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# THE CALL OF THE BRIDE

AND

Other Gospel Papers.

By W. T. P. W.

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# The Call of the Bride.

#### CHAPTER I.

#### THE BRIDEGROOM.

"And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him. And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on. And he said, I am Abraham's servant. And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses. And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath. And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell: but thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son."—Gen. xxiv. 32-38.

beautiful illustration of the Gospel of God, now presented by the Holy Ghost to the guilty children of Adam. It is a pictorial representation of the time in which we live. In the bygone ages, Abraham desired for his son Isaac that which would be a joy and comfort to him; and at this present time, God does the same for His Son. He is seeking that which shall be the source of endless joy to His only, His well-beloved, Son, Jesus. And what is that? A BRIDE.

The Son's Bride, with her jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, is what I desire to call your attention to; and beloved reader, rest assured this has not been left on record merely as a family transaction in the history of Abraham's descendants, but because it is fraught with the deepest interest to us now, and is full of instruction and beautiful simile.

In the beginning of this chapter we have Abraham giving directions to Eliezer, his servant, to go to his country, and to his kindred, and take a wife from thence unto his son Isaac.

In Eliezer we have not only a ready and faithful, but also a prayerful, messenger; and need we wonder then that his mission from Hebron to the distant city of Nahor in Mesopotamia was so prosperous? No; we can but share, as it were, in the faithful messenger's joy, as he recrosses the desert, taking with him to his master's son the one

who shall be so dear to his heart. And in these days there is One who has come from heaven's far-off land on a similar errand—the Holy Ghost. He has come down to us. Angels have been passed by, and to man, fallen man, has been delivered the Gospel message of peace; and from the family of Adam the Holy Ghost is gathering out those who shall form the Bride, and He is leading across the pathless desert of the world this Bride for the Son, to whom the Father has given "all things." Safely is He leading her onward to that happy moment when she shall be presented, radiant with the jewels that have been given her by her long-expected Bridegroom, the Lord of all.

Have you ever thought that there is a living Man, seated on the throne of heaven, waiting and longing for the time when the Church, His Bride, shall be associated with Himself in glory, and when He shall share all the honour and dignity of that throne with the one for whom He died? So it is. "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it;" and of Him individually the believer can say, "Who loved me, and gave himself for me." How happy and blessed are they who form an integral part of the Church! Reader, can you look forward with joy to the meeting of the Bride and Bridegroom? Can you picture the scene, and share by anticipation in the joy, when all heaven shall be in ecstasy, because "the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready"?

Twice in Scripture do we read of ecstatic joy amongst the heavenly hosts. First, at the birth of the Lord, we are told: "And suddenly there was with the angels a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men" (Luke ii. 13, 14). And again at the marriage of the Lamb: "And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. xix. 5-8).

Do you wish to form part of the Bride here described? I do not now ask, Do you want salvation? or, Do you want to escape from hell? No; I ask now, Do you want what God calls you to? Do you desire to possess the honour He here offers you? Will you have the dignity and glory He puts at your disposal? Will you accept it, or refuse it? Which? Can you for a moment hesitate? Oh, better far spend eternity as the happy Bride of the Son of God, in the brightness of heaven's glory, than spend it in the darkness of hell! Better far be bound to Jesus with the

cords of love, than be bound in hell with the cords of your own sins!—for in one state or other must eternity be spent.

But let us return and look in detail at what is here written. The scene represented is in the distant country of Mesopotamia, and the servant is there telling a tale that will allure one to leave all that is dear to her in her native land, and go to be the bride of him whom she has never seen, but of whom she hears such wondrous tidings.

Eliezer's mission is very simply and clearly told. He is a true and faithful servant; his sole desire is to serve his master. He says, "O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master" (verses 12-14).

What a beautiful example this is to each servant of God! Would that we all were more prayerful, more dependent on God for the success of all we undertake in His service, then might we look for an equally blessed result. He

prayed, nor had he long to wait for an answer; for we are told, "And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her; and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up." Mark here the eagerness of the servant in his master's work: "And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher. And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking" (verses 15–19).

Rebekah, type of the sinner, meets the messenger thus at the well. And does not God delight to meet you, dear soul? Yes. You think you have something to do, that you must get into a certain condition, before you can get into the presence of God; but you are mistaken. Rebekah, going just as she was to draw water, is met by Eliezer; and so, too, the sinner, just as he is, has presented to him, and must receive from God, His testimony to the Person of the Lord Jesus.

What does drawing water signify? It is the action of an unsatisfied soul, an expression of thirst. We have in the New Testament an account of one who came to draw

water at Samaria's well, and to whom the Lord said, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The truth taught figuratively here is the necessity for you to have Christ now as your own, and to be satisfied with Him, for it is He alone who can satisfy the cravings of the needy As Eliezer met Rebekah, so would the Lord meet soul. you. "Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher" is the first address of the seeker to the sought one.

So, in the 4th of John, when the blessed Lord would win the confidence of Samaria's erring daughter, "Give me to drink" is the gracious word that began an interview which did not end till, convicted of her sin, and commanded by His grace, that revealed heaven's best gift (Christ) to earth's worst sinner (herself), she left His side only to bring others back with her to that sacred place of blessing, by the words, "Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" Such, my reader, is the lovely way Divine Grace stoops to win man's heart. It has won mine. Shall it not win yours also?

Having secured her attention, got into her company,

and gone with her to her mother's house, Eliezer begins to unfold his mission; and see his earnestness: "I will not eat till I have told mine errand." And what doth he tell? "And he said, I am Abraham's servant. And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly, and he is become great; and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses. And Sarah, my master's wife, bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath. And my master made me swear, saying, . . . . Thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son" (verses 34–38).

His first care, you see, is to unfold the tidings about this only-begotten son; *i.e.*, he presents distinctly, a person enriched with all that the father's love could give, and concerning whom he had *purposes* which deeply concerned one of those who, for the first time, heard of this would-be bridegroom, Isaac.

What a type of Christ! We must not forget, too, that in Gen. xxii. we have in a wondrous figure the death and resurrection of Jesus, as of that scene it is written, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises, offered up his only-begotten son, . . . accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure" (Heb. xi. 17-19).

Thus it is not till Christ has died, risen again, and as-

cended into heavenly glory, that the Holy Ghost comes to seek the heart of the Bride for the absent one.

Before Isaac gets his possessions or his Bride, he is the risen heir; and thus is he a type of our Lord, who had first to die for His Church before He could have her with Him in glory. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 24). How far the antitype exceeds the type I need not say. How wonderful it all is! and how blessedly true! What the restraining arm of God saved Isaac from, His own beloved Son had to endure. He hung on the cross, He died a shameful death, He descended into the grave, as the Church's Representative; and, blessed be God, He rose again entitled to claim "His own" in virtue of His atoning death and blood-shedding.

What does the Holy Ghost reveal of that only-begotten Son of God? All that the Father hath is His: "Unto him hath he given all that he hath." The Man in the glory is the One to whom the Father has given everything. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John iii. 35). He "also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 9-11).

Scripture abounds with testimony that all has been given

to Jesus; but there was one thing yet in the mind of God, of deeper and greater value than all that had been given, a priceless gift in the sight of Jesus, and that was a "Bride" to be His helpmeet. How wonderful is the thought that the Son of God so loved that Bride as to come down to earth and give up His life in order to possess her! He loves the Church—loves her with so great a love that we are told He "for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame." For her He left His Father's home on high; for her He became a "Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" was mocked and scourged, and at last crucified between two malefactors. But the fruit of all His sufferings is that He shall have a spotless Bride for ever seated by His side in glory. All has been done to win her, and she shall be His. That was what sustained His heart while here on earth; that was what He looked onward to in the midst of all His untold, His unutterable agony. He was doing His Father's will, was paying the costly price demanded by a righteous God to redeem those who are to form His Bride. Costly, indeed, was the ransom! Great, indeed, was His love. But it is joy to know He shall have full recompense for all His labour, all His sufferings; that His heart shall be fully gladdened, when He shall have the Church, His Bride, with Himself in glory.

"He and I in that bright glory
One deep joy shall share;
Mine, to be for ever with Him,
His, that I am there."

Oh, beloved reader, will you be there? God wants you to share this joy and love, and to rank with Him to whom He has given all things. But you say, "Can this be for me? Does God mean this for me?" My answer to this question is very simple. How did Rebekah know she was the one Eliezer wanted for Isaac? She could have no doubt on that point, for she stood by as the servant (see ver. 42-52) detailed to Laban how he had prayed to the Lord that he might meet the "appointed" one at the well, and recognise her by this sign, that when he should ask water for himself alone, she should not only yield this request but volunteer water for the camels also. Now Rebekah knew that she had exactly corresponded to this wanted personage, having said and done thus to the letter, and therefore must be the one the servant was in quest of.

If you have any doubt whether you are the one Jesus wants, just tell me—Are you a sinner? "Yes." Then listen: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15).

"Yes, but I do not know whether I am 'appointed' to be saved, or, in other words, if I am among the elect." Very likely, and I did not know that the night I came to the Lord, but I knew something far more to the point, viz., that I was "lost." Do you know and acknowledge that? "Yes, indeed I do," you may reply. Very well, hear the Saviour's words, "The Son of man is come to seek, and to

save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10). Now what do you think? Are you the wanted one? You own you are a "sinner," and further, a "lost" one, and God says it was for such Jesus came. How can you escape the conclusion that He wants you? It is impossible to do so. Whether you want Him and are willing to accept God's wondrous salvation is the only open question. He offers it now to you, and it only remains with you to accept or reject His offered gift.

The exalted Son of God is patiently waiting till the last heart shall be won for Him. Say, shall your heart be won for Jesus? Shall the strong chains that bind you to the world and the slavery of Satan be broken even now by the tender accents of the Bridegroom's loving voice, saying unto you, "Come unto me"? Can you look back on the dark scenes of Golgotha, and see all that He suffered there to win you to Himself, and yet refuse to give Him your heart's affections? Surely not.

I ask you in God's name, and as a herald from heaven's far-off land, Will you come to Jesus? I take up the words of Rebekah's friends, and say to you, "Wilt thou go?" Let yours be the heart that joyfully responds, "I will go." Look at His beauty, He who is "the chief among ten thousand" and "altogether lovely," and rejoice in the truth that you may be His. He lingers over you with deepest patience and strongest love; He is knocking at the door of your heart; oh, soul, open unto Him. He lures you with

all the deep affection of His true heart of love; He would draw you to Himself. Again His accents fall upon your ear, calling you this day, and saying, "Come unto Me."

Let your response be that of Rebekah's, when she unhesitatingly said, "I will go." What decision there is expressed in these three words, "I will go!" and will you be less decided than she? Her vista was one of earthly joy, tarnished with earthly sorrows, and ending with death; but that which is now offered to you is perfect, unending, unclouded joy, and glory with Jesus in heaven. God, in grace and mercy, proposes to lift you from your present state of degradation, in which your sins have placed you, and deliver you from the eternal future of misery which awaits every unsaved soul. He invites you to association in all the love and glory of heaven, as the Bride of the Lord of all.

This, then, is the call which now by the Gospel falls on every sinner's ear. That which fits the sinner for the presence of God is provided also through the finished work of Jesus, and doubtless typified by the "jewels of silver, jewels of gold, and raiment," which Eliezer gave Rebekah, and of which I shall treat, with the Lord's help, in future chapters.

### CHAPTER II.

## THE BRIDE'S "JEWELS OF SILVER."

"And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah."—Gen. xxiv. 53.

HE effect of the word of God, when it for the first time really reaches the soul of a sinner, is to raise the question of fitness for the presence of God. Am I fit to go to God? is the query which the awakened soul will put to itself, and answer in the negative when the Gospel call has aroused it to the invitation of God. Now the perfection of the Gospel of God is this—that not only does it call the sinner to God, but shows the soul the way to come, and the ground of access to Him. In other words, it provides that which fits the guilty sinner to stand in God's presence, cleansed, forgiven, and happy.

Further, before the soul is called on to decide for Christ, it has brought before it the tale of His work and its effects for all who believe God's message about His beloved Son. This truth is strikingly illustrated in the verse at the head of this chapter. Having found the one whom he wishes to gain as a Bride for Isaac, Eliezer brings out the things which were at once the pledges of the reality of his message, and the answer to any question of poverty or unfitness to respond to his call by reason of the lack of

these things. The jewels of silver, jewels of gold, and raiment, were suited to the glory of the sphere whence they came, and to which she was invited; and once accepted and worn by Rebekah, would make her personally suitable to the scene and home to which she was called. These gifts must have for ever silenced her fears (if she had them) that she did not possess the attire and the ornaments that the Bride of such "a mighty man of wealth" should possess. Nay, more: she receives and possesses them ere she has to decide whether or not she will accept the call to be the Bride of Isaac.

Let all this have its application to you, dear reader. God wants you for His Son, and the Holy Ghost tells you, in the Gospel, what Christ has done by His death to fit you for the presence of God.

But you may say, "God may be willing to receive me, but I am quite unfit to go to God. How can I, who am such a sinner, go to be with Jesus in glory?"

Let not the question of unfitness keep you back, for God does not invite you without putting before you the jewels and raiment that will fit you for His presence, and for the place He calls you to. It is He that fits you, bear that in mind; you cannot fit yourself. All your attempts to fit yourself will but end in your being clothed in filthy rags.

Rebekah has listened to the messenger, she has received the gifts; he has told-her about his master's son, of the wealth and honour of him who is sole heir of all his father's possessions; he tells her also that he has come to seek a Bride for him, and Rebekah at length discovers that she is the one whom he seeks. She is asked to be the Bride of Isaac. Does the thought cross her mind of her fitness? or is the question asked, "Does he wish me?" We are not told so; but, trembling, doubting one, the heavenly Bridegroom wants thee. Art thou willing to go? Wake up, O sinner, to see that it is thee he wants. Rebekah may think of the riches and honour that shall be hers as the Bride of Isaac; but great as they were, they pale before the glory that shall be yours when in association with Christ in heaven.

We read in verse 53, that "the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah," thus fitting her with the bridal raiment suited to the high station about to be hers. Reader, do you want that which will fit you to be the Bride of the Lamb? It is all ready for you, offered to you, as Rebekah's was to her. Will you accept, as she did, "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment"? How rich and how rare are these jewels! Let us look at them separately.

The jewel of silver is the first in order; and as we gaze on its beauty we see engraven upon it, in sparkling letters, Redemption. Gold is the symbol of Divine Righteousness, while Raiment tells of a suited covering. Thus you see the believer has three things: 1st, Redemption; 2nd, Righteousness; 3rd, Raiment; and they are all free gifts; you

have not to purchase them; you are not to work for them. Eliezer gave to Rebekah, and she received.

