

# Followed and Found

Incidents  
and  
Illustrations  
of the  
Gospel.



Geo. Cutting.

INCIDENTS

AND

ILLUSTRATIONS

OF THE GOSPEL.

BY

GEO. CUTTING.

---

No. 2.

FOLLOWED AND FOUND.

---

A. S. ROUSE,  
15, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, LONDON, E.C.  
1904.





# CONTENTS.

	PAGE
The honours of the Saviour's name . . . . .	5
In earnest when the house was full . . . . .	8
The two welcomes . . . . .	11
The grand secret . . . . .	14
A welcome for the worst . . . . .	17
Happiness not the ground of assurance . . . . .	18
“ Who'll introduce me, mother ? ” . . . . .	20
“ Space to repent ” . . . . .	21
A common difficulty . . . . .	23
Where have you left them ? . . . . .	24
An intruder made welcome . . . . .	28
A way to hell past Calvary . . . . .	32
Your opinion not asked . . . . .	33
Is it true that “ No man is sure ” ? . . . . .	37
Happy servants wanted . . . . .	44
“ Never ” . . . . .	48
“ On the tree.” “ In our hearts ” . . . . .	57
The culprit's place . . . . .	60
Rich toward God . . . . .	64
Why does man hate the Bible ? . . . . .	65
Fully discharged ; or, “ Out on bail ”—which ? . . . . .	69
Forgiveness . . . . .	72
Grace . . . . .	76
The heeded warning . . . . .	76
A drowning man's wish, and what came of it . . . . .	79
“ This year ! ” “ Thy day ! ” . . . . .	85
Why search further ? . . . . .	87
Peace : false and true . . . . .	89



	PAGE
"God requireth that which is past"	94
Crimson stains made snowy white	99
Just inside	104
What if these things <i>should</i> be true?	107
If you only knew	110
What gives peace?	113
Try one first	114
"No blemish"	115
A murderer's dream	117
"He lifted up his eyes"	121
"Let by-gones be by-gones"	121
"Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day?"	123
"Shut in" or "Thrust out"	127
Gone	128
Alarmed or calmed?	132
"I know where I missed it"	135
"Nothing said respecting you"	140
Fearing because forgiven	141
Communion and victory	143
What is your verdict?	144
Time's sowing and eternity's reaping	146
Trembled—astonished—attracted	147
The student's conversion	149
"Spade-ace guineas, fourpence each"	154
Why unbelieving?	159

# INCIDENTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE GOSPEL.

---

No. 2.

## FOLLOWED AND FOUND.

---

### THE HONOURS OF THE SAVIOUR'S NAME.

**D**O you take it upon yourself to examine your doctor as to his knowledge of the human frame, or his ability to discern its ailments and prescribe their remedy? No. You are content to know what his *examiners* thought of him when he passed before them, and you judge of this by the diploma they granted him. Then you carefully inquire what his *patients* have to say of him, especially those that have ailed the most. Lastly, if you feel you can trust your case in such hands, you give good proof of it, either by going to him or by calling him in to see you, and thus you avail yourself of his personal skill and acquired experience.

You are burdened with sin. You dread its final consequences, but you can no more struggle yourself free from it than you can shake off a cancerous growth from some vital part of your body. But a report has reached you of the ability and willingness of Jesus the Son of God to meet the need of a sinner like yourself. No matter how aggravated your case, no matter how "far

gone" you may feel yourself to be, you have heard that Jesus is just the One for you.

But, you ask, who can adequately guarantee to me the trustworthiness of Jesus to meet a case like mine?

Only one was found equal to such a task. The Father knew Him. The Father loved Him. To use our figure, the Father could safely commit every sin-stricken patient to Him, and in the end the Father's pleasure in man's blessing abundantly prospers in His hands. His divine excellences, His absolute fitness for the wondrous work given Him to do, were once known only by the Father. But how blessedly, how charmingly, were those excellences brought to light before our very eyes as He walked in lowly grace through this sin-infested, plague-stricken world!

Was there ever a case so desperate that He was not equal to it? Not one. When did *He* turn His face away from any human misery, or coldly pass by a needy one that desired His help? Never! Did the devil enslave and oppress the human mind; did the sense of sin overwhelm and crush the soul; did disease wreck the body, Jesus was equal to all, and as equal in willingness as in power. Alleluia! Even death fled before Him.

The Father could look on with delight and audibly express His good pleasure in that blessed Man. The Spirit could descend from the opened heaven and rest upon Him. Even more than this has since been brought into evidence. There has been a full answer in heaven to all Christ's services on earth. But who that witnessed those conferred glories, who that saw those celebrations, could be entrusted with a testimony to us about them? Who could bear to us the Father's thoughts about Him? Only One.

The "Spirit of Truth that proceedeth from the Father," said Jesus, "He shall testify of Me" (John xv. 26).



The same Holy Spirit that came upon Him here below, as co-witness of the Father's delight in Him, has, since His return there, been sent from heaven to make known the honours and glories which the Father counts Him worthy of. "Behold the Lamb with glory crowned !

To Him all power be given ;  
No place too high for Him is found,  
No place too high in heaven."

What glorious "diplomas" are His ! And He lives to give us the full benefit of His every divine and every human qualification. He lives in the place of power to serve His people in the place of weakness.

But let us look at the other side. Can the "Great Physician" produce any witnesses able to give personal testimony to His healing, saving, recovering power ?

Instantly ten thousand times ten thousand voices are raised to answer the challenge. From every kingdom on earth, from every station in life, from every stage of moral degradation to which it was possible for man to sink, comes the testimony of countless witnesses of the Saviour's worth. Nor is any one of these myriads of witnesses contented that he has told all he *ought* to tell of what the Saviour has done for him.

Give them one language and one opportunity of putting their hearts and voices into one song, and they will exclaim with one accord—

"Glory, glory everlasting  
Be to Him who bore the cross,  
Who redeemed our souls by tasting  
Death, the death deserved by us.  
Spread His glory,  
Who redeemed His people thus."

---

"Our gracious Master and our God,  
Assist us to proclaim—  
To spread through all the earth abroad—  
The honours of Thy name.

“ Jesus, the name that charms our fears,  
That bids our sorrows cease ;  
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,  
'Tis life, and health, and peace.”

Could my reader join that song? Have you come into personal contact with that living Saviour? Can you from your heart say—

“ *His blood can make the foulest clean,  
His blood avails for me* ”?

Do you know its cleansing value for yourself? It is not enough to know *about* the Saviour; you must personally make His acquaintance.

If you have been “healed by His stripes,” you cannot fail to have been comforted by the love that brought Him to the place of death to serve you. Yea, He sought you out that He might serve you: He *followed* you till He *found* you.

Join, then, in the heaven-taught chorus of praise to His name. Join it, not only by the confession of the lip, but in the devotedness of a life given up to His service. Not only “*tell*” others, but “*show*” them what great things He has done for you. Remember this. *Your* answer to the question, “What think ye of Christ?” will be found in your everyday history.

---

## IN EARNEST WHEN THE HOUSE WAS FULL.

**I**N the month of October, 1859, two brothers might have been seen walking together through the streets of Dublin. One of them was purposing that night to attend a gospel preaching in the Rotunda, one of the most spacious halls in that city, and was earnestly inviting his brother to accompany him. He soon found,

however, that his companion was not disposed to do any such thing. He had just been buying a nice reading-lamp for himself, and his purpose was to go quietly home with it, and have the pleasure that night of using it. Again and again the invitation was repeated; but, alas! without the desired effect. He had made up his mind to pursue a certain course, and pursue it he would.

It so happened that the Rotunda had to be passed on his homeward way. When the brothers came up to the large building it was found to be packed to the very doors with eager listeners, and consequently there was no chance for either of them to gain an entrance.

No sooner did G—— discover this than a desire instantly sprang up in his mind to get inside.

“How could it be managed?” was the one absorbing thought now; while reading-lamp and a pleasant evening at home were quite lost sight of in his eager wish to reach the inside of the Rotunda.

There was only one chance for him, and that was beset with difficulty, if not with danger. Yet the difficulty *must* be overcome, and even the danger risked. Up above his head was an open window. But how reach it without a ladder? was the question. Well, quite close to it was a rain-water spout. Up this they would climb, which they did, both of them reaching, thereby, an open window, and the crowded passage leading to the room where the meeting was being held. From thence they struggled to an ante-room, and through the window of that to the slates of another part of the building. From the slates they managed to reach the room where the preaching was going on; and there G—— sat, with dangling legs, above and behind the preacher’s head, listening to the gospel. There and then the Spirit of God breathed an eternal blessing into his young soul.

Years after, this same young man became himself a



preacher of the blessed gospel of God's grace and glory ; and it was on his way, one evening, to a small preaching-room that he composed that precious little hymn, so much in keeping with the story of his own conversion, now so widely known, commencing—

“Come, hear the gospel sound,  
Yet there is room,”

and closing with the solemn verse—

“God's house is filling fast,  
Yet there is room ;  
Some guest will be the last,  
Yet there is room.  
Yes, soon salvation's day  
To you will pass away,  
Then grace will no more say,  
Yet there is room.”

How much the conduct of this youth outside the crowded Rotunda reminds one of what is predicted in God's Word of the behaviour of the tens of thousands who shall find themselves left behind for judgment at the Lord's second coming. Listen to the Lord's own description of the sad scene: “Many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us ; and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are : then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets. But He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are ; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity ” (Luke xiii. 24-27).

Alas for such a company ! What can they say now, but with one common wail cry, “ *The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are NOT SAVED* ” (Jer. viii. 20) ?

Men may sing, if they will, of the “gate's ajar” ; but,

depend upon it, there is no such thing, nor ever will be. When God's grace opens the door, it *is open*; yes, as *widely* open as His large heart and gracious hand can throw it; and when in righteousness He closes it, it will be closed indeed. We read, "AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT" (Matt. xxv. 10).

It is when the door of mercy is so widely open that men are found treating the matter with cold contempt, either by a dogged refusal to enter, or by a sleepy indifference to all that is at stake by remaining outside. But when the wedding has been "furnished with guests"; when once the "house is filled," and "the door" for ever "shut," what terrible earnestness will they manifest!

"Have we not heard the Bridegroom is so sweet?

Oh, let us in that we may kiss His feet!

*Late, late! TOO LATE!*

*Ye CANNOT enter now!"*

There will be no climbing up some other way then.

"Sealed is their doom, for there's no more room!

Filled are you mansions of light."

Let us earnestly beseech you then, dear reader, to be in time. *Some* guest will certainly be the last; and *that* one, for aught you know, may enter this very hour. If you care for your eternal happiness, delay not another moment. The Saviour still waits to welcome and bless. But bear in mind what His last message is to His chosen ones, "*Surely I come quickly.*" Thank God, we are still here to tell you that, "*Yet there is room.*"

---

## THE TWO WELCOMES.

**T**HERE are doubtless two ways of *coming*, but only one of being received. *Merit* will do, if I have got it; nothing but *grace*, if I am a sinner. By way of illustration, turn to 1 Samuel xviii. and Luke xv.

First, think of David's case. He was his father's willing messenger in the interests of his elder brothers on the field of battle. While on that errand of obedience he gained a most brilliant victory, and earned before all Israel a character for himself that put even Israel's chosen king and leader into the shade. His fame spread so far, so wide, that "from all the cities of Israel" they came forth to meet him with music and dancing, joyfully celebrating his peculiar achievements. The *worthy* one is welcomed.

For himself he won a bride, and she no less a personage than the king's own daughter. To his father's house he was an honour and a joy; while he so gained the admiration of the king's son that Jonathan's princely robe was placed upon the worthy hero's shoulders, his sword and bow at his side. Brightest fame, highest honours, choicest favours were personally his, and his by right. He got what he deserved, and deserved what he got. Here, then, we see *merit*. Not merit for salvation, but pure, simple merit in itself.

But yonder comes another, a destitute, dissipated, degraded one—the returning prodigal; and, mark it well, highest honour, choicest favours await him also. The father's "best" is lavished upon this wretched waster; music and dancing celebrate the long-absent wanderer's return. The *unworthy* is welcomed.

How was this? Yes, ask why, and wonder. *He* had won no victory. He had gained no character but a vile one, as his own lips confessed. He had procured the fulfilment of no kingly promise. He had not left his father's house in happy accord with fatherly affection to seek the welfare of his brethren. He was no honour either to kin or country. He deserved no princely robe, much less the "best." Yet for brilliancy of reception even David's welcome back is unquestionably trans-



cended. Then on what ground did all these favours come to him? Ah, it was not because of the prodigal's personal merits, but because of the father's grace and love. Not because of what his conduct had been toward the father, but because of what the father's heart was toward him. "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is *found*." This is grace—the beloved Son's own picture of His Father's precious, forgiving, all-abounding grace.

And will not such grace suit your case, my reader? Get low, then, before it, as it shines in a glorified Saviour. Fully expose your wretched unworthiness before its heart-melting rays, and let your heart freely breathe itself out in those well-known lines:—

"Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee;  
O Lamb of God, I come."

You cannot stand before God on *both* grounds. It must be

ALL GRACE AND SURE SALVATION,

or

ALL MERIT AND CERTAIN DAMNATION.

"By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 8, 9).

If you stand before God on the ground of your works, remember it must be *all* your works, and one sin would certainly exclude you from a merited salvation and shut you up to eternal damnation. *Merit* or *grace*, then, which?

Your time is short, make haste with your answer. God waits to be gracious to you. Close in with Him now.

---

## THE GRAND SECRET.

AN old man in a remote village in one of the eastern counties lay dying. He had plied his trade as baker in the same place for years. But though hard-working and respectable, he was, it is to be feared, a thoroughly unconverted sinner. He had been accustomed to ward off the keen edge of God's Word, and to delay the acceptance of the precious glad tidings by the oft-repeated statement, that *no one could know on this side of death whether he was saved or not.*

Oh, how the enemy of souls hates the doctrine of assurance of salvation! And into the heart of many a poor self-righteous sinner he soothingly whispers, "You are as well off for eternity as other people. *Nobody* can really *know* they are saved; so just go on as you are, and hope for the best. You will stand as good a chance as others in the end; as good, or even better, than many who say that they are really saved now, and make such a loud profession about it; for they are wickedly *presumptuous*, and you are not."

It is to be feared that the devil's lie in this respect found but too warm a welcome in the heart of this poor baker; and having lived long years without salvation himself, and in making light of its precious possession in others, he was evidently determined to brave it out to the end.

His grown-up children were standing in sorrow round his bed. Would their father even then, late as it was in life's little day, give any satisfactory testimony as to his faith in the precious blood of Christ? Alas! no. He referred to the future, it is true, but only to say, "*I shall soon know the grand secret now.*"

Grand secret? What a mistake! Salvation is no grand secret for the believer in Jesus. Nor is damnation a secret for the unbeliever. In neither case is it a matter of idle speculation. GOD HAS SPOKEN. The whole truth is out. The word of the Lord has gone forth, and "this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter i. 24, 25).

When Nebuchadnezzar set up his golden image, and the "herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp . . . and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace," was it any grand secret that those who refused to bow were doomed to present judgment? No. Every one in the nation knew that in order to be saved from the fiery furnace they must "*bow*" when the king's trumpeters sounded forth the authorised signal to do so.

This had been plainly declared by the king's herald. Nor did it matter who that herald might be. Whose was the *decree*? was the all-important question.

So with the heralds of the gospel.

When the Lord Jesus sent forth His messengers, saying, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 15, 16), the consequences of believing or rejecting that gospel were not left an open question.

And when the gospel was carried to the Thessalonians it mattered not to them who *brought* it; it was of vital importance who *sent* it. So we read that they "received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God."

Again, take Paul's preaching at Antioch. "To you," he



said, "is the word of this salvation sent"; and added, "*Be it known unto you* therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things." And again, to the unbelievers, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish" (Acts xiii. 26, 38, 39, 41).

Now, if the herald of the impious king could say, "*To you* it is commanded, bow or be destroyed," God's herald announces, "*To you* is the word of this salvation sent"; "believe, and be justified"; or "despise and perish."

As God is true, dear reader, there was then, and there is now, no uncertainty, no guess-work, no waiting for the "grand secret." All was and is plainly told out.

No doubt there was once a grand secret in the heart of God in connection with man—secret thoughts of blessing to be held out to the guiltiest through the precious blood of His own Son. But it is no secret *now*. The only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father has been here and expressed perfectly "all that in that bosom lies." The perfect Sacrifice for sin has been offered and accepted; and the Holy Ghost has come down from heaven to tell us, not only what God thinks of that precious shed blood, but what He thinks of those who have faith in it. What an affront, then, to God the Father, Son, and Spirit, to wrap up the whole of the gracious testimony in the mist of uncertainty, and still persist in calling it all a "grand secret"! If God has spoken, faith needs no more. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *thou shalt be saved*," is plain enough. And not less plain, "He that believeth not shall be damned." To cross the line which separates time from an endless eternity will not add a jot to the truth of God's holy Word.

One word more. If God had been saving men on the ground of *their* worthiness, and we had no standard

whereby to measure our merits, salvation *would* be an uncertainty, and this until the last temptation had been overcome, the last step in this world had been taken. But it is not so. It is all of grace; *i.e.* without one merit on our side. It must be so; for all have sinned. The blood which cleanses the soul from one sin cleanses it from *all*. To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him *shall* receive remission of sins. This, we say, is no grand secret, but the most glorious, the most gracious proclamation that could possibly reach the ear of a dying sinner. May its well-assured blessings be yours, dear reader.

If God has been good enough to send such a message, do you be wise enough to believe it.

---

### A WELCOME FOR THE WORST.

IF I could boast a life that knew no equal  
'Mong all the multitudes of fallen men,  
Judgment at last would be the solemn sequel,  
The best must perish if not born again.

Could I e'en reach ambition's highest summit,  
And tower above the rest of Adam's race,  
Measured by God's all-righteous line and plummet,  
Down with the lowest I must take my place.

But had I sunk so low that angels wonder  
Why one so vile should still be left to sin,  
Coming through Christ my chains are snapped asunder,  
The worst of wanderers God welcomes in.

Yea, could my crimes be worse than all before me,  
More deeply dyed my soul than Calvary's thief,  
Calvary's blest Lamb would still in grace receive me,  
And change to endless joy my hopeless grief.

---

## HAPPINESS NOT THE GROUND OF ASSURANCE.

(FROM A GOSPEL ADDRESS.)

