

Good Tidings.

"Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."—*Luke II. 10.*

Vol. XXI.—No. 1, 1884. "God is Light." "God is Love." Whole No. 139

LONGING FOR HIS RETURN.

O 'twas a mournful parting day !

" Farewell, my spouse," he said ;
(How tedious, Lord, is Thy delay !

How long my Love hath staid !)

" Farewell !" at once he left the ground,
And climb'd His Father's sky ;
Lord, I would tempt Thy chariot down,
Or leap to Thee on high.

Round the creation wild I rove,
And search the globe in vain ;
There's nothing here that's worth my love,
Till Thou return again.

My passions fly to seek their King,
And send their groans abroad,
They beat the air with heavy wing,
And mourn an absent God.

Withinward pain my heart-strings sound
My soul dissolves away,
Dear Sovereign, whirl the seasons round,
And bring the promised day.

T. W. B.

In April, 1875, Mr. B. left his home in the country and went up to an hotel in D. intending, as he expressed it, to have a good time. He was a man of talent and of education, had all that the world could give and had tried—thank God, in vain—to satisfy his soul and to find happiness in the pleasures of sin. For a season these seemed to satisfy, but illness set in, and for the first time in his life he was consciously brought, face to face, with the solemn fact that sooner

or later he should have to do with God and that he would have to give account of himself before God and that eternal things, though unseen, were realities.

He sent for a Doctor, who told him that his lungs were affected, but that there was no immediate danger, that his life, with care might be prolonged for several years. Before leaving, the Doctor, turning to him, asked "How does it stand between your soul and God?"

He gave no answer, though the question went to his heart, why should he answer? was not that a question between himself and God, not to be talked of, and which could not be answered, at all events till the day of judgment, such a question was only an impertinence, so he thought, yet it pierced his conscience, an arrow divinely directed.

Shortly after he left D. and went to B. doing his best to throw off the serious thoughts, awakened in his illness. "Plenty of time yet," whispered Satan to his heart, "Plenty of time," his heart quickly responded; "Time to enjoy myself now and time enough before I die to repent.

Falling thus readily and willingly into the old snare of Satan, he soothed his conscience with the idea that he could go on now pleasing himself and forgetting God, but that before he died, he would find time to be converted, to turn to God and so get to heaven.

Miserable thought; alas! how many

souls are so lulled by Satan into the sleep of death by the one short sentence, "Time enough yet!"

But God in His rich grace was following the poor prodigal and again laid him on a sick bed. The illness proved a very serious one, and day after day he lay lingering apparently between life and death.

Serious, solemn thoughts pressed themselves on his soul, but the wily tempter met them with a fresh set of inventions. "Why should the thought of God now frighten him, it would be a very cowardly thing to think of religion on a sick bed, he should play the man, die as he had lived and fear nothing."

The sick man determined to "play the man," and in order that no one should speak to him of God, gave strict orders that no one was to be admitted to his room unknown to him. He lay thus for about a fortnight, when as his illness seemed to increase, his friends insisted upon his having a second Doctor to see him.

He came and having examined him, sat down beside his bed having told him of his dangerous state, asked "How about your soul and God?" The Lord sent the word home to the sin-sick soul in living power, he said nothing, did not even answer, but much was passing through his mind. "What a fool I am," he thought, "I have let no one into my room for some weeks, lest religion should be spoken of, and now the first person who comes in, asks me of God—I have done my best to keep God out of my thoughts. Is He following me; does He really love me. He was convicted of sin, of his ingratitude to the One who seemed to him to be following him, of the sin too of resisting God. He was miserable, knowing that he was unfit to stand before God, yet having it as a certainty to his soul that he must stand before God. The state of his soul

was now what we have expressed in the Psalm, "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." The light and holiness of God's presence so felt by the soul, that it discovers that there could be no justification, if God should enter into judgment.

