

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.

A NEW BEGINNING.

WHEN "a new beginning" is spoken of in connection with the concerns of the soul, it is of vital importance to inquire *who* it is that is making the new beginning, and what the nature of the fresh start. For example, the writer, for years, was in the habit of using New Year's Day as the occasion of a new beginning for a better life—a turning over of a new leaf. But long before the year was half gone he had many times felt the need of another new start. The crab tree gets a new start every year, and many new leaves before the year closes, but the only real difference, year after year, is in the number of crabs it brings forth. The "new leaf" fades and finally falls, and the *quality* of the fruit is no better. So with us. Every new beginning in the way of making *what we are naturally* more agreeable to God, so that He will at last accept us and take us to heaven, must necessarily disappoint us, and this for one simple reason: the secret of the failure is not in the lack of new beginnings, but in the tree itself. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and the mind of the flesh "is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh *cannot* please God" (John III. 6; Romans VIII. 7, 8). If this is God's verdict after a four thousand years' test, are we likely by fresh tests to prove Him wrong?

In connection with the town of Carmarthen, there is an old legend—an alleged prophecy of

ancient date—to the effect that when a certain oak tree in Priory Street comes down, it will mean the downfall of Carmarthen itself!

This story is so really believed by many, that though the tree itself has only been a dead trunk for the past two generations, the town authorities evidently do their utmost to keep the dead and fast-decaying old monument still standing. For this purpose they have fixed strong iron supports, while a massive stone structure has been built round it for a yard or two up the trunk, and repaired and whitewashed at periods.

A few feet from the stump, however, another oak has been planted. It seems to be of several years' growth, and it is a pleasing contrast to the old tree, for it looks exceedingly fresh and vigorous; and already its fine, strong boughs have begun to overshadow the old dead trunk, as though it would fain hide the folly of those who are using their wits to keep upright what must eventually come down. This *young* oak needs no human masonry to support it. The power of life is there.

In this tree we see, not a new beginning for the *old* tree in a new place, but a *new* beginning in a *new* place. So in God's way of blessing.

How slow men are to take this in! *God* has got a new beginning for Himself and for us, and is not now asking *us* to make one. We must fall in with *His* new beginning. Here our figure fails; for the new oak had the same *sort* of beginning as the old one, and like it must sooner or later come to an end by decay and death, while *God's* new beginning is of an entirely *new* order and character. It is not only in "Another Man," but in Another Man beyond the power of death.

In Colossians i. 18 He is spoken of as "*The Beginning, the Firstborn from the dead*"; and, again, in Revelation i. 5, as the "*First begotten from the dead.*" The term "firstborn" always supposes the beginning of a *new* family. And in God's new beginning everything is new. It is entirely *beyond* death—beyond the judgment which was the inevitable doom of all who belonged to the fallen family of Adam. God's answer now to every need of that family is found in Christ.

Is it my sins that trouble me? Christ has borne them, suffered for them, and is risen from the dead, having for ever settled that question to God's perfect satisfaction (1 Peter i. 21; ii. 24; iii. 18).

Is it what I find in myself after I have believed? Christ died as much for what I know is still in me as for what He knows I have done in the past. All within me that *deserves* God's condemnation has *received* that condemnation in Him Who was made a sin offering for me (2 Cor. v. 21; Rom. viii. 3).

Do we want a perfect fitness in which to appear before God? God has "made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 6), and proclaims us to be "complete in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power" (Col. ii. 10).

Is it life we need? "Our life is hid with Christ in God," and "When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 3, 4).

Is it power for walk? We are directed to the same blessed Person. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might" (Eph. vi. 10); "I have strength for all things in Him that gives me power" (Phil. iv. 13, New Trans.).

Well may such a blessed Deliverer say, "Look

unto ME and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth."

Waste not your time, then, on new starts of your own in *self*-improvement. God's new beginning cannot be improved. Therefore if you are occupied with *improvement* at all, it is the clearest proof that you are looking at the wrong person. You are anxious to make yourself worthy of *God's* acceptance, and ignoring the Gospel message which declares that God has found a Man worthy of *your* acceptance, His Beloved Son, and our Adorable Saviour!

What a bright, new start does every one get who gladly bows to *God's* new beginning. Dropping for ever all expectation from himself, he looks to Christ alone and is fully satisfied! "They looked unto Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed" (Ps. xxxiv. 5). Be it so with you, my reader!

GEO. C.

HIS ONLY REGRET.

"O whose side are you?"

The youth to whom this question was addressed looked up with a smile as he answered brightly, "I am on the side of Christ."

"Thank God! you will never regret it," said the questioner, adding, "You will never find a Christian who regrets having come to Christ."

"Never!" echoed an aged believer, who had been listening to the conversation. "My only regret is that I did not come to Him sooner—regret at the thought of the years I wasted living without knowing Him as my Saviour and Lord."

"Then how were you brought to Him?"

“ Ah ! ” he replied, “ God must have been working with me in my childhood, for I often trembled to think of the judgment, but I tried to comfort myself by making a promise to God that I would ‘ give my heart to Him ’ when I was a little older. Then as a young man I determined that I would be converted after I had married and settled down; and in God’s exceeding grace that was fulfilled.

“ One Lord’s Day evening we went to hear a man preach whom I knew very well. To my alarm he solemnly announced as his text the words: ‘ And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torment.’ He spoke earnestly and with power, and God pressed the reality of eternity upon me.

“ Both my wife and myself were much concerned that night and went home to cry to God for mercy. We truly felt that nothing was too bad for us and that we deserved the judgment. Yet we did not then get peace with God, and week after week my anxiety increased.

“ For months I was in a terrible state of soul-distress. I well remember one cold winter’s day I was walking along the country road, then covered with snow. The Holy Spirit was striving with me and I was very miserable. I knelt down in the deep snow and prayed what I had been taught to pray: ‘ O God, make me more sorry for my sins.’ I know now that the mistake I was making was that I was looking within, occupied with my repentance instead of turning in all my need to the Saviour; and, of course, no peace came.

“ I went home and said to my wife, ‘ It is no use, I am in despair; I shall have to give up or I shall put an end to myself.’ She had already found peace, and she begged me to get alone with

God; so I went into the kitchen, knelt down, and cried aloud to God.

“I shall never forget that moment; it was as though the enemy was determined not to let go of me, and he suggested the thought: ‘What is the use of a wicked man like you praying?’

“Then, as a voice from God, the words of Scripture came before me: ‘*The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth from all sin.*’ A great sense of relief filled me, for I knew I was forgiven. I rose from my knees with tears of joy mingled with my tears of repentance.

“I had been for a long time examining my own heart, asking myself how much I loved God, but in His great grace He directed me to hear one of His servants, who brought before us the blessed truth that, ‘Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins,’ so that instead of being occupied with the feebleness of my love to Him, I learned to enjoy the greatness of His love to me, and then could say, ‘We love Him because He first loved us.’”

What is *your* regret, dear reader? Should you continue to neglect the Saviour and the great salvation that is to be found in Him, it will, alas! be your everlasting regret that you let your opportunity slip.

Why continue to live a wasted life?—for life is wasted if it is lived for self-gratification and without the knowledge of God. Spare yourself those terrible regrets, that fearful remorse, and put your whole confiding trust in the Living Saviour, and henceforth live unto Him Who died for you and rose again.

Perhaps, however, you have been *trying* to get the blessing; *trying* to be good enough; *trying* to make yourself fit to receive it. You will not be blessed that way. It is not trying, but *trusting*. Let the same words that brought such relief to our friend enlighten your soul: "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Notice the words, "The blood . . . cleanseth . . . from sin"; for

It is not thy tears of repentance or prayers,
But the blood that atones for the soul.

On Him, then, Who shed it thou mayest at once
Thy weight of iniquities roll.

Nevertheless it remains true and intensely important that "God now commands all men everywhere to REPENT," and repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ are linked together by the Spirit of God. Repentance is the door through which you must enter, but do not stay examining the door. Let your eye of faith rest upon the Lord Jesus Christ, the Object of faith, the One Who shed the precious blood, the Saviour Who is waiting to receive you.

Is there one, whose eye is scanning these pages, with whom the Spirit of God is striving? Be encouraged by the simple story of our aged friend to get alone with God and there close with Him. Do not seek to quench those convictions nor despair of the blessing. God is waiting to hand you His free, unconditional pardon the moment you surrender to His beloved Son.

Wanderer from home, the Spirit is striving,
Seeking to win thy long-hardened heart.
Do not resist Him; He would persuade thee
E'en to surrender just as thou art.

F. S. M.

A SECOND BLESSING.

THERE is a divine order in Scripture, and the Spirit of God used the pens of the four evangelists so to group together the incidents in our Lord's life and service that deep and precious truths might be conveyed to the soul; for the soul has a journey and a history. One incident does not repeat another, though it may support it; nor does one clash with another, though it may lead on the soul to another point in its apprehension of the truth in Jesus. There has been nothing unnecessarily repeated in Scripture, nor has anything been omitted which God would communicate to us, so that we might know Him and His grace in Jesus, and be built up simply but surely in the eternal verities of the Word of God.

I would draw the reader's attention to two incidents brought before us in Matthew IX. A man sick of the palsy is brought to the Lord. The peculiar manner in which they let him down through the roof is not detailed here. The great point before us is *the faith that brought him to Jesus*, not the way they brought him. The need in their minds was his sickness; but the Lord takes *all about us* into account, even if it be a bodily ailment that makes a soul betake itself to Him. What has brought all the sickness, and misery, and grief, and sorrow into the world? It is SIN. Sin has worked out in man's flesh in a thousand ways, and its consequences are as numerous. How it had worked out in the palsied man we are not told, but sins there were, and *Jesus knew them*, though only the consequences

were seen by others. They had put the case into the hands of Jesus in faith, and He heals a wound from the bottom. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the man, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."

Let me ask, my reader, Have you put your case into the hands of Jesus? He was here as *Son of Man*, feeling for men, with authority to forgive sins, and He proved it by the power which healed the consequences. He has authority *now* to send the message of forgiveness from heaven by the Holy Spirit to the soul that trusts Him, and that authority is proved by the power in which He rose from the dead. See the blessing which comes from the hands of Jesus: sins forgiven, disease healed, and the paralytic sent to his house a healed and forgiven man. Good cheer indeed he had; let the scribes say what they will, they could not prevent the faith that was there, nor the blessing that Jesus gave to faith. We will let them alone.

But Jesus passed from thence, and seeing Matthew sitting at the receipt of custom (his daily calling, though not a respectable one in that day), He said to him, "Follow Me." Here we get an advance; if I may so say, *a second blessing* is detailed here. Anything that had previously passed in the soul of Matthew is not recorded, that is not the point of interest. We left the former case with the man sent *to his home*. Matthew is at his ordinary calling as a publican. Now, whatever it was that worked the readiness in Matthew to leave his calling and follow Jesus, one thing is clear, that there *was* readiness. This might have been the first time that the Lord had intimately and directly spoken

to Matthew, but I must think that, like another publican (Zacchæus), he knew something of Jesus, knew that there was a fountain of grace for poor sinners in His heart, or why did he invite (see Luke v. 29) publicans and sinners into the company of the One Who had called him ?

How often does the very sense that we may have of what is to be found in Jesus make the soul conscious of things that oppress the spirit, and it longs to be free ! Let me illustrate what I mean. Suppose the cage of an imprisoned bird were opened so that it could leave it and use its wings, but that while it could fly it was held by a thread which cramped its liberty and confined it to its former surroundings—free in one sense, not in another. Matthew was held to his publican's calling. Can you not imagine how the thought of changing it for companionship with Jesus would be welcomed in his soul ? Christ's words, "Follow Me," cut the thread. It is not now a man sent to *his home* with all the cheer of the grace of the Son of Man in his heart, but the further blessing of a man called to be *in the company* of the One in Whom all the grace for publicans and sinners resides. Can you not, my reader, imagine the new joy in Matthew's soul, as he realized the thought : I may be *with Him* in the joy of His grace ?

We have more now than the happiness of a forgiven and healed sinner ; we have one taken from the receipt of custom, and made *a child of the bridechamber* by the simple, blessed call of Jesus. We are brought there in the power of the Spirit now, and this without leaving our ordinary occupation. To have found out that we are, through *His* grace, children of the bride-

chamber, will enable us to use this world, not as calling it our own. Christ has cut the thread for us, and called us into His own company. His fulness is the joy of the bridechamber.

T. H. R.

THE WAY INTO THE BLESSING.

EXTRACT FROM AN ADDRESS.

THE Lord Jesus was down in this world, not only as the Son of the Father, as God manifest in the flesh, as the Messiah to Israel, but we get Him as the *Servant*. And oh! it is such a wonderful thing to think of Christ down here as a Servant, waiting on the necessities of man. There is nothing dearer to the heart that knows Christ. He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

He comes before us in this chapter *after* He has been rejected by Israel. It is all-important, for the understanding of this chapter, to see this.

"*At that time.*" It was the time of His rejection by Israel. It was the close of His ministry to Israel, and He stands there as the rejected Messiah. There never was a moment of deeper sorrow in the Lord's pathway through this world—apart from the sorrow of Gethsemane—than when He reached this moment of His history.

He was the Nazarene, the carpenter's son, the "Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Jehovah had come down into their midst in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and instead of doing Him honour He was in the outside place, rejected.

Had He a place to turn to? Indeed He had.

He speaks to the Father, and He speaks as the Son. The Eternal Son was there. He falls back into the divine sovereignty of God in the place of rejection. He says, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

I came here this evening with one thing before my soul—one thing for myself, and one thing for you. BLESSING! Blessing *without limitation*; blessing without a boundary line. *Get hold of it*; no matter who you are. *Cling to it*. Blessing from God; blessing from Christ; blessing through the Holy Ghost; blessing through the Scriptures. . . . And what is the way into it? You have to become as "a little child." As knowing nothing, as having nothing; but in simple, confiding faith, believing God's testimony. . . . "*I thank Thee,*" says Jesus. He has perfect acquiescence in the ways of God. You never can have rest in this world unless you have it. *Man* seeks rest in his surroundings; *God* gives us rest within. He proposes an internal rest. Why those lines of care? Oh! you know it. Insubjection to God. Insubjection to His will is the source of all the care and unrest around us. It is a great moment in the soul's history when the soul discovers in God's presence its utter foolishness and utter incapacity, and bows down in confession of it in His presence.

"*All things are delivered unto Me of My Father.*" The more your soul apprehends the glory of Christ's person, the more you are delivered from everything else; and so, unconsciously to yourself, you become superior to everything here.

JOE WHITBREAD'S AWAKENING.

THE following circumstances were related by a Christian lady, well known to the writer, shortly before she was taken from this world to be for ever with the Lord. She was visiting in Dorsetshire, and had been asked by another Christian to see a poor woman at a village about two miles from Bridport. On arriving at the cottage she learned from a neighbour that the woman in whom she was interested had gone out.

But this neighbour, hearing from the lady (Mrs. R——) that she had called to speak with the woman about her soul, remarked that there was a sick man (Joe Whitbread) living a few doors lower down who would be glad of a visit.

Mrs. R—— immediately went to the house, and after knocking at the door, walked in. She found the man was alone and very ill, being, in fact, doubled up with pain before the fire.

After speaking with him for a few minutes concerning his health, she turned the conversation to his state before God. He unhesitatingly declared that in that respect he was all right, as he had never injured any one in his life, and was not afraid to die, altogether evincing his state to be one of stubborn *self-righteousness*.

Having heard all he had to say without making much answer, she proposed to read him a little from the Word of God. He made no objection, and she accordingly opened her Bible at Romans III. 9, reading it as follows, very slowly, and with much emphasis on the words in italics:—

“‘ What then ? are we better than they ? No,

in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin'—*except Joe Whitbread.*

“‘As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one’—*except Joe Whitbread.*

“‘There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God’—*except Joe Whitbread.*

“‘They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one’—*except Joe Whitbread.*

“‘Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God’—*except Joe Whitbread.*

“‘Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight’—*except Joe Whitbread.*

“‘But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference’—*except Joe Whitbread.*

“‘For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God’—*except Joe Whitbread.*”

When she came to the last of these verses, he cried out in great distress, “Oh, stop, ma'am! I can't bear it any more! Oh, stop, stop, ma'am!”

She, affecting surprise, asked what was the matter, remarking, “I'm only putting together what God says and what you say. God says, ‘*All have sinned*’; and you say you have *not*; so that must be ‘*except Joe Whitbread.*’” Only a few more words passed, and she left.

A day or two afterwards, Mrs. R—— paid a second visit; but to her surprise was refused admittance. His wife was at this time at home, and stated that he was confined to his bed, very much worse in health, not able to see any one, and she firmly refused to let her enter his room.

However, Mrs. R—— elicited that he had been visited the day before by his minister, who was much surprised to find how the invalid had been disturbed from the false security in which he had previously been so comfortably lulled; that he had received "the sacrament" from the minister, who had assured them that he was all right; and they were charged on no account to admit the lady to see him a second time!

As the woman persisted in obeying the injunction, Mrs. R—— had very reluctantly to forego an interview with the poor invalid.

Believing the Lord would yet open a way for her to see him, she made a third visit a few days later, when she found the woman more tractable, and succeeded in gaining admission to the dying bed of the sufferer. The moment she appeared in his room his face brightened up with joy and gladness, and he exclaimed how delighted he was to see her, as he was longing for her to come.

When his transports had subsided, he related what agonies of soul he had gone through since her first interview with him, so much so that a report began to spread in the village that he had lost his reason; but the Lord had revealed Himself to him, and it was all now PERFECT, CLOUDLESS PEACE, and he was longing to depart and to be with Christ.

They accordingly rejoiced and praised together for the wondrous grace that had rescued him from

the self-righteousness in which Satan had held his prey. A few days afterwards he fell asleep, having been full of joy from the moment he found peace to that in which his spirit passed into the presence of Him Whose precious, perfect work had made him meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Dear reader, are you enwrapped with that terrible cloak of *self-righteousness* which so many are folding around them in a blind and fatal complacency? Oh, let God's Word penetrate your soul, and strip you of every false security! "There is NONE that doeth good, no, NOT ONE" (Romans III. 12).

W. R.

Detected.—That which man is taking to get to heaven by, the law, is the very thing that pronounces judgment against him. Suppose I bring a right true measure to a man who is in the habit of using a wrong measure, what do I do it for? Not to make him honest, but to prove his dishonesty. It is in vain for him to say, I will change my character; the thing is already done. The question is, Has he a character? He is proved to be a dishonest man. The law was given "that the offence might abound."

J. N. D.

The true sign of a right state.—A man likes thinking badly of himself—aye, and saying so, better than not thinking of himself at all, and simply displaying Christ's gracious life by thinking on Him only. We have to judge ourselves, but our right state is thinking of the Lord alone.

J. N. D.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.



CAN GOD BE KNOWN ?

WHEN an ancient philosopher was asked, "Who and what is God?" he requested a day to consider the question and frame his answer. At the end of the time he desired two days more, and then four days, each time doubling the number, and giving as a reason for it that "the more he meditated upon the subject, the more obscure it appeared." Finally, he replied that the more he pondered the more perplexed he became, for the more involved in mystery the question appeared.

Alas, the human mind has always reeled under this great question in its vastness and importance. We can understand the shrinking and sense of littleness which has been awakened in the annual address of the President of the British Association last year. No one can deny he is one of the leading astronomers, yet, in attempting with his own short ladder to scale the loftiest heights, and with his scanty rule to fathom and measure deepest depths and infinite distance, he was forced to exclaim, "*We do not know.*" In one of the oldest recorded controversies on the ways of God, we have this remarkable question: "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" Yet the same book declares of the Almighty, "*We cannot find Him out*" (Job XI. 7; XXXVII. 23).

No matter how great the intellect, we are constantly reminded of man's littleness, and of the limitation of his knowledge of God.

It is indeed true that we cannot find God out by science or reason. But, blessed be God, He can reveal Himself. He has done so. Thus we turn for answers, not to science but to the testimony of the Son of God in the Scriptures; not to reason, but to a divine revelation in the Word of God. Just as the sun in the heavens is seen by its own light, in like manner God is known only by His own revealing.

There is, dear reader, such a thing as the knowledge of God. Men are counselled by the Holy Ghost to form His acquaintance, "Acquaint now thyself with Him [God], and be at peace; thereby good shall come to thee" (Job xxii. 21). "Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God" (Prov. ii. 3-5).

The great end of all God's dealings and doings in this world is to make man acquainted with Himself. Upon a heathen temple was written: "*Know thyself.*" But over the temple of God, as typified in Solomon's day (2 Chron. ii. 5)—as expressed in the Lord Jesus (John ii. 19)—as seen in the Church (Eph. ii. 21), is written in bold letters "KNOW GOD." For thy soul's greatest want and truest good, *Know God.* To know God is to be at peace with Him. As another has well said, "When a soul knows the Lord, the most miraculous transformation takes place." This mighty distance is bridged between God and man. God has drawn so near to man in the person of His Son, that every fear is gone in the contemplation of it, and you find your truest delight in God Himself.

The very thought of acquaintance with God is inspiring, the reality glorious. O unsaved one, make His acquaintance. What good shall then come to thee! "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3). As I think of the terrible judgment on Christendom, I feel the importance of pressing on readers of *Tidings of Light and Peace* their responsibility to make God's acquaintance. God is not a distant Being, neither does He dwell in thick darkness now. He has revealed Himself in the Word—His beloved Son, Who has come into this world and been made flesh that man might understand God unto perfection. The words and ways of Jesus were the words and ways of God. It was said to Israel, "Prepare to meet thy God"; but every true believer in Christ can say "Thank God, I've met Him in Christ." In the life of the Lord we have the manifestation of God. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." And as I see my Saviour receiving publicans, harlots, and sinners to His heart, I can only exclaim, "That is the God of the Bible; that is the way in which He received me."

But the full, perfect declaration of the Blessed God was in the precious death of the Lord Jesus. That death brought to light the Father's heart, and ours has won completely. As we listen to those heart-thrilling, soul-touching words of the Saviour on the cross, we not only exclaim with Pilate, "Behold the Man!" but "Behold your God!" There we behold the full manifestation of God's love to a ruined world. At the same time, His holiness, justice and righteous character met.

Creation, with all its wonderful display of skilful workmanship, never reveals God fully. His *power* and Godhead are seen, but not His *heart*—not His holy nature of love and grace and mercy. The preaching of the cross is still foolishness to the philosopher, but Christ crucified is the wisdom and power of God to the believer.

Why civilized men should rise no higher than the brute beast and live only for the present world is difficult to understand. Their aspirations, at best, are vague and indistinct as to things unseen and eternal. Ah, learned man, thy philosophy cannot make thee calm in the prospect of meeting a holy God! The handiwork of God has been marred by sin. You cannot otherwise account for the state of things in the world. Deny it you dare not. It exists, whether you like it or not (1 Cor. xv. 21). Beloved friends, let me ask, and challenge your heart in doing so, What has the Gospel done for you? In the Gospel the blessed God draws near to you, and says in unmistakable language, *I want you to know Me*. Your every blessing lies in that knowledge.

“’Tis not for man to trifle—life is brief, and sin is here.
Our age is but the falling of a leaf, a dropping tear.
We have no time to pass away the hours ;
All must be earnest in a world like ours.”

W. N.

A Serious Consideration.—Beware of a false trust, as you are careful when crossing a ford that you place your foot on the right stone to be safe. If Christ is *only* Man, you are cursed for trusting Him (Jer. xvii. 5; John III. 16; John VIII. 24).

GEO. C.

SIGNS OR SUBSTANCE.

“**H**AVE you ever been to —— Church? Well, if you have not, you *have* missed a treat! It has such a lovely service, and the Vicar is *such* a dear man—a really good fellow—and we have the eastward position, and a choral celebration of the Eucharist, and the mixed chalice, and such lovely vestments and ornaments—it is all so beautiful! You should go!

“The Vicar is so clever, too, and so particular. Why, do you know that when he was showing me round one day last week he pointed out a very ancient and beautiful piece of carving over the chancel stalls, and as I approached and would have mounted the chancel steps to look more closely at it, he said, ‘Excuse me, but this part is sacred and may only be entered by the priest; it is not for the laity.’ Oh! he is so particular! Such reverence, it is beautiful! He is such a dear man!”

These words were spoken by a clever and intelligent member of the Church of England as an inducement to a friend to visit the church in question. This is what he had to offer to one who might have been desirous of hearing of how he might get his sins forgiven; of how he might become acceptable to God; of how he might know what the delight of the support of the Good Shepherd is, He Who gave Himself that He might bring us to God.

In reply, the one addressed responded something to the following effect:—

It certainly sounds very nice, but what does *God* think of it all? Does it please Him? Will

it do to die with? What comfort will it be to you when on your death-bed to know that every Sunday your church was filled with lovely perfume, and that the clergyman wore a red robe? Will it soothe your conscience to know that you always turned to the east, and bowed your head and made the sign of the Cross at the mention of the name of Jesus? Does this ornamental service and the singing of beautiful hymns atone for your sins, and does the railed-off chancel, which no unordained person may enter, speak of liberty of approach to God?

Everything you speak of sounds very nice to one uninstructed in God's ways, but when examined, their uselessness—nay, their deceptiveness—becomes very evident. For they are, at the best, but shadows, where substance is needed; they belong to a bygone age; they are out of date. You make everything of the *accessories*, and forget altogether the essentials. Let me narrate a little incident to illustrate my meaning.

A few years ago Dr. Sven Hedin, the great Swedish traveller, crossed the Asiatic continent from the neighbourhood of Persia to Peking, and in so doing had to cross the great Desert of Gobi, an enormous sea of sand without track or tree, destitute of anything that would support life. He knew not whether there were wells or springs or not, as none to his knowledge had been that way before. Before he got across his camels died, and all his baggage had to be abandoned. His companions sank, and he trudged on alone. For hours, after leaving his last friend, he searched fruitlessly for water. At last, when on the point of despair, he came to a hollow in

which he found a tiny stream with a few bushes growing beside it. Oh, how he drank! His blood was almost dried up, but now by the refreshing water he got new life, new courage, new zeal.

But his next thoughts were of his abandoned friend some miles back in the desert. How was he to take to him some of the precious liquid, which had given him so much benefit? He must be reached with the life-giving water, but in what could he carry it? He had no pitcher, or bottle, or jar. What was to be done? At last a bright thought struck him. He would carry it in his boots! Without more ado off they came and were dipped in the brook; when filled to the top the doctor set off on his errand of mercy. Happily he was in time, and had the joy of seeing his friend drain the strange water-vessels dry, and getting the comfort of his companionship in ultimately recovering their lost baggage.

Do you think that the dying man would criticize the water-vessel, or complain that the water tasted of leather, or it was not a nice way to carry water in boots, or that he would have liked a cut-glass tumbler much better? Ah, no! It was *water* he wanted, and the way he got it was of no moment to him. It was not the vessel, it was the contents. He had had with him, in his equipment, the most approved water-cups, but they were empty and had to be abandoned. Water was his need, not cups!

When they were bitten by fiery serpents in the wilderness, they were directed to look to the serpent on the pole. The pole was doubtless little more than a rough branch of a tree, not planed or smoothed or trimmed. The pole was

merely that which upheld the serpent. They were to look at that which was on it. When they beheld the *serpent of brass* they lived.