A WOMAN I once knew was for months troubled because she could not feel what her mother felt when she was converted. Her mother had passed through deepest exercises of soul, and when at last she found peace she was exceedingly happy. She told her daughter that when she got up from her knees, after God had saved her, everything looked different, even the trees and the flowers in the garden looked different. So the daughter first tried to feel as miserable as her mother had, but never could be satisfied that she had been made sufficiently miserable. Then she tried to feel happy. She tried to pray herself into this joy, and would occasionally get up from her knees and look out of the window to see how the trees looked. When she did not find that they looked any different she would go down upon her knees and try again.

Now if the trees had looked ever so different—had she seen them covered with silver and gold—it would not have proved that she was saved. So I said to our friend, “Where, then, are you resting for assurance now?”

“Oh, I have got the Word of God for it now!” What God had said she could believe.

So must it be with you, anxious soul. You must believe it first, and feel it next. If some dear mother here to-night heard to-morrow morning that her son was ill, when would she *feel* troubled—before she believed the letter, or afterwards? Why afterwards, of course. She would not say, “I know he is ill because I feel so troubled; but I feel troubled because I know he is ill.”

“But how do you know he is ill?” we inquire. “You have not seen him. It is years since he left home, and he is now in a foreign hospital.”

"I know it because he says so."

So there were three items in this change in her feelings.

First, she received the letter.

Second, she *believed* it because of her son's word.

Third, she *knew* he was ill because she believed it, and was troubled in consequence.

Now there is somebody here to-night who would fain feel it first. If you could only feel what some other Christians have felt, if your convictions were as deep as theirs, if your joy was as full as theirs, you think you might say for certain that you were saved.

Let us suppose then for a moment that you had such deep joys, and that when I ask you how you know you are saved, you tell me it is because you feel so happy. On whose opinion would you be relying for that assurance? Why you have only got your own opinion after all, and that opinion based upon your own feelings. You are like the spider who spins a web out of his own body, and then trusts himself to it, though some strong hand may sever it the next moment. You cannot rest upon any feeling of your own. The next circumstance in your path may scatter your bright feelings to the winds, and leave you in dark, bewildering uncertainty. Perhaps you ask, "Then you do not believe in happy feelings?" Yes, I believe in the Christian having every week, while on the road to glory, seven little heavens of spiritual joy—"joy unspeakable and full of glory." Joy is a fruit of the Spirit, and the Christian *ought* to be happy; and if he does not grieve the Spirit he will be. It is your right, fellow-believer, to be happy, and there is something wrong with your ways if you are not. But do not build your peace upon your happiness. That is the common mistake. "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

---

“WHO’LL INTRODUCE ME, MOTHER?”

ON a small island in the Forth of Clyde a little girl lay dying. Her parents were both converted, and had often spoken to their beloved child about the Lord Jesus Christ, and the things of eternity. As the chance of her recovery, according to human reckoning, grew less and less, these “little talks,” no doubt, would both increase in frequency, and deepen in interest. One day the loving mother was speaking to her about finding herself, ere long, in the presence of the Lord Jesus, when suddenly she inquired, “But who’ll introduce me, mother?”

This would have been a very important question, no doubt, had she been going to meet one of the great ones of this world, but not so in going into the presence of Jesus. To know herself as a sinner, needing His precious blood to cleanse her, was a sufficient introduction to Him in this world; and to know Him as the Saviour who had washed her from those sins was sufficient to make her at home with Him in the next.

Reader, your first *real* having to do with the Lord Jesus will be in connection with *your sins*, and their righteous due according to God’s holy claims. If as a poor, self-condemned, repentant sinner you are brought to Him in “*the day of salvation*,” all your sins will be forgiven and forgotten; for He Himself has “once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” But if you are raised in your sins at “*the day of judgment*,” you will surely have to say to Him about them, and that according to the same righteous standard. “Every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. xiv. 12).



Your sins, therefore, will either introduce you to the Saviour now, or to the Judge then. Which?

In the day of grace you need no other introduction; in the day of judgment you will get no other. Consider well how soon the one will be passed and the other reached.

---

## "SPACE TO REPENT."

THERE is a time when the "longsuffering of God" comes to an end. The solemn period of His waiting grace is called, in Revelation ii. 21, a "*space to repent*." "I gave her space to repent . . . and *she repented not*."

Think, also, of God's forbearance with Israel. After describing their provoking wickedness, He says, "Howbeit I sent unto you *all* My servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, "*Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate*. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness" (Jer. xliv. 4, 5). Again, it is recorded in 2 Chronicles xxxvi. 15, 16: "The Lord God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; *because He had compassion on His people*, and on His dwelling-place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, *till there was no remedy*. He gave her space to repent . . . and she repented not."

But not so with the men of Nineveh. When judgment was pronounced upon them, with only a forty days' respite, the warning cry of God's prophet was heeded: "they repented in sackcloth and ashes": they "cried mightily to God," and "turned from their evil ways." God gave Nineveh "space to repent," and she repented.

Let us seriously ask, dear reader, Have you yet been

brought to true repentance? or are you filling up this long-suffering "space" with hardness and unbelief? If so, we would urge you, with all the earnestness we possess, to pause, and solemnly consider how you stand with God and the realities of another world.

A friend of ours writes: "I had the following lately from T——, in D——, and know it is true:—

"A young lady, one of two sisters, had had an attack of the epidemic lately prevailing. She was recovering, but had been warned not to go out. She had, however, made up her mind to go to a large wax-work show coming to the town, and to a ball two nights after, and she said, laughing, 'I will go to the wax-work, then nurse up for the ball, and *then send out cards for my funeral.*'"

She *did* go to both, and *died two days after the ball!*

There the curtain must drop as to this poor trifle. But *you* are here, and we still feel constrained to plead with you, and say, in the interest of your precious soul, "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near." Beware, lest the time come when your cry of remorse will find *no answer*, and lest, like Balaam, you "*see Him, but not nigh.*" Be sure of this, that unless you repent and turn to God,

"Your day will soon be past,  
And your judgment come at last."

Whether you believe it or not, it stands recorded in the Scriptures, "And the Lord said, *My spirit shall NOT ALWAYS strive with man.*" May it never be said of you, in the day of judgment, "I *gave her space* to repent . . . and *she repented not.*"

"The longsuffering of our Lord is salvation" (2 Peter iii. 15).

---

## A COMMON DIFFICULTY.

AN earnest young man, known to the writer, had been for some time in real exercise before God as to his soul's salvation. At times he felt assured that he did believe; at others he was all unsettled about it. In nearly all such cases—and how great their number!—too much is made of faith *in itself*, and too little of the object of faith. The gospel presents *Christ* before the soul. His blessed Person and work are held up for the gaze of faith. Now, while you cannot too highly magnify the importance of *faith in Christ*, yet the moment you get occupied with your “believing” you are making too much of what you call “faith.” *Faith in your “believing”* and *faith in Christ* are two different things. The former is not what God calls faith at all. It is only a species of self-occupation which necessarily robs the soul of blessing and comfort. The Spirit of God has a holy jealousy, that, when salvation is sought, CHRIST ALONE should be the object of the soul's satisfaction and confidence. True faith is that which relies wholly upon Christ, and upon the Spirit's testimony concerning Him.

The young man referred to was employed in a house of business in one of the Midland towns. As he sat at breakfast one morning, the writer, knowing something of his difficulties, asked him the following question: “Suppose, when you get to the office this morning, you found a notice to this effect fixed upon the door: ‘All in Mr. ——’s employment who have any confidence in their master can take a day's holiday to-day.’ Suppose this to be a genuine announcement signed in your master's handwriting, could you *honestly* return home and take your day's holiday?”

“I could,” he said with emphasis.

“Well, then, God says that ‘whosoever believeth’ in Jesus ‘shall receive remission of sins.’ Are you not sufficiently assured of your confidence in Him as to honestly claim, upon the Spirit’s testimony in the Word, the remission of sins?”

You see, dear reader, that this young man had only to think of the kind of person his master was, and thus knowing him as thoroughly trustworthy, he could, without a moment’s hesitation, claim the holiday on those terms. Have *you* no faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?

Do not think of your faith as though *that* was your Saviour. It is the work which Christ did for sinners, and the loving welcome which all get who come to Him, that the Spirit of God brings before a conscience-stricken sinner. May my reader follow the example of another young man who, after a long time of weary wavering between self as an object and Christ, at last came to this point, “If God has so loved me as to give His Son to die for me, then He must have considered His Son to be a Saviour worthy of my heart’s confidence; and *my heart’s confidence He shall have.*” Henceforward, for him, the matter was settled, and he is now privileged to bear the glad message of salvation to others. So may it be settled for my anxious reader before he or she lays down this paper.

---

### WHERE HAVE YOU LEFT THEM?

“**N**O more violation of the Fourth Commandment for me!” said John Bunyan as he listened one day to a sermon against Sabbath-breaking. He would obey it henceforward with heart and soul, that he would! So when he got home he assured his wife that on this point his mind was thoroughly made up, once for all.

But, alas for human resolutions in natural strength!

The impression was very transitory. Indeed, before he had well finished his dinner he had shaken the sermon out of his thoughts, and was mentally returning to the old sports. That very afternoon he might have been seen flinging himself with his usual vehemence, heart and soul, into the game of "cat."

Suddenly, he says, he thought he heard a voice from heaven! He considered for a moment, then threw his "cat" upon the ground and left off playing. It is said that the spot can be pointed out now where he stood like a statue, trembling at the demand of the super-human voice, "*Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell?*"

Now there is little doubt that at this solemn moment John Bunyan thought that to *leave* his sins—to leave off committing them—was all that was necessary for his soul's security and blessing. And, without question, thousands in this more enlightened day share that thought with him. If they could only leave off sinning for the future, they think their previous history, though full of sin, would practically be winked at by God, or, to say the least, mercifully passed over. So that, in reality, REFORMATION is their Saviour. But not so. "God requireth that which is past" (Eccles. iii. 15). And though man may say in his heart, "God hath forgotten: He hideth his face; He will never see it"; *He will "not require it"* (Ps. x. 11, 13), yet God's demand is inevitable, absolutely inevitable; for it is the demand of His own holy, righteous character. Sin *must* have its judgment. So that if his sinful course could have been effectually abandoned that afternoon on the village green, and never more resumed, it would still have left the sins of the past to be brought up against him at the day of judgment. "God requireth that which is *past*."

The sins of yesterday can no more be atoned for by



the good deeds of to-day than one act of treason-felony last year could be wiped out by any number of loyal acts this year. The manufacture of a white pin to-day could not change the colour of a black pin manufactured yesterday; nor would all the white pins made throughout a whole century alter the fact that one black had been produced in the previous century.

It is true that, when God's Spirit begins to work in a man's soul, one of the first signs of it is that he as genuinely desires to give up his sins for the future as he earnestly craves forgiveness for the past. Hence the apostle Peter says, "He hath sent Him [Jesus] to bless you, by turning away every one of you *from His iniquities*" (Acts iii. 26). Indeed, there would be grave doubt as to the existence of any genuine work in a man's soul if there was not, in more or less degree, this turning away *from* his iniquities. But there is a wide difference between being so indignant with your unjust living in the past, that you are determined to run no further into debt, and the just meeting of your past liabilities. And there is as vast a difference between turning from your iniquities and having those iniquities righteously put away from you.

"Could my zeal no respite know,  
Could my tears for ever flow,  
Naught for sin could e'er atone  
*But Thy blood, and Thine alone.*"

"Though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet *thine iniquity is marked before Me*, saith the Lord" (Jer. ii. 22). Let man adopt the very best methods that lie within his reach, he cannot remove the stain of the smallest of his sins from before the eye of God. The end of all his reformation and religious zeal, with the help of all the clerical orders and sacerdotal performances under the sun, is simply this, "*Thine iniquity is marked before ME*, saith the Lord."

ONLY THE BLOOD OF *Jesus*, and THE BLOOD OF JESUS ONLY, can remove the crimson stain. The only place where sin can be left so that it will never more rise in judgment against me, is the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. The only way I can stand for ever clear of its damning influences is by being "*justified by His blood*" (Rom. v. 9).

Do you ask how it is that the believer is thus justified? Let Isaiah, by the Spirit of God, answer: "He shall justify many; *for He shall bear their iniquities*" (Isa. liii. 11).

On the ground of faith in that *one sacrifice* once offered, God can now say of every believer, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. x. 17).

Just one serious word more. Are you content to say, My sins are now a thing of the past, I have left all behind? Then *where have you left them?*

Is your debt left in the creditor's book against you, or under the value of that which has cancelled it?

Are your sins only under the fair garment of a reformed life, or are they under the value of that which is the witness of the precious life of Another having been laid down on your account—the precious blood of Jesus? *Where have you left them?* Be sure of this, they are either *marked by God's eye, or removed from God's memory*. Which?

Do not, we beseech you, rest another moment without a satisfactory answer to that question—an answer *good enough to die with*.

"What can wash away my stains?

*Nothing but the blood of Jesus;*

So that not one spot remains?

NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD OF JESUS."

---

## AN INTRUDER MADE WELCOME.

“**A** MAN is known by the company he keeps.” Yes, but all depends upon his *motive* in choosing it. The doctor who attends the sick child of a pickpocket, and in the kindness and integrity of his heart charges no fee for his services, comes out of that infamous dwelling as irreproachable as he went in. He will not accept even one pennypiece of the pickpocket’s ill-gotten gains, but he will gladly serve even a pickpocket’s suffering child.

In an infinitely higher way it was thus with Simon’s Guest in Luke vii. 36. He had come from heaven to express God’s good pleasure in men—not in their ways, that was impossible, but in them; and not all the Pharisees in the land should thwart Him, little as His gracious errand suited them. Man’s utter depravity met His holy eye everywhere; but if one thing could possibly be more obnoxious than another, it was the hypocrisy that sought to conceal wilful wickedness under a veil of assumed sanctity.

How little Simon the Pharisee could have known his Guest that day! Listen to what he says in his heart: “This Man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him: for she is a sinner.” As though he had said, “I can see well enough that this Man is no prophet, and I would fain strip Him of His prophet’s robe and leave Him standing exposed. Why, even *I* know this woman better than He does, and I would take pretty good care that she did not touch *me*!”

Would you, Simon? Wait a bit and listen, while we give you another application of some of your own words. If *you* had known who and what manner of

*Man* this is, you would have been dumb with amazement that He should have condescended to cross the doorstep of a Pharisee like yourself. For His mission here is "not to call the righteous, but *sinner*s to repentance."

But suppose, for a moment, that it had been possible for you to have gone on with your stripping until His whole heart and mind had been laid bare before you, what would you have discovered, think you? Why, a mind that, without divesting you of one of the religious robes of your sect, discerns you through and through—a mind that knows you far better than you could possibly know this poor sinner at His feet. Nor would that be all; you would have discovered a heart that cares for both you and her. You would have seen that the feet which are being kissed by this poor woman are on their way to the cross of Calvary for her sins.

Poor Simon! He knew neither his own heart nor the Lord's. Yet what divine beauty, what heavenly lustre, what touching grace is here! Even Simon himself is not roughly handled. How differently would he have fared at *our* hands! Our indignation would just have boiled over! But how does Jesus treat him? "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee." What gentle consideration! He would not begin until his host was ready. "Master, say on," said Simon.

"There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell Me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And He said, Thou hast rightly judged" (*vv.* 40-43).

He has put Simon the Pharisee and this sinful woman of the city into the same parable (for He would fain bind them up in the same bundle of blessing), and now

proceeds, personally and pointedly, to apply it. How touchingly He shows that the freest pardon is available for *both*! One of the two, this sinner at His feet, had received it already; and oh, what a chance for Simon too, had he wished for it! "*When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.*" What a blessed climax! Surely such heavenly light was well calculated to open the eyes of even a Pharisee, and make him exclaim, "Lord, I too have nothing to pay; yet I have despised Thy condescending grace. I doubly need Thy pardon!"

Now note this. The very thing that Simon was proudly condemning was the very end for which the Saviour was patiently labouring. God wanted man's love. He had come to win man's love, and here in this poor sinner He had got it. God's forgiving grace, expressed in Jesus, had won her confidence. She loved, she trusted. It is true she was a *great* sinner, but this only proved Him to be a great Saviour.

Her many sins are pardoned. But *more* than pardon is hers. The Person to whom she owes that pardon has been found. She knows where He has gone, and reach Him she must, even though it be to make herself an unwelcome intruder in the house of a proud Pharisee. Once there, she will wash His feet with her tears, and wipe them with the hairs of her head! Who could help admiring such responsive affection?

In Jesus God had expressed His good pleasure in her blessing; she would now express *her* good pleasure in God, by pouring the overflowings of her more than satisfied heart upon the feet of His beloved Son. Alleluia! Jesus hath triumphed. God is made known. A pardoned sinner loves much.

How grateful must all this have been to the blessed Lord Himself! Not a word did *she* utter, but He would



speak for her. He would put her eloquent act of responsive love into one brief sentence and cause it to be repeated to the very ends of the earth. "*This woman hath not ceased to kiss My feet.*" What joy in heaven that day!

Just one personal word with you, my reader. Have you ever found *your* way to His feet, a sinner confessed? Has heaven ever known joy over your repentance? If not, we are glad to tell you that you may still reach Him; and more, we can tell you *where*. He is no longer in the house of a Pharisee on earth, but on the throne of God in glory. But He is as full of compassion and tender grace as ever. No rebuffs, no murmuring Simons there! His own heavenly welcome awaits you. Bless His Name!

But if forgiveness is worth having, if you *really* value a personal interview, go at once. Know you not that He is *about to change His place* once more? He is about to rise up and close the door. No repentance then! Tears you *may* have, but you will shed them all outside a closed door. Oh, how bitter will be the "fruit of your own way," how unbearable the remembrance of your proud neglect of His precious grace! "But for that I might have been *inside!*" will be your wail. What remorse to think of the long years He waited for you. Then came your last chance, and this chance MISSED!

One word more, and it shall be the Spirit's, not mine: "The Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts" (Heb. iii. 7). Good advice. Take it.

---

## A WAY TO HELL PAST CALVARY.

THE late Sir Edward Denny has left behind him a record concerning a man named William Dove, who was condemned to die for the crime of poisoning his wife.

It would appear that in the earlier years of his self-willed course he had faithful Christian friends, and one who, with deep longings, especially cared for his conversion to God.

After his trial and condemnation the pleadings of one of those friends of early days came back to his memory, and were committed by him to paper. They were these, and underlined as below :—

“William, if you are determined to go to hell, you shall wade through seas of tears and (walk) over moun-  
tains of prayers.”

