

THE GOSPEL MESSENGER:

A Monthly Magazine.

EDITED BY

W. T. P. WOLSTON.

VOL. XXX.

1915.

EDINBURGH:
"GOSPEL MESSENGER" OFFICE, 2 BRISTO PLACE.

LONDON:
THE CENTRAL BIBLE TRUTH DEPOT,
12 PATERNOSTER ROW.

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SAVED AT ONCE.

AS large numbers of the *Gospel Messenger* are being circulated in the training camps, and are also being sent to the front, for the benefit of the men engaged, or to be engaged, in the tremendous struggle now going on, I am anxious that in this present number of the Magazine, which will, no doubt, find its way amongst the combatants, there may be a very plain statement of the Gospel—one which may so present the way of salvation that many a troubled, weary, guilty soul may find peace with God, and the full assurance of faith.

To begin with, the Gospel means "Good News!" Keep that fact in mind. It tells of the love of God for men guilty and undone. It speaks of the atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the gracious power of the Spirit. It announces the thrice-blessed truth that, while God must punish sin according to the holiness of His throne, yet He has "*no pleasure in the death of the wicked.*" He has thrown the gates of heaven open to all who turn to Him in repentance.

Again I say that the Gospel is "Good News."

The Law was bad news for the sinner, because it commanded him to do that which he never could do; and therefore fulfilled the purpose for which it was given, viz., to show man his guilt and powerlessness, but not to save or bless him. It was dead against him.

For what is the Law? It is the principle of works.

"The Law which shows the sinner's guilt
Condemns him to his face."

Now, do you think that you could work your way into the presence of God? Suppose that you began the effort to-day, and did your very best for the rest of your life, long or short, do you think that your list of good deeds, done in the future, could make amends for the bad deeds of the past? Impossible!

"Not the labour of my hands
Can fulfil Thy Law's demands."

A mirror may show your spots, but cannot remove them. Nor can the Law, nor the principle of doing your best, nor living up to what your conscience may dictate, nor the turning over a new leaf, nor becoming outwardly religious by merely joining church, chapel, or meeting, put you in possession of salvation. If so, Christ need not have died.

No, my friend; but thank God: "*Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God*" (1 Pet. iii. 18). "*Bring us to God.*" How complete, how perfect, how intelligible! That is Gospel, that is good news of the dearest and most precious kind.

How is the *believing* sinner brought to God? By the glorious fact that "*Christ once suffered for sins.*"

Is that enough?

"It is enough that Jesus died,
And that He died for me,"

Is that all?

Tell me what more is needed? If God tells us that "*the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son* (mark the word), *cleanseth us from all sin*" (1 John i. 7), then can He demand more?

If I pay your debt in full does your creditor dream of claiming anything further? Surely not. Then, if your creditor is satisfied, you may well be the same.

Ah! but must I not feel something? Well, what would you like to feel? I should suggest only intense gratitude to the friend who, at such cost, paid the debt. Gratitude is the spring of worship! Then what produces the feeling of gratitude?

The acceptance by faith of that which He has done, the payment He has made! Faith is the link, not feelings, nor works. Then must I not work?

"I dare not work my soul to save,
That work my Lord hath done,
But I would work like any slave
From love to God's dear Son."

This is Gospel indeed, and so divinely simple. It makes you a debtor to grace, where the only possible return is your whole life gladly surrendered to God. It is liberty! And it is just this which makes salvation attainable at once.

Hence we read: "*By grace are ye saved through faith*" (Eph. ii. 8). How unspeakably happy to become at once, here and now, the possessor of Salvation! Can it be?

I remember in my young days forming this resolution, that, ten minutes before I was called to

die, I would repent of my sins and cast myself on the mercy of God. I did not then see what better I could do, for I did not know the Gospel.

Ten minutes before death ! Not very satisfactory, because, thought I, if a bullet should pierce my heart on a battlefield, I should not have the ten minutes for preparation.

That plan was of no use !

What instead ? I took God's way, and came like the prodigal of Luke xv., in my sins and vileness, and was met by a kiss, and a robe of righteousness, and a welcome to all the joys of the Father's love. "*They began to be merry.*"

That is the Gospel of a truth. There is no other.

Friend, come to the Lord as you are, AND NOW.

J. W. S.

A PHYSICIAN'S TESTIMONY.

MY boyhood was spent on a farm. Later I became a student of medicine, and the college life and graduation were followed by the everyday life of a busy physician. In this I was successful, professionally and financially, far beyond my most sanguine expectation.

As to religious views, I had none, other than an intense hatred for everything called Christian. I read eagerly the writings of Tom Paine, Ingersoll,

Huxley, Tyndall, and Darwin, and listened with great delight to every one who could in any way array themselves against the Bible.

So life passed, until, in my thirty-ninth year, every plan seemed completed and nothing seemed to prevent the enjoyment of whatever life held in store for me.

Each afternoon it was my custom to post my accounts, rest as quietly as possible in my private office, where, quite alone, I could read or give myself up to such rest or meditation as was most agreeable.

One afternoon, while thus engaged, a thought flashed through my mind, which seemed as if a voice had spoken it, saying :—

“Doctor, you’re lost !”

This aroused and startled me ; but I put it away as some idle or foolish fancy, and thought no more about it.

The next afternoon, in the same place and about the same time, another startling announcement, as if it were a voice, said :—

“Doctor, you’re going to hell !”

“Nonsense !” I cried ; and after a volley of oaths I wondered what kind of tricks somebody or something was trying to play upon me—and strongly asserted that no such place as hell had any existence whatever.

And thus from day to day, at about the same time, some such terrific message came to me, until I doubted my own sanity, and seriously thought of calling in a physician.

One evening, being called to supper, I went, with more desire to put on a bold front against all this than anything else, for I had no appetite. I was suffering unexplainable agony.

At last, at the table, I broke silence by saying, "I've got to *pray*, if I can ; for I am in awful agony ! I'm going to hell, if there is any such place ! "

I thought of my mother, and sent for her. She came to me within an hour or so, and I told her my case. She said she had prayed for this all my life. Instantly I became angry, and asked her how she could pray for me to be in this kind of suffering. She then prayed for me again, but apparently could not help me in the least.

I then thought of one of the leading ministers of the city, with whom I was acquainted. To him I went, and as we sat in his parlour I told him my case. He then proceeded to tell me that when he was a young man he attended a certain camp-meeting, and when they called for "mourners," or "seekers," he went down to the "mourners' bench," and was not there long until he saw a light coming from far away, which came nearer and nearer until it shone all about him ; and then he knew he was converted !

Here he paused, for I was staring at him in wild amazement. I arose at once, and almost rushed out of his house, in greater darkness than ever. The day was now more than half-gone. I came back to my home and offices (the offices were all closed : no calls were attended to at all). I found a little Bible about the house, and began to read in the New Testament.

Here I discovered much about Jesus Christ altogether new to me. I said in my heart, "He must be more than man; and if more than man, He must be God."

I can only remember this, that His divinity was the one thing I had most positively denied, and was now ready to affirm; and in my heart did so. The instant I did this, everything changed as by an electric flash. The unbearable burden was gone, the dread of hell vanished, and an indescribable tenderness and love of the very person of the Lord Jesus Christ seemed to fill me so full that it must be told. On the pavement, in front of my own office, I found myself with my arm around a filthy tramp, telling him of the lovely being, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then, and not till then, came penitent tears. Oh! that Holy Person I had abused! The vile names I had given Him! The wasted years! The men I had poisoned with my awful teaching! I can never undo it nor recall it! Then to think He forgives it all, and saves a sinner like me! My whole being seemed melted into tears of penitence and thankfulness.

Then came burdens of prayer for lost men. It now seemed to me that the gospel truth was so plain and simple that everybody must be saved: and to live, as I had done, in stubborn ignorance, was a grievous fault. I felt that if men were taught how it was, they would gladly have the Lord Jesus Christ to do for them what He had done for me.

THE LOST SOUL ; or, CHRIST REJECTED.

LOST ! lost ! and lost for ever ! You shrink from the words and say, Oh, but can it be ? Is it a reality ? Did you see that soul go down into hell before your eyes, and you had no power to save her ? Did you hear her death cries of agony, and still could do nothing for her ?

Yes ! yes ! it was a terrible reality never to be forgotten by me ; and though it is years since, I seldom can think of it without weeping, and the remembrance of it has often sent me with a word of warning to others ; and this terrible death scene of which I was an eye-witness has often brought from me the cry, " Escape for thy life ! "

The story of A., the rejecter of Christ, is no phantom of some fevered imagination, it is no wrought-up story to work upon your feelings and fill you with horror ; but may the Lord use it to show you that death is a reality ! that hell is a reality ! and you, sinner, have to meet both, if you reject Christ.

It was in the autumn of 18— we went to reside in a little villa near —. It was one of a cluster of villas looking upon the distant hills. Some time after we had come there, a gay young couple came to live next door, and we had watched with some little interest the preparations for their arrival.

A few days after this I saw the lady walking along the footpath near our windows ; she was young, and her dress and bearing marked her as one of the

world's chosen ones. As her graceful form passed up and down the shrubbery, I was struck with the delicacy of her appearance, and a look of unrest upon her fair young face that told its own tale. No peace ! no peace ! My heart rose in silent prayer to God, that He might send me with a message to her soul.

Next day I called. On asking for Mrs —, the servant told me she was ill, but she thought she would see me. I went in and soon found myself in earnest conversation with Mrs —. Her tale was soon told, for she was unreserved and very communicative ; finding it, as she said, a great comfort to have any one to speak to, to break the monotony of a country life in the absence of her husband, who was all the day engaged with business.

During my visit she frankly told me that though only a few months married, and her heart thoroughly occupied with the world in every form, its ball-rooms, its concerts, its parties, yet she was very unhappy ; and, in a simple, child-like way, she said, " We have been watching you and your husband pass up and down, and we think you look so happy !" The moment had come : I thanked God for the opportunity to speak, and said, " You are right, we are happy ; and the secret of our happiness is, we know Christ ; we have peace with God, through believing in the finished work of Christ ; and we have in Him what the world has never given you, and never can give you, for the end of all its joys is eternal misery."

As I pressed upon her the necessity of conversion,

tears rolled down her cheeks, and she said, "But no one ever told me that before : is it all true ? "

"Yes," I answered, "for God's Word declares to us 'Ye must be born again,' and, 'Except ye be converted . . . ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.'" I pressed upon her the necessity of accepting Christ *now*, and rose to leave; slowly and solemnly she said, "Well, I would like to have your Christ, but I love the world ; and, though I am often unhappy, yet I could never give up my dancing ; and you know," she said, as a hollow smile played upon her lips, "I sing at private concerts, and they say, 'A.'s voice is the best voice there.'" I shuddered ! A little of the world's praise is more to thee, fair A., than the unsearchable riches of Christ. I said, "Remember, they that reject Christ here will have to spend eternity in hell."

A few days after this, on returning from a walk, I found Mrs—— had called. I hastened to return her visit, and found her more miserable than before. Struggling to assume a gaiety she did not feel, she met me by saying, "Oh ! let me tell you about the concert I am to sing at next week."

"Stop," I said, "there will be no singing in hell ! "

"Oh !" she said, "don't speak in that way, I cannot bear it ; speak of your Jesus if you like, but not of hell !" Again I told her of His love for sinners, but her mind was full of her coming concert, her dress, her songs, &c. And as I parted from her, very sad she said, "When the concert is over I will come and

talk to you": but weeks passed and she came not.

We were leaving our country home for a time, so I called to say good-bye, and pressed once more upon her the salvation of her precious soul; but she was swamped in a whirlpool of coming gaiety, and had no time for Christ.

It was months ere we returned home, and almost immediately I was laid upon a bed of sickness, from which I was just recovering when a message came to me one morning from Mrs——, whom I had not seen since my return. "Do come at once, I wish to see you."

I rose quickly and dressed, and soon found myself at her door. It was opened by a sister, who said, "Oh! come in; A. is very ill, and is very anxious to see you." With noiseless footsteps I went upstairs to her room; gently I opened the door of that half-darkened chamber, and, oh! shall I ever forget the sight?

There, on the bed, lay A., in the ravings of fever; her infant son, a few weeks old, on a little bed by her side. Her graceful form was racked by pain, her masses of dark tangled hair lay on the pillow, the dew of death was on her brow; and as her large dark eyes opened and saw me, her parched and blackened lips parted, and she almost screamed:—

"Oh! you have come at last; now do not leave me," and, sitting up in bed, she grasped me with a strength that only fever gives.

"Have you sent for the doctor?" I whispered to her sister.

"No," said A., wildly, hearing me, "he will only tell me I am very ill, and you know I must be at the choral meeting next week. I am to sing at the concert"; and so saying, she fell back on her pillow in a swoon. I pointed to her sister to take my place, and hurried from the room.

In a few moments my husband was off for the doctor. It seemed long till he came; never shall I forget that hour, while anxiously listening for his footsteps. I bathed the burning brow, and pleaded with her to let me cut off the tangled web of her once lovely hair; and, as she again half swooned I did so, hearing her murmur all the time, "But the concert! how can I go to the concert without my hair? And it was so beautiful! 'Oh,' they said, 'A.'s hair was so beautiful.'"

At last I heard the doctor's hurried footsteps on the stair, and left the room. As he came out I met him; his anxious face told all. "Doctor, is she dying?" "Yes, dying fast; but don't tell her! I am going for another doctor, but I know it's too late." And giving me a few hurried orders about his patient, he left me, with his words ringing in my ears, "Dying fast! don't tell her!"

Yes, I must tell her, was my resolve, for she is unsaved and does not know it. I could only look up in agony and say, "O. God, help me to speak to her!" The doctor had told me to give her champagne and brandy every quarter of an hour till he returned; she heard the order and asked for it whenever I entered the room; drinking it down

she exclaimed, "Oh ! I can live a quarter of an hour upon that ; surely I am not dying ?"

"Yes, A.," I said, "you are dying ; but I can tell you of One who died to save just such as you." Gently I told her, in very simple words, of that One, who met the prodigal in the far-off land ; and the dying thief upon the cross ; but she almost threw me from her, and said, "I cannot hear it now ; when I get better I'll come and sit with you, and hear about your Jesus ; but not now," and again she swooned.

I prayed, oh ! as I had never prayed before, and as I rose from my knees I found her large dark eyes, already glazed by the hand of death, fixed upon me. "Oh !" she said, "pray to *your* Jesus, He *will* hear *you* ; but *I* don't know Him, and *I* cannot hear about Him now."

Eagerly I asked, "What shall I pray to Him for, A. ?" Horror filled me as I heard her answer. "Pray to Him that I may get well, and go to the concert."

Again I pleaded with her about her soul ; but it was no use. She had rejected Christ all her life, and she would not have Him now. Hours passed, and the doctors came, only to say, "Sinking fast !" Her husband and friends arrived to see the end of fair A., and I would fain have left a scene so terrible ; but she held me in her grasp.

Every quarter of an hour, as I gave her her draught, she said, "Oh ! I can live upon that—it must make me live—I cannot die !" And then in

plaintive accents she wailed out, "I'm too young to die ; yes, I'm only twenty-one : yes, too young to die !"

"Father," she said, as her father drew near the bed, "will you take me to the concert next week?"

"Yes," said her father, "I will." I was a stranger to her friends, and, seeing she was sinking fast, I passed away from a scene so awful. In a few moments all was over, and the soul of A., the rejecter of Christ, had passed from the world and its pleasures, its balls and its concerts, into the realities of an endless eternity. "Woe unto you, ye despisers!" "Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life."

K

"THE GOD THAT ANSWERETH BY FIRE."

"And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord ; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken" (1 KINGS xviii. 24).

ATERRIBLE drought had devastated the land of Israel. For three long years it had held the country in its terrible grip. To such a despairing pass had things got that the king himself, and the governor of his house, were under the necessity of dividing the land between them in search of a little grass to keep alive the few horses and mules that were left.

This long-continued drought was the direct intervention of God. A monster of iniquity, Ahab, sat on the throne, surpassed, if possible, in wickedness by his queen, Jezebel, whose very name has passed into a proverb for evil. 'The nation had gone whoring after the gods of the Philistines. Hence God's judgment.

It is singular how bad men like to be served by good men. They may cheat, but they don't like to be cheated. They may lie, but they don't like to be lied to. Piety in others is a guarantee of trustworthiness, however little they may like to practise it themselves. So it was with King Ahab. Obadiah, the governor of his house, was one who "*fear'd the Lord greatly.*"

As Obadiah was prosecuting his search for grass he was startled by the sudden apparition of Elijah. He bade Obadiah inform the king, "*Go tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here*" So Ahab went to meet Elijah.

The meeting of these two remarkable men was dramatic in its suddenness. There they stood. Ahab, a king, wicked, depraved, base beyond words. Elijah, a prophet, stern, denunciatory, consumed with a passion for righteousness. There are many instances where moral force has caused iniquity, though backed by material might, to shrink back powerless and abashed. It was so in this case.

Elijah was immeasurably superior to the wicked king. He bade him gather all Israel to Mount Carmel, and with them the prophets of Baal, four

hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the grove, four hundred.

Then Elijah addressed them in burning words of vehemence, that have deservedly become historic. "*How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him.*"

The three years of famine must have spoken loudly to them. Following Baal, the false god had given them no rain from heaven. Forsaking the true God, He had withdrawn His favour. In their hearts they ran after Baal, just as man to-day runs after his lusts and pleasures and sin. In their consciences they must have felt God was stronger than Baal, in so far that Baal could not give them the early and latter rain, which Jehovah had promised to an obedient people, whilst God manifestly withheld it, as He had warned them by His prophet.

Hence the prophet's cry, "*How long halt ye between two opinions?*" *The great need was DECISION.*

And is this not the case with multitudes to-day.

In health they devour the novel, run greedily after the picture palace, the theatre, the card table.

In sickness they turn to their Bible, they want their Christian mother or Christian acquaintance to speak to them. And as the sickness increases so their desire for salvation increases. Then health returns. The desires vanish. Old tastes revive. "*The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire*" (2 Peter ii. 22).

In prosperity they forget God.

In adversity they desire His help.

I would sound in your ears the prophet's challenge, "*How long halt ye between two opinions?*" The testing time is coming. Will your sevenpenny novels deliver you in the day of death? Will the picture house and the theatre minister solid comfort to you in the hour of death? Aye, and will the mummary of ritualism, the formalism of a fashionable Christless religion, carry you safely through the river of death to the celestial city?

Oh! for decision. Look things in the face. Not as they affect you for a day, nor a fortnight, nor a year, nor three score years and ten, but how they will affect you for ETERNITY. This world is not all. This life is not everything. *After death* is the great question. After death lies *the judgment*—the great white throne—the lake of fire—ETERNITY.

"*If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow Him,*" was the prophet's challenge. Take up this challenge, beloved reader, and may your wisdom be to choose here and now for God.

Elijah was but one against many. Look at his lofty brow, his piercing eye, his courageous front as he faces eight hundred and fifty false prophets in the presence of a king who hated him, and a people who had suffered bitterly the slow, relentless materialising of his prophecy. The mighty power of God was behind him.

As he dictated terms to Ahab, so he dictated terms to these prophets. Two bullocks were to be taken. The false prophets had to choose one—cut

it in pieces, lay it on wood, and *put no fire under*. Elijah was to do likewise with the other bullock. They were to call on the name of their gods. Elijah was to call on the name of the Lord. And then the stern prophet threw down the startling challenge, "*And the God that answereth by fire, let Him be God.*"

What a striking test! And with fine sarcasm Elijah bids the false prophets to proceed first, as they were many. Nothing loth, they took their bullock, dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon. "*But there was no voice, nor any that answered.*"

Reader, the testing time is coming. The hour of your need will arrive. When death, that king of terrors, and terror of kings, enters your chamber, puts his freezing fingers on your pulse, snaps your heart strings one by one, closes your eyes, and draws a deadly pallor over your inanimate clay, tell me, as you enter the dark valley of death, will there be a comforting voice amid the gloom? Will there be one to answer with assuring words your frightened questions? Will there be a friend, who sticketh closer than a brother, to still your heart's fears then? "*When the gain thou hast hoarded is slipping from thy grasp,*

When thou standest needy and alone,
When thy cold hand no longer the wonted props can grasp,
Oh ! who will listen to thy moan ?
Now there's one resource for the guilty—
Jesus ; Jesus saith, Come unto Me
Still mercy's blood-stained lintel thy door of hope may be,
Oh ! Sinner, JESUS DIED FOR THEE."

To proceed, the prophets of Baal cried aloud to their god, and getting no response, in their frenzy jumped upon their altar. Elijah urged them on with biting sarcasm. He mocked them, saying : "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." Miserable refuge in a time of need surely ! Without avail they gashed themselves with knives and lancets, till wearied out they failed.

So shall it be. Money shall fail. Pleasure shall fail. The pleasures of sin endure only for a season. Aye, and a Christless religion shall fail. No new theology or higher criticism can give anxious sinners true peace.

"None but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good."

Now came Elijah's turn. He bade the thousands of Israel "Come near unto me." So the blessed Lord Jesus Christ bids the sinner, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28). Elijah bade them come as a prophet of Israel. The Lord Jesus bids sinners come to Him as "*the Saviour of the world.*"

Elijah then built an altar of *twelve* stones. This signified that what he was about to do was for the blessing of Israel's *twelve* tribes. This may stand, indeed, as a feeble picture of the grace of God. Not only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel

did Christ die, but we read that He "*gave Himself a ransom FOR ALL*" (1 Tim. ii. 6). And we further read that royal proclamation, the Bible in miniature as Martin Luther styled 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). There is forgiveness and salvation for all,—white or black, English or German, French or Russian, emperor or peasant, general or private,—for Christ died for ALL. Glorious news!

Then Elijah built a trench round his altar, and commanded that four barrels of water should be thrice poured over the sacrifice, twelve barrels in all. Four is the number of what is universal, and three speaks of full testimony. Did Elijah's action mean that God's grace would spread out world-wide? We know not, but we do know, whether his action meant this or not, that God's grace has spread world-wide.

Now consider the scene. A blazing sun. A scorched, parched ground. A blue sky without a fleck on it. The baffled priests of Baal, forbidding and menacing in aspect. The thousands of Israel standing with chastened hearts and exercised minds, for we read the Lord had turned their hearts back again to Himself. ..

There stood the prophet with upturned face and reverent mien. He prays. Short, reverent, confident are his words—a contrast to the frenzied babel of the priests of Baal, when they uttered

in vain their incantations. He prayed, "*Lord God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word. Hear me, O'Lord, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the Lord God, and that Thou hast turned their heart back again.*"

One thing was certain. There was nothing in the sacrifice to attract the fire of God's judgment. All around was as tinder, matchwood, ready fuel for the flame. There stood the guilty sinners of Israel. Surely if the fire of judgment flashed from God it would fall on them. A sacrifice saturated with water was the last thing the fire, in the natural course of things, was likely to touch.

And oh ! sinner, let me pray your most careful attention, for this infinitely concerns you. Let me bid you look at Calvary. Who hangs on yonder cross ? Jesus, the Son of God, the Holy One of God. Who stands around that cross, thirsting for the blood of One who did no greater crime than to bring the love of God into this world, to bless, to save, to do naught but good, aye, to die for His enemies ? See the multitudes—Jew and Gentile, cultured high priest and rude soldier, learned scribe and Pharisee, and the common crowd. With one accord they fill the air with their frightful cry, "*Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas*" (Luke xxiii. 18).

Hundreds of years have rolled by, and you were unborn when that crime of the universe was per-

petrated. Look again. I was represented there. You, yes, YOU were represented there. Take your place of guilt, as I have done, or else the day will come when *you* will be charged with the guilt of the murder of the Son of God. "*He that is not with Me is against Me*" (Matt. xii. 30) defines your ground.

Where, think you, should the judgment of God fall? Upon the spotless Son of God, or you, the guilty sinner? Give yourself the answer to this question fearlessly. I make bold to say that never did the Son of God delight the heart of God more than when He proved His devotedness to His will by dying on that cross. And never did men more deserve judgment than when they crucified the Lord of Glory. And from that day to this men are mostly absolutely indifferent or actively opposed to that precious Saviour. Are you one such?

As Elijah ceased praying, "*The fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.*"

THE SACRIFICE WAS ACCEPTED.

Remember there is no blessing apart from sacrifice.

And in a far higher way than what could be said of Elijah's sacrifice, can we not say that

GOD HAS ACCEPTED THE SACRIFICE,

even the death of His beloved Son? The fire of His wrath fell on this spotless Victim. If He had to cry in the anguish of His heart, "*My God, My God, why*

hast Thou forsaken Me?" He likewise cried aloud in triumph, "*It is finished.*" THE VICTIM BECAME THE VICTOR. By dying He slew death. By surrender He overcame the foe.

And what was the outcome of God's act in the acceptance of Elijah's sacrifice. Twofold—"And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, '*The Lord, He is the God; the Lord, He is the God.*'" On the other hand, the defeated prophets of Baal were silent. No word apparently escaped their lips.

The results were twofold, I repeat. Repentant Israel cried aloud in confession. The unrepentant false prophets of Baal maintained a defiant silence. Israel discovered that God had accepted the sacrifice, and in their bowing to the truth of this they escaped the judgment. But the false prophets were silent. They refused to bow to God's acceptance of Elijah's challenge, "*The God that answereth by fire, let Him be God.*" Short work was made of them and their rebellion. Elijah said, "*Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.*" Judgment fell upon them because they rejected the sacrifice on which the fire, emblem of judgment, fell.

So shall it be with the gospel. Reader, it will either seal your blessing, or your doom; it will either open the gates of heaven for you, or close the gates of hell upon you. Which shall it be? Do you keep silent? Let me entreat of you to look at things

differently. But remember, no mere word of the lips can work any charm, no mere acquiescence with the tongue can prove a blessing, lip-service is of no account in God's sight.

But when the lips give expression to what is in the heart, begotten by repentance and self-judgment in the presence of the cross of Christ, blessing follows. Hear the plain testimony of Scripture:—

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, THOU SHALT BE SAVED."

"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. x. 9, 10).

The way of salvation is plain: only through the accepted sacrifice of Christ can salvation be yours.

On the other hand, how clear is it that if God spared not His well-beloved Son when He voluntarily took the sinner's place, He certainly will not spare the sinner who, in addition to a life of carelessness and sin, adds the audacious crime of rejecting God's salvation. *"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"* (Heb. vi. 2).

"How long halt ye between two opinions?" There may be neutrality in a European war, and that is difficult for nations whose territory adjoins those countries which are fighting, but *there can be no neutrality in these matters.* You are either *for* or *against.* There can be no middle ground. Decision is the great thing that is needed.

IT SUDDENLY SNAPPED.

IT is the morning shift, when some six hundred men are gathered round the shaft of one of the great South Yorkshire collieries waiting to descend to their work.

Eight men take their places in the cage, and are swiftly lowered into the pit. The cage returns, and another eight descend. The third time the cage is at the surface. Eight more men take their places in it.

Was there one amongst those hundreds who doubted for a moment the strength of that steel rope as it flew swiftly over the whirling wheels? Not one. The cage goes down again, and the engineer, with his eye on the indicator, sees that it is within about sixty yards of the bottom when there is a violent oscillation of the rope, a jingle of signal bells, and hundreds of faces are blanched with fright. What has happened?

The steel rope has suddenly snapped, and seven of the occupants of the cage are launched into eternity.

Friend, should you be called on just as suddenly to leave this world, how would it fare with you?

Oh, you reply, I am not afraid to die! Possibly not, but what about AFTER death? Can you bear the thought that you will have to meet God? Reflect that with those very eyes with which you read this paper you shall see the Lord Jesus, the Judge upon the throne, for God has declared that "*every eye shall see Him*" (Rev. i. 7).

Yes, says another, but there is plenty of time.

With those very words on his lips many an unbeliever has found himself unexpectedly in a Christless eternity to find that though there might be plenty of time for others, HE was just too late. May this *not* be your experience.

Wake up, sinner, we implore you, to the fact that you are hastening on, that every heart beat brings you nearer to——what? Nearer to meeting God, nearer to meeting that blessed Jesus whom you now despise, but meeting ~~Him~~, not then as Saviour, but as Judge (see Acts xvii. 31), to hear from His lips those awful words, "Depart from Me," and to pass from thence into the blackness of darkness FOR EVER, where "their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark ix. 44).

Sinner, wouldest thou escape? Listen, then, to the voice of that blessed Saviour on Calvary's cross, crying, "IT IS FINISHED" (John xix. 30). What is finished? That mighty work that the Lord Jesus Christ came to do. On the cross God poured out upon Him all His righteous judgment against sin—God forsook His own blessed Son because of our sins (see Matt. xxvii. 46), and when the storm of God's judgment was exhausted Jesus cried aloud, "IT IS FINISHED," and gave up the ghost.

Oh! sinner, never was a more wonderful sight. The Lord of life and glory dying for *your* sins. God's righteous sentence is carried out, and the One who bore the sins has died.

But joyful news! He is not dead now. No! so

complete, so perfect was the sacrifice, so fully was God's righteousness vindicated in the death of the Sin-bearer that God could raise Him from the dead in proof of His perfect delight, and set Him at His own right hand in glory, exalted—a Prince and a Saviour.

Therefore if Jesus took the believer's sins into death, and is now in heaven without them, it is very certain that the believer's sins are gone.

It is so simple! All that is required is that you should own to God your true condition—own that Jesus, the spotless Substitute, died on Calvary's cross in your stead. Do this, and a joy, a happiness you never knew will be yours, for, listen!—"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" (Rom. x. 9). And again, "He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life" (John vi. 47).

Close in then with God's offer now. Take Jesus as your Saviour, and go on your way rejoicing, then it will matter not how suddenly the thread of your life be snapped, for death will simply usher you into the Lord's presence, to enter into "fullness of joy." Sinner, do not put it off! Do not trifle!

"Life at least is very brief,
Like the binding of a sheaf,
Like the falling of a leaf,
Be in time.

Sinner, heed the warning voice,
Make the Lord your happy choice,
Then all heaven will rejoice,
Be in time."

PLENTY AT HOME.

"**W**ELL, really, I must ask you to excuse me, for we have *plenty at home*," was the lady's reply when asked to receive a copy of the *Gospel Messenger*.

It may be that you, like the lady, have *plenty at home*; plenty of Bibles, plenty of Gospel books, plenty of opportunities of hearing God's gracious message of forgiveness, but are you saved? Are your sins forgiven? If not, the very plenty around you will only condemn you before God. Then in other respects multitudes allow "*plenty at home*" to blind their eyes to what is beyond this life.

"*Plenty at home.*" So thought the rich man of Luke xii. when, having built greater barns and filled them, he said to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." But God said unto him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

"*Plenty at home.*" So thought the rich man of Luke xvi. who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. "The rich man . . . died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments." His plenty a thing of the past, he now begs for a drop of water to cool his parched tongue, but he found it was too late even for that. Want, not plenty, was his eternal portion.

"Plenty at home." So thought the prodigal of Luke xv. when he found himself at the swine trough, after having turned his back upon his father, and travelled into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. But what a mistake he made.

"Plenty at home." So he found when, having spent all, he came to himself and said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." Plenty of *welcome*, for the father ran to meet him. Plenty of *forgiveness*, for the father fell on his neck, and kissed him. Plenty of *clothing*, for the father said, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him." Plenty of *feasting*, for the fatted calf, music and dancing all awaited him.

And reader, there is no need for you to remain in the land of dearth, in your sins, and away from God. A wondrous welcome; full forgiveness, Christ as your fitness, feasting, and merriment, all await you, if you will but turn to God in repentance and faith. Plenty, poor sinner, there is for you, and all is free. But at what a cost it is all procured. Nothing less than the death and blood-shedding of God's beloved Son secured the offer of these blessings to you.

"If sinners ever were to know
The depths of love divine,
All Calvary's weakness and its woe,
Blest Saviour, must be Thine."

The work has all been done, Christ is risen from

among the dead. God has been met, and more than satisfied about the question of sin.

"Delay not. All things are ready. Come."

"But," says some poor procrastinator, "there is plenty of time yet."

Yes, reader, *plenty of time* to die in your sins, *plenty of time* to be lost for ever, *plenty of time* to know the death, hell, and torment of the rich man.

But to be saved! "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

J. H.

A GENUINE CONVERSION.

WHATEVER men may say or think about the Bible and Christianity, the fact of conversion cannot be ignored or explained away.

However men may try to explain it away, the fact stands—clear and unassailable. It produces not simply a change, but a revolution in character. No moral treatise, no medicine, no Act of Parliament, no improved environment can change a radically bad man into a radically good man. But the Gospel can and does reclaim the habitual drunkard, uplift the fallen, and even transforms the criminal into a useful member of society, whilst the mere professor when converted becomes a real possessor through its power.

J—A— of S— is a remarkable instance of this miraculous power which the Gospel of God possesses. Naturally headstrong and impetuous, he

early went astray, and fell into open sin. Like many a promising young fellow, he was not proof against the alluring "pleasures of sin," and with all his heart he went in for them. His physical prowess was such that for years he held the boxing championship of the district, and the godless society into which he was thrown drew him farther and farther away from God.

But God had His eye of compassion upon him. It was at an open-air preaching that he first remembers being greatly moved about his soul's eternal interests. The meeting was held at the street corner, and our friend lingered to the close. He was "almost persuaded," but the "pleasures of sin" had not yet lost their charm, and after a struggle he turned from the Saviour's pleadings to plunge only deeper into the vortex of sin. For years he tried to stifle the voice of conscience by throwing himself into gambling, drink, and almost every form of vice.

He told me that as he now looks back on his past life, his deepest feeling is one of haunting, vain regret that he did not decide for Christ on that memorable evening. What burning shame, what degradation, what remorse he would have escaped had he then taken the gift of God!

Young reader, be warned! Decide for Christ *in thy youth*. "*Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation*" (2 Cor. vi. 2). Even should you eventually be converted, you will never cease to regret that you withheld the best of your years from God.

As the years went by, J—— A—— sank deeper and deeper in the mire of sin. Often the week-end, day and night, was spent at the card table, whilst his dissipation brought him to the verge of delirium tremens. Yet in his sober moments he was a keen man of business.

One Sunday, in his forty-sixth year, he unaccountably wandered into a building where he heard a faithful preacher of the Gospel speak about the efficacy of the blood of Christ. The thought struck him, "*I'm not sheltered by the precious blood: the wrath of God hangs over me,*" and for three months he was profoundly miserable. Then someone lent him a well-known book, "The Traveller's Guide from Death to Life," and a short exposition of John iii. 18 was used to his conversion. The peace-giving words God used were—"He that BELIEVETH on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already." "Well!" said he, "*I believe on Him, therefore I'm not condemned. Thank God! I've got it!*"

At once he sought his wife, and told her the good news. Soon she, too, was rejoicing "in a new-found gladness."

From that day, over six years ago, J—— A—— has gone on telling others of the Saviour who has saved him, and God has wonderfully used him in soul-winning. Some of his former associates, seeing his transformed life, and hearing his joyful testimony, were likewise induced to "taste and see that the Lord is good."

Reader, what about your soul?

You may not have been a drunken profligate like J—— A——, but you need converting every bit as much as he.

"Except ye be CONVERTED, and become as little children, ye shall NOT enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 3).

"But 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 the Lord Jesus, and shalt BELIEVE in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be SAVED" (Rom. x. 8, 9).

E. A. M.

"THE VERY THING FOR MY NEIGHBOUR."

SOME years ago the writer gave an elderly well-to-do farmer from Kent, who was on a visit to a patient of his, a little Gospel tract, and sought to press upon him the great importance of his getting right with God at once, in view of the endless eternity which was fast approaching.

The old gentleman received it, as well as his remarks, in a kindly and apparently interested manner, but the day following, on his calling at his patient's house, he was met by the old gentleman,

whose acquaintance he had made the day before, and was somewhat surprised by his coming to him quite excitedly, with the air of a man who was conscious of having undoubtedly made a real discovery, saying, "The very thing for my neighbour! That little book, sir, you gave me yesterday was the very thing for *my neighbour*; it must have been writ on purpose for him."

This poor man evidently thought his *neighbour* really needed salvation, but he appeared not to have the faintest idea that he was equally in need of it. And truly this is the state of thousands of people in this day.

Pardon me, my reader, but possibly *you yourself* may be of this class, who think they see great spiritual need in *others*, but being blinded by the god of this world, they are self-satisfied and have no personal soul-need. The minister may say, "This morning's sermon was 'the very thing' for my parishioners." His wife replies, "Yes, my dear, and for the one who preached it also." The parishioners say, "What a pity it is that our person does not act up to what he preaches." Wives see a great need in their husbands; husbands in their wives; parents in their children, and children in their parents; masters and mistresses see great shortcomings in their servants, and servants are no less quick to see the failures of those who employ them; and nearly all see and deplore the sins of *their neighbours*. But few! oh, how few! see their own guilty and lost condition.

But, dear reader, face this all-important matter, we implore you, now, at this moment. It is the only one you can call your own, for if you have not been "justified," you are still guilty before God—a lost sinner. The Word of God declares, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. xviii. 20); "The wicked shall be turned into hell" (Ps. ix. 17); "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. vii. 23); and you must surely see that you are included in these scriptures. It is not a fact, but only a device of Satan, that man must commit some terrible sin, according to man's thoughts, in order to be lost.

No. That is his condition at the commencement of his sinful course. "He is condemned already" (John iii. 18), and must get out of that lost condition, and be saved, or he will be eternally lost. But good news has come to man! blessed news! "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10).

Possibly, dear reader, in heart you are saying, "Yes, but how is this salvation to be reached? There is nothing on earth I desire so much as to be saved and to know it." We reply, Treat God as you would have people treat you; that is, be honest with Him.

A young person said to us recently, "I have lately been troubled about myself. God has shown me myself just as I am, and the need of a new heart. I have spent nineteen years without God." This gave the opportunity of quoting, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came

into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15); "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 were healed" (Isa. liii. 5); "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts xvi. 31). Her face brightened as with much feeling she said, "Oh! I see it." We then said, If you take heed to what we say you will never allow a single doubt in your heart again.

Now listen. When the Lord's friends had forsaken Him and fled, and His enemies had got Him as they thought in their power, and having heaped every indignity upon Him it was possible for Satan or man to devise, even to spitting in His face! they nailed Him to the accursed tree. There the believer's sins were laid upon Him, and He who knew no sin was made sin for us. When in this terrible pain of body and awful suffering of soul He turned to God, what did God do? He turned His face from Him! It was this that extorted that agonising cry, "*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*" (Mark xv. 34).

Now do you know *why* God thus hid His face from Christ? Was He less dear to Him than He had ever been? By no means. He was never more dear to the Father, surely, than during those awful hours. But as the Sin-bearer He was forsaken of God.

You see how that iniquities were laid upon Him, and it was on account of those very sins

being upon Him that God could not look upon His well-beloved Son. The blessed Lord then cried out, "It is finished" (John xix. 30), and He bowed His head and gave up the ghost. But what was "finished"? Why, the work for man's redemption was accomplished. Blessed be God. Nothing can now be added to a "finished" work.

But to return to our point. When Christ was on Calvary He had sins upon Him, and God being too pure to behold iniquity, He could not look upon Him. Man now took Jesus down from the cross, and laid Him in that new sepulchre, His enemies putting a seal and setting a watch, doubtless thinking to keep Him there.

After this came poor, ignorant, but warm-hearted Mary upon the scene. Her heart was full, almost to breaking. "They have taken away my Lord," she said, "and I know not where they have laid Him." Man thought a sepulchre good enough for God's beloved Son, but blessed be His Holy Name! nothing short of the highest place with Himself in glory would suit the heart of His God and Father. So He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand on His own throne, being perfectly satisfied with that wonderful work, and delighted with the Blessed Workman.

If, then, a question should ever arise in your heart, Is it all right? where would you look to be assured of this? Well, the devil would tell you to look *within*, and if you did so you would see a very bad self, one who has bad thoughts, bad desires, and so

on. He would then say, "There now! you have made a great mistake: you are not saved at all; why, dear me, you don't think saved people ever have thoughts like yours!"

It is quite true we ought not to have bad thoughts. But how is it we get them? Why, by taking our eye off that blessed Saviour of ours. The fact is, we are far too bad to look at, and when we can have our Lord for constant heart-occupation, we are stupid indeed to look at such poor things as ourselves.

But in case the question should arise, Is it all right? where are we to look, to be perfectly sure that everything that was against us is removed for ever? Why, truly, we must look to the right hand of God. Christ is there. No question about that. Well then, if, when He had our sins upon Him on Calvary, God could not look upon Him on that account, surely He could not have Him at His right hand in glory if one sin, one spot remained upon Him.

Where are our sins, then? God says, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins" (Isa. xliv. 22); "For Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back" (Isa. xxxvii. 17). Again, "Cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah vii. 19); "And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. viii. 12).

Now, beloved reader, are you going to lay this aside with the remark, "The very thing for my neighbour"? or can you say, It is the very thing for ME?

THE FOUR COURTS.

IN the city of Dublin there is a massive building called the Four Courts. It constitutes the principal Law Courts of Ireland, and is one of the buildings in Dublin which visitors rarely omit seeing. This rather striking name, "*Four Courts*," caused me to consider the Four Courts which the saved sinner is passed through in the history of his soul.

I would usher my reader, without further delay, into

COURT No. 1.

This Court is called *The Criminal Court*. We pass from the prison cell to the bar of justice, in the clutches of that rather uncouth constable with stern, unbending countenance, who is called *Conscience*. He it is who reminds us of our offences and sins, and causes us moments—aye, hours—of soul-trouble.

Reader, if unsaved, it is your turn to stand in the dock. The witnesses are brought forward, and as custom demands they are all sworn in, and the indictment is read. They must tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Witness No. 1. Your throat.

Evidence. His throat is an open sepulchre (see Rom. iii. 13).

Witness No. 2. Your tongue.

Evidence. His tongue has used deceit (see Rom. iii. 13).

Witness No. 3. The lips.

Evidence. The poison of asps is under his lips (see Rom. iii. 13).

Witness No. 4. The mouth.

Evidence. His mouth is full of cursing and bitterness (see Rom. iii. 14).

Witness No. 5. The feet.

Evidence. His feet are swift to shed blood (see Rom. iii. 15).

Now let the prisoner speak for himself. Reader, what have you got to say? You claim that you've got a *good* heart. We will not shrink from examining it. Let us hear the verdict of Him who makes no mistakes. Under the all-searching eyes of the Judge the whole truth is revealed. Here is the verdict of unerring truth—

His heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked (see Jer. xvii. 9).

The fact is, you have not a leg to stand upon. Every member of your body condemns you. Your own flesh abhors you. You hang your head, and one word alone can truthfully pass your otherwise speechless lips—GUILTY. Is this not so? But now comes in the strange part of the story. If you plead guilty at man's bar you are at once condemned. If you plead guilty at God's a free, unconditional pardon is offered you. We read, "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a

propitiation [mercy-seat] through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness. . . . that He might be just and the Justifier of him which believed in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24-26). What wondrous grace!