The meaning of the Jewels of Silver we learn in Exod. xxx. 12-16, where we read of silver in connection with making atonement, or giving a ransom for the soul, i.e., Redemption. "When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them. when thou numberest them. This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary [a shekel is twenty gerahs]: an half shekel shall be the offering of the Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the Lord. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls. And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord to make an atonement for your souls."

In Exodus we have the first mention of redemption, and in Revelation we have the last. It is found all through Scripture, till it culminates in that magnificent song of heaven: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open

the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. v. 9). The blood of Jesus is the believer's redemption money—that, dear reader, is the jewel of silver he offers thee. Wilt thou accept it? Thou must either be redeemed or be eternally lost; and as it was of old, so is it now: "The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less." The same for the rich, the same for the poor, every one must have the same Saviour, the same salvation through His sacrificial death, the same redemption price, and that is Christ. Christ from first to last, we owe all to Him. He alone is our Redeemer, our precious Jewel of Silver.

On turning to Exod. xxxviii. 25-27, we read: "And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation was an hundred talents. . . . And of the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the vail; an hundred sockets of the hundred talents, a talent for a socket." The boards of the tabernacle (type of the believer) rested on the sockets of silver, or, in other words, had a foundation on redemption, and figuratively teach us that everything rests on atonement. Precious indeed in the sight of God is this fair Jewel of Silver; and shall we fail to value the heavenly gift?

How often is redemption brought before us in Scripture! Let us look at a few passages in the New Testament: and first in that epistle which gives the foundations of man's relationship to God after he has sinned. I allude to Rom. iii. 23–25, where the Holy Ghost says, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." Man's sin is met by God's grace, which provides a Redeemer, and a redemption based on the shed blood of that Redeemer. The sinner has only to believe in Jesus in order to enjoy present and eternal redemption from the consequences of sin that God must judge.

After man's sin, and before God's judgment of him and it, at the great white throne, Christ steps in, bears sin, and is made sin on the cross; sustains God's judgment in respect thereof, fully satisfies all the claims of God's righteous throne, makes propitiation, or atonement, and effects redemption for every poor sin-stained soul that trusts in Him. Mark, redemption and purchase are not If I buy a slave, the slave is mine, and is still the same. If I redeem a slave I take him out of the condia slave. tion in which he was a slave, and the moment I redeem him, he is a slave no longer, but a free man through the redemption which I have effected—perhaps at a great cost to myself — but which he now rejoices in. Mere purchase would still leave his fetters on him, but redemption means their being for ever knocked off and the man set free.

Now this is exactly what the Gospel does: it delivers the sinner who believes from the righteous judgment of God

—Christ having borne it—and from the present power of Satan—Christ having overcome him. What a blessed Redeemer! and what a redemption! Who would not have Him and it when both are to be gotten by faith?

Again: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30). How plainly it is stated here that Christ is made our redemption; but do you believe it? Are you willing to be redeemed?

Again: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. iii. 13). What more could He do for us? He has redeemed us "once for all." Once is sufficient, for that once has satisfied the righteous claims of God.

We are redeemed by the blood of Christ, but, oh remember, Divine judgment will inevitably overtake you if you are not sheltered by that precious blood. To be without the blood will be as certain judgment to you as it was to the Egyptians on the night of the Passover in Egypt: but yours will be eternal judgment.

Have you ever thought of the extent of the meaning of Redemption, and how it affects you? What does it mean? It means that you may be set free from the judgment due to you on account of sins. "The wages of sin is death." Oh, sinner, will you not flee to the refuge from the wrath to come?

Then, in Eph. i. 7 we read, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Here we have not only the redemption in the Beloved, but we have the forgiveness of sins, and it is according to the riches of His grace.

Again, as it were, does the heavenly Bridegroom open the casket and anew offer to you this precious jewel of silver. Do not undervalue it, it may not again be offered; do not refuse it, lest to the pangs of hell be added the bitter remorse, that redemption from its flames and torment had once been offered you, but you refused to be redeemed.

Again, in Col. i. 14 we read, "In whom we have redemption through his blood;" and in Titus ii. 14, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." What did He give? He gave Himself; to redeem whom? All who will receive this silver jewel of redemption. Christ Himself is the half shekel of the sanctuary; yea, He is the sanctuary itself where all may find rest and salvation.

In Hebrews ix. 12, we have it spoken of as an eternal redemption. "But Christ being come . . . neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained ETERNAL REDEMPTION for us."

The Spirit of God also speaks of it as a present, known,

precious, and perfect redemption; Christ was perfect, therefore His work was perfect. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter i. 18). You see it is no mere hope of redemption that is offered to you, it is a blessed certainty, "Ye know." Mark it well, beloved fellow-believer: "Ye know" it, for the precious blood of the Son of God has been given to redeem you.

If you simply believe in Jesus, you are entitled to swell that song of heaven which rises to the ascended Lamb of God. "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood" (Rev. v. 9).

What a note! "Redeemed to God!" If you believe in Jesus you are not only redeemed from judgment and the lake of fire for ever, but "redeemed to God" now. I have not reached heaven yet, but I have reached God, every simple believer in Jesus can truly say. It was to effect this He died. "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter iii. 18).

Dear reader, do you believe these blessed truths of God? Let me urge you not to despise them. Your own eternal ruin—spirit, soul, and body, will be the sure result if you do. As the servant "gave" the "jewels of silver" to

Rebekah, so do I bring to you the tidings of God's gift to the world—His Son, a Redeemer, a Saviour. Oh, be entreated to accept this blessed Saviour now, and enjoy "redemption" as a present portion. The slave cannot redeem himself, nor can you. "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him" (Psa. xlix. 7). If you cannot do it for your brother, much less can you for yourself. You must let another do it for you. The only One who could do it is Jesus. work of redemption is finished. "He gave himself a ransom for all." See the cost of our redemption. Himself! Can you refuse any longer to trust Him? Nay; trust Him simply; receive Him as your Redeemer—as your redemption—and then go on your way, not ashamed to wear the priceless and sparkling "jewel of silver" sovereign Grace has given you, always singing—

"My Redeemer! Oh, what beauties
In that lovely name appear;
None but Jesus, in His glories,
Shall the honoured title wear.
My Redeemer,
Thou hast my salvation wrought."

### CHAPTER III.

## THE BRIDE'S "JEWELS OF GOLD."

"And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah."—Gen. xxiv. 53.

HEN the servant comes to call Rebekah, he brings out the things that fit her for the sphere to which she is called. We have seen the value of the "jewels of silver," viz., redemption; now let us look at the "jewels of gold."

Gold, in Scripture, is used as a symbol of *Divine right-cousness*. As such, it occurs in many of the types of the Old Testament, specially in the articles in the Tabernacle and Temple, which are symbolic of God's righteousness in government and judgment.

Take, for example, the Ark of the Covenant. "And they shall make an ark of shittim wood; two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold; within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make a crown of gold round about. . . . And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee" (Exod. xxv. 10, 11, 16).

Now the Ark of the Covenant was the throne where God manifested Himself in righteousness, if any could, in righteousness, draw near to Him. God, who was to be approached, is holy—infinitely so; and holiness is a nature which delights in purity and repels evil; hence He sits on a throne, which judges in righteousness and with authority the evil that holiness abhors. Further, the law—the testimony of what God required of man—was in the ark, but thank God it was covered by the mercy-seat. Another has well said, "Suppose an ark with no mercy-seat. The law would then be uncovered; there would be nothing to hush its thunderings, nothing to arrest the execution of its righteous sentence. Could a nation of transgressors stand before it? Could a holy and righteous God meet sinners there? Could mercy reign, or grace shine forth from such an ark? Impossible! An uncovered ark might furnish a throne of judgment, but not a seat of mercy."

But God knew this better than we, and hence we read: "And thou shalt make a mercy-seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy-seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end; even of the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof, and the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark, and in

the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee" (Exod. xxv. 17-22).

The mercy-seat thus formed the basis of the throne of God, as the cherubim (made of the same piece), which were its supporters, did its sides. Both were of gold—pure gold. Thus in the ark and its covering and supports we seem to have a marvellous connection of human and Divine right-eousness in the Lord Jesus. He was perfect in human obedience and love to His Father, and lived perfectly up to the responsibility of man according to God. But He also glorified God. All that God is was glorified by the Son of Man, and not only does the Son of Man go right-eously into the glory of God, but by His going to the Father righteousness is proved; and we can go where He is, in virtue of Him and His work for us.

The shittim wood and the tables of the law are in the ark, but all is clothed with the gold—God's own righteousness.

The cherubim, who always in Scripture are connected with the judicial power of God, or are the executors of the will of that power, are of gold also, and the direction of their faces is important. *Inwards* towards the mercy-seat. Why? Because they could thus see that which the moral nature of God demanded should be on the mercy-seat, if man, a sinner, is to draw near to a holy God who hates and must judge sin. But what do they see on the mercy-seat? *Blood*. Yes, blood must be put upon the mercy-seat,

as the witness of the work of atonement done for those who had failed in responsibility before God. The claims of His throne must and can only be met by blood—the sign of death having been undergone—and when the blood is sprinkled, the cherubim gaze upon it as expressive of the satisfaction of God in that which enables Him to permit the sinner to approach to Himself.

What a comfort to see thus that God's claims in righteousness are met by the blood of atonement, and we draw nigh to a mercy-seat sure of acceptance in righteousness!

We have the same truth taught by the use of gold in the New Testament. For example, turn to the book of judgment, which the Revelation most emphatically is. There the Apostle John says: "I saw . . . in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle." John had often seen Jesus, had often enjoyed sweet companionship with Him, had heard His life and peace-giving words, had lain his head on His loving bosom, knew Him well; but now when he sees Christ, he sees Him with a garment down to His feet, and he recognises Him not. The garment down to the feet shows priestly discriminating judgment, the golden girdle Divine righteousness as displayed in Christ where He now is.

He threatens with judgment those who have departed from Him. Priestly discrimination and judgment are here brought out. It is no longer grace meeting man's need, but judgment meeting him as he is.

That the "golden girdle" signifies Divine righteousness is clear from Isaiah xi. 5, where the Spirit of God, speaking of the judicial dealings of Christ in righteousness with the earth, which usher in the millennium, says, "And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins."

Again, the Lord says to the Church of Laodicea, "Because thou sayest, I am rich... and knowest not that thou art... poor... I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich" (Rev. iii. 17, 18). What a solemn call! And who is it to? To the professing Church, accounting itself rich without having Christ as the righteousness of the soul by faith.

Reader, are you a mere professor? or do you really possess Christ as your righteousness before God? If the former, you had better heed the call of Christ in glory to possess yourself of true and approved righteousness by buying it of Him. You must have to do with Him in order to get it.

Now in order to stand before God, man must have a righteousness suited to God. Do you think man has any righteousness? No; yet he must be righteous to stand before a righteous God. Man may say, "I will work it out, I will fit myself for the presence of God," but when he stands before God he finds he has no righteousness: "We

are all as an unclean thing, and all our rightcoursesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. lxiv. 6). Ah, why does man not take God's word for truth, and seeing that he can have no righteousness of his own, accept what God has provided and so freely gives?

"There is none righteous, no, not one," is written against man once, yea, thrice, by God (Psa. xiv.; Psa. liii.; Rom. iii.). Spite of this, many serious souls drop into the snare laid by Satan, and, "being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Rom. x. 3). Dear reader, are you one of this class? If so, may God use this paper to show you the utter folly of your course.

Now the essence of the Gospel is this,—that when man is utterly helpless and guilty, and can furnish no righteousness suited to God, so as to be able to stand before Him, then God comes out, and by the work of the Cross—the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus—confers on every one who believes in Jesus divine righteousness, which enables the soul to stand before God in unclouded peace. When man has no righteousness for God, then God has righteousness for man.

This is the burden of Romans iii., to which I would direct my reader. Should you think that in order to stand before God there must be works on your part, how does verse 20 dispel such an illusion: "Therefore by the deeds

of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin"—not the blotting of it out. The law can recognise, detect, and measure the sin, and then can only condemn the sinner; so that it is clear the law can afford no help, and confer no righteousness. Whence, then, is it found, if not in man's own efforts to keep the law? The answer is plain. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (verses 21, 23). All have sinned, and come short of yielding what was due to God, and then, all being manifestly without righteousness, God manifests His righteousness to all, and confers it upon all that believe (not who work).

The aspect of this manifested righteousness is unto all, i.e. it is universal; its application is to all that believe. Here is a limit: "All them that believe." But why this limitation? Because "righteousness" is not by "works" now, but by faith on our side, even as it is of grace on God's part, as it is written: "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (or mercy-seat) through faith in his blood, to declare . . . at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24–26). The righteousness of

God is declared to be this, that He is justin justifying the one who believes in Jesus. This is no new doctrine, for "Abraham believed God, and it (his faith) was counted to him for righteousness;" and at a later day, David also (Psa. xxxii.) "describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord w ll not impute sin" (Rom. iv. 3, 6, 7).

Now the point of all this is, that it is God's grace and not man's good behaviour which secures these blessings to the poor guilty one. Did you ever ponder these words of the Spirit of God, dear self-righteousness worker? "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 4, 5). If I work for you at £1 per week, it is only right and fair you should pay when the work is done; this is debt; but if, when the work I should have done I fail to do, and then you come and give me £5, that would be grace. Just so does God act. ourselves to do anything but sin, Christ has come in grace, and on the cross borne sins, and been made sin. The judgment due by God to sin has been sustained by Jesus, and He has glorified God about sin.

The proof of this is clear, for God "raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences,

and was raised again for our -justification" (Rom. iv. 24, 25). Then what now is this justifying righteousness of God? Simply, what is due to Christ. Our due, and the due of sin, Christ took and sustained on the cross. The judgment that was due to us fell on Him. The moment He bare "the sins of many" (Heb. ix. 28), God in righteousness forsook Him; hence His cry, "My God,-my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" What is the answer to this cry? God raises Him from the dead, and then in righteousness accepts and connects with Christ every one who has faith in Him.

To make it plain. Christ took my place in death and judgment on the cross, and now I get Christ's place before God, by faith in His blood. Is this right? Clearly so; it is due to Christ that if He took my portion to extricate me from it, I should share His portion, if, in grace, He be willing to share it with me. God, therefore, against whom I have sinned, is "just" in now justifying me, because Jesus has been delivered and condemned for my sin, and then raised by God in proof of His satisfaction and delight in Him and His work of redemption for me. I might go further, and say He would be unjust to Christ to condemn me for those very sins for which He condemned His Son. Nay, He is righteous, "faithful and just," as John puts it, and shows His righteousness by justifying every soul that clings in faith to His beloved Son. He judges sin, and justifies the sinner who believes in Jesus. Thus is God's righteousness declared.

How beautifully harmonious is every part of this wondrous way of possessing a righteousness suited to God, needed by man, provided by God, and possessed by the believer!