What a solemn path to pursue! Yet there is something worse than this in the way of every gospel rejecter. To wade through affection’s burning tears, and walk over a heavy heart’s groaning prayers, is not the most condemning feature of his downward course. He tramples on the heaven-sent testimony of the cleansing value of the blood of Jesus, and that is *infinitely worse*. To disregard the tears and entreaties of a fellow-mortal betokens woeful hardness, but to coldly ignore the testimony of God’s love in the gift of Jesus, to trample upon the precious blood, to resist the pleading of His gracious Spirit, is, beyond everything, appalling.

To reach *a felon’s cell*, a murderer’s doom, by such a road is terrible enough to contemplate, but to reach damnation everlasting by such a road is to reach it with lashings of conscience unbearable. Think of it! *A way to hell past Calvary!* How awful to be found in such a path!

Reader, where are you? Has such a course, till now, been yours? Then for your soul's sake, and in God's name, we call upon you to stand and consider. Beware of the doom of Capernaum. "And thou, Capernaum which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell" (Luke x. 15).

To look back from the depths of hell and think of the many times you were called upon to halt and listen to the wondrous tale of Calvary will be enough to make you wish, for all eternity, that you had never been born at all.

But you *have* been born, and may yet be born again, thank God. Oh that it may never be said of you, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you" (Acts xiii. 41).

There is only one way to heaven, and that is by way of Calvary, through faith in Him who hung there. The penitent thief went that way, and every saved sinner since. But there is a way to hell by Calvary also. The other, the *rejecting* thief, went that way. Beware, lest you go too.

---

## YOUR OPINION NOT ASKED.

IT is of very little consequence that a criminal, under sentence of death, does not believe in what he is pleased to call the "doctrine of capital punishment," since every breath he draws, every clamorous word against it, only brings him so much the nearer to the hour of execution. He might as well say, "No king, no law, or else a king without power to enforce his own laws." And it is of quite as little consequence that a dying mortal should say, "No resurrection for me. No resurrection, to judg-

ment." He might as well say (and sometimes he is even bold enough to do it), "There is no God, and therefore no accountability to Him." But the reality of His existence and man's accountability to Him depend no more on man's *opinion* than the existence of the sun in the heavens depends on the opinion of a committee of blind philosophers. Facts are facts, and if even the blind can't see the sun they are made to feel his power. "There is nothing hid from the heat thereof." And the facts of God's existence and of man's responsibility to Him do not wait on man's reasoning mind. His *conscience* is made to feel it, even though his lips may try to deny it. Sooner or later man's responsibility to God will assuredly have to be faced by every man living. "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. xiv. 11, 12).

#### A DARING CHALLENGE.

A certain Hanoverian countess, who lived about a hundred years ago, was a noted unbeliever, and was especially opposed to the doctrine of the resurrection, as indeed every unbeliever might well be, especially if his opposition could alter it.

This lady died when about thirty years of age. Before her death she gave orders that her grave should be covered with a solid slab of granite; that around it should be placed square blocks of stone, and that the corners should be fastened to each other and to the granite slab by heavy iron clamps.

Upon the covering this inscription was placed:—

**"THIS BURIAL-PLACE, PURCHASED TO ALL ETERNITY,  
MUST NEVER BE OPENED."**

All that human power could do to prevent any change

in that grave was done. But a little birch-tree seed sprouted, and the root found its way between the side stone and the upper slab and grew there. Slowly but steadily it forced its way until the iron clamps were torn asunder, the granite lid was raised, and it is now resting upon the trunk of the birch tree, which is large and flourishing.

Here is a voice, and a very loud one too, for those "who know not the Scriptures nor the power of God."

Two things are outside the will and power of man—the retaining of his natural life on earth when death comes upon him, and the ability to hold his body in death when God's resurrection power is put forth.

*"A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."* Or as it has been more simply translated, "It is not because a man is in abundance that his life is in his possessions" (Luke xii. 15).

*"There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it"* (Eccles. viii. 8).

Man will be quite as impotent in resisting the power of God in resurrection as he was in evading the hand of death.

*"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"* (John v. 28, 29). And who can reverse God's decree?

There was one Man here, but only one, who had the power of life and death in His own hands—Jesus the Son of God. He alone could say of His life, "No one taketh it from Me; I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again" (John x. 18, New Trans.).



Who else can use language like this? Who, among the mightiest of earth's monarchs, can dispute God's right to say to him, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee" (Luke xii. 20)? And when once the decree has gone forth, who can reverse the sentence?

Now if this is true in connection with *death*, it is certainly not less so in connection with *resurrection*.

This unbelieving Hanoverian countess would fain have defied God's power to raise the dead; and indeed, as we have seen, she took great pains to leave the record of her defiance for the public inspection of posterity. But in the Creator's hands one tender little sprouting seed was enough to make her folly manifest to all observers. The writer has in his possession a photograph of this very grave, with its iron clamps torn out of their places, the stone slabs burst asunder and gaping wide, as though opening their mouths to cry shame on folly as impudent as it was impotent.

Blessed be God, the true believer need not be disconcerted either about death or resurrection. Though once they were the source of his gravest fears, they are now the very foundation of all His hopes. Do you say, "How is this?" Jesus has died and risen again—Jesus, the sinner's Surety; Jesus, the sinner's Friend. As another has remarked, Jesus, the Son of God, has been into the domain of death as an Invader, and come out as Conqueror. To His servant John He said, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. i. 18).

But *why* did Jesus die? Death was sin's penalty, and that penalty must be righteously met. God's holiness demanded it. "Sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. v. 12). Jesus died. But death could not

hold the Prince of Life. If divine love took Him into it, divine power took Him out of it. He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25).

With this mighty Conqueror the reader has to do. Though, in righteousness, He has power to judge, in tender longsuffering He waits to bless. Do not defy Him and expect to prosper. Do not linger till your little day be done before you consider your soul's eternal welfare, or, be assured, the thought of His slighted love will add unbearable intensity to the anguish of your self-inflicted doom. Be wise in time. Repent of your sins. Seek His face. Still His invitation is, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" (Isa. xlv. 22). GOD HAS SPOKEN. *Your opinion* is not asked. *You have to do with facts.* Face them at once.

---

## IS IT TRUE THAT "NO MAN IS SURE"?

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

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

"NO MAN IS SURE." That all depends. In many cases

the statement is true. You cannot be sure of the weather for two days together. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," and you can neither tell its next movement nor the consequent result. You may make your "forecast" and be moderately correct, but "*no man is sure.*" Again, you cannot be sure of what may seem even more trustworthy than changing winds—the continued possession of riches. Hence the exhortation, "Charge them that are rich, that they *trust not in uncertain riches*, but in the living God" (1 Tim. vi. 17). "Riches certainly make themselves wings: they fly away" (Prov. xxiii. 5). You may have them to-day, but as to how long you will keep them *no man is sure.* Indeed, man's life abounds with "open questions." Whether that fine ship just leaving the dock will reach her destination; whether that child, blooming with health to-day, will ever arrive at the years of manhood; whether the peace of Europe will continue for another ten years—are all *open* questions; and there are thousands more.

But how serious it would be to put the word of "the living God" on the same ground! Who could place the sentence which heads this paper after the sentence with which the Epistle to the Hebrews opens, and say, "*Though God hath spoken, no man can be sure*"?

What, then, is the secret of such a statement as the one we find in the "Parish Magazine"? It is based most probably on the utterly false notion that it is man's good behaviour, and his own satisfaction with it, that entitles him to say he is saved from coming wrath and fitted for future glory. Ministrations from the pulpit, participations at the "altar" (so called), and even Christ's death itself, are understood to be necessary *helps*, but *only* helps—helps to his finally becoming *good enough to go to heaven.* But since "the grey-haired saint

may fall at last," if he can only be put right *at some point before the close*, and then sin no more till he reaches the end, he thinks—and his teachers encourage him to think—that he will be taken into heaven on that sinless ground. He can then, at least, claim some little merit, have some little show of goodness; and so with a hope, because God is merciful, that the past is all forgiven, he considers himself ready to die! Hence, the supposed necessity of the "rites of the Church" for the dying, whether it be the Lord's Supper in Protestantism, or the Confessional and Extreme Unction in Romanism.

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

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

justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. iv. 25 ; v. 1).

God *can accept nothing short of perfection*: and who could stand before Him on the ground of his own merits and be pronounced perfect? Has He not recorded it for our enlightenment, that He considers "*there is none that doeth good ; there is none righteous, no not one*"? Who, knowing that "God requireth that which is past," dare be judged for his sins and expect to escape damnation? "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Eccles. iii. 15 ; Ps. cxliii. 2).

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

A mariner does not send up his "distress rocket" for lifeboat assistance until he has been brought to absolute despair as to his own ship. And so with the real believer. He has no doubt, no uncertainty, either as to his own lost condition or as to the trustworthiness of the Lord



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Take a supposed case by way of illustration. A certain sea-captain knows that the master of another vessel makes a practice, while afloat, of living in ease and careless self-indulgence, instead of maintaining the constant watchfulness that becomes him. He will allow any member of the crew to take control of the ship and guide it according to his own peculiar will and fancy. One day, while together in harbour, he says to this careless commander, "If I acted on board my ship as report says you do; if I did not keep a close watch on my crew and hold them to their proper posts of duty; if I allowed them to control *me* instead of my controlling them—I should expect to see my vessel brought to a complete wreck some day, even though I had for years been giving instruction in navigation to others." In a similar way the apostle speaks when he says: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." SCRIPTURE NEVER SUPPOSES THE TRUE CHRISTIAN TO BE CHARACTERISED BY A SINFUL COURSE. On the contrary, a desire for holiness according to God and a shrinking from sin are ensured by his new birth. True, he still possesses a fallen, sinful nature, and is therefore liable to fall into sin. But is he therefore given up? No. It is because he is "*sealed unto the day of redemption*" that he is exhorted not to

grieve the Holy Spirit of God (Eph. iv. 30). And should he sin, there is a provision for his restoration. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Discipline, rebuke and chastening may come in, but all to bring about the restoration of his soul to communion with the Father.

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

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

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

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

Once more we ask, Is this the language of "awful uncertainty"? The very opposite. We close our remarks by quoting those words of the Lord Jesus Himself in John v. 24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He

that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." To this we boldly add—

SINCE GOD HAS SPOKEN, EVERY MAN MAY BE SURE.

---

## HAPPY SERVANTS WANTED.

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

Then, later on in history, we read, "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward" (Job v. 7). But God interferes for man in his misery. Grace brings in a complete change—brings in salvation. Gladness attends the advent of the Saviour, and as soon as Jesus was born into the world God took care to announce the same by special messenger. "Behold," said the angel to the shepherds, "I bring you *good tidings of great joy*, which shall be to all people" (Luke ii. 10).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Eternally loved and infinitely blessed, but NOT HAPPY!

With privileges so many, with honours so great, with

a portion so choice, with prospects so brilliant, but NOT HAPPY!

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

Angels for His servants; Jesus, the Son of God, his Friend; God's presence his home—but NOT HAPPY!

How could such a man serve acceptably the "happy God"? Just think of such a thing!

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

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

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

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

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

And if you want to judge of vital Christianity, look at someone, however poor in this world's goods, who is "rooted and grounded in love," who is under the culture of the Father, as a plant of His own planting, who is watered by the ministry of the Spirit, warmed by the

sunshine of the Lord's gracious favour, and giving forth the fragrance of His own precious name to all who come near him.

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

---

### "NEVER."

**D**ID it ever strike you, dear reader, that the same word which yields sweetest consolation to the true believer effectually extinguishes every ray of hope for the unbeliever, and leaves him nothing but darkness and utter despair? That word heads this little paper.

To make this the more distinct, let us ask two questions, which, from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ, are both answered by this very word.

1. Can the man or woman, who dies in unbelief, *ever* be saved? Mark the solemn answer—NEVER!

2. Can the one who has been born again of the Spirit of God *ever* be lost? NEVER!

Now if this weighty little word were but the utterance of feeble man, to quote it might be of little moment. For example, the apostle Peter used it on two important occasions in his history, but only displayed thereby his own utter weakness—"Though all shall be offended because of Thee," he said, "yet will I *never* be offended" (Matt. xxvi. 33).

Yet what followed? Was he not as vehement in the denial of his Master, as, a few short hours before, he had been vehement in the pledge of his faithfulness?

Then again, in John xiii. 8, we find him saying to the Lord, "Thou shalt *never* wash my feet"; and yet, the next moment, only too glad to submit to even more than his gracious Master purposed. So we see that Peter's "*never*" was proved to be as weak as water, and rendered utterly worthless by the first test brought to bear upon it. But let *God* say "*never*," and who shall gainsay it? Who can twist *His* "*never*" so as to bring it within the bounds of human possibility? Nay, who dare try? Who? Alas! it *has* been tried, and, still worse, professed followers of Christ—preachers and teachers—either in blind ignorance or daring self-will, have done it. How deeply solemn!

But let us turn to God's Word, and there find *His* answer to the questions just proposed.

Mark ix. 43-48 bears directly upon the first, and though, for want of space, I shall quote only one of these solemn verses, I would beg you to read, slowly and thoughtfully, the whole passage.

Verse 43 runs thus: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go *into hell, into the fire that NEVER shall be quenched.*"

Now, mark this well, I pray you: not only is the fire "*not quenched*" (see verses 44, 46, 48), but, as the Lord repeats again in verse 45, it "*never shall be.*"

And yet, in the very face of such unmistakable language, poor foolish man (wise in his own conceits) would seek, by the breath of human argument, to quench that "fire." He would fain treat the gracious Saviour's solemn warnings as mere idle threats, or persuade his alarmed conscience that, if there *is* a hell, it will only be of limited duration, and that, after a few thousand years of punishment, there will an end to it. But what God said of some who made light of His gracious warnings,

in Jeremiah's days, solemnly applies to these human reasoners of modern times: They "*SHALL know whose words shall stand, MINE, or THEIRS*" (Jer. xliv. 28). Consider it well, then. "*NEVER SHALL BE QUENCHED*" is the unchanging word of the Lord. There it stands on record as it fell from the lips of the righteous Judge and gracious Saviour. There it stands, and, as God is true, there it *shall* stand for ever. Not all the craft and power of Satan, nor all the tears of the weeping lost, will ever avail to quench that fire—*never!* NEVER!

Be warned in time, dear unsaved reader, lest too late you awake some day to the awful discovery, that when the Lord Jesus Christ warned sinners of the fire that "*never shall be quenched,*" He meant what He said! Remember, it will not be possible then to correct your fatal mistake.

But "*why will ye die?*" Why ruthlessly push from you the outstretched hand of mercy? Christ still waits at the Father's right hand, and while He thus waits "*whosoever will*" may come.

"Thousands have fled to His spear-piercèd side;  
Welcome they all have been, none were denied."

Men, with crimes of deepest dye, have come and been washed from every crimson stain in His precious blood. The hardest of men have had their hearts melted and won by His mighty love. And why should *you* still refuse Him?

Be entreated. Fall at His feet even now; and, oh, *what* a welcome the poor prodigal will get! What arms of love will encircle him! His sins will all be forgiven, and all forgotten too. "*Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins*" (Acts x. 43). Again I beseech you to beware of trifling with such momentous issues.

"Resist not the Spirit, no longer delay,  
God's gracious entreaties *may end with to-day.*"



And then a long eternity of despair in that "fire unquenchable" will certainly be yours.

May God, in rich mercy, save you from such an appalling doom.

But, it may be, that some fellow-believer, who reads these pages, may be saying, "Though I can and do believe that 'never' answers the first question, I cannot as readily accept it as an answer to the second."

Well, then, on what ground do you accept it as answering the first? And why do you believe that the *punishment is eternal*; that the fire of hell *never* will be quenched?

You reply, that when the Son of God said, "Never shall be," the matter was for ever settled.

Certainly. Whenever He spake, He was simply uttering the "words of God;" so that to receive His testimony is to set to your seal that *God* is true (John iii. 33, 34).

Now, then, turn with me to other words of this same blessed One—words none the less plain and unmistakable (John x. 27–30): "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they *shall never* perish, neither *shall* any one pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand."

Just take your pencil and write down the two important words we have been considering in Mark ix. 43, and then beneath them write the two found in John x. 28, thus:—

"NEVER SHALL."

"SHALL NEVER."

Look at them honestly, as before Him who once uttered them, and say which you consider to be more worthy of your trust. Surely *both* are equally true, and therefore equally worthy of being received.

"Ah, yes," you say; "and I believe that Christ's sheep

shall never perish, if ——” Stop there! Why did you not say that the fire “never shall be quenched, *if* ——”?

Ah, reader, there are no “ifs” about the matter! “Never shall” and “shall never” are alike the words of the Son of God, and must stand or fall together. Fall, did I say? Nay. “The word of our God shall *stand* for ever” (Isa. xl. 8). “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away” (Matt. xxiv. 35). And again, in this very chapter (John x. 35), we are told that “the Scripture *cannot* be broken.” “Every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him. *Add thou not unto His words*, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Prov. xxx. 5, 6).

It is our wisdom not to reason about His words, not to add to them or take from them to suit our own ideas, but to receive them by simple faith, and rest our souls upon them.

But it may be asked, “Who are the sheep of Christ?”

Well, every true believer is a “sheep.” The Lord said to the unbelieving Jews in that day, “*Ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep*” (v. 26).

Now, if the true believer is a sheep of Christ, and if the Great and Good Shepherd has given us His word for it, that no sheep of His shall ever perish, why not honour His blessed word, and take the comfort for your trembling soul which He desires you to have?

But it may be further objected, “May not some of these ‘sheep’ turn out very badly after all, and fall sadly and deeply into sin?” Of this there can be no doubt whatever. But there is another question it may be helpful for us to consider first: *viz.*, Did not the Shepherd who uttered such assuring words about His sheep know at the time He uttered them how every one of these very sheep would “turn out”? Most certainly He did. This very chapter is witness of it (v. 15).

When He said, "I lay down My life for the sheep," was He thinking only of His then disciples? Look at the very next verse: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold" (*i.e.* the Jewish fold): "them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one flock, and one Shepherd." "*Must* bring." Why this "must"? Ah! there is, in that little word, the gracious constraint of His own love; just as there was a righteous necessity, because of God's holiness and our guilt, in that same word to Nicodemus—"The Son of Man *must* be lifted up." Oh, what a Saviour He is!