Contrary to all human expectation, he so far recovered, as to be able to be about again, much as before; but with the great spiritual difference, that he rose from that sick bed a religious man, a man with a religion, but without a Saviour, a man, determined to seek God, not knowing that the Son of man had come to seek and to save him, a man, who thought that by his own doings he could for himself open a way into the divine presence, in total ignorance that the way into the holiest of all had been, once and for ever, opened by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Soon after he returned to D. to tell his friend of the great change. "You will be glad to hear that I am all right now, I am quite happy, I try to feel very sorry day by day, I hope soon to be sorry enough and to have prayed enough and then God will help me to gain salvation."

"Dear sir," replied his friend, "you are beginning at the wrong end, salvation is for sinners, the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost, Christ died for the ungodly, your prayers, your sorrow, your good intentions cannot avail for your salvation, suppose you could always do what is right in the future what about the past, how can your future good actions atone for your past transgressions? The truth is that as a helpless and a hopeless sinner, you must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ."

Mr. B. could not bear to think that his need was so great that he was helpless much less hopeless—was his change of life of no avail, must he not do something, had he not to help in the matter

of his salvation. He paced his room in an agony of mind. "Is all my striving of no use? Turn, said his friend, to the 3rd chapter of Zechariah and see there the picture God gives us of salvation.

How is the sinner represented there? "Clothed in filthy garments." And what does the Lord say of the sinner, "Is not this a brand plucked from the fire;" there we have God's estimate of you and of me, "A brand fit for the fire," and no escape unless we should be plucked out.

His friend dwelt shortly on a few points of this lovely scene; a picture divinely given of the Lord, of Satan and of a sinner, a picture of exceeding grace, exceeding malice and exceeding need; grace exposing and grace relieving.

Satan's mouth stopped for ever his exceeding malice could bring no greater charge against the sinner, than what Jehovah expresses in the sentence, "A brand plucked from the fire."

Satan is rebuked and silenced, not because of anything good in the sinner, or about him, but because of the fulness and freeness of Jehovah's love. "Evén the Lord that hath CHOSEN Jerusalem rebuke thee."

The Lord sets His love on an object fit for the fire, on a poor sinner clothed in filthy garments. Grace comes to such, for, "It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

Space forbids us to dwell on this wondrous scene—grace working till it not only removes the filthy garments, but brings a change of raiment and sets a fair mitre on the head of the one whose exceeding need and guilt was his only plea. He does nothing, brings nothing, but receives all, and all done in perfect righteousness, for "The angel of the Lord stood by." But let us ask, "On what ground can grace so act?" what saith scripture, "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him," the Lord hath laid on him, the iniquity of us all."

The holy Saviour in perfect grace laid down His life and shed His blood, drank the cup and bore the wrath that God might be just and yet a justifier.

He died "the just for the unjust that we might be brought to God."

"Payment He will not twice demand, First at My bleeding surety's hand And then, again, at mine."

The truth was unpalatable to this self righteous man, "you have destroyed my peace," he cried. "My peace, such a comfort to me is all gone."

His friend tried to shew him that what he thought was peace was not so, that he was trying to establish his own righteousness, and not submitting to the righteousness of God, but he would hear no more. "Begone," he cried, "you'll drive me mad." "Remember, said his friend as he stood up to go, that salvation is for sinners, not of works, not what you bring to God, but what God is to you and brings to you, in Christ the Lord."

He then left him, praying that the Lord would bring peace to that convicted yet self justifying soul.

For three days the struggle lasted, he would not give up his integrity. To be nothing, to be only a lost sinner, that he could not work out his own salvation by his own good works, were truly that which his soul fought against. At last the light shone, he learned that he was only one of the ungodly ones, and that all his striving only plunged him into deeper anxiety and grief, since the more he strove the more he felt how unfit he was for the awful holiness of God's presence. His knowledge was little, but experimentally real; for these three days he felt himself a real sinner, totally unfit for the presence of God and yet ardently desiring to be in that presence.

