into his cell. His works were vain and fruitless ; not by such puny efforts could guilt be blotted out. If sinners were to be justified, nothing short of the atoning work of Jesus had to be accomplished. Upon this his soul rested, and here he found a firm foundation. Yes, he discovered that God had freely justified him by His grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus ; that great as had been his sin, the grace of God was greater ; and the precious blood of Jesus, which is the basis of all blessing, made him whiter in the sight of God than the new-fallen snow.

It is probable that you, my reader, have not had to stand at the bar of an earthly judge ; you may have been decorous and upright, but in God's sight you are a sinner, and the awful possibility of standing at

God's bar is straight before you. What think you of it? Of one thing I can assure you, if you got a sight of your past, as it appears in God's sight, the agony of which you have read in this paper would be yours, nor would you rest until you knew without a doubt that Christ had for ever washed away your many sins.

J. T. M.

THE WAGES QUESTION.

NEXT to good wages, I find in general, working men look after good masters; such as will find them constant employment; pay them with regularity, and treat them with kindness. This is quite natural, and yet although it may appear unaccountable, there are a great many working men, and even women and children in our town, who are of their own deliberate and voluntary choice, in the service of one of the worst masters that can be imagined! It is not that he ever fails to pay wages when due; the fact is they are frequently paid BEFORE they are expected.

Neither is it that the supply of work is ever short; this has never yet been known to occur, but he does make *such* SLAVES of those who remain with him. They work hard, day and night; with body and mind; without rest or holiday, month after month, year after year, and many at the expense of their purse and their position in society, devote themselves

entirely to his service, and yet I assure you, he is one who does not know what kindness is.

He is, to his work-people, the most malicious enemy they have ; indeed, he only aims to get them absolutely into his power, in order that he may torment them in every conceivable way. And his men know this quite well, yet they seem to have lost all power to free themselves from his tyranny, and more than this, they are so bewitched by the flatteries and deceit he practises towards them, that most of them have no DISPOSITION to part company with him ; they have worked for him nearly all their lifetime, and their fathers before them have done the same, and although they never get full rest of body, or enjoy any real peace of mind, while engaged for him, they yet hug the fetters of this most oppressive and merciless master.

However, it is often surprising to see the amount of hardship and ill-treatment people will submit to for the sake of really liberal remuneration : I have already remarked that in the case of the employer referred to, the payment of wages is never deferred after they become due, and you may judge of how amply the poor wretches are repaid their slavish toil, when I further inform you that their hire is DEATH ! Nothing besides, nothing whatever ! Except indeed that after death comes judgment, and that means eternal misery. The wages of sin is DEATH, and no bright golden wages are laboured for with half the industry or perseverance that this commands.

Every person, old or young, has been for a longer

or shorter term in this cruel servitude, but some of us have been bought over by another Master, a very different person indeed, and One who, with kindness to perfection, cares for all whom He has made His own. He liberated us from our slavery at the cost of His own blood, and we now desire to fulfil all His bidding, not for paltry wages, but for very gratitude and love.

His service is perfect liberty, and the peace of soul, the rest of conscience, and the joy of heart that are ours while basking in the sunlight of His favour, are indeed a contrast with the wretchedness and misery of which we were ever the subjects, when in the service of our former master. Before our emancipation we used to try by all means in our power to dissipate the gloom that had settled on our spirits, to drown in the mad pursuit of fancied pleasure, the unhappy reflections that often crossed our minds, and by a little outside show of morality, to stifle the clamour of our ever-accusing conscience. And on the whole we were reckoned as well off, and as happy as other people, which it may be was true, but ah ! we for ourselves knew even in laughter that the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness ; and the continual fear of death, that eternal death, which was our hire, gnawing at our hearts, by day and night, effectually hindered our being really happy.

But now, thank God, He has made us happy, without our having to work a day for it, for He has taken off our shoulders the terrible load of our guilt,

and upon the sinless, spotless Jesus, His beloved Son, has He laid the iniquity of us all. And now, through simply believing Him, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and He has made us not servants only, but sons, and has told us that when the inheritance passes into the hands of Him who is appointed heir of all things, the "First-born among many brethren," we shall share it, as joint heirs with Him of all His great possessions.

Now I ask you, my reader, whether it is better to be working hard to earn the wages of sin, which is death and eternal banishment from the presence of the ever blessed God, or to receive at His bounteous hand that priceless gift which He so freely bestows on ALL who feel and confess their need of it. Even eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord? W. T.

THE FATAL CHAIN.

IT was low tide at the river's mouth. Away in the distance the waves were rippling idly over the brown sands; while the retreating river, now but a thread of silver, had laid bare long stretches of shining seaweed that filled the air with a dank odour. The boats moored in the channel rocked themselves to and fro, as though laughing at their less fortunate companions that had been left stranded by the fickle waters. The white-winged

seagulls cradled themselves among the dancing waves, and paddled on the shore in search of food.

Through such a scene the skipper of a certain vessel was making his way, careless apparently of his surroundings. As he strode on he stumbled over an iron cable that was fastened to an anchor embedded in the river. In some way his foot slipped through one of the links and, try as he would, he could not extricate it.

Two men that were passing came to his help, but their efforts proved as vain as his own, and now the imprisoned foot had swollen with the strain. The situation began to look alarming, for the tide was rising and it was impossible to haul in the cable at such short notice ; they might, however, cut it.

The nearest village was two or three miles distant, and by the time the men had returned with the smith, the river was rapidly widening. Alas ! the smith found his tools were powerless to sever the heavy chain. Higher, still higher crept the water. Oh, the horror of the position !

"Save me, save me," cried the unfortunate man ; "do something ; do anything."

As a last resource they sent for a surgeon to amputate the foot. Ah ! but would the doctor reach the man in time ? Before he could arrive, would not the cold waters have swallowed up their prey ? At last the boat, carrying the surgeon and manned by an eager crew, leapt swiftly over the water ; but as the rowers neared the spot, their grasp slackened on the

oars and they looked upon each other with dismay. They were too late !

In the skipper's sad death we have a picture of the manner in which many souls perish. For man is bound by a mighty chain—the chain of sin, and his utmost effort to free himself will only prove the strength of the fetters that bind him. He cannot free himself, nor is there any created being that can free him, and left in such a plight, the billows of judgment will roll over his head ; he will perish.

Unconverted reader, pause, for here is depicted *thy* soul's danger. We would ask thee to consider thy position quietly, thoughtfully. Let the terrible reality of thy peril burn itself into thy soul till thy one anxiety be to escape and thy one cry, "Who shall deliver me?"

Ah, then we would point thee to the Son of God. He it was who saw man's need, who descended into Satan's stronghold, broke the bands of death, snapped the fetters of sin, and re-ascended to His Father's throne, a Saviour God.

Call upon Him. He will deliver thee from the power of sin and place thee beyond the reach of the judgment waves, secure upon the rock of His atoning work.

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. x. 13).

HOW THE PARDON WAS OBTAINED.

DURING the American Revolutionary War a certain man was convicted of treason and sentenced to death.

The news of his arrest quickly travelled to the small town in Pennsylvania where he lived, and perhaps the one whom it most affected was Peter Miller, the minister of the Baptist Church; for the condemned man had made himself notorious by his abuse and persecution of his Christian neighbour.

No sooner did Peter Miller hear of the distress of his old enemy than he set off on foot for Philadelphia to intercede for him with the President. But General Washington, whilst expressing sorrow, told him he could not possibly pardon his friend.

"My friend!" said Miller, "*I have not a worse enemy living than that man.*"

"What," said the General, "you have walked sixty miles to save the life of your enemy! That in my judgment puts the matter in a different light. I will grant you his pardon."

The pardon was made out, and Miller started on a fourteen-mile walk to the place where, in the afternoon, the sentence was to be carried out. As he reached his destination, the man was being led to execution. The latter, seeing him in the crowd, said, "There is Peter Miller; he has walked all the way from Eparata to have his revenge gratified to-day by seeing me hanged."

Another moment, and Peter Miller's revenge was accomplished; the pardon was placed in his enemy's hand.

Few men would have undertaken such a journey to save the life of their greatest enemy, and yet this story of self-forgetting love fades into insignificance beside the story of God's love to man.

Yes, to obtain man's pardon the eternal Son of God undertook a journey that led from heaven to earth. Moreover, He had to *purchase* this pardon, and the price He paid was His own blood. Thus Jesus *died* to obtain forgiveness for His enemies.

Now, whether gratitude and affection towards his deliverer filled the pardoned traitor's heart we know not, but reader, we would ask thee if *thou* hast ever thanked the Lord Jesus for what He did on thy behalf? Or is He, notwithstanding His love, still nothing to thee?

Oh, heaven must stand amazed at the base ingratitude of those that slight the Saviour's love. But wilt thou not join the company that with adoring hearts say—"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. i. 5, 6).

..
"Lord, we worship and adore Thee
For Thy rich, Thy matchless grace;
Perfect soon, in joy before Thee
We shall see Thee face to face.
Yet e'en now our song shall be,
Jesus gave Himself for me."

"I WORK A WORK IN YOUR DAYS"

(Acts xiii. 41).

OUR days are privileged to witness a wonderful work of God. It is not creation, which is, indeed, a mighty witness to His power and Godhead, and one to which men should hearken, for that work has been finished long ago.

It is a work even more marvellous than creation, which is being accomplished, as to its glorious results, in our days. Look abroad and you must see, unless strangely blinded, a moving of the Spirit of God. The hearts of His people are being at this moment greatly moved by a deepening sense of the glories of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of His claims on their hearts and lives; whilst there is also a remarkable acceptance of the gospel, and vast numbers of souls are turning from sin and unbelief to the knowledge of the Saviour.

All this is true, but the work now alluded to covers the whole period of our days since the testimony of the apostles. "Behold, I work a work in your days" (Acts xiii. 41). This work is attributed, in a very emphatic way, to God Himself. It is, *par excellence*, His work during this entire period. How infinitely important and blessed it must be!

Now, what marks this period? It had for its beginning the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is characterised by that awful sin to-day. He was

taken down from the tree, but, we read, God raised Him from the dead !

God interposed just when man had headed up his guilt. A risen Christ is therefore the divine burthen and theme for this period.

This is the work of God ; but, along with it, there flow most precious results for those who believe : First, forgiveness of sins ; second, justification from all things ; third, eternal life ; fourth, joy in the Holy Ghost. But, if these are preached, how are they to be possessed ? All through faith in Him ! Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the connecting link. Every true believer has all of these blessings. Impossible ! Incredible !

Alas, such an exclamation is the language of the human heart, for man would fain merit, by efforts of his own, a share in such blessing ; but his efforts are all precluded by faith, which makes nothing of man and everything of God, and hence, then, follows the solemn sentence—"A work which ye shall in no wise believe though a man declare it unto you." That is, it is beyond human credibility ! It is none the less true. The guilt that rejected our Lord when on earth rejects Him still. The Living Word was refused then ; and the preached Word is refused to-day. A man may declare the message, but it is "in no wise believed." Such is man !

What is necessary ? The grace of God working in quickening power—and, thank God, that makes the message effectual. But for this work of God death and judgment must take their course ; but grace

works,—God works, to-day, and, spite of unbelief of every form, souls are blessed. “Behold, I work!” And thus the stream rolls on, and God is glorified.

I wonder, dear reader, whether you have ever discovered the obduracy of your own heart to be such that it is closed, naturally, to the gospel of God, that you really prefer any sound to that of the truth, and that, unless the Spirit of God should in boundless mercy deal with you—as most certainly He desires to do—you must inevitably perish! Have you? If not, do consider your state. Shall it be said of you that you “in no wise believe”? Will you seal your own doom?

Ah! thank God that it is true of Him that in our days He works! But our days quickly pass—days of grace and salvation! And what then?

J. W. S.

JESUS AND SATAN.

“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.”—MATT. iv. 1.

WE often hear people say that Satan is not a person. I do not believe in the personality of Satan, you say. Perhaps you do not. But you forget this, that the very thing that would delight him best of all is that you should not believe in him. If you believed in him you would be afraid of him. I will ask you a question: Do you believe in the personality of Christ? Oh yes, of

course I do ; Christ is the Son of God, and the Saviour. And you hope to be saved by Him ? Yes. What kind of a Christ must you have to save you ? He must be a sinless man, that is certain. I agree with you.

Now, let me ask you another question. What is Satan, then, if he have no personality ? Do you reply, as many others to-day—Satan is the proclivity to evil which is found in man's heart. That is plain, at least. Satan is not a being who can trip men up ? No ! Satan, forsooth, is the tendency to evil in man's own heart, and then, you tell me you must have a perfect Saviour. True, but I want you to notice that if you get rid of a personal devil, you get rid at the same time of a personal Saviour. They both go together. How is that ?

You tell me that the devil is only the proclivity in a man's heart to evil. There must be sin coupled with that. I read that Christ was tempted of the devil. Had He any proclivities to evil ? Oh no, you exclaim. How, then, was He tempted of the devil ? If Christ was tempted of the devil, and the devil be the proclivity to evil in a man's own heart, then He must have had such, for Scripture affirms that He was "tempted of the devil." Do you see, my friend, where you are ? You have a Christ before your mind with proclivities to evil in His heart. If that were true He would not be perfect, and He would not be a truly holy man. God forgive me for saying the words.

But I am only showing you where your false and

hell-born ideas as to Satan are taking you. Their issue is the complete destruction of Christ as a possible Saviour, because He must have a fallen nature to have proclivities to evil in His heart—since out of it are the issues of life. That man cannot save me who has such a nature. A Christ with any proclivities to evil in His heart could not meet my case nor yours. No, my friend, by your casuistry and infidelity you have swept the devil and Christ off the scene together, and you have left yourself where you are, a sinner in your sins, and on your road to hell, and when you get there you will find that there is a devil, who will be your companion for eternity.

But further, I press on you that there is a Christ, whom, if you go on in your present sad and awful condition, you will never meet but once, and that to get at His hands the judgment you have earned. Ah, my friend, you may say, I do not believe in judgment. Satan is clever enough to keep you from believing that too. There are plenty of men who say, "Did God prepare hell for men?" No, He did not. "And did God prepare eternal fire for men?" No. The Lord Jesus will yet say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, *prepared for the devil and his angels*" (Matt. xxv. 41).

But do you not see, that if you will not have the company of God's Man for eternity, you must have the company of God's foe for eternity? If you are not going to spend it with Christ, through faith in His blood, and through faith in His name, if you are not going to spend it with the One who defeated the

devil, and the One who loves to deliver and save you, you will spend it with the one who has deceived you. The first and last acts of Satan are identical—deceiving men. (See 1 Tim. ii. 14; Rev. xx. 3, 8-10.) My friend, better far wake up to the truth now. Better far take your place as a poor, good-for-nothing, ruined, undone sinner, and let this blessed Son of God, this Man who is the Victor over Satan, bless and save you. How will He do it? Follow His history, and you will soon learn.

In the end of the fourth chapter of Matthew we read that Satan being overcome, Christ comes out to bless and deliver man: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (ver. 23). In plain language, He fulfils a very striking verse found in Luke's Gospel. There the Lord Jesus says, "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoil" (Luke xi. 21, 22). And what is the meaning of that? Satan is the strong man, and he is armed with everything that can encircle and hold his vassal—man. This strong man keeps his palace. His armour is the knowledge he has of the weakness of man, a weapon which he has well learned to use in upsetting and overcoming man. His palace is the world. His goods are sinners. And while he holds them thus, they are in peace. You were never in

anxiety about your soul? Never. You have been in peace all your days. You do not believe in Satan. Not you. You are just an illustration of the truth.

But who is the stronger Man? The blessed One who was tempted of the devil. He overcame Satan, and bound him morally in the wilderness. He took all his armour from him. Christ has gone into the devil's camp of set purpose, hence we read, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John iii. 8). He has come here to refute the devil's lie that God did not love men. God is love, and He has given His own Son to death for us, at a great cost.

When the devil left Christ in the wilderness, we are told by Luke that it was "for a season" (chap. iv. 13). Another time Satan crossed His path in the garden of Gethsemane. Regarding that attack the blessed Lord said to His disciples, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John xiv. 30). He had met Him once before, and been defeated by Him. But, unabashed, he came to Him again in the garden. Then he evidently pressed on Jesus the awful consequences of His pathway if He would go on, even death. What was Christ's action? We read, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from (or out of) death, and was heard in that he feared" (Heb. v. 7). His agony was so deep then, that "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke xxii.).

Doubtless Satan then suggested to Him to pause and not drink that cup, for it would cost Him His life, and the forsaking of God. He looked into the cup and measured its contents. It was all God's judgment against sin. If He drank it He must be forsaken of God, and be cast off, upon the cross. Not merely was it the physical suffering and sorrow that man could give Him, as they nailed Him to the tree, but the inevitable sense that God and He must part company. Hence as He looked at that cup, He said, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done." He knew that if He did not drink that cup of judgment upon the cross, you and I would have to drink it in eternity. If He did not drink the cup in our room and stead, there was no deliverance, no salvation, no pardon, no cleansing, possible for you and me.

As He looked at that cup He shrank from it in all the perfect holiness of His being, and deprecated it with the utmost intensity. Then He took it, and drank it to the very dregs in the perfection of His love. Blessed Saviour! Well may each redeemed one cry, Hallelujah, I am saved; I am saved by His death. We are saved because He drank God's cup of wrath, to the very dregs, so that He, in tender love and divine righteousness, might put the cup of God's salvation into our hands, and press it to our lips. May we not joyfully say, "What hath God wrought?"

Nor is this all. He died to save us, He now lives to succour us. "For we have not an high priest

which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin " (Heb. iv. 15). What is that ? Just what we have been considering—the temptation in the wilderness. And now He is able to succour us. " For in that he himself suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted " (Heb. ii. 18). He is able to save, He is able to succour, and He is able to sympathise (Heb. iv. 15). Note well the passage—" Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them " (Heb. vii. 25). What is the meaning thereof ? That blessed, great High Priest, now at God's right hand, understands perfectly all the pathway of the Christian here. He has gone through it Himself. He took up all our sorrows in His life that He might sympathise, and He took up all our sins in His death that He might save. Now on high He can succour and deliver His people absolutely. Hebrews iv. 15 alludes to the temptation in the wilderness, and Hebrews v. 7 gives us the agony in the garden, as He looked at the cup, shrank from it, and then drank it.