Without doubt, then, He had, at that moment, the whole of His flock before His mind. And, let me ask, was He going to die for them without knowing their sins beforehand? Impossible! Did He not let Peter understand that He knew *his* sins beforehand? Yet, of Peter with the rest, He could say, "Shall *never* perish." No doubt Satan earnestly desired to pluck that sheep out of the Good Shepherd's hand. "But," said Jesus, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Precious assurance! Just notice here, in passing, that we have three distinct persons brought before us—"the Shepherd," "a sheep," and the "roaring lion," seeking whom he may devour, as Peter himself speaks of Satan afterwards. Now the question comes, Who is to have that sheep? the "Shepherd" or the "lion"? "Satan hath *desired* to have you," was the Lord's word to Peter. But can he *accomplish* that desire? That is the vital question. Did he try? He did. And, as far as the "sheep" was concerned, he would have come off victorious; for Peter could not keep himself, though he *thought* he could. But He who was going to lay down His life for the sheep knew as well how to *restore* by His intercession as to *save* by His death. "*I have prayed for thee.*" "The Lord is my Shepherd." "He restoreth my soul."

Not the feeblest, nor the most faulty, sheep of Christ will Satan ever get. Blessed be God for that! If we had been told that even *one* would be tempted away and devoured we should each one of us be saying, "I fear *that* one will be *myself*." But not so. The Father gave Him the "sheep" (John x. 29). And He says two all-important things about them in connection with their being His Father's gift to Him:—

1. That He GIVES ETERNAL LIFE to *as many as the Father gave Him* (John xvii. 2).

2. He says, "Those that *Thou gavest Me* I have kept, and NONE OF THEM IS LOST" (John xvii. 12). And afterwards, "Of them which *Thou gavest Me* HAVE I LOST NONE" (John xviii. 9).

And what is the secret of their being kept thus? Is it *their* love or *their* faithfulness? No! Most emphatically, NO! Not *their* love, but *His*.

"Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto *the end*" (John xiii. 1).

Peter might fall—*did* fall, in spite of himself. He utterly broke down, and that when he meant to do his best. But had his blessed Master's love broken down in consequence? No, no! Peter's *word*, too, had fallen to the ground. Is the word of the Lord to fall likewise? Never!

Could you not understand Peter saying, when he heard the cock crow on that eventful morning, and when the thought of his sin burst upon him with all its depressing power, "*Now*, my Master will for ever turn His back upon me!" Nay, Peter. The very opposite of that. See, what grace! Why His face is turned towards His erring disciple immediately, and that loving look—with all its unspoken language—broke his heart, and he went out to weep bitterly.

Ah! no, dear fellow-Christian; no one is able to pluck

us out of His mighty hand, or rob us of a place in His loving heart! Indeed He speaks of His sheep in somewhat the same way in which He speaks of His own life (compare John x. 18, 28). Of His own life He could say, "No man taketh *it* from Me." Of His sheep He says, "Neither shall any man" (or any one) "pluck *them* out of My hand." And, in another place, He says, "Because *I* live, *ye* shall live also." Colossians iii. 4 states that He *is* our life; and in the previous verse, "Your life is *hid* with Christ in God." And again, in 1 John v. 11, "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."

How eternally secure, then, is every sheep of Christ! It is no surprise to *Him*, when, to use a familiar expression, they turn out badly. He knew all about them to start with; and, notwithstanding all, died for them. And now He never takes His eye off one of them, but lives to support them in their weakness, and to serve them, as their *Advocate*, if they sin (1 John ii. 1). This all-prevailing advocacy of His is the means which He employs to bring a failing believer to repentance and confession of his sins, and thus to restore communion.

But will not the knowledge of such unchanging love make us careless in our walk?

The very opposite. It is this love of Christ that constrains those who have really tasted its heavenly blessedness *not* to live unto themselves, as once they did, but to Him who died for them and rose again (2 Cor. v. 15). And if, in their folly and self-will, they *do* stray from His sheltering side, He will certainly never rest until He has brought them back, though He has to use His chastening hand, and deal heavy strokes, to accomplish it; and all this because of what they are to *His* heart and to His Father's.

How blessed, then, thus to be kept and cared for all



life's journey through, till in glory we meet Him who died for us; and all, I repeat, because of what *His* love was, though He knew, at the start, all that ever *we* should be!

Till that day let us never forget that *He is able to keep us from falling*, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy (Jude 24). And not only "able to keep," but "*able also to save them to the uttermost* that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. vii. 25).

Finally, let no mere cold, lifeless professor dream that these precious assurances apply to him. Judas was a splendid professor, and outwardly made a better show than Peter did. The friendly kiss looked better, far better, than the denying oath. Yet He who searches all hearts said of Judas, "One of you is a *devil*" (John vi. 70). And at last we read that he went "*to his own place*" (Acts i. 25).

This is a day of easy-going outward religiousness, in which it is both easier and more popular to *profess* Christ than to join rank with the openly infidel and profane. Success in business is too often, alas! in close alliance with the renting of a pew in church or chapel. But I solemnly urge that it is *not* to such that "never perish" applies. Another "never," found in Matthew vii. 22, 23, applies to such—"Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?" That was *their* profession. Now listen to Christ's: "Then will I *profess* unto them, *I NEVER knew you*: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity."

But, as we have seen, He says, in John x., "*I KNOW My sheep*"; so that if these had ever been "sheep" He

certainly could not say to them, “I NEVER knew you.” Believest thou this, my reader?

God grant that you may be brought to see, and honestly confess, that the “never” of grace is as great a reality as the “never” of judgment; and, on the other hand, that the eternity of the unbeliever’s damnation is as distinctly marked in God’s Word as the eternity of the believer’s blessing.

---

“ON THE TREE.” “IN OUR HEARTS.”

(EXTRACT FROM A GOSPEL ADDRESS.)

GREAT things have been accomplished for you, dear believer in Christ; but God’s heart will never be at rest until you know it, because you will never *enjoy* it till you know it, and you will never *know* it till you believe it. I want to speak of a few of the simplest blessings of the gospel, but before I begin I solemnly warn any unbeliever here, that so long as he remains an unbeliever not one of these blessings are his. It is quite possible to pass muster among other professed Christians; but the question is, Are you really a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ? If not, God distinctly declares that His judgment rests upon you. Therefore when I speak of these blessings do not make a mistake in the matter. Not one of them belongs to an unbeliever, though every one of them belongs to the feeblest Christian. It is not a question of how much faith you have; you might have very great faith, but if it rests in something short of the blood of Christ you will be lost for ever. I might have very great faith in a vessel when I go on board her, but if she is capsized in mid-ocean my faith in the vessel does not avail me much.

Some are troubled because they cannot remember the time when they were really converted. It was such a

gradual work with them that they cannot fix a special date. They hear of someone who can fix the exact hour, and because *they* cannot do so they are troubled about it. Now I could not tell you what awoke me this morning. I could not tell you exactly what hour I awoke. I could not tell you how many minutes it took to fully wake me up. But one thing I know, *I am awake now*. Perhaps you may not be able to point to the exact day when you believed in Jesus; but can you look into His blessed face in glory and say, "Lord, Thou art worthy of my confidence, and Thou hast got it"? If so, you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. It was God who produced the sense of need in your soul. It was the Spirit's work to bring you to repentance, and give you desires after Christ; and if you have come to Him in the most trembling way possible, He declares that believing on Him you shall never be confounded.

Now there are two things in these verses I want specially to bring before you. One is, that which has taken place *outside* the believer; and the other, what takes place *within* him. Many confound these two things, and are made miserable; they are looking inside for that which only an outside look can produce. Look carefully at the two verses, and you will see what I mean, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter ii. 24). "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. v. 5). Note the words—

"ON THE TREE"

and

"IN OUR HEARTS."

God does not tell us that we get justified through the Holy Ghost shedding abroad His love in our hearts, but that we are justified, that is, saved from all charge of sin, through Him who went to the tree and died for us.

The only One who can give us peace about our sins is the One who bore their judgment. The *Holy Ghost* did not do this. Christ did. Speaking of Jesus our Lord raised from the dead, Paul says, in Romans iv. 25, "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

Now if the Son of God, who knew no sin, was delivered *for* our offences, the guilty sinner, believing on Him, the risen One, is delivered *from* his offences. Some people seem to think they can be saved by believing that God loves them well enough to pass by their sins without judgment; that He loves them so well that He thinks as lightly of their sins as they do. But they only betray their utter ignorance of the God they speak about. I doubt much if such souls were ever really in the presence of God. They can sentimentalise about God's love at the expense of His holiness, but God saves sinners *righteously*. Romans iii. shows that He cannot save me because *I* am righteous. Nothing can be plainer than that, because it says, "There is none righteous." But the great wonder of the gospel is this, He saves because *He* is righteous. Now God's righteousness does two things. He righteously deals with my sins in the person of Jesus on the cross, and He righteously places the One who died for me on the throne of His glory. In order, therefore, to have a full gospel you must have these two righteous acts before you.

In the country I once saw an old guide-post. The arms were so much out of adjustment that instead of pointing horizontally, one was pointing up to the sky, and the other down toward the earth. I said to the friend who was with me, "That is a very poor guide-post but a very good preacher." The faithful preacher must point in two directions—down to the cross where the judgment was received, the work finished; and up to the glory where the Man sits who finished it.

---

## THE CULPRIT'S PLACE.

## WAITING FOR THE SENTENCE.

**I**T was a solemn day for that prisoner as he waited for the verdict. A plainly-declared law had been broken, and they had "found him" in the transgression. Moreover, the penalty also had been pronounced, and that penalty *death*. Thus the statute ran, "The soul that doeth aught presumptuously" (marginal reading, "with a high hand"), "whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken His commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him" (Num. xv. 30-33).

The commandment had forbidden "*any work*" being done on the Sabbath day (Exod. xx. 10), and witnesses had found this man gathering sticks on that day. Notice the account of what followed. "And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him" (v. 34). There was a double inquiry.

First. Had he sinned against light and knowledge, *i.e.* "with a high hand"?

Second. In case he had, how should the death sentence be carried out?

The first was known to the man himself, his own conscience bearing witness. The second was distinctly pronounced by God: "The man shall surely be put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp" (v. 35). Here was judgment without mercy, and carried out to its extremity.

## EXECUTION STAYED.

More than fifteen hundred years after the event just referred to, another culprit is brought before us on the



page of sacred history. This time it is a woman, but, no less than the man just referred to, she is verily guilty—guilty of a deliberate breach of a known law. Like the first case, there is not a breath of excuse from the culprit's lips, while denial would only add iniquity to iniquity. They had each been "taken in the very act."

Up to this point, therefore, the two cases run pretty much together. But what a contrast follows! Her sinful act had in itself "reproached" the Lord, though such may not have been the intent of her act (Num. xv. 30). But there was at that very spot, in the very bosom of her accusers, a wickedness still more deeply seated, notwithstanding that it came in the garb of a repute for scriptural knowledge, in the Scribes, or of a pretentious zeal for religious ceremonial in the Pharisees. For they would, if they could, use one form of reproach to entangle Him in another. If the sin of the law-breaker was a reproach to the holy Law-giver, it was because "He loved righteousness and hated iniquity." But if they could only press Him to make light of the sin in His kindness to the sinner, it would be a greater reproach still. So we read they say unto Him, "Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but *what sayest Thou?*" This they said tempting Him, that they might have to accuse *Him*" (John viii. 5, 6). No doubt they reasoned thus: If He shall say, "Put her to death," what will become of His reputation for grace and kindness? If He shall say, "Let her go free," He will be in conflict with Moses and the law!

Poor blinded ones! They had no eyes to see that the Law-giver Himself was there, and that He who passed sentence on the law-breaker (Num. xv.) decided also who should be his executioners, and where the place of his

execution. "All the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp."

The god of this world was blinding these cavilling Pharisees as to the holy dignity of Him whom by craft they sought to catch. But He stands upon His sovereign right notwithstanding, and says, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her"! As though He had said, "If you take the place of Moses and put this woman in ward till you inquire what shall be done to her, you shall have an answer so divinely righteous that the law-giver himself could find no fault with it."

Instantly a faithful witness rises up and effectually disqualifies every one of them, a witness who was privy to their own dark deeds. "*Conscience*" drags them to the bar, and summarily convicts every one of them. Stripping off their cloak of self-righteousness, and covering them with shame and confusion, he made them glad to hurry away from the presence of Him who could read them through and through.

This holy, blessed Son of God was now left "*alone*." Yes, as the Executor of God's judgment, how absolutely He *must* stand "alone"! No one but He is equal to that solemn office, for none but He is absolutely without sin.

But now comes a very serious question. *Can sin escape without righteous judgment?* To this there is only one answer: IMPOSSIBLE. How, then, is it to be carried out and sinners be saved?

#### THE SENTENCE EXECUTED.

Here we come to that which must ever be the wonder of all created intelligences—how the execution of the sentence and the deliverance of the sentenced can be rightly reconciled. "These things," we are told, "the angels desire to look into"; and well they may, for the only solution of this "mystery of love" is in the fact

that the only executor of God's judgment on man's sin has been to the spot where judgment was demanded and has answered for him by laying down His own precious life-blood in his stead.

Was the law-breaker (Num. xv. 31) to be "*cut off*" *with his own iniquity upon him*? Then, that is *my* desert also; I own it, I own it with repentance. I deserve a sentence equally severe.

But tidings have reached me—tidings from God Himself—"tidings of peace." What is this news? It is this: the holy soul of the Sinless One has been made "an offering for sin" (Isa. liii. 10). It declares that Jehovah hath laid on Him my iniquities (*v.* 6), that He was "*cut off*" out of the land of the living," and that God has had it thus recorded: "For the transgression of My people was He stricken" (*v.* 8); that "He was wounded for our transgressions," that He was "bruised for our iniquities," that "the chastisement of our peace was upon Him," and that "with His stripes we are healed."

"He took the guilty culprit's place,  
And suffered in his stead.  
For man—oh, miracle of grace!—  
For man the Saviour bled."

The Sabbath-breaker was "*cut off*" with his *own* iniquities upon Him. Jesus was "*cut off*" with *my* iniquities upon Him. But death could not hold Him; that was impossible. He is risen. He left the grave as the witness that the whole question of sin had been settled, and the power of death for ever broken for all who believe in Him. "HE WENT INTO DEATH AS AN INVADER AND CAME OUT OF IT AS CONQUEROR." He brought, as the Risen One, the "tidings of peace" to His followers.

More than this, He has gone up to heaven and sent down the Holy Ghost to assure them that there is now "no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus"

(Rom. viii. 1); that, as another has aptly put it, "He who loved righteousness and hated iniquity" has "died for the iniquity He hated, that He might establish the righteousness He loved." So that if He could say of Himself personally, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin" (John viii. 46), the Holy Spirit can say of His people, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. viii. 33, 34).

What think ye of such a Saviour, my reader? If He is worthy of your confidence, make His acquaintance early, and be at rest.

---

## RICH TOWARD GOD.

(FROM A GOSPEL ADDRESS.)

**P**RESENT peace is not all that we possess: we have something to look forward to. There is a wonderful prospect before us. I can for myself personally assure you, dear friends, that I am conscious of having most brilliant expectations.

I often say to unconverted people, "You have no need to *pity* those who believe in Christ, you may blame them, and have good ground for doing so; nay, more, when you have said all that you have to say on that score we shall have more to add still. But if you blame us, don't pity us, we are so wonderfully well off. I do not call that man rich who can, in a few years, spend his fortune. I call that man rich who never can come to the end of his fortune." Another has remarked, "The richest unbeliever has wealth here, but cannot keep it; the poorest Christian has wealth yonder, and cannot lose it." "He is rich toward God." Cheer up, fellow-Christian, and rejoice in

the hope of the glory of God. We are nearer home to-night than ever. The Lord is coming, and we shall be off directly.

But what of you who are not saved? The door of mercy is about to close; not as a third-class carriage door closes when, as the train is just starting, the porter hastily slams it, but as that fleecy cloud closes upon and locks itself with its neighbour-cloud, shutting from view the last bit of blue. It will close *silently*, and none will be aware of it but the watchers. May my hearers be found among them. But in order to this your sins must be washed away in the precious blood of Christ, and your heart attracted to Himself personally as your own Saviour. Is it so?

---

## WHY DOES MAN HATE THE BIBLE?

“**T**HAT book” (said a caviller one day, speaking of the Word of God) “is not fit to be read to my children.” Would it not have been better if he had paused a moment, and asked, “If all the truth of my *own* history had been written down, would it be fit to read to my children?”

Why does man hate the Scriptures so much? “It is a collection of *fables*,” he says. “But this cannot be the real reason, for if you accept this charge, Æsop and others have, before now, made a collection of fables, and he does not hate *them*.” “It is only a history,” he says, “and there are mistakes in it.” But even if this *were* true, why do not other histories get a share of his hatred? “It has so many contradictions in it.” How glad he seems to be when he *thinks* he has found one. But it is easier to make the charge of a so-called contradiction than to honestly point it out. But if he actually found a thousand (in reality he cannot find



one), it would be no reason for these strong feelings of undisguised bitterness. He says the story of Jesus Christ is only a myth, that He never existed as He is spoken of in the Bible—that the Bible statements are not true. But people don't get angry about *Grecian* mythology; they don't get madly excited over the stories of Jupiter or Hercules, because *they* are not true. Ah, no, all this cavilling lacks the clear ring of genuine honesty. The *true* reason must be sought elsewhere. "Thy word is a . . . *light* unto my path," said David (Ps. cxix. 105), and "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil *hateth the light*, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" [*shown as they are*] (John iii. 19, 20, New Trans.). This is the true secret.

A farmer in Lincolnshire said that he had not opened the Bible for nearly twenty years—that he *dare* not do it. Every page seemed to condemn him.

The Word of God is as the eye of God upon the soul of man, and because he cannot bear it, he tries his utmost to set it aside and get rid of it.

A certain princess in one of the South African native tribes, though only a plain-featured, commonplace sort of creature, was greatly flattered by those who wished to please her, by being told she was not only the most lovely woman in her tribe, but that her face was the most beautiful on earth! About that time an English hand-glass was brought to her. She had never before seen any such thing in her life. On receiving the mirror, she went into her hut to take one good, long, delightful look at her own beauty. But when she held up the glass and saw her own face (anything but handsome), she was so greatly annoyed that she lifted her royal fist and dashed the glass to pieces, and then made a law that no looking-glass should ever again be brought

into the tribe. Why this rage? It was not the material glass she quarrelled with, but with the unpalatable revelation it made of what *she* really was. But did breaking the mirror change a single feature? No. In this respect it left her as it found her.

