

TIDINGS

OF

LIGHT AND PEACE

EDITED BY GEO. C.

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

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TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

PAUSE!

ABOUT a mile from the town of Olney in Buckinghamshire—Cowper's Olney—there stands, in the centre where three roads meet in the village of Emberton, an old, square clock tower, after the model of a church tower. Beneath the clock the following lines are inscribed:—

“Time's on the wing, how swift he speeds his way !
Hasting to sink in one continuous day.
Pause, passing traveller—what thy destiny
When death unveils a vast eternity ?
Live then to Christ—in Christ eternal gain.
No Christ—no hope, but everlasting pain.”

Pause, reader. If unconverted it is indeed high time you called a halt ere

Death pulls you up

short, once for all.

Where have you come from ? Whither are you going ? Where will life's journey, on the road you are now travelling, land you ? “What *thy* destiny when death unveils a vast eternity ?” These are questions which might well engage your most serious attention on the threshold of a new year. You have just left 1902 behind, with all it contained of weal or woe, with its long list of unrepented, unforgiven sins to swell the heavy score which a holy God has already entered against you.

1903 stares you in the face. "Time's on the wing, *how swift* he speeds his way!" You have just reached another mile-stone on life's short journey. But another mile-stone on the road to—where? Have you been carousing over it—fêting the fact that you have let slip, nay, sinned away, another short period of your little day of grace?

Some years ago a young man went home to his lodging in San Francisco, on New Year's Eve, to dress for a ball. He purposed to

"Kill Time"!

Yes, to "kill time" by dancing out the old, and dancing in the new year, with a number of others as heedless and godless as himself. In the course of dressing he sat down to rest for a moment, but thoughts of home and parents in far-away Scotland, which he had left, tired of restraint, crowded in all unbidden upon his mind. Many a frolic and sin of the past came up before him. Thoughts of God, of judgment merited, of goodness spurned, and of grace rejected were borne in upon him. Instead of sitting down for a moment, he sat for hours in that chair, all unconscious of their flight. At last he roused himself from his long reverie and looked at his watch. It was nearly midnight! Too late, he thought, to go to the ball; besides, he had lost all desire for its dissipation. "Haven't they watch-night services," thought he, "in the old country? I wonder if there is such a thing here?" Upon which he rose to his feet, hurried on some clothes, and went out to look for a church or chapel in which a "watch-night service" was being held. He found one and entered.

There God met him. An earnest gospel appeal went straight home to his heart. Thankfully he believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as *his* Saviour, and was saved there and then.

And now, my reader, let me answer those questions for you which I suggested for your consideration at the beginning of this paper. I answer them lest, by any means, you should deceive yourself in the replies you give.

Where have you come from?

You came from the hand of God—"We are the offspring of God," said the apostle Paul to the Athenians (Acts xvii. 29). Have you thought of this solemn fact, and that therefore He has claims upon you, and that you are answerable to God?

Whither are you going?

Ah, WHITHER? If unconverted—and it is such I am addressing, yearning for your blessing—if unconverted you are going on as fast as time can take you—accelerated, it may be, by your own dissipation and sin, to death and judgment. For God has said, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but *after this* THE JUDGMENT" (Heb. ix. 27). You can't get away from these two appointments which God has made, and, depend upon it, *they will not get away from you!* They are two *fixed* points, and you are *hurrying on to reach them!* And denying the existence of judgment will no more do away with it than denying the existence of death—if you were so foolish as to do so—would abolish it.

When death unveils eternity.

Unconcerned reader, what then? The road you are now travelling will *land you in destruction*

(Matt. vii. 13): your destiny the lake of fire (Rev. xx. 15). For of the judgment of the great day we read, "*Whosoever* was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." "No Christ, no hope, but everlasting pain."

Thank God, you have been spared to the "Year of Grace" 1903. And just as the road along which I approached Emberton clock tower, with its quaint old inscription, parted in two, so will you reach "the parting of the ways" the moment you repent and turn to God. Up to now you have been going your own way. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but *the end* thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. xvi. 25). But the moment

The Spirit unveils your danger

and you forsake that way and look to God, you enter the narrow way which leadeth unto life (Matt. vii. 14). Then will you "live to Christ," and "find in Christ eternal gain."

Do you now ask a question:

How may I find it,

this "narrow way which leadeth unto life?" Or in other words, "What must I do to be saved?" Then we answer in the words of Paul to the conscience-stricken Philippian jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12).

What must you do to be damned, did you say? Simply continue on the road you are going. Nothing more is needed.

W. G. B.

A SOLEMN WARNING.

A SOLEMN WARNING.

RUINED and lost at last !
Perished in dark despair !
Lost, for the die is cast !
Gone far away—but where ?

* * * *

Sunk in the lake of fire,
Offers of mercy o'er !
Gone to destruction dire,
Gone, to return no more !

Never a moment's rest !
Never a pause of peace !
Pain in the anguished breast !
Anguish—and no release !

Gnashing of teeth and tears—
Tears that no comfort dries !
Horrible, hopeless fears !
Wailing and ceaseless cries !

Lost ! for rejecting still
God's message of light and love !
Lost, because human will
Turned from the things above !

* * * *

Perishing sculs, be wise ;
Look to the blood-stained cross !
Dare you that cross despise ?
Dare you at last be lost ?

Jesus the Just has died,
Died for the sinner's sin !
Justice is satisfied,
Hasten and enter in !

Hasten ere mercy's door
Close on your aching view !
Ere the last chance be o'er,
Enter, there's room for you !

* * *

THE CROSS AND ITS RESULTS.

(Notes of a Gospel Address.)

FOUR things come before us in connection with the cross—

1. God's final test of man as a sinner.
2. God's estimate of sin.
3. God's judgment of sin.
4. God's end revealed in blessing.

We see in the cross the full exhibition of man's wickedness. The full character and root of sin is brought to light, and man proved to be a hater of God.

God was fully revealed and presented to man in the person of Christ. In grace He adapted Himself to the need of man as He found him amid the varied forms of evil under which he laboured as the fruit of sin. On the other hand, everything which was agreeable to God in man, every human grace and perfection, was set forth in Jesus. Yet the One in whom all this was set forth was despised and rejected. When Pilate brought forth this blessed One and said, "Behold the Man," the religious leaders said, "Crucify Him." The most enlightened, the most religious of men rejected Him. They would have nothing of God, and could appreciate nothing that was according to God.

All this only proves how entirely man is alienated from God. If man has been proved capable of murdering the Son of God, what further need of testing? His state has been fully revealed; his sin has come to light in its worst form. But all this has been recorded for our profit. Man has been portrayed in his true character by the hand of God, so that we may

look at the picture and see ourselves as God sees us; see ourselves as we really are, not one whit better than those in whom all this wickedness was brought to light.

Now the second point to consider is that in the cross we have *God's estimate of sin*—His holy abhorrence of it, His righteous judgment of it. This has been clearly set forth in His own beloved Son made sin, forsaken of God and crying, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" God's face was hidden from the beloved One because He had become, on that cross, at that particular moment, identified with sin. Thus we see how obnoxious sin is to God, how absolutely intolerable it is to Him. *We* may think lightly of it; He cannot. He abhors it. How important it is that we should come in some measure to have God's estimate of it and of ourselves as sinful men! If repentance is to be true and deep, and it should be, we must judge ourselves in the light of the cross. There will then be no assumption of what we are not, no pretension to human goodness, not even a thought of self-improvement for ultimate self-satisfaction. The only thing we can do is to loathe ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes. Instead of seeking to justify ourselves, we shall condemn ourselves, and in so doing we shall come over to God's side. We shall justify Him by accepting His judgment of ourselves.

Now *whence comes the relief?* What is the remedy? This is the third point for our consideration. We see how, for every repentant sinner, God has condemned sin in Christ dying for us on the cross, so that He can now justify and save the one who has sinned. "God sending

His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, has condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. viii. 3). "He who knew no sin was made sin for us" (2 Cor. v. 21). God has condemned my sin in the sinless One. *The sinful man in myself has been condemned in the sinless Man on the cross.* In so doing God has established and manifested His righteousness. It is of all importance to know that all the rights of God have been fully maintained and satisfied in the death of Christ, and that *God has been glorified in the presence of sin.* Moreover, all this has been made clearly manifest in the fact that Christ has been raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and is gone to the right hand of God.

Lastly, *what is the result of all this?* It is this, that the soul coming to God by Jesus, through faith, is accepted of God, and made meet for glory. My sin having been so completely condemned in Jesus dying for me, God no longer identifies me with my sin. Before Him I stand apart from it, and He now identifies me with Christ. I am, in Christ, righteous before God. As a man in Adam, in sin, I have died in the One who died for me, so that if I live before God I live in a wholly new condition, in Christ. "I am crucified with Christ. No longer live I, but Christ liveth in me."

Thus a man like the dying thief could go straight into paradise. But he did not go there *as a thief.* In the One dying by his side God had condemned all that the thief was, as well as met all he had done, so that in that character he had come to an end and ceased to be. God no longer identified him with his sin, and no more regarded him in the *character* of a thief; he lived

to God in another condition, in the life of Christ, and so he was fit to be with Christ in paradise.

The One who has borne our sin has become our righteousness. The believer is in Christ, and there is no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus. Such are made meet for the inheritance of saints in light, and can therefore rejoice in hope of the glory of God. F. H. B.

THE UNREASONABLENESS OF INDIFFERENCE.

JOB ix. 2.

THE man accused of crime is by no means indifferent to his position. He engages an eminent counsellor, in order that his case may be pleaded, and pleaded in such a way that he shall appear just before his judge.

Men are wise enough concerning their temporal interests, while the interests of eternity are often counted as the small dust of the balance.

How is it with you, my reader? Has Job's question ever received your serious consideration?

Job was a man of extraordinary wisdom. When he spoke even the aged kept silence, and by his word their matters were decided.

If the above question were worthy of Job's attention, surely it cannot be altogether beneath my reader's notice.

Perhaps you reply, "But I am no great sinner, and therefore I do not trouble myself much on this matter. I regularly attend church, and always do my duty. If I were a flagrant sinner, I certainly would start afresh."

Granted, dear reader, that you are respectable, upright, and by your fellows highly esteemed.

Yet methinks you will scarcely claim equality with Job. He was not only revered by man, but also approved of God. God declared of Job, "There is none like him in the earth," yet Job's heart was exercised about this question.

How man should be just with God was to him a matter of vital importance; and there can be no doubt that it is of equal significance to all who rank below him.

Mark you, it is not, How should a *sinner* be just with God? but, How should *man* be just with God?

Ah! this, then, becomes a personal question with each one of us. Am I a man? Am I a human being?

Here, then, is a problem the solving of which I dare not delay: How should man be just with God?

But why should this question interest me? Why should I be anxious to know how I stand with God?

BECAUSE I, as a creature, am responsible to God.

BECAUSE God is "the Judge of all the earth."

BECAUSE "He hath appointed a day, in the which *He will judge the world in righteousness.*"

We do not, however, stand in the position of the man spoken of at the beginning of this paper.

We are not on our trial. *We have been tried, and not only tried, but found guilty and condemned.*

God thus speaks in His Word: "There is none righteous, no, not one. . . . All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

God also says *that He will by no means clear the guilty.*

Hence the importance of Job's question, and the unreasonableness of indifference.

My reader may say, "If I am guilty and already condemned, is there any hope of escaping punishment, much less of being justified?"

Well, dear reader, our case would indeed be hopeless if it were not that God is interested in our question, How should man be just with God? Yes, God has been deeply interested in our case, and, in His infinite wisdom, has devised a plan by which we may not only escape the punishment due to our sins, but also stand justified before Him.

To the aid of infinite love came infinite wisdom. Justice demanded satisfaction.

The guilty must die, or a competent substitute be found.

But what resource had *we*? None. No man could atone for his own sins, much less for those of his brother. No angel nor archangel was equal to the emergency. Then spake the beloved Son, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." *God* had a resource in Christ.

It was God's will that man should be saved, and the Lord Jesus undertook the work of redemption. He died, the just for the unjust.

On the ground of that work God can "be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

You know that Christ took upon Him the form of man; but remember His incarnation did not save us. No, no. If He took upon Him the form of man, it was for the *suffering of death*; because *without shedding of blood* there could be no remission.

All that believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are justified from all things (see Acts xiii. 38, 39).

Here, then, is the answer to the question, "How should man be just with God?"

How shall I be just before God? By simply taking the lost sinner's place, and believing God's testimony concerning His Son as my Saviour.

What has God said concerning His Son? "HE GAVE HIMSELF A RANSOM FOR ALL," and therefore for you. This, dear reader, is God's message to you. But are not good works necessary to salvation? Let God's Word answer. "Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Then how are you treating this message of salvation? Upon it depends your eternal destiny. If you despise it, *you will perish*; if you neglect it, *how shall you escape*? If you receive it, Christ says *you shall never perish: none shall pluck you out of His hand*.

"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."

Reader, do you believe in Jesus? Is His precious blood the foundation of your hope?

Then, indeed, are you just before God. Who can condemn? It is God that justifieth. Who shall lay anything to your charge? It is Christ that died.

The question of the believer's sins will never again be raised, because God visited His own Son with the punishment due to them.

Let us indeed praise God that the question so important to us has been a question of such deep interest to Him.

What God's love devised, His power and wisdom have accomplished. How, then, can the reader be indifferent and escape? . CHAS. H.

THREE INSCRIPTIONS.

“OVER the triple doorway of the Cathedral of Milan there are three inscriptions spanning the splendid arches. Over one is carved a beautiful wreath of roses, and underneath is the legend—

1 *‘All that pleases is but for a moment.’*

Over the other is sculptured a cross, and these are the words beneath—

‘All that troubles us is but for a moment.’

But underneath the great central entrance, in the main aisle, is the inscription—

‘That only is important which is eternal.’”

Although unknown among the many artists who spent their time and talents upon this vast edifice during the five centuries it was in building, there yet was one who has left behind the shortest, but most powerful sermon ever echoed by its walls.

“All that pleases is but for a moment.” Can the reader not say, “How true!” The pleasures of childhood and the keener pursuits of riper years, whether physical or intellectual, how quickly they passed away, and what little satisfaction they afforded! And, alas! how often there remained a prick in the conscience, or sorrow in the heart, because of “something”—that ceaseless something—that led astray, or caused pain!

But—happier than that artist of ancient days—living as we do now in the full sunshine of the gospel of the grace of God, we can tell abroad the good news that He gives “pleasures for evermore” through the Lord Jesus Christ, who is at His right hand.

So that while all that pleases here upon the

earth is but for a moment, the pleasures of having our sins forgiven because of Christ's all-atoning work upon the cross, and of having our hearts made glad with the sense of His deep love, are eternal. These are the joys that will abide with us for ever. And then, in the words of the central inscription, we shall realise, "*That only is important which is eternal.*"

Very truly can Christians say, "*All that troubles us is but for a moment.*" The apostle Paul stood boldly forth, took up his cross, and followed in the footsteps of Jesus. And his brave words sound cheerfully to-day: "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. iv. 17). L. J. M.

DELUSIONS ABOUT DEATH-BEDS.

THERE is a superstition in some of the northern counties of England that a person cannot die comfortably if there is a *pigeon's feather* in his pillow; and many a dying man, ere now, has had his pillow changed by those who have watched his last hours, in hope that they could thereby remove the disturbing thing.

Perhaps you are inclined to smile at the folly of such people, or at least to pity their ignorance or stupidity. But wait a moment. This is not the only popular delusion in connection with the bed of the dying. Here is another, and one far worse in its effects upon others. Many people consider that if a man dies "peacefully," as it is called—that is, without restless tossings or any outward sign of excruciating pain, such as distortion of countenance and the like—he has certainly gone

to heaven. Yet if we take our stand on the truth of Scripture, there is no more ground for one thought than for the other. Both are delusions. Indeed, it is not of the righteous, but of the wicked, not of those who die in the Lord, but of those who die in their sins, that it is said, "They have *no bands* in their death" (Psalm lxxiii. 4).

It is well to remember that there may be two causes of outward uneasiness, one through physical pain, the other through smarting of conscience; one because of the state of a dying body, the other because of the state of an undying soul, and this in view of its entering into the immediate presence of God. "The spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccles. xii. 7).

It is related of Sir Walter Raleigh, that when his executioner gave him the choice of position on the block on which he was to be beheaded, he said, "It matters little in which direction my head falls, if my *heart* is right." When Richard Baxter, the author of those two God-used little books, *Calls to the Unconverted* and *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*, was dying, he said to one who visited him, "I have pain, for there is no arguing against one's senses, but *I have peace*, I HAVE PEACE." With intense bodily suffering he had the calmest, sweetest rest of heart and conscience, for he had Christ.

And should the writer or reader of these lines be called to die before this year is out, it will matter very little what his body may be passing through, and still less what kind of pillow his head may be placed upon. If Christ is His, through faith in His precious blood there will be no stain on his conscience, and, through the knowledge of the God who provided such a

Saviour and gave such a gift, no fear in his heart. All, all will be well.

"It is growing dark, mother, growing dark," said a dying child in Yorkshire, "but Jesus is lighting me through." Happy home-going!

But what must it be to be without Him at such a moment? If still a stranger to this blessed and (to those who know Him) never-absent Friend, take timely advice, and seek to make His acquaintance at once.

"'Tis Jesus, 'tis Jesus, our Saviour from above,
'Tis Jesus, 'tis Jesus, 'tis Jesus whom we love."

"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near." No other friend can say what He can say, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." And this He *does* say to the one who trusts Him. Blessed Saviour!

In conclusion note this. You may depart with an agonising physical struggle, yet go to be with Christ notwithstanding. You may "die easy," as men speak, and wake in hell! Nay, if you die without Christ, whether on the lap of luxury or on the hard stones of a public thoroughfare, as God is true, your doom will be as inevitable as it will be unalterable. Oh, what a thorn in your pillow will the thought of unforgiven sins prove to be; but the sharpest thorn of all will be the remembrance of slighted grace. God save my reader from such an end. Fall down before Him at once and through Christ and His all-availing sacrifice seek His mercy.

"Jesus can make a dying bed
As soft as downy pillows are,
While on His breast I lay my head
And breathe my life out sweetly there."

GEO. C.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

WHY AM I NOT SAVED?

THE recital of a rescue from a sinking ship in the North Atlantic some twenty-five years ago may serve to help you to answer the question, *Why am I not saved?*

The hope of everyone seems to be that, however badly they may get on in this world, they will be all right in the next. How few, comparatively, think of *how* they are to get to that place of delights which God has prepared for them that love Him!

Have *you* ever thought of it, my reader? Have you ever asked, *How* am I to reach the "radiant shore of the better land," as Mrs. Hemans speaks of it in her beautiful poem? Heaven is where God the Father is, where Christ is, who has gone to prepare a place for *His own*. This speaks well for the blessedness of the place; but *how to get there* is the question.

One thing I am convinced of, and it is this: I can never reach that place—never be found in such company—with the slightest taint of sin upon me. As sure as God is *holy*, He could not tolerate me in His presence with the slightest taint of sin upon me.

Now, what of our hope of heaven? We are the

descendants of Adam after he had sinned; we were conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity. The Spirit of God has left it on record that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Consequently, when I begin to think of my final destination; when I consider the poor, weak, rotten vessel I am sailing in—that is, the worthlessness of what I am in myself—I can only exclaim, I shall never reach there in this condition! Well for us when, like the men on that sinking ship, we reach that stage.

Our vessel had been battling with a heavy gale for some days, but through God's mercy we had been able to live through it without accident. The wind had somewhat subsided, and we were preparing to make sail and proceed on our passage when another ship was sighted, flying her national flag *upside down*, and a set of signals signifying, "*We are sinking. Will you take us off?*" They had evidently found out the worthlessness of the vessel they were in, and how impossible it would be for them to reach their desired port if they trusted to her.

Now let me ask, Have *you* reached that stage? Have you realised that in yourself you are a hopeless wreck, that you have "sinned, and come short of the glory of God"? You will not think of saying you have never sinned; and if you have, you are lost, and, if you trust in yourself, *eternally* lost.

These men, realising the helplessness of their vessel, signalled for help where alone it was to be obtained, and that was outside of themselves.

Are *you* content to go on in a condition that will finally bring you to eternal destruction, or will you call for help ere it be too late? Re-

member, "*Now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation." "*After death*, the judgment."

The thrill that ran through us when we understood their signal I must leave you to imagine. Just think of it for a moment! Those men that we saw moving about in health and strength might at any moment be hurled into eternity unless we could help them. Can you doubt what our answer was? Well, friend, it is a similar desire that actuates the writing of this little paper. My prayer is, that as He blessed the means used for the saving of these lives, He may bless this paper to the saving of your soul.

All we could say to these men was, "We will try to take you off when the sea goes down." You see, there was *uncertainty* in our answer. But to you it is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou *shalt* be saved." No uncertainty there. To them we could only say, We will *try* to take you off when the sea goes down. To you, The boat is alongside; get in and be saved. "The word is nigh thee . . . the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 8, 9).

Perhaps you say, But must not I do something?

I ask in reply, What *can* you do? Your boat is smashed—that is, your hope of heaven on your *own* merits has been shattered by sin; your vessel rotten—that is you are personally *unworthy*; and hence you are drifting to hopeless destruction.

But does it *cost nothing*?

You shall hear. Through God's mercy the sea gradually went down, and about six hours after first sighting the vessel we were able to launch

our boat. Then what a time of anxiety for us as we watched her approaching the sinking ship! First one sea caught and nearly overturned her, then another; then she sank out of sight in the trough of the sea, but only to come into sight again, always drawing nearer and nearer to her goal, till at last she was close alongside.

Do you inquire about *cost*? Think then of what it cost God, through Jesus, to save a *soul*. "God so loved the world, that He gave His *only* begotten Son." He spared Him from His side that He might come down into this world, take upon Him the form of a servant, be made in the likeness of men, be tempted in all points like as we are (sin apart), and, last of all, be made sin for us in order that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. Did that journey cost Him nothing? Think of Him as a lonely stranger here. "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." Think of Him in the Garden of Gethsemane, sweating, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground, and praying, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done." Think when, last of all, with no angel to stand by Him to strengthen Him, God had to hide His face from Him because of what He had become—a *sin-offering* for us. Oh, what a cry was that which He uttered, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" when all the waves and billows of God's judgment rolled over Him! Thank God, He perfectly answered to every righteous charge against us, and, after those three hours of darkness, was able triumphantly to exclaim, "*It is finished.*"

Yes, friend, "Having suffered all the judgment, borne the storm of wrath alone," He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. It is all over now, and need not be repeated. He is now seated at God's right hand, and from thence He sends forth His servants with a message of full forgiveness and free salvation to every creature under heaven. And everyone that believes upon Him gets the blessing.

Now, my unconverted reader, God's way of blessing has been pointed out to you, salvation has been brought within your reach. *How is it you are still unsaved?*

In the case of this sinking ship, directly the boat reached the side of the ship *they all got into her and were saved*, for she was big enough to take them all and carry them to a place of safety.

Do you not know you are lost? Do you not know you have no means of saving your own soul? Yet you will not, or at any rate *do not*, accept the only means God has provided for your soul's salvation. Oh, my friend, *beware!* Refusing to accept is only one form of despising, and I would leave with you the awful warning uttered by one who got his commission direct from Jesus in glory—even Paul the apostle. "Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you" (Acts xiii, 40, 41).
B. A. H.

"THE Saviour lives, no more to die;
He lives, our Head, enthroned on high;
He lives, triumphant o'er the grave;
He lives, eternally to save."

FAITH'S RESTING-PLACE.

“THERE’S naught on earth to rest on,
All things are changing here,
The smiles of joy we gaze on,
The friends we count most dear :
One Friend alone is changeless,
The One too oft forgot,
Whose love hath stood for ages—
Our Jesus changeth not.

“The sweetest flower of summer
That sheds its fragrance round
Ere evening comes oft withers
And lies upon the ground :
The dark and dreary desert
Has only one green spot,
’Tis found in living pastures—
Our Jesus changeth not.

“Clouds soon o’ercast our sunshine
So beautiful, so bright,
And while we still admire it
It darkens into night :
One sky alone is cloudless
Where darkness enters not,
’Tis found alone with Jesus—
And Jesus changeth not.

“E’en friendship’s smile avails not
To cheer us here below,
For smiles are all deceitful,
They quickly ebb and flow :
One smile alone can gladden,
Whate’er the pilgrim’s lot,
It is the smile of Jesus—
And Jesus changeth not.

“And thus our bark moves onward
O’er life’s tempestuous sea,
While death’s unsparing finger
Is stamped on all we see :
But faith has found a refuge
Where hope deceiveth not,
Our life is hid with Jesus—
And Jesus changeth not.”

THE GREATEST ATTRACTION.

WE were sitting over the fire, half a dozen of us, during the interval between an afternoon meeting and one in the evening, when the gospel was to be preached.

The moment was precious to each of us, because in a spirit of true and happy Christian intercourse we spoke truly to one another of the things of the Lord—things made clear to our hearts by His grace.

Allusion was made to meetings of a similar kind held in the same city many years before, the memory of which filled some of us with joy and thankfulness.

"I have a saying of yours," said one of the company, "which I think you will remember"; and going to her desk, she brought a small piece of paper for my perusal. I wondered what saying of mine could have been of such deep importance as to warrant preservation for such a number of years as had elapsed since it had been uttered.

My curiosity was certainly raised.

On taking the paper I quickly glanced at the words, and in a moment admitted the justness of their having been kept.

This may seem that I felt proud of my preserved saying. Well, I felt thankful, anyhow, that such a saying had been cherished. The words were:—

"Shall I tell you what induced me

For the better land to start?

'Twas the Saviour's loving-kindness

Overcame and won my heart."

Ah, but these words, though quoted during my preaching, were no words of mine. The writer was a poet of high Christian character. His verse is well known, and is oftentimes sung, and deservedly. Right glad I was to have the fine old sentiment brought back to my recollection.

What sentiment? That my heart had been won by the loving-kindness of the Saviour. The sentiment is brimful of moral beauty. First; it speaks of a Saviour. That is charming to a soul that has felt and owned its utterly lost and guilty and helpless condition. Most charming when terror hardens and law condemns and conscience smites and judgment hastens. A lovely word, then, is "Saviour." Second, we have a big compound word—"loving-kindness"—none too big. It falls sweetly on the ear.

Oh, how fond was the psalmist of that word! He says in Psalm ciii., "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities." Yes, all of them; and then, finally, "Who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies." Never did diadem shine more fair!

Love and mercy and forgiveness suited David just as they suit other poor sinners, like you and myself, dear reader.

And such it is for us, that there should be loving-kindness in the heart of that thrice holy God against whom all of us have hopelessly sinned.

Thirdly, it mentions the *heart*. Now the heart of man is really an awful thing; it is a sin-creating and sin-loving and sin-committing machine, a factory of fearful abominations, a spring of infinite moral pollution—"desperately wicked."

It exists, naturally, in direct opposition to God. If it loves sin, and it does, it hates God. When the Son of God was here below, and was delivered by Pilate to "their will," He was forthwith crucified. Such is the will of man—your will and mine.

Then how can it be broken, how can such a heart be won to God? That is just the fourth statement in our verse. It speaks of a "heart won."

Thank God, myriads of such hearts have been won. And how? Let me quote one passage of Holy Scripture which should give you the key: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me" (John xii. 32).

A lifted up, crucified Christ is the mighty magnet of attraction for all men; and if the gracious magnetism of Calvary shall fail to draw, then all the terrors of wrath shall fail to drive.

What attracted yonder dying malefactor? What turned him from hell, and drew him to paradise? A crucified Christ.

What caused the spectators to smite their breasts, and the proud Roman centurion to confess that "this was the Son of God"? The sight of a crucified Christ.

