

TIDINGS

OF

LIFE AND PEACE.

EDITED BY GEO. C.

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“WE DECLARE UNTO YOU GLAD TIDINGS.”—*Acts* xiii. 32.

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TIDINGS OF LIFE AND PEACE.

"A DAY OF GOOD TIDINGS."

THEY had tidings to tell, those four lepers outside the gate of Samaria—*good* tidings; tidings of a complete victory, followed by peace and plenty; tidings of untold wealth for the poor, and bread enough for the hungry. They could speak, moreover, of undisputed liberty in putting forth the hand of need, and taking freely of the scattered spoil. (2 Kings vii.)

The forces of a terrible enemy had, to a man, been driven off the field; yet not a warrior in Israel had lifted a finger to do battle with the foe. With His own mighty hand, and with His holy arm, Jehovah Himself had gotten the victory; and it was left to those once despairing lepers first to taste the fruits of this victory themselves, and then to bear the glad news to the famishing city close by.

We also, dear reader, have *good tidings* to tell—tidings of a more marvellous victory, of far, far richer gifts, precious tidings of the love of God and of the finished work of Christ—a work in the *honour* of which none can share, though all may freely participate in its blessed results, so that the believer can sing—

"The mighty work was all His own,
Though we shall share His glorious throne."

And, oh, *what* results! Peace and pardon through the atoning blood of a *crucified* Saviour, unlimited blessings—life, righteousness, and full acceptance in a risen and *glorified* Saviour, to say nothing of the eternity of joy in the very presence of God and of the Lamb which waits us who are His.

Dear unsaved reader, many longing hearts are praying that these "*tidings*" may be "life and peace" to you, reaching your heart in saving power. May God in mercy grant it.

Writers and readers may never meet face to face in this world; but how unspeakably happy should they be permitted to rejoice together in the coming day of glory! May the Lord open hearts, like Lydia's of old, to receive His glad message and to accept His proffered grace.

But what of us who *have* received it? Shall we be privileged to taste these heavenly blessings and not bear the tidings to others? Shall we "hold our peace," while multitudes around are perishing for lack of knowledge? "If we tarry till the morning light," said the Samaritan lepers, "some mischief will come upon us." And if *we*, fellow-believer, hold our peace till the morning light, *i.e.*, the morning of the Lord's return, our only opportunity for making Him known by lip and life will have slipped through our fingers and be gone for ever. What a loss! On the other hand, he who is used to bring one sinner to repentance is used to fill the very heart of God with joy, and nothing less! What a gain! What a privilege! "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Let us take it to heart at once, for "the time is short" (1 Cor. vii. 29), "the day is at hand." (Rom. xiii. 12.)

GEO. C.

THE BROKEN SNARE.

I WAS standing behind the counter one morning early when a dissipated-looking man came in, and asked for a *Believer's Almanack* which he had seen in the window. On handing it to him I said, "Are you a believer?"

"No," said he; "but my wife is."

"But your wife being a believer will not save you."

"Oh, but my wife is a very good woman!"

"Yes, I have no doubt of it; but that will do nothing for you. And what an awful thing it would be if your wife were in heaven and you in hell!"

He walked backward towards the door, and with a parting salute said, "You don't know her! There is not a better woman living than my wife."

A month had passed away, when one day he came again.

"You don't remember me," he said.

"I remember your face, but cannot recall where I saw you."

"Don't you remember me buying that *Believer's Almanack*? Well, ever since I have been *trying my very best to be good*; but this morning I have fairly broken down. I was coming along that narrow track near our house, when I saw a cart before me; and, as two cannot pass without one drawing near to the hedge, I called out to the driver to let me pass, as I was in a great hurry; but the fellow only turned and grinned at me. I shouted again, but he just did the same; so I

jumped down and laid about him well with my whip; then, drawing his cart on one side, I said, 'Now you'll let me pass.' I had got some distance down the road when something said to me, '*That's being a Christian, is it?*' I turned my horse round and drove back. When he saw me coming he jumped off his cart, and got his whip ready for self-defence; but I called out, 'Nay, nay, master, I've come to beg your pardon. I am very sorry for what I did; for I have been trying to be a Christian for the last month, and now I have gone and done this. Here's five shillings for you, and I hope you'll forgive me.' And now," he said, "I have come to ask you what I must do. I do want to be a Christian, and have tried my very best."

After lifting up my heart to the Lord for a message that would deliver him, I said, "Well, you have been trying to do what you can never accomplish. It is quite impossible for God to accept anything that we can do for salvation. How could He? Why it took the Son of God Himself to do that work. He came into this world, became a man—a sinless, holy man—and after having glorified God in all He did, went to the cross, and offered Himself without spot to God; and then, having completed the work God gave Him to do, He cried with a loud voice, 'It is finished.' And now every poor sinner who trusts in the finished work of the Lord Jesus goes free, and has peace, everlasting peace, because '*He made peace* by the blood of His cross.' 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.'"

I saw that he listened with great eagerness, and when I had done he said:

"Don't let me make a mistake. Do you mean to say that I have nothing to do?"

I then said, "If the Lord Jesus said it was 'finished,' how can you add to it?"

"Praise the Lord!" he said. "I see it all now. I'll get home and tell my wife."

Here was a man first trying to shelter himself under the goodness of his saintly wife; and then, seeing the folly of that, trying to work out a goodness of his own as a ground upon which to rest his hope of heaven. How happy, that God in mercy opened his blind eyes to both these well-laid traps, so that he could say, in the language of Psalm cxxiv., "Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are delivered."

The best work of a lost sinner could never make him a saved saint; and could all the good works of the redeemed in paradise be reckoned to his account, it would not avail him one jot for salvation, and, for the simple reason, that *it could not atone for one sin*. "*Without shedding of blood is no remission.*" (Heb. ix. 22.) "IT IS THE BLOOD that maketh an atonement for the soul." (Lev. xvii. 11.)

And now, dear reader, are *you* trying to merit heaven, or make yourself acceptable to God by anything you can do? Don't be deceived, it is the devil's great lie; believe it, and it will certainly land you in the lake of fire. Behold that mighty work done at the cross! Listen to that awful cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and ask yourself, How could *a sinner* take any part in such a work? It was planned in the counsels of God, and the result was that the Son of God left the glory of heaven to do a work

which none but He in heaven or earth could touch ; and now having gone back, as the triumphant Man, into the same glory, every believing sinner may

“Point to His atoning blood
And say, this made my peace with God.”

If God and His Christ have been at such a cost to provide this precious soul-saving sacrifice, think what joy and satisfaction it must be to the heart of both, to see a poor sinner resting his all upon it ; and what a triumph it is for the great “murderer” when he can persuade a helpless, guilty rebel to trust to the rotten cobwebs of his own merits.

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” “By grace ye are 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.)

T. J. S.

A REVELATION FROM GOD.

HAVE you ever thought, dear reader, what a wonderful thing it is, that amidst the changing words and works of men we possess one source of unfailing confidence, one sure platform on which to take our stand for time and for eternity—I mean *the word of God* ?

In vain do the puny efforts of man assail this bulwark. His heart and will, not being subject to God, would gladly deny His very existence ; and it has been truly remarked, “Infidelity is only what is in man’s heart coming up into his head.”

In His word it is that God has revealed what

He is, and exposed too what we are, and we would reverently and thankfully accept it.

Some years ago a Christian lady and her young daughter were staying in a fashionable watering-place in the south of Ireland. The hotel was crowded with all sorts of visitors; and, to the disgust of most of them, Mr. T——, a well-known leader in recent political outbreaks, came under its roof. At the *table d'hôte* his proximity was avoided, and places were changed to ensure safe quarters.

It happened, however, that, one day at dinner, coming in late, Mr. T—— was put by the side of this Christian lady. Politics were of minor moment to her. A woman of earthly rank and ability, her soul burned with love to Christ, and His interests were, through grace, hers. Her young daughter marvelled to see this gentle and refined mother in conversation with so coarse and repulsive-looking a man, and noted the wondering glances of lookers-on. She could not catch all that was passing, and perhaps was not deeply interested, when suddenly her attention was arrested by the man turning round and bringing his fist down on the table with, "I believe in myself!"

There was a pause; and then, with quiet power, came the never-to-be-forgotten reply, "And I believe in a *revelation*."

Mark the contrast, I pray you, my reader. Do you believe in man, or in God's revelation?

Years rolled on. This same lady is again in conversation with a sceptic—this time a man of talent and refinement. For many years she had prayed for his conversion; and now it was anguish to see the handicraft of Satan where she would fain have seen the impress of God's work.

After a long argument on the truth of the Bible and the reality of its inspiration, she said, "I know a knife is a knife because it cuts; I know the Bible is the word of God *because I have felt its power.*"

"Ah!" he interrupted, "that's the best thing you've said; stick to that."

Reader, have you bowed to God's word as a revelation from heaven to you? Do you cavil at it and discuss it? or do you accept it, "not as the word of man, but, as it is in truth, the word of God"?

But if you *do* thus accept it, you will never know its power till you have felt its sharpness as a two-edged sword, which wounds and alone can heal. Aye, let us welcome its wounds and probes, for these are the probings of the good Physician to heal our souls.

O.

"NOT SEEN, BUT ETERNAL."

THERE sat Christopher Columbus in the council-hall at Salamanca. He had just explained to the sages of that city his project of crossing the broad Atlantic to discover a new world.

How is it received? With shouts of derisive laughter.

The brush of the painter has graphically depicted the scene for us.

Columbus is the sole occupant of one of the benches in a large oak-panelled hall. Three priests are walking across the hall, shaking their sides with well-simulated laughter. Another is leaning forward, peering rudely and mockingly in

his face. Behind him one of the councillors is tapping his forehead with his finger, as much as to indicate the state of Columbus's mind. Groups are scattered here and there, evidently picking fun of this, as they thought, vain, wild scheme.

Columbus sits with a countenance in which is betokened resoluteness and courage. His eyes are fixed as they look far beyond the council-hall of Salamanca. His soul is gazing out, and he sees the new continent before his eyes. Hope rises in his breast, and he hears a voice within, saying, "Hope on, waver not; you will find it." His charts, unheeded by the sages, lie at his feet—one unrolled, the other not even opened.

Thus these so-called wise men treated the project that was destined to exercise such a potent influence on the future of the world.

What a picture this is of the way the world treats a Christian!

"The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. iv. 18.)

Worldlings are occupied with the things of time and sense. with things fleeting and evanescent, with things seen and temporal. Their thoughts and efforts soar not above the sun. The Christian declares he is travelling to another country of such an order as to constitute this world by comparison a desert, and himself a stranger and pilgrim in it.

But the worldling scoffs as the Christian declares the joys of this unknown world—heaven, and heeds not his earnest invitations to join him in the journey. Some declare him demented, others laugh good-naturedly, others

scoff with the scorn of an infidel—all unite in refusing the gospel of the grace of God. Thus they refuse the divine future the grace of God would map out for them. The Christian's chart—the Bible—lies unheeded, or, if looked into, only to be coldly criticised by those ignorant of its reality.

But the unseen realities of the Christian are eternal.

You who would scoff at heaven, beware lest you learn the realities of hell. Call not that Christian a fanatic; he has but weighed things temporal by things eternal. Lift up your eyes beyond the narrow boundaries of time, and gaze into the never-ending future beyond it, and let this solemn question be answered in the light of it, "Where shall I spend eternity?" You may well tremble as you enter upon this all-important question.

Thank God the way to heaven is plain and simple. Jesus said, when here on earth, "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." (John x. 9.)

Good works, tears, repentance are not the way. Christ alone is the way, in virtue of the value of His work on the cross of Calvary, and that for "*any man*." "Any man" means YOU, dear unsaved reader.

After Columbus had surmounted every difficulty and discovered America, he returned to Spain and showed the specimens of interest he had collected from the shores of the New World. How the wise men of Salamanca would remember with shame the treatment the intrepid adventurer had received at their hands!

So when eternity bursts upon the eyes of poor worldlings, with what anguish of spirit they will confess their blind mistake! They have laughed away heaven and gained a hell. The gulf fixed, the die cast, their portion is irrevocable for all eternity. With all the earnestness I possess I would shout, "Awake, awake, thou sleeper; awake to the tremendous realities of eternity." Do not sleep, eat, or drink till you have decided for Christ. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 36.) A. J. P.

SIN'S "WAGES" AND GOD'S "GIFT."

"**A**RE you unwell, John?" enquired a devoted Christian wife of her unsaved husband, as he came into the cottage one evening and sat down after his day's work was done. There was a painful look of unrest upon John's face that night, and her keen eye was not slow in discovering it.

But no, he was not ill.

What was it then? Had he been getting into disgrace, and receiving a discharge from his employer? Had he brought home some harrowing bit of tidings of the death of a cherished friend or beloved relation? No; it was none of these that caused that agonized look.

"Then what is it, John?" enquired his anxious wife.

"Well, Mary, last night I read but a single line out of *that Book*, and it has made me the most miserable man on earth."

He knew full well that his wife always read

that Book with comfort and joy ; but it had been far otherwise with him. The fact was that the previous evening, when John came home, he had found the Bible open on the table, and while his wife was preparing their evening meal he had picked it up and read a sentence, or rather with his wife's assistance (for he was no scholar) he had spelled it out thus: "'T-h-e,' the; 'w-a-g-e-s.' What does that spell, Mary?" "*Wages*," she replied." "'O-f,' of; 's-i-n,' sin; 'i-s,' is; 'd-e-a-t-h.' What word is that?" "*Death*, John."

He closed the book ; but close his heart against the searching light of God's word he could not. It had entered his heart by the Spirit's power, and there was no shaking it off. "*The wages of sin is DEATH*," he thought. "*Wages! Wages!* I know well enough what wages means. It is what a man has a *right* to when his work is done. And '*the wages of sin is DEATH*.'" Conscience was now fully awake; his whole lifetime had been but one long term of wilful rebellion against God in the service of sin, and then the *reckoning-day*! Alas! it would be sure to come. And then the "*wages*"—"death." He had earned them; and to receive them was his right. God was *just*. Escape seemed impossible.

That night poor John got very little sleep, and all next day at plough the same solemn sentence filled his anxious mind—"The wages of sin is death." "The wages of sin is death." He turned it over again and again; he looked backward and forward until he was right down wretched. In this state he entered his cottage the night on which our story begins.

His wife had well-nigh forgotten the circumstance of her husband's short lesson in reading,

and little guessed, when she heard him spelling out that short sentence, how very near she was to a bright answer to her many prayers. But at last, recalling what had happened, she exclaimed :

"Ah, John, you did not read far enough !"

Then, taking up her Bible, she turned to Romans vi. 23, and read the whole verse : "*For the wages of sin is death ; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*"

It was then her happy lot to tell the good tidings to her convicted husband, and though the writer cannot give in detail all that was said, yet enough was said to turn his heart from himself to Christ. She reminded him, no doubt, of how hard he had worked in the service of sin, and that the just penalty—*death*—must assuredly be received, either by the sinner himself, or by another on his account ; that, in the greatness of His love, God had given His only begotten Son, given Him to stand under the full weight of the judgment deserved by the sinner ; to be lifted up, to suffer, bleed, and die upon the cross ; and that God had declared, through the lips of His dear Son, that "*whosoever* believeth in Him should *not perish*, but *have everlasting life*." (John iii. 16.) In other words, that, in love and mercy, God had sent His own Son to receive upon the cross sin's righteous penalty, the sinner's wages—judgment and death, and that now His gracious gift was nothing short of *eternal life* through Jesus Christ our Lord.

That night they knelt together, and with grateful, overflowing hearts thanked the Blessed One who had received sin's full wages, and thanked God for His unspeakable gift.

"*There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.*" (Luke xv. 10.) But *there is eternal wrath* also, as the full wages of sin, for every sinner neglecting God's great salvation. As surely as there is *joy in heaven* over the repentant, will there be "*wrath from heaven*" upon the unrepentant. "Because *there is wrath*, beware lest He take thee away with His stroke: and then a great ransom cannot deliver thee." (Job xxxvi. 18.)

GEO. C.

"MUST BE SAVED," OR MUST BE LOST.

TESTIFYING of Christ to all the people of Israel, the apostle Peter said, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby *we must be saved.*" This is equally true for all to-day. We "*must be saved*" by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, or we cannot be saved at all. The Word does not say we *may* or *might* be saved, but "*must be saved.*" Reader, you "*must be saved,*" or you *must be lost.*

By nature all are *lost*, but, because grace reigns, not yet lost for ever. "*Now is the day of salvation.*" Once that day is passed, the unbeliever will be lost for ever, without a single ray of hope—*lost for all eternity.*

"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke xix. 10.) You are lost if unsaved. Have you found it out? Here is a precious Saviour for you—Jesus. You may turn to man in a thousand and one ways; you may make ceaseless efforts to save yourself; but

the Scripture sets man utterly aside, and points all to Christ Jesus only, for "neither is there salvation *in any other.*"

Salvation is to be found in Him, to be found *now*—the portion, present and eternal, of *every one that believeth*. (Romans x. 1-14.) But "neither . . . in any other." Why? The Word replies, "*For there is none other*"—"none other name under heaven given among men." Nothing could be plainer. If you shut your eyes to it, or follow your own thoughts and will, you must surely reap the eternal consequences. No name but the all-powerful, all-precious name of Jesus can save you. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins." (Matthew i. 21.)

"It tells us of a Saviour's love,
Who died to set us free;
It tells us of His precious blood,
The sinner's perfect plea."

Are you trusting therein? This peerless name is "*given among men.*" All are called to bow to it, and believe on it. And "to Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts x. 43.) "Neither is there salvation in any other." But, alas! how many to-day are still "foolish and slow of heart to believe!" Thousands prefer their own way, their own doings, to Christ and His finished work.

In a certain mining village in the south of France the men employ big dogs to walk inside large wooden wheels, something in the form of a treadwheel, to work the ropes or chains to raise the coal, &c. The dogs keep on walking, and thus working, till the appointed task is done.

The wheels go round and round, but they themselves are always in the same place, and never advance any further. Their whole demeanour, when they commence, shows how they dislike this hard labour; and their gambols when the work is done show, on the other hand, how pleased they are to be free, and their labour ended.

Now how many thousands there are who work, work, work, and toil, toil, toil, like these dogs, yet never make any advance! Year after year finds them in the same place, not an inch nearer heaven, and for the simple reason that salvation is "not of works." (Ephes. ii. 9.) An unhappy *countenance only too often betrays the lack of peace and joy within*. But how different with those who find that the work is done, that all was accomplished long, long ago on the cross when Jesus died! This, this indeed is peace. Yes, rest of conscience, peace of heart, joy of soul, liberty of spirit, are the blessed portion of every one that believeth upon the precious, peerless name of Jesus. Dost *thou* believe?

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." "*Must be saved*," or you *must be lost*. Think of it: saved by the name of Jesus, or lost through your own folly and unbelief! Saved to be *with* Christ for ever in the glory of God, or eternally lost with Satan and his angels (Matt. xxv. 41; Rev. xxi. 8), where hope and mercy never can be found, in the second death, which is the lake of fire? (Rev. xx. 14, 15.) Believe on the name of Jesus Christ the Lord now, and follow Him.

TIDINGS OF LIFE AND PEACE.

DEATH! DEATH! NEVER!

THE END OF A PLEASURE TRIP.

MRS. A—— left her home in the west of England, apparently in the best of health and spirits, purposing to spend a few days with some friends in the north. She was bent upon having a pleasant holiday, and then returning to her husband and family.

On the journey Mrs. A—— was seized with sudden illness, and immediately the train arrived at the town of N—— she was conveyed to the infirmary to receive medical advice and attention, which were promptly rendered.

A servant of Christ, in making his accustomed round of the wards, noticed the new patient, and seeing that she looked extremely ill, was led to have some conversation with her. After speaking to her as to her bodily suffering, he said:

“Now, my dear woman, yours is indeed a sad case. Suppose that you do not recover, what then? Are you prepared to meet God?”

“Oh!” said Mrs. A——; “thank you very much for your kindness. I am all right. God is good. Yes, He is very good to me. I am sure He is going to raise me up again.”

Turning to the nurse, who was at the bedside, she added, "The doctor thinks I shall get better."

"Suppose that God does raise you up, Mrs. A——, you will have most surely to die some day; what, then, about that never-dying soul of yours? Are you prepared to meet God, a holy, just, and righteous God? Are you fit to meet Him in your present state? On what grounds do you hope that He would receive you into heaven?"

"Well," said Mrs. A——, "I have always done my duty to my family; but really I have not thought very much about it. Thank you very much; I shall think it over. I am so weak to-day that I cannot talk much," and Mrs. A—— closed her eyes, putting off the important matter of her soul's eternal welfare to a "more convenient season," little thinking that too often the "more convenient season" never arrives.

After a few words more of solemn warning against procrastination, with counsel to accept the present, personal, and eternal salvation which is offered for *to-day*, not for *to-morrow*, the visitor left the ward.

Half an hour later the doctor stands at the same bedside with a very grave face. He has been hastily summoned, owing to a return of the dangerous symptoms. Do we now hear that sentence, "God is very good to me"?

Alas! no. In a very weak voice Mrs. A—— is saying:

"Is it possible? Am I dying? Have I to meet a holy, just, and righteous God? I cannot go yet. I am not ready. Please get me better. Just for five minutes to think about it. Death! Death! Never! I cannot! Not yet!" and so,

with a look of terror on her face, she passed away.

Her last opportunity gone, never to return; for, "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Eccles. xi. 3), whether heavenward or hellward.

Now, my reader, I doubt not that you, whether saved or unsaved, will say, "What a sad ending to a pleasure trip!"

Yes, indeed it was; but if you are yet unsaved, let me press home upon your soul the visitor's question to Mrs. A——.

"Are *you* prepared to meet God?" Meet Him you must; either *now* as a Saviour-God, who "is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish" (2 Peter iii. 9), or in that *coming day* as a righteous Judge, when "God 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.)

Remember this. You have to do with One of whom the psalmist says, "Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance" (Psalm xc. 8); and of whom the preacher says, "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Eccles. xii. 14.)

He knows all about you if others do not. You may make a fair show in the world, and pass muster before your fellows; but you have to do with God, not with men. "Acquaint *now* thyself with Him, and be at peace." (Job xxii. 21.)

Are you like Mrs. A——, a procrastinator, putting off to some "more convenient season" the question of your soul's eternal welfare?

Beware! lest you, like her, should be suddenly cut off, and that without remedy. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. ii. 3.)

All has been done that love could do in order that sinners, such as we, might be reconciled to God. Jesus has died for sinners, and now those who believe in Him "are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39); are justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth a propitiation [a mercy-seat] through faith in His blood . . . that God might be just, and the Justifier of Him which believeth in Jesus. (Romans iii. 24-26.)

Blessed meeting-place, where I learn that God has been satisfied; nay, more—glorified about sin, about *my* sins. Jesus cried upon the cross, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Psalm xxii. 1.)

Can you, my reader, answer that question by saying, with adoring heart, "Lord Jesus, my Saviour, Thou wast forsaken on the cross that I might never be forsaken"?

One question more and I have done. Where now is the One who died for sinners upon the cross?

"God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 9-11); and now, as a result, "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*." (Romans x. 9.)

Precious testimony rendered by God the Father to the infinite value of the work of His blessed Son. Receive it, and thou art eternally blest; neglect it, and thou art hovering on the very brink of eternal woe. The day is drawing nigh

"When careless and scoffers, where hope cometh never,
Shall think of the water they once threw away."

"Jesus is worthy now,
All homage to receive;
Oh, sinner, to the Saviour bow,
The truth believe."

S.

"IT'S WELL IT WASN'T THEE."

THE following circumstance was related to me recently by a well-known city missionary in London.

A few days prior to our conversation an accident had happened on a metropolitan railway. Half a dozen platelayers were at work when a train came suddenly upon them, fatally wounding one of their number, though the rest escaped unhurt. The wounded man was a Christian, who had often, in former days, been ridiculed by his comrades for his "methodism," as they called his confession of Christ. His injuries were so great, and the flow of blood so rapid, that it was evident, both to himself and those around him, that death was at hand. The sufferer, however, was calm and self-possessed, and after sending a loving message to his wife, he turned to one of his unconverted fellow-workmen, and said, "It's well it wasn't thee, Bill, but me; for thou art not prepared to die, and I am." Shortly afterwards he fell asleep in Jesus.

This is an interesting (though by no means uncommon) example of the power of faith in Christ to deliver the believer from the "fear of death," because of which the mass of mankind are "all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. ii. 15.)

And what was the secret of this blessed peace in the near approach of death? It was the sweet assurance which had been given to the dear sufferer—that he had been "washed from his sins in the blood" of Jesus. (Rev. i. 5.)

"The sting of death is sin." (1 Cor. xv.) Sin, therefore, having been put away, the sting of death was gone, and thus he was assured that for him to be "absent from the body" would be to be "present with the Lord." (2 Cor. v. 8.)

Dear reader, have you this blessed peace? If not, I earnestly entreat you to flee at once by faith to the Saviour. Thus will the purpose of His death be fulfilled in you. You will be "delivered from the wrath to come," from the guilt of sin, and therefore from the fear of death; and be enabled triumphantly to say—

"Oh, thou destroyer, see the blood
That makes the guilty clean!
No prey of thine, the soul on which
This token once is seen."

J. H. S.

CONFESSING CHRIST.

IT is said that a converted Indian was once heard to make use of words, in prayer, something to this effect: "Lord, do not let my confession of Christ be like the cloak I wear, which can be put on or thrown off as occasion may serve, but, *like the tattoo on my cheek*, let it be seen under

all circumstances—wherever I go, and whatever I do—seen through life, and till death.”

What a voice is this to many a heart in this land of gospel light and Christian privilege ! This little paper may possibly be dropped into the hand of one who is acting in a way the very opposite of this, one who is seeking to be a kind of *secret believer*. He may, perhaps, be persuading himself that it is wiser to say nothing about either his exercises, or his faith in Christ, to anyone ; for that he might not, in the long run, be able to maintain his profession ; that he might again fall into sin ; and that, in such a case, it would be far better, for the cause of Christianity, not to have made public profession of Christ’s name at all.

How sadly deceitful is the heart of man ! Is it not possible, think you, for a man to deceive himself with such plausible reasoning as this, and to console himself with having great jealousy for the honour of Christ’s cause ; whereas, at the bottom, it is nothing but cowardly self-consideration ; nothing but one of the worst forms of human pride, dressed up, though it may be, in the garb of religious humility ? The fact is that old worldly friendships are clung to ; the frowns or jeers of companions are feared ; or, it may be, that these timid believers protested once loudly enough against the glaring inconsistencies of professing Christians ; and now, remembering this, and conscious of their own weakness, they are not quite certain whether *they* might not actually be as bad themselves. Thus does Satan effectually close their mouths.

But how distinct and unmistakeable are the words of the Saviour : “ Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of man also

confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth Me *before men* shall be denied before the angels of God." (Luke xii. 8, 9.) And again the Holy Ghost testifies, "That if thou shalt confess *with thy mouth* the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and *with the mouth* confession is made unto salvation." (Romans x. 9, 10.)

Now, if being saved were a matter of a man's own merit, one could well understand his shrinking from making a profession; nay, more, it would either be presumptive ignorance or barefaced hypocrisy to do it. But to confess unto salvation, in a scriptural way, is simply to own, that though *I* was bad enough to be lost for ever, Christ was good enough to come from heaven, as sent of God, to do all the work to save me. What a comfort it is, therefore, that in confessing Christ I have not to say one single good thing of myself—and for the best of reasons, that, naturally, there is not one single good thing to say—but only to magnify *His* name "who loved me and gave Himself for me"! And is He not worthy?

"Who would hush the heaven-sent story
Of the One who came to die?"

But we must rise to *heaven's* thoughts of the blessed Saviour if we would have power to confess Him, and not be mouth-stopped before the world; for as a mutinous crew would hate to hear the name of the captain they had murdered, so the world hates the very mention of Christ's name. But the question comes, Shall *we* be silent? *Can* we? Shall not we who have tasted

the sweetness of His love "tell to sinners round what a blest Saviour we have found"? not in legal bondage but by His constraining love; not by fleshly effort, but in a felt helplessness which hangs upon Him, and upon Him alone.