Take another illustration. A rich Chinaman, who visited this country, took great delight in a beautiful microscope which was shown him. Having purchased one for himself, he took it back to China with him. One day he chanced to examine a tiny bit of his boiled dinner rice, when, to his horror, he discovered that there were actually tiny living creatures in it! Now it was part of his creed not to eat anything that once had animal life. What was to be done now? He was not only particularly fond of his rice, but it was the staple of his daily food. He thought he only saw one way out of it. He would destroy the instrument that pointed out the distasteful fact, and accordingly dashed to pieces the offending microscope!

Now, foolish as these two heathens may appear in the light of ordinary civilised common sense, yet the course pursued by those who attack the Scripture is quite as foolish. They talk as though *facts* could be altered as easily as *opinions* are changed. Alas that man should thus deceive himself, and by madly flinging the friendly "lamp" from him, leave himself in such utter darkness.

Neither the negro-princess nor the Chinaman saw a way out of their inevitable difficulty. Whereas, if the Word of God exposes what *we* really are, if it leaves no question as to what our conduct really involves, it tells us of a righteous deliverance from both, in the death of Christ. If it exposes my moral ugliness, it shows me that there is a way of standing before God, clad in the comeliness of Another—the beauty of Christ. God Himself has devised this way, as it is written: "*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). If it shows the character of what I have been doing all my life; if it shows the ultimate result of so continuing, it tells, with equal plainness, of what Another has done, the Lord Jesus Christ, and that, through faith in His precious blood, I may get forgiveness of the past, and power for a new walk in the future.

The Word of God holds out true happiness for every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ—"joy and peace in believing"; "joy unspeakable, and full of glory." Tens of thousands have proved it through life, and tested its reality upon a dying pillow. What a treasure it is to the Christian!

Does infidelity hold out anything really worth having even in this world, or anything better when the journey of life is over, than "a leap in the dark"? It does not.

It is said that a Mr. Wilmot, an infidel, when dying, laid his thin, trembling hand on the Bible, and exclaimed solemnly, and with more than ordinary energy, "The only objection against this book is—A BAD LIFE."

Be it your wisdom, dear reader, to come to the Word of God with open bosom, and honestly face the truth. If it detect the evil in you, it will direct you as to how to get rid of it. If in its light you see yourself a sinner, the same light will give you to read that faithful saying, so "worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." If it make known that man in his natural state will not do for God, it will make equally plain that God has found Another Man in whom all His delight can centre, and that every believer stands accepted in that Man. May this blessing be yours. Take one step in the light now, and it will never be yours to take a "leap in the dark" at the end.

---

FULLY DISCHARGED ; OR, "OUT ON  
BAIL"—WHICH ?

WHEN, in the days of Israel's history in the land of Canaan, a man discovered that he had taken the life of another, he had the privilege, according to God's merciful arrangement, of fleeing for shelter to a "city of refuge." Within the walls of that city the avenger of blood could not lay a finger upon him. So far, and for a time, therefore, although shut up, he was safe. But it is important to notice that every such refugee entered the gates of the city *twice*: the first time only with a wavering hope, the second with absolute certainty. Let us consider the secret of this a little more closely.

*Any* man who had taken human life could flee to a city of refuge. Even the *murderer* might enter the open gates, and for the time be sheltered; but it was only "*until*"—"until he stand before the congregation for judgment" (Joshua xx. 6). "If any man hate his neighbour, and lie in wait for him, and rise up against him, and smite him mortally that he die, and fleeth unto one of these cities: then the elders of his city *shall send and fetch him thence*, and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die" (Deut. xix. 11, 12).

But if, on reliable evidence, it was discovered that the manslayer had caused death *unwittingly*, he was restored once more to the city of refuge to which he had fled. Thus we read: "The congregation shall judge between the slayer and the revenger of blood according to these judgments: and the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood, and the *congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled*" (Num. xxxv. 24, 25).

With what different feelings, therefore, must he have entered the *second* time. The first entrance was with a

mingling of hopes, and fears, and peradventures as to what the issue would really be. He was, it is true, safe for a time; but how God's appointed tribunal would show up his case was the one absorbing question. Full evidence, pro and con, would be sure to be forthcoming at the solemn and critical day of assize that inevitably awaited him. What would the elders of his city say when they heard all? All he could do was to hope for the best. He thought of this feature of his case, perhaps, and hoped; of that, and feared. But not so when he next entered. He could then say, "All the witnesses have been called, my case has been thoroughly investigated, and the divinely ordered court has declared that I am entitled to the shelter of the city of refuge. My very misery has placed me in a more privileged position than ever I knew before, within a Levitical city; it has set me among those who serve in God's house and attend continually at God's altar. Until the death of the high priest I share in the privileges of those who have Jehovah Himself for their portion" (Deut. xviii. 1, 2; Num. xxxv. 6).

Now it would seem that many souls in the present day have never (to use the figure) had this second entrance. They have, in a sense, fled to Jesus, "fled for refuge," but they have not yet seen that at the cross their case was righteously gone into by God Himself, that their sins were borne there and then by Jesus, and their righteous due received once for all by Him. Yet how careful the inspired apostle is, in the Epistle to the Romans, to make this plain, showing that God can now be just while He justifies the ungodly sinner that believes in Jesus. All that *could* come out *has* come out. All that deserved judgment *has* received its full penalty. Not only have sins been borne, but the man that committed them has, in Christ's death, received his judicial sentence also, and the believer now lives before God in the life of Him



who has been raised from the dead, for ever beyond sin's dominion and condemnation. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

Not long ago a railway signalman in the north was tried for manslaughter. Through sleeping at his post a train had been wrecked and precious lives lost. There were many extenuating circumstances, however, in his case, and instead of being imprisoned he was let out on bail, being bound over to appear at any future time should fresh evidence come out to convict him.

How many professing Christians there are who, in the state of their souls, occupy this man's unenviable position. Instead of rejoicing in the *full and righteous discharge* which God holds out through the death and resurrection of His beloved Son, they are only "out on bail." Further convicting evidence, they fear, may yet come out, and then all that they can expect is condemnation—an eternity in the prison-house of the lost after all. But, oh, fellow-believer, all *has* come out, and God Himself now stands as the believer's Justifier.

"The trembling sinner feareth  
That God can ne'er forget,  
But one full payment cleareth  
His memory of all debt.

"When nought beside could ease us,  
Or set our souls at large,  
Thy holy work, Lord Jesus,  
Secured a *full discharge*."

How is it with you, my reader? Are you enjoying this "*full discharge*," and walking in the liberty of redemption? or are you only, to use our figure, "out on bail"?

"All thy sins were laid upon Him,  
Jesus bore them on the tree,  
*God who knew them laid them on Him,*  
And believing thou art free."

---

## FORGIVENESS :

WITHIN REACH AND OUT OF REACH.

(FROM A GOSPEL ADDRESS.)

I AM going to read for you one of the most encouraging announcements in the Word of God, and along with it one of the most solemn. You will find them both in Mark iii. 28, 29, "All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men." What a statement! And it is the highest authority who makes it. "All sins" forgiven!

But let us first notice the opening words of this gracious sentence, "Verily I say unto you." It is this that makes it so blessed, this "Verily" of Jesus—"Verily *I say* unto you."

Next notice the two words that follow, "*All sins.*" Do you hear *that*, drunkard? Do *you* hear it, dishonest man? "*All sins,*" even yours. What news for you, yea, for every class of sinners, in every degree of sin. Even the adulterer's sin is included, and all the other sins that usually go with it. Yes, and the swearer's sins too; for note what follows, "and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme." Surely this is enough to encourage men to come to Christ, even if there was not another verse of similar import in Scripture. "Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men." However degraded and horrible their character, however deeply dyed, however foul, Jesus declares they shall be forgiven. Sins against light, and under the protests of an upbraiding conscience; sins against the God of all grace, and sins against your fellow-men—all, all *may* be forgiven, and if you repent and believe the gospel they shall be. Could mercy go further? Could she extend her welcoming arms more widely? "Whosoever

believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43)—ALL SINS.

Perhaps you have said before now, "*I* have never done anybody any harm, and therefore feel no particular need of forgiveness." But are you *quite* sure of this? I wonder what God has thought of that sentence as it has fallen from your lips. You will do well to remember that He who listens to your words is well acquainted with your history also.

Take an illustration. You are a witness in a court of justice at the assizes. An acquaintance of yours stands in the dock, tried for murder. While the trial is proceeding (of course I am only supposing the case) the murdered man comes back to life. Entering the court, he looks round as if in search of someone, and finally fixes his eye on you. Then pointing his finger directly at you, he says, with thrilling earnestness, before judge and jury and the whole assembled court, "*He helped* to do it! Yes, he did; he *helped* the man in the dock to do it!" What would your feelings be, think you, under such circumstances? And is it not possible that more than one in this very room has, to say the least, helped the great "murderer" to ruin some precious soul? Your accomplices in sin may have gone. *She* may be in a Christless grave to-night: *he* beyond the reach of mercy. Yet each, if they could return to this room this moment, could point to you on this side, and to you on that, and say, "He helped to do it; she helped to ruin me!" *You* have been spared, it is true, but how can you, in the hearing of God, say that you never did anybody any harm? Oh, may God have mercy upon you, and bring you to true repentance this very hour, for the news in our text extends even as far as to you. Is it not marvellous? Oh, listen again! It is Jesus Himself who holds out to you a friendly hand and says, "*Verily*

*I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme."*

But there is another side to tell. Our text shows that there is such a thing as God's forgiveness being *beyond* a man's reach. Let us read the next verse in Mark iii. (v. 29), "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." It is not surprising that people have gone raving mad, and been sent to lunatic asylums, when they really believed, however mistaken they may have been, that there was no forgiveness for them.

If you knew for certain that some person in this room to-night would never be forgiven—say, some young man, in a certain dress, on a certain seat—would you not pity him? yea, would you not, from your *very heart*, pity him? Let us hope there is not, but let us not forget, that for the one who dies in his sins there *never will be* forgiveness (John viii. 21). We are bound to tell you, as plainly as words can convey the fact, that if you are that one you will be lost for ever. Oh, how can you treat your soul so lightly? Why, if you only cut your little finger, I venture to say you would have it carefully dressed; yet if you lost it entirely you would still have others left, but *soul* loss means *eternal* loss!

But return to our text. "*Hath never forgiveness.*" To whom, then, do these terrible words apply? Let us briefly consider. When the Jews of old saw the Lord Jesus casting out devils they could not deny the reality of the power displayed; but, as they hated Him, they attributed it to the power of darkness. They said, "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub the prince of devils."

But it may be asked, How was this the sin against the Holy Ghost? Well, they were wickedly attributing to Beelzebub what was really the work of the Spirit of God. Jesus said, "I cast out devils *by the Spirit of God.*" They

said, "He casteth out devils *by Beelzebub*." So that they were virtually calling the Holy Spirit of God the prince of devils.

Perhaps there is someone here who is in fear that he has been guilty of this unpardonable sin. I only ask, Do you then believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, in doing what He did on earth, was energised by Satan?

"Bad as I have been," you say, "and bad as I still am, I can, with all the energy of my heart, truly say, No, to this. I want Him for my Saviour, and this desire would be impossible if I really believed that He was energised by the wicked one. Why, if He had not been all love, all grace, all goodness, He would have sent me to hell long ago."

Look to Him then at once. *He*, who knows what you are, wishes this moment to have you as His own. He is looking through this world for needy, dying sinners such as you, that He may bless them.

A beloved, aged servant of Christ, Mr. Wigram, once told me of a gentleman who was for a long time in deep distress of soul. On one occasion his butler, a Christian man, was kneeling in one corner of the dining-room, while his master, in the other corner, was pouring out his burdened heart before God. "Oh, what a great sinner I am! Can there be mercy for me? What a great sinner I am!" This was his cry. He evidently seemed to think that his sins were too great to be forgiven. His faithful servant listened in silence till he could bear it no longer, and then, on his knees, crossed the room to where his master was kneeling, and said in earnest, tender tones, "Jesus is a great Saviour, master!" This turned the troubled one's thoughts from what *he* was to what *Christ* was, and his soul found peace.

Not only does a great sinner, when he repents of his sins, need a great Saviour, but the great Saviour rejoices to bless a great sinner.



Hear the Saviour's gracious announcement once more, "All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme." Will you not come to Him? Can you still neglect His great salvation? If you continue to turn a deaf ear to His message, it must be at your own peril, and we solemnly warn you that "*forgiveness never*" will, in such case, as surely and indelibly be stamped on your life-record as upon that of the blaspheming Jew whose eternal doom this verse contemplates.

But wherefore should it be thus? Christ died that we might be forgiven; He has been raised again for our justification. He is well worthy of our trust. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin; but without shedding of blood is no remission. God seeks, and by His grace *we* seek your present blessing. May you receive it as freely as He desires to bestow it, for His name's sake.

---

### GRACE.

IT is an immense comfort to know that, as believers, our only standing before God is in GRACE; and on this ground the best could not find a reason in himself why God *should* bless him, nor the worst a reason why He should not.

---

### THE HEEDED WARNING.

A MAN'S conduct in the sight of God is truly a serious matter, since the day is fixed for bringing every secret thing to light, and every wicked work to judgment. But it is by no means the only grave feature of His case. "*Where art thou?*" was the first sentence that fell from the lips of God upon the ear of fallen man. And

"Where art thou?" is a truly momentous question still. Many think it is *only* a question of outward behaviour, and that if by comparison with others they can, with self-satisfaction, put a balance of merit to their own account, they will therefore in the end be worthy of a place in heaven. As though God had thrown open the chance of heaven to mere human competition, and had allowed man to be his own umpire as to whether he merited it or not; as though He had never said, "By grace are ye saved through faith . . . not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 8, 9).

Now the fact is that there are *two* positions that man in this world can occupy. He may stand on the ground of his own history and supposed personal merits, and face the searching scrutiny of the day of judgment, or he may, through grace, renounce that ground as hopeless—as it surely is (Ps. cxliii. 2)—flee for refuge to Jesus, and, standing on the merits of One who bore the judgment for him, may know on the authority of God's Word that he is for ever beyond the reach of that judgment.

Take a simple illustration by way of suggesting the truth of these two positions.

In the extensive slate quarries near Bangor they have a fixed time for the blasting of the rocks. The writer happened to be walking through these quarries about this particular hour, when suddenly he was called upon by one of the workmen to halt. "Don't you understand what the ringing of that large bell means?" he inquired. Upon the writer acknowledging his ignorance, he added, "Then come here, and I will show you," and thereupon he took me to the ledge of a rock where no harm could happen to us, and from whence we could see all that was going on below. "If you look across there," he said, "in the direction from whence the sound of the bell is heard, you will see that a large flag is hoisted on a high pole.

This is the double signal that the fuses are about to be lighted and the blasting to commence." "But what is the sound of the trumpet that I hear?" "Oh, that is for those who are too far down to hear the bell, or see the flag."

Soon I saw that the warning had not been given in vain. Hundreds of men and boys could now be seen hastening to the caverns or clefts in the rock, or to other places of shelter, to hide themselves. One man seemed later than the rest, but he cleverly let himself down by means of a hanging rope, evidently placed there for the purpose, and then *ran* towards the place of refuge; and well for him that he did run, for he had only just reached the refuge when the first explosion was heard. And then crash, crash, crash, startled the ear from every side; now to the right, now above, now from unseen depths beneath; then a chorus of explosions together, till the mountain-sides echoed and re-echoed with their terrible thunder, and I felt that the workman who had arrested my steps had been a real friend to me, and deserved my heartiest thanks.

"But how is it," I said to my friend, "that when God warns sinners to flee from the wrath to come, and offers them a perfect shelter, that they heed it not, while not a single workman, young or old, in these Penryn slate quarries but took warning and fled for safety as soon as they heard or saw the signal?" To this the man had no satisfactory answer. What a tale it tells of man's hardened unbelief.

Are *you* still exposed, my reader, or have you fled for refuge? God has given assurance of an appointed day of judgment by raising His beloved Son from among the dead, and placing Him at His own right hand in glory. From thence comes the warning, "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused

Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth: but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven" (Heb. xii. 25, 26). And not only so, but God's "trumpet" of gospel testimony is still sounding here below. You have "obeyed" that gospel and fled to Christ, or you have "refused." Which? You stand as a child of Adam on your own merit, or, believing that judgment must be the lot of all who are found out of Christ, you have fled for refuge to Him who went into the place of judgment for you, and who gives to all who believe a place of security in Himself, beyond the reach of judgment, and beyond it for ever.

To go back to our figure. The best man in the Penryn slate quarries, if not sheltered, was in danger; while the worst man sheltered was safe.

Reader, where art thou? You cannot say you have never been warned. Your last gospel opportunity will come. How will you make use of it? How will you stand when the sound of your last warning has died on your ear?

"Haste, haste, haste,  
 Delay not from death to flee.  
 Oh, wherefore the moments in madness waste  
 While Jesus is calling thee!"

---

## A DROWNING MAN'S WISH, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

ABOUT twenty-five years ago, a young man, in the course of business, had occasion to visit a trading vessel from the Baltic, at that time lying in one of the ports of the Bristol Channel. He observed, on boarding her, that everything was in excellent "trim," as a sailor

would say; but it was upon entering the cabin that he saw what so deeply impressed him. Painted, in letters of gold, on a beam, in the most prominent place that could be found, were the following words, "SOLI DEO GLORIA" (*To God alone the glory*).

It was the captain's delight to explain the meaning of these words, and to give his reason for placing them there, to all who came on board his vessel. Even the German cabin-boy was called to tell, in his mother tongue, what the words expressed—To God alone the glory! What for? For a *double* salvation—the salvation of his body from a watery grave, of his soul from the jaws of hell. As nearly as memory will permit, let us hear his own tale, and see if it has no voice to us.

#### THE CAPTAIN'S STORY.

"Some years ago, while serving as mate on board a Baltic trader, we experienced, far away at sea, some very boisterous weather. So violently raged the storm, and so long, that our men became thoroughly worn out by incessant labour at the pumps. The water rapidly gained upon our disabled vessel, and it became sadly evident to everyone on board that she was fast foundering. Our case was utterly hopeless. The master of the ship gave way to despair, and retired to his cabin. At daybreak I climbed into the rigging, and to my great joy descried distinctly a sail on the horizon. At that time I was not a Christian; but it came to my memory that I had, when a boy at school, read somewhere in God's Holy Word, that *faith could remove mountains*. I reasoned, therefore, in my mind, that if I could only believe—'have faith,' I should, by means of the vessel just sighted, be saved from our sinking ship. But, immediately afterwards, I began to upbraid myself for thus thinking: was it not *tempting* God? And yet I could not help feeling that it was right to *trust* Him.