Friend, take your place in spirit beside the cross of Jesus; drink in the river of His loving-kindness toward a poor sinner like yourself, and you, too, shall smite your breast in self-abhorrence, and pass away a worshipper of this Son of God.

Your heart shall be won!

A heart won by love divine finds its all in Christ, and loves and lives for Him responsively.

“YOU GO YOUR WAY; I WILL
GO MINE.”

WITHIN twenty miles of London, not long ago, two men might have been seen conversing together. One was setting before his friend the way of life. Earnestly and lovingly he pressed his companion to receive God's gift of eternal life and turn to Jesus—"the way, the truth, and the life." He listened carelessly, turned on his heel, and as he bade his friend farewell, exclaimed, "*You go your way; I will go mine.*" He had chosen his way, rejected the offer of mercy, and continued his journey along "the way of death." What his thoughts were as to turning another day I know not; what his resolutions for the future no one living can tell.

That same week he took the train to London, spent some hours there, and returned by the last train at night. His home was at a wayside village, and the nearest station was M——. On his way from London he fell asleep, and slept so soundly that he did not awake when the train stopped and the porter called out, "M—— Station." The signal was given, steam turned on, and the ponderous train began to roll out of the station. A sudden jerk aroused the sleeper; he discovered that the train was moving away from the place at which he intended to alight. He jumped up, rushed to the door, leaped out, was caught by the wheels, and instantly crushed to death. His lifeless body was picked up and carried to his sorrowing friends. But what of his soul? "*You go your way; I will go mine*" was his response to the last offer of mercy he is known to have had. Think of it, reader—

awaked from sleep, and hurried in a moment into eternity!

Sooner or later you also must pass into eternity. It is of little moment whether you do so surrounded by loving hearts and hands ready to minister to every need, or in a moment are hurried out of this world. The great and all-important questions are: Are your sins forgiven? Have you eternal life? Are you personally acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ? We seek to awake you to the solemnity and importance of decision for Christ *now*. "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts" (Heb. iv. 7).

In contrast to the case of the young man whose sad end speaks so solemnly to us is that of another young man who fell asleep whilst travelling one night from London. A fellow-passenger, fearing he might go beyond his destination, aroused him from sleep, and then used the occasion to speak to him about the salvation of his soul. Finding he was unsaved, he warned him of the peril of being quietly lulled to repose and indifference about such an urgent matter. He listened, his eyes were opened to see his peril, and with deep and earnest anxiety he turned to the Saviour, and experienced the blessedness of passing from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. His feet trod "the way of life" for the first time. Ever since, in speaking of that memorable journey, he says, "*I was awaked out of two sleeps that night.*"

Friend, which of these two young men is a picture of yourself? Which path are you in? What road are you travelling, the "way of death" or the "way of life"? H. N.

OPPORTUNITY:
NO PROMISE BEYOND THE PRESENT.

(From a Gospel Address.)

I DESIRE this evening to press upon my hearers the deep importance of one word, the word "OPPORTUNITY." It occurs in a verse in Galatians vi.: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." It is addressed, you will observe, to Christians, to those who are left in this world to represent Him of whom it is written, "He went about doing good, for God was with Him." Hence they also are exhorted to "do good to all men."

We may well remember, dear friends, that there is no time for doing this like the present. We shall not always have the chance of comforting the distressed or succouring the needy. Let us do it, then, with heart and energy, and do it at once if we would do it at all.

But to-night I wish to speak to another class, and to draw their special attention to this same word, "*opportunity*." I refer to you who are, alas! still unconverted.

First, I would with all earnestness remind you that there is a time coming when the only thing you will have to do with that word is to bitterly mourn its loss. Oh, how soon will every gracious opportunity be behind your back for ever! You cannot count upon the past; the future is absolutely veiled from you; the present only is yours.

Now if you cast your eye backward for a moment, you will see that there have been certain very distinct features in your history. For ex-

ample, you have had a school-day history; perhaps, too, a business history; and, interwoven with all the rest, you have had a gospel-hearing history.

Standing out in bold relief, I can see in the latter two great wonders. As I look into your faces to-night, especially the faces of those who have for years been under the sound of gospel preaching, I cannot help feeling amazed that when the word of salvation came to you for the first time you did not at once accept it. In that lies the first wonder, and perhaps you yourself may be led so to regard it if you consider that when God gave you that opportunity He never promised you another. Mark this well, I pray you. There is no such thing in Scripture as the *promise* of a gospel opportunity to any man. Of promises there are many—promises to Israel, promises to the church, promises to individuals, promises “exceeding great and precious”; but as to *promised opportunities*, there are none. No promise is needed for to-day’s opportunity; for to-morrow’s no promise is given. In a deceived heart the devil may succeed in depositing a few counterfeits, but in the pages of God’s holy Word not one is to be found. Would it not be wise of you, therefore, to take this to heart at once?

You may remember the parable which speaks of “a certain man” who “made a great supper” (Luke xiv. 16). You may remember that when the guests refused to come, he bade his servant go and invite others, that his house might be filled, adding, “*None of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper*” (v. 24).

Oh, the solemn import of those words! God gives no guarantee of another chance to any man. Whenever you hear the gospel, therefore, as far

as any assurance on *God's* part is concerned, it is *your last invitation!* So that, as far as you knew, your first opportunity was your last. And the miracle is, when you heard of this wondrous love of God in giving His Son, when you heard of the death of Jesus for sinners at Calvary, that you did not instantly close in with the proclamation of a blood-sealed pardon, that you did not fall down then and there, and with a broken heart bless Him for it.

A poor ignorant criminal, who had, possibly, never before heard what has been pressed upon you times without number, was condemned to die. At the hand of the administrators of his country's laws he had no hope of receiving mercy in any form. But to let him tell his own story. He said: "When I heard there was pardon for me from God, *I just grabbed at it!*" That is, he eagerly and instantly grasped what you have so long and so coldly slighted.

Now let us turn to the second wonder. It is this: that, after all the neglected opportunities of the past, God should to-night be giving you another! Oh, that your eyes were opened to see all that hangs upon an opportunity that comes late if not last, and that, on your face before God to-night, this vital soul-matter may be definitely settled! What is the worth of the whole world in comparison with your precious soul? When you stand before His judgment throne, ready to be bound hand and foot and cast into hell fire, you will have found out your folly too late. But the God who will judge men then gives *you* advice now. Take it; for depend upon it, as surely as it is God's advice it is good advice. If you turn to Isaiah lv. 6, you will find it thus recorded:

"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near." And again: "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." What gracious pleading is here! But mark the warning that follows: "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. i. 18-20).

A young man went to a gospel preaching where a dear old Christian friend of mine was preaching. This young man, mark you, had that night reached the point which you will one day reach—his last chance. Did he know it? We may take it for granted that he did *not*. Yet from that hour he must bid adieu to gospel opportunities. If you had known that young man, if you had been in this secret concerning him, would you not, after that preaching, have been anxious to learn how he made use of such an august moment? You shall hear, for you could hardly guess if you tried. His father was a Christian, and expected his son to go with the rest of the family to the preaching; but he had no heart for such things. Perhaps some hearer even now may be in a similar state of mind. Had not some anxious friend warmly pressed you, you would not have been here to-night.

Well, this young man, as we have said, had been brought to listen to God's farewell offer of mercy, and this is how he treated it. He picked up a Bible, and between its open pages he placed a novel, so that he might *appear* to be reading the Bible. But God could see through that—nay,

even his companion could. The preacher had said during his address, "Perhaps there is some one here that will never listen to my voice again, who will never have another offer of salvation." But on he went with his novel, and even the prayer that followed did not deter him, and he read on to THE END. He "refused and rebelled."

Now for the solemn sequel. That week he went to the baths. He was a vigorous swimmer, an intrepid diver, and from the usual spring-bar he took a "header." A few hours before he had had his last gospel opportunity. Now he was having his last plunge, for this plunge into the water was a plunge into eternity! He never spoke again.

Now what would that young man give to occupy your place to-night—to sit there and share with you *one more gracious opportunity!* But he had had his last, and, to all appearance, when he had it he fatally trifled with it. How will you treat yours?

As far as you have any authority from God, you are having your last opportunity; and once more I ask, How will you treat it? "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near."

God delights in mercy, but sin's judgment is no less a necessity. Jesus has died; the blessed Saviour is risen; the Holy Ghost has come from heaven, come with *the gospel of free pardon* from the very throne of God. "God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." The day of judgment is fixed, but it is future; the day of salvation is present, but it is fast wearing away. *Only one opportunity* can be counted on, and it is the present one. "Behold, NOW is the accepted time; behold, NOW is the day of salvation." GEO. C.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

“HE WAS ANGRY, AND WOULD
NOT GO IN.”

LUKE xv. 28.

SCARCELY has the prodigal been introduced to the feast, after that marvellous welcome of grace by the father, and become the occasion of such joy to the household, ere another character appears on the ever-changing scene—“the elder son.”

He too, like his long-lost brother, had been in “the field,” but not in the degradation and misery into which the latter had sunk. For the world, “the field,” possesses a double character, not only as the scene of the lowest and most degrading lusts and passions, but also as that in which all legitimate duties and business interests are found—in which it is possible to be fulfilling “the desires of the mind” rather than those of “the flesh” (Eph. ii. 3); and though in the full and even scrupulous discharge of these, one may be found morally as far away from God as the most depraved and degraded.

Having been possibly occupied with duties which devolved upon him in the position of elder son, “as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing.” The unwonted sounds arrested his steps, for high festival was being

held; but instead of approaching in all the confidence of a son, and seeking from his father an explanation of that to which his sanction must have been given, "he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant."

Enough was at once communicated to stir a brother's heart and a son's heart to its depth. "Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound."

It may be that even years had passed since any tidings had reached home of the prodigal boy; years, too, in which the father's heart had well-nigh broken under the burden of his sorrow, of which the elder son must have been witness. Surely such an announcement as this, now clearly made, will find some response in his heart. But no: no echo of answering love was there. "He was angry, and would not go in." Tested in two points, he is found to be totally lacking, viz. love to his father and love to his brother. Relationship was there, but only in name. Unmoved now by his father's joy, as before by his sorrow—by his brother's restoration, as previously by his absence—what was called out only witnessed to the callousness of a heart that was wholly absorbed by its own righteousness and respectability—its own interests and estimate of what was proper and suited to the occasion, while judging grace to be an unholy tolerance of evil.

But the father's grace was capable alike of expending itself upon the elder son as upon the returned prodigal; "therefore came his father out, and entreated him."

He had come out before to meet his long-lost son, and now once more he comes out in supreme

grace to entreat another wayward son—to be met, not by a broken-hearted confession of sin and misery, but by the cold, calculating spirit of self-righteousness and offended dignity. It is no question with him of grace in marvellous exercise either towards his brother or himself, but of his own personal title and claims. "These many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment." Not his sins, but his service; not his ruin, but his righteousness, form the burden of his unfilial remonstrance with his father; while yet in his words the secret condition of his heart in its relation to his father comes clearly out, betraying the underlying state that had all along existed beneath a relationship which went no further than the name. "Thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry *with my friends*." His heart was smouldering after all, all through those years, with that which had burst out into a vehement flame in the case of his prodigal brother, viz. the craving for interests and companionship independent of his father and his father's house.

What shred of difference, as to inward state, is discoverable between the two brothers, save that one was cloaked by a studied profession of obedience and respectability, while the other was uncloaked and exposed in all the evil of its true condition? Truly "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man" (Prov. xxvii. 19).

The *promptitude* of grace, too, under another guise to the elder son, had not escaped the notice of self-righteousness and self-satisfaction. That which gave a peculiar and distinctive character to the father's act of welcome, and formed the

chief element in the prodigal's joy, "*as soon as*," fell from the lips of the elder brother in a charge of cutting scorn; while his own relationship to his newly recovered brother is pitilessly disowned in the words, "this thy son," and the measure of the grace in "the fatted calf" is ruthlessly contrasted with the measure of his fall into degrading sin.

But the tide of grace, unhindered by the exposure to the very core of the state and condition of such a heart, which could neither understand nor tolerate grace in any form, flows steadily on in the remonstrance of love: "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." While the *service* that lacked love cannot be owned of the father, the *privileges* of a lengthy past are owned—owned in weighty words that pressed home a heavy burden of responsibility upon that hard heart; for relationship is recognised and continuous privilege too. But what availed it all? Favoured at least by the constancy of advantages that the younger son had thrown off, the final issue of a graceless heart only witnessed to the abuse of long-standing privileges, and at least outward nearness to his father.

But let the father's heart be heard, best answer to the heart that had just exposed itself: "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad." Meet indeed, for the Shepherd's work on behalf of the lost sheep was done, and the foundations were thus laid for the righteous exercise of grace and a father's love: "For this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

Here this wonderful parable in part closes, and that without a ray of hope as to the elder brother. The curtain falls, so to speak, upon his self-con-

stituted exclusion from the banquet of grace, shutting in in light and love and righteousness the prodigal, where holy festival was being kept in the father's presence, himself the occasion, but shutting out the elder son, whose life-history and character as drawn by himself was, “Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment.”

Are we here in the presence of a character that has no parallel in actual life, or is the elder son, like the prodigal son, representative of a class?

Tested by their response, Godward and manward, to that which grace is now accomplishing, in rescuing guilty man from degradation and misery, it is but too true that there is a large class of so-called Christians who, though jealous of their reputation as such, and so in professed relationship with God—regular and respectable in the discharge of all necessary duties, engaged only in legitimate callings and lawful business—are yet intolerant of the grace that, ever active on the part of God, is gathering in, and with open arms welcoming, the confessedly degraded from the highways and hedges. These alike despise the activity of grace towards others and the entreaties of grace towards themselves, and convert sovereign love to the lost into a ground of accusation against God, while they are actuated by the independent spirit that seeks its pleasures among its own special company, apart from the presence and household of God. By these significant characteristics their true state is exposed, viz. as far from God as those who are in their lives degraded and debased. Let these recall the searching words of the apostle, “He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God

whom he hath not seen?" and, "Every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him" (1 John iv. 20; v. 1). The relationship in which they professedly stand (for these insist on being called Christians) only weights them with lasting responsibility.

Better, far better, to take up the prodigal's language in full confession of actual distance from God, for sovereign grace is entreating even these to share in the joy of reconciliation as prodigals, and views them as the objects of its solicitude as much as the dissolute, the profane, and the degraded, for grace alone can introduce into the favoured place. Remember, too, the word of the Lord Jesus, "*I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*"

And again, "Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but of His great mercy He saved us." Let the language of such hearts be no longer, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are," etc., but rather, "God be merciful to me the sinner," for it is further written, "*This man went down to his house justified rather than the other.*"

M. C. G.

FREE PARDON FOR ALL

MAN pardons an offender, but cannot justify him. God does both. The one whom God forgives, He justifies also; that is, the believer in Jesus stands as clear of the charge of his offences as if his guilt had never existed.

It is marvellous that God, who is holy, has in His wisdom, love, and grace so wrought through the work of Christ as to make such a thing, not

only possible, but absolutely consistent with all His holy attributes!

When King Edward VII., with much pageantry and amid the glitter of Oriental robes, was proclaimed Emperor of India at the great Imperial Durbar held at Delhi on the New Year's day of 1903, His Majesty was pleased to grant *free pardons* to the sixteen thousand of his Indian subjects who were in prison at the time for various crimes. When the Emperor-King's gracious offer was made known to these favoured people, we could not suspect that a single one of them either questioned the truth of the royal message or refused to avail himself of it. Not very likely that any one of them would choose to work out his own sentence after that!

Now God, in rich mercy, has been pleased, through His Word, to proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins among all nations, for the acceptance of every sinner under heaven, and the proclamation to those who have the fear of God before them runs thus: "Be it known unto *you* . . . that through this Man is *preached* unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him *all that believe are justified from all things*" (Acts xiii. 38, 39). But note, God is holy as well as kind, and His proclamation continues: "Beware therefore, lest that come upon *you*, which was spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish (*vv.* 40, 41). Those thousands of Indian offenders did very well by accepting their Sovereign's favour; but how infinitely better does a person fare who, as a repenting sinner, accepts for himself that which flows from the work of Christ at the cross.

. How different are the results of the Delhi

exaltation and Calvary's *humiliation* ! Those at Delhi got forgiven consequent only upon King Edward's being at the very height of earthly glory, while, on the other hand, all who set to their seals that God is true, get His forgiveness and eternal blessing consequent upon the Saviour of sinners having been at the very lowest spot earth could find for Him, though repentance and pardon are only publicly *announced* after He has reached the highest place of heavenly glory. Yes, that blessed Person who suffered, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, is now exalted and enthroned in glory to be a Prince and a Saviour. *Jesus the mighty Conqueror* over Satan, sin, death, and the grave, was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, so that believers in Him might have a place with Himself and be like Him in His own everlasting kingdom and glory.

Soon He will come forth, as "King of kings and Lord of lords," to be worshipped by the redeemed from every clime. To describe that splendour, language despairs !

"To Him that saved us from the world,
And washed us in His blood,
Called us to share His glorious throne,
As kings and priests to God,
To Him let every tongue be praise,
And every heart be love !
All grateful honours paid on earth,
And nobler songs above !"

Friend, will *you* be there, or are you "*halting between two opinions*" while on your way to work out your sentence in endless banishment from God in the misery of blackness of darkness ?

"Be wise to-day, 'tis madness to defer !"

"Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

May you have peace of conscience through trusting the blood of Christ, and joy of heart through occupation with the One who loved us, died for us, and rose again. For His great name's sake may all this be yours without delay.

J. N.

"DEATH IS HERE."

HOW constantly are we reminded of this solemn fact, death is here! It may seem commonplace to write about it, but the following striking and even startling incident illustrates the truth of the saying, "In the midst of life we are in death." And thus deeply impressed with the solemn warning, I would urge my reader to consider the necessity of being prepared for it, whenever death shall come, suddenly or otherwise.

"Our wasting lives grow shorter still,
As days and months increase;
And every beating pulse we tell,
Leaves but the number less.
Dangers stand thick through all the ground,
To push men to the tomb,
And fierce diseases wait around
To hurry mortals home."

London was at her busiest. All seemed bustle and excitement, and banners were everywhere, for the King and Queen were to visit the City. Scarcely had I gone fifty yards from my hotel, to wend my way across the crowded thoroughfare, when, from a lofty building of some six or seven stories in course of erection, fell a workman at my feet. His foot had slipped on the plank

above where he was working, and he came crashing through the timber down to the hard pavement where I stood. A cab was hailed to convey him to the hospital; his fellow-workmen gently picked him up, but hardly had they placed him in the cab when he expired. "*He's dead, sir!*" they exclaimed.

I passed on in the midst of the busy scene. Its motto may be *life*, I thought, but it is dark and sinful, and death is here. Again I asked myself, What will become of all this sumptuous fare, this fêting and feasting? What of this gaiety, with its grand decorations? What will be the end of this search after a great name and high honours? And I could but answer, DEATH! *Jesus* could weep in this scene of death, and shall I forbid the tear? But *that* One is never thought of, not even mentioned in the world's thanksgiving. This foolish world once chose a "robber" rather than the "Saviour." And the choice is no better to-day. They killed the Prince of life, but He lives again. He has overcome death. Man did his worst when he did his best to get rid of the Son of God. But "God raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God." Christ has abolished death, and hath brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel.

Accept Him, trust Him, believe in Him; then if sudden death should overtake you, it would be but the stepping-stone to certain *glory*. You would be able to meet the deadly shaft with this triumphant exclamation, "O death, where is thy sting?" and at the coming again of *Jesus* to add, "O grave, where is thy victory?" THERE WILL BE NO DEATH THERE.

W. N.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

“WOULD I know what sin is? I look there. Righteousness? I look there. Hatred without a cause? I look there. Love without bounds? I look there. Judgment and condemnation of sin? I look there. Deliverance and peace? I look there. Divine wrath against evil? I look there. Perfect divine favour and delight in what infinitely glorified God? I look there. Weakness and death, though willingly bowing under it? It is there. Strength, divine strength, which has met and removed evil? It is there. Peace and wrath? It is there also: the world under Satan’s power rising up, to get finally rid of a God of love; and God, by this very act, delivering the world and making peace by the blood of His own Son. As it is said, ‘That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage’ (Heb. ii. 14, 15). As I have said, good and evil in all their extremes and forms meet there for the triumph of love in once suffering the evil that good may have its full force.”

You may not have, my reader, in peace of soul been able to contemplate all the glory of the cross. You have a blessed portion yet before you; but remember, it is presented to you just as you are, for your need in all the grace of it towards a poor sinner. It meets you in your sins, if it infinitely glorifies God. A Jesus dying on the cross for the vilest meets the wants and burdens of the vilest—comes home through grace to his heart. If his sins are a burden to him, he may see Christ bearing them, that he may be

free and have peace. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). "And by Him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39). Were his "sins as scarlet they shall be as white as snow" (Isa. i. 18). "If you are heavy laden, come to Him who came in love to give you rest, and has died in love for you." J. N. D.

THE DEVOTED SERVANT OF AN INSULTED MASTER.

"God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both LORD and CHRIST."—ACTS ii. 36.

"Of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the LORD CHRIST."—COL. iii. 24.

INVALIDS have often been immensely benefited by being roused from morbid occupation with their real or partially imagined ailments and forced into active service for one they love, whose case was manifestly more serious than their own. And there is little doubt that it would be well for many sickly, self-occupied believers if they could be awakened to the fact that there is much useful and even urgent service for them to do if they had but the heart to do it. Do they forget that the One who loves them has been hated without a cause, apprehended in the night like a common thief, nailed to a gibbet as a malicious malefactor, and then insultingly cast out of this world altogether; and all this in the very act of serving *them*? Do they forget that it is He who desires their service to-day? for He still has interests here even in the place of His rejection. Yet they seem to go

aimlessly gliding on, save as they think of their own personal comfort and enjoyment.

Even a worldly man's servant would hardly be able to enjoy an entertainment if he found that, though he had managed to push his own way into the concert-hall, his master had been excluded. But how would he feel if the vain, selfish pleasure-seekers around him had not only crowded out his master, but had, with gross insults, rudely pushed him off the steps of the building? How would he enjoy the entertainment, think you, when he discovered that some of these very people were amongst the performers at that entertainment? Would he not instantly leave their company, and go forth to seek and serve his master, even if only to express his sympathy, and to ask what he could do for him?

Now listen to the words of the blessed Saviour, "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour" (John xii. 26). And He said this in the solemn contemplation of His own rejection and death. But be it remembered that true service is not confined to prominent deeds or public speeches.

The writer was once privileged to visit an aged believer who, during her years of bodily strength and daily toil, had been the means of bringing many sinners to the knowledge of the Saviour. She lived in a very humble cottage in the country. Her means were small and her sufferings great. There she lay, under a little lean-to roof, which was only just high enough on one side to admit the bed. Naturally she might have found plenty to complain of, if she had compared her lot with the

mercies enjoyed by others, but not a single murmur escaped her lips. One thing there was, however, which she longed for, and you could not easily guess what that one thing was. But as nearly as the writer can remember her own words, you shall have them. It was no worldly advantage for any member of her large family that she sought, and no special mercy for herself. Christ, her Saviour, and His present position filled her thoughts. "I should like to be a comfort to *Him* while I stay here," she said. "He has been cast out of His kingdom; the world has rejected Him; and I *should* like to be a comfort to Him!"

What real service was this in that secluded bed-chamber! How grateful to the Lord's own heart, and what a treasure to the rejected One in glory, must be every such desire in the bosoms of His saints on earth!

Oh, how happy she looked! And no wonder. For what was the secret of her joy? She was in full accord with the mind of Heaven. Thoughts of self were dropped, and by His Spirit she entered into the feelings of her absent Lord.

Consider His position yourself, my reader. Men cut short His day of unparalleled service here, but having been by the right hand of God exalted, He will serve them from thence—serve them as persistently and unremittingly as ever. He will send His Spirit; He will furnish His servants with suited gifts for the carrying on of His work for man's blessing. He will take them into His confidence; He will tell them His secrets; He will allow them to serve Him in this day of His rejection; allow them to share both in His sufferings here and His glories there.

There is no better cure for self-occupation on

the one hand, and worldliness on the other, than the consideration of His present position—how He reached it, and why He has so long remained in it. If man's hatred made Him an exile from this world, His love will still serve man in that world. And more than this. He will reproduce His precious grace in the souls of others, and cause them to serve according to His own work. What a Saviour! What a Friend!

A woman with whom the writer is personally acquainted was, after her conversion, turned out of house and home by her Roman Catholic husband. "How can I best serve Christ under such circumstances?" was her great thought, and she not only maintained herself by her own hands, but every day, watching her opportunity, she went to the house during his absence, prepared his meals, and left all spread ready for him when he came home from work. The result was that his opposition was broken down and in the end he also was converted. Oh, what victories grace has won!

Has this grace of the Lord Jesus Christ yet won your heart, my reader, so that it comes out in your daily life? Is there anyone on earth or in heaven who has been a gainer by *your* affection for Him? Or are you content with only a name to live? Are you content, as far as your service is concerned, to go to heaven alone? Has the professed knowledge of His love made no difference in you? Depend upon it, no heart feels a slight so keenly as His; and no heart more truly appreciates even one look of responsive affection.

Outward correctness and even orthodox creeds fall far short of *His* desires. He saw all this in her who had left her first love—the Church at Ephesus (Rev. ii. 1-5). He wants our *hearts*.

He died to win them, and He lives to keep the fire burning. "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," said the apostle by the Spirit (Eph. vi. 24).

Just one word of caution here. No self-effort, and not even the conviction of what we *ought* to be, can produce the affection He desires. Love alone can beget love. It is the mighty winning power of the love of God in Christ Jesus that is filling heaven. The countless multitudes of those who will sing His praises for ever will gladly confess the blessed truth with one accord, "We love Him because He first loved us."

"O ye, who walk in darkness,
Ever mourning for your sin,
Open the windows of your soul,
Let the warm sunshine in ;
Every ray was purchased for you
By the matchless love of One,
Who has suffered in the shadow
That you might see the sun."

If this suffering love has won our hearts, let us not forget that the world still hates Him. Daily may we remember how soon our time of service for Him here will come to an end. "The night cometh, when no man can work." Thrice blessed will it be to get His heart-filling "Well done," and then to rest in His presence for ever.

"Our Lord is now rejected,
And by the world disowned ;
By the many still neglected,
And by the few enthroned ;
But soon He'll come in glory—
The hour is drawing nigh ;
For the crowning day is coming
By-and-by."

GEO. C.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

IS IT TRUE THAT "NO MAN IS SURE"?

A RECENT issue of a "Parish Magazine" touches a subject of such vital moment that, in the interests of souls generally, we call attention to it. The following is an extract (no italics in the original):—

"No vessel is safe until it has reached the port and cast anchor, so no soul can be pronounced safe until it has cast anchor within the veil. If a St. Paul, with his absolute faith in God and his devotion to Jesus Christ, was yet *haunted by the thought* that in the end he might be a castaway, we are driven to the conclusion that *no man is sure*. Some latent weakness may be developed; some unexpected temptation may prove too strong. 'The grey-haired saint may fall at last, the surest guide a wanderer prove.' But from *this awful uncertainty* death sets the Christian free. *While he lives this cannot be.*"

"NO MAN IS SURE." That all depends. In many cases the statement is true. You cannot be sure of the weather for two days together. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," and you can neither tell its next movement nor the consequent result. You may make your "forecast" and be moderately correct, but "*no man is sure.*" Again, you cannot be sure of what may seem even more trustworthy than changing winds—the continued possession of riches. Hence the exhortation, "Charge them that are rich, that they *trust not in uncertain riches*, but in the living God" (1 Tim. vi. 17). "Riches certainly make themselves wings: they fly away" (Prov. xxiii. 5). You may have them

to-day, but as to how long you will keep them *no man is sure*. Indeed, man's life abounds with "open questions." Whether that fine ship just leaving the dock will reach her destination; whether that child, blooming with health to-day, will ever arrive at the years of manhood; whether the peace of Europe will continue for another ten years—are all *open* questions; and there are thousands more.