With Him, then, it was " prayers and supplications." Do you know what the apostle connects with prayer and supplication for us ? " Be careful for nothing ; but in everything by *prayer* and *supplication* WITH THANKSGIVING let your requests be made known unto God " (Phil. iv. 6). Thank God. Christ's prayers and supplications were coupled with strong cryings and tears, ours are to be coupled with thanksgivings,

for His death and resurrection have brought us into peace, liberty, and rest before God.

And now, let me again ask, who would not have this blessed One as Saviour, Lord, and Friend? Who would not seek to follow Him? He is the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him, for He has overcome Satan and spoiled his goods. Fellow-Christian, you and I were once servants and slaves of the devil. But what has happened? The Lord has picked us up, saved us and cleansed us, filled our hearts with peace and joy, and given us the privilege of telling other people of Himself.

What a wonderful thing is the grace that picks up the vessels of Satan's power, delivers and cleanses them, and then deposits in them some spiritual gift by which others may be helped. Christ ascended on high that He might send down the Holy Ghost with the glorious news which, when believed, delivers sinners from Satan's power, and brings them from darkness to light. And there is the value of preaching. The preacher goes out and tells the simple tidings of the love of Jesus and the value of His blood. Any one that believes and decides for Him, God will give His Spirit to, and very likely make him the means of blessing to somebody else. That is the way the gospel spreads. First of all you receive the gospel yourself, and then constrained by His love you go and tell others what Jesus has done for you. Like the man whose eyes Jesus opened, you can say, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see" (John ix. 25). Who wrought

this marvel? Jesus. My reader, believe in Jesus, and then go home and tell your friends: "I have found the Lord. I am delivered. I am set free. His blood has washed all my sins away."

Now, the gospel is not only that Christ has overcome Satan morally when tempted in the wilderness, but that He has gone right down into death, and there destroyed his power. Further, He has risen triumphant, and the devil knows it well. As a consequence there is peace for you. You learn to know a risen, triumphant Christ at God's right hand. The Man who overcame Satan morally in the wilderness—while He was on His way back to God's right hand—has on the road carved the pathway for me to accompany Him, and has opened the doorway right up to God's presence through His death and resurrection. As He died He said, "It is finished." When He rose, He said, "Peace unto you." The Holy Ghost has now come down to tell us that the Victor is in the glory. And the man that believes in Him shares His victory, and enters into the spoils of His conquest.

If you have never before made up your mind for Christ, surely you will believe Him and confess Him henceforth. Then you can joyfully go through this world and say: "Come, see a Man that has overcome Satan, borne all my sins, saved me for ever, and now fills my heart with peace and joy. His name is Jesus." If this be the case, God will make you the means of blessing to others. May He grant it for His name's sake.

W. T. P. W.

A LIVING SAVIOUR IN GLORY.

(Read Mark x. 46-52 ; also Heb. ii. 9.)

“**J**ESUS OF NAZARETH PASSETH BY.” Such were the significant words so solemn, so hopeful, uttered in reply to a blind beggar’s inquiry concerning the crowd thronging the highway where he had craved an alms so often. Solemn was that reply, for it meant that the traveller would soon have disappeared, yet hopeful since it meant that He had not yet done so, but was at hand. Nevertheless the multitude’s sentence had to be altered in a manner altogether outside its limited reckoning, and depths of mercy great enough to do this exhibited before its eyes, which, if understood, would have evoked the sentence “*Jesus of Nazareth refuses to pass by, He stops.*”

So far as Bartimæus was concerned, much depended upon the value he attached to the moment that had arrived. Had he allowed it to pass unused the regrets of a lifetime would not have restored it to him, for whatever pittance he might have extracted from the passing crowd there was something being carried in the heart of that glorious Stranger so near to him, nothing could compare with ; and that was mercy—the mercy of God.” Three years had beheld Him traversing the land, undoing the works of the devil, and now He had at last “set His face steadfastly as a flint to go to Jerusalem,” nevermore to return that way.

However, the blind man did realise the moment that had come, and sought mercy from the One who made that moment what it was. Above the general din, louder than the protests of the crowd, and in spite of the sordid arguments known to him as a beggar, arose persistently the cry, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me." The beggar was ready. Was Jesus ready? Ah! He was always ready. He loved His work. Scripture says so. To Him it was as meat and drink, and when material to be worked upon was at hand He applied Himself to its every detail with ineffable delight.

Could He not by a word or a look have opened the eyes of the blind while proceeding on His way? Doubtless He could had He so wished, but nevertheless

"JESUS STOOD STILL."

Oh! how millions of redeemed sinners praise Him for that interruption of His journey, timed in front of the suppliant for mercy—forcibly illustrating His present long and patient pause, in view of a sorrowful humanity. How well also was it that Bartimæus was deaf to the advice of the crowd; how well that he utterly ignored business prospects, such as they were, when they would have hindered him, for he threw over the goodwill of those he formerly appealed to, foregoing at the crucial moment his only means of existence and staking everything upon the mercy of God, and tasting its sweetness on the very spot, as he got his sight.

Centuries have elapsed since the foregoing incident occurred. Refreshed, Jesus resumed His pathway to Jerusalem—to Calvary. Before a universe, that beheld God dishonoured by sin and heard Him libelled by a liar, has been writ, by means of the cross, the fact that God is right, and will not pass over what is wrong, the fact that He is love and loved the world.

But we would follow the course of Jesus, for, as at Jericho in the past, so in the present, everything depends upon getting into touch with Him where He is. The tomb which Romans guarded and which Jews hoped had buried the fame of Jesus witnessed His victory, as He emerged, after the power of an endless life, to company for forty days with those who loved His company, ere He departed elsewhere.

BUT WHERE DID HE GO?

Luke xix. 12 shows that He likened His movements to that of "a certain nobleman who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return." He has disappeared from this country (earth) and has gone to a far country (heaven—see Luke xxiv. 51), and when manifested again it will be in glorious majesty in His kingdom here.

He has gone upon a journey, but unlike the former one, which ended at Golgotha, the present one has as its objective point the kingdom.

Nevertheless He has done exactly upon this journey what He did upon the former—*He has stopped*. Something has interrupted that journey to the kingdom. The crying need of the spiritually blind and poor is lingered over by the long-suffering com-

passion of a Saviour-God, as shown in Jesus, and now He is not standing, as at Jericho, but *sitting*; and, my reader, I ask you if the evidence proves that He loves His present occupation, seeing He has remained at it for nigh nineteen centuries?

A wonderful message comes from the glory, where He sits, to mankind upon earth, whence He was expelled, and none other than the Holy Ghost has come to report accurately the message.

Listen to it. "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts xiii. 38, 39).

At the cross God spoke to Jesus about sin, and what He said and the answer given was not in words alone. Neither you nor I will ever fathom what transpired when a Holy Man was forsaken by a Holy God on that cross. But, that question settled, God now speaks to you and to everybody about Jesus, there being no one else to speak about, and this He does by the Holy Ghost upon earth through the preaching of the Gospel.

But what about your guilt? You are referred to Jesus. Again, your sinful state? You are referred to Jesus, and if you go to Him believing, He will tell you that these questions were closed at the cross.

I could not ask you to ignore such questions, that would be extreme levity and wickedness, but the cross of Calvary is the eternal witness that they were gone into, to the satisfaction of God, and no lamenta-

tion of yours will ever receive any answer than the one God has given in public. Let that suffice, therefore, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Those who believe on Him receive the Holy Ghost, and those who have the Holy Ghost are neither blind nor poor.

True, they cannot see Jesus physically, as Peter reminds them, but they love Him and rejoice in Him (1 Pet. i. 8), because, according to Hebrews ii. 9 they see Him with the eyes of their hearts in the spot which they know He is so worthy of. All *things* are not yet put under Him, but "we see Jesus" where the Father has put *Him*, and never will He be higher than He now is.

Soon He will sit upon His own throne, and a glorious day in public will that be for Him and His own; but, sitting upon the Father's throne to-day, He opens to us the wealth of what is heavenly. There are those who can say without their sin remaining, "we see," and who, if poor, can add, "yet possessing all things."

A departed pilgrim used to sing—

"Is the wilderness before thee,
Desert lands where drought abides?
Heavenly springs shall there restore thee,
Fresh from God's exhaustless tides."

Oh! my reader, do not ignore what can be yours while the Saviour sits on high. Did He arise and proceed to the kingdom your doom would be fixed, for with His departure would depart from you the mercy so near to you, leaving nothing for you but the blackness and despair of an undone eternity.

In view of such an eternity close your ears to the advice of the "multitude." Had Bartimæus taken its advice he would bitterly have regretted it.

In view of such an eternity plead not the popular but devilish excuse of to-day—"business." Had Bartimæus done so Jesus of Nazareth would have passed by and left behind Him a blind man and a beggar, even if a successful one.

Furthermore, in view of the mercy flowing to-day, like the virtue that of old healed the physically wrecked, I ask you, as one who knows it, as one who prizes it, as one who could not exist without it; yea, as one who knows Him through whom it flows, as one who has a link with Him where He is, as one who, while conscious of much infirmity, must avow that he loves Him; *do not miss it*, if you miss everything else.

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

R. J. R.

THE OLD, OLD STORY ONCE AGAIN.

THERE are few verses, if any, more familiar to men's ears than John iii. 16—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life," but there are many who fail to grasp its wondrous fulness and blessedness. There is more than enough contained in it to make every sinner who receives its

blessed contents by faith, happy both now and for ever. Let us ponder these life-ministering words.

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

Now there was a moment when that love gave a manifest expression of itself towards an object, and here a precious little word of two letters is introduced to convey to us its fulness and extent—"so"—God *so loved*. Who can fathom its depths? You have the heart of God Himself there; no cold formal statement, but all the warmth and affection of the heart of hearts, the heart of the blessed Saviour. God told out in loveliest simplicity, God *so loved*. It speaks volumes to the heart that receives it. Meditate, as you read these lines, upon the infinite depth of meaning in those soul-winning words.

And what was the object of so great love? Wondrous to say, a world steeped in sin and wickedness. Not one lovely and attractive in itself, but a world full of enmity and hatred against God, that was opposed to both light and love; a selfish, self-satisfied world, whose heart's desire was to live without Him. But the love of God goes out to an object utterly unworthy in itself. "For God *so loved the world*." Not a favoured part of it, nor a favoured people in it here, but the world at large

—the whole world, this world of poor, guilty, hell-deserving sinners, fulfilling the lusts and desires of their own poor deceitful hearts.

Already man in the world had been put to the proof; the holy law of God had clearly manifested that love was not there, neither to God nor to his neighbour. It was then, when the fulness of time was come, that the full expression of God's wondrous love came out. He no longer demands of man, but gives to him. "For God so loved the world that he *gave*." And gave what? Wonder of wonders! Gave *His only begotten Son*. Can it be true? Yes, gave His only Son. We are often so familiar with it that we treat it as a matter of course, and lose sight of the immensity of the gift. And many pass it by without scarce a thought, and yet such wondrous love is enough to break the hardest heart. The gift of Christ can alone give us an idea of the infinite depths of meaning in the words "*so loved*." God withheld not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. He looked from His holy dwelling-place upon this world of ruined sinners, guilty, and lost, and instead of sweeping it with the besom of judgment, so richly deserved, *so loved* it that He gave His only begotten Son.

Wondrous story! The Son of God came down into this lost world to save; the Son of God became the Son of man, the delight and joy of the heart of God, and yet here to do His will even unto death He went to the cross, bore the whole judgment of God, and glorified Him. God is *light* as well as

love, the Holy One who dwells in light unapproachable. Hence the hiding of His face from His Son at that awful moment when He was made sin. And such was the infinite value of that sacrifice, that in view thereof, we hear the Lord saying, "That whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." Blessed, joyful news! *All are* invited now to participate in His wondrous love. And rightcously so, because the claims of His holiness were perfectly met. None need reap the consequences of their folly and sin. Salvation now is for "*whosoever*." Where is there one that is not included there? Who can get outside of *whosoever*? The vilest need not despair, so long as "*whosoever*" is in John iii. 16; and the word of the Lord endureth for ever.

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

You may know all about it, see it all as clear as daylight as so many facts, but unless you believe,

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

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

Once again then, dost thou believe on Him? Not about Him as a historical personage, but on Him, the living Christ, the living Son of the living

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

Look at the whole verse once again. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). It begins with God and ends with life. It begins with God, who had no beginning and has no end, the eternal God; and it ends with life, which has no beginning nor end neither, for Christ is that life (Col. iii. 4). And the believer has this life in the Son. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may *know that ye have eternal life*" (1 John v. 12, 13).

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

MAKING LIGHT OF IT.

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.”—MATT. xxii. 2, 3.

THAT is what the kingdom of heaven is like. God spreads a feast in honour of His blessed Son, who has always been so well pleasing to Him, and He will have the wedding furnished with guests; they shall share His joy, and the delight He always takes in making much of His dear Son, they shall enjoy with Him. And when all things are quite ready, He sends to fetch in those whom He has invited, but they will not come. How strange! Was ever another feast so treated? Nor was it that they would gladly have come if they possibly could. No! “they MADE LIGHT of it, and went THEIR WAYS, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.” Ah! they did not make light of those things, but the King’s feast was nothing to them; they could do without it.

Now I want to ask you, my dear reader, How are YOU treating God’s feast, that rich provision of His grace, that precious salvation for poor hell-deserving sinners, which the gospel unfolds to you? The banqueting house of the blessed God is open for “the hungry,” the water of eternal life is flowing there, and He says, whosoever will, let him take of it “freely.” You know this, are you making light of it? You do not disbelieve a word of it; you do not scoff at it and ridicule it; you are not, it may

be, an open despiser of His grace, no ! But are you making light of His feast, that He has spread for such as you ? You do not make light of your business ; your farm has quite due attention ; you eagerly follow your pleasure, and you never think of making light of a good bargain.

Perhaps you do not make light of "religion," but attend diligently upon all its outward forms ; you are more upright and benevolent than many you could point out, but what about God's feast ? He feasts on Christ. All His delight is in Jesus. He calls you to fellowship with Himself in this. He desires that you should be satisfied only with what delights His heart. Now, are you "making light" of this ? Is your heart on God's Christ, God's Lamb ? Or are you saying in the bottom of your heart, "I can do without Jesus, I do not want Him, at any rate not now ? It may be all well to think of religion when I am going to die, but things of much more immediate importance demand my attention now." Oh, if you are thinking thus, my beloved reader, you are despising Christ. Verily, God holds you guilty of making light of His feast.

And what will you do if God makes light of you presently, if He makes you "like the chaff which the wind driveth away," and you be swept for ever from His blessed presence, where alone "there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore" ? Ah ! you will wish then you had made more of the grace of God in the gospel, and lighter of a thousand other things that will be of no benefit to you then.

"He filleth the hungry soul with goodness." Confess your emptiness and need of Him, and seek through faith in Jesus, supply from His store, and "your soul shall delight itself in fatness." But make light of His feast a little longer, and it will be too late, and nought will remain for you, but "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish."

W. T.

"ARE YOU ONE OF THE RANSOMED?"

AS I took my seat in a railway carriage some time ago where there were four other passengers, my attention was especially drawn to one, an elderly lady, who, although looking very ill and worn out, could not keep silent.

It was easily noticed that her brain was over-balanced, but what was occupying her mind for the time? More than once I caught the words, "the ransomed"—evidently the subject of the conversation. Presently she rose from her seat, and seating herself by me, immediately asked the question—"Are you one of the ransomed?" On replying "Yes," she said, "The King is coming, think of the lost ones, ransom them in;" and so she continued in that strain without a pause until I had to leave her at the next station.

These two sentences, although uttered by one whose intellect was weak, are worth passing on, and to you, my reader, I would repeat the question, "Are you one

of the ransomed?" If not, then you are still a captive of Satan, but we can tell you that the Redeemer has been here: Jesus "gave his life a ransom for all." The price of the sinner's redemption has been paid, the cost His precious blood. Now, if you trust Him, you may be free.

"He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood avails for thee."

But do not delay, "Because there is wrath; beware lest he take thee away with his stroke, then a great ransom cannot deliver thee."

Fellow-believer, to you I would pass on the next sentence, "The King is coming, think of the lost ones." They are perishing around us on every hand. Oh! may we be more earnest in winning them for Christ. May they be delivered from going down to the pit, for He has found a ransom.

"Gather them in! for there yet is room
At the feast that the King has spread;
Oh, gather them in!—let His house be filled,
And the hungry and poor be fed.

Gather them in! for yet there is room,
'Tis a message from God above;
Oh, gather them into the fold of grace
And the arms of a Saviour's love.

Out in the highway, out in the by-way,
Out in the dark paths of sin,
Go forth, go forth, with a loving heart,
And gather the wanderers in."

“THE DEVIL’S POOL.”

“A LOCKSMITH named S—— E—— of W—— with several companions decided on *Sunday morning* to have a sprint on the Pickwick football field. After having several runs the men resolved upon having a bathe, and repaired to a swag pool near by, known as ‘The Devil.’ Divesting themselves of their clothing, the companions of E—— dived into the pool, but the latter said he did not think he would venture, as the water was chilly and he did not feel ‘overwell.’ With persuasion he eventually dived, and when reappearing above the surface he exclaimed—‘It’s all over. I am done for!’ He sank, and his body has not been seen since.

“Information was given to the police, and dragging operations were soon in force. The news of the man’s disappearance quickly spread, and in the afternoon hundreds of persons congregated round the pool. Some missionaries, with a Gospel Tent near by, came on the scene and conducted a religious service. Between three and four o’clock it was computed that there were between 3,000 and 4,000 people present.”

So runs the newspaper notice.

The crowds of people repairing to that pool called “The Devil” gave us to inquire of God as to what we should do, and feeling assured that He had a voice to the people in this calamity, and the chorus appealing to us :—

“ Won't somebody tell them
 Tell them of Calvary's tree !
 Tell them the story of Jesus,
 Of what a great Saviour is He ? ”

we abandoned the Tent Meeting and repaired to that pool—not to hold “ a religious service ” exactly, but to “ preach the gospel.”

As we stood there gazing into the still water and pictured the poor fellow lying at the bottom in the icy grip of death, how helpless we felt as to him ! His body was *there*, but his soul—WHERE ?