"I descended the rigging in order to convey to the captain the welcome tidings of the vessel just in view. I besought him, with all my energies, to cheer up and come on deck; and, if it were our lot to die, that we should all die together like men. But all my efforts were fruitless; the thought of his desolate family at home, and of his own hopeless condition, seemed to be completely crushing him. He only bade me pour upon the troubled waters some of the oil which we had on board, in order to lessen, if possible, the severity of the seas which were then breaking over us.

"On going back to the deck, I found that the ship we had noticed in the offing had evidently seen our signal of distress. Once more I returned to the captain; but even this pleasing intelligence failed to arouse him. What an anxious time it was! For though the friendly vessel was making her way towards us, ours was settling down, every minute lower and lower, into the water, and at last she sank with every soul on board. Even the boats went down with her. Thus did I find myself beneath the water, with nothing that my hand could lay hold of. In an instant the *past* became an awful *present*, as my history seemed to pass in review before me, and with it this thought filled my soul: *Oh, that I could reach the surface, and say, Lord, have mercy upon me; for then I think I could die happy!* In an instant I felt I was being borne upward. How, I knew not, until I discovered that a large ladder from the ship's hold, commonly used by the Baltic traders in those days, had, in rising to the top, carried me with it. Thus was my heart's deep longing speedily granted. '*To God alone the glory.*'"

How touching is this readiness on the part of God to meet any poor sinner that has a wish to turn to Him! Has he not said, "*Before they call, I will answer*" (Isa. lxxv. 24)? How strictly verified in this case! His

all-seeing eye penetrates to the depths of the mighty ocean. *He* knew, oh, how *well* He knew, all that was passing in that poor sailor's heart as he sank, within touch of death, in the foundered vessel. Not a word could he utter, but the wish was as well known to God as if uttered with a voice of thunder. Well may He be called "*the God of all grace*"—"rich in mercy"—"*rich unto ALL that call upon Him*"—"not willing that ANY should perish."

Dear reader, has a heart-felt cry for mercy ever reached His ear from *your* lips? It is high time to take the question to heart; for be sure of this, that if this "mate's" cry be not yours in time, the captain's despair, only a thousand times darker and deeper, will be yours in eternity! A sinner who sinks into the lake of fire will never dream of expressing the sinking seaman's wish: *Oh that I could reach the surface, and cry for mercy!*

"Of all hope bereft,  
And to judgment left,  
For ever to wail and to weep."

*Too late!* Awful word! Too late for mercy! Too late for ever!

A rejected Saviour, an insulted Lord, will be the righteous Judge at the great white throne. If His loving "Come" be blindly refused, His dreadful "Depart" must eternally be endured. When once the eyes are opened, dear reader, how deeply real it all is! But, you know, the rich man opened his in hell (Luke xvi. 23)! Are *you* still unconcerned? Then, I beseech you, ask yourself this question—

"How will *my* heart endure  
The terrors of that day,  
When heaven and earth, before His face,  
Astonished shrink away?"

Would you really be saved? Are you anxious, even now, to get this solemn question settled? Do, then, what those distressed seamen did in their water-logged vessel. They knew their efforts were useless, that their strength was expended, and their ship a hopeless wreck. What *could* they do? *They could only look outside themselves for succour and safety.* And look they did, with longing eyes, to every point of the compass, if perchance a friend, in the hour of need, might anywhere be found. And when at last they saw what they hoped might prove to be one, they found means of making known their deeply-felt need, and hoisted the flag of distress. But, even then, nothing was really assured to them. Would the distant vessel notice them? If she did, would her captain care to go out of his course to help them? And if both had been made sure to them, could their vessel hold out long enough for succour to reach them?

But how different is your case, awakened reader. The Man who once died for sinners upon the cross is seated now, a living Saviour, in the glory of God. Still He waits to be gracious to the vilest, and His blessed message still echoes through a dying world: "*Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth*" (Isa. xlv. 22). Had that sailor known the truth of this precious message, he need not even have waited to reach the surface. One look of need from his anxious heart would have secured a blessing from that loving Saviour *instantly!* Had he been as many fathoms deep as there were sins in his guilty history, while life remained in his body, and reason on her throne, it would have been just the same. Jesus is "*mighty to save*" (Isa. lxiii. 1), and as willing to do it as He is able. Bless His name for ever!

But to return to the captain's story.

“When I reached the surface I found two others of our crew; one was a seaman, a good swimmer, floating about amid small wreckage, the other was our cabin-boy. All three of us now laid hold of the large ladder, and waited with anxiety the approach of the rescuing vessel. Imagine our dismay when we saw her turn her head in another direction to pursue her own course!”

How different was this to the Saviour’s word, “Look unto Me, and *be ye saved*.” They looked, only to get the most heart-sickening disappointment. But how was this?

“It appeared that they had seen our ship sink, and, mistakenly thinking that they had sailed over the spot without seeing any traces of human life, they turned their helm and proceeded on their own way.”

“Then how were you saved at last?”

“Well, the captain’s mind, it seems, was ill at ease about it. ‘*Go back, go back!*’ whispered an inward voice. ‘Then for God’s sake *let us go back!*’ said the chief officer, upon learning from the captain what his feelings were. Accordingly, to our infinite delight, we saw, once more, that their vessel was making her way toward us, and ultimately they picked us up. On reaching the deck of the friendly vessel, I fell on my knees before them all, and thanked God for His merciful deliverance. To God alone I owed it; ‘*to God alone the glory.*’”

Reader, have *you* ever thanked God for your salvation—*your own salvation*? Or are you among the many who are kept, year after year, crying for mercy while clinging to the ten-stair ladder of their own law-keeping? The law is holy, and just, and good! but you are a guilty sinner, and therefore it is written: “*By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight*” (Rom. iii. 20). But, “by *Him* all that believe *are justified* from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law

of Moses” (Acts xiii. 39). It must be *salvation first ; good works next*. Works that flow from the knowledge of the love that has saved me are alone acceptable with Him. Add but a single good work to the Saviour’s merits, as a title for heavenly glory, and you diminish by so much the value of His precious blood, the extent of his finished work. May you rather know the blessedness of being “justified *freely by His grace* through the *redemption that in is Christ Jesus*” (Rom. iii. 24). Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light : who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son : in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col. i. 12–14). To God alone the glory, for such unbounded, unmerited blessing.

---

“THIS YEAR!” “THY DAY!”

“Thus saith the Lord . . . THIS YEAR thou shalt die.”

JEREMIAH xxviii. 16.

“If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this THY DAY, the things which belong unto thy peace ! but now they are hid from thine eyes.”—LUKE xix. 42.

A CERTAIN traveller, while passing through a vast forest, missed his track. Nightfall was coming on apace, and it became necessary that he should halt till morning before proceeding. How he could best protect himself from the ferocious beasts that infested that wild forest, was the all-absorbing question. He knew they would be prowling abroad during the hours of darkness in search of their prey. He had heard that these night wanderers were afraid of the light, so he at once began to prepare for kindling a large fire. Dry leaves and dead



branches were carefully collected, and now for a light. Alas! he found he had only three matches in his possession. The first which he struck proved to be a bad one, and failed to ignite. The second ignited, but a waft of wind soon blew it out. Now came his *last match*. Oh, how carefully he handled it! Kneeling down close to the dry leaves, he noted the direction of the wind, and jealously sheltered his match from it. How his heart beat with excitement! Would *this* fail? or would it succeed? Everything depended on it. Whether he should spend the lonely night in darkness, exposed to the ferocity of beasts of prey, or rest quietly in the light, protected from them, depended entirely on this his LAST MATCH! He struck it, the leaves ignited, the dry twigs caught the flame, and he spent the night in tolerable comfort.

Dear reader, solemnly consider. Thou wilt, to use our figure, come to thy "LAST MATCH." There is a God whose claims thou hast shamefully neglected, whose love thou hast coldly spurned, and in the thoughts of that God there is a brief period of time known as "*thy day*." The things which belong to thy peace must be attended to in this "thy day" or *never*; miss God's present call and you may be left in the dark for eternity. We cannot with certainty say that "this year thou shalt die," but we can say, "This day is 'thy day.'" Oh, harden thy heart no longer! Trust in the risen Saviour. Rest on God's thoughts of His precious blood. Submit to His holy authority, and you will be able to go on your way rejoicing.

---

## WHY SEARCH FURTHER?

“CANST thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?” said Zophar to Job (Job xi. 7); and yet in the same book we have this exhortation by another of his friends: “Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee” (xxii. 21).

Hermes, the great Egyptian philosopher of very ancient date, said of God: “He is a Circle whose centre is everywhere, whose circumference is nowhere.” This eminent student tried to define infinity, and found himself beyond his depth.

He is a fool who denies God’s existence; he is more than a philosopher who personally makes His acquaintance.

Napoleon the First was by no means a religious man, yet he had to confess that he knew, for certain, that *every* man could not be an atheist, for that he had tried hard and long to believe there was no God without achieving his end. There is an oft-told story of him that will still bear repeating. One night during the progress of the expedition to Egypt he came by surprise upon a group of his officers who, on the quarter-deck of their vessel, were freely discussing infidel notions so prevalent in France both then and since. Striding into the midst of them and pointing upwards to the moon and stars, which, from a cloudless sky, were just then beaming upon the vessel’s deck, “Gentlemen,” he said, “who made all these?”

Yes, who? Truly it is the fool that hath said in his heart, “No God.”

It has been well said by another that “Paley’s watch found on the moor did not more certainly proclaim a

watchmaker by its manifest proof of design and contrivance and means adapted to an end than does the world proclaim a world Maker—a Creator—to the thoughtful, unbiassed mind.”

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork” (Ps. xix. 1), “His eternal power and Godhead” are clearly seen in His wide creation (Rom. i. 20); so that men who, if they could, would deny His existence are “without excuse.”

“All worlds His glorious power confess,  
His wisdom all His works express.”

But who shall declare *Him*? Who shall make known His heart and mind? Who shall bring to light His feeling about man? Hear the divine answer, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him” (John i. 18).

Would you know God? Then you must come to Christ. Christ is “the image of the invisible God”—the Revealer of the Father. In Him is embodied the fulness of grace and truth. The grace that is in God and the truth, both about God and you, came out in Him. Both were expressed at the cross. It is there that we fully learn God, and only there. But learning Him there we discover that, spite of our sin, He just suits us as repentant sinners. His holiness is not hidden; His righteousness reckons with our guilt in the Person of our blessed Substitute, while His love is clearly manifested before our wondering eyes. “God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. v. 8). “Herein is love,” “the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. viii. 39).

If God has been pleased to make a full revelation of

Himself in Christ, why not believe in Him? If He has thus been so blessedly declared, why, in unbelief, search further?

If God thus revealed does not suit you; if, with the agnostic of the present day, you still pretend to be "a seeker after truth," it is only because you are unrepentant. There was never yet a truly *repentant* sinner on the earth that the gospel of God's grace did not suit, suit admirably, suit, as men speak, "down to the ground."

One word more. You may search till your hair is grey; you may reason yourself "down to the grave"; but "except ye repent," ye shall surely "perish." Do you hear? "PERISH"!

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

---

## PEACE : FALSE AND TRUE.

**A**BSENCE of alarm is, in itself, no real guarantee of safety. Every fisherman's baited hook, every well-spread fowler's net supposes this; while the page of history teems with illustrations of the fact, and hardly a day passes without fresh contributions to the record, and these of the most striking character. Above all, hear the word of the Lord, as He points back to one of these very illustrations: "They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage . . . and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away" (Matt. xxiv. 38, 39). Listen again to the testimony of the Holy Spirit

as He points us forward to a day fast approaching. "When they shall say, Peace, peace," He says, "then sudden destruction cometh upon them . . . and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. v. 3).

The most successful fowler is he who can most effectually keep his net or his snare out of sight, who can keep his victim in the most undisturbed peace until escape is impossible and he can triumphantly cry, "Caught."

The man who captures wild ducks in the fens of Lincolnshire does it all by unsuspected agencies. He has his decoy-*pond*, his decoy-*dog*, and his decoy-*ducks*. But he never comes into sight himself; a high barrier keeps the ducks from seeing him.

His little dog is trained to do his share of the deadly work without a bit of noise. Very systematically he goes to work; first running along inside the barrier next to the pond where the decoy-ducks can see him, then outside through a hole in the barrier, where he knows he will get a bit of cheese from his stealthy master.

The decoy-ducks are accustomed from their "duckling" days to get their food in the presence of this little dog, so that when he makes his appearance they give their "quack" of satisfaction, and at once make their way toward where he is. The unsuspecting wild ducks seem to understand this cheerful "quack." It means food, they think, and gladly follow on, down a winding and ever-narrowing channel, connected with the large pond and cut out for the purpose. Toward the end this channel is completely spanned with netting.

The dog is leading on all the time, getting his own taste gratified every fresh hole he reaches. The foolish ducks follow. No doubt they consider themselves well able to keep out of danger, but they are no match for the master-mind behind the fence.



When the decoy-man considers that they have gone far enough to serve his purpose he suddenly shows himself from behind. *Escape* is now the all-engrossing object before the wild ducks. But how shall they accomplish it? Ah, that is the question. Flying upwards is impossible, for the strong net is there. They cannot see their way back on account of the winding of the channel by which the spacious pond is by this time hidden from their view, and besides, *the man* is there behind them. In great terror they do all they can do, and that is to rush wildly forward to the narrow extremity and to DEATH! This is precisely how the great "destroyer" works with souls.

"When the strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace" (Luke xi. 21). Nor does the Lord leave any doubt as to who the "strong man" is (see preceding verses). It is the devil—the master "fowler," with all his well-hidden, unsuspected devices. He is looked upon here as king or prince, but acting as keeper of his own castle. *He* does not come into view. He knows better. He acts by subtle artifice, and binds his captives by means of their own varied tastes. In reality his "palace" is a prison, but to those within its iron gates it is regarded as a delightful "Palace of Varieties." "Do as you please," "Choose your own pleasures," "Gratify your own tastes," and such-like agreeable little sentences are amongst his favourite mottoes; while the "palace" itself furnishes ample means for putting them into practice. Is it the betting ring or the gambling table you desire? or is it pleasure of a more intellectual, more refined type that suits your particular tastes? Well, you need not go out of the "palace" for any of these. Indeed, there is, so to speak, accommodation in the palace and its grounds for every possible taste imaginable, from the external ceremonies of religious formality and

musical religious entertainment down to the gratification of the most degraded lusts and passions that a fallen creature can be capable of. You may enjoy yourself there in any way that is best fitted to your own particular fancy. There is, however, one thing to note. In order to really enjoy them you must forget, if you ever knew, that you are *a prisoner* there! You can only enjoy the bait as long as you are not feeling the keen barb of the hidden hook. When the fowler's snare has hopelessly entangled your feet you can no longer relish the dainty, scattered morsels. His "baits" are briefly summed up by the Spirit of God under three heads: "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," and over them all are written these words, "Not of the Father" (1 John ii. 16).

But how is it that the "keeper" is able to keep some of his victims so long? Well, the secret of it lies in two things: one, the gratification of your own will; the other, fear of the consequences of confessing Christ. While you are content to remain as you are he will gratify you. When you come to see that you are, while belonging to his palace, exposed to the judgment of God, and consequently desire to escape, he terrorises you. Fear is his favourite weapon for the anxious, and every anxious soul seeking to quit the "palace" is more or less made to feel its keen edge.

Have you ever asked yourself why it is that when a man changes his residence, or his political opinions, or even his "religion," there is nothing of terror in his mind, but directly he wishes to leave the world, to renounce his old lusts and pleasures and to come to Christ, a strange, unaccountable, and almost indescribable feeling of terror comes over him? Ah, it is easy to account for it in the light of this scripture. It is the determination of the "strong man armed" to "keep his goods" that accounts for it all.

A few years since a servant of Christ had embarked on a steamboat bound from Hull to Gothenburg in Sweden. But such a dense fog settled upon the harbour early that morning that the captain dare not venture further than a few yards from the dock gates. There the ship had to remain fully a day and a half. When the fog had sufficiently lifted to permit of sailing, the captain took his vessel slowly and cautiously down the River Humber. By the time the open sea was reached the fog had quite cleared away. Then followed a most terrific storm, which tossed the vessel most furiously, and still further delayed her arrival at the destined port.

The passenger already referred to will not easily forget that early morning in January when Gothenburg harbour was reached. The sky was perfectly cloudless, and there was not wind enough to disturb even a snowflake. Calm, welcome calm, was reached at last. What a striking contrast it was to the experience of that stormy voyage!

That voyage began with a calm and ended with a calm. But how different the character of the calm! One was a calm before the storm was reached—the calm of a dense fog; the other, a calm after the storm was passed—the calm of cloudless brightness, the calm of the “desired haven.”

Now these two characters of calm illustrate the two kinds of peace that men possess to-day. One is the kind of peace that some have because the stormy question of “How can a sinful man be justified with God?—that is, how can *sin be judged righteously* and *the sinner saved righteously*?”—has never yet been raised in their souls. Such peace is truly the foggy peace of hardened indifference and culpable uncertainty. The other is the peace which the true believer possesses; the peace which follows the inward storm of conviction,

brought about by the sense of what sin is in the sight of God; the peace which is the result of knowing that the One who knew no sin has, once for all, endured sin's fullest condemnation. "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Peace is the *result* of knowing this. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. iv. 35; v. 1).

"The storm that bowed Thy blessed head  
Is hushed for ever now,  
And rest divine is ours instead,  
Whilst glory crowns Thy brow."

---

### "GOD REQUIRETH THAT WHICH IS PAST."

ONE quiet summer evening, on the road to a village in Lincolnshire, the writer of this paper saw, at a little distance behind him, two men, apparently returning from their daily toil in the fields. One of these, walking faster than either his companion or myself, soon overtook me, and a conversation commenced about the solemn concerns of eternity. It soon became apparent that this poor man, like thousands of others, alas! was making a fatal mistake as to the way of salvation. He was seeking for rest and peace in his own reformed life, instead of in Christ's precious sacrifice and death! He recounted, with evident eagerness and undisguised satisfaction, the story of his altered ways, and, like a clever artist, was making use of the wicked immorality of the past, as a dark background upon which to picture the moral worth of the present. He was now no longer a besotted drunkard, but a sober man! Instead of oaths and obscene language filling his mouth, prayer-saying and Bible-reading had taken their place. Moreover, he

was as regular now at a place of worship as he had previously been at the public-house.

"So far so good," was my response; "but is *that* all you have to rest upon for salvation?"

"Well, I really *am* a praying man now; and if you were to come to our village, and make inquiries about me, nearly everyone would tell you what a sad character I once was, and what a different man I am now!"

