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LETTERS
ABOUT
JESUS





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LETTERS ABOUT JESUS.

Addressed to Inquirers.

BY THE

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AUTHOR OF "STREAMS FROM LEBANON," "THE BLOOD OF
JESUS," ETC.

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**Jesus saith—I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life :
no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.**

JOHN xiv. 6.

OUR NEED OF JESUS.

“ For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”—LUKE xix. 10.

DEAR FRIEND,—Has God’s Holy Spirit shewn you that you are a *sinner*?

What! you may ask, Can I not discover that I am a sinner but by the light of the Holy Spirit? I tell you frankly and at once that you *cannot*.

I am free to acknowledge that, without the Holy Spirit, you can easily learn that you are a sinner from the Word of God, or confess yourself a sinner in prayer: but to see yourself a sinner in the light of divine teaching, to feel it with a divinely enlightened conscience, and to

realise the terrible *fact*, as in the very presence of the God of infinite holiness, and in reference to the solemn realities of a coming Eternity, is a matter of awful *experience*—not of mere *learning* or customary *confession*!

Oh, how dreadful it would be were you convinced by the Holy Spirit that you are “condemned already,” ruined, lost, and in danger of hell every breath you draw! I wish you were *so* convinced: I pray God you may be so, even this very moment; for were you to die an unpardoned sinner, and you *may* die any moment, you would lift up your eyes in hell, being in torment, and find yourself a sinner for evermore where no Saviour ever comes!

Perhaps you say, as another once did,—“I admit I am a sinner, I know that I have sinned; but I cannot understand what you mean by saying that I am a *lost* sinner—a *ruined* sinner. I am not *lost*; I am not *ruined*, as you say.”

“Well, I know you are not *finally* lost, or you would not be here. Bless God for that mercy. But if you are *not lost*, you can have

nothing to do with the Saviour, for He has come 'to seek and to save that which was lost.' " Man, as soon as he fell, was *lost*, for God's first question implies this—" Adam,—where art thou ?" God, in grace, was seeking man at the fall, because he was *lost*; and God in Christ is seeking sinners still, just because they are *lost*.

It may be, however, that you have heard so much in the preaching of the sanctuary about *sinners* and *lost sinners*, that you will readily admit that the Bible teaches that, as sinners, we are all utterly ruined and lost. But do you feel that the Bible speaks true to *you*, when it comes to you personally, and says, *You are a sinner: you are ruined and lost*, for *you* are "condemned already," and the wrath of God abideth upon *you*? "God be merciful to *me a sinner!*" is quite a different thing from the easy-going acknowledgment, "we are all sinners."

When D'Aubigné was a student, he heard Robert Haldane reading a chapter from the epistle to the Romans, concerning all men

being *sinners by nature*. He was astonished at it, but being clearly convinced by the passages read to him, he said to Mr Haldane, “Now I do indeed see this doctrine in the Bible.” “*Yes*,” replied he, “*but do you see it in your heart?*” It was a simple question, but it proved the sword of the Spirit, and awakened his slumbering conscience to recognise the terrible fact, that *sin was in his heart*; and, by the grace of God, it led to his conversion to Christ, for he immediately felt his need of Jesus when he found himself a *lost sinner*.

My friend, has this experience been *yours*? Have you seen *sin in your heart*? Have you seen and felt it to be a poison which has passed through every part of your moral nature?

Thousands of persons in Ireland, as well as in other places, have had such a soul-harrowing sight and sense of *sin in their hearts and lives*, that it has so burdened their spirits that they have been well-nigh driven to despair, and some of them have been almost deprived of life; and, perhaps, you have never lost an hour’s quiet sleep, nor relish for a single meal,

by a sight of your soul's sinful and lost condition! And yet, if you only saw it by the grace of the Holy Ghost, your condition is quite as bad and hopeless as theirs!

How dreadful your case!—a sinner not far from perdition, and yet gay, happy, careless and reckless of eternity! Notwithstanding all your outward correctness of deportment and periodical religiousness, your case is desperate! But, if you *will* go to hell, do not mock God by the way, pretending to serve him when you know that all your praying, hearing, praising, and communicating is but a downright insult to the All-Seeing One!

A dear, devoted Englishman, who has been used by God to awaken thousands, and turn many from sin to holiness, and from profession to reality, during his protracted stay in Scotland, was wont to speak out with the utmost plainness about the mockery and folly of people going down to the everlasting burnings by the holy way of the communion table!

He said one day something very like this,—
“I fear many of you are going to endless

misery, and you are not doing so like many of my countrymen, who never go to church at all, but spend their time at home or in the public-house. There might be said to be a Scotch way of going to hell, and this seems to be it:—You have got the Shorter Catechism in your head, your Bible in the one hand, and a token from your minister in the other, but the world is in your hearts, and hell fire will be the end of it ‘except ye repent.’” This is very strongly expressed, but is there not too much truth in it?

When many an English artisan perishes through carelessness and apathy to the Gospel, and many an Irish peasant is led into hell blind-fold by the superstitious rites of a cruel priesthood, multitudes of the church-going Scotch seem bent on entering eternity arrayed in all the holy garments of a religious profession, but it will only be to hear, with astonished ears, the withering words from a Saviour’s lips that will send them to their “own place,” —“I never knew you ; depart from me ye that work iniquity.”

At a meeting for inquirers, held after an open-air service in the town of Dundee, a minister's attention was drawn to an old man. When asked, whether thoughts of his soul and his Saviour led him to appear among the inquirers, he sat for a while, Job-like, unable to speak.

At length he acknowledged that, although he had made a public profession of Christianity for many years, it had been a Christless profession. He had heard the preacher say in his discourse, that a person might receive fifty "tokens" to admit to the communion-table, and yet, after all, be unconverted; and this pierced his heart, for he felt that it was an accurate representation of his own case. He was directed to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the chief of sinners. He listened, he believed; and the minister now writes of him that "he gives all the marks of having unreservedly yielded himself to Jesus, and of walking in the fear of God, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost."

Many are deceiving themselves by *joining*

themselves to some one of the Churches of Christ before being *joined by the Holy Spirit* to Christ himself ! The Holy Ghost, when he comes in saving power, will "make havoc of the Church," in so far as it is composed of such members. He has done so in the case of thousands in the recent revival, and He is doing so still in many different places throughout the land.

An intelligent, amiable, honest, upright young man, a pattern of good conduct and religiousness, was suddenly arrested one night by the Spirit of God.

"Oh, my sin ! my sin !" he cried. "What sin ?" asked a friend, wondering what sin could be lying upon *his* conscience. "Oh, it is my cold neglect of the loving Saviour." For four hours he writhed in torture under a dreadful sense of sin ; and after the Lord revealed himself to him, he vowed that his life should be one *living sacrifice* to his Redeemer's praise. His conviction and conversion were the means of leading more than one flourishing professor in the town to inquire, "*Am I saved or lost ?*"

It is greatly to be feared that many even of those who frequent our communion tables are "*not saved*," and will be in hell for ever, unless they repent of their church membership and all their other sins, and, like this *religious* youth, be brought to Jesus for pardon and peace. Religion, you see, saves none ! "*The precious blood of Christ*" alone, can save us from sin and wrath. Are you, my dear friend, "*saved or lost?*" If you are *saved*, you remember a time when you were *lost*; and you can tell something of *your* conviction and conversion. Those who are *saved*, if not sanctified from their infancy, can tell how they were brought to a sense of sin and a knowledge of salvation.

Have you *felt* that you are a sinner, and, as such, have you sought salvation. While passing along the street one morning (writes a Belfast minister), a young man rushed out of his office and caught me in his arms,—“Oh! sir, I have found Christ.” “When, and how?” were the questions I earnestly put to him. He then gave me the following account of

himself :—“ You know, sir, I have been very anxious for some weeks past. That anxiety became dreadful on Friday night. I was engaged in prayer. While on my knees my burden became intolerable. I felt my sins pressing on my heart as if that warehouse were built on my body. I could not move. I could not rise from my knees. I cried with such agony that my next neighbour rose out of bed and rushed in to know what was wrong. He prayed with me. Before he left I found peace through believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

My dear friend, have you known aught of an experience like that ? Have you ever felt your sins pressing on your heart, as if the weight of “ a warehouse ” were lying upon your body ; and do you know what it is to have peace “ through believing on the Lord Jesus Christ ?”

“ If you do not find out your sin, and bring it to Calvary to get it pardoned and washed away through the blood of Jesus, be sure your sin will find you out, and bring you to

the judgment-seat, to be condemned by Jesus, and sent away into everlasting punishment."

A little girl, who had told her mother a lie before she left home, was greatly troubled when she heard a minister say these awful things in his sermon. "*Oh that lie!*" she said within herself. "*I must bring it to Calvary, or it will send me to hell!*" She was led, step by step, to see herself a great sinner, although a little girl; and she walked miles to see the minister, to ask him how she was to be saved. By and bye, she was enabled to lay her sins on Jesus, and when she was asked afterwards if she had laid her sins on Jesus, she replied, "*Oh, yes, and I'll never lay any more.*"

My dear friend, have you laid *your* sins on Jesus; and has it made you so averse to sin, and so full of desires after holiness, that you now feel anxious to "*sin no more,*" like this dear lamb of the Good Shepherd's fold?

But there is not only pardon in Jesus, there is every spiritual blessing a ruined sinner needs. "*It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell.*"

A minister, who had been accustomed to consider the Gospel extremely simple and intelligible, and having little in it, was struck one day with the expression, "*The unsearchable riches of Christ.*" "*The unsearchable riches of Christ,*" he said within himself, "I never found, I never knew that there were unsearchable riches in *Him!*" He became deeply convinced of sin ; and, while pacing his room some time afterwards, he was led to contemplate those two passages of Scripture,— "*Without shedding of blood is no remission,*" and "*The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*" He believed in Jesus—washed in his blood, and was filled with a "*joy unspeakable.*"

"I went up stairs and down again (said he), backwards and forwards in my room, clapping my hands for joy, and crying out, "*I have found him—I have found him—I have found him, whom my soul loveth,*" and, for a little time, as the Apostle said, whether "*in the body or out of the body I can hardly tell.*"

It should not be thought incredible that a

minister should thus be preaching *salvation* to others while *lost* himself, for we read in the third chapter of the gospel by John that even the excellent, moral Nicodemus, a master of Israel, had no idea that he required to be “born again.” It was to this ruler of the Jews that Jesus addressed the solemn language,— “*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*” If any man might have been sent by the Lord Jesus to work out a righteousness for himself, this man would have been he; but even to him He says, “*Ye must be born again.*”

You may perhaps think, “If I do better, God will pardon me,” but that is a vain thought. He will by no means clear the guilty. No amount of reformation for the present can atone for the sins of the past. The God of inflexible justice has you in custody as a criminal, by law condemned to die, and all your fancied good works are now but prison-house services, and can avail you nothing for justification before God. The sentence is passed; and were you, for the present, to give

a perfect obedience to all God's commandments, that would be but duty, and "duty dischargeth no debt." If you cling to doing better, as the ground of your pardon and acceptance with God, your damnation is sure.

But although you can do nothing to merit God's favour, you need not perish. We declare unto you the "good tidings" that you may be saved upon the ground of the finished and accepted work of One who is mighty to save. The holy Jehovah, in sovereign mercy, sent His son Jesus to be the Saviour of the lost! He endured the cross, bore the curse of the law, made atonement, and opened up a way of access to God's favour, for the chief of sinners! He put away *sin*,—not *sinners*. They may be reconciled,—"*for He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.*"

God will save sinners as an act of free grace,—not otherwise;—by grace, or not at all. There is a glorious way of "being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption

that is in Christ Jesus." The old way of works is closed, and guarded by the flaming sword ; but the new and living way of free grace has been opened and consecrated for us by Christ, the only mediator between God and man. If you ask the question,—"*What must I do to be saved?*" the answer is simple and satisfying, for it is that which God's holy Word supplies,—" Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Although it is utter folly to try to get up a righteousness in which to appear before God, many are doing it. A girl who, at one time, had been very frivolous, but who is now, in her own sphere, first in every good work, and a devoted Christian, when asked by a minister, "What brought you first to think about your soul?" replied, "Amid all my folly I often thought seriously of my soul and of judgment, and often had partial amendments of my life ; but as often, in the time of temptation, I fell back, and my convictions were lost. When I recovered them I felt very uneasy, because I knew that with my vain heart

I could not appear before God. I tried once very seriously to work out a righteousness of my own, but it was all in vain. I tried it a second time, with the same result, till at last my mind was fixed on the righteousness of the Surety, and I saw a glory and a perfection in it that I wondered I had never seen before. With my whole heart I trusted in the merits of Christ, and I feel my peace growing, and my love to God growing, and I think I could not only live for Christ but die for Christ."

My dear friend, has this been *your* experience? Have *you* seen such an inexpressible glory and perfection in the righteousness of the Saviour of the lost, that you have trusted in His merits with your whole heart, and now feel that you "*could not only live for Christ, but die for Christ?*" Have you had a spiritual conviction of sin, and an evangelical conversion to God? Are you living for self and the world, or for Christ and Eternity? Ask yourself seriously, before you read any more, this all-important question,—**AM I LOST OR SAVED?**

LOOK TO JESUS.

Look unto me, and be ye saved, for I am God, and there is none else.—ISAIAH xlvi. 22.