Turning our attention to the hundreds, yea thousands, crowding the banks, we gave out our first hymn :—

“ Will *your* anchor hold in the floods of death,
 When the waters cold chill *your* latest breath ? ”

Our prayer next rose to God for the recovery of the body of poor E—— and for the bereaved ones, and especially that God's blessing might rest upon His precious gospel to those standing round. The hymn—

“ Where will you spend Eternity ?
 This question comes to you and me.
 Tell me, what shall your answer be ?
 Where will you spend Eternity ? ”

having been sung, we sought to show that according to God's Word it is not “ all over,” and how solemn and impressive that word sounded there in the *presence of death*—“ It is appointed unto men once to die, but *after this the judgment* ” (Heb. ix. 27). We sought to show that this calamity had not

happened by chance, for not a sparrow falls to the ground until God wills it. "The wages of sin is death," "but after this the judgment." "So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God."

That poor fellow little thought, as he dived into "The Devil's Pool," that he was diving to his doom ! It seems highly probable that he had been doing this, virtually all along diving into the devil's pool of sin, and now the moment had come for him to be paid sin's wages—death seized hold upon him, "but after this the judgment."

Alas, alas ! how many among that throng were doing likewise, and if God paid them their wages that day, everyone would have to own that He was righteous in all His ways.

We sought to show how Jesus had come down from the glory of God, and how He had entered the cold chilly waters of death to rescue the perishing. How all God's waves and billows had rolled over Him. Blessed Saviour ! Prophetically it had been written of Him, "The waters compassed me about even to the soul ; the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. *I went down* to the bottoms of the mountain ; the earth with her bars were about me for ever : yet hast Thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God " (Jonah ii. 3-6). That now as risen and glorified at God's right hand He could righteously and eternally save all who put their trust in Him, repenting of their sins.

How inviting are the waters of "the devil's pool"! and how vast is the throng diving into it. Are you, my reader, one of the number? Have you not found out that its water is stagnant, and that "the dead are there," and millions of its erstwhile bathers "are in the depths of hell"? Are you content with the devil's stagnant pool while God is inviting you to bathe in "The *river* of God," which "is full of water"? "And he showed me a pure river of *water of life*, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. xxii. 1).

The Gospel is not a stagnant *pool*, but a rippling *river* of life-giving waters, fed by the springs of divine righteousness and holy love; and our God's last invitation in His wonderful book is: "And let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take the *water of life* freely" (v. 17). No *death* is ever found in God's river. You may drink of it, wade into it, and "swim in" it (Ezek. xlvii. 5), but there is "no death there."

God is the fountain of living waters, and Christ's redemption work as the Lamb has, so to speak, removed the dam and waters now gush out.

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

Reader, seize your opportunity and respond to the invitation of a God of love now—for remember all that the devil can give you is like a stagnant pool here, and not one drop of water to cool your parched

tongue can ever be given in that place where "The worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched."

While we write, the dragging operations are still going on, for the body of E—— is not yet recovered. Hundreds again last night had the privilege of listening to the gospel, while we had the joy of telling it out, and warning the neglectors of salvation that it may be their turn next.

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

May God use this paper, my reader, to warn you to flee from the devil's pool to His own river of grace, supplied through One who says:—

"If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me . . . out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John vii.).

E. E. C.

FROM PAIN TO PEACE.

A GREAT Irishman was setting forth on his last journey. Behind him lay a strenuous life devoted to the service of his country. The Irish people had lavished on him almost unbounded love and admiration, and he had enjoyed honour, fame, and fortune beyond many.

He had been religious, too, a sincere son of the Roman Catholic Church. Early in life he had written in his diary: "Oh, Eternal Being, Thou knowest the

purity of my heart, and the sincerity of my promises." But now, too early old with ceaseless toils, and worn by sickness and sorrow, he was about to pass over from time into eternity, and before him lay, as his biographer says, "the dark unknown, which he feared to go out into."

Did the thought of his arduous life yield him no consolation? Did the remembrance of the purity of his heart bring him no repose? Could the love of friends afford no mitigation of his fears? None! Gloom and despair settled down upon him, filling his days with terror, while at night the thought of dying drove sleep from his eyes.

As he drew near the end the last sacrament was administered to him, and during the prayers his ear caught the name of Jesus. Blessed name! Jesus, the Saviour of sinners! Jesus, the sinner's Friend! "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus," murmured the dying man, and fell asleep in peace.

Years have passed away since then, multitudes of men and women have come and gone on life's pilgrimage, innumerable changes have taken place; but, thank God! there remains to-day, unchanged and unchangeable, the power of the name of Jesus. It is still the name that has power to bless, it is still the only name under heaven, given amongst men, whereby we may, nay, we must be saved.

Have you, gentle reader, come under the wondrous power of this name? or, rather, has He who bears this precious name wooed and won your heart? I have ventured to relate to you this simple story,

because it adds its little tribute to the power of Jesu's name, but not to encourage you to risk your soul in the strange madness of delay. Perhaps you say, "I will do as this man did, I will get riches and reputation, I will takè all the world has to offer, then at the end I, too, will call on Jesus for pardon and peace." But consider a little—first, you may die before you have done any of these things. I know not who you are, you may be already the hero of great deeds, and the plaudits of a grateful nation are perhaps at this moment ringing in your ears; or you may be in humble circumstances, and your name shall never be written in the annals of fame; but "*death happeneth alike unto all.*" You would fain ignore the grim spectre, and, if you are rich enough to command the highest medical and surgical skill, you may buy him off for a time, but one day he will overtake you, and, clasped in his cold embrace, with the warm life-blood congealing in your veins, and your heart, which once beat so high with hope, giving its last faint throb, there will be only left for you a coffin, a funeral, and a grave; and then?—"It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27).

Again, who can promise you that you shall have a death-bed? You may die in a strange land, in the stress of battle, by a sudden disaster; there may be no friend at hand to breathe the sweet name of Jesus in your dying ear.

Think also, would you really like to spend your life for this world? to keep the company of those

who insult and outrage that name ; and then, at the last, call upon Jesus ? I do not think you can deliberately plan such inconceivable baseness. That pardon which you think to obtain so lightly was won at great cost by the cruel death, the deep, measureless sorrow, the sore travail of soul of Jesus the Saviour, "for without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22), and if you had a hundred lives to give wholly to Him, you could never repay Him. Well has the poet sung,

"See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down,
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet ?
Or thorns compose so rich a crown ?

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small ;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

I pray that your eyes may be opened to see this, and that you may receive Him now, with all the blessing He brings. How gracious He is ! In His Word He puts it in so many different ways for you. If you do not understand how to receive Him, He says "Come" (Matt. xi. 28) ; and if you say, I do not know how to come, "Believe" (Acts xvi. 31), or "Trust" (Eph. i. 12) ; or if this is still too difficult, He says "Look" (Isa. xlv. 22).

Do, dear friend, let Him bless you now, and then in true-hearted surrender lay your life, and all that you have, at His feet.

A SAVIOUR FOR YOU.

(Read Luke ii. 1-20 ; xix. 9, 10 ; xxiii. 35 ; Acts v. 29-32.)

THESE four Scriptures abound in glad tidings for lost men. For such there is a Saviour. You say, Who are lost? Well, are you a saved man, a saved woman? You reply, I could not say. Then what are you?

There are but the two classes, the lost and the saved, and we are all lost before we are saved. The Lord Himself preached that in Luke xix. His birth, however, is the irrefragable evidence that man was lost. What does a thirsty man need? Water. A hungry man craves bread ; a sick man craves health ; and a lost man ought to crave a Saviour. God knew the world was lost, and therefore in the deep love of His heart He sent His dear Son. Are you a saved man? If not, you have not understood the meaning of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into this world, and as far as you are concerned you have nullified it, because you have not let Him have His way with you.

You say, People cannot know they are saved. I beg your pardon, *I* know it, and *you* may know it. Like the apostles, we can say, "we are His witnesses of these things" (Acts v. 32). He came into the world to seek and save that which was lost. He has saved me, and He wants to save you. That word, a Saviour, is a lovely word for men that know they are lost. It is a lovely word for anxious souls, for sin-burdened, spirit-convicted men and women.

“When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Gal. iv. 4). When was the due time? The full time was come when it was manifest that man was utterly lost and undone, and could not meet his own case, nor put things right with God. Sin has produced an awful chasm, and there is only one bridge between man in his guilt and God in His holiness, and that is the dead body of God’s blessed Son. You will never reach God, know Him, or be fit for His presence save on the ground—not of the incarnation—but of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Incarnation in a certain sense bars my way to God, because incarnation reveals Christ as a man who suited God, a man who was fit for God—the thoughts of His heart, the words of His mouth, and all His deeds were suited to God. Are we thus pure? No, therefore His life only condemns us. While the veil hung in the temple the way to God was not open; but when Jesus died the veil was rent in twain—God rent it, and now the vilest sinner can go in. Christ incarnate makes me feel I am not fit for and cannot get to God; but Christ dead and risen, and the veil rent, shows me the work of redemption accomplished, by which the vilest can draw near to God. That is why God sent His Son, and I want you now to glance at the four Scriptures I have read, which present Him at His birth, during His life, then in His death, and finally in resurrection and ascension.

1. "A SAVIOUR, WHICH IS CHRIST THE LORD."

Born, according to Scripture, at Bethlehem, true son of David, the fulfiller of every promise in His own Person, this blessed babe, Jesus, answered every Old Testament prophecy. He was born at Bethlehem in a wonderful way. Mary and Joseph lived at Nazareth, many miles away: how then will His birth be at Bethlehem? The Roman Emperor would like the census taken, to know how many nationalities there were in his dominions, and how many of each tribe, and so every one had to go to his own birth-place. The machinery of the Roman Empire thus put into motion simply fulfilled Scripture, by bringing the Saviour's mother to Bethlehem.

Little recked the Roman Emperor as he made that enactment, which was so objectionable to the Jews, that he was fulfilling Scripture. Mary and Joseph had to go up to Bethlehem, and there Jesus was born. When they reached there the Emperor changed his mind, hence the census was not taken till fourteen years after (*see* Luke ii. 2), but God used the pride of man to carry out His purposes.

"And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was *no room* for them in the inn" (ver. 7). Why no room in the inn? You say, Oh, of course Augustus Cæsar's order had crammed the hotels, and there was no room. I never knew a hotel that had not room for a rich man; but here was a poor man, and when Mary and Joseph arrived

there was no room for them, so, out among the cattle His own hands had made Jesus, Himself the Creator, was born. You will say, It was a mere coincidence. Will you then tell me why there has been no room in your heart for Christ yet? Is *that* a coincidence? No, it is a manifestation of the state of your heart—a dreadful manifestation. There was no room in the inn then, and there has been no room in your heart for Jesus yet. That is man *exposed*.

In another part of Luke's gospel it tells of a great supper spread, and when those that were bidden to it refused to come, the master of the feast said to his servant, "Go out quickly . . . and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and **YET THERE IS ROOM**" (chap. xiv. 22). That is God *revealed*.

There is room in God's heart and at God's feast for you, and I would recommend you to come in now. Shall there be room in your heart for Jesus? Let Him in. Away with those bolts and bars. You have kept Him outside all these years. If the love of Christ gets in, and you have the sense Christ has loved you, and died for you, you will let Him in. You have only one heart, and you have kept Him out; and one tongue, and it has never served Him yet. Repent now, and let Him in.

God sent His blessed Son to earth for a set purpose, and immediately He is born this purpose is intimated. "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock

by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid" (ver. 8, 9). That is what takes place in the history of a soul when it is going to be blessed of God. You have the sense God is drawing near to you, and it produces a Godly fear.

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good *tidings of great joy*, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David *a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord*" (ver. 10, 11). "Great joy," and you have never tasted it? How is that? What is the reason, what is the secret of it? You *ought* to have the joy. You do not know what you are missing, you who do not know Christ. God has sent you a Saviour—not a helper, not a judge, not a detective officer. God is love, and here is love in activity, shown clearly in the gift of His son—"a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Whom will He save? You, if you will let Him.

Picture to yourself a sinking ship. The crew on board have lost their boats in the storm. One man goes aloft to scan the horizon, and sees a ship in the distance. How glad they are; they think there is the possibility of salvation. By-and-by the ship gets nearer, and they fire signals of distress. The answer comes back, "Help coming." At length a lifeboat reaches them, and are they not glad? Yes, and saved too. I was a sinking sinner, and God sent a Saviour, and He has saved me. He is now ready to save

you just where you are, for He is "A Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Now look at the effect of these wondrous tidings. This chapter gives you a picture of a handful of thorough converts. When the shepherds got the good tidings did they turn and say, It is very interesting? No. Did they ask each other, Is this reliable information? No. It is reserved for the twentieth century people to be doubtful, critical and infidel, and miserable too. Look at these simple shepherds. They "said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which *is come to pass*, which the Lord hath made known unto us" (ver. 15). They believe the tidings—they were believers. They act upon the tidings, they do not tarry—"Let us *now go*" is their determination. Let us go to the spot where He is. *You* will not find Him at Bethlehem, but at the Father's right hand—not unwanted, among the cattle, but where He is wanted, a Man risen from the dead. If you set yourself to find Him, you are bound to find Him, because He has said, "he that seeketh findeth" (Matt. vii. 8). He has come to seek you, and if you set yourself to seek Him you will find Him.

"And they came with haste" (ver. 16). Their sheep and their business disappeared. They might have said, "We may lose some sheep, we may lose money over this"; they said, "Let us now go." The sheep have no importance when the question of the Saviour is brought up. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own

soul?" (Mark viii. 36). Better lose all our sheep than miss finding the Saviour—that is what they said practically. "And they came with haste, and found." "He that seeketh findeth." They received the gospel, the testimony that there was a Saviour, and they repaired to the spot where He was to be found; they had no doubt. They had a message from God about Him, so have you, and they sought and found Jesus.

"And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child" (ver. 17). They were capital converts, they received the truth, they came with haste, and when they had seen Him they told other people. "And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them" (ver. 20). Nothing sets a man praising like knowing that Jesus is his own Saviour. You say, I believe Jesus is a Saviour, I have heard other people say so. That testimony is not worth much. Are *you* saved? Well, I am doubtful. Then you have never crossed the line yet. Do so now.

2. "COME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE."

In Luke xix. there are two seekers—Zaccheus sought to see Jesus, and Jesus was seeking Zaccheus. You say, *I* would like to find Jesus. My dear friend, I have glorious news for you: He is seeking you. Zaccheus found Him, and the Lord said to Zaccheus, "This day is salvation *come* to this house" (ver. 9). Why had salvation come to that

house? Zaccheus sought Jesus, found Him, and took Him home with him. I recommend you to do the same at once. Zaccheus took Him home, and people said, "That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner"; but when he got home the Lord said, "This day is salvation come to this house." Zaccheus received the Saviour and was saved.

All through His life Jesus was saving sinners, and He is doing the same now.

3. "HE SAVED OTHERS"

was the testimony of the rulers as He hung on the tree at Calvary. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God" (Luke xxiii. 35). What was His answer to this taunt? He would not save Himself. Without the shedding of blood is no remission of sins, and if He had not died, you and I could not get life. Man's sin was of such a nature before God, that nothing but the atoning death of His blessed Son could blot that sin out. He paid my debt with His life, with His own precious blood. He sacrificed Himself, the spotless, sinless, stainless, holy Jesus, that He might bring us to God. God is saving people all round to-day; He saves others, why should He not save you? If you do not get saved now, it is only because of the deep, deadly unbelief in your heart, and that sin is slowly carrying you to a lost eternity.

Any sin you may have committed against man pales before this—God has sent His Son into this world, and you have not bowed the knee to Him.

This will come out by-and-by, that you were told about Him, you were called to Him, but other things came in, worked in your mind, wrought in your heart, and fatally influenced your history. The devil will always help to keep you from Christ, and if he succeed you will die as you have lived, an unforgiven sinner, the crowning sin of your life being that you did not believe in God's dear Son. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 16).

You may say you do not believe in damnation. Very likely; one thing is certain, you will get converted on that point very shortly, when too late to be converted to the One who would not save Himself that He might save others. If He had come down from that cross He could not have given His life a ransom for many, He would not have met the claims of God; but there, upon that tree, alone, He was made sin, and bore the judgment of man's sin. There He laid down on the treasury bench of heaven the price of the sinner's redemption. His blood alone can cleanse from sin, purge the conscience, and satisfy the claims of the altar; it has washed all *my* sins away, why not yours? The work that put sin away was done on the cross, and there Jesus said, "It is finished." God forsook Him there. The judgment due to man He took, and then, redemption accomplished, He died, God having been glorified, and Satan's power broken. That death of Christ in grace and atonement, that death of infinite value, is precious to God, and if you rest on the One

who died and rose again, He will save you. There will rise up by-and-by a wonderful chorus from untold millions in glory, as they sing, "Thou art worthy, . . . for thou was slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood" (Rev. v. 9). Will you be there to join it?

4. "A PRINCE AND A SAVIOUR."

The work of redemption was finished when Jesus died, but resurrection must be known to enjoy redemption. Peter carries you to this point in Acts v. There the opposing rulers in Israel wanted to crush out the testimony to a risen Christ. The work which saves, all done, Christ died and then rose. Death could not hold Him, He rose from the dead. He has glorified God about sin, and to-day there is an empty grave on earth, and the throne of God is filled on high by Jesus, for there He is "crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. ii. 9). Hear Peter's testimony: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree" (Acts v. 30). If you have given Him no place in your heart, practically speaking you are as guilty as they. If you have not come over to His side you are on the world's side, the wrong side of the line. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (ver. 31).

Man put Jesus on a cross, crowned with thorns. Hatred slew Him, but love buried Him, for His death brought out affection that had never been

manifested before. What was it, however, that put a seal on the stone at the mouth of the sepulchre, and a guard of men with drawn swords round that stone? It was fear—fear of resurrection. A sealed stone was to keep the Son of God in the grave. What folly! An angel rolled away that stone, not to let the Saviour out most assuredly, but to let us look into the tomb and learn the glorious tidings that He is risen, the victory won, sin put away, the devil defeated, and the grave broken up. Now He has gone on high, “a Prince and a Saviour.” Get into His retinue now! Let Him save you, and carry you, and care for you, and you will have the privilege of serving Him.

God has exalted Jesus for “to give repentance to Israel.” What is repentance? Self-judgment. You judge yourself as a good-for-nothing, hell-deserving sinner, and He will accord you forgiveness of all your sins, and you will be found at His feet, a blessed, pardoned sinner, saved by His grace. Will you not cross the line now? Be assured of the truth of all this, for Peter then adds, “And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to *them that obey him*” (ver. 32). The Holy Ghost has come down from an ascended Saviour in glory, and He is now here, and dwells in every Christian. He is not in you yet if you are not a Christian. Who, then, gets the Holy Ghost? The one who obeys Christ.