A threefold cord of righteousness now binds the believer to God, and the Scripture says, "A threefold cord is not quickly broken." The various strands of this golden cord of righteousness are: (1) Grace; (2) Blood; (3) Faith.

- 1. God's grace is the source of justification.
- "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24).
  - 2. Christ's blood is the means of justification.
- "Much more then, being now (not hoping to be by-and-by) justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. v. 9).
  - 3. The soul's faith is the principle of justification.
- "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1).

Now if these be the true sayings of God, where have you room for "works"? Nowhere, at least in Romans. Some one will say, What about James? Does he not say, "Ye see then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only"? Yes, he says this, and it is most needed. But do not for a moment think that Paul and James clash. The truth is this. In Romans you are justified before God by faith, and that only; in James you are justified before men by works. God can see faith, men cannot, but they

can see works. God must see both, and surely will see works when faith exists.

But there is more than this. Not only is the believer justified from all offences by faith in the Lord Jesus, but "they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Rom. The "gift of righteousness" is to be "received," ¬v. 17). you notice — not earned, as many suppose. When received by faith, the possessor is assured he shall "reign in life." This sweetly accords with the expression, "justification of life," which flings a flood of light upon the present standing of the believer. "So then as it was by one offence toward all men to condemnation, so by one righteousness toward all men for justification of life. For as indeed by the disobedience of the one man the many have been constituted sinners; so also by the obedience of the one many will be constituted righteous" (Rom. v. 18, 19, New Trans.). In verse 18 we have the aspect of Adam's path and Christ's, given us in contrast. Adam's involves "condemnation," Christ's "justification of life." In verse 19 you have the effects. Adam's disobedience constituted all his family "sinners." Christ's obedience constitutes all who are His (and we are His by faith in His blood) "righteous."

Then the moment I am linked with Christ by faith I see (1) that I am through His work justified from all the offences and sins of my old life as a child of Adam, and

(2) that I am the possessor of a new life, called in Romans vi. 28, "eternal life," and that I have "justification of life," and hence shall "reign in life," being constituted "righteous" by God Himself, in virtue of my association with Him who died and rose again, and is now at God's right hand in glory.

Christ is my subsisting righteousness before God, as says the Spirit in 1 Cor. i. 30, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is *made* unto us wisdom, and *righteousness*, and sanctification, and redemption."

We also read in 2 Cor. v., "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

The truth therefore is, that Christ is the believer's righteousness before God: and the believer is also made the witness as well as the subject of God's righteousness, in a smuch as he is brought into the same place of nearness to God, in life and glory, as Christ Himself (viewed of course as the Man who died and rose again). The believer and Christ are viewed as one, and as Christ is the righteous One, all His are viewed as possessors of a righteousness in Him, which is suited to the glory of God where Christ now is. On the cross Christ identified Himself with us in our sin, shame, guilt, and death. By His atoning death all we had done and been was for ever swept away from before God. Rising from the dead, the head of a new family, He associates with Himself in life, standing, and place before God

in glory, all who trust Him, and whom therefore He calls His "brethren."

In conclusion, I would only now ask you, beloved reader, have you yet accepted the "jewels of gold" the Gospel messenger brings to you? Have you yet received the "gift of righteousness"? If not, I would urge you to delay taking so important a gift no longer. Come to Jesus as you are. Receive Him, and in receiving Him you will receive all and far more than I have written of, for all that God can give you in blessing is wrapped up in the person of Christ, and once you receive Him you receive all. May you be able to see what another saw and wrote, viz.:

"The risen Christ had ended
Righteousness of law:
God's righteousness was something
Quite distinct, I saw.
That Man above—whose dying
Closed the things of old—
Was Head of God's creation,
Channel of the gold.

"That Man was in the glory,
I in Him up there;
Before His God and Father,
I was thus brought near.
The Place I found was opened,
Where was wealth untold—
The Man beginning all things,
In Himself the gold.

"I once was lost, a sinner
Under Satan sold,
And now I'm lost in glory,
In the source of gold.
'Tis when God's Christ in glory
We at last behold,
We learn, as with Rebekah,
HE begins with GOLD."

### CHAPTER IV.

## THE BRIDE'S "RAIMENT."

"And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah."—Gen. xxiv. 53.

E have looked at the "jewels of silver" and "jewels of gold;" now, I would desire to direct your attention to the "raiment." But let me first say it is of no use hearing the Gospel unless it produces an effect upon you, unless it shows you what you are, and what God is, and what He has done for you. Unless it turns you to the Lord for salvation, the effect of your hearing the Gospel is but to add the weight of heavy responsibility to your already sin-burdened soul.

God is calling you in this hour of His grace to association with Christ in glory; He is offering you a place with

Christ. Christ could not have a place down here because of the sin and wickedness of man, so God gives us a place with Christ in glory. He offers you a part or portion with Christ. Eliezer travelled from Canaan to Padan-Aram for a bride for Isaac; Christ is in glory, and the Holy Ghost came down from heaven at Pentecost, and from that time till now His constant effort has been, and is, to lead souls to yield themselves to Christ. There ever have been, and will be, hindrances and difficulties in the way; for Satan is ever busy in trying to keep you out of the blessings God has for you—the great blessing of being "one with Christ." But what breaks down all opposition of Satan and the human heart is that God wants to bless you. Do you believe that God really wants, and is waiting to bless you?

Reader, do you possess that which fits you and gives you a true title to be in the presence of God? Have you the bright hope before you of this glory with Christ? Before you can stand in His presence you must have on suited raiment; the courtly Robe of Heaven must be yours—and that is Christ. God has provided it for you, and I, as the ambassador of God, now offer you in His Name Christ, the Raiment.

Oh, sinners, and all ye workers for salvation, better far barter your own self-made clothing, which is useless before God, and accept what He in His grace and mercy has provided for you; provided for you without money and without price. Your own raiment—in the way, I mean, of good works, almsgiving, or morality—may do well enough to clothe you in the sight of your fellow-sinners; but they are no covering in the sight of a God who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; and, sinner, you must be clad suitably for God or be eternally lost.

There is a great difference between working for salvation and working from salvation; the first is your own futile attempts to clothe yourself; the latter is working because God has already clothed you and made you fit for His service.

The first covering or raiment we read of in Scripture is the fig-leaf "aprons" of Adam and Eve; and what avail were they when the guilty ones heard the voice of God, saying, "Where art thou?" They knew they were naked, and they tried to hide themselves from God. The miserable knowledge obtained by their sin had but taught them they were now unfit for the presence of God. You, whose life has been one long pathway of sin—sins of so deep a dye that you blush at their remembrance—mark, it was one sin only that made Adam unfit to stand before God. One sin drove the guilty ones from the Garden of Eden; one sin brought death into the world: what then about your numberless sins?

Can you brave the presence of a sin-hating God in nothing but your nakedness and burden of guilt? Adam and Eve hid themselves, for they could not stand in His presence in their nakedness. But oh, the love of Goà's heart! No sooner was clothing needed than He in mercy and love provided it. "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Gen. iii. 21). How different is their clothing now! Instead of an "apron" in which God has not put one stitch—the whole thing being paltry human effort—each is arrayed in a "coat" in which man has not put one stitch, for the Lord God made and conferred the suited garment. What grace! and what a lesson to workers for salvation now! And, sinner, Adam's need was not greater then, than yours is at this present moment; and God is as willing now to clothe you as He was to clothe Adam and Eve.

But do you know your need? Oh, what can cover the nakedness of your guilty sin-stained soul? I do not address you as a poor sinner, but as a guilty sinner in need of clothing in order to fit you to stand before a sinhating God. Doing your best will not do: it but discloses the sense of your guilt and need by arraying yourself in what you think will suit God; but it will not do. Your own clothing is filthy rags in the sight of God: you are but trying to hide behind your works, as Adam tried to hide himself from God behind the trees of the garden. But you, like he, shall be drawn from your hiding-place and obliged to own yourself to be naked and undone before God; obliged to own your own clothing to be valueless.

The Apostle Paul's wonderful comment on this is found in 2 Cor. v. 1-3: "For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven (if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked)."

This last clause is very solemn. The Apostle had fears that some in Corinth might be found like Adam naked—when they were clothed, i.whe., en in resurrection. Though resurrection should bring soul and body together again, so that he called the person clothed, nevertheless he fears they may be found naked—in other words, Christless—not having that covering for the whole man which fits it for the presence of God. How awful to be a mere professor of Christ here—to have on a lovely garb of morality, so-called good works, and religiousness, so as to pass current as one of Christ's people; to die, that is to be unclothed; to rise again, alas, not in the first but the second resurrection, that is, to be clothed, and then find yourself in the holy blaze of the great white throne a naked sinner, never having been washed from your sins in the blood of Christ, nor had Him as your clothing before God!

Reader, are you clothed? have you Christ as your raiment? or do you think you will be accepted as you are? Look at Matt. xxii. 11: "And when the king came in

to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a

wedding garment. And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to his servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." We have here a warning, as well as the truth of the end of this dispensation, for it is the guests here, not the bride; but the warning is for all who have not on raiment. "How camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?" The King gave him an opportunity of telling the reason why he had no wedding garment on; but what is the result? what the consequence of this meeting between the King and his guest? The man was speechless. How camest thou in thus? Was there no provision made for the guests? Was there no raiment for thee? Yes, there was the robing-chamber, and there were garments provided, as is the custom in the East, but the man neglected the provision made, and the result was the command, "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness." Oh, soul, will you be warned ere it be too late? God would fit you for His presence; Christ is the garment, the royal raiment He has provided for you; therefore, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."

The man here described did not want a robe; he may have been one of the "good" mentioned in verse 10; his life may have been a blameless one; he may have been a

dutiful son, or a kind husband and father, a useful member of society, one of whom his country was proud; then what need had he of a robe? The King would surely acknowledge him as he was; his deeds were sufficient to recommend him to his Sovereign, and so he passes in; but what is it to find? Ah, what indeed? His unworthiness; and that there is nothing left to be done but to bind him and cast him forth.

Professor of Christianity, have you been converted? Have you on the garment that fits you to stand before If you were to die this night, would you be naked in the presence of God? I beseech you to ask yourself the solemn question, and to rest not till you have truthfully answered it: Have I been born again? have I fled to Jesus? have I found Him? have I Him as my covering, my raiment? Can you say, Yes? If not, oh, precious soul, beware; be warned: thou hast detailed before thee in these verses an event in thine own history, the moment when before God thou must stand, and find the clothing of morality to be of no avail. You find you are not in Christ, therefore you are still in your sins; you hear the question asked you, "Friend, how camest thou in hither?" and thou, thou shalt be speechless. Oh, what a moment when thou discoverest the true state of thy precious but eternally lost soul. No excuse hast thou to offer; thou shalt be speechless. No extenuation can be offered by thee. It is too late; thou standest before the King, then

forced to be a Judge, and the awful since is broken by the command, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Oh, be warned! What is God's command now? It is "Clothe him;" clothe him with the raiment I have provided for his need; but if you reject His provision, then it will be "Bind him." What a contrast! Clothe him with Christ, put upon him the "best robe;" and "Bind him" with the cords of his sin, and "cast him into outer darkness."

Oh, ye unsaved souls, wake up to the reality of your perilous position! Why does the Spirit so often warn you? Why does He so often bring your own case, as it were, before you? Why? why? Is it not because God always warns before He judges? Is it not that He gives the unsaved soul often the opportunity of escape, though, alas, he heeds it not? Yes, He is a God of mercy now, though one day He will be a God of judgment to those who scorn and reject His proffered mercy. God warns, but man goes on, and on, and heeds it not. We have but to look around us in order to see the truth of this.

What are those agonised accents from yonder bed of death? It is an unsaved soul finding out with his latest breath that he has scorned the offer of salvation, that he has left unheeded all the warnings of a gracious God, till it is too late!

Oh, what must it be to be swept into eternity without one ray of hope! Care ye to die thus?

Come to Jesus. "Come, for all things are now ready." The silver is for thee, the gold for thee, the raiment for thee. "Put ye on Christ." Eliezer brought raiment to Rebekah and she received the gift—I bring you Christ, will you receive Him?

In Luke xv. we again find mention of raiment: "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him." Had it been left to man to choose the raiment, he might have been content to robe himself with the garments that holy angels wear; but God gives more befitting raiment to the Bride of the spotless Lamb of God. She shall be arrayed in the best—the glorious robe of the "King of kings."

You know the beautiful story of the prodigal son here given; but have you observed, it was not till "he began to be in want," that he thought of his father's home, and the joy and abundance there. Want is the discovery the soul makes when in the far country, away from the Father's house. But the last thing man does is to turn to God for help; he will try all other expedients first, ere he goes to the only Source of help and succour.

The prodigal, like too many in the present day, goes and joins himself to a citizen of that country. And who is that citizen? Satan! And oh how successful he is in providing for the wants, the lusts, of sinners! He does his utmost to keep you away from the Father's house of plenty; and

how often he is successful, too! He gilds over the husks to make them fair to the eye; but when the sinner eats of them he finds out they are bitter to the taste, they are unsatisfying, they are but husks; and yet such is the morbidness of his appetite, he fain would fill his belly with them.

The prodigal is brought to a sense of his need before he says, "I will arise and go to my father." Ah, he has found out that he is helpless and in need of food and raiment, and he comes just as he is; in his rags and poverty he comes, and is he refused? No! He is first welcomed, and then clad.

Many try to clothe themselves before they go to God; they have found out their need of God, but they think that before going to Him they must better themselves; but man must come just as he is, and be beholden to God for all. Come as you are; it is thus God delights to receive you.

"I have sinned," said the prodigal. Have you known the moment when you found that you have sinned, found that you were undone, and lost, and naked; when you have gone down before God with the words, "Father, I have sinned"? I call this the grandest moment of a sinner's experience on earth, when he gets before God, and finds out—what? That the One whom he has offended and sinned against, and whom he thought was against him, is for him, is waiting in grace to receive him, is on his side

- "I have sinned." It must be individual confession; it will not do to rest satisfied with, "We have sinned." No; you must get alone with God, and forgetting all else in the deep penitence of your soul, own to Him, "I have sinned." Sooner or later the awakened soul passes through this searching conscience-work, this conviction of sin, ere it is clothed and is at peace. This precedes the clothing in the case of the prodigal before us.
- "I have sinned, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." Ah, this is the man God clothes. I urge you to consider your own individual case; it is of paramount importance, this humbling yourself before God. The ploughshare of conviction must go deep down in the soil—the deeper the furrow the surer is the seed to be safe, and the brighter the prospect of a harvest of golden grain. What is the result of the prodigal's confession? It is the command to "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him." Oh, what love! "Bring forth the best robe." Prodigal, will you have Christ? He is the Best Robe. "Put it on him." He was not even asked to put it on himself, it was put on him; all was done for him, he did nothing but receive his father's gift of love. And your case is the same: God has done all; He provides the raiment, and, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." The first Adam, who was unfit for the presence of God, has ended his history in the death of Christ, and in the second Adam the believer is gloriously complete.