"I am, by no means, calling in question the truth of what you tell me," I replied; "but a guilty past history has placed a most solemn question between your soul and a holy God—the question of *your sins*, I mean; and what I wish to know is, whether or not this is *all* you have to say as to the settlement of it?"

"Well, I can't think of anything else!"

"Then, I must tell you, that there is one verse in God's Word which is a most serious one for you to consider, and it is this: '*God requireth that which is past.*'"

Just at that point in our conversation we happened to be walking rather sharply down a steep hill, when suddenly I missed my companion from my side. Turning quickly round to see the cause, I found him standing perfectly still, and looking down to the ground, as if wrapped in thought, while marked concern was depicted on his countenance.

"What is the matter?" I inquired, as he continued standing in mute meditation. And then there came from his lips a decided proof that this single line of God's Word had done its own searching work in his soul, for he said, "If *that's* in the Bible, *I'm lost!*"

"Well, it certainly *is* in the Bible, and it will be easy for me to let you see it for yourself." So, drawing out my pocket-Bible, I turned to the third chapter of the book of Ecclesiastes, and, pointing with my finger to each



word, read, aloud and slowly, the last six words in the fifteenth verse: "*God requireth that which is past.*"

"Then I'm lost!" he groaned.

Now, is it difficult to understand, dear reader, how it was that this solemn conclusion should have been arrived at by him? Let us inquire. *Reformation* has only to do with bettering the *present* or the *future*; it supposes, upon the very face of it, that the *past* is not right. But God's requirements, as we have seen, *do* reach the past; and who can change one jot of it? who can alter what has already been accomplished? Therefore, instead of clearing you, your "turning over a new leaf" only condemns you; for, if the past were satisfactory, there would be no need for a *new* start; and if it be blotted with sin, then most certainly will God's righteous requirements have to say to it, sooner or later.

Is it not clear, then, dear reader, that every "new leaf" you have "turned over" has been but a fresh clause added, by your own hand, to the indictment already against you—an additional seal of your condemnation? You may have little dreamed of this, but it is none the less true! There stands that solemn line in the living Word of God—a truth as unalterable as your past conduct is undeniable—"God requireth that which is past." The marginal reading of the verse is: "God requireth *that which is driven away.*" And is not this what men and women try to do? We would fain "drive away" from our memories the painful records of the past, for it is doubtless anything but palatable for the iniquity of our heels to compass us about, as David expresses it (Ps. xlix. 5). But what avails the driving of sin from our remembrance, if God still sees it at our door?

Then, it may be asked, is there no escape—no remedy—for the consequences of the past?

There can be only one answer. *There is NO ESCAPE—* none whatever, except it come through the meeting of God's righteous requirements. But, blessed be God, such an escape has been provided. The very God who said, "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22), has also said, "The life of the flesh is in the blood: and *I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls*: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. xvii. 11). He can now say of the guiltiest, "Deliver him from going down to the pit: *I have found a ransom*" (Job xxxiii. 24). Nor are we left to speculate as to who this "*Ransom*" is, that the God of all grace has "found." 1 Timothy ii. 5, 6, will furnish us fully with the answer: "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, *the Man Christ Jesus*; who gave Himself a RANSOM for all, to be testified in due time." What unsearchable treasures of grace are enfolded in those two little sentences—" *I have found,*" " *I have given* " !—" *I have found a Ransom,*" " *I have given the Blood.*" The renewed mind knows not which more to wonder at, the greatness of the provision, or the freeness of the gift; while the more that is known of the *object* of such favour, the more does the wonder at both increase. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, *while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*" (Rom. v. 8). And, through that precious shed blood, God can declare Himself righteous, while He clears from every charge of condemnation the feeblest believer in Jesus. Let me quote for you the words of Scripture. "To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness; that He might be *just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus*" (Rom. iii. 26). For the true believer, therefore, it is no more certain that the requirements of God, as to all his sins, *must be met*, than that *they have been met*. "For

Christ also *hath* once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God " (1 Peter iii. 18).

" Righteousness demands no more,  
But mercy yields her boundless store."

It was truly pleasant, therefore, to tell this newly-awakened soul that though, if left to his own effort of amendment, he must be eternally lost, yet that the Son of Man had come "to seek and to save that which was lost," and that He had finished the work which the Father gave Him to do. God was now satisfied with the one settlement made at the cross, on the sinner's behalf, and that the only way to get the blessing was simply to believe on Him who made that settlement. For "*by Him ALL THAT BELIEVE are justified from all things*, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts xiii. 39).

And now, my reader, what of *your* case? If God, this night, were to require your soul of you; to call upon you for an answer for a lifetime of sin, could you meet such a demand? You know that you could not. Like Job, you could not answer Him "one of a thousand." To stand upon your own merit would be to be eternally lost. "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord," said David, "for *in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.*" But if, as a poor repentant one, you turn to Christ for salvation, there will be joy in the presence of the angels of God about you. God is as gratified in beholding the feeblest longings for Christ in you, as He is satisfied with the finished work of Christ for you.

But I solemnly warn you, that if you still persist in evading this vital question, and content yourself with the thought of mere moral reformation, either now or at a future time, then be sure of this, that the time is rapidly approaching when, as surely as that Lincolnshire labourer was pulled up, face to face with God's righteous

demands, so will you be. He was arrested in *time*; take heed that your awakening does not come in *Eternity*! Consider well, I entreat you, the solemn sequel of such a waking up; and before you lay down this book, bow to God's righteous claims; thankfully accept His gracious provision; trust in the precious blood of Christ; and then you will be able, with another, to record thus your happy, thrice happy, experience—

“Sweetest rest and peace have filled me,  
Sweeter praise than tongue can tell;  
*God is satisfied with Jesus,*  
*I am satisfied as well.*”

---

## CRIMSON STAINS MADE SNOWY WHITE.

“**A**S thy days, so shall thy strength be,” remarked a hard-working mother one day to one who had called upon her in connection with the concerns of the world to come.

“Yes, that is true, blessedly true, for the one who knows *Christ*,” said her visitor; “but there is another question which must be faced before such a promise can be really enjoyed—I mean the question of your *sins*.” For up to this point he had not known that she had already found peace through “the precious blood of Christ.”

“Oh yes, I know that well; nor shall I easily forget what I was brought through before that matter was settled!”

“Do tell me, then, how it was brought about.”

“Well, it so happened that the housemaid at the establishment where I served as kitchenmaid became, for some unaccountable reason, exceedingly miserable. Everybody in the house was making remarks about her; some of them suggesting that she would soon be in a

lunatic asylum. Wherefore I never knew, but this unhappy girl seemed to have a sort of clinging attachment to me. One day I said to her in an upbraiding tone, 'Elizabeth, what *can* be the matter with you? You will be out of your mind next!' She looked earnestly into my face, and sadly answered, 'I'M GOING TO HELL!'

"'I need not have asked you that question,' thought I, 'for *I'm* going there too; there is only this difference between us, *You are troubled about it, and I am not!*'"

"From that moment my own exercises began. I became very miserable about the past, but was determined to lead a different life and seek salvation. But what could I *do*? Well, I could pray. But there was a difficulty in connection with this. I knew that if the servants who occupied the same room saw *me* praying they would certainly laugh at me. So I was determined to pray when they were fast asleep, and would accordingly lie awake and watch my opportunity. When I thought they were soundly asleep I crept out of bed and knelt down to seek the longed-for blessing. But when I got on my knees I was only the more dreadfully oppressed. The most horrible, blasphemous thoughts—thoughts which almost seemed to be hissed through my lips in spite of myself—were suggested to me. When I got into bed again the thought seemed to be suggested, 'Do you think God is going to hear a prayer like that from a sinner like you?'

"Then I would steal out again and try to make a prayer which He *would* listen to. But my misery only deepened. At last, one day, another thought struck me: 'There is my brother Charlie's Bible in my box upstairs. Perhaps if I got that out and read it I might get the happiness I wanted.'

"This Bible," explained the woman, "had been specially prized by me, not so much because of the book itself, as



that it was my poor brother's. It was in his kit, and sank with him when his ship, a man-of-war named the *Eurydice*, went down a few years since off the Isle of Wight. The vessel was just returning from foreign service, and all on board were anxious—alas! too anxious—to arrive in time to spend the end of the old year among their friends in England.

"I fetched Charlie's Bible out of my box, all discoloured by the salt water as it was, and, as my work lay chiefly in the kitchen, I put it in the kitchen drawer. But when could I read it? I had prayed in the dark, but could not read in the dark. How then? Well, the table-drawer was not far from the water-tap, so while waiting to fill a bucket I could occasionally draw out the book and read a few words without anyone noticing it. But even this seemed all to no purpose. Deeper and deeper into the most intense misery I seemed to be daily sinking, when one day a new thought was suggested. It was something like this: 'You were not in this wretched state before you commenced to pray and read that book! *You'll* lose your reason next! Just stop in time. Put that book into the fire, and have done with your misery.' Acting on the suggestion, I took it out of the drawer, and had actually got it between the bars of the kitchen grate when the remembrance that it was once my poor brother's made me pause and consider. Whatever would my brother Charlie think if he knew that I burned his Bible! Now came a flood of anguish more intense than ever. To think that I was even bad enough to burn the Holy Scriptures! For it seemed, had not the remembrance of my brother stopped me, as if I certainly should have done it.

"Darkness and distress seemed almost to overwhelm me after this. There seemed to be no comfort for me anyhow. At last it came into my mind that I had once

heard that a Christian lady on a certain night had a Bible-class for young women, and that a servant whom I knew attended it. I would inquire of this girl if I should be allowed to go. The end of it was that she took me with her next time she went.

“We were a little late, and they were singing a hymn as we entered the passage leading to the kitchen where the meeting was held. We remained in the passage until they finished singing. As I stood there I heard the following words:—

“‘Jesus paid it ALL,  
All to HIM I owe;  
Sin had left a crimson stain,  
He washed it white as snow.’

“As I listened to the welcome news—

“‘*Jesus paid it all*’—

the cloud lifted, the burden was gone, and, even before I actually got into the meeting, joy and peace in believing had filled my soul.”

Now, dear reader, this is, as nearly as I can recollect her words, the story of *her* conversion. Has anyone on earth yet heard the story of *yours*? Nay; have they ever heard of it in heaven? Or are you still seeking your joys in a world that has cast out Christ? Let me whisper one little word in your ear. That joy of yours is as *certain* to end with sorrow as you are reading this paper; either the sorrow of repentance now, or the sorrow of the second death hereafter. While you are seeking happiness away from God you will not have Satan’s opposition, but the moment Satan sees that you are troubled about your sins he will either try all in his power to send you to sleep, or failing in that, bring all his artillery against you. Don’t think that he will lose you without a struggle. But, thank God, when grace works in the soul, and the eyes are once opened upon

eternal things, all his efforts are utterly useless. May God open *your* eyes, my reader!

Should this fall into the hands of an honest seeker after peace, let me remind him that the only thing which can effectually meet the cravings of a divinely-awakened conscience is that which has eternally met the claims of God's righteousness as to sin. Nothing can do this but "*the precious blood of Christ.*"

Now if you believe that Jesus *has* paid it all—paid sin's full penalty—then are you bound to admit that four things are due to Him, even while you still remain on earth—

1. IT IS DUE TO CHRIST that you should be forgiven.

"If He has my discharge procured,  
And freely in my place endured  
The whole of wrath divine;  
Payment God will not twice demand,  
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,  
And then again at mine."

2. IT IS DUE TO CHRIST that you should *know* it. For it was His wish that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations" (Luke xxiii. 47). His word declares that "all that believe ARE justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39).

3. IT IS DUE TO CHRIST that you should *confess* Him as the One who has, by His death and resurrection, perfectly met your case. (Read Rom. x. 9-13.)

4. IT IS DUE TO CHRIST that with heart and voice you should praise Him for the victory He has wrought for you at such a cost. He feels it when He does not get His kindness acknowledged. "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?" (Luke xvii. 17.)

One word for any unbelieving reader. If you refuse to give Him His dues by turning to Him, by trusting Him, by confessing Him now, be assured that the day of

judgment will find you receiving, in righteous measure, *your* full dues. And the end may be nearer than you think.

Indeed, death has rested upon you from the beginning of your history, and will unceremoniously push you out of this world in the end. You may have been seeking ambitious things, but you have been under the condemnation of death all the time.

Thank God, some of us, though once in your sad position, have found a *new* source of life—"life in Christ Jesus," life in Him who has, for the believer, exhausted sin's judgment, who has risen above it, and lives to God for ever beyond it.

All this has been brought to light by the gospel. What, then, must his end be who refuses to obey such a gospel? For anything he knows, while his friend is jauntily wishing him "a happy new year," death may be preparing to push him into the darkness of a lost eternity.

Reader, how do *you* feel in view of such an appalling possibility? Ask yourself just one brief question, and pause till you get a satisfactory answer: WHAT IS MY SOUL WORTH TO ME?

---

### JUST INSIDE.

**D**ID you ever hear a person say, in connection with getting to heaven at last, something to this effect, That they hoped at least to find *some* place there, if only just inside the door? To come a little closer, has such a thought ever entered the reader's own mind? Perhaps you are free to own that you hardly expect to merit a very high place in heaven, but you certainly hope to be allowed *some* place there.

Now do not be offended when we tell you that this

thought, wherever found, betrays serious ignorance of the real ground of entering heaven at all. Deeply seated in every such heart is the delusion that one's *own* merits have at least something to do with our title to glory; and Scripture is entirely opposed to any such idea. Listen to its voice. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done" (Titus iii. 5). "Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 9). "To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 4, 5).

Now directly this truth of no salvation, no heaven by our own merit is apprehended in the soul—as soon as it is seen that the merits of Christ are the only ground for acceptance before God—the notion of only getting "just inside" the door is abandoned for ever. For the question is no longer, How far inside the door will my own merits place me? but, How near will the merits of Christ bring me? What soul would not shrink from the thought that the *merits of Christ* would only put a man "just inside"? Nay, ask yourself, Where have those merits placed the Lord Jesus Himself?

The question needs no answer, you will say.

Exactly. But then, where those merits have placed Him they will place every soul that rests upon Him. They will give to the most distant a title to the nearest place, to the most unworthy a sense of fitness for the very holiest. "For Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter iii. 18). He did not suffer to place us just inside the door, but to bring us right home to God.

"So nigh, so very nigh to God,  
I could not nearer be,  
For in the person of His Christ  
I am as near as He."



Let me ask myself, therefore, and be sure that I get a true answer,

“ON WHOSE MERITS AM I RESTING?”

Is it on supposed merits of the past? Is it even on *hoped-for* merits in the future? Or is it on the precious merits of the accepted, the highly exalted, the righteously glorified One, the Man after God's own heart, “the man Christ Jesus”? Can I truly say—

“I stand upon His merits,  
I know no safer stand ;  
Not e'en where glory dwelleth  
In Emmanuel's land”?

All that my own merits could do for me would, instead of putting me just inside the gate of heaven, plunge me into the hopeless depths of damnation! Do I honestly believe this?

“Oh, surely I am not so bad as that,” someone may say.

Yes, you are; you have sinned, and with one sin upon you you will never enter heaven. Every question of sin must be settled outside the gates of glory. For every true believer it has been settled—settled on the cross; and through the merits of that precious shed blood he stands before God cleansed from every spot, clear of every charge. For the unbeliever the final settlement will be deferred to the great white throne, but the question *will* have to be settled. Do not forget, my reader, that every sinner standing there then will be judged by the very One he rejects now (John v. 22), and every one be condemned to the second death. Every one thus judged will go to hell, and will go there on his own merits entirely.

“Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, [O Lord]: for in Thy sight shall *no man living* be justified.”

May the Lord in His grace, dear reader, give you to weigh this matter seriously. Otherwise you will yourself one day be weighed, and *coming short* of the glory of God, will get your righteous dues with every lost Pharisee in the lake of fire.

---

## WHAT IF THESE THINGS *SHOULD* BE TRUE?

**L**IKE some sheriff's officer who, with the boldness of legal right, enters and takes possession of the hitherto undisturbed home of some bankrupt spendthrift, this question has, many a time, forced an unwelcome entrance into the heart of a determined unbeliever.

Conscience *will* have the "last word," and many a stout-hearted sinner has, before now, quailed before that sentence, while conscience has loudly echoed the last word—"TRUE!"

Among the many of this class is found the name of one who afterwards wrote the well-known hymn—

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
In a believer's ear."

John Newton had a praying mother, and at a moment when it seemed least likely that her prayers would be answered, the longed-for blessing came. He was far out at sea at the time, and with no fear of God before his eyes. With the purpose, no doubt, of whiling away an idle hour, John Newton took up one day a religious book. He had not long had it in his hand before he was led to ask the question, "What if these things *should* be true?"

The thought filled him with terror, and he closed the book. Having contrived, as he thought, to put away the solemn question, he retired to his hammock till the

next watch. But God had not done with him. God can *knock* at the heart's door as well as make His voice heard within. That night amid the darkness he was awakened by the dash of waves. A violent storm had arisen since he lay down, and a terrific sea was now sweeping the ship's deck. He soon found that the cabin where he lay was fast filling. A cry arose, "The ship is sinking!" All was confusion and alarm. Twice he made for the deck, but was hindered. Once the captain met him on the ladder and bade him return for a knife. As he was returning for it, another man went up in his place, and was washed away by a wave that was just then breaking over the ship.

This, John could see, was a merciful interposition for him; and now thoughts of home and of those whom he had loved affected him greatly. He cried, "O God, save me, or I perish," "The God of the Bible forgive me for His Son's sake," "My mother's God, the God of mercy, have mercy on me."

The cry was heard. John Newton was brought to Christ, brought to see the value of His precious blood. His soul was saved.

You would like, perhaps, to know a little more of his inner exercises at this time. Here, then, is his own account of it.

"In evil long I took delight,  
Unawed by shame or fear,  
Till a new Object struck my sight  
And stopped my wild career.

"I saw One dying on a tree,  
In agonies and blood,  
Who fixed His languid eyes on me,  
As near the cross I stood.

"Sure never to my latest breath  
Can I forget that look;  
It seemed to charge me with His death,  
Though not a word He spoke.

"A second look He gave, which said,  
 'I freely all forgive ;  
 This blood is for thy ransom paid ;  
 I die that thou may'st live.'

"Thus while this death my sin displays  
 In all its blackest hue,  
 Such is the mystery of grace,  
 It seals my pardon too."

Oh, my reader, THESE THINGS ARE TRUE !

WHAT THINGS ?