"This day is a day of good tidings," said the Samaritan lepers, and "we do not well" to "hold our peace." (2 Kings vii. 9.)

Can *we* say less, fellow-believer?

"The fowler's snare is broken,
And loosed my captive wing,
And shall the bird be silent
Which Thou hast taught to sing?"

GEO. C.

"ARE YOUR SINS FORGIVEN?"

THIS, dear reader, was the pointed question by which God in His infinite mercy reached my heart.

A cousin had come to stay at our house for two days. He was an earnest Christian, and was going to have two preachings in the village school-room, and so I determined to keep out of his way as much as possible. Another cousin was also stopping at the house, and we both agreed to go out rabbit-netting, and so avoid the dreaded appeals about our souls. Well do I remember that first night, for, as if to encourage us (we were out nearly all night), we brought home a heavy bag of rabbits. At eight in the morning I woke, and found my mother standing by the side of my bed. She told me that my two sisters had been converted the evening before, and that she had come to my room about midnight to tell me, and had found me out. This made some im-

pression on me, for now five out of a family of eight were converted.

I kept out of the way all the day, and in the evening we all went to the preaching, at which I sat unmoved. A large party of us gathered round the supper-table, where a question arose as to the meaning of a word, and I went into my father's study to look it out in the big dictionary. I had just found the place when the door opened and my cousin came in. I began some explanation about the word, of which he took no notice, but, walking up to me, he lovingly laid his hand on my shoulder, and looking straight at me, he said, "A——, are your sins forgiven?" I shall never forget that moment. It was God's arrow to my heart. All my sins seemed to come up and stand before me in all their blackness, and with them came the assurance that they were *not* forgiven, and that I should have to answer to God for every one.

"No, no," I cried, "they are not forgiven," and, bursting into tears, I rushed away, and upstairs to my room. I heard after that my cousin went back to the dining-room, and quietly said that I should not come in to supper, and most likely would not appear again that evening. He could see that the question had gone home to my heart, and he knew it was the beginning of the work of God in my soul.

All that night I cried to God for mercy. I had often said that the burden of my sins was intolerable, but now I really felt it, and realised that I deserved punishment. I fell on my knees and told all out to God, and as I went through the list of sins of thought, word, and deed, they seemed too many to be pardoned. It was then

that my cousin came in again, and now it was his privilege to tell me of a Saviour for such a sinner as I was. Earnestly he pressed on me to believe and be saved, to rest on the finished work of Christ, and to pass from all this misery to joy and peace. The news was too simple. It was not the way I thought that salvation was to be obtained, and so for some time I fought against these messages of love from God. But this only increased my unhappiness, and I was shown more of the depth of wickedness, and of my distance from God. I can now look back and thank Him for it all, for it was a most salutary lesson; but the time of distress about my sins was very grievous. To "look and live," to "believe and be saved," seemed far too easy a way of getting what I so earnestly longed for. Yet, dear reader, this is God's way, for salvation is to "him that worketh not, but believeth." (Romans iv. 5.)

At last the light dawned on my soul. I gladly took salvation as God's free gift. I well remember the joy that filled my heart one morning as I applied to myself the seventh verse of the 124th Psalm—"Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped." With my whole heart I thanked Him, and for the first time in my life I worshipped God. Often had I been to what is called a place of worship, but now I praised and blessed Him for delivering and saving me. Worship is the glad utterance of a delivered soul, and unless you are saved, dear reader, you have never yet worshipped God. It was when the Israelites saw all their enemies dead upon the seashore that they burst out into a song of praise.

And now, dear reader, I want to press the question home to your heart—Are *your* sins forgiven? Answer to God to-night, ere you lie down to rest, either “*yes*” or “*no*.” “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” Are you then, dear reader, one of those whom God calls blessed? God starts each one on the road to glory with the assurance of perfect forgiveness. Our sins are what first trouble us, and so these He removes first. Has the burden gone from you? If one who reads this is anxious and troubled, His word to you is, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matt. xi. 28.) Come just as you are, and rest on His finished work on the cross. “Be it known unto you therefore . . . 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.) In no other way can you get pardon and peace. Crying and striving or doing your best will not get it. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. v. 1.) “Thy sins are forgiven,” said Jesus to a burdened, sinful woman; “thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.” How did she know she had forgiveness? By resting simply on the word of Christ; and thus, dear reader, will it be with you if you do the same.

“But do you never sin now?” says a reader.

Alas! alas! dear friend, “the heart knoweth its own bitterness;” and often have I failed, and grieved the heart of the One who has so loved me. But now, if I sin, I go to God as my Father, and tell all out to Him. I confess it as 1 John i. 9 tells me, and it is this that bows the heart in

shame before God. To tell the motives and desires that led to the sin, this is true confession.

I remember a lady once telling me that when she was a child she stole a skein of silk from a friend's house. It was found out, and the next morning she had to walk to the place and confess all. The lady received her kindly as usual, and then the story of her guilt had to come out; and even now she remembers the deep shame that was hers as she told what she had done.

"But do you never forget you have been forgiven?" says another.

Alas! dear reader, any of us who work for the Lord by speaking to souls, know how we have often met those who say, "Well, I used to know this peace and joy you speak of, but I have lost it now." How is this? The apostle Peter, in his second epistle and first chapter, explains it. I quote the passage from verse 5: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."

This is a solemn passage, and one that should speak to your heart and mine, dear Christian reader. For if we walk carelessly, and do not daily increase in the knowledge of the Lord, and show forth these lovely fruits of the Spirit, we may at last lose even (I do not say the for

givenness, but) the assurance that our sins are forgiven.

Should a reader say, "It is thus with me," I press 1 John i. 9, and entreat you to return in confession to the Lord. Tell all out to Him, remembering this promise, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

C. A. R.

"NOT CONDEMNED;" OR, "CONDEMNED ALREADY."

A POOR cabman in the town of M—— lay on his bed dying of typhoid fever. Hearing of this, and being anxious to know whether or not the all-important question of the salvation of his soul had been settled, I called to see him. To all appearance life, with him, was nearly run out; so, bending over him, I quietly said, "I see you are very ill, and the doctor thinks you may not recover."

"Does he?" he exclaimed.

A look of dread came over his face, and in a moment all consciousness left him. I feared lest he had gone without my having had an opportunity of speaking to him about the Saviour of sinners; but after remaining in that state for about ten minutes, to my deep thankfulness he opened his eyes.

With a sigh of relief I proceeded with my message, and said, "My friend, I know you are very, very ill, and in a few short hours may have left this poor world for ever." Then slowly and solemnly I repeated that verse in John iii.: "He that believeth on Him [Jesus] is *not condemned*:"

but he that believeth not is *condemned already*, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." When I finished he bade me go away, and swore so dreadfully that I was obliged to leave the room. I called again in a day or two, and found that he had just passed out of time into eternity, his wife telling me that he lost consciousness almost immediately after I had left the room, and it had never returned. Many a time that man may have heard the wondrous story of a Saviour's love, and perhaps imagined that he would have time enough on his death-bed to accept God's offer of salvation. But, alas! no such thing. Rocked to sleep in the devil's cradle, he could, only three short hours before he left this world, *curse* the very one who sought to show him the way of life and peace.

While distributing tracts with a brother in the Lord in some of the Derbyshire villages one Saturday afternoon this year, we came across a man who looked well-nigh eighty years of age. I said, as I proffered him a tract, "Will you be kind enough to read this?"

"Nay, I canno' read," was his reply.

So I pulled out my Bible and said, "Well, then, I should like to read one verse from God's own word for you;" so, turning to John iii. 18, I read the same text which I repeated to the dying cabman, "He that believeth on Him [Jesus] is not condemned;" but before I could proceed further he exclaimed:

"That's me, sir!"

This dear old man had faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and resting on God's word, had full assurance of salvation. Blessed assurance!

Reader, there is nothing between "*not con-*

demned" and "*condemned already*" for anybody. How do *you* stand? Do not evade the solemn question. "*Now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. vi. 2.) Remember these "*nows*" are God's. Trifle not with them. In John iii. 18 the Lord Jesus speaks of present realities. "He that believeth on Him [Jesus] is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Dost thou believe? P. H. S.

"HE CALLETH THEE."

"And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; He calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus."—MARK I. 49, 50.

"**H**E calleth thee"—oh, do not miss the blessing,
 Thou foolish one, and proudly say, *We see*,
 Lest thou indeed, no heavenly oil possessing,
 Be plunged in darkness for eternity!

"He calleth thee"—oh, haste! nor dare to linger,
 Thou careless one, when Jesus passeth by,
 What if this night, with icy touch, death's finger
 Should summon thee, so unprepared to die?

"He calleth thee"—oh, come with all thy sorrow,
 Thou troubled one, and He will give thee rest!
 Delay not till some more convenient morrow—
 God sayeth, "*Now*," His time is surely best.

"He calleth thee"—oh, art thou sorely yearning,
 Thou helpless one, for power to set thee free?
 Lo! Jesus saith, thine inmost thought discerning,
 "Soul, what wilt thou that I should do to thee?"

"He calleth thee"—oh, hast thou now received it,
 Thou happy one, the message of His love?
 Then tell around, *as one who hath believed it*,
 What glory waiteth thee with Him above!

J. S. K.

TIDINGS OF LIFE AND PEACE.

EVERY ONE.

“As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”—ROMANS xiv. 11, 12.

EVERY knee shall bow; *every* tongue shall confess; *every* one shall give account. If this is true, who can escape? where is there a loophole? This decree has gone forth, and none can alter it. As one of the proudest unbelievers that ever lived, named Nebuchadnezzar, had to confess, “None can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?” (Daniel iv. 35.) And he also confessed that “those that walk in pride He is able to abase.” (Daniel iv. 37.) This being settled, it is clear that, either in *this life* or *the next*, there must be a distinct having to do with God. But it makes all the difference to us what time this having to do with God takes place. There is a time of grace, and then a time of judgment. The time of grace has well-nigh run out; yet it is still the day of salvation, and sinners are daily being reconciled to God through the death of His Son. This has been going on since Christ took His seat on the Father’s throne, and sent the Holy Spirit down to this earth to make His word effectual in the hearts of

sinners to their conversion ; but this work of grace will close when the Lord Jesus comes and calls His saints up to meet Him in the air, and takes them all into the Father's house to be for ever with Himself. Then begins the time of judgment, when those who have not been reconciled by the death of God's Son, that is, have never known the Saviour, must know the Judge. For all must *bow to Christ* ; God has decided that. The only question is, *When ?* Now this makes the word of God of all importance, for God "now commandeth all men every where to repent : because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge." (Acts xvii. 30, 31.) Here you have *the time* when the unconverted must bow. "Every one shall give account"—these are *the persons*. "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." (Matt. xii. 36.) And again, "The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." (Rev. xx. 12.) This is what men are *judged for*. So you have in Scripture—

1. *The Time* of the judgment.
2. *The Persons* who will be judged.
3. *The Indictments*, or what they will be judged for.

This stands on one side, but, thank God, there is still the other side ; for God has given Jesus to die for the sins of all those who believe, and in doing this He bore the judgment that those sins deserved. This He did on the cross, when He drank the cup of God's wrath against those sins, till He could say, "It is finished !" Now it is clear if He finished the judgment for the sins He bore, there is no judgment left for those who believe on Him.

Now believing is bowing to Him, the heart receiving the glad tidings that Christ suffered, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God, and by that work has put all the sins of His people out of God's recollection. "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. x. 17.) So if the sins are gone, the judgment is gone, and such persons have a part in the resurrection of *the just* (Acts xxiv. 15), called *the first* resurrection (Rev. xx. 5), and this is *for glory* without any question of judgment, because that question has been settled by Christ on the cross for all believers. Thus those who have part in the first resurrection have their bodies changed, and made like His body of glory, and go into the Father's house; while *the rest* of the dead, whoever they may be, moral or immoral, honest or dishonest, learned or ignorant, live not again till the thousand years are ended. (See Rev. xx. 5.) So those raised *before* the thousand years are for *glory*. Those raised *after* the thousand years are for *judgment*, and all who are judged for their sins must be cast into the lake of fire. God has no remedy for such; the only remedy He had was Christ the Saviour, but they would not bow to Him in the time of grace, and it is too late in the time of judgment; for Christ is then not the sinner's Saviour, but the sinner's Judge. Judgment does not begin till grace is over. So "now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. vi. 2.)

If one should read this who is not saved, I would say, You have no time to lose; get alone with God; take the sinner's place, and let your heart bow to Christ as God's only remedy for sins; for "there is none other name under

heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv. 12.) "All that believe are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39); and "being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 1.) For when we know judgment has *passed* we have *peace*. "But there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." (Isa. lvii. 21.) "The way of peace have they not known." (Rom. iii. 17.) Oh, bow to the grace of God, and you will never have to bow to His judgment!

G. W. G.

"THE SACRIFICES OF GOD ARE A BROKEN SPIRIT."

PSALM li. 17.

SOME years ago, in a country house in England, a large party was assembled at Christmas-time. Mr. R—— was entertaining his tenants, and in the centre of the large hall was a magnificent Christmas-tree. Much fun and merriment went on, and at the end of the drawing-room a stage was erected, and there myself, my uncle, and three brothers acted as "Christy minstrels."

And now, dear reader, I am telling this story with one desire, and that is, to magnify God's exceeding love and grace. For had you gone among those assembled and asked the question, "Which of all here are most unlikely to be converted?" they would have said, "Oh, the most unlikely are those five making fools of themselves there."

Well, two years after, at the same season of the year, four out of those five are gathered for

prayer, and we are unitedly crying to the Lord for a blessing on the Word about to be preached in the village. We also thank Him for what He has done in saving our souls, and ask Him to save the fifth, now far away in Australia.

Yet another year has passed, and the five of us are gathered, all now knowing what God in His grace had done for us, and we thank Him for the knowledge of salvation through the death of His beloved Son. Truly the work was God's! He had, in His grace, saved the five of us, and three sisters also, within those three years. But I return to the Christmas party. There was one in the house that night who knew and loved the Lord, and she determined that the party should not break up without some effort for the salvation of their souls. She therefore got several nicely-bound books, and each was given one on leaving.

Mrs. S—— was the wife of the largest farmer on the estate, and she received a book with the rest. She was very angry. "We have had such a pleasant evening," she said, "could they not let us go without forcing any religion upon us?" So angry was she that at first she determined not to read the book, but afterwards changed her mind, as she knew she would be asked how she liked it. So one Sunday afternoon she sat down "just to look into it." But the Lord had blessing in store for her, and so He made her open the book at a place where the writer was commenting upon that passage in Exodus xii. 30, "And 'there was not a house where there was not one dead.' How many families there are in this so-called Christian land where not only *one* but *all* are dead—dead to Christ, dead to His Gospel, with much morality and even religion, but utterly dead towards God!"

This was the passage that she read, and the word went home to her heart.

"It is just so in this house," she said to herself. "We are moral and upright, but all are unsaved, and should God come for judgment to this house we should all be lost."

This was the beginning of the work in her soul. Her sins kept on rising before her, and no rest or peace could she obtain. It is thus, dear reader, that God begins the work in every heart. It is by a ray of light from Himself that shines into our dark hearts, and shows us how bad we are. It is like a light brought into a dark room, where perhaps I have before slept quietly, but when the light comes in, and reveals to me the dust and dirt, I shrink from the place with horror. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all," and His light shows me how corrupt and unfit for His presence I am. Has He showed you this, dear reader? If even by reading this you begin to see how unfit you are for a holy God, do not check these thoughts, but let His light shine right into your heart. It will show you your ruin and your sin; but it will also show you God's remedy, and God's salvation.

The daily work of the farm had to go on as usual, but through it all Mrs. S—— carried a heavy heart; and when a few days after Mrs. R——, who had given her the book, called, she found her in deep distress about her soul.

If, dear reader, you know and love the Lord you will understand how readily Mrs. R—— listened to the story of God's work in this soul. Here was one broken down before God because of sin, and it is a grateful task to speak to such of a Saviour.

This is what God is looking for now. He wants hearts that feel how far they have wandered from Him, and how undone they are. God the Holy Ghost produces this in the soul, and the mission of the Saviour was "to heal the broken-hearted." At every preaching, or wherever there is any effort for the salvation of souls, there God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost are working together for the eternal good of the sinner. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit." (Psalm li. 17.)

This is what He wants and longs to see. Has your heart then been thus broken before God? Have you seen your guilt in the light of His presence? Have you felt your deep need of a Saviour? Have you cried to God to be merciful to you a sinner? If so, then listen to God's good news, as Mrs. S—— did that afternoon. God has provided a Saviour for lost and guilty ones; and resting in His finished work on the cross, you can be saved. He longs to be gracious to you. He longs to remove the burden of your sin, to tell you of forgiveness and peace proclaimed and made through the blood of His cross.

This was the message that Mrs. S—— heard; and she received it simply, as God's loving voice speaking to her.

Years have passed away, but Mrs. S—— still lives in that village, working in a quiet way for that Saviour who loved her, and gave Himself for her; and now to others she tells the good news of pardon and peace, and a home of glory that awaits every believer in the finished work of Christ.

This was the beginning of blessing to that village. A year or two more passed, and had

you been there, dear reader, you would have seen many gathered on the first day of the week around the Lord's table, to remember Him, and show forth His death. Mrs. S—— is always there, and many others who were together at that Christmas party years ago.

But if the One who died for sins, "the Just for the unjust," is unknown to you, then not only are you incapable of thus remembering Him, or of rendering worship to God, but you are one of those who *will* come into condemnation, and upon whom the wrath of God *abideth*. (John iii. 36.) And in whatever house you may be found, of that house it may be said, "Therein is one dead, 'dead in trespasses and sins.'" (Eph. ii.)

C. A. R.

"DO YOU KNOW GOD?"

THE one to whom this question was put started, and could give no answer. She had been outwardly numbered amongst God's children, and at the very moment was in their company, on her way to a tea-meeting. But this question from the lips of a servant of God's suddenly arrested her.

"Do you know God?" It was an arrow shot, perhaps, at a venture, but it sorely wounded the heart of that young girl.

Had the question been, "Do you know the Lord Jesus?" she would no doubt have answered, "Yes;" but *God*, the thought of *God*, a holy God, troubled her. She had heard of Him as a God who is "light," and of "purer eyes than to behold evil;" a God who, when His well-beloved Son, who knew no sin, was "made sin" for us, had had

to hide His face from Him, so that that exceeding bitter cry—a cry the bitterness of which *we* cannot measure—was wrung from His lips, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

All this she knew; and true it is, and well it is to know its reality in time. But there is another side, a bright and blessed side. This very God, before whom seraphim veil their faces, crying, "Holy, holy, holy" is the One in whose heart is the deep, unfailing spring of love towards lost and guilty man that made Him send His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. He "gave" Him. He "spared" Him "not." He "sent" Him to be the "propitiation for our sins." And now, from the glory, this blessed "God *commendeth* His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

And for all this love and grace man has heaped up independence, indifference, ingratitude, and hard thoughts of God, the majority, alas! rejecting the Son He sent and salvation through His name. Let me ask you, dear reader, What are *your* thoughts of God? I have told you some—a very few—of God's thoughts of you, and of His actions towards you. Now what is your answer to Him?

By nature you are "afar off," hiding yourself, like Adam, and, for the same reason (*i.e.*, because of sin), away from Him; but He wants you now to be reconciled to Him, and He is fully satisfied with the work wrought on Calvary's cross, whereby *He* can be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Again let me ask you, Do you know God?

PEACE THROUGH THE FINISHED WORK.

MAN has three great enemies who are opposed to his eternal salvation, and one great Friend who has done all that love can do to secure it for him.

The first enemy is Satan, the second the world, the third himself. *His great Friend is God.*

Satan, who was the instrument of his ruin at the outset, has persistently followed up his advantage to the bitter end, and leaves no stone unturned to secure the utter ruin and eternal misery of the human race. A babe might as well struggle to free himself from a giant, as a man endeavour by his own efforts to deliver himself from the awful power of the wicked one.

The world, made up of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (and not of the Father), is another powerful foe that none can despise. (1 John ii. 15, 16.) Its elements, first seen at the fall, are exactly what the natural heart of man loves. Gilded over by Satan, it is the great deceit by which tens of thousands are beguiled to eternal perdition. It is set in the heart of fallen man, and supplies the very food that his corrupt flesh delights to feed upon.

Man himself too is his own enemy. He loves darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil. (John iii. 19.) His own will always works sin in independence of God. His mind is alienated from Him by wicked works. (Col. i. 21.) Or if natural conscience is uneasy, he offers a fleshly religion and fleshly doings to God to make up for his misdeeds, even though he may nominally

profess Christ. Heart and mind are both departed from God. He has no true knowledge, either of God or himself, and he is utterly opposed to the true and only way of salvation.

Hence the sinner's case were utterly hopeless, had he not a true Friend in the One who of all others he naturally hates—*God Himself*. *God is light*, but *God is also love*. In love He looked upon man and gave His Son. He saw him under Satan's power following the world and doing his own will, and, in infinite wisdom and matchless love and grace, gave His only begotten Son to die, that He might deliver us from these terrible foes. Jesus offered Himself without spot upon the cross, and bore the holy judgment of God once for all. There His holy claims were met; and being glorified by His Son, He raised and exalted Him as Man to the highest glory at His own right hand. (Acts ii. 32, 33.)

And now He tells men plainly that "all have sinned, and come short" of His glory (Romans iii. 23), but that all who own it, taking their true place in self-judgment before Him, and believing on the Son, are pardoned, justified, and saved.

"All have sinned;" but "it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," &c. (1 Tim. i. 15.) On the cross Jesus cried, "It is finished." (John xix. 30.) In resurrection He says to His own, "Peace unto you." (John xx. 2.)

How blessedly simple! "All have sinned," but "*it is finished*;" and therefore the blessed message comes from the lips of the risen Son of God Himself to every believing soul, "*Peace unto you*." Dost thou believe on Him? The whole blessing is wrapped up there. You have sinned, and you

deserve the lake of fire. Christ has died and finished the work of redemption. Christ risen pronounces the gospel of present, lasting, eternal peace for *every one that believeth*. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans v. 1.) Have you it? Peace with God, through the finished work of Christ, now and for ever?

If so, and you are still left here, there is one thing for you to do until you behold the One by whom peace was made. (Col. i. 20.) Christ Himself says to you, "Follow thou Me."

All have sinned. It is finished. Peace unto you. Follow thou Me. E. H. C.

THE UNWELCOME DISCOVERY.

HOW much easier it is for man to understand God's *power* in creation than to grasp the thought of His *love* in redemption! Hence it is a common thing to hear Him spoken of as "*The Almighty*," or as "*The Creator*," or even addressed by professing Christians as "Thou great and almighty Being." There can be no doubt that He is all this, and that, as Romans i. 20 puts it, His eternal power and Godhead are "*clearly seen*" by His works in creation. Yes, *clearly* seen by all but the blinded atheist, who is rightly described in 2 Peter iii. 5 as "*willingly ignorant*." Shutting his eyes to divine revelation, the very existence of the earth and the heavens becomes a mystery to him, and his own existence not less so; while the inevitable future is a darker mystery than either. He cannot even count the stars that

spangle the heavens, for every freshly-added power to the telescope only shows him that his past calculations were numerically far below the mark; nor can he, with all his boasted cleverness, count how many times a common house-fly moves his wing in one minute. He could not give life to a single dead gnat, nor could he, with all his scientific appliances, place a new star in yonder heavens, or take one from its present place, and yet he has the daring to lift his rebellious voice and say, "No Creator, no God." There can be little doubt, however, that had it been possible for God to have created the world, and then gone out of existence, there would have been no infidelity about the creation. But He is the "LIVING GOD." He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and consequently a God who must judge sin. This, man cannot bear, and hence it is written of him, "The fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God.*" But, as another has remarked, he only says this in his heart, *not in his conscience.* Such men remind one of the wealthy Brahmin who had come into possession of a very powerful microscope, with which he was wont to amuse himself by examining the different wonders in creation around him. One day, it is said, he chanced to examine his own dinner, and, to his great annoyance, discovered the rice to be full of tiny living creatures, too small for discernment by the natural eye. Now, alas! it was part of his creed never to taste of anything belonging to the animal kingdom. What could he do therefore? There was nothing for it but to demolish the instrument that had manifested the unpalatable secret! This he accordingly did by dashing it to pieces at his feet. But did this alter

the unwelcome fact? No; he thereby only manifested his own folly. Nor does the rejecter of God's word do anything less unreasonable than this. A distasteful fact lies therein recorded—"after death the judgment." He does not like it, and therefore, if he could, would sweep the blessed Book from the face of the earth. But it has been well said, that the Book itself is as great a miracle as any miracle it records. It has stood many a storm, and is likely to stand a good many more, be they ten thousand times fiercer than the former. "The word of God abideth for ever."

But God's power in creation, and the certainty of coming judgment, are not, thank God, the only truths this precious record contains. In the person of His beloved Son God has fully declared Himself as the "*Friend of sinners*," of the worst of sinners. He "*so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son*." That Son—the "*Word made flesh*"—has fully revealed the Father's heart, and, if not a sinner in the wide world, should ever be saved, God has certainly declared His boundless love to man. "*God is love*."

Take an illustration. The snows lie deep on the ground in hard mid-winter; wild forest birds are seen half-starved near your door; you go out in kindness to them, clear the ground, and scatter crumbs and seeds all around. Now, if every bird fled back to the forest without tasting a crumb, and eventually perished for lack of food, it would not alter what *your* kindness had been to them. But suppose one half-famished little thing hopped within five yards of you, and ever so timidly picked up a few crumbs, would you not like it? Yes, and the nearer the tiny creature came the better pleased you would be; and should one of

the hungry flock be so trustful as to hop on your shoulder, or pick crumbs from your hand, you would be inclined to call every child in the house to witness it. (See John iii. 16; i. 18; 1 John iii. 16.)

Now God has come near to man in the person of His Son. He knew that without the death of a spotless victim man must righteously perish for ever, and He so loved a guilty world "that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." What love, what giving, what a gift!

Reader, your responsibility is to receive this unmerited gift from God. Remember that the alternative, if in blind unbelief you refuse it, has been expressed in that one awful word—"*Perish.*" Weigh the issues well and carefully, for they stretch into eternity. God has righteously cleared the ground by the work of His beloved Son in suffering and death upon the cross, and UPON THAT GROUND ALONE He holds out to you eternal blessings. Whatever *your* heart may be, He has proved that *His* heart is to be trusted; and, when a poor sinner comes for that salvation which He delights to bestow, the very angels are called to witness the overflowings of His joy. The servant could say of the prodigal's reception, "Thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because *he hath received him* safe and sound." (Luke xv. 24.)

Blessed be God, if, for His *pleasure*, He created the world at the beginning (Rev. iv. 11); for His pleasure, also, He will bless needy sinners to the end." (Eph. i. 5-7.) "They *began to be merry*," nor will the joy ever cease throughout eternity. May the reader be inside the house to share it.

GEO. C.

**"THERE STANDETH ONE AMONG YOU, WHOM
YE KNOW NOT."**

SONS of men, while ye are busy toiling
'Mid the scenes of earth—life's restless mart—
Buying dust for gold, and madly selling
For some passing trifle soul and heart ;
'Mid the din of crowds, and 'mid the tumult
Of the many passing to and fro,
Do ye ever pause to think there standeth
One among you whom ye do not know ?

Looking on you, but you do not heed it ;
He is speaking, but you do not hear ;
Offering life to you, you do not need it ;
Calling to you, and you draw not near.
Are ye blinded by earth's fading splendour ?
Are ye deafened by the ceaseless flow
Of men's voices, that ye heed not standing
One among you whom ye do not know ?