Reader, have you obeyed Him yet?

OUT OF HIS DISTRESS.

WITHOUT a moment's warning there leaped from the hillside red streaks of fire, and almost before the rattle of the musketry broke upon the ears of the startled company many a young Britisher lay prone upon the veldt. It was the old story, the Boers had outwitted the British scouts and caught their foes in a trap.

Amongst those who fell was a young fellow who had been reared amidst Christian influences at home, but he had broken away from restraint, joined the Imperial Yeomanry, and rushed off to the war. His horse had been shot through by the first volley, and as it fell it pinned its rider beneath its weight, smashing his thigh. He must have fainted for a time, and when he came to himself the roar of battle was far away, and he found himself fixed by the leg beneath his dead horse and utterly unable to extricate himself. The pain of his thigh was intense, and for the time he could think of nothing else; but as he lay there with nothing to shelter his helmetless head from the sun—which burnt down upon him as it well knows how in South Africa—a fresh agony seized him, obliterating for the time all thought of the broken thigh.

Thirst had gripped his tongue, his throat, his very vitals; he made a desperate effort to cry for water,

but his dry throat refused to utter a sound and he fell back weak and fainting. Then he began to think ; it was quite possible that he would be left there to die—to die of thirst and pain, and Oh, what would that mean? Then memory began to work. He thought of the prayers, tears, and entreaties in the Christian home in England. The gospel preachings he had listened to recurred to his mind. He thought of the Saviour whom he had slighted, and, as he thought, a fiercer agony than heretofore laid hold upon him, and his shattered thigh and burning thirst were forgotten as he thought of HIS SINS, HIS SOUL, and ETERNITY.

He knew well that he deserved to be damned, and he acknowledged it as he lay there upon the open veldt. But was there mercy for him? Were all the wondrous things he had heard about the Saviour's grace true? Was Jesus, God's beloved Son, really ready to receive the utterly guiltful and helpless?

I will put him to the test, he thought, and from the depth of his sorrow he cried, " Lord and Saviour, have mercy on me."

He had scarcely uttered that truly penitent cry when he lost consciousness of everything, and when next he awoke it was to find himself being carried to hospital with a wonderful peace in his heart. He had proved that the Lord Jesus Christ was all that God's Book says He is. He knew that He had delivered him out of his deep distress, had welcomed, pardoned, and blessed him, poor, vile, hell-deserving sinner though he was.

And what He did for the soldier-lad upon the war-swept veldt He can do for you, my reader, just where you are, lying on a sick bed, it may be, or sitting comfortably at home. Oh, turn whole-heartedly to Him for the blessing. He will not say you Nay.

J. T. M.

A RICH MAN'S CONFESSION.

SITUATED amidst beautiful surroundings in Yorkshire there stands a fine mansion, some eight miles from the market town of D——.

It was in this Hall, some time ago, I was sitting with the owner discussing some important business matters. After settling the business in hand the conversation took quite an unexpected turn. Addressing me, Mr H—— said, "By the way, you knew Mr M—— very well, did you not?" (referring to another county magnate who had only recently passed away). I said "Yes, I knew him well, and had a great respect for him." Mr H—— continuing, said, "Yes, but he said some very queer things. I remember him telling me that he was 'saved'; now I don't believe *anyone can know that he is saved.*"

"My dear sir," I replied, "you must please speak for yourself; so far as our departed friend is con-

cerned, I don't doubt for a moment that he was saved ; and as for myself, I have known the forgiveness of my sins for many years, and that is what our friend really meant when he told you that he was '*saved.*' Indeed, I go farther, I say that there is no reason why *everyone* should not know the forgiveness of their sins."

Mr H—— thoughtfully replied, " Well, all I can say is, that *I don't know the forgiveness of my sins. I wish I did.*"

" I am thankful to hear you say that you wish you did, and if you will bring your Bible, we will look together into the matter, and see what the Word of God says regarding the forgiveness of sins and salvation." With remarkable alacrity for a man of years, away he went to his library and returned in a minute with a copy of the Scriptures. I looked at the book—it was a small Bible, with brass mounting and a clasp, such as was in common use some forty or fifty years ago. It was old—yet it was new ; no finger-marks were upon it ; no, it had never been used. No wonder the owner knew nothing about forgiveness and salvation—yet he was quite ready to say that he did not believe that anyone could know that they were saved. Perhaps you, my reader, have also in your house a Bible, but if you are a stranger to its contents, the very possession of the Scriptures will only add to your condemnation, because if it lies in your house unused, it but proves how little value you put upon what God in His mercy has committed to man for man's salvation.

If I had asked to see a plan of this man's property he could have produced it, and accurately described the boundaries as well, probably, as being able to explain the position of every building on his estate; but of heavenly things, those things which will alone endure to eternity, he practically knew nothing. Was he an infidel? Oh, no, he was a regular attender at a place of worship. I turned to various Scriptures, showing him from the Word that God was a Saviour—God, not willing that anyone should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the Truth—that God sent His Son into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved; that He was able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.

I pointed out that it was God who took the initiative in the matter, and thus God commended His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us, and that Christ died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God—that Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree—that He whom men despised and put to death God had raised up from the dead, and had made Him—that same Jesus—both Lord and Christ, and that the blessed Lord Himself commissioned His disciples to preach repentance and remission of sins through His name, and that there was joy in heaven over one sinner repenting. Mr H—— listened very attentively to the Scriptures, and for the moment at least the Bible presented to him something very different from what he had ever thought.

I fancy to his mind it had appeared to be simply a book consisting of a number of sections written upon various subjects by many authors, historical, moral, and so on. A new light was thrown on the Bible, and looking at me very thoughtfully, he said, in a voice of sadness I shall not soon forget, "What is the value of all these lands to me when I don't know that I am saved?" Solemn yet hopeful statement; the arrow of conviction had penetrated his conscience, the bow drawn at a venture had done its work, the light had come in and exposed the darkness—for blessing, I doubt not. I thought, as he spoke, of these words, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

Here was a man, who for threescore years and ten had revelled in the lap of luxury, finding out at last that all was of no value to him.

Has my reader made this discovery? You may not be, like my friend, a rich landed proprietor, but whether you have little or much, let me ask you in all affection can you say that you are saved? If not, let me beg you to turn your eyes to that blessed, glorious Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, seated at the right hand of God (He is Lord of all), He who in love to your soul bore the judgment which you deserved upon the cross of Calvary, died for your sins, and was laid in the grave. One look at that blessed Man will bring you to His feet, a worshipper. God grant it may be so.

JESUS THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF FAITH.

“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith ; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”—
HEB. xii. 2.

ALL the witnesses for God spoken of in Hebrews xi. are for our encouragement in the path of faith ; but then there is a difference between them and Jesus. Accordingly, the apostle here singles Him out of all. If I see Abraham, who by faith sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, or Isaac, who blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come, or Jacob on his dying bed of blessing and worship, they have all run their race before ; but in Jesus we have a far higher witness. Besides, in Him there is the grace to sustain us in the race.

Therefore, in looking unto Jesus, we get a motive and an unfailing source of strength. We see in Jesus the love which led Him to take this place for us, who, “when he putteth forth his own sheep, goeth before them.” For, if a race is to be run, we need a forerunner. And in Jesus we got one who did run before us, and has become the Captain and Completer of faith, in looking to whom we draw strength into our souls. While Abraham and the rest filled up, in their little measure, their several places, Christ has filled up the whole course of

faith. There is no position that I can be in, no trial whatever that I can endure, but Christ has passed through all and overcome.

Thus I have got One who presents Himself in that character which I need ; and I find in Him One who knows what grace is wanted, and will supply it ; for He has overcome, and says to me, "Be of good cheer : I have overcome the world"—not, you shall overcome ; but, I have overcome. It was so in the case of the blind man (John ix. 31, &c.) who was cast out of the synagogue. And why ? Because Jesus had been cast out before him. And now we learn that however rough the storm may be, it does but throw us the more thoroughly on Christ, and thus that which would have been a sore trial does but chase us closer to Him.

Whatever turns our eye away from Christ is but a hindrance to our running the race that is set before us. If Christ has become the object of the soul, let us lay aside every weight. If I am running a race, a cloak, however comfortable, would only hinder, and must be got rid of ; it is a weight, and would prevent my running. I do not want anything to entangle my feet. If I am looking to Jesus in the appointed race, I must throw the cloak aside : otherwise, it would seem strange to throw away so useful a garment. Nay, more ; however much encouragement the history of antecedent faithful witnesses in Hebrews xi. may give, our eye must be fixed on Jesus, the true and faithful One. There is not a trial or difficulty that He has not passed through

before me, and found His resources in God the Father. He will supply the needed grace to my heart.

There were these two features in the life of Christ down here. First, He exercised constant dependence on His Father; as He said, "I live by the Father." The new man is ever a dependent man. The moment we get out of dependence, we get into the flesh. It is not through our own life (for, indeed, we have but death) that we really live, but by Christ, through feeding on Him. In the highest possible sense He walked in dependence on the Father, and for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame. Secondly, His affections were undivided. You never find Christ having any new object revealed to Him so as to induce Him to go on in His path of faithfulness. Paul and Stephen, on the other hand, had the glory revealed to them, which enabled them to endure. For when the heaven was opened to Stephen, the Lord appeared in glory to him, as afterwards to Saul of Tarsus. But when the heavens opened on Jesus there was no object presented to Him, but, on the contrary, He was the object of heaven; the Holy Ghost descends upon Him, and the voice of the Father declares, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Thus the divine person of the Lord is always being witnessed to. The apostle here gets hold of the preciousness of Christ in the lowliness into which He has come; but he never loses sight of the glory of Him who has come there.

J. N. D.

THE MAELSTROM.

THERE are several strong and swift currents which flow along the Norwegian coast. In rough weather at full tide these counter-streams being driven by the wind at accelerated speed, intercept one another, and form whirlpools. One, exceptionally large and dangerous, is known as the Maelstrom. It covers an area of about four square miles, the outermost circle being more than twelve miles in circumference. At this distance from the centre it is difficult to detect the presence of the eddy, but as it sweeps inwards it increases in speed and violence, sometimes running at the rate of twelve miles an hour, showing itself to be a raging whirlpool. Unwary fishing-boats are drawn into its track, and rarely do the sailors discover, till their fate is inevitable, that they are caught in the grip of the dreaded Maelstrom.

Although they may spread every stitch of canvas before the wind, all their efforts are futile to wrest the boat from such a deadly embrace. She is tossed upon the turbulent water and whirled round and round in giddy circles. Before her gapes the mouth of a huge funnel. With a roaring sound the water swirls round in its black depths; very soon the boat and occupants are engulfed in the rushing vortex, and no trace of them is left.

Some hours later, as the whirlpool disperses, floating fragments appear and tell how the boat and victims were dashed against the hidden rocks below.

Such is the fearful end of those caught in the Maelstrom.

Yet the Maelstrom is but a poor illustration of the great whirlpool of sin ; its mighty current swiftly bearing souls into the black jaws of death.

My reader, if unconverted thou art caught in this terrible eddy. In front of thee roars the vortex of death, and thy soul is in danger of being lost on the rocks of judgment beneath.

Thousands of men and women are being swept to this terrible end. Although many may be only on the outermost circle, yet the power of sin has them as surely in its grasp as those who are on the very brink of the black funnel mouth of the Maelstrom.

Every effort to escape from its power is fruitless. No mortal hand can drag the victims from that awful vortex.

Yet, thanks be to God, for sinners there is an escape. Christ Jesus through His death overcame the power of sin and Satan. He rose triumphant from the grave, and lives again, mighty to save. We read, " Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved " (Rom. x. 13).

Anxious soul, this promise is for **THEE**. From the depths of thy heart send up the cry—O Lord, **SAVE ME**.

Wait not for another day lest the waters of death overwhelm thy soul, and thou be lost in the blackness of despair.

There is no hope beyond the grave.

TERMS OF BLESSING.

WHEN any person wishes to have to do with God, the first thing is to ascertain what are the terms which God has laid down on which He will meet any one. In the Old Testament writings the terms were figuratively stated, for types were only intended to hold a place till Jesus came, of whom the types spoke.

When Jesus was on earth He spoke of the terms on which He could bestow blessing. Terms must always be dictated by the Giver; this point is of the greatest importance. In Mark ix. 22, we read of a man who wanted blessing for his son who had a dumb spirit, which had possessed him from a child. The father appealed to Jesus, proposing the terms by saying, "If thou canst *do* anything, have compassion on us and help us." Jesus made no reply to these terms, but at once stated His own by saying, "If thou canst *believe*, all things are possible to him that believeth" (ver. 23).

On hearing these terms, the father at once abandoned his own terms, and accepted the terms proposed by the Giver. He was indeed surprised to find that the blessing he sought was to be granted on such terms, and said with tears, "Lord, I *believe*, help thou mine unbelief" (ver. 24). Jesus immediately delivered the child from the evil spirit. Many persons are to be found to-day who, while owning that only Jesus can save them from the wrath to

come, yet have not received the blessing of salvation. Like the father of the child, they seek to make their own terms, which are according to their own thoughts.

After Jesus had died and risen again, God named His terms in very plain language. Thus the first preachers after the resurrection of Jesus stated the terms in every preaching, and declared that they were fixed both on God's side and also on man's side. They urged their hearers to at once approach God on the terms which He had laid down.

Since those days there has been no alteration in the terms, and every faithful preacher presents the glad tidings as they were laid down in the Holy Scriptures by the Spirit of God. These terms have always been suitable to every anxious sinner, and all who have bowed to them have found peace with God. No believer has ever regretted having agreed to God's terms, for he has always realised more blessing than he expected.

After the resurrection and ascension of Jesus and the descent of the Holy Spirit, God announced that He could have mercy upon all. When mercy has been received, the way is clear for grace without limit, and then God's love can be known by the Holy Spirit, which is given to every believer.

All this is proposed in the gospel. What a gospel it is! If believers knew it better, how much more they would enjoy it, and then speak of it.

On what terms can a repentant sinner obtain the good of this gospel? This is a very important

question. Alas, many persons who preach do not know God's terms, as laid down in the Holy Scriptures, so they mislead their hearers, and often many years of this life are wasted through being misled as to the terms. The blessing of the gospel has been waiting for anxious sinners ever since Jesus took His seat at God's right hand, and numbers have availed themselves of the blessing on the only terms laid down.

Now what are the terms on God's side? A few passages will make this clear. "But to him that worketh not, but *believeth* on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 5). "Whoso *believeth* on him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). "And in him all that *believe* are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39).

Now what are the terms on man's side, on which the blessings of the gospel are obtained? Living faith in God and the testimony which He has given concerning His Son. "Without *faith* it is impossible to please God" (Heb. xi. 6). This is a very powerful statement, and excludes every other way for blessing.

There is nothing material in the gospel, it is entirely good news of spiritual blessing to meet spiritual need; therefore, only faith can receive it. The blessing is received in the heart, not in the hands. It does not gratify natural desires, but meets spiritual wants. Hence it is available to faith, and faith receives what God offers. The result is immediate, as we read, "Being justified by *faith* we have peace with God" (Rom. v. 1). This is a

wonderful result to faith, and true to every one who has bowed in his heart to God's terms. Thus spiritual need is met by virtue of the death and resurrection of Jesus, and what is even greater, all God's righteous claims have been met to His own satisfaction, so that the sins of all believers have gone from God's sight.

After any one has found peace with God, then it is important to know what position such an one occupies under the eye of God. The new position is in grace, which means in the favour of God. We read, "We have access by *faith* into this grace wherein we stand" (Rom. v. 2), and again, "By *faith* ye stand" (2 Cor. i. 24). The natural circumstances of this life are not changed by the gospel, because the gospel is a testimony to spiritual blessings which are available through Christ's *first coming*, while the change of body and the circumstances connected with it will be realised at Christ's *second coming*.

It is well to be clear about this part of the truth, as many have been led astray to expect healing of the body. None of the apostles preached healing of the body; they had power to heal, but they never preached it. Those they healed had to die afterwards, so it was only a temporary benefit, which was a sign of the change of dispensation from Judaism to Christianity.

If all the blessings are spiritual, then they can only be realised in our spiritual being by faith, and we can only continue to enjoy them by faith through the power of the Holy Spirit.

God has made every provision for our spiritual progress, both in giving us His revealed mind in the

Holy Scriptures, and power to understand them by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual progress means spiritual movement, so we read, "We walk by *faith*, not by sight" (2 Cor. v. 7). Walking implies movement, and this is made by faith because there is nothing which appeals to sight. Outward circumstances may be very trying, as the apostles had to prove, and many since their day also, but spiritual progress more than compensates for the trials of this life. For this spiritual vigour is necessary, so we must feed on Christ as the bread of God in order to maintain spiritual vigour. "The just shall live by *faith*" (Heb. x. 38). Living implies that every part of the believer's spiritual being is in full energy. After having laid hold of the beginning of the gospel and found peace with God, there is a reluctance to "walk," that is, to move on in faith in subjection to the Word of God, and sometimes service for the Lord is used as an excuse. But service has no power apart from the servant being himself a living witness of what he testifies. The apostle Paul said to Timothy, "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, *faith*, long-suffering, love, patience" (2 Tim. iii. 10). Faith when put to the test always produces works. In the record which we have in Hebrews xi., we find that in every case recorded the works proved the reality of the faith. Works *do not produce* faith, but real faith *produces* works.

If a farmer bought a sack of professed *seed wheat*, and had it sown in the field under proper conditions to receive the seed, and then not one grain grew,

that would prove that what he bought was not *seed wheat*.

So faith which does not produce any good works is not faith, but only imitation (see James ii. 26). In this day of profession it is well to have a sure guide, and God has taken every care to protect His people against imposture.

Of the Thessalonians Paul could say, "*Your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity (or love) of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth*" (2 Thess. i. 3).

This characterises faith now as much as it did at the beginning.

G. W. G.

HOW HE GOT CONVERTED.

A—— was a fine young fellow, only twenty-one years of age, but he loved this world.

He was fond of the theatre, the billiard table, society, and the butterflies of fashion; he was a lover of pleasure, and cared little for his soul.