But how serious it would be to put the word of "the living God" on the same ground! Who could place the sentence which heads this paper after the sentence with which the Epistle to the Hebrews opens, and say,

Though "God hath spoken, no man can be sure"!

What, then, is the secret of such a statement as the one we find in the "Parish Magazine"? It is based most probably on the utterly false notion that it is man's good behaviour, and his own satisfaction with it, that entitles him to say he is saved from coming wrath and fitted for future glory. Ministrations from the pulpit, participations at the "altar" (so called), and even Christ's death itself, are understood to be necessary *helps*, but *only* helps—helps to his finally becoming *good enough to go to heaven*. But since "the grey-haired saint may fall at last," if he can only be put right *at some point before the close*, and then sin no more till he reaches the end, he thinks—and his teachers encourage him to think—that he will be taken into heaven on that sinless ground. He can then, at least, claim some little merit, have some little show of goodness; and so with a hope, because God is merciful, that the past is all forgiven, he considers himself ready to die! Hence,

the supposed necessity of the "rites of the Church" for the dying, whether it be the Lord's Supper in Protestantism, or the Confessional and Extreme Unction in Romanism.

All this is built upon the false thought that man needs only a *Helper*. But the man who has no strength for holiness worthy of God, and no means of giving righteous satisfaction as to his sins, is absolutely *lost*, and needs a *Saviour*. Even help for the future will not atone for the sins of the past. "But when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 6). "He came into the world to *save* sinners"; "to seek and to *save* that which was *lost*."

Instead of man being able, either by his own effort or anybody else's help, to make himself *good enough to be saved*, he discovers, when taught by the Spirit of God, that he is *bad enough to be lost*; that if God's righteous judgment must fall upon his every sin he must, without a sin-bearer, pass eternally under that righteous judgment. But this is not the only discovery the Spirit makes to him. He finds that God has, at His own personal cost, provided One equal to the task of bearing sin's righteous consequences and expressing His love to the sinner at the same time. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). "Who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. . . . Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. iv. 25; v. 1).

God *can accept nothing short of perfection*: and who could stand before Him on the ground of his own merits and be pronounced perfect? Has

He not recorded it for our enlightenment, that He considers "*there is none that doeth good ; there is none righteous, no not one*"? Who, knowing that "God requireth that which is past," dare be judged for his sins and expect to escape damnation? "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Eccles. iii. 15 ; Ps. cxliii. 2).

Be it well remembered that God's righteousness admits of no compromise. You must stand absolutely on the ground of *your own personal merits*, or *entirely on the ground of the merits and work of Christ*. Do not imagine that you can use the merits of Christ as a makeweight for your deficiencies. It must be self without Christ or Christ without self. The true believer is said to be "*accepted in the Beloved*" (Eph. i. 6) and to have "*no confidence in the flesh*" (Phil. iii. 3). But it is only when we have been brought to true repentance, brought to realise the hopelessness of trusting our own merits, that we really turn to Christ and rest our souls on His merits alone. Two things characterise every true conversion—the condemnation of what is evil in one's self and the appreciation of the good that is in Christ—and these cover the whole of the true believer's history; that is, "repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

A mariner does not send up his "distress rocket" for lifeboat assistance until he has been brought to absolute despair as to his own ship. And so with the real believer. He has no doubt, no uncertainty, either as to his own lost condition or as to the trustworthiness of the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour. The more deeply he learns the wretchedness of all that is in himself

naturally, the more tenaciously does he cling to the one only Refuge, the precious blood of Christ and the perfection of His never-to-be-repeated sacrifice. In this lies his only ground of acceptance; nor does he want another, for its ever-abiding efficacy is reckoned by God to his account, just as Abel was counted righteous *because of what his sacrifice was* (Heb. xi. 4). Hence of the sacrifice of Christ it is written, "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." "And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. x. 14, 17).

But it may be asked, "What of Paul's 'awful uncertainty' and of his being haunted by the thought that in the end he might be 'a castaway'?"

The answer is as simple as it is emphatic. As far as the record of Scripture goes *Paul had no such haunting fears!* Let him speak for himself.

First look at the context of the passage referred to in the "Parish Magazine" (1 Cor. ix. 26, 27). Open your Bible and read it for yourself carefully. "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air." Would it be common honesty to erase the words, "*not as uncertainly,*" and put in their place, "*with awful uncertainty*"? Let the reader judge.

But it may be asked, "Then why does the apostle add in the last verse, 'But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway'?" Note here it is not a question of *becoming* a castaway, but of being one, *i.e.* of giving proof that he never was a genuinely converted man. Unless there was a work in the soul that caused him to keep his body under spiritual control, his being a preacher

stood for nothing; he was but "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal" (1 Cor. xiii.).

The passage presents Paul, the preacher, comparing his own case with that of certain teachers in Corinth who, while professing the name of Christ, were, by report, living in a carnal, fleshly way. In seeking to reach their conscience, and expose to them their jeopardy, he makes use of a common enough form of argument.

Take a supposed case by way of illustration. A certain sea-captain knows that the master of another vessel makes a practice, while afloat, of living in ease and careless self-indulgence, instead of maintaining the constant watchfulness that becomes him. He will allow any member of the crew to take control of the ship and guide it according to his own peculiar will and fancy. One day, while together in harbour, he says to this careless commander, "If I acted on board my ship as report says you do; if I did not keep a close watch on my crew and hold them to their proper posts of duty; if I allowed them to control *me* instead of my controlling them—I should expect to see my vessel brought to a complete wreck some day, even though I had for years been giving instruction in navigation to others." In a similar way the apostle speaks when he says: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away." SCRIPTURE NEVER SUPPOSES THE TRUE CHRISTIAN TO BE CHARACTERISED BY A SINFUL COURSE. On the contrary, a desire for holiness according to God and a shrinking from sin are ensured by his new birth. True, he still possesses a fallen, sinful nature, and is therefore liable to

fall into sin. But is he therefore given up? No. It is because he is "*sealed unto the day of redemption*" that he is exhorted not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God (Eph. iv. 30). And should he sin, there is a provision for his restoration. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Discipline, rebuke and chastening may come in, but all to bring about the restoration of his soul to communion with the Father.

We say unhesitatingly that Paul had no doubt of his own safety. Listen to him still further. "For *we know* that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. v. 1).

In verse 8 he says, "*We are confident*"; and in verse 6, "*We are always confident.*"

In Acts xiii. 38, 39, "*Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.*"

In Romans viii. 30, "Whom He called, them He also justified: and *whom He justified, them He also glorified*"; and in verses 35 to 39, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things

present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Once more we ask, Is this the language of "awful uncertainty"? The very opposite. We close our remarks by quoting those words of the Lord Jesus Himself in John v. 24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." To this we boldly add—

SINCE GOD HAS SPOKEN, EVERY MAN MAY BE SURE.
GEO. C.

WHAT WE WAIT FOR AND WHAT WE DO NOT WAIT FOR.

WE wait for glory; we wait for the redemption of the body. Why thus distinguished? They who have received the firstfruits of the Spirit wait for this; we wait for the redemption of the inheritance, but (how much greater soever the enjoyment may be) we do not wait for our own redemption—we have it through His blood. We do not wait for life, because "he that hath the Son hath life." We shall not have glory till Christ comes, but we have life; in believing, "we have life through His name." "When He who is our life shall appear, we shall appear with Him in glory"; but we are dead and risen with Him, and therefore seek the things above. The inheritance is reserved in heaven for us—that is, glory is; but not life—it is hid with Him there, but we have it or it could not be called ours. J. N. D.

CONVERSION : WHAT IS IT ?

WHILE holding some gospel meetings in the little town of Port Antonio, on the north coast of the island of Jamaica, I was asked to call upon a gentleman who was thought to be interested in divine things.

Very politely he received me, and after a few minutes' general conversation I introduced the topic that was uppermost in my mind, the salvation which God offers so freely to lost and perishing sinners. It soon appeared that the gentleman quite considered himself to be one of those who were on the road to heaven. He was a member of the parish church ; he subscribed liberally for any good purpose ; he did not swear ; his life was a moral one ; and it was not often that he neglected to say his prayers before retiring at night.

I listened to all that Mr. —— said, and then replied, "With your permission, sir, I will ask you one plain, straight question."

"By all means," he said.

"Well, then, *are you converted?*" I continued : "All that you have told me as to your manner of life is very good, but something further is needed before you can call yourself a child of God. *You need to be converted.* Our Lord Himself declared : 'Except ye be converted . . . ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven' " (Matt. xviii. 3).

He hesitated for a moment, and then replied : "Perhaps we should hardly agree as to what conversion is."

The remembrance of this conversation, held more than eight years ago, suggests to my mind the possibility of some of my readers being under-

some misapprehension as to what is meant by conversion. Of its *necessity* none can doubt, since the word of truth is so clear, and I think all will agree upon the importance of seeking to learn, from Scripture, what it really is.

* * * *

Exactly one year subsequent to the date of the conversation mentioned above, the London papers contained a paragraph of news headed thus:—

“THE CONVERSION OF PRINCE BORIS
OF BULGARIA.”

Prince Boris, at that time, was just two years of age. His parents, Prince Ferdinand and Princess Marie Louise of Parma, were both Roman Catholics. It was naturally the desire of the Bulgarians that their ruling Prince should be a member of the same Church as that to which they themselves belonged. A law was consequently passed that any heir to Prince Ferdinand must be of the “Orthodox” or Greek religion.

Little Prince Boris was therefore formally transferred from the Roman Catholic to the Greek Church, and this transference, or change of religion, was announced throughout Europe as his *conversion*.

Now it cannot be too emphatically stated that mere change of religion, whether in the case of an infant like Prince Boris, or in the case of an adult, is not conversion. A man may give up Judaism for Christianity, or abandon the Koran for the Bible, without being really converted to God. No change from Roman Catholicism to Protestantism, or from heterodoxy to orthodoxy, is in itself conversion. Conversion, according to the Scriptures, is something far more vital and

radical than a mere exchange of one religion for another, even if such exchange means the abandonment of a false religion for the profession of Christianity in its purest form.

* * * *

With equal truth it may be said that conversion is not mere reformation, or turning over a new leaf, or making good resolutions for the future, even if such resolutions are faithfully kept. Nor is it a religious impulse, or impression, such as is often experienced at "revival meetings," and which is generally more or less transitory in its effects. Conversion is a far deeper and more spiritual change than anything of this kind.

What, then, is conversion? The word signifies a turning, or a change, but it is a change that affects a man to the inmost fibre of his moral being, a change which is the result of his being born again, and of being operated upon by the Holy Spirit of God. Let us see how it is described in the Bible.

Turn first to 1 Peter ii. 9: "*Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.*" That is a very vivid portrayal of conversion. An unconverted man, no matter how religious and moral he may be, is in darkness, and no change that does not involve his being brought out of that darkness into God's marvellous light is conversion. Brought into the light, he sees himself in his true colours, a leprous and loathsome sinner; there, too, he experiences the grace of God in saving such as he. That is conversion.

Take verse 25 of the same chapter: "*Ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto*

the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." Conversion is here spoken of as the return of straying sheep, wanderers in the paths of sin, not merely to the right path, but to a *Person*, the Lord Jesus, the Shepherd and Bishop of souls. Unless one has come to Him and received Him as one's own Saviour, one is not genuinely converted, whatever other change one may have undergone.

Then look at Ephesians ii. 13: "*Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*" This shows us that the means by which the momentous change is brought about is not resolves or vows, prayers or efforts, but Christ's precious blood; and that the change is not merely a change of feeling or character, but an entire change of position, a change from distance to nearness. If one cannot thus speak of having been "*made nigh by the blood of Christ,*" it is in vain to think that one is converted.

Read yet one more passage, 1 Thessalonians i. 9, 10: "*Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven.*" This is conversion indeed, a definite turning to God from the things that once held sway over the soul. The one that has thus turned to God no longer dreads Him, or thinks of Him merely as a stern Judge. He possesses peace with God, can joy in Him, and call Him "Father." He delights to serve Him; and his heart is set, not upon any object of earth, however bright or fair, but upon God's Son, who is coming from heaven to claim him as His own.

With this description of genuine conversion before you, let me ask you the plain question, Reader, *are you converted?*

H. P. B.

THE TURN OF THE TIDE.

ONE summer's evening the writer stood on the edge of a stream that was flowing into the sea. The day had been very calm; only tiny ripples curled over the bar a few yards away, and the last rays of the setting sun shed a mellow beauty over the tranquil waters. But, as I stood, there arose a sudden commotion along the shore, and, turning towards the mouth of the stream, I saw a ridge of water, some inches high, come sweeping in with a "rush-sh-sh" from the ocean, tearing away the pebbly bank on either side and spreading with resistless rapidity.

Hastily I retreated to the high beach, and from thence watched the flood travelling up the stream; while the waves, gaining in size and strength, beat over the bar and broke right into the river, sending billow after billow in its wake.

The sun had gone, dark clouds were coming over the sky, and the sound of the harsh rattling of the shingle on the bar filled my ears, as I turned homeward thinking of the words of the Book, "For My determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them Mine indignation, even all My fierce anger" (Zeph. iii. 8; Isa. lxiii. 3).

Very clearly does the spiritual eye discern the "signs of the times," the glaring unbelief, the determined self-will, the absolute rebellion that underlies the outward calm of the gospel-hardened nations of the earth, who say, "Peace, peace," where no peace is. *Hardened indifference and God-given peace have no affinity.*

But how near is the "turn of the tide"!

The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the

air to call His blood-bought people home is just at hand. And then from beyond the slighted bar of God's patient grace and marvellous longsuffering what a flood of judgment will roll in upon this guilty world!

Does the reader ask, "Why say 'guilty world'?"

We will go back in thought to an ancient eastern city, hundreds of years ago.

The inhabitants have all procured lambs to furnish a feast, which they call the "feast of the passover," and there is much talk of one "Jesus of Nazareth," who was taken last evening in the garden of Gethsemane. Above the hum of a city rises the hoarse cry of an enraged populace—

"Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him!" Later on in the day, in company with two malefactors, One is seen going outside the city, bearing the marks of cruel usage, up to a place called Calvary, and there, lifted up on a cross of wood, He is taunted and derided. Then a hush falls upon the city, the feast is being celebrated, when, lo, the darkness of the shadow of death descends upon the whole land. For the Lamb of God, the holy sin-offering, was passing under the judgment of God: the great Antitype was then giving Himself up "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. v. 2).

But perhaps you say, "I would have stood up for Him. I cannot understand the Jews crucifying a Man who did so much good."

Stay, my friend. Have you never laughed at and ridiculed one of the servants of this Master? Why do you dislike the servants of God? For the same reason that the Jews and their rulers crucified the Lord of glory. The presence of good is

a reproach to evil. "Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John iii. 19). And the natural heart always chooses Barabbas rather than Christ (John xv. 17, 18).

But it was to make atonement for us that the Lord went down into that terrible darkness, under the flood of God's judgment against sin.

For the believer there is now no judgment; it is exhausted, and he stands upon the solid ground of the value of the death of Jesus. But for the unbeliever there is a terrible, overwhelming day of wrath coming. "Who shall stand when He appeareth?" (Mal. iii. 2). Flee to the shelter now.

L. J. M.

THE FIRE ALARM.

MANY a time during a long voyage have we heard the fire alarm sounded. Suddenly the stillness has been broken by the unmistakable sound of the gong. On the deck, on ordinary occasions, may be seen the passengers sitting in their easy-chairs—some reading, others chatting, and not a few sleeping, the only sound to be heard being that of the waves as they rush wildly on either side of the vessel as she ploughs her way through the deep blue sea.

But as soon as the alarm is sounded the quiet scene on deck is changed to one of excitement. On every hand can be heard the rush of busy feet, as the crew hurry from all quarters along the lower deck. Some run to the pumps, others hastily fix the hose. Some hasten to man the boats, while others run with buckets filled with water. Stewards take their places at the boats with blankets under their arms. Lanterns,

compasses, etc., are brought ready to place in the boats; then at a signal from the captain they begin to lower. On the quarter-deck the saloon passengers are watching the proceedings with the keenest interest, amused at the unusual proceeding.

But why amused when a "fire alarm" has been sounded? Simply because no fire could be seen. The captain had only called out his men to test their efficiency.

We thought as we watched them getting ready the boats, as though to escape from the burning ship, of how different the case would be if it were a reality. With what terror the passengers would have watched those operations! What anxiety would have been depicted on every face, what concern would have been shown by every passenger to escape from being burnt to death on the high sea! The concerts and games with which they had been amusing themselves would be as empty bubbles in the face of such a stern reality. The great concern of each would be, What means of salvation?

Like the passengers on board that steamer, you and I, dear reader, are sailing onward to eternity. The alarm has been sounded—not a false one, for the danger is as real as it is great. The cry is raised, "Escape for thy life!" All that is required for your safety has been provided. The means of salvation is within your reach. Eternal judgment will soon overwhelm you if you give not heed to the way of escape. Do not be unconcerned, then, like the passengers on board the steamship, but take God's gracious offer of salvation. It has been secured for you at the cost of the precious blood of Christ. Hasten to avail yourself of it.

E. E. N.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

THE GOSPEL IN THE PSALMS.

IT is no uncommon thing, especially in the country districts, to see some aged inmate of a cottage sitting with the Bible open at the Psalms. Often has the writer's heart been cheered by such a sight. Poring over the sacred page, the aged reader has doubtless found there what could be found nowhere else. Yet, alas! what ignorance there often is, even with such, touching the gospel of the grace of God, unfolded in its fulness and blessedness in the New Testament.

Now, though the gospel is not the subject of the Psalms, we do find in the Psalms what constitutes the gospel, for we find Christ there—the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.

It is with the thought of presenting Christ that we now take up certain Psalms in a gospel way.

Let us suppose the reader to open the book of Psalms for the first time, and begin with Psalm i., "Blessed is the man." How sweetly the first word falls on the ear—"Blessed." It is what God pronounces him to be who answers to the description given in this Psalm. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor

sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night." What a beautiful life this is, on both its negative and its positive sides.

Can you, my reader, claim blessing from God on the ground of answering to the description here?

Have you *never* walked "in the counsel of the ungodly"? Have you *never* sat "in the seat of the scornful"? Have you *always* delighted in the law of the Lord, and meditated in His law *day and night*? Let such questions be asked in the presence of God, and we shall each have to answer, No; my life has been far otherwise.

One Man, and one alone, could claim blessing from God on the ground of what He was. It is *Jesus* who fully answers to the picture—that unique, that perfect Man over whom God could open the heavens and say, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Surely *He* was as that "tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever He doeth shall prosper." *It is Jesus* who was all that a man should be. His beautiful life should convince us of sin. What a contrast He is to all others! Like lost sheep, we have all gone astray; He, never. *We* have found pleasure in doing our own wills, while He could say, "I always do the things that please My Father."

But let us look now at Psalm xiv. 2: "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God." What did He see? "They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no

not one." How emphatic, how sweeping are the words in this verse—"all," "altogether," "none." No exception among all the children of men. Can you bow your heart here and say, "O God, I own that Thou hast in this scripture given me my own moral photograph"? This is repentance. God would convince thee of sin in order that thou mayest take the place of self-judgment, and we know that He will never condemn those who condemn themselves.

In Psalm i., then, it is Jesus, not I. In Psalm xiv. it is I, not Jesus.

Now we come to Psalm xxii.: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? why art Thou so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring? O My God, I cry in the day-time, but Thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent." Well do we know who it is that was thus abandoned of God. "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour *Jesus* cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

The forsaken Man of Psalm xxii. is the blessed perfect Man of Psalm i., Jesus the Son of God.

The Psalmist could say in Psalm xxxvii. 25, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken."

But it was seen at Calvary.

Dear reader, ponder these words—"why," "Thou," "forsaken," "Me."

"WHY?" And when no answer came (for God was silent to Him), then from out that awful solitude and from that heart, that broken heart, which was a shrine for God's glory, came

the answer which vindicated God in that forsaking, "*But Thou art holy.*"

"THOU." God is true to what He is. In 2 Corinthians v. 21 we read: "For He hath made Him to be sin for us." "*Made Him to be sin*" is the answer to "forsaken Me."

"FORSAKEN." A holy God forsakes Him because He was made sin. But this same scripture declares "He knew no sin." He was the perfectly righteous Man of Psalm i.

But here in Psalm xxii. He takes, as Substitute, the place of the filthy man of Psalm xiv.; and none may know what it cost Him, for who could fathom that ocean of sorrow? There are other sorrows in this wonderful Psalm, sorrows resulting from man's hatred; for poor wretched man was there incited by Satan. "Dogs have compassed Me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed Me: they pierced My hands and My feet." They can even gamble for His garments (v. 18).

But the sorrows of verses 1, 2 are atoning sorrows; it was what He endured at the hand of God, as Isaiah liii. 10, "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him." He hath put Him to grief. Oh, wondrous love, to give His Son! Oh, infinite holiness, to put Him to grief when made sin!

If we could measure the ineffable and uninterrupted communion which was ever His in all His perfect way here, perhaps we could then understand what it was for Him to be forsaken.

Dear reader, let us learn, here, the wondrous love of God that gave Him; the infinite holiness and righteousness of the God who forsook Him; the matchless love of Christ who thus endured sin's judgment.

But that bitter night of weeping is over (v. 21), for He was heard and taken from the lowest point of death—"the horns of the unicorns." After having met all the righteous claims of God, and exhausting the judgment we deserved, He gave up the life in which He bore it.

All, all was met there, and now peace and joy come. "Joy cometh in the morning"—the resurrection morning.

"That glorious resurrection morn
Bids doubts for ever cease,
For far and wide the news is borne
Of perfect peace"

How fitting the title of this Psalm—"The hind of the morning"—and how beautifully it ends. Mark the closing sentence: "*He hath done this.*" Let your faith put two other words, "*for me,*" or write your name in full at the bottom of that Psalm, "*For me, Lord Jesus, Thou hast died.*"

Yes, for the one whose condition is described in Psalm xiv.

Now turn to Psalm xxxii. Again are we greeted by that precious word "*blessed.*" "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."

Now this is true for thee, dear reader, if thou hast written thy name at the foot of Psalm xxii. Thou art without doubt the blessed man of Psalm xxxii. The God who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, in whom you believe, accounts thee righteous (Rom. iv. 24, 25; x. 10).

It is not what we think, feel, or realise, but what God says (Acts xiii. 38, 39).

So the *sinless Man* of Psalm i. dies in Psalm xxii.

for the sinful man of Psalm xiv., in order that the *sinful man* of Psalm xiv. may enjoy the portion of the blessed man of Psalm xxxii.

It is interesting to note also that this is the first Psalm entitled "Maschil," which means "Giving instruction." It is the first instruction God gives to man. May you, my reader, be thus instructed and blessed.

Another word. The man who is thus instructed and blessed can now go back to Psalm i. and seek to walk in His footsteps. "He hath left us an example, that we should walk in His steps" (1 Peter ii. 21).

There are three sentences in 1 John iii. 5 full of beauty and moral import.

"And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins."

"And in Him is no sin."

"Whatsoever abideth in Him sinneth not." To abide in Him is to walk even as He walked.

May it be our joy and blessing thus to walk "till travelling days are done." W. J.

WARNING—A KINDNESS.

ON a Bank Holiday, some years ago, some young men went from Manchester to Birmingham to spend the day. Returning at night, they had taken their seats in a railway carriage, when one, knowing the train was timed to start in five minutes, ran across to the refreshment-room.

On his return to the platform, he found a train just moving off. Without hesitation he opened the nearest door and jumped in, thinking himself fortunate to have caught his train.

Judge of his surprise when, instead of proceeding on to Manchester, it gradually slowed down and stopped outside the station.

Realising at once that he had got into the wrong train, he determined to seek the platform, as he was sure the Manchester train would not be gone.

Opening the carriage door, he stepped out in the darkness, and stood between the lines.

Scarcely a minute passed before the gravity of his position was apparent.

Whiz!

Close by him thundered past an express. Around him lay an intricate network of lines, over which he could only dare to pass at the utmost risk of his life. Lights were flashing, and trains were coming and going, as only those who have travelled through large towns on a holiday can form any conception of.

But what was that regular waving of a lantern to and fro yonder?

Not many paces away a "shunting" pointsman was busy at his work. In that humble man he thought he saw his deliverer. Quickly as possible he strode across the intervening lines, and only reached him just in time.

"Could you kindly direct me——"

"In God's name, get behind me—quick!" he said in a tone trembling with surprise and agitation.

The powerful rays of a lamp loomed in front, and a train dashed by only a few feet away, where the adventurous passenger had crossed but a moment before.

"Now, then, hold on to my coat, and as I move you follow."

In loud, unceremonious tones these words were uttered; yet how sweetly they sounded in the ear of the young man, now fully alive to his terrible situation!

Implicit obedience was imperative. His life depended on the shunter's directions.

The sinner awakened to his awful condition before God, as guilty and under condemnation, is pictured here. The hard, peremptory tones of the shunter, he knew, were friendly, and he did not take offence at them. So should it be with the sinner. The voice that speaks of judgment and warning is that of the One who came freighted with grace and truth to a perishing world.

The One who said, "It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not," said also, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," and again, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Mark ix. 43, 44; John iii. 16). Oh that souls would take heed to the kindly warnings of God!

The predicament of the subject of our narrative was perilous enough, but infinitely more perilous is your condition; my dear reader, if your hope of salvation is not in the Lord Jesus Christ, in His completely finished work and the all-atoning value of His precious blood. To naught else in heaven and earth does God attach the slightest value for a sinner's shelter.

From His own great heart of love proceeded the thought of redemption for man through His own provided Lamb: that perfect Sacrifice com-

pletely displayed and vindicated every attribute of His character and glorified Him eternally, and He has made both Lord and Christ in ascended glory the One who thus offered Himself as the willing Victim. Have you yet bowed the knee and humbled the heart to the Lord Jesus? Have you come to Him? "This Man receiveth sinners."

But let us return to our narrative, though not much remains to be told.

For fully five minutes, which seemed an hour, the pointsman guided the young man from one point to another while the special shunting operations, owing to the congested traffic, were going on.

At last he was at liberty to take his charge to the Manchester train, which had been delayed, and curiously enough, placed him in the very compartment he had left at the first, much to the surprise of his friends, who when they heard his story regarded him as one saved from the very jaws of death.

"It is a wonder," remarked a commercial traveller to him, "that we have not to read in the papers to-morrow of a young man cut to pieces on the railway."

It may be necessary to explain that the Manchester train had been shunted to allow other trains to pass, and that was the cause of the above adventure.

Dear unsaved reader, may you realise your lost condition under sin and under death, and trust entirely and only in Christ. He is now holding out salvation—the light of the knowledge of the glory of God to all. In implicit obedience to His word, may you be led into His gracious footsteps, and to walk with Him here till landed safely in glory.

L. O. L.

THE FEAR OF DEATH REMOVED.

THERE are three very good reasons why the believer in our Lord Jesus Christ should have no fear of death! First, because we read that our Lord took part in flesh and blood in order that "through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 14, 15). That deliverance from the fear of death was one special object of His death.