This important truth that now he was learning, is described by Job in the 9th Chapter of his book.

Job there asks, "How should man be

just with God," and then answer in part that solemn question with a description of his thoughts as he meditates on the amazing powers and knowledge of God. He first dwells on His power in creation, the great and only Creator of the heavens and the earth, the evidences of His power and greatness manifest every where and yet He Himself unknown though anxiously sought for.

"Lo, He goeth by me and I see Him not, He passeth on also, but I perceive Him not," evidences of His presence on every hand and yet no knowledge as to the conditions upon which Job could confidently take his place before Him.

Job then turns to himself and compares what he could do, with the Being, with whom he knows that he must hereafter have to do with. "If I speak of strength, lo, He is strong, and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead. If I justify myself my own mouth shall condemn me, if I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse."

He thus finds that in himself is weakness and sin and therefore that the attempt to justify himself would be fruitless, for his mouth first opened in self-justification, would have the second time to be opened in self-condemnation, and that if he should take the ground of a boaster and say he was perfect he would by so saying be proved perverse. From this nothing can flow, but to take the place of utter weakness and to seek relief not from what he is or could do but from what God is and what He is willing to do; so from verse 30 he absolutely condemns himself as not only sinful, but as "without strength" too, that he could never fit himself for God, and his exertions only manifested the truth as to the deep and real experience of his soul, that in no way could he justify himself, that he was a sinner and that nothing that he could do would avail to justify him before God.

His only refuge then is a "Daysman

who might lay his hand upon us both." One who, could bring to God all that God required from man and who could bring to man, from God, all that man required to stand accepted before God.

Blessed refuge; wondrous resting place for the sin sick soul. Found only in the one who could say, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." The eye 'then' can be lifted from the contemplation of self, to the contemplation of Christ; so long as the sinner, convicted of sin is looking to himself, misery must be the result, but when through grace, the eye of faith rests on the Redeemer, the misery is changed into rejoicing, for the sinner, now believing on the Lord Jesus Christ sees Him as "delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification."

On the third day his attendant entering his room found him crying out, "It is all right, thank God, all right now." He could not understand what it all meant, so he sent a hurried message to the Doctor to say that Mr. B. was either dying or going mad. The Doctor soon arrived; on his approach he was saluted with the words; "It's all right! Thank God, I have found it!"

"Found what," his friend asked.

"Peace, Peace, he replied I have no fear, it is all finished."

"How did you find it?"

"I was lying here, feeling the awful burden of my sins, in despair, giving up all hope of ever being saved, when I thought I heard the Lord saying to me, "I have done all, I have borne it, trust in me, I saw it all, how He died for me and I have peace, peace." His friend rejoiced with him in his new-found joy but soon left him, as his poor frail body was little able to bear much conversation.

When one has believed, how simple is the Gospel! The difficulty is always on our side we bring in our thoughts and thus being occupied with what is

of ourselves, or rather of "myself," we leave no room in our souls to receive from God, to see what God has to say to us, and that in the riches of His grace what He does say is, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come to the waters and he that hath no money come ye buy and eat, yea, buy wine and milk without money and without price." "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."

We are prone to bring in reasons, conditions, qualifications, going to God as those who could bring to Him something worthy of His acceptance, forgetting that the best we could do, or bring, is but the offerings of a sinner, like Cain, who bringing the best to God, did not take into account that the best, at best, was but the fruit of the cursed ground.

But when we take our place before God as lost sinners, dead in trespasses and sins, God takes His place as Saviour, in the riches of his grace, receiving us in perfect grace and perfect righteousness in Christ Jesus the Lord. T. W. B. lived for more than two years after this, in the enjoyment of settled peace with God, witnessing too, in his measure to the grace of the One "Who loved him and gave Himself for him."

—W. R. E.

CUT IT OUT.