And it is He that was lifted up on the Cross that is the life-giving One. It is He Who is the water of life. It is He Who gives freely. It is Christ Who is the Saviour—not His Cross. I see crosses, plain and ornamental, as though *they* were means of salvation. They are but as empty drinking-cups to the thirsty traveller; they make a show, but are deceptive. I see crucifixes with a representation of a dead Jesus; but even that is valueless to me. I want a living and a life-giving Saviour. Dead, I need life. Away from God, I need to be *brought* near. Signs and symbols are valueless to one on his way to hell. Such want saving, need to be plucked as brands from the burning, by a living Saviour.

He *was* on the Cross. He died. Thank God to all eternity for that death! But He is now a risen, ascended, glory-crowned Saviour, adored by heaven, and on earth by those who have taken from His hands the living water. He says, "Who-soever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Away with shams and all the trappings of a ceremonial religion! They make a pretence of being able to satisfy man's heart's craving. Draw near. Let no communion rail or intervening priest stand in your way. Draw near to the living God. He bids thee come. He offers thee life eternal! Do not any longer, when looking at a pitcher, think you are having a drink; or seek to satisfy the appetite by looking at the model of a loaf! No longer regard the forms and ceremonies of the ritualist as the way of salvation set forth in our Lord Jesus Christ. S. S.

HOW GOD JUSTIFIES THE UNGODLY.

WHEN a man becomes troubled about his sins and anxious to get right with God about them, he almost invariably commences, as we say, to turn over a new leaf, and to amend his life. The inmost thought of his deceitful heart is to make up for the past by an endeavour to act rightly in the present and for the future. In all this he but manifests the darkness of his heart and mind, and that he has no true sense of God's holiness and claims, or how he can be pardoned and justified in His sight. Satan, our arch-enemy, will do his utmost to keep him in the dark, and to hide from him the only true way in which he can be justified in God's sight. But it is worse than folly to follow our own thoughts, when God has so plainly and graciously spoken in His Word. Therein He has set forth in the clearest manner possible the only ground on which He can pardon the sinner and justify him. The great question is not what *we think*, but what *He says*. What then saith the Scripture?

"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. IV. 5).

"So much work, so much pay," is a common axiom in the things of this world. If a man works for another, his pay is a debt, and not an act of grace on the part of the employer. The money is earnt. But God is dealing with us in quite a different way altogether. He gave His only begotten Son, Who, made sin on the Cross,

bore its judgment and died (2 Cor. v. 21). In Him God has been glorified, and the mighty work of redemption accomplished. God has set Him forth as a mercy-seat, and now grace reigns. And grace does not demand but gives. A work was needed ere God could justify a sinner. But no one could do that work but Jesus, God's Son. He undertook it, and did it. It was done nearly nineteen centuries ago, and hence every effort of man to-day to propitiate God by his works is utterly in vain. It is a denial of the finished work of Christ.

On that ground, and on that ground only, God justifies. Hence the blessed statement that we have cited from Rom. iv. 5. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Weigh it well, dear reader, "To him that worketh not." To him that ceases from his fleshly working to make amends for the past, and to justify himself, which is the very essence of Pharisaism. "To him that worketh not, but *believeth*." Mark that. Not to him who merely assents with his understanding, but to him who believes with the heart. To him who believes on God, who takes Him at His word, and rests in childlike faith and simplicity on what He says. And what does He say? That He justifies the ungodly and counts the believer's faith for righteousness. What could be more simple?

But, maybe after all, you are puzzled at His justifying *the ungodly*. We are not surprised. Self-righteousness does not die easily. If it said, justifieth *the godly*, it would more nearly coincide with your thoughts, would it not? Ah, yes, that's it, we think we hear you saying. If only

I were godly, I could understand how a holy and just God could justify me. Exactly. *If* only you were godly. But that is just what you feel and know you are not; and learn, once and for ever, you never will be after the flesh. That "*if*" upsets it all. And if it could be, what would be the result? Why, *your* righteousness would avail before God: you would be fit for His presence without a Saviour at all!

O, cast your deadly doing down; God will have none of it! "To him that worketh not." So runs the precious message of the Gospel. It is "not by works of righteousness which we have done." It is "not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 9). Nay, nay, God does not justify the godly. Were it so, not one would be justified. Let His living Word speak in power to your soul. He justifies the ungodly. He justifies the one who is the very opposite of Himself. He does not justify ungodliness. Far be the thought. But He justifies the ungodly sinner from his ungodliness who believes on Him. He seeks no righteousness from you, and when you give up your wretched and futile efforts to produce it, and cry "ungodly," and believe on Him, He will count your faith for righteousness. You get righteousness before Him, where He found it, not in yourself, but *in Christ*.

In the context of the passage of Scripture we have been dwelling upon, we get two remarkable examples of faith—Abraham before the law was given, and David after. Both, having believed the promises of God, were justified on the same blessed principle of faith. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteous-

ness" (Rom. iv. 3). And David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works (Rom. iv. 6).

And who could describe that blessedness, and the joy of it in his own soul, better than one who had so deeply sinned; and who, if he had been dealt with on the ground of his works, must have perished without hope? But hear his own language, true for himself, true for Abraham, and true for every one that believeth. "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. iv. 7, 8). Every one that believeth comes into that blessed company. He is accounted righteous by faith without works; his iniquities are forgiven, his sins are covered, and no sin whatsoever is laid to his charge. Well may the Psalmist pronounce him blessed!

But some man may say, That is all very well, but do you mean to say that good works are shut out of the Gospel plan altogether? God forbid! But they are most surely wholly and fully shut out as *the ground* of our pardon or justification. The moment to that end you attempt to introduce them in any form whatever, you are beginning to do despite to Christ. But the moment you have believed God, and are resting on the finished work of Christ, His Son, good works begin. The knowledge of pardon and justification through and in Christ, apart from yourself and self's miserable doings, will fill your soul with gratitude to and affection for Him Who has done all for you. And the deep desire will spring up in your heart to please Him in all things, to do good works, and to bring

forth fruit to His praise. "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James II. 17). But where faith is living, it produces living effects. God puts His Spirit within the believer, and "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. v. 22, 23).

E. H. C.

HOW FAR ARE YOU GOING?

A WELL-TO-DO solicitor, personally known to the writer, had just retired from his practice in one of the eastern counties. After spending the greater part of his life amid the daily claims of a busy professional life, he was anxious to settle down in some agreeable spot, and there enjoy, for the remainder of his declining years, the longed-for rest and quiet which possibly he had often pictured to himself in earlier days.

In view of finding the situation he coveted, he visited many and various localities, but none seemed to his taste until he hit upon a place in South Devon—a charming spot overlooking moorland and sea. There were interesting associations with this particular situation, which, however, we need not dwell on here, save to mention that in a house in a beautiful cluster of trees close by, the poet Tennyson had composed his poem, "The Moaning at the Harbour Bar."

When this retired solicitor found that on that very spot a suitable residence was available, he exclaimed, with evident satisfaction, "*I shan't go any further!*"

Let us leave all that the speaker's words meant

to him who uttered them, and consider them in relation to men generally—to man as a being left here responsible to the God Who gave him being.

In such connection *no* man on earth can say, "I shall not go any further." It is certain that the Poet Laureate did not so regard his stay in that carefully selected spot. He looked further—much further. The in-rushing waves, as they were forced by the tide over the harbour bar in the estuary, sounded to the poet's ear very much like moaning. At such times the water was shallow, and the navigation consequently dangerous. Hence the words in the poem, penned, it is said, in that very place—

"May there be no moaning at the bar
When I put out to sea."

He evidently realized that beyond the fairest "harbour" in this world extends a boundless, fathomless ocean—ETERNITY.

It is vain to settle down amid delightful surroundings and say, "I shan't go any further." Only a little way beyond the most attractive residence in this world is the graveyard! Man with some measure of resignation would even regard being forced by the king of terrors out of his mansion to occupy a dark, narrow, and solitary dwelling, with no window and only one door—and that door at the top—if he could only to his own satisfaction persuade himself, "I shall not go any further." But another Voice has been heard in this world—and to those who know Him not there is a strange, unaccountable, *inevitable* authority in that Voice.

The one special utterance we now refer to makes

it clear that "*the grave is not the goal*" of man's existence. Listen to that utterance. Jesus had just told them that the power of life and death and the authority to execute judgment had been given to Himself—Son of God and Son of Man. "Marvel not at this," He said, "*for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation*" (John v. 28, 29). Years after this the same writer is inspired to say, respecting the second resurrection, "I saw a great white throne . . . and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God" (Rev. xx. 11, 12). But not a single individual in that vast company will be able to say, "I shall not go any further." For all that are there judged will be cast into the lake of fire—the "second death."

It is a common question when friend meets friend in travelling, *How far are you going?* We need not ask you that question, dear reader, we know; and you know how far you are going. ETERNITY is the destination of all—with Christ or without Him. The truly converted can sing together—

"Alleluia! we are on our way to God."

But, to use our figure, we do ask, *Are you prepared* for passing the "harbour bar" safely? Would there be no sense of danger, no "moaning at the bar"? No bemoaning of your wasted opportunities? Are you now prepared for what is *beyond* the "bar," when "the spirit will return to God that gave it?"

To be prepared, is to be cleansed from the

defilement of our sins by the precious blood of Jesus, and to have holy boldness through the knowledge of God's love—the love of God shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost that indwells us (Romans v. 5). But *all* who believe the Gospel of God's salvation, through Christ, receive the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit of promise is the seal of their security to the end—"sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. i. 13; vi. 30). The day that will find us far, far beyond the "harbour bar."

Consider a moment. You are constantly travelling. You are nearer to some destination than when you started reading this. The room where you take your dinner is, in reality, a travelling "*diner*." Your bedroom, a sort of *sleeping car*. You are ever on the move to the end. What will the end be? We beg you to give that question very serious thought.

The mission of God's Son to this world, His precious death, His present patience, all, all declare God's deep interest in you. Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life"—life "abundantly." The Spirit is now dwelling on earth, and He also asks, "What shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?" (1 Peter iv. 17). Face that question *at once*. To-day the risk of delay is all at your own door. A lost *to-morrow* would hold your wasted *to-day* in everlasting remembrance. "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is near" (Isa. lv. 6).

"It is not too late to Jesus to flee,
His mercy is great, His pardon is free;
His blood has such virtue for all who believe,
That nothing can hurt you if Him you receive."

GEO. C.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

NOTHING.

A NOTED German preacher greatly entertained his sovereign by his extraordinary gift of speaking, on the spur of the moment, on any or every subject proposed to him, as well as by the unusual texts of Scripture he chose for the topics of his sermons.

One day the king challenged him to preach without any preparation on a subject he would suggest just when he was ready to begin his discourse. He agreed to do as had been suggested, and at the last moment the king handed to him a paper that should have contained the text.

He examined it and found it blank, but at once announced, "To-day my sermon is on Nothing, and out of nothing God created the universe." He forthwith proceeded to discourse on the marvels of God's handiwork; at the same time the king felt belittled by the unexpected turn the preacher had taken.

By the way, does it not appear very shocking to you, my gentle reader, to reduce God's Book to a means of turning the sacred office of preacher of the Gospel into a source of entertainment and intellectual pleasure? Can you imagine the firemen at a fire, where human life was endangered, seeking to amuse the inmates of the burning

premises, by jokes and droll antics? How could you? Yet there are those who take the position of being guides to heaven and expositors of Scripture who lightly trifle with eternal things, make game of the Gospel, and slight the blood of Christ. Others seem to use the pulpit and the platform to influence public opinion, politics, etc., as though *earthly gain* was the same thing as godliness. Shame on them!

This treatment of the king's strange fancy may have been smart, but pray what help is a discourse on the wonders of creation to a sinner oppressed by the devil, or to a hungry saint wanting a morsel of spiritual food?

Now had this preacher known something of the love of God, something of His grace, he might easily have turned his subject to better account. Let us take our Bibles and turn to a few well-known narratives, and, asking a few judicious questions, seek spiritual profit from the subject.

THE THIEF ON THE CROSS.

What had this man done to be found there? Surely you know he was a rebel and a murderer, and justly deserved all he was getting. But what had he done to merit the loving, tender words of the One at his side; to hear the promise of the Lord of Glory, that in a few hours he would be in Paradise with the One he owned as Lord? Nothing! Nothing!

SAUL OF TARSUS.

Why was Saul smitten to the earth on his way to Damascus by the light above the brightness of the sun? He had persecuted the Lord's people,

assisted at the stoning of Stephen, haled men men and women to prison for being followers of Jesus.

But what had he done to deserve the care of Ananias, and the solicitude of the Lord Who had appeared to him on his way to Damascus? Nothing!

THE JAILER AT PHILIPPI.

This man had scourged the two faithful servants of God, had thrust them into the inner prison, had fastened their feet in the stocks, and generally ill-treated them.

But in what way had he merited the gracious word of salvation, that brought joy to his house and heart through his believing on the Lord Jesus Christ? Nothing—absolutely nothing!

What claims had Naaman the Syrian on the grace of God, through which he benefited so wondrously? None.

In the same way we can find that though God's grace was bounteously bestowed on man from the day of Eden to the present, we find that there is no reason in man that could lead God to bless man—none!

Shall we come a little closer home, my reader? Shall we ask what YOU are that God should bless you, if blest you are? Has His goodness had a softening effect on you, or do you regard it as a wage for services rendered, or as a reward of virtue? If you think this, listen to the words of the Holy Ghost Who declares that you, in common with all mankind, have gone out of the way, have become unprofitable, and that there is none that doeth good—no, not one! This is what God declares you to be before Him; and as for

your deeds, He sees nothing in them but what is objectionable and repellent to His holy nature.

But you may persist and say, "Well, I acknowledge I have come short of what I should have been; may I not hope to improve in the future?" To this question God gives a flat negative. You, being a child of Adam, are regarded as his offspring—and all in Adam die; those in the flesh CANNOT please God. So, like a charged prisoner at the bar, you are guilty on three counts of the indictment—

You are nothing	}	that God should bless you.
You have done nothing		
You can do nothing		

Do you acknowledge it? Or do you seek to justify yourself?

LOOK AT ANOTHER.

When the blessed Lord Jesus was born, the angels proclaimed God's good pleasure in man, and the stars were obedient to His will. Later the heavens opened, and God announced in the hearing of men His great delight in His Son. He could say when speaking to His Father, I know that Thou hearest Me always, and could also say, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?"

Think and ponder, and say what cause had He to be so highly esteemed. He had every cause, for He ALWAYS did those things that pleased the Father; was always delighted to heal, to cleanse, to minister to man in his bondage and necessity. He went about doing good, for God was with Him.

Yet what had He done to have the cold-shoulder wherever He went? to be regarded as an outcast, to be derided, to be the song of the drunkard, to experience the cold of night and the chills of man's cold heart, the hunger of the long fast in the wilderness or the thirst on His way through Samaria, the horrors of Gethsemane's night, the ridicule of Herod and his troop, the sham trial, the cruel mocking, the awful cross? What was He, or what had He done to have this rolled upon Him? NOTHING! Absolutely nothing! What had He done that led the sun at midday to cease its shining, and His God, the One Whom He had delighted in, to be irresponsive to His cry? Again, NOTHING! Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him.

Oh! sinner; you who never have or never can do a thing to gain God's favour, listen, listen! Listen to these words: "He hath put Him to grief"—God hath done this; that with His stripes you might be healed. You that have gone your own way may see your iniquity placed on His holy head; may yet shout your glad-heart-praises to His adorable name! "He has done all! His work is finished," and neither the wisdom nor the skill of all created things can detect the slightest flaw or shortcoming in His triumphant achievement. *Nothing* can be added. *Nothing* taken away.

Before many days have gone by—for He says He will come quickly—the same Jesus Who was so hustled and scorned and crucified here, will sit upon His holy hill! He will rule as King. He will sit as Judge. And then as King over the whole earth, where He was cast out, He will ask, of His God—He Who asked on Calvary and

got no answer—will ask, and all His desires will be granted. Nothing will be denied Him in that day. He will be Lord and King. He will cast out all that gives offence to His holy rule.

Take heed, sinner! Now He is refusing nothing asked in faith and confidence in Him. He will give thee forgiveness, peace, pardon, righteousness, justification, Heaven—eternal life. Ask now! and you shall have all that He can give; nothing that's good will He withhold. Then HE will ask, and nothing will be refused Him.

And then as Judge. Should you not be found agreeing to what God has stated to be true of you (that is, that you are without God, without hope, without strength in yourself) you will be brought before His Judgment Seat, and when your sins—your rejection of His wondrous salvation, your neglect of golden opportunities—are brought out against you, what excuse will you make? what will you then say? What *can* you say? In the parable of the wedding garment such a case as this is drawn. One, like yourself may be, who desired the good things of Heaven, but neglected opportunities, and despised the Royal provision. What could he say? Nothing. He was speechless! and well he might be. Mercy slighted, God's goodness rejected! Then followed the awful sentence, "Take him away; cast him into outer darkness." What a doom! What an end! Away from God, and love, and light, and grace, and goodness.

You may now have God's grace for nothing; you can get it on no other terms. If you do not take it for nothing you will have every reason to bewail for eternity your own wretched folly.

NEGLECT FATAL.

THE Master" is at present "sat down," but the day approaches when He will "rise up"!

The door is at present wide open, but the moment comes when it will be shut! (Luke XIII. 25).

Things cannot go on indefinitely as they are to-day; a sudden awakening will ere long overtake a sleeping world!

The lovely "day of salvation" will change into the awful "day of judgment," and the silvery call of grace will pass into the sentence of woe. And because the Master sits in patience the world deems He is indifferent to its folly! What a mistake!

He sits in order that men may repent; that they may give up their folly; that they may turn to God; but He does not sit because He is, or can be, indifferent to sin.

He sits, and will sit, till the appointed moment arrives, and then He will rise up—patience over and long-suffering past—and shut to the door. A shut door! How awful! That door is open to-day; it may be shut to-morrow! Hence, procrastinator, haste! But, if shut, is it shut for ever? Will not the hand, which kept it open so kindly for all these long centuries of darkness and sin, open it again for one brief moment, and permit a soul, at last aroused and truly sincere, to enter? Never, no, never!

"When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are," and again, "Depart from me, all ye workers

of iniquity!" (Luke XIII. 25, 27). The door is not opened again, even to those who shall cry so earnestly, "Lord, Lord, open to us." Their sincerity may be genuine, but it is too late! They should have cried before. Now it is useless. They are unknown; they are workers of iniquity. Many flatter, nay, delude themselves to-day that "another chance of salvation" will be given them after they have missed the present.

They must die of course, but, having died and been "thrust out" into "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth," they enjoy the "larger hope," as it is falsely called, of one more opportunity of escape. The hope is vain! The wish is, of course, the father of the thought, but the wish and its offspring are both doomed to awful disappointment. The gulf is fixed; the judgment is eternal. The shutting of the door is an event of eternal import. It is closed finally and for ever.

Hence the question is asked, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Fail to enter the door while it stands open; fail to turn to the Saviour while grace avails; fail to believe savingly now; despise the blood of Christ which alone can cleanse from sin, and the fault and the blame and the endless remorse must be all your own.

Knock now, enter now, find a welcome now—
or NEVER!

J. W. S.

A Farewell Message.—A condemned murderer recently sent the following message to his comrades: "Look for something more real than the pleasures of this life; seek the realities of another world, because they are the only things you will need *in the end.*"

THE MEETING OF EXTREMES.

“There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat.”—EXOD. xxv. 22.

OH, where, in all the universe,
Do wide extremes unite?
Say, where shall finite man converse
With God the Infinite?

Thrice holy is the King of kings,
Enthroned in dazzling light;
How, then, shall men—poor, sinful things—
Approach His glory bright?

One place, and *only* one, is found
Where grace doth freely flow;
Where mercy's voice doth gladly sound
To all on earth below.

By faith a rugged cross I scan,
Upraised at Calvary;
And there I see a sinless Man
In deepest agony.

A Man—but more, the Son of God,
Thus veiled in human form;
Now smitten 'neath Jehovah's rod,
Afflicted by the storm:

That awful, awful storm of wrath
Which now 'gainst sin has burst;
'Gainst sin now laid on Him Who hath
For sinners been accursed.

Oh, blacker than the blackest night,
Those hours of anguish deep;
When God upon the world's true Light
Our darkest sins did heap.

'Tis o'er! Now Justice sheathes the sword;
Now Truth is satisfied;
The Saviour's precious blood is poured,
The Lord of Life has died.

“*Tis finished!*” oh, victorious cry—
Lo, Grace and Truth now meet;
See Righteousness and Peace draw nigh,
And do each other greet.

Oh, wondrous mystery divine—
 That dark, accursed tree—
 Where Grace and Truth their strength combine
 To set the guilty free.

'Twas love unto a fallen race
 That brought the Saviour down
 From yonder glorious, happy place,
 From yonder radiant crown.

But every drop of love so free
 Meant burning wrath for Him ;
 And every beam of grace we see
 But made His sky more dim.

Yet now He lives, He lives again—
 For us the Mercy seat,
 Where grace and truth united reign,
 Where God doth sinners meet.

Here wide extremes at last unite,
 Here man with God may meet ;
 The finite with the Infinite
 May hold communion sweet.

J. C. J.

WANTED ABOVE, AND READY TO GO.

THREE short words may sometimes be seen on a railway-waggon, especially in the vicinity of a goods-station. Sometimes the reason seems apparent, sometimes not so clear. But there stand the three words plain enough—“NOT TO GO.”

What a contrast to the two words uttered by God-inspired David (1 Chron. xxix. 15)—“NONE ABIDING.” “We are sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.” ALL TO GO.

“Man being in honour abideth not . . . and when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his

glory shall not descend after him" (Ps. XLIX. 12, 17). "We spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away" (Ps. cx. 9, 10).

A young husband lay on his bed in great weakness. His mother-in-law was in the room, and he addressed her thus: "I am going to leave you!" She remarked at once: "Then you are tired of staying here with us, are you?"

"Oh, no! For *He* is with me *here*. But I am leaving to-day with Him. I am not tired of you either; you have been a kind, good mother to me. *But He wants me, and I am leaving to-day!*"

Though his body was fast going to decay, it was all well with his soul, you see. He could speak of that which was incorruptible. His eye was upon Him Who had been into death on his behalf. For him death's sting had gone. And in Him Who took that sting his heart rejoiced. Hence he could speak of dissolution in the most homely terms: "*He wants me, and I am leaving to-day!*"

To the heart of every true Christian, apart from either coming into the world or leaving it, his stay here is a theme of unutterable wonder. There was a special moment in his history when, either gradually or suddenly, he woke up to the fact that, long before he came into it, a very wonderful Person had been into this world from another world; that this Person had the most intense personal interest in himself; and that just before His visit came to an end He had left

an urgent message, that both His Father and Himself were very desirous that he should spend a joyful, sinless eternity in their company (cf. Mark xvi. 15; 2 Thess. ii. 14).

But this was not all. The Divinely-awakened sinner discovers that the sins of the past, which now distress him so greatly, and seem to shut him out from all hope of heaven, have all been atoned for by the blood-shedding of that wonderful Visitor; for it was no less a Person than the Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God and Creator of all all things, Who had been here.

Then, not only did this blessed Friend at God's right hand become a mighty attraction to his heart, but he became possessed of a *new power*, both for the enjoyment of His love and for living and walking under the influence of its all-constraining power; and that new power, the Holy Spirit of God, Who seals unto the day of redemption all that repent and believe the glad message which He left to be proclaimed everywhere.

Here, then, was the secret of the young Welshman's happy departure. It was to this wondrous Friend and Saviour and Lord he knew he was going. "*He wants me, and I am leaving to-day.*"

You also, my dear reader, have been born into this world, and you also are soon going to leave it. If there are "*none abiding*," you are included in that declaration; and if the message He left was to be told to "*every creature*," you are certainly not *excluded*. The vital inquiry for you is this: Have I *obeyed* the Gospel? If not, we are bound to tell you that another message has been left, and to this effect, that the same Lord Jesus shall one day return, and that every eye

shall see Him, for that "He will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. i. 7, 8). Those who were once freely and graciously invited, will, for the rejection of His grace, be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." Awful alternative—terrible doom!

But you are still invited. Bow at His feet confessing your sins at once; none other can save you.

GEO. C.

PREPARATION FOR SERVICE.

"**H**OW could the power of grace be manifest, either to you, in you, or by you, without afflictions? How could the corruptions and devastations of the heart be checked without a cross? How could you acquire a tenderness and skill in speaking to them that are weary, without a taste of such trials as they also meet with? You could only be a hearsay witness to the truth, power, and sweetness of the precious promises, unless you have been in such a situation as to need them, and to find their suitableness and sufficiency. The Lord has given you a good desire to serve Him in the Gospel, and He is now training you for that service. Many things, yea, the most important things belonging to the Gospel ministry, are not to be learned by books and study, but by painful experience. You must expect a variety of exercises: but two things He has promised you, that you shall not be tried

above what He will enable you to bear, and that all shall work together for your good.

We read somewhere of a conceited orator, who declaimed upon the management of war in the presence of Hannibal, and of the contempt with which Hannibal treated his performance. He deserved it; for how should a man who had never seen a field of battle be a competent judge of such a subject? Just so, were we to acquire no other knowledge of the Christian warfare than what we could derive from cool and undisturbed study, instead of coming forth as able ministers of the New Testament, and competently acquainted with the devices, the deep-laid counsels and stratagems of Satan, we should prove but mere declaimers. But the Lord will take better care of those whom He loves and designs to honour. He will try, and permit them to be tried, in various ways. He will make them *feel much in themselves*, that they may know how to feel much for others.

I know the Lord loves you, and you know it likewise: every affliction affords you a fresh proof of it. How wise His management in our trials! How wisely adjusted in season, weight, continuance, to answer His gracious purposes in sending them! How unspeakably better to be at *His disposal* than at your own! So you say; so you think; so you find. You trust in Him, and shall not be disappointed. Help me with prayers, that I may trust Him too, and be at length enabled to say without reserve, "*What Thou wilt, when Thou wilt, how Thou wilt.*" I had rather speak these three sentences from my heart, in my mother-tongue, than be master of all the languages in Europe.

The complaints you make of what passes within encourage me under what I feel myself. Indeed, if those who I have reason to believe are more spiritual and humble than I am, did not give some testimony that they find their hearts made of the same materials as mine is, I should be sometimes hard put to it to believe that I have any part or lot in the matter, or any real knowledge of the life of faith. But this concurrent testimony of many witnesses confirms me in what I think the Scripture plainly teaches, that the soil of human nature, though many spots are certainly better weeded, planted, and manured than others, is everywhere the same—universally bad; so bad that it cannot be worse, and, of itself, is only capable of producing noxious weeds, and nourishing venomous creatures. We often see the effects of culture, skill, and expense will make a garden where all was desert before. When Jesus, the good Husbandman, encloses a spot, and separates it from the waste of the world, to make it a residence for Himself, a change presently takes place; it is planted and watered from above, and visited with beams infinitely more cheering and fertilizing than those of the material sun.

But its natural propensity to bring forth weeds still continues; and one-half of His dispensations may be compared to a company of weeders, whom He sends forth into His garden to pluck up all which He has not planted with His own hand, and which, if left to grow, would quickly overpower and overtop the rest. But, alas! the ground is so impregnated with evil seeds, and they shoot in such quick succession, that if this weeding work were not constantly repeated, all

former labour would be lost. Hence arises the necessity of daily crosses and disappointments, daily changes of frame, and such multiplied convictions, that we are nothing, and can do nothing of ourselves: all are needful, and barely sufficient to prevent our hearts from being overrun with pride, self-dependence, and false security.