The claims of God have all been met, and after the darkness of Calvary, the bright rainbow of God's acceptance shines forth to man; the Corn of Wheat fell into the ground so that in resurrection He might be enabled to say, "I go to my Father, and to your Father." What blessedness it is to be "found in Christ!" "accepted in the Beloved!" Again, I say unto you, "Put ye on Christ;" stand in that which God gives you, and have peace; throw away the fig-leaves, and God will clothe you with Christ. Precious raiment! Sinner, come to God as thou art, and hear Him say to thee, "Take away the filthy garments from him . . . Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment" (Zech. iii. 4).

It has been said there are two steps to be taken, "Out of self into Christ, and out of Christ into glory;" but it seems to me there is but one step needed. Will you take it? It is, "Out of self into Christ," to abide there for ever in all the fulness of His perfection.

What a place! To stand before God "accepted in the Beloved," the One who is the joy of God's heart! What have you done to merit this? Nothing; but Christ has done all. "That ye have put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts... and that ye have put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. iv. 22-24), is the truth of the new position

in Christ. "Put off" and "Put on." It is the blessed substitution of Christ for self, the result of that work when "He who knew no sin was made sin for us."

If you are wise you will not slight, but gladly receive, the instruction of the Lord Jesus, who says, "I counsel thee to buy of me... white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear" (Rev. iii. 18).

See how He wants to clothe you with that which alone can make you suitable to God. "White raiment!" How different from the repulsive "filthy rags" of "our right-eousnesses." You would not admit one clothed in "filthy rags" to your house and table, and will God? No. Then away with all that springs from or savours of self, and array yourself in all the perfection of Christ, and His work for sinners.

The Raiment, then, that is offered to you, is Christ, and having Him you have redemption, and righteousness, and peace. Christ is all, and I have that which fits me to be His Bride when I possess the jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and the raiment. It is Christ, Christ, Christ—all Christ; Christ from first to last, Christ for time, and Christ for eternity; "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

Once again I ask, "Wilt thou go?"—go across the desert to Him? Oh, the joy of knowing that God has forgotten my sins, and given me liberty to forget myself,

and let my thoughts be all given to my glorious Bridegroom! "Wilt thou go?" Would that I could hear your say, "I will go." God can hear you say it wherever you are. Oh give Him the joy of listening to thy whispered "I will go."

Decide for Christ; you have heard all about Him who is the silver, and the gold, and the raiment. He has been offered to you freely, and shown to be the only way you can be acceptable to God, and fitted to be the Bride of Jesus. Will you accept the gifts? Will you have Christ?

"Wilt thou go?" is God's challenge to your heart. Can you refuse? Will you not come to Jesus?

God presents Christ to you now as an object of faith. Rebekah. did not see Isaac until the journey across the desert was accomplished, but he came to meet her when the desert sand was left behind; he came to meet her when she had reached the green fields of Canaan.

"I shall see Him in His beauty,
He Himself His Bride will meet;
I shall be with Him for ever,
In companionship complete."

Oh, Christless soul, can you risk spending a joyless, hopeless, loveless eternity, without Jesus? I charge you by the joys of heaven, to which God invites you, and by the horrors of hell, of which He warns you, "Be ye reconciled to God"—"Put on Christ."

You have but to decide, and honestly say from your heart, "I will go," and He will receive you and welcome

you and fill your heart with joy and love. Oh, come to Jesus! Accept the gifts offered to you in God's well-beloved Son; accept the silver, the gold, and the raiment, and know that thou art fit to be the Bride of that Son, "to whom the Father hath given all things." Let yours be the joyful words: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels" (Isa. lxi. 10).

## CHAPTER V.

#### THE BRIDE'S DECISION.

"And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things. And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master. And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go. And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master. And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go. And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and

Abraham's servant, and his men. And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them. And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way. And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi; for he dwelt in the south country. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all things that he had And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."—Gen. xxiv. 53-67.

E have, in previous pages, been looking at this chapter, and seeing how simply and sweetly the Gospel is therein foreshadowed and illustrated; and now, in referring to it once more, I avow, most distinctly, my object is not to unfold the Gospel in its doctrinal view, but to get your soul, my reader, if possible, brought to a distinct point before Christ.

The Lord help me to pen, and you to peruse, this paper as if indeed it were the last occasion on which I could appeal to you, or you have the opportunity of receiving Christ.

I find, then, here one question: the person most interested gets one simple question put to her, to which she

must make, on her own responsibility, one answer—Yes or No.

The narrative is very simple, the type equally beautiful, the application heart-winning. The Father of the Lord Jesus Christ offers to give you eternal glory in association with His Son. Consequent upon the death, resurrection, and ascension of His Son-which are the proofs of God's love on the one hand, in giving that Son to die, and His righteousness on the other, in raising and glorifying Him, as man, in token of His delight and satisfaction in the work He has accomplished for sinners—there has come from heaven a divine messenger, the herald of a divine message, and it falls now on your ear. It is this: God wants to have you for His Son, He does not come and press upon you that you want His Son; that possibly may not be the case consciously, for many do not care to have Christ, as they are not aware of their lost and needy condition as sinners. When people really want anything they cast about till they get it, but if they are indifferent they are passive.

It is perfectly true you want a Saviour; but salvation is not the thought there. God here proposes to you to share the glories of His beloved Son. Do you not see to what glories and dignities you are invited? Instead of being left to die in your sins, and then pass unpardoned and unblessed into outer darkness, to be the miserable companion of the devil and his angels (Matt. xxv. 41), God

wants you to enter into relationship with Christ now, by faith in His name, and then be the sharer of His joys through the endless cycles of eternity's blissful day.

This is the message Eliezer brings. He comes from Canaan, where Isaac abides. The father sends his servant to the far off land to get one, if he could, to cross the desert to be the Bride of the unseen and unknown Bridegroom. Three things are necessary if you are going to be a sharer of the glory of Christ—redemption, righteousness, and raiment; but "jewels of silver," "jewels of gold," and "raiment," the very articles which typify these three things, the servant brings out and offers to Rebekah. Silver is the type of redemption: the only way the soul can draw near to God is on the ground of redemption. I need righteousness, and gold is the symbol of Divine righteousness. "Raiment" speaks for itself, and these three things I must have.

Christ is your raiment, if you will have Him as such, and all else.

I address you as a messenger from God. "Bold ground," you say. Yes, but no more bold than blessed. In the name of my Master I come, and want to win you for Christ. I want to win you for Christ as you read this paper. O unsaved man, unsaved woman! my message is this—I want you for Christ. God wants you for Christ.

"Oh, but I am such a sinner!" True, that is quite true. "I cannot, as I am, draw near to God." False. The

veil is rent, the blood is shed and sprinkled before God, the new and living way exists, and you are bidden to come to God just as you are.

Nevertheless, mark, Eliezer does not say "Wilt thou go?" before he gives Rebekah the jewels and the raiment. If it be the question of what will fit me for the Father's house, could anything be better than what He sends? The Gospel tells you that Christ came into the world, and it tells you, too, what He has done. The law tells me what I ought to do, and smites me because I have not done it. Law tells me of myself; the Gospel tells me what Christ is, and what He has done.

Are you going to have Christ? You have often heard about Jesus, but are you on your way to Him? I want this to be the moment of your betrothal.

What I want now is decision. Redemption is accomplished, the blood has been shed, and the claims of God have all been met by the cross. That which the sinner needs has been wrought out for him by Jesus; and now it is for you to accept the Gospel message, for you in the truthful integrity of your soul to say, "Come what may I am going to be Christ's." You may have some time to wait ere you see the Lord Jesus face to face; the desert may be long in crossing, but one sight of Him will more than make up for all the toil or trouble of the way.

Rebekah hears the message one day and starts the next.

Many have put off coming to Christ for ten days and have spent them in hell. I beseech you to come now to Jesus.

Notice here how that arch-enemy of present blessing—procrastination—appears.

The servant "rose" and said, "Send me away unto my master." Her relations reply, "Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go." They want the moment of decision deferred, and you want that too, don't you? "Some day," you say, "but not just now." You want to defer it. This is the plausible voice of the devil. If you are not turned to the Lord, your back is towards Him; you are still in your sins, and they will bring you to judgment. Ten days are most insidious. Felix was a man of ten days. "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." Ah, poor Felix, when will his convenient season come? He never had a more convenient season. Oh, turn now to Jesus! Oh, ye halters, who are not yet decided for Christ, take Felix as a warning!

Perhaps you think you will turn to the Lord when you reach your deathbed. Delusive hope, for you may never have one. I heard lately of a procrastinator whose constant reply to earnest Christian friends, when they spoke to him of his soul's salvation, and urged him to come to Christ, was, "I am sure that God is so merciful, that if I turn to Him, even on a deathbed, He will hear my prayer

and save me, so I shall wait till then." Though repeatedly warned, this was his refuge, and so on he went, till he came, not to his deathbed, but, as was his wont, into the hunting-field. While the hounds were in full cry after the quarry, his horse leaped a hedge, on the further side of which were lying some sheep. Disturbed and frightened by the sudden apparition of the horse, the timid creatures fled in all directions. Their scampering off alarmed the usually sure footed steed, who fell, flinging his rider. Three words burst from the lips of the falling man—not "God have mercy!" but, addressing the sheep, "Devil take ye!" They were his last words, for he broke his neck and died on the spot. Reader, be sure of it, procrastination is the thief of souls, as well as of time, and I quite agree with Rowland Hill, who termed it "The recruiting-officer of hell."

God may never give you the opportunity of repentance on a deathbed. Now is the only time you can be sure of finding Christ.

Sinner, I warn you these are facts, stern facts, "But what do you want me to do?" you may reply. I want you to yield yourself to Christ just now. I want you to make sure of eternity, and not put off, even until tomorrow (which never comes), the momentous matter of getting really hold of the salvation of God.

Ye young ones, I appeal to you. It is vain to say "Let me die the death of the righteous." If you are

going to die the death of the righteous you must live the life of the righteous. It is vain to suppose you can get Christ when you like: you must get Him when you may, and that is just now.

"And her mother and her brother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go" (ver. 55). Such was the procrastinating speech of that day, and how solemnly is it echoed by many a soul nowadays. Do you say, "I will decide for Christ in a few days at the least: at most, ten? Ten days hence! Oh, no! It must be now if you want to be with Christ in glory; if you want to be with that rapturous throng around the Saviour; if you want to join the chorus, "Worthy is the Lamb."

What does God say? Now. Jesus will have you now. I earnestly implore you not to delay. I lay no claim to being a prophet when I say you may never have another Gospel message and another day of grace in which to be saved. Really, my dear reader, you can have no idea of the joy of being Christ's, or you would not delay a single hour in turning to Him, receiving the pardon of your sins, the salvation of your soul, and the sweet heart-thrilling assurance that He is yours and you are His. Do you know that Jesus loves you and wants you, wants to claim you as His? "Jesus . . . having loved his own which were in the world, loved them unto the end." Oh, to be His own loved one—His very own! Nothing changes that

love of His. Jesus wants to have you numbered among His own, His very own.

Will you yield? Let not Satan deceive you with a few days hence, ten days. Now is the time.

Well, what is the servant's answer to be—"Send me away, for I have failed?" Oh, say, must I go and tell my Lord I have failed—failed to win your heart for Him? Shall it be so? Oh no, no; give me the joy of saying to my Lord, "This heart is Thine."

What was Rebekah's answer when her relations said to her, "Wilt thou go with this man?" She said, "I will go." No one else can decide for you. You have a soul, its eternal welfare depends on your answer. You have a soul to be saved or lost. Oh, will you let any one, anything, come in between the Lord and your soul? Decide, decide now.

Jesus wants you, Jesus is waiting for you. Oh, let nothing hinder you from coming to Him. "We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth," was the word then; it is you that are concerned now. Wilt thou go? dear soul, wilt thou go? Oh, say, "I will go!" Yes, have Christ, be Christ's! Shall He be thine? What say you? "Wilt thou go?" The Holy Ghost puts the question to you, it is not my question. God's question is, "Wilt thou go?" Wilt thou go to meet Christ and be His? Give me thine answer; oh, let there be no more delays. How can you tell you will have time to decide to-

morrow? To-morrow is God's, not yours. "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Let there be no more procrastination. God lingers over you; again and again He lets you hear these words, "Wilt thou go?" "Wilt thou go?" "I will go," says faith, "I will go," says the decided heart, "I will go," says the earnest one.

"I will go;" this is the calm, quiet resolution of the soul that wakes up to see the glory that is offered, and the grace that offers it.

What is the absolute alternative if Christ is not received? The dreary darkness of an eternal night, in which the only light is that shed by the lurid flame that is never quenched, the only companions sinners and devils as wretched as yourself, and the only occupation vain regrets over the folly and unbelief that have landed you in a spot beyond the reach of the hand of God Himself.

All depends on yielding yourself, or not, to Jesus. If the language of your soul is "I will go," you will thank God to all eternity.

Would you like all to be saved but yourself? Would you like all to be included and you excluded from that blessed number who surround the Lord Jesus in unfading glory? Surely not. Then halt no longer, but give a decided answer to the query which again I put—nay, which God in His sovereign grace once more puts to thee.

Soul, "wilt thou go?" Thou canst hardly say no, when

to remain is to be eternally lost. What is thine answer? "Ten days hence." Beware, the clemency of God will not last for ever. Ten days hence and the door of heaven may be closed for ever against thee, and in vain shall thy piteous cry be, "Open unto me." But, thank God, there is yet another answer thou canst give, "I will go." Let it be thine.

Rebekah had never seen Isaac when she decided to go to him, but she believed the report that Eliezer gave. think you not that as they journeyed across the desert many a question was asked concerning the one to whom she was going? And would not her heart grow warmer and warmer towards him as she heard his praise? And shall it not be so with you? The Holy Ghost, we are told, "Will take of the things of Christ and reveal them unto you." Oh, listen to Him, let no trumpet-sound of earth deaden His voice. He would tell you of God's well-beloved Son. Oh, learn of Him of all His gentleness, love, and grace, and of His glory, too; and as each beauty bursts upon your admiring gaze, know that He may be thine, and if thine, then shall the jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and the raiment become more precious to thee because they are His gifts.

Did Rebekah stop the camels to pick up the agates of the desert? I trow not; and wilt thou linger by the way to gather the withering pleasures of a death-doomed world?

Oh, no! Haste thee on to the joy, the satisfying and endless joy that is to be possessed only at thine Isaac's side. Be unfettered, be but a sojourner and pilgrim here; heaven is thy home, speed thee on to it. And what shall the meeting be when thou shalt see Him face to face? Wonderful as was the story ye listed to by the way, yet your astonished soul in wonder shall exclaim, "The half had not been told."