DEAR FRIEND,—My heart's desire and prayer to God for you is, that you may be saved. You regard yourself as a lost sinner ; and well you may, for it is actually true. You were born in sin ; you have lived in sin ; and, on account of sin, you are condemned to die by God's holy law, "for the wages of sin is death!" But the grace of God is exceeding abundant ; and He has given the most undisputable proof that He loves sinners, and would have them to obtain salvation "through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us."

Jesus is an all-sufficient Saviour ; and He is able and willing to save the very chief of sin-

ners. His work of redemption is finished, as the Scriptures shew. He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities. He His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree. He died for the ungodly. He died, the Just One for the unjust. He appeared in our nature, took our place, "was made under the law," and endured its curse. He has put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and because, by His obedience and death, He hath magnified the law, God is well pleased with all who believe in His name "for His righteousness' sake." God's chief aim in the Bible is to make Himself known as a God of grace—a God in Christ reconciling sinners to himself. He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. We have ample proof of this in the fact that He sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. What was it but His love to us sinners that moved Him to do this? God sent His Son to die for His enemies—to redeem from merited wrath the rebellious and ungodly.

And the great thing with you at present is to know the real foundation of a ruined, hell-deserving sinner's peace. Jesus is our peace, who hath made peace by the blood of his cross. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. Eternal death is the sad result of sin, for the holy Jehovah says in His Word, that every soul that sins must die. He will by no means clear the guilty. But, out of His great love, He made Christ to be sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." The thought of redeeming lost sinners from the curse of the law, originated in the loving heart of God. And when Jesus appeared in our world it was as "God manifest in the flesh," and to "redeem us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." He gave Himself for our sins. This exchange was wonderful, and full of love. Jesus satisfied the law and justice of God. He bore

the curse of the law, and thus delivers us from that curse. We have broken the law, and are guilty and under the curse, but if we are found in Christ, God reckons us as free from that guilt and curse as Jesus is—because he had the guilt imputed to Him, and bore the curse. He died, but He was raised again for our justification, and is even at the right hand of God, where He maketh intercession for us.

Now, then, if any poor sinner wants pardon, let him draw near to God in the name of Jesus, and he will find redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of all his sins. Dear friend, are you thirsting for pardon? “He will abundantly pardon.” Were it not that God means to save lost sinners such as you, the fountain opened would soon be closed, and this sin-blighted world would be burned up. As long as you are preserved in life, and as long as this world is kept from the consuming fire, so long may you believe that there is forgiveness with God for you, and “plenteous redemption” in His well-beloved Son. But remember “salvation is of the Lord.” He

Himself must save you. He cannot bear any rival in this great work. His own arm will bring you salvation. Take care lest you fall into the error so common among anxious souls, of making a Saviour of the "frames" of your own mind. Experience is delightful, but it is a poor substitute for Christ. The most elevated state of mind cannot prove a Saviour. It is upon Jesus bleeding, dying, atoning for sin, and suffering under the dreadful stroke of the sword of justice, that your eye must be fixed ; and if so, you will feel that "peace that passeth all understanding" keeping your heart and mind, and "joy unspeakable and full of glory" will spring up within your soul.

The same Jesus who laid down His life for sinners, and who only knows the grace which is in the Father's heart, calls, in the Gospel, upon all sinners to come to Him and be saved. He says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." His own sweet word to you, a sinner, weary and heavy laden, is, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." What, do you need so much

rest? Your guilt is a burden so heavy that you will soon sink under it; but come to Jesus, and He will lift it from off your soul, and give you immediate rest. Do you feel yourself to be lost? Well, "the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Is He not seeking to save you? "Look unto me, and be ye saved," is His own loving exhortation. Can you refuse to turn your dying eye towards the Pierced One? Can you reflect upon His dying love, and not believe that He is willing to save? Can you think of Him as Jehovah-Jesus, the ever-living Mediator, and not credit His ability to save? "He is able also to save them to the uttermost who come to God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." With the love of a brother, with the compassion and mercy of a God, he beseeches you now to embrace Him as your Saviour. Do you regard yourself as vile, guilty, worthless, and lost? Such he saves—

"Not the righteous, sinners Jesus came to call."

How overpowering must that word of "a just

God and a Saviour" be to your troubled soul — "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "Come now!" notwithstanding all the transgressions, pollutions, ingratitude, formality, and indifference of your past life. Come with all these, and before attempting to make yourself acceptable in the least degree. Do not think your sins too many, too aggravated, or too great to be forgiven. The salvation which is in Jesus is so great and so full, that the great wonder of the universe is, that those who have it set before them can find a way to get past it into the world of woe! If you would avoid being saved, you must, by stifling your convictions, arise and flee, lest the river of grace should bear you onwards on its bosom to a glorious eternity. Can you hesitate to embrace such a full, free, perfect, and eternal forgiveness of all your sins, as that which the Gospel holds out to you, and presses upon your acceptance? Stand still, and see

the salvation of God. "Behold the Lamb of God," and be saved !

I conceive of your case in this way : You appear to be like one who, by going too near the brink of a precipice, has slipped over it, and caught hold of the twigs of some shrub growing in the clifts of the rock, to prevent himself being dashed from crag to crag; and laid a mangled corpse in the abyss below. A friend is seen standing on the nearest ledge, and calls to him to let go his hold, and he will certainly preserve him from impending destruction. He believes, acts according to his friend's direction, and is delivered. You feel that you are in imminent danger—hanging over the brink of an eternal hell ; and you are willing to hold by anything which seems to afford the slightest probability of deliverance. You may be holding firmly by the preaching of the Word, prayer, conviction of sin, reading of the Bible and religious books, by tears, repentings, resolutions, and anxieties, but all these are mere twigs by which you are catching, as you feel yourself hanging over the

mouth of hell. You cannot be saved by them. If no one appear able to deliver you and bear you away to a place of safety, you will inevitably perish. But the Lord Jesus—the sinner's Friend—appears stretching out his merciful arms, and calling upon you to let go all human means of salvation, and he will certainly save you with an everlasting salvation. Hear His voice, listen to the "*gracious words*" which proceed out of his mouth, and let go your every hold. And if you do so in obedience to His call, and trust in his ability to save, you will find yourself reclining upon the bosom of the Divine Redeemer, and feel that "the eternal God is your refuge," and underneath you are "the everlasting arms." This done with childlike simplicity, He, having sought and found His lost sheep, will lay you upon His shoulders rejoicing, carry you about all your life, and place you at last in the everlasting sheepfold on the banks of "the river of the water of life," in Emmanuel's land.

"I wish I could relate to you as it was once told to me, an account of a lady in Scotland,

and of the way in which her doubts and anguish were removed. It was during a revival, in which several known to this lady had been brought to Christ. Among the rest, a particular friend of hers had been converted. Feeling some measure of concern herself, she went to a servant of Christ who was labouring in the place, and told him she was unhappy. He replied that he was glad to hear it. Astonished at this, and somewhat offended also, she told the minister what efforts she had made to obtain salvation, how she had read and prayed, but still seemed as far from peace as ever. He told her that it was not by anything she could do, but by what Christ had long since done and finished on the cross that she was to be saved. All seemed dark and mysterious to her, and she left; resolving, however, to call on her friend, who had recently been converted. She did so, and asked her what she had done to obtain the peace of which she spoke. 'Done! I have done nothing! It is by what Christ has done, that I have found peace with God.' The lady re-

plied that this was what the minister had just been telling her, but that she could not understand it. She went home with her distress greatly increased ; and, shutting up herself in her room, she fell on her knees, resolving that she would never rise till her soul found rest and peace. How long her agony continued I cannot say ; but nature became quite exhausted, and she sunk to slumber. While thus asleep, she dreamed that she was falling over a frightful precipice, but caught hold of a single twig, which overhung the abyss beneath. By this she hung, crying aloud for help, when a voice from below, which she knew to be the voice of Jesus, bade her let go the twig, and He would receive and save her. 'Lord, save me !' she cried ; but the voice again answered, 'Let go the twig.' She felt as though she dare not leave hold, but continued crying, 'Lord, save me.' At last, the One below, whose voice she heard, but whom she did not see, said, in the most tender, solemn tones, '*I cannot save you, unless you let go the twig!*' Self-desperate,

she let it go, fell into the arms of Jesus, and the joy of finding herself there awoke her. The lesson taught her by her dream was not lost upon her. She perceived that Jesus was worthy of all her trust, and that not only did she need no twig of self-dependence, but that it was holding to the twig that kept her away from Christ. She let all go, and found Jesus all-sufficient."*

There is no object in the universe so free to you as Christ. He is willing to be your

* I met with the above illustration in a precious little book, *Peace in Believing*, published by G. Morrish, London, after my letter was in type; and even although it is, to a great extent, a reiteration of what I have already written, I think it so necessary that the point of which it treats be made clear, that I have blotted out a number of pages of my own writing in order to get it in. I know well that it might be objected to such an illustration, that it is calculated to give a wrong view of faith, as if it were a *dreadful* thing, and salvation through faith only a *desperate venture*, whereas faith in Jesus is neither *dreadful* in the act, nor *uncertain* in the issue. The *one point*, however, which we wish to illustrate is, that the awakened one must quit all *self-dependence*, and,—discovering the Saviour to be a person independent of, and external to self,—trust to "JESUS ONLY."

Saviour. If you are willing to be saved, then all is well. Salvation is offered to you as a gift—"without money and without price." "The God of grace" has made salvation so free to every sinner, that it would be utterly impossible for us to make it more free. The salvation of God is set before a world of lost sinners ; and the gracious invitation of Jehovah is given to every poor thirsting one ; 'Ho ! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.' Could the Lord have invited you more specially had he written down your name in this soul-stirring invitation ! Oh, dear soul, come to "the waters" of salvation, " Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Only believe, and your salvation from that moment will be as certain as if you were already in heaven. Salvation is no doubtful thing to the believer in Jesus—"Thou *shalt* be saved." The man to whom this language was first addressed believed, was saved, and rejoiced in God the self-same hour. This is to you "the day of salvation." If you will only look to Jesus, and trust your

soul's salvation to Him, you shall have pardon, peace, joy, and hope of glory, this very day. Put your trust in God that He will blot out all your sins for Jesus' sake, and you will soon be led to cry out in wonder, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity!" for you will then know experimentally the preciousness of pardon to a burdened soul.

It is told of the great reformer, Luther, that he was under deep and protracted conviction of sin before he was brought to peace, and that an aged monk was instrumental in bringing peace to his troubled conscience. It happened in this way: he was under soul-crushing convictions of sin, and had such spiritual conflicts, that his health gave way. He was laid upon a sickbed, and was brought near the gates of death. In this condition, he was awfully distracted by a vivid apprehension of God's holiness and his own sinfulness. The aged man entered his cell, and repeated in his hearing this article of the creed, "*I believe in the forgiveness of sins.*" "These simple words which the pious brother pronounced

with sincerity in this decisive moment, diffused great consolation in Luther's heart." "I believe," he repeated to himself ere long on his bed of sickness—" *I believe in the forgiveness of sins.*" "Ah!" said the monk, "you must not only believe in the forgiveness of David's or Peter's sins, for this even the devils believe: *it is God's command that we believe in the forgiveness of our own sins.*" From this time light sprung up in his soul, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, kept his heart and mind through Jesus Christ.

Pardon of sin realised as a personal blessing is, you see, the only thing which can give life, light, and peace. You will never have any true godliness unless you are "accepted in the Beloved;" and you can never have a happy soul until you have a consciousness of pardon and acceptance. There is forgiveness with God; and being "*with God,*" and promised freely, it will be *yours* for the asking; therefore "*seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon Him while he is near.*" If you go to Him through Christ, confessing

your sins, you will find him faithful and just to forgive you your sins ; and from personal experience you will be enabled to say, “ O Lord, I will praise thee ; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away and thou comfortest me. Behold, God is my salvation ; I will trust and not be afraid : for the **LORD JEHOVAH** is my strength and my song : He also is become *my salvation*.”

Cast yourself at Emmanuel’s feet as a poor perishing sinner, crying, Lord, save me ; and if you perish there, you will be the first who ever did so. “ Him that cometh unto me,” says the loving Jesus, “ I will in no wise cast out.”

“ Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy Cross I cling ;
Naked, come to Thee for dress ;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace ;
Foul, I to the fountain fly,
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.”

THE GIFT OF JESUS.

“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.

DEAR FRIEND,—We are saved not by *giving* God anything of ours,—be it love, repentance, worship, or obedience,—but by accepting the free gift of His only-begotten Son. “For God so loved the world, that *he gave his only-begotten Son.*” Who can tell the greatness, and who can estimate the value of that gift? Fully to comprehend its greatness and its value requires the mind of God! The cause of God giving such a gift to the world was His love: “God *so loved* the world.” There was no cause in the world why He

should love it ; on the contrary, there was everything to induce Him to hate and destroy it. There was a time when He could look upon all here below, and feeling a complacency in all, pronounce all very good ; but now all was evil : yet, wonderful to be told, He loved our fallen world ! When there was no loveliness at all, He loved ! He loved un-fallen Adam in paradise ; but He also loved fallen Adam, as "in the sweat of his face he tilled the ground, cursed by his fall, beyond the reach of the tree of life. It is well to mark this, that God's love was the *cause*, not the *effect*, of the Saviour's mediation. The advent and death of Christ did not procure the Father's love to sinners ; but the Father's love provided the Saviour's advent and man's redemption. He loved the world before any Saviour was promised or sent ; for it was because He loved it that He gave the promise, and sent His only-begotten Son.