Let us cross now into

COURT No. II.

It is called *The Bankruptcy Court*. Here we find those who were once set up in business, but have found themselves unable to continue: they cannot pay twenty shillings in the pound, so have been obliged to file their petition. They have no power to go on. Many a recently converted soul has said, "Well, though I'm saved, I feel I have no power to go on for God. I feel bankrupt of any power."

Fear not, the man described in Luke x., whose wounds the Lord bound up, pouring in oil and wine, had in addition the Good Samaritan's own beast to carry him along, a hotel to stay in, and all his hotel expenses paid. Oh! wondrous "extras" of grace. "Whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee," said the Good Samaritan to the host of the inn. So, believing soul, God gives His Spirit to carry the believer through every difficulty and trial, and lays open all the resources of his treasure house to the believer. There need be no Bankruptcy Court for one of the Lord's people. The Lord Jesus is "able to save them unto the uttermost that come to God by Him" (Heb. vii. 25).

Let us pass now into

COURT No. III.

Let us call it *The Court of Petitions*. Here you can tell the Lord what presses on your heart. Here you can roll upon Him all your care, for He careth for you : "Be careful for nothing ; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 6). What a resource in a time of stress, of anxiety, of perplexity.

There is one more Court,

COURT No. IV.

Let us call it *The Court of Love* (such is not found on the earth). Its joys are only known by those who love the Lord, and are outside this world altogether. We may well sing :

"Who, in thy palaces of love,
Thy golden streets have trod ?"

"He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me was Love" (Song of Sol. ii. 4).

This is the climax of grace. Look up and down the Court. What gracious provision of God's own purpose, and love is spread before the believer's ravished eyes ! Who would not be a Christian ?

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

“HAPPY! YES, HAPPY!”

A WAY down one of the busy thoroughfares of a poor part of London, on a Saturday evening, might have been seen an old coster's barrow, with its owner not far away, the latter endeavouring to effect a few sales to enable him to pay the rent of his room, and obtain the necessaries of this life. When I first met him he must have been about seventy, and was very deaf and feeble.

But saddest of all, he knew not a Saviour's love, fast bordering on the verge of eternity as he was. Poor old fellow, I fancy I see him now, standing by his stall, hoping to sell some of his little articles.

One night amongst the busy throng there wended his way a Christian man, seeking to be used by his Master. Coming up to our friend the costermonger's stall, he stopped for a moment, out of passing curiosity, to look at the wares displayed. Soon up came the old coster, “Anything you'd like, sir?”

My friend put his hand in his pocket, and bought one or two things; then offering the old man a book he said, “Will you accept a message from God, my friend? It is a good message He sends you.”

The old man nodded a sort of respectful assent, and replied, “I can't read, sir.” This remark led to some conversation on eternal things, and my friend left with a promise to call and see him at his lodgings.

The promise was soon fulfilled. What a room it was ! A bed, a broken box, and a picture, in a stuffy room none too clean, comprised all the furniture. Yet that man shortly became the possessor of something that brought joy, peace, and happiness into his life such as he had never known before. It was the knowledge that God loved him, that the Lord Jesus had died for him, a poor, helpless old man on the verge of eternity in his sins.

One day the Christian visitor went up the rickety staircase, and pushed open the door ; there sat the old coster, leaning over what was practically an empty grate, with a small saucepan half-full of luke-warm tea, and a few crusts of dry bread for his dinner. If anyone should be miserable then it might well be he.

Unheard and unseen by the old man, the visitor made his way up to him, and asked him how he was.

" Happy ; yes, happy," came the quick reply from a surprised and beaming face at seeing his welcome visitor once more.

The knowledge of Christ had lit up this man's life in a most wonderful way, and, dear reader, it will light up your life if you will accept God's gift. God loves you. Here was a poor old man with next to nothing in the world, yet marvellously happy and peaceful, and who died, trusting in Christ, a year or so afterwards. You, in much better circumstances are not anything like so happy. Why is it ? Is it because you are without Christ ?

L. A. A.

DANIEL AT BABYLON.

AN ADDRESS TO YOUNG MEN.

(Read Daniel i.-vi.)

THE prophet Daniel's personal history as a man, as a saint, and as a servant of God, is intensely interesting. When the prophet's history begins in Babylon he was a captive. The first thing that strikes us, as we read the story, is that, as he looked round, he must have felt that everything was gone, and there was little for him to do. "Here am I, a captive in a strange city, what can I be or do?" we can easily understand his saying. If he had not been made of the stuff that he was he would have gone with the tide. The tide of the world was running tremendously strong in Babylon. But here is a man, who has enough grit to take his stand for God. The meaning of his name is interesting, "*God is judge.*" He walked before God.

Chapter i. shows us Daniel as a student at Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar, the king, for his own purpose, tells the master of his eunuchs that he should take charge of certain of the children of Israel of the king's seed, and of the princes, and then indicates what kind of an education they should go through. We are there told of Daniel's preliminary examination, his curriculum, that which he was to feed upon, while his character developed, and in the close of the chapter you

have his final examination and place in class. He and his three comrades came out at the top of the class.

I have heard it said that if a man be a Christian, he must necessarily be a milksop. That is absolute nonsense. Don't you believe it. A man that is a downright Christian is the happiest of men, and it is wonderful what God can do with him.

You will find, as you read this man's history, how, step by step, he is promoted, until he is made "chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon." That is where he comes in for his deepest trials, at the close of his history.

Daniel's "preliminary examination" was a matter of what he was personally. Nebuchadnezzar was a keen judge of character. He demanded certain qualities in his students, and Daniel passed this examination (see chap. i. 4). Because you are a Christian, you need not be a fool. Because you are on the Lord's side there is no necessity for lacking anything that a man should be, as a man, passing through this world. God has given to us all gifts, more or less, and each one according to his several ability (see Matt. xxv. 14-15). I do not doubt that God took into account the mental and physical ability of this fine young man. The next thing is that he is appointed "a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank" (ver. 5), so that at the end of three years—the length of his curriculum—he might stand before the king.

But the moment Daniel sees what is before him,

he begins to feel, "Well, I belong to God, and I know Jehovah has got certain principles and lines for His servant." He had not forgotten what he had learned as a youth in Judea, that is to say, he knew the Scriptures.

I think one great lack to-day is, that young men have not been taught the Scriptures as children. Hence they do not know the Scriptures. Further, there is not on their own part the study of the Scriptures there might be, and which there should be. Timothy was told, "that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures" (2 Tim. iii. 15). The fact is, the character of things in this respect to-day is immensely and sadly altered. When I was an unconverted lad, I remember my dear mother somehow instilled into my mind, as a child, that there was something very wonderful in the Bible, and, although I did not know Christ—for I was not converted as a child—they tell me I used, after breakfast in the morning, to get hold of the big family Bible my father had been reading in, and I would squat, cross-legged like a Turk, under the dining-room table, with the old book on my knees, and there I pored over the Old Testament stories. I attribute a good deal of the little I do know to the early training my dear mother, now in glory, gave me. If any of you here to-night are fathers, see that you instruct your young ones in the Scriptures. Inculcate the value of them, and beget, if you can, in their hearts a desire to learn and know the Scriptures, and possibly your son may turn out a hundredfold better than his father.

When we come to verse 8, we find Daniel beginning to show what kind of a youth he was. The truth he had learned, as a Jew, greatly influenced him, and we read, "But Daniel **PURPOSED** in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank." He had a good chance of eating and drinking, and most men are generally governed by their appetites, so there was real temptation in Daniel's path. Do not pretend to be men that are not influenced by this. We are so constituted that we are so influenced, but here comes in the opportunity for self-denial. That is where purpose shows itself.

Barnabas exhorted the Antiochan converts "that with **PURPOSE OF HEART** they would cleave unto the Lord" (Acts xi. 23). I exhort you to-night with purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord.

Purpose is a grand thing. We are far too much like those jelly-fish that you may see when you go to the seaside in the summer time. You say, "Oh! yes, they are very pretty." True, but mark, every wave moves them. Young men to-day—lots of them—are just like jelly-fish. They are moved by whatever comes along.

Now, I ask you honestly, as you weigh up your own history and cast a retrospective look at your life, do you think, my beloved young fellow-Christian, that you have been, like Daniel, a man of purpose? Remember, the man that, when tempted, can say "No" is the man for a day of difficulty.

If you will take the trouble to read what God told

His earthly people in Leviticus vii., xi., and xxii., you will find the kind of food that God said His people were to eat and what they were not to eat. Then again you will find in Numbers vi., the story of the Nazarite, the man who denied himself wine from the day of his birth.

Now Daniel knew all this, doubtless, and he says, as it were, "I am not going to act on the world's lines." In plain language, he was a separate man. He had this conviction that Scripture must be obeyed, and that heathen ways—even as to food—did not suit a man who belonged to God, so he declined therefore to take the king's meat and drink, or to act exactly like the world about him. A *separate* man will very soon be an *enlightened* man, and the enlightened man will be the *useful* man, and the useful man will be the *preserved* man.

Time went on, and Daniel fed on pulse and drank water—exceedingly plain fare. Let us apply this simple truth. You will find, as Christians, that what you feed on will form you. I mean what you read. The reading of to-day immensely forms men's minds. It forms your feelings too. If you are feeding on the thoughts and writings of men all around you to-day, do you think you are going to grow spiritually? Certainly not. You will have to be careful what you are feeding your soul on. You will not be the worse, but much the better for carrying with you a small pocket Bible. That is where the spirit of God will turn you to, to enlighten you, to feed you, and refresh you.

Well, David's curriculum came to a close. Of all the places in the world, where would you have expected to find a man of God who could unfold the mind of God? Most certainly not in Babylon. Babylon, the world's then metropolis, was the last place where you would have expected to find a man like Daniel. But there was God's man, and at the end of the three years Daniel and his fellows come in before the king, Nebuchadnezzar, who evidently examined his students himself. Among them all was found none like Daniel and his companions, "therefore stood they before the king" (ver. 19). "In all matters of wisdom and understanding that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm" (ver. 20).

I like to see the men that come out at the top. If you are in for some examination, it is no evidence of Christianity for you to be at the bottom of the class. When I was a student, over fifty years ago, at King's College, London, the Lord helped me to hoist my flag a little for Christ, and it leaked out that I preached the Gospel. The godless students, of course, laughed, jeered, and then dubbed me "Spurgeon." When they had had their little go at me it was my turn, and I turned the Gospel guns on them, till by and by they gave me a pretty wide berth. They all took for granted that "Spurgeon" was a numskull, and would surely be at the bottom of the classes. Well, they were surprised. They

did not get all the prizes, for the Lord greatly helped me, blessed be His name.

It is certain that the Lord helped Daniel, and that explains why he comes out here at the top of the class. I do not know whether you have noticed a striking verse—"I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation" (Ps. cxix. 99). That was the culminating point Daniel and his three companions reached here. Top of all in their class, better than all in his kingdom, Nebuchadnezzar felt these four young men could be trusted, "therefore stood they before the king." They had wisdom from God.

God helps His children if they are set to be here for His glory and for His service. Daniel, separate and enlightened, is God's vessel in godless Babylon. He was God's man. Are you, where you live?

But we pass on. The next chapter is not so much Daniel's personal history, but you learn how he was used of God. What you have recorded in the second chapter takes place in the early part of King Nebuchadnezzar's reign. This monarch had a dream. He could not remember it, and most unreasonably he demands that his wise men and astrologers shall reveal the dream to him, and likewise interpret it. In despair they admit they cannot deal with this difficulty.

Nebuchadnezzar was evidently a very hot-tempered man. Here in his hot temper he sends forth a decree, that all the wise men should be killed, Daniel included.

Now observe what Daniel does. He desired of the king that he would give him time, and he would show the interpretation. He went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions. He was a great believer in fellowship and prayer. He gets his brethren together.

First he was a separate man, next I find God helped him greatly, and he was an enlightened man. Now we find that he is a prayerful man.

What is the result of this little prayer meeting? It is a very interesting story. He goes to God with his brethren, and "then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven" (chap. ii. 19). There is something very lovely about this. When he got an understanding of the vision, he did not bolt off to Arioach, and say, "I have got it." No, he first blesses God for the revelation. Then observe how he draws his brethren in. "Thou . . . hast made known unto me what we desired of thee; for thou hast made known to us the king's matter" (ver. 23). If you can get another brother to join with you in prayer, do so. Show me three or four hearty young men who love to come together and pray, and I will show you men whom God will use. Again, show me men that are powerless, and I will show you men who will drift along through life, one day happy and the next day miserable, and really of no practical use.

W. T. P. W.

(To be concluded in our next.)

“I'LL RISK IT.”

HERE lived in the United States, some twenty-five years ago, a man who said there was no God. One day he came into the office of the place where he worked, and said to a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, who had often spoken to him of eternity and of the Lord Jesus, the Saviour of sinners, that he had decided that Jesus was a mere myth.

It was a busy day in the office, and the believer, who knew that his sins were forgiven through the precious blood of Christ, was a little perplexed just for a moment how to reply. As he raised his eyes and looked about the office he saw many calendars hanging on the walls.

“Why, man,” he said, “look at that year on these calendars. It does not commemorate the birth of some great potentate of this world, but speaks of the lowly Jesus, the blessed Son of God, our Saviour.”

Without one word the scoffer turned, and went out of the office.

This same believer had a dream about this man, and in the dream he saw his face after death, and he heard him say, “Oh! how disappointed I am.”

In speaking to him about it afterwards, he said to him, “And your face showed how disappointed you were.”

He answered, “I'll risk it.”

Shortly before his death this same believer called to see him, and was speaking to him again of eternity.

He said to him, "It is all settled, I don't care to hear any more of these things."

A universalist minister had called, and told him he was all right, and the one who had pleaded with him so often had to record the sad fact that he died as he had lived.

Dear reader, are *you* risking it, or will you turn to the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, whose precious blood cleanseth from all sin, and be enabled to say through grace—

"On Christ, the solid rock, I stand—
All other ground is sinking sand"?

T. F.

FRUSTRATED PROSPECTS.

A SHORT time ago an accident occurred by the collision of a motor cycle and motor car. A young man, the owner of the motor cycle, had both his legs broken. A friend and I, who happened to see the accident, took him to the hospital of the town in which it occurred. After suffering for five weeks, and having all that money and skill could provide, he died.

How sad that the work of a few moments should have such terrible results. Let me tell you a little of his history, as I afterwards learnt it from his own brother.

His father died when he was seventeen years old;

he then became the main support of the home. Being very shrewd, he soon made his way in the world, and became a very successful man, and at the time of the accident his prospects seemed very bright. This summer was to have been the best he had ever had. He had made plans to have a long holiday on the Continent; but, alas! he reckoned without God, and I am very much afraid he died without hope and without God.

Oh! how many there are who leave God out of the question. They make their plans for time, and forget the long eternity which lies just ahead of them. Are you guilty of such folly, dear reader? If so, I ask you with all seriousness, as the above incident is still fresh in my memory, to consider

"Where will you spend eternity?

This question comes to you and me.

Tell me, what shall *your* answer be?

Where will *you* spend eternity?"

This is a question of the greatest importance, and it concerns you, my reader. If I were to ask you about your earthly prospects, no doubt you would be quite ready to tell me. What about your prospects for eternity? Oh! be wise and look this matter straight in the face. Your earthly career will soon have an end. Then you will launch out into a long eternity. If you have taken the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour it will be an eternity of bliss; if not, an eternity of woe.

Oh, the joy of knowing Christ as one's Saviour! Then, whether our time here be long or short, when

the call comes, to go to be with Him is our happy prospect.

You know not how soon you will have to go. Great is the folly of putting off this great question of salvation. You need this Saviour, for the Word of God declares that "all have sinned" (Rom. iii. 23), and your own conscience bears witness to this fact. Yes, you need a Saviour, who alone can cleanse away every sin.

"God could not pass the sinner by,
His sin demands that he must die ;
But in the Cross of Christ we see
How God can save, yet righteous be."

In order to be your Saviour the Lord Jesus came down and bore the judgment due to your sins on Calvary's Cross. "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 6).

It is a grand thing to be resting upon a foundation like this. God is satisfied with Jesus' work; the proof is that He has raised Him from among the dead and seated Him at His own right hand, a victorious living Saviour. Now the message goes out to all that are in their sins, "To Him give all the prophets witness that, through His name, whosoever believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). Do not, I pray you, put off any longer, but take Christ as your Saviour now, and salvation is yours for time and eternity. God grant that you may. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

THE TOUCH OF CHRIST.

THERE is a wonderful power in the human touch. The other senses may be closed, and yet the afflicted, blind, deaf and dumb—such as the late Laura Brittman, in the United States—may be taught to communicate with others through the touch. So the touch of a skilful musician can make his instrument speak as with a living voice. The touch of a wise and practical surgeon, or of an experienced nurse, can soothe the most overstrung nerves, and infuse hope into the most desponding sufferer.

If it be so with merely human beings like ourselves, this must have been far more the case with the Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Saviour, whilst He was upon earth. That this was actually so the four evangelists declare very plainly. In their records we find that His touch was marvellously effectual in healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, giving sight to the blind, making the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak, as well as in even raising the dead to life.

How often He touched men, women, and children, and then sent forth various blessings into their bodies, minds, and souls. When, too, they in their turn touched Him in faith, they drew forth from Him the greatest benefits.

But the all-important question arises, whether this contact is still possible and effectual as of old, or do we sigh in vain as “for the touch of a vanished

hand, and for the sound of a voice that is still"? No, it is rather true that in a higher spiritual sense that touch has still its ancient power, and that we are invited now to really draw near and touch Him in faith.

How remarkable were our Lord's words to Mary Magdalene, as she stood weeping by the empty tomb, and heard His gracious voice in its well-known accents calling her by name. In her first joy at the discovery she seems to have been ready to approach too closely to Him, and with reverent affection to clasp His feet. But this could not be, for He said, "Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God." Very plainly did He imply that after His ascension and the coming of the Comforter, she and all His true disciples in every age might as truly and effectively touch Him by faith as when He was on earth.

How many are now like the afflicted woman in the crowd! She had spent all her living upon physicians, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse. She had heard of the great things He had done for others, and therefore resolved to seek relief for herself. So she passed through the surging crowd until she had come up close behind Him. She hoped to steal a blessing unseen and unnoticed, through contact with his outer garments, for she said, "If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole," and as soon as she touched it, she felt in her body that she was healed of her plague.

Knowing that she had gained her purpose, she shrunk back amongst the crowd, unnoticed by others, though not by the Saviour. Perceiving that virtue had gone out of Him, He asked, "Who touched My clothes?" The disciples objected to this question; but Jesus knew the difference between the pressure of curiosity and the contact of faith.

As His loving glance fell on her, she was made to feel that she had done wrong in concealing the blessing she had received. Fearing and trembling, but knowing what was done in her, she fell down before Him and told Him all the truth. That was enough. She was dismissed with His comforting assurance, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague."

How beautifully does this incident illustrate the nature and working of saving faith. If we touch, as it were, the hem of His garment with a real sense of need, we shall receive out of His fulness all the blessings that seem to be suited to our case.

So it was with a woman who had through curiosity entered a chapel where the late Mr C. H. Spurgeon had been announced to preach. The building was crowded in every part, and she had to stand in front of the pulpit. His text was our Lord's question to Simon the Pharisee respecting the woman that was a noted sinner, "Seest thou this woman," and suiting his action to his words he pointed to the very spot where the stranger stood, although he afterwards said that he had not known or seen her at all. The arrow of conviction went straight to her conscience.

She was riveted to the spot, and felt compelled to listen to the very end. The truths she heard were applied to her heart by the Holy Spirit, and led eventually to her true conversion.

Here was a case in which the Saviour by His grace touched the outcast's soul. Like that other woman during our Lord's earthly ministry, amidst the crowd of hearers outwardly pressing around the preacher, she at least that day touched the hem of His garment, and received the blessing that she so deeply needed.

A poor Irish boy being asked, "What is saving faith?" made this admirable answer, "It is grasping Christ with the heart."

"Mark you," said a Christian sailor speaking to his shipmates about personal religion, "it is not just breaking off swearing and drunkenness. It is not only reading the Bible, or saying a few prayers, or even starting on a steady respectable life. Even if that would put things right for the future there is the old score still to be wiped out, and how shall we do that? It must surely be by first laying hold of what Jesus did and suffered for us, and accepting pardon and salvation through Him. That is believing in Him."

What the honest tar said in his plain blunt way is indeed the message of the Gospel, which alone brings light, life, and peace to the soul.

So it is that we can now touch the Saviour through faith, and be touched by Him.

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST.

(NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.)

(*Read 1 Peter i. 18; 1 John i. 7; Rom. v. 9; Heb. x. 16-22; Rev. v. 6-14.*)

EACH of these scriptures, you will notice, has something to say about the blood of Jesus. Like a scarlet thread the reference to the precious blood of Christ runs through them.

Some one may say we do not hear much about the blood nowadays. There is no mention of it in the cultured up-to-date preaching. People nowadays do not like it. It is vulgar, they say.

But in what we have read from Scripture, we find that what men call "vulgar," God calls "*precious*," and we have to face the fact that if we are to be right with God, if we are to have a title to glory, if we are to have an entrance to that home of light and love and cloudless joy, where God is, and where Christ is, it can only be by one way, and that through "the precious blood of Christ." Not by what you can do, with the efficacy of that blood thrown in; not with your prayers and piety thrown into the scale with the blood of Christ, *but by that blood ALONE*. God attaches such value to the blood of Christ that He will allow nothing to stand alongside it—absolutely nothing. There is a dignity about the precious blood of Christ that nothing can touch, and if you, up to this moment, know nothing of its efficacy, of its virtue, and of its power, may God in His grace give you to know it now.

In the five scriptures we have read together we exactly describe a circle. What we get in 1 Peter i. 18 is that we are "*not redeemed with corruptible things . . . but with the PRECIOUS blood of Christ.*" What we get in Revelation v. 6-14 is the wondrous sight of those who have been redeemed gathering round their blessed Redeemer, and singing the "new song"—the song of redemption.

Redemption has various meanings. In the first place it means that the believer is delivered from the thraldom, bondage, and slavery in which he was held. He has been delivered from the awful condition that he was in by nature and by practice. He is now to be for God's everlasting joy and satisfaction. That is what makes the Gospel such a wonderful thing.

Think of it! God looks down on poor, black, worthless, hell-deserving sinners. There was not one single thing in us to provoke the love of God, and yet He loved us, why, I cannot tell. That will be the puzzle of all eternity. He loved us so much, that He purposed to take us from our awful condition, and to place us in His presence, happy there forever.

Now, before we could be brought home to God, there remained a question to be settled, and that was the great question of sin. That was the barrier between us and God. It was sin which caused the distance between us and God. We were hastening down to a lost eternity. The cause of all misery, distress, dissatisfaction in the human heart to-day is explained in one word of three letters, S-I-N.

And while God loved us, and desired to have us in His presence, He is a righteous God, holy, of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and therefore the sin question must be settled, the dark stain of sin must be washed away. You ask, "*How can that be?*"

We get the answer in 1 John 1. 7, "*The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us FROM ALL SIN.*"

I was speaking to a man last Lord's Day afternoon. He said, "*My great difficulty is about my sins.*"

"Well," I said, "*a very real difficulty too. What about your sins?*"

"*If I only knew how to get rid of them, if I only knew how they could be removed,*" said he.

"Look here," I broke in, "read this. 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.' Do you believe that? Do you believe what God says?"

"Yes, I do."

"You believe you are a sinner?"

"Yes, I know that," he answered.

"As one who trusts in Christ, you believe the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin. Then where are your sins?" After a minute's pause, he said, "They must be gone!"

"Of course they are. Thank God, they are ALL gone," I gladly assured him.

Some of us who are converted remember when we realised all this at first. Oh, how happy we were! We had come to Jesus, we had trusted

Him, and His precious blood has put away our every sin. We were cleansed, God's Word said it, and we knew it. But how soon Satan came along, and whispered in our ear, "You think you are Christians! Fine specimens of Christians you are! Think of what you said this morning; think of what you did yesterday, and of the way you have been living these last twenty-four hours," and he pressed one charge after another, until we almost began to inquire whether we were really believers or not.

Romans v. 9 answers that question. We read that we are "*Justified by His blood.*"

What does it mean to be justified? This, that every claim that a holy God had against us, has been met so completely by "the precious blood of Christ," that every liability of ours as guilty, lost, undone sinners has been so perfectly answered by "the precious blood of Christ," that there is not a man on earth, or a devil in hell, that can bring one single charge against us before God. We are absolutely cleared of every charge.

First of all, then, we are redeemed, we are justified, but there is something still in advance of this.

What we get in Hebrews x. 16-22 is what we have been brought into—the immediate holy presence of the blessed God, to find ourselves perfectly at home there. We have to go back to the Old Testament to understand this chapter. Most of us are familiar with it, and any of you who have read your Bibles know that that which was the holiest of all in the

tabernacle was the one spot into which only one man—the high priest—could enter, and that only once a year, and he could only go in with the blood of another.

I do not think it requires any stretch of imagination to assume that when the high priest got in there he was uncommonly glad to get out again, because he himself was a sinner, and he was conscious of it.

Now, the simplest believer in Jesus is invited to enter the holiest, and is assured that he has boldness to enter there, "by the blood of Jesus." It is wonderful that God, who is the One against whom we have sinned, who is the One of whose glory we have come short, who is the only One who can, and who must, deal with sin, is the One who bids us enter.

But what about our sins? When we came to Jesus, this living, loving Saviour, we heard the God against whom we had sinned say of believers, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. x. 17). It matters not if men remember them when God forgets them.

"Let men remember, let foes accuse,
My sins are remembered no more."

God looks down on us as those whose sins have been cleansed away by the precious blood of Christ. He looks upon us as those whom He has been able to clear of every charge on the ground of "the precious blood of Christ," and we have now "boldness to enter into the holiest." On what ground? "By the blood of Jesus."

You remember that in the holiest there was the

mercy-seat covered with pure gold. Gold was the emblem of the righteousness of God. It told of His inflexible rights, of all His claims that the sinner could never meet. Looking down upon that gold there were cherubim. The cherubim were the figures of God's judgment. They were the executors of God's judgment. So to speak, they looked down upon that gold, and they demanded judgment. But what came in between the gold and the cherubim? THE BLOOD. God's eye rested upon the blood. How glorious is the anti-type. *In virtue of the precious blood of Christ* "we can enter into the holiest," to find our home in God's presence, and in God's love, to find our delight in praise and worship, to find our everlasting joy in that One who shed His precious blood.

Now we come to Revelation v. There we get God's purpose fulfilled. As I said at the beginning, we were redeemed from the slavery and the bondage that we were in, that we might be brought right home to God. Get hold of it! We are going to spend eternity where there is fulness of joy in His presence.

In Revelation v. we have the blessed Lord Jesus described as a Lamb, as it had been slain. So you see at once the connection between our first and last scriptures, "A Lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world" (1 Pet. i. 19, 20). Right away back in the past vista of eternity, God had His eye on that Lamb. In the eternity into

which we are about to enter there is going to be an innumerable company, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, cleansed from their sins by His precious blood, not one stain of guilt upon them. In the perfect likeness of Christ Himself they will gaze upon the One who died for them, who poured forth His precious blood to redeem them.

They will see in His side the very spear wounds from which that blood flowed, and the heavens will resound with praise as they sing, "*Thou art worthy.*"

They will be there from every clime, nation, people, and tongue. Are you going to join in that song of redemption and praise, worship and adoration to the Lamb that was slain, to that One who shed His blood?

Dear friends, you may have your sins put away, you may enter into the holiest, and find your home of joy and delight in the presence of God, in virtue of that precious blood. Trust it now. Trust it now, for your soul's sake. Amen.

W. B. D.

THAT AWFUL "BUT."

"**B**UT he was a leper" (2 Kings v. 1). Ah! friend, there is a "but," too, in your history, so that whatever may be the extent of your good qualities in the sight of men, they are all more than nullified in the sight of God, by this one thing.

Here was Naaman, a great warrior, honoured of God in his generalship, greatly favoured by the king, his master, "*but*"—and this "**BUT**" cast a dark cloud over everything—"BUT *he was a leper.*"

In leprosy we have an illustration of the defiling nature of sin. As a leper, Naaman was a figure of what *you are*, my unsaved reader, viz., a sinner in God's holy sight.

It is dreadfully humbling to human pride to be told that depravity is the inherent quality of the human heart; to be informed that the best the unsaved sinner can do is hopelessly defiled and unholy; that, indeed, the spring of all his actions and the impulses of his soul are abomination in the sight of God.

Yes, you may be amiable, refined, educated, accomplished, *but* you are a sinner. You have a nature capable of every wickedness under the sun, your inner being is corrupt, and *unimprovable*.

Well, Naaman heard of God's prophet, and armed with a letter from the King of Syria, he travelled a long distance to the King of Israel to be healed. But he had come to the *wrong person*—he went to the king instead of to God's prophet. In this he has many followers to-day. Some sense of need is stirred up in the soul, and some effort is made for a remedy. So in all the pomp of the sinner's pride he often seeks to this great man or that, that great preacher, or this thing with a great name in the world. These often only tickle the ear, and lead captive the imagination, but cannot even tell the

remedy for sins ; often, alas ! in these days of Higher Criticism and New Theology, so widely spread to-day, they know it not for themselves. They deal with externals, not with the heart ; they speak of reforming, of whitening the outside of the sepulchre, but the deeper question of the malady and corruption of SIN, they cannot touch, for they know it not for themselves.

But, if in real earnest, God has His eye on the seeking soul. God's prophet hears of the king's confessed impotency, and his message to the king is, "*Let him [Naaman] come now to me.*" As the prophet of Jehovah he can tell Naaman what to do, just as one infinitely greater at a later date directed Nicodemus, the ruler of the synagogue, to where cleansing could alone be found in the memorable words : "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John iii. 14, 15).

Naaman then comes at length to Elisha's door. There he stands, expecting to be recognised as the great Syrian general. He has come now in the wrong way.

It is amazing how people expect God to save them ! It is a kind of condescending act for them to go to a gospel meeting. They patronise religion, and seem to think they would be an acquisition to heaven's ranks instead of a mass of corruption that would pollute heaven itself.

The prophet simply sends a message by his servant

—“Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thou shalt be clean.”

The great man is amazed ! Fancy such an ignoring of *him* ! Alas ! he forgot that he was only a defiled and defiling leper.

Friend ! God sends His message to *you*, “*Wash and be clean.*” But the fountain is not Jordan ; it is that of which Jordan was a type—the precious death of Christ. That alone cleanses from all sin. Jordan is a figure of death in the Word of God, and the blood of Jesus shed in death is the fountain which God has opened for sin and for uncleanness. I know men turn away from it as Naaman did. It is a dreadfully humbling thing to have to give up all thought of being saved apart from that which proclaims you as good for nothing in yourself, and as wholly and absolutely indebted to the work of another !

But whichever way Naaman might turn, there was the fact of his leprosy staring him still in the face, and no matter to what you may turn, friend, no matter how you may kick against God’s way of blessing (and the enmity of your heart against God does prompt you to rebel against it), *there is no other way*, mark that well !

Oh ! I would say to you as Naaman’s servants said to their master—“If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it ? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be cleau ? ”

Naaman’s need at last drove him to Jordan. May the sense of your deep need drive you to the

death of the Lord Jesus Christ as the alone remedy for your state before God.

Naaman washed, and his flesh came again, according to the prophet's word, as the flesh of a little child. And now he must return to give thanks, but God's prophet will not be in any sense paid for the blessing. Naaman, with a true God-given sense of things, begs for two mules' burden of earth, in order to rear an altar to Jehovah, so that in a land of idols he may worship the true God. The picture is beautiful.

Naaman, *the leper*, becomes Naaman, *the worshipper*. Now he knows God, and knows Him as a God of mercy, as well as of power, and he will worship Him only.

Have you, as a defiled sinner, utterly unfit for God, and unable to do the smallest thing for your own cleansing, fled to Christ, and received cleansing through His precious blood?

"Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?" or are you still in the defilement of your sins?

If cleansed, have you returned to give thanks? "Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?" was a question once asked by the Lord. The Lord will miss your thanks, if, cleansed, forgiven, saved, they are not rendered.

Let it be known that Jesus has blessed you, and in this land where idols many govern the hearts and ways of men let God—the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—be the object of your heart's affection, of your adoration, and your service. F. H.

DANIEL AT BABYLON.**AN ADDRESS TO YOUNG MEN.**(PART II.)

(Read Daniel i.-vi.)

I NEVER forget that the night I was converted I got an invitation to go the next evening to a prayer meeting. That was a splendid start. If you have to do with young converts, give them a nice, warm, affectionate shake of the hand, and say, "Let us pray together, and let us praise the Lord together." It is wonderful how it works.

Why is it, nowadays, we hear people talking of not much blessing? I will tell you why. There is not much prayer. There is not so much individual and collective waiting upon God as the occasion demands. There is not the expectation of blessing.

I do want to stir your minds up, my beloved friends, over this matter, for I learn a great lesson here from Daniel. He goes to God in prayer to have revealed to him a most momentous thing, and it was revealed to him. When it is revealed, he gives God thanks, but, delightful to see, he brings his brethren in. There was nothing at all of self in Daniel. It was real fellowship. "Thou hast made known unto *us* the king's matter."

Then Daniel comes in to the king, and reveals to him what nobody else could reveal. He unfolds to Nebuchadnezzar his dream of the image of gold, &c., which stood before him in his vision, and which is

a remarkable panoramic view of the history of the world, and of the four monarchies—the Babylonish, Medio-Persian, Grecian, and Roman, that have dominated it. These empires have all gone to-day. I do not doubt but that the fourth—the Roman empire—will be revived again. Scripture tells us as much. In its last phase, that of ten kingdoms, it is illustrated by the ten toes of the great image, toes, we are told, of mingled iron and clay—the former symbolising that which is firm and rigid, militarism, no doubt, the latter, mere Socialism. We can easily see to-day how Socialism and all that kind of thing is working.

The end of other empires will be exactly the same as it was with the empire of Rome. When Rome was at its full height, people were engrossed with pleasure, money-making and the like, and they lost what marked them as a martial nation, and they were overthrown. To-day you will find it is the same thing. What has marked the young men of to-day, very, very largely? It is pleasure, and the acquisition of money so that it may be spent in pleasure.

Daniel sees the end of all this. He sees a stone, cut out without hands, falling upon the feet of the image, and destroying it. That symbolises the coming back of our Lord Jesus Christ as Son of Man to this earth in power, might, majesty, and glory. The Roman empire will come up again by and by, but it will have this remarkable feature. There will be the recognition of an imperial head, while, at the

same time, there will be ten kingdoms (Rev. xiii. and xvii.). This much Scripture tells us. Hence the value of reading the Scriptures, and knowing their meaning.

Prophecy casts light on things to come. You need not meddle with politics one bit, because a Christian belongs to heaven. It is a great thing to see that a Christian belongs to heaven. He has to go through the world, but he walks with the light of heaven illuminating for him all that is around, as well as the future.

The result of Daniel's unfolding the dream is this, that "the king made him a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors of all the wise men of Babylon" (chap. ii. 48). The king saw that he was a man of wisdom and knowledge, and could be relied upon. He was God's man in Babylon. "Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon." He did not forget his brethren in the day of his prosperity. "But Daniel sat in the gate of the king" (ver. 49). He was raised to what we should term the Bench. He was made a sort of Lord Chancellor, to give judgment in the place of the king, the most important position, perhaps, that he could occupy at that time.

We pass briefly over chapter iii., which does not give you Daniel's history. You find his companions—these three young men—were, however, greatly influenced by him. Here is a very great lesson, my

dear young fellows. You do not know what influence you have on the people round about you.

Look at the influence Daniel had on these three men. His personal influence on them was this; it made them firm, and when Nebuchadnezzar, in his impiety and folly, put up a great image of gold, and under threat of a fiery furnace commanded all to worship it, what did these three young fellows say? They said to the king, "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us. . . . But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (ver. 18). I think that is splendid. Look at it, these men with the fiery furnace facing them. What would be the harm of bowing down to worship? It is the king's command, too. But the king's command involved the denial of what was due to Jehovah, and that they could not give up, if it was to cost them their lives to maintain it.

It is remarkable to see the result. The three were cast into the furnace, which only burnt off their bonds, however. Nebuchadnezzar the king is astonished and says, "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? . . . Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" (ver. 25). What was the effect of this splendid devotedness? They get the company of Christ.

If you want the company of Christ, you will have to be firm. You cannot have His company, if you

are going to let slip that which is very precious to His heart. God in His wonderful grace preserved them. The only thing the fire really did was to burn off their bonds, and set them free. We have to take care lest we get weak, and lose our moral fibre, our spiritual grit, which the Holy Ghost alone can produce in us.

In chapter iv. Daniel records Nebuchadnezzar's story of his conversion. Have you recorded yours yet?

In chapter v. Daniel is able to unfold certain things to Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, and at the close of this fifth chapter again he is exalted, getting the third place in the kingdom. You may say, "Why the third place?" Belshazzar, inside of Babylon was reigning as joint-king, while his father was fighting the Medes outside the city, and the drunken king's promise was, "that the man who could read the writing on the wall, should be the third ruler in the kingdom" (ver. 7). Daniel read it, and the king fulfilled his promise. In fact, he was made Prime Minister. Belshazzar was infidel, but nevertheless he proclaimed the tidings that Daniel was the third, and he was. It was not very long that he occupied his position, because the kingdom passed away that night.

But look at the next chapter, and you will find that somehow or other Darius, the Median king, came to understand about Daniel. Who was this man that was made Prime Minister in the very moment of the death of Belshazzar? Again you will see he was

God's man in Babylon. "It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; and over these three presidents, of whom Daniel was first, that the princes might give accounts to them, and the king should have no damage. . . . Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was found in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm" (ver. 1-3). Daniel's excellent spirit was the secret of this further promotion.

Well, what follows? He got hated. If you are going to be faithful to God you may expect to be hated. Your Master was hated and rejected by the world, and men of the world will do their best to trip you up. Look at Daniel in his new post. We read, "Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom, but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him" (chap. vi. 4). It is a fine thing if you are in an office or a place of trust, and are surrounded by godless men, if they are able to say this, "You can find no fault with his conduct. He is the best worker in the whole place." Are you God's man, where you work?

Then these men, to gain their end—Daniel's downfall—appeal to Darius's vanity, and really say in effect, "O king, make a law that nobody shall be prayed to for thirty days except yourself." Darius consents, and shows us what utter apostasy is.

Now look at Daniel. "When Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house ; and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed, and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime" (chap. vi. 10). What effect had Darius's decree upon Daniel? Not a feather's weight. He was not driven to his knees in a difficulty. When the difficulty came it found the man of God in this condition of power. Observe, too, that he had his windows open. Now you know the Eastern houses were built low upon the ground. He was not afraid of being seen. He flung open his windows. I tell you what I think some of us might have done. We would have shut the windows, or drawn down the blinds.

But Daniel knew the Scriptures (see 2 Chron. vi. 36-39). He had learned in his book that when God's people were captives in the land of the enemy, if they turned towards Jerusalem, and *looked* towards Jerusalem, and *prayed* towards Jerusalem, God would hear and answer. Notice this man in the face of an edict that consigned him, if disobedient to it, to a den of lions. See him *looking* towards Jerusalem and *praying* to his God. Very well, of course his enemies come, and find him praying and making supplication before his God. You know the end of the story.

He was thrown into the den of lions, but you must remember he came out of it, too, and that unscathed. What lessons we learn from Daniel.

Now, to-day, there has been no part of Scripture

assailed like the book of Daniel. In our day Daniel is not cast into a den of lions, but his book has been cast into a den of critics. Do you think the critics are going to destroy it? Have no fears, Daniel escaped the den of lions unscathed, and equally so his book will come out from the den of critics, and when the critics are dead and gone the book of Daniel will stand. It is the Word of God. That is the point.

The story of Daniel's escape is a very beautiful one. That night "the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting; neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him" (chap. vi. 18). Darius had a miserable night, but Daniel had a grand one. The man in the den of lions passed a peaceful night, and the man who put him in could not sleep. The man with a bad conscience has an awful bedfellow. Darius had a very bad night, and in the morning he comes with a lamentable voice, and says, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God whom thou servest continually able to deliver thee from the lions?"

That is a fine testimony to Daniel. I think we often serve the Lord intermittently, Daniel did continually. That is fine. Then said Daniel, "O king, live for ever." In effect he says, "I am all right. You have had a miserable night, but I have had a grand one. My God has sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me" (ver. 22). Daniel comes out of the den, and his accusers go in.

Then he is more than ever exalted and confided in by the king, for we read, "so this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian" (ver. 28). He lived through the reigns of four kings.

We must not now go further, except that I will draw your attention to one verse, "O Daniel, a man greatly beloved" (chap. x. 11). If you can put at the end of your name the words, "*man greatly beloved*," that is the finest affix you can get to your name. By whom? By God. He greatly loves the man that is here for Him, set for His will, determined to be by grace for Him. I desire, my young friends, that it might be so with you, that you so "*purpose in your heart*" to follow the Lord, that He may be able to use you, and that He may come and communicate His mind to you. May you be a "*Man greatly beloved*" by God.

"Many mighty men are lost,
Daring not to stand ;
Who for God had been a host,
By joining Daniel's band !
Dare to be a Daniel !
Dare to stand alone !
Dare to have a purpose true,
Dare to make it known."

DE GRAAF'S THREE LESSONS.

ONE day while visiting a sick woman at the North End, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, the husband told me of a foreigner, a Belgian, De Graaf by name, living in the next street, who had been laid up with dropsy for about three months. He said De Graaf's wife was addicted to drink and greatly neglected him, and asked if I could not get him into the hospital. I said I would see what I could do, and called to see the man. I told him what his friend had said, and asked him if he would like to go to the hospital.

"No," he said, "I am not long for this world, I'd rather die here."

"Very well," I replied, "if you don't want to go to the hospital we will say no more about it. But if you are not long for this world, do you know where you are going?"

"Yes," he said, "I am going straight to heaven."

"That's good," I replied. "What makes you think so?"

"My heart is clean," was the answer.

"And who made it clean?"

"I, myself," said the man.

"How do you make that out?" I asked.

"My priest told me so," he continued, "because I gave half a crown every Saturday to the Sisters of Mercy, and as many vegetables as I could spare (he was a vegetable dealer), and went to confession every Easter, and brought the priest half a sovereign.

He said my heart was clean, and I would go straight to heaven when I die."

I took my Bible out of my pocket and said, "Look here, De Graaf, if ever you made a mistake in your life, you have made the biggest this time. When you appear before God, you will hear nothing but what is written in this book (pointing to my Bible). Listen to what it says," and I read to him Isaiah lxiv. 6, "*All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.*" "Do you think," I asked, "God will have filthy rags in heaven?"