Could ye for one moment look upon Him,
Ye would see upon His hands and brow
Tokens of a love which far surpasses
All the love that ye have known ere now.
Could ye know His heart, ye'd find 't was yearning
Over you in love and sympathy.
Could ye hear His voice, ye'd find 't was saying,
With an untold sweetness, "Come to Me."
Could ye pause—but no, earth's care and pleasure
Keep your hearts, and ye will have it so.
Pass on with the crowd, yet know there standeth
One among you whom ye do not know. G.

TIDINGS OF LIFE AND PEACE.

"A FEW MORE YEARS SHALL ROLL."
WHAT THEN?

ONE Sunday evening in the year 1873, among a large congregation at St. —, Birkenhead, was one who had been very regular in her attendance there; morning and evening she was never missing. Not that she was there as a needy one; far from it. She rested in her own goodness, so that her judgment of self had never been, "Woe is me, for I am undone." She had never learned to say, like Job, "I am vile;" had never given serious thought about her sins, nor how they were accumulating before God hour by hour, week by week, year by year. Yet her seat was never vacant in that congregation; on the contrary, she was well content with herself, proud of her fancied goodness. One morning, however, an arrow of conviction entered her soul; the light of God aroused her conscience, by means of the following lines:

"A few more years shall roll,
A few more seasons come,
And we shall be with those at rest,
Asleep within the tomb.
Then oh, my Lord, prepare
My soul for that great day!
Oh, wash me in Thy precious blood,
And take my sins away!"

The words of this hymn bore no new sound to her ears ; yet, as she herself said afterward, "They never struck me before. I thought, How true ! 'A few more years' at the most, and perhaps but a few short hours, and I shall see God face to face. How shall I stand the unsullied light of His presence, if not washed in the 'blood of the Lamb' ?" And now it was that God taught her to say, instead of, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are," "O God, I am a sinner !" She sat still, riveted to her seat, and silent ; for while others sang, some of them as carelessly and as unmeaningly as she had often done before, *her* heart was groaning to God in secret. To continue, in her own words : "After the service I went home, shut myself in my room, and falling on my knees, cried, 'O God, what shall I do ?' I kept on repeating this ; I knew not what else to say. But if ever woman pleaded for her life, I pleaded then that God would not let me be eternally lost."

How sweetly would a message from God have fallen upon her ears at this time ! How gladly a true servant of the Lord would have sought to bind up her wounds by pointing to the wounds of another, even Jesus the Saviour ! But none of His people surrounded her. Her husband was a crack shot, a good hunter, and a thorough man of the world, and to him she could not open her heart ; for he belonged to a world whose god and prince is Satan—the god of this world, who has "blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. iv. 4.)

Side by side they often walked together ; but

their hearts were going different ways. She was longing that her feet should be guided into the way of peace; and, though her tears would often flow fast as she walked and was sad, the troubles of her heart were only known to God. She said, "I used to hear on Sundays that salvation was to be obtained by working and doing; but the more working and doing was preached, the more bitter my sorrow, the more hopeless my case; for I felt I never could reach the presence of God. That place was holy, and I felt all sinful; I had read, 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord,' and I knew that I was a rebel sinner. Still it was the one thought of my life."

Months passed away like this, and it was now nearly a year since the hymn that had, by God's Spirit, aroused her soul, had been sung. "A few more seasons" had come, and she began to feel something of the despair expressed in those solemn words in Jeremiah: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." (Jer. viii. 20.)

Walking one day in a quiet spot, she began seriously to consider if she could obtain peace in the seclusion of a convent. Surely *there* she could get away from all, and be good. She felt the world to be a hindrance to her, and she could not escape it. She did not see clearly that wherever she went she would carry the world in her own heart, even if her vows could separate her from it outwardly, and the convent walls shut out some of its temptations from view. She neither knew the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ nor the blessed living Saviour who once hung there.

Strange as it may seem, on the very evening of

that day her laugh was one of the merriest, and that among friends who had nothing better to fill their hearts than music and wit, and "the laughter of the fool." (Eccles. vii. 6.) But how often, even in laughter, the heart is sad! As she wended her way home at night the hot tears were coursing down her cheeks; for the thought of her utter helplessness and sinfulness was pressing heavily upon her. She repaired to her room, and casting herself upon her knees, she cried, "*O God, what shall I do? Do not let me be lost!*"

It is written, that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. x. 13.) She had called upon Him, and even thus, as she called, He answered. "The light of God came into my soul," she said, "and I got up from my knees and wept for joy. The Spirit of God had spoken to me. No one knew of my state, but I knew that I was a saved soul." "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." (Titus iii. 5.) "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." (Rom. v. 6.)

All was changed. She had been told to work for salvation, and now, though through much darkness of soul, she had found out that she was without strength, but God had given Christ for her just as she was, "*without strength,*" *without "works."* "The grace of God that bringeth salvation" (Titus ii. 11) had been revealed to her. She had been trying to pump up water out of a dry well. She had been looking for goodness in her own heart; nay, falsely *taught* to do so, and all the while the Lord was saying to her, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and

who it is thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." (John iv. 10.) But now she had received the gift of God, and it was within her "springing up." She had been indeed a thirsty soul, and He had said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink." She had come, and was no more thirsty.

And now the living waters began to flow out from her. (John vii. 38.) Next Sunday she gathered a little band of children in her garden, and began to tell them the good news. She obtained tracts to help her to make God's salvation known. She spoke to her friends and companions, and testified of Christ at home. She had now peace within. Though her heart had been like the troubled sea, He had said to her, "Peace, be still; and there was a great calm."

Satan, thus spoiled of his goods, sought by every means to harass and distress this newly-liberated soul. The Lord had called her to be one of His own sheep, and precious was the knowledge of it to her soul, though the mocking lips of man called her "*saint*" in derision; and her own husband—proud, worldly man—called her a "*sister of mercy*." Yet nothing could disturb the peace which the Saviour had given her—a peace resting entirely upon God's own estimate of the work of His beloved Son.

For the cheer of any reader passing through similar trial let us add, that after nine years of quiet testimony God gave her the joy of witnessing the conversion of her husband. He laid His gracious hand upon him; sorrow upon sorrow rolled over him, and with this chastening came conviction and repentance, until one day

he enquired, "Where is it written, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest'?"

He came to the Saviour; his soul found rest and peace and salvation. Oh, the precious grace, the unwearied patience, of our God!

Reader, has *your* heart yet been brought into His holy presence? If not, remember that a few more rolling years at most will surely find you there. Think of your soul's deep need before it be too late. Have to do with God for yourself. Think not, by your good works, of commending yourself to God. Remember that God is, spite of your sinful state, *commending His love to you*. (See Rom. v. 8.)

Oh, believe that wonderful love! Believe the message now!

S. C. M. A.

HEAD-BELIEF, OR HEART-BELIEF.

I WAS thinking the other day what a difference there is between knowing about the use of the life-boat—knowing, too, her structure and qualities—and knowing, *experimentally*, her saving power; the immense difference between seeing her in her beauty and symmetry moored on shore, and proving, *personally*, her buoyant superiority to the wild waves that threaten destruction to the forlorn passengers of a foundering vessel.

These, as they trace through the blinding storm the outline of the life-boat breasting the billow and hastening to their help, cherish a widely different feeling as to the welcome craft than do those who, on *terra firma*, without danger or need of such help, are able to pass a cold and un-

sympathetic criticism on her appearance. She is nothing to them but a boat, perhaps beautifully and scientifically constructed, but that is all; to the others she means the hope of deliverance, of safety, of life. It little matters to them, exposed as they are to imminent destruction, what her appearance may be, the only question with them is her saving quality. Can she surmount the storm? Can she live in such a sea? Can she transport safely to shore?

Yes, for this reason is she named a "life-boat." Further, transferred from the vessel, you find yourself carried above the wave, and discover, to your unspeakable delight, the living power of the life-boat, and at last are placed safe and sound on land. You are now able to speak *experimentally* of the virtues of this wonderful boat, by which you have been saved from a watery grave, and restored to life and love on shore.

Your estimate of the boat is altogether different now. You can say, "That is my life-boat; the boat that saved my life." You have, as it were, a personal interest in her. You rise from mere opinions about, and criticisms of her, to a personal and happy appreciation. You have proved her value.

And thus it is with the gospel. Who but knows the good news? Who but has heard, and heard again and again, the sweet story of God's salvation? Many can pass a cold criticism on that story; many, perhaps, admire it. Many place a certain external value upon it, and regard it as a moralizing power; nay, perhaps they go so far as to admit that it alone can save, but their knowledge of the gospel ends there. They have never been placed in circumstances which have

made the gospel a tremendous personal necessity. They have never been convicted of sin, nor felt their lost condition. They have viewed the storm from a distance, but have never found themselves thrown on the billows of despair. Their acquaintance with such things is only theoretic, and they marvel when they hear others speak of remorse, anguish, and inevitable woe. Yet just as the life-boat was designed for the shipwrecked, so the gospel is intended for the lost. Blessed fact!

Were none lost, what need of a gospel? Hence, to feel your utterly lost condition is your first and strongest claim on the gospel, your clearest title to its good tidings.

But to feel this condition is absolutely necessary. It is a *sine quâ non*. There is no heaven for you without repentance. You may not realize your guilt to-day, but it will force itself upon you yet. You may not experience the storm, but its brunt will fall upon you anon. You may not deem your vessel unseaworthy, but she is about to founder.

May the day hasten, dear reader, when the gospel will be of more value to you than the gold of California—that day, I mean, when you will feel, in overwhelming power, your state as guilty and undone—a fallen, sinful child of Adam, for whom there is not one ray of hope anywhere, without or within, but in that gospel which, thank God, saves the lost.

Oh, may it hasten apace!

“The curse of the day is the lack of repentance.” “Religion is going in silver slippers.”

Many know about it; few know it. To know about it is an unspeakable privilege, but that does not save, that is not to be in the life-boat.

To know by divine instruction, through the

genuine admission of personal guilt, the suitability of the gospel as "the power of God unto salvation," is to be rescued, delivered, saved.

Head-knowledge does not suffice. It is "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (Romans x. 10); and then, most certainly, "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Now may I ask, dear reader, Is your faith one of the head, or one of the heart? It is a profoundly important question, and I earnestly beseech of you that you make it personal. Carry it with you upon your knees, into the presence of God, and rest satisfied by no means until you are assured that you do not only *know about* the gospel, but that you *know it*; that you are no longer a mere *head-believer*, but a *heart-believer*, and a true and grateful worshipper of the God of all grace.

J. W. S.

THE RESTLESS PRISONER.

I BECAME aware of the presence of a little bird in my room by its fruitless efforts to escape. It dashed from wall to wall and against the closed window. At last it escaped at the back of the house. Poor little thing, how frightened it was of me. It had no relish for the near company of a human being. I said to myself, "This is just how a sinner would feel, could he get into heaven unsaved; the presence of God would be insupportable; he would be out of his element, and have no tastes suitable to the place; his one thought would be to escape; yet we hear people say, 'Oh, of course, we all hope to go to heaven!'"

What is heaven? That holy abode where God

in all His glory reveals the fulness of His love to those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; where the great multitude of the redeemed delight to raise their song of praise to Him that sitteth on the throne and to the Lamb for ever; where all are conformed to the image of God's Son; where all is unsullied righteousness around and within each heart; where sin, sorrow, suffering, and death shall have passed away, and partings be no more. The presence of God and His Son make heaven home.

Would heaven be home to you, my reader?

To be at home in God's company you must possess divine fitness and divine affections, or you would only be miserable, like the little bird. You could not join in heaven's song of praise to the Lord Jesus, "Thou art worthy," for you would have nothing to praise Him for. The very heavens we see shall pass away (Matt. xxiv. 35); the earth we live in shall be burned up; and there shall be new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. (2 Peter iii.)

Where will you be then, reader?

"There shall in no wise enter into it" (the holy city) "any thing that defileth." (Rev. xxi. 27.)

If not washed in the Saviour's blood, your presence *would* defile it. You cannot have a place inside. "Without" (outside) "are dogs"—unclean things. (Rev. xxii. 15.) So you must live for ever "*outside* heaven, *inside* *hell*," where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matt. xxii. 13.)

There is no middle place for respectable sinners. There is no rest *in* hell, and no backdoor *out* of it. (Mark ix. 43-48.)

God's judgment hangs over this guilty world, as once it did over Egypt and its rebellious king.

God said, "I will execute judgment: I am the Lord." (Exodus xii. 12.) He did so then, and will do so again, and only lingers in long-suffering grace in order to save.

God sent His beloved Son into the world to die to prove His *love* to man. Man showed his hatred of God by crucifying His Son. (Acts iv. 24-28.)

God will never pass sin by unpunished; so in righteousness He poured out His wrath against it on the sinless One—made Him to be sin for us. Now sin has been judged to the uttermost; for Christ has died, established God's righteousness, and made it available for every one that believes. God is just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. (Rom. iii. 26.)

This is the only fitness which will avail with God to save a sinner from hell, and take him to heaven, for it is *provided* by Himself, and in His grace flows to us through a righteous channel, even through the crucified, risen Lord, and is *possessed* by the believer. So-called "good works" will not save. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the *ungodly*, his *faith* is counted for righteousness." (Rom. iv. 5.)

Faith in Christ alone justifies before God, and produces its proofs in good works before man. (James ii.)

Dear reader, put on this fitness, and give thanks to the Father, who *hath* made us (believers) meet (that is, fit) to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. (Col. i. 12.) Believe God's record (1 John v. 11), and you will be happy now in His presence, for His perfect love casteth out

fear. (1 John iv. 18.) You will love Him because He first loved you, and His love will be shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (Rom. v. 5.) *Then heaven will be home to you*, and you will sing the song that begins on earth, "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.) "Blessed are they that wash their robes [R.V.], that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city." (Rev. xxii. 14.) A

THEY SAID "NO."

ISAIAH xxx. 16.

IT is the language of the *heart*, and not of the lips merely, that God has regard to, therefore the person that says "No" to his salvation, and means it, is guilty of a great and grievous sin.

This reminds me of what took place one winter's morning near the little town of L——, on the Lancashire coast. After a very stormy night, the news spread through the place that a ship had come ashore, and was likely to become a total wreck.

The life-boat, however, was very soon launched and manned; and on her way to the foundering vessel she could be seen lying on her broadside, bending to the fury of the waves, which were breaking over her some two or three miles from the shore. Hundreds of persons were soon assembled on the beach to witness the life-boat return. On her way back it could be discerned

that others were on board beside her own crew. As soon as the boat was near enough to be hailed, anxious enquiry was made as to whether *all* hands were saved, and it was soon ascertained that all but two of the crew had been rescued.

These men, with death staring them in the face, and with the life-boat at hand, had positively refused to leave the wreck. How much they resembled those referred to at the head of this paper who said "*No*." They were like thousands of unsaved persons around us, who, notwithstanding the rich provisions of God's grace, and the untiring entreaties of His love, choose to live in sin, and refuse to be saved from it, as well as from the judgment which will surely overtake them if they continue to say "*No*" to the salvation which grace brings. The sin of the grace-despiser and Christ-rejecter, if persisted in and not repented of, will surely *find him out* one day; will leave the soul in outer darkness, without refuge for ever.

But you may be wondering, as were many others at the time, what became of the two men who were left on the wreck. Well, the fact is, they were, after all, taken off by another boat, and brought safely to land.

They changed their mind, it appears. Another offer came, and they wisely accepted it without further delay, like a young man we read of in the Gospels, who at *first* refused to obey his father's orders, saying, "I will not," but who "afterwards repented and went." Who would not leave the world's judgment for God's salvation? and the world's "*water*" for "wisdom's wine"? (See Proverbs ix.)

"Oh, weary sinner, come!"

The goodness of God it is that leads to *repentance*; and it is this which accounts for the cry of the Philippian jailor, "What must I do to be saved?" When the Holy Spirit convicts us, "the signal of distress" is raised in the soul. The word of God contains the tidings of salvation, and the answer of peace is received when God's word is relied on. Thus does His love become known to our hearts—a love which has proved itself in Christ's sufferings on the cross, and which satisfies itself in saving eternally all that believe on Him. But, because of our sins, God's *holiness* needed to be satisfied as well as His *love*; and from the precious gospel we learn that His love has supplied what His holiness demanded. It is found in the person and work of Christ; found in Him who, to vindicate God's holiness, was forsaken on the cross, and who, to prove His love to sinners, refused to come down from that cross till all was "*finished*." He would meet every claim of God, and make atonement for our souls by His precious blood.

H. H.

A THREEFOLD CORD.

THE story has been told of three men of different nationalities having met, and who could not understand each other's language. But there was one thing they all knew, and could say with the blind man in John ix., "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." At length one of them ventured to speak, and, in doing so, uttered one word which struck a chord in each of their hearts, and brought a glow of delight on their faces. Then the second uttered a

word, which seemed to increase their pleasure; and finally the third added a word, with the result that they fell on each other's necks and wept for joy. My reader may ask, What could those three words be that could produce such an extraordinary result? They were "JESUS," "HALLELUJAH," and "AMEN." The first one said "JESUS," and that instantly struck a chord in each heart. The second one was so delighted that he shouted "HALLELUJAH" (Praise the Lord). And the third was so in unison with the others, that he fervently ratified both by saying "AMEN" (So be it). Now I will ask my reader a question, Why did that *one* word "Jesus" produce such an effect, and call forth such a response? Because they all knew Him, and had all heard His voice in the depths of their souls, and had all got life through believing on His name; and what is more, they were all in the present enjoyment of that life which He had given them, and purchased for them at such a cost—the giving up of His own life, and the shedding of His precious blood. No wonder, then, that the second one should exclaim, "HALLELUJAH" (Praise the Lord), for who was so worthy of the adoration of their hearts as the ONE whose name was the sweetest music in the whole universe of God, and whose name fills all heaven with rapturous joy, and will be the theme of praise throughout all eternity? "Jesus, all names above." And as regards the third one, when the chord was struck in his soul, and that blessed Person was being exalted and praised, he could not do less than express himself in full harmony with the other two, and give his heart full vent by saying "AMEN" (So be it). Here were three men, and they had a threefold cord

that bound them together as one—"Jesus," "Hallelujah," "Amen." Yes, they were His to all eternity. And now, my reader, has the name of Jesus ever been like music in *your* heart? Have *you* ever said in your heart "Hallelujah"? Do you say it now, when that peerless name is uttered? And when you hear that God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name, does your soul rise with adoring gratitude, and with every power of your moral being, do *you*, prostrated before His blessed feet, exclaim, "Amen. Amen"? If not, what then? I fear *you* have never known Him. Therefore I conclude with a warning. Beware lest the moment come when He shall say, "I never knew you." "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish." H. W. S.

PLAIN DEALING.

IF you are laying up treasure for yourself, and are not rich towards God—Fool! (Luke xii. 20, 21.)

If you are *trusting in your own heart*—Fool! (Proverbs xxviii. 26.)

If you are making clean the outside of the cup, and of the platter, but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness—Fool! (Luke xi. 39, 40.)

If you are raising such questions as, "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?"—Fool! (1 Cor. xv. 35, 36.)

Christ is the wisdom of God. (1 Cor. i. 24.) Do you possess Him? Oh, if you despise Him, wronging your own soul, loving death, God says, "Fool! fool!" (Proverbs i. 7; viii. 36.) F. M.

TIDINGS OF LIFE AND PEACE.

FOUR GUILTY MEN AND THEIR CONFESSIONS.

I. THE CONFESSION OF FEAR.

NUMBERS xxii. 34.

"I HAVE SINNED," cried Balaam the sooth-sayer, as he cowered before the angel of Jehovah, who stood with sword in hand to withstand him.

Balaam was a religious man. He was familiar with the sacred name of Jehovah, and was widely famed as a prophet. He professed to inquire of the Lord, and plainly said that he could only do as he might be permitted by Him. He had good desires also. He said, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" He had visions too of future glory. He said, "I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh." Sorrowful confession!

Beneath all this religious cloak there was a heart that had no love for God and His people. Indeed, the very matter about which he pretended to inquire was an offer made to him of wealth and honour if he would curse the people of God. Was there any need that he should inquire of God about this matter? None; for had he loved God he would have shuddered at the thought

of cursing His people. Nor did he actually inquire. But God came to him and inquired, when Balaam told Him the errand of the messengers, and God absolutely forbade him to go. But if Balaam loved not God there was an object that filled his heart—an idol was enshrined there. He was a covetous man, who is an idolater. He longed to have the reward of iniquity which was offered him. He was like a man whose eyes are dazzled by lights which do not light his path, and he cannot see where he walks.

When God at length permitted him to go, that He might turn the intended curse into a blessing, Balaam eagerly clutched the permission, saddled his ass, and set out. The angel of Jehovah stood in his way, but he, blinded by the glitter of the gold, saw him not. Twice his ass turned aside, saving his life; and when at length she could turn no longer, she fell beneath him. As he laid his blows upon her, God opened her mouth, so that she spoke with a man's voice, rebuking his madness. But even this could not arrest him in his course. God then opened his eyes, and he saw the angel, who said to him, "I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me." Under such testimony, and before the sword of judgment, Balaam could hold out no longer. "I have sinned," he cried; and yet, making evident the shallowness of his confession, he added, "If it displease thee, I will get me back again;" that is, he was still bent upon going on in his sinful course, if he might be permitted. He was permitted; he went on, and fell among the enemies of Jehovah.

Solemn history, with its solemn lesson! Oh,

how many when in fear have cried, "I have sinned"—in a storm at sea, in the awful crash of the thunderstorm, or when lying near death! When God's hand has pressed heavily upon them, calling to mind a careless, selfish, godless life, and they have faced eternal judgment, what confessions have been poured out! what vows made! what stern resolutions formed! But, alas! when His hand has been removed, the fear has passed away, the vows and resolutions have been forgotten, and the old course returned to.

Do these pages speak to any such? "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." "Because there is wrath, beware lest He take thee away with His stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee."

II. THE CONFESSION OF REMORSE.

MATTHEW xxvii. 4.

"I HAVE SINNED," said Judas Iscariot, as he cast before the priests the money which he had coveted and gained.

Judas was a religious man. For more than three years he had been in company with Jesus and His disciples. So perfect did he appear in his religion that his companions rather doubted themselves than him. But there was an idol in his heart. He loved money, and Satan quickly formed a snare for him. By betraying his Master into the hands of His murderers he could gain thirty pieces of silver. He entered into a covenant, and all went off successfully. Satan hardened his heart against the last act of the grace of his Master—the sop dipped in the dish—and he carried out his awful plan. He kissed his Master and gained the reward of the traitor.

As a vulture seizes its prey, and cannot be driven away, so did remorse seize the soul of this unhappy man. "I have sinned," he cried. But he had no hope of pardon. Every act and word of grace from his Master had only served to harden his heart, as clay is baked by the bright shining of the sun. Now the horrors of hell rolled in upon his soul. He could not live. He went and hanged himself, and went "to his own place."

Awful picture! Oh, reader, may the confession of remorse never be thine!

"But I do not intend going to hell," you say. Neither did Judas. But hardening his heart against the grace of God, Satan was working out his destruction, until at the last, as with a shriek of horror, he passed into eternity.

"To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart."

III. THE CONFESSION OF REPENTANCE.

2 SAMUEL xii. 13.

"I HAVE SINNED," said David, smitten in his conscience by the word of God through the prophet.

It was the same language as Balaam used. But was it, as in his case, the transient effect of fear? Ah, no! It was the outpouring of a heart that truly considered its own sinfulness before God. It measured not its sin by the fear of consequences, but by the holiness of God. This we find from Psalm li., which was written at the same time by David.

"Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight." "Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: Thou delightest

not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, 'Thou wilt not despise.' There was the consciousness of the fact that nothing he could do, nothing he could give, could ever atone for his sin. His heart was broken as he thought upon it. But he, unlike Judas, knew the goodness of God; he was sure that in the multitude of His mercies He would not despise a broken and contrite heart.

"Purge me with hyssop," he prayed, "and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." His one resource was in God, the very God against whom he had sinned. He would not despise him; and if He would wash him, he would be whiter than earth's purest whiteness.

"The Lord also hath put away thy sin," was the answer of God to him. Oh, how truly God waits to be gracious! How speedily does His answer of peace follow the true confession of repentance!

"I HAVE SINNED," cried the prodigal, as he found himself clasped in his father's arms. (Luke xv.) The kisses of love fell upon his worn cheeks; his weary head was pillowed upon his father's bosom. In the light of such love his sin appeared in all its intense blackness. "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

Dear reader, are *you* that prodigal? Have your sins pressed heavily upon your conscience? Have you become weary in your struggles after joy? Has the love of God to the sinner at last made its way into your heart, melting it, as snow melts before the sun, until it has flowed in this true confession of repentance to Him?

“Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him,” cried the father. The love that runs to welcome the sinner hastes to provide the fitness for the presence of God. No fitness have we. But Jesus has suffered once for sins, “the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” And now we give thanks to “the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” (1 Peter iii. 18; Colossians i. 12.)

God “looketh upon men, and if any say, I HAVE SINNED, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.” (Job xxxiii. 27, 28.)

May each beloved reader know the present salvation of God—the forgiveness of sins, the covering with the best robe, and the joy and gladness of the Father’s house.

J. R.

“THE LONG, DARK NIGHT IS COMING, MARY.”

THESE words were spoken by one well known to the writer shortly before he was called into eternity. His life down here was ebbing fast away; and all he could look forward to was, as he expressed it, “a long, dark night.”

It is not in my power, reader, to say where this soul went to, but one cannot help judging by these almost last words that his salvation was very doubtful. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die;” and “whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

Now, dear reader, if you be called to die as you

stand at present in the sight of a holy God, are you ready to meet Him? If not, why delay any longer? Jesus is waiting for you to own yourself a lost, ruined sinner, and that you should cast yourself at His feet and own that it is only through His blood you can be saved. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isaiah i. 18.) Do not wait any longer to decide this all-important question of your soul's salvation.

If you were told you were in a wrong train when travelling somewhere, you would be very uneasy, and not satisfied until you found yourself going in the right direction again; but when the word of God tells you that wrath is abiding on you, and that you are on your way to the lake of fire, being borne on by time to eternity, you treat this warning with neglect, forgetting that it may result in the ruin of your precious soul.

Come to Jesus, dear unsaved reader. He is able and willing to save you—not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. God has loved us with such a love that He gave His only Son to die for us, in order that He might bear the divine judgment which was due to our sins, and make us fit to stand in His holy presence. What a wondrous offer of mercy, without money and without price! Can you refuse it? Oh, do not delay any longer, lest you be too late to enter in through that door which is now thrown open wide to receive you, and lest you find yourself void of all further hope, and no prospect before you but "*a long, dark night*," to be spent in the lake of fire prepared not for you,

dear unsaved one, but for the *devil* and his *angels*.
(Matt. xxv. 34, 41.)

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

"Oh, Lord, 'tis joy to look above,
And see Thee on the throne,
To search the heights and depths of love
Which Thou *to us* hast *shown*,
To look *beyond the long, dark night*
And hail the coming *day*,
When Thou to all Thy saints in light
Thy glories wilt display."

M. H. H.

LAST WORDS OF AN ENGINE-DRIVER.

(Killed in the collision at Hampton Wick, Aug. 6th, 1888.)

"**D**ON'T lift my head so high—my back is broken—it pains my back."

"Send for my wife."

"No, I shan't get over it; I am dying." (They told him his mother was come.)

"Mother, where are you? I can't see you now; but don't grieve for me, mother. It was not my fault. Thank God it was not my fault."

"I am going home to my blessed Lord Jesus. I found Him in life, and He is now with me in death. . . .

"Don't cry, mother. It is I who grieve for *you*. I only grieve for *you*, mother, for I am afraid you have not come to Jesus. Don't put it off, mother; you must come to Him. Oh! don't put it off. I—I am going home to Him—going *home*." (And thus he "fell asleep."—Acts vii. 60.)

Reader, have you come to Jesus? People come to everything else. They come to their law-

keeping, their feelings, to the amount of their faith, to their morality, yea, to anything of theirs, but not to Christ. "You must come to Him" to get relief, to get salvation, to get life. Come to Jesus. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt.xi.28.)