Second, because, by His resurrection, God has been enabled to give us the victory, and that in a way so triumphant that we can say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. xv. 57). Sin, the awful sting of death, is gone for the believer—atoned for in the blood of Christ, and the grave has been shorn of her victory by His glorious resurrection. The victory is now on the side of the vanquished. And, third, because the gospel assures us that "He hath abolished [annulled] death, and hath brought life and immortality [incorruptibility] to light" (2 Tim. i. 10).

Thank God for such a revelation! Instead of death hanging, like the sword of Damocles, over the head of the Christian, the gospel bids him open his eyes to the life-giving results of the resurrection of Christ and enter into the full enjoyment of the annulling of death, and the bringing to light (as hitherto concealed) of life and the incorruptibility that attaches to it. This is for the deep enjoyment of faith. Hence the death and resurrection of Christ, and the gospel

which unfolds them, all bear witness to the fact that the fear of death is wholly wrong in the Christian. The knowledge of God's perfect love casteth out fear.

Of course, death may be viewed in two lights: first, as the dread penalty, in time, due to sin; and, second, as the dissolution of the body.

I refer to the first. Death has no claim on him for whom the blessed Lord passed through its deepest waters, bearing the penalty in richest grace, and undergoing the judgment to its entire exhaustion. That death is, for him, annulled.

Christ is risen!—mark the truth—and He “is the firstfruits of them that slept.” The grave has lost its hold. We stand victorious.

To all this the gospel bears clear and welcome witness. It speaks of life instead of death, and of incorruptibility instead of the horrors of the tomb. It sets the mind free from the terrible bondage of fear and dread which enthralled those who lived before the death of Christ. We are in the liberty of life, and are “passed from death unto life” (John v. 24).

Hence “death is ours” (1 Cor. iii. 21–23).

“Set the bells a-ringing,” said a young Christian, when he learned that he was about to depart and be with Christ.*

And, whilst allowing for the tears and sorrow of nature, yet the funeral of a Christian should be a triumphal procession. The flag of victory should be kept flying, and the grave should be regarded as nothing more than the temporary receptacle of the dust which rests under the care of Christ. Sown in weakness, it will be raised in power.

* See *A Bright Sunset*, by the editor of this magazine.

The emancipated spirit soars away to be with the Lord, while the cumbrous clay awaits the archangelic shout and the trump of God that shall call every saint, dead or living, to meet the Lord in the air, and to be for ever with Him.

Ah, my beloved fellow-Christian, you have no cause to live in bondage through the fear of death, none whatever. Rejoice in your divinely effected liberation and in the knowledge of eternal life as revealed in the Son.

He who should fear death is the sinner. He must meet it as the penalty of the fall, as the consequence of his own guilt, and as the dark passage into the eternal judgment that lies beyond. He has every cause to fear.

Look, dear friend, at the cross and the empty grave of Christ, and, as you look, learn the wondrous meaning of His death for us. He died that we might live.

J. W. S.

HAPPY SERVANTS WANTED.

SORROW attended the advent of sin: gladness the advent of the Saviour. Sorrow was proclaimed by God as man's lot as soon as sin had come into the world. To Adam He said, "In sorrow shalt thou eat of it [that is, of the fruit of the curse-stricken ground] all the days of thy life" (Gen. iii. 17).

Then, later on in history, we read, "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward" (Job v. 7). But God interferes for man in his misery. Grace brings in a complete change—brings in salvation. Gladness attends the advent of the Saviour, and as soon as Jesus was born into the world God took care to announce the

same by special messenger. "Behold," said the angel to the shepherds, "I bring you *good tidings of great joy*, which shall be to all people" (Luke ii. 10).

The presence of the Saviour on earth was God's great "Fear not" to every sinner of Adam's race who was not too proud to listen to the gracious announcement. The banishment of fear from the heart and the filling of the same with heavenly gladness have been the sure results of a received gospel ever since.

In the city of Samaria there was "*great joy*" when the gospel which Philip preached was listened to and received (Acts viii. 8).

In Jerusalem they "did eat their meat with *gladness* and singleness of heart, praising God" (Acts ii. 46).

In the desert near Gaza, when the eunuch found the Saviour he went on his way *rejoicing* (Acts viii. 39).

In Philippi, when the jailer believed he *rejoiced*, we are told, "believing in God with all his house" (Acts xvi. 34).

All bear one unvarying witness that there is "joy and peace in believing." Nay, more, the Spirit delights to *fill* us with it" (Rom. xv. 3).

Now it is when this spring of heavenly joy—"joy in the Holy Ghost"—is reached, true service rightly begins. It was evidently in this joy—the joy of "first love"—that the jailer's service began, as he washed the stripes of Paul and Silas and set meat before them.

God wants *happy servants*. "Serve the Lord with gladness" is the Spirit's injunction, and servile drudgery is out of the question.

During the recent war in South Africa the writer, on one occasion, happened to be in a small

remote town in Cape Colony, where the great majority of the inhabitants were Boers or colonial Dutch. One day a strange report reached the town. It was brought by a man who had come from the nearest railway station, about forty miles distant. He said that he had seen British soldiers dragged to "the front" in chains, and weeping because they were compelled to take part in the service of the English Crown. Now the Boer element in this said town seemed highly gratified with this man's report, false though no doubt it was. But what would the Crown of England have thought of it, had it been true?

The question need not be answered here. Suffice it now to say that our blessed Lord needs no such soldiers in *His* ranks. Perfect liberty prevails there—liberty as happy as it is holy. Indeed there can be no really acceptable service without it. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." "Serve the Lord with gladness." Hear this, ye servants of Christ.

In the days of type and shadow, the marks of mourning, the uncovered head and the rent garment, as really disqualified a priest for the service of the sanctuary as the stain of actual sin. "Glory and honour are in His presence: *strength and gladness* are in His place" (1 Chron. xvi. 27).

Wounded, and even frightened birds never sing. We must be happy, really happy, to serve acceptably. Do not, therefore, make the grave mistake of trying to recover lost joy by increased activity in service. If you are *not* happy, if gladness of heart is not yours, you may be sure that *things are not right within*. And the endeavour to once more reach by outward service the joy you have lost is as dangerous as it is useless.

If, early some winter evening, all the gas jets in your dwelling suddenly went out, you would never be so foolish as to leave your house just as it was, and seek the light you had lost by trying to assist the street lamplighter. Such a culpable course would only expose those left in the house to great danger, and yourself, perhaps, into the bargain.

The illustration is only a poor one, but we may be sure of this, that there is grave spiritual danger in seeking to minister spiritually to others when our own soul's true joy is extinguished by some unconfessed sin.

"What is the matter? Where is the mischief? Why this sudden darkness?" would be your wise inquiries as to the extinguished lights in your dwelling. Nor would you rest until you had discovered the cause and applied the remedy. The figure needs no application.

Oh, what must the angels think of *an unhappy Christian*?

Eternally loved and infinitely blessed, but NOT HAPPY!

With privileges so many, with honours so great, with a portion so choice, with prospects so brilliant, but NOT HAPPY!

Ransomed by the precious blood, sealed with the Holy Spirit, called to God's eternal glory, but NOT HAPPY!

Angels for his servants; Jesus, the Son of God, his Friend; God's presence his home—but NOT HAPPY! How could such a man serve acceptably the "happy God"? Just think of such a thing!

Oh, but a man in such a state is not serving *Him*. He is, in reality, but serving himself, serving to keep up his credit as a servant, while trying to supply his own felt lack of joy.

The world, looking on, soon discovers the empty formality of such service, and uses it freely enough to discredit Christianity altogether.

Should the reader of this paper be inclined to judge of vital Christianity by what he may often have witnessed of this cold, joyless, soulless routine in the professed service of Christ, we should like, in all earnestness, to ask him one question.

Would you allow some visitor from the Arctic Circle, who had never before seen a white moss rose, to form an opinion about what this flower is like by showing him one planted in a flower-pot and struggling for existence in the dirty back yard of some smoky manufacturing town?

No, you would show him one under careful culture, with favourable surroundings, with plenty of sunshine and ample moisture, and drawing its nourishment from a suitable soil.

And if you want to judge of vital Christianity, look at someone, however poor in this world's goods, who is "rooted and grounded in love," who is under the culture of the Father, as a plant of His own planting, who is watered by the ministry of the Spirit, warmed by the sunshine of the Lord's gracious favour, and giving forth the fragrance of His own precious name to all who come near him.

You may then say to yourself, "What Christ has done for this one He can do for me!" You may go to the blessed Saviour just as you are! You may confess freely what *you* are, and confide steadfastly in what *He* is. So shall the blessing of forgiveness, the joy of His salvation, the comfort of His spirit, and the hope of eternal glory be yours.

GEO. C.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

DOES GOD REGARD THE CHILDREN OF MEN?

“**A**H,” said an infidel, “if there be a God, He would never take notice of the children of men. God never regards man.”

“The day may come, sir,” said a Christian who was sitting opposite to him in the carriage, “when you will *prove* the truth of what you have just said.”

“I do not understand your allusion, sir,” said he.

“Well, sir, the day may come when you may call, and He will refuse; when you may stretch out your hands, and He will *not* regard you.”

Yes, Scripture is plain that God will, in another day, say to some, “Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded: . . . I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh” (Prov. i. 24, 26).

But, my reader, that is not God’s attitude to-day. The lie of the infidel to-day, as to God, is the lie of the devil. *God has great regard* for the children of men. The infidel mind of man would fain get rid of God; but in this the Bible designates him “*a fool*” (Ps. liii.). We grant him the laugh at the ignorance of the heathen, who bow before the gods of wood and stone. “Eyes have they, but they see not; ears have they, but they hear not.”

But let him not forget that the God of the Bible sees, hears, and remembers.

Permit me to set before you what is said in Scripture concerning the all-seeing eye of God, and press upon you the solemn consideration of this tremendous fact.

"Hell and destruction are before the Lord : how much more then the hearts of *the children of men*?" (Prov. xv. 11). If at one glance the all-seeing eye of God scans those vast regions of hades and hell, with all their misery, caused by sin, surely at a single glance He can equally scan the little thing called man's heart, and make manifest every motive in it. This He has done, and declared it to be "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." He has asked the question, "Who can know it?" and answered it: "I the Lord search the heart" (Jer. xvii. 9, 10).

Outside the Garden of Eden "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" (Gen. vi. 5).

Again, in the Psalms we find this solemn sentence repeated, "God looked down from heaven upon *the children of men*, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God" (Ps. xiv., liii.). But there was none; the mass He saw to be living as practical atheists, as if there was no God. How intensely solemn, then, is this verse, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Ps. ix. 17).

But, thank God, "the needy shall not be forgotten" (v. 18). God hears, as well as sees; so that if you can but honestly put your hand upon your mouth and smite your breast, saying in your heart, "God be merciful to me the sinner," then gladly we

can turn you to the brighter things of the gospel of God's grace. There we learn, in all its blessed fulness, that God has not only eyes and ears, but a gracious, loving heart. Oh, anxious sinner, God *does* regard you. He is vastly more interested in your blessing than ever you could be. His blessed attitude is of a Saviour-God, "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter iii. 9). He is not only willing to bless, but waits to be gracious. Listen to the Lord's representation of what His heart is: "But when he [the prodigal] was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and covered him with kisses" (New Trans., Luke xv. 22). God is so attentive to the sinner's cry that, to Him, there is music in a sigh and beauty in a contrite tear.

"God loves to hear the contrite cry,
He loves to see the tearful eye,
To read the spirit's deep-felt sigh:
Come, anxious sinner, come!"

In the case of that proud infidel Pharaoh, king of Egypt, God would have him learn that He had carefully considered his defiant boast, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey Him, and let this people go?" God had noted all their woes. When the lash of the taskmaster's whip fell on their backs, He saw it. The groan that followed, He heard it. "I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them" (Exod. iii. 7, 8). Oh, sinners, what a God we have to do with!—"the God of all grace."

Even when we were ungodly, without Christ and without hope in this world, He cared for us. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). What the heart of God purposed the Son of His love accomplished. He "was delivered for *our offences*, and was raised again for *our justification*. Therefore being justified by faith, we have *peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. iv. 25; v. 1).

My friend, I say again, God *does* regard you. Listen to the Psalmist: "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; Thy judgments are a great deep: O Lord, Thou preservest man and beast. How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the *children of men* put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures. For with Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light" (Ps. xxxvi. 5-9). May it be yours, dear reader, to know God and be abundantly satisfied with the river of His pleasure.

W. N.

NOTHING NEW: EVERYTHING NEW.

"There is no new thing under the sun."—ECCLES. i. 9.

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."—2 COR. v. 17.

IN these two apparently contradictory assertions you have the verdict of sense and the verdict of revelation; the cry of despair and the exclamation of faith and hope. Can both be true? Yes, both are perfectly true in the sense spoken. The

first is true in the natural sphere, the second in the spiritual. To the natural man there is nothing new, to the spiritual man all things are new; and it is only those who know the spiritual that truly understand the natural.

The first scripture asserts that under the sun there is nothing new.

THE LAWS OF NATURE continue the same in all generations. "The sun ariseth, and the sun goeth down." There is a constant succession of day and night. The wind continues to whirl about. Water continues to flow, and fire to burn. There may be fresh discoveries respecting those laws, and new adaptations of them, but the laws themselves are the same in all generations.

THE MORAL NATURE OF MAN is the same to-day as in the ages past. Men are still alienated from God and at enmity with Him, as in the days of the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles. There may be more refinement, and in many things more intelligence, yet, left to themselves, men still choose the evil and hate the good. You have only to look at human life to see that, notwithstanding all the improvements of modern times, unbelief, pride, selfishness, sensuality, ill-will, and love of God-forgetting pleasure continue to bear sway in the hearts of men. God is still forgotten by the world, His claims denied, and His mercies abused. The root of human nature became corrupt at the fall, and as the root so the branches. "A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit."

THE EVIDENCES OF THE CURSE are the same now as in the generations past. Labour and toil are yet the portion of men. Disappointment and vexation, more or less, sooner or later, attend every enterprise. The pursuit of knowledge,

wealth, fame is still found to be vanity, just the same as when Solomon wrote these words; while sickness and disease invade every home, and death cuts down its thousands every day. Yes, the curse rests upon all flesh, nor can men, however wise and powerful, take it away. Under the sun there is "*nothing new*." Such is the sad picture the first scripture presents to our view. How awfully sad to be left here without any hope of change, except a change only from bad to worse! Yet such is the condition of all without interest in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Consider now the second scripture. Here the fact is announced that in Christ there is a new creation. Men in Christ while here below are still connected with the old. They bear about a body of sin and death; they feel and suffer the results of the curse in sickness, pain, and bereavement, yet in Christ they are a new creation. To them all things have become new.

IN CHRIST THEY HAVE COME INTO A NEW RELATION TO GOD. Once they were under deserved condemnation, but in Him full forgiveness is theirs, and the sentence of condemnation for ever revoked (Rom. viii. 1). By nature they were far from God, but now in Christ made nigh by the blood of His cross (Eph. ii. 13). Once they were slaves, but through Christ they have received the adoption of sons, and by the Holy Spirit cry, "Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 5-7). Their relation to God in Christ is altogether new. God Himself has become their God, their Father, their portion, and their all.

IN CHRIST THEY HAVE A NEW LIFE. They have been born again of the Spirit. They have been quickened into newness of life. The change in

them is vital, deep, and radical. They are no longer darkness, but LIGHT in the Lord. In the light of His Spirit they see the evil of sin, the vanity of the world, and the absolute necessity of an interest in Christ. The current of their *affections* is changed. Sin once loved is now hated; God once hated is now loved. To commune with God, and obey Him, is their most earnest desire. The *motive* by which they are prompted is new. The love of Christ constrains them not to live to themselves—the idol they once worshipped—but to Him that died for them and rose again.

Hence it follows that THEY LIVE A NEW LIFE. The change shows itself in their daily conversation and pursuits. They no longer walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit. They no longer live to gratify the lusts of the flesh, but to do the will of God. They no longer sit in the seat of the scornful, but in the assembly of the upright. In the most practical sense, to those in Christ all things are new.

IN CHRIST BELIEVERS HAVE NEW PROSPECTS. The future is no longer dreaded. It is bright with hope, and they no longer seek to banish the thought of it, but dwell upon it with delight. "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ," we long for His coming to receive us to Himself that we may share His rest, His joy, His glory for ever and ever. Should His coming be delayed, we expect to be victorious even in death. Death will be but going home, departing "to be with Christ, which is far better." Come what may, in Christ all is well.

Such is the believer's relation to the future; it is that of a well-grounded, lively hope. On the

other hand, to be without Christ is to be exposed to the wrath of God, to everlasting shame and contempt, to the worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched.

In which state are you? Are *your* hopes, desires, motives, and pursuits bounded by time? Are you occupied only with things under the sun? Or can you say that in Christ old things have passed away, and all things become new? Your present and eternal welfare depends entirely upon your relation to and interest in the Lord Jesus Christ.

O. T.

THE ESCAPE OF THE "ORSOLINA."

IT was the day before the terrible volcanic disaster in Martinique. The Italian bark *Orsolina*, Captain Marino Leboffe, lay at anchor in the roadstead of St. Pierre, loading with sugar for Havre.

The volcano was already beginning to assume an appearance that seemed threatening to an experienced eye, and signs of the coming outburst were making themselves visible about the mountain summit. Unobserved though these symptoms were by the great majority of the people, they did not escape the notice of Captain Leboffe. Alarmed by what he saw, he went to the shippers and told them that he did not consider it safe to stay in the roadstead any longer, and that he had decided to stop loading and sail immediately for Havre.

"But," objected the shippers, "you haven't got half your cargo on board; you can't go yet."

"That doesn't make any difference," replied the captain. "I would rather sail with half a

cargo than run such a risk as a man must run by staying here."

The shippers assured him that there was nothing to be feared from Mont Pelée.

"Well," said Captain Leboffe, "if Vesuvius were looking as your volcano looks this morning, I would get out of Naples, and I'm going to get out of here."

The shippers then became angry, and told him that if he sailed he would be arrested as soon as he reached Havre. He bade them good-bye and left them. They, however, sent two customs officers to the bark, with instructions to stay on board and prevent her sailing.

When the sails were unfurled and the crew began to heave up the anchor, the customs officers hailed a passing boat and went ashore, after threatening the captain with all the penalties of the law.

Twenty-four hours later the shippers and the customs officers lay dead among the ruins of St. Pierre, while the bark *Orsolina* was far at sea, on her way to Europe.

A striking illustration this of the truth of the Scripture proverb: "The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going" (Prov. xiv. 15).

If Captain Leboffe had been "simple" enough to listen to the counsel of the shippers, he would have shared their fate. His prudence in "looking well to his going" is deserving of every commendation.

Your soul, my unsaved reader, is like a bark anchored in a roadstead which is threatened by approaching doom. The shore by which you linger is soon to be overwhelmed by a terrible outburst of divine wrath and judgment. Por-

tentious signs of this are not wanting. Evidence accumulates that things cannot continue as they are much longer. In social life, in political life, in commercial life, the same tale is told, a sweeping change is coming; we are on the very verge of it.

But loud and clear above all these dim and uncertain warnings sounds the voice of divine revelation, with tones of clarion distinctness. "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." "The Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all." "Out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

In view of such warnings as these, we are far more certain as to the disaster that is coming upon the world than the captain of the *Orsolina* could be about the eruption of Mont Pelée. After all, he *might* have been mistaken, but when *God* has spoken there can be no mistake.

The point for you, reader, is whether you are going to linger any longer in the roadstead of sin and insecurity, or whether you are going to immediately weigh anchor and set sail for the harbour of eternal bliss.

There are influences, no doubt, that would detain you, just as the shippers and the customs officers sought to detain Captain Leboffe. There is the thought of what your friends would say and think. There are "the pleasures of sin," upon which you are not prepared to turn your back just yet. There is the hope that you stand as good

a chance as others, and that there is no special need for haste. Satan has many devices by means of which he induces the "simple" to put off coming to Christ, to abide in their peril and their sin.

But the blessed God, to whom your eternal welfare is a matter of deep and true concern, *warns* you. "Escape for thy life," He cries; "look not behind thee, neither stay thou . . . lest thou be consumed" (Gen. xix. 17). But He does not stop here. He tells you of a means of escape, a sure haven of refuge, which He has Himself provided through the gift of His Son. The way of salvation is through JESUS, and the sinner who trusts in Him gets all the benefit of His atoning work and is saved.

It is *your sins* that expose you to judgment, and the only way of deliverance from the danger is for your sins to be removed. Now this is just what the work of Christ upon the cross entitles God to do. On the ground of that finished work He can righteously put away for ever the believer's sins, and gratify His own heart of love in doing so.

His words of warning, then, go hand in hand with words of grace. The voice that bids you flee from your danger calls you to the arms of a Saviour.

Let no influence detain you. Say, with Captain Leboffe, "I'm going to get out of here." Put your confidence in the gracious Saviour. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Ps. ii. 12).

H. P. B.

"A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished" (Prov. xxii. 3).

THE THREE CUPS.

HIGH up in the topmost garret,
Lonely and poor and old,
Always weak and aweary,
Often hungry and cold,

There lay a bed-ridden soldier
With all of his marches done,
Except just the one that he longed for
To the land beyond the sun ;

And the kindly hand of a neighbour
On the table by his side
Left the day's three meals, in three small cups,
Till she came at the eventide.

With the first in the dawn would David
Sing aloud—"My cup runneth o'er";
And the second—when painful and tired,
So long and so slow seemed each hour—

Would remind him of One who so loved him,
Of the terrible cup which He took,
Of its bitter dregs that He tasted,
Of "Thy will be done" that He spoke.

And the third cup he took in the evening
With the span of his life nearly o'er ;
What joy that "a cup of cold water"
Remained for the weak and the poor

To give in the name of the Master,
Who alone can apprise the cost,
And honours the least of His servants
Because 'tis in His name they boast.

So out of his small soldier's pension,
And out of his happy old heart,
Went—akin to the widow's "one farthing"—
Such assistance as he could impart.

It is often His wisdom and pleasure
That the great and the wise ones should learn,
From the life of some humble ignored one,
Great truths which to blessing may turn.

Oh for eyes by His Spirit anointed,
And for ears on His messages bent,
That the heart may be tuned to His measures,
And the tongue to His praises be lent ;

To love—not the rich and the clever,
To esteem—not the high-born and great,
But the poor and the suff'ring and lowly
That bear the "redeemed one's" estate.

L. J. M.

THE WORST OF ALL DISEASES.

"Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee ; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk ?"—MARK ii. 9.

THERE was a time when the Son of God was here on earth, when there was no need of those abodes of suffering such as infirmaries, hospitals, and asylums. He was "JEHOVAH, THE LORD THAT HEALETH THEE." The blind received their sight, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf were made to hear, the dead were raised to life. They brought to Him from all the country round the diseased and afflicted and the suffering. He healed them all. There went a virtue out of Him ; as many as touched Him were made perfectly whole.

The Lord was at Capernaum : the news was noised abroad, and many gathered together, in-somuch that there was no room to receive them ; and He preached the word unto them. They brought to Him a poor incurable sufferer, sick of the palsy, borne of four. It was the sick one's extremity, but it was also faith's opportunity, and it would not be put off. If those who brought him could not get in at the door, they would through the roof, and they did, and let down the

bed on which the sick of the palsy lay before Jesus while He was preaching.

But this poor afflicted one had a worse disease than palsy, and it was to save from this disease that the blessed Saviour came, though He cured the palsy too. So we read, "When Jesus saw their faith, He said unto him, 'Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.'" Oh, blessed words to a sin-sick soul!

"The worst of all diseases
Is light compared with sin ;
On every part it seizes,
But rages most within :
'Tis palsy, dropsy, fever,
And madness—all combined,
And none but a believer
A full relief can find."

But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and they reasoned thus in their hearts: "Why doth this Man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?" But Jesus is God—God the Son—the Son of God—God manifest in flesh—God over all, blessed for ever—one with the Father in deity and divine glory. In Him those whose eyes were open beheld "the glory as of an only begotten with a Father."

Oh, we love to bear testimony and confess this! Every saved one, every believer rejoices to do so. All the divine glory of His person gives its value to His God-glorifying, sin-atonement, sin-forgiving work. How that glory rays forth here! He knew the unbelieving reasoning they had in their hearts; they had no need to utter it; He read their hearts, He knew their thoughts. Who but God could do this? Man only knows what is uttered or spoken; God knows the thoughts and intents of the heart.

When Jesus perceived in His spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, He said unto them, "Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, take up thy bed, and walk?" Ah, dear reader, in this question all the blessed truth of forgiveness is wrapped up. In one sense there was no difference, one was as easy as the other. He only, who had divine power to effect the one, had divine right to effect the other. But in another sense (oh! ponder this) it was far harder, infinitely so, for the blessed Saviour to say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," than to say, "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk." The healing could be effected by His word only; but if the forgiveness of a sinner's sins was to be brought about, that blessed Saviour must take the guilty's place. He must be made sin, be forsaken of God, suffer the awful judgment and wrath of God against sin, and thus make purgation of sins by His atoning death and bloodshedding. This He has done, and God has raised Him from the dead. On the ground of having this before Him, He could say to the sick of the palsy, "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

Blessed, precious Saviour, it was that sinners might have full, free pardon brought to them that Thou didst come from heaven. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." "God sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "Without shedding of blood is no remission." "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Dear reader, how about *your* sins? Have you been born again? Have you ever been awakened to the fact that *you* have this terrible, this worst.

of all diseases? Oh that the reading of these plain, simple words might awaken you! If unforgiven, you are far from God, and where He is you cannot come. Not only can you never be with Him, but you will be in eternal misery, in outer darkness, in the lake of fire. "There shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Oh, believe God's word and come to Jesus the Saviour now! He will in no wise cast out. W. F.

AN ARROW FROM THE ALMIGHTY.

ONE bright summer's day a Christian gentleman was walking along a country road when he came upon a labouring man who was engaged in cracking stones. He began to talk with him, and soon found he was one of those who dare to doubt the truth of the Scriptures.

So the Christian said to the sceptic—

"Well, my man, just look up at the sun yonder."

"I can't, master," replied the man.

"But why can't you?"

"Because it is too bright for my eyes."

"Now, my man, if you cannot look at the sun, *however will you be able to look at its Maker?*" rejoined the gentleman earnestly, as he passed on his way.

The last sentence arrested the man's attention, and, by the blessing of God, was used to the arousing of his conscience, and, ultimately, to his conversion. For, like an arrow shot at a venture, but winged by the Spirit of God, those words stayed in his mind, tearing to pieces all his former self-confidence, until he found real, abiding, and eternal peace by bowing to God and believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

L. J. M.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

HOW DO YOU STAND IN RELATION TO GOD'S GLAD TIDINGS?

WE who have received Christ and have been brought to God by Him have good news to pass on to others, news of the great salvation which God has provided for men in Christ.

We can speak of this salvation not merely as a "plan of salvation" or a part of a creed, but as those who, having for ourselves tasted its joy and proved its worth, can commend it to others. We are like the patients of a great and wise physician who, for two reasons, can recommend his treatment: firstly, because his greatness and wisdom are such as to command confidence; secondly, because of having personally benefited by his skill.

It was not always so with us. There was a time when our hearts were in darkness, not knowing God, when we were strangers to His grace and to the blessings of His kingdom. But now, having the knowledge of Him and of these precious things, we think of others, of the many who still are as we once were.

To such I would like to address a few words.

God has brought in for men, in Christ, things that are very real and great and blessed.

If we know and consider the greatness of the Person who has come out from God to us, One who is Himself God, but who has become man, it is not difficult to see that the things that God

has introduced in Him for men must necessarily be very great and very blessed things.

A great person was required as mediator to bring in the law. Moses was great enough for that; but great as the law was, the things which God has now introduced in Christ are as much greater than the law and all connected with it as Christ, God's Son, is greater than Moses.