But the Saviour who loved him had marked him out for blessing. His eyes of compassion rested upon him, nor did He rest until He had found him, putting him on His shoulders rejoicing. Well may we sing—

"There is joy in heaven to-night,
And the angels all look on,
For it is not theirs that deep delight,
Though their praise swells loud at the glorious sight
Of another repentant one."

Let us now hear the story of his conversion. Said he—

“It was my portion to work next door to a dear Christian man who often talked to me about my soul, but I always turned the conversation to some other subject. But somehow or other I could not get rid of the thought that some time or other I should have to die; and I knew perfectly well I was not prepared to die. Well I knew that God said, ‘After death the judgment’ (Heb. ix. 27).

“The thought of ‘hell’ and ‘judgment to come’ troubled me greatly. My Christian friend had often invited me to a place where the gospel was preached, but I told him I did not want to go to such places, they were not in my line.

“Still the Saviour looked down with pity and compassion, and I was laid aside for a few days by illness. It was then He began to work in my soul. I knew if I were to die I should go straight to hell. I rolled from one side of the bed to the other. I knew not what to do, so I resolved that if I ever got well I would go down to that preaching place where my friend went.

“The Lord in His mercy raised me up, and I went to business as usual.

“It was my custom before starting work to look in and see my friend, so I stepped in and commenced talking about the room where he went. Said I, ‘I will come with you next Sunday, all being all.’ ‘Thank God!’ said my friend, and a bright cheery smile lit up his face. I knew he had got something I had not.

"Sunday came; at the appointed hour we met, and we were soon seated in a nice little room, where the story of the love of Jesus was told out.

"That night the preacher took for his text that well-known verse, 'Be sure your sin will find you out' (Num. xxxii. 23). He showed us that sooner or later our sins must be found out, either now or on the judgment day. He went on to tell that wonderful story of a Saviour's love; how He loved guilty sinners, and how He bled and died on Calvary's tree, so that He might cleanse poor vile sinners in His precious blood.

"It was that which touched my heart, the story of a Saviour's love. The preacher finished by pressing upon us to come now, for 'Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation' (2 Cor. vi. 2).

"The meeting closed by singing that well-known hymn—

'Have you any room for Jesus—
He who bore our load of sin;
As He knocks and seeks admission,
Sinner, will you let Him in?'

"'Yes,' said I, 'I'll let Him in to-night, I'll find room for Him to-night; I've had room for business, pleasure, and a hundred and one things.' So I just let Him come in. And did He? Ah! indeed He did. I confessed my sins to Him, asking Him to forgive me, and wash them all away in His precious blood; and He has done so, for He says, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out' (John vi. 37), blessed words, lovely words to a weary soul.

"I went again the next Sunday and heard once more the story of love, but it was not until the following Sunday that God spoke peace fully to my soul, and, blessed be His name, I've been happy ever since. Praise His name ! *"

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Months have rolled away since this dear young man found a Saviour. Did he go back to his old habits, companions, &c. ? No, not he. He broke from his old companions, and bade them good-bye: the billiard table, the theatre, the pipe, all went; he had now found something better, he could indeed say—

"Now none but Christ can satisfy,
None other name for me ;
There is love and life and lasting joy,
Lord Jesus, found in Thee."

He loves to be in the company of Christians, to talk of Him, and what a great Saviour is He.

He is now found where every Christian should be, that is with his fellow-believers showing the Lord's death until He come.

He heard the blessed words of the Lord Jesus, "Do this in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. xi. 24), and he has responded to it.

His only theme is Jesus ! Jesus ! precious Jesus.

.

This story has been penned so that you, dear reader, may flee to Jesus for refuge. The storms of God's judgment are nearing, and we would, with all our being, urge you to flee to Him.

Oh, young men and maidens, butterflies of fashion,

and you too that have grown old in the service of Satan, turn now to Jesus; tell Him that you are vile and undone, and He will bless you. Do not trifle with the things of eternity; heaven is in earnest, hell is in earnest, then flee, we beseech you, to Him who is able to save.

If you have already come to Him, may you be out and out for Him till He comes.

Christian, listen!

“Won’t somebody tell them?
Tell them of Calvary’s tree,
Tell them the story of Jesus,
What a great Saviour is He!”

E. W.

THE TEMPLE IN THE WOOD.

THE dark mantle of night was silently vanishing before the approaching dawn of day, as with laboured steps an aged farmer made his way toward a wood that bordered one of his fields.

“Woodman, spare that tree,” had been his pathetic appeal to the forester some time previously; but the estate on which he was a tenant was heavily burdened with debt, and in order to raise money the command had been given to fell every oak in the plantations. For over forty years Mr R—— had farmed this place, and by long association the very soil had become dear to him, but around the old oak to which he wended his way special memories clung. Five o’clock was the usual hour at which the labours

of the day were commenced in the district, but each morning at four o'clock, save under very exceptional circumstances, Mr R—— walked to the old oak tree and there engaged in private devotions. Ten years more than the allotted span of life had been his portion, and the extra term had brought its full tale of labour and sorrow.

His sons were both dead, and he had acted the father's part to his grandchildren. The eldest of these, the mainstay and comfort of his old age, he had buried two weeks previously. Only the evening before he had stood helplessly by, while the relentless hand of death took from him his beloved wife, and worn out though he was, he arose at his accustomed time and toiled toward his wonted place of prayer, to seek comfort to his bruised and bleeding heart from the God of all comfort and consolation.

The illness of his wife had prevented him knowing exactly all that was being done on the farm, and none of the workers had whispered to him that his altar-tree had been cut down. Who can wonder that the tears coursed down his wrinkled cheeks as he viewed the scene of devastation? The inner court, a low gnarled branch worn bare by the pressure of his knees, was lopped off, the undergrowth which had formed an outer screen was trampled under foot, and the young saplings, whose tapering leafy heads had formed a lovely fretted aisle, had been overturned by the fall of the great tree. His desolated shrine seemed a fit emblem of his life, for the props and stays on which he leant had all been removed.

“Who did sin,” might be asked, “that the old man should be afflicted thus?”

Few could look back on a better spent life than this aged farmer. His prayers and alms-deeds were known throughout the parish. He also gave great attendance to reading. On rainy days, when the dripping atmosphere prevented agricultural labour, he seated himself by the hearth, and from the big family Bible he read aloud in reverent sonorous tones chapter after chapter and book after book. Quiet and unostentatious in his behaviour, he feared to sin presumptuously by saying his sins were forgiven. But God was not unfaithful to forget his prayers and supplications, and in the moment of his direst need, as he knelt uncanopied in his violated sanctuary, the love of God was shed abroad in his heart, the peace of God flowed like a river into his soul, and the arm of the Lord brought salvation unto him.

About a month later, Mr R—— was seized with severe illness which his advanced age rendered doubly serious. His brother, a devoted Christian, came to see him. After the two men had talked together in private regarding the decease which one of them was soon to accomplish, the grand-daughter of the sick man said, “Will Uncle John take the Book?” for by the term of “Taking the Book,” family worship is known in the Upper Ward of Clydesdale.

From stable, barn, and byre came the farm lads, the maids from the milkhouse and kitchen, and with bowed heads they grouped themselves around the

bed of their dying master. The brother selected the fifteenth of 1st Corinthians, that precious portion of God's Word which, in the presence of death, has been the comfort of God's children throughout generations :—

“ But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain. But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. . . . So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. . . . And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. . . . For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”

The dying man rallied wonderfully as the soul-comforting passage of Scripture was read, and he bore a bright testimony to the faith he had in life beyond the reach of death. Then he exhorted the

young people round him to turn to the Lord, to own their helplessness and sinfulness, and they would find God to be rich in mercy.

“Drink in the Word of God into your souls,” he said, “as the earth drinks in the rain that cometh oft upon it, then you will receive blessing from God ; but if you reject the Living Word, you will be like the cursed earth that brings forth briers and thorns, whose end is to be burned. When you have got light from God, avoid striving about words to no profit. I have wasted precious hours in long discussion on the merits and demerits of Erastianism, Arminianism, and Calvinism. I see no distinction now among the severed members of the flock of Christ. They own one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, and they ever find the same Lord over all, rich unto all that call upon Him. I had a hallowed temple in the wood, where I daily mourned over my shortcomings, and prayed that God would give me faith in the precious blood of Christ, and grant to me the hope of salvation. When my temple was removed, it seemed for a time as if I must cry, ‘Ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more.’ God brought good out of what I thought was evil, and He gave me exceeding abundantly above all I asked or thought ; instead of hope, He has given me full assurance of salvation through faith in the atoning death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.”

The eyes of the dying man looked out through the window beyond the fields where the young corn was springing, beyond fir-bordered meadowlands,

beyond the horizon to which Mount Tinto raised its cairn-crowned head, beyond the clear blue sky, and his eyes beheld something invisible to others as he whispered, "I shall see the King in His beauty—I shall be like Him, for I shall see Him as He is. And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."

He lingered some days longer ere the mystic change which we call death came to him, and he exchanged the chequered night of time for the glorious day of eternity.

"God loves to be longed for, He longs to be sought," and He called the prayerful Daniel the "man of desires." To any sin-burdened heart we say, Continue knocking, continue seeking, and the blessing of God will assuredly be secured, for God, that cannot lie, has given His faithful promise, "Those that seek me early shall find me." M. M.

SIFTED AS WHEAT.

(LUKE xxii. 31-62.)

WE have Peter's conversion recorded in the first chapter of John, when he met Jesus. The Lord changed his name. "And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone" (John i. 42). He was converted then, but not consecrated to Christ. You, too, my reader, perhaps can say, I am a believer, and

I know I am saved. Yes, but have you really set out to follow Christ? If not, you are very like Peter between the first chapter of John and the fifth chapter of Luke. There the Lord wanted a pulpit, and He took Peter's boat for that purpose. The Lord was the best preacher that ever was, I need not say, and a most practical preacher too, for "he opened his mouth and taught them" (Matt. v. 2), and the people heard Him. The point is, if you are addressing people, be sure that they hear you. He addressed the people on the shore, and speaking as He was from the boat, they could both see and hear Him.

On that occasion He gave them the lovely story of the sower and the seed. The truth went right down into Peter's heart that day. Oh, it must have been a wonderful scene. See Simon sitting in his boat, and listening to all that wonderful ministry. He belonged to Christ, but up to this point he has never followed Him. And now, when the sermon is over, the Lord, who will be no man's debtor, as it were, says, I am going to pay you for your boat, Peter. His words were, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon, answering, said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net" (Luke v. 4, 5). They caught so many fish that the net broke, and they had to get their neighbours to come and help them. "And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink." Peter had never had such a catch in all his life, and when he saw it, "he fell down at Jesus'

knees, saying, Depart from me : for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

What brought up this question of his sin ? As he got a revelation to his soul of the glory of the Person of his Master, that He was God as well as Man, I judge he was thoroughly ashamed as he thought what his own pathway in relation to Him had been. Peter learned his lesson that day. The light of God fell on his soul, and, although he says, " Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," the moment he comes to land he turns his back upon everything, and follows Jesus. He is consecrated to Him now, and begins to follow the Lord. I have known many a man turn to the Lord when earthly things had all failed—very likely the bank had broken, and everything had been swept away. In such circumstances a soul will often say, Now I think I will devote myself to Him. But when the day was brightest, and his business most successful, Peter left all, and began to follow the Lord. Christ filled his heart, and the glory of His Person eclipsing everything here, he left all, and followed Jesus. Now was there ever a moment in your heart or mine like that ? Is there anything as fine in the history of your soul or mine ? That is the real question for us.

It is very interesting to see how Peter comes to the front everywhere in the Gospels, just from the affection of his soul to the Lord—affection coupled with energy that often led him astray because of his self-confidence.

But the close has come. In the chapter before

us—Luke xxii.—the Lord has been betrayed, and He knows He is going to die. So when He had gathered His disciples together in the upper room, and had given to them the expression of His love in the breaking of bread, He told them that one of them should betray Him. Peter did not know who it was, and he beckoned to John to ask who it was. And John leaning on the Lord's bosom put the question. It is a great thing to be near Christ. You cannot be too intimate with the Lord. There is nothing He loves so much as to have you near Him. There was not a cloud between John and Jesus, and John put the question, "Lord, who is it?"

After supper was over, "the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (vers. 31, 32). That is a very striking word. It is a great thing for our souls to bear in mind that the enemy is always on our track.

The way the Lord warns Peter is very striking. He says, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as *wheat*." Observe, it is wheat. Perhaps you may say, I have had a good bit of sifting. Well, there is one thing clear, if you had not been wheat, you would not have been sifted. If you had been mere chaff, the devil would have left you alone. He never worries his own subjects, he keeps them in peace. Saints he always attacks. Sin in a sinner is bad, but sin in a saint is ten times worse,

because we sin against Christ and light. Therefore sin is infinitely worse in my life, as a saint, than it was when I was a poor lost sinner. Do not, however, be in despair if Satan does sift you. Self-confidence was the secret of Peter's fall, and usually of all our falls; and it is a great thing, beloved, when the spring of self-confidence in us gets broken up. God allows it to be.

What is the next word? "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." That is beautiful. We should pray for God's servants too. Pray for those who are in the forefront of the battle. The devil is ever ready to trip them up. Before Peter was tempted, Jesus had prayed. "I have prayed for thee." Charming words! The Lord's intercession for us is a wonderful thing, and may well cheer our hearts, but, on the other hand, we must be careful, and prayerful also.

In that prayer commonly called "The Lord's Prayer"—in reality the disciples' prayer—occur the words, "Lead us not into temptation." We should often pray that, I think. When our Lord was in presence of difficulty, He always prayed. You will find Him in prayer on seven separate occasions in the Gospel of Luke. Trace them out, and their occasion. In our chapter He is found in prayer (ver. 41). The hour of His sorrow and rejection had come, and as Messiah He was being cast out. Hence He could say, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness" (ver. 53). The more need, therefore, for tenacious clinging to God. He was praying for Himself, but

first said to His feeble follower, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Faith is very apt to fail, and, no doubt, when Peter woke up, and discovered what he had done, he broke down. But love had prayed for him, and he was kept from remorse and suicide like Judas. The Lord on high is there always in intercession for us. He died to make us clean, and He lives to keep us clean. He does not say we shall not be tempted, but He does say—"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. x. 12, 13).

Sometimes one hears this question—If I go to such a place, or such a scene, shall I not be kept? I know I ought not to go, but, if I go, will God keep me? If you go against the warnings of God's Word and your own conscience, you will surely fall. Would not the Lord keep me? No, not a bit of it. Do you think God is going to keep any one who selects a path of disobedience? If Peter had only heeded the word of the Lord he would have escaped the fall.

Now look at Peter's answer, and his fall. Would you not have thought that you would have found Peter trembling? Look at the thirty-third verse. "Lord, *I am ready* to go with thee, both into prison and to death." What an answer! Beloved, that man had

fallen! His fall did not occur when he really denied the Lord. Here is where he fell. He is occupied with his own affection. He did love the Lord, undoubtedly, but instead of being simply occupied with Christ, and clinging to Christ with this sense, Lord, if Thou dost not keep me I shall fall, he was self-confident. The Lord warns him, and us through him. "And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me" (ver. 34).

But the history passes on. Let us follow the Lord to the Mount of Olives. We go into the garden, and there is the blessed Lord praying. He says to the disciples, "Pray that ye enter not into temptation" (ver. 40), and again, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder" (Matt. xxvi. 36). When He comes back He finds them sleeping. When they should have been praying, they were sleeping. How much do I pray? How much do you pray? Prayer is the secret of the soul's success. "Watch ye, and pray" (Mark xiv. 38), He also says. Here instead of praying they were sleeping. It only shows what the weakness of the flesh is. They see His sorrow, and yet they can sleep. Such hearts as we have! We can sleep in the presence of His glory (see Luke ix. 32), and we can sleep, too, in the presence of His sorrow. "The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak" (Mark xiv. 38), is the Lord's tender comment thereon.

The temptation was now come as the multitude, headed by Judas, appeared. "And while he yet

spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him" (Luke xxii. 47-51).

They said unto Him, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" and without waiting for His reply, one of them smote the servant of the high priest. It was Peter who did it, and that was the very action that detected him. "And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not. One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew" (John xviii. 25-27). When he got into the high priest's hall, the wounded man's relation recognised the man that used the sword. Possibly Peter thought he was very devoted, and that he was doing a fine thing. Mark Jesus' answer here: "Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him" (Luke xxii. 51).

The next thing was they took Jesus and bound Him. Do you know the last thing the Lord did before they bound Him? He healed that ear.

Blessed Lord, the last movement of His hand was to heal the bleeding ear that His poor servant had cut off. "Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. *And Peter followed afar off*" (ver. 54). Poor Peter, when he should have been distrustful, he was self-confident; when he should have been praying, he was sleeping; when he should have been quiet, he was using an unbidden sword; when he should have been separate, he was sitting down at the fire among the worldly; when he should have been near Christ, he was following afar off; and, as a legitimate consequence, when he should have witnessed for his Lord, he denied Him. Poor Peter! How like us too!

Where was John all this time? Another scripture tells us that John went in with Jesus. At first "all the disciples forsook him and fled" (Matt. xxvi. 56). He is left alone. By-and-by John picks up courage, and comes back. Peter followed afar off. Ah, brethren, are we following the Lord afar off? If so, we shall not be kept. What about John? Nobody challenged him. No. He was very near Christ. The man that follows afar off is bound to be found out and tripped up.

"And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, *Peter sat down among them*" (ver. 55). Three times over thereafter he denies his Lord, as forewarned by Him, and energetically refuted of Peter. And when he had done it the three times, "the Lord turned, and *looked upon Peter* : and Peter remembered the word

of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out and wept bitterly" (vers. 61, 62). How does the Lord recover our hearts? By a look sometimes. He turned and looked on Peter. What kind of a look was it? Was it a look of anger and reproach? Is that the kind of look it was? No, no, I think it was a look of broken-hearted, disappointed love. It said, You do not know Me, but I know and love thee. Nothing has changed My love to thee. That look broke poor Peter's heart, and he "went out, and *wept bitterly*."

I think when Peter found that his Lord was crucified, it must have been a terrible moment in his history. What could sustain that man's heart? I believe Christ's prayer, and Christ's look sustained him. If he had not had the word, "I have prayed for thee," and the look, I believe he would have gone, and followed Judas. Judas went and hanged himself. Remorse puts you into Satan's hands, but repentance leads to real breaking down before God. There never will be recovery without repentance. Peter had the sense that the Lord loved him. He knew that the Lord loved him. Judas never knew that. If he had known the love of Christ, he would not have hanged himself.