The man was pale before, but he turned paler still, as he whispered, "No, sir."

"Well," I said, "I have good news for you. What you can't do, God can and will." Then I read the following texts to him. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all" (Rom. viii. 32); "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3); "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin" (1 John i. 7); and "Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). After a few words of prayer that the Lord might open his eyes to see and his heart to believe God's way of salvation, I left, promising to call again.

I did so two or three times a week, and after about a fortnight he told me he now knew he would go to heaven, not because of what he had done, but because of what Christ had done for him. I continued to visit and read to him, and it was quite refreshing to see his desire for the sincere milk of the Word. I would

sometimes ask him, "Shall I read anything special to you?" and he would say, "No, 'tis all the Word of God. I want to hear it all."

After some time, one day as I called I noticed a great change in him. Ever since his conversion he had been very bright and happy. That day he looked greatly troubled. Fearing Satan had assailed him with fears and doubts as to his soul's salvation, I asked him what was the matter. He then told me his wife had come home the night previous the worse for liquor. Being rather noisy he remonstrated with her, and asked her to be quiet. But she grew worse, so that he got angry, and gave her a good scolding. Directly afterwards he became very unhappy and could not sleep on account of it.

I read to him 1 John ii. 1 and i. 7, telling him to confess his sin to God, and it would be forgiven him. "But," I continued, "you have now to learn a second lesson. The first lesson was, you could not *save* yourself, only Christ could *save* you. Now you have to learn you can't *keep* yourself, only Christ can *keep* you. The next time your wife comes home drunk, you ask the Lord to *keep* you quiet. He can do it." He said he would.

A little trouble with my eyes compelled me to go away for a few weeks. After my return to Port Elizabeth, the first time I visited De Graaf again, he called out even before I had time to say good afternoon, "'Tis true, sir; 'tis true, sir!"

"What is true?" I asked.

"The Lord can *keep* me," he said, and then told

me that a few evenings before his wife had come home worse than ever. He said nothing, but asked the Lord to keep him quiet. After some time, when she saw she could not provoke him with her words, she took a basin and smashed it on the floor. "But the more she rased [Dutch word for raged] the more I prayed to the Lord to keep me quiet," he said. At last she came towards the bed. He feared she would strike him. Still he prayed. When standing before the bed she burst out crying, sank on her knees and sobbed out, "What a wicked woman I am! Pray to God to convert me, as He has converted you."

And there and then, at the silent midnight hour, that dying man cried to God for his poor drunken wife. From that day she was a changed woman. Before, she would never stay in the room when I read to him. Now, she listened as attentively as he. About a week after she confessed Christ as her Saviour, and her whole life proved the reality of it. The room, dirty and untidy before, became a model of order and cleanliness. On her husband she waited with touching devotion, so that he said repeatedly, "Tis heaven on earth now."

However, there was another lesson to be learnt. Paul says in 2 Timothy iii. 12—"All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," and De Graaf was privileged to learn that too. When the priest heard of his conversion he came to see him. De Graaf had told his wife he did not want to see him. But the priest forced his way in, asking, "Why don't you want to see your father?"

" You have deceived me long enough," he replied, " and almost let me die in my sins. You told me my heart was clean, and I would go straight to heaven when I die. But God has showed me that all my good works were filthy rags, and that nothing but the blood of Christ could cleanse me from my sins."

" I would have told you the same in giving you the last unction," the priest replied.

" I wanted to know this while I was alive," De Graaf said, " and I thank God He sent some one to tell me so."

The priest went away in a rage, but told the landlord, also a Roman Catholic, not to have him in his house. His wife found another room, but after a few days the priest spoke to the new landlord and so frightened him that he hired four kaffirs to carry poor De Graaf on his bed into the street, put him on a tray cart, and sent him out of town, finally depositing him in an iron shed, used as a stable, near some brick-kilns.

There I found him the next day, rejoicing that he was counted worthy to suffer for Christ. The shock, however, was too great for him. On the day following he departed to be with the Lord, rejoicing, and full of praise to the very last.

Reader, have you learned De Graaf's three lessons? Perhaps this falls into the hands of one who has not learned the first yet. Remember, not what you can do, but what Christ has done, will ever bring you to heaven. But if you have learned to trust Jesus, and you know Him as your own personal Saviour,

then you may also learn that the One who saved you can keep you every day. It is your blessed privilege to look up to Him who sits at God's right hand, and to know that "*He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him*" (Heb. vii. 25). And then should it be given you to suffer for His sake (see Phil. i. 29), may it be yours to "rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven" (Matt. v. 12).

G. O.

A SHORT SUMMONS.

ONE cold and chilly December night a Spanish vessel laden with a cargo of highly inflammable minerals was moored a little distance from the edge of P—— dock. The crew were on shore enjoying themselves.

As night drew on they proceeded to walk back to their vessel. When near the dock, thinking their boat was moored close to the edge, three of them proceeded, as they thought, to board her, when in so doing they walked straight into the water and were drowned. So they passed into eternity. A short summons indeed!

What if your summons were as short? Are you ready? Whether the summons be short or long delayed, come it will. Are you ready? Thrice foolish if you delay answering this question. Your soul and your eternity are at stake.

M. J. L.

A CAPTAIN'S CONVERSION TO GOD.

THIS is a true story. I know that some people are suspicious of much that they see in print in the way of such anecdotes, fearing that they may be, possibly, coloured or exaggerated; but, in this case, my information and authority are both absolutely correct and unimpeachable.

The incident occurred many years ago, and is reported to us by the inspired pen of the evangelist Luke, who, besides writing the lovely gospel, wrote also the Acts of the Apostles. He, doubtless, heard the particulars of the story from the lips of the Apostle Peter, under whose ministry this soldier was savingly blessed, and was given by the Spirit of God to pass it on to us (see Acts x. and xi.).

The officer's name was Cornelius, centurion of the Italian Band—a crack corps of the famous and ever-victorious Roman army. A centurion was the commander of a hundred men, corresponding to a captain in the British army to-day.

A good deal is told us about him. He was not fast, nor gay, nor thoughtless. Far from it; he was of a serious and religious turn. We read four things about him :—

1. He was devout.
2. He feared God.
3. He gave much alms.
4. He prayed to God alway.

"Well," you may say, "if he did all that he could not have been very far astray, for what could a man possibly do more, especially a soldier?"

Why a soldier?

Because, if a soldier is devout, and fears God, and attends to his duty, he can hardly be expected to do more; he cannot afford to give much alms to the people, nor can he pray to God at all times! Life in the barrack room is not conducive to over-much religion.

Quite possible, and yet this soldier did all that.

Then surely he must have been a saved man?

Strange to say, that is the very thing which, spite of all his good deeds, he was not. No, his works had not saved him. How extraordinary! Then should he have increased them, giving more alms, and if possible, praying more frequently? Would that have saved him?

No it would not.

This is just the rock on which people stumble. They have the idea that their good works will save them, but they won't. Bad works, sins, take people to hell, but good works do not take us to heaven.

Now, be patient, and let us see how the Apostle Peter treated the case. Turn to Acts xi. 13, 14, and read how that an angel, one of God's holy messengers, was sent to Cornelius, and charged him to send for Peter, who would tell him (mark) words whereby he, and all his house, should be saved!

Words do what works cannot. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom.

x. 17). "He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life" (John v. 24). "Hear, and your soul shall live" (Isa. lv. 3).

And what words did Peter preach to him? He said: "To Him [that is the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ] give all the prophets witness that, through His name, whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). These were the words that did it! "Whosoever believeth in Him!"

The Apostle Peter made no allusion to the works or prayers of Cornelius, because they had not a particle of saving value in them (I say "*saving value*" advisedly), but he preached the remission of sins (to be had at once) by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ! Note the order—

- (1) "Whosoever believeth in Him."
- (2) "Shall receive remission of sins."

Lay hold, I pray you, of this wonderful statement.

These are *words* whereby you (whosoever you may be) may also be saved.

And so we read that, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word" (Acts x. 44). They heard the word in their heart, and received the seal of God's salvation—the Holy Spirit—immediately.

How simple, how sure, how divine, and how sudden!

Thus the captain was saved. And how? By hearing some wonderful words. That was all, but how divinely simple!

And when exposed, perchance, to a sudden death,
how unspeakably valuable !

Let me ring out the contrast : Words, *words*,
WORDS—the words of God ; not works—the worth-
less works of man !

Have works no place ? Well, I do not suppose
that the centurion's charities, now that he was saved,
decreased in number, or that his prayers henceforth
began to flag ; but he would now live in the joy and
power of a salvation possessed, instead of one to be
acquired, as he supposed, by his prayers and alms.
He would thus "work out his own salvation" (Phil.
ii. 12). Another has died and risen to do all the mighty
work necessary for it. What a difference ! The
"dying thief" went to paradise on the very day on
which he heard the words of the dying Son of God.
How sudden !

Notice this : Grace is the cause, blood the merit,
faith the instrument, and works the evidence of
salvation. The thief had no time for the evidence,
save in the bold confession of Jesus as Lord, but he
went to Paradise.

When in circumstances not very dissimilar to those
of Cornelius, and in deep soul-anxiety, I found a ray
of light in the words :—

"In my hands no price I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

And now, after many years, I find the cross of
Christ a perfect resting-place for my soul, in view of
death and eternity. All glory to God. J. W. S.

GLAD TO BE A PRISONER.

IT sounds strange, but the man was positively glad that he was a prisoner. He was a German soldier fighting on the western front in France. The trenches were simply unendurable. The man was in a frightful condition. He knew that once he was taken prisoner by the British he would be kindly treated, taken to a place of safety and comfort, given good food, and have the sure prospect of returning to his wife and family at the end of the war.

His captor was bringing him along to the British lines. As they stumbled along in the dark, the British soldier fell into a hole full of water. At once the German showed the greatest solicitude, and earnestly sought to rescue his captor. He showed no desire to escape. In fact the desire was all the other way. He wished to be captured.

Knowing the terrible circumstances of this war, we are not surprised at the action of this German. Indeed, we think he was a wise and sensible man.

Would that men everywhere were as sensible in a far more serious matter. The sinner avoids God, and will do anything rather than come to the Lord. If such knew the blessedness of belonging to the Lord, they would hasten to bow to Him, and receive Him as their personal Saviour and Lord.

To be the Lord's bondman is sweetest liberty. It is heaven begun on earth. He says, "My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Matt. xi. 30). Will you not come to Him now?

"MAN OVERBOARD."

A GENTLEMAN was returning from the West Coast of Africa. A friend of his named Thomas J—— was also returning by the same ship, and both were looking forward to meeting their loved ones in this country.

When half way across the Atlantic Ocean, Thomas, who was very reckless and wild, gave way to strong drink, which almost made him mad. Continuing, Thomas got worse, and one day, without any warning whatever, he jumped over the side of the ship into the mighty ocean. The cry, "Man overboard," was quickly raised, and all hands were soon on the scene. Imagine their surprise when Thomas, who was in the water, cried out for help. After having plunged into the water the shock had been so great as to bring him to his senses. Brave men soon swam to his assistance, but, alas ! it was too late. Thomas had already sunk, and never rose again. How sad !

But this is only a warning to you, dear unsaved reader. Don't delay to come to the Lord Jesus, and don't be like Thomas, *i.e.*, cry when it is too late. How much would he have given to be safely back once more in the ship, but it was too late. Alas ! you, who have never trusted Jesus as your own precious Saviour, and are still going on in your sins, may one day wake up to find yourself in the sinner's eternity with the Devil and his angels for ever. H. M. L.

A WONDERFUL WINDOW.

A WINDOW is described as "an opening for the admission of light."

In the present day, when houses are built with many windows, we are likely to be ignorant of the fact that windows have not always been so plentiful. There have been days in this country when a tax was imposed upon every window, and hence at that time people learned to do with as few windows as possible. In other words, men accustomed themselves to darkness. This is not a difficult matter, but neither is it wholesome.

To the thoughtful mind, a subject such as the above opens up a long vista. So long, that it reaches back into past centuries, and extends into times not yet named.

He who knows all things and can make no mistakes declared "men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil" (John iii. 19). There is no bias in this judgment. It is the weighed conclusion of Him who cannot err. Is it not, then, incumbent upon us to seek *the light*?

If we desire thus to do, then we find a direction in the matter, for it is written, "The entrance of Thy words giveth light ; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Ps. cxix. 130). And it does even more than that, for it is said, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. cxix. 105). With the prayer that God may be pleased to make this Word a light unto us, let us turn to 2 Kings

vii. 1, 2, and there we shall find something said about a window.

There had been a terrible famine in the land of Israel. It was the direct result of Israel's sin. Both people and king had departed from God, and turned to idols. By His servant Jeremiah (see chap. xxiv. 10), God declared that He sent the famine, as well as the sword and pestilence, to punish those who rebelled against Him.

Owing to the famine the sufferings of the people were very great, and to add to their trials and afflictions, they were surrounded with cruel enemies. Their condition was dark indeed. So dark that it must have seemed almost impossible for outward surroundings to grow darker.

At this time God sent His prophet, Elisha, to declare that relief was at hand. This statement was not made in a corner where no one could hear it, but it was publicly made before the king and court, as well as in the audience of the people.

One of these, who heard the statement, was a personal attendant upon the king. He was evidently a thorough man of the world, and as such a cynic, with the gift of saying "smart" things. One can almost picture the man, he has so many counterparts in the present day.

The fact of there being a personal God, who regards His people, was something that had never entered into the heart of this nobleman. So when he heard that relief was promised he gave vent to his unbelief by saying, "Behold, if the Lord would

make windows in heaven, might this thing be." The prophet's prompt reply was, "Behold, thou shalt see it [that is, the fine flour for the rich and the barley for the poor] with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof."

These words need to be taken in connection with the declaration of the Lord Jesus : "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John iii. 19).

This was a very evil deed of the nobleman, to contradict the solemn word of God. The days were dark ; light—in the welcome prophecy of quickly coming relief—was given on the authority of God, and yet this man declared God's word untrue and impossible of fulfilment. He rejected God. He chose darkness rather than light, and thus proved his ways and his heart to be evil.

We can read the whole chapter (2 Kings vii.) for ourselves, and we shall find it most profitable so to do.

The concluding verses show how perfectly God's promise was fulfilled. The people had the bread, but in the great crush the nobleman was overborne, and the crowd passed over his body so that he was trodden to death. He had seen the fine flour and the barley offered at the price named by the prophet, but he had been unable to partake of it. Solemn warning to us all !

Now let us look closely at these facts as through a window.

There was no need for the Lord to make

"windows in heaven," as the unbelieving lord suggested. They are there already. We read of God opening the windows of heaven (see Gen. vii. 11), but on that occasion it was to let down His judgments. He now promises us that He will open the windows of heaven to pour out blessings upon men, if they will but return unto Him confessing their sins and believe in the Lord Jesus (see Mal. iii. 10).

God does not call upon men for mere outward tithes now, but He calls upon those who believe on His name to "present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God" (Rom. xii. 1).

The nobleman was condemned because He refused God's offer of mercy, and mocked at His promise. What do we?

God offers the Lord Jesus—who is "the Bread of Life" (John vi. 48)—to men, that they may believe in Him, and whosoever believes on Him has everlasting life (see John vi. 47). This offer is made freely—"without money and without price" (Isa. lv. 1). How do we receive it?

Do we say, "We cannot believe that salvation is so free as that," and therefore reject the blessing, or do we with thankful hearts cry out, "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief"? (Mark ix. 24).

The Lord give you to be in deep earnest about these eternal realities.

"Behold, NOW is the accepted time; behold, NOW is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

THE UNJUST STEWARD.

(Read Luke xvi. 1-18.)

IT is very interesting to see the way in which this passage is connected with what both precedes and follows it.

Chapter xiv. is the Great Supper—God's providing a wonderful feast, to which He invites man. This illustrates God's attitude towards man—grace, blessing, and desire for man's company. You know how the invited guests responded to the invitation. We read, "They all with one consent began to make excuse." It was only as the result of the fervency of the love of God that any came in to the feast at all. And that is what has taken place in your history and mine, I trust.

"Twas the same grace that spread the feast,
That sweetly forced me in,
Else had I still refused to come,
And perished in my sin."

Chapter xv. presents in that beautiful tripartite parable the love of God. In it we find presented the blessed work of God, whether we look at the Son of God as the Shepherd, seeking the sheep; or the Spirit of God, guiding, under the figure of the woman; or the Father receiving man when he returns. In each part of the parable it is the joy God has in His own grace toward man here in his guilt.

Now I think the circle of hearers, who heard the

Lord speak in chapter xv., was smaller than that in chapter xiv. The end of chapter xiv. shows that many got restless, and went outside, but publicans and sinners drew near to hear Him. It is only a needy soul that really gets near to God, and is prepared to hear what He says.

In chapter xvi. the circle is narrower still. He speaks to the multitude in chapter xiv.; to the publicans and sinners that drew near to Him in chapter xv.; now He turns to those who have professed to follow Him.

Chapter xvi. is exceedingly important, because in it the Lord lifts the veil, and lets us look into eternity. God sees what lies before every one as he goes into eternity, and you will find that it is marked by two words — “*comforted*,” or “*tormented*.” Which portion shall be yours, reader?

But in this early part of the chapter we have most remarkable instructions for disciples while they are on the road to the “everlasting habitations.” We get the most wonderful principles for the guidance of our souls as we pass through the world, where men are set on enjoying themselves, and making themselves happy and comfortable, and are therefore inclined to be selfish. Whatever the rich man got he used for himself, and he lost this world and the next.

My unconverted friend; if you die in your sins, very soon it will be true of you. You will have lost what you loved in this world, and you will have lost the next world too. Nothing but eternal punishment will await you. Be warned in time, I beseech you.

The character and behaviour of a disciple is very important. I believe you might sum up the teaching of chapter xvi. 1-15 as our Lord showing us the secret and spring of true wisdom as to the eternal future.

You may say it is a difficult scripture. Well, I can see its meaning, though I may have difficulty in applying its principles, because the apprehension of a principle and the application of it are two different things.

We read, "There was a certain rich man, which had a steward." I do not doubt the rich man stands as a figure of God. "A certain man made a great supper" in chapter xiv.; "a certain man had two sons" in chapter xv. In a general way, God is the Father of all men. We are His offspring.

Here it is "a certain rich man." He had plenty of goods. Who is the steward? Responsible man—you and I. Man has "wasted his goods." Man has been put down here in this world in responsibility, and he has misused that which God, in His goodness, has put in his hands, the things of this life. They are called "the unrighteous mammon," and "that which is another man's." The money, the possessions, the property, whatever men may handle, they will have to learn are not their own; they are but stewards of earthly things. We are accountable to God.

If you had a steward, a man with your possessions in his hands, you would expect him to be faithful. If he were not you would turn him adrift. That is what is going to be done. You and I have notice to

quit. The day when we must leave this scene is fixed. We have lost our situation on the ground of unrighteousness. Yes, I accuse you and myself of failing in responsibility, in righteousness to God in connection with the use of things down here.

"And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward" (ver. 2). He has got a little time to make up his books, and give an account of his stewardship before he goes out. He is a thoughtful man, for the steward said within himself, "What shall I do?" That was a wise question, and you and I do well to face it. How shall I carry myself in relation to God, and the things I have handled down here? This man has the opportunity of doing one of two things—appropriating something for the moment, or investing for the future.

So he asks himself the question, "What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses" (vers. 3, 4). He was a useless man in some ways, and proud too.

How these parables of our Lord expose us—they bring out what is in man. This man says, in effect, "When I have lost my present position, and the opportunity of handling that which belongs to my lord, I cannot dig, and I am too proud to beg, but I should like to have a friend or two." He looks right

into the future, and that is exactly what every man should do. You should keep your eye upon the future.

"So he called every one of his lord's debtors *unto him*, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill and sit down quickly, and write fifty" (vers. 5, 6). I do not doubt that debtor thought he was a very fine fellow.

You say, He was a rogue. That is not the question. The point is, he was looking to the future. The Lord does not commend dishonesty, but He commends a taking care for the future. Are you concerned about your eternal future?

"Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill and write four-score" (ver. 7). He makes another friend; now he has got two. He says to himself, "I have done them such a good turn that I have ingratiated myself with them, and in the days to come, when I am in need, I shall have two friends."

You say, It was roguery. Of course it was. But these are the words of the Lord Jesus. He describes a case in this world, and shows how wise was the man in view of the fact that he was going to lose his situation. He might have made both these pay the full hundred, and taken a little more, and he would have filled his pocket for the time. He would have augmented his riches just now. But he says in effect, "No, I am no better off now by

this action, but I shall be by and by. I am not caring about the present, but I do care about the future ; and when the day of my downfall comes, and I am turned out, I shall want neither bread nor house ; I shall be cared for by my friends." He was very wise. " And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely : for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (ver. 8). Did his lord command him because he had done righteously ? No, but because he had done wisely ; he had secured the future.

Now are you quite clear about the future ? It is not at all a question of how to get eternal life, or blessing from God, or a title to glory ; all that is in the previous chapters. In chapter xiv. you are invited to the feast, and in chapter xv. you go in on the ground of sovereign grace. It is a question of what should mark the children of light as they pass through a world of darkness, where money is that which commands everything down here. Man is an acquisitive creature, and often covetous. It is there, even if we are not conscious of it. " And the lord commended the unjust steward"—he is still "the unjust steward." Our Lord adds, " For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." The "children of this world" are men in the flesh, and "children of light" are children of God. " God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1-5).

Every believer is a child of light. We are "children of light," "children of God," and "children of the resurrection." When you read of "children of light" you expect them to see things, and not miss the road.

Here was a man of the world, and he feathers his nest for the future; but the children of light are sometimes not wise. Our Lord says, "And I say unto you, Make to yourself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations" (ver. 9).

What is "the mammon of unrighteousness"? Is it money which is got wrongly? Oh, no! The figure shows the steward is occupied with dealing in what is someone else's. The goods are his lord's. What he was handling did not belong to him, but he so handled it that, when the moment came for him to be cast out of his situation, he had things made comfortable for the future.

The "mammon of unrighteousness" is what the Lord calls the things of this life. "No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (ver. 13). He says, as it were, "You can use money in view of the future." Many of us are apt to use it in view of the present. It does not mean that the money is got wrongly, but that which is in the hands of man as a responsible being, the steward of God down here, has been wasted and misused by every one of us. Adam was a failure;

he began by being deceived, and man's history has been unrighteous, universally and characteristically. The mammon is whatever we have in this world, the money, the possessions that may come into our hands, either less or more as the case may be. It is called "the mammon of unrighteousness" in contrast with "the true riches," and it is called "another's."

I may have only got a little of my lord's goods in my hand, but he says, "If you are faithful with a little I can trust you with more." On the other hand, he that is unjust in least will be unjust if he gets more. "If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" (ver. 11). I have no doubt "the true riches" are all that is connected with Christ where He is. "Unrighteous mammon" is all that is connected with man in this scene. "True riches" are all the blessing that is wrapped up in Christ, but made ours—all God's purposes and counsels of grace for us in the Lord Jesus Christ. "And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" (ver. 12).

Here is the whole question of the true use of our possessions. Money may be used most wisely; in fact the Lord bids us use it to secure a good place in the "everlasting habitations"; because it is His, not ours. He says, "I give you liberty to give away freely what belongs to Me, and not to you." The result will be, the grace of Christ will be seen in the pathway of Christians who are here, living for Christ, and like Christ.

If I do the opposite, if I set my mind to get on, my heart will get buried in business, and I shall be drowned, as the apostle says, in the love of money. "For the love of money is the root [a root, N.T.] of all evil; which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. vi. 10). It is not that men should be lazy, no; if you have a business be diligent in it; but if your opportunities enlarge, your responsibility and privilege enlarge also, for everything that comes in has got to be used—it belongs to the Lord; it is not yours.

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. vi. 17-19).

Then you may lay up. Yes, not gold down here, but lay up for the time to come. I do not doubt that this is a commentary on the teaching of our Lord in Luke xvi.

But there is another side to all this of deep practical import. The soul that does not heed a scripture like this gets stunted. That is the reason you hear people say, I do not seem to get on spiritually, I do not grow in what is heavenly. Perhaps the weak point is in connection with the things down here. We are selfish, and self-occupied, and gather things round ourselves,

instead of being deeply interested in the wants and woes of those round about us. A Christian should be a perfect sunbeam in a world of darkness. He is connected with inexhaustible supplies of blessing on high, but draws from Christ; and then in the things down here he is faithful, having his Lord's command to give freely what does not belong to him. It is the principle of Christian generosity. What we have is His, and not our own, and He lets us be His almoners—people who get Him a good name, a good character, because we minister the things that belong to Him; and by and by it will turn out to our account. We have to live in the light of the future, even in relation to the things God puts in our hands as we go through this scene.

The end of Luke xvi. shows the rich man as an illustration of the contrary. He only thought of the present, and he lost everything. This was not palatable doctrine to people in that day; it is none the more palatable in this day. It would make people find out the needs, and claims, and calls all round, instead of being able to add bank-note to bank-note. Do not forget, "ye cannot serve God and mammon." You cannot serve God and hold on to mammon. The Lord draws the sharpest line of distinction between them. It is impossible to serve God on the one hand; and on the other, be governed by that which governs the world, the love of money.

The great thing is to be here in this world the expression of the goodness and the kindness of God. It comes out in a thousand ways. You say, "I have

but little." Be it so ; if you are faithful the Lord will give you that which is your own. We may diminish in outward things, but we are none the worse for that.

We read, "And the 'Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things : and they derided him" (Luke xvi. 14). Flesh will not take this in ; flesh will not accept it. No one will accept it unless under the touch of God's Spirit.

You go through this scene thinking of the wants of others. The claims of the poor, of the Lord's servants, will come into view, and you will have the sense, "I have the privilege of using what the Lord has put into my hands, and I can use it for His glory, and the good of men ; and I shall find by and by that when I gave out what was not mine, the Lord was putting it down to my credit for the day of reward."

The Lord replied to these Pharisees, "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men ; but God knoweth your hearts : for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke xvi. 15). What is highly esteemed among men is that which will give man a place in this world. It is what men have got of the things of this life that gives them importance in the minds of men. Let the principles of a day to come be those that govern us as we pass along.

"HIS FATHER SAW HIM."

"When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (LUKE xv. 20).

"His father saw him!" Ah! those eager eyes
Had watched through many a dark and lonely
night—

Watched 'neath the silence of the midnight skies
Till the dawn flooded them with sound and light!

"His father saw him!" After weary years
Of passionate yearning for the well-loved face,
Now to behold him, through joy's sudden tears,
And feel the rapture of his child's embrace!

"His father saw him!" All those years of sorrow
Lost in that moment of ecstatic bliss!
Peace for the past and joy for all the morrow
Given in the gladness of the father's kiss!

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Whose is the love so quenchless in its burning?
Whose is the patience which delights to wait
For the slow footsteps which are home returning—
For the lost sinner who is coming late?

Whose is the heart that, so divinely yearning
(Father and God, 'tis Thine, and Thine alone!)
Sees the first step the sinner takes, returning:
Runs to embrace, and bid him "Welcome home!"

A TRIFLING ACCIDENT AND ITS TREMENDOUS CONSEQUENCES.

IT was seemingly only a small thing, the side-slip of a bicycle on a wooden paved road, which a shower of rain had made greasy, but that apparent trifle was fraught with momentous consequences both for time and for eternity.

The rider of the bicycle was a very big, powerful man in the prime of life. He got up from the ground and shook himself, his only thought being annoyance at having, as he supposed, looked ridiculous in the eyes of those who thronged the fashionable promenade of the large city on a fine sunny afternoon, and also at having covered himself with mud.

A bit of mortified pride, however, was not to be the sequel of that tumble, nor were the mud-covered clothes to be its only consequences. Far graver things followed in its train.

In a short time strange symptoms began to appear. At first he would not allow that there was anything the matter, but presently a doctor was called in, then a second in consultation; both had grave apprehensions as to his case, and he was recommended by them to go into the hospital under the care of an eminent surgeon.

Skilful treatment, however, was of no avail, and but a short time elapsed ere this stalwart man, once so full of life and energy, was paralysed entirely as

to the lower limbs, and could not walk a step, or even turn round in bed.

This was a fearful blow to his proud nature—to be helpless when he had been so strong, to be dependent on others when he had always been the one to give aid, no longer to be able to move hither and thither at his own will, or do his accustomed work ; it all seemed unbearable, and the thought came to him often that he would put an end to himself, without anyone guessing his intention, and this he believed he could easily do : he wanted only to find out a painless way.

"Better die and have done with it all," he said to himself, "for I am of no more use in the world, and only a burden to myself." This was Satan's suggestion to him, but God had His eye on this man for blessing, and again and again he was thwarted in his purpose.

He did not believe in a God or in a devil, and consequently neither in heaven nor hell, but asserted boldly that when a man died there was the end of him. He ridiculed the idea of a never-dying soul, or of a God to whom he must give account, and thought those who spoke of such things were cowards, or hypocrites, or both.

In this state of mind he became the inmate of a home in which God, a short time before, had brought four of his fellow-sufferers to know and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work, and not only to know Him for themselves, but earnestly to desire that those around them should know

Him too, and for this they sought the Lord continually.

R. M—— had been but a few days in the home when he discovered that these four men were very unlike most of the others in the wards, and also what the secret of the difference was, and from that moment every kind of sneer and petty persecution that he could devise was levelled at them. They never resented it, which angered him the more, but every night the four met to pray specially for this man's conversion: his soul's welfare pressed heavily on them.

Six months went by, and still they prayed, ever more earnestly, but M—— remained apparently unchanged. Twelve months rolled away, and his little persecutions and constant sneers seemed only to increase, but they prayed on. Night after night they cried to God to snatch this soul out of Satan's hands as "a brand plucked out of the fire," and to make him a trophy of the grace and the power of Christ.

When the second year of R. M——'s admission to the home was almost at its close, and still the sneers seemed to grow more persistent and the petty provocations to increase, so that the rest of the patients, though unconverted themselves, were indignant, for the four Christians were always on the watch to serve and help others, "a power for good in the place," as the matron said, then those who prayed began to be discouraged. They said to each other, "Have we been mistaken? Has the Lord not in-

tended that we should pray so persistently for this special soul? Shall we give up? We have asked every day for two years that he might be converted, and we have been confident the Lord was hearing us and would answer, and yet he seems only more hardened in his defiance of God and hatred of His children."

But they could not see, through that wall of apparent defiance and hatred, that already God had begun to work, and the answer to their prayers would surely come.

The very day when their long-tried patience and hope began to waver, they came, in their morning reading, to the 18th chapter of the Gospel of Luke, and the words "that men ought always to pray and *not to faint*" seemed a rebuke to their discouragement; while the Lord's illustration in the parable of the unjust judge and the widow encouraged them to go on.

That very day the Lord began to manifest that He was answering their prayers.

A Christian gentleman passed through the ward after visiting a patient in an adjoining one, and seeing M—— smoking his pipe, he said a cheery "Good morning!" to him, adding, "You seem to be enjoying your pipe?"

"Very much, sir," said M——; "I expect you enjoy a good smoke, too."

"Well, I used to; but I do not smoke now," was the answer.

"*Not smoke now*, and you used to enjoy it!" ex-

claimed M—— in amazement. "Why, however is that, sir?"

"Well, I will tell you," answered the gentleman. "Four years ago I found out that the Lord Jesus Christ loved me, and had died for me; and when I found out that He loved me so, I wanted to use all I had for the One who had done so much for me, and I could not use my pipe in His service, so I threw it away."

"But," said M——, "you do not think it wicked to smoke; do you, sir?"

"Oh! no; I do not think it wicked to smoke, and I do not judge any one else for smoking, but you asked me why I did not; so I just told you that I wanted to consecrate all to the One who loved me so that He gave up His life for me, and I could not consecrate my pipe to Him, so it cost me but little to throw it away. Do you understand? But perhaps you have not found out yet what I only found out four years ago. Have you?"

In a broken voice M—— answered, "I see, sir; you have got something that I have not got, and that I want to get; and there are four men in here who have got it too. And how I have persecuted them for two years, but for the last eighteen months I have been miserable, though I was too proud to own it. There has not been a day in these months when I would not gladly have changed places with any one of them, for I knew they were right; and I wanted to get what made them so happy and so forgiving, but the more miserable I got the more

I worried them ; and the more patient they were the more I tried to provoke them, because I was so miserable. Will you come and sit down by me, and tell me how I can get what you have got, and they have got ; for I have found out there is a God, and a heaven, and a hell. How can I know Him ? ”

Gladly the gentleman responded to the request, and he put the gospel simply and plainly before him—the old, old story of the love of God in sending His Son, and the love of Christ in coming and shedding His precious blood, which cleanses from *all sin*. How the Lord Jesus Christ had paid the heavy debt of sin for every one who trusts Him, and thus had enabled God in righteousness to receive and welcome each returning prodigal.

M—— listened, absorbed, but the conviction of his own great sin overwhelmed him, and when his visitor left him he was in the condition of the prodigal when he had found out his own deep need, but did not know the love of the Father's heart and His tender compassion.

He spent a terrible day. Satan fought hard to keep a servant who had been so faithful to him. The nurses helped him to bed, but not to sleep. The long hours of the night wore on ; the ward was darkened, and every one else was asleep. Then, almost in despair, he cried aloud, “Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner, the worst sinner out of hell to-night ; be merciful, be merciful ; save me, even me ! ”

No one in the ward heard that penitent cry, but it reached His ear that is never "heavy so that it cannot hear," and He answered with the words, as though they were spoken aloud: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from *all* sin" (1 John i. 7).

"*All sin, ALL SIN, then mine,*" he murmured. "It is Thy word, Lord; the gentleman read it to me to-day from Thine own book—all sin, all, even mine." The peace of God possessed his soul from that moment. He had gone through a night of agony, but as the dawn broke he fell asleep with the certainty, as a pillow, that the precious blood of Christ was enough to put away all his sins, and had done it.

Next day he confessed Christ boldly in the ward. His words were received with incredulity and jeers. "You talking like that," the others said. "You—we do not believe a word of such hypocrisy—you setting up to be a saint all of a sudden. We know how you have persecuted those four men, who have got the real thing we are sure."

"Yes," said M—— very humbly. "It is all true, I know. I was blind then, now I see. God has forgiven me, and so have they."

Such a change in the bold, defiant infidel, the persistent opposer of all that was good, had a great effect in the wards as the weeks went on, and the reality of the work in his soul was apparent to all. A new life, a new power was at work in the scoffer, and he had a new object too. Now he wanted to win others to the One who had revealed Himself to

him, and the Lord did not long try the faith of this new-born soul without giving him an answer to his prayer to let him win others as jewels for the Saviour's crown.

Only a week or two after his own conversion, when he was sitting in his wheel-chair in the beautiful cemetery at ——, studying his long-neglected Bible, the sexton came up to him and said, "I see you every fine afternoon reading the same book. I think you must have something I have not got, but which I want to get. Can you tell me how I can get it? How can I get saved and know it?"

There, in the place of death and the evidence of the power of Satan, this babe in Christ told out to another soul the way of life and escape from Satan's power; told how the Lord had saved him, read to him God's own words, and when they had to part M—— said to the sexton, "I will lend you my Bible till to-morrow afternoon, and you read John iii., and when you come to the 16th verse, read it, and read it, and read it till you believe it for yourself, and then go on to the 18th verse, and read that, and read that till it takes hold of you, and then you will find great comfort in John v. 24."

So the sexton went away with the Bible, and M—— went back to the home to pray for him.

The next afternoon was fine also, and M—— got a pass again to go out, and wheeled himself as usual to his favourite spot in the cemetery, where he was soon joined by the sexton with the Bible.

"Well, did you do as I said?" asked M——, eagerly.

"Yes, I did, indeed; but I had not got to read, and read, and read, for the first time I read the 16th verse of John iii. I saw it all clearly. God gave His Son, and I trust Him. He saves me, and I am going to see Him and live with Him for ever. I should like to see Him soon."

Little did either of them think how soon this wish was to be realised, for he was a young, strong man, only thirty-four years of age. For several days they met, every fine afternoon, in the cemetery, and exchanged words of faith and hope, and, if the sexton had time, they read a bit of God's Word together. Then came a day when the sexton did not appear. The first day M—— only thought his work was in quite another part, for the cemetery was very extensive; but as days went on, and he never came, he wondered if he had left his place of work, and had never told him. He had no means of finding out, for they had met so regularly that he had never asked him where he lived; besides, he knew that the sexton was at work all day, and he himself could not go out after dark.

Eventually, through a friend who visited him in the home, he heard that the Lord had fulfilled the sexton's desire of soon being with Him, and had taken him quickly home. A chill caught had developed into pneumonia, and after forty-eight hours' illness he had departed to be with Christ, "which is far better," but not before he had been the means of

his wife's conversion, and she had gone to this lady to tell the story of her husband's triumphant death-bed, and of how she had learnt from him to know the same blessed Saviour, whom he had only known for so short a time, and in her deep, deep sorrow had this great comfort that they would both spend their eternity together "with the Lord."

As another has said truly, "Little is much if God be in it," and surely God was in that side-slip on that spring afternoon, and *all* its consequences will only be known in a coming day, when the secrets of all hearts will be revealed. But other, and equally blessed, consequences with those here related are known, even now down here.

"Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save ; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear" (Isa. lix. 1).

Reader, are *you* saved ?

The believer in the Lord Jesus can sing :—

"Joy and peace it is to know Him,
 Oh ! how He loves ;
Think, Oh ! think how much we owe Him,
 Oh ! how He loves.
With His precious blood He bought us,
In the wilderness He sought us,
To His loved ones safely brought us,
 Oh ! how He loves."

DEAD! DEAD! DEAD!

YES, notices such as the following are painful reading. Tears start to our eyes as we see in them the grief of stricken hearts—"sons, fathers, husbands, and so on," swept away to be seen no more, while children, widows, and parents are left crushed and desolated by this terrible and savage war.

The obituary notices give a sinister complexion to the advertisement columns. In peace time obituaries occupy the smallest space. Now they dominate the field; an ocean of grief and sorrow is displayed. How much human joy this miserable war has destroyed. Dead! Dead! Dead! Column after column! Sons, fathers, husbands, and so on. A few months ago they were still among us in glorious youth and health. Now a foreign soil covers their bodies, and a gloomy oppression tells us that they are no more.—*Press Association.*

"A foreign soil covers their bodies, where their graves are probably unknown, and a gloomy oppression tells us they are no more."

All true, and all most bitterly sad! And yet these obituary notices give us not a thousandth part of the suffering. They tell of the death of a few who have willingly and courageously sacrificed their lives in responding to the national call, and they help to fill its Roll of Honour; but, for every one killed, how many are wounded and maimed for life—sent back from the field of blood to spend, perhaps, a few useless years of existence, and then to follow in the train. A miserable load, indeed! And all the more so because of its universality.

"Dead, dead, dead!"—oh! the reality of it, and the sorrow and the agony! "A gloomy oppression tells us they are no more!" Worse and worse!

One thing the obituary notice cannot do, and that is it cannot lift the veil, and show us life on the other side of death. It cannot unfold to us the resurrection. It ends with the grave and oppression. How many of those "fathers, husbands, sons, and so on," may have gone in spirit from the field of carnage to be for ever with the Lord? Yes, how many? God alone can tell.

Mark, when God's children die, their bodies may be covered by foreign soil, but their spirits—they themselves—are "present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8), and their bodies will be raised from the dead at the coming of the Lord.

How this glorious truth, revealed to us in the gospel, disperses the cloud of gloom, and wipes the tear away from the believer's eye. "*Life and immortality [lit. incorruptibility] are brought to light by the gospel*" (2 Tim. i. 10), and happy it is to place God's revelation alongside of the poor lugubrations of man, and let the light of His truth carry some cheer to the bereaved and sorrowing heart.

For this cause the Son of God gave His life, that "whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16).

'There death is unknown—all is life, life, life! and the hope of glory instead of "the oppression of gloom" is known to the believer in Christ.'

WHAT WAS THE MATTER WITH ME?

SLEEP forsook me, my health failed, life was a burden, misery and wretchedness marked my days and nights. An unsatisfied longing filled my soul. Failure and disappointment harassed my steps at every turn. Death seemed preferable to life, and Satan suggested, "End it all in a suicide's grave."

The doctor said I was suffering from insomnia, and ordered me rest from work. I acted upon his suggestion, but was no better. "*What is the matter with me?*" was my oft-repeated inquiry during many a miserable month and year.

It began in this way. During the South African War (being a member of a volunteer battalion, Royal Engineers) I was drafted to Chatham for additional training. I was only twenty-one years old, but I had travelled fast on the downward path from an early age. My lips were familiar with oaths and curses; my feet often carried me into public houses, but gambling was my chief snare. It held me as in a vice. None but those who have been carried away by the awful excitement of betting can understand the hold it takes upon its victim. The race-course was a favourite resort, as were the billiard room, the card table, the theatre, and the music hall. At the same time I was devoted to athletic exercises, and was keen on Socialism, being a member of the Independent Labour Party.

Strange to say, during this time I used to attend a Bible class on Sundays, to which I had voluntarily gone, and I had no compunction of conscience when going straight from a "book-maker's" to read the Word of God. The teacher took a deep interest in me, and, after I had left the midland town where I lived, for training in Chatham, wrote me a letter, which came on my twenty-first birthday. This letter reached me after I had been three weeks in camp. These were weeks, alas ! of drunkenness. All my time, not taken up with drill, was spent in public houses.

As I opened this letter in our tent a change of expression attracted the attention of one of my comrades, who asked, "*What's the matter?*"

I handed him the letter in reply. A sneer passed over his face as he read it. It was my turn to ask, "*What's the matter?*"

"*Fancy a chap like you receiving a letter like this!*" he replied.

"*What's the matter with ME?*" I asked.

The words which drew forth the sneering remark were these—" *I pray, night and day, that the LIGHT FROM HEAVEN may shine across your path, and that you may be led into the way everlasting.*" The conversion of Saul of Tarsus, when he was so wondrously arrested in his mad career, was evidently in the writer's mind, and he desired that another great sinner might be arrested in his downward course. The immediate effect of those words was to lead me to give up certain gross sins, mend my ways, and

avoid the public house, but all the time I felt thoroughly miserable, and often asked myself, "*What's the matter with me?*"

My camp training ended, I found myself back among my old companions in sin, and again pursued my evil courses for nearly four years. All this time I longed to burst the chains and fetters of sinful indulgence, and find something to satisfy the cravings of my soul, but I looked to myself, and my efforts at reformation; consequently, all ended in failure and disappointment. Gloom and misery filled my soul; weary restlessness disturbed my nights.

All the time a Saviour-God was following me. His eye saw my miserable condition. His heart of infinite love pitied me. His mercy had arrested Saul of Tarsus. A light from heaven, followed by a voice, turned him from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God. If ever there was a sinner I was one. If anyone needed mercy I did. No visible light, however, shone upon me, no audible voice from heaven fell upon my ear, but God spoke to me, and light shone into my dark heart at a moment as unexpected in my history as that of Saul's.