I will name some of these things, and, in passing, may say that, as they are for all men, they are for the person who reads this paper.

To commence with, *repentance*, as a privilege, is preached in Christ's name. God, in favour, calls upon all to repent as a privilege, because it has in view their receiving the forgiveness of sins (Luke xxiv. 46, 47; Acts xvii. 30, 31). Repentance, at the same time, is a moral obligation toward God and a moral necessity for man as a sinner.

Free, full, and present *Forgiveness of Sins* has also been brought in, for men, in Christ (see Luke vii. 36-50; Acts xiii. 37-9).

God's kingdom, too, has come in, and is now established in the Lord Jesus Christ. Though not yet a visible and universal kingdom, such as it will be when He comes in His power and glory, it nevertheless exists as a present reality, so that men—all who will—may enter into it by coming by faith under the authority of Jesus as their Lord, and may find in it salvation, both present and eternal.

Then there are the *blessings* of God's kingdom, such as a free and present *justification* before God; *peace with God*; the *gift of the Holy Spirit*; *righteousness* in Christ; *salvation*; eternal life; and the *hope of God's glory*.

If you are sufficiently interested in these things to read the Holy Scriptures, you will find (in such as Romans v.) that these great blessings are now available for all men "through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Such is the blessed character of the present time in God's ways with men; yet we think of many who, were they to put to themselves the question, "Have I repented toward God?" and were to reply truthfully, would have to answer, "No, I have not."

"Have I really in my heart (see Romans x. 8-10) believed on and bowed to Jesus as my Lord?" No.

"Have I entered God's kingdom?" No.

"Are my sins forgiven?" No.

"Am I justified?" No.

"Am I saved?" No.

"Have I entered into peace with God?" No.

"Can I rejoice in hope of the coming day of His glory?" No.

Now in view of the wonderful and blessed facts and realities of the gospel—of God's grace having thus come into the world, in His Son, bringing salvation and life for all, and within the reach of all, to men's doors, so to speak, that all might be saved, that none may perish—how serious a matter it is for any person to have only a *negative*—a NO—to say to God regarding His glad tidings.

If such is your state, my reader, or if you have only vague and uncertain hopes as to these things, we can say to you, and can press upon you, that God's will for you is that *you should be saved* (see 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4). But you will not always have the opportunity you now have, for you are going and judgment is coming.

Let not the devil keep you from what God has for you in Christ. This warning is not unnecessary; for as in the parable of the great supper, in Luke xiv., there were those who were so engrossed with a "yoke of oxen," "a piece of land," and "a wife," as to neglect, or despise—and thus to miss—the great supper, so, alas! is it as a present-day reality; many are content, and Satan helps them, to be so engrossed with the pleasures and cares of this life, and the passing events and trifles of this world, that the voice of God speaking in grace in the gospel falls on deaf ears. Beware, then, for Satan and his efforts to hinder your being saved are very real.

We would warn you also not to allow your fellow-men, by their favour or enmity, nor the matter of gain nor loss in this world, to influence you in these matters of such present and eternal importance.

The Lord Himself warns men of a time when the door of God's grace in the gospel, and of man's opportunity, will be closed. That moment may now not be far distant. He also speaks of those who, with the earnestness of despair, will desire and seek to enter when too late (see Luke xiii. 34).

Therefore do not trifle with God's glad tidings, do not delay in turning to Him. An *assured welcome* awaits every repentant sinner (see Luke xv. 11). Allow nothing to stand in the way of your entering God's kingdom. Abundance of grace and present salvation await all who enter it, with the joyful prospect of full salvation and of God's glory at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

E. J. W.

THE UNEXPECTED MAY HAPPEN.

MAN is given many warnings as to the uncertainty of human life, and among the most solemn and striking of them stands the fatal wreck of the *Elbe*.

This steamship left Bremen on Tuesday morning for New York, *viâ* Southampton, with four hundred people on board. But early on the following morning she was run into by the steamer *Craithie*, and went down with three hundred and eighty men, women, and children, who were thus launched into eternity within twenty-four hours of embarking.

Little did they think, as they put their trust in the noble vessel and its skilful captain, that but twenty minutes next day would suffice to lay its power and pride twenty-one fathoms down on the floor of the German Ocean, all the puny might of man being powerless to save.

What a warning this should be to lead man to consider his end, and the measure of his days, what it is, that he may know how frail he is (Psalm xxxix. 4); for his days are as grass, as a flower of the field so he flourisheth; the grass withereth, and the flower fadeth (Isa. xl. 8). Man lives and dies, customs come and go, empires rise and fall; but in the midst of all that is perishing, passing, and changing there is something that always abides. Like an immovable granite rock in the midst of a restless, chafing sea, "*the word of the Lord endureth for ever*" (1 Peter i. 25). And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart:

that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus [*Jesus as Lord*], and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 8, 9).

It is by faith in the risen glorified Saviour at God's right hand that we pass out of our natural condition as *children of men*; and, being redeemed by His blood and justified by God's grace, it is the privilege of everyone that believeth in Jesus to stand in the glorious liberty of the *children of God*, forgiven and free. "For ye are all the children of God *by faith* in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26).

Among the passengers on board the *Elbe* there were rich and poor, old and young, many varieties and distinctions; but in the sight of God, then as now, they belong to two classes only—the *children of God* by faith in Christ Jesus, and the *children of men* who have died with their sins still upon them.

Of the former were a missionary and his wife, who, refusing to be parted, were drowned together, the stormy waters only serving as the means of a swift entry into the everlasting light and gladness of their Father's presence.

Of the latter were two thieves, who, after a course of deceit and lying, were making their escape with pockets filled with stolen gold. Who can tell their hopeless agonies as they thus passed away into the darkness!

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7); and "He that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Prov. xxix. 1).

Death may be lying just ahead of the reader ; many a frail bark has gone down in life's sea with very little if any warning. A sudden illness may come and, like a storm, swamp you ; or a sudden accident, like a collision, may run you down. If either of these happened to you, how would it stand with *your soul*, my reader ?

Pause on your way, and listen to the voice that still pursues—"Turn ye, turn ye . . . *why will ye die?*" (Ezek. xxxiii. 11); "O earth, earth, earth, *hear the word of the Lord*" (Jer. xxii. 29); "*Hear, and your soul shall live*" (Isa. lv. 3). L. J. M.

THE MAZE, AND THE ONLY WAY OUT OF IT.

IN many public gardens is found what is called a maze ; that is, a number of high hedges planted in parallel lines near together, with paths between, and every now and then either a part of the hedge crossing the path, or apertures through from one path to another. In the midst of all is a small open space with a tree. Visitors enter the maze, and seek to reach the tree ; but the windings of the path are such that, together with the cross-hedges and apertures, it is most difficult to thread one's way through and to attain one's object.

Numbers try it, and run to and fro and round about, and in and out, only to find, when apparently near the goal, and almost sure of reaching it, some unexpected hedge which blocks the path-way. And hence, weary and disappointed, they have been compelled to retrace their steps. And so they continue, winding their way in and out,

in and out, till fairly exhausted, without attaining their aim.

Now near the tree in the middle of one of these gardens, which the writer well remembers as a child, was a man seated on a raised platform, to whom anyone could appeal for guidance who, discovering his own efforts to be unavailing, desired still to reach the goal. This man knew perfectly every turn of the way, and, obedient to his simple direction, the exhausted traveller at last found rest on a seat by the tree in the midst.

How strikingly this illustrates the vain efforts of sinners in this world to attain the heavenly goal—Christ Himself in the glory of God! The world, through sin, has become like a vast maze. Tens of thousands are striving in all kinds of ways to reach heaven, but without success. Satan has cultivated innumerable hedges—high and broad and strong; and opened innumerable misleading apertures into false paths. They face the sinner on all sides. There is no getting over the former, but it is very easy to go astray through one of the latter.

There is a way, however—a right way—but man in his fallen, sinful state does not perceive it. Strong in self-confidence, he is very loath to give up his own moral and religious efforts to reach the desired goal. Long and oft he spurns the direction of *the only One who can help him*. It is too humbling to his pride. He *thinks* he knows. He is confident of his final success. If only he continues to persevere, he feels pretty sure that all will be well in the end. And so you may see him, wherever you turn, working and striving, doing and trying, with fleshly energy and zeal. Tell him his efforts are useless, and he

will probably consider you very impertinent, and reply that he knows quite as well as or better than you. Tell him he will never reach the goal without listening to the direction of the Lord Himself in glory, and you will very likely receive some such answer as that your idea is an old wives' fable, and that he is sorry for one who has such a poor opinion of a creature endowed with such wonderful powers as man, or that the way he is travelling is the one his fathers trod before him, and so it *must* be right. If *they* went to heaven that way, it is good enough for him (?). So he continues to try, and try again, but he *never reaches the goal*.

Dear reader, what are *you* doing? Are you unconverted, though *doing the best you can*, as so many vainly say? (Not that you could not do very much better, if you tried. But your *very best* would not do for God, for "in all your doings your sins do appear" (Ezek. xxi. 24).) Ah! you are still in the great maze, or, as the Germans call it, "*the error-garden*." You are no nearer the goal than when you entered it. And if you pursue your course for the next ten, or twenty, or fifty years you will be only farther off than ever. Salvation is not by works of righteousness which we have done (Titus iii. 5). What *can* be clearer than that? Then why pursue this pathway of error any further?

Quite recently the writer of these lines spoke to an old man nearly eighty years of age, with whom, more than thirty years ago, he had often conversed on this momentous subject. Again asking as to his soul's welfare, he received the same old worn-out reply, "I'm doing the best I can." Poor man, he was still in the "error-garden."

"Why, you were trying that road the last time

I spoke to you, and you have not got any further; don't you think it is time to give it up?" was the reply, followed by a presentation of the gospel of Christ. Poor man, he acknowledged the truth of what was said, but it appeared to have no power with him.

What suicidal folly to pursue such a course! Cease from your vain efforts. Cease now. Give up. Let your strivings and doings cease *once for all*. "Thus saith the Lord, *Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls*" (Jer. vi. 16).

Stand then, and just where you stand, turn to the Man who is seated at God's right hand, who only can direct you aright—Jesus, the Lord, the Son of the living God. He, and He alone, can, for *He Himself is the way*. He it is who says, "*Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*" (Matt. xi. 28). And again, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.*"

Respond, then, to the invitation of His love, and come unto Him. All the hedges that Satan ever planted will be of no avail to arrest you then, and you will give the go-by to all false paths. You will get the rest you need and want. *He will give it you*. It is by Him, in His presence now, and with Him for ever when He returns. This is the only way out of the maze, this huge error-garden, the world which lieth in the wicked one (1 John v. 19). *He is the only way to the heavenly goal, Christ Himself in the glory of God*. Now, now is the time to enter upon it. Believe on Him, and you shall be saved. E. H. C.

HAS GOD NO RIGHTS ? (!)

IF we live in a day of *crying wrongs*, it is not because it is not a day of *pleaded "rights."* We hear it on every side. There are royal rights and the people's rights, national rights and municipal rights, religious rights and commercial rights, workmen's rights and employers' rights, and (that nobody should be left out) men's rights and women's rights. With what dogged tenacity will man cling to his so-called rights; how hotly will he contend for them; and how indignantly will he resent any infringement of them.

But suppose that the justice of every such plea could be granted, what about God? It would almost appear to-day that amidst all the hubbub for the creature's rights the Creator's rights had either been well-nigh forgotten or wilfully ignored. Let us consider this grave matter more closely. Has *He* no rights?

There are two great powers at work in the world to-day, the Holy Spirit of God and "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

The first maintains the right of God to bless the children of men by securing a place for Himself in their *hearts*, and this through Christ and what He accomplished on the cross.

The second seeks to set Christ and His atoning work aside altogether. To this end he induces man to mentally frame a god according to his own ideas of what God *ought* to be, and with this either to deny the necessity of redemption by blood altogether, or else to cast a slur upon the efficacy of the atoning work by detracting from the personal glory of Him who did it.

It is a solemn consideration that every reader of this paper is being influenced by one or other of these powers, and the great test for each is found in the Saviour's own words (Matt. xxii. 42), "*What think ye of Christ?*"

If you have ever been brought to real repentance toward God, nothing short of Christ could meet your conscience or satisfy your heart. You came as a sinner to Him: you could do, you dare do no other. You not only saw that sin must have its just judgment, but you pronounced judgment upon your own sin. You knew that God, in the very necessity of His holy nature and righteous character, must bring every evil thing into judgment; but that in the death of Christ for you He had already done it; that expiation had been made: sin's penalty endured.

But more than this, you saw that there was a gracious motive in all that had been done, a motive worthy of the blessed God Himself. LOVE, infinite love, was in it. "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). The confidence of your heart was drawn out to God through Christ, and you could afford, because of what He was, to pronounce the sentence of condemnation on what you were.

Now probably no one would go so far as to deny God His sovereign right to show mercy. But this granted, another thing must follow. If He has the right to show mercy at all, surely He has a right to show it *in His own way*. Surely He is in no way dependent upon His creature to tell Him *how* He is to do it!

Show mercy He will; nay, He has already

done so in the death of His beloved Son; He has declared Himself in that very act as not against man, but for him. But this is just what the enemy hates, and against which, either in secret ambush or in public battle array, he marshals his hostile forces. Beware of him, my reader.

When Oliver Cromwell was besieging the town of Wexford, in Ireland, the commander-in-chief of the town forces sent by special messenger the terms on which he would surrender the town to the Protector.

But there was another side, Cromwell's side. Mercy was offered to the town, but only on the ground of unconditional surrender before a certain hour of a certain day. This offer was proudly disregarded; the commander in the besieged city insisted on making his *own* terms, and history records the sequel.

There were no less than ten stipulations in the document, one of which ran thus:—

"All acts, transgressions, offences, depredations, and other crimes, of what nature or quality soever, be they ever so transcendent . . . shall pass into oblivion; without chastisement, challenge, recompense, demand, or questioning for them, or any of them, now or any time hereinafter."

Such a demand under the circumstances was regarded as nothing short of barefaced impudence.

When the appointed time had expired Oliver Cromwell showed no mercy, save as he considered that extreme measures in one place would prove a mercy to other places by stopping further bloodshed. Power, overwhelming power, was on his side, and he used it with such vengeance as made his opposers think twice before they idly tried to parley with the terms he thought well to offer.

“When Thy judgments are in the earth,” said the prophet, “the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness” (Isa. xxvi. 9). But how slow man is to learn it, while on every side grace is flowing like a river, and “sentence against man’s evil work is not speedily executed.”

Many condescend to recognise God’s *existence*, though in reality they can no more deny it than could the Wexford commander deny the existence of Cromwell as he stood with iron hand at his closed gates. Others will even *patronise* God by *serving* Him, if only left to do so according to their own ideas. But let the question of sin come up, and they coolly talk as if, in such a trifling matter as sin against God, the offender must be left to *dictate his own terms* and say what *God* ought to be and what He ought not to be!

If a man has committed an offence which is worthy of death, then according to the king’s rights and that man’s deserts he must die for his crime. What would be done, if on the way to execution, he tried to dictate his *own terms* to the sovereign? Would the sentence be reversed or even commuted? Would he be listened to? No, not for a moment. *His right is to die!*

From the beginning God has claimed His right to show mercy to fallen man, but He has done so according to His own holiness, and therefore in the full recognition of sin’s just deserts.

He claimed His right to show mercy to our first parents, but it was in clothing them with that which testified of *death* having taken place, or the skin of the animal could not have been provided.

He claimed his right to show mercy to Noah, but *judgment fell on the ark* that sheltered him.

He claimed His right to shelter Israel, the

night of Egypt's judgment, but it was only when He saw *the sprinkled blood* that He passed by each door. *Death was in every house in Egypt—a dead lamb or a dead son.*

He claimed His right to show mercy to Israel by typically atoning for their sins once a year, but His golden mercy-seat was, year by year, *sprinkled with the blood of atonement.*

To-day He claims His right to show mercy by proclaiming free pardon to man, for "He is rich in mercy"; but it is only through *repentance on man's side* and the *blood of propitiation on God's.* "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). "We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. i. 7).

But do not forget that this period of grace and mercy is fast wearing away. Judgment will follow, a judgment all the more terrible because it will follow nineteen centuries of slighted grace and mercy.

God's rights *must* be respected, either as they are presented in grace through righteousness now, or in judgment without mercy in the day that is coming. Bow to His present right to bless you, in His own way; and do it now. GEO. C.

Feelings and Faith.—"Do you talk about *feeling* that the dead in their graves will be raised again? Do you *feel* that the cold of winter will be followed by the heat of summer? No. You *believe* these things; to talk of feeling would be absurd.

"Feelings are more fickle than the winds, more unsubstantial than soap-bubbles, and are these to be the gauge of divine fidelity?"—*Extract.*

NONE LIKE HIM.

"Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into Thy lips: therefore God hath blessed Thee for ever."—PSALM xlv. 2.

"Yea, He is altogether lovely."—CANT. v. 16.

"Never man spake like this Man."—JOHN vii. 46.

SING ye of the Saviour,
Ye who love His name;
Ye who know His favour,
Celebrate His fame.

Sent One of the Father,
Dwelling here below,
Sinners round Him gather
With their tale of woe.

Beggars in their blindness,
Men of every ill,
Find His loving-kindness
Draws them nearer still.

Power of curse possessing,
Power of life and death;
Yet for man 'twas blessing
To His latest breath.

Brightness of God's glory,
Yet for man made sin;
He would tell love's story
Hearts like ours to win.

Vanquisher all-glorious,
Spoiler of the tomb!
Jesus is victorious—
Satan's overcome.

Sing, for He's returning—
We shall with Him reign!
Sing, with full hearts burning,
That He comes again!

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

THE TWO PUZZLED DOCTORS.

ABOUT thirty-seven years ago a doctor and his assistant were in attendance on an old retired tradesman. It was a case that sorely puzzled them both. They had had, for young men, a fair amount of experience, but neither of them had seen, either in hospital or private practice, a case similar to this—not that the diagnosis was particularly difficult, or, in point of fact, the prognosis either, for it was quite plain to them he could not live very long.

It was not, however, the disease, but the man himself who puzzled them so very much.

He seemed to be past their comprehension, yet there was no question about his intellect being weak. On the contrary, he appeared to be a man of some intelligence.

Again, there was nothing to complain of in the way their daily visits were received, for their patient uniformly met them with a gentle, benignant smile; yet they could not feel at home with him, for they could not make him out.

As we have said, his case was a very serious one, and as the doctor always thought it right to tell his patients, when they were in real danger, the truth as to their state, but in as guarded a manner as possible, the time had now come when he felt he must break the "sad" news of the ap-

proaching end to this patient. So, to avoid a shock, he commenced as carefully as possible to bring the "painful" subject before him, and by degrees came to the usually distressing point, saying, as near as remembered, "My dear friend, I fear your time here will not be very long."

His countenance changed immediately. The doctor was, however, quite prepared for that, as he had seen it under similar circumstances many times before.

Was the poor old gentleman going to burst into a flood of tears? No.

Was he going to cry bitterly that he might be spared here a little longer? No.

Was he about to deplore having to leave his loved ones here? No.

Can it be possible? Yes, indeed; there can be no mistake about it; instead of anguish, a bright, radiant smile lights up his face as he calmly inquires, "And do you think, doctor, the event will take place to-day?"

It was now the poor doctor's turn for intense astonishment, and his professional decorum was tried to the utmost to enable him, without showing his great surprise, to reply, "Well, no; I trust not to-day, but I fear it will be very soon."

Again that bright, confident smile illuminated the face of this strange man as he said, "Ah, well, it is a good thing to be prepared!"

In the after part of that day and subsequently, the doctors, not being able to understand their strange patient, pronounced him to be a "regular caution," and made many jokes at his expense.

But green as he appeared in their eyes, he was unquestionably in possession of some secret they were in entire ignorance of. Indeed, though not

cowards, they would have been terribly distressed had *they* been in their patient's position. What, then, was the wonderful secret which could give this man such perfect calmness when face to face with death?

As the writer, by the grace of God, has himself been in the knowledge and enjoyment of this secret for many years, permit him to try to answer this all-important question, with ~~the~~ sincere hope and fervent prayer that the highly prized blessing may be yours before you lay aside this little paper.

In the first place, our old friend had, by the Holy Spirit's teaching, become convinced that he was not right with God, and being honest enough to own his sinful and undone condition before Him, he soon became aware of the great fact that God was not against him, but for him.

Yes, "GOD IS LOVE. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 8-10).

He is a holy and a righteous God; He hates sin, but He loves the sinner. His righteousness forbids His overlooking one sin, yet in love He willeth not the death of a sinner.

"The perfect righteousness of God
Is witnessed in the Saviour's blood ;
'Tis in the cross of Christ we trace
His righteousness. Yet, wondrous grace.
God could not pass the sinner by—
His sin demands that he must die ;
But in the cross of Christ we see
How God can save us righteously.

“The sin is on the Saviour laid ;
’Tis in His blood sin’s debt is paid.
Stern justice can demand no more,
And mercy can dispense her store.
The sinner who believes is free—
Can say, ‘The Saviour died for me’ ;
Can point to the atoning blood
And say, ‘This made my peace with God.’”

So in all simplicity he accepted God’s word about the precious Person and work of His beloved Son, and had “peace through the blood of His cross” (Col. i. 20). “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Rom. v. 1, 2).

Mark well, dear reader, that it was not “peace with *himself*,” but “peace with *God*,” which gave our old friend such joy at the prospect of death.

Death, did we say ?

Nay, it was no “death” to him, but simply falling asleep in Jesus. He said, “It is a good thing to be prepared,” and prepared he was, through the precious blood of Jesus Christ alone.

About two years after the above event “the king of terrors” came and suddenly snatched one of these very doctors from time into eternity. God has been pleased to drop the curtain, and close from our view what his real end was ; and we desire, in all affection to his memory, to leave that curtain as it fell.

At the same time, what hallelujahs—what eternal songs of praise shall be His ! for, as “a brand plucked out of the fire” (Zech. iii. 2), the “King of Peace” and Lord of Glory snatched the other doctor from the very brink of hell,

using the sudden death of his cherished friend to thoroughly arouse him to a sense of his guilty, lost, hell-deserving condition, and eventually gave him, through that same precious blood, not only "*peace with God*," but to know the "*peace of God*," which passeth all understanding" (Phil. iv. 7).

This plucked "brand" is the writer of this paper, who for over thirty years has himself been enjoying that wonderful secret, the effects of which so greatly astonished him and his friend in their old patient of thirty-seven years ago.

His most earnest desire and prayer now is that each unsaved reader may, without another moment's delay, be honest with God and his own never-dying soul, and take his true place as a guilty, lost sinner before Him, and claim Jesus—the One who died for sinners—as his individual Saviour. Each will then, with an adoring heart, be able to say, "Who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*" (Gal. ii. 20). He will thus be brought into the wonderful secret which gives calmness, comfort, and confidence when face to face with what is usually called death.

"My title's undeniable—

'Tis Jesus and His blood ;
His word must be reliable,
For He's the Son of God.
And though my sin's detected,
My Substitute's accepted ;
And now my soul's protected
From judgment's righteous rod ;

"And now upon the throne on high

He sits, my risen Lord :
God's satisfied, and so am I,
Who rest upon His Word.
Redemption's toil's completed,
The powers of hell defeated,
My life's in glory seated—
Jesus the Christ, our Lord."

C. P. W. N.

“ALL CLEAR FROM THERE TO HERE.”

IT was our privilege some years ago to pitch a gospel tent in the village of E——. Many came to hear, and, thank God, some for blessing.

Among others was an old man, T. N——, who had been a marine in Her Majesty's service, now retired on his pension, to spend the remainder of his days in his native village. God was pleased to reach him at one of the earliest meetings. The sharp, barbed arrow of conviction entered his soul; those long years of sin rose up before him with all their consequences. He faced his past with God, and it troubled him sore.

We visited him at his cottage many a time, and presented the blessed gospel to him. Still no peace. Often at the close of our interviews would he say with his deep voice, “But God is just, sir—God is just.” He had yet to learn that if God be just, He is “the justifier of every one that believeth in Jesus.”

Weeks rolled by, and others were brought into blessing, but T. N——'s trouble deepened. The last Sunday came, and on Monday morning the canvas was coming down. It was a solemn time this last preaching. The subject was: “When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us,” etc. (Luke xiii. 25). T. N—— sat just inside the tent door, with a look which seemed to say, “If I do not get the blessing to-night, whenever shall I get it?”

At the close of the meeting we invited the people to stay for prayer. To our surprise

T. N—— was the first to leave. He went home to have the after-meeting with God.

On Monday morning, walking down the village, I met him. As he drew near, his face told the tale of this after-meeting. Holding up his hand, with a look of peace and joy on his face, he said, "It is all right with me now." "Tell me," I said, "how it happened." He said, "Last night I went home to my cottage, fell on the floor, and cried for mercy. I said, as the sweat poured off me, 'O God, have mercy on a poor old sinner like me.' At last I saw the Lord Jesus on the cross for a poor old sinner like me; then I saw Him in the glory, and it is all clear from there"—pointing upwards—"to here," smiting on his breast. *All clear from there to here.* It was peace.

How is it with you, dear reader? Have you acknowledged the claims of the throne? Do you know the One who has met those claims? How blessed to know that the God to whom we are responsible, and who alone could rightly estimate the extent of our responsibility, has come in from His own side to meet it! *His love provided what His holiness demanded*; His own blessed Son was that provision. A Divine Person was competent to give divine satisfaction.

"Wherefore, when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me. . . . Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. x. 5, 7). *He has done it.* "But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down at the right hand of God" (v. 12).

He is where He is because He did what He did where He was; and He did what He did where He was because of who He is—THE SON OF GOD.

God the Holy Ghost has now come down to bear witness to us of what is in the mind of God for us. He is a *competent* witness. Listen, then, to His witness: "Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more." *No more!* NO MORE! NO MORE! It is like the olive leaf which the dove brought to Noah. The dove brought the witness that *the judgment was past*, and it plainly said, No more! no more!

The Son of God has gone up the shining way to the throne of God, and the Spirit of God has come down to let us know "it is all clear from there to here."

W. J.

FACTS NOT AFFECTED BY UNBELIEF.

AN omnibus stopped at the corner of one of the London streets to pick up passengers. As the writer got in, a lady inquired of the conductor the way to a certain quarter of the Metropolis. He civilly gave her directions in reply, adding that his omnibus would take her there. She shook her head unbelievably, in spite of his repeated assurance that it was so, and remained where she was, still waiting at the corner of the street.

The omnibus moved on, when the conductor, rather vexed, observed to the writer, "They won't believe what we say."

"Just like man with the Scriptures, the Word of God," was the reply to him. God speaks plainly in His word, and gives full directions as to the way to heaven, and moreover, has provided the means to take us there. But man will not believe God nor trust in His provision, which is in Christ.

Later in the same evening the same passenger, who, unlike the lady, did believe the omnibus was going in the direction he desired to go, and which took him there according to the conductor's word, met a friend out walking. This gentleman is an earnest preacher of the gospel. He told him how, on the previous Sunday, he was announcing the gospel to a company of men on board a ship in the London Docks, when one man declared he did not believe a word of it. Our friend was led to the scripture and preached. "*Shall their unbelief make the truth of God of none effect?*" Man's unbelief does not alter the truth of God, which, blessed be His name, remains ever the same.

That truth is, that God has raised up His Son from the dead, the One whom man crucified and slew, and "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus [this risen Christ], and *believe* in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 9).

This blessed One has borne the judgment due to the sinner, and God has accepted this; so that now everyone that believes on Him, risen and at His right hand, shall be saved. *The unbelieving remain under the judgment of God.*

The infidel listening to our friend gradually quieted down under the effect of the Word of God brought home by the Spirit, and it was hoped he may have been brought to believe the truth. If so, it was to his soul's salvation.