"Hark, sinner, while God from on high doth entreat thee,
And warnings with accents of mercy doth blend ;
Give ear to His voice, lest in judgment He meet thee :
'The harvest is passing, the summer will end.'

"How oft of thy danger and guilt He hath told thee !
How oft still the message of mercy doth send !
Haste, haste, while He waits in His arms to enfold thee :
'The harvest is passing, the summer will end.'

"Despised and rejected, at length He may leave thee ;
What anguish and horror thy bosom will rend !
Then haste thee, O sinner, while He will receive thee :
'The harvest is passing, the summer will end.'

"The Saviour will call thee in judgment before Him ;
Oh, bow to His sceptre, and make Him thy Friend !
Now yield Him thy heart, and make haste to adore Him ;
'Thy harvest is passing, thy summer will end.'"

H. C. A.

LETTER TO AN UNDECIDED ONE.

"I HAVE often, of late, asked myself how it is you do not decide for Christ as Percy the driver did, and as in mercy some of us whom you know have done. It is no disgrace to take up the confession of His name, and if you once do it, remember He is able to give you strength to carry it out. But you must make a start. You *must begin*, and that beginning is to receive, and then confess Christ as your Saviour, and then, as a follower of Christ—that is, a Christian—read the New Testament to see how you should

live and act. I believe that this is the one step left for you to take. I think that you do believe the word of God—the Bible—only you have not yet had the courage to join those who are not ashamed to let others know that they do, and are Christians. What is there to be ashamed of in being willing to own that I am trusting Christ and His word, which says that when He died He died for all, and if for all, then for me? Can a man save himself? Read for yourself that 'He died for all' in 2 Cor. v. 14, 15; then read in 1 Cor. xv. 3 that 'He died for our sins;' and then that 'the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from ALL sin.' (1 John i. 7.) Not some sins, mind, but ALL; *all gone*, and gone for ever, from God's presence.

"Then step out boldly and say, 'I believe it,' spite of Satan, who, even while you are reading this, will try to hinder your soul from passing into perfect peace; but (turn and read it for yourself in Romans xv. 13) joy and peace come only from believing, not from doing, or any other thing.

"Safe for eternity, and saved by this believing, which is only another name for faith (Romans v. 1 and 1 Cor. xv. 2), do not let Satan hinder your entering into it by suggesting that you will fail to act up to it. Tell him the truth; that is, that 'he is a liar' from the beginning (John viii. 44), and that God, who has kept others—and many very weak ones too—can keep you, and if you do fail can restore and lead you on. Say, 'I do believe it now, at this moment, and I will trust God for the future.' May you step out, like a child in obedience, and say this openly to others."

H. C. A.

THE EMPTY SEPULCHRE.

NO. I. IS HE DEAD OR RISEN ?

THERE was no small stir in Jerusalem on the third morning after the crucifixion of Jesus. Elders and priests were in close consultation; for the report brought by the Roman soldiers from the sepulchre had been the source of more than ordinary uneasiness. The body of Jesus *gone!* Could it be possible? Alas! for them it was but too true. What then could be done in the matter? Was Jesus *risen*, and their worst fears realized? No; they would never allow their proud hearts to bow to such an unwelcome fact. *Risen?* Never! But His body was missing from the sepulchre. What could be said? With the arch-deceiver at their side, himself as much foiled and disappointed as they, an explanation is soon arrived at. The soldiers must be bribed, their lives protected, and a report set afloat through the city, as a fitting answer to all enquirers.

Now let us remember that eternal issues are at stake in this question, and let us calmly and carefully consider what their report was worth. For "*If Christ be not raised . . . ye are yet in your sins,*" says the apostle (1 Cor. xv. 17.)

Here it is, then "*His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept.*" (Matt. xxviii. 13.)

Now, upon the face of it, if this story be true, another thing must be taken along with it; viz., that of all the dwellers in Jerusalem at the time, none knew so well as the disciples that Jesus was still dead, and that He was a dead "deceiver."

Had He not repeatedly told them that He should rise again from the dead the third day? (See Matt. xvii. 9, xxvi. 32; Mark ix. 31; Luke xviii. 33.) Indeed, this fact had become so notorious that the Lord's enemies, whose perceptions were quickened by malice and fear, seem to have laid hold of it more firmly than His attached disciples had done. None, therefore, we repeat, knew so well as His disciples that He had dashed all their hopes as to His Messiahship, and entirely forfeited their confidence in His truthfulness. What, then, could have followed but the effectual scattering of this feeble few had it been so? Was it not so when *Theudas* was slain (Acts v. 36, 37), and when *Judas of Galilee* was cut off? But what do we find in the case of the disciples? Why never before the cross had the Lord such bold and persistent followers as He had after. The handful of men who fled for fear from the side of their *living* Master, were afterwards prepared to go to prison and to death for Him, and to go *joyfully*. And all this for whom? for a dead Impostor? Yes, even so, if they were but midnight body-snatchers, and their Master not risen from the dead. But let us look at this story more closely:

"*His disciples came by night and stole Him away.*" (Matt. xxviii. 13.) Alas for these heads of the nation! their very determination to keep the body of Jesus in the tomb until after the third day, turned out to be one of the strongest links in the chain of testimony against them. Pilate seems to have fallen in with their wishes, by granting a special guard of soldiers to watch the tomb, and added further, "*Make it as sure as ye can.*" This they certainly did; and it is easy to picture their self-satisfied faces as they

look again and again at the huge stone at the door, at the secure fastening, and the official seal. Who dare tamper with it? Surrounded as it was with their military watch, who could? All that was now left would be to wait quietly until the third day, and then to open the sepulchre, and reveal the dead body of Jesus. This would be the crowning day for their hatred and pride.

But had these precautions *not* been taken, there might have been, at first perhaps, an *appearance* of truth in this concocted story.

Here was a "great stone," so heavy, indeed, that the devoted women (who had doubtless seen it) despaired of being, by their combined strength, able to roll it away. What, then, must the difficulty have been when, in addition to the usual fastening, it was securely and officially sealed? For we may rest assured that, when these chief priests had, to their own satisfaction, "*made the sepulchre sure*," by no ordinary wrench would any one be able to cast the stone aside and enter. And yet, to their own showing, all this was done without even waking the Roman guards, who, instead of watching, lay sleeping on the spot. Was it credible?

But look at the rest of the story: "*While we slept*." Now it is well known, that for a man in the Roman army to fall asleep while on guard was to incur the penalty of death, so that it was a rare occurrence for any soldier on watch to do it. But here was a number of them, with more than ordinary charges of vigilance, and yet they *all* go fast to sleep. Indeed, so soundly do they slumber that a sealed sepulchre could be broken into, the ponderous stone rolled away, and a dead body carried safely out without their being awakened.

Neither trampling of footsteps, nor the wrenching of official fastenings, could arouse these sound sleepers. And yet *they could actually tell who it was that came and stole away the body!*

Was a more clumsy, threadbare lie ever told? Well might the chief priests have deemed it necessary to pay "large money" to the soldiers to adopt and repeat such a story. Yet this was the only way the Lord's absence from the tomb could be accounted for by them.

No wonder, then, that all the enemies of Christ should be astir in Jerusalem, as miracle after miracle was performed in the name and power of the risen Jesus.

But could they not stamp out this new doctrine? Well, at any rate they would try. A hot zealot was soon found in the person of a young man of promise and energy—Saul of Tarsus. *He* would carry their cause to certain victory. Exceedingly mad against the poor followers of the despised Nazarene, he set to His work in real earnest. He had undertaken to superintend the stoning of Stephen; and having made havoc of the disciples in Jerusalem, he was now determined to do the same in Damascus.

But even the hottest enemy to the truth of the resurrection is to become one of its boldest witnesses. On the road thither he is suddenly arrested by the voice of the ascended Jesus. The glorified One speaks to him, "*I am Jesus whom thou persecutest;*" and the champion persecutor is turned forthwith into a willing servant, and "Jesus and the resurrection" becomes his life-long theme.

What a testimony was this! Writing to the Corinthians afterwards (1 Cor. xv. 15), and speak-

ing of the various witnesses of the resurrection, he says, "He was *seen of Cephas*, then of *the twelve*; after that He was seen of *above five hundred brethren at once*; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that He was *seen of James*; then of *all the apostles*; and last of all He was seen of *me also*, as of one born out of due time." And who shall dare to gainsay the witness which he bore, or question the motives which actuated him in bearing it?

Was it for personal or pecuniary gain he did it? Listen to his words as they come from the walls of a foreign prison, a place he reached, moreover, because of this very testimony,—*"I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ."* (Phil. iv. 8.)

Did an ambitious desire for worldly glory influence him? He was accounted the very "filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things," and he knew it. (1 Cor. iv. 13.)

Was it for social or religious applause? His confession of Christ simply meant the sacrifice of every religious friend he had. New companions he found, it is true, but they were among those he once so bitterly hated, the poor and despised among men.

Had he remained the fierce persecutor of the humble followers of the "Nazarene," the learned, and religious, and respectable in Jerusalem would have honoured and applauded him still; but by becoming a bold witness of Jesus and the resurrection he is imprisoned here, half murdered there, hated everywhere. Read that long catalogue of ills in 2 Cor. xi. 23-28, and you will see the recompense Paul got for bearing testimony to a risen Saviour. Nor was life itself so dear to him

as the joy of finishing his course of labour and suffering in the interests of the One who had awakened his sleepy conscience and won his rebel heart.

God has taken great care, then, that there should be an abundant witness to the truth of His resurrection. Angels and men, friend and foe alike, are called in to give their testimony. And even those who denied it at the beginning, and those who wilfully do so still, are certainly divested of every tittle of proof to the contrary.

Reader, do *you* believe that the glory of the Father visited that dark sepulchre and raised up Jesus from the dead? Do you believe that the highest place in heaven is now occupied by that very Man—that God has not only raised Him, but made Him Lord of all? Believe it or not, it is so, and we would earnestly call upon you to bow to Him now. If you remain unsaved you must, sooner or later, bow before a throne of judgment, and be damned. Thank God, you *may* bow before a throne of grace and be saved. Oh, turn to Him *now* in true repentance! “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Rom. x. 13.)

If God, in righteousness, forsook Him on the cross as a Sin-bearer, in righteousness He has glorified Him as the Sin-purger; *i.e.* as having done the work of sin-purging. (Heb. i. 3.) And He is equally righteous in clearing from all charge of sin the guiltiest sinner who believes in Jesus. (Rom. iii. 25.) But beware of indecision. Your eternity may hang upon this moment. The risen One is coming again, and coming quickly. Bow to the Man of power now, and you will find Him the most blessed of friends for ever. GEO. C.

TIDINGS OF LIFE AND PEACE.



THE EMPTY SEPULCHRE.

II. WHAT IS BELIEVING IN VAIN?

1 COR. xv. 2.

UNTOLD gladness must have filled the hearts of the disciples as they discovered, beyond any possibility of doubt, that their Lord was risen from the dead. At first it seemed too good to be true, as one witness after another proclaimed the welcome news, "*He is risen! He is risen!*" Even when they saw Him standing in their midst, we are told that, until He "did eat before them," they "believed not for joy." But there could be no mistake about those wounded hands and that pierced side of His. The most doubting one is fully convinced, and each and all go forth prepared, henceforth, to stake all they had in this world, and all they hoped for in the next—nay, even life itself—upon the truth of it. "*He is risen! He is risen!*" was their simple testimony, and their souls went with it. "*With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.*" (Acts iv. 33.)

Years rolled on, and the restless enemy still continued busy. He had signally failed in his direct attack from without; he would now try what he could do by an indirect attack from

within. Accordingly we find that, at Corinth, he managed that false teachers should creep into the assembly; teaching that "there is no resurrection of the dead." (1 Cor. xv. 12.) But with what moral force and transparent simplicity does the apostle cause the light to be focussed upon this crafty design of Satan! How thoroughly he exposes it! He shows a sevenfold consequence to believers if this "no-resurrection" theory were true. The whole gospel arch would give way if this keystone were removed. Seven important links would necessarily fall if that one link were severed. Let us look at these in order.

1. "If there be no resurrection of the dead, *then is Christ not risen.*" (v. 13.)

2. "If Christ be not risen, *then is our preaching vain.*" (v. 14.)

3. If our preaching is vain, "*your faith is also vain . . . ye have believed in vain.*" (vv. 2, 14.)

4. "*We are found false witnesses of God;* because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ" (v. 15); which was a lie, if there was no such thing as resurrection.

5. "*Ye are yet in your sins;*" i.e., if Christ be not raised. (v. 17.)

6. "*Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished;*" for if living believers are still in their sins, those who had departed *had died in their sins*, and consequently "*perished.*" (v. 18.)

7. "*We [the apostles] are of all men most miserable*" (v. 19), for "we stand in jeopardy" of our lives "every hour," because of preaching this very doctrine.

How crafty of the devil to aim this kind of back-handed blow at the truth of Christ's resur-

rection! Little do professing Christians know what they are doing when they wilfully depart, in the least degree, from the plain doctrine of God's word. But now comes the question—

WHAT IS MEANT BY BELIEVING IN VAIN?

Take a simple illustration. A London tradesman owes to a manufacturer in the North the sum of £50. Repeated demands are made for a settlement of the account, but in vain. The poor tradesman has well-nigh come to a dead-lock in his affairs, and is quite unable to meet this claim on the part of his creditor.

One morning, among his business letters, he finds a short but very important note. It is from a friendly man of business living in the town next to that of the manufacturer, saying, that on hearing of his serious difficulties, he had been to the creditor's office and laid down a cheque for the full amount, and that a receipt would be sent in due course. The poor tradesman's mind is forthwith set at rest about the debt, for he fully believes the word of his correspondent.

By a later post the same day comes another letter in the well-known handwriting of his creditor. "Ah," thinks he, "this is doubtless the receipt for my long-standing account," as, with good courage, he breaks the seal, and begins to read. But, alas! no such thing. With regret the manufacturer writes to tell him, that the cheque, paid on his behalf yesterday, had been dishonoured at the bank, and that consequently the £50 is still owing.

Now, you see, it was not that the cheque had not been paid, and not that the poor debtor did not fully believe it, but that since the creditor could

not accept the dishonoured cheque as payment, the debtor had *believed in vain*, and was *still in debt* to the manufacturer.

Now may the Spirit of grace apply this to the help of some anxious reader of these pages. Is it not clear that if a settlement is to be made with God on account of sin, it is the One against whom we have sinned that must accept the satisfaction when offered? It is He who must be satisfied with that which makes the settlement. Now such was made when, upon the cross, the dying Saviour said, "It is finished." As a sin-bearer, He had been under the judgment of God—"forsaken," as His own blessed lips proclaimed. But what proof should we have had of God's acceptance of that work, or His good pleasure in it, if the One who did it were still in the grave, having never been raised? None whatever. Plenty of evidence we should have had that He had *undertaken* the settlement of that awful question, or why the sinless One there at all? Why that bitter cry in the darkness? Why forsaken? But where the proof that in God's account He had not failed in the attempt? Even though we had believed, and ever so firmly believed, that He had died for us, we should still be in our sins. If God had not raised Him from the dead, we should have believed in vain.

Now this is what the apostle is seeking to press upon the Corinthians when he says, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." (1 Cor. xv. 17.)

But Christ is risen, "risen indeed;" and the blessed consequence is that the believer is no longer in his sins before God, but out of them for

ever. He who bore our sins is out of them, or God could not righteously have raised and glorified Him, and therefore those for whom He suffered must be out of them also.

A little Irish boy was once asked the question, "How do you know that your sins have been put away?" His answer was a clear proof that he had got hold of God's side of the gospel, heaven's side of the cross. It was simply this, "*Because they're not on Jesus now.*"

"Of course they are not. But what has that to do with it?"

"Everything. Because if He actually bore my sins in His own body on the cross—and He did—and is now in heaven without them, He must certainly have put them away."

How beautiful, how heart-cheering, such an answer! The Lord fill my reader's heart with the joy of such an answer—God's own answer to every question of the enemy as to the sins of all who believe in Jesus.

GEO. C.

"I MADE MONEY LIKE MAKING HAY."

A GENTLEMAN said to me one day in conversation, "Ten years ago my health broke down through overworking my brain. Mine was a very lucrative business, and for twenty-five years I made money like making hay. I literally *coined* money; and when I found I was amassing it so quickly, it made me all the keener after it. I worked hard early and late; but my doctor told me that if I continued I should some day have to pay for it, which I did not then believe. At last I was compelled to retire, for my sleep went from

me, and since then I have tried nearly every remedy the doctors can prescribe. I have been three times to Italy, to America, and other parts of the globe, but cannot get back my sleep. I am compelled to leave home about every three months for bracing air, or else I should get as bad as ever. Here I have made all this money, and I cannot enjoy it now I have got it."

"Look here, Mr. W——," I remarked. "It may seem to you out of place, or it may not, for me to contribute my recommendation to your long list of remedies."

"All right, sir, all right; go on," said he.

"Well, Mr. W——, I strongly advise you to try the '*road-to-glory*' remedy, as an excellent and lasting one for your very trying complaint. Receive as your Saviour the One who said, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life;' and who said, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I *will give you rest.*'"

"Yes," said Mr. W——; "I do really believe if I took that advice it would be the very thing for me; for a good clergyman once told me that nothing short of that sort of thing would meet my case."

"Then, Mr. W——," I continued, "*will* you really receive Christ as your Saviour, and get on the road to eternal glory, and be delivered from eternal hell? For myself, I do assure you, that were I not certain I should go straight to the Lord in glory if I died in my sleep, I durst not, for one single moment, lay my head on my pillow, lest I should drop off to sleep and wake up in the torments of hell."

"That's very good," said he.

"Yes, but will you *try* it? You cannot lose by

it; you are sure to gain for time and for all eternity."

"Well, I *must* try it," he replied.

His train, taking him off, prevented the opportunity of further pressing the all-important question, and it remains to be seen whether or not our friend has really adopted the divine remedy. If he has, he may read in God's word, "He giveth His beloved *sleep*;" and, "Ye shall find rest unto your souls."

There is no doubt Mr. W—— was ill at ease about his soul's eternal destiny; but "the love of money is the root of all evil."

You may "make money like making hay," and in like manner get every thing else this poor, doomed world can hold out to you; but what of it all when sickness comes, or that unwelcome death-knell reaches your ear, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee"? "Then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure *for himself*, and is not rich toward God." (Luke xii. 20, 21.)

Reader, where is *your* treasure? Is it on earth or in heaven? and does it in reality give you solid rest, peace, and joy of heart? You may not have riches or poverty to burden you, but every heart knows its own bitterness. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for *where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*." (Matt. vi. 19-21.) Yes; steer clear of the *moth*, the *rust*, and the *thief*.

The moth eats the *soft things*, the rust spoils the *bright things*, and the thief *steals* the *good things*; and after that there is not much left for your heart to cling to.

If you have true soul-exercise, we earnestly beseech you to try the "road-to-glory" remedy. Call it not "very good," and say not, "I must try it," and after all, perhaps, not accept Christ, God's remedy for your soul's eternal need. David said, "I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a *place for the Lord*," and such we recommend to you. J. N.

THE WORLD'S FUTURE.

I.

THERE is nothing more certain than that the world is doomed, and will presently undergo judgment.

We do not gather this from the conjectures of men, but from the sure word of God. The Bible is God's revelation to man, and amongst other things it reveals that the world for its sinfulness is condemned. The sentence remains to be executed.

Nothing, we repeat, is more certain than this. When the apostle Paul preached his famous sermon in the capital of classic Greece, he announced to the philosophers, scientists, and pleasure-seekers, who formed his audience, the future of the world. He indulged in no fond dream of a golden age, of good times to come, but in stern and solemn language proclaimed the awful doom that hung over the guilty scene. "God," says he, "*commandeth all men everywhere to repent.*" Why?

"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."

The world is growing better and wiser, men say; the mists of superstition and ignorance are vanishing; civilization is rapidly doing its own mighty work; and man, by the development of his intellectual powers, is releasing himself from those encumbrances that, till now, hindered true progress and happiness. On the lips of thousands is the boast of the world's progress. Progress, true, but it is towards the eternal judgment of God.

There has been on this earth a mighty Prophet, a Revealer of the future; One of whom it is written, *"He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God."* And those who are wise will listen to these words, for God cannot err.

What, then, did Christ predict respecting the world's destiny? Refer to Matthew xxiv., xxv., and listen to the awful tale of judgment He is telling. Here Christ removes the veil of the world's future, and announces the outpourings of the wrath of God. He even discloses its state just prior to the judgment. *"As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."*

These are the words of God, for He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God.

Thus, reader, we learn that the state of the world immediately preceding the coming of Christ to judgment will correspond with its state in Noah's time; and for further light we invite you to accompany us to Genesis vi., vii., and consider that eventful period of the world's history.

The earth had become peopled with the family of fallen Adam and his wife, and for 1500 years man had had his own way, and done his own will; but in Genesis vi. God appears upon the scene, and this is what He saw: "That the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Then the decree goes forth from the divine lips; judgment is announced: "*I will destroy man whom I have created.*"

There was one man, however, who found grace in the eyes of the Lord. His name was Noah. And, to preserve him from the universal destruction, God gave him directions to make an ark of refuge.

But God did not immediately carry out His sentence of doom. He measured out a period of 120 years from the decree to its execution, and in this interval Noah was commissioned to build the ark, and announced to the world the judgment to come. Chapter vii. opens seven days before the flood. The ark is ready, the testimony is ended, and God says to Noah, "Come . . . into the ark."

Now Noah was a wise man. *He believed the word of God.* None can imagine the amount of ridicule and scorn he encountered from an apostate world as he built his ark, and proclaimed the impending vengeance of God.

But the unbelief of the world did not affect the faith of Noah; it hindered him not from preaching and building, and it altered not the sure word of God. Thus the 120 years passed away, and Genesis vii. opens, as we have said, on the edge of the storm.

Now, from what we learn in the Bible of God's nature and ways, it is certain that these 120 years were years of patient waiting on His part—years in which He waited to display mercy and grace towards any who might receive Noah's testimony, and repent. But it is a most solemn and extraordinary fact that not a single human being outside Noah's family entered the ark; that is to say, not a single person of all who were then living had listened believingly to the testimony of God's servant respecting the world's future; all had deliberately and wilfully closed their ears to the voice of the prophet of judgment, and indulged in false dreams of present peace and an undisturbed future.

Now, although we are more than 4000 years removed from this awful epoch of the world's history, we know exactly how the people were engaged on the day when the judgment came. Jesus tells us that they were "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage;" that is to say, they were living as they had always lived—in total unconcern as to the terrible future, never dreaming, for an instant, that in a few short hours their corpses would be floating on the waters of judgment, and their souls mourning in a lost eternity. Yet in their ears were ringing words of dread import, calls to repentance from the prophet of God; and before their eyes rose up,

huge and mysterious, the ark of refuge, significant of coming danger.

Noah's wisdom did not stop when the ark was finished. When the command of the Lord came, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark," we read, "And Noah went in."

And he had a good reason for going into the ark. It was "*because of the flood*;" that is to say, the very judgment which the world refused to believe in, induced Noah to get, with all haste, into a place where he would be secure from it. Yet what had he more than they? Certainly he had the word from Jehovah's lips, but that same word he preached to them.

And then, when the believer and his family were in safety, the word preached and derided for 120 years received its awful fulfilment. Waters from above and below—the avengers of God—rushed upon the earth, and clasped in their deadly embrace every living thing that moved upon the earth. "And all flesh died . . . and every man . . . and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark."

Though forty centuries have come and gone since then, the Holy Ghost has so placed on record in the pages of eternal truth this awful story of judgment that one can seem to gaze upon the scene and see it re-enacted.

When the valleys were filled by the deadly waters, numbers doubtless fled to the high hills for safety, but the Spirit tells us the pursuing waters rose up and covered the high hills. To the higher mountains—their last resource—thousands may have crowded, but fifteen cubits upwards did the waters prevail, and the mountains were covered.

Oh, the agony of the watchers as they watched the rising waters, filled, even then, with countless multitudes of the dead and dying. Oh, the prayers and cries of those who, on the morn of that fatal day, were "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage," all heedless of the warnings of the preacher Noah!

There, riding securely on the waters of judgment, was the ark that all had once despised, but now despised no longer. Many a drowning wretch would clutch despairingly at the vessel as the raging waters carried him past, but it was all too late. Many a dying creature would wail out a last prayer to God or Noah to open the door. Vain prayer! God had shut that door, and when He shutteth no one openeth.

But some are saying, "Why drag out of the obscure past scenes that are best forgotten?" Because, my readers, this judgment that came upon the old world is the type of a more awful judgment that will ere long burst upon the present world. Above the rush and roar of those mighty waters we hear the trumpet-voice of the great Prophet of God announcing, "*As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be, also in the days of the Son of man.*"

But as in view of the deluge God provided the ark as a refuge for any who would receive His word, so also has He, in prospect of the coming judgment, provided an ark of salvation, and that ark is CHRIST.

H. W. S.

"THE acceptance of *Christ* carries salvation with it (Luke xix.), although *peace* is only obtained through a knowledge of His *work*."

“NOTHING ELSE WILL DO.”

A SHORT time since I visited some of the Lord's people at the town of L——, and on leaving the place for D—— I was not quite sure of my way; but on the road I met a young person, and enquired, “Is this the right way to D——?” “Yes, sir,” she replied. I thanked her, and said, “There is just one question more I should like to ask—Can you now tell me the way to heaven?” She looked at me very earnestly, and said, “Oh, yes, sir; you must be washed in the blood of the Lamb!” I said, “Is there no other way?” “No,” she answered, “no other way; and nothing, nothing else will do.” I then asked her whether she had been washed in that precious blood. Her face brightened, and she said, “Yes, thank God.” We shook hands, perhaps never again to meet on earth; but up there in heaven we shall together say, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood . . . to Him be glory.” (Rev. i. 5, 6.)

Reader, if you are unsaved, may the words of this dear young girl speak home to your soul, “There is no other way, and nothing else will do.” Your morality, your observance of religious forms and ceremonies, your prayers and good intentions, will not avail to save you. In Isaiah i. 6 we read, “From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores.” In Romans iii. 23 we read, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” and surely you are included. It is

God who says this; but the same God also says, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isaiah i. 18.) Reader, it must be the blood of the Lamb; "*nothing else will do.*"

D. H.

"DEAD WORKS."

"I'M dying! Where am I going?" were the words spoken in tones of despair early one morning in the dreary ward of a large infirmary.

Ah, it was a sad sight to see that soul pass away into eternity, clinging to the worn thread of earthly life.

"I thought I was getting better—and I've been here so long—but I'm dying. Where am I going?" said the poor woman, looking piteously at the Christian girl who supported her, and who, overpowered by the sad scene, was sent away by the nurse, to hear afterwards that she died with a "frown on her face."

But had she no hope beyond the grave? Alas! no. Morning by morning a Romish priest had stood beside her bed, lulling her soul by his vain repetitions, but in the hour of death these "dead works" formed no foundation on which her soul could rest. A living Saviour—One "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification"—is the *only object* of a faith that reaches beyond the tomb when the link between body and soul is breaking.

The afternoon of the day before two Christian ladies had visited the ward, and as they paused at the entrance, looking from bed to bed, they had noted the impress of death upon this woman's

face; and one of them, ere she left, had gone anxiously to her side to speak of Christ, but had met with a repulse; so, repeating a text, and turning sadly away, the last opportunity was gone.

Oh, reader, death is a terrible foe! The word of God says, "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war." (Eccles. viii. 8.) Unsought, he approaches his victim, and as the "wages of sin"—for "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, *for that all have sinned*" (Romans v. 12)—the human race earn a bitter portion.

It is the cross of Christ that disarms this foe. There we see One who turned not aside from that dark hour, "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." (Hebrews ii. 14, 15.) Yes, dear reader, Satan is a conquered foe; the "sting of death" too (sin) is gone for all whose sins are forgiven, and for them death is but the entrance to eternal bliss.