Two Christian men were talking about Assurance of Salvation, and one said "he thought it a kind of presumption for anyone to say that they were saved," the other replied, "Friend, hand me your Bible," he opened at 1 John v, then taking out his penknife, said, "Brother, I am going to cut out verses 12 and 13, you don't believe them, they are no use to you, therefore they are better out than in." "Stop, stop," cried the other; but before he could rise up to prevent him, his friend had them out

and laid on the table. There they were:—

12. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

13. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

At first the man was very angry and vexed that his Bible had been spoiled, but taking up the cut-out verses he began to read them over, and soon the light began to dawn on him. "What a fool I have been!" he exclaimed. "I say I believe God's Word—yes, it is true from first to last—but I have not believed this, and yet it is very plain; henceforth I will not doubt what He says. Thank you, Brother, for such a sharp, cutting reproof; the holes in my Bible shall stand as a witness against my unbelief; the words are in my heart now. Reader, how much of God's Word ought to be cut out of your Bible?

"I HAVE GREAT FAITH IN PRAYER."

Such were the words of one who in the judgment of herself and others had death in view; and there alas! without any solid resting place for her soul. A christian friend sat beside her to whom the words were spoken, and she asked him to pray on her behalf. He replied, "he gladly would, but what were the petitions he was to present for her?" to this her only answer was, "I have great faith in prayer," and thus she craved a rest for her poor heart in the creature instead of Him who offers Himself as the rock that is higher than us, saying, "LOOK UNTO ME AND BE YE SAVED." On her friend further suggesting to turn and see what God had spoken to those in trouble and distress by their sins, it seemed distasteful to her and shortly after she sent a message for another to come from whom doubtless she expected more comfort. On his

arriving she made her request afresh adding as before, "I have great faith in prayer." Strangely as it may seem he too wished to know what her desire from God was, and taking up the word added, shall we not first turn to what God has told us here of His provision for souls in need. And so doing, he turned to the same parts of Scripture with but one exception that had been already presented for her soul's trust, dwelling especially on, " WHOSOEVER WILL, let him TAKE of the water of life FREELY." In this, showing that to be without salvation when the Saviour offered it to our souls as the fruit of His finished work must be through want of the willing mind to receive it as His gift to simple faith in us. All this surely, had God's hand and voice in it, as neither of the two who had spoken thus had any conversation with the other respecting her state.

Alas ! with many does this fatal snare obtain ; fatal, I repeat, reader, because "It puts PRAYER (the breath of the christian,) where atonement (the work of Christ,) should be. Has He met God about our sins who trust Him ? Then it is upon HIM we rest, not upon our own or other's prayers, blessed though they be as FRUIT but not the resting place, neither is there salvation in any other : for there is NONE OTHER NAME under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts vi. 12). "To Him give all the prophets witness, that WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM shall receive remission of sins." Acts x. 43.

"Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe are justified from all things." Acts xiii. 38, 39.

"To Him that worketh not but BELIEVETH ON HIM that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Rom. iv. 5. "These sayings are FAITHFUL AND TRUE."—B. C. G.

MY COMPANY.

I have read of one who dreamed a dream when in great distress of mind, about his soul. He thought he stood in the outer court of heaven and he saw a glorious host marching up singing sweet hymns, and bearing the banners of victory ; and they passed by him through the gate, and when they had vanished he heard in the distance sweet strains of music.

"Who are they ?" he asked.

"They are the goodly fellowship of the prophets who have gone to be with God."

And he heaved a deep sigh as he said, "Alas, I am not one of them, and never shall be, and I cannot enter there."

By and by there came another band equally lovely in appearance, and equally triumphant, and robed in white. They passed within the portals, and again were shouts of welcome heard within.

"Who are they ?"

"They are the goodly fellowship of the apostles."

"Alas," he said, "I belong not to that fellowship and I cannot enter there."