It happened in this way. I was on my way to the theatre to try and drown my thoughts in watching the play, when the sound of singing from a building opposite attracted my attention. Crossing over I found that mission services were being held. Conflicting emotions filled my breast. Should I go to the theatre or the mission? I hesitated, then walked into the gospel meeting, and the first words which

fell upon my ears were these—“*I am not a wealthy man, but I would give a large sum to the manager of that theatre opposite to lock the doors, and let me speak for an hour to the people in the place. I know some of those people would quake with fear for their souls.*” These words arrested me. I thought, that is where I intended to go. I was terribly upset, and I again wondered, “*What's the matter with me?*” The preacher then read the third chapter of John's Gospel. As he went on I felt more and more miserable, but when he reached the 16th verse and transposed the words thus—

“*God so loved you, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that when you believe on Him, you shall never perish, but you shall have everlasting life,*”

the greatness of God's love so overpowered me that I could only bow my head and sob bitterly, as I thought of God loving a poor wretched creature like me !

At last I had found out “*what was the matter with me.*” I was a sinner, away from God, bent upon pandering to my lust and passion for strong drink, when God spoke to me through that letter whilst in barracks, and ever since an uneasy conscience, which I vainly tried to drown in pleasure, had disturbed my nights, and made me thoroughly miserable. Now I found out that what I needed was a Saviour, and a Saviour who would save me *just as I was.* The congregation sang the hymn :—

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

A voice in my ear said, "*That's the way to come,*" and there and then—

"I came to Jesus as I was,
 Weary, and worn, and sad ;
 I found in Him a resting-place,
 And He has made me glad."

Peace, joy, rest, filled my soul. Such blessedness I had never before tasted. All the pleasures of the world were not to be compared to knowing that I was an object of the love of God, that all my sins were pardoned, that I was *saved, SAVED, SAVED!*

When the preacher found I was resting on John iii. 16 for my eternal salvation, he said—"To-morrow morning you will have to face your workmates, and I know what it means, from personal experience, to confess Christ among that class of men, so my advice is, tell them at once what has taken place."

My soul was so filled with my new-found joy that I could not keep it until morning. So I went that night to my Bible-class teacher to tell him that I was now "in the way everlasting," and gladden his heart by telling him that his prayers for my salvation had not been in vain.

No dismal forebodings drove sleep from my eyes that night—I rested in spirit, soul, and body, a happy child of God, a weary sinner whose burden had gone, and, thank God, gone for ever. Morning

came. Now came an inward struggle, as I thought of the consequences of confessing Christ to men who knew my black past. Strength and help came from above, and I confessed with my lips the Lord Jesus, just as the night before I had believed with my heart unto salvation.

"*We'll give you a week,*" was their reply. That is eleven years since. Here I am to-day, another witness that my Saviour is not only "able to save," but "able to keep" those who put their trust in Him.

He died on the cross to put my sins away, He lives in heaven to save me to the uttermost. Persecutions, trials of various kinds have been my lot whilst working in environments that are not helpful to Christian life; but amidst them all I have been kept supremely happy, and the language of my heart is—

"I feel like singing all the time,
My tears are wiped away,
For Jesus is a Friend of mine,
I'll praise Him all the day."

Why do I tell you a little of my history? For three reasons. First of all, to magnify the grace of God in forgiving, saving, and blessing a sinner like me. Secondly, in the hope that some weary heart and troubled conscience may find in God's wonderful love to poor sinners the same joy, peace, and rest I have found. Thirdly, to encourage Bible-class teachers, gospel preachers, and Christian parents, to go on praying for the salvation of those who seem hopelessly lost, and prayer will be answered.

It was answered for me,

T. H.

ALMOST, BUT NOT QUITE.

MOST people have either heard of, or else seen, cases of narrow escape from death.

David had several experiences of this kind, and it taught him the truth which he thus expressed, "There is but a step between me and death" (1 Sam. xx. 3). Now, what makes death so solemn and serious is this: "After this [death] the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27). If men are really like the beasts that perish, if there is no hereafter, "if the dead rise not; let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die" (1 Cor. xv. 32). But let men say what they will, they cannot get rid of God's sure Word, which asserts, with all possible distinctness, that God will bring all men into judgment (see Rom. ii. 3; Heb. x. 27; Eccles. xi. 9, xii. 14).

This being an established fact, that death will sooner or later reach each individual, and that "after this the judgment," how important it is that we should be ready. Men may persuade themselves that they are "almost ready," and that they are sure to have plenty of time for final preparations at last, but this is a hopeless delusion.

There never was greater need than there is to-day to warn men to "prepare to meet thy God" (Amos iv. 12).

"Danger and death are ever nigh,
And soon or late all men must die."

Facilities of every kind are so great nowadays

that men have ceased to take the precautions, and to make the necessary preparations that once they did. The very conveniences of the present day actually lead men to neglect the "one thing needful." If men think at all they gradually drift into the error that God changes with the times, and that with a little "spurt" at last they will as certainly be able to "win salvation" as they can jump into a motor car and make a dash for a train.

Of old, men thought more seriously than now, and they often put their thoughts into such a form that they were easily understood, and were repeated from mouth to mouth until they took the form of a proverb. As an instance it is only necessary to quote the saying, "A miss is as good as a mile."

Put another way, this saying means that a man is just as badly off whether he misses his train by an inch or a mile, by a minute or an hour. Or, take the case of a shipwreck. The sailor, who jumps from the foundering vessel and just misses the lifeboat and perishes in the water, is as surely drowned as the man who went down in the doomed ship.

These facts need to be considered. They are no less real than solemn.

There are so many seemingly pressing matters to be attended to that there is a great tendency to put off soul matters until a more "convenient season," as Felix stated he should do (see Acts xxiv. 25). If there were any possibility of men being able to arrange with certainty that they would find a

"convenient season" at some future time, then it would mean that they had been able to make a "covenant with death" and an "agreement with hell," it would mean they had arranged with death to delay his coming until they were ready, and that they had bargained with hell to keep its doors closed! What awful and profound folly! God declares that these "refuges of lies" shall all be exposed (Isa. xxviii. 15, 18).

Is it worth a man's while to play with death and destruction? Is it worth a man's while to hide beneath a mass of lies, and discover when too late that death cannot be bribed, that God cannot be deceived, and that hell is an awful reality?

When Paul pleaded with Felix he told him of the Lord Jesus—"the Lord our Righteousness" (Jer. xxiii. 6)—for he reasoned of righteousness as well as of judgment. He told him of the wrath to come and the only way of escape, and these solemn truths made Felix tremble, but he would not regard the warning. He sought to drive away the conviction and to drown his thoughts, and so he put off seeking the Lord Jesus until a "convenient season." How seemingly near he came to conversion, and yet how far away he drifted!

He has many followers. Thousands are persuading themselves to-day that at some later period, some "convenient season," they will turn to the Lord, but is this the way to treat the Lord Almighty, the Lord gracious and "full of compassion" (see Ps. lxxxvi. 15)? When He says, "To-day . . . harden not your hearts"

(Heb. iii. 7-8), is it becoming in any man to reply, "Not to-day, but at some other time"?

There are some who have heard these things many times, but they put off really seeking. Apparently often on the verge of turning, and yet always so far off.

Agrippa, the king, listened more attentively than Felix, the governor. He went so far as to say to Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (Acts xxvi. 28). Many have come as far as this, and yet turned aside. They have been almost persuaded to believe in and follow the Lord Jesus, but some fear or some favour has kept them back. Often it is some comparatively little thing, but it is some cherished sin they will not surrender, and so, whilst "almost persuaded" to lay hold of the Lord Jesus for life, they draw back and sink into perdition.

There are no "almost persuadeds" in heaven, but there are plenty such who will never cease mourning that heaven's gates were closed on them because they would not close with the Saviour's offer.

Abraham was "FULLY persuaded that what God had promised He was able to perform" (Rom. iv. 21), and therefore he left ALL and followed where God led, and all who are blessed as Abraham was (Gal. iii. 9) do as Abraham did. Paul was of the same faith as Abraham. He said, "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).

THE GREATNESS OF THE GOSPEL.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15).

HERE we read a great gospel statement. By this gospel the Apostle Paul was converted from the most rabid Judaism and thorough-going ritualism. He fought most strenuously for it against all invaders, and defended it against all corrupters. It was his continual boast that he was not ashamed of it. His sufferings for its grand truth as its great ambassador are unequalled in the world's history. For its sake he willingly parted with good name, friends, and all that goes to make a man great amongst men. He proved his deep sincerity by enduring imprisonment, stripes above measure, hunger, thirst, nakedness, the contempt of men, and a martyr's death were its glorious witness.

The seeds he has sown have sprung up and borne fruit the wide world over. The huge towering mountain of Judaism has been removed into the sea of the nations before the silent march of its victorious power. The cultured heathenism of Rome and polished learning of Greece have crumbled into dust, and now they belong to the limbo of the dead past, since it began to be preached.

To Paul's own soul it was a healing balm. It was like a medicine that had cured him from an awful gangrene or malignant disease. Because of this he was thoroughly in earnest in recommending it

to others. He well knew that other men were as badly in need of its curative properties as he himself had been. He had tried mere natural religion—the greatest of all prescriptions proposed to meet man's ruin—until he was sick of it.

All he had tried effected no cure for his sinful state, and furnished him no lasting satisfaction. At last he found the glorious gospel of the Son of God a cure for every ill, a balm for every sorrow. He could, therefore, recommend it most highly, and say that it was worthy of all acceptance—of all evidence and belief. He could recommend it to all classes, as for instance to a king on his throne and a runaway slave.

We shall divide this text into three parts:—

Who was Christ Jesus?

Where did He come from?

What was the object of His mission?

WHO WAS CHRIST JESUS?

No more important inquiry could be raised. It is being raised in men's minds, and at this present moment it is being discussed everywhere.

Was the Man Christ Jesus, who appeared in Judea, born of the humblest parentage, "over all, God blessed for ever"? Was He the Son of God, the Father, in personal relation to God, as none but Himself ever was, or ever could be?

This no mortal man can ever know except by the revelation of God the Father. If that be accepted, then let us hear what God's revelation says of this

One, who was born of a woman and truly man in every sense of the word. His life was sinless, which proves beyond controversy that there was no sin in His nature.

When Jesus addressed the question to His disciples, "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter at once answered by a distinct revelation from the Father, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Did Jesus say Peter was wrong in making such an unheard-of confession? Never. He always corrected His disciples when they needed correction. At one time He had said to Peter when in the wrong, "Get thee behind Me, Satan; for thou art an offence unto Me" (Matt. xvi. 23). Strong language this to his most ardent, impetuous disciple. But when Peter, by the Father's revelation, saw His deeper glory as being the Son of the living God, He accepts that, and at once responds, "Upon this rock [the confession of His divine person] I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. xvi. 18).

In John xvii. 5 He says to the Father, "Glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." Nothing can be clearer from these weighty words than that He was in personal relation to the Father, whom He was at that moment speaking to. Nothing can be plainer than that He had a glory previous to having come into this world to glorify the Father by doing His holy will. Having now accomplished the Father's will and pleasure, and finishing redemption's

mighty work, He asks the Father, with confidence, to be put back into the place of distinction He had with the Father before the world had any existence. This fully accords with the beginning of the Gospel by John, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

But when was the beginning? No mind can tell when the beginning was. Scientists tell us this world may be millions of years in existence, but before there was any world the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This affirms His eternal existence, and His distinct personality, and His true Deity.

WHERE DID HE COME FROM?

Scripture is just as clear that He came from God, that He came from heaven, which is represented as God's dwelling-place. *He is no product of earth, no mere evolution of the race.* He could say of Himself, "The Son of Man which is in heaven" (John iii. 13). "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but *He that came down from heaven*" (John iii. 13). Heaven is the sphere and home of God's blessed existence, as earth is the sphere and home of man's natural existence. "As is the earthly, such are they also that are earthly; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly" (1 Cor. xv. 48). The celestial is heavenly, the terrestrial is earthly.

So Christ declared of Himself, "*I came down from heaven*, not to do Mine own will, but the will of

Him that sent Me" (John vi. 38). When tabernacling in the flesh He was the heavenly One. His whole life and character bore the stamp of His heavenly origin. Earth was a foreign sphere to Him.

When he spoke to the Jews about the manna, and about giving His flesh for the life of the world, even His disciples murmured. His reply was, "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up *where He was before?*" (John vi. 62).

WHAT WAS THE OBJECT OF HIS MISSION?

Listen! Sound it far and near. Let it be wafted on the breezes, and carried on the storm—

To SAVE SINNERS.

But do sinners need saving? If not, His wonderful mission has been in vain. "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke ii. 11). "He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21). The very name—JESUS—given to Him implies it.

What does it mean? Jehovah, Saviour.

What has made men unhappy? There are various causes, but SIN is at the bottom of it all. *Had there been no sin there had been no misery.* *Had there been no misery there had been no need of mercy.* The riches of God's mercy is displayed in sending such a Saviour as His only-begotten Son to atone for sin, and bear its intolerable burden. Had He not suffered on the cross we must have

bore the awful consequences of our sin in separation from God for ever.

But He has suffered for sin that He might in mercy become our Saviour. He drank the bitter cup of the wrath of God on the cross. He was made sin there for the believer. His atonement or expiation for our guilty sins was complete. He cried with His latest breath, "*It is finished.*" The awful cup of God's wrath He drained. There is no wrath for the believer to bear because He bore it. His own words are plain to all who "believe"—"He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation [judgment], but is passed from death unto life" (John x. 24).

He made peace with God for us by the blood of His cross. *We have not to make it because it is made.* When we believe it is made for us we then rest in the blessedness of His accomplished work. His resurrection is victory over death and all the power of the enemy. His triumph is the believer's triumph. He fought the fight alone. He gained the victory alone. Our sins are put away, Satan is defeated. Death is overcome and its power broken, God is glorified. Those who believe stand beyond death in resurrection life, and victory. We have passed out of death in His risen life, therefore we are out of the place of condemnation. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1).

A STORY FROM H.M.S. "PATHFINDER."*

"Thou wilt show me the Path of Life."—PSALM xvi. 11.

ON Saturday night, 5th September, the news reached London of the loss of H.M.S. "Pathfinder." Torpedoed by a hostile submarine off St Abb's Head, she sank, and two hundred and fifty men perished with her. "'S.O.S.' went up the last signal"; but all the promptitude and resource of those who tried to help could not prevent the heavy loss of human life.

Two hundred and fifty souls hurried into eternity! This was the unspoken burden on the real heart of the nation as the tragedy became known. What about those souls? Where are they now?

Could any message from the other side have been received telling of their eternal safety, half the weight of that burden would have vanished. Here, then, just such a message has come across the waves from the lost ship. No apology seems necessary for passing on the story of one of the crew who, only shortly before the disaster, found the Path of Life that leads to eternal joy.

As far as his soul was concerned, our hero began his career in anything but a hopeful manner. "The things that are not seen" had no apparent place in

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his outlook. In which fact there lies an infinite encouragement.

As a boy, not only was he the despair of his schoolmasters and neighbours, but even his own parents could do nothing with him. For some time it was his unpleasant habit to appear at the Sunday school in his parish, apparently for the sole purpose of making his presence felt by the most outrageous conduct. It was often a question between his teacher and the superintendent as to how long his disturbances ought to be endured ; and there is no denying the fact that when he finally took his inglorious career into his own hands, and disappeared, the neighbourhood sighed with relief.

Years went by, and no word came from the troublesome boy. Then one Sunday, about a month before the present war, he returned on this wise. The Vicar, according to his custom, was holding an open-air service. "He careth for you," was his text. Twice over, in a peculiarly ringing voice, he repeated the four wonderful words ; and, valiantly trying to ignore a low whistle almost in his ear, he went on to tell the old, old story of Divine love and pity.

"Remember this, however careless you may be about the future of your soul, God cares what becomes of you. He cares so much that He sent His only Son to die, so that He might make a way from earth to heaven for those who have sinned, and come short of the righteousness He required."

In simple words like these the preacher endeavoured to arrest the heart and conscience of the crowd around

him, and all the while the whistling grew louder and more insistent, till it merged at last into a definite song—

"I DON'T CARE WHAT BECOMES OF ME."

Obliged to turn round at this, the Vicar saw that the disturbing element was a young bluejacket, with H.M.S. "Pathfinder" on his cap. Beneath the gilt letters, in spite of added years and altered dress, the Vicar recognised the features of his old unruly scholar. As he had gone, so had he returned, precisely the same wild, reckless, audacious spirit that in the past had created so much trouble.

Delighted at having attracted attention to himself, the bluejacket came back to his charge with renewed vigour. "I don't care what becomes of me," he chanted; "I don't care what becomes of me": and this time he accompanied his song with the fantastic steps of the hornpipe.

The Vicar, full of concern at such flagrant behaviour, dismissed the spoiled meeting, and before the sailor could make his escape, he grasped his arm and led him away. Once clear of the crowd, he began to reason with him on his behaviour; but the only response to his appeal was the same refrain: "I don't care what becomes of me."

"Do you care about nothing?" he asked at length. "Wouldn't you care if you knew you must die to-night?"

"Not I," was the determined rejoinder; and again the song began: "I don't care what becomes of me."

Feeling that words were useless, the Vicar turned sadly away. A second thought came to him. "Wait a moment," he said, and from his pocket he produced a little book, on the back of which he wrote in large, clear letters—

"IF I DIE TO-NIGHT I SHALL GO TO H——."
Then he handed it to the sailor.

"If you really do not care what becomes of your soul," he said, "before you go to bed to-night finish writing that last word, and then sign your name to it. Only remember, there are *two ways* in which that last word can be spelt."

Absolutely unsobered, the man put the little book into his jumper, and swaggered down the street, singing defiantly: "I don't care what becomes of me."

The Vicar went on his way slowly and sadly, wondering if he had been wise in what he had done; and praying with his whole heart and soul that somehow or other the rebellious young life might be transformed by the grace of God. To tell the truth, there was not much faith about that prayer, but it is not always according to a man's faith that answers are bestowed. The very next morning the answer came. At the eight o'clock service, who should be in church but the disturber of the previous evening! At the close of the service, a very subdued, humbled man made his way down the aisle, and followed the Vicar into the vestry. He wasted no time on preliminaries. You forget yourself when you come face to face with eternity, and this man had faced

death and judgment through the sleepless hours of the night.

"I am utterly miserable," he volunteered with a shudder. "I couldn't go to sleep last night. I couldn't finish that last word, for

I DO CARE WHAT BECOMES OF ME;

and I know where I should go if I died now."

There was no need for the servant of God to point out his utter unfitness for heaven. Sin lay like a heavy burden on the man's mind: sin that deserved punishment: sin that must keep him for ever outside the Golden City, where "nought that defileth can ever enter in." The very idea of such a character as he expecting admission there drew from him a bitter laugh.

"If I died to-night, I should go to hell," he said, miserably.

"But Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners from hell," answered the Vicar triumphantly. "It was because He knew the horrors of that awful place that He died to deliver us from it."

Glancing down at the ribbon on the man's cap, which was revolving nervously in his weather-beaten hands, he went on: "The Lord Jesus is our Pathfinder. He found a plan by which He could make a path for sinners, from earth to heaven. It cost His holy, sinless life to make that way; but He thought it worth while to die in our stead, and open the gate of heaven to all believers. Listen to this: 'AN HIGHWAY SHALL BE THERE, AND A WAY,

and it shall be called The Way of Holiness ; the unclean shall not pass over it ; but it shall be for those : the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.' That is the Path which the Lord Jesus died to open for seafaring as well as wayfaring sinners. Listen again :

‘I AM THE WAY,’

says the Saviour Himself ; ‘No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.’ You see, He Himself is the Way that leads to heaven, and the wonderful part is that ‘Whosoever will’ may come to Him.”

The sailor did not speak, but the anxiety on his face deepened. “I do care what becomes of me,” was written all over it.

“Here is a comforting verse,” went on the Vicar, in dead earnest : “CHRIST DIED FOR THE UNGODLY.

“He died that you might be forgiven,
He died to make you good,
That you might go at last to heaven,
Saved by His precious blood.”

“You used to sing that when you were a little boy, do you remember ?”

Not all at once, but bit by bit the man’s countenance cleared. By the grace of God, and the comfort of the Spirit, he gradually saw that faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ is all that God requires from sinners, for admission into His family and His home. After a few broken words of humble, thankful prayer, the forgiven

sailor went on his way rejoicing. Two days later he appeared again. This time he came to the vicarage to say good-bye. His whole attitude was expressive of the miraculous change that had come over him: He hesitatingly asked whether, before joining his ship, he might be allowed to come to the Lord's Table, and publicly take his place with those who loved their Saviour. Being satisfied that he was dealing with one who did most earnestly repent, and was heartily sorry for his misdoings, and by the grace of God did intend from henceforth to lead a new life walking in God's holy ways, the Vicar granted his request.

The service over, there was only time for a last hand-shake, a last "God bless you," and the boy went off to rejoin his ship.

For just one month after the outbreak of war the "Pathfinder" took her share in guarding our coast. For just one month that young servant of Jesus Christ was given the opportunity of telling his shipmates what God had done for him; and then in one moment he was summoned into the presence of his Maker.

Before the casualty lists were published, his friend the Vicar seemed to know by instinct that his old scholar's name would appear amongst the dead, and he longed with unutterable longing to know how that last month had been lived. Had the change been real? Had his life altered with his faith? It was only a day or two before an answer was sent that silenced all questionings.

The very next Sunday he noticed a group of six men sitting at the back of the church. Being strangers, he hurried out of the vestry hoping to catch them on their way out. The men were waiting about at the door, for they had come on purpose to speak to the Vicar. They were all survivors from the "Pathfinder," and each one had come in contact with the man, whose life had been altered by what he had learned through the gospel.

There was no mistaking their testimony. The change in their once godless companion had been so striking and so real, that his explanation of the cause had been listened to with respect and interest, and, joy of joys, several of his shipmates were led thereby to realise their own danger, and to look to his Saviour as their only hope of salvation.

And to us who have ears to hear, there still comes ringing across the sea that message on the "scrap of paper" which bore such heavenly fruit :—

"If I die to-night I shall go to Heaven."

LETTICE BELL.

"GOD'S CREATURE."

WETHER you believe it or not, you belong to God. First of all, by creation. He made you. Second, by providential care. He has kept you in life up to this moment. The very air you breathe is His. The sun that shines upon you, the food you eat, belongs to Him. In the

third place, He has purchased you by the blood of His Son. When Jesus died He paid the purchase-price of the world. He bought the field for the sake of the treasure that was in it. That blessed *One*, to whom belong the glories of creation, the goodness of providence, and the matchless love expressed in the price He paid to purchase you, lingers over you in all the grace of redemption. He has bought you to set you free.

Let me tell you how He set a fellow-sinner free. He was a dirty, ragged fellow, with care written in deep furrows on his brow—the very image of misery. That very morning his employers had dismissed him for intemperance. He was on his way to a drunkard's home, to a pining wife, and starving children. He passed a schoolboy beating a dog unmercifully. Another boy, seeing him, said, “Don't do it ; it's God's creature !”

These words fell upon the poor drunkard's ear. It was a new thought to him. Surely if a *dog* was God's creature, *he* was. “What ! I, a drunkard, a burden to my own family, despised by society, ashamed to look my own children in the face because of the way I have wronged them—I, God's creature ! Ah ! I remember the days of childhood. I remember when I knelt at my mother's knee and breathed those hallowed words she taught me, ‘Our Father.’ Now desolate, weighed down, despaired of by friends. Little did I then contemplate what I now am. Alas ! I yielded to temptation. By gradual steps I descended Satan's ladder, and what a spectacle

I am now ! ‘God’s creature !’ I might have been His child. What am I now ?”

He looked up. The public-house stood right before him. He must pass it on his way home. Often he had sought to drown his remorse and silence his conscience there, and then staggered home to inflict new miseries on wife and children.

He stopped. There was an inward struggle. The Spirit of God had fastened that child’s word about being “*God’s creature*” on his conscience. He hurried by the door, entered his own house a sober man, a convicted man, a deeply penitent man.

His wife had often prayed for him with broken-hearted cries. Now the answer had come.

Ruin stared them in the face, her husband had lost his employment, nothing but starvation or the workhouse was before them, but all this was nothing to her. She would have faced that, and far more, for the joy of that moment. Those tears of her husband, as they coursed down his cheeks, filled her heart with a joy, which only those know, who have prayed, watched, and waited for the salvation of those dear to them.

Not many hours rolled by before prayer gave place to praise, and husband and wife rejoiced together that now both their eyes had seen God’s salvation. They wept for very joy. “*God’s creature*” was also a new creature in Christ Jesus ; old things had passed away and all things become new. Their night of sorrow had been turned into the light and joy of a morning of salvation. He

had yielded to God's claims. He could now look up into the face of his Saviour and say, “Thou hast not only created me, preserved me, purchased me, but Thou hast redeemed me to God by Thy blood.”

I wonder if you, my reader, can say that “The blood that *purchased* me is the blood that has redeemed me.”

Perhaps you say, “I do not understand the difference.”

Let an illustration help. If I bought a slave in a country where men are sold as slaves, that slave would be my absolute property. If he ran away and refused to serve me he would still be my property. He is mine by purchase. In that way all men belong to God. The purchase-price is the blood of Christ. You may refuse to own Him as your Master, you may try to escape from Him, but you are still “God's creature,” you belong to Him in a double sense, first by creation, second by the redemptive work of His blessed Son.

Now suppose the slave-owner issues notices, and has them placed in every conspicuous place: “All of my slaves who have run away shall have a free pardon, and a full *redemption* granted to them on condition that they come and claim the pardon; they need do nothing, bring nothing to secure it. It is a full, free, unconditional pardon. All coming will be free for ever.”

Imagine a runaway slave reading that. One of two things will happen. He will either say, “I am quite content where I am, and I don't believe

a word my master says"; or else he will go straight off, and claim the offered pardon.

Which course are you taking? You might be the biggest blackguard, the worst drunkard, or the most immoral man, yet if you respond to God's gracious invitation you shall swell the ranks of the redeemed. If you doubt my word, you just try it for yourself. I came when I was just ready to sink into hell. He remitted all my sins. He will remit yours. It is yours to confess your guilt. It is His to forgive. "With the Lord there is mercy, and with Him there is *plenteous redemption*" (Ps. cxxx. 7).

Do you reply, "Your way of putting it makes things so easy that it will lead people to do what they like"? So it will; in one sense you are quite right. Some visitors noticed a young girl watch every movement of her master, and anticipate every command. She never seemed tired of serving him. They inquired the reason. She replied, "I was a slave; my master purchased me, and then gave me my redemption. I was free to do what I liked. I am finding my joy in serving the one who has redeemed me." Such in substance, if not in words, was her reply.

Only yield yourself wholly to Christ. The constraint of His love will produce its own results. What you will "like" to do will be to please the One of Whom you can say, "He loved me and gave Himself for me." You will say, "I am redeemed to God by His blood," henceforth my desire shall be, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" H. N.

THE FARMER'S CONVERSION.

I WAS spending a holiday in a small country place on the east coast of Ireland, where along with a friend we were holding gospel meetings with much interest. My host was a genial farmer, well nigh the allotted three score years and ten, still bright in his testimony to the saving and keeping power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Although kept hard at work all day and living quite four miles out of K—— he was constantly found at the gospel preachings.

Thus I was led to ask him to tell me how he was brought to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I seek to give this in his own words, praying, unsaved reader, that God will bless it to your soul's salvation.

"God's dealings with me were very gracious, and though I had turned thirty years of age when I yielded to Him as a sinner, yet He took me in and saved me. Brought up by godly parents I attended the chapel some distance from our home, but childhood and boyhood years passed, and I was still unsaved.

"A wonderful answer to prayer roused serious thoughts towards God. Whilst walking home through some fields one dark night I was suddenly seized with severe internal pains. Instantly I dropped to my knees, and asked God as proof that He heard my cry to free me from the pain before the opposite

side of the field was reached. God answered my petition, the next field being entered with freedom from bodily pain, but with a troubled heart as thoughts of God's goodness and my waywardness came before me.

"Nights of weariness with hardly any sleep followed, until one night the burden of sin could be borne no longer. What could I do? Should I get out of bed and pour out my heart in repentance? I knew that would bring instant reproach and scoffing from my brother, who shared my room. Satan whispered, 'Sleep on,' but this was far from me, so hastily dressing I quietly slipped from the bedroom, ran downstairs, and went straight to the hayloft. Reaching this I flung myself down, and in true repentance and faith cried, 'Lord save me, or I perish.'

"It would be impossible to describe my feelings on rising from my knees. Truly I was a new creature. God's glorious light had shone into my dark heart, bringing joy and peace, and from that day to this I have never doubted my acceptance before God. 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life' (John iii. 36).

"Since that time God has used me in blessing to others, and now, having been kept all these long years by my blessed Saviour, I long for the moment when He shall come, and call me to Himself, when with the blood-bought throng I shall join in that eternal song of praise, 'Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood . . . to

Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.
Amen' (Rev. i. 5, 6)."

What about your future, dear reader? Do you prefer not to think about it, or would you like to know that all was settled? If the latter, you may own your guilt, as a sinner before God, accepting in simple faith the death of Christ as meeting His claims against you, and salvation is yours.

"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" (Rom. x. 9).

J. H. R.

SUDDEN DESTRUCTION.

"... When they shall say peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them."—1 THESS. v. 3.

THE late earthquake in Italy, and similar disasters, give one a feeble idea of the judgments about to fall on guilty Christendom. An experience that nearly cost the writer his life makes for him the above text an unforgettable part of Scripture.

Once when on surveys in Namaqualand, South Africa, he stood on a hummock—which elevated him above the vast surrounding sandy plains—to take observations. An assistant, well acquainted with the country, tended the horses by his side,

Far in the horizon, but travelling in the direction of the hummock, came a whirlwind, lifting and suspending in the air a column of sand. Once and again the assistant urged the surveyor to leave the hummock. The surveyor, however, failed to realise the danger, and continued working. The assistant's cry of terror—who saw the whirling column of sand to be making directly for the hummock—made the surveyor hurriedly pack up his instruments, and rush off to level ground, and out of the way of danger.

Turning round at some little distance from the hummock he had left, he was just in time to see the column of suspended sand strike the hummock, and in a moment collapse and form a pyramid of sand.

Had the surveyor remained at his station but a short time longer both men and horses would have been fatally overwhelmed, and left not a trace of their disappearance.

The Lord's faithful servants have seen, and see to-day, the whirlwind of God's long foretold but still suspended judgments approaching indifferent, pleasure-loving Christendom.

Again and again has their cry of warning been heard as God's voice has spoken in recent years, and is speaking in the terrible happenings occurring in many parts of the world, both on sea and land. But momentary horror passed away under the lullaby of "Peace and Safety." Once more—and as many believe—God is speaking through the appalling carnage and horrors of the present war to His

professing people for the last time: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke xiii. 3); "Judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Pet. iv. 17).

The terror that was universally manifest when first the war broke out is becoming once more largely a thing of the past, and it is to be feared that indifference will again stifle purposed repentance. A conviction, deep, wonderful, and real, that the Lord's return for His saints is at hand, is the precious experience of comparatively a few, and so the many fail to realise the significance of present happenings, and look forward to a time of great spiritual and temporal prosperity when peace once more is the world's portion.

The spiritually instructed believe otherwise. If the Lord said to His friend, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" surely we may expect that the Lord will reveal to His loved and waiting people that the time for their translation is very near—even if the particular "day and hour" of the Church's departure is withheld. This the Lord has done and is doing.

The wise do not wait for the "great tribulation," but for God's Son from heaven, and they see in passing events, not a prelude to "peace and safety," but the swift approach of the whirlwind of overwhelming judgments on guilty Christendom, boasting to-day of being "rich . . . and having need of nothing"—not even of God and the word of His grace. Lord, warn and save!

"OUR SHEPHERD IS THE LORD." AN ADDRESS TO YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

(Read John x. 1-30 ; Heb. xiii. 20, 21 ; 1 Pet. ii. 20-25,
v. 1-4.)

WE have the Lord Jesus presented to us in these Scriptures in His Shepherd character. In John x. you have Him as the *good Shepherd*, in Hebrews xiii. as the *great Shepherd*, and in 1 Peter v. as the *chief Shepherd*.

He is the good Shepherd in *death*, the great Shepherd in *resurrection*, and the chief Shepherd at this present time in *glory*, and by-and-by at His coming for His own.

In John x. He Himself introduces the subject in the parable of the Shepherd and His sheep. The blind man in chapter ix. is a sample of how the sheep are sought and found. He had been in darkness, with all kinds of religious associations, but the Lord opened his eyes, and the man began to witness for Christ. First of all he speaks of Him as "*a man that is called Jesus*" (John ix. 11). By-and-by he gets on, and says, "He is a *prophet*" (ver. 17); and then he says, "If this man were not of God, He could do nothing" (ver. 33).

He recognised that He came out from God. The end of it was when he said to the Pharisees, "If this man were not of God, He could do nothing," they were angered, and said, "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?" (ver. 34). And they cast him out to where Christ was. They had

already agreed in chapter ix. verse 22, “that if any man did confess that He was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.” That meant that the Lord was cast out, and it is a great thing to see that you and I have to do with a rejected Christ. That is how the question of following becomes very important. The man follows the light he gets till they cast him out, and that was the most blessed thing that could happen to him. He was cast out, but Christ was rejected before him, and they cast him into the blessed company of Christ.

It will do you no harm to receive similar treatment at the hands of the religious world. The Lord is always on the look-out for a cast-out person. He will pick up the devil’s castaways, and then welcome religious castaways. He is the Receiver of castaways.

So the Lord is on the look-out for this cast-out one. When He finds him He asks him, “Dost thou believe on the Son of God ?” (ver. 35). He replies, “Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him ?” (ver. 36), as if to say, “I should like to believe on Him if I knew who He was.” “Jesus says unto him, Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee” (ver. 37). The first sight that poor man got when his eyes were opened was Christ. Now as cast out by the Pharisees he finds himself in the company of the Son of God—he is blind to everything else now. “Lord, I believe,” is his response, “and he worshipped Him ” (ver. 38).

I do not believe anyone really touches worship in the true sense of the term until they have been cast

out by the religion that suits the flesh and the world. We live in a day when there is so much that suits man in the flesh, and he is appealed to, and resuscitated, and religion is trimmed down to suit man, whose heart is opposed to God.

The religious leaders of that day rejected Christ, and likewise the man that followed Him. They will do the same to-day, and if you are not prepared to be cast out, you will never really touch what God puts before you in this gospel, the knowledge and revelation of Himself that leads to the heart finding its absorbing delight in Himself. That is what leads up to the doctrine of chapter x.

John x. begins with the words of the Lord Himself, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber" (ver. 1). What is the sheepfold? Judaism with all its religious ordinances and ceremonies, suiting man in the flesh, and you must not forget such religions abound to-day. You have got a sort of Christianised Judaism very prevalent to-day. It suits man in the flesh. It is not Christianity proper. It is that which has entangled a great many sheep.

"But he that entereth in by the door is the Shepherd of the sheep" (ver. 2). There is no doubt who the Shepherd of the sheep is, because the Lord tells us plainly, "I am the Shepherd of the sheep" (ver. 14). "Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the Door of the

sheep” (ver. 7). He is not only the door of the sheep, but the Shepherd likewise. It is the Lord Himself, as the sent One of God, who enters in among them by the right door, and becomes the Shepherd of His sheep. How is that?

I have no doubt as far as His pathway is concerned it is in fulfilling all prophecy as to His coming. He was of the seed of David. He was born at Bethlehem. He was duly announced by the promised forerunner, John the Baptist. He was, above all, the Son of a virgin.

The Shepherd of the sheep came in through the door into the sheepfold. “To Him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear His voice: and He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out” (ver. 3). The mark of a sheep is that it hears the shepherd’s voice. Many of you have wondered whether you are a sheep. Sometimes you have thought you were, and sometimes not. What were you looking at? *Yourself*, and *your* feelings and *your* experiences. What is the mark of the sheep? They hear *His* voice, and follow *Him*. Have you ever heard that voice and been constrained to follow?

“He calleth His own sheep by name and leadeth them out” (ver. 3). I need not tell *you* that an Eastern shepherd is different from the shepherds in this country. The sheep are in front here, and the shepherd is behind, and the poor sheep are often frightened beyond measure by the sheep dogs barking at their heels. In the East every shepherd knows

his sheep, and every sheep knows its shepherd, and the sheep are not driven, but led. It was and is an Eastern way, and the Lord took up the figure, "He leadeth them out."

It is very blessed so to hear His voice. There was a poor, bleating, broken-hearted sheep on the resurrection morning—she thought she had lost the Lord. Mary was a sheep He had found, and now she thought she had lost the Shepherd because He had died. She did not understand the necessity of His death, and she knew Him not in resurrection, but suddenly He said, "Mary." Ah! how true it is, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (ver. 27).

Again the Good Shepherd spoke from glory, and said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" (Acts ix. 4), and the astonished arch-persecutor replied, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts ix. 6). Another sheep is called by name, and followed Him who called.

Perhaps you remember the time when you first heard His voice. He called you by name. You did not hear the call He addressed to me or to anyone else, but you heard the call He addressed to you. You heard His voice, and there was a link formed between Him and you from that moment, and that link can never be broken. How blessed!

Let us follow on with our chapter. The Lord was going to lead His sheep out of Judaism into Christianity. So we read, "And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and

the sheep follow Him; for they know His voice; and a stranger will they not follow” (vers. 4, 5). The Lord Jesus was outside this whole system of Judaism. Its leaders had refused Him, and He is compelled to refuse their system in every way. In verse 40 He goes back to the spot of His baptism where He got in among the sheep, and He takes His own outside that system. He goes before and they follow, because they know His voice. It is an immense thing to know His voice, and I press upon my own soul and yours the unspeakable importance of cultivating that nearness to the Lord that enables you to hear His voice.

The sheep may have to take a turn in the road as they go along in the desert, and the only sheep that are safe are those who listen to His voice. You have not to go a road Christ has not trodden. He counts upon your hearing His voice, and He will guide. The sheep know His voice.

“And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers” (ver. 5). There is a character about the Lord’s sheep that is very simple. They will not follow a stranger, but will flee from him. The sheep, knowing its own Shepherd, is heedless of another call—more than that, it will flee from the voice of strangers.

“Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the Door of the sheep” (ver. 7). Note very particularly He was not the door into the fold, *He* entered in by the door, to lead the

Jewish sheep OUT of a system of ritualism. But He is the door of the sheep INTO salvation and liberty. Where was He? Outside. That was the warrant for any one of the sheep being outside, and the only place to be with Him.

"All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them" (ver. 8). These had no interest in the sheep. They cared not for the sheep, but, as it has been said, for their fleece. The sheep were wise enough to hear nothing but the voice of the Shepherd.

"I am the Door; by Me, if any man enter in, He shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" (ver. 9). What is the Shepherd the door into? Into all spiritual blessing. He is the door to salvation, to liberty, to the Father, to glory, to heaven, to peace and rest. There is nothing to be had from God except through the Lord Jesus Christ.

And what do those find who pass through this door? There is salvation first of all. There is no salvation apart from Christ. Perhaps you thought there was salvation in the Church. The saved form the Church of God; that is true, but there is no fold to-day, and the Church is not the spot where you are to be saved. The Lord says, "BY ME if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" (ver. 9).

Salvation is through contact with Christ personally, through the knowledge of Him as a personal Saviour. The first thing, then, is salvation. Next, to "go in and out," that is liberty, "and find

pasture," that is sustenance, food. If you are a poor unsaved sinner, the Lord presents Himself to you as an open door, and you go in, not to the bondage of Judaism, but into the light and liberty of Christianity, the enjoyment of the love of the Father and the Son, in possession of what belongs to eternal life, enjoyed here on the earth.

But, further, the Lord says, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (ver. 10). I think "life abundantly" is the present enjoyment of what really is eternal life; it is what the Lord suggests to the woman, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John iv. 14). The believer is so connected with Christ by the Holy Ghost, and so in the enjoyment of what is found in the knowledge of the love of God, that his heart springs up in worship to the Lord.

Now He gives the secret of it all. "I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep" (ver. 11). There is *His* love—the spring of it all, the blessed love of the Lord that led Him as the Shepherd to go into death, because He knew nothing but His death could save the sheep, or give them life. "Ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Pet. ii. 25).

Now we get a word as to dangers—the hireling and the wolf. "But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth

the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep" (ver. 12). The hireling has no real interest in the sheep: his only object is payment for his services. You will find presently that when we come to that part of our chapter where the sheep are put into the Father's hand, and into the hand of the Son, He says also, "Neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand" (ver. 28); "No man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand" (ver. 29). "Pluck" is the same word rendered "catch" in verse 12.

No wolf can catch you out of the Shepherd's hand or His Father's. The hand of the Son and the Father is a very safe place to be in, and there is the sweet assurance that no power can pluck the believer out of that spot of safety where His love has put him.

Then what intimacy is conveyed in the words, "I know My sheep, and am known of mine" (ver. 14). There should be no stop at the end of verse 14. Could anything be more blessed than that you know the Lord as the Father knows Him and He knows the Father? It is a condition of the most precious and blessed intimacy and affection and communion. It is an atmosphere of rest and love, and deep enjoyment, and holy communion of heart. That is the life here He proposes to us.

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold [literally

flock] and one Shepherd” (ver. 16). Who are these “*other sheep*”? Gentiles, saved by grace. At the beginning of our chapter we have the Jewish sheep called out from the fold of Judaism ; here the grace of God indicates the calling out of the Gentile sheep. He looked along the ages and saw us, poor sinners of the Gentiles, and this takes us in. He has suffered for us, and died for our sins to bring us to God. How sweet is the ministry of that shepherd love. “There shall be one flock, and one Shepherd” [N.T.], not fold. Not two flocks. Dismiss from your mind the thought of a fold. It is one *flock*, one Shepherd. To-day who cares for the sheep? The great Shepherd. He was and is the good Shepherd, but in resurrection He is brought before us as the great Shepherd.

“Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again” (ver. 17). Why does the Father love Him? He was always His blessed Son, the object of His delight through all eternity, but He has presented a motive to the Father’s heart, He has presented a reason to His Father why He should love Him, and what is that? He has loved you and me enough to lay down His life for us, and because He has been so devoted to the glory of God, and wanted to have us for Himself, and has gone to death, He has presented a new motive to the Father to love Him.

What a Saviour! What a Shepherd! May God fill our souls with a sense of the glory of His Person, and the blessedness of His ways.

W. T. P. W.

SALVATION IN NONE OTHER.

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." —ACTS iv. 12).

OUR God in grace doth still proclaim,
To all men under heaven,
Salvation thro' the only name
Which unto men is given—
The name of Him who died to save,
The Son of God who loved us,
Who rose in triumph from the grave,
Our Lord, our Saviour Jesus.