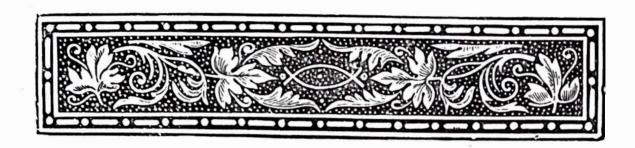
There are three things the Lord has done for us. He loved us, He gave Himself for us, and He has washed us from our sins. Why has He done these? "That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blame." What a glorious Bride shall the Church be in that day when "the marriage of the Lamb has come!"

Rebekah goes, she commits herself to the guardianship of Eliezer, and at eventide she sees Isaac coming; and what is that but a simple type of the meeting with our Lord? Isaac was comforted when he received his Bride; and have we not read of Jesus, "Who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame"? His joy will be full when He has His Bride in glory with Him. And is that blessed hour near? The last step of the journey may be indeed most near; this night it may be that "He that shall come will come." He is coming. Three times

in Rev. xxii. He says, "I come quickly." Are you ready? "Wilt thou go?" "I will go," is the only answer suited to such a call of grace. And now, in conclusion, I would say, Let all know you are Christ's. Confess Christ. Own Him.

"The Father, from eternity,
Chose us, O Jesus Christ, in Thee,
In thee, His well-beloved;
And we, as given to Thee—Thy Bride—
In Thee, Lord Jesus, do confide:
Thy love remains unmoved.
From Thee daily
Strength receiving—to Thee cleaving,
Blessed Jesus!
May we all show forth Thy praises.

"Before the world we'd make our boast,
That Thou, in whom is all our trust,
Art Lord of life and glory:
And soon Thou'lt bring us to that place
Where we shall see Thee face to face,
And, glorified, adore Thee.
Amen!—Be then
Praise and blessing, never ceasing,
To Thee given,
Here; and when we come to heaven.



# RESTING IN JESUS.

T is man's need that brings him to God, and Jesus is One given of God on purpose to meet the case of each needy heart; on purpose to meet your case, if you are in need.

God wants the needy heart just to turn to Him, and get its need met; and not only does it get its need met, but the moment when the heart meets Jesus is the moment fraught with deepest, richest blessing to that heart for time and for eternity.

It is a real thing to meet Christ, to know Christ. Have you met Him, dear reader? Do you know Him? Can you say, "Oh, yes, I have met Him; and there is no one I know, no one I trust, like Him, no one I am on such intimate terms with as Jesus?" Each heart that knows Him would say that. The heart that has not met Jesus

has no rest. No doubt you have tried to find rest—tried to find it in works, in pleasure, in many things. But it is all of no use; there is no rest for the human heart till it gets to Jesus, and His rest is perfect, and lasts for ever. When He takes up your case it is an entire cure. If He has picked me up and saved me, it is for time and for eternity. If He has pardoned me (and He has), it is once and for ever. His pardon can never be cancelled: "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

If the blood of Christ is on you, it will never be rolled off from you again. It remains the irrevocable pledge of God's faithfulness (to Christ), and of your eternal security. That blood speaks to the eye, the heart, of God; it even affects the memory of God, for because of it He can say, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

Does that blood rest on you? Have you trusted Jesus? If not, trust Him now, touch Him by faith now. He will not shake you off. He will know your touch, if it be ever so feeble. He reads the heart, He recognises the least touch of faith, and wherever there is faith there is forgiveness. The two things go together, and there is more still—there is eternal life imparted. The touch of faith links me with Jesus, and in Him there is everything that God can give. There is everything precious in Jesus, and the heart that knows Him has an unfailing source of joy and peace. It goes on enjoying more and more what He is, and

what He has done, and His are joys that never fade away, and never pall upon the taste.

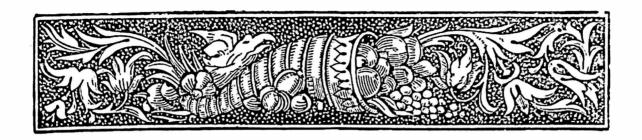
"The draught that lulls our thirsting, But wakes our thirst anew."

The Lord give you to know the sweetness of resting in Jesus!

"Jesus! I rest in Thee,
In Thee myself I hide;
Laden with guilt and misery,
Where can I rest beside?
'Tis in Thy meek and lowly breast
My weary soul alone can rest.

"Thou Holy One of God!
The Father rests on Thee,
And in the savour of that blood
Which speaks to Him for me;
The curse is gone—thro' Thee I'm blest;
God rests in Thee—in Thee I rest.

"Soon the bright glorious day,
The rest of God, shall come!
Sorrow and sin shall pass away,
And I shall reach my home.
Then, of the promised land possessed,
My soul shall know eternal rest."



## THE SAVIOUR AND THE SHEPHERDS.

Read Luke ii. 1-22; Matt. xxvii. 45-66; xxviii. 1-10.

HESE three Scriptures, taken together, give us the birth, the death, and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Three wondrous facts for any sinner to think of. Ponder it one moment—the birth of the Son of God, the death of the Son of God, the resurrection of the Son of God.

Why this birth, this death, this resurrection? Because nothing could save you or me but this. Nothing! There was no possibility of man being redeemed, and brought to God—saved, and delivered from eternal judgment—but by the wondrous means which these Scriptures unfold.

I do not wonder that heaven goes into a perfect ecstasy the moment it is promulgated that man can be saved. And how can he be saved? Only by the coming down of the Saviour! And surely, dear reader, if God has been loving enough to provide a Saviour, what does He expect from the sinner? That the sinner shall have wisdom enough to avail himself of the Saviour God has provided.

Have you availed yourself of the Saviour, and the present salvation God presents to you in the gospel of His Son? It is the grandest news that ever fell on mortal ears—a Saviour for ruined sinners!

Let the Shepherds of Bethlehem show you the way to the Saviour. I want you to be like these Shepherds; they are the best illustration of good gospel listeners that I know. They are men who hear the gospel, receive it, embrace it, enjoy it, act upon it, tell their neighbours all about it, and then go home with hearts brimming over with praise and worship to God because of it!

Luke ii. opens with the birth of the Saviour.

Did you ever notice that God only tells the story of creation once, and in few words, but twice He tells, with every particular, the wondrous tale of the birth of His Son, and four times over the Holy Ghost records the death of the Saviour, and His resurrection.

Why is this so? Because it is of very little matter if you know about creation or not; but it is of great matter if you know about Him who is the *Creator*.

Four times over the Holy Ghost tells the story of the death and resurrection of the Son of God, because that death is what alone avails to bring the sinner to God.

On the actual knowledge of Him who was born, and Him who died, hangs the eternal salvation of your precious soul and mine.

It is important to see what comes out in the commencement of the chapter, for we live in infidel times.

Has it ever struck you, then, how careful God is to have the birth of His Son recorded?

The Roman Emperor, in his pride and folly, wants to know how many subjects he reigns over, and not only so, but their nationality, and also their city; and so Joseph and his espoused wife Mary go up to Bethlehem, their native city, to be enrolled, and I should not wonder if that register of the birth of the Son of God exists still.

The pride of the Roman Emperor was the means God used for the fulfilment of the Scripture, that the King of Israel, God's Messiah, should be born in Bethlehem. See the manner of His birth: Joseph and Mary come up, and there is no room for them in the inn. "Oh," you say, "that was a coincidence." Ah, do you think so? Supposing Joseph had been a great man, with a large cavalcade, and he had sent ahead to order apartments, do you think there would have been room for him? I think so! But the world never did like the poor, and the Lord loved them intensely.

They generally make room for the rich in the inns, though the poor are put out. The Lord comes as the poor man, though He comes into the world His own

hands had made, content to be reputed the son of a carpenter.

He comes in this lowly way; shall I tell you why? Because, then, there never could be a poor person who could say, "I could not go to Him, for He could not understand my case."

He took His place down here at the outset as a poor man; God came into the world in this gracious way to win man's heart. In grace He came, content to be cradled in one man's manger, and buried in another man's tomb.

Do you still say it was a coincidence that there was no room in the inn? Then I ask you—Is it a coincidence that there is no room in your heart for Christ? There has been room for your friends; room for folly, for vanity; room for pleasure, but no room for Him!

Is that true of you? Well, let me tell you this: though there has been no room for *Him* in *your* heart, there is room for *you* in *His* heart.

Though there was no room for *Christ* in *man's* world, He sends out the message that there is room for *man* in *His* world, *i.e.* heaven! "Yet there is room" (Luke xiv. 22).

The sinner's heart is like the iceberg often; but beneath the rays of the sun, the very iceberg melts, and beneath the beams of Jesus' love the very hardest heart must melt too. Let Him make room for Himself in your heart, and let Him get a whole heart, too; for I believe, if He does not get the first place, and the chief place, He gets a very little place.

If God tells you of His dear Son, do not you refuse Him. Look at these Shepherds, they are at their business, and the Lord sends an angel to preach the gospel to them. Here is a message from heaven for sinners on earth; God visits them with a message for eternity, and what do you think is the effect? They are sore afraid. The first effect of the gospel is to make people sorrowful—it makes them glad afterwards. There are two lovely points in the way the message comes; not only it comes right down to the men where they were, God, as it were, interrupting them in their business to show them there is something better than their business, even the salvation of their souls, but there is more than this: they are sensible of the presence of God with the message—"the glory of the Lord shone round about them." I covet that! The holy, solemn, searching sense of the presence of God Himself with the gospel message. God is there, God is dealing with those Shepherds, and they are sore afraid, and rightly so; they are properly solemnised before God, and I maintain this is the first effect of the gospel, the sinner begins to feel he is in the presence of God, and that he is unfit for that presence.

But you will find, the moment the right kind of fear is produced in the soul, God comes in to remove the fear. "Oh," you say, "I have never feared." Then, my friend,

I am sorry for you, for the days of your fear are coming the days of your terrible dismay are coming, in which no voice will bid you "Fear not." The mark of the unregenerate man is this, "no fear of God before his eyes." He sports with God's grace, risking Histerrible judgment. O man, O woman, wake up! The day of your terror is coming. The first thing a soul knows when God is dealing with him is fear and trembling. A man sees the glory of God, and his own unfitness for it. Rom. iii. gives us the unconverted man unfit for the glory of God. Rom. v. gives us the believer rejoicing in view of that glory, because he knows he is fit for it. The jailor of Philippi wakes up when the glory of the Lord comes in, and he cries out, "What must I do to be saved?"—he sees his own unfitness for that glory.

When the glory comes in on the prophet's soul, in Isaiah vi., what does he say? The seraphim cry "Holy," but he cries "Unclean, unclean, woe is me!" Oh, have you ever learned that you are undone, unclean? "I am a man of unclean lips," the prophet says. Why unclean lips? Because, deeper still, deeper than the lips, there is an unclean heart, which produces unclean lips. Then the right fear being produced in the prophet's soul, the seraphim flies with a live coal from off the altar. God loves to dispel the fear which He Himself has produced.

Have you ever felt this fear? I am very much afraid of you if you have not! Have you seen yourself in the

presence of God? Have you felt what a sinner you are, owned what a sinner you are before God, convicted by God's presence?

What is conscience? It is the eye of God on the soul, the knowledge of good and evil in God's presence; knowing I am full of evil, and there is no good in me.

Repentance is the soul judging itself before God—owning it is, what God says it is, a totally lost sinner. If you are not a lost sinner, I have no gospel for you, for it was to save the lost Jesus came. When once I discover I am lost, I am glad to look outside myself for a deliverer, a saviour. It is a beautiful thing to see a soul going down, and owning itself lost, and really anxious. Are you anxious, my friend? If so, I have two distinct words from the Lord for you, "Fear not." Are you troubled and cast down? "Fear not" is God's assuring word to you. Do you feel the weight of sin? Then you are the very one Jesus came for. He came to save sinners, to seek the lost.

"Fear not," says the angel, "I have for you to-night the very news you need. I bring you to-night tidings which will produce great joy." The first effect is fear in the presence of God, and then, when the tidings God has to tell fall on the heart, what comes next? Great joy; and now, if you are anxious—if you are burdened by the weight of sin—I stand, an ambassador to you from the courts of glory, with this Divine message, "Fear not."

And oh, I have better tidings for you than the angel had for the Shepherds. He could tell of a Saviour born; I can tell you of the death and resurrection of that Saviour, of the work that has been done whereby the sinner's redemption is completed, Satan's power destroyed, death and hell vanquished, and lost man saved!

"To you is born a Saviour." Now, a Saviour is for the lost! not those who are going to be lost, but who are lost already. God never would have sent a Saviour if man had not been lost, for He is not a helper, but a Saviour. There is one thing Christ absolutely refuses to do—to help a sinner; His saints he helps. The Lord will save a sinner, He will not help him. Help is for a man who can do something. Christ comes down to the sinner when he is dead in his sins, utterly helpless, dies Himself for the sinner's sins, and saves him. Are you saved or lost, I ask you, my friend? "I am not lost," you reply. Are you saved, then? "No." Then you must be lost. you say, "I do not think that." Well, then, would you like to die just now where you are? If you did die this moment, would you be saved or lost? If I should be lost if I died this moment, I stand in the position of a lost man But the Lord comes to seek and save the lost. There is a lovely alternative and a dread alternative. What is the lovely alternative? I am saved the moment I come to Christ. What is the dread alternative? am not now in Christ, I am now lost.

You are either Christ's, saved, and on your road to glory; or you are lost, and on your road to hell.

This company of Shepherds hear the joyful news that for lost man there is a Saviour; and as they hear it, the hosts of heaven seem to come trooping together to hear the joyful news too, that there is a Saviour for man. Heaven seems to go into an ecstasy over the very thought of a sinner being saved, and the heavenly hosts come down to give praise for it. It is like the picture in Luke xv. where we hear of "joy in heaven."

A Saviour for man—and how does He save? By Himself undergoing the judgment due to man's sin. He saves by bearing the punishment instead of me, by dying in my place. In bitter derision they cry, as He hangs upon that cross, "Himself He cannot save." Is it "cannot?" No! no! no! Himself He will not save, that He may save you and me; because if he save Himself, He cannot save man, and He chooses to save man.

On the cross He takes on Himself the judgment due from God to wicked man: He takes the wages of sin, He meets the claims of God, He does that which can eternally redeem you, and then He expires. He dies as no other man ever died. Not in weakness, but in *strength*; He cries with a *loud* voice, and gives up His spirit to God. And then the grave receives Him, but does it hold Him? No, it cannot; He comes forth again Conqueror over it,

risen from the dead, and by His resurrection proving that the sinner's Substitute is free.

An angel comes down again at His resurrection, as at His birth. He rolls away the stone. To let Jesus out? Far be the thought! It is to let us look in and see an empty tomb—to see that He who died is dead no longer, that He is risen.

Why is it there is such profound silence here? Angels praise at His birth, but at His resurrection there is no song. The angels seem to stand back now and say, "It is for you to sing; He did not die for us, He died for you."