And mark the *intensity* of this wondrous love. It is expressed by the little word "*so*," and measured by the greatness of the gift be-

stowed. "God *so* loved the world,"—"sinners," "the ungodly,"—"that He gave His only-begotten Son." "The Father loveth the Son," yet He "*so loved* the world" that He gave His Son to be its Saviour.

We are by nature the enemies of God ; our carnal mind is "enmity" against Him, and is daily shewing this "enmity" by insubordination to His law. Yet He pities us, He loves us, He has compassion upon us ; yea, He *so* loves us as to give His only-begotten Son to die for our sins ! "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die ; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love towards us" (he sets it up like a sea mark on a mountain-top, as the word signifies, far above all creature-love), "in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

The world had nothing to expect from the holy God but destruction, and yet He sent salvation instead ! "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." Who can tell the intensity of that love which

made the Father send the Son to be “the Saviour of the world”? His love is not like much of that which goes for love among the children of men. His love has taken form and shape, and has been embodied in a gift of the most transcendent magnitude and worth! He so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son to be its Saviour! *Deeds* are the surest test of *love*; and men are not slack in applying this test to the professed love of their fellow-men. The love of God does not shrink from being tried, in fact it invites trial by such a standard; for it is not *professed* but *manifested* love—“not in word only, but in deed, and in truth.” It appears in the gift He has bestowed upon a sinful and miserable world.

Meditate on this manifested love! Bring your whole soul into contact with it. How it melts these frozen hearts of ours to be brought into the neighbourhood of this wondrous love! Nothing will effectually melt the icy hearts of rebellious men but the warm rays of this marvellous love. When you are awakened by the convincing Spirit to see that God has

been yearning over you with bowels of compassion, and providing for you with the bounty of a father's love, in the time of your rebellion, then is your heart most likely to be pierced with a keen sense of your ingratitude, and to be drawn to the prodigal's resolution, "I will arise and go to my father." Nothing will effectually change our hearts, and make us love God, and forsake the service of sin, but believing "the love that God hath toward us." The great means God is employing to draw men's hearts up to Him, is His own manifested love. If His love has no effect upon you, you will perish for ever! But be now persuaded to contemplate that love, as it is seen in the gift of God's only-begotten Son. "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.*" This is the *gracious end* which God had in view in giving His Son. He is given by God to be the Mediator between God and man; to be believed in by a perishing world for their salvation and everlasting happiness.

God gave His only-begotten Son to be believed in as *the incarnate Redeemer*. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.” “When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman.” “Jesus Christ is come in the flesh;” He has appeared in the nature of man, to be thus fitted to save sinners. Surely the love of God is here conspicuously displayed ! Believe in Him then as God manifest in the flesh, the Son of God, and the son of Mary, in one person, Christ Jesus. If you would have your heart impressed, and your soul saved, believe in Him as the God-man,—the Father’s unspeakable gift to you, a perishing sinner.

God gave His only-begotten Son to be believed in as *the Holy One who, in the room of sinners, gave a perfect obedience to God’s holy law*. God’s own testimony concerning our race is, “They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable ; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” They

are, without exception, “children of disobedience.” God created us to serve Him, and thus glorify His name ; but now we cannot, because we are “without strength” to give a perfect obedience, and God will be satisfied with nothing less. But God gave His only-begotten Son to be made under the law, that He might magnify it. He appeared to do the Father’s will, as the Substitute of sinners. He stood in the room of transgressors, and gave a constant, full, and perfect obedience to the law in all its demands. And His obedience to the law was not given as an example merely, but as the substitute of erring sinners, that He might obtain for them a title to the everlasting inheritance reserved in heaven. Believe in Him as the obeying Saviour, who fulfilled “all righteousness.” The Father, in love, presents Him to you as “His unspeakable gift.”

God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son to be believed in as the *dying Jesus*. “*Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.*” “*He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death,*

even the death of the Cross." You have sinned against a holy God, who will by no means clear the guilty ! If you are not acquainted, experimentally, with the atonement of Christ, you are under the curse of God's righteous law ; " for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." How dreadful to be under that curse, and in danger of the wrath to come ! But consider what is the testimony which God hath given concerning His Son. " God sent His Son to redeem them that were under the law." " Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." " For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh ; and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh ; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." " In the end of the world hath Christ appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." " He gave Himself for us, that He

might redeem us from all iniquity." Such a record has God, in love, given us of the redemption that Christ has effected by His dying in the room and stead of perishing sinners. He also "delivers us from the wrath to come."

God so loved the world, that He gave his only-begotten Son to be believed in *as the propitiation for our sins*. "He is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." What love is this, that reaches down to the lowest depths of guilt, pollution, and ungodliness, and plucks the chief of sinners as brands from the burning of deserved wrath ! "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." He now appears before a guilty and unhappy race, as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world ;" and in so doing, he is the brightness of the Father's glory, as a God of love ! He is able and willing to save the chief of sinners. He is the all-sufficient Redeemer of the lost of every rank, condition, character, complexion, country, and

age. Kings, princes, nobles, the opulent and powerful, are welcome to Him ; but the obscurest, weakest, poorest, most abject, wretched, despised, and debased, are as welcome as they !

God so loved the worst of sinners, that he gave his Son to die for them ! He so loved even murderers, adulterers, liars, harlots, thieves, swearers, whoremongers, blasphemers, idolaters, persecutors, scoffers, infidels, and atheists, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that "whosoever" of them all should believe in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life !

There never was love like this manifested, throughout the whole universe. The love of God has been manifested to our lost world in a thousand other things, but in the gift of His Son it is magnified, and shines forth with overpowering brilliance. Were I intending to impress you with the fact that God has loved our lapsed, degenerate world to some extent, I might effect my purpose by taking you into the wide domain of Nature, and discovering to you some of the beauties, the harmonies, and

wondrous adaptations, which obtain throughout the vast variety of objects which constitute her gorgeous and diversified garniture. I might shew you how he has adapted the atmospheric air to the purposes of respiration and combustion ; how serviceable He has made the winds for the promotion of health and commerce ; how He has accommodated the rains and temperature to the processes of a universal vegetation ; how the minerals most required in the arts and everyday life are the most abundant, and placed within man's reach ; how He has formed man to be the inhabitant of every zone, and spread over every latitude those animals best calculated to serve his convenience ; how He makes day and night, gives the successive seasons in their annual course, and, with old ocean's heaving surges, forms a highway for the world.

But being desirous of convincing you that God has loved our world, not merely in some degree, but in the very highest, I pass these by as secondary evidences, and simply unfold "the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is

in the Cross of Christ, and not in Nature, that you will discover the greatest proofs of your Father's love. Do you really desire to know the love of God? Then fix your eyes upon that sacred ensign dipped in the great Emmanuel's blood,—that banner of free love, unfurled to the gaze of perishing sinners by the sin-hating Jehovah Himself,—and there you will see this heart-melting inscription, written by the Father of mercies, radiant with ineffable glory, and legible to the utmost confines of humanity:—“**GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.**”

Perishing sinner! God in his matchless love, has given His Son to be a Saviour for you! He was sent forth to be the Saviour of the perishing. Whosoever believeth in him shall never perish. Believe in God's manifested Son as the Saviour of sinners. Believe in him as the Father's loving gift to the world. Believe in him as the propitiation for your sins. You will perish unless some one save you; and

surely you will not hesitate to embrace as your Saviour the only-begotten of the Father. "God hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Believe in Jesus as having made an all-sufficient atonement. Believe in him for the putting away of all your sins. It is not enough that you believe in Him as bearing the curse for others ; you must believe in Him as a Redeemer from your own sins. Dost thou believe on the only-begotten Son of God as thine all-sufficient Sin-bearer ? "He that believeth in Him is not condemned." All mankind out of Christ are condemned already for their sins : but the moment that any one of them believes in Him who died for sinners, he ceases to be condemned. As Mediator, Jesus was justified and accepted of the Father, on His accomplishing the work of our redemption ; and whosoever cleaves to Him ceases to be condemned, for he is no longer regarded as guilty, but righteous in the Righteous One. Whosoever believes in Jesus becomes a partaker with Him in His justifica-

tion. If you believe in Christ, all your sins will be pardoned, and you will be received into God's favour. If you are trusting in "the Lord our righteousness," you shall never perish. See here the marvellous love of God !

But oh, see that you deceive not yourself on this vital matter ! As there is only one God, and one Mediator between God and man, so there is only one way of being saved from condemnation and the wrath to come. There are a thousand ways of being lost, but only one way of being saved. Christ says, "*I am the way.*" What love God has manifested in giving his only-begotten Son, that *whosoever believeth in Him should not perish !* Dear friend, *does not WHOSOEVER mean you ?*

God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, to be believed in *as the living Jesus, and the life of our souls.* "He that believeth on the Son *hath everlasting life.*" The Lord Jesus is no inanimate principle, he is a living Person. "And this is the record, That God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is His Son. *He that hath the*

Son hath life." Jesus is the Life. John, in his first epistle, gives us this testimony, "The Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." The world lost all spiritual life at the fall, and is now dead in trespasses and sins, and can be made alive only by the living Jesus. Apart from Christ, you are not only *condemned* already, but you are *dead* already. But God, in love, has given you His own Son, to be *the life of your soul*. Believe in Him, and you will not only have the sentence of offended justice cancelled, but you will have your dead soul quickened. Jesus gives life to the world. When on earth He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." Not only is the title to eternal life bestowed on believing, but life is imparted to the soul by the regeneration of the Holy Ghost. "As many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." What your soul is

to your body, that must Jesus be to your soul. When you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, Christ will be in you as "the life" and hope of glory. Newness of heart will be experienced, and newness of life will be manifested. Jesus is Eternal Life, and whosoever believeth in Him shall never die. It would have been a great gift, if God had given Jesus as the remover of the curse from our guilty souls : but how much greater when He has sent Him to be their life also ! Believe in the Son of God, and in one moment your guilt will be removed, and your soul will enjoy new life. Then will you be able to appreciate the apparently contradictory statement of the apostle Paul, "I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

SALVATION IN JESUS.

“The salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory
2 TIM. ii. 10.

DEAR FRIEND,—I am very anxious to keep before your mind the good news concerning Jesus ; and to impress upon you the precious fact that He lives as the Saviour of sinners, and therefore you need not perish, for “ He is able to save to the uttermost.” There is room and welcome for you at the banquet of free love, which God in mercy has prepared for perishing heavy-laden sinners ; and, therefore, I would call you to the blessed feast. Oh, that the Holy Spirit would incline your heart to come !

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God is love, and you are by nature enmity against God ; and the knowledge and belief of God's love is the only means for destroying your enmity, and giving you peace. The Holy Ghost tells us that peace comes to us, and is continued with us, through the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord.

You may desire to have deeper conviction of sin—a deeper sense of your dreadful alienation from the life of God, and your guilt and misery as a transgressor of His holy law : but it is not by the deepest feeling of your enmity, guilt, and misery, that you will get rid of them, but by obtaining a clear and scriptural knowledge of God, and Jesus Christ our Lord. Your state of mind prior to believing in Jesus, and becoming reconciled to God by the death of his Son, is of no account with God. It will not hinder you from obtaining His mercy that your mind is sluggish and lifeless, like the stagnant waters of the Dead Sea ; nor will it recommend you to his favour that your soul resembles the Falls of Niagara, whose lashed and broken waters roll their perpetual thun-

ders. Jesus will save you as a sinner; not as a terrified and anxious sinner, but *simply as a sinner*. It is quite true that you will not seek salvation until you are convinced of your sin; but it is wrong to wait for a deep sense of your lost condition, as if you thought to purchase the salvation of God by the depth of your conviction of sin.

As soon as you feel yourself a sinner, you are in that character to go straight to the Saviour. He will receive you as a sinner, but not as a *penitent* sinner laying stress on your own repentance. Your broken-heartedness does not in the least *help* your salvation, nor does your hard-heartedness *hinder* it. If you are saved at all, it must be entirely by Christ's finished work on Calvary, and not on account of your incipient penitence. We are saved not by the consciousness of our sin, but by the knowledge of our Saviour. Jesus said on Calvary, "It is finished;" and this should lead you to see that, if He finished the work of redemption *then*, it would be doing dis-honour to Him to act as if you could add

something to the all-perfect work of God's incarnate Son. If the blessed Jesus has finished the work of making atonement for sin—if He has fully satisfied divine justice, if He has magnified the law and made it honourable—we have nothing at all to do with laying the foundation of our reconciliation with God. Convictions, tears, resolutions, would all have failed, but the precious blood of Christ is all-sufficient as the ground of our peace, for the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin. An ocean of your tears could not wash out one of your "crimson" sins, but one application of Jesus' blood will take them all away. Your sin is such a dreadful evil, that nothing can remove it but the "precious blood" of the Son of God. What a view this must give you of your helplessness, and exposedness to everlasting woe! But is it not good news that God has laid our help upon One who is "mighty to save," even Jesus, who is His only-begotten and well-beloved Son? It is well-pleasing to the Lord to cast yourself entirely upon the royal clemency of the God of love. You will find

Jesus all that you require. If you know Him and receive Him by a simple faith, you will be saved by Him for evermore. Only believe in Him, as that Jesus who once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, and you yourself will be brought to God. Through Him we have access to the Father : “ I am the door ; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.” Will *you* enter by Jesus, and be reconciled to God ? Your mental confusion, spiritual darkness, and ignorance of divine things, will be no barrier ; for Jesus is the Light of life, and coming to Him, you will be spiritually enlightened. Oh, that He would even now shine in your heart, to give you “ the light of the knowledge of the glory of God ! ”

Let your awakened soul come into broad contact with the mind and heart of God, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. Divine wisdom is the principal thing ; therefore get wisdom. Take your Bible, and read all those precious passages in it that speak of God’s love to ruined sinners. Pray over them, and

meditate on them. Take the Word of God as your guide to the knowledge of His character and grace, and go to the throne of grace, and ask Him to open your blind eyes to behold the soul-saving and sanctifying truths therein contained. You will there learn that God is love, and that the greatest and sublimest manifestation of it was given when He sent his only-begotten Son into the world "that we might live through Him." This is the manifestation of the great God in which you are most thoroughly to interest yourself, for it is your life. He so loved us that he sent His Son to be "the propitiation for our sins." "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." Are not these glad tidings? You are one of "the world" that may be saved through Jesus Christ the Son of God!