Freedom for public service depends much upon the spirituality of our walk before God and man. Wisdom will not dwell with a trifling, an assuming, a censorious, or a worldly spirit. But if it is our business, and our pleasure, to contemplate Jesus, and to walk in His steps, He will bless us; we shall be like trees planted by a constant stream, and He will prosper the work of our hands.

The sermons of some preachers are often more ingenious than edifying, and rather set off the man than commend the Gospel of Christ.

When the Lord gives confidence, He will not disappoint it." J. N.

FRAGMENTS.—“**The cross** was the *outlet* of man’s enmity and the *inlet* of God’s love.”

“**Repentance** is the judgment we form, under the effect of God’s testimony, of all in ourselves to which that testimony applies.”

“**Faith** is the divinely given perception of things not seen, wrought through the word of God by the Spirit. . . . True faith is the work of the Holy Ghost in the soul, revealing the object of faith in divine power; so that the heart receives it on divine testimony as divine truth, and as a divine fact.”

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

“THOU DIDST SPEAK TO ME OF JESUS.”

A GOOD many years have rolled away since a young man stood over a newly-made grave in Cumberland, holding a worn Bible in his hand. The tears rolled down his cheeks, and as if addressing the occupant of the grave he thus spoke: “Thy prayer has been answered, dear departed friend. This book has been, under God, my solace: in it have I found Him of Whom Moses and the prophets did write. *For ever—yes, for ever—shall I have cause to remember that thou didst speak to me of JESUS.*”

A year had rolled away since Henry M—— had stood in that country churchyard, a gay, thoughtless young man, whose one aim in life was pleasure. His father had died when he was quite young, and had left him an ample fortune which enabled him to gratify a taste for travel. Fancying that happiness was found in the fleeting things of this world, his days were spent in seeking in other scenes a happiness which the past had failed to bring.

Having left the hotel where he was staying he had sallied forth one autumn day to visit the seat of Lord S—— where he was told the park abounded in beautiful views. The way led through the churchyard, in which he lingered for a while to admire the singular beauty of the

situation. Whilst thus occupied a funeral entered the churchyard. The mourners were few, but, if sobs and tears mean anything, they were mourners indeed. The service was soon over, and all had left the grave except an old man of nearly fourscore, whose silvery locks and benign countenance greatly impressed the young pleasure seeker. He watched the tears slowly chasing each other down his deeply furrowed cheeks, as with eyes upturned to heaven he appeared to be communing with God.

The sacredness of the old man's sorrow touched Henry M——, and he was about quietly to withdraw when, in a tone of kindness and respect, the old man said, "Let not my sorrows drive you away. In this grave is buried one whom, when alive, I loved but too fondly, and now, when dead, I too deeply lament."

"Some one nearly related, perhaps?"

"My granddaughter. Her parents died and left their one daughter to my care, and now Mary has gone; but she is gone to her home, she has left a poor weary world for that scene where 'the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.'"

"You think, then, she is happy now?"

"Think, sir! I *know* that she is."

"How is that possible?" said Henry M——.

"Sir, Mary was a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ."

"But are not all Christians believers?"

"All who are Christians indeed, but not all who *profess to be* Christians. 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.' This is a plain and positive declaration. No condition is attached; no exception is made; he that believeth the

Divine testimony concerning Jesus hath everlasting life. If all professed Christians were true believers they must be saved.”

“How did your granddaughter differ from those who, as you say, are only professing Christians?”

“She was acquainted with *One Whom* the world despises. She knew Him Whom to know is life eternal.”

“What is His name?”

“*His name is Jesus!* Upon Him, the Rock, did she build for eternity. Her hope of salvation was in Him, not in herself. Her trust was in His work, not in her own. She rested her acceptance on what He has done, not in anything in herself. It was not always so. Long did she try by means of her prayers, her tears, her Bible, her church, her kind and gentle temper, to gain peace with God, but all in vain. Only when she turned to Christ did she find the rest and peace she sought.”

“But,” replied Henry M——, “although we cannot think that our own good works can altogether save the soul, yet surely they must be done to prevail upon God to forgive sin?”

“The believer in Christ Jesus cannot be too constantly exhorted to the performance of all good works, but that is because he is saved from all his sins and is perfectly righteous before God in the righteousness of Another. He Who knew no sin took our sin; we who knew no righteousness are made righteous in Him. Mark the perfect exchange. We as sinful men were not more identified with sin than He was as our Substitute in God’s sight; neither is He more righteous than we are made righteous in Him.”

“These things seem too vast to be true.”

“No, sir; their very vastness is a proof that they proceed from an infinitely wise God. Receiving these truths into her heart by the power of the Holy Ghost, my dear Mary found that peace which passeth all understanding. Believing the record God gave of His Son, she saw herself one with Him—through Him pardoned—in Him justified—in Him complete—in Him saved for ever.”

“But how could she know all this?”

“The faith of my granddaughter was a very simple one. Mary’s creed was not drawn from the systems of men, but from the Word of God. Reading the Bible one day she came to this verse—

“‘CHRIST JESUS CAME INTO THE WORLD TO SAVE SINNERS’ (1 Tim. i. 15).

“‘To save sinners!’ she exclaimed. ‘*Sinners*, and to save them! What good news is this?’ Like Lydia of old the Lord opened her heart to receive it. She read it—she believed it—she was at peace.

“As she lay on her dying bed I said to her, ‘Glorious to be one with Christ!’ She replied, ‘Glorious, indeed, to be one with Him—no longer seen in the first Adam, but always beheld in the second—chosen in Him—accepted in Him—holy, yea, without blame in Him. He, made an offering for my sin; I, made the righteousness of God in Him. As He is, so am I in this world.’

“Had some one gone to her bedside and told her to comfort herself with her holy desires, her spiritual affections, her past life, ‘Miserable comforters,’ she would have said. ‘*Jesus is my comfort—my salvation—my hope—my life—my*

all. He is my peace. It is not self, but Jesus; it is not my work, but His work; it is not my righteousness, it is God's righteousness which gives my soul rest.' In her life and conduct she adorned the doctrine of God her Saviour; she received the truth not in word, but in power and in the Holy Ghost; but she is gone and these eyes shall see her no more."

The old man paused, for his tears trickled fast.

As it was now sunset Henry M—— gave him his hand and told him, half smiling, that he had never talked so much religion in his life.

"Ah, sir," said the old man, as he pressed his proffered hand, "I may never see you more. This feeble hand shall soon be stiff and motionless, these eyes shall soon be closed in death, and you, too, must die. Yon setting sun, yon falling leaf, whisper death is near, and after that the judgment.

"*Eternity!* Awful word ETERNITY. There is something fearful in that word. Eternity, an ocean without bottom or without shore! Oh, sir, should you venture that ocean on the shattered planks of your own righteousness, should you dare to stand before a holy God in your own unholy, unrighteous works, what must the issue be but endless, hopeless misery?

"Passing as you are, sir, a young man, through a world where everything is deception, I can only pray that this conversation may not pass away and be forgotten. Before I say farewell, I would add, Salvation is for sinners. The door is open to the most unworthy, to the vilest. Numbers—the most vile and thoughtless—have, through grace, entered in and found peace to their souls. Remember, over the door is written—

“‘WHOSOEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY.’”

As he spoke these words he took out a small pocket Bible. “This book,” said he, “has been, under God, my solace in many a wintry hour. Often, when all has been lowering without, and dark and cheerless within, have the truths therein contained been brought home to my soul. Now my granddaughter is gone I shall use no Bible but hers, and if you would not wound my heart take this Bible from me. When you look upon its pages think of the old man at E——, and *remember he spoke to you of JESUS.*”

With hasty steps and a full heart Henry M—— returned to his hotel, and the old man to his cottage.

The result you know. A year afterwards he revisited E——, hastened to the cottage to find that the old man had died just a fortnight before. Going from the cottage to the churchyard his tears fell fast, as taking from his pocket the Bible the old man had given him, his last words forced themselves on his mind, and he exclaimed, “*For ever—yes—for ever shall I have cause to remember that thou didst speak to me of Jesus.*”

My one desire in transcribing this is that the message from that graveyard may reach thy soul, unsaved reader. May it speak to *thee* of Jesus—Jesus the sinner’s friend. Jesus, the just One, Who died for the unjust one. Jesus! *Jesus!* JESUS!

Henry M—— found in Him a satisfaction which neither wealth nor pleasure could produce, a Saviour from the awful doom of a hopeless eternity, and a Saviour who could fill, satisfy, and keep him through this defiling world. You also

shall find Him if, like Mary, her grandfather, and Henry M——, you come in simple faith to that blessed Saviour Who came into this world *to save sinners*.

What an encouragement to us Christians to speak to every one of *Jesus*, JESUS! We may not, any more than the sorrower at that graveside, see the fruit of our words here, but the day will soon dawn when sower and reaper will rejoice together. How glad we shall then be that we spoke to perishing men of JESUS! H. N.

THE TRUE BALANCE.

“**F**OR our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. iv. 17, 18), repeated the voice of the reader to the sick man.

Outside, the warm sunshine flooded the garden and street; and there was the hum of the town's busy life.

Inside, was the hush and shade of an invalid's room; and the worn quiet face of the sufferer.

“Our light affliction,” he said slowly, “our light affliction. That reminds me of a poor fellow—dear me, it's years ago now—he was dying of consumption, and I used to go and sit and read with him a bit at night; and he was glad of it, what with the cough and the lonesomeness. And he said to me one night, ‘Yes,’ he says, ‘put all the afflictions, *all* of them mind you, in

one side of the scale, and the eternal weight of glory in the other—why,' he says, 'there's nothing in 'em, *nothing in 'em!*'"

Yet every reader will own that consumption, ending a life in pain and weariness before it has well begun, was no light thing.

Nor was it a light thing, that even more painful disease that had suddenly laid the second invalid low. How then could they both agree with the words of St. Paul and, in spirit, thus rise triumphantly above their circumstances?

Surely because they paid no regard to the "seen and temporal things," but looked at the "unseen and eternal things."

Love makes a burden easy; and the strength of Christ's love, uplifting the otherwise feeble human heart, makes its sufferings and trials feel light. More even than that. His power is so wonderful that He can remove all fear of suffering, so that it can be met courageously.

Think of the three Hebrews, in the days of Daniel, who were unhurt in the midst of "the burning fiery furnace." Of the two prisoners at Philippi, in the days of the Cæsars, who sang with bleeding backs. And of the martyrs in the days of Queen Mary, who prayed for their tormentors.

You will say all this is superhuman. It is quite true. Divine love and power *are* superhuman. And then we remember that the "affliction is but for a moment." Even the long and weary days are as fleeting as that, when compared with the glorious years that lie before those who love Jesus.

May we take the "balances of the sanctuary" into our hands, and weigh up everything according to the estimate of God.

L. J. M.

A MISTAKE CORRECTED.

IN my early Christian life I was greatly troubled and often called in question the reality of my conversion, because I had not passed through the deep exercises of soul of which I had heard some speak, and of which I read, especially in the Life of John Bunyan. Having been brought up under Christian influence, and having been the subject of religious impressions from my earliest childhood, I was led in a more gentle way to faith in Jesus Christ, the light coming to me like the dawn of day. But I was so troubled concerning the work of the law, that I secretly longed to pass through it rather than be deceived. What I longed for came to pass. For a considerable time I walked in great darkness and bitter bondage, and was daily assailed by fierce temptations. Such was my distress of mind that I would gladly have given or endured anything for peace of conscience; indeed, so distracted was I one day, that I thought my mind would lose its balance—it was difficult to attend to the ordinary duties of life. But in due time God graciously restored me, and gave me to see how mistaken I had been in measuring myself by others, and in not trusting Him utterly and alone. I will briefly state some of the lessons taught me, in the hope that others may profit by them.

First. I was taught that deep exercises do not of themselves make the soul humble before God. Indeed, it is possible to be proud of deep experience, to set it up as a standard by which you measure others, and to look upon all who do not reach that standard with suspicion. I found myself in danger of falling into this temptation.

Second. I saw that I had been limiting God by looking for uniformity in His dealings with His people. Instead of trusting Him to lead me as He should choose, I wanted Him to lead me like others. God has His plan for each one in conversion and in after life and usefulness.

Third. I found that I had overlooked, and consequently made light of, His preventing grace. That I had not gone so far into sin as others was due to His preventing grace alone, and in this I was an equal debtor with those who had been rescued from deep and open sin, since, if left to myself, I should have been like to them.

Fourth. I was led to see that the objective life is the truly healthy life. It is our highest happiness to be looking unto Jesus. Only as you face the sun is the shadow of self unseen. Let self in any form cross the path and come between the soul and Christ, and the sure result is darkness and unrest. I have found self-occupation to be weakness and doubt; while "not I, but Christ," is life indeed.

Fifth. I had repeated proofs of the tender mercy of God while passing through this season of temptation. He kept me from despair, gave me times of relief, spoke to me by His Word, and, finally, delivered me. Notwithstanding my sin and folly, He did not take away His loving-kindness from me, or suffer His faithfulness to fail.

O. T.

*"Nothing but Christ for darkest hours ;
 In Him our trust 'mid Satan's powers ;
 Though tempests rage and troubles flood,
 Nothing but Christ—the Christ of God."*

ARE YOU AN INTERESTED PARTY?

A LAWYER'S clerk in London once told the writer that his duties often took him to Somerset House, where, for revenue purposes and for the sake of reference, a copy of every will made in this country is kept in Government custody. On the payment of a small fee any will there may be examined, and many are. My friend remarked that, no matter how long a will might be, he had never yet seen any one the least sleepy while he was reading it to them. Indeed, he remarked, "It is quite a picture to watch the intense interest and fixed attention while a will is being read!"

Every will is a reminder that the one who made it once had possessions which he could not keep: it is the story, short or long, of what he has had to *leave*. But it is a further reminder that the most interested party will one day have to do the same.

But the record of another "will" has been written; and every one interested in it is reminded that not only the blessings are unsearchable, but that he will have an "endless life" in which to enjoy them. But who are the interested parties, and where are they to be found?

"All men, everywhere," that believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. How did *they* come to believe when so many others do not? Finding that they could not possibly rely on any alteration *in themselves* to procure a fitness worthy of God's requirements; discerning that there is only One Who can lay claim to such personal fitness, and that One the Lord Jesus Christ; hearing that all who, in self-condemnation, turn to Him, they gladly did so with confidence. Believing on Him God declares

them to be accepted (taken into favour) in the Beloved (Eph. i. 7), made "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 17); and "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. i. 3).

In Romans viii. 35-39 the Spirit of God raises an important question, and answers it; "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . 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."

And is my reader not to be interested in such a matter? There is a moment at hand when all that your eye can see will have to be parted with. Have you anything unseen and eternal? Is it not a matter of the utmost moment that a portion so illimitable and everlasting should become yours? You cannot merit it by your goodness, but you may miss it through your unbelief.

It is not by *self-amendment*, and relying on it when you think you have reached it, but by *self-condemnation* and relying on Him. Only thus is the blessing reached, and the heart made satisfied with its eternal portion in Him.

Is not all this enough to keep you awake until you know for certain that all your liabilities have been met in the death of Jesus, and your fortune secured in the glorified Christ?

“AFTER ALL I’VE BEEN, HE
WELCOMED ME!”

WE were schoolboys together, Albert and I. Our friendship started from the day we settled a difference with our fists in the playground, and although dissimilar in many ways, yet the love of a lark or adventure found us frequently together, and when school days were done and we had started our business life we often met. It was at this time that in the goodness of God I was able to speak to him of the One Whom I had found as my Saviour, but Who was as yet a stranger to him. He promptly treated such matters with lightness, and laughed at the idea of people making so much of religion as to make themselves peculiar; the result was that with tastes now so different a breach in our friendship occurred which, as time went on, gradually widened until we were far apart.

Now, after some years, in response to a message desiring me to see him, I found my companion in many a frolic, ill—so ill that the doctor had given up hope of his getting better—and lying there helpless, with time and opportunity to think, he had found that the world, the place of his pleasures, was fast slipping from his grasp, and he had no hope beyond; and so in his distress he sought relief by turning to the chum of earlier days, who had spoken to him of Christ and salvation—of life and death.

With others I shared the privilege of telling a willing listener the story—so old, but ever new—and his heart opened to it as the flower to the morning sun. It was his extremity and God’s

opportunity. In implicit confidence he turned to Christ, a lost, guilty, undone sinner, and learnt that in Him God's grace brought salvation; and peace and rest possessed his soul.

The evening before he passed away I sat by his bedside—we were chums again, with much of common interest; now we talked together of the love that God has to us and of the manifestation of that wonderful love in the gift and death of Jesus, until heaven's joys seemed very real and Jesus Himself drew near and our hearts rejoiced. But then I had to go. We were to meet no more on earth. As I rose to say farewell and held his wasted hand, he said, as best he could, "Good-bye, old chap; *one thing gets over me—that after all I've been, He welcomed me!* I served the devil well, so many years, and now at the end of all, when I cannot do the least for Him, ill and helpless and about to die, *just as I am, He receives me!*"

He could say no more, but tears of gratitude and gladness poured down the cheeks of my happy chum—and I went on my way with a deepened sense of the greatness of the grace of a Saviour-God.

C. S. B.

THE SEALING AND FILLING OF THE SPIRIT.

AN ANSWER TO A LETTER OF INQUIRY.

YOU ask, dear brother, "What is your reading of Acts XIX. 2?" and say, "Acts II. 4 and Acts IV. 8 show that Peter had more than one filling."

Now you must clearly understand that I am no teacher, nor am I by any means well up in

Scripture; but it is doubtless well for us to bear in mind that neither Old Testament saints, nor even the saints who were with the Lord when He was down here, were sealed or indwelt by the Holy Ghost. In fact, none were until Acts II. "For the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John VII. 39). The Holy Spirit used to come "upon" Old Testament saints, and they prophesied. For instance, He came "upon" King Saul and he prophesied (1 Sam. x. 10, etc.), but He did not abide always with him or any other Old Testament saint. Even David said, "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me"; but of course *we* could not pray thus, for our Lord has said, "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may *abide* with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth . . . for He dwelleth *with* you, and shall be *in* you" (John XIV. 16, 17).

Now this promise was fulfilled in Acts II., when the Holy Ghost came down and baptized all believers into one body—the Church. All these believers had been Jews, but now they were indwelt by the Holy Spirit they were really and truly Christians. So at the present time all true believers are "sealed" or indwelt by the Holy Ghost (Eph. I. 13), and are so added *to* the already baptized Body.

There is no repetition of baptism of believers into the Body of Christ, and there is no withdrawal of the Spirit from one who is "sealed" or indwelt by Him. "And He shall abide with you for ever." But He is *grieved* by what *man* may call "small" sins of any kind. May God deliver you and me from thus grieving Him!

We don't get, I think, any mention of Gentile

believers "indwelt" by the Holy Ghost until Acts x. 44, 45, hence, I suppose, the ignorance of the saints at Ephesus, as shown in Acts xix. 2. With regard to Acts ii. 4 and Acts iv. 8, and your remark that these scriptures "showed that Peter had more than one filling," I don't think it should be put quite like that, as we must remember that the *normal state* of a Christian is *being "filled"* by the Holy Ghost (Acts ii. 4); but it is much to be feared we are not, at times, in our normal condition, hence the admonition, "Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. v. 18).

Possibly it may be well to recapitulate a little. The Holy Ghost used to come "upon" Old Testament saints, also "upon" those saints who lived during our Lord's sojourn on earth, and it was their privilege sometimes to be "filled," but they were not indwelt by Him. On the contrary, New Testament saints, i.e. since Pentecost, have been indwelt by the Holy Ghost, and it is our privilege to be "filled" as well. The Holy Ghost also dwells in the Church corporately.

The Church is Christ's Body. So we are united to Him, our Head, in the glory, and also to each other down here, "for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (Eph. v. 30), "and every one members one of another" (Rom. xii. 5).

If these truths were known and acted upon by all Christians, dear brother, what a blessed state of things would result! There would be no more isms and no more divisions! C. P. W. N.

"SINCE Thou hast borne sin's heavy load,
 My guilty fear is o'er ;
 Made Thine, by virtue of Thy blood,
 I'm sealed for evermore."

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

WRONG THOUGHTS: HOW RIGHTED.

“DO you believe that God loves you?” was the question addressed to me when I was in the deepest anxiety to get saved.

“No,” I answered most emphatically. “How could God love such a sinner as I am? If God gave me what my sins deserved, He would put me into hell fire.”

I had a strong sense of condemnation in my conscience, and could understand the justice of God dealing with me as my sins deserved, but I had no knowledge of His love as displayed in Christ to sinners like myself.

In fact, I believed it was only good people God loved. Conscience and experience alike told me I was not good. I could not deceive myself on that point. I tried to make myself good, but was heartbroken to find I had no power in myself to do so. The evil propensities were too strong for me, and constantly overcame every good desire.

I was under the false impression from childhood that if I was good God would love me; hence my efforts to make myself what I thought He would like me to be. I learned afterwards it was all because I did not know God's love.

“Christ died for the ungodly.” And the death of Christ for such is the fullest expression of the love of God. But it was for the “**UNGODLY**,” not for the good or the righteous or for those

who could make themselves better in any way. An ungodly man is a man who lives without God and in disregard of God. Such all are by nature. I had

WRONG THOUGHTS OF GOD.

Wrong thoughts of God are at the bottom of the misery of most people. Besides, they are at the bottom of every false system of religion. God says, by the lips of David, "I hate thoughts." Man's thoughts lead him astray from God. No wonder God hates them. He wants to win man. He wants men to have right thoughts of Himself. Right thoughts in the minds of men are really God's thoughts. God's thoughts when allowed their place in the mind always displace man's thoughts.

Naaman, though afflicted with leprosy, showed his self-importance and vanity when he said, "I thought he would come to me . . . and strike his hand over the place." He came to get cured of his malady, but he came not only in the wrong way, he came with wrong thoughts. No medical authority of any reputation would have allowed a patient his own thoughts for one moment. *Naaman's thoughts made him come in the wrong way*, and therefore hindered him from getting the blessing as soon as he might.

When he gave up his own thoughts and became as simple and as trustful as a little child, he got the blessing. When he got the blessing he did not say, "*I thought*," but "Behold, now *I KNOW* that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel." What a mighty revolution, and all by the acceptance of God's thoughts!

It puts me in remembrance of a story I once

read about a man crossing to America. As he stood on the vessel *he thought* he saw an approaching storm cloud. This filled his mind with unrest until he learned to his great surprise from one of the officers that the storm cloud was not approaching. It had burst and spent itself far behind the vessel.

The dismay that filled the man's mind was the result of wrong thoughts. The officer, who knew more than he about storm clouds, gave him right thoughts which cleared his troubled mind and set him at perfect peace. The officer's thoughts displaced his thoughts. The result was the enjoyment of peace. In the same way the sin-distressed soul learns God's thoughts toward him in Christ, and rests in perfect peace.

THE IGNORANCE OF THE BIRDS.

One specially hard, long winter, when the country was covered with frozen snow for eight weeks, many birds died through want of food. Every morning we used to put plenty of warm food behind our breakfast parlour so that my family and myself might enjoy the luxury of seeing the hungry birds get a hearty meal, and all be reminded of the Saviour's words, "God feedeth them."

We observed that on the tree behind the house the crows would perch themselves, stretch their necks, look down with a hungry eye at the provision ; but, unlike the sparrows, they never came down to partake of what they were so much in need of, and what it only afforded us the greatest pleasure to give.

In looking at them I often exclaimed: "How like those birds are to men who will not have

the Gospel they are in the direst need of; the Gospel which God is so pleased for men to appropriate to themselves, as needy, helpless sinners." Then would I say again: "Oh, that those silly birds only knew the real joy it would give me to see them partake freely of what my pitying care has provided for them! They need not fear me."

They did not know my thoughts, and could not understand my care for them. Hence their dread of coming down to partake of what would have saved them from death, and kept them in the enjoyment of life.

How is it that man is afraid of his beneficent Creator? Has He not showered down blessings more innumerable than the hairs of our head? Is not sin the answer? Sin has made man afraid of God. *Yet man's very sin has been an occasion for God to show greater love to man than He possibly could have done had man not sinned.*

He hates sin with a perfect hatred, because it has deprived Him of the confidence of man, His creature, made in His image and likeness! His desire for the restoration of man's confidence is beyond all expression, save as the cross of His Son has expressed it.

That He might put away sin and lay a right foundation whereby He might bring man back to Himself, and get the affection of man's heart, He came down Himself to men in flesh.

"GOD WAS IN CHRIST"

Wonder of wonders! Mystery of mysteries! Insolvable to all natural intelligence! Of every other event it is the most momentous, most significant. A real MAN but very God, was Jesus

Christ our Lord. Though He was of the seed of David according to the flesh, yet He was over all, "GOD blessed for ever." If He was David's Son, yet was He not David's Lord? If He was David's offspring, yet was He not THE ROOT of David? The second Man was the Lord from heaven.

"Though in a human form He trod,
Still was the Man Almighty God
In glory of His own . . ."

As a Man He was made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem them that were under the law. Therefore "He was made *a curse for us.*" This is substitution, without which there could be no true Gospel.

He came not to charge home the offences that men had done against Him, but to bear the punishment due to them. What other monarch ever acted toward rebels thus? This was all to dissipate the darkness of men's minds about Him, and bring them out of the ignorance of their natural minds into the marvellous light of His own mind with regard to them.

All the wrong that man has done against Him, God has found a righteous answer for in the atoning sacrifice. Thus has He shown His love. It is undeserved by rebel man. It comes down to us as unmerited favour, which is the purest grace. It would not be grace if I deserved it. Because I do *not* deserve it, it is grace to me.

What a provision for us, but what cost to God! How deeply we are indebted to Him! As we contemplate our sins, and contemplate His love in meeting those sins in the death of His Only Begotten Son, should it not fill us with wonder, admiration and praise?

Sin has been an outrage against Him, and an insult to the justice of His government of this world, of which each one of us is a responsible subject. Sin is no trifle. Each one of us has failed most grievously in the place of trust He has set us in. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Conscience and experience alike are in fullest accord with this statement of Holy Writ. Sin is darkness and death and departure from God. "Her guests are in the depths of hell."

The Shorter Catechism says: "Man's chief end is to glorify [really make much of] God and enjoy Him for ever." Splendid definition of the end for which man was created! But has man made much of God, and thus fulfilled his mission in this sphere? Has he not, instead, made much of himself and forgotten God? Has he not lived in utter disregard of His just claims upon him? Has he not too often been ungrateful and unthankful? Has he not often blasphemed His beneficent Creator and served the creature more?

It was said of the lofty, high-minded king of Babylon, "The God in Whose hand thy breath is *thou hast not glorified.*" This solemn charge covered the entirety of that proud boaster's life. In consequence, the doom of his kingdom was written in that strange, mysterious handwriting on the wall, "THOU ART WEIGHED IN THE BALANCES, AND FOUND WANTING."

Kind reader, if God laid you on a dying bed, and put all your lifetime of mercies and opportunities in the balance with your sins of utter neglect, ingratitude, and disregard of God, think you would it be otherwise with you? Steady

yourself! Think seriously! Answer to Him with Whom you have to do, and Whom you must surely meet!

Think of the cost to God for your salvation! He gave His own Son. He could not give more. Less would not meet the gravity of your condition. Think of the greatness of the salvation wrought out by His dying agony, by the deep, deep, unspoken anguish of His holy soul! Did all this mean nothing? Is all this to go for nothing, so far as you are concerned?