And so it is for anyone who reads these lines.

UNBELIEF is the damning sin.

FAITH, or believing God, is the saving principle.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." J. S. C.

“DO THYSELF NO HARM.”

IN the early days of Cape Colony one of the governors was a Dutchman named Van N——, and he has unfortunately left behind him a sadly tarnished reputation.

Besides other exactions, he made himself very obnoxious by keeping back, for his own use, some of the money due to the soldiers. In consequence of his injustice thirty or forty of them made a conspiracy to desert, but their design was found out and seven of the ringleaders condemned to death. One by one the unhappy men met their cruel doom, but when the executioner prepared to adjust the rope around the neck of the last victim, the man turned his head towards the Residency and cried—

“Governor Van N——, I summon you this hour to appear before the tribunal of Almighty God to render account of my soul and the souls of my comrades!”

After the execution, the counsellors returned to the Residency to tell the Governor that the sentence had been carried into effect. They found Van N—— seated in an armchair at the end of the audience-chamber and saluted him, but—to their great surprise—without obtaining the slightest sign of his attention.

Solemn to relate, he had suddenly been called through the mysterious portal of death into the audience-chamber of God, there to await the consequences of his misspent life. The counsellors were in the presence of another corpse, for the tyrant and the tortured, the murderer and the mangled, had together gone to appear before Him.

In the museum is still shown the chair in which the Governor died, but oh, if remembrance upon earth is so keen, where all impressions and remembrances are but transient, what must there be before the eternal God! What memorials does *He* keep?

It is very solemn, but at the same time very salutary, to reflect that God holds each one of us as responsible creatures, to whom He has entrusted valuable gifts—such as time, talent, energies, etc., and of whom He will certainly require an account of what has been done with them.

What use are you making of His gifts, my reader? Is this warning voice altogether out of place with regard to you—"Do thyself no harm"?

No doubt Van N—— thought he was sharper than most men, and would amass his fortune sooner and more easily than his predecessors; but no wise person will slight that terrible asseveration—"The wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23), or that other weighty utterance—"What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. xvi. 26). Will not the wise consider the *end* of plans and projects, the "*afterwards*" of these responsible lives, lent for God's glory in a death-stricken world?

Real, abiding and satisfying gain is to be found only in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the easily entreated grace, love, and power of that perfect Friend every tempted and distressed soul will find a peaceful shelter.

"Do thyself no harm. . . . Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 28, 31).

L. J. M.

HOW MAY I HAVE MY SINS REMOVED?

HOW may I have my sins removed? This is a question that has found an echo in many an anxious heart, and while, thank God, many have received the answer which brings peace and gladness, many are, alas! as yet without it.

As one in whose breast this soul-torturing question was unsolved for many a weary year, I desire, by God's help, having received, through the grace of God, *the* answer, to say a word to any who may be anxious about this matter, praying that God will make it plain to them.

The idea is very common among men to-day, and desperately clung to, that it is something *they must do that will give them* a title to glory. So they set about reforming their lives in the earnest hope that what they are doing will cause God to pass over their history of guilt and sin, and forget all that has passed. But God is nothing if He is not righteous. He could not wink at one solitary sin, and retain His character as a righteous God. I say it reverently—He *could not*.

Oh, but is He not merciful? Yes, indeed He is—ever blessed be His name!—and one great feature of His mercy, my friend, is that *you*, with all your guilt and sin unpardoned, are graciously permitted another opportunity of having your sins (perhaps enough to damn a whole city) completely removed.

God is merciful, yes, but He is more, He is *righteous*; and He *cannot* be merciful at the expense of righteousness; in other words, He could not admit you into heaven with *one single trace of sin on your soul*. To do so would be to *contaminate the spotless purity of heaven*. God

and sin could never dwell together. So that for *you* to go to heaven—and I feel confident you dearly wish to—*every spot of sin* must be got rid of.

How is this to be done? Well, certainly not by turning over a new leaf and endeavouring to lead a moral, religious life. For could you succeed so well as never more to fail, it would not remove one sin of the past.

There is *only one way*, my friend, whereby sin can ever be removed from your soul, and it is my joy to direct your gaze to that blessed One. It is Jesus who alone can cleanse you from your sins. Oh, let me implore you not to slight His gracious call, but accept Him and be saved for ever. God wants you to be with Him; but unforgiven sin would shut you out. So He sent Jesus, the Son of His bosom, in whom is His delight, to satisfy the claims of His righteousness in removing the sin. He bore our sins on Calvary's cross of shame in order that the blessing may be ours.

Will you not trust Him? Have you no room in your heart for love like this? Listen! If you refuse to accept Jesus, and in *one hour from now* you found yourself for ever too late, how great would be your damnation!

Are you anxious to have your sins removed? If so, then cease striving, and in simple, child-like trust look up to Jesus. He will hear and understand, and eternal blessing will be yours. He has given His assuring promise, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37), and if you put all your faith in Him God has said that your sins and iniquities He will remember no more (Heb. viii. 12). It is so graciously, wonderfully simple. E. H. D.

LOOKING FOR A SIGN.

THE case is urgent and the messenger intensely interested. The son of a nobleman is at the point of death. The father hears that Jesus has come within fifteen miles of his dying boy, and straightway sets forth from Capernaum to Cana to fetch Him. He reaches the ever-gracious One and makes his appeal. But Jesus knows the workings of the heart, and says, "*Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.*" Probably, like Naaman the Syrian, he had made up his mind *how* Jesus would do it. At least, thought he, His personal presence will be necessary. But he reckons wrongly in this. He who could command a burning fever to depart forthwith and cause a dying child to spring into fresh health again, could do it as easily at a distance as nigh at hand.

Still, the case is critical, the danger is great, and once more the suppliant presses his anguished petition—"Sir, come down ere my child die"; and then, without the craved-for sign, the father's faith is put to the test—"Go thy way; *thy son liveth.*"

Was his faith up to it? Yes. *The man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him,* and he went his way; that is, the Saviour's word was enough—enough *without a sign.*

On the way home his servants met him with a message. What was it? It was identically what Jesus had said; nothing was added to what he knew before—"Thy son liveth." And even, when he reached home, what his eyes saw added nothing to the truth of what his ears heard and

his heart had believed when he knelt, a suppliant, at the feet of Jesus.

And so with the believer in Christ to-day. When once I have, by the Spirit's power, received His word, and rested my soul upon it because it is *His* word, if all the angels in heaven came out to assure me, they could add nothing to what their Master had said, nor would a thousand years of heavenly bliss in His immediate presence make one word of His more true.

A woman in the country once related a bit of her soul-history to the writer. At the age of seventeen she had been awakened to the needs of her soul at a cottage prayer-meeting. Thirty years afterwards she was still without peace. At this point she became very much alarmed because, as yet, she had no real assurance of her blessing.

One day she went upstairs feeling determined to know if the assurance that she was the Lord's could be reached by one like herself. She would, therefore, not get off her knees without coming to some certainty about it.

But, alas! she was looking for *some sign in herself*, some unmistakable token in the shape of an assured feeling that she was all right. After remaining some considerable time on her knees, she rose, but, alas! feeling, as she expressed it, "as hard as a stone."

She then made up her mind it was no use trying any longer. It must be that she was not one of God's children; so she would give it up for ever. She would just look after her children, lead as good a life as she could, and chance the rest!

"You see," she said, "*I had left out the chart.*" Yes, and with this the One to whom the chart

would have directed her. But God had not forgotten this poor baffled seeker, and deliverance was not far off.

One day shortly after this she was doing something near her little bookcase. Seeing a Bible, she took it down and began to read the twentieth chapter of the Gospel of John. When she came to the story of Thomas she felt unusually interested, as she saw in him one who wanted some visible sign before he could believe. She read on, and when she got to the Lord's words to that disciple—"Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: *blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed*" (v. 29)—the light entered, and she exclaimed, "Lord, I do believe," and immediately rejoiced in Him whom her heart had trusted.

The scripture was the means of bringing Christ and His words before her, and instead of looking any longer for the comforting *results* of believing, as a sign that she really believed, she had turned her eye to Him who could alone win the heart's confidence and produce those blessed results.

How is it with my reader? Is Christ *your* confidence, or are you trying to find satisfaction in a spiritualised self? Like a good pilot, the Spirit of God will direct you by the chart to the only "Light" that is to be trusted for getting safely into harbour. "They looked to HIM, and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed."

"I'd look to Him till sight endear
That Saviour to my heart ;
To Him I'd look, who calms my fear,
Nor from Himself depart."

GEO. C.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

A TENT-DOOR BLESSING.

I MUST tell you about the conversion of a young policeman whom we had in to tea the other evening. In reply to my query as to how he was converted, he said (as near as possible I repeat his words):—

“About six years ago (when about twenty-five years of age) I got married. Coming home unexpectedly a few evenings after, I found my wife *on her knees praying*. I was so horrified and frightened that I went out again and thought to myself, Well, whatever shall I do? Oh, to think that I could have been such a *fool* as to marry a religious woman.” (Note, the wife was quite unconverted at the time, but he did not know this.)

“Hating all religion, and yet being afraid to say anything to her, I actually thought seriously of running away to America! However, while these thoughts occupied my mind other thoughts came in, and I began to think of what an awful sinner I must be that I had never thought of praying, and that hitherto my life had been completely godless. My conviction of sin grew deeper and deeper, and though I never mentioned the subject to her, I got utterly miserable. I felt I was under condemnation and could not escape.

“I did not know where to turn for relief, till at last I thought of one of my comrades whom we all knew to be a good man. Two or three times at night I went up to him on his beat and

tried to get out what I wanted, but courage failed me, till at last one night, driven to desperation, I said to him, 'Oh, Joe, what am I to do? I feel I'm such a sinner.' Immediately Joe was filled with delight, and holding me in his hands said, 'Why, Tom, I'd rather hear this than that they had made me superintendent!'

"'Why,' said he, 'I thought there was something up these last few days, as I noticed you had given up your jokes and tricks with the other men when in the barrack-room'; and then he told me of Jesus and His precious blood that cleanseth from all sin. I got a measure of peace, but was not really at rest, not feeling fully assured that I was perfectly safe. This feeling grew and grew, till at last I considered myself as bad as or worse than before.

"At this time I was so intensely in earnest that I used to pray all the time on my beat, and indeed have knelt down at night on the flags in pouring rain crying to God to do anything to me, to let me break my arm, or my leg, or smash me anyhow, but to let me know *for certain* that I was saved.

"About this time a gospel tent was put up by some preachers near my beat, and one night when I was passing, two of the preachers came out and saw me, and asked me would I have an eye on the tent if this was my beat. 'Yes, sir,' I replied. The following Sunday evening I passed and heard them preaching, but did not go near as some of my new friends in chapel had warned me against them, saying they were a sect to be strictly avoided. Still, I thought I'd just go near the door at the end, and as I came up I heard the preacher repeat the scripture, 'Verily, verily, I

say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, *hath everlasting life*, and shall *not come into condemnation*; but is *passed from death unto life*' (John v. 24).

"That was enough for me. Immediately my whole soul was filled with joy and peace in believing, and has been ever since.

"When I went home I was so happy I told my wife that I was converted and knew I was saved; but she, instead of rejoicing with me, was very angry. Then for the first time I found out that she herself was not saved! However, it was not long before the Lord saved her too. Seeing me so happy and sure, she got anxious herself, and could not rest till she had got the same blessing."

"I thought upon my sins and I was sad,
My soul was troubled sore and filled with pain;
But then I thought on Jesus and was glad,
My heavy grief was turned to joy again.

"I saw my sad estate, condemned to die;
Then terror seized my heart, and dark despair;
But when to Calvary I turned my eye
I saw the Cross, and read forgiveness there.

"I saw that I was lost, far gone astray—
No hope of safe return there seemed to be;
But then I heard that Jesus was the way,
A new and living Way prepared for me."

W. P.

Now, Now.—There are two very solemn "*nows*" in Scripture—the "*now*" of future despair and the "*now*" of present salvation. To a lost man in hell it was said, "But *now* . . . thou art tormented." To you it is said, to-day, "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation." How awful, in time to pass the one, and in eternity to reach the other! GEO. C.

THE PILOT ON BOARD.

(A WORD TO THE NEWLY CONVERTED.)

IT is a glad moment for the seaman, wearied with a long and tedious passage across the ocean, when at last the pilot is received on board. Not that all his difficulties are now ended ; the landing-place he is seeking to reach may not even be in sight, and he may have many perils to encounter before he arrives at his port of destination. But what cheers his heart is the fact that the *pilot is on board*. He has now with him in the ship one who has come out from the port he is bound for, and whose sole concern it is to guide him safely there. A thrill of gladness runs through the whole ship's company when the pilot steps on board.

And is not this a faint picture of the joy that fills the heart of the Christian when he realises for the first time that there is One dwelling within him whose great concern it is to conduct him to the place from which He came ? I mean the blessed Spirit of God. Does not the heart of the Christian long to reach Christ ? Then what an unspeakable comfort to know that it is the delight of the Holy Spirit who dwells in him to lead him to that blessed Person in glory. It gives him the sense that he is nearly home. He has a link with the place he is going to. There may be many dangers and trials yet to encounter ; but whatever comes he cannot lose the Pilot. *He* knows every bit of the way, and will not rest till he has brought the ship safe into the longed-for haven.

Generally speaking, the first thing the pilot

does when he boards a ship is to give the right course to steer. Possibly the captain may have partly lost his reckoning. He may have been driven out of his course by adverse winds or unknown currents. He may not have seen sun nor stars for many days, and knows not for certain which way to steer. He has been anxious and uncertain how to act. But when the pilot's voice is heard there is no uncertainty. Clear and sharp the word rings out; the helmsman obeys the order, and the ship swings round with her head in the right direction.

How important it is for us who are sailing across the ocean of life to have our faces in the right direction. Well, then, the Spirit of God has "given us the course": "Christ is our aim." *He* is the Way. "To-day if ye will hear His voice" harden not your heart.

The next thing the pilot does is to look aloft to see that every bit of canvas is set that the ship will safely carry and that the sails are well trimmed. He has no time to waste; he has come to take the ship into port, and will not be satisfied till he sees that all is being done that can be done to get her in as soon as possible. And does it not encourage our hearts to think that from the moment we received the Spirit it has ever been His desire to set our whole moral being in movement towards that blessed Person from whom He came? *We* may get careless and indifferent, but will *He*? Never.

Then when the pilot has satisfied himself that the ship is fairly on her course, and every sail set to the best advantage, he is free to turn to the captain and tell him what he has been longing to hear—news of home, of what is going on in the

land he is bound for. And this is what the Spirit delights to do for the Christian. He came from heaven to make known the things of Christ. Oh, what can give greater joy to the Christian's heart than to hear of Christ and His glory?

But one may ask, "How is it that some of us know so little of this?" Well, to go back to our illustration—the pilot and the captain are pacing the deck together in pleasant intercourse, when suddenly the conversation is brought to an abrupt end. The watchful eye of the pilot has detected that the ship is off her course or that a sail needs setting or trimming. And until these things are corrected he is not free to engage in conversation. So with us if we allow our minds to wander here and there; the Spirit of God is not free to take of the things of Christ and show them to us. He has to draw our attention to our own wretched failures, until they are confessed and put right.

Then there is another thing in regard to our illustration that it is important to remember. The pilot does not come on board to take actual command, but to guide and direct. The captain is still responsible for his ship; and so long as he keeps his crew under command, and is willing to be guided by the pilot, all will be well. But suppose he thinks he is quite competent himself to bring his vessel safely into port, and will not listen to the pilot's counsel, what then? Though deeply grieved at the captain's conduct, the pilot will not attempt to force matters. Sooner or later the captain will certainly discover his folly, and will be glad to turn to the pilot again for help. Will the pilot refuse it? Not for a moment. He will be only too glad that once more he is left free to guide the ship to her destined port.

So with the Christian. *He* is responsible for his own conduct (Rom. xiv. 12). But if only we are subject to that blessed Spirit who dwells in us, and seek to walk in self-judgment with our eye in the right direction, He will not fail to lead us safely through the countless dangers that beset us, until at last He brings us to our desired haven. So directed we shall have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Have *you* the Pilot on board, my reader?

C. H. H.

RICH INDEED!

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.”—2 Cor. viii. 9.

THIS scripture forcibly reminds the writer of a dear old saint of God whom he attended in her last illness many long years ago.

Mrs. P. was very poor in this world's goods. She lived in a very poor cottage, far away from other houses. Yet she never appeared lonely or cast down, for, blessed be God, if she was poor for time, she abounded in riches for eternity. And not only so, but her living, loving Saviour, whom she knew as having died on Calvary for her, was now living in glory for her, and by the sense of His presence He so greatly comforted and cheered her that her loneliness was turned into inexpressible joy. Those lines—

“Jesus the Saviour is mighty to save,
Jesus hath triumphed o'er death and the grave”—

were not *mere* words to her. They had a deep

meaning and were a solid reality to her, and she could contemplate with complacency, yea, with delight, the fact that she was about to be a partaker in that wonderful home He had prepared for her eternal abode; and surely no earthly mansion could for a moment compare with it, for He Himself would be the one object, the one centre there. He says to His own blood-bought ones, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John xiv. 2, 3).

Dear reader, are *you* included in that little word "ye"? Will you be there? If not, where? You may have earthly riches and a fine house to live in, but if you do not know Christ Jesus as your Saviour you are poor indeed. Your riches and you will not keep company much longer. Your house will soon cease to be your abode. A few more years at most (it may be only a few days or even a few hours), and you and your riches will be parted for ever, your house occupied by another. Again, then, dear reader, we would solemnly press the question, Where would your soul be if death should step in this very day and snap the link which binds you to your earthly possessions?

Beloved *unsaved* one, we pray you, in Christ's name, and for your never-dying soul's sake, be real and be in earnest to-day. Don't let this moment pass (it is the only one you can call your own) without accepting Jesus as your Saviour.

Believe me, there is no hindrance on His side to instant soul-blessing. Believe God, who says, "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2). "Believe on the

Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts xvi. 31).

This is just what our dear old friend Mrs. P. did. Appropriating the "true riches," she was more than satisfied ; she was delighted, yea, wholly absorbed with her risen and glorified Lord.

She could not, however, through her paralysed condition, *say* much about Him ; in fact, as far as we remember, she could only speak two or three words at once, "Jesus, blessed Jesus," and they were spoken very falteringly thus, "Je-sus, bless-ed Je-sus" ; but the thought of them always gives a thrill of joy and delight to the writer, for they were uttered with such meaning, so earnestly, and so trustfully—"Jesus, blessed Jesus."

"Satisfied with Thee, Lord Jesus, I am blest ;
Peace which passeth understanding on Thy breast ;
No more doubting, no more trembling,
Oh, what rest !

"Taken up with Thee, Lord Jesus, I would be,
Finding joy and satisfaction, all in Thee :
Thou the nearest, and the dearest,
Unto me."

On one occasion she had to get a friend to write and explain her symptoms, and after giving a list of her many ailments, how she suffered in this way and that way, and how she was utterly unable to move her limbs, she finished her letter thus : "Thanks be to God for all His benefits !"

Could you, dear reader, thank God under similar circumstances ? Could you look upon and call such dire afflictions *benefits* ? Well, we are quite sure that none but a blood-bought, Spirit-taught one could do this. But there is the same Saviour, the same grace, the same Holy Spirit for you. Bring your guilt, your need, your upbraid-

ing conscience, your unsatisfied heart to Jesus, and all the rest is a matter of *receiving*. This was what made my old friend so rich. Do thou the same.

C. P. W. N.

“Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am? . . . Some say that Thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.”

MATT. xvi. 13, 14.

EXTRACT.

WE here see unbelief manifesting itself in the form of indolent opinion, which proves that the heart and conscience are not interested in a subject that ought to command them—a subject that if the heart would really face its true importance, it would have no rest until it had arrived at certainty with respect to it. The soul has no sense of need; consequently there is no discernment. When the soul feels this need there is but one thing that can meet it; there can be no rest till it is found. The revelation of God that created this need does not leave the soul in peace until it is assured of possessing that which awakened it. Those who are not sensible of this need can rest in probabilities, each according to his natural character, his education, his circumstances. There is enough to awaken curiosity—the mind is occupied about it, and judges. Faith has wants, and, in principle, intelligence as to the object that meets those wants; the soul is exercised till it finds that which it needs. The fact is that God is there.

J. N. D.

WARNING AND WELCOME.

THE well-known sea-bird, the stormy petrel, is rightly accredited with a sensitive presentiment of a change of weather. Fishermen in Iceland keep their weather-eye upon him. Should he fly far away out of sight, it is a sign of fair weather, and they can pursue their calling with their frail barks upon the treacherous waves without fear. But should the petrel be seen flying landwards, it is a sign that a storm is gathering. Wise men will hoist every sail at once, and haste for the harbour of shelter and safety. To remain at sea after that, tossing to and fro on the waves, would be to run the risk of being caught by the fury of the storm and of meeting with a watery grave.

How strikingly this reminds us of the state of things in the world in relation to Christ! Man, as he cannot see Him, acts in his unconverted state as though He were a long way off. He reckons that the outlook is fair, and sails fearlessly through the world, assured that he has plenty of time to enrich himself with its offers of gold, or honour, or renown. He sees no sign of coming danger. Death and judgment to him are vague, a long way off, in the dim, uncertain future, and the latter possibly only a tale that is told after all! His present life and home are here, and they engage nearly all his thoughts. He esteems it his duty and interest to do the best he can for himself. But, alas! he has no sense that his heart and mind *have been blinded* by the god of this world, and he sails on regardless of the warning sign of Scripture, "Behold, the Judge standeth before the door" (James v. 9).

On the other hand, the troubled soul looks up. He sees Christ on high, but though on high, *at hand* (Phil. iv. 5). He hears His warning voice, telling of His coming soon as Judge, and entreating him to flee to Him at once as Saviour. He is the only harbour of refuge and safety from the coming storm. Forewarned by His precious words of love and grace, as a wise man he turns the prow of his bark (to use the figure) homewards. Forsaking for ever the delusions of Satan and this storm-threatened world, he steers straight for the harbour. *In Christ Himself*, who died for sinners, he finds *a present haven of shelter, rest, and peace.*

Dear reader, how is it with you? Are you still deluding yourself with the thought that Christ will not return in your day, and that death and judgment are far away? Listen, we beseech you, to the word of warning. As the stormy petrel flying strongly and swiftly towards land is the warning sign of coming danger to the Iceland fisherman, so hear the word that comes down to your soul from the glory of God, from One who is at hand, and who is coming quickly, and with power to judge the quick and the dead (Rev. xxii. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 1): "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and *let him return unto the Lord*, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will *abundantly pardon*" (Isa. lv. 7). And again, "*Come unto Me*, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28). And again, "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if *thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus*, and *shalt believe in thine*

heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 8, 9). But "*how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?*" (Heb. ii. 3.)

Believe on Him, the Saviour now in glory. The storm of divine justice and judgment has already passed upon Him. God hath made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us. And whoever believes on Him *does not come into judgment* (John iii. 18; v. 24). *His sins are forgiven, his soul is saved, his judgment is past.*

Pass on in indifference, and pay no heed to the voice of warning, and you will surely and shortly reap the fruits of your folly and unbelief in eternal woe. Listen to the voice of the Son of God, and flee to Him, *and present and eternal safety and blessing are yours.*

E. H. C.

DYING LOVE INSULTED.

YOU did not believe that beggar's pitiful story, and therefore did not respond to his urgent appeal for charity. But the case was real and the need was great. Yet, since beggars have so often been found impostors, telling a false story to excite pity, no one greatly wonders that you did not credit his. *Honest poverty might, all the same, consider itself insulted.*

But suppose another case. You are broken down in health, and in the greatest financial extremity. A gentle knock is heard at your door. You answer. Your visitor tells his errand: he assures you that he is one of the royal family, that he has not come to seek pity, but to show it; not to *beg*, but to *give*. But you coldly criticise or impudently question his kind acts, and perversely misconstrue his words. He makes you many

gracious offers, but you proudly refuse them all, and finally you so often bid him begone that at last, with tears of real sorrow, he departs. This time *it is royal kindness that feels insulted*.

Oh, but I should never think of insulting such a benefactor. Not I! No one doubts the assurance. But this is only our introduction to a more serious matter. Among men, insult could not go higher than when it is shown to royalty. Yet insult *can* go higher, for it can be shown to divine persons—to God, to His beloved Son, and to His Holy Spirit.

There are many to-day who profess to honour Christ, that is if words mean anything; they even call Him “our Great Example.” They applaud His life of unceasing service for others, and admiringly point out that He consummated that life of holy devotion by a martyr’s death. But they stoutly deny His work as the Holy Substitute of God’s providing for the bearing of sin’s judgment in the sinner’s stead.

This we cannot but regard as a gross insult to our blessed Lord, cover it by whatever garb you may. Let us look more closely at this solemn matter, and let us plainly repeat the assertion that the man who does not believe that Christ bore the believer’s sins—“our sins,” “in His own body on the tree,” and the judgment of God due to them, does nothing less than cast insult upon the Son of God.

We have in Scripture three distinct records of the cry of Jesus upon the cross: “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” Once prophetically in Psalm xxii. 1, and twice historically—Matthew xxvii. 46, Mark xv. 34.

Who dare affirm that this cry was not intensely

real, and that God did not in those three dark hours *actually* forsake His Son? Mark this: the blessed Sufferer Himself while raising the question *Why?* indicates the righteousness of God's act in thus forsaking Him, saying, "*But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*"

This righteous act, therefore, on the part of God was either on account of the forsaken One personally, or on account of the place He had voluntarily taken for others. In other words, this fierce wrath, which in those three hours of darkness overwhelmed Him, was either for Himself or for others. Which? If you say, *Not* because He was a substitute for others, then it was for Himself (oh, horrid thought!), or else God was inflicting judgment for nothing. Oh, how His *dying love* is thus *insulted*!

But if not for His own offence (and blessed be God it was not, for He always did those things that pleased His Father, and of this His Father publicly testified), then it was for others. "He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." The sins of those who believe on Him were as actually transferred to Christ when, in love, He took the place of the sin offering, as in the Levitical type on the day of atonement the sins of Israel were, for one year, laid upon the head of the scapegoat.

Let Unitarianism either admit this or let her stop her mouth for ever in *professing to applaud* the holy life of Him who bowed His head in death at Calvary, while her doctrine otherwise

grossly insults Him by denying redemption by His precious blood.

But perhaps the reader may say, I am no Unitarian, yet I have not found peace with God through Him.

If Christ was a sin-bearer on the cross, where is He now? Oh, I believe that God raised Him from the dead, and that He has gone to the right hand of God in heaven.

But you would not insult *God* by inferring that the sins He bore on the cross were taken by the Sin-bearer to that holy place? Oh no; sin can never be tolerated in His presence. Then *where* are the believer's sins? If God laid my sins to *His* charge, they are not laid to my charge. If He, to whom they were transferred, and by whom their judgment was righteously borne, is for ever clear of them, so is he for whom He bore them.

Beside, not to believe this would be to disparage if not to insult the testimony of the Holy Spirit, who came at Pentecost to witness to His place of glory there, and to witness also that upon the ground of His own sacrifice for sins God will remember our sins and iniquities NO MORE (Heb. x. 15-17).

Faith honours Christ by resting its all on the atoning merits of His sacrifice and death; but this kind of unbelief not only insults Him, but shuts the door of hope in its own face. Let my reader seriously consider how he stands in the light of all this. When once you are awakened to the righteous deserts of sin, nothing short of the suffering work of the once God-forsaken Substitute will meet your case. But remember He is a living, exalted, sinner-welcoming Saviour now. Oh, make His acquaintance early!