But remember, nothing unreal will stand should death come to you—no human works, no human efforts; and if you have been "daubing" thus, as with "untempered mortar;" if you have been saying, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace," you will find, like this poor woman, that your house is built on the sand.

Ah, dear reader, it is better to let the house tumble down in time, rather than in that dread *eternity*, when the wicked dead shall be raised at the second resurrection. (Rev. xx. 12.) O.

TIDINGS OF LIFE AND PEACE.

THE EMPTY SEPULCHRE.

III. THE SURETY SET FREE.

HOW ready we are to turn in upon ourselves for some proof in our feelings that the momentous question of our soul's salvation is settled! How slow in turning to Christ, the risen Surety! To hear many an anxious soul speak, you might think that instead of the Lord saying, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved," He had said, "Look at yourself till you feel you are saved." And thus it is that many a troubled seeker is kept in doubt and darkness for years. Oh, what a relief it is to turn from self, with all its defeats and vain struggles, and rest the eye upon a risen Saviour, knowing that in God's account His victory is our own!

"We triumph in Thy triumphs, Lord."

We wish to bring this blessed risen Surety before your heart, dear reader, and we long for your blessing in doing so. Should heart and conscience still be anxious and unsettled, we beg of you to look up to God, before reading further, and seek His blessing upon this little paper. He alone can give the truth a peace-speaking entrance.

Let us first take a simple illustration. A kind-hearted traveller has occasion to spend a few days

in a small country village. He is himself strictly punctual in all his business concerns, and owes not a single penny to any man.

During his short stay he hears that the poor widow who keeps the village shop is deeply in debt, and likely to be sold up on that account. His kind heart is so touched that, in order to save her from "distress," he signs his name as surety for the whole of her responsibilities. Now from that moment, until every farthing is paid, *he* is in debt. To what amount? To the exact amount of the *widow's* debts—no more, no less.

Now suppose you knew, for certain, that during the following week this gentleman had left the village, and, as to debt, left it as he came into it, not owing a single penny; what would you say of the poor widow's affairs? She would certainly be out of debt also. Exactly. And it is even so with believers in connection with their Surety. To use our figure, He came into this world, and passed through it "out of debt." He, the perfectly sinless One, had not the shadow of a righteous charge against Him. But when He offered Himself without spot to God as our Surety, then could He call *our* sins *His* sins; and hence the fierce wrath, the dark forsaking, the undiminished judgment which overtook and overwhelmed Him as He hung upon the tree as our Substitute. As it is written, "He was wounded for *our* transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of *our* peace [or the chastisement whereby *our* peace was effected] was upon Him; and with His stripes *we* are healed." (Isaiah liii. 5.) And again, in verse 7, which some read thus: "*It was exacted, and He was made answerable, and He opened not His mouth.*"

But He has left this poor world again, and returned to heavenly glory. Did He go out as He came in? Were the charges of the Surety still binding upon Him, or had He satisfied the righteous claims for which He made Himself answerable? There can be but one answer: He went out chargeless. How could the glory of God and the unsettled question of sin be found together in one person? Hear the testimony of God's word: "Christ was raised up from the dead *by the glory* of the Father." (Romans vi. 4.) He was "*received up in glory*" (1 Timothy iii. 16), and then "*crowned with glory*." (Hebrews ii. 9.)

God had justified the guilty sinner's Surety. In prophetic language, after speaking of His sufferings, the blessed Saviour could say, "He is near that justifieth Me; *who will contend with Me?* let us stand together: who is Mine adversary? let him come near to Me. Behold, the Lord God will help Me; *who is he that shall condemn Me?*" (Isaiah l. 8, 9.)

And if the Surety is beyond charge, so are those for whom He stood responsible. Indeed, so clear are they that the Holy Ghost takes up, in Romans viii., this very language of the Lord Jesus, just quoted, and boldly asks, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. *Who is he that condemneth?* It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." And this happy position of "no condemnation" is, in God's account, the indisputable portion of *every* believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Is the Surety free—free from even the slightest charge? So are they. Is He beyond and for ever clear of

condemnation? So are they. Their place is determined by His, henceforward for ever.

For proof of the settlement, therefore, do not look into the restless heart of the poor debtor, but behold the glory-crowned brow of the risen Surety, and lift up heart and voice in His praise. He, He alone is worthy. *Trust Him, trust Him.*

“He bore on the tree the sentence for me,
And now both the Surety and the sinner are free.”

GEO. C.

THE WORLD'S FUTURE.

No. 2.

TIS an old, old story, so oft repeated that some seem to have grown weary of listening to it; but to those who have believed it to the saving of their souls, new wonders are unfolded each time of telling—wonders of grace and truth, of wisdom, love, and righteousness. And the story runs that God, in marvellous mercy, sent His beloved Son into this ruined world to die in the sinner's stead; that the Son, in perfect obedience and love, came and willingly offered Himself a sacrifice for sin. There, on the dread cross, God's judgment descended upon the Sinless One, that the sinful might be saved. From His pierced side, in death, poured forth the precious blood, a ransom for the soul.

In the cold, dark grave in the Arimathæan's garden lay the Son of the Father's bosom. Then by the Father's glory the Son was raised, and taken into heaven, exalted a Prince and a Saviour. From the realms of bliss came the blessed Spirit to announce to a lost world that through Christ's most precious sacrifice sins had been atoned for;

divine righteousness was satisfied, and a full and free salvation from the coming wrath secured for every one who believes in Jesus.

Yes, God be adored, Christ Jesus is the blessed ark of refuge for perishing sinners. All who flee to Him are saved for evermore.

When on earth, journeying to the cross, He announced the truth to the listening multitudes. "NOW IS THE JUDGMENT OF THIS WORLD." The sentence went forth never to be recalled. But was there *no* hope for any in the doomed scene? Yes, listen: "*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.*" (John xii. 31, 32.)

He looked upon the lost world. He saw the approaching judgment, its awful doom, its helplessness, its hopelessness. He would become its Saviour, would be lifted up on Golgotha's cross that the storm might burst upon Him, and then to Him should all eyes look; to Him should come for refuge men of all classes and conditions, Jew and Gentile, black and white, learned and unlearned, old and young, rich and poor. He was the true ark; all needed Him, all should come, and the door should stand wide open for all who came.

Great and glorious He stands before us, this blessed Person, the sinner's *only* refuge. Words of solemn warning and measureless love fall from His lips. He pronounces the judgment, and is Himself the Saviour from it. As He speaks, as we gaze upon Him, we realize the world's fate, the threatenings of divine wrath are heard, the mutterings of the coming tempest. BUT THERE IS THE ARK WITH OPEN DOOR. He stands alone; the incarnate God come down to earth for the salvation of His lost creatures. Before Him fade

and vanish every other means of safety from the approaching wrath.

And then, right onward through the intervening ages, from that day to this, out from the doomed world, a ceaseless stream of sinners, laden with misery and guilt, and fearing the coming judgment, have come to the once uplifted One, and found in Him life, joy, and eternal safety.

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The hundred and twenty years of Genesis vi. corresponds with the present age, the period of God's longsuffering. The word of warning went out to the old world during those years of waiting. The warning of coming judgment has never ceased during the nineteen centuries of this dispensation. Jesus proclaimed it, died, rose, and left the earth; then sprang up an army of witnesses, and, in the might of the Spirit of God, spread the news from pole to pole.

Paul announced that Christ was coming to raise His dead saints, change the living, and translate them all into the glory of God, and that He then would inflict vengeance upon a world that had rejected Him.

Peter spoke of the time that was coming when the heavens should pass away, and the elements melt with fervent heat; when the earth also, and the works that are therein, should be burned up—the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

James heralded the news that "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." "Behold, the Judge standeth before the door."

Jude takes up the prophecy of Enoch caught up to heaven before the flood. "Behold, the Lord

cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all."

While John completes the inspired Word with the sublime but awful pictures of the outpourings of God's wrath upon a Christless world, and then conducts us, in vision, to the judgment of the great white throne, where death, hell, and sea give up their dead, and every unsaved man is judged according to his works.

My reader, a word with you. Have *you* fled to Christ for refuge from the coming wrath? If you have not, the truth of God about you is that you are part and parcel of a world that is reserved for judgment, and if you avail not yourself of His ark, no power in the universe can save you from being engulfed in the awful doom that is coming upon it.

Yet, with you, Christ is pleading this moment; with the hand that was pierced, through your many sins, He beckons you to Him. From the glory He calls you out of this ruined world to Himself. Will you come? The door of the ark is open—open for you. Hark! What is He saying? "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." (John x.) Oh, delay not! This very hour Christ may come, and with a shout awaken His sleeping saints, and catching them and the living ones away to Himself in the air, take them into the glory of God! But this moment of the saint's blessing will be the commencement of the world's judgment; thenceforward mercy's door is shut against all who have rejected the gospel.

ARE YOU OUTSIDE?

And what is outside? *Outside!* Why the judgment-throne; the awful presence of an

offended God; the blackness of darkness; the ceaseless wailing; the quenchless fire; the undying worm; the despair and soul-agony of a lost eternity.

ARE YOU INSIDE?

And what is *inside*? Inside! Why the never-ending joy and singing of the Father's house; the presence and company of Jesus; the deep, untold bliss of a saved eternity in God's fadeless glory.

Seven days before the flood God told Noah to come into the ark, and Noah obeyed.

The coming judgment may commence this day, or it may not be here for seven days. It matters not. God is saying to you, "Come to My Son;" and if you ask, *When* shall I come? His answer is, Now. "Now is the day of salvation." Obey God, and you will forthwith be as safe as was Noah when he stepped into the ark, and was shut in by the Lord. Delay, and the judgment will come and overtake you as surely as it overtook the unbelievers in the day of the deluge.

Noah might have argued, 'There are yet seven days; why get in before the seventh day? But happily for him God's word sufficed. "Come into the ark" brought him straightway to the *only* refuge from the coming wrath.

Is God's word sufficient for you?

A week before the flood Noah knew the day and almost the hour when it would come; but Christ says that no man knoweth the day or the hour when He will come. How marvellous then that men should trifle with their opportunity of salvation from eternal woe, and delay, if they do not refuse, to come to the true ark while it is still said, "*To-day* if ye will hear His voice"!

Thousands may have stood before the ark of gopher wood, and peered in with idle curiosity while the door stood open, who refused to enter in. Afterwards, when they *would* have entered in they *could* not.

Millions have listened to the story of divine love told in the wonderful gospel of God, and have turned away untouched and unconcerned, refusing or neglecting the ark of that gospel. A day is at hand when these same millions will knock loudly for admission at the *closed* door, only to hear the dreadful words, "Too late, too late, you cannot enter now."

Reader, shall *you* hear them?

W. H. S.

"I BELIEVE IN THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS."

THOUSANDS of lips repeat the above words some fifty-two times every year, and, for all who can say them from the heart, a very blessed belief it is; but we fear that many have a very vague idea of their true signification.

A number of imprisoned debtors might *repeat* once a week, "I believe in the forgiveness of debts," but we are at a loss to perceive what it would avail them.

But let us suppose some kind, rich friend suddenly stepping forward and laying down a large sum of money, sufficient to cover their debts. All are then called upon to candidly acknowledge their hopeless indebtedness, and invited to avail themselves of his bounty. What should we expect all would do under such

circumstances? Why, to avail themselves of it, and to go free, to be sure.

But what should we think if, instead of availing themselves of the proffered payment and liberty, they remained where they were, and yet week after week repeated the words, "I believe in the forgiveness of debts"?

And does not this resemble the conduct of thousands to-day? We are all hopeless debtors on account of our sins, but God has given His Son, and His precious blood has been shed, a propitiation for all. The good news is announced far and wide. The door of mercy is open. All are invited to go free. Yet thousands and tens of thousands remain where they are. They hear the blessed, joyful sound; but turn away their ears from it. The enemy (Satan) catches away the good seed, lest it should find a place in their hearts, and they should believe and be saved. (Luke viii. 12.) And yet week after week their lips may be heard repeating, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins."

Alas! what blind infatuation to go on year after year with this confession of faith upon the lips, while the heart is still a perfect stranger to divine forgiveness!

And yet how plainly God has set forth the manner of forgiveness in His word. He so loved the world, that He gave His Son. He came, He died, He was buried, He rose, He ascended, He sat down triumphant as Man at the right hand of God in glory. The work of redemption is accomplished. "It is finished" are His own words. The ground of forgiveness is prepared. God is glorified as to sin, and now *from the glory*, where Christ is seated, offers forgiveness to all in His

name—free, full, and everlasting. "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.)

There *is no forgiveness* in the grave,
There *is no forgiveness* in the day of judgment,
There *is no forgiveness* in hell ;

But

There *is forgiveness* in this life,
There *is forgiveness* in this day of grace,
There *is forgiveness* NOW.

Now is salvation's day. *Any* and *every* reader of these lines can have the forgiveness of his sins by faith in the Lord Jesus *now*. *To-morrow* may be too late, *too late for ever*. Confess your hopeless indebtedness before God, and believe on His Son. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John i. 7.) Trust therein, and you are cleansed; believe on Him, and you are forgiven. "In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." (Ephes. i. 7.)

How blessedly simple the gospel is, and yet what difficulties our poor, deceived hearts raise! The word of God does not say, that through the mass, or the sacrament, or baptism, or good works, but "*through this Man* is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." God alone can forgive sins. He forgives through Christ. And if through Christ, clearly it is not through ourselves, or our works. (Ephes. ii. 8, 9.)

Beloved reader, are *your* sins forgiven? We fear many have passed into eternity lost who professed to believe in the forgiveness of sins when on earth, but died without it. One un-

pardoned sin will suffice to sink you into eternal perdition, but *not one* remains unpardoned when you believe in Jesus. His precious blood cleanseth from all sin. God offers to every one a free, present, and everlasting forgiveness of sins. Have you received it? You believe, may be, in the forgiveness of sins, but can you take your place among the little children to whom the apostle John says, "I write unto you . . . because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake." (1 John ii. 12.)

Forgiveness is the fruit of God's love. The finished work of Christ is the alone ground of it. The resurrection and glory of Christ, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, are God's testimony to the value of that work. His everlasting word gives the assurance of it to all who believe. Forgiven, we are responsible to walk as forgiven ones till He come, abounding in good works, the fruit of faith in His glorious name. E. H. C.

FAITH.

FAITH is the gift of God. (See Ephesians ii. 8.)

Faith cometh by hearing. (See Romans x. 17.)

Without faith it is impossible to please God. (See Hebrews xi. 6.)

We may say there are two sorts of faith or belief; viz., intellectual or *head* belief, and divine or *heart* faith. The only faith God owns is that of the heart, which is the result of His grace, through the testimony of His word, by the power of the Spirit. Thus we can see that real faith is always connected with the heart; for it is the heart which God claims. "My son, give Me

thine heart." (Proverbs xxiii. 26.) A man's heart is the spring of his actions; and what the heart is set upon, that will it seek after. If on earthly things, it will seek for happiness in things below, such as money, worldly position, pleasure without God, etc.; but if on heavenly things, it will seek the things that are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Now God's appeal is to this *spring* of action; *i.e.*, the heart; and because the heart is naturally full of pride and unbelief He chooses *youth* as the time to make it—"My son, give Me thine heart." In order to produce faith, God has to begin with the heart. How came it in this condition? "By one man sin entered into the world." Every one is born in sin. The heart is estranged from God. Satan, the usurper, has possession of that which rightly belongs to God, so that He has to make appeal, and say, "Give Me thine heart." Now, a man may be educated, religious, and zealous in the pursuit of his duties; his memory may be well stored with Bible knowledge, and he may even take the place of teaching others, without being converted, or the heart being touched by divine grace. The faith of such an one is only an intellectual belief, such as a parent or teacher can produce by instructing the mind. But real faith is the gift of God, and is produced in the heart by the reception of His word in the power of the Holy Spirit. God's word, when applied by the Spirit, produces *conviction*; that is, a knowledge of oneself as unfit to meet a Holy God, unfit for heaven His dwelling-place, and only fit to be banished for ever from Him. It is realizing this which gives the desire to be saved. The *heart* is affected, with some no doubt

more deeply than with others; but in each case of conviction there is a *finding of self out*; while in *conversion* there is a finding of God out. The heart learns that God is love, and there is a turning to Him. This love was shown in the gift of Jesus: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John iv. 10.) He learns that "Christ died for the *ungodly*" (Romans v. 6); so that through His death, and His bearing the judgment due to sins, he finds, from the Word, that the sins are no more in God's book against him, but put away for ever—that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John i. 7.) When this is known in the heart there is peace—"peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans v. 1.) "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans x. 10.) Thus is the heart brought back to God, having tasted the bitterness of being away from Him. Very little of the truth may yet be known, but the heart having returned to God, all the benefits of Christ's perfect, finished work are the portion of such an one, and the Holy Spirit is given to dwell in him, and to lead the heart by faith into a fuller knowledge and enjoyment of the things of God. G. W. G.

FAITH, NOT FEELINGS.

MANY people, who are anxious about their souls' salvation, are waiting for some extraordinary feeling, some curious internal emotion, before they can say they are saved.

Others again, who have put all their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, are confident one day about their salvation, the next day doubtful, according to the state of their feelings.

In fact, they look upon their feelings as a spiritual barometer.

You meet a Christian; you accost him, and enquire into his spiritual condition.

He makes answer: "Satan *has* tried me this morning. Such horrible doubts he has injected into my soul! But I feel hopeful I am saved, because if I were not a child of God, the devil would not take the trouble to tempt me this way." Thus do you find him deriving a 'melancholy comfort from his *miserable* feelings.

You meet another Christian friend, and enquire into his spiritual condition.

He answers: "I awoke so happy this morning. I cannot help singing, 'Glory be to God.' I am sure I am saved, or else God would not give me such happy feelings." So he leaves you, deriving confidence from his *happy* frame of mind. But what saith the Scriptures?

The apostle John in the gospel writes: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: *but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.*" (John xx. 30, 31.)

Dear anxious soul, the gospel was written for such as you. (Refer to John iii. 15, 16, 36; v. 24; vi. 47; x. 9, &c.)

How plain! how simple! It is so easy to be understood that a child can grasp it, and "he may run that readeth it."

The same apostle—the beloved disciple John—writes to those who had believed: “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.) It does not say that “ye may feel it.” Ah, no; but that you might have the knowledge, the conscious knowledge, that you have eternal life from God’s unchanging, unchangeable word.

When such a tremendous change as conversion takes place in the history of a soul, there must be emotion or feelings—great or small, as the case may be—but your feelings do not save you, but believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. You may say, “Well, So-and-so, when he was saved, seemed to pass from such distress and anguish into such peace and joy, and I am so quiet. Can it be real with me?” I ask you, “Are you trusting the right Person, the Lord Jesus Christ?” For if you are, it matters not whether you take hold of Christ as a drowning man would a rope, or touch the hem of His garment like those in the gospel, you are eternally saved.

My friend, wait not; seek not for more than God has given you in His word, but put your trust in what is written, and then you will, like the converted Ethiopian, go on your way rejoicing.

The Lord Jesus Christ did the work on the cross that has *satisfied* God. Now God sends His word to *satisfy* you. Can it satisfy you? Has it satisfied you?

“Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! For He *satisfieth* the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.” (Psalm cvii. 8, 9.)

A. J. P.

TIDINGS OF LIFE AND PEACE.

THE SQUIRE'S WAY TO HEAVEN.

DUSTY and tired, after walking across a remote country district, I had reached the beautiful village of C——, from whence I purposed going by rail to the neighbouring town of A—— to preach that night. Being a stranger, and not knowing the way, I was looking about for someone to direct me, when I observed a tall, stately-looking old gentleman sauntering along the road. Overtaking him, I asked if he would kindly show me the way to the station. He politely said, "I am going in that direction, and if you accompany me I will direct you." So we walked and chatted together, when at length he said, "I will show you something near the station here that you will not see every day in this kingdom—a place where five roads meet."

"Indeed," I said. "Some people tell us there are many roads to heaven. May I ask, sir, what would be your way to heaven?"

He stopped, drew himself up very proudly, and looking me straight in the face, said, "*My way to heaven, sir, is to do my duty.*"

I said, "Listen! 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart, and with *all* thy soul, and with *all* thy strength, and with *all* thy mind; and thy neighbour *as thyself.*' Have you done this?"

After a pause, with his eyes fixed on the ground, he replied, "Well, I cannot say I have."

"No," I said, "you have broken down on that road; but there is a blessed Man up there in heaven, Jesus, the Son of God, who loved God with *all* His heart, and who, when here, looking upon the sons of men, said, 'I know you, that *ye* have not the love of God in you;' and of Himself could say, 'I do always those things that please Him,' who went to the cross and laid down His pure and spotless life for such wretched neighbours as you and I. Ah! He loved His neighbours better than Himself, and died to bring us to God, and to give us a title to glory. So He could say, 'I am the door: *by Me* if any man enter in, he shall be saved;' 'I am the way . . . no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.'"

Now, dear reader, I would ask *you* the same question, Which is your way to heaven? It would be an awful thing to make a mistake, as many are doing, alas! who are building their hopes on a path of rectitude, or, in the words of the squire, upon doing their duty. There is a way that *seemeth* to be right unto men, but the end of that way is death. Listen to God's word: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight;" "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continueth not in *all* things which are written in the book of the law to do them." The *law* tells me what I ought to be, and curses me if I am not it. The *gospel* tells me what God is, and blesses me if I believe it. The law *demand*s love—"Thou shalt love." The gospel *produces* it—"We love Him, *because* He first loved us." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that

He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

May you, my reader, be able to say, I have known and believed the love that God hath towards me.

W. J.

"I DON'T KNOW HOW TO."

"**I** WANT to believe, but I don't know how to," were the words of one anxious about her soul's salvation, to whom I lately spoke. She had been in this state for some time, and was longing to be told how she was to believe. With a real sense of need, and the desire to be saved, she was making a saviour of her faith; trying hard to believe, as if it were a matter of attainment. Is not this a common mistake? And yet we would not treat a friend in this way. If one we knew well told us something, we would not say, "I don't know how to believe you." It would be rather, "I don't know how to doubt you. I can't but believe it, since you have told me." Let us then treat God with the same simple confidence, since He has spoken, and His word cannot fail.

Not having much time to speak to my young friend referred to, I said, "God does not tell you *how* you are to believe, but *what* you are to believe, and *whom* you are to believe in." I then wrote down on a piece of paper as follows:

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." (1 Peter iii. 18.)

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

These three blessed words in John xix. 30 were next written down—"It is finished."

Pointing to these scriptures, I said, "Now, E——, you see this is what God asks you to believe. Christ has thus suffered. He has come into the world to save sinners. He has finished the work of salvation. Do you believe that He, the Just one, suffered for you, the unjust? That He came into the world to save sinners, and therefore you?"

"Yes," was her decided answer.

"It is what God has written in His own word about the person and work of His own Son that He expects you to believe. What the Lord Jesus came to do—'to save sinners'—He has done. 'It is finished' tells us of a work done, salvation wrought out, pardon provided, peace made."

In some such words I spoke to E——, leaving her the paper with the three passages. She seemed to be drinking in every word, and professed to believe the simple statements of God's own word.

A few days after I found E—— quite happy and at rest; not struggling how to believe, but simply taking God at His word. Christ was now before her, and God's testimony to Him, not her efforts to believe, and all was simple and clear.

God's faithful saying and Christ's finished work were now her trust, and she was happy. She knew her sins were forgiven, for God had said, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust." She knew she was saved, for God said in His word that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and He had finished the work of salvation.

It may be that some who read this simple paper may be still *trying* to believe, wondering

if they have believed enough, or if their faith is of the right kind. The more in earnest you are, the more unhappy you will be, for you will never be assured you have the right quantity or quality of faith or belief.

Do you not see that God tells you *what* to believe, and *whom* you are to believe in? Look at the verses already quoted, dear anxious one, if such you be. How simple they are! It is God's testimony to Christ and His work. Do you believe that?

No longer think of your own faith, as long as you simply trust God's own precious word, which declares that the work is done. The One who did it is no longer on the cross, nor in the grave. He is risen. God raised Him from the dead. A risen Christ is God's receipt for you, telling of a finished work, and of God's delight in it.

"Oh, the peace for ever flowing
From God's thoughts of His own Son!
Oh, the peace of simply knowing
On the cross that all was done!

"Peace with God! the blood in heaven
Speaks of pardon now to me;
Peace with God! the Lord is risen,
Righteousness now counts me free."

T. E. P.

A RISEN CHRIST AND THE DAY OF RECKONING.

TRULY solemn were the words of the great Gentile evangelist as he boldly took his stand for God on Mars' hill, and sounded forth, "The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." (Acts xvii. 30, 31.)

From this we find that God has already fixed upon two things in connection with coming judgment—

The day is *appointed*.

The Judge is *ordained*.

Notice also the little word "all," as occurring significantly twice over in these verses: (1) God has, by raising Christ from the dead, given the "assurance" or the pledge that He *will* judge the world, and He has given it to "*all men*." (2) Because of this God is now commanding "*all men every where to repent*."

What, for the unconverted, could be more solemn than this? Yet, on the other hand, could we possibly be furnished with a better proof of His long-suffering mercy? For the last eighteen centuries, and over, the "great and terrible day" has been *fixed*, and yet, instead of coming forth in fiery judgment, the "ordained" Judge has patiently waited upon a throne of grace, and patiently He waits there still. But THE DAY OF RECKONING WILL COME. God assures us of that, and gives the resurrection of His Son as the solemn pledge of it. It is easy enough for the infidel reasoner to *deny* both the Lord's resurrection and His coming in judgment; but where is the scoffer who can *prove* either that He is not risen, or that He is not coming? Such a person is not to be found.

When the world—Jew and Gentile—crucified the Son of God, and closed the door of the tomb

upon Him, there needed no further witness of what man thought of Jesus. The world could not and would not tolerate Him. "Let us murder Him, and have things our own way," was really the language of man's wicked heart, and his actions went with it.

But there is another side to all this. Hear the testimony of the blessed Lord Himself: "Therefore doth my Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again." (John x. 17.) And again, "If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and *shall straightway glorify Him.*" (John xiii. 32.) This He did. But from the very moment that the Father's glory visited that tomb, and raised His beloved Son, the world and the Father are manifestly on two sides. Man put Him *into* the sepulchre, God took Him *out*; and henceforward that open grave becomes a picture of the gulf that must ever lie between the world that hated, crucified, and buried Jesus out of sight, and the Father that loved and glorified Him, and decreed that every eye should see Him.

Now, reader, every soul on earth *must* take sides either *with Christ against the world*, or with the world against Christ. In God's account *you* are taking one side or the other this moment. Where do you stand? Have you till now been on the world's side of that open grave? Then God has but one thing to say to you. He calls you to repentance,—He commands you now: "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." He calls you to repent now. When Christ appears in power and glory to execute judgment, it will be *too late to repent!* And remember, "The end of all things is at hand." "The Judge standeth

before the door." (James v. 9.) As you value your soul, there is therefore no time to lose.

How men will wish, in that day, that they had obeyed God's gracious call, as they try in vain to hide themselves from the all-searching gaze of Him who comes as the executor of wrath so long in mercy held back, the wrath of God! Oh, think of it seriously! *The wrath of God.* Yes, *the wrath of that God* who gave the world His Son as a Saviour, and extended to it eighteen hundred years of long-suffering after that. What a day, when righteous retribution bursts upon it! But, thank God, it is still the day of grace, and "God" still "commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." How good of Him to turn our eye forward to the burning day of judgment, and *command* us to repent! to turn us backward to the cross, and thus to *commend* His love!

"Who is a pardoning God like Thee,
Or who has grace so rich and free?"

Unsaved reader, may His goodness bring you to repentance before the fast closing day of His long-suffering shall be over.

"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found,
call ye upon Him while He is near." GEO. C.

"YOUR LAST DAY."