The infinite love of the Son of God hanging on that cross was the expression of God's thought of you. Nowhere does His mighty voice speak more loudly, both in holy hatred against sin and in love to you the sinner. If you accept His atoning sacrifice for your sins, it will for ever clear you of all charge of sin. It will change your mind about God completely.

You will feel that nothing but absolute self-abasement becomes you in the presence of such marvellous undeserved favour. You will no longer have hard thoughts of God. You will learn His love to you, and as the happy result, *you will love Him.*

Your heart will be filled with gratitude, and your lips with praise; your life hereafter will be for the glorification of God and not of yourself. Your body, that may have been the slave of the foulest lusts under Satan's influence, will gladly be presented to God, a living sacrifice, as "not your own." Thus your life will be a testimony to your friends of what great things the Lord has done for you. It will show that miracles are still being performed of which your new and consecrated life will be an undeniable

witness. The moral change in you will be an unanswerable argument against the insidious, blatant infidelity of these days. You may not be able to explain the change in so many words, but to you, at least, the change will be as real as it was to the man who said: "Whether He be a sinner or no, ONE THING I KNOW, THAT WHEREAS I WAS BLIND NOW I SEE." P. W.

REMORSE NOT REPENTANCE.

SELDOM does a soul acknowledge with absolute conviction the certain end of a life of sin. Usually there is some hope of heaven; often enough, alas! a groundless hope, founded on something else besides the finished work and the atoning merits of the blood of the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But with all seriousness, and, at times, with an almost tragic manner, a sad life-story was told to me; a life-story I dare not pen, ending with these awful words, "*I'm going down to hell!*"

There was no thought of making a confession to me of her sins; it would have been useless if there had been such a thing in her mind, as absolution is with no man on earth (and with Christ only in heaven); but spontaneously, strangely, and suddenly as an accident occurs, was this life-history narrated.

I looked her in the face.

"It is perfectly true," I assented with earnestness, "you are going down to hell. You know it. There is but one end to a life of sin if unforgiven. Yet to you, vile as you confess

yourself to be, there is forgiveness offered. The same Saviour Who went to Sychar's well to meet such a one as yourself, and Who saved her, would save you. He has died for sinners. His precious blood can cleanse you from all sin. He will receive you now, and He alone can save you from judgment. You need not go to hell!"

My reply was evidently unexpected, and, taken aback, she replied—

"Ah! I know that Christ can save."

She had heard of Him and His love, and I wondered if she realized the doom she anticipated. I endeavoured to bring her to see how great is the salvation offered, and the wondrous love of the Saviour in giving His life that "who-soever believeth" may be saved.

Alas! it was all too evident that the misery of sin was accepted without repentance. Yet it was sweet to declare the love of God and the wondrous grace of His beloved Son, however it may have been taken; and who can tell but that the word of peace and pardon may have sunk into that poor withered heart?

To all appearance she went forth again, wandering away from God, like a wandering star, and, if still without repentance, unto the blackness of darkness for ever, a lost soul. Lost from God. "Going to hell!" How solemn, yet how real her words sounded!

Cain had gone that way, out of the presence of God, out into the land of wandering, as the name implies, the land of Nod. And all mankind, like him, have gone astray, turned "to his own way." Yes, all have *sinned* and come short of the glory of God (see Rom. III. and Is. LIII.)

Yet to His wandering creatures the blessed God has sent forth His Son to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke XIX. 10). How great His love as expressed in Jesus, the Son of Man, Who revealed the heart of God, and made a way back to God for us by bearing the judgment of sin, suffering for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.

How great the rejoicing in heaven over one sinner that repenteth; over one who believes the love that God has shown in the gift of His Son to die for sinners!

Dear reader, are you aware of God's love to you? Are you lost or found?

Are you, like the poor woman who confessed she was going down to hell, wandering aimlessly on the broad road that leads to destruction?

God cares for you; He delighteth not in the death of the sinner, nor in his judgment. It is God's strange work (Isa. XXVIII. 21).

Read that wonderful account of divine grace in Luke xv. How the shepherd rejoices over the found sheep, the woman over the found silver, the father over the found son.

What a picture! God the Son, God the Spirit, and God the Father, rejoicing over the repentant, recovered wanderer. What caused the prodigal to come back to his father? It was his father's goodness and mercy.

May the same goodness lead some reader to repentance (Rom. II. 4).

L. O. L.

“Return, O wanderer, to thy home,
 'Tis madness to delay;
 There are no pardons in the tomb,
 And brief is mercy's stay.”

THE CALL OF GRACE.

“Look unto Me, and be ye saved.”

WHAT a most unaccountable thing grace is! Let us suppose a case by way of illustration. A burglar has broken into a nobleman's residence. He has managed to get safely off the premises, but a dense fog has come on, and in trying to make his way out of the immense park he misses the footpath (specially chosen for noiseless walking on the grass) and wanders about, he knows not where.

Weary and disappointed, he suddenly thinks he hears a human voice. Standing still, he listens; and then, though apparently at some little distance, he distinctly hears these words: *“You have lost your way; come in this direction and I will deliver you from your difficulty.”*

Like a frightened hare, he takes to his heels and runs with all his might. But where? Ah, he is lost! First he falls headlong heavily, then he collides with a tree and bruises himself sorely. His alarm increases, and once more he stands to catch breath. “What is that?” he gasps out to himself in a subdued whisper. “If it isn't the same voice again!” But it now says, *“I can see you have lost your way; I know of dangers which you do not. I feel for you in your bruised condition. But come in this direction, and I will not only deliver you from your peril, but heal your bruises into the bargain.”*

Once more he darts off, trying to take a little more care, but suddenly finds himself in the fish-pond, up to his waist in mud and water. No hunted deer from that park ever panted more

painfully. He halts by compulsion. He cannot help himself; the next step might land him in some mud hole and be his death. Suddenly the same voice again breaks the horrid silence: "*I know exactly how it stands with you. I see your danger. I know all you have been doing to-night. But I am the owner of the residence, and I desire to forgive you. Stand still, and if you wish I will bring a light and come to you. I will most certainly save you from your predicament. Shall I come?*" Somehow, the burglar thinks, there is an assuring tone in that voice. And out comes his response, "Yes, my lord, come. I am prepared to tell you the worst. Come as quickly as you can."

Do you say, What nobleman on earth would so patiently make offer after offer to one he knew had been robbing him? Ah! you must look higher for that. There is a "Nobleman" (Luke xix. 12) Who knows all the things that ever you did, and says to you, as tenderly as ever, as you read these lines, "Look unto Me and be ye saved." He lets you know that He sees your danger, and the terrible character of it. He knows your deeds and the awful consequences of same; knows that you have been robbing him of the years of life He claims as His, and spending it for yourself and His enemy, but that He has been to the cross to meet the question of what was righteously due to the one who believes on Him. The grace of God His Father was behind it. By the grace of God He tasted death for every man. You have but to confess your sins, and call upon Him Who suffered for sins and rose again, in order that salvation shall be yours! For "who-soever shall call upon the Name of the Lord

shall be saved." Yes, there it stands waiting for your response. "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth : for I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. XLV. 22).

What claims could that burglar plead for the benefits offered? None whatever. It was all grace—that is, it was all without one merit on his side. And it is, says the Apostle, "by grace ye are saved . . . not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. II. 8, 9).

Boasting is excluded. "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is DEATH. The wages of sin is DEATH: but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. VI. 21–23). The death we deserved, Christ, by the grace of God, tasted. The eternal life we did not deserve, grace makes ours in Christ risen and glorified. We turn from ourselves to Christ, and not only get the forgiveness of our sins through His precious blood, but the God of all grace has called us to His own eternal glory by Christ Jesus (1 Peter v. 10).

What say you, my reader, to such grace? He knows your sinful wanderings, but is calling you still. Is it not high time you responded to that call? "Truly as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between [thee] and death" (1 Sam. xx. 3). But blessed be God, there is but a step between thee and forgiveness, and peace and life everlasting. God give you to take it. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. XIV. 12).

GEO. C.

SETTLED ACCEPTANCE AND A
FLUCTUATING EXPERIENCE.

“**A**S He is, so are we in this world,” “We are in Him that is true” (1 John iv. 17; v. 20). Nothing in any measure short of this could avail. The man who is not in Christ is in his sins. There is no middle ground. You must either be in Christ or out of Him. There is no such thing as being *partly* in Christ. *If there is a single hair-breadth between you and Christ, you are in an actual state of wrath and condemnation.* But, on the other hand, if you are in Him, then are you “as He is” before God, and so accounted in the presence of infinite holiness. Such is the plain teaching of the Word of God. “Ye are complete in Him”—“accepted in the Beloved”—“members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.” “He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit” (1 Cor. vi. 17; Eph. i. 6, v. 30; Col. ii. 10). Now, it is not possible that the Head can be in one degree of acceptance and the members in another. No; the Head and the members are one. God counts them one; and, therefore, they are one. This truth is at once the ground of the loftiest confidence and of the most profound humility. It imparts the fullest assurance of “boldness in the day of judgment,” inasmuch as it is not possible that aught can be laid to the charge of Him with Whom we are united. It imparts the deep sense of our own nothingness, inasmuch as our union with Christ is founded upon reaching the end of all hope in man accord-

ing to the flesh, and the utter abolition of all his claims and pretensions.

Since, therefore, the Head and the members are viewed in the same position of infinite favour and acceptance before God, it is perfectly evident that all the members stand in one acceptance, in one salvation, in one life, in one righteousness. There are no degrees in justification. The babe in Christ stands in the same justification as the saint of fifty years' experience. The one is "in Christ," and so is the other; and this, as it is the only ground of life, so it is the only ground of justification. There are not two kinds of life, neither are there two kinds of justification. No doubt there are various measures of enjoyment of this justification—various degrees in the knowledge of its fulness and extent—various degrees in the ability to exhibit its powers upon the heart and life; and these things are frequently confounded with the justification itself, which, as being divine, is necessarily eternal, absolute, unvarying, entirely unaffected by the fluctuation of human feeling and experience.

But, further, there is no such thing as progress in justification. The believer is not more justified to-day than he was yesterday; nor will he be more justified to-morrow than he is to-day; yea, a soul who is "in Christ Jesus" is as completely justified as if he were before the throne. He is "*complete* in Christ." He is "*as*" Christ. *He is, on Christ's own authority, "clean every whit"* (John XIII. 10). What more could he be at this side of the glory? He may, and—if he walks in the Spirit—will, make progress in the sense and enjoyment of this glorious reality; but, as to the thing itself, the moment, by the

power of the Holy Ghost, he believed the Gospel, he passed from a positive state of unrighteousness and condemnation into a positive state of righteousness and acceptance. C. H. M.

PEACE.

HE maketh peace, the glorious work is done,
 And that which could disturb is ever gone,
 He gave Himself for those by sin defiled,
 And enemies have now been reconciled.

He maketh peace.

He maketh peace, the wound not slightly healed,
 Nothing unsound beneath, no sin concealed ;
 For He Who knew no sin, was yet the One
 Made sin for us, God's well-beloved Son.

He maketh peace.

He preacheth peace to those far off and near ;
 How beautiful His feet, who still doth bear
 Good tidings, published on the mountains high,
 And calls to those far off, to bring them nigh.

He preacheth peace.

He preacheth peace, peace through His cross to-day,
 Ye troubled ones, O turn without delay,
 Tidings of light and peace to you He brings,
 Shows how that light amidst your darkness springs.

He preacheth peace.

He is our peace, in Him 'tis all secure,
 In Him it now subsists and must endure ;
 Peace made and preached, and peace in Him possessed,
 What welcome news is this to souls oppressed !

He is our peace.

He is our peace ; O may our souls repose
 In Him, our Lord, Who daily grace bestows
 And seeks to draw us to His trusted side,
 That we may ever in His love abide.

He is our peace.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.



THE SWORD AND THE SACRIFICE.

1 CHRON. XXI. 1-30.

DAVID had to choose between three things: either three years' famine, or for three months to fall before his enemies, or three days to have the sword of the Lord and the angel of the Lord destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel. David said: "Let me fall now into the hand of the Lord; for very great are His mercies: but let me not fall into the hands of man." He knew God better than he knew man after all. It is a great thing to fall into the hands of God.

Then there came an angel with a drawn sword. The question has been raised by infidels, Where were the people in all this? But the people had departed as well as the king. Depend upon it, not only had the king departed from God, but the people had largely departed too. They never really gave up idolatry; they held to it secretly, even in the days of David and Solomon. It is natural to people to be idolaters; we are in the presence of it now, of Babylonish idolatry. Roman Catholicism is Babylonish idolatry pure and simple, worshipping the creature more than the Creator, a piece of bread or the most blessed among women. No doubt these people were suffering for their own sins as well as David's sin.

There was the *sword*. Listen: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." There it is, like a sword you cannot get away from. What Satan seeks to do is to divert you from that. Young woman, Satan has succeeded in diverting you from thinking of the judgment of God by something of far less consequence; you would rather have a feather in your hat, or some companionship here, than the Saviour. Judgment is hanging over your head. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

Here was a farmer threshing wheat. He lifted up his eyes, and when once he had done that, it was all over with the threshing. If you have never had your eyes open to see the sword of the Lord, I pray God you may see to-night. Suppose you were bound to your bed to-night, and right over it a glittering sword was hanging by just a single thread. Would it fascinate you? Would you sleep? No, no! When God opens the eyes of a sinner to see the judgment, it is all over with business and pleasure. Satan seeks to divert people from it, but the sword is there. Ornan and his four sons hid themselves.

David is a type in one way of the Lord Jesus Christ. Of course, there he is, and he stands for himself, a poor sinful man, but the Spirit of God took him up to pen some of the most beautiful psalms—psalms that speak of Jesus bearing the judgment of His people. Psalm XXII. was written by David, where you get what Jesus felt on the cross far more than you do in the gospels. David was the man used of God to bring forth that side of things. In Psalm XXII. it could not possibly be David speaking of himself, he is speaking of

the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.

In our chapter we have him as a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, though all types fail. What we find here is, he stands in the breach. In one of the prophets there is a verse that runs like this: "I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none." Some one must stand in the breach, and the blessed Lord Jesus Christ is the one to do it, David's son, and David's Lord because He is the Son of God. In our chapter here, David says to God: "Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? Even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed: but as for these sheep, what have they done? *Let Thine hand, I pray thee, O Lord my God, be on me.*"

Think of Jesus. He came down here and ever lived for the pleasure of God, traced His beautiful way under the eye of God, and established His title to live. There was no stain of sin there, infinitely holy and absolutely perfect; and yet when He came to the cross there was the sword of judgment, there was the judgment we deserved. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Jesus stood in the breach; God found a man to keep out the plague—it was His own blessed Son. On yonder cross He said: "*Let Thine hand, I pray Thee, O Lord My God, be on Me.*" It is said in the Psalms that He took His people's sins and called them His own. He was perfectly sinless or He could not have done it. Heavy was the hand of God on Jesus when He was on

yonder cross. Come here and learn what sin is by the sorrows of Jesus; see the holiness of God by the terribly bitter cry that came from His lips: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Was there ever a cry like that, ever anguish like that? "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? Why art Thou so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring?" There is no answer. "O My God, I cry in the day-time, but Thou hearest not: and in the night-season, and there is no rest for me." No answer. Oh, was there ever sorrow like that?

Can you measure the ineffable communion in which He dwelt here for thirty-three years, living in the sunshine and favour of God? He never relieved a man yet but He felt it in His spirit, "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." He could look up to heaven and sigh deeply; it was not an act of divine power simply, but He felt it all. On He went, "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief"; He could say, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." We see Him weeping over Jerusalem—poor Jerusalem!—sleeping that sleep of guilty indifference. There, across that valley, behold the blessed Lord Jesus weeping in agony and praying more earnestly. How hard man's heart is! There were the people sleeping on! They had witnessed all His mighty acts, seen all the goodness of God in that blessed Person, and He had wept over Jerusalem, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes."

Now in the cold midnight hour He weeps before the Father's face, "and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." The cup was there, though He did not drink it there. Satan was crossing His path and saying, "If You go this way, You will feel my power." He brushes Satan's suggestion aside, and sees the Father's power and the Father's hand. The flaming sword was there—the sword of judgment. "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." It was not possible; there was no other way of sheathing the sword. He must go on to Calvary's cross, and there on Calvary's cross be numbered with the transgressors.

Oh, that blessed Lord Jesus! Did you ever trace Him? What holy ground is this! He was nailed to Calvary's cross. We are told in history, when prisoners were nailed in this way, how they writhed and cursed their tormentors. *This* blessed One never cursed His tormentors. The soldiers must have been awe-stricken, and may well have whispered, "Who is this?" "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth."

They nailed His hands to the cross, His blessed hands. Think of your hands, man! God knows what they have done. Think of what His hands had done: they had never been outstretched for Himself. Take His feet; they will never walk here again; they were nailed to the cross. Think of where your feet have carried you! Think of His hands, His feet! There they are uplifted. Then His lips move: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." He is with the Father still. Is that Jesus? Yes, that

is Jesus. "Father, forgive them." Perhaps they were touched for a moment, but now in cold-hearted selfishness they gamble over His clothes. "They parted My raiment among them, and for My vesture they did cast lots." They were gambling over His garments in the presence of the sufferings of Jesus! Poor, wretched man!

The bulls of Bashan come round and begin to taunt Him: they have got the Scriptures on their phylacteries. "He trusted on Jehovah that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him." Oh, that blessed Saviour! He trusted God through all the agony of the cross, through the forsaking, through death; yes, He trusted Him all through.

"If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him." He will stay there. His disciples forsake Him, and then darkness comes, thick darkness. "Let Thine hand, I pray thee, O Lord my God, be upon me," said David. The hand of God was upon Jesus in that bitter hour. Oh, David, if the hand of God comes upon you it will crush you; but it came on Jesus. Twice over in Psalm xxii. He says, "Be not far from me." Then He has to say at last, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Oh, beloved friends, I know why; He took my place, He bore my judgment, bless His holy name! Do I love Him—love Jesus? Why, of course I do. He took my place. The judgment I deserved fell on Him, overwhelmed Him in that bitter hour. By that act He won my heart. I have found people to love me here, and who would do *anything* for me; but He has done for me as no one else could. We have to say to Him, "O, Jesus Lord, who loved me like to Thee?"

He was the Altar and the Sacrifice. David comes to Ornan, he had hid himself. How can you go on threshing your wheat when the sword of judgment is over you? May God open your eyes to see it. When David drew near he came out of his hiding-place, and bowed at his feet. Bow down at the blessed feet of Jesus the Lord to-night, Who has been to the cross as the sacrifice, and Who has sheathed the sword for ever. It all speaks of Christ.

David said to Ornan, "Grant me the place of this threshing-floor," etc.; and Ornan said unto David, "Take it to thee. . . . I give it all." "No," says David, "I will pay the full price for it," and he paid six hundred shekels of gold; on the threshing-floor he put the sacrifice. Christ is both the Sacrifice and the Altar. It was near the very spot where the ram was caught by its horns in the thicket. That marks the beauty of Scripture. "God will provide Himself a lamb." On that very spot this altar was built and the sacrifice was there: God accepted the sacrifice. If God accepts the sacrifice the sword is sheathed for ever. The *accepted sacrifice* and the *sheathed sword* is the story of this chapter.

How does that apply to me? I am going to tell you the best part of it now. You cannot get resurrection in the type. How do I know the sword is sheathed? How do I know the sacrifice is accepted? Because God has raised the One Who was the sacrifice and He is in the presence of God, a risen Christ. The sword is sheathed for ever. It is in the presence of God Who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, and in the presence of Jesus Who was raised, that you know the sword is sheathed for ever. It is not

at the foot of the cross that your burden rolls away, but at the feet of the Saviour Who was on the cross. The sword is sheathed for ever, and it is *peace*, PEACE, PEACE!

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

The sacrifice has been accepted because the Person Who was the sacrifice has been raised. Beloved friends, there is no other God but the God Who raised Him; and no other Christ to trust but the Christ Who has been raised. You need to get into the presence of God Who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. He has accepted the sacrifice; the sword is sheathed.

W. J.

JOHN BERRIDGE'S MISTAKE.

“MY desire and intention in this letter is to inform you what the Lord has lately done for my soul. In order to do this it may be needful to give a little previous information of my manner of life from my youth up to the present time.

“When I was about the age of fourteen, God was pleased to show me that I was a sinner, and that I must be ‘born again’ before I could enter into His kingdom. Accordingly I betook myself to reading, praying, and watching, and was enabled thereby to make some progress, as I flattered myself, in religion. In this manner I went on, though not always with the same diligence, till about a year ago. I thought myself on the right way to heaven, though as yet

I was wholly out of the way, and imagined I was travelling towards Zion, though I had never set my face thitherward. Indeed, God would have shown me that I was wrong by not owning my ministry; but I paid no regard to this for a long time, imputing my want of success to the naughty hearts of my hearers, and not to my own naughty and unscriptural doctrine.

“You may ask, perhaps, ‘What was my doctrine?’ Why, it was the doctrine that every man naturally holds whilst he continues in an unregenerated state, that we are to be justified partly by our faith and partly by our works. This doctrine I preached for six years at a curacy which I served from college, and though I took some extraordinary pains, and pressed sanctification very earnestly, yet the people continued un-sanctified as before, and not one soul was brought to Christ. There was, indeed, a little more of the form of religion in the parish, but not anything of its power.

“Now some secret misgivings arose in my mind that I was not right myself. (This happened about Christmas last.) These misgivings grew stronger, and at last very painful. After about ten days, as I was sitting in my house one morning and musing on a text of Scripture, the following words were darted into my mind, and seemed, indeed, like a voice from heaven: ‘Cease from thine own works.’ Before I heard these words my mind was in a very unusual calm; but as soon as I heard them my soul was in a tempest directly, and tears flowed from my eyes like a torrent. The scales fell from my eyes immediately, and now I clearly saw the rock I had been splitting upon for nearly thirty years.

“Do you ask what this rock was? It was some secret reliance on my own works for salvation. ‘Doing, doing, doing.’

“I had hoped to be saved partly in my own name, and partly in Christ’s name, partly through my own works, and partly through Christ’s mercies: though I am told we are saved through faith, not of works (Eph. II. 8, 9).

“I hoped to make myself acceptable to God partly through my own good works: though we are told we are accepted in the Beloved (Eph. I. 6). I hoped to make my peace with God partly through my own obedience to the law: though I am told that peace is only to be had by faith (Rom. v. 1). I hoped to make myself a child of God by sanctification: though we are told we are made children of God by faith in Jesus Christ (Gal. III. 23). Thus I stumbled and fell. In short, to use a homely similitude, I put the justice of God into one scale, and as many good works of my own as I could into the other: and when I found, as I always did, my own good works not being a balance to the Divine justice, I then threw in Christ as a makeweight. And this every one really does, who hopes for salvation partly by doing what he can for himself, and relying on Christ for the rest.”

• Reader, Christ will either be a whole Saviour or none at all.

“For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Rom. x. 2, 3).

J. BERRIDGE.

THE MINERS' MESSAGE.

SAD beyond description is the pitiful story of the recent Hamstead Colliery disaster; yet from that grim death-chamber has come a stirring testimony which has gone through the whole world. It has found an echo in the heart of many a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and has doubtless spoken in its solemn simplicity to the unconverted.

Briefly the facts are these. Shortly after five o'clock on Wednesday evening, 4 March, 1908, smoke was seen issuing from a shaft, and immediately men below were warned that something was wrong. A few minutes later three or four men who had just descended were hauled to the surface, and they brought the serious report that a fire had broken out down below, and the retreat of their twenty-eight comrades below had been cut off.

Rescue parties were immediately formed and attempted to descend. They made their way to the utmost limit of safety down the different shafts; but it was a hopeless task, and the cage soon reappeared at the pit-brow with the men almost insensible through the ordeal they had heroically faced.

But why should a terrible story be retold here? Because there is presented a striking picture of the real state of the unconverted soul. In a helpless and hopeless condition, without any resources and in need of a saviour, the poor miners below depict the position of the sinner without God. All that is good and necessary for life is above, and they cannot reach it. All their devices are in vain, and they are in need of help

and deliverance apart from their own efforts entirely if their rescue is to be accomplished.

And does not the very spirit of the rescuers remind us of the devotedness of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son, Who came from above into this dark, sin-stricken scene of woe, Who laid aside His glory and descended even into the lowest depths of death that He might rescue and save poor helpless sinners from an eternity of woe?

The next day a fresh body of men descended, only to return to the surface with the same story of defeat. Darkness came on again, and sobbing women and children, who had hoped against hope, were gently led to their homes.

On Thursday night a band of rescuers again descended, two of whom managed to penetrate into the workings for a considerable distance. Realizing, however, that they were becoming exhausted, they turned back; but for one of them, Welby by name, it was too late, for he sank down completely worn out, while his companion had to reluctantly leave him to gain the cage in time to save his own life. It was soon found that poor Welby had perished, and on the following Tuesday, just as the darkness closed over the desolation of Hamstead Colliery, a mournful scene was enacted at the pit-head: the body of that brave rescuer, who had thus lost his life in his efforts to save the imprisoned men, was brought to the surface.

He had died for others, but his efforts had been unsuccessful. A noble death of self-sacrifice was his; and we are carried in thought to One Who in self-sacrifice voluntarily laid down His life. Blessed be God! His work was not

unsuccessful, but fruitful with eternal results. Ten thousand times ten thousand saved ones will sing throughout eternity the praises of Him Who loved them even unto death, and "gave Himself" for them. Shall *you* be one of that happy throng, dear reader?

A week passed, and then the worst was known, for fourteen of the missing men were found lying side by side on their faces, dead. Another day of search, and six more bodies were found; and here the searchers were greatly affected as they noticed chalked upon the door, close to where the six were lying, the words—

The Lord preserve us,
For we are all Trusting in Christ.

Under this they wrote their names.

TRUSTING IN CHRIST! Could anything have been more expressive or more comforting? To think of those poor fellows caught in a trap from which no escape was possible, facing a terrible death, with no hope of deliverance, yet calmly and simply to record the blessed fact that they were trusting in the mighty Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Their trust as they passed into eternity was in the only object worthy of confidence; nor was it in vain. Although temporal deliverance was not granted to them, a greater and even more blessed portion was theirs—to be transported into the presence of Him in Whom they trusted. Truly, "blessed is the man that trusteth in Him."

The absorbing consideration of those poor miners was not the *social-question* for time, but the *soul-question* for eternity. Let it be yours

to-day. Beware lest *you* are entrapped by the enemy into giving to the former the importance of the latter.

There is every reason why you should entrust your precious soul to Christ. Let us enumerate a few.

HE IS SO TRUSTWORTHY. God Himself has entrusted Him with the great work of Redemption, and so perfectly has He accomplished it, that God has raised Him from the dead and given Him glory, that *your* faith and hope might be in God.

HE IS THE *ONLY* SAVIOUR. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

IT IS VAIN TO TRUST IN MAN. For "none can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." Then "cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?"

YOU CANNOT SAVE YOURSELF, for God's Word says: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us."

YOUR NEED OF A SAVIOUR IS SO GREAT, and He is both willing and able to save. Trust, then, in the Lord Jesus Christ, Who *alone* can meet your need, for by His precious Blood *alone* your guilt can be removed, by His death *alone* can God righteously meet you in grace, and in Him *alone* can you be justified.