The Spirit of our God from heav'n
Is come to spread the story
Of saving grace, of sins forgiv'n,
Through Christ our Lord in glory;
None other name can we proclaim,
None other way to favour,
Through ages long—'tis still the same!
The one and only Saviour!

Tho' other ways some minds may seek,
None other can avail them;
The storms will come, the floods will break,
And Satan will assail them;
But on Th' Eternal Rock who stay,
Tho' tempests roar about them,
Trusting in Him, The Truth, "THE WAY,"
Nought can prevail against them.

BLEEDING FRANCE; OR, THE TESTIMONY OF AN INFIDEL.

BEHOLD France trampled under foot by the fierce modern Hun, her country bleeding, her cities destroyed, her ancient cathedrals battered by shell, her Government fleeing from Paris to Bordeaux ; Paris itself, her capital and pride—gay, volatile, pleasure-seeking—threatened and sobered ; her mothers bereaved of sons, her wives of husbands, her little children of fathers, her fair fields one vast cemetery. Surely such a spectacle is enough to make the stoutest weep.

Time was when she publicly gave up the Christian religion, and crowned a wicked brazen woman Goddess of Reason in the ancient cathedral of Notre Dame. This was accompanied by the terrible Reign of Terror. Blood gushed in streams from the guillotine. No person or property was safe. *Reason WITHOUT GOD became madness.* Things became so absolutely terrible that they wrought their own cure. The nation was forced to see that it could not go on without some recognition of God. Thus God spoke to France. A revulsion set in. Something had to be done if France were to avoid absolute moral suicide. At least nominal Christianity was resorted to with happy results so far.

God is again speaking to France. God's people have been crying to heaven to give her wisdom to

hear His voice, and recognise His chastening hand. Nor is France alone being visited. Britain, Russia, Germany, Servia, Turkey, Italy, must be included, indeed the whole world is spoken to in deeply solemn tones.

Is France listening? Is England listening? Are you listening? We hear of the French churches crowded by praying women, where they used before the war to be empty. And yet it is not a turning to the observances of religion, but to the fear of God; not to the forms of religion, but to faith in the Saviour, that is of any avail. Only in "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts xx. 21), can true rest and eternal happiness be found. Let us trust that something of this is going on.

An extract from a confession recently made by a celebrated French atheistical writer—Larredan—culled from the French newspapers, seems a case in point. Surely it is in answer to the prayers of God's people. Larredan writes:—

"I laughed at faith, and considered myself wise. I no longer retain my gaiety over this derision, as I see France bleeding and weeping. . . . It must be something consoling to know an eternal homeland which shines with love, when the earth is glowing with hatred. This knowledge is the knowledge of a little child, but I am no longer a child; that is my poverty, and causes me a shiver."

"I stand by the streams of blood on French soil, and I see rivers of tears. I doubt. But the old

woman from Bretagne, whose sons have bled to death, and who cried till her eyes were blind, she prays! How ashamed am I before that woman.

"Behold a nation of dead covers the fields. How difficult to remain an atheist on this vast national cemetery. I cannot. I have betrayed myself and you—you who have read my books, and who have sung my songs. It was a most raving, a most terrible dream. I see death, and cry for life. France, France, turn to Faith. . . . To give up God is to be lost. I know not if I be alive to-morrow, but this I must tell my friends: 'Larredan dare not die an atheist.' Hell does not trouble me, but this thought troubles me—a God lives, and I stand far from Him. My soul shall joy mightily if ever I experience that moment, when I kneeling can say, 'I believe, I believe in God, I believe.' These words are the vespers of humanity. For those who know them not it is night."

What a bitter awakening this man has had! Behold the intense yearning of his awakened soul! He finds his old-time laughter folly, and his wisdom worse than ignorance. He has seen the passions of men let loose, and has learned what it means when all restraint of God and religion is set aside.

Over forty years ago an outspoken German writer prophesied that when the gospel lost its power in his country there would be a revival of the war-like spirit of ancient times, the frenzied, war-like spirit of Berserker's mythological twelve sons. For is not Berserker's name, descended to his sons, but the corruption of "bear-sark" or shirt—and stands for all

that is brutal and terrible? The outspoken German writer's prophecy has come true.

The clear mind of Larredan looking into the cause and effect of this mighty European massacre evidently sees at last that to be without faith, without God, is terrible, and brings terrible results. Has not Germany produced the higher criticism in which the Bible is cut to pieces in the professors' chairs in her universities, their students, bereft of faith, taking the place of pastors to the people? and behold the result. It is no new thing for God to use nation to scourge nation. Germany is Protestant in name, but atheistical in reality; France, Roman Catholic in name, but atheistical in reality.

"Larredan dare not die an atheist." He tells us the knowledge of an eternal homeland shining with love is the knowledge of a little child, and he is no longer a child. Ah! Larredan, and all of us must become as little children, if we are to be blest. Look at the significant action of Jesus—the great Teacher—when He set a little child in the midst of the arrogant disciples, who were disputing as to who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Hear the words of Him, who was God and Man, "Except ye be converted, and become as *little children*, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 3).

How beautiful if Larredan and any of us stoop to be great with God's thoughts, stoop to give up our own thoughts, and in humility believe God's thoughts after Him.

The old Brittany woman, weeping till her eyes are blind for her sons who bled to death on France's battlefields, in her simplicity prays. Happy simplicity! She knows not a tithe of the world and its ways compared to Larredan, but with all his knowledge of men and affairs of this life, he stands abashed and ashamed before her who believes there is a God, who can hear her piteous prayer from that cottage far from the noise of the battlefield.

Oh! that those words, "I believe, I believe in God, I believe," by now have sprung from the heart and lips of Larredan. Oh! that his soul by now shall have rejoiced mightily.

But there is one thing the Bible is most explicit about. *There can be no reaching God SAVE THROUGH CHRIST.* "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5). Blood is flowing in streams in France and Flanders, in Poland and Prussia. Why? Because of sin. For ever and ever, to the ages of ages, there will be no war or carnage or sound of battle in the new heavens and the new earth, where

"All taint of sin shall be removed,
All evil done away."

Yes, blood is flowing in torrents on this earth. Man is a sinner. God is visiting this earth with His live lightnings.

And how can God's judgments be met? How can sin be put away? Blood is flowing in torrents as the result of man's sin and wickedness. *Mark*

well, sin can only be met by BLOOD SHEDDING. There is an awful lie, too often uttered, alas! from the pulpit of to-day, that if a soldier sheds his blood on the battlefield, that his dying a hero's death will atone for his sins. Terrible delusion!

It is "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, which cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). That and that alone can meet the sinner's case. Blood, shed not in hate, but in love, not in the excitement and fever of the battlefield, but to meet the righteous claims of the eternal throne, can enable God to righteously forgive the believing sinner.

Listen! "Without the shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22), is the solemn judgment of God. Every Jewish sacrifice pointed to this tremendous truth. The blood-sprinkled lintels in Egypt on the passover night proclaimed it. Above all, the great atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the types and shadows, made atonement, and set the blessed God free in perfect righteousness to offer salvation and peace as His gift.

Happy scene! No wonder Larredan's ardent spirit longs for the peace and shining love of that place as he stands amid the roar and carnage of battle.

There is no salvation without blood. *There is no salvation apart from Christ.* He is the only Mediator, and we can go straight to God through Him, and pleading the atoning merits of His sacrifice at Calvary, affirming our heart-felt faith in Him alone as our Saviour, and His work as sufficient to meet

our desperate case, we shall find in His presence salvation, peace, joy, and eternal life. None can go by any other road. No priest, be he Romish or Anglican, can impose himself between the soul and God. For the soul to be blessed, there must be personal dealings with God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord Himself said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh to the Father but by Me" (John xiv. 6).

"Without that Way there is no going,
Without that Truth there is no knowing,
Without that Life there is no living."

How explicit! How plain!

And the Apostle Peter says, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12).

For the moment forget Larredan, interesting as he is, eloquent as are his words; let us forget fair France, yearning as we do that her sons, and none least among them Larredan, may receive the blessings of faith, and let me ask *you* and *you* alone, as if there were not another sinner in the world, Have you faith in God? Have you faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? Can you say, "I believe"?

For if you cannot, in the words of Larredan, "*It is night.*" May that night not deepen into an eternal night. May wisdom's choice be yours. Come to the Saviour! Come now!

A. J. P.

THE LOST "LUSITANIA."

SCENES IN LIVERPOOL—THE GREAT QUESTION.

THE news was still fresh in Liverpool that the giant Cunarder, due at the home port within a few hours, had been sunk by a German submarine. Crowds of anxious inquirers, people who had relatives and friends on board, began to gather round the Company's offices, where all the telegrams that came to hand were immediately transferred into bulletins, and shown at the windows.

The disaster had taken place on the Friday afternoon. Early on the Saturday I mingled with the crowd still patiently waiting by those never-to-be-forgotten windows. Lists were being shown every few minutes, containing the names of those who had been *saved*, and those whose dead bodies had been brought into Queenstown, and were therefore known to have lost their lives. Words cannot describe the *intensity* of the scene. As each new bulletin appeared there was an eager straining of the eyes to read the list of names. There were relatives, whose suspense as to the fate of their loved ones, must have been awful. The great question with them as to their friends was: Are they saved? No other question had any place in their minds. They were not asking: Did they succeed in saving their baggage, or their money? Had they enjoyed the voyage up till the fatal moment? The one question was as to the *safety* of those concerned.

I saw some fall back with a look of relief and thankfulness, that expressed itself in tears as a name that they had waited to see appeared in the list of the "saved." Another, a woman, turned away with a face blanched white, and lips pressed close together, stricken with an agony too great for tears, when she caught sight of a name amongst those reported lost. Can you not imagine what the scene was like ?

I have no wish to minimise the awfulness of the calamity, brought about by a savage disregard of the recognised laws of warfare. But the tragic fate of the "Lusitania" is as nothing beside the awful catastrophe that lies ahead for so many members of the human race.

The Scriptures, whose predictions of events now past have been so marvellously fulfilled, foretell the approach of a day of reckoning between God and man. Man is a responsible creature, and is accountable to God for his thoughts, words, and actions. In view of the day when account must be rendered, surely the greatest question that can be asked concerning any individual is, *Is he saved ? Is she saved ?*

To be "saved" means to be right with God. And this involves, on the one hand, a true confession of our sinfulness and helplessness ; and, on the other hand, a sincere trust in Christ as our only Refuge and Hope. Those who accept Him as their personal Saviour are delivered from the danger that confronts them. Their sins are cleansed away by His precious blood. God forgives them, justifies them, and proclaims His righteousness in doing so because judg-

ment has already taken its course with regard to their sins, the penalty being borne by their Substitute. It was for this that Jesus died upon the cross. "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24).

He did not suffer on our behalf in order that we might *hope* to be saved some day, or in order that we might be saved at the end if we "did our best." He died to make God's great and wonderful salvation free to every sinner the instant he truly believes in Him. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12).

Do not resent the question, then, if we press it urgently upon you: *Are you among the "saved"?*

The whole human race is divided into two classes according to a verse in 2 Cor. ii. 15, namely, "Them that are saved," and "Them that perish."

I ask you earnestly and importunately, if God were to show the lists, written with unerring accuracy, of the "saved" and the "perishing," in *which list would your name appear?*

H. P. B.

"IT TOOK TWO DEATHS TO DO IT."

IFIRST met Jim Harris in a tent where special services were being held in a country town. At the close of the meeting he was asked to say a few words. Someone near me whispered to another, "Why that's Jim Harris, the comic singer. What's he going to say?"

He came forward with rather a jaunty air, and for a moment I wondered whether he could say anything suitable for such a meeting.

Covering his face with his hands for a second, he took them down to reveal a face literally smiling from ear to ear. Such a smile was infectious, and I feared lest the solemnity of the meeting should be broken in upon, but I was mistaken. From start to finish he held the attention of his hearers in a remarkable way.

“Dear friends,” said he, “many of you know me, but some don’t, and to them I must just tell what I was, to make them understand what the Lord has done for me. Oh! I feel so ashamed when I think how I played into the devil’s hands, making a fool of myself, and helping to drag others down to my own low level.

“Thank God He stopped me when I had been six years at it (six years too long, friends). It is awful to think of six years of such a life!

“Why, I went round from one public house to another, singing and performing just to amuse the drunkards and sinners, always ending with a heavy drink myself, so that I had to wait hours before I could go on to the next place.

“I had a good voice (which now I gladly use for my Lord), and I had a good memory for all sorts of comic songs (rubbish they were indeed); and all this time my Annie was fretting at home, and doing her best to bring up our four little ones respectably, as she had been brought up, poor girl.

“She seldom saw me sober, and only had a trifle of my earnings, but she prayed and prayed for me.

Sometimes I went in unexpectedly, and found her on her knees, and heard my name.

"That would sober me if anything would, for I loved her really, though it did not look like it, and then I would make up my mind to be a better husband.

"But I was held fast till the Lord broke the chains, and, my friends, it took two deaths to do it !

"One day our little Jennie, who had always loved her father, took ill. She got weaker and weaker till, at last, she died, holding my hand in hers.

"This only made me worse ; I felt hard, ah ! so hard. I'd go on worse than ever, but I missed little Jennie when I went home, and could fancy I heard her voice calling, 'Daddy, are you a good kind Daddy to-night ?' What would she have said if she could have seen me reeling home night after night ?

"Then our Fred got sick ; such a good scholar he was, and his mother was so proud of him, and so was I ; but nothing could save him, and the doctor said it was from poor living, and he had been half-starved, and I felt I was to blame for his death. For a few days I kept at home and tried to comfort my Annie, and it was then that the Lord met me.

"I was sitting alone one evening when I felt as if a dagger had stabbed me. I just saw what my life had been, and that I was rushing on to hell, away from God—away from all I loved. My sins rose up before me like a great mountain, and down I sank on the floor utterly crushed, for I saw no hope. I felt that I must perish in my sins. I thought that God must be against me, and that

He was going to take all my children and my wife from me, as I was not fit to live with them. How long this agony lasted I don't know, but all at once I thought I heard angels singing, so I listened, and heard just outside the door, 'Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power?' sung by several voices.

"I opened the door, but there was no one. The singers had passed along, but their message remained and brought the first ray of hope and light to my stricken heart.

"'No,' said I aloud, 'I've never been to Jesus yet, but if He'll have me I'll go now,' and down I knelt sobbing out the words, 'I come now for the cleansing power. Don't refuse me. Cleanse me and make me a new man!'

"Then I found my wife kneeling by my side, and she just prayed for what I wanted; and, praise the Lord, I was saved there and then before I got up from my knees, saved by my blessed Redeemer, and forgiven all my black and awful sins.

"From that time He took me into His service, and I found what a change of masters meant. No more hard service for Satan, with death before me as his only wages, but peace, and joy, and rest, and such happiness as I never knew before, and all through Christ and His precious blood.

"Dear friends, I only tell you my life-story to show that none are too bad for Jesus to save if He saved a poor sinner like me, and He will save you, if you will only come to Him and trust Him for a full salvation,

"Are you laden with sins? The precious blood can cleanse you from them all.

"Are you afraid of falling? God is able to keep you day by day and right through to the end. I am seeking recruits for my Master. Will you come and join our happy band? You'll never regret it. He wants faithful followers to-day; will you take Him for your Saviour and Friend?"

The Spirit of God was working amongst that company, and some responded to the invitation, and confessed their need of a Saviour.

Years have passed, and Jim Harris is still witnessing for Christ and winning souls. Of course his home is changed, and often and often he and his wife wish that their little Fred and Jennie could enjoy the comforts they all have now.

"The Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save." Let any reader of this simple story take courage, if he has given way to any besetting sin, and believe that God is willing to receive him, if he truly repents, and turns to Him, pleading not his own utter unworthiness, but the merits of Jesus Christ, God's Son, who died "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18).

Remember, too, that He is able to keep you from falling, if you trust Him fully.

"Myself I cannot save,
Myself I cannot keep,
But strength in Him I surely have,
Whose eyelids never sleep."

DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER?

ANY years ago in a village in the heart of the Forest of Dean, a young woman, who had been converted some years, made the very sad mistake of marrying an unconverted man, hoping to be the means in God's hands of leading him to the Saviour in after days.

She found, however, she had no power over her husband, and he went from bad to worse, and the home of love and happiness that she had pictured before marriage turned out to be a time of misery.

She talked to him, and prayed for him daily, but he became a frequenter of the village inn, and there in the skittle alley would spend his spare time drinking and gambling away his life, and so some twelve years of wretchedness and unhappiness of their life was spent.

A mission was to be held at the chapel where this dear woman attended in spite of all the jeers of her husband, and it was laid upon her heart to pray especially for his salvation, and she seemed to realise in her soul that on the following Sunday her prayer would be answered, and her husband would be reached.

Many times each day she was looking up to God to this end, and in due time the Sunday arrived. Calling him by his name, she said, "We have a special man at the chapel to-day, you *will* come just for once and hear him, won't you?"

"No," he replied, "certainly not, I am not going to your chapel, and especially to-day, as we have a skittle match coming off up at the inn, and I shall be there all day."

The poor woman said no more, but her hopes sank down to zero, and getting alone by herself she could not refrain from weeping. They had a little daughter some five or six years of age, whom the mother had many times spoken to about the Lord Jesus, who came into this world to save sinners, and this young heart had in all simplicity received the Saviour as her own. At this moment she came to her mother and said, "Mammie, what are you crying for?"

"Oh! nothing, my dear," replied the mother, and brushing away her tears she got herself and child ready for chapel, and went off to the service, the husband going his way, as was his custom now on Sundays, to spend his time playing skittles and drinking. He did not appear at dinner-time, and after the meal was over as the dear woman was thinking of him, and the downward road he was taking, and the certain end, she could not refrain from weeping again.

"Mammie," said the child once more, "you are crying again; what is the matter?"

The poor mother could no longer keep quiet, and she said, "Daddie is a wicked man, and I had been hoping he would come to chapel to-day, and take Jesus as his Saviour, and instead he is down at the public house drinking and playing skittles with a lot of bad men."

"Mammie," said the little girl, "do you believe God answers prayer?"

"Certainly," replied her mother.

"Then," said the child, "let us ask God to save Daddie," and falling on their knees by the side of the table they looked up to God. The little voice broke the silence, "Jesus, Daddie is a very wicked man. He is not kind to Mammie, and it just makes her cry because he won't come to chapel and give his heart to you, but will you please just save him where he is. Amen."

Atheists may mock, and men of the world may make a scoff at prayer, but the words of this child went straight up to heaven, and like a lightning flash came the answer.

At that moment in the skittle alley the pins were stood up, and the man had the ball in his hand to throw at them. His companions, some flushed with drink, were standing around, when suddenly his arm dropped to his side, the ball rolled on the floor, and he said, "Mates, I'm going home."

"Nonsense," said his friend, "the match isn't finished. You can't leave now. Have another drink."

"I'm going home," he said, and home he went. He walked straight into a room, and shut the door. His wife said, "Won't you come and have your dinner?"

"No," he growled, "let me alone," and he pushed her out of the room..

Tea-time came round, and she asked him to

come to tea, and again she met with the same answer, "Go away, let me alone."

About nine o'clock he came out and asked for a Bible, and without saying another word shut himself up in the room again. She went to bed about ten o'clock, praying, as she had been almost unceasingly doing since he came home, till she fell asleep.

She was suddenly awakened some hours later by hearing her husband shouting for joy, singing the song of the redeemed. The Lord had saved his soul. There was no more sleep that night as they both praised God for the wonderful work He had wrought in that home, which was now a *real home* for the first time in their married life.

The next morning the dear man, who worked on the railway, told all his friends what had happened, and he started that very day to warn sinners of their doom, and to point them to "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." He and his dear wife went out together after his work was done, and God blessed their labours abundantly. He was called in the district the King's Son, and many a forester has to look up now and thank God for having sent the "King's Son" across his pathway.

In answer to prayer the money came in, and a little mission hall was built, and it still stands up on the hill above the village, and the writer has many times had the privilege of preaching the gospel to the simple souls that gather there. The one known

as the "King's Son" has been now some time up in the glory with the One who broke his heart with His almighty love in that cottage years ago in answer to the prayer of a little child. The widow is still alive, bright and happy in her Saviour's love, and her one delight is to tell to others of the Saviour she has found.

The writer looks upon her as one of his greatest friends, and can vouch for the truth of this story, which answers the question, "Does God answer prayer?"

A. B.

EARTH, HEAVEN AND HELL.

No. 1.—EARTH.

(Read Luke xiv.)

THREE chapters—Luke xiv., xv., xvi.—give us, as it were, earth, heaven, and hell. If you will read them carefully you will see that, practically speaking, they form one discourse from the lips of the blessed Lord, but with a narrowing audience.

Luke xiv. gives us earth with all its hindrances when the blessed message of the gospel falls upon a sinner's ear. In that chapter you have, likewise, presented the object of God in the gospel. Wonderful theme!

Luke xv. presents the very atmosphere of that into which the gospel brings the believer. And where is

that? Heaven. You say, "I hope to get to heaven when I die." But we should get into the atmosphere of heaven before we leave this world. This wonderful chapter tells us most blessedly of God's joy, and the way His heart is gratified, in the blessing of the repentant sinner.

Luke xvi. shows us the drawing aside of the veil of eternity by the Lord Jesus Christ, who describes what is in eternity, not in the way of blessing, but of the reverse.

Thank God, the believer knows a good deal about Luke xiv. and xv. As to Luke xvi., praise God, he knows nothing, and never shall. Then you may ask, "How can you then describe it?" We cannot, and we do not mean to. But it is described by the Lord Jesus Christ, and if you are wise, you will listen to His description and say, "By the help of God I will never go through that doorway."

The man that makes acquaintance with hell will not find it to be what poets have painted it. Alas! many a preacher would tone down the solemn truth, and say, "God is far too good to judge men. There is no such place as hell." But we would urge, with all the earnestness that we possess, that it is wisdom to listen to what Christ says. His description of a lost eternity is absolute truth.

Those scenes, Earth, and its hindrances (see Luke xiv.), Heaven, and its happiness (see Luke xv.), and Hell, and its horrors (see Luke xvi.), are described by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Thank God for the warnings of love as well as

the wooings of love. No man can go down through the dark portals of hell till he has passed by the open door of heaven. No man to-day in the light of Christianity can go *unwarned* through the portals to that awful scene, over which might well be written the despairing words, "He, who enters here, leaves hope outside." Before the morning light you may be gone into eternity. Is it to be heaven with all its joys, or hell with all its sorrows? You may have earth and heaven, or you may have earth and hell. You must make your choice; we cannot make it for you.

"Well," you reply, "but I am on earth."

Yes, thank God, you are in a spot where the gospel can come to you, where an invitation can reach you—an invitation to a feast that God has spread, a feast where He wants your company, a feast that He has prepared for you, and where He would fain have you by His side.

But someone may say, "I am not fit." Well, do not let that trouble you at the outset. Which of the two men described in Luke xv. partook of the feast? Was it the bad one or the good one? Was it the prodigal or the elder son? The man that had never done a right thing, till he repented, got in, and the one that affirmed he had never done a wrong thing did not get in. It is those that have no sense of sins, whose guilt has never troubled them, that do not want to get in. There is no man too bad for Jesus. Alas! there are many, who think they are too good for Him, and miss the blessing.

The occasion when the Lord brought out this beautiful story is very interesting. He had gone into the house of a Pharisee on the Sabbath, and there He found a man with dropsy. He had plenty of enemies there, and they watched to see whether He would heal this poor man. And did He heal him? Of course He did. His miracles were all of mercy, *with but one exception*. May you never be the counterpart of this exception. What is this exception? The cursing of the barren fig-tree. The fig-tree was a figure of Israel as a nation, who had immense privilege from God, and who ought to have brought forth much fruit. And what did the Lord find in the tree? Nothing but leaves—there was no fruit. What is that a figure of? A professor of Christ, who has got nothing but empty profession, and no reality, nothing for God. God will have reality. A mere profession of Christianity will not do.

Let us look now at the narrative in Luke xiv. 12-24. The Lord introduced the subject by saying, "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many" (ver. 16). Who is the certain man? The truth comes out in parabolic form, and thus at the beginning God Himself is presented to us in all His grace in seeking the sinner.

God has made a great feast in honour of His Son, and He has sent out invitations. A feast is spread. What He looks for is guests. This feast is the revelation of the grace of God now in the Person and through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And mark, it is a *supper*. Why a supper? The supper is the *last* meal of the day. It speaks to us of God's *last* dealing of grace with man before judgment rolls over the scene.

There was the *morning* of creation. Go back, and you will see God dealing with man in creation. But man fell. There was the *noontide*, when God tested man by the law. Oh! what failure—deep, gross failure. We come down to the *eventide*, and we find God coming out in the Person of His blessed Son. That is the life of Christ. But now, consequent upon the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, you have this final testimony of God in grace brought out under the figure of a supper. The very next thing will be judgment.

Now it is the supper of God's grace, just before the midnight hour of judgment comes on. Have you heeded God's call? Are you a guest at His feast? He has nothing left for the sinner to do; the work of atonement is complete. Observe the message that the giver of the feast sent out by his servant at supper time, "Come, for all things are now ready" (ver. 17).

Who is this servant meant to be the figure of? Listen! After Christ had died, and the work of redemption had been accomplished, the Lord Jesus rose triumphant from the dead. He was seen for forty days among His disciples. Then He ascended up into heaven, and after ten days He sent the Holy Ghost into the world, with the good news about the Supper. The servant in this parable is intended,

doubtless, to be the figure of God's great Servant in this world—the Holy Ghost. The first time the invitation went forth three thousand men responded to the gracious call.

Have you ever responded to this invitation? Are you saved? Are your sins forgiven? Perhaps you reply, "Nobody can know that." The truth is, there are thousands who do.

Let me give you one case out of very many. I was taken by a friend the other day to call on an old Christian. The door was opened by a young woman.

"Is mother in?" said he.

"Yes, come in."

So I said to my friend, "Who is this?"

"Oh! that is Mrs A——'s daughter."

"Good morning to you," said I to her. "Are you converted?"

"No," she replied.

"What," I said, "not converted, and mother a Christian?"

"No," was her sad response.

"And do not you think it is time you got converted, my dear young woman?"

"I will not deny that," said she.

"Well, if I were you I would make haste."

I had stopped in the lobby, but, seeing a door into another room, I said, "We had better go in here."

A long conversation followed. The tears rolled down the young woman's cheeks as she asked for prayer.

"But I have something to say to you first," said I, and by the Lord's help I put the simple sweet gospel story before her.

"Oh! but I am such a sinner," said she.

"You are just the one for the Lord Jesus," I responded. "If you are the biggest sinner out of hell, there is a Saviour great enough and compassionate enough to keep you out of it, and you can come to Him, if you will."

The light got in, and tears rolled faster than ever. "I have been miserable for two years," she said, "and nobody has ever spoken to me."

"Won't you accept the Lord Jesus as your own Saviour just now?"

"I will," she happily responded.

My reader, if you get a chance, take it. Do not say, "I will think about it, and take it next week."

Thank God, this young woman took it.

"Now," I said, "I will pray with you, but shall I pray to the Lord to save you? or shall I thank Him that He has saved you?"

"Oh! thank Him that He has saved me."

We got on our knees, and of course I thanked the Lord. But I shall never forget the simple spontaneous prayer that came from the depths of her heart:—"O Lord, keep me, my blessed Lord, keep me. Thou hast led me to Thee, Lord, and saved me. And oh! blessed Saviour, I thank Thee for saving me, and I thank Thee for sending this angel [she meant a messenger] to the house, and O Lord, I know Thee, and Thou hast met me."

After a few minutes we went into the kitchen, and I was introduced to the mother.

"This is your daughter," I said, "and is she converted?"

"Oh! no, Jane Ann is not converted."

"Stop, mother, I am converted," the daughter said.

"You converted? When were you converted?"

"This morning, in the other room. Thank God, mother, the Lord has saved me."

Would that you, my reader, were as anxious to be saved as this young woman was. "Come; for all things are now ready." Everything is prepared. The Spirit of God has come with news of peace and pardon. Come into the banquet house. The bread of God is put before you. Will you not take the Lord Jesus as your Saviour?

The servant went out and said, "Come; for all things are now ready." And what was the response? "And they all with one consent began to make excuse." And what did the first say? "I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused" (ver. 18). Well, there is no harm in a piece of ground, unless you put it between your soul and God. But fancy any man being so foolish as to first buy an estate, and then go to look at it. It looks as if any excuse would do.

And another said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused" (ver. 19). How foolish to buy oxen before proving them. There is only one fool bigger

than he, and that is the soul that has a chance of salvation, and refuses it.

And what did the third say? He took absolutely the very relationships of life as the reason why he should not come. 'He said, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come" (ver. 20). Fancy, the very relationships of life are the things that men bring in as a reason why they should not turn to God. Could you believe it?

But whenever Christ gets hold of a man, he is not only anxious about his own soul but His neighbour's. This man ought to have said, "I will come, and bring my wife. Surely she will be welcomed, we are one."

Now, my friend, have you made any of those excuses? If so, give them all up. Stand for Christ, my friend, now. Confess Christ, and own Christ, and acknowledge Christ. Let His love win you to-night.

Let us now look at the activity of His grace as illustrated in the end of the parable. "So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind" (ver. 21). In this we see how God longs that the wretched, and the sin-burdened, and the miserable should come to His gospel feast. The servant said, "Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room" (ver. 22). There are two words in this part of

Scripture. There is the word for the sinner, and the word for the servant. What is the word for the sinner? "Yet there is room." What is the word for the servant? "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled" (ver. 23). What words for us! How it ought to stir us in downright earnestness.

Is there one unpardoned soul, who has not got the knowledge of God's love, reading these lines? Friend, listen. "**YET THERE IS ROOM!**" There is room in God's heart for you. And there is room in His house for you. There is room in that scene of joy. Come. That is the invitation. "Come; for all things are now ready." "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (Heb. vi. 2). "**To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts**" (Heb. iv. 7).

Come to the Saviour now!
 He ready stands to bless;
 He bids thee nothing bring,
 Only thy guilt confess.
 No anger fills His heart,
 No frown is on His brow,
 His mien is perfect grace,
 He bids thee trust Him now!
 Come! come! come!

Yes, indeed, "Come;" for all things are now ready."

W. T. P. W.

THE SAILOR'S CONVERSION!

THE gospel meeting was about to commence when a sailor entered the room, and, taking a seat, bowed in silent prayer. I could not help noticing during the preaching that his attention was marked. When the meeting closed I asked to have a word with him.

It was not long before he told me that he was serving on H.M.S. —, which had taken part in attacking the German squadron which bombarded Hartlepool, &c., and his ship now being in dock, he had sought out the gospel hall.

I asked if he were a converted man, to which he heartily replied, "Yes, thank God, I am."

"Then you would, indeed, be thankful to know, whilst facing death in attacking the Germans," said I, "that your soul was saved."

He replied, "Indeed I was, and I kept on saying all the time the bombardment was proceeding, 'Thank God, I am saved; thank God, I am saved.'"

What about you, reader? It may be that your home is far beyond reach of any attack by the enemy, *but remember*, the day is fast approaching when *you must meet God* about your sins. Why not meet Him now? The way is open. Christ has died for sinners, and is now in glory asking for your trust in Him. If you will but confess Him as your own Saviour, God's judgment for you is passed, because Christ has borne it for you. You mean to be saved sometime, then why not now?

On asking my sailor friend to tell me something of his conversion, he said that for years he had always avoided meeting with "religious" people, until one day, about eight months previously, he was brought into touch with a Christian sailor at the home of his sister, and a long, serious talk followed.

F—— tried to shake off the impression caused by this conversation, but God's Spirit was working, and he retired for the night only to have a troubled dream. He dreamed that a slip of paper was handed him with only room enough for his name to be added. He was told that if the space were filled up salvation would be his, but if not, his portion for eternity would be the lake of fire. Poor F—— woke in a cold perspiration on finding he had not, in his dream, signed the paper, but it left such an impression that he could not efface it from his memory. Bad language was stopped, the grog, once so eagerly looked for, was emptied into the sea on being handed to him, and bad companions were avoided as much as possible.

All those things, right in themselves, were not sufficient to bring peace of heart and a knowledge of sins forgiven, and F—— had yet to see that in order for a sinner to be saved, it needed a sacrifice much greater than man could make.

God wonderfully ordered that the Christian sailor whom F—— had met in his sister's house should be on the same ship, and it was not long before he showed F—— *God's way of salvation* through the sacrifice Christ made on Calvary's cross. "Neither

is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts iv. 12).

F— gave up his own strivings, and, confessing his sinful state to God, accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his own Saviour, and peace and joy have been his portion since.

How different the state of a shipmate of F—’s.

A day or two before the naval action he had been boasting of his ability to meet any man in open fight, but he added, “I am afraid to die.” Little did he realise that his days were numbered, and that death was so near him. In the action a shell struck him, and death followed the same day.

Reader, “Prepare to meet thy God” (Amos iv. 12). “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out,” Christ says (John vi. 3). “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved” (Acts xvi. 31).

J. H. R.

“IS THAT ALL?”

A SERVANT of God, visiting a military hospital, noticed a young soldier whose life, it was evident, was quickly ebbing away.

“Friend,” said he, “you are soon to die; are you saved?”

“No, sir,” was the earnest reply. “What shall I do?”

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts xvi. 31).

“Say that again,” demanded the soldier.

It was repeated. Steadily and earnestly looking at the visitor, the young man rejoined, "Is that all?"

"Yes, that is all; I can say nothing more; there is nothing, nothing more for you to do."

Closing his eyes for a few moments, the youth at length opened them again, and raising his right hand, he exclaimed, "Lord Jesus, I surrender!" Instantly his face shone with a new-found peace, and a few days later he passed away into the presence of his Saviour.

Perhaps, reader, you have not yet discovered that the gospel is so simple on your part. You may be under the impression that you have got to do something in order to merit God's favour. You think that if you live a noble and upright life, no doubt God will reward you with heaven in the future. Is this the gospel? No, no, my friend. God's Word plainly states that "to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 5). His *faith*, mark you, not His *works*!

We, as fallen, sinful creatures, cannot contribute anything towards meeting the demands of a holy God. But the gospel is this, that what we could not do, Jesus, the blessed Son of God, *has* done. On the cross He "gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. ii. 6). He has, in His own Person, met all the claims of God against us. So perfectly has He satisfied these claims, that God has raised Him from amongst the dead, and given Him the highest place of honour in glory. Because of the worthiness of Christ, God finds delight in blessing sinners.

"Be it known unto you . . . 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).

There is nothing left for you to do but to take your true place as a sinner before God, and accept by faith the salvation which He so freely offers. Will you do it?

C. S. R.

B.

HOW AN OFFICER'S WIFE WAS SAVED.

SOME years ago the wife of a military officer near Cork attended the ministrations of a young chaplain, afterwards Dr Daunt and Dean of Cork. Previously her husband and herself had been very indifferent to spiritual things, until the young chaplain's ardent appeals from the pulpit had stirred her conscience. Often did he invite his hearers to come to Christ, and accept His salvation.

The invitation touched her very deeply, until she became very anxious on the subject ; but she did not yet know what this practically meant. One night she lay awake pondering this vital question, and praying for the Holy Spirit to reveal the answer.

Amid the darkness of her soul she recalled Miss Havergal's beautiful hymn :—

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

As she repeated the well-known words, it occurred to her to ask herself, "Is not this, after all, just coming to Jesus, and, if so, I will really do so." In that simple way the barrier of her unbelief was broken down, and true peace entered her troubled soul.

When morning came a doubt arose in her mind whether it was an illusion of the night; but she reassured herself that even if it were such, yet the way was still open to come to Christ.

That proved to be the turning point in her soul's history. From that time she became a very decided, constant Christian, and was the means of winning her husband to Christ, and then of leading many others to Him.

One passage of God's Word seems especially suited to guide such wanderers into the way of peace. The apostle John, after describing how Christ, the Light of the World, has been rejected by it, writes, "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." Then by way of contrast he adds, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 10-13).

There is a close link between this solemn truth and the freeness and fulness of the gospel. There is life for all in the crucified, risen, and ascended Saviour. Faith is the channel through which divine

blessing flows into the hearts of sinners. By the Holy Spirit, the Lord and the Giver of Life is ever striving with needy souls. The conflict ends when we individually accept Him, and set to our seal that God is true. All are invited in His Word, and even entreated to stretch forth the hand of the soul, and as it has been well observed : "Although a feeble faith will perform feeble work, it can receive a whole and perfect Christ, which is the one thing needful."

Admirable was the Irish boy's definition of saving faith as "that which grasps Christ with the heart."

W. B.—T.

"I AM DEEPLY CONCERNED FOR YOUR SOUL."

A YOUNG man imbibed infidel principles. His sister was a devoted Christian, and earnestly desired his salvation. She got a Christian friend to come and reason with him. Reason and arguments failed to move him. When the infidel brother sought to argue with his sister, she was silent. He stormed, spoke ill of her God, her Saviour, her Bible. Still she was silent.

At length her distress at the awful condition of her brother opened the floodgates—she burst into tears. She had often spoken to him before. Now her heart was breaking over him. This proved too much for his infidelity. In speaking of it afterwards, he said, "I then saw myself a sinner, and fled to Christ."

That young man lived to preach the gospel he once despised, and under God he attributed his salvation to his sister's deep concern for his soul's salvation.

Let me relate another instance of how God met an infidel. He, too, was clever, and well versed in all the stock arguments against Christianity. He had erected a battery that human reason, he boasted, could not overcome. He had entrenched himself in a fortress, which he believed was impregnable. His Christian wife prayed on, lived Christ before him, adorned the doctrine of God, her Saviour, in all things.

A preacher of the gospel, growing old in his Master's service, was deeply imbued with the love of souls. He had often prayed for, and spoken to the infidel, but without result. One night he was so intensely anxious about him that he spent nearly the whole night in prayer. Next morning he mounted his horse, rode down to his house, went into the infidel's place of business, took him by the hand, and with profound emotion said, "*I am deeply concerned for your soul.*" Not another word could he get out, and, mounting his horse, rode home.

The infidel could not go on with his occupation. He went into the house, and said to his wife, "Here is old Mr —— come down to tell me he is *deeply concerned for my soul.*"

An hour afterwards that very man started for the house where the old preacher lived. What for, do you think? Why, just to say, "You came down to tell me that you were *deeply concerned for my soul.*"

I am now come to tell you that *I am deeply concerned for my own soul.*"

That man turned to the Saviour; became an earnest and devoted follower of Christ, humanly speaking, through the deep compassionate anxiety of another for his soul's welfare.

Let me give you an instance of the effect of indifference and unconcern for the salvation of others. A young man on his deathbed sent for a preacher of the gospel. He said, "Do you remember preaching some months since on the words, 'Choose ye this day whom ye will serve'? You spoke of the value of the immortal soul, the uncertainty of life, and urged immediate decision. I resolved there and then, do what others might, I would serve God.

A professed Christian man whom I knew was sitting by my side. I turned to him the moment the meeting was finished to ask him to pray for me, to bring his Bible, and teach me the way of salvation. To my surprise he was laughing and joking. Before I could recover my astonishment he made some ludicrous remark to me about the coat of an old man sitting before us. I was carried away by it, and from that moment all serious impressions departed, and have never returned. I am now dying, my prison house is hell for ever, and devils my companions. Would to God I had never seen J. W.! Tell him all this." What a message—uttered, as it was, with the fearful energy of despair—to reach the ears of the flippant professor.

Is it possible that you, my Christian reader, are utterly indifferent about the everlasting welfare of

precious souls? Is the language of your heart, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Alas! when you come to render an account of your stewardship, if you have to say, "God saved me, cared for me, watched over me, brought me safely to heaven, but I never cared for, watched over, or sought another one to share that home with me."

May the deep compassion of the heart of the blessed Lord so fill us that we may be *greatly concerned for the souls of our fellow-men.* H. N.

FALSE HOPES.

I WAS once questioning an old man as to how he stood with regard to eternity, when he said, "I expect to go to heaven because I have always been willing to attend all the funerals in the village here, from the time I was a boy!"

You may smile at his answer, my reader, but may I ask, On **WHAT** do **YOUR** hopes of heaven rest? If not on the atoning death and blood-shedding of Christ, your awakening, when it comes, will be as terrible as that poor old man's must have been years ago.

One has only to speak on eternal subjects to find what ignorance prevails as to what is the ground of the sinner's acceptance before God—that great redemption price paid by Christ on Calvary's cross.

How many, alas! are building their hopes on their strict attention to religious duties, religious ordinances and observances.

Yet God's Word says, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 3).

Others think they will win heaven by keeping the ten commandments.

Yet God's Word says, "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. ii. 16), for the simple reason that no one has ever been able to keep it.

Many there are who think they will be saved if they try to lead good religious lives, and do all the good they can to their fellow-creatures.

Yet God's Word says, "Salvation is not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 9).

My reader, God has decreed that, "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). This cuts at the root of all man's efforts to save himself, whether it be by good works or religious observances.

But "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," to die and shed His blood to atone for His creatures' sins.

In virtue of this, and this alone, God freely forgives every repentant sinner who comes to Him.

In giving the ground of their hope these will say, "We have redemption THROUGH HIS BLOOD, the forgiveness of sins" (Eph. i. 7).

My reader, will you not come to Christ now, and appropriate what He has done for you as a sinner, and then seek grace to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, "and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. i. 10)?

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.

HERE are many people to-day who profess the Christian name, yet do not like the mention of the blood of Jesus. They object to such hymns as "There is a stream of precious blood," and speak sneeringly of the "blood theology."

But the Word of God speaks glowingly of "the PRECIOUS blood," and so may we. The blood shed is the life outpoured, the ransom paid, the sacrifice offered, salvation secured.

In Russia, the doctrine of redemption through blood is dear to the multitudes who flock to hear the gospel, and perhaps no text is so much upon the preacher's lips and in the hearer's heart as "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

This text used to be emblazoned above the platform of the old Central Hall in Petrograd, where so many souls were led to the Saviour. Redemption by blood, cleansing by the precious blood, victory through the blood of the Lamb, is ever the theme. It is exactly the gospel the Russian needs. He knows the evil of sin; he feels the power of sin; he desires deliverance from sin. This he cannot find in the observance of ritual and ceremonial, but the gospel comes proclaiming *peace by the blood of the cross*.

I have a vivid recollection of a meeting in Schlisselburg, a town near to the celebrated fortress of the same name for political prisoners. The hall, lent for the purpose by a large manufacturer, was

crowded with men, very few women being present. Only a few chairs were available, so most of the congregation stood. A hot July day, windows opened, and window sills filled with eager listeners; outside another crowd, in spite of priests, walking up and down, trying to deter people from attending the meeting. Few, if any, of the hearers had ever heard the gospel preached in its simplicity, and the singing of gospel hymns had been unknown to them. They learned to sing now, and

SANG AFTER A SHY INTERVAL

with great fervour; and the hymns were hymns of *redemption by blood*. How heartily that one was sung, "Nothing but the blood of Jesus." Another was "Just as I am," and one of the few women present was sitting next me, and gladly availed herself of the offer to share my book. While others were singing, she was reading softly to herself, and with intense feeling, and seemed fearful of losing a syllable.