Dear friend, will you not believe in Jesus, and have life even now, and be happy for evermore? "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." "Believe

on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "*He that believeth hath everlasting life.*"

As soon as you are willing to be saved by Jesus, you will feel the refreshing gush of spiritual life passing, like the electric current, through your whole soul, and you will feel as if you were all new, and had already entered a new world. But if you would be deeply impressed with the love of Christ, you must repair by faith to the cross of Calvary, and to the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, where Jesus intercedes. It is upon Jesus, loving, obeying, bleeding, dying, and pleading that you must fix your eye,—if you would have salvation, and enjoy "the peace of God which passeth all understanding."

Let the beloved Immanuel have the first place in your mind and heart. Look unto Him, and be saved. Hear Him, and your soul shall live. Embrace Him as your portion, and you shall be satisfied, and filled with all the fulness of God. He must be the Alpha and the Omega in your salvation. Just as on the

Mount of Transfiguration, when Moses and Elias vanished from the gaze of the disciples, and they "saw no man but Jesus only ;" so you must see *Jesus only* if you are ever saved. He alone is able to save you ; and He will speedily accomplish it, if you will only intrust Him with it, and sincerely desire it. His name is called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins.

"See," as a Christian brother beautifully and earnestly writes, "that you unwittingly add nothing to the perfection of the work of Christ. You may be betrayed into this sin and this folly by looking within yourself rather than to the person of Jesus ; by attaching an importance too great to repentance and faith, and your own doings and strivings, rather than ceasing from your own works altogether, and resting for your peace, and joy, and hope, simply, entirely, and exclusively on the work of Jesus. Remember that whatever we unintentionally add to the finished work of Christ, mars the perfection and obscures the beauty of that work. 'If thou lift up thy

tool upon it, thou has polluted it.' Nothing have we to do but, in our moral pollution and nakedness, to plunge beneath the fountain, and wrap ourselves within the robe of that Saviour's blood and righteousness who, when He expired on the tree, so completed our redemption as to leave us nothing to do but to *believe* and be *saved*. 'It is finished.' O words pregnant of the deepest meaning ! O words rich of the richest consolation ! Salvation is finished ! 'Jesus only !' Look from fluctuating frames, and fitful feelings, and changing clouds, to 'Jesus only.' Look from sins and guilt, from emptiness and poverty, to 'Jesus only.' 'It is finished !' Let devils hear it and tremble. Let sinners hear it and believe ! Let saints hear it and rejoice ! All is finished. 'Then, Lord, I flee to thee, just as I am !' I have stayed away from thee too long, and am nothing bettered, but rather grown worse. Too exclusively have I looked at my unworthiness ; too absorbed have I been with my penury ; too bitterly have I mourned having nothing to pay. Upon thy

own finished work I now cast myself. Save, Lord, and I shall be saved !' Before this stupendous truth let all creature merit sink ; let all human glory pale ; let all man's boasting vanish,—and Jesus be all in all. Perish forms and ceremonies—perish rites and rituals —perish creeds and churches—perish, utterly and for ever perish, whatever would be a substitute for the finished work of Jesus ; whatever would attempt to add to the finished work of Jesus ; whatever would tend to neutralize the finished work of Jesus ; whatever would obscure with a cloud, or dim with a vapour, the beauty, the lustre, and the glory, of the finished work of Jesus ! It was 'Jesus only' in the counsels of eternity—it was 'Jesus only' in the everlasting covenant of grace—it was 'Jesus only' in the manger of Bethlehem—it was 'Jesus only' in the garden of Gethsemane—it was 'Jesus only' upon the cross of Calvary—it was 'Jesus only' in the tomb of Joseph—it was 'Jesus only' who, 'when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the righthand of the Majesty on high.' And it

shall be 'Jesus only'—the joy of our hearts, the object of our glory, the theme of our song, the Beloved of our adoration, our service and our praise, through the endless ages of eternity."

And do not think of Jesus and salvation as far off. Oh, how strangely anxious souls mistake the plainest truths and realities ! Jesus is not far from your soul. He is just at your side ; and His salvation is also near. You have to undertake no lengthened pilgrimage to meet the Lord. You have just to open the eye of faith, and, lo ! a Lamb, as it had been slain, is before you, and salvation is experienced in your soul ! Oh, dear friend, struggle no more to render yourself better, as a preparation for receiving Christ ; but open your heart, and let in the great Redeemer. While you are struggling with sin, repenting, weeping, reading, praying, resolving to be good, and fighting with temptation, a *Divine One* is kept waiting and knocking at your door. He is there—just at hand—standing and knocking ; and he would fain come in. If you would only open the door, and give Him a cordial

welcome, he would graciously enter, and bless you with all spiritual blessings. Could you refuse to admit Him who gave himself for our sins? See! He is just beside you, bearing those marks which tell of love—those wounds which He received when He was “wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities.” It is the same Jesus who died on Calvary, and who rose again from the grave; and He is ever ready to be the surety and sin-bearer of any awakened soul.

“*And has He really come to offer himself to me?*” Yes! even to you. Will you not hear Him speak peace to your troubled soul! How blessed, were He to say, “Thy sins are forgiven thee!” I would fain shut you up to Christ, and persuade you to give no sleep to your eyes until you find a place for Him in your heart. Fain would I lead you away from everything, to meet with Jesus who is “altogether lovely.” Oh, do listen to His own loving invitation, “Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Jesus is in real earnest with

you, whether you are or not. But I believe you are in earnest ; but see that it is to have Christ Himself, and peace, not *from* Him merely as a gift, but *in* Him, as the very fountain of spiritual peace. “ He is our peace.” May the Divine Spirit open your heart as he opened the heart of Lydia to receive these saving, and peace-giving truths !

I hope I have, in some measure, succeeded in explaining to you the love of God ; and surely you cannot refuse to be loved by the Triune God ; you cannot surely reject the love of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ! You will let the mighty tide of divine and everlasting love flow freely into the innermost recesses of your troubled soul—will you not ? Receive the fulness of the Godhead by receiving Jesus. See in Christ the uncovered heart of the infinite Jehovah. How very much He has already done to win your confidence, to melt your hard heart and make you forsake sin, and run into the holy embrace of the everlasting arms, crying, *Abba, Father !* Are you not amazed at the great kindness that God

has already shewn you? He has spared you all those years of your life that are past, although you were deserving of the flames of hell. He has given you food and raiment, friends to care for you, ministers and kind instructors to teach you. You have your Bible to read, the house of God, and the private meeting, in which to hear of Jesus and the great salvation. Is not His goodness wonderful? His is "*marvellous lovingkindness.*"

The Holy Spirit, I trust, has been graciously striving to awaken you from your deep and dangerous sleep; and He is, it may be, now saying to me as I write, "Plead with your reader to arise and flee to Jesus, ere the door of mercy close for ever. Beseech him by the blood of the cross, by the resurrection and the ascension, by the all-prevailing intercession of the glorious Advocate of sinners, by the solemnities of the judgment, by the happiness of heaven and the misery of hell, to hide himself in the ample folds of the Redeemer's righteousness, and in that holy wedding-garment approach God his Father, and all heaven will shout aloud for joy."

Now, dear friend, be persuaded to look to Jesus, and to " consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession ;" and see how worthy he is to be trusted with your salvation. He is God. He became man. He obeyed the law. He endured the curse. He died for our sins. He was buried. He rose from the dead. He lives, and pleads for us in glory ; and he will speedily " appear the second time without sin unto salvation." He is altogether worthy of your earnest study and confidence, for He is an all-perfect Saviour ; and there is only one sinless course open to you who now have Him set before you—and that is to receive Him as your Redeemer, and live to His glory. How blessed the necessity ! It is just this—you must lie down quietly at the cross of Calvary, and let the wave of free love flow over you. And then God the Father, not seeing you, but Christ, will say of you, " Thou art all fair, my love ; there is no spot in thee." Being found in Christ, you will be regarded and treated as if you were Christ. Accepted in the Beloved —" in whom we have redemption through His

blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace"—you will receive the Holy Spirit, to incline you to obey all God's holy commandments, and live to the praise of His glory ; and you will be at last presented faultless before the presence of His glory, with all the redeemed and sanctified people of God, when the day of immortal blessedness shall dawn and the Day-star arise !

OPPRESSED with noonday's scorching heat,
 To yonder cross I flee ;
 Beneath its shelter take my seat ;
 No shade like this for me !

Beneath that cross clear waters burst,
 A fountain sparkling free ;
 And there I quench my desert thirst ;
 No spring like this for me !

A stranger here, I pitch my tent
 Beneath this spreading tree ;
 Here shall my pilgrim life be spent ;
 No home like this for me !

For burdened ones a resting-place,
 Beside that cross I see ;
 Here I cast off my weariness ;
 No rest like this for me !

DR. BONAR.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS

“I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”—PHIL. iii. 8.

“*ARE* you comfortable in your soul?” inquired a minister of a dying man. “I cannot say that I am *very* comfortable,” was his reply. The minister then said, “Well, we are not saved by our comfortable frames—what are your thoughts of Christ?”

The name of Christ was as ointment poured forth, and he immediately cried out, “*I am quite in love with Jesus Christ.*” This he spoke with a heavenly smile, and in such rapture, that two or three persons in the

room burst into tears of joy. “*I am firmly fixed,*” said he ; “ the promises are very many, and the Lord is faithful to His promises. *I have had no hope but in Christ for many years.*”

Dear reader, are you more anxious about knowing Christ, than you are about having mere comfort of mind ? There are some who even prefer *anxiety* of mind, and overwhelming conviction of sin, to Jesus the Prince of peace. But be assured that conviction or comfort will avail you nothing if you know not Christ and believe not in His Name.

Mark how the apostle Paul prays in his Letter to the Roman Church : “ Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” Is not that a beautiful, comprehensive, expressive, and intelligent prayer ? “ The God of hope !”—how animating is it to think of our God as “ The God of Hope !” His manifested character in Christ Jesus, as a “ God that delighteth in mercy,” is the sure foundation of our hope.

“God is love;” and from Him as from a perennial love-fountain the streams of love and hope continue to flow from generation to generation.

Now mark this:—the apostle prays this “God of hope” to “fill you with all joy and peace.” Would not that be delightful? You greatly desire spiritual “joy and peace,” and the prayer is, that you may not only have them in a measured form, but that you may be *filled* with these precious spiritual commodities. “The God of hope *fill* you with all joy and peace.” Wonderful prayer! O how blessed it would be to have it answered! how happy to have “abundance of peace,” and “joy unspeakable!”

Well, just observe how the prayer runs, and you will notice how these may become yours: “The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.” How well the great Apostle Paul knew the true gospel way of giving “peace and joy!” “The God of hope” fills sinners with “all joy and peace” only “*in believing.*” Believe all that goes to make

Jehovah “the God of hope,” and you will certainly have “all joy and peace;” but not otherwise.

“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” If you believe this you will have “all joy and peace;” and if you have no “joy” or “peace,” it is simply because you are an unbeliever. “Being justified *by faith*, we have peace with God;” and having peace with God, we shall certainly have that “peace of God that passeth all understanding,” and that “joy” that is “unspeakable and full of glory;” yea, we shall “abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” All that God bestows He gives to us “*in believing*.” “O that I had ‘peace !’” you may be saying. Well, “the God of hope would fill you with *all peace*,” *on your believing* that he has the good-will to do so. You wish to have “joy and peace” *without* believing, or *after* believing; but God’s way is to “fill you with all joy and peace **IN BELIEVING**.” Never think

of peace or joy but "*in believing.*" There was none of the apostles more exact in his theological knowledge and statements than Paul, and he does not say that peace and joy come *before* believing, or *after* believing, but *IN* believing. He has said nothing about getting "joy and peace" by *knowing* or *feeling* that an inward change has been produced, but he simply prays, "The God of hope fill you with *all joy and peace in believing*, that ye may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost." "We do not steady a ship by fixing the anchor on aught that is within the vessel. The anchorage must be without the vessel ; and so of the soul, when resting, not on what it sees in itself, but on what it sees in the character of God—the certainty of His truth, and the impossibility of His falsehood." Then my friend, you must *believe*, and do nothing else, and wait for nothing else, for otherwise you can never be filled "with all joy and peace ;" and if you have not these, you cannot have any "hope" for eternity. It is only when you are filled with all joy and peace in believing, that you will "abound in hope."