F. S. M.

THE WAY TO LIBERTY.

WHAT is it? There is only one answer—CHRIST. It is not to be found in struggles for reformation. Who is to tell you when you are what you ought to be? A flatterer may tell you that your ways are faultless. But God looks at the *heart*. Friends may all agree that your manners are charming. But what of your motives, your hidden springs? "Thou desirest truth in the *inward* parts" (Ps. LI. 6). God looks at the *intents* of the heart. And the God Who searches your ways, hears your words, knows your heart of hearts, and weighs you in His balance, proclaims that you "come short" of His glory. If you never find liberty until you can make yourself what you ought to be in His sight, liberty will *never* be yours—NEVER! If you are never free until you are free from the *presence* of indwelling sin, you will die a hopeless slave. But you may be free from all expectation of making better of it, free from its power.

It is Christ that makes free. "Stand fast," said the Apostle to the Galatians. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith *Christ has made us free*" (Gal. v. 1). If He has borne my sins and their full weight of judgment, I am *free* to look at my sins in that "marvellous light" (1 Peter II. 24; III. 18). If the sin I find in my flesh has been judged in *His* holy Person on the cross, I am free to expect no more good from the flesh, but free to judge it in the same "marvellous light" (Rom. VIII. 3).

If God has set Christ in glory before me, and tells me that all that He is is mine (1 Cor. I. 29-31) as God's unspeakable Gift (2 Cor. IX. 15),

I am free to look up to heaven and say, "*All, all I want is there.*" I am free to read my title to glory in the marvellous light of Him Who is there in the midst of that glory already. And He tells us even in the Old Testament the result of so looking. "They looked unto Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed" (Ps. xxxiv. 5). He exhorts them to *continue* looking. "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus (or *looking off unto Jesus*) the Author and Finisher of faith" (Heb. xii. 1, 2).

It is said that in the days of slavery in the Southern States of America, when a slave was escaping for his liberty, he had only one mark to guide him. He knew not a single friend in the country through which he was passing. He had studied no geography, and possessed no maps. If he had they would have been of little use, since, for fear of being captured, he had to hide in the day and travel by night. But he had one sure mark to guide him—THE POLE STAR. The North Polar Star was his only mark, but it was fixed and reliable. He knew that liberty was to be found in *that* direction only, and with his eye upon that Pole Star he hastened forward till he reached what he yearned for.

He regarded not the engrossments of others. "This one thing I do," he could say. So with the Christian, even after he has been set free here. He looks to Christ. He presses on to the place where Jesus is Who set him free, and to enjoy in His presence "the liberty of the glory of the children of God" (Rom. viii. 21).

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

SAVED BY A COMMA.

I READ the other day a story about the father of the present Czar of Russia. Briefly it was this. A certain well-known revolutionary was sentenced to life-imprisonment in Siberia. A plea for pardon was presented to the Czar, who after duly examining the papers wrote the following verdict: "*Pardon impossible, to be sent to Siberia,*" affixing his signature to his decision. The papers were left on his table, and the Czarina, happening to be passing through the room, glanced at them, and read the dread sentence given upon one well known to her. Moved with pity, she took a sharp penknife and erased the comma after the word impossible, and placed it after the word pardon. The sentence now read: "Pardon, impossible to be sent to Siberia." Later on, when questioned as to the sentence, and had pointed out to him how it read, the Czar stood by the written decision, and the rebel was pardoned. He owed his liberty to the change of place of a comma.

The illustration serves in a feeble way, both by similarity and by contrast, to show the present position of believers to-day and of those who either die unrepentant, or who will be left behind when the Lord Jesus comes for the Church, i.e. for all who truly belong to Him, who are therefore not rebels. I do not know if it was in *the heart of the Czar* to pardon, but who, feeling it

necessary in the interests of justice, and to maintain the integrity of the throne, had to pass the sentence of banishment for life on this rebel, and found no way to reconcile the two things; but I *do* know that God's desire is toward every rebel of the human race. He is declared indeed to be—

A God ready to pardon (Neh. ix. 17; Ps. lxxxvi. 5). And not only so; He has found a way to maintain His justice and righteousness consistently with His own holy nature. It is this that is declared in the gospel. "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). Against one who, truly repenting, puts in a plea for pardon, through the precious blood of Jesus, there is absolutely no charge left. Such a one stands in a much safer position than the man referred to, when the Czarina out of pity changed the position of the comma. Such a one can never be banished to hell. The sentence reads—

"PARDONED: IMPOSSIBLE TO SEND HIM TO HELL."

Another has suffered for his sins and *God is satisfied*. God in *righteousness* stands by the *written* decision: "Thus it is *written*, and thus it *behoved* Christ to *suffer*, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations" (Luke xxiv. 46, 47).

Does my reader believe this? That at *this* moment, and indeed for nearly two thousand years, God's attitude towards men has been the same? The secret lies in those words,

"IT BEHOVED CHRIST TO SUFFER."

What untold grace and love! Untold so far as *our* words can express, but all told out in the

DEATH OF JESUS.

It is impossible for a soul trusting in Him to be banished to hell; impossible to come under the judgment of a righteous and holy God. Why? Because that judgment has been fully meted out to the Sinless One, to Him Who alone was competent to take up the question of sin in His Holy Person, settle it for God and man and come out of it. He "rose from the dead the third day"—a triumphant Saviour; and it is *impossible* for a soul who really trusts in that risen and glorified Saviour to be banished in judgment; as impossible as it is for that Saviour to go again into the judgment He exhausted on the believer's account.

If doubting souls should read these lines, I pray that they may be led to see how perfectly, how fully God has declared His love in the gift of His Son, and how *impossible* it is for a poor repentant sinner, turning to Him now in the day of His grace, to be turned empty away. *After such a proof*, do not insult Him by turning yourself away. Do not slight and dishonour Him by doubting for a moment that His desire toward you is eternal blessing.

Now just a word of warning to close. It is clear from the Scriptures that God will not bear with man's rebellion for ever. It is due to Christ that His enemies be made His footstool (Ps. cx. 1; Heb. i. 13). Upon all who remain obdurate, who refuse to bow to Christ and own Him Lord, judgment must certainly fall. When God has proclaimed His determination to *enforce*

submission, it is idle for men, though duped by Satan, to evade it and mock at the thought. To use the simple illustration at the beginning, the comma cannot be moved from where God in judgment places it. The sentence must stand according to man's deserts without a Mediator.

"Pardon impossible!" "these shall go away into everlasting punishment"—to hell—the place to which evil is finally banished for ever.

I beg of you, reader, not to trifle with these stern realities. Let not the false teachers and preachers lull you to sleep by a tale of fancied security and their soul-destroying theories. Thank God, the gospel is still "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16).

"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, yet righteous be."

A. H.

MAN'S INVENTIONS, GOD'S INTERVENTION.

"**L**O, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions" (Eccles. vii. 29). Thus wrote Solomon, the wisest man of his day. And that he was right in his calculation was evident. That man soon began to scheme and invent is seen written upon the sacred page of Holy Scripture

according to the Book of Genesis. They began in the early chapters, and have been going on ever since. "Let us build us a city," they said, "and a tower whose top may reach to heaven." How ambitious and full of pride man was, coupled with the forgetfulness of his Maker! They sought to gain eminence and reputation. Having begun to do this, God said, "Nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do" (Gen. xi. 4, 5, 6). Evil ideas prompted the heart of man, which is only evil continually. Such is the comment of Scripture; and may we not say, as it is written, "Let God be true, and every man false"?

Man evidently does not like to retain God in his thoughts. So that that which was spoken by God through His prophets and apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ appears on the surface to-day, despite the education and culture that man in his fancied wisdom boasts himself in. They are "without hope and without God in the world." But God has intervened, blessed be His Name; He has "devised means, that His banished be not expelled from Him" (2 Sam. xiv. 14). Wondrous fact that God could set One at His right hand—the delight of His heart—to be a mercy-seat through faith in His blood, and thus to declare His righteousness—(wonderful declaration!)—through the forbearance of God. All through the ages down to the present time we see how God did, and does, forbear with man. Is not man an object of interest to God? But listen. The day of grace will not always be extended to you, for God has appointed a day in the which He will judge the world by that Man Whom He hath ordained; whereof He has given assurance

unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead (Acts xvii. 31). What will the issue of that day mean to you if still careless and indifferent? You will pass out of the world in that condition; you will assuredly come under His all-seeing eye and unsparing hand for judgment. You will then have missed your last opportunity for ever. Awful thought! See to it, and that right early, "NOW, in this thy day."

"There are no pardons in the tomb,
And brief is mercy's day."

Not long ago I went with a friend of mine to visit a man in one of the States of America. He was evidently dying, but did not appear to be conscious of it. When asked how he was, he said in a boastful way, "I shall soon be able to go to work." But before a week had expired he was dead.

How solemn it is that man desires to leave God out of his thoughts. He plans and schemes, as did Jacob, until God comes in that He may withdraw man from his purpose and hide pride from man. How great is His mercy to His creature, who ever lived and desired to live for his own will and lust. God will make you feel your necessity of Him. He may take you by a way similar to that of Jacob or Job, but the end will be blessing. He is a God that delights in blessing. Happy is that man who accepts the blessing from His hands.

"How wondrous a Saviour is God's blessed Son!
How great and eternal the work He has done!
God's glory maintained by His death on the tree,
While mercy flows freely to you and to me."

E. I. E.

FOUR VISITORS FROM HEAVEN.

ON special missions these heavenly visitors came, and the mission of the first two vastly different from the mission of the other two. Indeed, the writer's desire is to draw attention to the very remarkable contrast between them. Is there not a contrast between striking men with blindness and opening blind eyes; between taking life and giving life; between executing judgment *upon* those that deserve it, and bearing judgment *for* those that deserve it? These contrasts, we shall find, are strikingly apparent in the visits we refer to.

From the place of unsullied holiness to a place that stank with the filthiest wickedness—from heaven to Sodom—came two angels. When these unexpected visitors arrived at Lot's house, in a few words they told their errand: "*The Lord hath sent us to destroy [that is Sodom], and we will destroy this place.*"

To another city came a heavenly visitor. This second city had for its wickedness the name of the first city given to it, "which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified" (Rev. xi. 8).

In Jerusalem, Jesus set forth the purpose of His errand, and the amazing secret that lay hidden behind it. Nicodemus, a ruler and a Pharisee, was permitted to hear the gracious announcement from His holy lips: "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. For God sent not His Son into the world to con-

demn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved" (John III. 16, 17).

What a marvellous contrast is here! The two angels brought a message of judgment, with proffered mercy for one small family. Jesus, their adorable Creator, brought God's grace into this world, and a message that concerned the whole human family. He Himself was the perfect expression of the grace He bore witness to. Listen to the words: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," afterwards wrote the Apostle John (John I. 17), and, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief," wrote the Apostle Paul.

The two angels came to *destroy*. Jesus said, "The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke IX. 56). "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John X. 10).

But there is another extraordinary contrast. When the two angelic messengers and Lot were threatened with violence they "put forth their hand and pulled Lot into the house," and then "smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves to find the door."

When the blessed Son of God was threatened with violence (John VIII. 59), we read, "He went through the midst of them, and so passed on," and as He passed on He saw a man blind from his birth. What did He do? Without even

being asked He opened his eyes, so that he might find in Himself the "True Door"—the only way to worship and true liberty (John x. 9).

But when Jerusalem had got rid of Jesus at Calvary, another heavenly visitor came to the same city—the blessed Spirit of Promise. He came in His own divine right; He came as sent of the Father in the Son's name, and He came as the sent One of Jesus to bear witness of His grace, Whom the world had rejected. "If I depart I will send Him [the Comforter] unto you" (John xvi. 7; xv. 26). Indeed, we might say that the visit of the Holy Spirit—"*Spirit of grace*"—was only an *extension* of the visit of the Son. The purpose was the same, and the same love the secret of both.

For example, what a refreshing extension of that story of opening blind eyes, in connection with men's violence, did the murder of Stephen furnish! The ringleader of that violence, Saul of Tarsus, had his eyes opened a little later to see, with unveiled face, the glory of the very same Lord Who stretched forth His hand to take Stephen out of their murderous clutches into the "House." Nor was this all. The Saviour made known His intention to send him far hence to the Gentiles, "*to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in Me*" (Acts xxvi. 18).

Nearly nineteen centuries have passed since then, and, blessed be God, still the message goes forth; still blind eyes are being opened. But is the *reader* known in heaven as one of the

number? Has the Saviour's grace touched his heart in its subduing power? Has he received the forgiveness of his sins through faith in Him Whose precious blood was shed for sinners?

The day of His patient waiting *will* end. Wrath from heaven will surely follow. Persistently reject the grace now preached, and it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for you. The Holy Ghost is still here! While He remains, beware of resisting Him. Take heed to the martyr Stephen's words: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts VII. 51). Solemn indictment. May "*always resisting*" be no longer true of you. God's Spirit will not "*always strive.*" While He waits, and we wait with Him, we can still remind you that "the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared" (Titus II. 11).

GEO. C.

A Painstaking Friend.—"You have a Friend Who has done wonders for you, and Who expects nothing in return but a humble acknowledgment: and that also He must give you. Our Lord has been showing you some tokens of His singular regard for you. He taketh pains with those He loves. He has been trying you with the rod. The trial on His part was altogether love, and graciously intended for your benefit. He will turn everything into blessing; for He does all things well. He does not, He *cannot* make one mistake in His government." W. R.

GOD SEEKING MAN.

THE history of man repeats itself, for every man living to-day is but a reproduction of the man who lived before him.

There is no real originality in any man except in a few details of his life. Nothing proves this more than the fact that all men alike are born away from God. Their ways may differ, but their hearts are all the same. Man, being away from God, his case has one particularly bad feature: he has no desire of himself to return to God.

When Adam had sinned he did not seek God, but tried to hide himself from God (Gen III. 8).

About three thousand years after Adam sinned the Holy Spirit of God wrote, through David, "There is none that seeketh after God" (Ps. xiv. and LIII.). What a proof that Adam's children had not changed, but were like their parent.

When Paul wrote by the same Spirit to the Romans, he quoted David's testimony as being still true (Rom. III. 11), although another thousand years of man's history had elapsed. The still further term of nineteen hundred years, with all the light of the gospel, has not changed man, so that if left to himself he must die in his sins, at a moral distance from God.

Thus it is clear that man will not seek after God, but the miracle of grace which the gospel proclaims is, that God has become a Seeker after lost man.

God sought Adam in the Garden of Eden, found him, and clothed him. And every believer, during either Old or New Testament times, has

been brought into blessing through God acting as the Seeker.

The history of Jesus on earth was the great demonstration of this truth. He stated, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke XIX 10). Since the death and resurrection of Jesus this testimony has become much clearer and louder, because having ascended to the right hand of power, He has sent the Holy Spirit down on earth to produce desires after God in the hearts of men; so now wherever there is any real desire, the Holy Spirit has produced it. This is very important for believers to understand.

But there is even a worse feature of man's heart, and that is, he is opposed to God being a Seeker, and does all he can to hinder this work of God. The gospel of a seeking God is unpalatable to him; God is not in his thoughts, and he does not wish to have Him.

Every man by nature is opposed to the gospel and to the God Who sends it. Some persons may be indifferent to it; others may speak against it, and even try to hinder it by craft or violence. A few may patronize it until its claims thwart them; then they may become its bitterest opposers. But one and all are by nature opposed to God seeking for man.

However, God continues to act in this way, and nothing can hinder His work of grace proceeding to its glorious result. All the persecutions of His witnesses, beginning with the murder of righteous Abel, and continued in Israel till the murder of Christ and His servant Stephen, and since then by other wicked hands, does not hinder God's work. It only brings out

more clearly that God is intent on blessing for man. This is brought about by the Holy Spirit's invisible work and the testimony of the gospel producing "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts xx. 21). The hearts of men are thus wrought upon and a vital change within is the result. Now "whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever" (Eccles. III. 14). The manifestation of God's work, seen in the outward ways of any believer, may be sadly disfigured, for he may get under the influence of the god of this world, and for a time may be a reproach on the gospel; but all who have been really converted, and know what God has done, could never suppose that His work could possibly be undone by the enemy.

Persons have often professed conversion when there was no work of God in them, and, therefore, their profession soon withered away, while God's work must stand, for it is intended for eternity.

It is the desire of God, as expressed in the Scriptures, that His work in the soul should be seen in the outward life of each believer, so they are exhorted to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. v. 11), and also to "shine as lights in the world" (Phil. II. 15).

Man thus wrought upon by the grace of God is not an improved or reformed man, but a new man—a new creature in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. v. 17). This new moral condition belongs to a new moral sphere, and so we are exhorted, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. XIII. 14). This new sphere of authority under

which the believer is brought is called the Kingdom of God, and the Lord has been placed at the head of it. So we are called to take His yoke on us and learn of Him, and thus to display the new sort of man by our ready submission to His will.

As to our outward man, that is, our bodies, they are not materially changed, but are to be controlled by the new inward man. This is of great importance to believers, because the relationships of life and the toil to obtain daily bread have to be continued, because no change has been effected in these natural things. They have to be carried on in the fear of the Lord, and regulated by the new man. The second coming of Christ will for ever close up these natural conditions by changing them to entirely new and heavenly conditions (1 Cor. xv. 49).

While this is patiently waited for we have to abide here in a somewhat strange condition, but which is amply provided for by Christ on high and the Holy Spirit below.

In a few words, the condition is this: something *entirely new* has been introduced into every believer which by faith has become *himself*. The old still remains in him, but is no longer himself (Rom. vii. 17). Thus the body is not outwardly affected, but is controlled by the *new* instead of the *old*. This is blessed liberty from the old, and liberty to serve the Lord. All this necessitates exercise of soul in order to enjoy the new and refuse the old. May the Lord give us understanding in all things.

G. W. Gy.

CARRY IT ABOUT WITH YOU.

FROM AN ADDRESS TO CHRISTIANS.

CARRY it about with you. My Saviour has been *rejected here*; my Saviour has been *accepted there*. If you are not a missionary of divine blessing, there must be something between your soul and God.

“In Christ.” To be in the apprehension of it is to be *in the power* of it. Satan cannot take me *out*, but he can lead me to forget that I am there. The first thing is, that God has put us into Christ; the next thing is, what Christ is made unto us (1 Cor. I. 30). GOD does everything in this verse—we do *nothing*; our place is the place of subjection and the place of reception. “Wisdom” is in contrast with all the insufficiency of man’s resources. We *have* to travel through this world—wisdom we *need*; well, I thank God *we shall never lack it*. CHRIST is our wisdom.

In our pathway down here through this world we need wisdom. Are you going to trust to the experience of *yesterday*? It is a positive barrier to blessing to trust to experience in the past. Whatever the case, there is unfailing wisdom for you in Christ at God’s right hand.

Thank God, He is “*my righteousness*,” too. It settles everything; it is not what you are, it is what *Christ* is.

“Sanctification” . . . set apart to God entirely. “I pray that your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless,” etc. Your spirit not be hampered by things down here; your *affections* set upon Christ; and your *body*,

a holy vessel for God. He is my sanctification.

. . . I don't believe, beloved brethren, that our hearts are half up to the *boundless resources* that are ours in Christ. I believe it is joy to the heart of Christ when He sees us, as it were, compelled to turn to Him. He loves us so much that He is jealous of our turning elsewhere.

And He is going to be our "redemption." There is singing *about* Christ, and there is singing *to* Christ. . . . The twenty-four elders—" *Thou art worthy.*" . . . The angels—" *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.*" Is it not a blessed thing with Himself in our midst—" *Thou art worthy*"? In the bustle and hurry of this world we need quietness and retirement to listen for His voice. He loves to help us. Don't look to brethren, to meetings; look up to Me more; let Me have more of your company. What an origin! *God* our origin. What a position! *Christ* our position. What a redemption! *Christ* our redemption. I assure you, beloved friends, when you are near *Christ*, you cannot speak of your service. The more we are with Christ, *self* will retire, and Christ will take His rightful place. He *has* His place in heaven. Oh, that He might have it *in our hearts!* E. P. C.

He ever lives for you.—In Gethsemane He came to His disciples and found them sleeping. They were *His* thought, not He theirs! He *their* thought? They could not watch with Him one hour. So it is now. He ever liveth to make intercession for *us*. Do we live ever to love Him—to serve Him? He ever lives for you. Do you ever live for Him? J. G. B.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

INCOMPARABLE GRACE.

MEN in general are very much occupied with themselves and their surroundings during the short span of present life in this world. Seventy years, beyond which but few live and which is far beyond the average life of the human race, is a very short period in comparison with "the ages" so often spoken of in Scripture. Do you not think, dear reader, that it is very poor policy, and shows great shortsightedness, to use all your energies and endowments for the amassing of wealth, the pursuit of power or fame, etc., when you know full well, and are reminded daily of, the great uncertainty of your present life? But, alas! as said by a certain well-known writer, men think all others mortal but themselves. Have you ever considered the following? God has wrought "that in the ages to come He might shew *the exceeding riches of His grace* in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 7). This is true for every believer. See what you miss if you are not one.

Grace is a wonderful thing, and it is only God Himself Who could tell us of it or show it to us. And what an infinite fulness there is in it! He tells us of *the exceeding riches* thereof. But maybe you have never realized your need of it. Listen to what He has portrayed as to man's state in His Word, and remember that you are included. If you realize it in your soul, you will

find out what thousands of others have done, that naught but grace will meet the depth of your need. We will sum it up as briefly as possible. Man, created for God's glory, listened to Satan's lie, disobeyed God's sole express command, introduced false worship, murder, lying, violence, and corruption into the world, lived with a seared conscience, became drunken and idolatrous, maltreated and killed God's servants, spit in the face of His Son, falsely accused and crucified Him, resisted His Holy Spirit, and despised and neglected His Word!

One can imagine some one who had never heard the contents of Scripture saying, "Well, man must be in a deplorably wicked state!" But, alas! thousands have read and heard more or less about it so often that they seem to treat what God says almost as meaningless. The rebel heart of man refuses, or pares down, or minimizes the plainest statements concerning his state. Happy indeed is the man who faces and bows to them, and, without comparing himself with others, confesses honestly before God, *That is the truth about me; I am capable of it all.* Why? Because such a one is the only fit subject for *the grace of God.* If I belong to a race as wicked and guilty as that, one thing is clear: *I am lost!*

If a physician met with a patient who was suffering from the same number of deadly *physical* maladies as man is suffering from *morally*, as set forth in that diagnosis, it would be strange indeed were he not to pronounce him *incurable.* For that is what man is. He is guilty, lost, *incurable.* You could do nothing with him. He is past improvement before God for the eternal future (however much his condition may be improved by

education, civilization, etc. for this life). Nothing will do for him but *grace*. God is the God of all grace (2 Peter v. 10). Hence He has pronounced man's case as hopeless, and announced grace to him. This is worthy of God. Grace super-abounds where sin abounded. And what grace! Nothing to approach it in its fulness and extent was ever known among men. It is *incomparable*. How does it come to us?

God overruled man's crowning wickedness in crucifying Christ, by making Him sin for us, Who knew no sin, on that same cross. All His claims against the sinner being met by the sacrifice of the holy Sin-bearer, He therein laid the basis of everlasting righteousness. Through it grace reigns (Rom. v. 21). The grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared (Titus II. 11). Love—divine love, the love of Him Who is LOVE—is the blessed spring and source. That love is perfect, infinite, eternal. The grace consequently which reaches man is boundless and exceeding rich (Eph. II. 7). In Christ, through and in Whom we receive it, are *untraceable riches*. The believer in Him is thereby brought into the highest relationship with God—that of *sons, holy and without blame*. A heavenly place and portion in the home of love and light and holiness is his. The sure hope of glory with and like Christ lies immediately before him, and is about to be realized and enjoyed by him. And the whole range of blessing is *eternal*, and to the joy and satisfaction of the heart of God unto everlasting ages. This is *incomparable grace*.

Dear reader, what think ye of these things? What think ye of Christ? Continue in in-

difference or neglect, and you will surely, ere long, reap the eternal fruit of your blind folly and unbelief in banishment from God. Any moment may be your last here. Take to heart what God has said about your miserable state. Set to your seal that He is true. Confess you are guilty, incurable, lost. Believe on Him Who died, and Whom God exalted to glory, and all that wondrous range of blessing which we have briefly detailed will be yours. Christ is the only Saviour, and God presents Him to you. His precious blood cleanseth from all sin. God has given up any expectation from us and received Him. And the moment you receive Him by faith all that God has set forth in Him, the glorified One, is your present and everlasting portion. Once you enter upon it, your soul will be overwhelmed with gratitude and praise, and it will be your delight to serve and follow Him, till you reap it all with Him in eternal light.

E. H. C.

FACT BEFORE FEELING.

THERE was a time when I longed and prayed for the full assurance of faith, the witness of the Holy Spirit that I was truly born again and united to Christ. I was expecting this assurance to be granted by some overpowering feeling, causing the heart to overflow with joy, and putting an end to all doubt once for all. I had heard some speak of a time in which they had been so highly favoured that they could never afterwards call in question their interest in Jesus Christ, and I was hoping that such a season would be granted to me. One day, while praying

that I might be able to say with full confidence, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me," there was given to me the persuasion that I should be able to say it just as truly as Paul said it. This persuasion led me thus to reason with myself: If you will be able to say it some time, why not say it now? If it will be true in the future, it is true now, since truth is truth at all times and for all time. This reflection brought me relief and showed me my mistake.

I had been looking to feeling instead of looking to fact—to *my* sense of Christ's love rather than to that love itself. That Christ loved me, and gave Himself for me, is an eternal fact, whatever be my feeling. My feeling does not alter it in the least, and it is the belief of this fact and the personal appropriation of it that kindles devout feeling. We have "*joy and peace in believing.*"

Moreover, I had been trying to exercise a future instead of a present faith. A future faith will never bring deliverance or beget peace, and this is the mistake we so often make. It is a present faith that God honours, the faith that takes Him at His word, and receives Jesus Christ as Lord now, whatever be our condition or our frame. We need to believe that Jesus loves us even now, just as we are and where we are, and thus believing, to trust Him to save and keep us every moment.

" Faith is not what we see or feel,
It is a simple trust
In what the blessed God hath said
Of Jesus as the Just."

THE REALITY OF DEATH AND VICTORY IN LIFE BEYOND IT.

FROM A GOSPEL ADDRESS.

WE preach the coming of the Lord often—we have the bright, the blessed hope of the coming of the Lord to receive us to Himself; but there is another side of the picture too. Do you know that we are all dying men and women? It is only a question of days, or months, or years, and then if the Lord delays His coming you must die, I must die; there is not one who can stand up and claim exemption. “For by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.” You know you have sinned, and the soul that sins must die. Have you ever looked it in the face? Over every man, woman, and child in this city this sentence of death hangs. Have you ever weighed in the light of eternity the vanity of the moment of your stay upon earth? What is our life? It is even a vapour.

Oh, dear reader, death is an awful calamity to the unconverted man. I should be afraid to die if I did not know Christ as my Saviour. For death is a reality, and after death there is the judgment, and then the sentence, and then—the lake of fire. You may seem to have health and strength, but the seeds of mortality are in you. The Lord give you to face the truth, and then there is the blessed remedy.

Whoever you are, I can tell you, on the authority of God's own Word, Christ died for all. But what did He bring out of the grave? He brought life and incorruptibility out of it. That is what Christ has done!