Some one may say: "This is very like my life and my history. Years ago I was a bright happy Christian, but somehow I got away from the Lord, slipped into the world, lost my joy and peace, and I have got so down in my soul that my whole path-

way has been a dishonour to Christ." My dear friend, go and weep alone; weep bitterly, and your tears will be dried some day. Oh, if you only get the sense in your soul, He has loved me, and He loves me still, all will come right. God's word to Israel, "I remember thee, and the kindness of thy youth," is equally true of you. Though eight hundred and fifty years of backsliding had rolled by, God had not forgotten the moment when they loved Him, and He was everything to them (Jer. ii. 2). They had long forgotten it, but He had never forgotten it. Is yours a backsliding heart? My dear friend, do not remain such, but come back to the Lord. Do not lose another hour. Peter had to wait three days for his restoration. It was what the Lord had said to him, and the look of the Lord, that wrought in his heart. He remembered that He had prayed for him, and the last look He gave him was a look of such love and pardon, such infinite grace, that it broke his heart.

You will find that Peter had a private restoration, and a public restoration. The private restoration is referred to in the twenty-fourth of Luke (verse 34), and you get his public restoration in the twenty-first of John. The evidence of his restoration is manifest in the second of Acts. The Lord met him privately. What took place at the meeting nobody knows. The Spirit of God has thrown a veil over it. Nevertheless, though a veil is flung over the scene, we know that Peter was beautifully restored to the Lord. How do we know this? John xxi. supplies the answer. His

brethren were slower than Peter in reaching the Lord on that occasion. He did not wait till the boat got to the shore ; he cast himself into the sea in his hurry to get near the Lord. He says, You can have the fish, let me get to the blessed Lord. I know the man was restored by this action.

But then, of course, the Lord gave him a public restoration. I think you will never find a saint doing any real good until he is completely rid of self-confidence, and broken down before the Lord, and hence really right with the Lord. He is then in a condition for the Lord to use him. We see Peter restored to the fellowship and company of the apostles in John xxi., and then we see him in the second of Acts preaching the Word and mightily used of the Lord. I have said many a time, I believe when the devil saw Peter preaching in the second of Acts, he wished he had left him alone in the high priest's palace. Why? Because the breaking of him was the making of him, and in the first half of the Acts of the Apostles we hear a great deal more about Peter than any other servant. I repeat, the breaking of him was the making of him. He was picked up and restored. Ah yes, there is nothing like grace. Grace saved us as sinners, and grace has kept us as saints. And when we get to glory, what shall we say? It was grace all along the line. And therefore the deeper in our souls there is a sense of the Lord's grace, the more our hearts will rejoice in Him.

"O MOON! BE THOU MY WITNESS."

ON the south-east coast of England stands a favourite watering-place, with its magnificent harbour and splendid fleet of fishing vessels, its grand old chalky cliffs presenting a charming appearance as the harbour is entered from the sea.

Now it was in this fine old town there lived the subject of my brief narrative.

It was on one of my visits to this place, many years ago, I made the acquaintance of a somewhat remarkable character, who at that time had not long passed the prime of life.

I found him in one of the back streets of the town, sitting in a small shed which he used as a workshop, for by trade he was a cobbler.

Many a time have I wended my way to that little shop, and conversed with him upon subjects that deeply interested us both, while he, sitting upon a stool, was mending a pair of boots.

It was a great pleasure to see his face beam with delight as he spoke of the great things the Lord had done for him, and how He had had compassion on him.

One day when I dropped in I found him pondering over the twenty-ninth chapter of Isaiah. After speaking together as to its general meaning, he drew particular attention to the eighth verse: "It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and,

behold, he eateth ; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty : or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh ; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite." He seemed much struck with this passage as being applicable to so many in the present day. They live ; they dream ; they awake, their soul is not satisfied. They thirst ; they dream they drink ; they awake, they thirst again. Thus it is with those who seek satisfaction in the pursuits and pleasures of this present age, and who have not made the eternal God their refuge : with them it is a dream. But, alas ! how many will have a fearful awakening when they awake to shame and everlasting contempt (Dan. xii. 2).

Little by little I learnt from him some of his past history, together with the story of his conversion, which I will now give you, trusting that it may not only prove interesting, but be of real blessing to some whose eyes may fall upon these pages.

In his earlier years Dick (for that was the name by which he was generally known) went to sea, and during the years he was a sailor he lived a reckless life, having no fear of God before his eyes. He went from bad to worse till he ultimately became a confirmed infidel.

Was he happy, think you, dear reader, while he thus sought to persuade himself that there was no God ? Far from it ; for at times, in hours of solitude, he found it difficult to stifle conscience, that inward monitor which God, in mercy to His creature man, has placed within every breast.

Sometimes as he lay in his bunk at night, thoughts of God, the God whose existence he denied, eternity, that eternity he refused to believe in, would trouble him. What do you think he did on such occasions? He had recourse to the infidel writings of Tom Paine and Voltaire, which he kept under his pillow at night that he might read them by the light of his oil-lamp in order to dispel thoughts of eternity, and bolster himself up in the belief that there is no God and no hell.

Alas! how depraved and self-willed is man. How deaf to the claims of God! How blind to his own interests! "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Ps. xiv. 1).

After some years Dick gave up his sea-faring life, and took up the occupation in which I found him engaged. It was during this period that the Lord began His gracious work in his soul, by causing him to feel the unsatisfying character of all things here, and created in his heart a craving for an undefined something he was conscious he did not possess.

Is this your experience, dear reader? Have you grown weary of the pursuits and pleasures of earth? Do you sigh for something less transient, something more satisfying, something more stable, which you have long proved this world cannot supply? If so, depend upon it God is speaking to you; hearken to His voice, turn not away.

It was on one of those lovely starry nights when the full moon shone in all its silvery splendour, that Dick took a stroll on the pier, restless and dissatis-

fied, without God and without Christ in this world. Looking at the full moon he prayed to it thus—"O moon, be thou my witness that there is something here (placing his hand upon his breast) that I want, which I have not got." Poor fellow, he had no knowledge of God, nothing within but an aching void which became more and more intolerable as day after day passed by.

How suitable at this time would have been those blessed words of Jesus to the poor woman at Samaria's well: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John iv. 13, 14). But these words he knew not.

How many there are in this poor world to-day who are wearily treading this barren waste, tired and dissatisfied with everything here, yet knowing not where to turn for comfort and rest. Is it so with you?

Now it came to pass about this time that a dear servant of the Lord obtained a hall in this town in which to preach the gospel. Many crowded to hear the preacher, and among others, who should creep into the hall one night but Dick. Ashamed to be seen there, and fearing lest he should be noticed, he took a seat at the back.

The word was with power and demonstration of the Spirit, carrying conviction to the conscience of poor Dick. Thinking that some one must have

spoken to the preacher about him, he became angry and left the hall, vowing he would never enter it again. But before a fortnight had passed he was again found there, a listener to the precious words of life and peace. This time with conscience more deeply ploughed and heart reached, in brokenness of spirit he received the word as a little child, and confessed the Saviour he had so long denied.

Reader, have you thus received and confessed Him? Years have passed away, and Dick too has passed away from this scene of toil and sorrow into the joy of his Lord.

These facts which I heard from his own lips are indelibly engraven upon my memory, and I trust that their simple recital may be blessed of God to some precious soul into whose hand these lines may fall.

It is stated of Grimaldi, the once noted clown, that he said to a friend on one occasion, "Little do the people who listen to me night after night know that while I appear to be so happy, and keep my audience in roars of laughter, behind all this apparent happiness there is in my breast an aching heart."

Be assured of this, dear reader, there is none but Jesus can give you true happiness, and certainly none but He can save your precious soul. For it is written, "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). Listen to His invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of

me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matt. xi. 28-30).

"O turn from this sad empty world away,
Its smiles deceive, its joys last but a day ;
Its friendship passes with the passing hour,
True happiness is not within its power.
Why seek its favour, or its worthless gain ?
All it can give is labour, sorrow, pain ;
But Jesus life eternal doth bestow,
Come, then, to Him with all your grief and woe."

E. M.

FRAGMENT.

FOR whom, let us ask, is Christ now living and acting at the right hand of God? Is it for the world? Clearly not; for He says, in John xvii., "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." And who are these? Believers, children of God, Christians, who are now passing through this sinful world, liable to fail and to contract defilement every step of the way. These are the subjects of Christ's priestly ministry. He died to make them clean. He lives to keep them clean. By His death He expiated our guilt, and by His life He cleanses us, through the action of the word, by the power of the Holy Ghost. C. H. M.

THREE COMING ROYAL REVIEWS.

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom: Preach the word. . . . I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."—2 TIM. iv. 1-8.

ON Monday, 18th September last, his Majesty King Edward VII. held a royal review of Scottish volunteers in the King's Park, Edinburgh. Nearly forty thousand men, clad in varied martial garb, and animated by loyalty to his person and his throne, had, in many cases at much personal inconvenience to themselves, voluntarily flocked from far and near to be inspected by the King, and finally to march before him.

Hundreds of thousands of deeply interested spectators, pitched on the slopes of picturesque Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Crags, beheld the Sovereign and his gathered army of citizen soldiers, and the impressive sight will doubtless long live in their memories.

That review has gone by, but three royal reviews are yet to come to which I would fain turn your attention, since their importance cannot be overestimated.

The three reviews that I have to bring before you relate not to the King of whom I have spoken,

but will take place before Him who is the "King of kings, and Lord of lords," the blessed Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. I hope to show you that there will be three reviews in His presence, two of which may take place at no very distant date. The third, I admit, is a long way off; and I pity the man that is at that review. The second may be very much nearer than people think. The first, fellow-Christian, may have come before the morning light of to-morrow.

You may say, Who will take part in these three reviews? The whole human family, at different dates, will be at them. The first review is when the Lord reviews His *heavenly saints*; the second is the Lord reviewing *living nations* on earth. I do not recommend any of you to get into that review, because if you do you are bound for eternal punishment. The third review is thus described, "And I saw *the dead*" (and the dead only), "small and great, stand before God" (Rev. xx. 12).

The first review is of the saints *in glory*, and the result will be most glorious for all. The second is that which Matthew xxv. describes when the King sits on the throne of His glory, and before Him *on earth* are gathered all nations, and the result is blessed only for some. The third, spoken of in Rev. xx., occurs when heaven and earth have fled away, and the issue is terrible for all. You will either have to be at the review of *the glorified*, in heaven; of *the living*, on earth; or of *the dead*, neither in heaven nor on earth, who have been raised from their

graves, only to die the second death. Make your choice where you will appear.

1. THE REVIEW OF THE GLORIFIED.

Now, fellow-Christian, let us consider this briefly. I can understand Paul's joy, as he wrote to Timothy, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom." Sometimes people mix these things up all together; but that will not do. Christ will judge the living at His appearing, that is, when He comes out as King of kings, with the armies of heaven in attendance (see Rev. xix. 11-16). And then He will judge the dead, ere He gives up His kingdom (see Rev. xx. 11-15). The judgment of the living is when He sets up His kingdom; the judgment of the dead is at the end of the thousand years, when He is about to give up the kingdom to God.

There never was a king yet but had his throne taken from him, either by some foe, or by death; but here is a King who, after He has reigned a thousand years in righteousness, delivers up the kingdom to God. That King will have ruled rightfully and blessedly for a thousand years, and then, as man, He will abdicate in favour of God (see 1 Cor. xv. 24-28). That Man is my Saviour; is He yours? If not, what I am now going to turn your attention to will have no relation to you, because I am going to speak first of all of what the apostle alludes to

when he bids Timothy go on with the ministry of the Word, and do the work of an evangelist. Paul is going off the scene with a glad heart, and a bright light in his eye. I have done my work, he says; "I have finished my course, I have *kept* the faith"—not given it up. He had held it tenaciously, and now, he says, I am only waiting for the review, and when it comes He is going to put a crown on my head. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. iv. 8).

Friend, you should see where you are, *now*, for you are most certainly either a sinner in your sins, or a saint of God. If an unbeliever you are the former; if a simple believer in Jesus you are the latter, and as such will be seeking to please Him who has redeemed you. Turn to 2 Corinthians v. 9. "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be acceptable to him." Not "accepted of Him"—there is no labour to get acceptance, because Christ is accepted for us. God accepted His death for us; He accepted the sacrifice which His blessed Son made for sinners like you and me, and now He is risen, at God's right hand, and God has made us to be "accepted in the Beloved." The acceptance before God which your soul must have is the acceptance of Christ. You cannot get anything less; you must either have that or be rejected.

The first man is rejected; the second man, the

Lord Jesus Christ, has gone through death, and He is accepted. Death and the grave triumphed over the first man; but Jesus was a Man whose every thought, word, and way was suited to God in life; and then He gave Himself "a ransom for all," and paid the price of the sinner's redemption. The payment of that price took Him into the grave. It could not hold Him. It had retained every other man. Even those who got out had to go back again. But He is risen—the mighty Victor. On the Cross He was a Victim; risen from the dead He is a Victor. And now He is gone on high, and is accepted, and our acceptance, therefore, is Christ. Being "accepted" *in* Him, Paul says, he labours to be "acceptable" *to* Him for the subsequent weighty reason.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (ver. 10). Now when does that take place? It is imminent. Christians, who are intelligent in the Scriptures, know that what lies next before us is not the conversion of the world, but the fulfilment of the blessed Lord's promise—"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John xiv. 3). We know that the return of the Lord draws nigh; it is referred to in almost every section of the New Testament. It is the proximate hope of the Christian. You thought, perhaps, that He was coming at the end of the world. No, that is a mistake. How will He come? Paul

tells us, "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 : so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. iv. 5).

Are you listening for this shout, fellow-Christian? That is the Christian's hope. And when you meet Christ you will be exactly like Him. The Apostle John says, "When he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John iii. 2). He will raise the dead saints in His own likeness. We have sown our loved ones in weakness and corruption ; He will take them out in glory. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. xv. 49). Do not let any thought of fear enter your heart in view of the judgment-seat of Christ, because when we stand there we shall be like the One who is the Judge. We shall not have a diverse thought from the blessed Lord in that moment. The Lord is going to review all His people, and you and I will have to review our whole life. Never, in Scripture, for the believer is the thought of the imputation of guilt suggested in connection with this manifestation. You are like the Lord in glory, and He is going to give you a reward for all your service for Him down here. You may say, It has been very little. Yes, but so minute has been His scrutiny of our service, that if only you have given

a cup of cold water in His name, it is not going to be forgotten (*see* Matt. x. 42 ; Mark ix. 41).

There will be great joy in our hearts, I think, then. This review is a very solemn thing, but when you remember that you will be like Him, that He is the firstborn among many brethren, that every saved soul there is like Him, and will be with Him for ever, and that He will review your history, that He may commend what He can in the pathway, there is nothing to be afraid of. You do not reach glory because of your deeds, but because of sovereign grace ; but when you get there a crown of righteousness, from the hands of the righteous Lord, is bestowed on all those who love Him and His appearing. This carries no dread ; to look back over the pathway will be very blessed. To see all the grace that has followed us, how it will fill our hearts with praise. How we shall bless the grace of Him who died to save us, lived to keep us, and finally carried us by His power into eternal glory. Well sang M'Cheyne :—

“ When I stand with Christ in glory,
Looking o'er life's finished story ;
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,
Not till then, how much I owe.”

When He reviews our life we shall judge everything as He judges it, and shall be surprised at what He can commend ; and at the end find ourselves with Him for ever. There is nothing terrifying about that ; it is entrancing. A grand review will that be for us, fellow-saints. We are going before the One

who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, and we shall see His beauty and learn His grace.

That is what we are waiting for who are Christians. If the Lord came to-night for His own, how would it be with you? Would *you* be left? I know *I* should not, because I have known that blessed Saviour, and if you have not known Him till now, I give you a hearty invitation to come to Him. From eternity He has planned to have a Bride, composed of sinners saved by grace. You and I may be part of it. "Yet there is room." Come now to Him. You make up your mind for the Lord now. He says, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24). The reason there can be no imputation of guilt, and hence no condemnation, is that the One who will be judge in that day has already sustained our judgment when He died in our place.

2. THE REVIEW OF THE LIVING.

When all the saints have gone into glory, for the first review, who will be left on earth? Sinners in their sins. Dear unsaved one, do I hear you say, And what then? Could not I be at the second review? Yes, you might be, but not for blessing, only for the reverse. Turn to Matthew xxv., where we get the Lord's own statement. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations" (vers.

31, 32). Here is the King who has been rejected on earth, fulfilling what is described in detail in Revelation xix. 1-21, and clearly indicated also in Joel iii., where the nations are summoned to the Valley of Jehoshaphat (which means "*The judgment of Jehovah*"). The earth belongs to Him who is the Son of man and Son of God, Jesus, Jehovah the Saviour. He made it, and He put it into the hands of a man who lost it. He has redeemed it by His own blood, and He is now going to put it right by power. He created it in the beginning; He redeemed it on the cross; now He is coming back to take the inheritance.

"And he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left" (vers. 32, 33). You say, I always hoped I might be among the sheep. You will not, because the sheep are all blessed there. You say, Shall I then be among the goats? Yes, if you are at that review, you most surely will be, for you cannot be among the sheep, because you have had your opportunity of blessing now through the gospel, and have missed it. You have heard of a heavenly Saviour, and have not bowed to Him. You have been called, and declined the call. Christendom's day of grace has then passed for ever. Notice what Joel spoke of, "*Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about*" (chap. iii. 12). You do not regard yourself as a heathen. You are most likely a

professing, but unsaved Christian. You might be there, but you could not be among the sheep. The man that misses the gospel now does not get another chance of salvation in that day. Miss it now, and you will not get it then.

The testimony of God as to this is intensely solemn. Turn to 2 Thessalonians ii., where, after the rapture of the saints (ver. 1), we read of Antichrist's appearance, "Whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders" (ver. 9). Antichrist will simulate Christ. God's Man, the real Christ rejected, and the day of believing Him gone by, Satan operates mightily, and Satan's man comes, "With all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (ver. 10).

What has God sent to you now? The news of grace and pardon through Jesus, that you might be saved; but you prefer the world, and miss salvation. The coming of the Lord terminates God's actings in this way of grace, and the door is closed, the Holy Ghost retires, and Satan's man comes in. Many, alas! have not believed the truth. "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie"—the lie is Antichrist, and all that is connected with him—"that they *all might be damned* who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (vers. 11, 12).