He died, He rose, and now He is on the throne of God. What are you going to do, now you have heard of Him? Mark what the Shepherds did, "And it came to pass as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us." The moment they heard the tidings they said, "Let us go and see!" What will you do?

Where can you see the Saviour now? In Bethlehem? No! Upon the cross? No! In the grave? No! In Galilee? No! Where, then? Up in the glory at the right hand of God.

"And they came with haste." They lose no time; they are not even exhorted to come: they are so earnest to

come, they need no exhortation. They are splendid gospel listeners. They came and found. It is what always happens. They who seek find! Oh, cannot you picture that scene! Bowed down before Jesus, the babe in the manger!

They have heard, believed, sought, found, accepted, praised, and worshipped God, and now they make known abroad the good news, We have sought and found the Saviour, a babe in Bethlehem, but our Saviour!

"And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them."

They were anxious sinners; are calmed by the words "Fear not;" they hear about the Saviour, they seek Him, they find Him, they worship Him, and they return, praising God for all they have heard and seen.

The Holy Ghost makes Christ so real and precious to the soul that believes Him, that He is seen and known better than the nearest friend.

The tale has come out that God has sent the Saviour, and what have you to do? Accept Him simply; you cannot buy salvation, it must be God's gift to you. The sinner comes to God oftentimes for salvation and brings something. "No!" says God, "I cannot sell it, I will give it to you."

May the Lord print upon your heart the blessed news that He has sent you a Saviour; and if He has sent you a Saviour, will you not accept Him—and more, confess Him? These Shepherds make known abroad the Saviour they have found; and let me tell you there is nothing that so impresses another as to be able to say, I know Him myself—this is the One I have found—He has saved me. May this be your language henceforth, for His name's sake!

"Oh! Jesus is my Saviour,
 'The Mighty God,' His name!
To seek and save the lost and vile,
 As Son of man He came.
In all His great atoning work,
 The will of God is done;
And God delights, in righteousness,
 To bless me by His Son.

Alive for evermore;
He loves to ease the burdened heart
Of each whose sins He bore.
Believe—and God's salvation sure
Is free to every one;
In manifested righteousness,
He honours thus His Son,"



## A RENT VEIL, A RISEN SAVIOUR. A REDEEMED SINNER.

MATT. xxvii. 35-55; xxviii. 1-11.

HAT the gospel does for a soul that receives it, is to bring it to God, not merely to bring a man to heaven when he dies, but to bring him to God now, to enjoy God now, before he gets to heaven. "Christ suffered for sins once, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Now that is the very last place where you who are unconverted would like to be brought. You do not want to be brought to God, and I will tell you why; because you are afraid of God. The unconverted man is always afraid of God; he does not want to get into His presence; and why? Because he knows very well that there are some questions God will raise with

him, and he is not prepared to answer them. God must raise the question of sin with every soul. It is a question that has to be answered between every soul and God, and the man that does not know Christ cannot happily answer it in God's presence.

Now, there are three things that mark Christianity—a rent veil, a risen Saviour, and a redeemed sinner. In Hebrews x. 19, 20, we read: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." Here the Spirit of God gives us what the veil was a type of. If we turn to the Old Testament we shall get what this veil was, and what it was used for. It had a twofold use, it shut man out, and it shut God in—man could not go in to God, and God could not come out to man.

If we look at the description of the tabernacle, we shall see it was an oblong tent divided into two parts, the holy place, and the most holy. The whole mass of the people might come no farther than the brazen altar in the court of the tabernacle, on which the sacrifices were offered—type of the death of Christ in atonement for sin. Beyond this the people dared not go. The priests, the sons of Aaron, might go farther, having first washed at the laver which stood betwixt the altar and the door of the tent. They went inside the first covering into the holy place, to perform the service of the tabernacle, but the veil shut

them out from the most holy place. Within that veil they might never go; what was there, their eyes might never look upon.

Inside that veil was the ark of the covenant, containing the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant, and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat; each cherubim looking towards the mercy-seat. But besides this, what else was there? The presence of God! God dwelt there between the cherubims, and into that presence they could not go, and if He came out, it could only be in judgment. Oh, the solitariness of those long years wherein God dwelt alone! One only day, once in a year, might man approach God. Once in the year the high priest might go inside that veil, shrouded by the incense, and with the blood of atonement in his hand, and every other man was shut out.

"But," you urge, "I thought you said the veil was the type of Christ." So it is! And what shuts man out from God most entirely? Christ does! A living Christ; Christ in life bars the way between man and God, for He was what no other man ever has been, or ever could be—holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, and therefore now God has made Him higher than the heavens.

He, as man, walked this wilderness path without sin, and that is what no other man ever did. In life, then, the life

of Christ, there is no approach for a sinner to God. By His death only can you approach God.

Let us look for a moment at what that wondrous veil was made of. If you turn to Exodus xxvi. 31, you have it: "And thou shalt make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work; with cherubims shall it be made."

Now what is the blue? The blue is the well-known symbol of what is heavenly. And was not Christ heavenly? Where did He come from? From heaven! He could say while walking this earth, "The Son of man which is in heaven." He is "the second man, the Lord from heaven." He came from heaven, down to this earth, and everything about Him was heavenly. There you get the blue, the heavenly character of Christ, as the God-man, God manifest in the flesh.

What is the purple, then? Well, purple is the *imperial* colour, and what is He? King of kings, and Lord of lords. He whose right it is to reign shall yet be displayed in this character to the whole universe of God. In bitter mockery they clothed Him in purple in the day of His shame and agony, but He is King of kings and Lord of lords, and the wide universe of God will yet own His sway. There never has been an earthly king or potentate whose kingdom has not been taken away from him; death has come in and robbed him of all his glory, but this King, after a long and glorious reign over the wide

earth during a thousand years, at the end of that thousand years gives up His kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all. Death comes and takes it from every other. This One goes through death first—wears no crown in life down here, but the crown of thorns they gave Him in cruel mockery—rises up out of earth, and thereby acquires the right to be set as Son of man, God's King, over all creation.

Then there comes the scarlet. "Oh," you say, "scarlet means suffering." Not always. Scarlet is the Jewish royal colour, for not only is He to be king over the whole earth, but in a very special manner He is "king of the Jews," and as purple was Gentile colour, so scarlet was the Jewish emblem of royalty. They put over His cross, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews," and they wrote it in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin, that all peoples and tongues might read the inscription. It really did describe who He was, and what their guilt was, for He was king of the Jews, and they had crucified, in scorn and hatred and unbelief, their king.

Next, you have the fine twined linen of cunning work, figurative, I believe, of His holy nature as man; that which all could see and recognise, and underneath the veiled Godhead. Perfectly righteous, perfectly holy, perfectly pure, as man, and with all the glory of the Godhead shining through. The cunning work is emblematic of the way God devised by which He was legally Joseph's son.

and thus heir to the throne—the Jewish law esteeming Mary as Joseph's wife after espousal—really the son of Mary, as it is written, "a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son," while actually as to His nature the Son of God,—yea God Himself become a man. Amazing mystery of Divine wisdom and love!

"With cherubims shall it be made.' Cherubims symbolise the governmental dealings of God; and is not "the government upon His shoulder?" Has not God committed all judgment to Him?

We first read of the cherubims in Gen. iii. 24: "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Here, as the executive of God in judgment, they appear looking outward toward man in his sin. Secondly, in Exodus xxv. 18-20, we get: "And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy-seat... of the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof... and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubims be."

Here, in type, they gaze *inward* on to the blood-stained mercy-seat, which we knew from Rom. iii. 25 means Christ—having finished a work which enables God right-eously to save guilty man. Thirdly, we have seen them *in* the veil, *i.e.* connected with Christ personally. What

does John v. 22 mean? "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Again (v. 27), "and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." And again, God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts xvii. 31). And, "who shall judge the quick (or living) and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom," but our Lord Jesus Christ? (2 Tim. iv. 1).

It is, then, clear that Christ both judges and executes judgment on the ungodly. How then, sinner, can you escape it? The rent veil is the silent, the eloquent answer. He who is the Judge, after your sin, but before the day of His judgment thereof, steps in and Himself sustains the judgment, that He may deliver you from it. What amazing love!

The veil was to be hung upon four pillars of shittim wood. "What is the shittim wood?" you say. Well, I believe the shittim wood speaks of His humanity. He took a human form that He might be able to die. But the shittim wood was overlaid with gold. Gold, in Scripture, represents Divine righteousness. The hooks, likewise, were of gold, and the sockets were of silver. Now silver is typical of redemption. You will notice the sockets of the tabernacle were made of the half shekels of silver that

were paid by the people as redemption money—"every man a ransom for his soul" (See Exod. xxx. 12; xxxviii. 25-28). Everything is based on redemption.

Since the fall, man cannot meet God save on the ground of redemption. But how is this redemption accomplished? Jesus dies, and by His death opens the way of life for you, Read carefully the tale the 27th of Matthew re-Look at it; look at the scorn, the enmity, the cords. mockery, the hatred He passed through. "Oh," you say, "but did not God comfort Him in that terrible hour, did not God sustain His soul?" I believe from the third hour to the sixth hour, that is from nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified Him, until twelve o'clock, that God did stand by Him, did sustain His soul, did manifest to Him His perfect, infinite delight in Him. I believe that never was He so the delight of the Father's heart as in that hour, when, scorned by the world, and forsaken by His own, He hung there between heaven and earth.

But see what happens! At the sixth hour—that is, twelve o'clock, noon—darkness, like a pall, falls over the whole land. What is it? What is this strange eclipse at noonday? Is it God in judgment coming forth to execute vengeance on men—on sinners for their treatment of this Holy One, His beloved Son? Is God about to pour forth His judgment on their guilty heads? Well might they think so. No doubt they did. Well might they believe it was swift and just retribution coming for their murder of

Him, of whom even the thief dying by His side could say, "This man hath done nothing amiss;" whom Pilate declared to be a "just person," in whom he could find no fault; who even their own guilty hearts and consciences must have known was unworthy thus to die.

But was it God's judgment on a guilty world? was something greater far, deeper far. It was not God dealing with sinful man, but God dealing with His own Son; God dealing with Christ, because of man's sin, that He had taken upon Him. In that terrible hour, when darkness veiled the land, there was another far greater eclipse, a perfect eclipse between God and that One who hung there, even His own beloved Son, bearing sin. God hid His face from Him then. When all had forsaken Him, as He says, "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me," then, at that very time, God forsook Him too!

And those three hours of darkness, those three hours of total eclipse between God and the Son of His love, rolled on, and then at the ninth hour, three o'clock in the afternoon, comes that great, that terrible cry from Him, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Ah, He forsook Jesus in that hour, that He might never forsake you There was darkness for Him that there might be and me. only light for us. He bore the judgment that we might go free.

Once more, He cries with a loud voice, "It is finished," and gives up His spirit. "No man taketh it from me, I lay it down of myself."

And at that same moment God rends the veil, cherubims and all. He who should execute judgment on man, has in grace sustained and borne it for man; the price has been paid, redemption has been accomplished, and God is able now to come out in grace to man, in spite of his guilt, because of what Christ has done, and man may go in to God through a "new and living way." Beautiful word, a living way. I like that word! How a living way? Because it is not a dead Saviour that I am presenting to you now, but a risen and a living Saviour. He "ever liveth to make intercession for us." He has gone into the grave and come up out of it, having abolished death, and destroyed him who had the power thereof. The third day the tomb was empty, the Saviour had risen. That open grave, that risen Saviour, are the proof that the sins for which He suffered are for ever gone.

And what about the redeemed sinner? Well, I need not say much about him—Christ has everything to do with his redemption, He has brought him to God, as I said at the beginning, and the sinner, or rather he is the believer now, thus brought to God, has nothing to do but to "joy in God," and to wait quietly for the return of the Lord to take him to be with Himself, delighting in the meantime in every little bit of sweet service he can render Him while he stays here.

As a redeemed sinner I have nothing to do but to rejoice in the One who has redeemed me. "But what about your sins?" you ask. Well, I will tell you: God has talked to Christ about my sins, that He might talk to me about Christ.

During those three hours of darkness God dealt with the Lord Jesus about my sins, that He might be able to speak to me only of Jesus.

"But what about the judgment-seat: are you not afraid of that?" No. If I were to stand there and hear every one of my sins brought up, I should only say, "Lord, remember—Lord, remember." Remember what? "Not me, but Christ. Remember He died for me. I am unworthy, but He died for me. His blood was shed for me."

Have you ever noticed one thing lacking in the vessels of the tabernacle? There is no seat there found. And why, think you? I will tell you. Because the priest's work was never done. "Offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins, but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." There is no repetition of His offering, there can Whatever your sins are, His offering, once be none. offered, is a full discharge for all. "Offered one sacrifice for sins." For whose sins? For sins. But for whose? For sins. It does not say for whose, nor for how many, and if I had the whole sins of a nation on my shoulders this moment I should not care, with my eye on this word of the living God, for the next moment I might know that I am without a single one, free to go in boldly into God's presence because He died for sins, and therefore He died for my sins. That veil was rent: rent, too, from the top to the bottom. Why from the top to the bottom? Because man had no hand in it. If man had rent that veil, it would only have been to bring out swift destruction on himself. God Himself opened the way of access thus for the very vilest sinner into the holiest of all.

God will never enter into judgment with one who simply trusts in Christ. Those who believe on Him will be with Him, and like Him, before that judgment-seat is set. John v. 28 says, "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."

"And does not that all take place at once?" No; more than a thousand years roll between the first part of that verse and the second. The Lord takes two days to empty the graves and to raise the dead. Could He not do it all at once? No; impossible! He comes first to fetch His own. He Himself descends into the air, and there is the sound of the trumpet and the voice of words, His own voice, and part of the graves are emptied, the tombs are opened, and their occupants come forth. Where do they go? They go up with their Lord, to be for ever in His own bright presence. "They that have done good unto the resurrection of life," that is, of that eternal life which

they possessed, because He gave it to them when they were still down here. That light that He lit in their hearts never went out, that life He gave never was extinguished, for there is a second thing that was not among the vessels of the sanctuary, there was no extinguisher: snuffers there were, to keep the light bright, but no extinguisher, because once lighted, God never intended that that light should go out. "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

"They that have done good," then, i.e. all who have Christ, go up to be with Him, and the rest of the dead remain in their graves, and more than a thousand years roll by, and then there comes another opening of the graves, another resurrection of the dead, and they stand, smal and great, before the great white throne; to be judged out of those things written in the books, according to their "They that have done evil unto the resurrection works. of judgment." They stand there clothed in their sins, to be judged. Which of these two resurrections are you, my friend, going to have part in? Are you going to stand before Him in your sins then, or do you know what it is now to have boldness to enter into the holiest, through that new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh?