The great matter with you, then, my dear friend, is to have a thorough knowledge of the great facts recorded in the word of God, and more especially of those which relate to Jesus. “Knowledge is power” in spiritual as well as in temporal affairs. The perplexity of many awakened souls arises mainly from their defective religious knowledge. True religion is not enthusiastic, neither is it mystic, but *intelligent*, being founded on facts the most important and indisputable; and those who are possessed of it can “give a *reason* for the hope that is in them.”

But many act as if they had nothing to do with external facts, if they could only have inward feelings. They would have the palace of peace called up at once, as if by a talismanic word, and set aside the erection of it by means of laying one stone of ascertained fact upon another, as a process far too tedious for their impatient and immediatising spirits. Depend upon it, such a plan is unscriptural, and though it may gratify you for a time with charmed feeling, it will eventually leave you destitute

of all real, spiritual peace. *God's way is to save you by revealed knowledge divinely imparted.* The very fact of His having given us a *revelation* might convince us that it is His purpose to save us by *knowledge*. I do not mean to say that all who have an intelligent acquaintance with the great facts of the word of God are in a state of salvation ; for there is such a thing as having a mere *natural* knowledge of *spiritual* things. Nevertheless all who *are* saved, are saved by the knowledge of God in Christ ; and if they were to account for their salvation, it would be in this way : *"God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."*

Wherefore if you would enjoy *the peace of God*, you must have *the knowledge of God* as he is revealed in Jesus Christ. You desire inward peace. You have heard of "the peace which passeth all understanding," and long to experience it. But how is it to be obtained ? Not certainly by that "bodily service" which

is occupied with the performance of the duties of religion, nor yet by any direct mental effort to grasp it. It can be obtained only by an indirect process. Know God, and you will have *peace* without a single effort or wish on your part. The Apostle Peter prays that those to whom he wrote might have "*peace through the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord*;" and I believe that it is impossible to obtain real and abiding peace in any other way. When you *know* that God is the God of peace, that Christ Jesus His own Son has made peace by the blood of His cross; when you obtain an insight into the word of God, by the illuminating grace of the Holy Spirit, and there discover for yourself "*the gospel of peace*,"—you will doubtless have "*peace with God*," and feel within you a substantial peace that will "*keep your heart and mind*."

God the Father, by sending His own Son into the world "*to make reconciliation for iniquity*," shews His desire to give us peace; Jesus, by giving "*himself for oursins*," shewed His desire to give us peace; but seeing that

the Holy Spirit has given us a record of the Father's gift and the Son's atonement, thus doing His part to shew His desire for the establishment of "an honourable peace" between God and man, we are to be taught by that fact, that the peace of God is to be obtained by a diligent and intelligent perusal of the Holy Spirit's record, under the spiritual guidance of the Great Recorder.

He has given us a fourfold life of Christ. It is not by accident, that we have *four* Gospels. They are written with a purpose ; and they doubtless answer that purpose. They are all *distinct*, and written by different individuals, looking at Jesus in various aspects, and regarding Him from *different points* of view. This of itself might teach us that "the God of all grace" deals with us in the matter of our salvation as rational and intelligent beings.

After Jesus arose and ascended to the right hand of God, by means of the four Gospels the cross was so exhibited, that men coming from the four points of the mental and moral uni-

verse might see inscribed upon it, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

The minds of men are very differently constituted, and the awakened set out for the cross of Calvary from different and, sometimes, directly opposite quarters of the mental world. And God the Holy Ghost, by the vast variety of Scripture, has made ample provision for the difference of mental constitution and capacity among men.

And this exuberance and variety of inspired information plainly teach us that we are dealt with as if it were intended that we should be saved and obtain “*peace through the knowledge of God, and Jesus Christ our Lord.*” “These things are *written* that ye might *believe* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that *believing ye might have life through his name.*” This sentence, occurring at the formal conclusion of the fourth gospel, may be regarded as pointing out the one object of them all ; and it directs us to the *written* Word for that *knowledge* which is the sure

foundation of a faith which is invariably accompanied with "life" and "peace."

The gospel is good news about God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; and it cannot be *known*, understood, and realized, without setting God's holy, gracious, and glorious character before us ; and, beholding in this glass the glory of the Lord, we are certain to have not only *peace*, but to be "changed into the same image." As another has beautifully expressed it :—

"God's object in sending His Son into the world was to set His own character before us in its true light, that there might be no mistake as to it on the part of man. I do not mean that this was the *whole* meaning of the propitiation ; but it was one great point in God's desire was, to let men know the real character and mind of the God with whom they have to do.

"Christ's person is a revelation of God. Christ's work is a revelation of God. Christ's words are a revelation of God. When He lay in the manger, that was a revelation or un-

folding of God. When He sat by Jacob's well, that was a revealing of God. When He said, "Come unto me and I will give you rest," that was a revealing of God. When He wept over Jerusalem, that was a revealing of God. When He died upon the cross, that was a revealing of God. When He lay in Joseph's tomb, that was a revealing of God.

"To know God as He has thus made Himself known in Christ Jesus and His cross, is to have peace. It is into this knowledge of God that the Holy Spirit leads the soul whom He is conducting from darkness to light. It is this knowledge of a revealed God, conveyed into the soul by His Spirit, that drives out the native darkness and brings in light,—light to which the sinner is a stranger, light which brings us into happy communion with Him who is light itself, and in whom there is no darkness at all."

Thus, my friend, is God revealed in Christ *reconciling*; and your salvation and peace depend on your *knowledge* of Him. It is eternal life to *know the true God, and Jesus the Mediator*. If you would have true peace, you

must look to God for it. Your eye must rest upon a God in Christ, if your anxious soul is to be the habitation of peace. True peace flows from a clear perception of the way of salvation as it is laid down in the word of God. Your present duty, then, is to "search the Scriptures," and bring your mind into broad and vital contact with the mind of God ; and if you do so, with ingenuous dependence on the promised enlightening and quickening of the Holy Spirit, and apprehending the revealed character of the God of love, and sympathising with all His thoughts concerning Himself, His Son, His Spirit, and you a poor, condemned, wandering one, you will assuredly have salvation, and "peace like a river," while you "rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

It is quite possible for you to be saved by the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ our Lord. Many have been thus saved, and many are now being thus delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Take the case of one we knew and be encouraged.

It was a time of awakening in a ladies' school. Some had been enabled to believe in Jesus, and He was shining into their souls, and it was with them a time of light and joy. But there were others who, although alarmed or anxious, were yet in darkness. Some were enveloped in deeper gloom than others ; and there was one to whom I spoke of Jesus' love and power to save, who seemed to be more in darkness than all the rest. She was a girl apparently about sixteen, who had not enjoyed the advantage of parental instruction in divine things, and her kind teacher desired me to speak to her first on that account ; and the Lord graciously turned the shadow of death into the morning.

It was a time of deep interest. There sat the poor, anxious one stunned, confused, and surrounded with chaos and sable night, her face wearing an aspect which indicated calm, deep sorrow of heart, blended with a quiet, passive docility which seemed to say, " If thou canst do anything to remove this darkness and give me light and peace, have compassion on me."

I sat down before her, and, looking up for the presence of the Holy Spirit, I commenced to place before her mind the great leading facts of the gospel history. After explaining with all simplicity, the way of salvation through Jesus Christ, I asked her if she understood it any better than before, and in reply she said, "I think I do, but my mind is still dark and confused." "Can you not commit your case to Jesus and allow Him to give you light, life, peace, and salvation?" I said further, "I have been telling you about Jesus; we will now tell Jesus about you:" and so we joined in prayer. When we rose from our knees, I saw by her countenance that she was being enlightened, and on asking how it was with her now, I found it was as I had inferred. She did not say much, but I believed that He who is the Light of life had drawn near, to give her the knowledge of salvation by the remission of her sins; and the following week I learned from her teacher, that she was no longer "darkness" but "light in the Lord," and that she dated the advent of the heavenly enlightenment from

that evening when she was told about Jesus, and He was told about her ; and, now that five years have elapsed, it is gratifying to know that she is still following on to know the Lord.

This young lady's case is not an uncommon one. There are many in confusion, darkness, and perplexity, even in reference to the way in which God saves sinners. Reader, if you are in this condition, your wisdom is to read the Word of God, looking for the Holy Spirit to open your eyes, that you may thereby know Jesus in His person and work as God manifest in the flesh, dying the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God ; attend where the pure gospel is fully preached, and read those writings which are most famed for holding forth "a full Christ for empty sinners ;" and having known Jesus to the salvation of your soul, continue all your days to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," and be able to say, "*I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.*"

HOPE IN JESUS.

“Good hope through grace,” 2 THES. ii. 16.

DEAR FRIEND,—There is “good hope through grace” for the greatest sinner on earth, and, therefore, there is hope for you. This will appear when we consider *what God the Father has done, and what He is still doing*, for the salvation of sinners, both in providence and grace. There is ample room in the gracious heart of Jehovah for all who are willing to be received as beggars, that they may have change of raiment, and be seated at the banquet of free grace, clothed in the wedding garment bestowed by God himself. Only think of the wondrous provision God has made in his ineffable love for our redemption

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that evening when she was told about her. He was told about her; and, now years have elapsed, it is gratifying to see that she is still following on to knowledge.

This young lady's case is not an unusual one. There are many in confusion and perplexity, even in the way in which God saves sinners. If you are in this condition, you should read the Word of God, looking to the Spirit to open your eyes, that you may know Jesus in His person and works, manifest in the flesh, dying the death of the unjust, that He might bring us to God, where the pure gospel is fully presented. You should read those writings which are most holding forth "a full Christ for everybody," and having known Jesus to be the salvation of your soul, continue all your days to "walk in the knowledge of Jesus Christ." *Thine, &c.*

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and salvation, and see if you could doubt it. God has so loved the world as to give His Son ! Surely that one fact is altogether sufficient to prove conclusively that there is good hope for you. When the fulness of the time was come, He sent forth His Son to redeem us from the curse of the divine law, and reconcile us to God by dying in our stead ! "God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." The gift of God—His own eternal Son to die for sinners—is the pledge and proof that God has good-will towards them, and has room for them in the embrace of His everlasting arms.

Jesus, by the parable of the prodigal son, shews us this in the most striking manner. When the miserable and unworthy son arose and came to his father, the parent is represented as meeting him with the embraces of his love, and preparing a joyous feast to celebrate his return to the paternal abode. Our Father in heaven thus waiteth to be gracious to our unrighteousness : our sins and our iniquities He will remember no more.

His heart is still towards us. He is still merciful and gracious, and slow to anger. When any poor, sin-blighted, conscience-smitten prodigal is beginning to manifest the faintest symptoms of repentance, our gracious God is moved for him, and says: "Is he a dear, dear son? is he a pleasant child? I have been angry with him, but I do earnestly remember him still: my bowels are troubled for him: I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." "He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy." He pardons the guilty, quickens the dead, clothes the naked, feeds the hungry, and justifies the ungodly.

All the arrangements of His providence, as well as his acts of grace, shew God's willingness to receive sinners. If there were no other ground of hope left, could you not extract hope from the circumstance that the world is preserved by God's mighty power, and you yourself are still preserved upon it? Every rising sun proclaims the longsuffering and goodness of Jehovah, and that there is

forgiveness with Him for the chief of sinners. For there could be no use for this world in its present state, were it not to be the great platform on which shall be exhibited the triumph of grace over guilt in the salvation of a vast multitude of ruined sinners, which no man can number. God has purposed to erect a glorious temple out of the ruins of a lapsed and guilty race; and until that be accomplished, the world shall last.

Then, dear conscience-burdened friend, take courage from this, and hope in God's mercy. For as long as these heavens over you are not rolled together as a scroll, and as long as the earth beneath you is not burned up, you may believe it as one of the true sayings of God, that with the Lord there is mercy and plenteous redemption. You are in the very place of hope, as long as you are continued here. There is no gospel in the grave—no tidings of mercy in the world of woe; but good news from a far country—the refreshing news that God sent His Son into our world, that we might live through Him—are even

now sounding in your anxious ears. Hear, then, and your soul shall live !

God's dealings with sinners during all the course of our world's history have evinced his gracious character. He enjoined his disciples to proclaim salvation to every creature ; and all who have ever come to Him have been graciously received. And then think of all the means and influences He possesses for saving sinners. If He has souls to save in any place He will make all the arrangements of His providence to subserve His gracious design. If He has a mission of mercy to be sent even to the seven-hilled city, He can make the sovereign pontiff doff his tiara, cast away his papal vestments, evacuate his throne of blasphemy, and flee from Rome in the humble garb of servitude, that His will may be done. There is nothing too hard for God. If His work is to be forwarded throughout the dominion of the False Prophet, He can so arrange His providence as to carry the message of eternal life and love even into the capital of Mahomedanism, and ten thousand

Turks shall be found in possession of the Word of God. If His work is to be done on a large scale in the great metropolis of the Christian world, among its rich and poor, He opens the drawing-rooms of London for prayer, and its theatres for preaching, and tens of thousands are made to hear the gospel of the grace of God, to whom it is really "*news.*" And surely the providence which brings us in this land so fully into contact with the proclamation of the everlasting gospel, the Holy Bible, and the throne of grace, proclaims in full-toned accents and with trumpet-utterance, that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

"No fondest parent's melting breast
Yearns like thy God's to make thee blest."

An intelligent acquaintance with the work of Christ will lead us to the conclusion that there is still hope for the hopeless, and room for the worst of sinners, in the salvation of God. What a source of encouragement does that blessed work afford !