Has He not triumphed? Has He not gotten the

victory? He has. He has broken every barrier down, and now, to a Christian, to die is gain. What gain! For the only link the believer has with a groaning creation is the body, and when death comes it is only to break the last link and to set me free. For He gives the victory. He sets me free. He gives everything for time and for eternity. He has done everything. The Saviour lived, the Saviour died, and then there is that cloudless morning of resurrection.

I ask you, my reader, has death any fear? Has the grave any quiver of dread for you? Or is death only a cloudless passing into His own bright presence? For the Christian the brightest moment is the moment that he passes away to be for ever with the Lord.

You would not like to die without Christ, would you? You would not dare to. If you knew assuredly that this would be your last night on earth—and it may be—if you knew your head would never again be raised from the pillow in life, would you dare to lay your head tranquilly on your pillow without knowing that you had Christ?

I will tell you one thing—I would not dare to die without Christ; and I will tell you more—I would not care to live without Him either. And if you knew you would be saved next week—and there is no warrant in Scripture for knowing any such thing—you would have lost what eternity could never recover to you: a week's walking with, a week's enjoyment of, the Son of God! For salvation is not merely being rescued from hell at last; salvation is learning to know the Son of God, and walking with Him, being made like Him now.

E. P. C.

LOVE NOT BOUNDED BY DEATH.

TWO facts stand out in great prominence on the page of Holy Writ. One is that God found in man an object that attracted Him. The other is that, *naturally*, ruined man finds no drawing of heart toward God. God can so work in this guilty creature and so display Himself to that ruined thing, that man comes to find in God a corresponding attraction—such an attraction as commands his whole moral being; so that sinful men who, like the head of the fallen race, once fled from Him in cowardice and blamed Him in proud audacity, should be brought to say in Old Testament language, “All my springs are in *Thee*” (Ps. LXXXVII. 7), and in the New, “*We joy in God*, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the reconciliation” (Rom. v. 11). It is the result of God seeking man that man seeks God. Before the mission of the blessed God into this world in the person of His Son this was plainly demonstrated. But in His holy life and precious death all is *fully* brought to light. “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me” (John XII. 32). “We love Him, because He first loved us” (1 John IV. 19). It was His love, before *we* knew it, that made us an attraction to Him. It was His love, proved to us in death, that made Him an attraction to us. “*I will draw.*” One great charm in connection with His love is His undeviating persistency. He saves to the uttermost; He loves to the end. When He sets out to reach “His own,” He has blessings innumerable and immeasurable to press upon the objects of His

affection, nor will He be satisfied by a negative answer. When they have been reached and blessed, should they turn their eye away from Him to find counter-attractions elsewhere, He will soon show that He has never turned His eye from them. If they should cease for the moment to follow *Him*, He will turn and patiently follow *them*. If chastening is needed, He will chasten, but only as the fruit of His unfailing love. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth" (Heb. XII. 6). "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten" (Rev. III. 19). He said of Israel, "I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths" (Hos. II. 6). "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak to her heart" (v. 14, margin). How matchless this love!

All other love must pale into insignificance; all other attractions be robbed of their power to charm and draw when His love shines forth to make its influence felt.

Simon Peter, James and John forsake their "all" to follow Him. When Jesus presents Himself to Levi and says "Follow Me," he rises up forthwith, leaves all, and follows Him.

"Great was indeed Thy love,
All other loves above;
Love Thou didst dearly prove,
Jesus our Lord."

"*I followed him till my life was in danger,*" said a poor widow one day, speaking of her husband to the writer. And who could have blamed her for making such a limit under the circumstances? His mind had lost its balance, and many a wearying experience his mental vagaries brought her into. But in her affection she stuck

to him through everything. Sometimes they might both be found wandering together in the fields and lanes when the farm labourers went home in the evening; and when they returned to their work next morning they were still there. She could, by no persuasion, prevail upon him to return home. When he did take a fancy to go home for a time, he would suddenly start up from the most tempting dinner she could prepare for him and be off again. She would then instantly leave hers and go with him.

But eventually it became apparent to her friends, and at last to herself, that her life was in peril. What now? Ah! she had at last to make a stand for self-preservation.

Not so with Jesus. He loved us down to *death*. He came into the world for that very purpose. But, if proved by death, His love was not *bounded* by death. Ruth could say to Naomi, "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me" (Ruth i. 16, 17). But the love of Jesus went farther. When death was about to part them, He could say to His poor disciples, "*I will see you again*, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you" (John xvi. 22). His love would continue beyond death. His resurrection-power should be associated with it. And when His departure to the Father and His kingdom-rights are mentioned, "His own" are still bound up in His affections: "He loved them unto the end" (John xiii. 1-3).

Are you, my reader, one who has never yet

made the personal acquaintance of such a Friend? Then we would bid you welcome to His feet to-day. You have no tale of sin too appalling for His forgiveness, no stain of wickedness too deep for His precious blood to cleanse away. He will make you "whiter than snow," and your heart beyond all expression happy.

Have you already tasted that He is gracious, and yet been tempted to take your own course, away from Him and those who love Him? Well, once more we remind you. If you are not following *Him*, He is following *you*. Has He not spoken already? You may expect Him to speak more loudly yet, and *touch* you into the bargain. He would rather shorten your stay *here* than miss your face there.

It would be better to be taken away from the privilege of showing forth His praises *here* than miss the joy of celebrating His praises with the myriads of His redeemed ones in glory.

One snowy day in the country, the writer met a shepherd carrying from the fields a sheep he had been killing. Something serious had happened to it, and he was taking the dead sheep to his master's house. Thinking the man was a believer, he said to this shepherd, "Could you please tell me when the Lord Jesus Christ will *cease* to love you?" He became very thoughtful, but made no reply. The question was repeated, but no response. He then took the sheep off his shoulders and placed it on the snow. The question was repeated. Still getting no answer, the writer said, "Well, I must be going; and if you can't tell me, I will tell you. 'Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.' *He will never cease*

to love you." They then parted; the traveller to pursue his journey, the shepherd to bear his burden to its destination.

When the latter got back to the spot where the dead sheep had been laid, he saw a spot of blood on the snow, and this brought back the whole circumstance, the question asked him, and the answer to it as well. With deep conviction, the Spirit of God brought it to his heart, as he confessed afterwards. "If Jesus loves like that, what a wretch I must be not to love Him!" He took the news home to his wife, and her conversion soon followed. Oh, this love of our God set forth in Jesus: how "wonderful in counsel"; how "excellent in working" (Isa. XXVIII. 29).

"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."

GEO. C.

WHAT IS THE VERDICT?

THE streets of London in the neighbourhood of the Law Courts were crowded with people. A man was being tried for his life, and the prevailing question was, "What is the verdict?" Excitement inside was at its highest when the jury returned to give their final decision. The silence was intense as the foreman, in answer to the usual question, pronounced the awful word—"Guilty."

Now, dear reader, has it ever occurred to you

that we have all been found *guilty* before God? Listen to the verdict. The Spirit of God pronounces it:—

“There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes” (Rom. III. 10–18). “*Every mouth stopped!*” cries the great Searcher of hearts. “*All the world*” has become “*guilty before God*” (Rom. III. 19). How awful the indictment—how sweeping! Yet it is what God in His Word has said of each one of us.

Did you ever think how it must have grieved the heart of the blessed God to have had to say these words of His creature man? For He had originally created him in His own image.

But let us return once more to our illustration. We left the prisoner listening to what his fellow-men had to say about him, and the best they could say was, that he was “guilty,” worthy of the sentence of death being passed upon him. All that the law could do for him was to kill him. But appeal is made by others to the mercy of the Sovereign; and he obtains a reprieve. When the news reaches him he cannot believe it until he sees for himself the Royal Seal. Then what joy fills his heart! He does not now question the authority of the one who actually *wrote*

it, but accepts it with joy because of him who *sent* it.

Has the reader yet taken to heart what God has said about him? Does he know that the sentence is passed already, and that sentence—*death*? “Death has passed upon all men” (Rom. v. 12). That little word “*all*” must include you and me. Are you prepared to meet the solemn situation? Ask yourself that question, and do not rest until you can give a satisfactory answer. Be honest with yourself. Do not trifle with your soul. It is too precious, and the time is short.

If I am so bad, you say, what can I do?

Nothing, friend, nothing; but all *has been* done. Listen to the words of the blessed Son of God, ere He yielded up His spirit: “It is finished” (John XIX. 30). All that you have to do is to own Him as your Lord, and believe in the work He has done. Listen. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life” (John III. 36).

The man in our picture was allowed to live a little longer on earth, but it did not touch the question of sin’s penalty before God. But it is God Himself Who offers *you* pardon, and He does it on righteous grounds too. Jesus has died upon the cross, and to you the message is, “*Believe and live.*” Does it not fill your heart with deep longing, dear unsaved reader? Oh, how good God is! Will you not trust Him? Do so, then; **delay no more.**

“But take with rejoicing from Jesus at once
The life everlasting He gives;
And know with assurance, thou never canst die,
Since Jesus thy righteousness lives.”

F. J. W.

THE SOWER, THE SEED, AND THE SOIL.

“THE chapter (Luke VIII.) begins with the parable of the sower. Do you think you have ever found out the secret of that parable? It is to expose man. The seed was one and the same, but the dropping of the seed here and there was to expose the character of the soil. The seed makes manifest the soil. There is not a heart here that is not seen in one or other of these soils.

The first character is the *highway*, that is where the *devil* prevails.

The second is the *rock*, that is where *nature* prevails.

The third is the *thorny ground*, that is where the *world* prevails.

The fourth is the *good ground*, where the Holy Ghost prevails.

If you examine your heart day by day you will find that one of these has its pleasure with you. The business of the parable is to expose you to yourself, and to make manifest the four secret influences under the power of which we are all morally moving every hour.

Take the joy of the *stony-ground hearer*. It is well to rejoice; but if when I listen to the claims of God my conscience is not reached, that is a bad symptom. It is the levity and sensibility of nature. How wretchedly we are treating God, if we do not deal with Him in *conscience*! If I have revolted from such a One, am I to return to Him without conviction of conscience? It would be an insult to Him. Supposing I had insulted you, would it be well

for me to come and talk to you about some light matter? We have all insulted God, and are we to come to Him with a little animal joy?

The thorny-ground hearers are a grave-hearted people that weigh everything in anxious balances. They carry the balances in their pocket, and try the importance of everything; but the mischief is that as they weigh they make the world as heavy as Christ. Are we not often conscious of that calculating spirit prevailing?

In contrast with the others we get the *good ground*. We are not told what has made it good; but supposing we have the *devil, nature, and the world*, what is the only remaining influence? There is nothing but the Holy Ghost. It is very needful nowadays to testify that *the plough must come before the seed-basket*. What makes the heart good? He that has gone forth to plough up the fallow ground and sow the seed. God never could get a blade of grass from our hearts if He did not work Himself. The heart never can have anything for God that has not gone through the process of the plough. Be it with the light measure of the eunuch, or the deeper strength of the jailer, the plough must go through the fallow ground. Those of the thorny ground must talk of their farm, their business, their merchandise. Those of the highway say, 'Oh, let us think of it to-morrow.' Then, too, the sensibility that can rejoice under a sermon. It is happy for me that my *conscience* have to do with God, for when my conscience has to do with Him, then everything has to do with Him." J. G. B.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

SILENCE THAT WAS DISTURBING.

IT was strange, "very strange," but the lad could not sleep. Try how he would, the usual slumber would not come. At last it dawned upon him that something had entered the room, which was the cause of all the trouble.

The subject of our story had for years slept in a room near to a huge water-wheel, with its constant noise of pouring, splashing water. On this particular night the water had been turned off another way: the wheel was dry, and silence had fallen upon the scene.

No sooner did the lad step into the room than he noticed something was wrong, but it was not until he vainly endeavoured to sleep that he discovered that it was the silence that disturbed him.

Oh, sinner! a more solemn silence than that which crept into his room that night is coming over Christendom shortly. You, too, have grown used to a certain sound. The precious stream of gospel grace has been flowing over the wheel of time, to use the figure. It has fallen on your ears until you can sleep the sleep of unconcern. But, ah! a solemn day is near. That stream will be cut off; gospel preaching for ever cease. Oh, how appalling the silence that will follow! You will surely wake up then, but only to find

that the gentle outpouring of parental prayer and the louder strains of gospel preaching have ceased for ever.

A strange silence will creep over Christendom, and men and women be left to toss restlessly, hopelessly, without Christ, or any chance of finding Him. That young man found relief. When your gospel day is over *you* never will, for eternity.

But stay! Can you suffer it thus to be?

Consider. Can you refuse to listen to Him Who so tenderly says: "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest"? Why not come now? Then instead of being overtaken by the silence we have referred to, you shall be caught up at the coming of our Lord to have part in the song of the redeemed.

J. S. (N. Z.)

THREE TROPHIES OF GRACE.

RAHAB (Joshua II). THE SAMARITAN WOMAN (John IV).
THE SINNER OF THE CITY (Luke VII.).

I WISH to bring these three women before you as witnesses to the fact that the gospel of the grace of God presents to us shelter from God's judgment, satisfaction of heart, and peace of conscience.

Rahab lived in a city whose judgment had been determined by God, and whilst no living power on earth could avert that destruction, yet He Who had so decreed Himself prepared the way of escape, and made it known by certain men called spies, who entered the city, and, though not publishing the fact, communicated to a few a way of protection. Rahab's house be-

came the place of refuge; and *whoever* was inside was safe, *whoever* was outside was under judgment. This was before the work of destruction began. The ways of God have a uniformity about them. He always prepares a place of safety before any judgment takes place. This was His way when He judged the world by water. Noah built the ark for the saving of his house, and at the same time was a preacher of righteousness. What he had heard from God had taken such effect upon him: he *believed* all that God had said. It was no mere *assent* as to the work of Christ and the judgment of God, which is so common to-day. An assent is an effort of the *mind*, and even wicked people assent to all you can tell them, without the least effect being produced in their consciences. This can be applied to the one who has not yet believed in the glad tidings of God's grace, and the Spirit of God is pressing it in their souls. The encircling hosts of Jehovah's army compassed the doomed city of Jericho, causing terrible consternation to the inhabitants, and though they fought against the Lord's host (Joshua XXIV.), they were unable to turn them. So must it be with all who reject the offer of God's salvation; but how different the conditions of those within Rahab's house. These had had the assurance of safety. All could be calm and quiet in the time of judgment.

So with the believer now. Having heard by faith, he has appropriated the work of Christ. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, not by the reading of a newspaper. Joshua II. 19 declares the place of safety for the one who takes a place inside. Whosoever

was inside was under shelter from God's judgment; all outside were under judgment. Reader, how do you stand? Inside or outside is the question! Face the matter before God, consider it well; no time to lose. The judgment of God is hastening on to the doomed world. With all its innovations, there is not one which can stay that judgment. In the days of the Flood, when "wicked men said to God, Depart from us," He took them at their word and left them for judgment. Never say to God, "Depart." He may go and never return; and then the lake of fire is your everlasting portion. Yet in the midst of this mocking He provided a place of safety. The door of the ark was not closed until the last sound of the voice of the "preacher of righteousness" had died away. Then the Lord shut the door. He shut Noah in and all the millions of unbelievers out, and out for ever! But a scarlet line hung out of Rahab's window, which had already been the means of salvation to the spies and marked the place of safety for others—figures of the precious blood of Christ, which gave to God the right and title to save each and all. Then Rahab, who found shelter, found also a resting-place amongst God's people (Joshua vi. 25) and a place in relationship with the king (Matt. i. 5). She is one of the four women in the genealogy of the King. She was indeed brought out from destruction and brought into the place of blessing.

The Samaritan woman comes before us a poor, distressed soul, but, after the "Prophet" had reached her conscience, she finds unbounded satisfaction in the same blessed One Who relieved her of her burden, Who had demolished with one

blow all the fabric she had woven around herself by the threads of an ancient relationship with God's people. She had her notions of worship and stuck to them; perhaps you do the same. Let me tell you that "God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham." Don't rest on the church of your forefathers. Rest on Christ. Rest on no church, no minister, but on the finished work of Christ. A finger-post points the way, but has never put one soul on that way. This poor woman, overjoyed with her new-found treasure, leaves her water-pot, and seeks others to share the joy with her. It is a true sign of conversion when we wish others to enjoy the blessing. Whatever God gives always returns to Him; so He is always a gainer by anything He does. "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." The doing of the Father's will was His meat. Oh, would it were so with us!

Now, the "sinner of the city" receives of the hands of the Lord forgiveness, salvation, and peace. What a scene opens to us as we look within Simon's house. The blessed Lord, full of grace and truth, is there; also a proud Pharisee, who thought but little of Him Who had come under his roof; and a poor sinner, in her sins, but who knew them and felt the burden of them. Reader, let us ask if you ever shed one tear over your sins. Ah! you may say we all feel sorry about our misdeeds. That may be; but my question is deeper than that. Have you been before God about them and wept bitter tears? I do not refer to the effeminate weeping of the flesh, when some thrilling anecdote is related by the evangelist. I mean the pressing

home on the conscience, by the Holy Spirit in quietude, God's judgment of sin and the sufferings of His beloved Son in expiation of yours.

The Pharisee lost the blessing, his pride hindering his acceptance.

It is in such characters as these three women that the triumph of God's grace is seen. Reader, have you found shelter from God's judgment? Have you had personally to do with Christ? Has he pronounced to you personally, "Thy sins be forgiven thee, go in peace"? What comfort to a poor distressed soul!

J. S. B.

THE SECRETS OF MEN.

IT is well for every person to be acquainted with what is coming with regard to God and mankind. God has forewarned us of a day when He will judge the *secrets* of men by Jesus Christ (Rom. II. 16).

When persons think of judgment they generally suppose it refers only to the *public* actions of wicked men, but we read that it also applies to the secrets of men. What is meant by the secrets of men? Another scripture will explain the force of this expression. "If all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth" (1 Cor. XIV. 24, 25).

This supposed a case of either a Jew or Gentile coming into a Christian meeting and so

affected by what he heard that he was both *convicted* and *converted*. The secrets of his false religion, and his hostility to Christ and the gospel, were brought to light. This was real *conviction*, for his fig-leaf garment fell off, his self-righteousness deserted him, and he was conscious that he was naked before God.

The light of the ways of God in the gospel for the blessing of man completely overpowered him, and effected an entrance to his heart so that his secrets came out, and he fell down and worshipped God. This was the result of true *conversion*. He was turned from what was false to what was true, from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.

Men's secrets *must come out* either during the *day of grace* or in the *day of judgment*. So which shall it be? Oh, friend, consider which!

The true gospel preacher seeks to set forth the testimony of God so clearly that men may have their secrets discovered in this day of peculiar favour, which has already lasted nineteen hundred years, and no one knows how near we may be to its close.

Naturally there is nothing a man of the world more seeks to keep to himself than *how he stands with regard to God*. He resents any inquiry into his spiritual state. You may ask him about his family, his bodily health, or his business, and these inquiries generally please him; but ask him about his soul, and you offend him, because you touch his secret.

When some light of the gospel has dawned upon him, he is at first most anxious that no one shall know it. He may even pretend to oppose the gospel, while all the time he desires it.

Now inexperienced believers are too anxious to get at the secrets of unconverted persons, and this annoys them, and they only seek to hide it more effectually. God only can bring men's secrets to light, so we have to be careful in speaking to men lest in our undue haste we delay the work of God.

Men may have led outwardly blameless lives, and then the secrets lie very deep, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus, who tells us he had lived in all good conscience before God (Acts xxiii. 1).

But when the light from heaven entered his soul his secrets were discovered, for he was persecuting Jesus (Acts ix. 5), and was really the *chief of sinners* (1 Tim. i. 15). This exposure of his real state was so dreadful that he was three days without sight and neither did eat nor drink (Acts ix. 9). His secret enmity to Christ and the gospel, when it came out, so completely humbled him that it marked his subsequent life.

Men have often confessed crimes which were previously secret and it has brought them to punishment, but what crime in the sight of God is so serious as rejecting His testimony concerning His Son? Now, as soon as any one confesses his enmity to God he is *not* brought to judgment, but receives immediate forgiveness. Thus God's ways are above man's ways as the heavens are above the earth (Isa. lv. 9). If Christian meetings had more spiritual power to give out the mind of God, more persons would be affected by them, and the secrets of their hearts would be manifested by the power of the Word. This would be real work, and would not wither away, like that which springs up quickly, as seen in the parable of the sower (Mark iv. 6).

In every real case of *conviction* and *conversion* the Holy Spirit has acted on the person, although the person was unconscious of what power it was acting on him. This is important for those who seek souls to recognize, so that they may not use any means which the apostles did not use lest they should hinder the work of God.

In a country where there is freedom to read the Holy Scriptures many children get some light from their parents or Sunday-school teachers, which impresses their minds to various extents with the fear of the Lord; and although afterwards as they grow up they may have thrown off as far as they were able all remembrance of these things, yet when God begins to work, He revives and deepens what was early begun. If inquiry is made of persons who have been converted when they were grown up, they generally remember having been anxious about their souls when they were in their teens. This shows that God's work is never lost, although many years may have been wasted in carelessness about divine things, and even wickedness indulged in. This loss of precious time and acquaintance with wickedness may be a source of sorrow to the grave.

Now, secrets must come out, and so long as any one keeps them, they are afraid of being spoken to about their souls, and actually find fault with those who are seeking their blessing.

But if the secrets come out under the warm influence of the gospel, then all is changed; what before was avoided is then sought after and becomes increasingly attractive.

Thus, bowing to the Lord becomes the test for each one, and in proportion to our subjection

to Him we realize true liberty of soul. We have nothing to hide because our secrets have been brought to light. This desire for the light should grow upon believers, so that we may have no part dark regarding the claims of God.

“All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do” (Heb. iv. 13). Now it is one thing to own that this is in Scripture, but quite another to act upon it, so that we have nothing that we wish to hide from God, but can confess everything to Him. This gives holy boldness to believers. “If our heart condemn us not,” we read, “then have we confidence toward God” (1 John III. 21). May both writer and reader enjoy the confidence.

G. W. Gy

A MURDERER'S DREAM.

SIN and the blessed God cannot dwell together: sin and the *happy* believer cannot dwell together either.

God desired man's company as well as his blessing. But His holiness was such that He could not have him in His presence in his sins: His righteousness was such that there must be atonement *for* his sins. Every transgression and disobedience must have its just recompense of reward. Hence the precious statement (1 Peter III. 18): “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” Why bring us to God? Because God wanted us. God's desire is toward sinful men. Blessed assurance for every beating heart in the whole human family. He delights not in man's

banishment. He celebrates with overflowing joy the turning of a prodigal to Him. When He puts the sinner's sins away, He uses a figure that no other can possibly reach up to. What human mind could suggest a stronger, or one more sublimely simple, than this? "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us" (Ps. CIII. 12). And does not He Himself suggest in the previous verse of the Psalm that His thoughts of grace and goodness tower over every thought of the creature? "As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him." It was by Jesus the sin was put away; and the gift of such a sacrifice was the measure of His mercy toward us.

But there is another way of looking at it. He works by the death of Jesus to put my sins away from me; but He works in me also and turns me away from my sins. "God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts III. 26). We are *exposed* in the presence of the perfect grace of God's Holy One, and our iniquities become hateful to us. We turn from our sins and ourselves with loathing, and find our satisfaction in the blessed Sent One Himself. God delights to have it so.

Thus in a double way we become separated from our sins which once separated us from God. "Your iniquities," said the prophet Isaiah, "have separated between you and your God" (Isa. LIX. 2).

Has the reader experienced anything of this blessing of turning away from his iniquities? If not, you are still bound up with your iniqui-

ties, and your iniquities are still bound up with you.

It is said that a man awaiting execution for the crime of murder had, one night, a dreadful dream. He dreamt that the victim whom he had murdered was clinging to him most tenaciously. Do what he would, he could not shake himself free. From the cell to the scaffold, from the scaffold into the dreaded "beyond," he was still fastened in the grip of his victim!

We can well understand what such a thought would be to a poor condemned culprit. We can also understand something of the horror of the sentence pronounced on Gehazi: "The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave unto thee . . . for ever" (2 Kings v. 27). But what must it be for a man to die in his sins, and to be separated by his sins from God and all that is happy for ever! "Ye shall seek Me, and shall die in your sins. Whither I go, ye cannot come," said Jesus to some. No sentence can be more terrible. May the unsaved reader be awakened to something of its awful character, and escape to the welcoming Saviour at once. It gave *Him* no pleasure to say, "Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life," yet when here below He actually had to say it: and it will give Him no satisfaction to say to you beyond the grave, "Once ye *would* not come; now ye *cannot* come."

But what does give Him pleasure is to hear one of His own say, living or dying—

"The opened heavens upon me shine
With beams of sacred bliss;
Jesus proclaims that He is mine,
And whispers I am His."

A MOTHER'S COUNSEL.

I HAD just taken my seat in a railway carriage, when another passenger entered and took a seat opposite to me. We began to talk to each other almost immediately. This was favourable, as his journey ended at the next station. On a remark that he made about the severity of the weather, and the general state of things in agriculture, I replied that notwithstanding the development of science and the great advance in the various branches of knowledge, it was still utterly beyond the power of men to cause the sun to shine upon the earth when there was darkness, or the rain to fall (unless under favourable circumstances) when the earth was parched with drought, to which he readily assented. In the course of conversation I found that my fellow-passenger was a subject of the saving grace of God.

I was interested in him, and inquired how he had first been enlightened. He said that it was on the battlefield while lying wounded during the Boer War. "I was shot through both my thighs, and also through my right arm at the elbow," he said, "and I lay for hours helpless; then I was told that my case was a hopeless one. At that moment, and while alone in my extreme weakness and helplessness, my mother's advice, 'My boy, *trust in the Lord*,' came to my mind. There and then I turned to the Lord and asked Him to heal me, and to let me see my mother again. He answered me. I recovered; and, though maimed, I have seen her, and now I am able to speak of God's goodness."

“Ah!” said I, “things came into your mind at that time that you had little thought of, and perhaps had long forgotten.”

“Yes,” said he, “everything!”

“Your guilt, and your sins against a holy God.”

“Yes, I went through deep waters, and I felt my need as a sinner.”

“And you there found out that God was a Saviour, a Saviour of sinners, as Matthew ix. 13 teaches?”

“I did,” said he. “Then my younger brother, who for some time after my return home manifested carelessness as to what concerned his soul, and at times showed a disposition to ridicule these things, fell ill and died. But the Lord met with him while ill, and gave him ‘peace in believing.’ Just before his death he took mother’s hand into his, saying, ‘Mother, I wish I could take you with me out of this world of sin and sorrow. I am going home. God is ready to take me, and I know I am going to be with Him.’”

How wonderful are God’s ways, and how blessed to have eyes to see them!

In the case here related, one brother returned home, taken out of the jaws of death, as the messenger of peace to the other, who, though then in perfect health, was so soon to pass through death into the regions of life and peace, into the presence of the God Who had saved his precious soul from never-ending misery.

Reader, do not wait for a death-bed nor for any future event. Trust in the Lord NOW: for
 “NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION.”

E. H.

DAILY REST AND HOW TO FIND IT.