Do you know what it is to "draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith?" And let me tell you "full

assurance of faith" does not mean a very great amount of faith, but that which simply clings to Christ, and trusts in His atoning blood as its only ground of access there to worship within the veil.

"Where do you worship?" one asked me, some weeks "Oh," I answered, "I am very High Church; I since. worship inside the veil, in the holiest, and that is in heaven itself. I know of nowhere else where I can worship. I worship the Lord Jesus, I must worship Him where He If you look on to Heb. xiii. you will find something else combined with being "inside the veil," and that is, "outside the camp." Now, people oftentimes do not like this, they do not like the reproach outside the camp; but depend upon it, the two go very much together, and if I am not prepared for the reproach of being outside the camp with a rejected Christ, I shall not know much of the joy of being inside the veil. These two truths are like the two blades of a pair of scissors—one is very little use without the other—to have one blade alone is no good at all, but when you have both joined together, how good and how useful. There is nothing so cutting as these two blades together-"inside the veil" and "outside the camp." People like to get inside the veil, but depend upon it they do not remain there long unless they know something of what it is to be outside the camp too. That is why one hears so often of loss of joy: loss of peace, too, oftentimes. People want to mix up being inside the veil with

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God and being in the world too, and they cannot; they want one blade of the scissors without the other.

The Lord give us to hold fast the profession of our hope without wavering, provoking unto love and good works, that is, being so true to the Lord ourselves, that we may be helpers of each other till the day of His coming again!

"In the grave they could not find Him,

He had told them so before:

Justice could no longer bind Him,

Mourner, let your fears be o'er;

'He is risen!'

Jesus lives for evermore.

'Peace unto you!' this His greeting,
Word of Him that cannot lie,
From the heart that bore our judgment,
Heart of love that cannot die.
'Peace unto you!'
Still He speaketh from on high.

'It is finished!' 'He is risen.'
Ye who these blest words receive,
Peace in Him is now your portion,
Peace eternal He will give,
'Peace unto you!'
All who on His name believe."



## THE NECESSITY OF LOVE.

"And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."—Luke xxiv. 44-51.

"And while they looked steadfastly towards heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel: which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."—Acts i. 10, 11.

OST people, no doubt, are aware that the Acts of the Apostles comes from the same pen as the Gospel of Luke. Acts is an appendix to the narrative of the Lord's history on earth. In Luke you get Him going up to heaven; in Acts you get the further truth, that He who has gone up will so come in like manner as He went up. He went up in the clouds; He will return again in the clouds. From earth He was seen to go up; to earth He will be seen to come again. not speaking now of the intermediate blessed fact that He is coming into the air for His people, before He is seen from the earth at all, because now I am addressing those who are not His people—those who have not received into their hearts this Saviour, the blessed Jesus. On such I want to press this passage in Luke xxiv. "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer." Here is the Lord just before He goes off the earth, leaving this company, who had known and loved Him, to be His witnesses and to tell this tale, that thus it behoved Him to suffer. And oh, if it behoved Him thus to suffer, is there not something that behoves you, my reader?

Does it not behove you to repent and believe, in order to the remission of your sins? If there is an absolute necessity that He should suffer and die, is there no necessity laid on you? What was Christ's necessity? Why did it behove Him to suffer? On the one hand, because of the glory of God; on the other hand, because of His deep

love to you and me. Was He under sentence of death? Did He need to suffer because of that? Far be the thought. There was no necessity beyond the necessity that love knows, and the necessity of love is, that it can give itself no rest till it has its object in the place love would have it in.

It was love brought Christ down, love made Him suffer, love made Him die: it was love, and love alone, infinite love to you and to me. He loves, too, to put on your heart and on mine the weight of His love; and knowing that nothing but suffering could meet our case, He comes down willing to suffer, prepared to suffer. Why? Because you could not be saved if He did not; because I could not be saved if He did not; because if you suffer for your own sins, you must suffer for all eternity: for what mere mortal could exhaust the judgment of God in respect of sin? None! None but an infinite Being could do so, and Jesus was that.

None but God could know what sin really is, and what the judgment due to it is; and Jesus is God, and He, as God, knowing what God's thought was — what the judgment was, came down and bore the judgment Himself. There was the necessity of love, He says, that I should suffer, for they never could be saved if I did not. And when He has borne sins, drained the cup of wrath to the very dregs, and risen up out of all the suffering, He says, Go and tell every one that it behoved Me to suffer,

that forgiveness might be preached to the whole world. And where does this forgiveness commence? At the guiltiest spot in the whole world—i.e. pardon begins at the very spot where they killed Him. Now let me ask you, Are you forgiven yet? Forgiveness and life eternal are the fruits of the Saviour's blood, and who may have them? All who believe.

Oh, careless man, careless, worldly woman, you who have only lived for pleasure, you who have thought of nothing but pleasure here, have you ever thought of the sufferings of the Saviour? Have you ever thought that He took that fearful woe that you and I might have weal for eternity, that he took sorrow that you and I might have joy for eternity? Have you ever thought of Him, of Jesus? Has it ever bowed your heart to think of what it cost Him to rescue such as you and me?

Pause and think one moment now. Cast a backward look at His wondrous history, with its close of agony and shame. Oh, is it nothing to you that for such as you and me, He, the Lord of glory, gives Himself up to be sold for the price of the meanest slave—that He is willing to pass through anything if only He may carry out the deep purpose of His heart, meet the claims of God, burst the grave, annul death, break the devil's power, and save you? Yes, save you; that was the deep purpose of His heart. Have you ever thought of it?

Behold Him in the garden! With torches and weapons

His enemies draw near to take Him. How easily might He have escaped; for when He asked the question, "Whom seek ye?" and followed it with "I am he," they go backward, and fall to the ground. He might have escaped, but what of His people? Listen again. "If ye seek me, let these go their way"—that is, He says, "You may have Me, but you must not have Mine." Ah, Jesus will give up anything and everything, give up Himself, if He may only save you. And this is my Jesus, mine own Saviour, my Lord, my blessed Jesus—mine. Oh, would you not like to be able to say of Him too, "Mine, my Jesus"?

What won my heart was this, "He gave His back to the smiters." He suffered everything, left alone in His grief, for He says He looked for comforters and found none. And at that moment—when every one else had forsaken Him, and He turned to God—at that moment, when comfort from God would have been the most grateful to His heart, broken by reproaches, that is the very moment that God takes to show His hatred of sin, to turn away even from Him when it was laid upon Him, so that He cried in His depth of unfathomable agony, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

There the magnificent depths of His affection came out, for He was willing, I may say, willing even for God to forsake Him, that He might vindicate God's honour, and save you and me. Heaven, and earth, and hell witnessed

a stupendous struggle that day—a struggle between life and death, between love and hatred; but love is more than conqueror, and Jesus, dying, leaves this precious legacy to every poor sinner, "It is finished!" The work is finished that sets the poor sinner free. Heaven rejoiced with loud hosannas, and hell, I believe, trembled and was dismayed. And what shall earth do? What shall you and I do? Take those words and believe them, and rejoice in them, too, shall we not? Have sympathy with heaven's joy, shall we not? I will, at any rate, and I counsel you to do the same.

But there is more. He who died has risen again. Angels came down, and rolled away the stone from that tomb where they had laid Jesus. Why did they roll it away, think you? Was it for Him to rise? Far be the thought! No, no! They rolled away the stone that you and I might look in and see that He has risen, see that He is free. Who is free? The sinner's Substitute; your Substitute, if you will take Him as such—the One who, I can say, bore my sins. Can you say that too? He bore my sins, but now He is free, and so am I.

My sin brought in death, but Christ's death put away my sin; and now the resurrection of Christ is the evidence from God of the value of the work which Christ has accomplished, and which God has accepted, and by virtue of which the sinner is accepted too.

No arch can rest save on two pillars; and what stu-

pendous pillars we have for the arch of faith to rest upon —Christ's death and Christ's resurrection! And what about your feelings, do you ask me? I will tell you. My feeling is one of absolute security, resting on such mighty pillars.

But "repentance" as well as "remission of sins" was to be preached.

What is repentance?

It is a man judging himself before God. It is not like so many steps you have to climb up in order to be saved; but if you have given heed to God's testimony, listened to His Word, and you have been living in pleasure and sin all your days, you will find that you cannot but repent. The prodigal son, when he turned round and thought of his father, found that he had misspent his life; and, whoever you are, I challenge you, Have you not misspent your life? Oh, answer this question now between your heart and God; or at the great white throne you will have to answer it, yea, have there to own—I misspent my life, my life was one great mistake. My heart was not God's, my life was spent in distance from God. I knew not God's Son: He had no place in my affections or my thoughts.

Is this true of you, dear friend? Oh, how you need forgiveness! for you have lived in a so-called Christian land, possibly have professed to be a Christian too, and have been a hypocrite as well as a sinner, for you have been professing to have what you have not got. To find

out." I am not worthy," that is repentance. The moment I wake up to find what my life has been, I cannot help judging it; that is repentance.

Look at the thief on the cross. Too bad for earth, on the road to hell, he spends his last hours in abusing Christ! Look at it! Hear him abusing Christ. But listen! Jesus is heard to speak. Hearken to what He says: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." "Why I have been taunting Him, and He is praying for me; what a wretch I am!" says the thief. And then his neighbour, the other thief, speaks again, and says, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us," and this one says, "Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation, and we indeed justly?" He learns his own case in the presence of Christ, and judges himself, and then he turns to Jesus, with, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." And Jesus says, "To-day shalt be with me in Paradise."

A few more hours roll away, and this same man, who has taunted and reviled Christ, enters heaven—enters that scene of glory in company with Christ! Too bad for earth, he is just the one for a Saviour to pick up and save. You will find when a man really sees his sin and guilt, that you have no need to preach repentance to him, for he judges, he condemns himself.

And what is the effect of repentance? It is this: If in repentance I condemn myself, I take that work out of

God's hand. Why will a man be condemned by-and-by? Because of his sin. Why will a believer never be condemned? Because he has condemned himself already, taken, as it were, the work out of God's hands. You must repent, or be judged by God; and if judged by God, damned. He who says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;" says also, "He that believeth not, shall be damned."

- "Oh," you say, "but I do not believe in being damned." But Jesus did, and suffered to save us from it.
- "But I do not believe in everlasting punishment." But Jesus did, and underwent the wrath of God that we might never undergo it.

There is repentance on the one hand, and remission of sins on the other. And oh, my friend, will not you take the pardon, the forgiveness He proclaims, take the life eternal He will give? Decide for God and His Christ; repent, turn round to Jesus! You may not have another day in which to decide this eternally important matter. Yet another hour, another moment, and He may have come back in the cloud for His people. Jesus had taken His own out as far as to Bethany, and lifting up His hands, He blessed them; and while He blessed them He was parted from them, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. He was taken up; and they, with their eyes still fixed, are told, "This same Jesus shall so come in like manner."

And what is the next thing in the world's history? The Jesus they have despised and slain, the Jesus they have cast out of this world, shall come back to it, and every eye shall see Him. Would you like Him to come now? "No," says the unconverted man. Why not? Because you are unprepared, unready, unwashed, unforgiven. My friend, you had better make haste. God says, "Now is the accepted time;" and you had better not put off any longer the grave matter, the eternally important matter, of your soul's salvation. Oh, trust Jesus with it now, and know the sweetness of His pardoning grace! Oh, gaze on Him, and know that sweet, sweet sense of the remission of sins! For, if you trust Jesus, I can tell you this, God delights to honour those who trust Jesus. How sweet to stand between His first coming and His second! His first coming has made us meet to be where He is; His second coming will place us where He is. His first coming took my sins away: His second coming will take me away. The Christian stands between His first coming and His second. What a thing it is to be a Christian! Who would not belong to Christ? Oh, my friend, will you not decide for Him just now, and take the eternal life He offers?



# DO YOU HOPE, OR KNOW, THAT YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE?

portance, and your answer will evidence either that you are, if hoping, still in uncertainty as to the salvation of your precious soul, and consequently without peace with God; or, if knowing, in the conscious enjoyment of God's grace toward you through the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom you believe.

Most of those to whom I put my query decidedly answer "I hope," very frequently adding, "it is impossible to know." If you agree with such a reply, allow me to show you from Scripture that it is not only possible, but actually contemplated by God, that whoever believes in His Son should not only have eternal life, but know that it is possessed even now. To effect my object I cannot do better than relate how one who, like you, "hoped" was led to "know."

I was preaching the Gospel in the south of Ireland, having but one evening to devote to that particular place. In the afternoon a young believer informed me that her mother had promised to come to the Gospel meeting at night. She was an elderly person, by no means opposed to the things of God, but had never given evidence of having simply received the truth of the Gospel in its peacegiving power. Anxious as the daughter was for her mother's blessing, she was nevertheless importunate that I should not speak personally to her for fear of her being offended, and laid rather a strict embargo on my lips should I happen to come in contact with the old lady.

At the close of the evening Gospel meeting, as I was standing near the door, I saw Mrs. H—— (whom I recognised from the afternoon's conversation) passing slowly out. Offering her a little tract, and at the same time expressing a wish that she might receive no harm on her way home from the rain, which was falling in torrents, she replied that she did not think she would, and further, that she was glad she had come, for she had much enjoyed the meeting.

As I had been speaking on the text "Be it known, therefore, unto you that the SALVATION OF GOD is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it" (Acts xxviii. 28), I added, "I trust you now know the salvation of God, and have eternal life."

"I hope so," was her reply, showing no desire to pass me.

- "But why should you only 'hope,' my friend, when God wishes you to 'know' that, if believing in His Son, you have eternal life?"
- "Well, sir, I believe in the Son of God, and all I can say is I 'hope,' and I don't think anyone can 'know' as long as they are in this world."
- "If you will permit me," I answered, "I will show you just one little verse in the Word of God which will settle that matter definitively."
- "You need not trouble yourself," said she, "I know the Word of God well. Ever since I was a child I have studied it, and I don't believe there is a verse you can show me that I don't know."
  - "Just one, Mrs. H---."
  - "Well, where is it?" said she.

Taking her large-print Bible from her hands, I found and read to her, "These things have I written unto you that believe in the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John v. 13). I read it a second time, and then said, "Do you believe in the name of the Son of God?"

- "I do," was the emphatic reply.
- "You really do own that you are a lost sinner needing salvation, and that nothing but the blood-shedding of the Son of God could avail to put away your sins?"
  - "I do."
  - "You repudiate all thought of salvation by your own

works, confess that you are an undone, guilty, lost sinner, and now simply believe in the name of the Son of God?"