UPON the last day of February of this year I was paying a poor shoemaker his bill. As he receipted it he said, "Shall I put the date?"

"Yes, please," I answered; "it is the last day."

"The last day," he repeated, writing February

28th at the bottom of the bill, and then handing it to me.

"Thank you," I said. "I wonder if ever you have thought of your last day?"

"I know it will come," he answered.

"But are you ready for it?"

"I do hope I shall be. My wife is an invalid, but I go as often as I can to St. John's Church, so I do the best I can."

"And will going to church fit you for the last day?"

"Well, well, I'm sure I hope I'll be ready."

"The only way to be ready is to accept God's terms, and to be saved His own way. God's word says, '*Not of works*, lest any man should boast.' (Ephes. ii. 9); '*not by works* of righteousness which we have done.' (Titus iii. 5.) Jesus has died for guilty, lost sinners. 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' (1 Timothy i. 15.) Do not put going to church between your soul and God. The one Mediator between God and men is the Man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all. (1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.) No religious effort will God accept as part of your salvation. If you tell God that you are a wretched, fallen sinner, utterly helpless to do anything for your everlasting good, but that you do believe that He sent His Son in pure grace to die instead of you, He will receive you, and give you to know pardon for the past and readiness for the future. 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.'" (1 John i. 7.)

"Well, I'm sure I hope I'll be ready for my last day."

"I hope so too; but delay not to come;

for if you are not ready for your last day here, rest assured you'll stand at the great judgment-day 'in your sins.'"

Reader, *your* last day must come. The Lord is coming. If you are unprepared to meet Him, and to be caught up alive to be for ever with Him (1 Thess. iv. 17), your unbelieving day will close in a night of hopeless, endless misery. Are you prepared for that? Can you brave the day when the "Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." (2 Thess. i. 7-10.) Take sides with God against yourself now; accept His only terms of salvation now; and then your earthly day will close for a bright and blissful day of unchanging and endless glory.

E. E. S.

FROM SLIPPERY CLAY TO SOLID ROCK.

"**G**OD speaketh. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed" (Job xxxiii. 14, 15.)

A most remarkable illustration of these words has lately come before me. The story was told me by the person who had the dream, as near as I can recollect, in the following words: "I dreamt I lay in the bottom of a deep pit. The sides were of slippery clay; and although I had struggled

hard to get out, and sometimes nearly managed to reach the top, I always slipped to the bottom again. At last I lay there quite exhausted, and was just saying, 'It grows dark; I expect I shall have to stay here all night,' when a tall man came to the top and looked over. He asked me what was the matter; and when I told him what I have already told you, he said, 'Reach your hands up to me, and I will pull you out.' I said, 'I don't think you can.' But he replied, 'Oh, yes I can. If you'll only give me your hands I'll pull you out.' So I reached up my hands to him, and he pulled me out."

Very shortly after she had this dream two "tall" men, who were seeking for lodgings, were brought to her house. After the usual enquiries had been made, one of them asked the old lady, "Are you saved?" The question seemed thoroughly to discompose her, so much so that she beat a precipitate retreat with her daughter into their back room.

I, who was one of the two, remarked to my companion, "We have turned on the light too strongly," for they had acted just like people who are in a dark room when the gas is suddenly turned up. Years after I heard that the mother said to the daughter, when they got into their back room, "They won't do for us. Oh, they'll never do for us! Go and tell them so"—thinking, like many, that it was presumptuous to speak of being *saved*.

But her daughter replied, "Oh, mother, I think we had better try them first. We can but try them." So we took up our quarters there.

My friend had set up a tent for gospel meetings in a field near her house. About the second or

third evening after we had gone to her house she was induced to go to the preaching, with great misgivings as to the respectability of attending such places. On entering the tent she heard the chorus of a hymn being sung—

“Hallelujah ! ’t is done ! I believe on the Son ;
I am saved through the blood of the crucified One.”

The mother observed, “I couldn’t say that.” Either the next hymn or one in the course of the service produced a deep and lasting impression on the dear old woman’s mind. The chorus is as follows—

“On Christ the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand.”

She never rested until through faith she also could say, “On Christ the solid Rock I stand.” Deep was the exercise of soul through which she went, however, before she attained this happy result. Morning after morning she would retire from our little reading and prayer, at which we had invited them to be present, with her eyes full of tears. And she told me long afterwards that she would observe, “I have heard people talk of the penitent form, but I call this our penitent form every morning.”

For five years the dear old soul was left here to experience the reality and blessedness of God’s present salvation, and then she was called home. That terrible disease, cancer, manifested itself ; but never once was Satan able to shake the deep peace and calm rest of her soul. “It is a solid Rock, a solid, *solid* Rock,” she would say, referring to the hymn. She always contrasted the solid standing she had found in Christ with the slippery sides of the pit out of which she had been drawn in her

dream. Ay, and in reality too; for "the pit" is used in Scripture again and again to describe the place in which the sinner is, but out of which the believer has been drawn, as well as that to which the wicked shall go for ever. How often David speaks of it in the Psalms. "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings" (xl. 2), which seems to describe *exactly* this soul's history. And then for the final destruction of the wicked, as in Psalm xxviii. 1: "Lest . . . I become like them that go down into the pit." And here, too, the "rock" is contrasted with the "pit": "Unto Thee will I cry, O Lord my Rock." And one might write out a page of references where we get the Rock as a figure of the believer's position. One has said, "Our privilege is to have confidence in Christ as a Rock under our feet, and to rejoice in hope of the glory of God." And so it was with this dear old Christian in her closing days.

And now, my reader, let me ask you, What are *you* building on? It is not a question, what kind of building you are putting up. The most magnificent building on a rotten foundation is bound to fall. In other words, the loudest profession, the most moral life, the strictest religiousness, will avail nothing if you are not resting *wholly* and *entirely* on Christ and His finished work for salvation. You cannot "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" unless you "have peace with God *through our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Rom. v. 1, 2); and that is obtained alone through justification *by faith*. For God has said that His righteousness shall be imputed to us also, "if we *believe* on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and

was raised again for our justification." (Romans iv. 24, 25.)

Again I would ask, On what then are *you* building? Is it on "the Rock"—on Christ the solid Rock? Or is it on the sand—the sinking sand of your own goodness, or your own doings, or prayers, or anything of your own? Your foundation is bound to be tested, for all will be. The rain will descend, the floods come, the winds blow and beat upon the house you are building. (Matt. vii. 24-27.) Will your house stand, or will it fall? Look to your foundation without delay, for you know not how soon the storm of judgment may break. W. G. B.

DYING, BUT NOT ALARMED.

ALARMED, BUT NOT DYING.

"**M**RS. B——, you are very ill; if you should not get better, where would you go?"

"Oh, I have not a shadow of a doubt where I should go!"

"Indeed! What does your certainty rest upon?"

"The Lord Jesus Christ."

"What, the Lord Jesus Christ alone? Have you nothing to bring? no good works?"

"No, indeed; I have nothing but His work, and yet I am as certain I shall go to heaven as if I was there already."

All this was said with a ring of force and conviction, in striking contrast to the state of the poor weak body. In less than five hours Mrs. B—— was "absent from the body, ... present with

the Lord." There was certainly no alarm in view of death in the case, but "joy and peace in believing."

Scripture says, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that *he was righteous*, God testifying of *his gifts*: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." (Hebrews xi. 4.)

* * * * *

"I shall walk with Him in white; for He is worthy. Yes, I'm going to be with Him. Call my husband, call my children, call the servants. Let me tell them. Good-bye, good-bye, good-bye, each one of you. I'm going; I shall walk with *Him* in white, for *He is worthy*. Yes, yes, *He is worthy, He is worthy*." And so she died. Happy, thrice happy saint! Instead of being *alarmed*, she was positively *charmed* by the prospect before her.

* * * * *

He sat up in bed, taking his beef-tea, and talking to his wife and mother. A little conversation and the writer left, only to be called hurriedly back the few yards he had gone to find this young man of only twenty-six, the one he was talking with but a few moments before, had entered eternity. How "sudden!" how solemn! One short, sharp cry, and all was over. How sudden!

Dear reader, may not you be exposed to as sudden a termination of this life? And if so, are you like the two first-mentioned cases, ready to go before the summons comes, knowing that the work of Another has made you fit? Happy to go, because going to the Person who has done that work.

* * * * *

"Doctor, doctor, I sent for you; excuse my calling you up, but I'm afraid I am dying. I feel sure I am dying, and, doctor, I'm not fit to die."

"Oh, what a comfort, Mrs. S——," replied the writer, "to think the work is all done that can alone make us fit!"

"Oh, yes, I know all about it; I know all about it! But do you think I am dying? Shall I get better? For though I know all about it, I am not fit to die."

Next morning the trouble was over, the pain was gone, the sun was shining; all looked bright, and the question of the *soul's salvation was postponed to a "more convenient season."*

* * * * *

These four cases happened within a stone's throw of each other.

Reader, now is the day of salvation; you may never have a to-morrow.

The work is done by which you must be saved.

The divine Person who did that work is on the Father's throne.

The Word is in your hand that tells you of that work and Person.

The Holy Ghost is here to give power to the Word which tells of that work and Person.

Death and eternity are before you.

Would you like to die happily as did the two believers first mentioned, suddenly, like the young man spoken of? or are you a procrastinator? Which is it?

E. C.

L.

TIDINGS OF LIFE AND PEACE.

A SISTER'S LAST MESSAGE.

IT is a sad and solemn story, and perhaps we had better allow one of the chief actors in it to speak for herself.

"I was a novel reader before my conversion, and my sister had a great love for the same class of reading. It is now eighteen years since God showed me I was a sinner. It happened thus: Some preachers had taken a barn in the village where I lived, and my husband attended one of their meetings; when he returned home he told me what he had heard, but I made great sport of it. At last I was persuaded to go. That night the preacher chose for his text, 'Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?' The word searched me. I was deeply convicted of sin. I went home and burnt my novels, and then sat down and wrote to my sister, telling her that the Lord had saved my soul, and urging her to burn her novels, and come to Christ.

"By return of post my sister wrote back telling me my religion had driven me mad. That night I had a dream; in it I saw my sister enveloped in fire; a number of dark figures were with her in the flames. On her face was a look of indescribable agony, while her gaze seemed fixed upon some

object which she desired to look away from, but could not.

"I awoke in great concern, and when the morning came I wrote to my sister, giving her an account of my dream. Two days later my letter was returned to me, with the dreadful word 'Deceased' marked upon it.

"Amazed and distressed beyond measure, I instantly made enquiries, and discovered that shortly after writing to me, she and her husband were carried off by smallpox.

"My conviction is that my sister was in eternity when I saw her in my dream; *a little more than twenty-four hours after she wrote to tell me that my religion had driven me mad.*"

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Whatever this dreadful dream might have signified, two things seem clear; first, that God sent a message to this soul just before she entered eternity, *a last opportunity of salvation*; secondly, that the unhappy woman rejected it.

Is she alone in her folly? Alas, no! Amazing as it may appear, the fact is indisputable, that millions of men and women are, this moment, journeying to hell with their eyes wide open, supremely indifferent to the peril of their immortal souls.

Yet on every side sounds the sweet gospel of God's grace, announcing a free pardon to a lost world through the sacrifice of Jesus, whose blood at Calvary was poured out an offering for sin.

Oh, my reader, are you among the careless ones? Are you indifferent to the need of your precious soul? Be assured of this, if ever you find yourself in hell, it will be your own fault.

Your pathway has been strewn with opportunities of salvation; but a time will come, *if it has not come already*, when God will send *you* a last message, a last opportunity. This paper may be it.

What say you, if in twenty-four hours from this you are in eternity, how will it be with your soul?

W. H. S.

HOW A ROMANIST FOUND PEACE.

M— was brought up in a Roman Catholic country. From very early years he seemed to have a sense of his own sinfulness, coupled with the fear of having one day to meet God. As he grew up his hope was, that by performing all that the Church demanded, he should be all right in the end. Yet not only did he never find solid satisfaction for his uneasy conscience in all this, but found himself actually questioning different portions of the Church's teaching, such as the doctrine relating to the Virgin Mary, &c.

Up to his nineteenth year his soul was enshrouded in the darkness of Romish superstition; for he had no one to take him by the hand, and guide his wandering feet into the way of peace. He never dreamt that there was any such thing as the knowledge of salvation or the eternal forgiveness of his sins.

About that time he made a change in his employment, and went to lodge at the house of two Christian women. Strange as it may seem to those who live in a land flooded with gospel light, it was here, for the first time in his life, that he saw a Bible! A desire at once sprang up in his heart to read the precious volume, but only when *alone* in the room, where it was lying, dare he

venture to do so. In his ignorance of how matters really stood, he imagined that the couple with whom he was staying might raise an objection to a Roman Catholic reading their Bible! Many a stealthy peep into its blessed pages did he take, until one day they came into the room and found him reading it. Expecting some sort of rebuke or remonstrance, he humbly apologized for the liberty he had taken. But it need hardly be said that they expressed their joyful willingness to his reading it as often and as much as he pleased. Thus was he set free from all restraint in the matter, and read it he did. What most struck him was the wonderful clearness and simplicity of the Scriptures, and the more he read the more his soul was convinced that it was indeed the word of God.

Hundreds of questioning thoughts now began to cross his mind. "Surely he had not been brought up to care for other people's religion. He had had no opportunity of reading the Bible in his *own* church: why should he trouble therefore about matters which he had not hitherto been taught. It was not *his* fault that his parents were Roman Catholics, and he brought up in that faith!" But all this kind of reasoning failed to yield relief to his troubled conscience. With a burden of guilt upon his soul the question was ever before him, "How can I stand justified before a holy God?"

He still continued to go to "confession," and as he was residing eight miles from the chapel, he felt a sort of secret satisfaction in having to walk the eight miles through snow and rain. Surely *this* was a work of merit! But even all this, together with priestly absolution, and the periodical

assurances on the part of his confessor, that he was once more a child of God, failed to bring him into the longed-for rest and peace. On the contrary, his misery continued, and grew in intensity. The more he read the Bible the more uncomfortable he felt in the Romish Church; while Satan was increasingly busy in trying to alarm him by bringing before him the consequences of leaving it.

Then he thought he would try to pray; but the only prayer he knew, which he thought would be *proper* to say, was the one commonly known as the "Lord's Prayer." But even in using this he was pulled up: yes, by the very first sentence in it. To call God his "*Father*" he felt would be to tell a mocking lie; for he did not personally *know* Him as such; and, reader, you know it is sorry work trying to deceive the all-seeing God! Alas! how many are doing it.

Day and night, for weeks, the thought was constantly before his mind, "Oh, if I could only call God *my* Father!"

He now mustered courage to tell the two Christians with whom he lodged that he should be thankful to have a little talk with one of their teachers. Accordingly, one Sunday evening, shortly afterwards, a servant of Christ went to the house to see him, and then, for the first time in his life, the simple gospel of the grace of God was preached to him. Romans iii. had a most overpowering effect upon him, and left him without the shadow of an excuse, especially when he came to that sentence, "*That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*" (v. 19.) He was now troubled more deeply than ever.

But he must pass through deeper exercises still.

Shortly after this his anxiety was considerably increased through a dream. He thought he saw the moon coming down toward the earth, and upon it was written, in all languages, "*The Lord is coming!*" He awoke in fearful anguish of mind, knowing he was not prepared for that solemn event.

He now consented to attend a gospel preaching. Luke xv. was the subject chosen, and, to use his own words, "I felt that he was preaching all the time about *me*; for I knew *I* was the prodigal, far, far from God, and perishing in my sins."

Many days and nights of still keener anguish followed this, until at last the Lord was pleased to come in for his deliverance.

A little book had been put into his hand by the Christian who visited him, entitled, "*How to get Peace.*"* One evening he was reading it aloud to those with whom he was staying, and when he came to the part which speaks of God's acceptance of the work done in our behalf, he fairly broke down; he could read no more. All he could do was to lift up his full heart in silent thanksgiving to God. But we will let him tell his own story. "I read the pages of the little book with growing interest; but when I came to pages 23, 24, the light of God filled my soul. I saw clearly that *God was satisfied* by the work done for me on the cross! I could read no more. What I had found filled my soul with a joy unspeakable, and I had peace with God... No language can describe the joy and blessedness of that moment, when the heavy burden was rolled away from my heart and conscience, and I knew that the love and favour of God was resting upon me."

As many of our readers may not have seen the

* To be had of the publishers of this magazine.

valuable little book referred to, it will be as well perhaps to quote that portion of it which the Spirit used to the blessing of the young Romanist.

“‘But must not I accept Christ?’

“‘Would you not be glad to have Him?’

“‘Surely I should.’

“‘Then your real question is not about accepting Him, but whether God has really presented Him to you, and eternal life in Him. A simple soul would say, “Accept! I am only too thankful to have Him!” But as all are not simple, one word as to this also. If you have offended someone grievously, and a friend seeks to offer him satisfaction, who is to accept it?’

“‘Why, the offended person, of course.’

“‘Surely. And who was offended by your sins?’

“‘Why, God, of course.’

“‘And who must accept the satisfaction?’

“‘Why, God must.’

“‘That is it. Do you believe He *has* accepted it?’

“‘Undoubtedly I do.’

“‘And is——’

“‘Satisfied.’

“‘And are not you?’

“‘Oh, I see it now! Christ has done the whole work, and God has accepted it, and there can be no question as to my guilt or righteousness. He is the latter for me before God.’”

Dear reader, this fresh witness of the triumphs of God's grace is thus brought in all simplicity before you, in the earnest hope that the same grace may reach your soul also. Mark this: An unsaved Protestant, let him be high church, low church, broad church, or dissenter, is as sure of damnation, if he remain unconverted, as the unsaved Romanist. Let neither deceive himself by any fair religious show. *You must be born again, OR PERISH.*

GEO. C.

A CHILD'S SURPRISE.

A MOTHER quoted to her little girl John iii. 16, and began telling her how "*God so loved the world,*" &c., when the child, looking up to her, said, "Mother, that *cannot* be true. No, it *can't*; for if that were true, *everybody would be speaking about it.*"

Let me ask you, dear reader, Has this love, so amazing, so divine, been shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost, so that out of its abundance your mouth speaks of it to others? or are you still in nature's darkness and distance away from God, impenitent, with His wrath looming over your head? Lest you should be lost for want of a word, and stumble into perdition unwarned, I would seek to tell you of the great love and kindness of a Saviour God. Nor would I tell the blessed story as a mere matter of duty; for it is a joy and even a relief to my soul to repeat it to you.

When a dying gipsy, near Ipswich, had been told this wondrous story, he exclaimed, "And I never thanked Him! But nobody ever told me. I thank Him kindly!" Oh, think of it! He spared not His own dear Son, but delivered Him up for us all, for me, who never deserved it, who richly deserved the pains and pangs of an eternal hell! Had it been left to us to ask God for a token of love, should we ever have thought of asking Him to give His Son? *Never.* We might have asked for wisdom, like Solomon; we might have taken the devil's suggestion in Matthew iv., and asked for a kingdom; but never should we

have risen to God's thoughts, and asked that His Son might become a sacrifice for our guilt. No; God only knew what could meet His great heart of love, and our desperate condition as sinners in His sight; and, unasked, He "gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." My peace, pardon, and everlasting salvation rest simply upon my believing on the One He has given, and with adoring gratitude I exclaim, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!"

Have you, then, received this unspeakable love-gift, and thanked God for such a Saviour as Jesus the Lord? If you are a believer it has pleased God to link you with the Saviour in that verse. Do not separate what He has placed so closely together. Thank Him for that word *whosoever*, for it takes in all that believe. God might have mentioned you by your name, but then you might have thought that He meant some other person of the same name; but to avoid all such perplexity He says, "*Whosoever*," a word that includes all, and excludes none. Accept God's blessed proposals now, and the blessing will be yours. Time is short; eternity is near. Soon, very soon, you may be in a region where love and mercy cannot reach you, where hope will be exchanged for blank despair; where the possibility of being saved will be yours no more, where you will be crushed by the awful certainty that you are *lost* for ever.

Oh, my reader, the day of God's matchless love and grace is rapidly closing! The Son whom He once gave to save our souls is about to come to save our bodies; indeed, there is nothing we know

of to defer His coming a single hour. Lest, then, the judgment that will follow this event should overtake you in your sin and unbelief, in a state of distance and death, we beseech you, in the language of the prophet, "Give glory to the Lord your God, before He cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, He turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness." (Jer. xiii. 16.) "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." (Ps. ii. 12.) W. N.

"AN HOUR IN HELL."

SUCH was the subject of a lecture announced to be given by the editor of the *Freethinker* on a certain Sunday evening; and not only would people flock to hear him, but pay for the pleasure (?) of listening while he made sport of the awful portion of the lost in eternity.

What a solemn, solemn fact that the lecturer, and his hearers too, if they die in their sins, will most surely come to their first hour in hell, the first sad hour of that limitless eternity! though the first five minutes will be more than long enough to explode all their false theories of infidelity.

An infidel may scoff at the thought of a heaven, a hell, an hereafter; but there is one thing they can neither disbelieve in themselves nor make others doubt, and that is, the solemn fact that death is in this world.

They mask, in terms of their own choice, the hideousness of death, and call it "*the debt of*

nature;" but it is no such thing. It is the sad effect of sin upon our natural life. It ushers man into eternity, where the sham and tinsel of this poor world give place to the reality of dealing with a holy God.

The same scripture which speaks of death speaks also of judgment—"As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment," &c. (Heb. ix. 27.)

The fact that death is the appointed lot of every child of Adam no one can deny in presence of the funeral processions, the churchyards, the bitter scenes of bereavement that every one must have witnessed. Judgment after death, recorded by the same unerring word of truth, is equally true. To every rejecter of the gospel death is but the conductor into judgment.

The Lord Jesus Christ in Luke xvi. graciously draws aside the veil from a lost eternity. There we have depicted, in a few bold, graphic sentences, the rich man tormented in hell, eagerly asking for one drop of water to be carried to him on the finger of a beggar; and this is denied him. He is bade "*Remember.*"

People describe the horrors of a lost eternity, but the most awful part of it is the stinging memory of lost opportunities, despised grace, rejected love. Who can fathom the depths of eternal anguish in those words, "*Son, remember*"?

Look upon the shrunken frame of a dying man, the glassy eye, the pallid cheek. Listen to the laboured breathing. See the death-sweat on his brow, and tell me, does it not speak to you, in tones that cannot be denied, of eternity? He dies not as a beast, but lives on for ever and ever.

Oh, look across the narrow boundary of time,

and scan a boundless, shoreless, limitless eternity, and let this question be answered by you in the light of it, "Where shall I spend that eternity?"

I have heard people say, "Time is valueless compared to eternity." Time is the dictator of eternity. It is as you use your opportunities in time that your eternity is formed.

It hangs upon the answer you make to the question once put by vacillating Pilate to the angry crowd who were demanding the death of the only sinless One that ever trod this poor earth—"What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" (Matthew xxvii. 22.)

What answer will you make? Upon it hangs the issues of eternity. Accept Christ as your Saviour, and you will have pardon and peace now, and an eternity of bliss to come.

"What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" is the question asked concerning the multitude, which no man could number, in Rev. vii.

Mark the blessed answer: "These are they which came out of [the] great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

"Precious, precious blood of Jesus,
May it make thee whole."

Refuse Christ, and you madly drift down to an eternity of woe. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. ii. 3.)

Who are those that have part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone?

They are "the fearful, and *unbelieving*, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars." (Rev. xxi. 8.)

Will you spend eternity with Jesus as a Saviour, or endure a lost eternity under the sentence of Jesus as a Judge? I would urge upon you this question with all the earnestness of one who has been awakened by the grace of God to the necessity of decision for Christ: "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?"

Perhaps you say: "What a fuss you are making! Look after your own future, and leave me to attend to mine."

Imagine a scene.

A country town is wrapped in midnight slumber. Suddenly a cry of fire is heard. The inhabitants of the place rise from their beds, dress hurriedly, and rush off to the scene of conflagration. The fire-escape tears to the burning house at a truly dangerous speed.

No cynic curls his lip and says, "What a fuss! What excitement! Leave the people to look after their own house." No; with breathless excitement the crowd watch the work of rescue. A fireman has, at the risk of his life, entered the house, now like a furnace of fire, to rescue an inmate. With bated breath the people watch the window. He comes staggering under his load; he has rescued a living being. What a ringing cheer rends the air! how the women weep for joy!

Oh, sinner, your danger is ten thousandfold worse than that of a man sleeping in a burning house! You are slumbering, it may be, a death-like sleep over the very brink of eternal woe. Wake up! Time is short! Eternity is coming! Christ is coming! "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (Acts xvi. 31.) "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting

life." (John iii. 36.) "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.)

Answer the question, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" Heaven awaits your answer.

A. J. P.

THE DYING GIPSY.

"**P**RAISE the Lord! Oh, He has saved me! Bless God! My precious Saviour, He has died for me! Oh, bless and praise Him!"

Such were the notes of praise that fell upon the ear as we entered a house some time ago in the town of P——e, in the West of England. Mounting a few steps to where the voice came from, we found in the corner of the room a very poor makeshift affair for a bed, and on it a poor gipsy girl, about eighteen years of age, in rapid consumption.

There she was in the most wretched circumstances one could conceive; with a poor, weakly, suffering body, without father or mother or other relative to comfort her, and without a single penny in her possession; and yet her young heart full of joy and thanksgiving to the Lord, and the keynote of her joy and praise was this: "The Lord has saved me."

I pause a moment to ask, Can my reader say as much as the dying gipsy? At this moment, as your eyes run along these lines, are you saved or unsaved? The question of houses and lands, of buying and selling, of eating and drinking, dwarfs into the most utter insignificance besides

this one solemn question of your soul's welfare. And I would urge the question upon you, as under the searching eye of a holy God, Are you saved? or are you not?

We can assure you that God has manifested His earnest desire for your salvation. The Lord Jesus has done all that is needed to secure it; He has been into this world and suffered for sin. He died for sinners, was buried, and was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, has returned back into the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, and has sent down the Holy Ghost.

The word of God has been written in plain language, that you may make no mistake about this wondrous news. Again I earnestly and affectionately press the question, What has all this been to you? Are you saved?

With the poor young gipsy girl it was a new and grand discovery. When we first visited her she was a poor, blind, lost sinner, and showed a most decided dislike to having the Lord Jesus and eternity pressed upon her. However, a few Christians, who felt deeply interested in her, cried unto the Lord for her, and in His tender grace He opened her eyes—turned her from darkness to light. He found His way to her heart, and gave her the blessed assurance that He had saved her—had fitted her for heavenly glory; and all this gave her heart to burst forth in those exclamations of joy and praise referred to at the commencement of this little paper. No wonder that the soul who knows this fitness for glory should praise and magnify the One that made him fit. (See Col. i. 12.)

Let me say a word here to any young believer

who may be troubled with doubts and fears. Remember, the work of Christ upon Calvary's cross must stand alone. On that cross He made peace. On that cross He settled the question of sin for ever before God. God has been infinitely glorified in that work, and your present and everlasting salvation is secured by it; and, blessed truth, every one that rests upon it is at once made perfectly fit for the glory of God. You may and ought to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, but you do not grow in fitness for heavenly glory. Your title is the finished work of Christ, and therefore do not mix up your feelings and experiences with it.

To return to the young gipsy girl: the Lord left her to suffer for a few weeks to show forth the reality of her faith in meekness and patience, and then released her happy spirit. With a bright smile upon her face, and "*Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, home!*" upon her dying lips, she passed away. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord."

W. H.

MUCH IN LITTLE.

"**J**UST one letter of the alphabet makes all the difference between us now," said a recently-converted young woman to an unsaved neighbour who could not understand the great change that had come over her. "You love the *world*, and I love the *word*."

How much there was in this simple way of putting it. The *word* speaks of Christ, so the true Christian loves it. The *world* cast Christ out, yet the worldling still loves it. GEO. C.

TIDINGS OF LIFE AND PEACE.

“TO YOU.”