The Son of God came into our world on purpose to die for our sins. He appeared in the fulness of time, and gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity.

And His mission and work were freely undertaken and carried into effect, from love to sinners. He loved poor perishing sinners, and therefore gave Himself for them. He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. The wounds of Jesus form our hiding-place; and He is become our salvation.

There is still room in his finished atonement for all who may come to Him. As He is the Divine One—God incarnate—His sacrifice is of infinite worth; His atonement is an infinite satisfaction for sin. And as the word translated “mercy-seat” means the covering of the ark which contained God’s law, and as that mercy-seat was of such dimensions that it perfectly covered the law, so the atonement of Jesus, or Jesus Himself, who is called “the propitiation”, or mercy-seat, perfectly satisfies the law, and removes

the barrier of guilt which you might be afraid would preclude your admission into the favour of God.

And as Jesus, whose satisfaction to justice is infinite, offers Himself to you as your salvation, can you say that within the folds of an infinite righteousness there is no room for you? And should you fear lest your past neglect of his invitation should prevent your acceptance, He says: “*Yet there is room.*” “*To-day, after so long a time; as it is said, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*”

He is still the same Saviour He was on earth. Still it may be said of Him, “*This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.*” He turns away none from the door of mercy, who come as “*publicans and sinners,*” but opens wide that blessed door to all who seek admittance and stand knocking at it. He is able and willing to save; and His own word is: “*Whosoever will, let him come.*”

The mission and work of the Holy Spirit

prove that there is yet hope in Jesus, and room for sinners at the feast of grace. Jesus has now ascended to the right hand of the majesty in the heavens, and has received the promise of the Father—the Holy Spirit. He is now sent into the world to be the great minister of the sanctuary. He shews men their lost and ruined condition, and ministers quickening to the dead. He is sent to convince, convert, illuminate, and save; and when the gospel that proclaims pardon to the guilty is faithfully preached He draws near, and so applies it, that it proves effectual for their salvation. When the gospel is preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, it becomes the power of God unto salvation. Christ's word was with power when He spoke on earth, because He had the Holy Spirit without measure. And by His Spirit His word is still with power now that He is speaking from heaven. The Lord the Spirit is working with power in these days of judgment and revival. He is throwing an awe upon the minds of men by His

providence, and awakening hundreds of thousands of souls by His grace. He works externally by bringing near the righteousness of Immanuel to lost sinners, and He works internally when He quickens, alarms, instructs, and saves their souls through that glorious righteousness. How great is the encouragement which this supplies! From this life-giving ministration of the Holy Spirit you are not excluded. You who have the spirit of bondage, and fear lest you should be for ever lost, may, in the midst of your fears, take courage, and entertain gleams of blessed hope! If God had determined to give you no opportunity of being saved, would He have dealt with you as He has done hitherto?

Ah, but you may say, many have come under deep conviction of sin, and have, nevertheless, been castaways! Alas! it is too true. But it is because that conviction was trusted in, and the open door of the sinner's refuge was never entered. But it is surely a hopeful symptom to be brought to think

seriously about your soul's salvation. There must be a commencement. If you are to be saved your slumbers must be broken, sooner or later. And you should take it as a kindness and a token of love from the hands of God, that He breaks in upon the uniformity of your carnal sleep, and disturbs your precarious rest.

Besides we should never forget that all the blessed records of the grace of God are ministered to us by the Holy Spirit. It is He who has recorded all the precious passages which tell out the love of God, the freeness of divine grace, and the inexhaustible fulness of the feast of love which a Father's good-will has spread for us upon the gospel-table. It is He who records all the precious promises and gracious invitations ; such as, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters ;" "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden ;" "And whosoever will, let him come." It is He who has furnished us with a life of the Redeemer, four times given, and by four different pens, that if we missed the Lamb

of God in the one, we might have another, and another, and yet another Gospel, in which we might find Him. And at the close of the last narrative, lest we should have gone over all and failed to obtain salvation through His name, He makes His apostle insert this striking word: "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ; and that believing ye might have life through His name." And even after that there comes another chapter, by way of appendix, in which the risen Jesus is seen restoring the fallen Peter to a consciousness of his favour, and to his former apostleship, that He might make it manifest that he continued to be the tender-hearted Saviour, who is kind to the undeserving.

It is the Holy Ghost who records the parable which contains these encouraging words, "*Yet there is room.*" Surely these are words of real encouragement, however hopeless you may feel in yourself.

The Saviour would thereby shew you the great desire manifested by God for the salva-

tion of sinners. He is in real earnest that his table may be furnished with guests.

The patriarchs, prophets, and kings, as well as all the godly who lived before the advent of Jesus, had sat down at that table, and yet Jesus said, when on earth, "There is room." Apostles, martyrs, pastors and people, in the early ages of the Christian era, sat down there, and had abundance of the richest and the best which the God of grace could furnish. A vast concourse of sinners, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, flocked to that table at the time when the light of the glorious Reformation began to dispel the thick darkness of the middle ages, and, since that period, myriads more have taken their seats at that table; and during the past few years, thousands on thousands have been feasted at the "great supper" of the God of love; and, after all, there is room at the gospel table, and plenty on it, for every perishing soul. And there is nothing between you, O perishing sinner, and the open door of free grace that leads to

that table ; and if you perish, it will not be because of the want of room and provision for you, but because you would not be persuaded to take your place at God's feast of love, and have your hungry soul satisfied "without money and without price."

Servant after servant is sent forth by God the Holy Spirit to bid sinners to the "great supper." "All things are now ready," says Jesus, and if you will make no excuse but quietly seat yourself at his table the feast is yours. Salvation is all your own for the taking. Such is the encouragement of Jesus !

And lest any should keep back, saying, My case is hopeless, He bids us shew that the maimed, the halt, and the blind—the most hopeless persons—are received, and "*yet there is room.*" And, moreover, in the unutterable love of his gracious heart, our God will have the highways and hedges searched, and the vilest, most abject, and profligate, are to be even *compelled* to come in.

Be assured, then, that there is mercy to be found, and that God the Father, Son, and

Holy Ghost, are really in earnest about your present happiness and eternal well-being. "Multitudes, multitudes," are in these days of revival pressing into the kingdom of heaven, and filling up the room that is still unfilled in the Church of God; but "yet there is room." A day will come when there will be none, and the door of salvation will be shut for ever; but it is not so yet. Let me, then, earnestly beseech you to come in to-day to the feast of mercy, and "eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness."

The Holy Spirit leads us to believe that if you will take your seat at the feast of love below, you will have the assurance given you there that there is room for you at the marriage supper of the Lamb above.

A great multitude, which no man can number, is said to stand before the throne of God and the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands. They have come there out of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and "yet there is room."

O, my friend, how blessed to be among that glorious ransomed company ! And you and I have just as much warrant to seek a place there as those had who are now before the throne in glory ! There is one way to all, and free to all. The way to Glory is by Calvary. The way to heaven is through the banquet-hall of love. Embrace the gospel, and you may rest satisfied that there is room for you in the King's palace in the New Jerusalem. The very angels will stand back to make room for you, and let you nearest to the throne of the exalted Redeemer ! They will rejoice over you to-day, if they see you sitting at the gospel-table, and eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of man ; and they will watch over you during life, and bear you away at last to the banqueting-house on high, where Jesus and all His ransomed children meet, where holy Enoch still walks with God, and where the beloved disciple for ever leans upon his Saviour's breast.

THE NEARNESS OF JESUS.

“Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.”—HEB. x. 22.

DEAR FRIEND,—A man, three thousand years ago, who was as terribly perplexed as you or any person could be, said, after recounting all the sources of his perplexity, “It is good for me that *I draw near to God*.” How much more may an anxious and perplexed sinner say, “It is good for me that *God has drawn near to me* ;” for that is the great outstanding fact of the Christian revelation.

God has not maintained that *distance* from us sinners which he might have kept ; but, on the contrary, he has appeared among us in “the man Christ Jesus,” who is Immanuel—“*God with us* ;” and He is *Immanuel* as

He is *Jesus*—He is “God with us,” for the express purpose of *saving* us from our sins. “He was manifested to take away our sins;” and He was seen by men to be a real *Jesus*, so near, that when He had a helpless sinner placed down right before Him, He could say to him as he lay there on his couch of sickness, —“Son, be of good cheer, *thy sins be forgiven thee.*”

We should not think of “God our Saviour” as far removed from us, for He is indeed *very near*. He was very near to the men among whom He lived when He was on earth, for they saw Him with their eyes, heard Him with their ears, handled Him with their hands, sailed with Him in the same boat, walked with Him on the same road, sat with Him at the same board, and slept with Him under the same roof.

And He is really as near to you now as He was to the men of His own day. He is not so near to *sense*, but quite as near to *faith*. What He was then by His living person, He is now by His gospel. He was a man, and

went about among all sorts of men. In Him dwelt all fulness of blessing, and He dispensed His good things freely as the needy applied to Him. He came on purpose to be used by all who felt their need of Him.

And what He was then He is now by the word of His grace. He is as near to any one as is the passage of His holy word which a man lets into his mind by his eyes or his ears. Wherever the revelation that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" gets into a man's mind, there is He. And when Jesus is thus shining in upon the heart through the medium of the Word, if "the spirit of faith" is acting so as to render it sensitive, there will be an indelible impression of Him produced.

"Say not in thine heart, Who shall *ascend into heaven* ? (that is, *to bring Christ down from above*), or, Who shall *descend into the deep* ? (that is, *to bring up Christ again from the dead*). But what saith it ? *The Word* is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart : that is, the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy

mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” “*The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us* (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father), *full of grace and truth.*” “*The God of all grace*” assumed our nature and “*dwelt among us*” as one “*full of grace and truth.*” “Unto you is born a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.” The Saviour has come so *near* to those He means to save, that there is a *birth-relationship* between them; for, as they “are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same.” The leading idea of redemption is the doing away with that which has created the moral *distance* between us and God. Atonement by the blood-shedding of Jesus is received by us as that by which God and we are *made at one.* “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, *the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.*” And “now, in Christ Jesus,” those who were by nature and by transgression “far off are made nigh by the

blood of Christ. For He is our peace." His gracious doings and sufferings have removed all cause for remaining *at a distance* from God, as if He were not gracious; and the *manner* of His doing all He did when on earth is calculated to annihilate at once the *moral distance* which is felt to exist between poor, needy sinners and Himself.

The God whom we have given just cause for being offended with us, is still in Christ reconciling sinners unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. And when we take into our consideration all that He has done, and all the manifestations of His grace and good-will to men which He has shewn, and the striking manner of His acting towards the needy ones who came to Him when on earth, we cannot avoid coming to the conclusion that the grand underlying thought of His mission to our world was so to reveal the Father, as to inspire the alienated children of men with the fullest confidence in Him.

When we read the four narratives of the life of Jesus, and "hear the conclusion of the

whole matter," as given by the Holy Ghost in the memorable words, "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name," surely we cannot help saying, "All things are ready," the way of life is open, Christ is *drawing near*, "let us *draw near* with a true heart, in full assurance of faith."

All this is very precious, and full of consolation to the awakened and inquiring sinner. The Saviour is ever *near* to you ; "for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh."

He is "the Lord our righteousness," and by faith you may claim Him as yours, to meet all your need, and say with confidence as you embrace Him, "in the Lord have I righteousness and strength."

He has "power *on earth* to forgive sins ;" for not only is He the God of grace, but He

has once for all “appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” As another has truthfully said, “Forgiveness is brought *near* and sure to the soul—the word of faith to the heart and to the mouth—this annihilates distance, and makes pardon a present blessing.

“Jesus has come down to act in grace among men, without the intervention of a medium. The sinner and the Saviour are brought face to face ;—God is not, therefore, to be sought for *as at a distance*, under the hiding of ceremonies, or within the cloisters of temples. The blessed Saviour is walking abroad among our necessities in marvellous condescending grace ;” so *near* that any sinner has but to lift his eye, and, lo ! “a lamb as it had been slain” is before him, and he may hear the voice of Jesus saying, “*Thy sins be forgiven thee.*”

Let us think of Jesus as the gospel history exhibits Him to our view. He is the same in grace now as when He said to the man sick of the palsy, “Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee ;” the same as when the

“woman, who was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, touched the hem of His garment,” and heard Him say to her, “Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole ;” the same as when the two blind men cried as He passed, “Thou son of David, have mercy on us,” and He touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith be it unto you,” and their eyes were opened ; the same as when He put His hand on the leper, saying, “I will, be thou clean, and immediately his leprosy was cleansed ;” the same as when “all the publicans and sinners *drew near* to hear him ;” *the same in grace is Jesus still* as He was when He “went about doing good,” and “died for our sins according to the Scriptures.”

“He is still the same Lord, and purposes to be so. He has not retired within the vail *again*, nor bound up that which was rent from top to bottom. He has not built *again* that which He destroyed. It is not “a worldly sanctuary” that He fills and furnishes *again*, nor ceremonies, and observances, and rites,

and practices, under which he is *again* concealing himself. He has descended from heaven to earth, He is abroad among men, in the ministry of His precious gospel and by His Spirit, beseeching sinners to be reconciled." This is the Christ of God, the Friend of sinners, the Saviour of the lost. This is the Jesus who says to you, O, anxious one, "*Come unto me, and I will give you rest.*" "The gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God," when rightly understood and truly believed, supplants and utterly sets aside all the elements of a fleshly religion, in which man is so prone to trust.