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,"

and on to

"Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come!"

It was, I feel sure,

THE VERY MESSAGE SHE NEEDED,

and I trust that she there and then realised its preciousness and power,

The meeting proceeded, several testimonies were given, and Mr F.—preached. His text was "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). Never had a preacher a more attentive audience. One felt that God was very near. The Holy Spirit was indeed moving upon these hearts, and at the close over fifty stood up avowing their desire to know the

CLEANSING POWER OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.

One day in Petrograd, a lady troubled about her soul, though scarcely knowing what was the matter with her, was accosted by a stranger, who gave her a small card with the text written on it, "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." She wondered what it could mean. She felt her sin and her need of cleansing, but the cleansing by the blood of Jesus Christ was a mystery to her. Her trouble was increased, and she longed for light and leading. One evening, it may have been that same evening or the next, she was passing a hall, and seeing people entering as to a meeting, she followed.

GREAT WAS HER SURPRISE

and interest to see on the platform, conducting the meeting, the gentleman who had given her the card. She sat down, prepared to listen eagerly to his message. His text fell upon her ear with startling effect. It was "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). It came as the very voice of God to her soul; now she

heard the story of redeeming love in all its simplicity ; it met her need, and she left the place rejoicing in the precious blood.

In Paris I was introduced to a Russian lady and gentleman, and, after a few words, I ventured to quote in Russian, "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son." I had hardly begun, when both took up the words, and

COMPLETED THE QUOTATION WITH ME.

I don't think they came from Petrograd, but they had been where the verse was equally dear. I believe one could go throughout Russia and everywhere, among the believers, and find a passport in that glorious text, "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." What better password for earth or heaven can any saint or sinner need.

The above paragraphs, taken from "The Gospel in Russia," emphasizes a truth that lies at the very foundation of Christianity, a truth that is the base whereupon the whole edifice of blessing is built. We have not a word to say against reformation, character-building, improvement of environment, and so on ; but where these things are relied on they become positive snares. They cannot cancel the misdeeds of the past. They cannot cleanse away the guilt of sin. They cannot provide a righteous basis for God to show mercy to men. But the precious blood of Christ does all this and more.

It satisfies the necessities of God's righteousness ;

it relieves the repentant sinner's conscience; it silences the accusing voice of the adversary.

Reader, what do *you* know of the power of the blood that cleanseth from all sin? H. P. B.

DOES DEATH IN BATTLE SAVE?

THE Romans of old used to say: "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori," which means that it is both sweet and becoming to die for one's country. This is certainly true, from the patriot's standpoint. You will notice, however, that the Romans only viewed such patriotism as "sweet and comely"; they did not attach a further value to it.

Mahomet, however, who lived when the Roman Empire had dissolved, and who was a prophet as popular as false, taught that death on the field of battle was the passport to paradise, adding that all who thus passed in would find awaiting them numbers of black-eyed maidens, bridally arrayed, to give them welcome. This last idea would invalidate the other, and lead one to fear that the ground of his doctrine could not be of God. It originated in his own mind, and was worthless. The Romans were nearer the mark than Mahomet.

It is the acme of patriotism to die for one's country, and every man who sacrifices his life in

so doing is worthy of all the honour that country can place on his name and memory. Let his name be enrolled among its heroes, and graven on its tablets of fame. Let his family, whether in castle or cot, receive the grateful recognition of the nation.

But if true, is the battlefield the only stepping-stone to paradise? Is it the only place where such merit can be acquired?

Has no mother given her precious life for her child? Has no devoted doctor risked and lost his life for his patient? Has no worn-out nurse nobly allowed the lamp of her self-denying life to burn out, in order that the object of her care should live? Surely!

Had the mother, the doctor, the nurse the least conception of their meriting the reward of heaven for their self-sacrifice? Nay, they would bravely call it their duty, nor dream of supposing that the performance of it would, or could, entitle them to the special favour of God. Give them their due! Enshrine their cherished names in memory's fondest affections, but think not that even by such lovely actions salvation can be purchased.

Does their action differ so widely from that of the soldier on the field, who, bidding farewell to "loved ones far away," surrenders for their sakes life and limb, and nobly meets death on the field of blood?

No, the difference is not so great, saving that, while the one may watch during long hours of agonized and unnoticed devotion, the other is surrounded by all the glamour and *éclat* of war.

Both are equally beautiful, but neither gives a

title to heaven. Let this statement be most clearly understood. Let it be acknowledged that "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. lxiv. 6), and that "none can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him" (Ps. xlix. 7), and that the ransom of our nearest and dearest is far beyond our ability. We can neither, by any means, save ourselves, nor can we deliver from death those we love, even at the greatest possible sacrifice on our part. But a thousand thanks to God, the title to heaven is outside our own self-sacrifice or human efforts.

Christ "appeared once in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. ix. 26). He alone—the Son of God—could "put away sin." He met the claims of the eternal throne in all its majesty and holiness when, on the cross, He was "made sin for us" (2 Cor. v. 13), and when, blessed be His name, He was also "made a curse for us" (Gal. iii. 13). There we see substitution indeed, full, valid, efficacious, and divine; so that, by the acceptance of His precious redemption, we may be saved at once and for ever.

The blood of the Son of God supplies the title to heaven for every one, of every nation, who trusts in Him. Oh! let it never be supposed that death on the battlefield, however heroic, however unselfish, however substitutionary, could meet the demands of God. If so, why had His Son to die? Why "must the Son of Man be lifted up"? Why this necessity?

Nay, but just as surely as He has been "lifted

up," so now "whosoever [on the battlefield or elsewhere] believeth on Him shall not perish but have [mark the present tense] eternal life" (John iii. 15).

Other title to heaven there is not. "But as many as received Him [we read in John i. 12, 13] to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them which believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." This settles it absolutely.

God graciously opened the door to His house in His own way (even as the right to do so is His alone), whilst our mode of entrance is not self-sacrifice in the field, but by "believing in His name." How simple! How divine! How certain! Let His name in all its saving value be your only plea. "Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," is the one perfect means of present and eternal blessing.

J. W. S.

EARTH, HEAVEN, AND HELL.

PART II.—HEAVEN.

(Read Luke xv.)

No person can by any possibility tell us about heaven, unless he had been there, or had received information from one who had been there. There is only one who has been there able to tell us, and He says, "No man hath

ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven" (John iii. 13). While His blessed feet were here upon earth, He was in heaven as to His Spirit, and He carried the atmosphere of heaven with Him.

And this is what comes out so strikingly in Luke xv. The chapter begins, "Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him" (ver. 1). Needy, hungry, weary, troubled souls—broken-down sinners drew near. The Lord was in a Pharisee's house, and the grace that was in Him drew them to that unlikely spot. You know there is nothing attracts men to Christ like grace. It is just like a magnet.

But mark, if these needy ones, without any character, with nothing to commend them to God, drew near to hear the Lord, we read, "And the Pharisees and scribes murmured" (ver. 2). Yes, self-righteousness always does that. What does this story unfold? The heart of God. That God loves man, and that He has got the deepest possible interest in man as man too. I have got a wonderful unfolding of the grace of God in encompassing man's blessing from the lips of the Lord Jesus. His own work is brought out in the story of the shepherd finding the sheep; the work of the Spirit is brought out in the story of the woman finding the lost piece of silver; and the part that the Father plays is depicted for us in the father's reception of the prodigal, and his pleading with the

angry elder brother. This wondrous parable in three parts shows the joy which God has in man's salvation.

Well, these poor, wretched, unhappy creatures drew near to Jesus. The Pharisees might murmur, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (verse 2), but with ungracious spirit they expressed a very gracious truth. Yes, blessed news that! Is not that good hearing for sinful men? The words were flung at Him in reproach, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." If I might use the figure, I think the blessed Lord took up the words, and had them emblazoned on the blue ribbon of heaven, and He says, as it were, "I will wear that title, 'The Friend of Sinners.'"

In Luke xv. you have beautifully unfolded in parabolic form the way in which God works. Whether you look at the sheep, or the silver, or the son, we have really before us the sinner, the lost one, you, me, everybody. The sheep was lost, and the silver was lost, and the son was lost.

Perhaps you say, "I do not think I am lost." Then there is not one solitary grain of gospel for you unless you are a lost man or woman. You exclaim, "You do not mean to tell us we are *all* lost."

Well, let us begin with you. Are you saved?

"Oh! I could not take that ground."

What ground will you take, then? I find the Lord Jesus saying, "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after

that which is lost, until he find it?" (ver. 4). Why does He say "one of them"?

Because salvation is always individual. We have to get it individually.

Well now, have you found out that you are lost? If you do, there is good news for you. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10). It is to save the lost the Lord Jesus came.

What is a lost sheep? David knew. He could say, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep" (Ps. cix. 176). Isaiah could say, "All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. liii. 6). It is a good thing when a man feels it. A lost sheep may yet be saved. You may be saved yet.

Thank God, there is a Shepherd, who has come to save you. "The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep" (John x. 11). The only begotten Son of the Father, He has come into this scene. "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John iv. 14). He has come to save the lost sheep. Has He saved you yet? Let Him save you now.

"O wandering soul! come near Me;
My sheep should never fear Me;
I am the Shepherd true."

He has laid down His life. Jesus, the Son of God, has gone to the cross and there He wrought a wonderful work of redemption. "Christ also hath

once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18). "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Pet. ii. 24, 25).

Oh! what a wonderful thing to know the hand of Christ is upon you. Let me ask you, Has He ever reached you? That blessed Saviour has been seeking you. Yes, He has been on your track, dear fellow-sinner, all these many years. Let Him put you on His shoulder. Do you know how a shepherd carries a living sheep? He takes it by all fours, and puts it on his shoulders. It is the shepherd that holds on to the sheep.

People say sometimes, "Suppose I fall off." My dear friend, it is the Shepherd that holds the sheep; it is the Lord who keeps His sheep secure. He carries it home. When the shepherd of the parable carried the sheep home, he cried to his friends and neighbours, "Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost" (ver. 6); surely a beautiful figure of the joy of the Saviour in finding the straying sinner.

Now we come to the second part of the parable—the woman seeking for the lost piece of silver. The woman is presented to us as sweeping diligently for the lost piece of silver, a figure of the activity of the Spirit of God in seeking sinners "dead in

trespasses and sins." The sheep represents man in the activity of the evil in his life—man alive in his sins, as Romans puts it. The silver piece represents man dead in sin, as Ephesians puts it, "And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (chap. ii. 1).

So this woman sweeps diligently, that she might find the lost piece of silver. She lights a candle to aid her in her search (figure of the Holy Spirit using the Word of God). The sinner is revealed to himself when the Word of God shines in upon his conscience. When the woman finds the silver she says to her friends and neighbours, "Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost" (ver. 9). Thus we have presented to us in figure the joy of the Holy Spirit in bringing sinners to God.

Now we come to the story of the prodigal son. He had gone into a far country. It is just the description of what man is as man. He wasted his substance in riotous living. At length a famine arose, and he began to be in want. Hungry and in need, no man gave to him. In his desperate misery "he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country" (ver. 15). The first thing a man does before he seeks the company of God is to go into partnership with the devil. The Lord gave a charge to Saul of Tarsus the day he was converted, saying at its close, "Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts xxvi. 17, 18).

What is the far country? It is this world, away from God. What happens to the prodigal in this far country. He is sent to feed swine. The Lord uses this as a figure. And so degraded is he that "he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him" (ver. 16). That is, it presents a figure of the lowest condition of misery and moral degradation that man is in.

And then, all of a sudden something springs up in his heart that tells him there is goodness in his father's heart. That is it, my friend, God is good. It is the goodness of God that leadeth to repentance. The Spirit of God gives the sense in the heart of the awakened sinner, that there is love in the heart of God.

The prodigal wakes up, as it were, and says, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger" (ver. 17). There is the confession of his own wretchedness and misery.

The confession of the sinner is of a twofold nature. Firstly, there is goodness with God, and I am perishing; secondly, there is badness in myself. It is not merely that you are bad, but there comes with it the sense that God is good.

What is the next thing? He says, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son": and then he meant to add, "make me as one of thy hired servants" (vers. 18, 19).

You have got five points here: conviction, repentance, conversion, confession, confidence. What is the mark of repentance? "I will arise and go to my father." So we read, "And he arose, and came to his father." How long do you think it takes to get people converted? I do not think it took him long. Death and starvation were staring him in the face. "And he arose," right about face. That is a splendid illustration of conversion.

You say, "Did he find peace?" No, not just then. This scripture says twice, there is joy in heaven over one sinner that "repenteth." What is repentance? You get unhappy as to your sins.

It is a wonderful thing that heaven gets happy when you get unhappy. When you see yourself an utterly lost sinner, heaven rejoices. Why? Because heaven knows this, that if the work of God has begun in your soul, God will finish it.

Thus you will see this man home before long. He went as he was. He did not stop and change his clothes. Wretched, weary, heartsick, empty, but deeply contrite and self-judged, as he goes he says, "What shall I say to him? How I have wronged his heart. What shall I say?"

And as he gets along he lifts up his eyes, and he sees a figure coming, somebody running. "Oh! I think I know that figure," he says. "It is my father." And the next minute he is in his father's embrace, and the kisses of forgiving love implanted on those haggard cheeks.

Have you ever known that kiss? The joy of knowing that all is forgiven, and all is forgotten.

It is not the father's voice that breaks the silence, it is the son's. He says, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." (ver. 21). That was repentance. The confession was the owning of his guilt. And he was going to say, "Make me as one of thy hired servants," but how could he say "make me a servant," when his father was welcoming him as a son ?

And that is just the way God receives repentant sinners. This is the reception He has got for such. A royal reception worthy of God, surprising to man, hateful to the devil, and distasteful to self-righteousness, and heaven begun upon earth to the returning sinner.

But this is what fills heaven with joy. Oh ! give Him the joy now, if you have never done so yet. And what next? "But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him ; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet." (ver. 22). He is a son, and he must go into the house like a son. And what is the best robe the figure of? Christ, available for the sinner through His atoning work on the cross. How wonderful is the grace of God ! The ring on the hand speaks of eternal love. "Shoes on his feet," proclaims the fact that he was recognised as a son. Then the command went forth, "Bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it ; and let us eat, and be merry." (ver. 23). The long-expected son has come back to the father, and the very best in the

house is provided. "And they began to be merry." When God rejoices over His returning prodigals, this merriment will never come to a close. The music and the dancing started, happy emblems of God's joy in man's salvation.

The Son of God has died for you, and the Spirit is here to work in you, and the Father runs with open arms to receive you. This is the royal reception chapter of the Bible. And, if you have never had the reception yet, and the kiss, may you get them now. You may, if you receive the Lord Jesus as your personal Saviour. Will you?

Then the servant said in answer to the question as to what it meant by the music and dancing. "Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound" (ver. 27). He has received him safe and sound, and his heart is filled with joy. "It was meet," the father exclaims in his gladness, "that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found" (ver. 32). May God have that joy over you, my reader.

Chapter xiv. says, "Come: for all things are now ready." Chapter xv. says, "And he arose and came." Do you know what chapter xvi. says? A message comes up from hell, "Do not come." Pay heed to the message, I entreat you.

Ah! beloved reader, may God give you to know the joy of His salvation, for His name's sake.

THE TWO MASTERS, AND HOW TO GET RIGHT WITH GOD.*

"No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. vi. 24).

IHAVE written this paper in view of the heart-rending fact that vast numbers of persons are evidently passing down to a lost eternity in unconcern or uncertainty as to two things—the claims of Almighty God, and the everlasting welfare of their never-dying souls.

To put "first things first" must be admitted to be sound wisdom.

To be *right with God* is the *first* great necessity for each one of us. In comparison with this, every other consideration is as the merest trifle (see Prov. ix. 10; Matt. vi. 33, and xvi. 26).

Surely none can call this in question.

Oh! then, as you value your never-dying soul, *get right with God*. The apostle Peter described the man whose heart was not right in the sight of God as being "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity" (Acts viii. 23), that is, in soul misery and in sin slavery. Again I would plead with you to

* The solemnity and weight of this paper are immensely enhanced by the fact that the writer has given his last message. On 16th July, after a very short illness, he passed into the eternity of which he wrote so warningly to the unsaved. His paper was passed through the press as he lay—rejoicing in Christ—on his deathbed. Though not

GET RIGHT WITH GOD.

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The Holy Scriptures unfold to us every detail of this momentous subject (see Ps. xix. 7-11; 2 Tim. iii. 15-17).

Human reason and wisdom are of no avail in such a matter. Both are corrupted by sin (see 1 Cor. ii. 14).

The Word of God is our only sure guide. To live and to die without making it "a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path" (Ps. cxix. 105), must prove fatal to our eternal welfare (see Prov. i. 20-33).

From Genesis to Revelation one thing is most evident. We are face to face with it everywhere in the sacred pages. It is this. There are two great opposing forces in the world. These are good and evil, light and darkness, God and Satan—two masters—one, a devoted Friend, the other, a determined foe (see Gen. iii. 1-15; Acts xxvi. 18; Rev. xii. 9, and xx. 10).

written specially for *The Gospel Messenger*, we most thankfully reprint it, in the hope and belief that God will use it in blessing to many an unsaved reader.

We knew the writer well. He was, when a young man, very sceptical, and judged God very hardly. God's answer to this was by giving him a deep sense of his own sin, and then saving him very blessedly. From that hour he began to serve the Lord devotedly, and follow Him fully.

He was "a man of God," whose Christ-like life is an imperishable heirloom to his family, and an inspiring example to the saints of God. His last words of gospel to the unsaved will be much blessed of God, we are persuaded, for by them he "being dead, yet speaketh."—EDS. G. M.

* * * * * *

On the one hand the determined foe—the devil—works by every means in his power to keep us as his slaves, serving self and sin during our short pleasure-seeking life on earth. He labours to cause us to forget God and His Holy Word, to lead us to live in indifference as to God, and, with some, even to take sides with him in open rebellion against God and His beloved Son (see 1 Pet. v. 8).

To pursue such a course must inevitably result in those deceived by him sharing his doom for ever and for ever in that awful sorrow, “prepared,” not for man, but “for the devil and his angels” (Matt. xxv. 41).

* * * * * *

On the other hand there is the devoted Friend. He is the Saviour-God, God the Son, the Sent One of the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, who came into this world, “God . . . manifest in flesh” (1 Tim. iii. 16).

HE CAME to make God known as the Holy One who cannot look upon sin, who cannot pass it over, but *must* punish it, either in the person of the one who commits it, or in the person of a sinless Substitute, who, taking the believing sinner’s place, bears the punishment in his stead. The Old Testament types speak constantly of the necessity of death and judgment taking place before sinful man could be saved, or be in vital relationship with God (see Hab. i. 13; 1 Pet. ii. 24, and iii. 18; Gen. iv. 4, and viii. 20; Ex. xii. 13; Lev. xvii. 11).

HE CAME to maintain the glory of God in respect of sin, and to make known His great love to the sinner in the very world where His goodness had been called in question from the beginning of man's career (see John xvii. 4; Rom. v. 8; 1 John iv. 9-10).

HE CAME in tenderest pity to undertake the cause of sinful man, and by suffering and death to "undo the works of the devil" (Heb. vi. 14-16), so that a full and free salvation might be preached in all the world to *ungodly* and *helpless* sinners.

Thus grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord, and a way to glory is opened up for all those who will submit to God and with a thankful heart take refuge in the sinner's Saviour (see Rom. v. 21; Rom. v. 1-2).

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THESE ARE THE Two MASTERS.

What a contrast there is between them! What a contrast between those things which they are set to accomplish!

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Now if we seriously consider the *history*—public and *secret*—that attaches itself to each of us, can there be any doubt in our minds as to which master we serve until we are truly converted to God?

What thoughts, desires, motives, words, and ways we have been guilty of! What unclean thoughts! What unholy desires! What selfish, unworthy motives! What hasty, wicked, and, in some cases,

filthy words have escaped our lips ! What self-willed, self-indulgent, sinful ways ! (see Matt. xv. 18-20).

Like sheep, we have “gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way” (Isa. liii. 6).

Oh ! to what lengths some of us have gone ! Who could bear the exposure ?

And let us never forget that every one of these sins, which we have committed, has been a sin against God (see Ps. li. 4).

Besides all this, we have the words of our Lord Jesus, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment” (Matt. xxii. 37-38). These words must utterly condemn the most self-righteous, and make manifest how *all* have *come short* of God’s glory, and exposed themselves to His just and holy judgment (see Rom. iii. 23).

In a word ; behind us lies a history that we cannot alter, upon us lies a sentence that we cannot evade ; therefore if some one is not found to step in between us and our sentence our case is hopeless.

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If, then, we are to be *right with God*, we have to change masters (see 1 Thess. i. 9 ; Acts xxvi. 18).

Have YOU done this ?

God calls upon us to make our choice. But being deeply interested in our everlasting welfare, He does all in His power by His Holy Spirit and through His Word to woo and win us, and thus induce us to make

a right choice. This leaves us without excuse, if we fail so to do (see Matt. xi. 20-30).

Let me press upon you, as Joshua pressed upon Israel of old, "Choose you *this day* whom ye will serve" (Josh. xxiv. 15).

We have to quit the service of our great and determined foe, and enter the service of our great and devoted Friend (see Mark v. 1-20).

This is an absolute necessity, if we are ever to be right with God and go to heaven (see John viii. 21-24).

What a magnificent illustration of a man who changed masters, and thus got right with God, is the thief upon the cross (see Luke xxiii. 39-43).

His was a bad history. He had nothing to recommend him to the Saviour but his need. But he had a *divine awakening*. Have you?

He did not trifle with his convictions. He did not hesitate between two opinions. He seized his only opportunity to be saved, and confessing, without any qualification, his sinnership, he owned Christ as Lord and rightful King. Turning to the crucified Saviour, he cried, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom" (Luke xxiii. 42).

Listen to the Saviour's reply. "And Jesus said unto him,

"Verily I say unto thee,
"To day
"Shalt thou be with Me
"In paradise."

What certainty!
What promptitude!
What company!
What untold delight!



How was it that, though seemingly an outcast and rejected Man, Christ could utter such wonderful words? It was just because the Redeemer was in His own person the mighty God. He was about to bear the *full* penalty of all the sins of that wicked man in His own body on that tree. He was about to lay down His life for him. His precious blood was about to be shed for him. Thus it was that this thief, instead of passing down to his doom, might, as absent from the body, be present with the Lord that day (see Matt. i. 21-23; Isa. liii. 5; 2 Cor. v. 8).

Have you ever yet taken the same ground the repentant thief took?

If not, you may depend upon it, *you have never yet changed masters, you have never yet been truly converted to God, you are not right with God, you are yet in your sins, you are still lost and in danger of being eternally lost.*

* * * * *

You may object to this, and say, "I attend a place of worship, I do my best to live aright, I have been baptized, I have been confirmed, I take the Lord's Supper from time to time, and I have been taught that these things are sufficient to secure my eternal happiness."

No! Believe me, if this is all, you are being deceived.

You must be born again. You must have a personal dealing with God about your sins. You must have a true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and

in His atoning work. Thus only can you be forgiven and saved. Thus only can you be brought back again to God, from whom you have gone astray. Thus only can you become possessed of the unsearchable riches of Christ, without which, whatever else you may possess, you are poor indeed (see John iii. 7; Acts xiii. 38, 39; 1 Pet. iii. 18; Eph. iii. 8).

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are of importance in their own place, but are not the meritorious ground of a sinner's salvation. The precious shed blood of the Lamb of God—His sacrificial death—is alone that (see Heb. ix. 22).

How true are the well-known lines :—

“Till to Jesu's work you cling,
By a simple faith ;
'Doing' is a deadly thing—
'Doing' ends in death.

“Cast your deadly doing down,
Down at Jesu's feet ;
Stand 'in Him,' in Him alone,
Gloriously 'complete.' ”

In view of the call of God, the uncertainty of life, and the solemn and eternal issues involved, how important is the decision you come to. Can you, dare you, hesitate for another moment before making a right choice between the two masters, and saying “Christ for me” (see Prov. xxvii. 1; 2 Cor. vi. 2)?

To omit to do this is to add to all your other sins the crowning ones of neglecting the Word of God, of trifling with your convictions, of resisting the Spirit of God, of turning your back upon the Son of God, and of spurning His dying love.

"A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished" (Prov. xxvii. 12).

Is it possible for you to be so utterly foolish and heartless as to deliberately continue to take sides with the wrong master and remain longer in his service?

"He that is not with Me is against Me" (Matt. xii. 30) are the words of the Lord Jesus. There is no neutral ground.

If you still reject His claims, you will treasure up wrath against the day of wrath. You will seal your own doom. You will compel God to judge you. Your eternal destiny is governed by the attitude of your soul towards the Son of God (see Rom. ii. 5 ; Matt. xxii. 42).

How emphatic as to this are the words of the apostle Paul. "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha" (or *accursed before Him at His coming*) (1 Cor. xvi. 22). That verse will assuredly have its fulfilment.

* * * * *

As you read this paper may your soul be so wrought upon by God's Spirit that you may be led to take the guilty sinner's place, and to claim the guilty sinner's Saviour. Make the following verses of the hymn the language of your heart. Approach Him with them upon your lips, remembering that He has said, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37). *Thus* will you get *right with God*.

"Just as I am—without one plea,
 But that Thy blood was shed for me,
 And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee !
 O ! Lamb of God, I come !

"Just as I am—and waiting not
 To rid my soul of one dark blot,
 To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
 O ! Lamb of God, I come !

"Just as I am—Thy love, I own,
 Has broken every barrier down ;
 Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone !
 O ! Lamb of God, I come !"

In conclusion, let me add that ALL are free to come, yea, ALL are invited and besought to come. The value of the precious blood of Christ in the sight of God is such that ALL who come are welcome, whatever the number of their sins may be (see Isa. lv. 1; Matt. xi. 28-30; 1 John i. 7; Rev. xxii. 17).

And then, for the comfort of the one who comes, let me say that not only is he relieved of all the consequences of his sin and guilt, but "in Christ" he is brought into and remains in all the favour of God, and is placed in relationship with Him as His child. God takes account of the believer as He takes account of His beloved Son. This is the meaning of those remarkable words, "As He is, so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17).

Moreover, he receives the Holy Spirit to enable him to fulfil the holy obligation that rests upon each believer, to live for Him, who died for us and rose again (see 2 Cor. v. 15).

* * * *

Oh ! come then, and say—

“ I yield, I yield,
I can hold out no more,
I come, by dying love compelled,
And own Thee conqueror.”

* * * *

Ten thousand times better never to have been born
than not to get *RIGHT WITH GOD*.

THOMAS OLIVER.

Copies of the above for Free Distribution may be had
on application to Miss OLIVER, The Hawthorns, Bramley
Hill, Croydon.

YOUR DYING HOUR.

IN the ward of a small fever hospital a man lay dying of enteric. His laboured breathing, glassy eyes, and restless movements all told that death was near. A nurse was sent to sit beside him, and told to do all she could to ease his last moments.

He kept moving his hands restlessly, and between his struggles for breath and paroxysms of delirium he said, “ Nurse, I would like you to read some kind of a good book to me.”

Not having a Bible at hand, the nurse commenced to repeat that lovely gospel verse, “ Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. xi. 28). Also, “ Him that

cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37), but she saw his mind had wandered again, and he did not evidently understand what she was saying.

After another short interval, during which he was very restless, the poor man raised himself in bed, and pointing to a screen at the foot of his bed, said, "Can anyone tell me where I am going?"

Shortly afterwards his soul passed into eternity. Truly a leap in the dark. No doubt this man had often heard the gospel, and probably intended to accept it some time, but alas! like many others, he may have neglected it till it was too late. His mind was weakened by disease, and could not grasp the simple gospel invitation.

And now, allow me to tell you another story of a dying hour.

Another man lay dying of cancer, and the doctor had told him that day that there was no hope of his recovery. The nurse, who had been with him, and had spoken often to him of his need of a Saviour, was allowed to sit up with him, as it was expected to be his last night on earth.

The first part of the night passed comparatively quietly, but towards morning a severe fit of coughing came on, leaving him hardly able to move. The nurse had been looking to God all the previous day for another opportunity of saying something more to him, as she feared she had not been faithful enough before. As she stood beside him, she said, "Now, Mr M'Intyre, you know you told me

when you first came in that you thought you had to do something to *merit* salvation ; but even supposing for a moment that God would accept your works, you see you can do nothing, so God offers you salvation like the bitten Israelites of old—to *look* and *live*. One look to Christ in all your helplessness—and you will *live*."

Never shall I forget the pathos of that scene, as the dying man raised his hands above his head, and looking up, said, "I am trusting, Miss ; I am trusting," and shortly afterwards he passed away.

Reader, these are two true stories of dying men's hours.

What about your dying hour ? Will it be a leap in the dark, or a simple trust in Christ ? M. M.

AN AGED SINNER SAVED.

HE was very ill in bed—indeed incurably so. I knew nothing about his past life. The doctor said he could do him no good, so very seldom came to see him. I could see how very poor he was, and heard from the lips of his wife that she had a struggle to get food and clothing, and meet the house rent.

I asked my new acquaintance about his eternal destiny, about his sins of a long life, and the awful consequences of passing out of time into eternity unforgiven.

In answer to these inquiries of mine he replied,

"Will God shut any person out of His presence for ever, and consign him to an eternal doom *for ever*, because of his sins?"

I replied, "God does not desire to shut any person out of His presence, and consign him to the lake of fire for his sins. On the contrary, God has given His Son to die on the cross for sinners. His love in no unmistakable way has been told out to the sinner in the gift of our Lord Jesus Christ, who took the sinner's place. God could not pass by the sins and say nothing about them, so the Lord Jesus has died that God's *righteous* claims might be met. But for those who refuse the gospel we read, 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?'"

From that moment the dear man seemed to look at things in a different light altogether. The devil had persuaded him, I expect, for many a long year that God was against him. Now he saw that God was *for* him. He has given "His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). God is against our sins, but not against the sinner.

Our aged friend thanked me for calling, and said how pleased he would be to see me at any time. I called again and again. He was very much troubled about his sins, so much so that he would weep and express an earnest hope that God would have mercy on him, and save him at the last. Poor man, no doubt he was thinking a great deal of his past life, which I myself did not know until after his death. Although living in the same house as his wife, they

had held no conversation one with the other for two years. He frequented the public house, squandered his money, and ill-treated his wife. Perhaps you will say that such an old sinner ought to have died in his sins. Of course I admit that he could claim nothing from God on his merits, unless it was the just and eternal consequences of his sins. Nor could you, my dear unknown friend ; we are all shut up to God's mercy.

I remember on one occasion asking him if he knew the Lord Jesus as his Saviour. He answered me in a way that is very common. He replied, "Yes, I know he is *our* Saviour."

I asked him if he could alter that little word "*our*" to the little word "*my*."

"Oh !" said he, "I am afraid I cannot."

He knew God was good, and that He would not reject him, but he felt it would not do for him to make so bold as to claim the Lord Jesus as his own *personal* Saviour.

I pressed upon him over and over again the necessity of *decision*. I told him that the Lord Jesus would receive him with open arms if he would come to him as a poor, vile, and good-for-nothing sinner, and before leaving he trusted the Lord in this happy, simple way. The echo of the heavenly music was heard in that little bedroom. He sang as well as his feeble frame would allow him—

"O happy day ! O happy day !
When Jesus washed my sins away."

Our aged friend has now gone to be with the

Lord, but I ask you, Are you rich toward God? Can you look up and say the Lord Jesus is *my* Saviour? Can you put yourself amongst those for whom that wonderful stoop of grace was made, and are you made rich for eternity? Do not rest till you can say so.

W. G. S.

"I AM THE WAY."

TAKE the greatest care, dear reader, that you are on the right road, the one and only road that leads to God. There are many by-paths. Said a dying father to his son: "George, I'm on the wrong road, and it's too late to change."

Bad, indeed, to find out his mistake at last; worse when he felt that there was no time to change.

True, he was an infidel—one who rejected God's gracious revelation, and mercy, and salvation, during his days of strength, but who, on his bed of death, discovered that the cold, unsatisfactory negatives of infidelity furnished no foothold for the dread issues of eternity. He discovered this, when, as he sadly believed, it was too late to change, and so he died.

Hence, the very greatest care should be taken in good time that one is on the right road, and that consequently a change is, thank God, quite unneces-

sary. It is just the most blessed thing to be on that road, and to know it, and to be in the joy and power of it. It is life eternal !

But the by-paths are innumerable. Infidelity is one of them. It panders to the pride of intellect, and bolsters us up in arguments and sophistries. It finds a thousand faults with the revelation which God has been pleased to give us in the Bible ; and, refusing the light of its sacred page, it revels in the darkness of human reasoning. It supplies no certainty, nor assurance, nor peace, nor satisfaction. It is like the armed warrior in Sir Noel Paton's picture, groping his way, sword in hand, over boulders and rocks, through bogs and pitfalls, and is ready to “stumble on the dark mountains,” and to perish miserably.

“Die game !” said some of his backers in infidelity to another dying man ; and, having so said, they left him to fight the battle alone. Yes, but a game death is death after all ! It is the utter defeat of the man who dies. Pluck, power, and prowess avail nothing then. Discharge in that war there is none, for “the wages of sin is death”; and, sure as ever sin is paymaster, so he demands the penalty. They left him alone, his last breath came, when, with a frantic effort, he raised himself from his pillow, and cried, in the hearing of his poor but helpless wife : “Is it true ?”

Too late now to shriek for light ! He had refused the truth in life, and now he pays the penalty of his folly in death.

"God is not mocked." He means all that He has said.

Well, but we are not all infidels; far otherwise, we are professing Christians, and attend, as best we can, to our religious duties. We are honest, charitable, dutiful, are members of church, chapel, or meeting. We pay liberally for the extension of our church, and the spread of missionary labour. We do not neglect our Bible, nor miss the meetings for intercessory prayer, and many other such things we do.

Very good, and what then?

Why, we are clearly not infidel!

Yes, but what then?

Well, what more is needed?

Needed! Oh! the question is, what has all this done for you? Have you thereby received forgiveness of sins, peace with God, rest of heart, satisfaction?

No, we have not; we are not conscious of any such experience.

Then, on your own showing, the road you are on is only another by-path. It is, I may frankly say, one of the devil's greatest deceptions.

"I was going religiously and respectably to hell," was the awful discovery made by a young Irish gentleman, who, after that discovery, devoted his life to the preaching of the gospel far and wide.

Oh! but "going religiously to hell" is impossible! It is a contradiction in terms! Going to hell by drink, or by unclean living, by cursing and swearing, by atheism and infidelity I can easily understand, but surely not by religion! Why, we are told —

" 'Tis religion that can give
 Sweetest pleasure while we live,
 'Tis religion can supply
 Solid comfort when we die."

Yes, so we are, but not by the Bible.

I am not splitting hairs when I affirm that Christ and religion are not interchangeable terms.

There may be a hundred different religions ; there is only one Christ. Do not confound them.

Religion is merely a certain specified rule of life, right or wrong, Christian or heathen ; Christ is the Saviour, the life, and its power, joy, comfort, strength, victory, all in all.

He said : " I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me " (John xiv. 6).

Again : " By Me if any man enter in he shall be saved " (John x. 9).

This is the gospel of salvation. It is no by-path. It supplies what neither infidelity nor religion can. A living, loving, sympathising Christ, who has died but lives on high, is God's only way of life and peace.

By Him enter !

J. W. S.

DYING TESTIMONIES OF INFIDELES.

THE *Infidel Hume* said : " I seem affrighted and confounded by the solitude in which I am placed by my philosophy ! When I look abroad, on every side I see dispute, contradiction, distraction. When I turn my eye inward, I

find nothing but doubt and ignorance. Where am I? What am I? From what cause do I derive my existence? To what condition shall I return? I am confounded with these questions. *I begin to fancy myself in a most deplorable condition, environed with the deepest darkness on every side.*"

The *Infidel Hobbes*, notwithstanding all his high pretensions to learning and philosophy, was haunted, when alone, by the most tormenting reflections, and would awake in great terror if his candle happened to go out at night. This wretched infidel could not bear to hear anyone speak about death, and made every effort to cast off all thoughts of it; and when he actually drew near to the inevitable event, "*he confessed he was about to take a leap in the dark.*"

Six weeks after being seized with his last illness, he sent for a minister, and said, "I wish you, sir, to pray for me."

"And for what shall I pray?"

"That I may have repentance and preparation for death."

"Do you think, sir, that you are soon to die?"

"Yes," said Hobbes; "I must die, and I fear very soon."

"Have you any doubts now concerning the truth of the Bible?" .."

"I have no doubts now on the subject."

"Can you put your trust in the Almighty Saviour?"

"No, sir; *I have no interest in Christ.*"

"Will you not pray to Him?"

"No, sir, I cannot; will you please to pray for me?"

"Can you repent?"

"No; my heart is as hard as a stone."

Alas! alas! for poor Hobbes; entering eternity with "a heart as hard as a stone!" "with no interest in Christ!" "taking a leap in the dark."

What are the good of philosophies and theories, which, when death stares their authors in the face, are found out to be false? Believe the truth! Believe the gospel! "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

J. R. P.

EARTH, HEAVEN, AND HELL.

PART III.—HELL.

(Read Luke xvi. 19-31.)

WE may well be greatly impressed with what the Lord Jesus Christ brings before us in this solemn scripture. We observed in Part I., that the three chapters—Luke xiv., xv., and xvi.—present their subjects consecutively in the most striking way. There is a beautiful moral sequence in the truths that are thus put together by the Spirit of God.

In Luke xiv. we had before us, from the lips of the Lord Jesus, the wonderful story of the great supper spread by God, and the free invitation that

goes out in relation thereto. In plain language, you have the desire of God's heart for the company of man, for *your* company I may say. He made a great supper, and bade many.

Luke xv. shows us the man who accepts the invitation. If you have the feast in chapter xiv., you have the guest in chapter xv. The poor prodigal is but the picture of what man is as a sinner, but one who knows he is a sinner. He knew he was a sinner with nothing to commend him to God. Now, the difficulty with a great many souls is this, that they are endeavouring to fit themselves for God's presence.

With the prodigal everything was gone, he had lost his money and reputation, he had not one single commendable thing about him. He turned his back upon his father, but the misery, that followed, was but the opportunity for the love of that father's heart to flow out to him.

What a wonderful thing that God delights in the blessing of souls.

Now that story gives us the history of two sinners, under the figures of the prodigal and the elder brother. One got into the father's house, but the other, when entreated by his father, refused to enter. It is a fair question, what became of him? Surely the Lord Jesus Christ in Luke xvi. 19-31, in the remarkable picture which He draws of eternity, describes what is the future of that man, and all such.

Let us see what our Lord says in this solemn

chapter. He draws aside the veil, and shows us what eternity is. Listen ! reader. You cannot always be on earth. Our subject is not what people would call pleasant, but how important it is to face such things, especially when brought before our notice by none less a person than the Son of God.

We read, "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day" (ver. 19). That describes a man of this world, occupied only with the things of time. He has not only got enough to keep his mind easy, but he fares sumptuously. "And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores" (ver. 20). It is not the question of the value of the earthly goods. The Lord puts the two things in contrast. He wants to show the value of being all right for eternity, of being right with God for eternity. Are you right ? is the question.

We read of Lazarus "desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table : moreover the dogs came and licked his sores" (ver. 21). There was more compassion from the dogs than from this rich man. He was a very hard, cold, worldly man. The man, alas ! lived for himself. Whom have you lived for ? This is a solemn question indeed.

"And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom : the rich man also died, and was buried" (ver. 22). When the time came, all the money the rich man had

could not save his life. He had to die. And you have got to die. Are you ready? What a question!

You know man is the only creature of God that shrinks from death. Man has got a conscience, and he knows that after death there is something coming. It is the judgment of God. This rich man died, and was buried. Very likely he had an enormous funeral. His friends might say, "There is the end of him." No; listen to the solemn statement of the Son of God. "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments" (ver. 23). He dropped from the lap of luxury into the lake of fire. My reader, be warned. Settle where you are going to spend eternity. There is no second chance in the next world. Here in this world, and now, in time, must be the place and hour of your decision. Let me plead with you before God. What ground are you on? Have you been washed from your sins yet? Do not put from you these important questions, we beseech you.

Then the rich man cried and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me." Oh! we never read that he cried for mercy on earth. Very likely you have never in all your history cried to God for mercy. You have never thought you needed mercy. You may have made light of it, and despised the blessed message of God. Did not we all do it in days gone by? Yes, every one of us. But look, he cries for mercy. Alas! he is too late. He asks that Abraham may "send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool," says he, "my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame" (ver. 24).

We learn from this that which will come out of hell is an honest confession of the sinner's true state. The rich man cries out, "I am tormented in this flame."

But there is something else in hell. What is it? Prayer that is never answered. You may say, I do not believe in hell. That does not alter the solemn fact of its existence. Do you think the Lord Jesus Christ was only painting pictures? Never! In tender love He speaks the truth. He warns. Will you pay heed?

What did the rich man pray for? The smallest mercy—a drop of water on the tip of the finger of Lazarus to cool his tongue. But mark, he never got it. Oh! my friend, be warned. Yes, here is a description of the awful folly of men, who miss the gospel, and pass into eternity through love of the world and their sins, pictured for us by a master hand. What is the reply to the prayer, "Son, remember"? Memory will be an awful thing in eternity. If you pass away in your sins, do you not think that by and by in eternity the memory of how often you have heard of Christ, but never come to Him, how often you were besought to come to the Lord Jesus, but never received Him, will be an awful torment? Be warned.

The rich man is reminded, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented" (ver. 25). Oh! that eternal "now." My friend, look at this solemn

inatter in the face. You may say this is not a pleasant subject. Be it so. God wake you up to its unpleasantness, so that you may avoid the awful reality of it.

Further, Abraham says to the rich man, "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence" (ver. 26). No power can bridge that gulf.

A few years ago the last bolt was put into the Forth Bridge, and all the world looked on with wonder. People had said that the Forth would never be bridged, but by and by the Forth was bridged, and now people do not think very much about it. But stop, here is a gulf that even God cannot bridge. There is no bridge long enough, or strong enough, to stretch from the shores of blessing where Christ is, to the shores of sorrow where the impenitent sinner is. Thank God, you have not reached that spot.

Luke xvi. is like a beacon. It is God's warning buoy. Oh! that you may steer your ship clear, if I might so say, of what this chapter unfolds. Oh! be wise, lest it be said of you, "There is a great gulf fixed." Then there will be no recovery, and no return. There is no second chance in eternity.