ACTS xiii. 26.

IF you heard that an immense estate had been left to certain people in the country in which you live, would not your curiosity be excited? Again, if you learned that it was left to people living in your village, you would be more deeply interested. But if you found that it was left to people of your name, you would pay yet greater attention to the report. But what if you discovered that you were the very person for whom it was designed? The first thing you would do would be to read carefully the testamentary document, in order to certify yourself that you answered in every particular to the person described therein. That being done, you would minutely study the value and amount of property bequeathed to you, and in due time you would enter into possession. That is all simple enough, and such events occasionally happen amongst men. But a document describing property of infinite value has been sent, declaring that the people of the country where you live may become possessors—nay, that the people in your district; nay, those of your village; nay, that you yourself may become heir—this fact is made known in the document.

Only think, dear reader, that to you—whosoever you may be, or to whatsoever country you may belong, whether you be Jew or Gentile, wise or ignorant, bond or free—that (as the scripture says) “to you is the word of this salvation sent;” yes, “to you.” That is definite, distinct, personal, and unmistakable. A thousand doubts cannot alter the blessed statement, nor a thousand sins obliterate its truth. “To you” is sent the word of salvation. Lay firm hold of this most important declaration.

Now, could you conceive of any one being so foolish, when he had discovered that property had been left to him, as to take the document and lay it on the shelf, or put it in the fire? Impossible! He would investigate with the utmost diligence its every provision, until he became fully assured that he was legally the owner of all. Indifference in such a case is inconceivable.

But it is a fact well attested, and deeply to be deplored, that the document which contains the report of the most wonderful inheritance that can be bequeathed is little regarded, is laid on the shelf of indifference, or is read as if it did not mean what it said. People don't realize that the Bible contains the announcement of a present and full and eternal salvation for them. Come, reader, do you? Nay, they think it deals in generalities and in abstractions, in beautiful ideas and in pleasing sentiments. They think that the Bible was written for the scholar or the recluse; for the man who has time for retirement and meditation, but not for the ordinary individual, with his cares and toil and drudgery.

Ah, what a mistake! It was written for all. It has good news for all. It is just the Book for

the weary and heavy-laden, just the Book for man as he is—fallen, sinful, guilty, needy, friendless—just the Book, my reader, for you and me. It tells the fallen of redemption, the sinful of salvation, the guilty of pardon, the needy of wealth, and the friendless of ‘a “Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” Are these mere generalities? Nay, they are the most plain, intelligible, precious statements of fact that can be written. Thank God for every one.

Now, what I plead for is, that you should observe the *little words* of Scripture. Only think of how much is involved in these two monosyllables, “*To you!*” a property willed “*to you!*” salvation sent “*to you!*”

Are you fallen? It is sent “*to you!*”

Are you sinful? It is sent “*to you!*”

Are you guilty? It is sent “*to you!*”

Are you friendless? It is sent “*to you!*”

Do difficulties, doubts, darknesses arise? It is none the less sent “*to you,*” and such an assurance may well calm every fear, and impart perfect peace. Ah, reader, make it your own! Throw it not away; neglect it not. What is so attainable to-day may be out of reach to-morrow, and then what an eternal loss! “To you is the word of this salvation sent.” “Beware, therefore!”

J. W. S.

A DETECTIVE AND HIS PRISONER.

ON the platform of a small junction station on the London and North Western Railway a little crowd had collected. This being no unusual occurrence, especially toward evening, it attracted

but little attention. The writer sat in a carriage by himself, when two men entered, and quietly took their seats close together at the far side. There would have been nothing noteworthy in this either, had not the group just referred to come crowding round the carriage door, peering in with apparent interest. What could all this mean? The writer looked at his two fellow-passengers, and again at the crowd outside, without discovering any clue. Then an elderly man from the company came close to the window, and beckoned one of the newly-arrived passengers to him. Both rose: something was whispered between them, and once more the two sat down as near to each other as before. Another glance, and the secret was out. A link of bright steel could now be seen, and though they were both evidently doing their best to cover the chain from view, it was now plain enough that they were handcuffed together—a detective and his prisoner.

Feelings of pity filled one's heart to see a respectable-looking young fellow of about twenty-four in such a position, and almost involuntarily I said aloud, "'The way of transgressors is hard,' but wisdom's ways are 'ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.'"

"That is true," said the detective, while the prisoner, by a sorrowful shake of the head, seemed to give his mournful assent. A little more conversation, and I found, to my surprise, that neither the constable nor his poor prisoner were strangers to the gracious work of the Spirit of God.

As far as memory will carry I will seek to give separately the substance of each man's testimony.

THE DETECTIVE'S CONVERSION.

"I had a Christian mother, but left home unconverted, and somewhat earlier than most. I earned good wages in connection with the Midland Locomotive works at D——, but soon fell in with bad company, and spent all my earnings in wickedness. Things got from bad to worse, until one day I quarrelled with my uncle, with whom I was lodging, struck him in the face with my fist, and offered to fight him. Soon after this I left my work at D——, returned to N——, where my mother lived, and joined the police force. This, however, did not curb me in my wicked course, for I went deeper into sin than ever, though perhaps in a more covert way. One day, alas! my poor mother had to fetch me out of a public-house. On our road home she stumbled, in some way, on the pavement, and said, as I was helping her up again, 'You've broken my heart, my boy; you've broken my heart.' This certainly touched me a little, but still I persisted in the downward path. Shortly after this, while on duty, I was seriously bitten by a dog; and, for several days after, had a dreadfully painful finger. Then it was that the possibility of the near approach of *the end* came before me. The agony of mind with which I walked the streets on my usual beat I could never describe. I said to myself, holding my finger, as I walked along, '*Death! death! eternal death!* DEATH! DEATH! ETERNAL DEATH!' The dreaded hereafter was constantly before me, and I felt as though the very paving-stones would open under my feet and I should drop into hell. I then tasted something of the awful reality of

the torments of the lost, and I knew how richly I deserved it. At last I went to show my swollen, blackened hand to the doctor, who called me a 'brave fellow' to have been on duty with such a finger." [Little did the doctor dream of the fear and dread that even then filled his quailing heart; but God knew it, and deliverance was at hand.]

"After tossing on my bed one evening before going on my beat, I suggested to my wife, whom I believed to be unconverted, and therefore unconcerned about eternal things, that she should take a small article of domestic use into the town to be repaired. She was no sooner clear of the house than I sprang off the bed, and cast myself on my knees before God, saying, 'Lord, I want no sham religion, no deception; *I want to know that I am saved in reality.* I come to Thee! I make full surrender of heart to Thee.' Then suddenly, like a flash of light from heaven, the sense of pardon filled my soul. I rose to my feet—almost seemed lifted up—and couldn't help calling aloud, '*I've got it! I've got it!*' The policeman below thought I must have gone mad. Then, thought I, all the neighbours must be told, and from house to house I went with the news that '*I had got it.*' 'Got it! Got what?' 'Salvation!'"

Now, reader, let me pause here, and ask, Have you, like this policeman, ever honestly faced *the end*? Have you faced the reality of death? and beyond that, the *second death*—ETERNAL DEATH? Don't, if unsaved, deceive yourself by imagining that the "second death" means ceasing to exist. The second death is no more ceasing to exist than is the first. The circumstances of your existence will be changed both by the first and the second death, but *you* will live on and on for ever. At your

first death your natural body will be laid aside, and you in the prison-house *without it*; but if you reach the "second death," your body will have been raised, and you will be in the lake of fire *with it*. (Rev. xx. 12-15.) God grant that your spiritual awakening may come before death shall place his cold, withering hand upon you, and leave nothing for you but the misery and remorse of a hopeless eternity. And to this end, while God shall give us opportunity, we will both plead with you and pray for you. May the Spirit disturb your deadly slumber even now. Has He already awakened you? Then come to the Saviour to-day. Delay not another hour! Make full surrender to Him, as the policeman did, and "*joy and peace in believing*" shall be yours.

Now for

THE PRISONER'S STORY.

A word of loving appeal (judging him to be unconverted) brought from him the acknowledgment that he, too, was once happy about his soul's salvation, and that a few years before he had, he believed, been truly converted to God.

"Well," I remarked, "then your breakdown did not commence with the offence that places you to-day in such a painful position as this?"

"No," he replied; "my downfall began with cricket and football. These led me into godless company, and from that I got to drinking, and into deeper sin. But my father is a Christian, and I myself once helped in the work of the Lord; indeed, the Lord used me in rather a remarkable way to the conversion of my brother who is now in heaven. After my own conversion I had great longings for his salvation, and often tried to reach his conscience, but in vain. He

laughed it off, sometimes even with mockery. But God had His own way of reaching him, and this was how it took place. My brother's favourite dog had died, and it fell to my lot to bury it, which I did at the far end of the garden. I found an old piece of stone in the yard (probably part of an old grave-stone), which I thought would do well to mark the dog's grave, and accordingly placed it there. Shortly afterwards my brother walked down the garden path, but, after going as far as the grave, he came back looking greatly agitated and deadly pale. 'What is the matter?' I inquired. 'Are you ill?' 'No,' he said, 'but the words on that dog's grave-stone gave me such a turn just now. What a strange feeling came over me as I read upon it,

"PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD."

"These solemn words must have reached his soul in the quickening power of the Spirit, and brought him as a convicted sinner into the presence of a holy God; for from that moment he never rested until he knew for certain that his own soul was saved."

As I parted with the detective and his prisoner at the D—— station, the latter said, with apparent deep emotion, poor fellow, "Do, please, pray for me." May the blessed Advocate have restored His wandering sheep ere this, and given him to walk more softly, and distrust himself more thoroughly for the future.

Take warning by this, young believer, and beware of association with the world. For "what communion hath light with darkness?" (See 2 Cor. vi. 14-18.) If we unite with the world for a common object, we not only dishonour the Lord,

and rob our own souls of the enjoyment of their heavenly portion, but we also become stumbling-blocks to the unconverted, if not laughing-stocks for the enemy. Have you already been tripped up or drawn aside? His love, be assured, would win you back to-day. Get low before Him; confess all to Him; and never rest until you have the renewed sense of His gracious smile upon you. Depend upon it *He* will never rest until that moment. He who gave up His precious life to make you His own will never rest content till you are happily restored in heart to Him. Oh, how He loves!

GEO. C.

"HAVE YOU BEEN APPREHENDED?"

PHIL. iii. 12.

THE question at the head of this paper was put by a servant of the Lord—a friend whom I have known about twenty years—to a policeman. He went straight up to him in the street, and said, "Have you ever been apprehended?"

My friend being very tall, and of a commanding appearance, the policeman rather shrank back, and drew himself up, as though he thought one of the commissioners of police from Scotland Yard was going to lay hold of him, and that his time was come.

"But," he replied, in great astonishment, "it is my business to apprehend others, and I certainly have never been apprehended."

"Ah, yes," said my friend, "you apprehend them to run them *in*, but we want them to be apprehended to run them *out*. We want them to be apprehended by the power of God's word and by the love of Christ, that their eyes may be opened, that they may be turned from 'darkness to

light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me.' " (Acts xxvi. 18.)

Reader, have you ever been apprehended? Because, if not, I am really sorry for you.

"Have I been *apprehended*, did you say? What a strange question to ask me! Do you think I am a thief, or a murderer, or a very bad character? If you do you are greatly mistaken."

You will, perhaps, be terribly shocked when I tell you that, though you have never been "apprehended," yet upon the authority of THE WORD OF GOD, whose charges can neither be escaped nor denied, you *are* condemned as a thief, a murderer, and a very bad character, though before your fellow-man you may be the most moral and upright person that ever lived. Do you ask for proof? You shall have it. If you will turn to Matthew xxii. 37 you will find a word from the lips of Him "who spake as never man spake:" "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." Now, if you have not been converted, you have never loved Him at all, and consequently have not given God His due. You have robbed Him! You have withheld that to which He is entitled. Can you deny the charge? Again, read the second part of verse 39: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Have you done this? Have you come up to the lower standard of God's law? Do you not love *yourself* better than your neighbour? If two houses were on fire, yours and your neighbour's, would you not run to put out your own first? Then you have robbed your neighbour! Are you not guilty of withholding

from him that which God says is due from you to him?

Now for the second charge. Are you not one of Adam's race, who joined their hands together and imbrued them in the blood of God's Son? And though you were not *actually* present when that foulest of all crimes was perpetrated, and did not join with them in crying, "Away with Him, crucify Him," have you ever dissented from that dreadful crime, by which the earth was stained with His precious blood? or are you not at this moment continuing in association with those who hate both the Father and the Son? Then *you* are a murderer! For if it is true, and God says so (1 John iii. 15), that "whosoever hateth his *brother* is a murderer," what about those who hate God and His blessed Son, and who are, by their actions, virtually saying, "We will not have this Man to reign over us"? Again I ask, Can you possibly escape this indictment?

Yet you say, "I am not a bad character."

Well, let us see further if that statement can be maintained. Let us refer to the same authority again. (I own no other.) Turn to Romans iii., and read from verse 10 to verse 18, and there you will find, divinely portrayed, the character of every child of Adam's race, yourself included. And there are fourteen distinct characteristics. Can you escape them all? We shall see.

1. "None righteous"—*unrighteous*.
2. "None that understandeth"—*foolish*.
3. "None that seeketh after God"—*self-seekers*.
4. "All gone out of the way"—*wanderers from God*.
5. "Together become unprofitable"—*worthless*.
6. "None that doeth good"—*evilworkers*.

7. "Throat an open sepulchre"—*treacherous*.

8. "With their tongues they have used deceit"—*liars*.

9. "Poison of asps under their lips"—*back-biters—evilspeakers*.

10. "Mouth full of cursing and bitterness"—*profane*.

11. "Feet swift to shed blood"—*murderers*.

12. "Destruction and misery in their ways"—*without mercy*.

13. "The way of peace have they not known"—*no peace*.

14. "No fear of God before their eyes"—*godless and careless*.

Now, if you really think, or would try to persuade yourself that you can escape all these charges, here is one more, verse 23: "For ALL have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." You are weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, and found wanting. You "come short." You are not up to the standard measure. Where is your answer as to all this? Oh that God would apprehend you as you read this! Do you harden your heart against the Spirit of God? Then remember that the final reckoning-day is at hand. "Because there is wrath, beware lest He take thee away with His stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee." (Job xxxvi. 18.) Beware lest the policeman "Death" suddenly arrest thee in thy mad career, and summon thee to appear before the dread tribunal of inexorable justice, from which there can be but one awful issue—"the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" for ever and ever.

H. W. S.—N.

GOD SPEAKING FROM HEAVEN BY
HIS SON.

YET forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." Such was the preaching of Jonah to the men of Nineveh as he entered a day's journey into the city, and cried against it. For the moment we will leave the preaching to consider the preacher. Who is he that in the proud city of Asshur raises his voice to proclaim its overthrow? We may imagine the scorn with which, at first, a haughty Ninevite might regard him. "Who," he might ask, "dare utter such a message?" The reply that he was a Hebrew prophet would perhaps increase his contempt. But the day wears on, and still the prophet proclaims the message of God. A strange rumour is spreading as to the messenger. Though he is only a poor prophet of Israel, he has come back from the very BELLY OF HELL to deliver his message. In his own history he has learnt what the judgment of God is. Hear his cry to the Lord in his affliction: "Out of the belly of hell cried I, and Thou heardest my voice. For Thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all Thy billows and Thy waves passed over me." (Jonah ii. 2, 3.)

The rumour as to the preacher spreads. It reaches the ears of the king that a man who has been three days and three nights in the living grave of a fish's belly, has come back from the jaws of death and Hades to proclaim the overthrow of the city. His preaching does not consist of mere words. *He is himself* a sign to the Ninevites. (Luke xi. 30.) "They repented at the preaching of Jonas." The king "arose from his

throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes." The people, too, believed God, and proclaimed a fast.

Reader, a greater than Jonah is now preaching. A dead and risen MAN is verily speaking to you. How shall you escape if you turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven? (Heb. xii. 25.) He who has been in the depths of the judgment of God against sin, is now the risen One. There is a double pledge in the resurrection of the blessed Saviour, who once knew the deep waters of death, where the floods overflowed. (Psalm lxi. 1, 2.) First, through this Man, whom God raised from the dead, having seen no corruption, is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. Jesus risen is the pledge, to all that believe, of full and free forgiveness, and justification from all things. (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) Secondly, God has "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 risen is the pledge of judgment to the unbelieving world.

Reader, this dead and risen Man is a sign to you. *Will you* heed the Preacher? Will you hearken to His preaching? An assurance of judgment in righteousness comes *to you* from One who has been in the heart of the earth, but is now in heavenly glory; from thence He speaks. A message of forgiveness of sins, and full and perfect justification, comes from thence also to every one that believes. The men of Nineveh will indeed rise up in the judgment, and condemn you, if you disregard such a Preacher by turning away from Him that speaketh from heaven.

T. H. R.

THE INFIDEL AND THE WORD OF GOD.

ONE Sunday evening a young man was walking along the streets on his way to some scene of pleasure, when he was accosted by a person who stopped him, and thrust a small piece of paper into his hand. The young man took it, and read, by the light of the nearest lamp, the words, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." (Isaiah i. 18.)

A sneer passed over his handsome face as he read, and throwing the paper from him, he hastened on.

"'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow,' does not apply to me, at any rate; for I am an infidel, and I do not believe anything of the kind," thought he. "'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.' Hang the thing; I can't get rid of it! 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.' Sins? Conscience? Yes, but I acknowledge neither a future nor a God, and therefore am not responsible. What do I care to have my sins made white—to use the figure—seeing that I owe no duties beyond those necessary to natural human existence? 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.' — I am an infidel" (stamping his foot). "I don't believe in the Bible, the God of the Bible, the future, nor anything beyond the still, dark grave. So here's for a short life and a merry one! 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.' Confound it! 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.' Confound it! I wish I could get it out

of my head. 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.' It is very forcible; very poetical. Certainly that Bible is a wonderful book. Given for the sake of argument, that it is true, and that a God exists, I can easily understand religious people, who believe in a future either of joy or suffering, clinging to such sentences with a tenacity proportioned to their belief. . 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.' Admirable writing; terse, forcible language. I wonder who wrote it? God, I suppose. God? Why there is no God. I forgot myself. If I could only remember my principles, and how logical and well founded the arguments are which support them, I should be all right. 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.' Confound the thing! Will nothing put a stop to this? There is a church; I may as well turn in."

He entered, and was shown quietly into a pew by the door. A solemn silence reigned. The preacher had just read the text from the pulpit, paused a moment before repeating it, then in a gentle voice he pronounced the words, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

The vestry of that church was always open for a short time after service for the reception of those whom the message of the Lord had touched. That evening among the penitents there was one who prayed with tears, "Jesus, though my sins be dyed deeper than the deepest scarlet, do Thou make me whiter than the purest snow." ANON.

TIDINGS OF LIFE AND PEACE.

KING WILLIAM'S "ACT OF GRACE."

WHAT is grace?" is a question often asked. Terms used in connection with this life are easily understood; but when the same terms are used in connection with divine things men have difficulty, and complain that they cannot understand them. Hence a simple illustration, drawn from this world's affairs is frequently of value. Let us now present one from history.

When the Prince of Orange ascended the throne of England as King William the Third, there were very many men of various ranks who were liable to be prosecuted, and condemned for treason against him, because of their zealous efforts on behalf of James. But the king did not desire to employ harsh measures. Early, therefore, in his reign he instructed his Parliament to draw up what was called "A Bill of Indemnity," by which many might be set at liberty, and only the worst offenders be put to death. Parliament began the work, discussing the gravity of the offenders' guilt, but the members could not agree. Some thought that certain should be pardoned whom others thought truly worthy of death. Endless difficulties surrounded them, and the longer the House considered the question the further away

seemed all probability of arriving at any satisfactory conclusion. At length the King put an end to the profitless debates by presenting to the House what is called "An Act of Grace."

One historian says, "Between an Act of Grace originating with the Sovereign, and an Act of Indemnity originating with the estates of the realm, there are some remarkable distinctions. An Act of Indemnity passes through all the stages through which other laws pass, and may, during its progress, be amended by either House. An Act of Grace is received with peculiar marks of respect, is read only once by the Lords, and once by the Commons, and must be either rejected altogether, or accepted as it stands."

It was this latter which King William presented to his Parliament. It flowed wholly from his own heart, and extended full and free pardon to all, except a very few of most determined character, who were mentioned by name.

An historian tells of its reception. He says: "Both Houses stood up uncovered while the Act of Grace was read, and gave their sanction to it without one dissentient voice."

Now, this is but the faintest illustration of God's Act of Grace. He is "The King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God." But the world has rebelled against Him, choosing Satan as its prince. Jesus, God's blessed Son, spoke of him as the prince of this world, at the moment when all his hosts were being summoned to cast Him out and crucify Him. God holds all the world guilty before Him. (Rom. iii. 19.) He solemnly declares that the friendship of the world is enmity with Him. "Whosoever therefore" (be he peasant or peer) "will be a friend of the world is the enemy

of God." (James iv. 4.) And if the men who were shown to be traitors against King William trembled at the thought of the traitor's death which was due to them, how much more should the sinner fear Him who has power to destroy both body and soul in hell! (Matt. x. 28.)

Men reason about divine things, and seek to find some way of indemnity. Some will have it that only great or vile sinners need fear God's wrath. Others plead good works, or religious zeal, as grounds of exemption. But they cannot agree; there is endless contention, and a continual strife of tongues. God's Word declares: "We know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law" (the most favoured class): "*that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. . . .* There is no difference: for *all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. iii. 19, 22, 23.) There is therefore no "Act of Indemnity."

But, thank God, there is an "Act of Grace." "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood . . . to declare at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of Him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii. 21-26.)

God gave His precious Son to die for us who were His enemies; and redemption's work being

finished, God declares His righteousness in justifying the poorest sinner that believes in Jesus. This is *His* Act of Grace. Freely—that is, for nothing—by His grace He justifies, through the work His Son has done, every man, woman, and child that trusts that precious Saviour. Wondrous news!

Dear reader, this Act of Grace originated, not with man, but in the very heart of God, who is Love. When He might righteously have condemned us all, He brought forth this wondrous scheme. His riches of grace are shown in that He stoops so low. It is to the praise of the glory of His grace that He places us so high in the person of His Son. The gospel cannot be amended; it must either be rejected altogether or accepted as it stands. If it be rejected by you, your doom is for ever sealed, for there is no other way of salvation. Surely if King William's Parliament listened intently to his Act of Grace as it was read but once over, uncovering their heads as they stood, rendering every token of respect, and accepting it readily and thankfully, we poor sinners should do no less as we hear the wonderful story of the grace of God. That it may be so in the case of every reader of these pages is the earnest prayer of the writer. J. R.

WHO OWES MOST TO SOVEREIGN GRACE?

THERE can be little doubt that if every truly converted soul in earth or heaven were asked this question, the answer, throughout the redeemed host, would in substance be the same; viz., "*I am that debtor.*"

Hear what the great apostle of the Gentiles could say: "I am the chief of sinners. Long I bore the title and deserved it. A persecutor was I, and injurious too; so eager in my rage against the Lord's dear saints, that I hunted them to prison and to death. (Acts xxvi. 10, 11.) I held the clothes of those who martyred holy Stephen. (Acts vii. 58.) But, oh, yon light, above the brightness of the noonday sun, met me on my downward course, and laid me low! It shone into my dark, proud heart, exposed my utter vileness, but at the same time revealed Jesus to my wondering gaze." (Acts ix. 3-6.)

Let Peter bear his testimony:

My Master I denied with oaths and curses; the same who took my many sins upon Him; who, on that shameful cross, paid the full price of my redemption, that I might share His glory there. Oh, grace unbounded! Who so vile as I, to grieve a heart so loving and so faithful? Emblazoned in God's holy book my shame doth stand four times recorded: Matthew xxvi. 34; Mark xiv. 30; Luke xxii. 34; John xiii. 38. And yet that look of His, so full of sorrow, love, and pity, broke my poor heart, and laid me prostrate at His feet. (Luke xxii. 61, 62.) Who can owe so much as I?

Hear the Philippian jailor:

Of all the ransomed throng, who will surround the Lamb in glory for ever, could there possibly be found such a monument of grace as I? How well must Paul and Silas remember Philippi and that inner prison; how I magnified mine office, and how, with lusty willing arms, I measured out to them the stripes they never earned, and how, with grim delight, their aching feet I fastened

in the stocks. (Acts xvi. 23-34.) What grace that reached even to a hardened, cruel, guilty wretch like me!

Let the woman of the city tell her story.

None could be more deeply sunk in sin than I, a poor abandoned woman of the city; well known as such by all. The very fact that heaven is to be my everlasting dwelling-place must surprise the very angels. But oh, that never to be forgotten day in Simon's house! The Lord's gracious smile, His condescension, and His all-surpassing love to one so vile and worthless, enthralled my soul and made me His willing captive. Who can owe Him more than I? (Luke vii. 36-50.)

Let another witness speak:

Have you not heard of me, so steeped in sins of crimson dye, that I could never, never tell the depth of misery and sin from which that blessed wayworn Traveller at Sychar's well has rescued me? And yet He said it was His meat and drink to meet the need of such as I. (John iv.) All hail the day when first, as a poor outcast at Samaria's well, I heard the music of His heavenly voice.

But listen to yet another, that dying penitent at Calvary:

I was not fit to live; less, surely, far, to die. But on the very verge of hell He saved me; He who Himself did nought amiss. Oh, matchless grace that I am fit for paradise! My whole life's path, one long dark catalogue of crime. My deep-dyed sins have surely earned the lowest place in hell. Yet fit, through grace, to share eternal glory with the Son of God. How will the glories of that grace shine forth in me!

Dear reader, has the voice of the Son of God yet reached *you*? That voice which wakes the

dead (John v. 25), the voice that captivated Paul, that broke the heart of Peter, that set the jailor free, that caused the woman of the city to sing for joy, and snatched the woman of Samaria and the thief from the iron grasp of Satan.

Have you ever given it a serious thought that you will presently bid farewell to this world, and all that your heart clings to in it? Are you *sure* of your ultimate destination? Scripture clearly shows that the dark domain of hell is the only alternative for those who quit this world unfit for heaven. (Rev. xx. 15.) However fair an exterior you may have presented to the eyes of men, *God knows you*, dear unsaved one, as you read these lines; knows every detail of your history, from your entrance into the world until now. You would *quail* before the dark record which He could give you of the workings of that deceitful heart of yours; but if the God of *light* exposes the heart, it is the God of *love* that takes possession of it when thus exposed, and He makes it His dwelling-place. (Eph. ii. 22.) The *only* road to blessing is to take the place God's word assigns to every child of Adam's race (Rom. iii. 10-18), for such is the platform where God's amazing grace is displayed. (Rom. v. 8.) Your blessing *begins* there, but where does it end? It has NO END. There will be an end to tears and sickness and sorrow, to pain and suffering and death, but no end to the joy and gladness that will fill your soul the moment you take Jesus at His word. (Matt. xi. 28; Luke xv.; Rev. v.) Won't you trust Him, dear reader? Well do I know that you will *never* regret it. A few short years at most, and your place will be vacant here. *Where*, oh! **WHERE** will your spirit be *then*?

Decide this moment, friend, and eternal sunshine is your portion. And, when millions of ages have rolled away, you will still look back, with deepest joy and gratitude, to the moment you first heard *His* voice and responded to it. And it will be His joy to have you there as another witness of what His exceeding grace can do.

G. F. E.

ETERNITY'S STORM-WARNING.

IN certain latitudes the mercury is very easily affected by changes in the temperature. The captain, as he navigates his vessel across the ocean, is very careful to note all the changes in the barometer. Sometimes the quicksilver drops very considerably, and in a very short space of time. The sea may be like glass, the sun may shine brilliantly, not a stray cloud may be seen chasing its way across the sky; but the captain full well knows the storm-warning. A hurricane is tearing its frightful way at a tremendous speed towards the vessel. The eye may not be able to detect the coming storm, all the elements around are calm, but the warning is given and they wisely heed it.