SUPERSTITION is the religion of many. Millions have a superstitious dread of God, and they use various expedients to propitiate the object of their terror. To keep him *at a distance*, that He may not pour out the vials of His wrath upon them, is their only desire. God has sent His Son in grace, but the most of men have not yet heard of it. They live and die in dread and darkness. But most of those who have heard of Jesus Christ have such mistaken notions regarding Him and

His loving mission and work, so far are they from recognising Him as “full of grace and truth,” one “who can have compassion on the ignorant and them that are out of the way,” that they foolishly erect a creature like themselves into a mediator to come between them and Him. When we realise the precious truth that Jesus, *the Son of Man, hath power on earth to forgive sins*, and is the same still in His grace that He was when He said to the poor sinful woman who washed His feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, “*Thy sins are forgiven; thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace*,” there is a period put to all such pagan sentiments and idolatrous practices.

SACERDOTALISM is also set aside by true faith apprehending Jesus as a Saviour ever near. Many have no other religion than that of priests. But that is not the religion of the New Testament. There was, indeed, a divinely-appointed priesthood, those by whom the worshippers under the Old Testament economy approached God. They had to come

by the consecrated path, and have their affairs transacted by a consecrated priesthood, or else they could not be accepted. But this served only as a shadow of good things to come, and was entirely set aside when the great Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, entered into heaven itself with His own blood, there to appear in the presence of God for us.

Christ having come, there can be no priests needed now, and there are none but man-made ones, who are acting directly in the face of the Gospel and the genius of the present dispensation. God appoints no priests now, and all who know Jesus as that blessed priest who has *power on earth to forgive sins*, trust to no human priesthood, because, having Jesus, they feel their need of no other priest, and are convinced by Scripture that the age of priests is past. The terrible power of human priests has its origin in the superstitious dread of God which haunts those who employ them ; but wherever Jesus *draws near* and says, “*Be of good cheer ; it is I, be not afraid,*” “*Peace*

be unto you," priestcraft is supplanted by faith, and its power comes to a sudden end.

One priest alone can pardon me,
Or bid me "Go in peace;"
Can breathe that word, "Absolvo te," (I pardon thee),
And make these heart-throbs cease :
My soul has heard His priestly voice ;
It said, "*I bore thy sins—rejoice.*" (1 Pet. ii. 24.)

RELIGIOUSNESS is also set aside by faith in Jesus ever near. It is sad to think that many are the victims of religiousness as well as of worldliness. There are millions whose ideas of Christianity are so low and erroneous, that they believe the Church, with all its various appointments, to be an institution equipped with machinery for making people *religious*, just as a factory is equipped with machinery for turning out the goods made by it. Most people seem to have no realisation of the great leading truth of Christianity, that "Christ Jesus came into the world *to save sinners* ;" their conduct seems to indicate that they have imbibed the notion that Christ came not "*to seek and to save that which was lost*," but to

put the stamp of his approval upon such as were using their best endeavours to improve themselves ; for *religiousness*, which is the only gospel known to the generality of professors, evidently proceeds upon this understanding.

The *religious* “ man thinks that the worship makes the worshipper, and therefore we must set diligently about worship, in order to get ourselves accepted. The main idea that man has in connection with worship (such as prayer, and praise, and service) is, that it is the means of securing acceptance, and effecting reconciliation with God. He brings his gifts as the bribes or payments of the criminal, not as the thank-offerings of the forgiven. He worships in order to pacify God, and persuade Him to extend His favour towards him. But God cannot own a religion whose aim is to buy His love, to persuade Him to be gracious, and to accept the person of the worshipper on account of the multitude or excellence of his services.”

How different from all this is the doing of

Jesus ! He says, " Man, thy sins be forgiven thee," and never breathes a whisper about any service the man had rendered for it, nor did He lay him under any obligation to serve Him for the future. He left him free, and sent him to his house, well knowing that, from gratitude, he would consider himself " free to serve, but not to sin." Jesus drawing *near*, and freely dispensing His grace to sinners of every sort, cuts up *religiousness* by the roots.

It is sad, indeed, when men are taught to regard God with a merely natural veneration as " the great and dreadful God," who dwells " in the thick darkness," far removed from the perishing and needy sinner. This is not the God of the Gospel ; for Jesus, who is God-man, is really as near to poor sinners, as condescending, and as ready to supply all their need, as He was when " manifest in the flesh" as " the Son of man " " come to seek and to save that which was lost."

" Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath con-

secrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh ; and having an high priest over the house of God ; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

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

I thought upon the law, the fiery law,
Holy, and just, and good in its decree ;
I looked to Jesus, and in Him I saw
That law fulfilled, its curse endured for me.

I thought I saw an angry frowning God
Sitting as Judge upon the great white throne ;
My soul was overwhelmed ; then Jesus shewed
His gracious face, and all my dread was gone.

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

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

Then in that way, so free, so safe, so sure,
Sprinkled all o'er with reconciling blood,
Will I abide, and never wander more,
Walking along in fellowship with God.

THE GRACE OF JESUS.

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.”
—**GALATIANS** vi. 18.

DEAR FRIEND,—I have been thinking to-day of the seventy-second Psalm, which describes the reign and glory of a king “greater than Solomon,” and which appears to point forward to the days of Messiah’s kingdom, when every knee shall bow to Jesus, and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. After describing the equity, peace, greatness, and glory of His kingdom, when “all nations shall be blessed in Him, and all nations call him blessed,” the Psalmist says: “The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.” And what can that mean but this? If my Lord and king reign from sea

H

to sea, if “ He is king over all the earth,” if his name endure for ever, and the whole earth be filled with His glory, I can ask no more ; this is my utmost wish ; the answer to all my prayers ; I have no further request to make ! Our prayers are bounded only by the blessed fulfilment of that promise of our ever faithful God, that “ the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea ;” and then our employment shall be to praise the King who reigns in righteousness for ever and ever !

Some years ago, when walking one day along the walls of an ancient city, I passed a plot of grass which had been cut down the day before. The sun’s rays were scorching, the air was sultry, and the grass lay withering in the summer heat. A few days before I had seen that tall grass waving in luxuriant richness, and now it was cut down and its verdure had gone, and there was nothing remaining but the brown ungainly roots, around which the ground was cracked and burning hot ! Its beauty had gone, but it was not destroyed.

As I stood looking upon it, and compared its condition with what it was the last time I had walked past it, I said, here is the “*mown grass* ;” here is an emblem of the trials and *mowings-down* which the Lord’s people experience ; and it is this mowing down which gives His coming to them all the seasonableness of rain to the “*mown grass*.” I continued to meditate on this blessed theme, and preached on the Lord’s day following from Ps. lxxii. 6, “*He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass : as showers that water the earth.*”

If you are to be made the Lord’s you must be mown down even to the very earth by the scythe of Jehovah. You must be thoroughly humbled if you are to be exalted, for “before honour is humility.” All your false hopes must be cut up if you are ever to experience that hope which “maketh not ashamed.” I remember visiting a sick friend some years ago, who said, as a young girl went out of the room, “*There is a proud heart there yet ; Lizzie must be brought low if she is ever to*

be saved." And if it is a proud heart that is reading these lines, that heart must be brought low by the humbling grace of God's Holy Spirit before salvation can be obtained.

The operations by which some cures in surgery are effected are very painful ; but they must be endured if the patient is to be saved from death. When cancer shews itself in any part of the human frame, painful and awful is the remedy ; but the operation is necessary to save the sufferer's life. So is it with us : pride, in its various forms, has sent its fatal roots through our system with such malignity, that even the best of physicians, Jesus, can root it out, and save us from its fatal consequences only by the severest operation.

If we are ever subdued to himself by Jehovah, it must be by a series of successive humiliations, as the whole field of luxuriant, waving grass is cut down by repeated strokes of the mower's scythe. There is, naturally, a proud heart in us all ; and, as Jehovah has decreed to stain the pride of all glory—and can erect His own glory only on the ruins of

man's glory—He must abase us before we can be exalted in His righteousness.

Our "loftiness" and "haughtiness" are utterly at variance with "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," who made himself of no reputation,—took upon Him the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of men, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross—and if we are to become like Jesus, the words of the prophet must be fulfilled in our experience, "The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low ; and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day."

Man's glory and God's cannot exist together. God will not allow man to set up his glory as the chief end of his existence ; but He will teach him by terrible things in righteousness, that he that glorieth must glory in the Lord.

Ah, have you not got some unlooked-for *mowings-down*? Have you not wondered why it was that the Lord brought you through so much painful experience ? "Deep calleth

unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts : all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." You may have thought as you were laid low by some trying providence, Well, this will surely be the last stroke ; and while you were thinking, " I will now enjoy uninterrupted calm and cloudless sunshine all my days," stroke after stroke came until you thought He would make an end of you altogether, and you knew what it was to be as the " mown grass."

Now, this is the ordinary way which Jehovah takes to be gracious. We are foolish and ignorant, and "as beasts" before Him, as said the Psalmist, and consequently do not naturally wish to be brought to Himself in His way, but in our own. We would like to be brought to Him and drawn nearer by repeated exaltations, and He shews the foolishness of our wisdom by bringing us by a way we knew not. You who know what deep Christian experience is, know well that you have to be dealt with by successive humiliations, in order to empty you of the goods of the strong man

which you have within you, to make room for “the things that are freely given us of God.”

The scythe of humiliation goes before Jesus, like John the Baptist, “to prepare the way of the Lord.” But it was the stern Baptist who pointed to Jesus, and said, “Behold the Lamb of God !” and so is it still. Our tribulation has the voice of John the Baptist. It both says, “Repent,” and “Behold the Lamb.” It turns “the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord ;” so that when He descends, it is “like rain upon the mown grass.”

Some of us have been like Laodicea, saying in our proud ignorance, “I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing ;” even when the Lord was saying, “Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked ;” and the Lord in mercy thrust in the painful scythe and made us like “mown grass.” Ah ! depend upon it, this was all in mercy ; for “the full soul loathes the honeycomb,” and Jesus could not have been rightly appreciated without it. When He comes

down in the plenitude of His love, “He fills the hungry with good things; but the rich He sends empty away.”

The whole tendency of *the Word of God* is to humble man and exalt Jehovah. And this is one proof of its Divine origin, for it is just such a revelation as we would expect to come from God,—a revelation that gives God all the glory, and lays man in the dust before the throne of his Maker’s holiness. It is different with human knowledge. “Knowledge puffeth up.” It ministers to man’s pride, and therefore we find unconverted men jealous of their literary reputation—ever bent on fresh acquirements, and striving after a higher position in the intellectual world—as if these were everything. That the whole tendency of science and philosophy is to enlarge our conceptions and elevate and refine the mind cannot be doubted; but it is well known that the acquisition of this world’s knowledge only puts man farther and farther from his God so long as he remains in an unconverted state. No man has ever yet taken up his proper *moral*

position with reference to God by the study of science or philosophy. But it has frequently happened that learned men have spoken and written as if they themselves were sufficiently proud to wish to exclude the Almighty from His own universe !

But Divine knowledge has a different tendency. It discovers to us a God of infinite holiness—of Almighty power—of sovereign authority and inflexible justice ; and when a poor sinful man perceives that the God of the Bible is arrayed in all the glory and majesty of His moral attributes, then away goes all the verdure of his fancied goodness and cherished hopes, and he realizes his *actual* position under His moral government to be that of guilt, pollution, condemnation, and death ! This is our position by nature, and if we are ever saved, it must be by the sovereign mercy of the God of infinite holiness. Oh, how the knowledge of this mows down the waving luxuriance of our carnal hearts !

Why is it that we find pride, vain-glory, and self-conceit so frequently connected with

“the wisdom of this world?” Is it not because of the absence of the Divine element in it which would lead its possessors to a realization of their relationship to the Eternal? But when Divine truth reaches the heart, and finds a lodgement in the minds even of such as are possessed of gigantic intellectual powers and great attainments, it makes them stoop down in the profoundest abasement, lay their talents and learning beneath the Cross, look on Him whom they have pierced, consecrate their erudition to God All-wise, and “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Dear friend, has Divine Truth made *you* like “the mown grass?” If God’s Holy Spirit take the law and make it “quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword,” and thereby convince you of your lost condition—your *false* moral standing in the sight of God—and the everlasting hell of which you are in danger every moment; then, as stroke after stroke of that scythe is given, the whole field of your self-complacency, pride, *false* security,

and bright anticipations of earthly distinction, wealth, power, and grandeur, will speedily be mown down. As soon as the sharp spiritual edge of God's law is felt, sin revives, and we die ! The waving grass is shorn close by the ground with all the flowers, thorns, and thistles it contains,—the hopes of a life-time vanish in a day, and all self-righteousness and fancied goodness of heart are cut up by the roots !

You have been slain by the word of God's mouth ! You are convinced that you are justly condemned to die by God's holy law, for you have sinned against him, and by so doing you have at the same time done violence to your own moral nature ! In goes the scythe of Holiness, and all is over with you ! Here is the strong waving grass which some time ago appeared so fresh, vigorous, and beautiful, "mown" by the instrumentality of Divine Truth, and withering in the noon tide sun !