Then the rich man entreats Abraham, "I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him [Lazarus] to my father's house" (ver. 27). "Send the

warning note to my father's house," in effect he says. Look at the earnestness of the man in eternity. What does a man say who is there? Oh! send to my father's house. What for? "For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment" (ver. 28). How does he characterise it? "This place of torment." Friend, be warned. There is a testimony gone out. There comes the warning word from that scene of endless sorrow. It comes up now to warn you. Hear the incisive reply. "Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them" (ver. 29). Let them heed Scripture. You know we live in a day when the Word of God is made light of.

But mark Abraham's reply, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them" (ver. 29).

Hear the rich man's further entreaty, "Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent" (ver. 30). He thought that one rising from the dead at least would have this effect, that they would all repent and turn to God. But our Lord answers this in a very striking way, putting the words in a figure into Abraham's mouth, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (ver. 31).

Ah! my reader, One *has* risen from the dead, and men will not hear Him: the blessed Son of God Himself has gone into death, and He has risen from the dead, and gone up on high. And yet how many

have not been persuaded, and have not repented, and believed the gospel.

Have not you heard it from the lips of the risen Lord Himself? I mean through His Word. Yet you are not persuaded. It is an awful thing.

If you know it is right to be a Christian, be one. If you know it is right to belong to Christ, accept Him as your Saviour now. "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him" (1 Kings xviii. 21). Who is on the Lord's side? "How long halt ye?" Receive the Lord Jesus Christ this very hour, as you read these lines, we beseech you. You may know now what it is to belong to Him.

If you decide aright you can then look into the future, and say with gladness of heart, "*Eternity! it will be eternity WITH HIM.*" How happy and blessed such a prospect would be! Put not away from you, we beseech you, this solemn warning, falling, as it does, from the lips of the Son of God.

"Yes, let the truth with ringing cheer
Go forth till hosts infernal hear,
And tremble in their dens;
In this wide world there does not dwell
One soul alive and out of hell,
But Jesus' blood can cleanse."

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

THE MAJOR'S STORY.

SOME years ago Major S—— of the Royal Engineers was a passenger on a steamer returning to his post at Aden after his well-earned furlough. Among his fellow-passengers was an American missionary, returning to Egypt to his much loved work among the Copts.

Both the major and the missionary were earnest Christians, and many were the talks they had together. When they parted the missionary gave his friend some books and pamphlets, among them being one entitled, "Brief History of the Convict, Daniel Mann."

Mann was a convict in Kingston Gaol, Canada, sentenced to fourteen years' imprisonment for house-breaking with intent to rob. At the end of five years of his term, in an attempt to escape, he murdered his warden. But such was the grace of God, that Mann was brightly converted in the condemned cell, and grew rapidly and deeply in the things of God in the short space of time before he was executed.

But such things as the giving of this book do not happen by chance, as the sequel will show.

Let us anticipate the arrival of the steamer, and see what took place in Aden. Some weeks previously, a soldier in the garrison had been punished by his sergeant. Confined in prison, he determined on revenge.

He managed to shake loose one of the bars of the

window in his prison. Taking advantage of the firing of the one o'clock gun, under cover of the noise, he shook the bar quite free, squeezed through the window, dropped to the ground, gained the barracks, secured and loaded his rifle, and shot his sergeant dead.

He was tried by court-martial, and condemned to death. In three weeks' time, the official authority from headquarters to carry the court-martial into effect arrived from India, but some irregularity in it caused the delay of its return to the authorities for correction. This gave the condemned man a further and quite unexpected respite. Had this not occurred, the soldier would have been executed before the arrival of Major S—— at Aden.

But God had purposes of blessing for the condemned man. From the first, the chaplain of the troops had earnestly sought the eternal blessing on one so soon to enter eternity, but without any apparent result. Knowing the major to be a Christian officer, he put the case before him for his prayerful sympathy. He at once remembered the striking book the missionary had given him, and handed it to the chaplain. It quickly found its way into the hands of the poor murderer.

It was just the message for him. God had saved one murderer, why should he, too, not be saved? The book was happily the means of his conversion, and was his constant companion with his Bible till the end came.

The writer possesses the actual copy of "Brief History of Daniel Mann" referred to. It is dirty

and food-stained, as the result of constant use during those memorable days. The writer of the tract is a French-American, and the tract is published in New York, and still commands a wide circulation.

It is instructive and deeply interesting to see how God cares for precious, never-dying souls, and how He can graciously order events to meet His own designs of blessing. The bringing of the tract across the Atlantic by the missionary, his placing it in the hands of Major S—— on a steamer in the Mediterranean, the irregularity in the official document, and consequent delay in the carrying out of the execution, were all links in the chain of blessing of Private J—— W—— at Aden.

Years have rolled by, but God is just the same, and His loving interest in sinful men is as great as ever. May this narrative, for the truth of which the writer can fully vouch, be an encouragement to the reader to believe that God cares for his soul.

You may have been preserved from going to the extreme sin of murder, and for this you may thank God. We are all capable of such a sin, and may well cultivate the frame of mind, which marked John Bradford. He witnessed the awful spectacle —now happily long abolished in this country—of a murderer sitting on his own coffin in a cart, being taken to the place of execution. John Bradford was a well-known minister of God in those days, and as he witnessed the gruesome sight, he exclaimed, "*There goes John Bradford but for the grace of God.*"

Yes, we are all sinners, and we all need salvation, one just as much as the other. *One* sin unforgiven will shut us out of heaven as much as ten thousand.

How happy, then, if the reading of this true story of God's grace should give you, my reader, to realise that God takes an interest in you. The placing of this book in your hand is surely an evidence of this.

Do not think lightly of this opportunity. As I write these lines tens of thousands are facing death on the battlefield and battleship. Thousands have been hurled into eternity. God is speaking to the nations, and to individuals, in this terrible war. He is calling loudly.

Was it for nothing that a party of Christian friends was guided by God to Belgium in the latter part of July of last year—just a very few days before war was declared—and gave out thousands of Testaments, Scripture portions, and tracts? Mons, Charleroi, Liège, Dinant, Huy, Chimay, and numerous places, lately devastated by war, have had these messages of PEACE given to them. Little did the givers or receivers think that in a short time the land would be devastated, its towns and villages destroyed, its soldiers slain, and its unoffending people murdered. If the recipients of the Testaments and tracts could have seen into the near future, how those books would have spoken loudly to them of God's loving interest in them.

Will you not, then, pay heed to this message put into your hand? You may be a soldier on the battlefield, or a sailor in the fleet. You know not

what is before you. Or you may be a civilian, living in comparative peace and security, happily protected by that shield of the British Empire—her Navy. But, whoever you are, you know not what a day may bring forth. And at any rate life at longest is brief, and death and judgment lie before the sinner.

Let me ask your careful consideration of the following texts of holy Scripture, which will point you to Christ and salvation. Christ is the Saviour. He died on the cross. He completed the work of redemption. And in virtue of God's satisfaction in the work of redemption, performed by His Son at the cross of Calvary, God can and does offer you salvation.

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

"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).

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

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 8, 9).

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that

ye may KNOW that ye HAVE *eternal life*"
(1 John v. 13).

"Behold, NOW is the accepted time; behold,
NOW is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

Trust the Saviour now, and claim the blessing of
salvation from God, which He so freely offers.

A. J. P.

THE CHINAMAN AND HIS CUP.

PAU WA SHIN is a Chinaman, and he lives in the island of Hong Kong.

Not long ago a terrible storm, called a "typhoon," broke over the island. Ships were wrecked, houses were blown down, and a great many people were killed.

Pau Wa Shin happened to be walking near the pier at the time, when suddenly a whirling gust of wind caught him up and swept him into the sea.

There were some policemen close at hand. They saw the accident, but could do nothing. Not being able to swim they could in no way help the poor Chinaman.

But an English gentleman, named Mr Bevan, was passing when the accident happened. It seemed hopeless, even for a good swimmer such as he, to attempt a rescue. However, without stopping to think, he rushed forward, stripped off his macintosh, and dived into the surging waves.

He managed to get hold of Pau Wa Shin's leg, and to bring him to the steps of the pier. But the waves were strong and violent, and the brave gentleman was badly hurt by being dashed by them against one of the posts that support the pier. The Chinaman, however, was little the worse for his adventure. He had been brought out of the water safe and unhurt.

Do you know somebody else who needs to be saved like Pau Wa Shin? Sin, like the great typhoon, has swept *you* into terrible danger. You cannot possibly save yourself. Nor can any of your friends save you. They are, like the policemen at Hong Kong, quite unable to rescue you.

But just as there was someone, who was able and willing to save the poor Chinaman, so there is Someone who can save you.

Who is He? The Lord Jesus Christ.

He only can save you. Mr Bevan had to risk his life, and he got badly bruised in his noble act of rescuing Pau Wa Shin. But the Saviour did more. He endured unheard-of sufferings and gave up His life upon the cross in order to save sinners like you.

Have you ever thanked Him? Is your heart full of gratitude to Him for His great love?

Pau Wa Shin felt profoundly grateful to his great deliverer. He made him a present of a beautiful silver cup, and wrote him this letter:—

"GENTLEMAN,—I owe my life to you. You are my saviour. You saved my life at the risk of yours.

"On the morning of 18th inst., a holocaust [that is, a

dreadful calamity] visited this colony. While I was walking on the Praya I was blown out into the sea. As I was unable to swim I had not the slightest doubt of a watery grave awaiting me.

"On seeing this, you at once plunged into the water, regardless of your own imminent danger, swam to me, and succeeded in dragging me to the shore in safety.

"I do not know how to express my gratitude for your self-sacrifice in my rescue. Not only myself but the whole of my family are for ever under obligation to you for your great humanity and heroism.

"Sir, allow me to tender my hearty thanks to you in person, and at the same time, please graciously accept from me a memento in the shape of a silver cup, in token of my everlasting gratitude to you.—I remain, Gentleman, yours ever gratefully, PAU WA SHIN."

This letter makes it very clear that the Chinaman was fully aware of his terrible danger. He says, "*I had not the slightest doubt of a watery grave awaiting me.*"

Are you aware of your danger, my friend? If still unsaved, you are in danger of being eternally lost. There is not the slightest doubt of this. Your only chance of being saved is through the work of Jesus.

How can you express your gratitude to Him for His great deed of self-sacrifice?

Not by giving Him a cup, as Pau Wa Shin did to Mr Bevan, but by accepting a cup. In saying this, I am referring to a verse in Psalm cxvi., where David asks the question:—

"*What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?*" For the many mercies that

had followed him all his days he felt truly grateful. How should he express his gratitude?

He supplies the answer to his own question, in the next verse :— ..

"I will take the CUP OF SALVATION, and call upon the name of the Lord" (ver. 13).

How contrary is this to the usual method of returning thanks! Naturally we should conclude that gratitude would be more fittingly expressed by the presentation of a gift to the benefactor, rather than by the acceptance of one from him.

But in the matter of a sinner's salvation the reverse must always be the case. What has a wretched, broken-down enemy to give to the One against whom he has sinned so grievously? His heart? What a strange gift that would be, when the Scriptures declare that the human heart is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked."

His life? But that is already forfeit. Could a criminal, condemned to the gallows, offer his life as an expression of gratitude?

No: the offerings of heart and life can only be rightly made when salvation has been obtained.

The only thing for an empty, hell-deserving sinner to do is to *take*, with the hand of grateful faith, the cup of salvation that is freely offered.

Now this cup has, at least, three ingredients. For we need salvation not only from the eternal consequences of our guilt and folly, but from the snares and dangers to which we are daily exposed, and finally, from the very presence of inward sin,

and from the corruption and decay to which our bodies are subject.

In the same Psalm cxvi., to which reference has already been made, we read of what I may call the *three ingredients* of the “cup of salvation” (see ver. 18). “Thou hast delivered :

- (i.) My soul from death.
- (ii.) Mine eyes from tears.
- (iii.) My feet from falling.”

Salvation, then, first of all, means deliverance from death, the wages of sin. Not the physical death of the body (though that is robbed of its sting for the Christian), but the terrible destiny which the Bible calls “the second death,” which is, not annihilation, but the lake of fire.

But even when we know that the precious blood of Christ stands between us and the penal consequences of our sins, there yet remains much to fill our eyes with tears. There are sorrows, calamities, sufferings to be borne. But not for long. God Himself will wipe every tear from our eyes, and remove us from the very place to which sin and suffering belong. When we reach heaven at last, that will be the full and final chapter in the story of our salvation.

Meanwhile there is another thing. Our Saviour lives on high to deliver *our feet from falling*, to preserve us from the thousand snares with which our pathway through the world is beset. An old hymn says :—

“The tempter drives his vortex round,
We pass it, as on solid ground.”

This is due, not to any importation of special strength to *us*, but because "the Lord is our Strength and Shield," and in His mighty hand there is power to keep us from falling into the tempter's vortex.

We may speak, then, of salvation as having these three aspects :—

(i.) Salvation of the soul from all the consequences of our sins.

(ii.) Daily salvation from the snares with which Satan seeks to entrap us.

(iii.) Final and complete salvation when the believer is taken from the world altogether.

As a dear servant of Christ used to say: "I have a Saviour who *has saved me*, who *is saving me*, and who *will save me* as long as there is anything I need saving from."

These, then, are the three wonderful ingredients in the CUP OF SALVATION.

See to it, reader, that you do not put off the taking of this cup until it is too late.

In the matter of the soul's salvation how important is decision! God's time is now. "Behold, NOW is the accepted time; behold, NOW is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2). Procrastination is the thief of time, the old proverb says; but it is, likewise, the ruin of multitudes eternally.

How many have intended to be saved some day, but have missed their opportunity for ever. Don't be one of the number, I beseech you. Make sure of salvation now. If you do, the only regret you will have is that you did not trust the Lord sooner.

WHOSE WORDS SHALL STAND?

IF there should be a contradiction between anything which God has said and that which man may say, on the same subject, whose words are bound to stand ?

Well, that is easily answered, "God is stronger than man": and on that score alone He is sure to succeed; but that is not the only reason why He should do so. "God," we read, "cannot lie." He can do all things but that. Man, on the other hand, is naturally false. "Let God be true and every man a liar," is the necessary conclusion of the highest wisdom (see Rom. iii. 4), where God is seen in the light of the truth, and man in the darkness of the lie that resulted from his fall in Eden.

"Every man a liar," is indeed a painful and humbling verdict, but it is absolutely correct.

It is not a question of the number of lies told, whether called black lies or white. For, in this case, we all differ; but, down at bottom, in the fallen nature of all men there is an inherent principle of falsehood. "The heart," we read, "is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked"; and that being so, what sort of crop can be expected ?

Certain soils favour a certain vegetation, and the soil of the heart of man produces a veritable luxuriance of evil. "Out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts," and then follows a catalogue of twelve sins of various degrees and intensity, flowing from these "evil thoughts," and these again from "the heart of men" (see Mark vii. 21, 22). What

a sin-creating machine must this wicked little heart be! Well, then, how can you expect anything true to come out of it? That is just the question. "In me," said the Apostle Paul—one who of all others had carried out the old philosophic advice: "Man, know thyself,"—"in me," he said, "(that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. vii. 18). Mark that! No good thing dwells in the flesh, either of thought, word, or deed; so that the above verdict is neither wrong nor too severe.

It is our wisdom to plead "guilty." Then whose words shall stand, "Mine or theirs"?—The words of God, or those of His rebellious people? (see Jer. xliv. 28). God had spoken one thing; they had said the opposite. They had daringly contradicted Him.

Whose words should stand?

The question need hardly be asked. But what wonderful patience on the part of God to tolerate the contradiction! What proof have we that the words of God shall stand?

Take this: "Upholding all things by the word of His power" (Heb. i. 3). You may say that creation is controlled by certain laws. Quite true, but not all the truth. The word of His power has sustained creation without fail, day by day, since its beginning. These laws are of Him.

Creation, then, is a witness that the words of God shall stand, a witness which should greatly confirm the faith of His people—and an assurance that, in a work greater than creation—that of redemption—the truth shall prevail, and the words of God stand. "Heaven and earth shall pass away,"

said the blessed Lord, "but My words shall not pass away."

But creation is a thing seen, while redemption is not so! True, but the words of God guarantee both; and if we find them to be true in the realm of the seen, we may rest assured that they are not less true in that which is unseen. The secret infidelity that questions this goes to prove that the heart is deceitful and man a liar.

Whose words shall stand? Those of God, or those of man? Truth, or the contradiction of it? If God has spoken, and He has, nothing but the most absolute and unquestioning confidence in His words becomes the faith of His people. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

J. W. S.

THE SOLDIER'S SUBSTITUTE.

WE all know that Army Rules and Regulations are strictly enforced. A few days ago a soldier home on short leave from the front, where he had served his country with marked distinction, appeared before a magistrate with a sad tale of his liability to severe punishment on his return to duty.

The facts were these:—His mother, whom he loved dearly, had been taken seriously ill, and died while he was at home. His leave expired before the date fixed for the funeral, and his efforts to get into touch with his commanding officer failed, so he remained for the funeral *without leave!*

Every one knows the inevitable results of "breaking leave," and it will be admitted by all that punishment must follow breach of discipline. The soldier, knowing this, followed what may seem to have been the very course to lead to that punishment, but it led to *mercy*.

The magistrate's heart was touched by the soldier's frank story, and he assured him that no one should harm him. "I will take your punishment myself, if it is enforced," he said, and promising to see the commanding officer if possible, and himself explain the matter, he gave the man a letter to the officer to whom he must report himself, in which he offered to make good his promise to bear the punishment instead.

What a wonderful picture this is of "the Son of God, who" as the believer can say, "loved me, and gave *Himself* for me"! (Gal. ii. 20). Our soldier friend took the right course. He did not get any one to plead for him, but went *himself* to the magistrate, and stated his case. Knowing he was subject to punishment he appealed for mercy.

This is just the way the sinner should take, who feels the weight of his sin, and knows the consequences of it. The Lord Jesus says, "Come unto *Me*," and when we go to Him, owning our need and our utter helplessness to meet that need, we find in Him the One, who took our place, who indeed bore the punishment we had merited.

So that now God can righteously receive the sinner on the ground of what Christ has done at Calvary's cross.

THREE TRACTS AND THEIR TITLES.

THREE young men, to whom I had given tracts, commenced to read aloud the titles.

The first read, "Are you ready?"

The second followed with, "Who can tell?"

The third read out very slowly, "Ten words from God."

Thoughts came into my mind as to the order in which the titles were read.

First, "Are you ready?" What an important question! Ready for what? Ready to meet God with whom we have to do. God says, "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. xiv. 12). Are you ready, reader? In the parable given in Matthew xxv. 10, we find that when the Bridegroom came they that were READY went in with Him to the marriage, and the door was shut. Again we repeat, are *you* ready?

Perhaps you may answer this question by repeating the title of the second tract: "Who can tell?" Some go further than this, and say, "Nobody can tell." Can we tell? Let Scripture give the answer. Referring to the third title read out, can we find just "Ten words from God," that will give us an answer from God? Assuredly we can. Exodus xii. 13 comes to the mind.

God had given warning of coming judgment, and had provided a way of escape.

The Lamb had to be slain, and its blood sprinkled on the doorposts and lintel, while the whole family was instructed to remain under the shelter of the

blood. Nor was there any need for doubts or fears as to their safety from the destroying angel, for complete assurance came with "Ten words from God":—

"When I see the blood I will pass over you."

God is faithful. "Hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" (Num. xxiii. 19).

All who obeyed and remained under the shelter of the blood were preserved in safety, while in every other house, where the blood was not sprinkled, the firstborn was slain.

Just in the same way, the judgment of God will surely fall on this guilty world, but thank God, in His love He has made a way of escape for us. "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18). "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). "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 38, 39).

Reader, trust the precious Saviour that God has provided.

Here are another "Ten words from God":— "*Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him*" (Ps. ii. 2). Trust Him, and you will instantly experience this blessedness.

R. N.

"BUT WE SEE JESUS."

THE sight of Jesus will spoil you for the world. I would not ask you to give up the world. But if you get your eye upon Jesus, the world will be nothing to you.

The reason why so many young Christians are unhappy is that they are dabbling with the world. They have just got enough of Christ to make them miserable in the world, and enough of the world to make them unhappy with Christ.

What I desire for every reader of these lines is that Christ might so fill and entrance his heart that he might be like Stephen of old. Battered to death by the stones of persecuting fanatics, Stephen looked up and saw Jesus, and his face shone like that of an angel. That is what we Christians need—to glow and go.

In the strength of this we can joyfully sing :—

“Rise, my soul, thy God directs thee,
Stranger hands no more impede ;
Pass thou on, His hand protects thee,
Strength that has the captive freed.”

“But now we see not yet all things put under Him :

BUT WE SEE JESUS,

who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour” (Heb. ii. 8, 9).

W. T. P. W.

GOD BLESSING MAN IN CHRIST.

PART I.—MAN AS FOUND BY THE SON OF GOD.

(Read Mark v.)

THERE is a notable contrast between the condition of man as God made him, and that in which Christ found him. Four thousand years had rolled their course between these two points. Not that it required so much time to develop this contrast, but God waited that man's fallen condition might be fully proved before all. He was made upright, placed in Eden, and surrounded with everything to make him happy. Above all, God came down in the cool of the day to talk with Adam! A place of wondrous blessing and privilege.

But when the Lord Jesus came into this scene, how did He find man? In the poor wretched creature mentioned in this chapter we see a figure of man's condition in God's sight. It is an extreme case, but is a sample of what man has fallen to.

When the Lord was come into the country of the Gadarenes, "immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit . . . who

HAD HIS DWELLING AMONG THE TOMBS”

(ver. 2, 3).

That is where He found him! He dwelt in no house, but in the tombs, the place of death and departure from God; more than that, he loved it! When Jesus came to him, he cried out, "What have I to do with Thee, Jesus thou Son of the Most High

God? I adjure Thee by God, torment me not!" (ver. 7).

Note the contrast! In the beginning man was in the highest place of earthly creature-blessing with God. When Christ came, he was in the place of death and separation from God, and possessed of an unclean spirit!

Man's state to-day is set forth by that man, who had his dwelling among the tombs. After all has been done, he is still there in the place of death, from which by his own efforts he cannot escape. No amount of education can either improve his condition, or deliver him from the power of the devil, and from death.

While it is the man's lips that cried out against Jesus, the voice is that of the unclean spirit; it was he who was afraid of the torment, he who knew the Lord Jesus as the One with power to inflict it. The devils believe that torment awaits them, and seem to have some idea of the time, and they tremble. "Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?" they say (Matt. viii. 29). Satan, their leader, knows he has found his Master in the Lord Jesus; he learned this lesson in the wilderness.

But there was not only one demon; a whole legion has possession of this man, and they made nothing of the man, save as a vehicle of their wickedness and malice. Think of a whole legion of wicked spirits in a man! What hope has he? A Roman legion numbered ten thousand men.

The man, influenced by the demons, gives the Lord

His true title as Son of God, but knows Him only as a Judge, not as a Saviour. Satan deceives man now, by flattering him that he also is a son of God, even as the Lord is, and so he thinks he does not need saving. But to recognise heartily that Jesus is God, for a man with conscience towards God and faith towards the Lord Jesus, is to be truly saved. Peter was thus blessed in confessing Him Son of the Living God, the Father Himself having revealed it to him. But this poor creature's knowledge was from a wrong source and he only used it to beseech the Lord to depart from him. Alas! how many do so.

In this place of death, man has

No REST.

Always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones. He was using his very God-given power against himself. How mad an act! But surely one may say, I am not like that! Yes! If following your own will, though circumstances may be different, you have in this man a representation of yourself. Unbelief may refuse it, but before God it is true.

Does not every one know a drunkard is using his power against himself? Aye! and while not in so gross a form, every unconverted man is in just the same state Godward. Take the higher critic, who uses his intelligence that he may do away with God's blessed book, picking it to pieces, announcing his own folly by saying, "This is not of God, and that

is not of God." What is that but using the power God gave him against himself? Not his physical but his mental power, and like this man crying out his own shame, for a miserable creature he is. The poor drunkard is but a drunken sinner; while the mere scientist is a scientific sinner, and the higher critic a religious sinner, far worse than all!

In Luke viii. 27 we are told the demoniac wore no clothes; that is, he had

No RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Clothes are a figure of righteousness, and this in our gospel is set forth by the incompetency of man to bind or tame him (see vers. 3, 4). There had been frequent attempts to hold him within bounds, but it was impossible; even a God-given law could not do it. The moral chains and fetters, the "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" of the law, were plucked asunder, and broken in pieces by him. Was ever a man able to keep the law? Not one! Instead, that chain of ten links only roused man's opposition to break the barriers. Why is this?

Because there is a principle in man which is only maddened and urged on by these restraints. This appears even in a child. Tell a child not to do a certain thing, it is all the more eager to do it. The demon we know was in this man, he would not be bound with those chains. That is the real secret of that intense longing in the heart for its own will, for that which is forbidden. It indicates a power which is beyond man.

The devil has got hold of man. He does not believe it, for man is blind, and the devil very insidious, but it is true.

Satan has been at this work now for six thousand years, and knows how to urge man on with that longing desire, which makes him say, "I must do it; let me have my fling now, and then I will turn." No! You cannot turn, it is impossible. You must be turned. Let me press this upon you. If help is to come to you it must come from God. It is to be found nowhere else; but it is found there, "Surely after that I was turned, I repented" (Jer. xxxi. 19).

Others have tried their hands at this with what they call handmaids to Christianity ! All these things can accomplish nothing with regard to man's state before God; they can but ameliorate his condition socially. The evil nature is still there; the poison is in the blood, it will break out again in the same, or some other direction.

For example, here in Australia, they took a full-blooded black boy, cared for him as a child, sent him to school, and finally to England to college. He passed well, and came out equipped with clothes, and books, prepared for a business or other career. As soon as he saw the bush, his soul longed for it, and it was not long till he got rid of books and clothes, and betook himself to the bush and his people again, in his natural state.

So man is hopeless in himself. Neither can any man tame him. The case is too bad.

MAN NEEDS A DELIVERER.

Every man like our sample man needs a deliverer. But the Deliverer has come, and man will not have Him! This man would not; he tells the Lord to go away, "I beseech Thee, torment me not." Reader! have you ever besought the Deliverer to go away from you? Most of us have many a time. But Jesus said, "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit!" (ver. 8). The blessed Lord Jesus had come into the scene as Deliverer; the devil had found his Master; he must go.

Blessed be God, His gospel is not a negative thing; it tells of deliverance positively accomplished. God looked down, and saw there was none to deliver; then His own arm brought salvation. The Lord Jesus—God manifest in flesh—came to deliver man, and that in spite of himself. So it is with each one! Who would have come to Christ of himself? People talk of volunteers! Where are they? When converted a brother put his hand on my shoulder, and said, "This is a pressed man." Looking up and catching his eye, I understood, and said, "Yes! It was *all* of God." We cannot take credit to ourselves; we owe all to the Son of God, who came in flesh, and died to put us in this place of blessing.

The last verses of chapter iv. prefigure the way of this deliverance. The incidents are all figurative. Here was a man under the power of the devil; Jesus says, as it were, "I will go and save him!" But before He could do that He must cross the Sea of Galilee, and calm its waters. But shall the prey be taken from the

mighty? or the lawful captive be delivered? Yes! Jesus will take the captive from the mighty, and deliver the prey of the terrible. But to do this He must crush his power first; must destroy him who had the power of death. This was done by His own death at the cross, which gives a righteous basis for the exercise of His power in delivering the captive.

But He anticipates the cross in the deliverance of this man, as, also in other cases, having come in blessed grace into the circumstances which made miracles necessary. He wept and groaned at the grave of Lazarus; sighed, as He opened the eyes of the blind man. His visage was so marred more than any man's, and His form more than the sons of men. He entered into the awful condition of things under which man had brought himself.

But deliverance from the devil's power must be by other means than in the type. How did He calm the waters of Galilee? With a word of power! "He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still! And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." Was it in this way He calmed the storm of death? No! If He would save others, He must Himself go through the waves and billows of death. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 14 and 15).

The Covenanter, who wrote the following lines on the wall of his cell, on the morning of his execution, had by faith gripped this :—

“ My last sun is risen,
 It is far on its way ;
 My soul quits her prison
 Ere the close of the day.
 Farewell, hours of sorrow,
 I shall know you no more,
 Ere day dawn to-morrow
 Our union is o'er.

“ A bright ray is glowing
 O'er the river of death ;
 I fear not its flowing,
 With that light for my path ;
 Blest beam of His tracing,
 O'er the gloom of that river,
 Who, its horrors embracing,
 Has calmed it for ever.”

That is how Jesus calmed the river of death. He bore the stroke of divine vengeance ; He opened His bosom to receive it ; He was made sin, and upon His devoted head was poured out the judgment due to man as a sinner.

Thus has death been deprived of its horrors so that it becomes the servant of the Christian.

Reader ! He has been here and borne this, whether you believe it or not. “ The work has been done, and nothing in heaven or earth can alter the value of it. The only thing unbelief can do, is to keep you from the blessing of it. If you accept it you will be then and there delivered.

G. J. S.

A TESTIMONY TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

I HAVE a profound, unfeigned (I believe divinely given) faith in the Bible. I have, through grace, been by it converted, enlightened, quickened, saved. I have received the knowledge of God by it, to adore His perfections—of JESUS,—the Saviour, joy, strength, comfort of my soul. Many have been indebted to others as the means of their being brought to God, to ministers of that gospel which the Bible contains, or to friends who delight in it. This was not my case. That work which is ever God's was wrought in me through the means of the written Word. He who knows what the value of Jesus is, will know what the Bible will be to such an one.

If I have, alas! failed it, in nearly thirty years' arduous and varied life and labour—at least such, as far as the service of an unknown and feeble individual usually leads—I have never found it fail me: if it has not for the poor and needy circumstances of time, through which we feebly pass, I am assured it never will for eternity. “The Word of the Lord abideth for ever.”

If it reaches down even to my low estate, it reaches up to God's height, because it comes thence: as the love that can reach even to me, and apply to every detail of my feebleness and failure, proves itself divine in doing so: none but God could, and hence it leads me up to Him. As Jesus came from

God and went to God, so does the Book that divinely reveals Him come from and elevate to Him. If received, it has brought the soul to God, for He has revealed Himself in it. Its positive proofs are all in itself. The sun needs no light to see it by. . . .

I beg to avow, in the fullest, clearest, and distinctest manner here, my deep, divinely-taught conviction of the inspiration of the Scriptures. That this, while of course allowing, if need be, for defect in the translation and the like, when I read the Bible, I read it as of absolute authority for my soul as God's Word. There is no higher privilege than to have communications direct from God Himself. . . .

My joy, my comfort, my food, my strength, for near thirty years have been the Scriptures received implicitly as the Word of God. In the beginning of that period, I was put through the deepest exercise of soul on that point. Did heaven and earth, the visible Church, and man himself crumble into nonentity, I should, through grace, since that epoch, hold to the Word as an unbreakable link between my soul and God. I am satisfied that God has given it me as such.

I do not doubt that the grace of the Holy Spirit is needed to make it profitable, and to give it real authority to our souls, because of what we are; but that does not change what it is in itself. To be true when it is received, it must have been true before it was so.

J. N. D.

OUTPOST DUTY: OR, A STORY OF A HYMN.

A BEAUTIFUL story is told concerning Wesley's hymn, "Jesu, Lover of my soul." Two Americans, who were crossing the Atlantic, met in one of their cabins one Sunday night to sing hymns. As they sang the last hymn, "Jesu, Lover of my soul," one of them heard an exceedingly rich and beautiful voice behind him. He looked around, and, although he did not know the face, he thought he knew the voice.

When the music ceased, he turned and asked the man if he had been in the Civil War. The man replied that he had been a Confederate soldier.

"Were you in such a place on such a night?" asked the first.

"Yes," he replied, "and a curious thing happened that night, which this hymn has recalled to my mind. I was posted on sentry duty near the edge of a wood. It was a dark night, and very cold, and I was a little frightened, because the enemy was supposed to be very near."

"About midnight, when everything was still, and I was feeling homesick and miserable and weary, I thought that I would comfort myself by praying and singing a hymn. I remember singing this hymn:—

"All my trust on Thee is stayed,
All my help from Thee I bring.
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of Thy wing."

"After singing that, a strange peace came down upon me, and through the long night I felt no more fear."

"Now," said the other, "listen to my story. I was a Union soldier, and was in the wood that night with a party of scouts. I saw you standing, although I did not see your face. My men had concentrated the aim of their rifles upon you, waiting the word to fire ; but when you sang out—

"Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of Thy wing,"

I said, 'Boys, lower your rifles ; we will go home.'"

Reader, is your head covered ? Is your soul saved ? Are your sins forgiven ? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

C. H. F.

HOW A GREAT FORTUNE BECAME A HEAP OF DUST.

MANY years ago a Russian merchant, travelling in the East, met an Arab trader, who showed him something which appeared to be merely a little ball, dirty and ill-shaped. He said he had bought it from an Indian fisherman, and wanted to know if it was of any value.

The merchant did not know, but he offered the Arab a small sum of money for it, which the latter gladly accepted. Soon after this the Russian

returned to his home in Petrograd, taking the little ball with him. An acquaintance, to whom he showed it, recognised it as a fine pearl, and purchased it from the merchant.

The new owner, fully alive to the value of the pearl, invited his friends to come and see it. All the leading people of the metropolis accepted the invitation and flocked to behold the peerless pearl, which was kept in a strong box on a table in a room otherwise empty of furniture, in its owner's palace by the river.

Among the visitors was the Tsar himself. His Majesty set his heart upon possessing it, and made large offers of wealth and rank in exchange for it. These, however, were declined. The owner would on no account part with his pearl.

But in those days in Russia, what could not be secured in one way was often obtained in another, especially when the Tsar's pleasure was concerned. The possessor of the pearl was accused of being an accomplice in a plot. Knowing well enough what would follow, he seized his chief treasure, and abandoning all the rest of his property, he fled across the frontier, and ultimately made his way to Paris.

Many of the Parisians had heard of the wonderful pearl, and greatly desired to see it. At first the Russian refused, but at length, yielding to urgent and repeated requests, he agreed to exhibit it to a select company of bankers and dealers in gems. When they assembled, he opened his box.

What was the matter? Those standing around him saw his face turn deadly white, and his limbs begin to tremble. The pearl was found to be badly diseased, and before long it crumbled to powder! Thus a great fortune became a heap of dust!

For the sake of this pearl the Russian had abandoned his wealth, his palace, his friends, his position in society, and his country. And lo! it was valueless.

Let not the story be told in vain upon this page.

Is there something that you have set your heart upon, something for which you are prepared to let everything else go? Many a one has grasped some such object, and has counted himself happy, when lo! it has withered and proved worthless. Many a one looking back upon his life from the threshold of the grave has had to confess that he has wasted his years in pursuing that which he, at length, sees to be unreal and unsubstantial.

How different the case of the Christian. He, too, has a treasure, in comparison with which all else is but dross. It is not in his own keeping, but is "*in the heavens.*" There is no disappointment in connection with it, for we read that it "*faileth not.*" No one can ever deprive its possessor of this treasure, for it is secure "*where no thief approacheth.*" It is not liable to decay, or to depreciation in value, for "*neither moth nor rust doth corrupt*" it.

Who would not possess such a treasure? Are you anxious to obtain it? Do you want to know by what means it can be secured? *Not by anything*

that you can do or give. God is the Giver. If you are ready to take the place of an empty, poverty-stricken recipient, putting all your trust in Christ, placing all your hopes and confidence in the atoning merits of His precious blood, the treasure will be yours.

"The wages of sin is death, but the GIFT OF GOD is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23).

H. P. B.

"THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF MEN."

SO says a recruiting agent, as depicted on a poster to be seen on the walls of the city where I live. He describes them as—

- (1) "Those who hear the call and obey."
- (2) "Those who delay."
- (3) "The others."

Deeply important as the defence of the British Empire is at the present time, does it not afford an illustration of what is far more important? Remember

GOD CALLS.

"God . . . now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts xvii. 30). The gospel of God is "concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord . . . for the obedience of faith" (Rom. i. 1-5, margin).

Have you heard the call and obeyed? God calls *all men* to repent and believe the gospel—in plain

language, to turn from themselves, owning they can do nothing to secure eternal blessing, and turn to the Saviour in faith and trust—that mighty Saviour, who has done the mighty work, which has secured eternal redemption.

How true it is in regard to these eternal things that we find these same three classes of people, as illustrated by the recruiting poster.

(1) Those who hear God's gracious call, and render the obedience of faith.

(2) Those who delay—procrastinators. They mean to be saved one day—they think some future time will do—they intend to enjoy this world first, and be *sure of heaven* at the finish. How dangerous a course! What risks they run!

(3) The others. By this is meant, those who are utterly indifferent in this matter of so great importance. How vast are their numbers, alas! and how rude must be their awakening.

Reader, to which class do you belong?

Are you like King Agrippa of old, who having heard the Apostle Paul's defence and testimony, said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian"? (Acts xxvi. 28); or like Felix, who trembling, said, "When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee"? (Acts xxiv. 25)—in the one case, *almost* persuaded but not quite, in the other, we never read that the convenient season ever came.

Remember, dear reader, the true proverb, "Procrastination is the thief of time." Delays are

dangerous. Death may cross your path at any moment, and fix your eternal state.

"Haste! haste! haste!
Delay not from wrath to flee,
Oh! wherefore the moments in madness waste,
When Jesus is calling thee."

Simon Peter illustrates for us the man who hears and obeys. He heard the Lord's call, "Follow Me," and he forsook all and followed. Wise man! Happy choice!

This same apostle asked the solemn question, "What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God" (1 Pet. iv. 17)? There can be only one answer—*banishment* from the presence of the Lord. What a contrast to those who hear and obey. Such get their sins forgiven. They know from God's Word they can never come into judgment (see John iii. 16), because the Lord Jesus suffered in their stead, bearing the judgment of God against sin. They know God as their Father, and heaven as their home. They have eternal life, and can never perish (see John x. 28). God, the Holy Ghost, indwells them (see Rom. v. 5), making eternal and unseen things real and present to their souls.

Saul of Tarsus, afterwards known as the Apostle Paul, illustrates for us the man, who hears and obeys. He tells us he was not "disobedient" to the heavenly vision, when stopped on his way to Damascus, and stricken down by the "light above the brightness of the sun." Truly he heard the call and obeyed. How aptly comes the question, "How shall we

escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. vi. 2).

Surely this is what "the others" are doing. How withering is the sarcasm of the recruiting agent! How contemptuously he describes in one word the indifferent class—indifferent to their country's need and peril!

But in spiritual matters "the others," the careless, indifferent, and unconcerned, stand in great peril. Surely to "*neglect* so great salvation" is to have neither part nor lot in the matter. Such stand in danger of perishing eternally, and this in spite of the fact that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16).

In closing let me appeal to you, unknown reader. To which of these three classes do you belong?

Have you obeyed the gospel call?

Or are you procrastinating?

Or are you indifferent?

Many have enlisted in the army of King George V., ready, if necessary, to lay down their lives in the defence of King and country. All honour to them. But how infinitely important it is to be right with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, whose right it is to reign in your heart. ENLIST to-day amongst the soldiers of the Cross. God grant it.

"Decide for Christ to-day,
Confess Him as thy Lord;
Proclaim to all the Saviour's worth,
How faithful is His Word."

"A FRIEND OF SINNERS."

SHORTLY before leaving for India, the Right Honourable Lord Pentland addressed a meeting of the Educational Institute of Scotland.

In the course of an interesting speech, he told a story of a boy, who, when asked to give a definition of a friend, replied, "My friend is a person, who knows me, and yet likes me."

As the writer listened to this very excellent answer, he said to himself, "*My Friend is a Person, who knows me, and yet loves me.*"

There are some people who listen to the gospel message, and who would fain believe its life-giving words, but, conscious of their own sinfulness and consequent unworthiness, they say, "If only the preacher knew me, he would not proclaim salvation for 'whosoever will.' No one knows how bad I am, and how utterly hopeless is my case." If that is your position, permit us to tell you that there is One who knows all about you. As a matter of fact, He knows you a great deal better than you know yourself. He knows about those sins which, were they recounted in public, would bring crimson to your cheek. He knows about sins that you have long since forgotten, and yet He would fain bless you.

You have already guessed to whom we refer, have you not? His name is JESUS, and, thanks be to God, He just exactly suits us sinners.

Kindly open your Bible, and read that most

exquisite portion, Luke vii. Fasten your eye upon verse 34, and from it cull these four golden words—

"A FRIEND OF SINNERS."

Spoken in derision by those who felt not their need of a friend, the Holy Spirit has placed them upon the page of Holy Scripture, and has given them the imprimatur of His divine authority. Down through the ages the message comes to you right here and now; the Lord Jesus Christ is the "Friend of Sinners."

Kindly read the chapter, keeping this in mind. Verses 1 to 10 show Him to be *a Friend in sickness*.

Verses 11 to 17 present Him as *a Friend in sorrow*.

Verses 18 to 30 teach us that He is *a Friend in solitude*.

Verses 36 to 50 reveal Him as "*a Friend of Sinners*."

Please read the last fifteen verses again, and again, and yet again, for it is this portion that particularly concerns you just at present.

A poor woman, laden with sins, found her way to the feet of Jesus. All the townspeople knew she was a sinner; she knew it; and indeed she was worse than either they, or even she herself, imagined. When the blessed Lord did not cast her off, Simon the Pharisee had the satisfaction of thinking that his scepticism with regard to Christ was fully justified. If He were a prophet He would be bound to know that she was a sinner.

In very truth He was a prophet, but He was also "A Friend of Sinners"; therefore He, who knew all about her, welcomed her to His presence, assured her, repentant as she was, of the forgiveness of her sins, and sent her home with the happy knowledge that she was saved.

From that day, in answer to the Pharisee's sneer, He is "a Friend of Sinners," she would be able to say, in the words of the Song of Solomon v. 16, "This is my Friend." Reader! Is He yours?

Remember, your sins are many. Never again would you pose as a Christian, never again would you dare to partake of holy communion till saved, if the fact that you are a sinner, and such a sinner as God sees you to be, dawnd upon you. If to-day you realise it, or if, perchance, you are a person without any religious profession, and know only too well how great a sinner you are in the sight of God, we should like so very much to introduce you to the "Friend of Sinners."

He knows your sin, He knows your inability to save yourself; but, hearken to the first word of the gospel, "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. xv. 3). All we, who believe this, are able to speak of Him as the One "who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24). He has made full atonement, He has for ever settled the question of sin, and has glorified God in the settling of it, so that God can now righteously say of all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. x. 17).

You may have the joy of knowing this to-day, if you come to the Sinners' Friend. He is "a Friend [who] loveth at all times" (Prov. xvii. 17)—"a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (Prov. xviii. 24).