A LAND of perennial sunshine! Is there such a land? Indeed there is. That land is the resurrection-land; it is on the other side of the grave. That place is learnt here by those who take the place of death with Christ, and resurrection with Christ. A rest that never can be broken up, that never can be disturbed; a rest that is found in what Christ is and in what He has done for you; a rest that depends on God's appreciation of the work of Christ. "Christ hath once suffered for sins . . . that He might *bring* us to God." That word is so precious—"bring."

David said (1 Chron. XXI.): "Let me now fall into the hands of the Lord; for very great are His mercies." That is going down. A *weak* person can tumble. Relinquish yourself into the hands of Christ; those blessed hands have been nailed to the cross; fall into them, and He will give you rest.

Now, beloved friends, what is there for you—for me? Christians we are, and ready to go! Until that moment comes, what is there to fill up the interval. Only *one* thing (Phil. I): "For me to live is *Christ*." Christ in the morning, Christ in the afternoon, Christ in the evening. "*Christ*." But what does that involve? *Subjection to Him*. "Take My yoke upon you." You don't feel the yoke; but you are together—*so near to Him*. No cloud, no shadow, between your soul and Him.

When distance *distresses*, return is nigh. To be in distance, and not in distress, is to be in darkness. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise

from among the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee." "Take My yoke upon you," and what else? "*Learn of Me.*" In this restless age, what a solace! To you I say, Oh, take His yoke upon you, and learn of Him! Some of us have been hasty. As we learn of Him, the hastiness goes back, the impetuosity retires; and we take in that which is of Himself—"meekness and lowliness."

Beloved friends, what a mercy it is that we have nothing to keep up! We have a measureless income to live upon, the grace of God. *Be nothing but what you are; but keep close to Christ. Oh, keep close to Christ!*

Sons of God, members of Christ, keep close to Christ, learning of Him, finding out what He is—the meek and lowly One. And what then? Finding rest! What a *discovery!* You never find it in any way but in subjection to Christ. *Go in for discoveries!* You will have nothing but discoveries if you walk near to Christ. And the Lord adds this: "My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."
E. P. C.

WHERE PSALM I. PLACES ME.

VERSE one, what we should *not do* is set forth.

Verse two, what we *should do* is spoken of.

In verse three the *result* is stated.

In the next three verses the way of the ungodly and their end is described.

"The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish."

Reader, which of these verses describes you?

E. C.——P.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

THE POWER OF GOD.

IT is told of a celebrated composer that he was once asked what he considered the best music. He replied, "No music."

Possibly his meaning was the finish of a soft cadence, or the pause between two movements, which accentuates both. His musical conception favoured the dying notes as the best.

Whatever may have been his idea, it furnishes a feeble illustration of the marvellous way which God took to give effect to His mighty power.

Were you asked, dear reader, what was the mightiest way in which God's power ever acted, what would you answer? Would your mind revert to the irresistible forces of the elements—of wind, of water, of thunder? Or would you think of the unfathomable manner in which the spheres are kept in their places, of the secret forces of the realms of space?

Elijah of old, in gloomy mood, viewed, unmoved, the apparent results of the raging elements; but on hearing the still, small voice of God, he wrapped his face in his mantle as he heard God speak.

Let God speak, then, of His mighty power, and His own peculiar method of revealing it. Marvellous import is contained in the words of Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God!

“We preach Christ crucified. . . . Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. I.).

Just consider this, “Christ crucified,” the power of God. Has it ever caused you a thought that that Wondrous Person, Who gave life to all, Who was the Life, Who had life in Himself, Whose life was the light of men, Who is the Prince of life, once lay in the grave? That He was here on this earth in the place of death? Crucified in weakness.

Why was He there?

He was there the power of God. No power was seen in Him that day. Earth saw no power in a dead Man. And heaven was to learn the mystery of it. Yet here was the mighty power of God. Do you understand, dear reader, why Jesus hung there?

There was one scene God never forgot. It was that dark moment in Adam's life when he listened to the tempter's voice, and believed the lie that the enemy told. Adam elected to have the power the enemy offered instead of the power he had been given of God. No greater privilege or power, we believe, had been given to any creature. The range of earth's creation under him, and made only a little inferior to the angels.

The enemy told of power as of gods, a higher range of creatures than those in human form. Also, in accepting his offer, Adam lost the power God had given him, and came, as a disobedient and rebellious creature, under the power of death.

This power of death the enemy wielded (see Heb. II. 14).

But God loved His wilful creature, and in spite of rebellion and sin He came out of heaven

to offer man a greater power than he had lost, and to make a way from out of the prison of death in which he was confined.

“For as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

There was no other way for man out from the power of death than for a deathless divine Person to bear its curse, and annul the might of the devil.

This Jesus, Jehovah of old, did, out of love to man. Explain it away some would; but death as the penalty of sin remains, and faith only in the Saviour, and His precious blood shed on Calvary, brings peace to the soul.

When Jesus died no power was seen in Him; but the rocks rent, the whole creation was shaken, and the authority of darkness was broken for ever. No power, yet the mightiest of all power. The overturning, majestic, moral power of God, exerted in love.

Again was that power put forth with glory, in the resurrection of Christ from among the dead (see Eph. i.).

Have you, dear reader, come under the gentle, overpowering sway of God's love? Or is He a stranger to you? Ah, He cares for you! He has given His only-begotten Son to die, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life!

“He that heareth My word,” said the Son of God, “and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life” (John v. 24).

A LOST SOUL.

IN the days of the great Irish revival a wonderful work of God began among the inhabitants of a certain parish. The clergyman opened the school-room for special services, and night after night crowds gathered together in deep distress of soul, longing to hear words whereby they might be saved.

One evening the rector observed, standing at the bottom of the schoolroom, the Squire, evidently come there to see what was going on. At first he hesitated to go and speak to him, but feeling it was his duty to do so, he walked down the room to go to him. As he approached him, the Squire began to abuse him in a most shameful manner, telling him he was a disgrace to his "cloth" and to the Church of Ireland. After he had given vent to his anger he took his departure, leaving the poor rector not a little cast down.

On the following evening a footman appeared at the rectory from the Hall, requesting the rector to call on the Squire at his earliest convenience. At first he was doubtful about going, but at last decided to go and see what he wanted. Arriving at the Hall, he was shown into the drawing-room, at the end of which stood the Squire, looking careworn and miserable. As he approached him he cried out, "Oh, Mr. —, you see before you

A LOST SOUL!"

Inwardly the rector thanked God for such a confession, for it spoke unmistakably of a work of God begun in the soul of the Squire; and with

joy of heart he at once began to unfold God's way of salvation, and it was not long before the Squire was rejoicing in the knowledge of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

When a man comes to the discovery that he is lost, it is by no means a pleasant one, but it is a blessed discovery when it leads him to the One Who said, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Has this discovery ever been yours, dear reader? You have not to die in your sins to be lost; but this side the grave the lost may be saved. Die in your sins, and you will be

FOR EVER LOST!

Are you still in unbelief, still unforgiven? Then you are lost: you need a Saviour. May God open your eyes to the truth of your lost condition; and if He should graciously use this short paper to awaken you to your real state before Him, stop not at discovering that you are lost, but trust in the lost sinner's Saviour: rest not till you know for certain that you are saved.

E. E. N.

Death is not extinction.—"If death means extinction, then resurrection and the second death are fables." Every fibre of my moral being shrinks from accepting such a definition of death. To do so I must give up Christ; for *He died*. If death is extinction, then *He* became extinct, and there is no Christ. You have taken away my Lord, and I know not where you have laid Him! See where human reasoning lands one, and avoid it as you would Satan himself. H. M. H.

A TRUE TOKEN.

“**N**OW Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.” Thus the inspired historian writes of that ancient city with its strong walls and defiant towers.

“Why was it shut up?” Because of the children of Israel. “And who were they?” The executors of the righteous judgment of God.

Long before, God had declared to Abraham His intention of visiting the sins of the Canaanitish nations (Genesis xv. 16), and now the time was come; the iniquity of the Amorites was full.

“What a solemn time for Jericho!” The long-suffering patience of God exhausted, judgment must now come—judgment from which there was no escape. “None went out, and none came in,” and the hosts of the Lord, having crossed the Jordan, encompassed the city.

Whatever may have been the thoughts of those within, as to their chances of safety—and doubtless many had their pet schemes of salvation—only one household, of all that dwelt in Jericho, was secure: the household of Rahab the harlot. All the rest were doomed. The Lord said unto Joshua, “See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.”

“But how came it about that a woman of such a character should be the object of Divine mercy—a harlot, a prostitute, a woman of ill-repute—while the king himself, and the mighty men of valour, were exposed to the coming storm? What amends had she made for her misspent

life? What had she done to atone for her sins?" Absolutely nothing.

"By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace" (Heb. xi. 31).

"What was the faith of Rahab, and how did it save her?" She believed in the report of the spies, the messengers of Jehovah. They had entered the city some time previously, and made known to her the solemn fact that Jericho was ripe for judgment. She believed the message, and, as an evidence of her faith, not only hid the messengers, after having received them, but sent them out another way (James ii. 25).

"But what security did this give her, seeing she was still left in the doomed city, and her house was upon its very walls? How should the executors of Divine vengeance distinguish her house from others, in spite of her faith?" This she felt, and asked for "*a true token.*" "Swear unto me by the Lord," she said, "since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token: and that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death." And the men answered her: "Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be when the Lord hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee. . . . Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this *line of scarlet thread* in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. And it shall be,

that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him."

Thus that which was to ward off the stroke of Divine judgment was the display of the scarlet thread in the window. Whatever others may have thought or said about Rahab, or her house, her repose and trust were in the scarlet thread, the true token, which had been provided for her by the representatives of the people of Jehovah; her salvation entirely depended upon that thread.

And now the dread judgment was at their doors—Jericho was doomed. Solemnly the Lord's hosts march round the city—all the men of war and seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. "So the ark of the Lord compassed the city, going about it once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp" (Josh. vi. 11). "And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days" (v. 14). "And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner: only on that day they compassed the city seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city. And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the Lord: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she, and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent" (v. 17). "So the people

shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword. But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her. And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel. And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho."

Beloved reader, do you know that the world in which you and I live is like ancient Jericho—exposed to the sure and righteous judgment of God? "He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man Whom He hath ordained"; and do you know that there is *one way* of salvation from the judgment, and *one way only*? No matter who you are; you might be even of royal blood, a mighty man of valour, or possibly a poor

fallen creature like Rahab. Without distinction, there is but one way, and that by taking shelter beneath the precious blood of Christ. Just as Rahab was secure by virtue of the scarlet thread displayed at the window, so the "precious blood of Christ" is displayed before the eye of a holy God as that which is of His own provision, and of which He has said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." "Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness; that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. III.).

Divine love has made this gracious provision, the death of Christ has met all God's holy, righteous claims against sin, so that He can now "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

Will you not at once display the scarlet thread? Take your stand upon the atoning work of Christ as that, and that alone, by which you "shall be saved from wrath." "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Rom. v. 8, 9). Christ's blood is the "*true token*," all other hopes of salvation are vain.

"Precious, precious blood that shelters
From the wrath to come,
Gives the sinner right to enter that bright home."

J. H. E.

"I AM GOING TO DIE."

"And Esau said, Behold, I am going to die [margin]: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?"—GEN. xxv. 32.

IT is often the case with men to-day as with Esau of old; when the things they possess are about to be parted with, they begin to wake up to their real value.

What of all that men possess naturally is the greatest value to them? It is LIFE. "Skin for skin," said Satan (and he makes man his study). "*All that a man hath will he give for his life*" (Job II. 4). Who has not heard pathetic stories illustrating this statement? Above everything else in the world man dreads death. Vitellius, the Roman Emperor, made himself intoxicated in prospect of death. Mirabeau, who figured in the French Revolution, cried to his attendants when death approached, "Give me opium! I have an age of strength and not a moment of courage!" Louis XI forbade his servants even to mention death in his presence.

Life is valued; death is dreaded. Death means the loss of all that man values in this life. David describes the man of the world "*while he liveth*" and "*when he dieth*" (Ps. XLIX. 18, 19). "While he lived he blessed his soul." He congratulates himself on what he possesses, like the rich farmer (Luke XII.). But "when he dieth he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him." Hence the solemn force of the words of Jesus, "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?" (Mark VIII. 36, 37). So with Esau, "I am going to die: what profit

shall this birthright do to me?" For what he thought would ward off death, he gave up his birthright. To prolong life he would barter away all right to it. As the Holy Ghost speaks of it (Gen. xxv. 34), Esau "despised his birthright," and doing that, missed the blessing too, though he "sought it carefully with tears" (Acts xii. 17).

But why not look at that short sentence of five words in the lips of Esau—"I am going to die"—in the light of your *soul's* existence beyond the world in which you now are? Why not listen to the word of Jesus, and ask, "Since I *am* going to die and part with everything here, why not take the opportunity of making sure of what is beyond death and eternally enduring?" One who had personally listened to the exalted Jesus was able to say, "We know that if the 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). "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. iv. 16-18).

To part with the momentary possession of "the things that are seen" for an eternal weight of glory was no difficulty to the apostle, when his eye had seen the glorified One and his heart had made the wondrous discovery. "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." No wonder that he could say, "I count all things but loss

for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” [or, have Christ for my gain] (Phil. III. 7, 8).

Have *you* faced that short sentence—“I AM GOING TO DIE”? Have you taken your bearings, before and behind, in relation to it? What have you that you will not be compelled to part with, then? Of all that you possess of this world’s goods “you will carry nothing away.” “The glory of man” is as the flower of grass—soon gone; and once lost never regained. Left behind, it is left behind for ever. Besides, you are a *sinner*; you have a *conscience*, and God has fixed a day of reckoning. He would not have you take your sins with you to that tribunal, and therefore commands you to repent. And with the command He commends to you His love—a love expressed in the death of His beloved Son, and with this glad message comes the assurance that believing on Him no charge in that great day shall be found against you. Christ yours, all is well; without Him nothing is.

“ 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.”

But Scripture says, “We shall not all sleep.” The Lord is coming. But whether we fall asleep before He comes or are found alive at His coming, the birthright “title” and the “blessing” are both secure for the feeblest believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

May the reader be of the happy number when that great change comes.

GEO. C.

THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN.

FROM AN ADDRESS.

I WOULD first call your attention to *this*—that “faith is the *substance* of things hoped for.” If we realized what we profess to believe, then if the earth opened beneath us, or the heavens above us, we should be able to look up steadfastly, as Stephen did. Why is there so much trifling? why so much vanity? Because these solemn realities are so little known by us. The circumstances of our eternal day ought to surround us now. Faith should bring the future into the present, and separate the heart from seen things. If we walk by faith, we shall be uninfluenced by the things of sight. If all these realities were to become true to sight, what would be the consequence? We should not be able to look at anything else. If the Holy Ghost were here to sight, as He is to faith, what riveted attention—what waiting upon Him! If the Lord Jesus were to come in our very midst in His body of humiliation, would there be such gazing about? would there be attention to other things? Nay: but if even overwhelmed by the cares of the week, if tortured by the sorrows of life, there would be at least a momentary forgetfulness of all. Supposing that poor widow alone, and sobbing in her chamber, and the future—the glory—revealed to her sight, and her heart aware that she is a partaker in it—oh, how it would dry her tears! how absorb her heart! to the displacing of all that makes her so miserable. Suppose we were in a deadly conflict with Satan, and in the midst were to see the Lord holding out a bright crown, and saying,

“Him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne,” how would the eye fasten upon that object! There is but a step to that day when there will be no more parting, but all uniting—when all things that have been uttered will find their answer. But faith makes the things that will be true to sight *then*, true to the heart *now*. Suppose that, like the apostle, we were caught up to the third heaven and saw the Paradise of God, what would be the effect? We can easily suppose that man to be contented anywhere; and calmly to say, “A night and day have I been in the deep,” and make very light of everything here, whether sorrow or joy. We know so very little of this, and therefore little things vex us or seduce us. But remember that we are not *men*, but children of God; and if so, then if we walk as men, the Spirit of God is grieved. What think you of possessing in *measure now* all that we shall possess in the day of the Lord? Then pain of body, and pain of heart, would all appear very light, and we could say with the apostle, after enumerating things that would make some people mad, “These light afflictions, which are but for a moment.” Is this language that could only be used by an apostle? Why do not *we* thus speak? It is the right of all who have the Spirit.

* * *

Faith. Hope. Love.—Faith has wings, and both hope and love can make use of them. But hope whispers a cheering, comforting story as she looks ahead. She says, Neither faith’s wings nor hope’s comfort will be needed shortly. When Home is reached love will be able to do without either.

GEO. C.

ALLELUIAH. (REV. XIX. 5, 6.)

PRAISE our God, all ye His servants,
 Ye that fear Him, great and small ;
 Praise Him for His great salvation,
 He has broken Satan's thrall ;
 Power and glory,
 * Might and wisdom
 Give Him, ye His people all.

God omnipotent now reigneth,
 Let us then in Him rejoice ;
 Let us give Him highest honour,
 Let us sing with heart and voice,
 Alleluiah,
 Alleluiah ;
 Well may ransomed ones rejoice.

To the Lamb Who died to save us
 Be ascribed all glory too ;
 Lift your voices, sing His praises
 As the choirs in heaven do ;
 He is worthy,
 He is worthy,
 He, the Faithful and the True.

Praise Him for His love that sought us
 When our souls were far astray ;
 Praise Him for His grace that keeps us
 In the narrow heavenly way ;
 Alleluiah,
 Alleluiah,
 Thankful hearts should ever say.

Sing ye praises to the Father,
 Sing ye praises to the Son,
 Praises in the Holy Spirit—
 One in Three and Three in One ;
 Alleluiah,
 Alleluiah,
 Praise our God for what He's done.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.



MAN'S UTTER BREAK-DOWN: GOD'S PERFECT RESOURCE.

“A man shall be as an hiding-place.”—ISAIAH XXXII 2.

THE entrance of God's Son into this world proved the crowning test as to how far man under probation was able to respond to the righteous claims of God. Other tests there had been, for the long-suffering of God waited upon His sinful and rebellious creatures (Ex. xxxiv. 6; Matt. xxi. 33-39; 1 Peter III. 20; 2 Peter III. 15). But each successive test only demonstrated the utter inability of man after the flesh to produce one bit of fruit for God; nay, more, it brought to light the solemn fact that man, under the most favourable conditions, and exalted to heaven with privileges, was in a state of enmity and complete alienation from God (Isa. v. 2-4; Matt. xi. 20-24, xxvi. 48-49, xxviii. 11-50; Rom. viii. 6-8). Jews and Gentiles, rulers, priests, scribes, soldiers, and common people joined hands in casting out of this world the “sent one” of God (Acts iv. 23-28). But the death of Jesus was the closing up, as before God, of man's sinful history as born of Adam; and, consequently, an end of His dealings with man under probation.

In the resurrection of Christ a NEW DAY was inaugurated, and the first Gospel message from a risen and triumphant Saviour was conveyed to the Jerusalem sinners, who deliberately preferred a murderer to the Holy Son of God (Luke xxiii. 18).

Reader, who, think you, but a Being of infinite love and grace could have devised such a way of making His heart known to lost and bankrupt sinners? And still the glad message is being heralded forth, proclaiming to the hungry and thirsty and sin-laden children of men the wondrous fact that redemption IS ACCOMPLISHED; that God has been glorified in the death of Jesus; and the mighty Victor is enthroned in power and glory at the right hand of God (Eph. i. 20-23). And it is to *you*, poor, needy, helpless sinner, whatever your past history may have been, that Jesus the Saviour is presented to-day. It is not a creed, or a doctrine, but a Living Person Who is the subject-matter of the Gospel (Rom. i. 1-3). The verse quoted at the head of this paper speaks of "the winds" and "the tempest," two powerful adverse forces to be reckoned with, sooner or later, by every reader of these pages. The "wind" may fitly represent the active energy of Satan arrayed against all that is of God (Job i. 18-19; Jer. iv. 11-13; Matt. xiv. 30). Jesus went into the enemy's stronghold, and in His death destroyed him that had the power of death. The "strong man armed" has been overcome by "*a stronger than he*" (Heb. ii. 14-15; Luke xi. 21-22). This is why, dear, anxious soul, He can be a present "Hiding-place" for *you*. And the same blessed Person voluntarily entered into the darkness and distance and abandonment

of Calvary; sustaining and exhausting *there* the holy judgment of God against sin (John XIX. 30; Rom. VIII. 3); that He might be able, righteously, to present Himself to every needy, distressed sinner, as a "covert from the tempest."

"The storm that bowed Thy blessed head,
Is hush'd for ever now."

But the verse also speaks of a "dry place," and a "weary land": a twofold description of this world as we find it. No true, lasting pleasure is to be found "under the sun" (Eccles. II. 11). It is a "dry place." The name of God is blasphemed, His beloved Son despised and "disallowed of men" (Isa. LIII. 3; 1 Peter II. 4-7). He Who came to express the grace of God to a fallen world, could speak of it as a "dry and thirsty land where no water is" (Ps. LXIII. 1). Reader, listen: "If any man thirst, let him come unto ME, and drink" (John VII. 37). The risen and glorified Christ is the dispenser of "living water," the Giver of the "Holy Spirit" (John IV. 14, XV. 26). He alone can minister joy and satisfaction to the longing heart. Thirsty one, yield yourself unreservedly to Him Who is "as rivers of water in a dry place." It is a "weary land." Sin and sorrow and suffering abound. "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward" (Job V. 7). He Whose mission into this world was to "seek and to save that which was lost," had no place to lay His head (Matt. VIII. 20). He could say: "I am weary of My crying: Mine eyes fail while I wait for My God" (Ps. LXIII. 3). He knew what it was to weep with the sorrow-stricken children of men, and felt, as

none other could, the havoc and desolation which sin had wrought in a groaning creation (John XI. 35).

Reader, are *you* a mourner? "Blessed are they that mourn," says Jesus, "for they SHALL be comforted" (Matt. v. 4). Lay your burden down at His feet, and like the weeping suppliant in the house of Simon the Pharisee (Luke VII. 36-50), you will find, for the comfort and solace of your heart, that Jesus the Saviour will be to *you* the "shadow of a Great Rock in a weary land."

Careless one, hitherto indifferent to the claims of God and the voice of your own conscience, we pass on a kindly message to *you*. Your sins deserve judgment, and you *know* that you must, *one day*, give an account of yourself to God (Rom. XIV. 12). The bare thought of that dread "reckoning day" has often filled you with alarm, and you have trembled as you thought of your dark history and the unsullied holiness of God. Friend, the day of grace will soon have run its course. "The Master of the house will then rise up and shut to the door" (Luke XIII. 25). *The everlasting doom of all, outside of that closed door, will then be sealed.* God has decreed that every knee shall bow to Jesus. The light of a MILLENNIAL DAY will presently dawn upon this world, and God's glorious King shall reign in righteousness. His dominion shall be "from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Ps. LXXII.; Isa. xxxii. 1). That same lowly, despised Nazarene Who could meekly endure the bitter taunts, and blows, and buffetings of His faithless creatures, that God's Name might be glorified in a Man upon earth, shall

wield the sceptre and be owned as "Universal Lord." Men say, "When will He die, and His Name perish?" God has said, "His Name shall endure for ever. His Name shall be continued as long as the sun; all nations shall call Him blessed" (Ps. LXXII. 17). But *remember* that before Christ's millennial reign over the earth begins, the judgment of God will oversweep this guilty world, and the scene will be cleared of ALL who refuse to bow to the Name of Jesus.

Friend, hide yourself to-day under the safe covert of His wings. Listen to "God's Glad Tidings," and appropriate to yourself its countless blessings. "And a MAN shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest: as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

G. F. E.

LEFT BEHIND FOR THE NIGHT.

THE last train was slowly moving out of a London station when a man rushed on the platform and essayed to enter a carriage. The guard threw the door open and exclaimed, "Quick! Jump in!"

The man hesitated; the train having accelerated its speed, the opportunity was gone, and the guard shut the door, with the disconcerting remark, "Too late! You must stay for the night."

A Christian in the departing train, who had noticed what had passed, shouted in a voice that echoed through the deserted station, "We are not of them who draw back into perdition; but of them who believe to the saving of the soul" (Heb. x. 39). This all happened in a moment.

How forcibly this little incident illustrates far greater events, of far greater moment! A great opportunity! A great call! Wilful delay! Eternal loss! Life with its uncertain duration, its *momentous opportunity* for embracing God's great salvation; God's gracious *call* to the perishing; the *delay* of the fearful and unbelieving; the consequent *loss* when eventually left outside in eternal darkness!

Reader, where are you? Are you alive to the vital interest of the moment—the need of your one precious soul?

At the right hand of God, possessing fulness of blessing for the sinner, the glorified risen Saviour, Christ Jesus the Lord, still waits. Once He died for sinners. He came not to call the righteous! He has pardon, peace, and eternal joy for all who will receive the blessing. But soon that opportunity will have passed. Come to Him, sinner, as you are.

What a comfort to be secure! To trust in Him for salvation is indeed to be secure; ready for that moment when He will descend and with His victorious shout call His own away. At that same moment the door of mercy, so long held open, will be closed. Alas, then, for those who have neglected God's great salvation in the day of His long-suffering (Matt. xxv. 10). Whilst believers will be taken to share the glories of the "perfect day," they will be left behind for eternal night.

It is a terrible thing to draw back to perdition, but blessed indeed to believe to the saving of the soul.

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

L. O. L.

THE REALITY OF SOUL-EXERCISE.

TO those who have been divinely awakened, the indifference of those who are still dead in sins is appalling. To be awakened to your jeopardy in a burning house, and find others as quietly, heavily slumbering as you were until a hot spark fell on your face, is to stir you up in earnest desire for *their* awakening. You wonder that your first shake does not awaken them. In proportion to your anxiety to see them roused will be your gratification in seeing their earnestness to flee from the place of peril. If this is so as to man's short life here, how much more so when God brings eternity full in view.

True awakening is by the Spirit; and when it does take place, how real it is! "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John III. 8). As with a man's half-bewildered awakening in a burning house, the one previously awakened, who has clearly seen the sure way of escape, is the one to thankfully direct the seeker to the only way out, so with our spiritual awakening. Whatever the instrumentality, it is by the Spirit that the awakening comes, and by the same Spirit the seeker is directed, in the Gospel message, to the One in Whom is found the only way of escape from the deadly peril in which sin had involved him.

Oh, it is a glad message! There is gladness in it for the one who carries it; gladness for the one who receives it; gladness for God Himself when even one sinner is awakened to listen to it;

gladness for time ; gladness for eternity ; gladness shared by the blessed Redeemer Himself with every one of His redeemed in glory. He will present them "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24). With such a prospect, who would not rejoice in the salvation of a sinner to-day ?

Recently a young man, often prayed for by his departed mother, came to hear the "glad tidings" in a farmyard granary. God only knew what had previously been going on in that young man's soul ; but presently it became manifest to others. The glad message brought it to light. His sister had *already* discovered the only way out of present danger into eternal blessing, and very real was her solicitude for him. With trembling joy she watched the many evidences of his awakening, as she was able to trace them. One evening, however, her hopes had a severe shock. She found an old companion had invited him to go with him to a popular concert in a neighbouring town, and that he was actually going !