It is a most serious thing for anyone to hear the gospel and not believe it. God puts the truth before you, and that is Christ. Receive Him, and all

blessing is yours. Make light of Him, defer, procrastinate, put it off, and one of these days the Lord comes, the saints are taken up, the truth is lifted from the earth, and the lie spreads over the earth. There will be an earthly gospel regarding the coming Messiah preached by the Jew, and some of the Gentiles will believe it, and some will refuse it; but those who have heard and refused a heavenly gospel will get no chance of an earthly. If you die in your sins, you will be buried in your sins, and you will be raised to appear at the great white throne. If you say, Why was I not saved? the answer will come back, that you "believed not the truth."

You may say, I did not refuse the Lord; I meant to come to Jesus some day; I did not spurn the gospel. God knows, and you know, you have not believed it. God wake you up e'er it be too late. Do not delude yourself; you cannot be among the sheep. You might be among the goats, because when the Lord comes He will have to deal with Great Britain as well as other nations of the earth. The King says, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me" (vers. 34-36). But there were those who never had any love for Him or His people. Such, like you, dear unsaved one, were totally indifferent to Him. "Then shall he answer

them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment : but the righteous into life eternal " (vers. 45, 46).

You may well say, That is a solemn review. Yes, but it is coming. We Christians ought to let the world know what is coming. This is the next thing for the world. The next thing for the Church is meeting Christ in the air, to go into heavenly glory ; and the reward day to follow. For the world the next thing is the King coming back, with His people, as King of kings and Lord of lords, and He will then judge the world. The last view the world had of Him was naked, bleeding, dying on the cross. The next time the world sees Him, it will be with a sharp sword going out of His mouth, with which He will smite the nations. There is an awful review day coming for the world. You get out of it now without delay. Join Christ's heavenly band, and let all the King's soldiers, *i.e.*, the truly converted, the saved, be true to our colours. We are under the blessed flag of salvation, and the soldiers of Jesus should rally round Him, and be faithful to Him in this the day of His rejection.

3. THE REVIEW OF THE DEAD.

Now a few words about Revelation xx., where we get another review of a different nature, the last and the most awful. We are told in connection with this, " And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them " (ver.

4). Instead of being judged by-and-by we are going to be the judges. Who are on the thrones of verse 4? The armies of heaven, the heavenly company. Paul says, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. vi. 2). Little idea have we of the dignity of belonging to Christ, and the wonderful glory connected with association with Him. Here it is particularly unfolded. "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection" (Rev. xx. 5). The first resurrection includes only those who are blessed, and they will be at the first review. The millennial day is coming, and when the Lord reigns we shall reign. In the meantime we are prepared to be "the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things" (1 Cor. iv. 13). Men have rejected our Lord—small wonder if they reject us. If you will not share His rejection, you must be prepared to share the devil's damnation.

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 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. 6-10).

We have come to the issue of all things now. Christ is triumphant, the devil dethroned, and everything is going to be fixed for eternity; and if you have not now got a fixture with Christ through faith in Him, you will have one made for you by God that you cannot escape. Satan is deceiving every unsaved man; the eyes are closed to the truth of God, for the heart is sealed against Christ by Satan. You have a will, and it is a wicked will, because it is against God; but behind that Satan deceives man.

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face *the earth and the heaven fled away*; and there was found no place for them" (ver. 11). Who sits there? Jesus, the One who was on the cross, in agony and blood; the One who came to call up His saints, and came out from heaven with them—that One is here King of kings and Lord of lords, and He sits on the throne, because God has committed all judgment to Him. Time is over; eternity has begun.

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (ver. 12).

There is no haste; that review of your life will

be a full one, and there will be no mistake made about the books in that day. What will the record be? Born without Christ, lived without Christ, died without Christ, buried without Christ, raised without Christ. Oh, sinner, flee to the Saviour; do not risk being in that review.

“And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works” (ver. 13).

Will it be said of you that you did not hear the gospel, and that you had no opportunity of coming to Christ? No! you will have to admit you had.

“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (vers. 14, 15).

What an awful closing history of man—what a terrible review. Let me implore you, if you have never yet closed in with God’s offer of salvation, do so now. Get in among the glorified. Do not risk the second or third of these solemn reviews. They will be intensely solemn. The first is intensely blessed; but woe be to the man or woman in Christendom to-day who turns up at either of the others. Eternal punishment is the only issue, and the lake of fire that soul’s abode.

Reader, let me urge you to fly to Jesus, ere you lay down this paper.

“Pause and ask, Where shall I be
During God’s eternity?”

W. T. P. W.

WITHOUT EXCUSE.

"Yesterday morning a sad drowning case occurred in the River T—, near N— S—, about a quarter to eleven o'clock. It appears that the fourth hand on board the steam tug "E—" brought the skipper ashore in a small boat, and was returning to his vessel when he met with an accident. He had to board the steam tug "R—" to get on to his own vessel, and while attempting to do so by some means or other slipped, and losing his hold on the ship's side fell into the river. He sank almost immediately and was not seen again. Grappling operations were commenced by a number of willing workers, and about a quarter past twelve o'clock two men successfully landed the deceased by means of the grappling irons. The deceased was only seventeen years of age.

"On the body being recovered, it was found that there was a wound on the bridge of the nose, which had been undoubtedly caused by the deceased coming in contact with the sponson of the tug, and this, it is thought, must have stunned the poor fellow when he fell overboard, which explains the fact that he did not make an effort to save himself, but disappeared almost directly on falling into the water."

SUCH was the account of the fatality that appeared in a Tuesday morning's paper, and many reading it would probably say, "How terribly sudden, and so young too." "Was he ready to die?" would be the thought that would doubtless flash into the minds of others.

Now men are apt to say, "How sad to be cut off without warning, with no time to prepare to meet God," and the justice of God is often called into question in connection with such cases; but we are persuaded that God deals graciously with all men, and if the end comes suddenly, it comes not before space has been given for repentance. There is another side to this sad story which I must also relate.

A young fellow—an acquaintance of the one whose death is here recorded—had attended our gospel meetings. There he discovered his deep need of a Saviour, and found in Jesus One who was able to meet his need. He was saved and knew it, and delighted to confess the name of the One who had saved him. A tract had been given to him on the night of his conversion in the which were the following well-known lines :

“To lose your wealth is much,
To lose your health is more,
To lose your soul is such a loss
That no man can restore.”

These lines made an impression upon the young Christian's mind, and he committed them to memory.

On the Saturday night previous to the accident he was crossing the river on the ferry-boat ; there he met the now deceased youth, and besought him to attend the gospel meeting on the Sunday night. He got a distinct refusal, however, and on parting with his old companion he repeated :—

“To lose your wealth is much,
To lose your health is more,
To lose your soul is such a loss
That no man can restore.”

That was all ; they said “Good-night,” and separated, never again to meet in time. So that however the young fellow died on Monday morning, he had his warning on Saturday night—a warning, we believe, given him by a gracious God who willed not his destruction.

It is not within our province to say whether he went to heaven or hell ; we do but state the facts as they came beneath our notice, and we state them not to interest you in the soul of the one who is gone from earth for ever, but to interest you in your own soul. We desire that you should be arrested, if still unprepared, for what lies ahead of you.

Think of your soul, which is of greater value than wealth or health. Think of God, His claims, His grace, His judgment ; think of your sins, of death—dark and hopeless death if you are still Christless ; think of eternity, and while you think, remember the solemn passage from the Word of God—“ He that being often reprovèd and hardeneth his neck, shall be suddenly cut off, and that without remedy.”

J. T. M.

THE VALUE OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

IF we examine the value of the death of Christ, what do we find attached to it in Scripture ?

Do I need redemption ? We have redemption through His blood, an eternal redemption, for “ neither by the blood of goats or of calves, but by his own blood, he is entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.”

Do I need forgiveness ? That redemption which I

have through His blood is the forgiveness of sins—yea, without shedding of blood is no remission.

Do I need peace? He has made peace through the blood of His cross.

Do I need reconciliation with God? Though we were sinners, yet now hath He reconciled us by the body of His flesh through death, to present us holy and unblamable, and unreprouvable in God's sight. When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.

Do I desire to be dead to sin and have the flesh crucified with its affections and lusts? I am crucified with Christ. Knowing this that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed; for in that He died, He died unto sin once, and in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. This is my deliverance also from the charge and burthen of the law, which hath dominion over a man as long as he lives.

Do I feel the need of propitiation? Christ is set forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood. The need of justification? I am justified by His blood.

Would I have a part with Christ? He must die, for except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone; if it die, it brings forth much fruit.

Hence, unto what am I baptized as the public expression of my faith? As many of us as are baptized into Christ have been baptized into His death; for what, indeed, has broken down the middle

wall of partition and let in the Gentiles, slaying the enmity, and reconciling Jew and Gentile in one body to God? The cross. How have we boldness to enter into the holiest? By the blood of Jesus, by that new and living way which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh; for till that was rent the Holy Ghost signified by it that the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest.

Hence, it was a lifted-up Christ that was the attractive point for all. "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me."

In the power of what was the great Shepherd of the sheep brought again from the dead? Through the blood of the everlasting covenant.

How was the curse of the law taken away from those who were under it? By Christ's being made a curse for them, as it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

How are we washed from our sins? He has loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, for His blood cleanseth from all sin. If I would be delivered from the world, it is by the cross, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

If the love of Christ constrains us towards men in the thoughts of the terror of the Lord, how is it so? Because I thus judge, if One died for all, then were all dead, and they that live should live not to themselves, but to Him who died for them and rose again. Hence the apostle knew no man after the flesh—no, not even Christ. All was a new creation. If I would live in divine power, it is always bearing about in

the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in my mortal body. If He would institute a special remembrance to call Him to mind, it was a broken body and shed blood. It is not less than a Lamb, as it were slain, that is found in the throne.

All was love, no doubt, but do I want to learn it? Hereby we know it, that He laid down His life for us, and that even of God, in that He loved us, and gave His Son as a propitiation for our sins. It is to the sprinkling of that precious blood of Christ that we are sanctified, and to obedience; and through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once (contrasted with the many Jewish sacrifices) sanctified and perfected for ever, so that there is no more offering for sin; for having offered one sacrifice for sins, He is set down for ever at the right hand of God. For He should not offer Himself often, as the high priest entered into the holy place once every year with the blood of others; for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world He hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself: for as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the *judgment*, so Christ was once *offered to bear the sins* of many, and to them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Do I desire, therefore, my conscience purged? It is through the blood of Christ who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God. For it is by means of death that there is the

redemption of the transgressions which were under the first covenant, and in that view He became Mediator. Indeed, a testament could have no force while the testator lived.

Do I seek the destruction of the power of Satan? Is it through death that He destroyed (the power of) him that had the power of death?

What do I find to be the central object of Christ's coming—the groundwork of His glory as man? We see Him made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that He by the grace of God might taste death for every man. And even the purifying and reconciling all things in heaven and earth depends on this (Heb. ix. 23; Col. i. 20).

Would He sanctify even the Jewish people to Himself? It must be by His blood, suffering, rejected, without the gate. No remission for us—no privileges of the new covenant for us, nor establishing of it with them, without this blood—redemption is not without it. The living sinner, as such, cannot be presented to God, nor a living Christ offer that by which the sinner must draw nigh. The veil remains unrent, the conscience unpurged, the propitiation unaccomplished. God forbore with the Old Testament saints, and has shown His righteousness in doing so now—a righteousness now declared in that propitiation set forth through faith in Christ's blood. "By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

"GOD IS."

"**P**ROVE the existence of a Supreme Being," was the bold demand of a man who, with a large number of people, had been listening to some of us preaching the Gospel in the open air.

He made a demand which, in one sense, no man could gratify, because he really craved the performance of a miracle. There is a certain condition on which God is pleased to make Himself known to the human soul, and that condition cannot be produced by human power.

Yet, only think that anyone should ask for a proof of His existence when to the most ordinary mind these proofs abound on every hand. Has the education of this twentieth century done nothing to help us in the knowledge of a Creator? Has the preaching of the day failed to convince people of the verity of its testimony?

Has the good news in the Gospel produced so little effect? Ah, this may alas be true. The Gospel accomplishes a mighty result by the power of God. It saves all who believe, and leads such to the happy knowledge of God as Saviour, but it does not undertake to dispel all the infidelity of the world, nor pledge itself to save universally. When our Lord was on earth He said to the unbelievers around Him that they would not come unto Him that they might have life. They would not; their will was at work; and the will of man,

whether Jew or Gentile, is, by nature, in direct opposition to God, and to the knowledge of God.

But, supposing that it had been in our power to prove to this man the existence of a Supreme Being, what would he have gained? Would that have saved him? Not necessarily. We read "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble" (Jas. ii. 19). They doubt not the existence of God, yet they tremble.

Hence, something more than this is necessary for salvation. When the prophet Elijah gave a signal proof of God's power, and thereby scattered the worshippers of Baal, the effect of his proof was sadly momentary. More than an external demonstration was necessary for an internal and permanent result. The will must be subdued and the heart converted.

"Prove the existence of a Supreme Being!" As well endeavour to prove that of light to a blind man! It cannot be done!

Let him, if possible, obtain the inestimable blessing of eyesight, and then light, in its exquisite varieties of prismatic colour, will be his study and marvel. He can, now that his piteous blindness is gone, appreciate that which light does for us all. He can then take up his microscope and analyse the perfections of the wing of the insect and of the flower of the field. He can make his telescope sweep through space and fix itself on the distant star, and trace its faultless movements in unfailling relation to every other heavenly body; he can

discern in all these things a power, a design, a mind so grand and infinite that he must own a Creator and Upholder. He must admit a Supreme Being. If not, something must be wrong—his will, or his pride, or his sinful hatred of God—not his intelligence.

Now, it is an easy thing to ask for information of this kind, and to say, "Prove the existence of God," but the question is, do people really desire that knowledge? Conscience tells them that to know God means the abandonment of sin and of the world, the breaking off of many a fond association, the severing of links that bind to earth. God and sin can never go together, and, alas, we love sin and hate God, and refuse the knowledge of His ways. That is just the reason why the foolish infidel heart of man would ask for a proof of His being. It fervently hopes that there is no God, no hereafter, no judgment bar, and no hell; it would be only too glad to get the faintest assurance of this. Said a dying man, "Thirty thousand pounds to any one who can prove to my satisfaction that there is no hell!" A fortune for anyone who had seen eternity from the other side, and could disprove with absolute certainty the awful foreboding of the dying man. None claimed those thousands, and the sinner died, leaving his wealth to others, to face that God whose saving grace he should have sought and found in days of youth and strength.

Well, but how do any of us know God, and how can we preach Him to others with the same con-

fidence as though we had been privileged to see Him? Mark—"They shall all know me, from the least to the greatest," is part of the new covenant.

The least, feeblest, youngest believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as the most advanced, has the knowledge of the Lord, not merely of His existence, but of Himself. He can call God his "Father," can say, "Abba, Father." He has received the spirit of sonship, and is a child of God. Blessed relationship! We become God's children by receiving Christ. When the soul bows to God in repentance and the just acknowledgment of sin, it also turns to the Saviour, and is brought into relation with God. It knows Him. God can be known, may be known, should be known! He is fully revealed in His Son.

Notice, most particularly, that the day is fast approaching when "the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven . . . taking vengeance on them who know not God." How solemn!

Reader, *do you know God?* If not, why not?

God is! Not to know Him means speedy and unending vengeance. And therefore, in this day of grace, this year of mercy, let me entreat you to give up at once all questions as to God's existence, and the rather own your guilt and folly as a sinful child of Adam, and in the faith of His existence, nay, of His love for such as you and I, turn to Him who gave His Son to the death in order that we should live in the enjoyment of a well-known Saviour-God in time and eternity. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is" (Heb. xi. 6). J. W. S.

FOUND WANTING.

THERE was a sound of wild revelry in the banqueting house of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, the night he made a feast for a thousand nobles of his realm.

What gorgeous splendour must have been displayed in that hall. The guests were dressed in garments of the richest Eastern shades, adorned with wonderful embroideries and costly jewels, the flowing folds of their robes adding grace and dignity to the wearers.

The sparkling wine had brought a flush to their faces, and a brighter gleam to their eyes. The sound of revelry rose higher and higher whilst they extolled the senseless images of wood and stone which they worshipped as gods.

To do honour to these the impious king commanded his servants to bring the sacred cups of gold and silver which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from the temple of God in Jerusalem. With fearful profanity these heathen feasters drank wine out of the consecrated vessels, and triumphantly flaunted the praises of their gods.

But whilst the revelry was at its height, the whole scene was suddenly changed.

A deathlike stillness fell upon the guests, and deepest consternation overspread each countenance, as every eye was turned to a spot on the wall, where, over against the candlestick, appeared the fingers of a man's hand, slowly tracing mysterious characters upon the plaster.

The king, ashy pale and trembling with fear, sent in haste for his astrologers and soothsayers, to tell him what this terrifying omen foreboded. A magnificent reward was offered to the man who could interpret the characters inscribed upon the wall.

But, with all their magical arts, none of the Chaldeans could even decipher the writing.

Then the queen remembered Daniel, a man in whom was the wisdom of God. He was brought before Belshazzar, and by divine inspiration declared the vision.

He told the king that the fingers were sent from God, the Lord of Heaven, against whom he had exalted himself, but in whose hand his life was. This was God's message to him :—

“MENE: God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it.

“TEKEL: Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

“PERES: Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.”

That night the Persians entered the city through an unguarded gate. Belshazzar was slain, and the kingdom was taken by Darius the Mede. God had required that Belshazzar should humble himself before Him. This he refused to do, and had ignored God's claims upon him. Thus he entered eternity stamped with those significant words, “FOUND WANTING.”

Unsaved reader, if God were now to weigh thee in His scales of equity, upon all the years of thy life would be stamped the same sentence, “Found Wanting.”

God as Creator rightly requires of man a lifetime of obedience, but this man has failed to render. Does this solemn fact cause thee no anxiety? Canst thou offer anything to God to atone for thy failure to meet His demands?

As God is righteous, it is evident that none "found wanting" can be admitted into heaven to stand in His presence. Art thou conscious that thou hast sinned and come short of the glory of God? and dost thou inquire—"What must I do to be saved?" Then I have good tidings for thee. God has found a ransom. Christ died, the Just for the unjust. Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, God can remit thy sins and bring thee into favour.

Turn then to Christ. He is able to cleanse thy soul from all its guilt.