He still waited and lingered in the hope that he might yet get in ; but the next multitude did not encourage him, for they were the noble army of martyrs. He could not go with them nor wave their palm branches. At last, as he walked, he saw a larger host than all the rest put together, marching and singing most melodiously, and in front walked the woman that was a sinner ; and the thief that died upon the cross hard by the Saviour ; and he looked long, and saw such as Manasseh and the like ; and when they entered he could see who they were, and thought :

"There will be no shouting about them."

"But to his astonishment it seemed

as if all heaven was rent with seven fold shouts as they passed in. And the angels said to him :

"These are they that are mighty sinners, saved by mighty grace."

And then he said :

"Blessed be God! I can go with them." And so he awoke.

"THE FOOL HATH SAID IN HIS HEART, THERE IS NO GOD."

PSALM xiv. 1.



It is now about twenty years ago that a Christian lady in Scotland lay upon her death-bed. Her husband was already dead; and reflecting that her little daughter would soon have to be handed over to the charge of her grandfather, and that he was an infidel, filled with anxiety at the prospect, she called the child to her side, and obtained from her a promise that for her sake she would read one chapter of the Bible to herself every day. The child soon after was removed to the house of the aged infidel, and faithful to her promise, was found by him one day reading to herself in the garden. Requiring to know what book it was, she replied it was her Bible. He at once began to make light of it, declared that it was useless to read such a book, and asked what was the good of it. She answered that she might learn about God. "God," he said; "there is no God." The effect of this upon the child can scarcely be described, so great was her fright and amazement. For the moment she appeared petrified; but recovering herself, exclaimed with passionate earnestness, "Oh, grandfather, you're a fool; you're a fool; you're a fool!" The man was amazed at this extraordinary audacity on the part of his granddaughter, but the child continued to exclaim, "Oh, grandfather, you're a fool!" adding, "the Bible says you are a fool!" ("The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Ps. xiv. 1). The man list-

ened no longer; but to forget it was impossible. Wherever he went, by night and by day, every waking moment seemed to come into his mind, "You are a fool! The Bible says so!" The result was that he became miserably unhappy, and broken down before God; and the Lord graciously used the circumstance to his conversion.

Dear reader, if you have ever in your heart had such a wretched, infidel thought, may the same gracious God bless this incident to the salvation of your immortal soul.—Salvation of God.

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If you are not saved, you are Satan's slave, however much you may think you are free.

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Blessed Saviour! Glorious salvation, "unto all, and upon all that believe."

Good tidings.

"Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."—Luke ii. 10.

Vol. XIII.—No. 2.

"God is Light." "God is Love."

Whole No. 140

"I Am on the Line with Jesus."

It is always refreshing to one's soul to hear a clear decided confession of the name of Jesus. And if it is refreshing to us, we know that it is a joy to the heart of the Father and glorifying to His name.

In fact, there can be no salvation without it. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus (or Jesus as Lord); and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, THOU SHALT

BE SAVED." When salvation is known, it is what falls, naturally, so to speak, from the lips. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Rom. x. 8-10. The woman of Samaria first believed on Jesus as the Messiah, the Saviour of the world, and then went and confessed Him to her fellow-citizens. They came out and heard Him for themselves, and believed; and said, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." John iv. 42.

We had stepped into a street car in the city of M. and seeing a few persons there, I was reminded of a few tracts that I had in my pocket, and I gave them each one, a gentleman and three ladies. The car moved on, and they proceeded to read them. The title of the tracts was, "Which line are you on?" I will quote a little from them. "Then in plain language, you are not yet saved?"

"No, I could not take it on me to say that," was his reply.

"I see. But if you are not saved, have you found out that you are lost?"

"Lost? Me lost? No, God forbid! I shouldn't like to think that I was lost."

"Well," I argued, "that is strange. You are not saved, and you will not own that you are lost."

"Certainly not. Of course I am not good as I ought to be—no one is—but I am respectable and religious; that is, I go to church now and then; and though I can't say that I am saved, I shouldn't at all like to think that I was lost. Because a man is not saved, it surely does not follow that he is lost."

At that moment the shrill whistle of a railway locomotive, about to