In joy or sorrow, in prosperity or adversity, in sunshine or rain, in summer or winter, you would find Him to be a Friend in whom to confide, to whom to look, on whom to lean. Just as in Luke vii. we see how He was available for every class, and every condition, so to-day "Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (Heb. xiii. 8).

Was there ever a time when there existed throughout the world such a sense of the need of an omnipotent, sympathising Friend? The noble sailors on the mighty deep, the courageous airmen, who daily risk their lives, the brave soldiers in the trenches, the wounded and dying in the hospitals, the maimed, who have returned from the battlefield, the broken-hearted widows, the orphan children, the desolate relatives, the parents in constant anxiety regarding their boys, who are in the place of danger—all the world needs a friend, but for the moment we focus our attention upon you, dear reader.

You need a friend to-day; you will need a friend as you pursue life's journey; you will need a friend when your race here is run, and unless you make His acquaintance in time, you will be a friendless, homeless, hopeless sinner for eternity. Then make haste.

We entreat you, come to Him to-day, trust in Him just now, and be able to say of Him—"This is my Friend."

"I need a Friend to lead me on my journey,
The journey o'er the mountains drear and wild,
For I am sad, and lone, and heavy laden,
With footsteps faltering as a weary child,
With footsteps faltering as a weary child.

"I need a Hand to lift my heavy burden,
The burden of my sin, and guilt, and shame,
So tired I am, so worn with days of toiling,
Is there one kindly hand to ease my pain ?
Is there one kindly hand to ease my pain ?

"I need a rest from keen and bitter conflict,
From constant striving 'gainst the calls of sin,
Is there a peace, or rest for one so weary,
Where my poor soul can freely enter in ?
Where my poor soul can freely enter in ?

"There is a Friend, to every soul so friendly,
There is a Hand to lighten every load ;
There is a Rest for every toiler weary,
They all are found in Christ, the Christ of God,
They all are found in Christ, the Christ of God."

W. B. D.

GOD'S GREATEST VICTORY.

THE Lord Jesus Christ has gone down into death for the glory of God, for the blessing of man, and for the destruction of Satan's power. Christ has gone into death and annulled it. He has gone into the stronghold of

Satan, and demolished it. He has put away sin. He has met the claims of God in righteousness.

His apparent defeat was God's greatest victory. As the hymn sweetly says:—

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

By death He overthrew the power of Satan. He rose from the dead, and what is the next thing? God calls on 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. 31).

Jesus is now exalted at God's right hand. It is as the triumphant Victor that He is now seen by faith there. His exaltation is the witness on God's part of His delight in Him, and of His absolute satisfaction in the work, which He accomplished in His death. His brow is crowned in glory as the answer to His sorrow, suffering, and death.

W. T. P. W.

WHEN WILL PEACE COME?

NO T till Christ reigns. There may be a peace of exhaustion, a sullen peace, but real, actual peace will not come *to stay* till the King of Kings reigns.

The utter failure of the peace propaganda under

the Hague Convention shows that peace will never come permanently till the basis of it is God's.

This peace propaganda has an endowment of £2,000,000; a palace costing several millions; a library on international peace of 75,000 volumes; stained glass windows from England; gates from Germany; marble interior from Italy; silk tapestries from Japan; porcelain from China; marble statuary from the United States of America; carpets from Turkey; minor gifts from small states. Yet what is it all worth?

Five of the monarchs and presidents, whose pictures hang on the walls, have been assassinated since the palace was built. Since the present war began, it is reported that three visitors were being shown over the deserted building by the caretaker, and they fell to blows in the very place dedicated to peace. They were German, French, and one other nationality. They quarrelled so violently that actual fighting took place between them.

Think of it! 75,000 volumes on international peace in the library, and Belgium devastated, Louvain in ruins, Northern France a smoking ruin, Poland overrun, millions of men engaged in slaughtering each other.

The question arises on many lips, Why does God allow the war? Is Christianity a failure?

The answer is obvious. There are 75,000 volumes on international peace in the library. They can all be done without. Let them be gathered into a mighty pile and burned.

And what then? Put in their place a Bible.

Let the individuals, who make up the nations, govern their lives by it, and what would be the result? Peace, blessed peace, would come like a gentle dove to the anguished heart of the world, and still its passions and its fears. There would be no need for navies and armies, no need of frontiers to be fortressed; no need of mighty cannon and armoured Zeppelins; no need of strikes; there would be no poverty, no injustice. Then men would beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation would not lift up sword against nation, neither would they learn war any more (see Isa. ii. 4).

The present war is not the result of Bible teaching, but diametrically opposed to it.

Christianity has not failed, but the *lack* of Christianity has brought about the present state of things, and men are slow to perceive it.

Why does God allow this war?

Why does God allow a child to burn its finger when it thrusts it into the fire? To teach it to avoid fire in the future. To avoid a recurrence of the pain. To avoid a greater catastrophe. The child knows no better, but yet it has to learn its lesson.

Why does God allow this war?

Why does God allow a man who drinks prussic acid to be poisoned? The man is aware of what he is doing. No one thinks of blaming God in this matter. The nature of prussic acid is well known. The man is blamed for his folly, and he rightly deserves the consequences of his act.

Why does God allow this war?

Why does God allow tares to grow instead of wheat, when the farmer deliberately sows tares? No one is so foolish as to ask such a puerile question.

Why does God allow this war? We answer, the nations have been sowing the wind, and they are reaping the whirlwind. The lesson is a stiff one. But it is needed, and by it God is chastening and warning the nations, lest a more dread thing happens to them.

France has sown the wind of *infidelity*, and she is reaping the whirlwind.

Germany, Protestant only in name, has undermined the faith of the nation by the teaching of Higher Criticism. Her professors in the universities, her pastors in the churches, have sown the wind, and they are reaping the whirlwind. They are more responsible than Krupp for this terrible war.

Heine, an outspoken German Jew, prophesied over forty years ago the very happenings of to-day, even to the very details of the destroying of cathedrals. He saw clearly that the carrying out of Bible principles would save the nation, and the lack of them would destroy it.

Though pity goes out to poor, stricken Belgium, and admiration for her gallant but unavailing defence against overwhelming odds, yet was it for nothing that the Congo blacks moaned in their agony in the shades of their tropical forests when

avaricious Belgians mutilated them by the hundred for not bringing in enough rubber? Surely God saw, and Belgium is being spoken to by her sorrows. She sowed the wind; she has, indeed, reaped the whirlwind.

Russia has cruelly persecuted the Jews for long. Language fails to express the horrors God's ancient people have gone through at the hands of "holy Russia!" Does the Jew groan and sigh in vain? Surely the God of Sabaoth has heard. Russia has sown the wind. Behold the whirlwind.

Look at Turkey and the Armenians. The same story is told.

Why does God allow the war? Look at Britain. Is she a Christian nation? Are not the vast majority of its people non-church-goers? And many who do go to church are mere nominal professors. Is pleasure not pursued after by the multitude, with no thought of God? Is the land not in reality pagan?

A more terrible awakening than what is happening in the present is before us. Are the nations hearing? Alas! no. Is Britain humbled? No!

The vast majority of those who ask the question, Why does God allow the war? are men and women, who emphatically don't want God in peace time. When the sun shines, when business prospers, when health is theirs, God would be an intrusion. How unutterably mean to whine out, Why does God allow the war? when their past conduct has been such. They have done without God hitherto, and

now they are learning how terrible it is to do without Him in times of stress. Above all, how terrible it will be to do without Him in—ETERNITY.

We do not look for a '*Christian*' nation. God visited the nations "*to take OUT OF THEM a people for His Son*" (Acts xv. 14).

But on the strength of that verse we do expect that individuals will hear; may many take heed to these things.

Let the individual take heed to what is happening, and learn therefrom its lesson.

How solemn to see enacted on the Continent of Europe, on this colossal scale, the truth of Holy Writ: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. vi. 7, 8).

Whether it be the nations, the unconverted individual, or the Christian, this principle holds good. Without this restraining principle at work, things would be so awful as to beggar description. Man would destroy himself.

God is speaking. He has spoken quietly, then louder and still louder, and men are still deaf. He will speak yet louder, and make them hear.

But before He speaks His loudest the Lord shall come, and translate His Church to glory. What an encouragement for the Christian to read, "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from [out of] the hour of temptation,

which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. iii. 10).

But one thing is certain: There can be no true lasting peace either in an individual's life, a nation's, or the world's, unless Christ comes to rule.

Does He rule in *your* life? Is He *your* Saviour and Lord?

Or, if a Christian, does He really govern *your* life? One book is sufficient, and, if practised, will prove that Christianity is not a failure, but triumphant, and that God does not encourage war, but is the God of peace. I know Christians who really practise Christianity, and their lives are veritable libraries of Christian apologetics.

Peace is coming! Hallelujah! But not till the world has been chastened for its sins, not till judgments unparalleled shall have swept over the guilty nations, not till Revelations iv. 1 to xx. 4 has been fulfilled; and then Christ will come—peace will come—rest will come—joy will come.

Oh! that all knew Him now, and that we Christians knew Him better and trusted Him better. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. xviii. 25).

Then no such foolish questions as, "Why does God allow the war?" would escape our lips.

But see to it, dear unsaved reader. Learn the lesson to be learned from all that is happening. Come to the conclusion that God must not be left out of *your* life. You can do without God in health. Can you do without Him in death? You

can do without Him in time. Can you do without Him in—ETERNITY? Make your choice, but oh, let it be wise.

Bring God into your life. Repent of your sins, trust the Saviour of God's providing. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). Do it now!

A. J. P.

GOD BLESSING MAN IN CHRIST.

PART II.—MAN AS BLESSED BY THE SON OF GOD.

(Read Mark v.)

IN our previous paper we looked at the contrast between the state in which God made man and that in which Christ found him; we note now another contrast between the difference of the condition in which Christ found man, and that in which He left him.

The Lord Jesus found the demoniac dwelling among the tombs, wearing no clothes, untamed and untameable. Then the Lord commanded the demons to come out of the man. They sought his permission to enter into the swine, an unclean animal according to the Jewish economy. The swine under their influence ran down a steep place, and perished in the sea. Then they that kept the swine fled and told it in the city and in the country. They were afraid of this conflict between spiritual powers.

Then the people went out to see what was done,

and they that had seen it told them how it befell to him that was possessed of the devils, and also concerning the swine. "And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind : and they were afraid" (ver. 15).

There is the contrast ! The man as Christ found him was possessed of a legion of unclean devils, in the place of death, having no rest, no clothes (righteousness), and of unsound mind. He was now in the place of life at Jesus' feet, sitting there at rest, clothed, that is having righteousness, and in his right mind.

The first thing here is, the man is

IN THE PLACE OF LIFE.

He is sitting at the feet of Jesus. The entrance of the word of the Lord had not only dispossessed him of the demons, but had communicated life to him. He who, energised by Satan, besought the Lord to depart from him, now sat at Jesus' feet like Mary and heard His word, that word which had been to him the word of life. He could say with Peter, "Lord to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (John vi. 68, 69). A wonderful place !

In Christ was life, and the life was the light of men. It had shone in the darkness, and the darkness had not comprehended it. The world His hands had made did not know Him ; His own people

would not receive Him ; but this man had now received Him, believing in His name, and was born of God. This is what is figured here ! The blessed Lord's word of power had made the difference in this wretched creature ! By the incorruptible seed of the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever, he had been born again.

The darkness of death in the devil's seat, the world, is dissipated, and the light of divine life illuminates the spirit at the feet of Jesus—a place where none can die. A poor woman once said, " I'll throw myself at the feet of Jesus, and, if I perish, I'll perish there !" Happy woman ! None ever perished there ; it is the place of life. And though amid apparent defeat where the body may die, death may say to the Christian—

" Let losers talk, yet thou shalt die ;
These arms shall crush thee."

The Christian can make answer—

" Scare not, do thy worst.
I shall be one day better than before :
Thou so much worse, that thou shalt be no more."

Here in this place of life and light the man finds
REST.

He is sitting—the posture of rest. The people who came out to see what had happened, saw him sitting at the feet of Jesus. Had he been at rest before ? No ! he abode in no house but always night and day he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones ; the

poor creature had no rest in a scene of sin and death. Satan leads man on in an ideal state of things. "Man walketh in a vain show." He is looking for rest, but there is none here, nothing to satisfy. Each one must find it so, even the youngest.

The only real thing here is the unrest of sin, with the sorrow of it; but when Christ comes in, what a change! Rest is found in Him, at the feet of Jesus alone. It is offered to every soul. See the change in this man, once so restless, now sitting at the feet of Jesus. Is not that enough?

Let me ask, dear reader, Have you found rest there? In this fair land of Australia many have thought to find rest, but this is part of the same world where sin and death and unrest reign. True, some have succeeded in getting into easy circumstances, but that has not brought rest even on earth. He heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them. The cupidity of his fellows would deprive him even of these, and rest of conscience they can never bring him.

Only at the feet of Jesus can we find rest of conscience, followed by rest as to circumstances, and both only preliminary to the rest of God, which remaineth for His people.

The next thing indicated in our picture is

RIGHTEOUSNESS.

The man is clothed; that is a figure of righteousness. Before, he was a shame to himself and his neighbours; now he is clothed with that which sets

forth God's righteousness. He, who had delivered him, had also clothed him. The one who under the devil's power besought Christ to leave him, now comes and sits in the presence of the God whom his own lips had recognised, and is at peace there. Mark! he is in the presence of God without fear, for righteousness gives boldness. Love gives confidence; righteousness, boldness.

The righteousness of God with which the believer is invested gives boldness in God's presence. It is a status of righteousness with which a believer is invested, which can never be exhausted while Christ is upon the throne of God, and no power can pluck Him thence.

It is not a certain amount of righteousness paid to a sinner's credit, against which he may after all heap up sins that exhaust it. Righteousness "imputed" (Rom. iv. 22) to us should read "reckoned"; the truth is more clearly shown in the passage, "By the obedience of One shall many be constituted [N.T.] righteous" (Rom. v. 19).

Christ is made unto us righteousness, as well as all else. The wedding garment, and the best robe, are figures of Christ.

Oh! the joy of sitting at the feet of Jesus, in the confidence of love, at rest, and with holy boldness before God, because clad in His righteousness!

There is yet another point of contrast; this man is in his

RIGHT MIND.

He is intelligently enjoying all the blessings that

have been brought to him. He has nothing to boast of as to how he overcame the devil and escaped his toils, but his boast is in Christ. He came in grace, He grappled with the foe ; He bowed His own blessed head in death and conquered the enemy in his last stronghold ; He annulled his power there, and rose again triumphant. All glory be to Jesus, the risen, victorious, ascended Lord !

Reader ! Will you be offended if you are asked, Are you in your right mind ? Intelligent enough no doubt as to earthly things, but if unsaved, scripture does not accredit such as in their right mind. To reject Christ as your Saviour, is that to be in your right mind ? To be accounting some paltry trifle here of more value than the rich treasure of His love, is this to be in your right mind ? All the wealth of God's love is laid at our feet in the Son of His bosom ! What folly to leave this for the evanescent pleasures of this world. "Man's life is as the grass."

Note the points of contrast through the word of Christ, life, rest, righteousness, and a right mind. Are they yours ?

The hope of all, who are thus delivered, is to be
FOR EVER WITH THE LORD.

No wonder this man besought Him that he might be with Him ; that is a sign of life. The heart of the believer goes up with a bound to Him ; it only wants to be with Him. To reach Him "were a well-spent journey, though seven deaths lay between," as Samuel Rutherford says.

But the Lord says, "Go home to thy friends, and

tell them how great things *God* hath done for thee" (ver. 19). And immediately he departed declaring what great things *Jesus* had done for Him. To him now *Jesus* is *God*! The *God* of love!

True God He was in Bethlehem's manger, on Calvary's cross, and at every stage of manifest weakness that lay between. He is God of glory now, and the hope of His people is to be for ever with Him there. His promise is, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am there ye may be also" (John xiv. 3).

"With Him" is the goal; whether to depart and be "with Him," or to be changed and caught up to be "for ever with the Lord." "With Him" satisfies the heart! This was the desire of the man in our chapter. This satisfied the heart of the thief on the cross. The heart of the great apostle counted to depart and be "with Christ," far better; absent from the body was to be present "with the Lord." It is, however, good to be here till He bid us come that we may tell our friends how great things He has done for us, and can do for them.

In the swine and the demons, we have a picture showing that finally

THE WILFULLY UNCLEAN AND DEVIL- POSSESSED PERISH!

It is an awfully solemn warning to all, for it is what befell Israel and is what awaits Christendom. The demons besought Him that He would not command them to go out into the deep (see Luke viii. 31). The word for "deep" here, means "the

bottomless pit." They feared the lake of fire! They further besought Him that He would suffer them to enter into the swine and He suffered them. What then became of the swine? The whole herd ran violently down into the lake, and were choked in the waters. Seeing this the people besought Jesus that He would depart out of their coasts. Just what the man had done at the first. They valued their swine more than the deliverance of their fellows from the devil! How true this will be found of many a rejector of the truth, and of Christendom at the last!

For such nothing remains but the lake of fire for ever with the devil and his angels. And as with the swine, judgment is, alas! expedited by themselves! Many a soul will then say, There was a time when God was offering me salvation, but for the sake of illegal gain I rejected Christ, and I never had another opportunity. Christendom too, for its rejection of Christ, and for its illegal traffic in even the "bodies [marginal reading] and souls of men" (Rev. xviii. 13), will be judged, and find its portion with the devil, who deceived her. Christendom will say, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways" (Job xxi. 14). He will take them at their word, and departing from them, will leave them alone. Fatal word!

Reader! Will you have deliverance at the hands of Christ? Or damnation with the devil from those same pierced hands? Your life's blood is ebbing; there is no time to lose. Let me beseech you, receive salvation NOW!

"WHO IS ON GOD'S SIDE?"

FERE is an invitation to the Officers' Ball, which is to be held on Saturday, Mrs E——."

Mrs E——, the young bride of Captain E——, hesitated to accept the card, while her forehead showed the troubled state of her mind.

"What is the matter?" said her husband, who was just then entering the room, seeing his wife thus agitated.

Still meditating, she did not answer.

"What is it?" asked Captain E—— again.

They had recently been married, and her husband was stationed with the British army in India. Now, this was the first invitation she had received. Alas! she realised for the first time having made a sad mistake before God when binding herself to a man of the world in wedlock. Before her marriage she had been led to the Lord, owning Him as her Saviour, but she had never considered whether the man of her choice was one with her in heart and mind as to eternal matters and God. And now, when he was promoted and sent to India, she found it hard and bitter trying to serve two masters.

"Well, James," she said to her husband, "you know I am a Christian, and gave up the dancing hall and theatre before I married. I feel this to be a critical moment. I must decline the invitation."

"What! are you going to rob the party of its best and fairest dancer?" he said, laughing. "You will do no such thing. Do you know that old Hebich will be present?"

"James, that is impossible!" exclaimed Mrs E—, springing to her feet. "What, Mr Hebich, that dear old missionary, that faithful man of God? Impossible!"

"Just he it is," replied the Captain. "It was a capital idea of Major Jackson to invite him. Two days ago at a little gathering they counted all who shared the new-fangled views of Hebich, and Jackson laughed about the disciples of Hebich and his 'Hallelujah Singers.'* He put down the names of all such he was sure would positively decline. Then came suddenly the thought into his mind to invite the old fellow himself, and so he wrote the invitation."

"And Mr Hebich accepted?" asked Mrs E—, eagerly.

* The missionary—Samuel Hebich—was of the Basle Missionary Society, and lived and laboured on the west coast of India. The striking characteristic of his ministry was his powerful presentation of the truth of the personality of the Lord Jesus, and of the personality of Satan.

One regiment in Cannanore was so affected by his preaching and house-to-house visitation, that no less than seven officers and most of their wives were converted, and were not ashamed to confess their faith in Christ. Several non-commissioned officers followed, and others, so that before it had left Cannanore it had earned the sobriquet of "Hebich's Own."

“He did! I was present when the answer came, and you should have seen Jackson, how perfectly he imitated old Hebich, and how he rejoiced to have perhaps a chance to see the old man at the ball.”

“Well, I will go too, then,” said Mrs E——, briefly, knowing something of the zeal and courage of Mr Hebich.

The ballroom was prettily decorated with flags and flowers. The orchestra of the regiment played merrily, and the dancing began unconstrainedly. During the second waltz there entered the hall, almost unnoticed, a tall, broad-shouldered man with a long beard. Standing still, he looked earnestly at the glittering scene. Officers in scarlet and gold; ladies in beautiful ball dresses; abundance of lights; music; the delicate and sweet fragrance of flowers, all mixed together, offered an attractive picture to the beholder. Only two pairs of eyes looked upon it with adverse feeling.

The music was ended, and the dancers led their ladies to their respective places. The centre part of the room was now vacant, and during the pause which ensued the tall form of the missionary made for the open space.

The course of the animated conversation stopped immediately, all eyes being directed towards the fearless man.

“There he is, there he is!” whispered many. But no one dared to address a word of reproach to this earnest, venerable missionary. Now Hebich

stretches out his right arm above his head, at the same time calling with a loud voice to the audience : "Who is on God's side ? "

Deep stillness prevails. The second and third time sounds out the question, arousing great consternation : "Who is on God's side ? Who ? " The bold eyes under the bushy brows looked fixedly around upon those present.

A mysterious power from above seems to have fallen upon the dancers, for no one moves or raises the voice against the intruder, this bold witness of the Lord. So unexpected is the call, so sudden the attack, which meets the enemies unprepared, that even the most pronounced opposers are powerless and silent, and, as they lamented afterward, unable to put the bold preacher of repentance out of doors.

After the last call a stirring began among a group of dancers, and, to the astonishment of Captain E——, he noticed the delicate figure of his wife raising herself, deadly pale, walking slowly through the space, and placing herself alongside Mr Hebich.

With her head raised, stood the youthful witness of the Lord, before so timid, who now was obliged to confess her Saviour in the ballroom. There the two stood, the only ones on God's side—the strong, daring man and the weak and delicate figure of the lady in white.

Once more Hebich raised his voice to address the rest in a few earnest words, testifying to the reality of eternity, and preaching repentance toward God.

Then he left the hall. A few minutes later Mrs E—— left also, accompanied by her agitated husband.

It is not necessary to state that the ball was thoroughly spoiled to the most of those present, but for a few it was a momentous evening, and a time of decision for Christ. All of them will remember through all eternity God's testimony to them through His faithful servant, though not all, as is to be feared, in the place of eternal bliss and happiness.

Mrs E—— had learned for good that the Christian cannot serve two masters. God and the world are too great a contrast. Henceforth she took her stand decidedly and faithfully for the Lord among God's people, to suffer reproach with them for the name of Christ, to serve God with a true and joyful heart, and to wait for His Son from heaven. She has been in the glory for many years.

Do you think, dear reader, she ever repented of having taken such a bold stand for her Saviour-God? Surely not. But, tell me, would *you* have the same courage? On which side are you standing? Are you on God's side, or are you still with the world? Whither does your way lead? Is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Crucified, your Saviour? Then worship and serve Him. Break off with sin and the world, and follow Him.

“Best of blessings He'll provide us,
Nought but good shall e'er betide us;
Safe to glory He will guide us,
Oh! how He loves.”

Contributed by H. A. M.

THE THREE ENGINE DRIVERS.

ABOUT two years ago I was visiting a friend in Scotland, who brought out an old photo album to show me. He turned over its leaves, explaining the history which attached to the various portraits comprised in his collection. Among them was one, however, which attracted special attention.

It was a portrait of three men, apparently all about the same age. All three were engine drivers on the same line of railway in Scotland. Judging, too, by their outward appearance, all were respectable and intelligent men, as befitted those holding such a responsible position. But "man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. xvi. 7), and while these men were very similar outwardly, their treatment of God's glad tidings was different in each case.

How had they treated God's offer? The first man heard the story of God's love in giving His only begotten Son, but it awakened no response in his heart, except that of opposition. He was like a company of old, of whom it is said, "When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked" (Acts xvii. 32). I trust no one who reads these lines is of that class. Perhaps not. You may be too refined and polite to be an open scoffer, but you may be a neglecter, and "How shall we escape, if

we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. ii. 3), is the solemn question for you to answer.

What was the fate of the mocker? "Be not deceived; God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7), though written centuries ago, is still as true as when it was written. This driver, who had mocked at the gospel, was not long afterwards laid low with an illness which proved fatal, and which was of such a character that for some time before his end he was unable to speak, to say nothing of being unable to mock. And so he passed into eternity—to the best of my friend's knowledge—unsaved and unforgiven.

What did the second man do? The good news concerning our Lord Jesus Christ was also presented to him. Did he receive it? No. He did not treat it with open scorn and derision, as did the first driver of whom I have spoken, but he did what probably a great many more people do. He was a steady and industrious man, and he said that he hoped, by his industry and application to work, that he would get on, and save a bit of money, and later on, when he had more time, he would think of these things. His convenient opportunity, like that of Felix, never came. One day, while following his employment, he was outside on his locomotive, attending to some part of the machinery, when his fireman, being unaware of the fact that his mate was not in a safe position, started the engine. The man, who put off deciding for Christ, fell off on to

the line, and was soon in eternity, alas, unprepared !

But what of the third ? Well, the third driver was none other than the friend, who showed me the photograph. He had, thank God, heard the gospel and believed it. He had decided that his motto was to be, "Christ for me." He put his trust for time and eternity in the finished work of our blessed Lord and Saviour, and from that time it had been his joy to tell others of the Saviour he had found, and of the grace which had saved and kept him. He lives a life of service for the Lord, and is looking forward to going to be with the One, who has saved him.

Now I would ask, in conclusion, to which class do you belong ? Are you a mocker, a procrastinator, or a believer ? Do not think it is a matter of no importance as to how you treat God's offer of salvation. Your eternal destiny depends upon how you treat the Saviour, who is offered to you now. Do not be like either the first man or the second. Be like the third. Trust Christ as your Saviour, and you, too, shall live to prove the sweetness and the blessedness of that salvation, which is the portion of the one who simply takes God at His word.

So shall you find through all your pathway below, as did the third man of my story, a Friend who never fails, who will love you to the end, and your future will be one of everlasting glory, joy and blessedness with Himself. Go in for it, and you will never regret your choice.

W. M'D.

A TRIUMPH OF SCIENCE.

DR RICHARD P. STRONG, Professor of Tropical Diseases, Harvard University, U.S.A., tells the remarkable story of how the greatest epidemic of typhus fever recorded in medical annals has been fought and conquered.

Servia, after being deluged in blood in three wars, was invaded by a deadlier foe that threatened to exterminate the race. In January 1915, the epidemic of typhus fever began in that stricken country, and quickly assumed most alarming proportions. Multitudes were mown down by it. Hospitals were utterly inadequate to cope with it. Doctors and nurses fell by the score. Seventy per cent. of those affected died, and something like 100,000 cases were fatal.

An American Sanitary Mission—connected with the American Red Cross, and Rockefeller Institute—with Dr Strong at its head, undertook the heroic task of combating this deadly foe. It was surely a triumph of science when Dr Strong could announce that, after four months' efforts, the disease had been “practically eliminated.”

The Mission, when it arrived, started at once to hunt down the parasite, from whose bite alone the disease was transmitted. Two refrigerator cars were used. The patients entered the first car and divested themselves of their clothing, where it was thoroughly disinfected and dried. In the second, their persons

were disinfected. In ten minutes the whole joint operation was over, and the people donned their disinfected garments with the comforting assurance that they were free of the deadly parasite. Some 500 to 600 could be so dealt with in a day, and something like 60,000 people in all were disinfected.

Almost every house in Servia was visited, so that the disease might be stamped out. Over 100 military hospitals were visited, and hospitals and inmates thoroughly disinfected.

Such a record is surely a triumph of science, and one that we all can rejoice in.

But is there not a deadlier foe than that, which has invaded not only Servia, but the whole world, and before whose silent ravages the wholesale destruction of life—going on as we peacefully write these lines—on the battlefields of France and Poland, and at the Dardanelles, is as a drop in the ocean?

Nay, more than that, without fear of contradiction we can assure you that you have been assailed by this deadly foe, and that his inroads have already taken possession of your being with consequences that must be fatal, unless a remedy can be shown.

Would that you asked in alarm who this dread foe can be, for alas! indifference is the one word that marks the multitude in relation to these things! You have need to be alarmed; some seventy or eighty short years in this world are sufficient for this deadly agency to do its work, and then? It is only a question of a few fleeting years, and you will be faced with these terrible consequences.

We refer to the consequences of SIN. How terrible they are. "The soul that sinneth it shall die," is the divine statement. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment," is what God says. How intensely serious this all is. Every unconverted reader is advancing to meet *death and judgment*.

But is there no remedy? Indeed there is. The brave doctors crossed the Atlantic to go to the rescue of the Servians. Their campaign, not to destroy life but to save it, cost £35,000. But the remedy, we have to speak about, brought the Son of God from the eternal throne to Calvary, and cost Him all the bitterness of Calvary's Cross. His precious blood alone can cleanse sin away; His death alone can procure salvation and forgiveness for poor sin-stricken, death-marked man.

Will you not listen to this tale of matchless love? How all-embracing it is. "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).

Face the questions of death and judgment, or death and judgment will face you, and you will sink never to rise again into the doom your sins deserve.

The Christian can joyfully say of the Lord Jesus:—

"He took the guilty sinner's place,
He suffered in our stead;
For man, O miracle of grace,
For man the Saviour bled."

"THE DAYSpring FROM ON HIGH."

(Luke i. 78.)

IT is no wonder that heaven went into an ecstasy of joy when Jesus, the Saviour, was born. With His entrance into humanity "the Dayspring from on high" dawned upon this sin-benighted world. I am not surprised that when the angels of the Lord announced to the Shepherds of Bethlehem the glorious tidings, "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord" (Luke ii. 11), that heaven went into ecstasy. You may ask the reason why. Would that your heart knew something of this.

The reason is simple. Heaven recognised that if a Saviour sent of God had come, there was a clear solution of the difficulty as to how man was to be saved from his lost condition. For in the person of Jesus "God was manifest in the flesh." The eternal Son of God was to be man's Saviour, come down from heaven to earth, and there appearing as "the Man, Christ Jesus."

His character and office were divulged in the words, "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a SAVIOUR, which is CHRIST the LORD." Before His birth His name was pronounced: "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest" (Luke i. 31, 32). So heard Mary.

JESUS! Charming name. There is no name like it. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus." Why? "For he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. i. 20, 21).

Are you among His people yet? Can you honestly say, I belong to His people? Has the name of Jesus any charm for you? It is a precious name, and when the name of every man that the world has thought much of has gone for ever, and been forgotten, the name of Jesus shall be the song and eternal joy of His people. If you have never trusted the Lord before, as your personal Saviour, will you not do so now?

Thank God, He died for the sinner. He could die for us, just because He was exempt from death, as the sinless One. Having died, and risen again, He has a name above every name, which every tongue must confess to the glory of God. Oh! to confess Him now for your everlasting blessing. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, *thou shalt be saved*" (Rom. x. 9).

Observe, you will have to meet the Lord Jesus. You may see Him now by faith and for blessing. Scripture says, "Every eye shall see him" (Rev. 1. 7)—"every eye," your eye, my eye shall see Him. Would you like to see Him? I would. He is my Saviour. Is He yours? If not, let your heart be won for Him. Lose no time.

"WHEREWITH?"

HAVE I got the "wherewith"?

When you wish to purchase something, that is the question you ask yourself. Your "wherewith" should exceed, or at any rate equal, your outlay. That is clear.

If you want to build a tower, you should first sit down and count the cost. If you want to make war, you must first sit down, and consider if you can, with ten thousand men, meet him who comes against you with double that number. These questions are not new, but they are very significant.

"What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" That, too, is a very old question, and has played its part in the conversion of multitudes (that of the writer included), for it brings before a man the greatest personal issue that can be conceived. He may be able to place a fairly correct commercial value on any of his material possessions, his house, his horse, his cow, his dog, his articles for sale, &c., but his soul (and, believe me, man has a soul, and one that must live for ever in bliss or in woe), how can its value be computed? Who can appraise its worth, or state its preciousness?

The soul, the "ego," the I, the person, the individual unit, the one human being—who exists in the separate consciousness of his own distinctness from all beside, the living, sentient, responsible man, the little but great "myself," who has relations with

others, and responsibilities as an intelligent mortal—has relations, too, with God “in whom we live, and move and have our being” (Acts xvii. 28).

Is any exchange possible on my part, for such a charge?

None whatever!

It was, in view of such a question, that one of old said:—

“ Wherewith shall I come before the Lord ” [did he possess the possible means, the “wherewith,” to do so?] “and bow myself before the High God ? ” (Micah vi. 6). And tremendously important was the query !

“ Shall I,” he cried, “ come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old ? ” (verse 7).

Well, these were ordained as offerings in a purely typical way, and “could never,” we read, “take away sins” (Heb. x. 11); and therefore their utter insufficiency asserted itself in the conscience of this earnest seeker for peace with God.

He continues his inquiry: “ Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams ? ” (verse 7). No, not that! “ Or with ten thousands of rivers of oil ? ” A price incalculable, but still insufficient. Something more is required by the exigencies of a sin-burdened conscience.

Well then, “ Shall I give my first born for my transgression ? ” (verse 7). That is the very highest bid: impossible to go further! that is the greatest “wherewith” that man possesses; at least so felt Abram on the day when he laid his Isaac on the sacrificial altar of Mount Moriah?

Yet such an offering could not avail, and therefore in despair our inquirer could only bewail the fact that "the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul" (verse 9) was no true atonement, no propitiation before the throne of divine and immutable justice.

How suitable his query : "*Wherewith?*"

How can I be saved ? How ? Yes, how ? Clearly I cannot save myself. It is a most blessed thing when a man has made that discovery. He is a sinner ; he is guilty ; he has no strength ; nor hope in himself ; a past as black as hell convicts him ; a future, shrouded by despair, fills him with terror ; whither can he flee ? The grave of a suicide would be no true relief. What can he do ?

"*Wherewith,*" he cries, "shall I come before the Lord ? "

The thrice-blessed answer to this most appropriate cry of the poor guilty human heart is given by God Himself—the God whose throne of burning holiness has been offended by the sins of men ; and a wonderful answer it is.

If man's first begotten could not avail for his transgression, God's "only begotten" has by His atoning death, under the stroke of judgment, proved all-availing.

"God so loved the world" [think of that] "that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). Hallelujah ! "With God all things are possible !" In this marvellous gift we meet God's mighty "*wherewith*"—His

infinite Resource—His own perfect Provision—to meet all His claims on the one hand, and all the cravings and difficulties of the poor helpless, hopeless, undone sinner on the other.

“The blood of the cross” has accomplished what “ten thousands of rivers of oil” could never do. The virtue of “the blood of the Lamb” is infinite.

The believer can sing :—

“ Thus while His death my sin displays
In all its blackest hue,
Such is the mystery of grace
It seals my pardon too.”

J. W. S.

SANCTIFICATION.

FOR the lasting blessing and true peace of the Christian it is important to understand the subject of sanctification.

So many really sincere people are striving after a deeper holiness and a fuller sanctification in an unscriptural way, with the consequence that the peace of their souls is sadly disturbed.

No one should strive after inward holiness, or seek to be sanctified, as the way to peace with God. All my inward striving will not bring peace. All my noblest resolutions to be more holy will not bring rest. All the vows I may make to God on

my bended knees after a sad failure only show plainly I do not enjoy settled abiding peace with God. All my distress because of my failure to carry out my resolutions to be more holy only shows the legality of my mind, and that I do not understand grace, and that I am not established in it.

Grace makes no claim, looks for no conditions, asks for no vows, otherwise it would not be grace. God's grace is sovereign and free. Grace works by what it brings to us, and not by what it finds in us.

We may look at sanctification in four ways:—

1. Sanctification by the Spirit.
2. Sanctification by the blood of Christ.
3. Sanctification in the risen life of Christ.
4. Sanctification by the word of truth.

SANCTIFICATION BY THE SPIRIT.

That there is a work of the Holy Spirit done in us is clear from several scriptures. For instance, we read in 1 Peter i. 2 the expression, "Through sanctification of the Spirit." It is really the new birth—being born of God—which produces the divine nature. Without the divine nature we could not see the kingdom of God, much less enter it. God's kingdom is one of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Without the new birth we are absolutely dead to the things of God, and have no desire for them. Without the new birth we could not see our true state as sinners in the sight of a holy God. *Birth brings sight*

and hearing with it, whether it be natural or spiritual birth. When our eyes are opened in a spiritual way we see.

But what do we see?

We get a sight of our *past*. We get a sight of our own *sinful state*. We get a sight of the *future*. Death and the future bring terror because of our sinful past. Our present sinfulness makes us miserable because we learn in our helplessness we cannot mend the past, or make ourselves right with regard to the present or future.

This is what plunges souls into misery sometimes bordering on despair.

Every effort put forth, however good the intention may be, only teaches the true and earnest soul its own utter weakness, and what the power of indwelling sin is. This is a very humbling process, but it is wholesome and needful to teach humility. Humility is the hardest lesson we have to learn. It is by this means we are brought down so as to be glad to accept the work of Christ done for us. When we do so we enter into true rest of soul before God.

SANCTIFICATION BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.

This subject is fully treated of in Hebrews x. There the perfectly finished work of Christ is contrasted with the unfinished work of the Jewish priests under the old economy, which was the age of law, and hence of man's probation and man's works. Daily, in the holy place, the Jewish priests offered sacrifices, which never took away sins. Indeed, these sacrifices

only brought the people's sins to remembrance. Therefore the people under law in the age of works never had the enjoyment of a purified conscience. This is a conscience that, after the sense of purification, knows no stain of sin or guilt. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. x. 4).

In contrast with their sacrifices, Christ's one offering of Himself as Victim for our sins is set forth in all its blessed perfection as not bringing sins to remembrance, but as putting them away, so as never to come up either before God, or the believer, any more. Hence the believer, in this day of grace, is regarded as having a perfect conscience, or a conscience purged from all stain of sin by the knowledge that Christ's one offering has made a perfect and eternal purification for all his sins.

The clear and unmistakable evidence of this is that He is now *seated* at the right hand of the Majesty on high. *Being seated there shows His work of purification is done, and done completely, to the entire satisfaction of God.*

The Jewish priests, who offered sacrifices in the holy place, were never seated. They always stood. There was no seat in the holy courts. This is the clearest evidence that their work was never finished. The law of ceremonies had no completeness or finality in it. It was only a shadow. It had no substance. Christ's death is the end of it all. His death is the complete and final clearance before God for all who believe.

Because Christ's work is finished and complete, and because God has accepted it on our behalf, He can testify to us in His written Word, which is the witness of the Holy Ghost to us, that "their [the believers'] sins and their iniquities will I remember NO MORE" (Heb. x. 17).

What a comfort! What peace! What rest! We may well say, Hallelujah! We can now look at a seated Saviour on the very throne of God! He fills the throne in virtue of His own accomplished work. Our conscience can now be as perfect as His work is, and in all the perfection of His finished work He lives at God's right hand.

The testimony of the Holy Ghost to us is, "By one offering He *hath* perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 14). Think of being set apart to God in all the perfection of Christ's infinite sacrifice! Think of always being before God in all the sweet fragrance of that infinite Sacrifice! We "**ARE SANCTIFIED**"; *not* shall be sanctified.

Believing this in our hearts drives away all tormenting dread of God's holiness. We are now fitted for the light of divine and searching holiness. Hence one, who was in the knowledge of it in his dying hours, said to a friend who had come to see him— "*The more holiness the better. The brighter the light the better. It can only bring out to my soul the value of my title.*" Another in his dying hours lifted a piece of ice in his fingers, and said, "*My title is as clear as that.*"

SANCTIFICATION IN THE RISEN LIFE OF CHRIST.

This is taught very plainly in 1st Corinthians, where the whole assembly of believers are addressed as "SANCTIFIED IN CHRIST JESUS." Since we are sanctified in Christ Jesus we must be regarded by God as in the new creation life: "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature" (2 Cor. v. 17). This is true of the youngest, weakest, and feeblest believer now. It is not that we shall be a new creation in Christ at the Lord's coming, though that will be also true as to our bodies, but we are that now before God in the One who is the Head of the new creation. We are in His risen life. "*Who of God is made unto us* wisdom, righteousness, *sanctification*, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30). "We [are] made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly" (1 Cor. xv. 48). "Both He that sanctifieth and they who ARE SANCTIFIED *are all of one*" (Heb. ii. 11). "As He is, so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17).

Where is He? He is accepted in heaven, living in all the sunshine of the favour of the very God whose wrath He once endured on account of our sins.

Self-distressed soul, look up! Look not within! Look not around! Believe it! Receive it! Make the joy of this truth your very own now! Let *self* go for ever. Let your motto be henceforth and always, "NOT I BUT CHRIST."

SANCTIFICATION BY THE WORD OF TRUTH.

The truth of the Word is the instrument by which in the hand of the Spirit, we have been sanctified, and by which we grow, and by which as we grow we become more practically sanctified or separated to God from this evil world. "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth," is the continual desire of the Son to the Father. The Word is as the seed of God, which in the Spirit's power implants the divine life and nature in us. The Scriptures are also the sincere milk of the Word, and the food by which that life in us is nourished, and by which as children of God we grow.

In the power of the divine life and nature we love God, and hence love what He loves, and hate what He hates. This alone is true and practical sanctification. *It is love, which is the divine nature, that purifies and sanctifies.*

Sanctification is not the old man improved or made better in any way. It is not even the old nature, the flesh, restrained. It is to grow in the formative power of the new nature. That alone will restrain the old. *Feed the new, and you will restrain the old.* *The more sanctified a person is, the less sanctified he will think himself to be.* Moses did not see his own face shine. He did not even know it shone. Nothing is more subtle, or dangerous, or so inflates with fleshly pride as a spurious sanctification. The more sanctified I am, practically the more I will think and speak of Christ and less of self. P. W.

THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD.

ALTHOUGH it requires the grace of God and the work of the Holy Ghost to give God's Word quickening power, yet divine truth has a hold on the natural conscience from which it cannot escape. The light detects the "breaker up," though he may hate it. And so the Word of God is adapted to man, though he be hostile to it—adapted in grace (blessed be God !) as well as in truth.

This is exactly what shows the wickedness of man's will in rejecting it. And it has power thus in the conscience, even if the will be unchanged. This may increase the dislike of it; but it is disliked because conscience feels it cannot deny its truth. Men resist it because it is true. *Did it not reach their conscience, they would not need to take so much pains to get rid of and disprove it.* Men do not arm themselves against straws, but against a sword whose edge is felt and feared.

Reader, it speaks of grace as well as truth. It speaks of God's grace and love, who gave His only begotten Son, that sinners like you and me might truly know Him—enjoy Him for ever, and enjoy Him now; that the conscience, perfectly purged, might be in joy in His presence, without a cloud, without a reproach, without fear.

Let me add that by far the best means of assuring oneself of the truth and authority of the Word is to read the Word itself.

J. N. D.