She had one resource. She betook herself all that evening to prayer for him. What of the young man himself ? He had not been long in the brightly-lighted concert room before the thought came to him : "If this place should catch fire, I shall be lost !" It grew upon him, and he whispered his fears into his companion's ear. His friend made light of it, but not so that awakened heart. He made for the door. But when he had got outside the enemy began to whisper. What would his companion think of such a strange way of going on ? He returned, but the same alarm seized him again. He felt

once more the awful peril, and eventually left the hall to return no more. He mounted his cycle for home, but had not gone far before the thought struck him: "If I should fall off my machine and get killed, my soul will be lost for ever!" He hastily dismounted; and once more it might be said on earth, "Behold, he prayeth." He knelt down under the hedge. He cried to God, turned to Christ, trusted Him as his own Saviour, and found all that his troubled heart desired in the assurance of forgiveness through the precious blood of Jesus.

He now felt too happy to mount his bicycle, and walked home to confess with his lips what, all that night, his sister had been praying for. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." For the Scripture saith, "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed." "Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. x. 10, 11, 13).

Here is encouragement for you, my dear reader! What greater boon than to be the subject of a work of grace in the soul! What greater calamity than to miss it! To-day finds you with the blessing still within your reach. To-morrow may find you as far removed from all its glorious possibilities as the "great gulf *fixed*" can place you eternally. May your prayer be—

"Lord, I hear of showers of blessing
Thou art scattering full and free,

.

Blessing others, oh bless me,

EVEN ME."

Oh, it is a great reality! Seek it, and you also shall find it. Seek it NOW.

GEO. C.

“NO TIME FOR RELIGION!”

I HAVE no time for religion.

Indeed! Then have you no time for salvation?

Is there any difference?

Certainly there is.

Well, I have always thought that they were just the same; different words expressing the same meaning.

Not at all. Religion is an obedience to certain rules which should bind the observer always. Salvation is a gift, and is received in a moment.

A ship is foundering ten miles from shore. All hands are at work pumping out the water; they work well and most energetically, but without success. She is sinking.

People on shore see her distress and despatch a lifeboat, which, in due time, reaches the fated vessel.

Now, what is the use of the lifeboat?

Its use? Why, that those on board the ship should step into her and be pulled to shore.

Quite so. Then what would you suggest to that hard-wrought man at the pump who has no time for anything but to attend most religiously to his pumping?

Oh! I would cry to him to drop the pump-handle and jump into the boat.

Very good; and how long would that take?

Just a moment or two.

And then he would be safe?

Well, yes, so long as the boat did not founder too.

Of course; but the jump into the boat would be his salvation?

Yes!

To pump on the sinking ship may illustrate religion; to rest securely in the boat, salvation. If asked to lend a hand at an oar on the lifeboat, the rescued man would doubtless gladly respond and do his very best; but rowing in the lifeboat and working at the pumps of a foundering ship are very different things.

This is what might be called "dead works," that would illustrate the injunction to "work out your own salvation"—a work into which heart and soul would be flung as the result of life and confidence and hope.

Hence the vast difference between religion and salvation; though the saved man will be religious—that is, he will gladly carry out the rules and wishes of his Saviour.

I remember a gay young fellow saying to me that he had tried to be religious for three days, and then gave it up in disgust. I congratulated him on his persevering for so long, to which he replied, in great surprise, "But are you not religious?"

Well, I had been converted to God for several years at that time, and had proved the comfort of the lifeboat and the peace of salvation. I had lost the bondage of religion in the holy liberty of grace. I had got to know that "Thy service is perfect freedom," but such service flows from life and is thus natural, as contrasted with legality and slavery.

"I had just enough religion to make me miserable," said a man before he knew peace with God. After that he became free and happy and useful.

Did you ever notice a precious statement in

John VIII. 36—"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed"?

Ponder it, my reader! Such true freedom gives great deliverance to the burdened soul. It is wonderful freedom; it is given by the Son of God; it is therefore the liberty of a son and not the bondage of a slave; it lasts for ever; it is divine.

Call it religion if you please; it is one for which there is not time enough! Days, weeks, months, and years are all too short for such a joy—indeed,

"It seems as if eternal days
Were far too short to sing His praise."

J. W. S.

"NO PLACE FOR REPENTANCE."

HOW solemn is the Spirit's record of Esau, first in the Book of Genesis and again in Hebrews. It is said of him that he was a cunning hunter and a man of the field. No doubt, there are many men in the world to-day like Esau. Men who hunt for pleasure, and despise the grace and goodness of God that leadeth to repentance. There are multitudes of men of the "field" spending their days in revelry and self-satisfaction. But we are inclined to think with Solomon "that all is vanity and vexation of spirit" with them. It is said that Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage; and, as if to confirm it, the Spirit of God recalls it in the New Testament. He afterward desired to inherit the blessing, but was "rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it [the blessing] carefully with tears (Heb. XII. 17).

Let me affectionately appeal to you. Has this been your experience, my reader? Have you desired blessing from God? He is, blessed be His peerless Name, greatly interested in you. He has unlimited blessing for you, and that in nature and character like God Himself. It has been opened up through the Lord Jesus Christ, Who came forth to undertake the glorious and mighty transaction by shedding His precious blood. He was “made sin for us Who knew no sin.” God can now, upon a righteous basis, eternally forgive, and set you free from the sin which stood out before His all-seeing eye. Nothing but death, nothing but the cost of His life could put sin away. That He has done by the sacrifice of Himself, so that not a single question can be raised against the believer. Without question man is verily guilty, but his guilt need not bar his coming to God. Jesus, that Blessed One, has opened the way for “whosoever will.” All this He has done, and maintained the glory of God’s throne. “Hallelujah! what a Saviour!” How great a Person He is, and no usurper. Oh, will you not be persuaded to venture upon Him, and “taste and see that the Lord is good”?

Esau found no place for repentance, although he sought the blessing carefully with tears. He sought it when it was too late. How earnest he was! How deeply moved, even to tears! Ah, Esau, thine opportunity is over!

And if for the reader such a possibility should be turned into accomplished reality, what then? It has been said that “salvation finally missed is damnation eternally reached.” To-day there is a place for repentance. To-day you may have the

blessing. Oh, that you may seek it earnestly, with true contrition of soul. Thus it is written, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word" (Isa. LXVI. 2). In hell there will be found no place for repentance, but remorse and anguish of soul. May Esau's testimony be a warning voice to you; and this moment be yours for decision for Christ. Make your choice.

Not long ago I was visiting a dying man in North America, and I put the question to him, "What think ye of Christ?" He had great and elevating thoughts of "religion," but for Christ he had no desire. May it not be so with you!

"But now He's risen from the grave,
And bears the greatest, sweetest Name,
The Lord Almighty now to save
From sin, from death, from endless shame."

E. J. E.

"GOD KNOWN IS GOD TRUSTED."

PUT it home to the conscience of any person that is not saved. Has God got a pair of scales? Come then in the name of the Lord Jesus, and you are perfectly welcome to all that Christ has been given. Christ took my place in judgment, and I am to take His place in glory. "We become the righteousness of God in Him"—that lasts for ever. Men suppose their minds are capable of forming a just estimate of God. Now God says, "My ways are unsearchable." Christ is earth-rejected but heaven-owned. But there is another thing connected with this. I find God has been before man, and that if you come before God you must come in His way.

People generally begin with “I,” and talk about religion, “I desired to be instructed.” But God says, “I have done the work. I sent My Son; gave Him a cup of wrath to drink, and raised Him again. If so, let Me be the first poor sinner.” God ought to be the very first person to be trusted! “Has God taken the whole thing into His hand, and left Me nothing to do?” *Nothing.* What can you do when Christ has done it all? What could you do if Christ had *not* done it all? How could you meet His mind about God? about yourself as a sinner? The conscience gets scared if you get one thought about God. “What I have presented before you,” God says, “enables you to be as perfectly satisfied in My presence as I am.”

Here is the message he had got, that God did not need reconciling, but man needed to be reconciled. Now it is a very humbling thing for a poor sinner to have to go to God and say, “Really there was such suspicion of Thee in my heart”; but most easy, if I go on that ground that He hath made Him sin for us; and that God hath shown Himself out in this way. If my soul can take that, and say it is true, I have got two most astonishing things brought before me. I can say to God, “I can trust Thee to take away all that lurking suspicion that is constantly stealing up in my heart, because Thou didst make Him sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

G. V. W.

REST.

“Come ye yourselves apart . . . and rest awhile.”

“COME ye yourselves apart and rest awhile.”
 We'd seek Thee, Lord, and Thine approving smile,
 Thy care is still unwearied for Thine own,
 Apart with Thee it is that Thou art known,
 And this is rest.

“Come ye yourselves.” The Shepherd's voice we hear,
 Who calls His sheep, that He may have them near,
 And when He puts them forth He goes before,
 And leads them into life for evermore
 And gives them rest.

Apart with Jesus, called by Him aside,
 To rest awhile, and with Himself abide,
 Where free from all the turmoil and the strife
 We find in Him our joy, our peace, our life,
 And this is rest.

Apart with Jesus, earth's rejected One,
 Yet chosen, precious, and the Living Stone,
 As living stones built up on Him through grace,
 The preciousness is ours—love's chosen place—
 And this is rest.

Apart with Thee, a heavenly portion, Lord,
 Is that which now Thy presence doth afford,
 Responsive hearts will answer to Thy love,
 And know its power, while yet they daily prove
 That this is rest.

We bless and praise Thee, Lord, for what Thou art
 In service still, to give with Thee a part,
 Thy bosom is the place where we can be
 In quiet rest and peace apart with Thee,
 Till all is rest.

T. W. P.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

WISDOM LEARNED—CERTAINTY GIVEN.

THE Book of Proverbs tells us the way to real happiness is by Wisdom; and we are also told that Christ is God's Wisdom. God has spoken in His Son. Warnings are given in the Old Testament to keep men from going to destruction: in the New we have His final entreaties to repent, and His loving invitations to come to Him for blessing and rest.

Wisdom crieth in the broadways, wherever people congregate together, in the entry of the gates, and in the city she uttereth her words, "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is unto the sons of men." The simple, the scorner, and the fool are warned to turn at the reproof. Those who repent receive the spirit of wisdom and soon believe the glad tidings of salvation; but those who do not turn are warned of the judgment to come. Their fears will be terrible and their destruction certain. In awful distress and anguish they will call upon the Lord, but He will not answer (Prov. i. 20-28).

Reader, be warned. Death and eternal judgment are realities. God's grace provides an acceptable time to receive the gracious entreaties of Jesus, and to believe God's glad tidings concerning His Son; but in one moment this may

come to an end. What then? Every ray of hope gone, God's grace and mercy squandered, and nothing to look to in the future but the blackness of darkness and a horrible doom under the eternal displeasure of the eternal God. Such must be the end of "them who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. i. 8).

The penitent thief, in Luke xxiii. 39-43, presents to all men a truly converted one, having listened to Wisdom's warning during the last hours of his life. Along with the other thief he found himself in the grasp of the Roman power for breaking the laws of the land. Both were suffering the consequences of their evil deeds, and were condemned to crucifixion. But Jesus was at the same place, and was about to establish the will of God in obtaining an eternal redemption, so that all men who believe might have forgiveness. What a contrast! Christ obedient unto death to glorify God. As to men, He always did them good. His death upon the cross showed God's love to all. On the other hand, the thieves had been disobedient to God, and in the eyes of men were not fit to live because of their wickedness.

Every kind of dishonour was being done to Jesus. The hearts of all men were fully exposed by their attitude toward Him. One thief remained in his awful wickedness. The penitent thief rebuked him, and said: "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man hath done nothing amiss." His conscience was reached; he began to fear God; he learned wisdom from Christ. His request to Jesus was:

“Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.” Jesus heard his appeal. The Lord in His rich mercy gave him more than he asked. His desire referred to the future, according to the faith of a true Jew. He believed that the kingdom would come, and that Jesus was the Christ. But the Lord, in virtue of an accomplished redemption which He completed, fitted this believer for being in Paradise with Himself that very day. To be with Christ involved his future blessing in the coming kingdom.

What a change! Away from all the consequences of his sins and the reproach he brought upon himself by his evil ways, to be in Paradise with Christ!

As to outward appearance, most people would conclude that the penitent thief died as he lived. He had no power to reform, or alter his life outwardly, but the inspired account proves that deep, real exercises were going on in his heart; and, having believed, he confessed with his mouth the Lord Jesus. The result was that he received the certainty of present and abiding blessing from the Lord Himself.

Salvation is not of works, lest any man should boast. What works could a man do while bound to a cross to die? It was all the Lord's mercy. The purpose of Jesus Christ coming into the world was to save sinners. The penitent thief was a sinner, and could do nothing but call upon the Lord in his trouble. The Lord Jesus proved He was the Saviour of sinners.

This case shows that a person can be an outcast of society owing to bad behaviour, and yet the Lord's grace is not withheld. Christ met the judgment of God for sin; He died and rose from

the dead; now He lives on high at the right hand of God "a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins" to every one that believes. "The Lord is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Reader, if you have not heard the voice of Wisdom you had better listen now. Grace, abounds to the chief of sinners. Saul of Tarsus, a persecutor of God's people, found mercy from the Lord. Thousands have learned that the Lord is gracious. He said Himself, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37).

The one great thing to learn is that you are guilty before God. Although God must be just, yet He justifies those who believe in Jesus. On the ground of the blood of Christ and His death and resurrection, God will clear you completely from all your guilt. He will count you righteous the moment you believe. Trust Him now. Call upon Him, and He will answer. D. D.

Cleansed and Forgiven.—Are you working hard to wash away your sins by praying and trying to be good, because you want God to forgive you? You cannot wash away one sin that you have done. *The blood of Jesus alone* can wash away sins. Nothing else can.

"What can wash away my stains?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus!

So that not one spot remains?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus!"

"The blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7).

"Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22).

“LAST OPPORTUNITY.”

A VERY small rock stands in the water above Niagara Falls called “Past Redemption Point.” The reason it is so called is because no one was ever known to pass it, without getting into the rapids and being lost.

That point—“past redemption point”—in our lives may be small and apparently of little consequence; but, like the one above Niagara Falls, once we pass it we are lost—lost eternally.

Again and again we feel the Spirit striving with us, and trying to persuade us to repent and be converted, but if we repeatedly refuse His promptings, some day or another we shall refuse His last appeal: “My Spirit shall not always strive with man.” Why, then, do we refuse our last opportunity? Simply because we do not know it is the *last*. If we did know, do you think we should, for one moment, refuse it? Indeed we should not, unless we were mad.

Some, after repeated refusals, may just now be refusing for the last time. Before doing so yourself, reader, just stop and think of the tremendous issues at stake. Think of all it means to you. Think of your remorse in the lost world, through countless ages. Think how often you will review your neglected opportunities, especially the last! What sad regret you will have then; and there will be no recompense.

A story is told of a man many years since who was in charge of a railway bridge. Under it was a canal, where steamers very often passed. A train and a steamer could not pass at the same time. Before a steamer could get through the drawbridge had to be opened.

On one occasion a man in charge of a steamer was wanting to get through just as a train was nearly due. The gatekeeper informed him the bridge could not be opened till the train passed over: but the boatman being most anxious to get through, as he wanted to be first in the market with his fish, a bribe was given. The gate was opened. Hardly had he done so when the train came at full speed. The gateman tried his utmost to get the gate or bridge closed in time. But, alas! the time was insufficient. The train plunged into the water. The poor gateman ended his life in a lunatic asylum. One sentence was constantly on his lips, "Oh, if I only had . . .!" "Oh, if I only had. . .!"

Dear friends, would that not be our cry in hell if we allowed the devil to bribe us to open our gates to him, even though he could persuade us we could have them closed in time?

The gateman did not intend to cause a disaster. He thought, no doubt, that he could get the gate closed in time. Is it not the same with some who are neglecting their last opportunity? Never dream of trifling with it. As we do not know when the last opportunity is held out to us, our only plan is to treat every opportunity as though it were our last. Then when death comes it will not find us unprepared.

Are we waiting for a death-bed repentance? Be warned in time. This may never be our lot. Do not hold out any hope of your last opportunity being found there. How many never get a death-bed? And few of those who do are in a fit state of mind to repent; and it is certain that those who do repent then, have

lost all the joy of Christianity throughout their lives.

God's Word says: "Now is the accepted time." "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." God forbid that any of us should neglect our last opportunity, or that it should be ours to cry, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." J. C. L.

WHAT TO GO IN FOR.

A YOUNG man in my office, going abroad, said, "I am going in for money!"

I believe Christians ought to have something they are *going in for*. I am going in for being "filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph. III. 19.) Nothing less. It is all in the heart of God that we should have this.

What Christ wants *first* is not service. The thing that Christ values most is within the reach of the weakest saint. He says, I want your *heart*; I want to come in and be a *dweller* there. "That Christ may dwell in your heart by faith." The heart, in Scripture, is the vessel of the affections. *The heart becomes purified by the Object on which it is set.*

No one can know my weakness as I know it myself; but still I know He loves me. I can pillow my soul on the love of Christ. Our hearts need solace; but oh! did they know *His love*? You may get away from all, and yet you are never nearer to the saints than when you are near Christ consciously.

E. P. C.

DEVOTED LOVE.

“I love my master, my wife, and my children ; I will not go out free.”—EXODUS XXI. 5.

AND is it from love like this that we try to get free?

“I don’t think I do.” “I’m sure I do not.”

Are *you* so trying? Are you quite sure? “The love of Christ constraineth us,” that we who live “should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto Him Who died for us.”

Why is it that we are not more under the constraining power of that wonderful love? “I love my master,” said the old Hebrew servant. I love “My Master,” said He of Whom the Hebrew servant was only a type. Ere creation was completed we see the Son rejoicing in the Father’s love. “Then I was daily His delight ; rejoicing always before Him, rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth.” Over and over again in the Gospels there are incidents setting forth the love of the Son to the Father and the joy it was to Him to do His Father’s will.

“I love my wife.” The Hebrew servant, who so loved his wife that he would not leave her, might remain with her—but only as a bondman ; and she, the wife, still a bondwoman, a slave as before.

“I love my wife,” says the Son of the Father. But how will this holy Servant, spotless, undefiled, separate from sinners, secure for His eternal delight this Bride whom He loves? Is His love to His Master and His wife sufficient to carry Him through the long dark way, away from His home of glory down to this earth, through the world, walking day by day amongst “His own,”

and they receiving Him not, grieving that loving heart that yearned over them with such longing love?

Still on and on He went, few caring for or returning that love which was ever being displayed. That pathway led down—down to the dust of death. There He was forsaken even by the few who really cared to be with Him in His lonely walk down here. But what was most bitter to that loving One was being forsaken of God Himself. There, in the midst of the darkness, did that holy Servant carry out His Father's will. By laying down His life He sealed with His own blood the testimony of His love both to God and man.

We shall never know, never be able to fathom all it meant to that Holy One; but the Father knows. He has raised out of death that obedient Servant, His beloved Son, and placed Him at His own right hand; He has crowned Him with glory and honour, and given Him a Name which is above every name.

But what about the Bride which has been bought at such a cost, the "pearl of great price"? She is still left in the world that would not accept her Beloved; in the world that, as He walked through, only tried to make that pathway more sad and lonely.

Then surely she takes no part in the doings of that cold-hearted world! How could she link herself with anything that cast out her Beloved, that wondrous Man Who gave His life for her in such a manner? But is it so? Is it so to-day?

Is she quite separate and aloof from all that refused her Beloved, the world which would not accept Him?

“I love my children.” With the same intensity of affection that the Father loves the Son, does the Son love the children. “As the Father hath loved Me, even so have I loved you; continue ye in My love.” We love Him because He first loved us. Go quietly to John xvii. and listen. The Son is speaking to the Father, and what is His first concern? The Father’s glory. He asks the Father to glorify Him. It could not be otherwise; the Son could not bring glory to the Father without Himself partaking of it. “I and My Father are one.”

Then listen to the way He speaks of His own, the “children.” He was going down into death for them, and then up—up to the heights of glory that He might receive them to Himself. But He knows, none so well, the dreary loneliness they will feel when He Whom they love is gone. So again and again He gives them into the Father’s keeping. And that is where we are now—in the Father’s keeping, watched over and guarded and loved with the same love as that in which His Son, His well-beloved, ever dwells.

“*I love my children.*” But do we see beauty in Him? Do we often sit with great delight under His shadow waiting quietly for the Holy Spirit to teach us more of the Son, and the Father to Whom the Son has returned?

“He is despised and rejected of men.” But is this *still* true? After giving expression in such an unmistakable way to the love of His heart, is it so? Yes! Emphatically in the present tense is that one sad sentence! Much of that beautiful 53rd chapter of Isaiah is past, some of it is future, but at this present time God’s Lamb is “despised and re-

jected of men." And His children, the children whom He loves, they too are despised; they must be rejected by the world that cast out their Saviour. Living each day close to the Lord Who brought them near to the Father, Who gave His well-beloved Son to die for them, the world would have no attraction for their hearts. They would not wish to be counted part of it, to be known as belonging to it.

Is that the position taken by each one of us? Are we so "in the love of God" that from the bottom of our hearts we can say—

"Saviour, I long to follow Thee,
Daily Thy cross to bear"?

Can it be that the world has still some hold on our heart's affections? Should we be more truthful if we said—

"Saviour, I long to follow Thee:
Do Thou my heart prepare
To count all else, whate'er it be,
Unworthy of my care"?

Let us be honest with ourselves, and find out exactly what we are doing with this priceless love which so yearns for a fuller return from our affections; love which would wrap itself around us and preserve us from all which might through its seeming fairness draw us away from Him.

God grant that if He be pleased to leave us a little longer down here we may learn more of the love of that blessed Servant; that the Spirit, not being grieved by our lack of appreciation of Christ, may conduct us farther into the things of God.

THE END OF TWO VISITS.

LUKE II. 15 ; 1 PETER III. 22.

“*GONE . . . into heaven*” is said of both. Angels had been to this world in connection with an important announcement, and they had returned. They were a praising host—a “multitude” of them. The message was a joyful one. It exactly suited God, it was perfectly adapted to man. There was glory in it for God—“glory in the highest”; there was salvation in it for man—for man in the lowest. Not only did it embrace the lowest in the social scale, as for example, a few shepherds on their night-watch in the fields, but it extended, as this Gospel so blessedly shows, to the worst of sinners in the city (Luke VII. 37), and even to one too bad to be tolerated in the city—the dying robber at Calvary. Not only had the hosts of heaven come near to man on earth, the heart of *God* had come near to His ruined creature. Not only had an angel come to say “Fear not!” on God’s behalf, Jesus, the Son of God, had come to hush every bit of alarm in the heart of man in the presence of God.

This visit came to an end, and they went back. We read, “When they had gone away from them [the shepherds] into heaven,” the shepherds began to bestir themselves. There was a new object of attraction for man on earth, “a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord”; not a *lawgiver* and not a *judge*, but a Saviour. They hastened to see Him, and found Him; and they in turn became a praising company (v. 20). Poor sinners had been brought into the mind of heaven, and their fear turned to praise.

After thirty - three years and a half the

Saviour's visit came to a close also. Peter describes it and says: "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him" (1 Peter III. 22).

The angelic mission was *soon* over. It moved the hearts of those they spoke to, and they returned. Now the marvellous mission of Jesus was over. He Who but yesterday was at a thief's right hand on a cross of shame and suffering, was now at God's right hand in authority and glory and power.

What had the angel done? Only brought a *message*, accompanied as it was by a praising host. What had Jesus done? He had declared God in grace and sealed that precious declaration by His death for sinners. If an angel could say "*Fear not!*" He could do a work which would express a love that could cast out *all* fear.—God's perfect love! That work He did, the Lamb once slain now fills the throne of God above, His love fills the heart of His redeemed below.

Angels went to heaven to take their place of subjection to a *Man!* He had passed them by in descending to become a man. He had once more passed them in ascending as man to the right hand of God.

He has evidently shown, dear reader, a most marvellous interest in you and me. What interest have you found in Him? A Pharisee hardened in self-satisfaction has no particular interest in Him until he is shorn of all that a Pharisee could glory in, and stands in his real character, stripped and exposed, a real sinner before Jesus the gracious Saviour. It is then

that His mission to this world becomes a never-dying charm to him. Let a saved Pharisee tell the story himself: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. i. 15).

But there is a solemn alternative. He is coming again. He will judge the world in righteousness as the Man ordained of God to do it—the Man Whom He has raised from the dead. Has He not given a pledge of this to all men by that very resurrection?

"Behold the Lamb with glory crowned!
 To Him all power be given;
 No place too high for Him is found,
 No place too high in heaven.

He fills the throne—the throne above,
 Its rights to Him belong;
 The object of His Father's love,
 Theme of the ransomed's song."

GEO. C.

THE WORK OF CHRIST FORESHADOWED.

"AS to the order of the offerings in the opening chapters of the Book of Leviticus, the Lord begins with the burnt offering and ends with the trespass offering. That is to say, He leaves off where we begin. This order is marked and most instructive. When first the arrow of conviction enters the soul, there are deep searchings of conscience in reference to sins actually committed. Memory casts back its enlightened eye over the page of one's past life, and sees it stained with numberless trespasses

against God and man. At this point of the soul's history it is not so much occupied with the question of the root from whence those trespasses have sprung, as with the stern and palpable fact that such and such things have actually been committed; and hence it needs to know that God has provided a sacrifice through which 'all trespasses' can be 'frankly forgiven.' This is presented to us in the *trespass offering*.

But as one advances in the divine life, he becomes conscious that those *sins* which he has committed are but branches from a root, streams from a fountain; and, moreover, that *sin* in his nature is that fountain, that root. This leads to far deeper exercise, which can only be met by a deeper insight into the work of the cross. In a word, the cross will need to be apprehended as that in which God Himself has 'condemned *sin in the flesh*' (Rom. VIII. 3). My reader will observe it does not say '*sins in the life,*' but the root from whence these have sprung, namely, '*sin in the flesh.*' This is a truth of immense importance. Christ not merely 'died for our sins according to the scriptures,' but He 'was made sin for us' (2 Cor. v. 21). This is the doctrine of the *sin offering*.

Now, it is when the heart and conscience are set at rest, through the knowledge of Christ's work, that we can feed upon Himself as the ground of our peace and joy in the presence of God. There can be no such thing known as peace and joy until we see all our trespasses forgiven and our sins judged. The *trespass offering* and the *sin offering* must be known ere the *peace offering*, *joy offering*, or *thanksgiving offering* can be appreciated. Hence, therefore, the

order in which the peace offering stands, corresponds with the order of our spiritual apprehension of Christ.

The same perfect order is observable in reference to the *meat offering*. When the soul is led to taste the sweetness of spiritual communion with Christ—to feed upon Him, in peace and thankfulness, in the Divine Presence it is drawn out in earnest desire to know more of the wondrous mysteries of His Person; and this desire is most blessedly met in the meat offering, which is the type of Christ's perfect manhood.

Then, in the *burnt offering*, we are conducted to a point beyond which it is impossible to go, and that is the work of the cross, as accomplished under the immediate eye of God, and as the expression of the unswerving devotion of the heart of Christ. All these things will come before us in beauteous detail as we pass along; we are here only looking at the order of the offerings, which is truly marvellous whichever way we travel, whether *outward* from God to us, or *inward* from us to God. In either case, we begin with the cross and end with the cross. If we begin with the burnt offering, we see Christ on the cross doing the will of God, making atonement according to the measure of His perfect surrender of Himself to God. If we begin with the trespass offering, we see Christ on the cross bearing our sins and putting them away, according to the perfection of His atoning sacrifice; while, in each and all, we behold the excellency, the beauty, and perfection of His Divine and adorable Person. Surely all this is sufficient to awaken in our hearts the deepest interest in the study of those precious types." C. H. M.