GEO. C.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

NOT ASHAMED.

“For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.”—Rom. x. 11.

THIS portion of Scripture is quoted from Isaiah xxviii. 16. It is quoted by Paul twice, by Peter once, implying, no doubt, its threefold importance. It assures us that there is safety and sure support in the Lord Jesus Christ for all who believe. If you turn to Isaiah xxviii. 16, Romans ix. 33, and 1 Peter ii. 6, you will find that this promise is connected with Christ as the foundation which God has laid; and to those who build their hopes upon Him this assurance is given. Looking at Christ as the only foundation, and believers as the building, will help us to understand these important and precious words.

1. TO WHOM IS THE ASSURANCE OF PERFECT SECURITY GIVEN? “Whosoever believeth on Him.” It is to those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ *as a real living Person*. It is faith in *Him*. Faith in a ceremony will not save, even though it be appointed by Christ Himself. Neither is salvation promised to faith in a doctrine, even though that doctrine be perfectly scriptural. Everywhere in Scripture it is Christ Himself that is set before us as the object of faith; “Whosoever believeth on Him.”

“Jesus Christ Himself is the chief corner stone.” True faith looks to Him and rests upon Him as crucified and risen. Christ Himself in His person, His death, His resurrection, His inter-

cession is all our salvation, and meets all our need. His call to us is, Look unto Me and be ye saved; not to My cross, but to Me who died thereon; not to My gifts, but to Me in whom all gifts are found, and from whom they flow. A real, living, personal Saviour is our only hope. These words show us that—

It is by faith alone we are saved. It does not read, Whosoever is humbled for sin shall never be ashamed. It is true no one will ever trust in Christ without conviction of sin more or less, but to feel the need of a Saviour is not to trust in the Saviour, though, if true, it will lead to it. The truest humility springs from faith; the soul is never so humble as when it trusts in Christ utterly and alone. Neither is the promise to those who are kindly disposed. Not that kind and generous actions are worthless, far from it; they certainly benefit men, but they do not justify us before God. Even if we do all commanded we are unprofitable servants, we have no claim upon God, since we have only done what was our duty to do. Faith produces generous feelings and actions, but it does not trust them, they are the fruits, not the root; it rests on Christ alone and the work He completed on Calvary's tree. Jesus Christ is not half a Saviour, still less the one-hundredth part of a Saviour. He is all and in all, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

It is faith that trusts Christ wholly and undividedly that receives this assurance. Consider the words in connection with Isaiah xxviii. 16, and you see that the believer must rest upon Christ, just as the stone rests upon the foundation; the stone rests upon the foundation not partly, but wholly; in like manner we are encouraged to

rest upon Him. Make Christ all your confidence, cast your soul upon Him with all its sins, your life with all its needs, your eternity with all its possibilities. He is able to bear you and keep you safe from all evil.

“Venture on Him, venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude.”

You will never find rest until you make Him *all* your trust. These words also teach us that—

It is by faith that adheres to Christ continually. The stone placed upon the foundation continues to rest upon it; has it been supported by the foundation for fifty years, it must be supported still if it remains a part of the building, just as much supported as at the first. Just so must Christ be trusted. We can never become independent of Him. No experience, however sweet, no service, however successful, can support us in the trying hour. All our experiences, services and attainments are imperfect and sin-stained. They cannot be trusted as the ground of acceptance with God, even though proofs of His love to us. Our hope must rest on Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, from first to last. Death must find us confiding in Him alone, and to those who thus adhere to Him this assurance is given. You will notice also that there is *no time limit* in these words. The promise belongs to the young believer as well as to the old. And should a soul just about to enter into eternity cast itself upon Jesus Christ, however guilty it may be, yet the promise holds good. This word “whosoever” opens wide a door of hope for sinners of every character, every age, and every race.

2. THE ASSURANCE ITSELF. “They shall never

be ashamed." In Isaiah xxviii. 16 it reads, "*shall not make haste*," like one in a panic through sudden fear. The man who built his house upon the sand promised himself perpetual safety, but suddenly the storm beats upon it and the floods are gathering around it on every side, he feels it shake, and hope of safety dies; he looks this way and that in haste to flee and find a sure refuge. He who believeth shall not thus make haste; he hastes *to* Christ, but not *from* Christ; he finds the foundation sure and firm in the overwhelming flood, and so abides in peace. He whose heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord, shall not be afraid of evil tidings. It also means *that he shall not be silenced and put to the blush*. We have read of people who have boasted of their title to an inheritance, but when their title was examined it was found worthless; they were "ashamed," dumbfounded: they had no plea to urge, they had been indulging delusive hopes. Such will never be the case with those who believe on Christ. Their title to every needful blessing here, and to eternal glory hereafter, will hold good. It will never be disputed, even by the Judge of all the earth. In Christ Jesus we find boldness before God now; in Him also we shall find boldness in the day of judgment.

" Bold shall I stand in that great day,
For who aught to my charge shall lay
While through Thy blood absolved I am
From sin's tremendous curse and shame?"

It is a promise *that secures believers against all disappointment*. All they looked for and expected shall be fully realised.

Do they trust in Christ for pardon, their sins shall not be remembered against them any more for ever.

Are they hoping in Him for preservation unto eternal glory, He will keep them from falling and present them faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

So with every hope founded on Christ and warranted by His word, all will be fulfilled. Those who trust in their wealth will find it useless in the day of death. The man who trusts in his moral actions will be like him who had not on the wedding garment—speechless before the King; but the hope resting on the Lord Jesus Christ will never fail, nay, rather its fulfilment will exceed all our present conceptions and desires; when we see Him as He is, we shall say, “The half was not told me.”

You may take the promise in *the widest sense*. Faith in Christ shall never be disproved, never be found to be untenable for man nor dishonourable to God. It will never fail to satisfy the conscience and calm its fears. It will never be outbidden and eclipsed by anything better—yea, all other hopes will pale before this and disappear like stars before the rising sun.

3. THIS ASSURANCE IS FOUNDED ON THE SCRIPTURES. It is *God* who has promised: *His* word cannot be broken. *He* cannot lie. The believer's safety does not rest upon his own feelings, or impressions, or perceptions, but upon the word of Him who is able to perform all that He has said.

O. T.

God is Love.—“Divine love is sovereign; it is above evil, although it rejects it by the necessity of its nature, and judges it with the authority of its righteousness. God is love; this is the sovereign liberty of His nature.”

J. N. D.

“YET THERE IS ROOM”—“AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT.”

BALANCE these two sentences! They are brief, significant, monosyllabic. The first refers to the present, the second is historic future.

To-day there is room, to-morrow the door will be shut. The one is grace, the other judgment. Grace speaks of welcome to the sinner; it announces an open door and abundant opportunity. That is the mark of the present moment. It is God's day of grace, and grace provides everything. It makes no demand; it gives freely. Its terms are unspeakably suitable to such as we are. When a man has learned, what everyone shall know one day, that he is guilty and lost, and wholly unable to save himself, then it is that grace meets and suits and blesses him.

To such the proffer of *room* and welcome is infinitely sweet. The needy soul gladly places the foot of faith on such a fact, and boldly claims the gracious blessing. “There is room” for such, and thankfully do they avail themselves of it. Yet there is room. Not always. Only now. The “yet” flies quickly. Thank God, as I write and my reader reads, it is still true. May he learn its deep meaning. May the profound significance of the “yet” be graven on his mind, and that for him, be his sins what they may and are, “there is room.” To-day, but not to-morrow! When the morrow shall dawn, then the door shall be shut. It shall be shut on the foolish; shut on the unready; shut quickly, firmly, and for ever! A shut door and a hopeless doom go together.

Be not deceived on this point. That door will open no more on those against whom it is closed. The idea of a hope that another opportunity will be given is one of Satan's clever devices. He that is unjust shall be unjust still! There is no reversal. The sentence cannot be revoked. "The door was shut."

Take thought, dear reader, I do beg of you, lest you mistake the meaning of these plain but God-given words. Your eternity is at stake!

There is room yet, but only yet. And then the door shall be shut. J. W. S.

TAKE IT.

ONE day the writer was visiting an old Christian in the country, when a daughter of hers from a distance came to see her, thus giving him the opportunity of speaking to her about Jesus and His precious blood. This person was a sinner, and she knew it, and was undoubtedly very anxious about her soul.

She was, however, making a mistake, a very common mistake, for many really anxious people make the same. Instead of simply believing on Christ and resting on the finished work which He had already *done* at Calvary, she thought she must do something, plead anxiously and pray more earnestly, in order to get the forgiveness of sins.

"Oh, I do so long to be saved!" she said. "I do beseech Him to have mercy on me and save my poor soul."

John vii. 37 was quoted, "Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink."

"Oh, what shall I do? I do pray the best way I know how."

"Yes, dear friend, but suppose when you were coming here this morning, hot, tired, and thirsty, some kind person, seeing your condition, came out of her house with a glass of nice clear, cold water, and offered it to you, saying, 'You look very tired, and must be thirsty. Come, drink this water, it will do you good,' what would you have done? You would not, of course, have accepted it, but would have begged and entreated her to have given it you, saying, 'Oh, pray give me that water; I am so thirsty and faint, I feel I shall die if I don't get something to drink. Oh, have pity upon me, and give me that water!'"

"No," she replied, "I would not have acted like that, but I would have taken the glass and drunk the whole up."

"Well, now, you say you are longing to be saved, you are thirsting for salvation, and God's Word tells us that 'Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.' Now what will you do with the living water so freely and so graciously offered?"

"Oh, I see now," she said, "there is no need to cry and pray for that which is so freely offered me. I will therefore take that also."

And we believe from the earnestness and reality of her manner and words, as also from our further conversation with her, that there and then she received Christ Jesus as her Saviour. Hallelujah! Praise His holy name!

Now, beloved reader, we do not know you or your spiritual condition, but we do know that whoever you are, wherever you are, or whatever you may have done, His Word still stands as true as ever.

"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).

If you are yet unsaved, we beg of you before Him to consider well the import of that big, comprehensive word "whosoever," and from your heart say, "There is room for me in that word, and by His grace I will at once take my place within its wide embrace, and believing on Him who died for the ungodly, claim the eternal benefits thus fully held out. All my life I have been included in that awful word "*ungodly*," and since for such He died, I know that He received the full judgment due to my sins, and that, believing on Him, I can never perish, but have everlasting life. Blessed be His holy name!"

C. P. W. N.

A MORAL CHANGE IN THE CONVERTED MAN.

UNTIL men's eyes are opened they are under the dominion of SIN and of dark unbelief. Notwithstanding that the long-foretold day of judgment, "when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" (Rom. ii. 16), is fast approaching, "there is no fear of God before their eyes" (Rom. iii. 18). Further, "there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God" (Rom. iii. 11). This was exemplified some time ago in conversation with a lady regarding God's "great salvation" and His infinite love in giving "His only-begotten Son." The lady in question remarked, "If God *wants* to save me, why doesn't He?" To which the reply

was made: "We are not inanimate creatures, like logs of wood fallen into a river, which can be lifted out, but are in no sense altered by that rescue; but we are moral beings, with *consciences* and *hearts*, and have a distinct *responsibility* to the God who created us."

We are by nature away from God in heart and mind, without any *desire* to know Him. But, oh, wondrous truth! He came to *seek us*. "Rich in mercy," He desires man's good. "Christ . . . hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." When a man (through the light of divine truth shining into his heart) has discovered his guilt, he exclaims in deep distress, "What must I do to be saved?" He becomes *willing* to believe the "good news" concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. He gladly *turns* to the Lord. He receives the "forgiveness of sins." He is justified in Christ, and delivered from coming judgment and this present evil world. He *cleaves* "to the Lord with purpose of heart" and is filled with joy unbounded.

J. W.

A FREETHINKER'S FUNERAL.

COLONEL R. I—— was for many years the leader in America of what is called "free-thought." The writer has before him a reporter's account of what was said by a Dr. E——, one of R. I——'s greatest friends, to his fellow-"free-thinkers," as they stood around the dead body of their once infidel leader. We say advisedly "*once* infidel," for, however much infidelity a dying man may leave behind him, it is certain he takes none of it with him. "The spirit

returns to God that gave it," and "every one . . . shall give account of himself to God," and there is no infidelity there.

To use Dr. E——'s own words, Colonel R. I—— believed that "*reason*" is man's "*only torch*" to light him through this world to—nobody knows where!

In this increasingly infidel day it may be well to consider what he has to say, so that the reader may judge for himself how much comfort there is to be found in their doctrines when death comes in view. In his eulogy of the departed man, among other things, Dr. E—— said—

"He added to the sum of human joy, and were everyone to whom he did some loving service to bring a blossom to his grave, he would sleep to-night beneath a wilderness of flowers. Life is a narrow vale to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word; but in the night of death hope sees a star, and listening love can hear the rustle of a wing.

"He who sleeps here when dying, mistaking the approach of death for the return of health, whispered, 'I am better now.' Let us believe, in spite of doubts and dogmas, of fears and tears, that these dear words are true of all the countless dead."

It was very evident, according to his friend's showing, that at the end R. I—— made a mistake, ~~and~~ a very great one too, when he mistook *the approach of death for the return of health.*" But if this was the mistake of a dying hour, who can weigh the gravity of the mistake

of his long years of unbelief, of a life devoted to the fruitless task of trying to sweep away the blessed truth that God has given to man—either a revelation of Himself in Christ or an inspired record of His holy will in the Scriptures? Yea, if audacious human words could have done it, he would have swept all away with one bold stroke, and proclaimed, “There is no God, and therefore no God to be revealed.”

The doctor’s tribute to his friend’s memory, as he stood over his dead body recounting his many kind services to others, we have no ground to dispute, nor have we any desire to minimise the statement in the least degree. But what about the other side? If each who had been poisoned by his soul-destroying reasonings could have risen from the dead at that moment, and borne testimony to what those God-ignoring, Christ-despising teachings had done for *them*, what a “*howling* wilderness” would that “wilderness of flowers” have been quickly turned into!

Besides, “a wilderness of flowers” to sleep under is a very poor solace for an upbraiding conscience. Nothing, nothing can meet the awakened conscience of any mortal man but the precious bloodshedding and death of the Lord Jesus Christ for sinners. Nothing can soothe the heart and drive away its every fear but the knowledge of the love of God, revealed in the wondrous gift of His beloved Son.

What could meet the wishes of any upright debtor but the full discharge of his liabilities? Had Cain been able to turn half the earth into a gay flower garden, and the other half into a rich orchard, and had he brought both to God as an offering, it could no more have met his sinful case

than the wealth of a millionaire who had committed murder could righteously secure his exemption from capital punishment at any tribunal but the most corrupt. In God's account *death is sin's penalty*, and bowing to the righteous sentence, as Abel did, is man's truest wisdom, his only ground of justification. This is what Cain disputed, and he has numberless followers still.

"*Life is a narrow vale*," said Dr. E——, too narrow to admit of man looking "*beyond the heights*" or of knowing anything of what is there.

Granted, if the only light he possesses is the "*torch of human reason*." As well might a glow-worm, as he crawls in some deep valley, depend upon the light of his own tiny body to show him what is beyond the snowy mountain heights that tower miles above him. But when, to the dweller in the narrow vale below, what is beyond the heights has been fully made known, and made known by One whose dwelling-place is there, who could excuse the ignorance that still prefers its own glow-worm flicker to the full light of true testimony? Surely it has been well said that—

"Blind unbelief is sure to err."

Yea, and it errs *fatally*, when it wilfully refuses divine light. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John iii. 19). Hence such are rightly described as "*willingly ignorant*" (2 Peter iii. 5).

All that God is has been fully manifested here in His beloved Son, who came from heaven as the Father's sent One. He walked among men in lowly, lovely grace. He lived to assuage their sorrows. He died to atone for their sins. God's good pleasure in man, God's joy in his blessing,

could not have been more perfectly expressed than in the life of Jesus here below, followed by His death on the cross, nor could God's holy abhorrence of man's sin be more solemnly demonstrated than when as a Sinbearer Jesus passed under the righteous judgment of God.

But this was not all. He opened up for the blood-washed and forgiven a new and living way, by His resurrection, "a path of life" beyond death, a path which leads into "fulness of heavenly joy, into pleasures for evermore." God's own pleasures, God's own rest are now freely available for every sinner who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Oh, the blindness of unbelief that wilfully and determinately turns its back on the saving grace of the blessed God revealed in Jesus!

Death is the wages of sin, and even the most sceptical cannot escape it. How, then, do infidel mourners console themselves when one of their number is taken from them? What comfort does their unbelief yield at such a moment? Let one of their own company speak for the rest.

"We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word; but in the night of death hope sees a star, and listening love can hear the rustle of a wing."

Ask Dr. E——, or any of his unbelieving hearers, What star? What wing? and both he and they must be as silent as the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead they stand beside. Poor comfort this!

Oh that they had known the blessed Saviour and the power of His resurrection! With what

comfort would His words have come to their hearts: "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. i. 17, 18).

Had they all been believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, what unspeakable consolation would have been theirs as they listened to the Spirit's testimony concerning their departed friends!

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. iv. 13-18).

Can the increasing infidelity of the present day hold out any such comfort as this? Impossible. "Let us believe," continued Dr. E——, "in spite of doubts and dogmas, of fears and tears, that these dear words are true of all the countless dead."

What the doctor referred to were the words of the mistaken dying unbeliever: "*I am better now.*" But he might as well have added, "Spite

of the dishonour we are doing to Christ and His atoning sacrifice, spite of our insults to God's gracious Spirit and of our open defiance of His Word, let us believe that it will be well with us after all!"

"*Let us believe,*" he says. Believe! Believe what? Believe that which has no foundation whatever, except in the baseless fabric of his own imagination? No, freethinker. No! It is not good enough to die with. Woe betide the man who tries it!

But his words prove that even unbelief finds itself unable to shake itself free from the uncomfortable thought of *a great hereafter*. It was evident that Dr. E—— would fain clutch at *some* kind of hope, even though that hope had to rest on nothing more stable than the fancied sound of "*the rustle of a wing*," or the supposed sight of an imagined "star."

Oh, my reasoning reader, beware! God has spoken. Reject not His grace as set forth in the gospel of Christ.

But "*Prove it to me*" is the common retort of unbelief to-day; "prove to me the truth of Scripture." Our answer is, We can *not* prove the existence of light to a man who is blind; we *need* not to a man who can see. It is for the rejecter to prove it is *not* true, and a serious matter it is for him if he cannot so prove it. The converted man needs no proof. The truth of God has reached his soul in power. He *knows* whom he has believed, and with boldness can he say—

"Should all the forms that men devise
Assault my faith with treacherous art,
I'll call them vanity and lies,
And bind Thy gospel to my heart."

GEO. C.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

“VANITY OF VANITIES.”

“**V**ANITY of vanities,” saith the Preacher at the beginning and end of a book (Eccles.) which has been well described as the wail of a dissatisfied heart. “All under the sun” has been tried and found wanting, and what a cloud of witnesses history gives only repeating the cry of the Preacher,—

“Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.”

The incident of Cardinal Mazarin’s farewell to his pictures is told in the memoirs of Louis Henri Comte de Brienne, who says, “I was walking some days after in the new apartments of his palace. I recognised the approach of the Cardinal (Mazarin) by the sound of his slippered feet, which he dragged one after the other, as a man enfeebled by a mortal malady. I concealed myself behind the tapestry, and I heard him say, ‘Il faut quitter tout cela’ (I must leave all that). He stopped at every step, for he was very feeble, and casting his eye on each object that attracted him, he sighed forth as from the bottom of his heart, ‘I must leave all’; ‘What pains I have taken to acquire all these things’; ‘Can I leave them without regret?’ ‘I shall never see them more where I am about to go.’”

“Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.”

Lord Chesterfield, the man of letters and leader
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of the fashionable world, a short time before his death, wrote a letter in which he says, "I have run the silly round of business and pleasure, and have done with them all; I have enjoyed all the pleasures of the world, and consequently know their futility, and do not regret their loss. I appraise them at their real value (which, in truth, is very low), whereas those who have not experienced always overrate them. They only see their gay outside, and are dazzled with the glare; but I have seen behind the scenes. I have seen all—the coarse pulleys and dirty ropes which exhibit and move the gaudy machine. I have seen and smelled the tallow candles which illuminate the whole decoration, to the astonishment and admiration of an ignorant audience. When I reflect back on what I have seen, what I have heard, and what I have done, I can hardly persuade myself that all that frivolous hurry and bustle and pleasure of the world had any reality; but I look on all that is passed as one of the romantic dreams that opium commonly occasions, and I do by no means desire to repeat the nauseous dose for the sake of the fugitive dream."

"Vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

Lord Byron, the brilliant poet (who said, "I woke up one morning to find myself famous"), joins in the strain when he says—

"Count all the joys thy hours have seen,
Count all thy days from anguish free,
Then know whatever thou hast been
'Twere something better not to be."

And the verses which are said to be the last which came from his pen tell their own tale of a misspent life, and the terrible awakening to

a want so long ago described: "And when he had spent all he began to be in want":—

"My days are in the yellow leaf,
The flowers, the fruits of love are gone ;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone.
The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some volcanic isle ;
No torch is lighted at its blaze—
A funeral pile."

"Vanity of vanities; all is vanity." The politician, philosopher, poet, and ten thousands more, join in the "Preacher's" cry. It must be so, for we are all heirs to two great necessities.—a *guilty conscience* and a *dissatisfied heart*. Sad fruits of departure from God. But God proposes in the gospel to meet both. The work of Christ for the conscience and the gift of Christ for the heart.

Listen to words which fell from His lips upon the ears of a poor weary Samaritan woman at Sychar's well. "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John iv. 13, 14).

Again, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John vii. 37, 38).

What a wonderful proposal! Surely the blessed Son of God would not tantalise us with magnificent impossibilities.

Dear reader, have you come to Christ, the Christ who died to meet your need in connection with your sins, and who lives to give you this marvellous gift which shall put you in touch with Him who is outside the reach of death *above the sun*?

It was in the sense of this that Paul, when before King Agrippa, could say, "I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds" (Acts xxvi. 29). What a contrast to poor Byron's "'Twere something better not to be"!

True happiness lies in the knowledge of God, for He alone is great enough for our hearts, and in the gospel, by His blessed Son, God is saying, "I want you to know Me in order that you may love Me and live to Me.

This is what Christ proposes in the gift of living water, to "shed abroad the love of God in our hearts by the Holy Ghost."

Oh! how blessed to know that "nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

What a contrast to poor Cardinal Mazarin's "I must leave all that," "I shall never see them more where I am about to go"!

My reader, allow me to put a question to you at the close. *What do you possess outside the reach of death?*

W. J.

Know thyself.—"Two several lovers built two several cities: the love of GOD a 'New Jerusalem'; the love of the WORLD a 'Babylon.' Let every man inquire of himself *what* he loveth, and he shall soon resolve himself of *whence* he is a citizen."

AUGUSTINE.

MERCY OR JUDGMENT?

ONE or the other it must be for every child of Adam. The latter it need not be, for "God . . . desires that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." Then, it may be asked, why does not God gratify His desire and have mercy upon all? There is no court of appeal above God, and who could veto His decree?

Doubtless this is true, but God is not the arbitrary Being such a question would suppose. "The throne [even an earthly throne] is established by *righteousness*," and He who sits on the throne of the universe cannot, and most assuredly will not, disregard this principle.

Think for a moment of God as the One before whom every question of good and evil must finally be brought for settlement, and as the One by whom actions are weighed. Surely at that tribunal, if never before, *perfect justice will be done*, and men's works esteemed for the first time at their true value?

Suppose, then, for the moment that it would be *unrighteous* for God to forgive the sinful creature without atonement for his sins, would not the very nature and attributes of God forbid it? To go further, would not punishment be an absolute necessity if God were to retain His righteous character?

It is evident to a thoughtful mind that the mere overlooking of sin is wholly inconsistent with righteousness, so that God cannot extend His mercy to any of His guilty creatures (and *all* have sinned) without an adequate atonement. From the very beginning of God's dealings with man this principle is clearly established, for to

what purpose were the countless sacrifices offered in olden days, save as they prefigured the One Great Sacrifice of Calvary?

There in the offering up of the Lamb of God was God's righteousness in the forgiving of sins declared. In the terrible isolation and appalling darkness of the midnight of judgment at the cross, on which the Saviour of the world in wondrous mercy hung, was the prophetic saying fulfilled: "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

Every demand of God in His awful holiness against the sinner was completely met by the death of the Victim, Himself absolutely holy, who was punished in the sinner's stead.

And now, "through THIS MAN" (raised from the dead by the God at whose hands He had suffered for sins), "is preached the forgiveness of sins." And this to all the guilty, for the price laid down sufficed to ransom every sinner. Wherever men are found, however far from God, the blessed unconditional offer of forgiveness may be made.

Yet, strange to say, in spite of this most wonderful provision on the part of God, and the grace that presents as a SAVIOUR the very One whom men hated, rejected, and crucified—in spite of all, there are multitudes of men and women on every hand who despise the grace of God and proudly refuse His mercy.

For such, if they persist in their folly, there can be nothing but JUDGMENT.

The gospel is God's *ultimatum* to the world, not in wrath, but in mercy, calling upon the guilty rebel to own his guilt and offering to him a pardon "without money and without price,"

though purchased at the cost of the blood-shedding of the Saviour who was God manifest in flesh !

And now the solemn and astounding spectacle is witnessed of

“God beseeching—man refusing
To be made for ever glad.”

Yet the long-suffering of God lingers over a guilty world, and the door of mercy is thrown wide open for the penitent sinner with a Father's loving welcome and a Father's fond caress awaiting him who enters. Oh! the folly of those who turn away from love like this, and madly rush on to the terrible judgment that *must* fall (since God must be true to Himself and His word) upon those who will not accept the measureless grace that brings so great salvation within man's easy reach.

Pause on your way to ETERNITY, ye men with immortal souls! Pursue your course no longer against the stream of grace. Think of your sins in the light of all that God is, and say to Him in genuine contrition—“God be merciful to me a sinner.” Now He will gladly hear and answer such a prayer as that, but soon His ear will be for ever closed against the despairing cry for mercy that shall be wrung from those upon whom the eternal judgment has fallen that He so earnestly sought to save them from. The Saviour will welcome thee, the Father forgive thee, heaven rejoice over thee, and thine own heart be filled with thanksgiving and gladness if thou wilt come NOW.

“What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?”

W. B. W.

"SPEAK AS YOU FIND."

WE can only effectually tell "tidings of light and peace" as we know its power for ourselves. Thus we firmly believe in that old-fashioned English saying, "*Speak as you find.*"

In some little measure we can reiterate the words of the Saviour, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen" (John iii. 11). And the apostle Paul could say, "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." The longing for your salvation and blessing, my reader, is, after all, only natural to one who is himself eternally saved and blest.

What we have discovered for ourselves is of such importance and magnitude, and the benefit so great, that we want it to be known as widely as possible, in order that others may get the benefit too. We claim no credit for the discovery, but, like all true-hearted discoverers, we long to bring forward to the light what we have discovered. It must be with us as with those first finders of the Saviour. "One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother, Simon," and he brought him to Jesus, and so with Philip, who, having been found of Christ, "findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, *We have found Him* of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (John i. 45). When Isaac's servants had finished the digging of the well they came to their master and said, "*We have found water*"; and

in finding Christ *we also have found water*—that is, we have found refreshment and satisfaction.

We always feel free to recommend the medicine that has done us good. We can gladly and confidently commend Christ as an all-satisfying Saviour, for coming to Him He will give you His Holy Spirit, the living water. Oh, what a blessed provision for sin-sick souls! The secret of all true happiness at the present moment is to find Him and "living water" which He gives. All other findings are as nothing beside this.