Dear reader, was it not the knowledge of God which is contained in the divine Word that was the means of humbling you when the Holy Spirit removed the veil from your

heart and applied it with power ? As long as you could keep out the rays of Divine Truth from your mind, as long as the Word of God was merely a something without you, all seemed to be well with you : you could enjoy yourself, and engage in the giddy and foolish things which form the heaven of the unconverted ; but when the divine Word came within, and with a mighty stroke pierced your heart, then you had "trouble and sorrow." You were made to see Jehovah seated on "a glorious high throne"—the throne of His Holiness—as King over all—your Maker, Lawgiver, and Judge, and you felt that you could not stand before Him. Your opinion of yourself became altogether changed. Stroke after stroke was given, and all your hopes of being saved withered like the mown grass beneath the meridian sun, and you saw yourself a poor, ruined soul ; and felt that if you were ever saved, the Lord must be gracious to you, and hold out to you the golden sceptre of His sovereign love ! "The law came, sin revived, and I died." This was the death of all hope of

being saved by the law ; " for by the law is the knowledge of sin." O how it mows down the waving luxuriance of our carnal hearts when we see and feel that God is holy, infinitely pure, and opposed to sin ! What a humbling thing it is for proud man to have to cry out, " Unclean, unclean ! " " Woe is me, for I am undone ! " " God be merciful to me a sinner ! " Has the keen edge of the scythe of holiness cut down all your self-righteousness, and discovered your iniquities ? Have you seen in the mirror of God's moral nature that you are a miserable, polluted creature, so loathsome as to deserve to be cast for ever out of His holy presence into the lowest hell ? Have you seen the exceeding sinfulness of sin to such an extent that you loathe it from the very bottom of your heart, not because it deserves punishment, but because in its own nature it is unutterably loathsome ? If such is your experience you will have a sweet peace within, and feel a real complacency and delight in God's law, and be ready to exclaim, " O how love I thy law ! "

*But the entrance of the Gospel of God proves even more humbling than that of the Law. And no man is thoroughly “mown” down in spirit, until he believes in Jesus, and consents to take salvation as the gift of God. We naturally think only of working our way to glory : but the *Gospel* of Christ comes to us and says, Jesus is “the way”—the only way to the Father’s favour and the land of glory,—believe in Him and you shall have pardon and peace, and a place and crown in heaven at the close of your terrestrial course.*

Reader, if you think it is more humble to be sinning and repenting, doubting and fearing, than believing at once and being assured of the love of God in Christ Jesus to your soul, there is a lie in your right hand ! You can never be like “*the mown grass*” until you are perfectly satisfied with God’s method of saving sinners by free grace alone, and cordially embrace Jesus as your “all in all.” You are truly humbled only when consenting to be saved by free grace alone “without the deeds of the law.”

The stroke of the scythe of law is nothing to that of the scythe of love. God's Word discovers a way of being saved, which brings glory to Himself and immediate pardon and peace to perishing souls ; but it is such a humbling way that few find it, and even those who do are not all at once fully apprised of its self-crushing character. Most men, like Naaman the leper, would be willing to do some great thing, and to such the simple way, " Believe and live," has little to recommend it. Many think that it is most humbling to be " under the law ;" but it is far more humbling to be " under grace," and it is far more difficult to get people to join themselves to Christ than it is to get them to become disciples of Moses. But God's test of humility is, " What think ye of Christ ?" Have you such great thoughts of Him that you can entrust Him with your salvation, without trying to add the very least grain to His finished work ? Are you willing to take Him as your wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption, and glory only in the Lord ? Can you abandon without a

sigh your own sandy foundation of convictions, resolutions, good thoughts, warm feelings, enlargement in prayer, repentance, and conscientious walk in the world, and build upon the foundation which God has laid in Zion—the tried corner-stone ?

Are you willing to lift your eyes from your own heart to Jesus on the cross ; to be saved entirely by what He has done for you there, let the condition of your heart be what it may ? It has taken no little *mowing* of the Divine Spirit to bring you to this, and it will take not a little to keep you at it. Be not deceived with a mock-humility which keeps at a distance from the cross of Calvary. They know little of what it is to be like “mown grass” who keep at a distance from the cross of Christ. You are only truly mown down when you see that it is the easiest thing in the world for God to save you, for then do you realise His love and grasp His glorious scheme of salvation. There is no profound lowness of mind experienced until we “draw near to God with a true heart in full assurance of faith,” and

cheerfully, cordially, and fully submit to be saved by the free grace of God alone to the praise of His glory. "The most humbling thing is to lie down quietly at the throne of grace, and let the wave of mercy flow over us." The stroke of God's love will lay you more thoroughly in the dust than the stroke of His law. Free grace in Christ Jesus, cheerfully accepted and faithfully used, made even the proud Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, designate himself "the least of the apostles,"—"the least of all saints,"—"the chief of sinners."

Divine *discipline* is another stroke of God's scythe for making us resemble "the mown grass."

When the Lord led the people of Israel through the great and terrible wilderness, and gave them a wilderness-education and experience, it was all done that He might humble and prove them, and see what was in their heart, and whether they would obey him or not. God has dealt with His people in like manner in every age. His presence is with them; but He is among them as the leader

of pilgrims and strangers who are sojourning in a wilderness, where there are “fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, and no water,” a “great and terrible wilderness!” “In the world ye shall have tribulation,” for the refining of your souls, for the trial of your faith and the humbling of the flesh, “that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth ye should not serve sin.”

The patriarch Job needed much of God’s scythe of discipline before he was truly humbled. He seems to be introduced to our view as a godly man, who had got settled on his lees, and was more worldly and less godly than God would have him to be. He was, as he says, secure, so that he expected to die in his “nest,” but he tells us that God did not permit him; but “he hath delivered me up to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked. I was at ease, but He hath broken me asunder: He hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark. His archers compass me round about; He cleaveth my reins asun-

der, and doth not spare ; He poureth out my gall upon the ground. He breaketh me with breach upon breach ; He runneth upon me like a giant,” And yet all this and much more was necessary to bring Job to say : “ Behold, I am vile ; what shall I answer thee ? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken ; but I will not answer : yea, twice ; but I will proceed no further. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear ; but now mine eye seeth thee : Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

What a mowing down some of us must experience before we will *abhor ourselves* ! and yet this is “ the end of the Lord,” in all the discipline which He gives us by means of our outward and inward trials. When you are nearly overwhelmed with outward troubles—when business matters get complicated, oppressive, and vexing—when personal or relative afflictions assail you, when friends treat you with coldness or indifference, and when even your brethren in Christ misunderstand, misrepresent, or mistrust you, you are apt to feel

disheartened ; but this is just the discipline through which the Lord is bringing you to humble you, prove you, and empty you of self, that He may fill you with all the fulness of God. You see the wicked prospering in the world, and heaping up wealth, while you may have difficulty in maintaining yourself and family. But, since they are not in trouble, "their pride compasseth them about as a chain." Wherefore, covet not their portion and condition of mind, but rejoice to be *brought low* by the most humiliating means, for the Lord giveth grace unto the lowly.

"He that is down need fear no fall,
He that is low no pride,
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide."

A vast variety of means is required to humble us. Sometimes the trial comes from one's self, sometimes from friends, sometimes from the Church, and at other times from the world. An unfeeling calumny is propagated : an ungodly neighbour slanders or scorns you : some Shimei is raised up to curse David : a beloved

child is permitted to fill a parent's heart with the seeds of a life-long sorrow: distress or death enters the family; the weight of poverty may crush the buoyancy of the joyous and hopeful spirit; divisions in the house of God may sadden your soul, and the condition of the world may lie like a millstone on your mind; and all these things, you think, are thoroughly against you; but "by these things men live," and you are permitted to undergo such trials for your own spiritual benefit and for your Saviour's glory. It is all to make you feel your constant dependence on that God "in whose hands thy breath is and whose are all thy ways;" and to give you more relish for Jesus and communion with the Father and the Son, that, being filled with all the treasures of His grace, you may live to the praise of His glory.

"He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass." The tall, fresh grass has been "mown" and removed. The scorching rays of the summer sun are withering its roots, and the moisture which formerly kept it fresh and

vigorous, being dried up, the soil begins to crack and rend, so that it is in danger of being utterly burnt up. But in a few days the wind changes; the sky becomes overcast; the clouds pour out their watery contents; and the parched fields are refreshed.

How expressive the language, “He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth.”

The rain is both *suitable* and *seasonable*. “The mown grass” is being scorched; and neither a more intense flood of fiery rays, nor a fall of snow, would prove suitable. Rain, and rain only, can prove both suitable and seasonable. So when the soul is “mown” down and exposed to the influence of a variety of adverse circumstances, the coming of Jesus, with all the consolations of His grace and the comforts of His Spirit, is most suitable and seasonable. Look at the grass when “mown,” and you think that it only requires a short time longer of the fierce rays of the scorching sun to wither it up: but the rain descends and pours itself into the very heart of every

plant—it freshens the vital germ—percolates through the cracks and fissures which the burning heat has made, and thoroughly mollifies the soil, and the tiny rootlets drink in the reviving influence ; and as a result of this internal quickening, the field which the scythe of the mower had rendered so ungainly, assumes the greenest aspect, and with its new freshness, regales the eye of the passer by. In like manner are our "*mown*"-down souls quickened and refreshed by the presence of Jesus, and the rain of His soul-reviving grace. Are you laid in the dust by conviction of sin ? Are you oppressed by the burning heat of tribulation ? Are your prospects of temporal prosperity blasted ? O how seasonable and suitable, were Jesus now to reveal Himself and say, "*I am thy salvation ;*" "*Come unto me, and I will give you rest.*"

"I give relief to souls opprest,
O needy sinner, come."

And the rain is *sovereign and free* ; and so are Jesus and salvation. How frequently we hear it remarked in a time of drought,

“there is much need of rain,” and yet although we see the grass withering, the crops “languishing,” the flowers drooping—no rain descends. The rain cannot be commanded by man; it must be sent by God. “He *gives* rain from heaven.” The place where, the time when, and the circumstances under which the rain descends, are all of God, and not of us. So with Jesus our Saviour. He was “raised up,” sent, and given us in sovereign mercy by the God of love to save us from our sins.

The rain-makers of Africa pretend that they have control over the atmospheric changes; but every one of us knows it is false—a piece of pure knavery for selfish ends. And, sad to say, many religious teachers amongst us entertain a similar notion, and ply a similar piece of imposition in reference to the all-important matters of grace and salvation. But their pretensions are as absurd as they are unscriptural. There has been no deposit of grace made by God in any Church, nor has the power of giving or withholding salvation been committed to any class or order of sinful

men. The grace that saves or revives, is grace direct from heaven. It does not flow to us through any earthly channel ; but descends from the God of all grace, "as showers that water the earth."

And what so *free* as the rain ? And what more free than Jesus and His salvation ? He is the gift of God the Father's love. He came freely and gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity. The Holy Ghost comes freely and gives life, refreshment, and salvation. And the Gospel of the grace of God invites sinners to come to the Fountain of Life, "without money and without price."

And the rain is *powerful* and *reviving*. There is a mighty power in the summer rain. "The mown grass" would wither and die, were it not for the powerful influence of the copious showers. Under the potent and combined influence of the rain and sun, vast and speedy changes are produced. *All rain* or *all sun* would not do. There must be the union of both. So when the sun of Divine Truth and the rain of Divine grace operate

with combined power on the human soul, a mighty spiritual change is effected, and the inward regeneration of the mind appears in the beauty and consistency of a reformed and holy life. There is no possibility of resisting the quiet, powerful energy of the refreshing rain ; so the grace of God is irresistible in its transforming and reviving power.

Wherever Jesus comes down in the plentitude of his quickening power, he soon effects a great and unmistakeable change. All my natural corruption, pollution, hardness of heart, enmity against God and worldly affections, endearments, and connections, form no barrier to His effectual working for my awakening and salvation. If Jesus' grace is, from its very nature, powerful as the rain, then I have "good hope" that I shall be "sanctified wholly in soul and body and spirit," and at the same time made to bring forth fruit unto holiness, and thus live to the praise of His glory.

Oh, how urgently we need the transforming presence of Jesus to produce a soft impression of soul, that will make us tremble at His word

—to give tenderness of conscience—to diffuse a renewing and transforming influence through all the affections—to enable us to subdue sin, self, satan, and the world—to make us put on the “beautiful garments” of holiness, “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance ;” and incline us to pray and labour, with holier motives, humbler hearts, and a purer zeal for the salvation of perishing souls, and the revival of godliness amongst those who have through grace believed in Jesus to the saving of the soul.

And dear, tried, bruised, and “mown” believer, I wish before I close to give you still an additional word of consolation. I have before my mind’s eye a beautiful lawn and grassy terraces which during the summer months are “mown” every few days ; and so close has “the bottom” of grass become, that to the eye or the foot it is like a carpet of richest velvet. Your experience is here shadowed forth, if your afflictions and trials have been sanctified to you, and made a moral discipline.

The more frequently you are “mown” by Jehovah’s humiliating scythe, and watered by the refreshing influence of Jesus’ manifested presence, the more consistent will be your Christian walk, and the more lovely will you become in the eyes of the Lord, and of all who love Him in sincerity. “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby.” He mows down our souls, not for His pleasure, but for “our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness;” and this ought to make us “glory in tribulations also.” The more constantly you are “mown” by the scythe of tribulation, and refreshed by the transforming grace of Jesus, the nearer will it bring you to “the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

O God! thou knowest all—and me,
What my heart bears, and what it needs!
My weakness see,—
Yet not my sins, for Jesus pleads.



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