At once the order is given to reef the sails, to take in every inch of canvas, to make all taut and trim. Soon the hurricane bears upon the vessel in all its wildest fury, lashing the sea into a perfect storm; but, thanks to the timely warning, the danger to the ship is minimised, and it weathers the tempest.

Dear reader, you will no doubt commend the wisdom of the captain; but let me give you a far

more important warning—a warning for eternity, and may you have wisdom to heed it.

You may look around you, and your sky may be unclouded; life's narrow sea for you may be without a ripple; so far as you can judge there is no danger ahead. But God's barometer—the Bible—utters its warning voice. Listen to it, my dear reader. The dark clouds of death and judgment are ready to burst upon thy head; but God's love restrains them, while He sends you this warning note, and offers you a shelter from the coming storm.

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” (Heb. ix. 27.)

“The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.” (2 Thess. i. 7–9.)

“The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” (1 Thess. v. 2, 3.)

Many more scriptures might be cited, showing that God must punish sin, and that the storm of His righteous judgment must inevitably come upon the unrepentant sinner.

Oh, sinner, prepare for it!

“How can I?” you ask.

Not by your own strength, but by accepting God's refuge—the blessed Lord Jesus Christ. Many think that by ballasting the barque of their souls with innumerable good deeds, by taking in

every sail of bad habits, every inch of evil ways, by painting the old hulk with the paint of good resolutions or loud professions, they will be able to weather the awful fury of God's wrath. NEVER!

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. ii. 3.) Impossible!

Listen. Jesus bared His breast to the storm of Calvary. He breasted the full tide of God's judgment against sin. He gave up the ghost, a dying Victor; and being raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, He led captivity captive.

By virtue of His work on the cross, He now offers peace and pardon to every poor sinner who comes to Him. He "made peace through the blood of His cross." (Col. i. 20.)

Flee from the wrath to come by taking refuge in Christ Jesus. He is the Rock of ages, the sure Foundation.

But oh, dear reader, if you refuse the wondrous offer of salvation, you must certainly endure the wrath of God for all eternity!

Take heed to eternity's storm-warning, and accept the offer of shelter. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (Acts xvi. 31.) Saved for time and eternity! Your prospect will not then be one of judgment, but of glory; not of a coming storm, but of the eternal sunshine of the Father's delight.

A. J. P.

DIVINELY ARRESTED.

LONG years ago Saul of Tarsus was going on his own way when God stopped him. He "*verily thought*" he was doing his best, for "there

is a way that *seemeth right* unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov. xvi. 25.) But before he had got to this "end" God stopped him in his course, and all was changed. Saul was bowed down to the earth before the One he had persecuted, calling Him "Lord" whom he had hitherto hated and despised. Yes, God had made "this same Jesus" both "Lord and Christ." A word from this exalted One, and all Saul's life was changed. Nay, it was far more than that, it was a new life, from a new source, and belonging to an entirely new region, that was imparted to him. Saul of Tarsus was "born again" (John iii. 3), and from that time he followed Jesus in the way.

Another young man, like Saul, was going on his own way when God stopped him. He, too, was a persecutor of the followers of the Son of God; he, too, hated the truth.

One day, lately, he was making his way home from V——, where he had been engaged in making some necessary purchases. The next day was the day fixed for his marriage, and he was, no doubt, full of his own bright prospects as he journeyed homeward, but suddenly God stopped him. No "light from heaven" shone about this young foreigner, but "he fell to the earth," for the hand of God was upon him. He lay there senseless—for how long I know not—but at last the cold night air restored his lost consciousness; but with it came a terrible sense of his soul's guilt before God. In a mass his sins rose up before him: "the terrors of hell" filled his soul. He rose at once, determining to seek relief in an interview with one whom he knew to be a saved soul. But God had yet more to show him of himself and of his helpless and lost condition,

and that all alone in His own presence. Weary and nearly exhausted, he continued his way; but, like his soul's way, it was a wrong one; he had missed his path. Strength once more failed, and again he fell. There he lay alone and though fully conscious, and thoroughly awakened in mind and soul, the power of uttering one sound was gone. He could not, like Saul of Tarsus, cry out, "Who art Thou, Lord?" nor like the terrified jailor at Philippi, "What must I do to be saved?" In every sense his "mouth" was "stopped." He was brought in "*guilty before God.*" (Rom. iii. 19.)

Reader, it is no light matter, this being brought into the presence of Him "with whom we have to do." (Heb. iv. 13.) Saul of Tarsus could "neither eat nor drink" for "three days" after the voice of the Lord had reached his ear, and awakened his soul. In that presence, though not one word more had been said to him about his sins, he learned that he was the "chief" of "sinners." (1 Tim. i. 15.)

Impatient, wondering at the long delay, the one who was betrothed to the young man whose story is before us, set off to meet him, calling him by name while pursuing her way.

Her voice reached him where he lay; but help was no nearer, for he had fallen in the middle of a field, where she did not see him; and as he was just then incapable of moving or of replying, he could do nothing. Truly in soul and body he was "without strength." (Rom. v. 6.) The search seeming fruitless, the young woman was returning, and it was now very late; but as she passed through the field, her attention was attracted by a slight movement, and thus made aware of his presence,

she hastened to his side. There, at nearly "midnight," like the jailor at Philippi, *her* soul was aroused also, and her conscience awakened. But there was no one to say to these troubled souls, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts xvi. 31), as the apostle did in that prison.

Together, with difficulty, they returned home; but the young man refused all thought of rest till he had had an interview with one able to point out to him God's free salvation.

Paul the apostle could say what, as Saul the enemy, the guilty, the sinner, the strengthless one, he had proved for his own need—"When we were yet *without strength*, in due time *Christ died for the ungodly*." "While we were yet *sinner*s, *Christ died for us*." "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the *death of His Son*." "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v.)

It was not long before the Lord graciously gave rest to the awakened consciences thus laid bare before Him. Though "we . . . are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again . . . yet doth He devise means, that His banished be not expelled from Him." (2 Sam. xiv. 14.)

After a while these two were united together in the fear of the Lord; and though driven from the homes of their parents on account of the work thus wrought in their souls—persecuted instead of persecuting—they are now in the enjoyment of "peace with God."

S. C. M. A.

NOT FIT TO GO.

WHILE waiting at the T—— station a short time since I saw a train of trucks and waggons come in. Just afterwards I noticed that a man went round and struck each wheel with a hammer, and that something in the sound of one of them seemed to arrest his attention; for, after striking it once, he looked more carefully at it, and struck it again. He then took out a red label from his pocket, upon which these words were printed, "NOT TO GO," and fastened it to the side of the truck.

"Why place that label on the truck?" I inquired of him.

"The wheel is broken, sir."

"But you have not placed a red label on any of the other trucks, and they all look alike to me."

"Very likely, sir. But *I* know the wheel is broken, and that if it went it might cause an accident."

"Are you quite sure you have made no mistake?"

"Certain, sir."

"Then there is a difference between those trucks and you and me." He looked earnestly at me, wondering, no doubt, what I was going to say, so I went on. "Only one of those wheels is broken, but with us, by nature we are all 'broken' (*i.e.*, totally ruined), and hence *not fit to go*, not fit for the presence of a holy God. But do you examine every wheel to see if it is sound?"

"Yes, every one."

"Well, then, God has looked to see if there was one sound person, and we are told what He saw. (Gen. vi. 5, 12.) 'God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that *every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*. . . . And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.'"

The man looked surprised, and I then said, "If God were to test you *now*, would you be fit to go to be with Him?"

"I don't think I should," he answered. So I pointed him to the Saviour as the only One who could make him *fit to go*, and left him.

But perhaps you say, my reader, that the scriptures to which I referred the wheel-striker speak of those who lived before the flood, and that things have altered since then; that we have had the law, and the prophets, and the priesthood, and, last of all, the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. All this is quite true; but in Rom. iii. 23 we have God's thoughts of man as He sees him *now*: "All have sinned," He says, "and come short of the glory of God." Indeed, since the "law and the prophets," man has actually crucified the Son of God between two thieves! proving that he is no more fit to go into the glory of God than ever he was.

But though the cross clearly shows man's hatred at its very worst, it is here where God's love shines forth at its very brightest. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Jesus has died, has "made peace by the blood of His cross," and by that one offering every claim of a holy God

was so satisfied that now He can be "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

Reader, can you say, "I know Him as the One who bore *my* sins in His own body on the tree"? If so, thank God you *are* fit to go. But if you have not in heart bowed to Him, the word of the Lord is against you. "He that believeth not the Son" (or is not subject to Him) "shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 36.)

If, at this moment, this solemn word applies to you, then, be assured, that like the truck with the broken wheel at the railway station, you are *not fit to go*. There is this great difference, however: the truck did not go *because* it was unfit; you *must go* at the appointed time, whether you are ready or not. Consider it. H. D.

WHAT WILL **YOUR** END BE?

AN aged Christian woman lay dying in her quiet village home in Derbyshire. Weeping friends stood near her bed, but *she* wept not. Looking calmly upon them, she said, "*I am going.*" Then, turning her gaze upward, she said, "*I am coming,*" and was immediately with her Lord.

How different to the end of the notorious infidel who cried to the woman who waited upon him, "Stay with me, for I cannot bear to be alone. Send even a child to stay with me, for it is hell to be alone." Yes, lonely, indeed, must that soul be who is left to face death and eternity without Christ! What will *your* end be?

TIDINGS OF LIFE AND PEACE.

A STARTLING FACT.

PERHAPS you are not aware of it, but it is a fact, that THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IS COMING AGAIN.

He promised to come (John xiv. 3); the angels said He was coming (Acts i. 11); the Holy Ghost, by Paul, tells us *how* He will come (1 Thess. iv. 15-17); and in the last chapter in the Bible He Himself assures us, with a thrice-repeated promise, that He is coming "*quickly*." Yes, the once-rejected Christ of God—Jesus—the scorned and crucified One—is coming again.

What do you think He is coming for? Would you like to know?

He is coming to save the bodies of those *whose souls are already saved*. As soon as a person believes on the Lord Jesus Christ his soul is saved. *God says so*. (Acts xvi. 31; 1 Peter i. 9.) The writer's soul is saved. It is no presumption for him to say it, because God says to believers, "*By grace ye are saved*." (Eph. ii. 5.) But his body is not yet saved. It is still subject to disease, decay, and death, all of which are the results of sin.

When the Lord Jesus Christ comes, the *bodies* of all dead believers, whose *spirits* have been

with Christ ever since they died, will be raised ; all living believers will be changed and glorified without dying, and, all together, we shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

A solemn question now comes before us : WHO will be caught up when Jesus comes ? Let Scripture give the answer. We read in Matt. xxv. 10, "The bridegroom came ; and *they that were ready* went in with Him to the marriage : and the door was shut." None but those who are "READY" will go in with Jesus. Those whose sins are forgiven are *ready*. Those whose souls are saved are *ready*. Those who believe on the Son of God are *ready*. "Dost THOU believe on the Son of God ?"

Perhaps you say, "Yes, I believe all about Him ; I'm not an infidel." That may be ; but believing *about* Christ is not believing *on* Him. I might believe a great many things *about* a certain doctor, without ever putting myself in his hands to be cured. In like manner a great many believe that Jesus is the Great Physician, but, alas ! they know not their own dangerous state, and therefore do not go to Him.

You are a lost sinner ; so bad that, except you are saved by the Son of God, the lake of fire will be your righteous doom for ever. The blessed news from heaven to your soul is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Then YOU will be READY ; and knowing Jesus as the living Saviour of your soul, you will be able to look up, and say from the heart, "Even so, COME, Lord Jesus."

Remember, the door will be shut. There will be no salvation after Jesus has come for those who have rejected or neglected the gospel ; but

"the Lord Jesus shall be revealed . . . in flaming fire taking vengeance on *them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

C. A. C.

WHERE? WHAT? AND WHY?

OR, THREE MEN QUESTIONED BY GOD.

IF any great personage were to ask us a question, our anxiety to give a correct answer would be in proportion to the way the question affected us personally. For example, if Queen Victoria asked any one an important question, the desire to give the suitable reply would be greatly increased if it were known that there was a great reward for a right answer, and a heavy penalty for a wrong one. But when God, who knows the heart, asks a question, how infinitely more important is it that a true and acceptable answer should be given, especially if the *eternal destiny of the soul* is affected by that answer. The three words heading this paper opened three distinct questions put by God to three different men, as given in three portions of His Word. The results of these questions we desire briefly to consider.

1. When our first parents had sinned, and were hiding from God behind the trees of the garden of Eden, God's question to Adam was—

"WHERE ART THOU?"

He did not ask this question for mere information. He knew, full well, both where Adam was and why he was there. But, as the God of love and the God of all grace, He was seeking after Adam for his blessing.

Adam's simple and honest answer was, "I was afraid, . . . and I hid myself." He had got a conscience, and felt himself a sinner, but he had to see that his fig-leaf apron could avail him nothing before the *holy* and righteous God against whom he had sinned. The guilty pair had to learn that God could only be approached through *death*, as was shown by the coats of skins God clothed them with—skins of slain animals, and, no doubt, types of the great sacrifice of Christ on the cross for lost and ruined sinners. On this ground alone could God accept them. Well was it, then, that Adam responded to God's call, and got into blessing through God's own provision. Ever since that time Adam's race has been departing and trying to hide from God, as it is written, "There is *none* that seeketh after God. They are ALL GONE OUT OF THE WAY." (Rom. iii. 10-12.)

Reader, His question to you now is, "Where art *thou*?" If you have not yet answered this solemn question, remember that God knows *where* you are, and *why* you are there, and that you will, ere long, have to turn out of your hiding-place either for blessing or for judgment. We beseech you, therefore, to accept your responsibility, while you may get back to God through the finished work of Christ on the cross. We urge you to take shelter under His precious blood; it is this alone which gives true peace, and brings us nigh to God.

2. When Adam's two sons took their offerings to the Lord, Cain's offering was of the fruit of the *ground*—the ground which God had *cursed*. It had no *death* connected with it, and therefore both himself and his offering were alike rejected. Abel's

offering was of the *firstlings of his flock* and the fat thereof, the *blood* pointing to the *blood of Christ*, the fat to His personal excellence. He did, therefore, approach God through *death*, and was accepted. "Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell;" and "when they were in the field," we read, "Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him."

And now came God's question to this first of murderers—

"WHAT HAST THOU DONE?"

Of course, God knew quite well what Cain had done. But the grace of Him who has no pleasure in the death of a sinner was seeking Cain's blessing, though it was only met by the insolence of his reply—"Am I my brother's keeper?" There was now nothing left for God but to pronounce upon him the withering sentence, "Now art thou cursed from the earth."

Reader, God's question to you to-day is, "What hast *thou* done?" And mark, *God* knows what you have done, knows it all, and pronounces that you are "*guilty*" before Him. As you value your soul, therefore, we warn you not to set Him at defiance, as Cain did. Continue not, we beseech you, to resist His gracious appeals, lest you find yourself launched suddenly some day beyond the reach of blessing. Neither adopt any other way of salvation than the one He Himself has provided for you. Not all the flowers and fruits in God's wide creation, not all the good works of all the saints in glory, can avail to meet the question of your sin before a holy God. "Without *shedding of blood* is no remission." (Heb. ix. 22.) "It is the *blood* that maketh an atonement for the soul."

(Lev. xvii. 11.) "And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John i. 7.)

3. When Saul of Tarsus, "exceeding mad" against the followers of the crucified Jesus, was journeying to Damascus with official authority from the great ones in Jerusalem to persecute and imprison as many as he could find confessing the hated Name, he was suddenly arrested with the startling question, "Saul, Saul,

"WHY PERSECUTEST THOU ME?"

It was the voice of Jesus Himself that fell upon the ear of this persecutor, as the light from the glory brought him upon his face in the dust. *He* knew why Saul was persecuting His saints. Ignorance and darkness were on the side of the persecutor, who had never dreamt that in ill-treating these poor believers he was persecuting their living Head in glory; so closely were they united to Him.

Now note his answer—"Who art Thou, Lord?" and the Lord's reply, "I am JESUS whom thou persecutest." Thus was he given to understand that the crowning act of his self-righteous zeal was the crowning act of rebellion against the exalted Christ of God. But, oh! what *grace* it was that thus met him, enabling him, years after, to speak of Jesus as "the Son of God, who *loved me, and gave Himself for me.*" (Gal. ii. 20.)

This is not a day of open persecution, but of easy-going profession; and were the reader asked the question, "Why persecutest thou Me?" he might probably have ground for denying the charge. But if you are not persecuting Him or His followers, have you received Him as your Saviour and Substitute? "*What think ye of*

Christ?" Have you trusted His precious blood? Are you prepared, nay, *do you even wish, to dwell with Him in glory?* God is still waiting in grace to save you. Judgment is His "strange work;" but remember that the eternal destiny of your priceless soul hinges upon your answer to this question, "*What think ye of Christ?*" J. N.

WARNED OF GOD IN A DREAM.

WITH vivid distinctness rose before her the appearance of a great judgment-throne, towards which men, women, and children were fast hurrying. Horror-stricken, her mind grasped, in imagination, the reality of the last great day.

In vision Isaiah viewed the throne of God, and "Woe is me" was the utterance of his heart in that "holy, holy, holy" presence.

Daniel, too, described a solemn judgment-scene. "The Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." (Daniel vii. 9, 10.)

The soul whose dream is now being related felt herself sensibly and irresistibly drawn to this judgment-seat; and, though anguish and terror filled her heart, she felt unable to resist following the multitudes thronging towards it.

Reader, in like circumstances what would your

soul experience? When Paul reasoned of "judgment to come," Felix, himself a noble governor, and accustomed to judge at an earthly tribunal, "trembled." Ah, yes! and Paul could also say, in speaking of the "judgment-seat of Christ" (2 Cor. v. 10), "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." (v. 11.)

Again, in vision, that coming judgment appeared to the apostle John. "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. . . . And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." (Rev. xx. 11-15.)

Reader, this is deeply solemn, terribly real; and yet John, unlike Felix, could view it in perfect peace. In what lay the difference? In pondering it, see which case is yours.

John *knew* the One who sat in judgment. John had looked upon Him, and had beheld in Him the Lamb of God, and had followed Him—"the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." He could look upon Him from whose face earth and heaven fled, and see in Him the One upon whose bosom he had leaned his head. He was one "whom Jesus loved." He had listened to the voice of Jesus when He said,

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and *shall not come into condemnation*” (judgment); “but is passed from death unto life.” (John v. 24.)

To return again to the dream of her whose soul was now fully aroused by God. As she seemed to continue her way, suddenly she was arrested by the appearance of One whom she had not seen before, and in gracious tenderness He spoke to her troubled heart, saying, “*Have you need of Me?*” In this glorified One she recognized a Saviour. In His hands and feet were wound-prints. At His feet she fell, owning all her need, like the sorrowing and repentant woman who washed His feet with tears, and to whom He said, “Thy sins are forgiven: . . . go in peace.” Like this poor “sinner,” she, too, took her place as a guilty, needy one; and, through His death and the judgment He bore, she found pardon and peace for her soul. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. viii. 1.)

Reader, whether you have dreamt it or not, you are, with countless thousands of others, being hurried on to the judgment-throne of God; and unless you are arrested by the Saviour on the way you will certainly reach that great tribunal in your sins, and as certainly be lost for ever. Be wise in time!

S. C. M. A.

WAITING FOR AN INWARD CHANGE.

NOT long since, a man enquiring of a child whom he met the way to a certain street, got this brief and unlooked-for reply, “You are in it, sir.”

Now, in a similar way, there are many souls (through ignorance, no doubt) wanting to reach that which has already reached them. They are longing for an inward *change*, and deeply troubled because they have not had one; and yet, strange as it may appear, *the change* they expect would never be wished for if *a change* had not already taken place. From the slumber of sin they have been aroused by the Spirit of God, and are now wide awake to the bitter consequences of their guilty, godless course. This surely is a change, and a great one, but it is not what they are looking for. They expect some sort of *happy change*, which they vainly hope will give them peace about their sins; and hence they are always kept occupied with their own feelings, instead of with Christ.

The exercises of a young person in the north of Ireland were of this type. After years of indifference, though brought up carefully by Christian parents, she was awakened by the Spirit of God to a sense of her lost condition. Deep indeed were the exercises she passed through before she found peace with God; her great trouble being that *she hadn't had an inward change*. In the middle of the night she would rise from her bed, and peep into her mother's room, fearing that the Lord's coming might have taken place, her parents gone, and she left outside the door of mercy. Indeed, her anxiety increased to such an extent, that, for want of sleep, her physical strength gave way, and for some days she was forced to keep her bed.

I enquired if ever before she had been thus troubled and distressed about her state before God, and she freely owned that such exercises

were altogether new to her; and yet, marked as the change was, it was not the change she looked for, not the change she would fain have rested upon could she have found it. It is true she had heard of Jesus as a Saviour for sinners; doubtless longed to call Him hers, and to find peace through Him, but she expected to find it and everything her soul craved for in this longed-for *change*.

Now, reader, what was her mistake in all this? She was trying to get, by a happy inward change, what alone can be found in an outside finished work; *i.e.*, in the work of Christ upon the cross.

How many there are who are doing this! *They are seeking for peace by a change within, whereas it is really the change within which makes them seek for peace.*

Let us consider this a little more closely.

Man is naturally an enemy to God, and his carnal mind enmity itself against Him. (See Rom. v. 10; viii. 7.) He has no fear of God before his eyes. (Rom. iii. 18.) He seeks not after God (Rom. iii. 11), for he desires not the knowledge of His ways. (Job xxi. 14.) He counts God as his enemy, and would, if he could, get rid of Him altogether. As it is, he says in his heart, "*No God*" (Psalm xiv. 1); the wish being father to the thought. In this state he neither fears "wrath" as the judgment due to his sins, nor seeks for peace with God about them. But when the Spirit of grace works effectually in the soul, what a change is brought about! The careless one is made to feel his guilt, and to review the whole of his relationship with God, and condemning thoughts of self take the place of hard thoughts about Him.

But great as such a change may be, it is never

to become the ground of peace for a guilty conscience. That alone which meets the claims of God against us can really give peace to us. When a man of business finds, by taking stock, and auditing his books, that he is practically a bankrupt, from that moment, if he is honest, his anxiety and distress will commence. Nor does he dream that any happy change of mind *in him* will meet the difficulty. His one thought is, "Where is the money to come from?" "How are my heavy arrears to be met?" And it is only when some near relative or friend at last steps in and pays the whole debt, that his anxiety and misery are changed to comfort and peace of mind.

Yet how many, we repeat, are *looking for a happy change within* to assure them of salvation from coming judgment, and of peace with a holy God, instead of seeing that *it is the blood of Christ*, as God has declared its value, that cancels the debt of sin, shelters from judgment, and gives the guilty conscience peace. Such souls, like the young woman just referred to, want to find satisfaction in the joy which they expect the Spirit will produce in them, whereas the Spirit wants them to be satisfied with what Christ has done on the cross for them, and this by assuring them that *God is satisfied* therewith. It was the "*God of peace*" that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." (Heb. xiii. 20.) "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, *we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (Rom. iv. 25; v. 1.)

In reality, then, we may say that there are *two* great changes wrought in the soul of a believer. The first is by the Holy Spirit, who makes us feel our sinfulness and the consequent need of a Saviour. The second is effected when we see, by faith, that our Lord Jesus Christ has perfectly met our need by dying for our sins upon the tree; that the full penalty has been borne by Him, and that God has declared His satisfaction in that work by raising Him from the dead.

One is a change from hardened indifference to penitent anxiety, and usually called repentance; the other a change from soul-trouble about our sins, to joy and peace through believing on Him who bore them for us; or, to put it more briefly, the first is through the Spirit's work *in* us; the second through the Saviour's work *for* us. In one I am "born of the Spirit;" in the other I have "peace through the blood." Reader, is this peace yours?
GEO. C.

"WHEN JESUS SAW THEIR FAITH."

MARK ii. 1-12.

IT is a striking feature in this incident that the blessed Son of God is not asked for anything. Difficulties are in the way of His being reached, but they are surmounted by those children of faith; and how encouraging is the blessed Lord's response. The needy one is simply and silently let down at His feet. As if they had said to each other, "We need not interrupt the Lord. He is preaching the word; and *He knows* what we want; and *we know* His heart. He is scattering mercies all about, and surely He will meet

the need of our friend. He is worthy of being trusted."

No doubt He took all this in, and appreciated it. When "He saw their faith" He responded to it, as He ever does, in His own way, worthy of Himself. Sometimes for our good, and to lead us to judge what is very often mixed up with it—the energy of nature, the activity of the flesh—He tests our faith. Here we get the energy and the patience of *faith*—an energy daunted by no hindrance in the way to Jesus, the source of all blessing, "the only begotten of the Father, full of *grace* and truth." It was refreshing to His heart to see the energy that *would* get to Him, and the patient confidence in Him that could be satisfied with simply and silently laying their needy friend at His feet. How long did He keep them waiting? Not a moment. He never keeps a soul, who trusts Him in simplicity, waiting a single unnecessary moment.

Reader, have you any difficulties for Jesus to meet? "Oh, yes," you say, "I am a great sinner." Then you are just the one for Him, for He came "to save the lost." Do you not see that the first announcement He made to the palsied man was, "*Son, thy sins be forgiven thee*"? He did not give him power to rise up and walk *first*. No; at the proper time He does this. But He *first* deals with that which is most important. Forgiveness of sins first, and then power to walk. This is the divine order. Man is constantly endeavouring to reverse this order. Do you not want to walk as a Christian, and to please God, before you know that your sins are forgiven you—in fact, to get forgiven in that way? Has it never occurred to you, that, while seeking salvation in this way, you are practi-

cally denying the work of Christ upon the cross, and God's testimony as to it; namely, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth . . . from all sin" ? (1 John i. 7.) "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." (Ephes. ii. 8, 9.)

Do you think that the palsied man had any doubt about the forgiveness of his sins when Jesus had said to him, "Thy sins be forgiven thee" ? Of course he had not, no more than he doubted his power to walk when He said to him, "Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way."

Some years ago, at a watering-place in Lancashire, one was speaking to a small meeting on the scripture at the head of this paper, when a young man tottered into the room, and took a seat. He was observed to listen most attentively to what was said about the grace of God, and the simplicity of its apprehension by faith. It proved to be God's message of peace to his soul, and even his altered countenance bore testimony to the reality of his newly found blessing, as he left that little meeting never more to return. He had come to this small watering-place intending to remain some weeks for the benefit of his health; but finding rest for his poor wearied heart and conscience, he felt he must return the following morning to his home, and tell his friends "what great things Jesus had done for him." About a fortnight afterwards he fell asleep, rejoicing in the knowledge of sins forgiven, of relationship with God.

How many believers there are who seem never to be sure about one or other of these blessings. Ask if they are children of God, and they will

tell you that they "*hope so.*" Enquire if their sins are forgiven, and they look astonished that such a question should be put to them. But faith in Christ brings all alike into both these blessings. "*All that believe are justified from all things.*" (Acts xiii. 39.) Again, "*Ye are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*" (Gal. iii. 26.) Now, here are three alls: "*All that believe are justified from all things*"—*all* sons of God by faith. How can you *hope* that you are a child of God if you are not justified? Don't be trifling with God and your own precious soul. If you do not know that your sins are forgiven, you have no authority for *hoping* that you are a child of God.

Remember that time is short and eternity nigh. The gospel is in your hands, before your eyes, before your heart to-day. To-morrow may never be yours. "Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish." (Acts xiii. 40, 41.)

T. R.

THE MARTYR'S TRIUMPH.

"**I** *WILL banish you!*" said a cruel tyrant to the happy heir of heaven, at whose bar he stood for judgment.

"You cannot separate me from His love," was the martyr's victorious response.

"*I will confiscate your goods!*"

"My property is in heaven."

"*Then I will kill you!*"

"My life is hid with Christ in God."

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John v. 4).—*Selected.*