- "I do," was again the short and sincere answer I got.
- "Well then, granting all that, have you eternal life?"
- "I hope so."
- "Oh," was my reply, "I see it now; in the days when you went to school, which is, of course, a great while ago, they used to spell differently then from now."
  - "How so, sir?"
  - "Why k-n-o-w used to spell hope in those days."
  - "Not at all, sir."
  - "What did they spell?"
  - "Why of course, they spelt know, the same then as now."
- "There is a mistake somewhere," I replied, "there must be, for you say you believe in the name of the Son of God, and He says, 'These things have I written unto you that believe in the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life,' and you stand there and tell me that you only hope you have it."
- "Let me see that verse myself," said the old lady, suiting her actions to her words by diving her hand into her pocket, and taking out and adjusting her spectacles. Once and again she read slowly to herself, and then most emphatically out aloud, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life." The Spirit of God blessed her perusal of the sacred message and filled her heart with

peace as she believed it. "Hope' died on the spot, and faith and amazement mingled had full possession of her soul. Looking up she now added, "Well, is it not strange? For, often as I have read the Epistle of John, I never saw that verse yet. Of course I must have read it, for I am very fond of St. John's writings, but I never saw it in the light I do now. I am very glad you spoke to me, sir, and shewed me that verse. Dear me, how dark I have been, and there it was all the time and so plain, too, I wonder I never saw it before!"

- "Well, thank God you see it now, and you believe it simply as it stands, don't you?"
- "Oh, yes, there's no room left for 'hoping' or doubting now; I'm sure now, and I have to thank you for drawing my attention to the Lord's word."

We had a little more conversation, and then, seeing that she was now resting simply on the Lord and His blessed written word, I bade her "Good night," closing our short and only possible earthly interview with this question, "And now, Mrs. H——, if a friend meets you on your way home and asks, 'Have you eternal life?' what shall you say?" With a face now beaming with joy in the assurance of God's salvation she replied, "I should tell them that I know I have it because I believe in Jesus, and God has said, 'These things have I written unto you that believe in the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life.' Good night, and good-bye, Sir.

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To her it was truly a good night, and to me truly goodbye, for not many weeks after the dear old lady passed away to be for ever with the Lord, in the sweet enjoyment of the present possession of eternal life.

And now, my dear reader, I trust you will be as simple as was the one of whom I have written. If you know that you are a ruined lost sinner (and you must know it if you accept the testimony of the Word of God), just look away from yourself simply to Jesus. You will never get peace by looking to yourself, or trying to realise or feel assurance. This only is obtained by simply receiving God's testimony to you. You must receive His witness to you before there can be any witness in you. Nothing can be simpler. must be in a relationship in order to enjoy its proper affections, or fulfil its duties. I must know that I am a son of God before I can feel like one; so must you. I must know (and I do know) from God's Word, that I "have eternal life" before I can (and I do) feel that I have it; so must you.



# THREE GREAT FACTS, AND THEIR EFFECTS.

"Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God . . . . (1) by THE WHICH WILL WE ARE SANCTIFIED, (2) THROUGH THE OFFERING OF THE BODY OF JESUS CHRIST once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God. . . . FOR BY ONE OFFERING HE HATH PERFECTED FOR EVER them that are sanctified. (3) Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us. . . . Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now, where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having thereiore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh. . . . (1) 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. (2) LET US HOLD FAST the profession of our hope without wavering (for he is faithful that promised); and (3) LET US CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER to provoke unto love and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."—HEB. x. 9-25.

HERE are three points in this Scripture which stand out prominently, and they are replete with blessing for the sinner, because flowing from what God in Himself is. God is here seen as wanting something. He had a will, a wish. There was something He desired. Man has rebelled against God, but God, spite of this, wants to have us near Himself.

This is the grand truth taught in Luke xiv. The supper was spread, and God announced the desire of His heart. "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many." The guests were slow to heed the invitation given them, so the Master told His servants to compel them to come in, that His house might be filled. How wonderful! God wants the sinner to be near Him. Whom does He want? You! a poor sinner! Yes: He wants you, but you cannot be near Him in your sins. Then how can you be there? This is the wonderful truth which the Gospel brings out, that the blood of Christ, His Son, can cleanse you from all sin. Thus, and thus only, can you get rid of your sins.

Sin, if not blotted out by the blood of Jesus, must sweep every one to hell, the moral man and the immoral, the old and the young, the rich and the poor, every one whose iniquities are still upon him. Nothing but the blood of Jesus can save anyone from being lost for ever in the lake of fire. Sin consigns the unbelieving possessor thereof to everlasting judgment, and blood—the blood of

Jesus—lifts the feeblest believer therein to everlasting glory.

But answer me this question, Are you in your sins, or where are they? You may have the best character in the world, and the devil will help you to make it better even than it is, for he takes a great interest in "the self-improvement society." This is a very old institution, founded in the garden of Eden, its first members having manufactured "aprons of fig leaves" in hope of remedying their It helps you to give up this bad habit and that state. wicked way, and all its members are devil-deluded into the idea that "dead works" are of some avail, and that by behaving better for the future the evil deed of the past will somehow be erased. How this is to be effected the founder of this almost without exception universally patronized society is careful not to explain. "He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (Jno. viii. 44). Yes, "the devil that deceived them" (Rev. xx. 10) was the originator of this soul-destroying. agency.

Is it not strange that man should heed the suggestions of "a deceiver," "a liar," and "a murderer?" But, alas! so it is; and never stopping to inquire, how future amendment is to cancel past guilt in the sight of a God of infinite holiness, souls in crowds join the society, and—

unless getting their eyes opened by grace to see that such a course is a huge Satanic delusion, a monstrous spiritual lie, a diabolical bubble, which they are only blowing to ensure their everlasting damnation—pass on, fascinated by dreams of self-improvement, till, hurled by death into eternity, they find that "improvement" is not Christ, and that the pit of hell is a terrible reality.

My friend, if you are not under the shelter of the blood of Christ you are lost, and, improve as you will, you are only after all an improved sinner. You are still in your "But," says some one, "how can you prove I am lost?" Hebrews x. shows me. The work of the Lord Jesus there spoken of proves this, and the Gospel tells me, 'The Son of Man came to save that which was lost" (Matt. xviii. 11). When did the shepherd in Luke xv. go after the sheep? Surely it was when the sheep was lost. Why did the woman carefully sweep the house? Because the bit of silver was lost. Ah! if you have not yet got the great fact that you are lost home to your conscience, I would not give much for your chance of salvation. It was the son which was lost that the father kissed and clothed: and it was to reach lost ones, to bridge the chasm that lay betwen the holy God and guilty sinners, that Christ said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God!"

Do not imagine God views your sins and your guilty state by nature as lightly as you do. He says you are lost, and if He meet you as you are He must judge you for your sins. Righteousness keeps God apart from the sinner. This is why in the Old Testament we read blood was sprinkled on the mercy-seat. God's claims had to be met. Thus only could God permit the sinner to come near to Him. The will of God was to have the sinner near Himself. Christ did the work by which alone it could be so. He made atonement, and the throne of God was propitiated. Sin had to be swept away from before God. Jesus only could do that. He was the willing servant for that great work. "Lo, I come to do thy will!" is the Son of God volunteering Himself for this wondrous service.

And what do we further read was the blessed result of Christ's work? "By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ." we see what it is which separated the sinner to God. is the work of Christ, that work which removed the great mountain of sin that intervened between the holy God and guilty man. This truth is beautifully set forth, in type, in God's dealings with the children of Israel. Exodus xii. tells of the blood of the slain lamb sprinkled on the lintel and two side-posts of the door in the houses of the Israel-That signified they were sheltered from the wrath ites. He was kept out, as a judge. of God. Chap. xiii. declares all are the Lord's because of the blood which had been shed; so now we see every believer is separated to God by the work of Christ on the cross. In Exodus xiv. we find Israel protected and "saved" by God—Jehovah, in the pillar of cloud and fire, placing Himself between Israel and the hosts of Pharaoh. And in chap. xv. we see the Israelites thoroughly happy with God as they sang their song of triumph on resurrection ground. That is the gospel of the Old Testament, and of the New likewise. Sheltered from God, separated to God, saved by God, and happy with God.

Who, then, I ask, was it who wanted to have me? God! And who could bring me to God? His Son, and that only by death, His own death on the cross. What comfort for the anxious soul! God seeks to have you near Himself. His will is coupled up with your blessing. Do you think Satan wants to have you? Pharaoh sought to overtake the escaped Israelites, but how did he succeed? To reach them he must march against the bucklers of the Almighty. God was on the behalf of His people, and what happened to Pharaoh? Israel looked back from the sunny banks of resurrection, and saw Pharaoh and his hosts sunk in the waters of the Red Sea.

Well might Israel sing, "The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation" (Exod. xv. 2). Great was their joy, and most blessed their song of praise; but it was not an endless song. Their confidence in God failed, and their song of triumph was succeeded by the murmurs of the wilderness. But what is said of the joy of the Father's house, that portion into which by grace we

have been brought? Does the joy of that sphere ever fail? What does Luke xv. 24 say? "And they began to be merry." There is no word of that song coming to an end. It is an endless song. Hebrews x. shows why our song will be an endless one. It is because of the work of Christ. That work gives me title now to stand before God in righteousness, and it will be theme for endless song hereafter.

In Israel's day, when the High Priest went into the holy place, he could not sit down. There was no seat there for the priest to rest on. Why was this? Because his work was never done. He was "offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins." The work which gives liberty in the presence of God was not then an accomplished fact. Now that work is done, and we have an High Priest seated, who ever abides within the The blessed God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ, the one whom God sent to deliver man right out of Satan's power, is our great High Priest. He is seated on the very throne of God, because He has finished the work God gave Him to do. Before He died He cried, "It is finished," and here we read, "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God."

Sinner, you will see the One who did that perfect work! "Every eye shall see Him." How will you meet Him? Will it be to be banished from His presence? It must be

so if you do not now know Him, and come to be blessed by Him. If you now believe in Him and His perfect finished work, it will be all blessing—blessing now, and everlasting blessing when you see Him.

But does some one ask, "How do you know His work was perfect?" Hebrews x. tells me so. The Holy Ghost is the witness to the perfection of the work of Christ on the cross. What is His witness? Read verses 14, 15, and 17. "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, whereof the Holy Ghost is a witness to us... and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." People try to get a witness in themselves. They seek some feeling on which to rest for happiness, but this they cannot have.

Suppose you had a legacy left to you, and you received a letter from a lawyer telling you so, would you put this question to yourself, "Do I feel this fortune has been left to me?" Ah no, you would never think of your feelings, but simply believe the letter the lawyer sent to you, and rejoice over the money which you believed was now yours. Thus is the witness of man valued, but how differently is the testimony of God treated. And the word of God cannot fail: His word is true.

The Holy Ghost witnessed the return to heaven of the great Finisher of Redemption before He came to give Histestimony. For ten days He saw the Lord Jesus at the right hand of God, and then came to earth to announce

the glad tidings, that where there is simple trust in Christ and His work, sins and iniquities should no more be remembered by God. What a sacrifice, when such is the work it has accomplished. We would speak with reverence, but, so great is the value of the blood of Christ, that the very memory of God has been affected by it. He will remember no more the sins of the one who believes in the preciousness of the blood of Christ. That blood has blotted out from the memory of God the sins of everyone who believes; but if that blood be despised, what is said of the memory of the lost one in hell?

Ah! memory will have a great place in the regions of the damned. Its powers will deepen the misery of the lost. Read what is written of that scene in Luke xvi. 23: "In hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments. And he cried, Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted and thou art tormented."

You may be a good-for-nothing sinner, but if you believe the word of God as to the value of the work of Christ, the witness of the Holy Ghost to you is, "Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more." God has seen the blood, and when the sinner trusts in the work of Christ, the Holy Ghost is a witness to him that God remembers his sins no wore.

We see, therefore, that we have in Heb. x. these three great facts. (1) The will of God, which shows the Father's He wished the salvation of the sinner, that He heart. might take him as His child. (2) The work of the Son of That work secures the salvation which the heart of God. This salvation is for everyone God desired for the sinner. who will hear and obey the word of God; but we have also (3) The witness of the Spirit of God, which gives the assurance of salvation to the one who believes. The Holy Ghost witnesses to the sinner who has believed in the Lord Jesus Christ that his sins are for ever blotted out. What more does any one want? Only a heart to praise this triune God, who wills, works, and witnesses the present and eternal salvation of the feeblest in Jesus.

These three great, blessed, divine facts are the basis of the three beautiful effects which the Apostle now seeks to draw forth by the thrice repeated exhortation, "Let us." And he says, (1) "Let us draw near, with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." You must not doubt the Father's heart, nor the Spirit's witness. And what is a true heart? A heart that knows and believes it is in itself utterly untrue and not to be trusted. In Luke viii. 15 we read of the "honest and good heart"—that is, one which believes what God says of the heart of man, that it is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. xvii. 9). It comes to God not seeking to screen itself. With such a heart, then, we must draw near to God,

fully trusting God's revelation of Himself, and "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience," which is the blessed effect in my soul of the knowledge of the work of Christ for me. The value of the sacrifice of Christ I have bowed to.

Then the Apostle goes on to say, "Our bodies washed with pure water." What is that? An allusion to what we get in Lev. viii. 6, the washing of the priests at their consecration.

And now what are the consecrated ones told by the Apostle to do? (2) "Let us hold fast the profession of our hope without wavering." How unlike this is to many a Christian now-a-days. I see souls who have what I call a "hook-and-eye" sort of faith. They are sure of their salvation to-day, and all at sea about it to-morrow. Surely this is the work of Satan in the soul. He accuses the brethren before God, and he fills the soul with doubts; but tell me what room there is for any one to doubt who believes in the ransom God has given for the sinner? God is the justifier of the one who believes. Satan cannot touch the blood of Christ, and in that blood the sinner who believes has been washed. The blood cleanses from all sin, and its efficacy is everlasting. Who can accuse you when God justifies you?

"But will not Christ condemn me?" asks the doubting one. How could that be when it was Christ who died for you? May your hearts lay hold of the wondrous security of the one who trusts God's word. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering."

And what else are the consecrated ones exhorted to? (3) "Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works." This is very important. You may be able to see very little of Christ in me, but you are told to provoke me to increased devotedness. How can you do this? You must lavish your love on me. How would you cure a pump if it were dry? By pouring into it a few buckets of water, and soon the sparkling water will flow forth in refreshing and continuous streams. Now this is how you are to deal with the sleepy, half-dead brother or sister. Let such an one see in you that which you long to find in him, and thus by your love you will provoke him to renewed energy in the Divine way.

Then how needful the next exhortation. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." Let us seize every opportunity of being together as God's people; then will there be no occasion for this holy provocation. If you like best to be by yourself, I can only say it is a very poor thing, and a bad sign of your own condition. It is the sheep that is sick that straggles away from the flock. Let us keep together and care for one another. Let us answer to that for which God has created us in Christ Jesus: namely, love and "good works, which God hath before ordained

that we should walk in them" (Eph. ii. 10). Let our energies, beloved fellow-believers, be all controlled by the blessed Spirit of God, so that we may be to the praise of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

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