Having found these blessings for ourselves, oh! how we long that you should find them also. Christ made known by the Holy Ghost as your Saviour is all you need for time and eternity.

"I for myself have found—

Jesus is more to me
Than all the richest, fairest gifts
Of earth could ever be.
And the more I find Him precious,
And the more I find Him true,
The more I long for you to find
What He can be to you."

Said the Saviour to the woman in John iv. 10; "If thou knewest the gift of God, and *who it is* that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." But does my reader feel the need of it? The woman said, "Give me to drink." Have you said that to Him yet?

Would that the Spirit of God gave you to feel your thirsty, dying condition while in the place where the living water may be received as God's free gift! Why be dying of thirst, as to your spiritual condition, while such a blessing is brought so near you? Thank God for this testimony.

We have found water, yea, a well-spring of

living water, of which if a man drink he shall "never thirst." It is found in a living, loving Person—the Lord Jesus Christ. Coming to Him our thirst was quenched, our souls revived, and now we live in Him. Having found this eternal living spring, like Isaac's servants we exclaim, "We have found water." Could we do less? Surely the very stones would cry out if we did not. But in love to your soul, *we do speak*. We tell you that Christ in Holy Ghost power is to be found, and found now.

"He that believeth on *Me* shall never thirst." Millions there have been supplied, and fresh as ever still it flows. "Let him that is athirst come," are His own words. "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." Come and receive. Then speak as you find. W. N.

"SONGS OF DELIVERANCE."

(*From a letter written by a youth recently converted.*)

"**I** AM still *learning* that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." I don't think I *know* yet, for whenever I do something which I ought not, I am *disappointed in myself*! This would show that I still *expect* that there is some good in me, or I should not be disappointed.

The other day I failed again, and was thinking how wonderful it was that God should care for me who am always doing wrong. Just as I was thinking *why* it was, all of a sudden a thought came—"For His great love wherewith He loved us." I don't know where it is, but it just *came*. Would you say this was one of the "songs of deliverance" that "compass" us? (Ps. xxxii. 7).

A GREAT OFFER.

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
Come unto Me and rest."

REST! Who, of all the dwellers in this weary world, does not, in some way or other, know the need of rest, either for mind or body, for heart or conscience? Man is naturally the most restless of God's creatures. His proud aspirations, his rebellious will, his guilty conscience, his unsatisfied heart, all tend to make him restless.

Upon a seat, half-way up a toilsome hill, we saw painted in bold characters, "*Rest and be thankful.*" Now, though this seat gave rest to the climber's body, any onlooker could see that it did not give rest to his aspiring mind; for in a few minutes you might have seen him toiling upward still. In reality the mind had gone ahead of the body, and only waited till the body had strength to go too.

Not long since, in a small country town, the writer's notice was drawn to two signs on houses that stood side by side in the same street. One was *The Traveller's Rest* over a public-house, the other, *Funerals Furnished* over an undertaker's shop. To the writer's mind there seemed to be a sort of relation between these two signs. Both spoke of a temporary rest for the bodies of men, and yet there was a marked contrast between them. The mind of the passing traveller who tarries for a night anticipates the business of the morrow as he lies down. That is, he has *mentally* gone on. But the spirit of him who needs a bed of clay as a hidden resting-place for his lifeless body has *actually* gone on: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccles. xii. 7).

Now of all the disturbers of man's rest in this world this is the greatest. He may try many an opiate, but all in vain. "*Cannot rest*" is as plainly written on his heart and conscience as the publican's sign is written over his door. Two words disturb him sorely, SIN—GOD.

A clever thief, who for years has managed to evade the King's detectives, may comfort himself by the thought that he will be able to do so to the end. But every man knows that his last "move" is approaching, and that the cold hand of *death* will find him out at last. The question of what SIN is to GOD *must* then be faced. Now, what does he need in view of this? The very thing he has not got—rest! Rest for conscience as he looks back; rest for heart, and conscience too, as he looks ahead. Yes, reader, he *must*, and so must *you*, have to do with God. Do you not remember what He has written? "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" (Rom. xiv. 11, 12). Oh, but it must be a terrible moment when an *unknown* God has to be faced by an unforgiven sinner.

An Irish murderer, condemned to death, bewailed the fact that he was going to be hurried "into the presence of God tied up as a criminal." Yet every sinner who dies without pardon will suddenly find himself in the presence of God bound by the chain of his sins. Men willingly spend a lifetime in such fetters. "They *cry not* when he bindeth them" (Job xxxvi. 13).

But think of the last moments of such a man. He is about to step into the presence of God. Bitter reflections trouble his conscience and rack

his mind. Dark forebodings of what he has every right to expect make him shrink back from what is before him. Has he rest? *Rest!* No. He *cannot* rest. And still worse, he is not far from where "they have no rest day nor night," for ever and ever. Awful position!

Yet, blessed be God, rest may be reached, even at the sinner's greatest extremity in this world. How? *By the knowledge of God.* A lifetime of sin could no more shut a repentant sinner out from God's welcome and blessing than a lifetime of outwardly "good behaviour" without repentance could bring him into blessing. You have only to read the story of the prodigal and his elder brother to have this amply confirmed by Jesus Himself. As surely as the discovered "well of water" suited Hagar in her dire extremity, or as the discovery of plenty for nothing, in the abandoned Syrian camp, suited those starving, desperate lepers, the discovery of *what God is in grace*, as expressed in Christ, meets the need of the greatest sinner that ever lifted his arm of rebellion against Him. When he discovers, notwithstanding the enormity of his guilt, that God's attitude is one of compassion and mercy, a mighty change takes place in his soul. The light of a new day begins to dawn upon him, a day of divinely given rest.

On the great day of Atonement (Lev. xvi), after the sprinkling of the golden Mercy Seat with blood, and the acceptance of the same on the part of God, it was said to the tribes of Israel, "On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord." And then it was added, "It shall be a sabbath of *rest* unto you"

(*vv.* 30, 31). God found satisfaction in the sprinkled blood, and their sins were typically removed by the scapegoat.

But what was the secret of such a provision for a sinful people, year by year?

It was what God Himself was. Hence it was entirely of His own ordering. He would have them all at perfect rest before Himself, without a spot of sin to disturb either Him or them.

No doubt this provision on the day of Atonement pointed directly to Christ and the work He would do on the cross, but it pointed none the less to Him of whom it was said (and it was left for the very lips of Jesus to utter it): "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" (John iii. 16).

He *ever* dwelt in the Father's bosom, and was well able, therefore, to convey to us all the feelings and gracious desires of that bosom. It was He who could say to the weary and the heavy laden, "Come unto *Me* . . . and I will give you rest."

You will never, my reader, be *fully* at rest till you see that the rest He imparts really subsists in what *He* is who imparts it. Looking into His face in heavenly glory believers can say—

"The curse is gone : through Thee we're blest ;
God rests in Thee : in Thee we rest."

One of the youngest defenders of Mafeking in the South African war was a tall youth of sixteen years, whose mother was known to the writer. Percy M—— enlisted in a Colonial Volunteer Corps, and was shortly after sent to the place already named.

One evening during the siege he had just returned from two or three days of special military duty outside the town when he was told that

they wanted just one man more for that night's piquet. Would he go?

"Well," he replied, "I will go for two hours, but I am so worn out that I must have rest after that."

When the two hours were expired, and no relief forthcoming, he sent a messenger to the captain of his corps, saying that he wished to see him.

When the captain arrived he explained matters. He reminded him that he had served so many hours consecutively, and asked him if he could find a man to relieve him.

"Oh yes, my boy, I can," he said cheerfully, and went back into the town. In a short time the relief man appeared. But who should it be but the captain himself, not in officer's dress but in the uniform of an ordinary trooper, ready forthwith to take the weary lad's place!

It was this kind act which called forth the admiring words which the mother read me from the boy's letter, "*What a fine man! eh, mother?*" And, indeed, it was a fine act on the officer's part to take the lad's place on a night of danger in order to give rest to his weary body. Percy M—— never knew his captain so well, never admired him so much, as he did that night. A link of attachment was formed not to be easily broken. How truly might the young trooper's heart rest in the fidelity of such a friend!

Yet, how far all this is put into the shade when we turn to our blessed divine Rest-giver, the Lord Jesus Christ!

Think of the place He took in standing for us against the enemy, silencing his accusations by bearing the weight of sin's just judgment on the cross, that He might impart perfect rest to our guilty consciences. But it is what He *is*, coming

out in what He did, that gives such absolute rest to our disturbed hearts. We have found an unfailing Friend who has declared God's very heart to us by meeting all that He found in ours. We have accepted His great offer; we have tasted His precious love, and we rest in HIM.

"The curse is gone : through Thee we're blest ;
God rests in Thee : in Thee *we* rest."

Percy M—— had to *send* for a substitute to take his place. It was not so in our case.

"Not sinful man's endeavour,
Nor any mortal's care,
Could draw Thy sovereign favour
To sinners in despair ;
Uncalled, Thou can'st with gladness,
Us from the fall to raise,
And change our grief and sadness
To songs of joy and praise."

Nor does the heavenly wonder end here. "This perfect miracle of grace" goes further still. Having taken our place in the dark night of sin's judgment and "gotten Himself the victory," He is determined to share His honours and glories with us in the bright morning of His public manifestation. "We shall appear with Him in glory," and better still, *we shall be like Him*.

What a blessed Friend! What a glorious offer He makes! Happy the man who has made His acquaintance. Have you, my reader? Can *you* say—

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

If not, how gladly we can tell you that the offer is still open, but, mark this, you may never have another.

GEO. C.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

PRUNED OR GRUBBED UP.

I WAS lately at the bedside of a poor and absolutely helpless cripple. He was a middle-aged man, and for some five or six years had been confined to his bed with acute rheumatism. His hands and legs and body were twisted about in the most hopeless manner. My son was with me, who during the last three years had himself, more than once, been at death's door. In fact we were, though from different causes, a trio of sufferers. Speaking together of God's chastening, we read a little in Hebrews xii. 6-13. I remarked how well for us it was to remember that it was often by His ways *with* us that God effects His triumphs *in* us, by bringing us into that state of soul in which, as partakers of His holiness, the blessed God can enjoy our company and we can enjoy His. We also read Philippians iv. 6, 7, and rejoiced together in the fact that, however sad our surroundings might be, we had God's ear and His invitation to pour into that ear the tale of our sorrows, and His promise to fill our hearts with His own perfect peace.

The poor man seemed much affected, and spoke of his past waywardness and folly. My son then quoted David's words—"Before I was afflicted I went astray," and asked a question which his

own mother was once asked by a dear servant of the Lord when she was in great suffering, and in an illness which proved fatal.

"When is the tree nearest to the gardener?"

"When he is pruning it."

"Ah," said the poor fellow, "that reminds me of when I was working as a gardener. A lady asked me to prune some fruit trees in a certain way, and when I objected she said, 'Grub them up then!' And if God had grubbed *me* up, instead of pruning me, *I should have been lost for ever!*"

Reader, how is it with you? Perhaps you are living to gratify the desire of the flesh and of the mind, pursuing a course of self-will in a forgetfulness of God that can only end in disaster—overwhelming eternal disaster.

What if God were to say of you as He said of Ephraim once—"Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone"? It may be God has spoken to you already. Perhaps by His Spirit He has spoken more than once through His Word, or by sickness or bereavement, or by loss of one sort or another. Remember, it is bad enough to break God's laws, but it is ten thousand times worse to resist His Spirit, despise His merciful dealings, neglect His Word, and remain indifferent to the grace that sent His Son into this world, and to the suffering love of Jesus. He died that the prey might be taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive delivered, so that the ransomed soul might say exultingly, "My soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler: the snare is broken and I am escaped" (Ps. cxxiv. 7).

Have you done yet what the prodigal son did when "he came to himself"? Have you submitted

to God and entered into eternal blessing? Or are you still indifferent and trifling with your soul?

“There is a time, we know not when;
A point, we know not where:
That marks the destiny of men
To glory or despair.

“There is a line, by us unseen,
Which crosses every path;
The hidden boundary between
God’s patience and His wrath.”

T. O.

FOUR CRIES FOR MERCY.

WE have brought before us in Luke’s Gospel the account of four men who cried for mercy. Three of them cried in time and received a blessing for all eternity; the other cried when, alas! it was too late, when his doom was fixed for ever.

Permit me, dear reader, to put a question to you. Have *you* ever cried for mercy? Because cry you most certainly will, either just in time to get the blessing, or beyond the bounds of time, for ever too late.

In chapter xvii. 13 we find that Jesus, on his way to Jerusalem, was met by ten lepers, who cried for mercy. All ten were healed, though only one returned to give glory to God, only one to praise and bless the One from whom he had received the healing. Oh, how many there are still who have never confessed His blessed name, who have secretly received His blessing but never taken their stand in this world for the gracious Blessor! Should the reader belong to this class, think of the joy

and happiness you are losing by not confessing Him, and think of His loss also. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 9).

The second cry was that of the publican (chapter xviii. verse 13) who went up to the temple to pray, but could not so much as lift his eyes to heaven. Smiting upon his breast he cried, "God, be merciful to me *a sinner!*" Oh, what a grand title to bring to the Saviour of sinners! The whole of his life, both past and present, stood summed up in those two words — "*a sinner.*"

If you, my reader, have never honestly taken your place before God as a lost and guilty sinner you will never know, as this man knew, what it is to be a justified person in the sight of God. Hear what Christ says of this man: "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified." We would entreat of you to

"Come away to Jesus in your rags and sin,
Prodigal unworthy, He will take you in:
Own yourself a sinner, only mercy crave,
For 'twas vile transgressors Jesus came to save."

The third man (see verse 38, the same chapter) cried for mercy also. It was blind Bartimæus, who sat by the wayside begging. Hearing an unusual hum of voices and the tramp of many feet coming that way, he asked what it meant, and was told that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. As soon as ever that name fell on his ears, just mark his anxiety to reach Him. Mark the successive steps that follow. He heard, he

inquired, he cried, he came, he received, he followed, he glorified God.

Thus it is with every anxious soul. Has it been so with you, dear reader? If not, delay not one moment longer. Raise the cry at once, "Lord Jesus, have mercy on me!" and as surely as He met and blessed the three men we have just been reading of will He bless and save you.

Jesus is the One who on the cross has met all the judgment of God due to the sinner who believes. Hear His cry, "It is finished!" ere He bowed His head in death. His precious blood was shed, and that precious blood cleanseth from all sin. He was buried, but God raised Him from the dead. Now He sits at God's right hand in heavenly glory, a Saviour for all. Through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins (Acts x. 34).

Oh, will you not trust that blessed Saviour now? To delay is dangerous and may prove fatal.

"For if you still His grace refuse,
And dare such wondrous love abuse,
Then will He from you sadly turn,
Your bitter cry for mercy spurn.
'Too late! too late!' will be the cry;
'Jesus has gathered His own on high.'"

The last man in these scriptures who cries for mercy comes before us in chapter xvi. 24. But mercy was beyond his reach for ever. When here on earth, where alone mercy can be found, he sought it not. He fared sumptuously every day, was clothed in purple and fine linen; but there came a day when death severed him from all he possessed. He "died, and was buried; and in hell, in torments, he lifted up his eyes"

and saw the poor beggar who, full of sores, used to lie at his gate, now in Abraham's bosom. Then was wrung that bitter cry from his soul, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."

Oh, what a solemn scene, dear reader! Just think of it! How true it is, as another has said, all the wealth of a millionaire could not purchase a drop of water in eternity, though it be the universal provider of everything in this world but happiness, and the passport to everywhere but heaven. We earnestly trust that the one who now reads this paper will never join company with that man whose doom is for ever fixed, and whose memory stings him through and through as he thinks of all the opportunities he let slip when here on earth. But hark! he says something about the unconverted. Do you inquire what it is? Listen. "Tell them not to come into this place of torment." May God use those words to arouse the careless, unsaved reader.

In closing let me implore you to give your soul's salvation your immediate attention, for now is the accepted time and now is the day of salvation.

R. G.

Hypocrites in the Church.—The man who says that the only reason why he is not a Christian is that there are so many hypocrites in the Church is himself a bigger hypocrite than those he objects to. He is better known than he supposes, and deceives himself more than he deceives anyone else.

EXPERIMENTAL DELIVERANCE.

AT different points on the Rhine, in Germany, an ingenious device has been improvised to cross from one side to the other of the river. A boat is anchored in the middle of the stream, to which three or four others are attached by a long chain, at a little distance from one another. The current, which is strong, pressing on the boats, keeps all "taut." In the last one sits a ferryman, who guides all by a rudder. Turning it, the stream gradually drives the line of boats towards, say, the left bank, till the last one touches it. Persons then, who desire to cross, enter the boat, and the ferryman having again turned the rudder, and the stream again pressing, the passengers, without any effort on their part, are carried safely over to the right side.

This simple means of crossing a river has struck us as a very forcible illustration of the *experimental* side of the *deliverance* of the believer's soul.

The Lord Jesus Christ has been into death for the glory of God and for our salvation. Having been made sin, and borne the whole judgment thereof, He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and is now the risen Man in His blessed presence. The desire of the heart of God for all whom in His grace He blesses, is that we should not stop short at the forgiveness of our sins, but that we should be drawn into the company of Christ and have part with Him (John xiii. 8). It is only in the presence of the Father, on the other side of death, that the soul enters on the deep and abiding joys of His risen life.

Brought to repentance through God's grace, He freely and fully forgives our sins, and puts His Spirit within us (Acts x. 43, 44). By Him, God's love is shed abroad in our hearts (Rom. v. 5), and joying in His forgiveness, by the Spirit working in us, our affections are drawn to and set on Christ, through whom it reaches us, and the desire is kindled in our hearts to be in His company apart from all evil.

Now the only way to obtain deliverance from our condition and surroundings in a world under the dominion of sin, and to reach Christ thus, is *by death*. We do not mean the death of the body, but death morally—*death with Christ*—death to all that links us here with fallen man and man's world under Satan. To be in *living association with Christ now*, our connection with all that He died to must be morally severed—sin and this present evil world, and all that man is according to the flesh. Christ's death is the way of that deliverance.

It is here that our illustration comes in. The Rhine ferryman waits at the bank, ready to steer across to the other side of the river all who desire it. So also our risen Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is waiting, daily waiting, on precious souls *who know His full pardon*, and have *tasted of His great love*—to guide them, so to speak, to the other side of the river of death, in order to share His company now in the Father's presence.

The Rhine peasant, trusting the man in the ferryboat, steps in with confidence, and *by the power of the flowing stream* is carried safely to the other side. So also every pardoned soul, attracted by the love of Christ, confidently committing himself to Him, may, without his own

useless efforts, but by the mighty power of the Spirit of God, be carried beyond the power of this world into a sphere of life and liberty on the other side of death. Thus delivered, he can join with the apostle in saying, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. viii. 2). Henceforth he is "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." He is set free to enjoy all the sweets of liberty as one of the happy circle of the children of God, who have their place and portion on the other side of death.

Dear reader, how is it with you? Maybe, through grace, you can say honestly before God and man that you know your sins are forgiven. Give all praise to His blessed name for that. But has your soul tasted the joys of life and liberty in a risen Christ, free from the power of that which is in you and around you? If not, consider the import of the little figure we bring before you. Forsake the left bank at once. Abandon all trust in your own efforts. Commit yourself wholly to Christ, in whose blest name you are forgiven. Let Him turn the rudder for you, so to speak, so that you may be steered at once to the *right* bank. The power is ever present, ever flowing, which will carry you over. The Holy Ghost is here, waiting and willing to serve you thus. Christ has died to sin and lives to God. Know, then, that "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. vi. 9-11). So you

will find yourself in the blessed experience of your soul, by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the light and joy and power of the company of Christ, ready to welcome His speedy promised return, and then to be glorified together with Him for ever. But the power for your moral deliverance is here *now*.

The attraction is *there*, in Him who loved you and gave Himself for you. His Spirit is *here* to carry you over. If you have not crossed, why not cross now ?

E. H. C.

GOD MADE KNOWN—THE HEART'S TRUE COMFORT.

A DYING Christian was visited by a friend, who quoted for him various texts of Scripture illustrative of God's faithfulness to His promises.

When he had gone, the dying man remarked, "Texts like those do not give me so much comfort as, 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son' (John iii. 16); or, 'He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?' (Rom. viii. 32). Plain doctrinal statements exhibiting the *heart of God* are more sustaining to me than mere promises. I like to get into contact with the LIVING PERSON."

Yes, it is GOD HIMSELF that the heart needs to know, whether in living or in dying. Let the writer speak of Him as he and thousands of others have personally found Him.

Was my case as a sinner so desperate that

nothing but the sacrifice of a spotless victim could atone for my sin? It was God Himself who provided the Sacrificial Lamb. Hence the word of John the Baptist, when his eye rested upon Jesus here below: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (compare Gen. xxii. 8; John i. 29).

If an awakened conscience charged me with being *guilty* before God, no words could describe my comfort when I discovered that the very God I had sinned against was prepared to justify me, and that He could, through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, do so without abating one atom of His righteousness, ungodly though I was (Rom. iv. 5; iii. 27).

Was I *sold under sin* and utterly unable to meet my own case? It was God who said, "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a Ransom" (Job xxxiii. 24).

Was my heart so *defiled* by sin that no effort of mine could remove one of its crimson stains? Then God came forward as my Cleanser, saying, "Come now, and let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. i. 18). Peter had to learn by his vision that "what God hath cleansed" is not to be despised, but is "clean every whit." For "the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7; Acts x. 15).

Was *death* the wages of my sin? It was God who proclaimed Himself to be the Giver of *eternal life*; and in Him who exhausted sin's judgment and rose for ever beyond it, that gift is mine. "The wages of sin is death, but

the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. vi. 23).

Did I find it utterly impossible to make my heart love God as I ought to love Him? God not only commended His love toward me by the death of His Son, but sent His Spirit into my heart that I might be made joyfully and abidingly conscious of that love (Rom. v. 6, 8).

Was the bitter cry wrung from me, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" as with groans of despair I discovered what I still was according to the flesh, even after conversion? The blessed answer to that cry was this: "I thank *God* through Jesus Christ." It was God who broke my fetters in the death of His Son, and set me in liberty before Him in the life of His risen Son. (Rom. vii. 24, 25; viii. 2).

But more. In the perplexity and burden of earthly care I am invited to spread all my requests before this same blessed God, with an assurance that the very peace of God Himself shall garrison my heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

Do I sigh to be free from all that binds my spirit downward? He stands before me as "the God of hope," and holds out the blessed prospect of perfect conformity to the likeness of His own beloved Son. And lest I should be tempted to look at myself in order to discover some goodness of my own, as a merit for obtaining that glory, His Spirit reminds me that it is "*the God of all grace*" that has called me to it (1 Peter v. 10).

With such a God before the soul, it is no wonder that the dying man, we have referred to, found such comfort in coming into contact with the heart of this LIVING PERSON.

The reader will have noticed that all that God

is has been expressed in Christ. There, and there only, can we really know Him. Christ is our Sacrifice and our Ransom. Christ is the means of our cleansing, and the proof of God's love.

We know experimental deliverance *through Him*.

We stand clear of condemnation and enjoy true liberty *in Him*.

We shall be eternally glorified *with Him*.

What think you, my reader, of such a Saviour?

Will you not fly to His open arms while you have the opportunity, and not wait till, by the hand of death, you are *forced* into His presence? Will you not let Him gratify His desire to forgive and bless a repentant sinner by coming to Him with the full confession of your own sinfulness?

One word more. To refuse His grace is to defy His judgment; and who shall do *that* and prosper? Your time is short. As surely as the last month of another year has been reached, your last opportunity will be reached one day, *your* end will come. Oh! wake up at once. "Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee" (Job xxii. 21).

GEO. C.

EPITAPH IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD.

DATED 1830.

"BLAME not the monumental stone we raise,
 'Tis to the *Saviour's*, not the sinner's praise.
 Sin was the whole that she could call her own,
 Her goodness was derived from Him alone.
 To sin her conflicts, griefs, and pains she owed,
 Her conquering faith and patience *He* bestowed.
 Reader, may'st thou obtain like precious faith
 To smile in anguish and rejoice in death."

GOD'S LOVE AND SIN'S PUNISHMENT.

No. 1.

THERE is a class of persons, and perhaps a larger one than we think, who have a real difficulty as to the eternal punishment of the wicked and impenitent. They judge it to be inconsistent with the love of God.

After all, such objections arise in the first place by separating punishments from the nature and being of the God against whom sins are committed, and according to which they receive their character, as sins against the holiness and majesty of God. In this way sins and iniquities are too much connected with the finiteness of the individual, and with the love of God as preached to sinners whilst they are in *this* world, and before the day when "the wicked shall be turned into hell" with the devil and his angels.

One can readily pay attention to the real difficulty, and pity souls that are stumbled about the eternal misery of the wicked, from their one absorbing idea of God's love to sinful men, as proclaimed in the gospel of salvation *for to-day*.

In saying a word or two for such persons, and for their real help, let it be observed by them that whilst this love of God is perfectly true and essential in the gospel of His grace, yet it is also said that "He is known by the judgment which He executes on the earth." It will be found that these individuals overlook the *righteousness of God* as an essential of His being, and of His government in the world—"that He sits upon the throne in judgment" as well as upon the mercy-seat in grace. Else how can they reconcile the Deluge, whereby the world that then was perished, with

their one idea that "God is love"? Righteousness was there in terrible judgments, as well as sovereign mercy to Noah and those who by faith were saved by the ark! So, at the Red Sea, all Pharaoh's hosts sank as lead to the bottom under the fearful judgment of God, whilst Moses and the children of Israel passed over as on dry land. Indeed, I much question whether such persons, from their imperfect knowledge of the Jehovah of Israel and of God, *could* sing the song of Moses: "The Lord has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea." Does their faith embrace this necessary fact (for government and for glory), that "*the Lord is a man of war*; the Lord is His name"?

Such persons are in difficulty upon eternal punishment and misery in the lake of fire, because they have not the knowledge of God and His ways amongst men in this world, nor of the rights and titles of the rejected Christ, which have yet to be avenged and made good *here*!

We have noticed some of the judgments that are past, such as the Deluge, in which all mankind but eight souls perished; and the Red Sea, where the right hand of the Lord became glorious in power—"Thy right hand, O Lord! has dashed in pieces the enemy." Now, let us take the fearful judgment which is yet in the future, as described in Revelation xix.: "Out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

Have these persons opened their minds to receive this truth of God's righteous judgments with men upon this earth, whether past or at the

very doors, as just quoted, and contained further in the Apocalypse? If not, are they qualified to express an opinion upon the righteous judgments of God hereafter, when the misery will be eternal? "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever."

Before leaving the solemn subject of punishment as connected with the ways of God and mankind in this world, we may, for the sake of those who wish to determine everything in the light of God's love, take up the question of *the judgment of sin at the cross of Christ*. As Christians, our true knowledge of redemption and our title to the eternal glory, yea, and of the eternal life which we have in a risen Christ, are connected with the sufferings of our precious Saviour. And what were they? Where was love (in manifestation) to Him in those sufferings which He endured under the hand of God? Were not those pains and troubles and cries the effect of the judicial dealings of God with Him when, in grace towards us, our iniquities were laid on Him and He was bruised in our stead? Undoubtedly all was love—the purest and strongest love—to us. But was this the hour of God's manifested love to Him? Was He forsaken or not when He asked *Why?* Was He not drinking the cup *then* which the hand of holy justice presented? Yet never was He so loved by the Father as at that instant when, through the Eternal Spirit, "He offered Himself without a spot to God," that He might put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. The judgment of God was *due to us*; but our Substitute bore this in our stead, that we might never taste it. The judgment was His, that grace might be ours.

(*To be continued.*)