Christ shall be made unto thee wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, and thou shalt stand complete in Him.

But turn to Christ now, lest, like Belshazzar, thy days, nay thy very hours already numbered, thou slip from time into eternity "FOUND WANTING."

L. M. B.

WE can only effectually serve Christ as we are enjoying Him. It is while the heart dwells upon His powerful attractions that the hands perform the most acceptable service to His name; nor is there anyone who can minister Christ with unction, freshness, and power to others, if He be not feeding upon Christ in the secret of his own soul.

C. H. M.

"FOR" OR "AGAINST"—WHICH?

LET us turn back in thought 1900 years to the land of Palestine. We will enter Jerusalem and step into the judgment hall of Pilate.

Before him stands a remarkable Prisoner. His face is scarred and sorrowful, but a commingling of meekness and majesty and divine love illumine the features. It is the lowly Jesus ; the One whose ear had listened to every tale of misery and distress ; the One whose loving heart yearned over sorrowing humanity ; the One who went about doing good.

We look for His accusers, and see with astonishment that they are the Scribes and Pharisees, the religious leaders of the day.

Their faces scowl with envy and bitter hatred while they set up lying witnesses against Him. All their influence has been put forth to procure sentence of death, and outside the populace are thirsting for His blood.

But after due examination the judge is forced to proclaim, "I find no fault in this man, I will therefore chastise him and release him." Then the storm of hatred bursts forth as the accusers fear their intended victim will escape, and one cry rings out from all, "Crucify him, crucify him !"

At this outburst Pilate is perplexed. He desires to please the people, for he covets popularity ; but how can he condemn a man he has proclaimed to be innocent ?

Perhaps hoping that the sight would soften and subdue, Pilate leads Jesus out clothed in royal purple, with a reed for sceptre in His hand, a crown of platted thorns piercing His brow, and to the assembled crowd says, “Behold your King.”

But blinded with passion they cared not for His sufferings, but with one voice cried out, “Away with him, away with him.” “We will not have this man to reign over us,” was the sentiment expressed. And Pilate fearing to thwart the mob delivered Jesus over to the death His enemies desired.

Thus Pilate perpetrated the fearful crime of sentencing to death One whom he knew to be innocent.

Reader, I would ask your judgment about the Prisoner. Methinks I hear you reply, “I find no fault in this man. I believe He lived a perfect life, and died to save men from their sins.” I ask you then—Have you come out boldly on the side of Christ?

Do you say No? Then you, like Pilate, admit that Christ is guiltless and yet stand with His foes. What the Jews so wickedly said with their lips, you as plainly declare by your life—“We will not have this man to reign over us.” Since the murder of Christ the friendship of the world is enmity against God.

God is now calling upon men to take sides, and the Lord Jesus Himself says, “He that is not with me is against me.”

Pilate’s sin was great, and if he died unrepentant, great will be his punishment. But the man that to-day refuses Christ is guilty of sin even more

flagrant, and is risking punishment still more terrible.

For Pilate knew nothing of the love of Jesus; he knew not that Jesus, as Lamb of God, was yielding Himself as sacrifice for sin, but you are doubtless well acquainted with the story of His love. Consider the grave peril to which your soul is exposed. Of what sore punishment shall he be thought worthy that wittingly refuses the love of Christ?

Let me beseech you to at once abandon the ranks of Christ's enemies. Put your trust in the once crucified but now exalted Saviour, and then come forth in a bold confession of His name. It is written, "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." But it is also written, "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

ANON.

HE WILL NEVER LET ME GO.

HE was one of the devil's castaways. He had been a drunkard and a thief, with a wretched home and a broken-hearted wife. Some of the things he passed through are almost beyond conception. He was once foraging in the London sewers for silver spoons, and other things carelessly dropped by the servants down

the sinks. Whilst engaged thus, some oil stores caught fire and the surface of the Thames was a burning mass. The rising tide swept this burning oil up the sewer. As he began to retrace his steps he heard the most horrible shrieks, on turning a corner he saw numbers of rats fleeing before the flames. There was no way out except at the mouth of the sewer. He dived, swam underneath until he had got beyond the floating mass of oil. This was only one out of many hairbreadth escapes he related to me. That man was afterwards converted.

The grace of God, which brings salvation to all men, found him out and blessed him. His joy was too great to keep to himself, he began to speak to others. I met him one day, and said, "What are you doing?" He replied: "I was down last night in the suburbs of London preaching to the people and telling them of this wonderful Saviour, and how He saves to the end, and gives His sheep eternal life, and will never let them perish. After the preaching was over, they came to me and said, 'That gospel is too sure. If you don't hold on you will be lost.'"

"What was your answer?" I asked. "Oh, I told them I did mean to hold on, but I had found out that when I was saved *two people got hold of each other*. I got hold of Christ, and Christ got hold of me, and I am sure of one thing, if I let Christ go, *He will never let me go; He loves me too much.*"

Can you say that, my reader?

H. N.

"I AM CHRIST'S : LET ME GO."

AMONGST those who suffered death during the persecutions of the Scotch Covenanters was a young woman named Margaret Wilson. She was only eighteen when she was arrested and dragged before Claverhouse, and life was offered her if she would abjure the Covenant and attend Episcopal service. True to her faith she refused, and was sentenced to be drowned together with another woman, an aged widow.

A spot was chosen on the banks of the Solway, and two stakes were driven into the ground between high and low water marks. To the one nearer the water's edge they bound the old woman, and Margaret, fastened to the other, had to witness the sufferings of her fellow-Christian, while around herself the water was gradually growing deeper. She showed no fear, but prayed and sang until the waves choked her voice. Then when the struggle for life was almost over, her persecutors, hoping she would recant, unbound her and restored her to consciousness. Friends and neighbours crowded around, begging her to yield and save herself.

"Will she take the abjuration?" demanded the officer in charge.

"*Never !*" was the unfaltering reply. "*I am Christ's ; let me go.*"

Once more they bound her to the stake ; the

waters closed over her, and soon her spirit was released.

But how was it that this girl bravely faced a death that a man might well shrink from? The secret lies in three words : she was Christ's.

The Lord Jesus is a mighty Saviour. Men may exert their utmost strength against Him and against His people, but their efforts are as vain as those of children building sand-castles upon the seashore to resist the force of the ocean. Christ is conqueror of Satan, and has proved Himself stronger than death. Now the Christian knows that Jesus stretches out His omnipotent arm on behalf of His people, and thus, with eye fixed upon Christ, he passes triumphantly through the waters of affliction or the fires of persecution, even through death itself.

Reader, dost not thou desire to be upheld by such a mighty power as sustained this Christian maiden. If thou wilt, as lost and helpless, commit thyself to the Lord Jesus Christ, He will become thy Saviour and Helper.

He bids thee turn to Him ; He even pleads with thee, for He desires to cleanse thee from thy sins in His precious blood, and longs to put His sheltering arm around thee. All who come to Him receive a gracious welcome. Come, then, and thou shalt prove the truth of His promise to every one that turns to Him : " I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

JOYING IN GOD AND WAITING
FOR CHRIST.(2 Thess. iii. 5.)

THERE are two things which constitute the joy of a Christian to be his on the road, and the object constantly before his heart. The first is the hope of the coming of the Lord, and the second is present communion and fellowship with God the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. And these two cannot be separated without loss to our souls, for we cannot have all the profit without both of them. If we are not looking for the coming of the Lord, there is nothing whatever that can separate us from this present evil world; neither will Christ Himself be so much the object before the soul, nor yet shall we be able, in the same measure, to apprehend the mind and counsels of God about the world.

Again, if this hope be looked at apart from present communion and fellowship with God, we shall not have present power, the heart being enfeebled, from the mind being too much occupied and overborne by the evil around; for we cannot be really looking for God's Son from heaven without at the same time seeing the world's utter rejection of Him, and that the world is going wrong—its wise men having no wisdom and all going on to judgment, the principles of evil loosening all bonds, &c., and the soul becomes

oppressed and the heart sad. But if through grace the Christian is in present communion and fellowship with God, his soul stands steady, and is calm and happy before God, because there is a fund of blessing in him which no circumstances can ever touch or change. The evil tidings are heard, the sorrow is seen, but his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord, which carries him far above every circumstance. Brethren, we all want this. To walk steadily with God we need both this fellowship and this hope.

I do not believe that a Christian can have his heart scripturally right unless he is looking for God's Son from heaven. There could be no such thing as attempting to set the world right if its sin in rejecting Christ were fully seen; and, moreover, there never will be a correct judgment formed of the character of the world until that crowning sin be apprehended by the soul. To a Christian who is looking and waiting for Christ to come from heaven, Christ Himself is unspeakably more the object before the soul. It is not only that I shall get to heaven and be happy, but that the Lord Himself is coming from heaven for me, and all the Church with me. It is this that gives its character to the joy of the saint. As Christ Himself says, "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also"—when I find my delight, then shall you find yours also, I with you, and you with me—"For ever with the Lord."

You may think to find good or to produce good in

man, but you will never find waiting for Christ in man. In the world the first Adam may be cultivated, but it is the first Adam still; the second Adam will never be found there, being rejected by the world. And it is the looking for this rejected Lord which stamps the whole character and walk of the saints.

Then again, there is another thing connected with my waiting for God's Son from heaven. I have not yet got to be with the One I love, and while waiting for Him I am going through the world tired and worn with the spirit and character of everything around me; and the more I am in communion with God, the more keenly shall I feel the spirit of the world to be a weariness to me, although God still upholds my soul in fellowship and communion with Himself. Therefore Paul says in 2 Thessalonians i., "To you who are troubled, rest with us." So then I get rest to my spirit now in waiting for Christ, knowing that when He comes He will have everything His own way. For the coming of the Lord, which will be trouble to the world, will be to the saints full and everlasting rest. Still, it is not that we are to be "weary and faint in our minds." It is not a right thing to be weary of the service and conflict. Oh, no, rather let us be victorious every day. Still, it is not rest to be fighting."

However, when walking with God, it is not so much thinking of combat as joying in God Himself. This I shall know all the better when I am in the glory; my soul will be enlarged, and more capable

of enjoying what God really is, but it is the same kind of joy I have now that I shall have when He comes to be glorified in His saints, only greater in degree. And if this joy in God is now in my soul in power, it hides the world from me altogether, and becomes a spring of love to those in the world. For though I may be tired of the combat, still I feel there are people in the world that need the love I enjoy, and I desire that they should possess it, as it is the joy of what God is for me that sustains me and carries me through all the conflict, so that our souls should be exercised on both the fellowship and the hope ; for if I look for Christ's coming apart from this fellowship and communion with God, I shall be oppressed, and shall not go on. When the love of God fills my heart, it flows out towards all those that have need of it, towards saints and sinners according to their need ; for if I feel the exercise of the power of this love in my heart, I shall be going out to serve others, as it is the power of this love that enables me to go through the toil and labour of service, from that attachment to Christ which leads to service, though through suffering for His sake. If my soul is wrapped up in the second Adam, attachment to Christ puts its right stamp upon all that is of the first Adam.

When this love has led out into active service, then the conflict, doubtless, will be found as in 2 Corinthians i. ; there it is present blessing in the midst of trial. But in 2 Thessalonians i. it is tribulations, and not rest out of it, until the Lord comes ;

“that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer.” In 2 Corinthians i. 3, 4, there is present blessing in the midst of the trial — “who comforteth us in all our tribulation”; so that if the sufferings for Christ’s sake be ours, there are at the same time the comfortings of God in the soul. How rich a spring of blessing is this in return for this poor little trouble of mind. I get God pouring into my soul the revelation of Himself; I get God communicating Himself to my soul, for it is really that. I find it to be a present thing; it comes home to me, to my heart, the very joy of God, God delighting in me, and I in God. He identifies Himself with those who suffer for Him. There is no time for God’s coming into a soul like the time of trial, for in no way does He so fully reveal Himself to the soul as when He is exercising it in trial. There is astonishing power in this; for the amazing power with which Christ is to us present power and consolation is by His coming in, in present living power, even whilst these poor mortal bodies are unchanged. Ours are not yet redeemed with power, though they are bought with a price, but we have in Christ the life and the power; and, in spite of all, God is pouring in these consolations when we are in tribulations, showing the kind of power in Christ by which I am lifted up above every circumstance of trial. “The Lord direct our hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.”

DEATH-BED REPENTANCE.

IF you think it will be time enough to repent just as you are leaving this world you are making a grand mistake, most people die as they live.

A young fellow had often been urged to repent. His reply was, "Oh, I have only to say 'Lord save me' just as I am going to die, and it will be all right."

He was crossing a crowded street, a cab knocked him down. "The devil take you" were the last words he uttered as his soul passed into eternity.

Mrs W. was a wicked woman living an ungodly life, but whenever spoken to about her soul she used to say, "Oh, I intend praying when I come to die." The day came when death claimed her. Some one who waited upon her was asked how she died. She replied, "Mrs W. always *intended* to pray, and when she was taken ill she *tried to do so*, but she found praying very hard and swearing very easy, so she died swearing."

God never promises you salvation on a dying bed. There is only *one day* when God saves people. Yesterday has gone away from you for ever, you cannot recall it. To-morrow, death or the coming of the Lord may settle your doom. *To-day is the only one you can be perfectly certain of salvation.* "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." A death-bed cannot in itself affect a bad heart. Even supposing you have a death-bed, and have "time

to repent," it may be that the pains of your body will be so great that you cannot think of your soul.

I called to see an old widow who was dying. "What about your soul?" I asked. "Oh," she said, "thank God! He saved me before I was laid on this bed of sickness. Had He not done so, I am in too much pain and suffering to think of anything else."

Beware of the devil's lie, "Time enough to repent and change when the pains of death get hold of you." Now is the accepted time. H. N.

THE CHIMNEY SWEEP.

THE 9.30 A.M. train for the West of England left New Street Station, Birmingham, some years ago, with one of its third-class compartments fully occupied by well-dressed men, most of them deep in a newspaper. At the first stopping station a gentleman who sat on my right, between myself and a venerable Church of England clergyman, who was reading the New Testament, got out, and in stepped a chimney sweep, with bag and brush, fresh from his early morning work. Seeing the crowded state of the carriage, he stood inside the door. The clergyman said, "Sit down, friend; you have paid for your seat, and are entitled to it." He looked at me, and I said, "All right, sit down," and he took the vacant seat.

At the next station the sweep got out, and the door was no sooner shut than a gentleman in the compartment raised a vehement outcry at the insult which the Midland Railway offered to its passengers by allowing sweeps to so enter. It was true the sweep had left a grain or two of soot upon the seat, which I gently brushed off, remarking, "There are many worse things than a little clean soot."

"Yes, indeed there are," said the clergyman. "There is something infinitely worse."

"And what may that be, sir?" I inquired.

"The moral degradation of man," was the startling response, in stentorian tones.

"And what do you mean by that, sir?" said I.

"I mean, sir, the condition of sin in which man, God's creature, is; for he has been born in sin, and shapen in iniquity, and his moral degradation is indeed deep while he remains in unbelief."

"And may I inquire how you propose to meet that condition of moral degradation, sir? What remedy have you for it?"

"There is but one remedy, sir—the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ," was his emphatic reply.

Anxious to draw out so evident a defender of the faith of the gospel, I said, "But, sir, are you not aware that you live in a day when the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ is very lightly thought of?"

"I know it, sir, I know it, alas, and more is the pity, for the Word of God says, 'Without shedding of blood is no remission' (Heb. ix. 22). But it also

says, '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); 'And the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin' (1 John i. 7). And further, God says, 'Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot' (1 Pet. i. 18, 19). So that if man is going to be delivered from his moral degradation and existing condition as a sinner, it can only be by faith in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ; at least, so says the Word of God."

"I think you forget, sir," I replied, "that nowadays men are very doubtful as to the statements of that book which you hold in your hand."

"Yes, sir, alas, it is too true, but men will yet find the truth of this book, and that 'Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away' (Mark xiii. 31). 'Let God be true, but every man a liar' (Rom. iii. 4) is in that Word. God will vindicate His veracity, be sure of that."

The interest in the newspapers evidently had abated temporarily while this conversation was listened to by the occupants of the carriage, and the more so when I now asked this champion of Scripture if he were among those who took the ground of being "saved." To this he at once replied very firmly, "Yes, by the grace of God, I can say I am saved—

saved through faith in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ."

"And would you mind telling us how you reached that state, sir?"

"I shall be delighted. It took place on a dark, stormy night near Cape Horn. I was a midshipman on board a large merchant vessel, careless and heedless about divine things, but that night, after we had rounded the Horn, a godly mate, in whose watch I was, took occasion to speak to me kindly, seriously, and earnestly about my soul. God blessed his fervent words, and I was turned to the Lord Jesus Christ that night; in plain language, I was converted."

"What happened then?"

"The Lord kept me in the joy of His love till I reached England, and then I made at once for my only brother, told him what God had done for my soul, and he, through me, was led to the Lord likewise."

"*That was like Andrew and Peter in John i.,*" said I.

"Yes, and Peter was the means of many conversions in his day; and my brother, I know, has been the means of many likewise, and of sending more than eight hundred missionaries to the heathen," was his response.

"And what became of the mate?" said I.

"Oh, he very soon got a captaincy, and after a while retired from the sea, and now has given himself to mission work on the Thames."

By this time the train had reached Worcester, and

the exodus from that carriage was something remarkable. The parson, one young man, and myself alone were left, while many of our fellow-passengers got into other compartments, having had enough gospel for one day. What they did with it the day of the Lord will declare.

The sin of man is truly "moral degradation," but this aspect of his condition the natural man resents. It is true, all the same, and the sooner a man finds it out the better.

The question of sin before God must be faced sooner or later. The wise will face it now—in "a day of salvation" through the blood of Jesus. The foolish defer it till too late—the day of the wrath of the Lamb.

Reader, how do *you* stand with regard to this question of moral degradation? Have you found out yet that you are a lost sinner needing redemption? I trust you will not let this year close over your head without finding God's salvation, through faith in the blood of His dear Son. Did you begin the year without Jesus? Do not so close it. Come to Him just now. Though your soul have been stained with sin, and be as black as the chimney-sweep's soot, yet you may be washed whiter than snow in that precious blood, shed on Calvary's cross for sinners like you and me. Fling your doubts to the winds, receive and taste the Lord's grace, and then go and do what the young midshipman did—tell others of the blessed Saviour you have found. That will be a grand way in which to close this year of grace, 1905.