"The things concerning HIMSELF," Jesus, the Son of God (Luke xxiv. 27), the things concerning *God* and the way He has taken to make His heart known to sinful men ; the things concerning Him who knew no sin, yet who was "*made sin*" for us ; concerning Him who came to the cross as a holy victim that God might by the very act, which was the execution of His judgment upon sin, express His love to the sinner.

"God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8).

"Upon the cross this record's graved,  
 'Let sin be judged, the sinner saved.'"

Yes. "These things" *are* true, my reader, and we warn you with affectionate earnestness against closing your heart against them. Another has well said that "HELL IS THE TRUTH DISCOVERED TOO LATE."

The fool hath said in his *heart*, No God ; but conscience tells him of sin and its certain reckoning. Scripture tells him of a God ready to pardon, of a God who is as righteous in gratifying His heart by saving a repentant sinner, through the blood of Christ, as He will be righteous in the exercise of His "strange work" in judging every sinner who rejects Christ. "Hear, and your soul shall live." Refuse, and your soul must perish.

---

## IF YOU ONLY KNEW.

THERE was something sadly mysterious in the way the young man was treating his Christian mother. He had left home, and was lodging in one of the largest cities in the Western States. For some unaccountable reason the couple with whom he lodged had made it their business to poison his mind against his widowed mother. So effectually had they done this, that at last he not only refused to come home to see his sorrowing parent, but refused to reply to any letters she sent him. Special messengers were deputed to convey the assurance of her tender regard for him, but all to no purpose.

At last, for his sisters, a sad day came, for they were told that their mother must undergo a serious operation. This moved them to entreat their brother, ere his mother passed under the operator's hand, to grant her the longed-for pleasure of seeing his face once more, warning him that this might possibly be his last chance of gratifying her. But no. With stolid hardness he refused all their yearning entreaties, and the day for the operation arrived. The devoted mother had placed on the corner of the mantelpiece, facing the door of entrance, his photograph, so that if he *should* come and peep in unexpectedly he might see that his heart's coldness had not driven him from her heart's memory.

The operation proceeded, and even while under the influence of chloroform, the chief burden of her thoughts was only made the more manifest; for as the surgeon's critical services went on she repeated again and again, "If he *only knew* the heart I have for him, I am *sure* he would come back! *If* he only knew!"

Did it ever strike you, dear unsaved reader, that the secret of all your years of refusal to receive divine blessing lies in your ignorance of what the heart of God



is toward you? "*If thou knewest*" was the Saviour's own word to the sinful woman at Sychar, and "*If thou hadst known*" the audible expression of His sorrow after the proud rejection of His kindness by the favoured city.

The bestowal of his substance upon the younger son in the parable was no adequate expression of the father's heart. Ah! no. The prodigal never imagined what his father's love really was, until in his destitution he returned. His utmost hope was that he might be allowed to subsist as a hireling at his father's gate. Yet what a jubilant reception, what a warm, overflowing welcome, was his!

How marvellous the love of God! How hard the heart of man! Only the suffering and death of the Son of God could adequately express the one, only the gracious Spirit of God, even after such proof as Calvary affords, could give man's heart to believe it. It is only the Holy Ghost who can effectually commend God's love in Christ to any human heart, and there shed abroad its cheering rays.

You may possibly, my reader, wonder at the hardness of the heart of the young man just referred to, but what about your own case? How has God's love affected *you*? Are you still listening to the lie of the enemy, and shutting God out of your thoughts? or has the light of His love entered, casting out all your fear, removing all your cold suspicion?

Do not say that His holiness and righteousness stand in the way of your believing the record of His love. He has expressed His righteousness in respect of your sin by the very act that proves His love. *Death* has been the penalty of sin from the beginning, and in receiving that penalty Christ has perfectly expressed God's love. If His righteousness necessitates that man as a sinner should be driven out, the very One who

drove man out, by the way of death, came down to where man was to bear his suffering, and bring him back by a new and living way through His *own* death. He opened out "the way of peace" by His own acceptance of the storm of judgment, and having passed through it, He stands in risen power beyond it—a willing Saviour mighty to save. You cannot find proof of God's love in yourself. In vain you will grope for it there. The sun rises and shines without your asking, and without your deserving. So the love of God. If your window shutters are up, the proof that the sun has risen will be found outside your house before it is found inside. Take down your *heart's* shutters and look out. Like the rising sun, God's love does not wait for your asking, nor is it limited by your deserving. Look to the throne where Jesus now sits exalted as Lord. Behold the marks of suffering still upon Him, and see in those glories the eternal declaration of God's estimate of the value of His sufferings.

The young man we have spoken of did at last return, and the mother's life was spared to see it. Late one winter's night it was her joy to meet him at the railway station and welcome him home. A day later and the writer of this paper was allowed the privilege of sharing her joy.

Has there yet been joy in heaven, dear reader, over *your* return? If not, may we remind you that the Spirit's last warning *will* come! Oh, *if you only knew* what God's heart was toward sinners you would surely hasten to confess your unworthiness, and receive His forgiveness.

Then would you be able to sing with everyone else who has so come—

"Not half Thy love can I express,  
Yet, Lord, with joy my lips confess  
This blessed portion I possess,  
O Lamb of God, through Thee."

---

## WHAT GIVES PEACE?

"**D**ID you *understand* what was said to-night in the preaching?" said the writer to a young man one evening after a gospel address in his father's sitting-room.

"Well, yes, I think I did," he replied cheerfully; "but what helped me more than even the preaching was what you said to me in the tramcar this afternoon."

"What was that?"

"It was the remark you made about the ticket."

Now, in order to explain this remark to the reader, it will be necessary to say that this young man was kind enough not only to meet the writer at the railway station in order to conduct him to his father's house for tea, but that when they subsequently took their seats in the tramcar he paid for the writer's ticket as well as his own. Observing what had taken place between him and the conductor, the writer quickly remarked—

"It is knowing what *you* have done that gives *me* peace about this journey."

He left it for the Spirit of God, if it so pleased Him, to apply the humble figure to the soul of his young friend, and this He apparently did.

Now, will you, anxious reader, carefully ponder that remark in connection with the soul-peace you so much long for?

Don't you see that the transaction which gave the writer peace was entered into and completed between his friend and the Tramcar Company's representative, and that it was the *knowledge of what had been done that set his mind at rest*?

If the conductor, representing the Company, had refused the offered coins as spurious, then the person paid for must have prepared himself to meet his own case. But it was not so.

In like manner, if there had not been perfect divine satisfaction in the work of the cross, the sinner must have prepared himself to meet his own liabilities. But the believer knows that God was not only satisfied with that which was there and then accomplished, but that He was eternally glorified by the precious death and finished work of His beloved Son.

It is *knowing this* as a *testimony from God* that gives a sinner *peace with God*—"Who [Christ] was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. iv. 25 ; v. 1).

---

### TRY ONE FIRST.

**I** ONCE knew a young man who had just started in business as a dyer. One of his first customers was a lady who brought a very expensive fur cloak to be dyed. When she had gone he began to seriously consider the matter thus: "I have had no experience with this kind of fur. If I spoil it, it will be a great loss to the lady and a great disgrace to me. What shall I do? I will procure a scrap of this very material and try one inch first. If I cannot succeed with one square inch it would be foolish to venture on the whole cloak."

Was he wise, my reader? Then take a hint yourself, and before attempting to remove from the eye of God the guilty stains of a lifetime, be sure that you can succeed with ONE SIN. Select from your history just one sinful act. Meet God's righteous requirement against it. Bear its judgment. Remove its crimson stain as though it never had been. First satisfy *God*, then satisfy yourself about it.

Ah, this is impossible. But the precious blood of

Christ has done what you could *never* accomplish. Trust that precious blood, and not a charge, not a spot, shall remain. It is God who says, “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” “And by Him all that believe are justified from all things.”

---

## “NO BLEMISH.”

“It shall be perfect to be accepted ; there shall be no blemish therein.”—LEVITICUS xxii. 21.

WHEN an Israelite was permitted to bring an offering to God, this was one of God’s distinctly stated requirements. Again and again we hear it repeated, “*without blemish*,” “WITHOUT BLEMISH!” “It shall be *perfect* to be *accepted* ; there shall be no blemish therein.”

Every thoughtful person will freely admit that nobody is *quite* perfect. But how few stop to consider that this is a plain acknowledgment that no man in his own personal merits can be accepted before God. Who can honestly say, “There is no blemish in *my* character”? Who can claim purity of motive even for his *best* deeds, to say nothing of the shady acts which would not bear the close investigation of a dozen decent men?

Man only tolerates his fellow-man because he does not thoroughly know him, and the little he does know becomes a welcome off-set against all he knows of himself.

*No blemish !* Why, “the whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it” (Isa. i. 5, 6). Only One upon earth could ever claim perfect suitability to God. Only One could face both friend and foe and say, “Which of you convinceth Me of sin?” (John viii. 46).



Only One could truthfully affirm, "I do always those things which please Him"—His Father (John viii. 29).

He, Jesus, met all the malice of the enemy, all the opposition of man, without a word or even look that was not in perfect accord with the heart of God. With His word He foiled the gainsayer, dispelled disease, and made death give back his prey. With His word He comforted the broken-hearted, and invited the weary to share His own rest. In His holy life He was accessible to all, and even in the moment of deepest shame and suffering found leisure of heart to entertain the appeal of a dying robber. Ah, there is none like Jesus! Blessed Saviour! Without blemish? Yes. But far, far more. No negative could express what He was. All that God could wish for in man He found in that Man, and heaven and earth were called to listen to an expression of His delight in Him (Matt. iii. 16, 17). "The pleasure of Jehovah" ever "prospered in *His* hand." *No blemish.* All perfection there.

But some troubled soul may inquire, "Of what avail is it to me that *He* has no blemish, since I have so many?"

Of what avail? Why, don't you see that it is the unblemished perfection of Jesus that constitutes Him a fitting, acceptable sacrifice for such as you? A sacrifice must be "*perfect to be accepted.*" Therefore, of what avail would be His sacrifice and death for me a sinner if God had not accepted Him as my Substitute?

Notice this. All a believer's hopes are centred on His perfections. "He offered Himself *without spot* TO GOD." "He gave Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God" (Eph. v. 2). Mark, it was not to *us* He offered Himself, but

TO GOD  
FOR US.

"He once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that  
He might

BRING US  
TO GOD."

You have not, therefore, to turn in upon yourself for any proof of acceptance. You must turn to God and *let Him tell you what He thinks* of the acceptability of the work of Christ for you.

"Ye were not redeemed," says the apostle Peter, "with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter i. 18, 19).

Jesus is worthy of the exalted place He now occupies in heaven, and God seeks to give Him an exalted place in your heart. On the ground of your own *personal* merits you are for ever debarred from all hope of acceptance. On the ground of His merits you may stand in perfect acceptance to-day.

---

## A MURDERER'S DREAM.

THE following interesting details have been sent to the writer, and he now sends them forth as another blessed instance of the marvellous achievements of the grace of God with rebellious man. May it prove not only a comfort to praying parents, but an encouragement to some downcast sinner groaning beneath the crushing burden of unforgiven sin.

William — resided in Australia. He was a member of a God-fearing family, but his own soul was untouched by the story of God's love to fallen man. He sought the company of young men as godless as himself, and rapidly sank from bad to worse. Many a warning did he get, no doubt, from the lips and pen of his devoted, praying mother, but all, alas! to no purpose. He would not

listen. He was evidently determined to pursue his own course, and ultimately became another most painful illustration of the truth that "the way of transgressors is hard." After continuing in this course for some time, he was at last brought to book. He was arrested on the charge of having committed murder! He was taken before the judge and his case heard, but as the evidence was not very clear, and as he insisted on his innocence, he was pronounced "Not guilty." However, the police were not satisfied with this verdict, and subsequently finding further evidence, he was again arrested and tried for his life. This time he was found "Guilty," and accordingly sentenced to death, although still stoutly maintaining his innocence.

At this point the accused sent for a Mr. R——, a Christian whom he knew in the place.

Mr. R—— wondered why *he* had been sent for, but went. When he got to the prison cell there sat William looking as "don't care" as possible. Mr. R—— asked him why he had sent for him. "Oh," he said, "I want you to tell my mother that I am perfectly innocent. I did not do it. I know who *did*, but still they won't believe me, so I suppose I must die."

Then Mr. R—— said to him, "But, William, if you are really innocent I don't like to see you dying for another. *I* do not know whether you did it or not, but God does; let us pray."

They got down on their knees, and Mr. R——, with his arm round William, prayed, "O God, if this man is innocent, bring to light the man who is guilty; but if he is guilty make him 'own up.'" Then he said, "Now *you* pray." He waited and waited, but no sound. Then he began to feel him trembling under him. Then, with a sob, the poor fellow cried out, "O GOD, I'M GUILTY! I'M GUILTY!"

Mr. R—— then left him with Psalm li. and the first verse of the hymn, "Just as I am."

Neither of them could get any sleep that night, and when Mr. R—— went to see William in the morning he found him in an agony of despair.

For two days Mr. R—— came and saw him, but he was still in the same wretched state.

The following day when he came in he saw that a change had taken place, his face was so bright and happy-looking. Upon Mr. R—— asking for an explanation of the change, he told him that he had had a dream in the night. He dreamt that he went to the gallows; that there he was hanged, and that he dropped down, down into hell; that when there Satan came to him and said, "Ah, I've got you; you are my boy now!" that he then took him round to what seemed like so many different caverns, where he saw some of his old companions. In one he saw them at the card-table, but with such ghastly grins on their faces. In another they were sitting beside tables with tankards before them, but *all empty!*

He could not stand all this, so threw himself on the ground crying, "Christ, save me!" But the ground only threw him up again, and, as it did so, someone said, "Don't you know there is no rest in hell?"

With this he awoke, and found himself on the ground with the Bible open at Psalm li. There and then he knelt down and said, "I come, I come,"

"without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me."

Mr. R—— then told him that the first thing to be done was to confess his guilt to the prison officials. This he did. The authorities looked more fully into the case, and out of consideration of three things they decided to change the sentence to imprisonment for life.

The three things were these—

1. That he was not quite nineteen.
2. That it was the new judge's first case.
3. That it was Jubilee year.

In prison his life was such a witness for Christ, and he was so trusted, that he was allowed to take the medicines to the sick, and gladly, no doubt, did he use this opportunity of speaking to them. He was allowed, too, to visit the condemned cells with his Bible. He was taught two trades—blacksmithing and shoemaking—and ultimately they made him a warder. So pleased, indeed, were they with him that full liberty was at last granted to him. They gave him clothes, money, and a new name, and sent him to another colony to work his way.

Here, my dear reader, is a little reminder of how the grace that met and blessed William —— will, if you bow to the sentence of God against your own guilt, meet and bless you.

It is truly a year of jubilee. It is God's day for proclaiming liberty to the captive, forgiveness for the guilty, salvation for the lost. No matter how much beyond nineteen your years of hard-hearted rebellion may have stretched, Christ has died for the ungodly, and therefore, through Him, God is righteous in proclaiming to you the forgiveness of sins. Yea, He declares that "by Him all that believe are justified from all things" (see Lev. xxv. 9, 10; Acts xiii. 38, 39).

But deeper blessing still will be yours if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. William —— was made a prison warder; you will have the privilege of exercising your new-found liberty in proclaiming pardon and peace and liberty—yea, *full liberty*—to other of Satan's prisoners. You can tell them, if they believe the gospel, that new resources will be put into their hand for enjoying their liberty. William received money, the believer receives



the Spirit of God. William came forth in new clothes, leaving the prison garments behind. We are privileged to cast off the works of darkness and to put on the Lord Jesus Christ; to be "clothed with humility" (1 Peter v. 5); to be marked and known by that which characterised Him when here below (see Rom. xiii. 14). Indeed, no longer are we to be known by the old name of *rebel sinner*, but by the new name of a *reconciled one*.

Repent, therefore, and believe the gospel.

---

"HE LIFTED UP HIS EYES."

**A**BRAMHAM "lifted up his eyes" on Mount Moriah. He saw God's provision and believed God's word. The rich man (Luke xvi.) disregarded both, and "lifted up his eyes" in hell. With one of these, my reader, thou wilt spend eternity. Which?

---

"LET BY-GONES BE BY-GONES."

"*LET by-gones be by-gones.*" "Yes, that may do all very well for *you*," says the upright creditor, as he urgently presses his oft-evaded claim, "but your debt cannot be reckoned among the by-gones till it has been honourably paid to the full."

"*Let by-gones be by-gones.*" "Pause there," says the sober-looking judge to the plausible pleader. "No doubt that might suit your client admirably, but I sit here to represent the claims of the Crown. I am responsible for the maintenance of justice, and I have before me, as charges against the prisoner, the criminal records of years past, and these all aggravate the charges of to-day. The full penalty *must* be administered; I have no

alternative. And even when the present penalty has been discharged, the prisoner's 'by-gones' can even then only remain buried so long as no further breach of the law is proved against him."

"*Let by-gones be by-gones.*" "Ah! but his behaviour to me has been shameful in the extreme. I might be willing to forgive him if he would own his faults, but *forget* such treatment I cannot."

"*Let by-gones be by-gones,*" says the unrepentant sinner, offending against both light and love. "*Never, never!*" whispers his upbraiding conscience. "Never, till the just claims of a holy God have been righteously satisfied. Every transgression must receive its just reward."

BUT CHRIST HAS DIED. The just has suffered for the unjust; the Obedient One has answered for the disobedient; the Sinless has stood for the sinful; the Beloved Son has died for the hateful rebel.

"The Saviour for the lost has died,  
Jesus, my Lord, was crucified."

And more. God has declared *His* satisfaction in that which Christ has done. The Ransom has been accepted; the Sin-purger seated. The darkness of the cross of Calvary has been exchanged for the glory of the throne of Majesty; the believer is free. God proclaims it. THE BELIEVER IS FREE!—RIGHTE●USLY FREE! "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15). "And by Him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39). When *God Himself* declares that the believer stands clear of every charge, when He pronounces him to be cleansed from every spot, then *by-gones are indeed by-gones*; they are done with for ever. And this He does declare. Read Hebrews x. 17, and you will see it for yourself. "Their sins and iniquities will I

remember no more." Blessed absolution! "When *He* giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?" (Job xxxiv. 29). "It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?" (Rom. viii. 33, 34). If God is my Justifier, it matters little who is my accuser.

"For me *He* has no sentence, not one accusing breath;  
The charges laid against me, Christ answered by His death."

---

### "WHEREFORE LOOK YE SO SADLY TO-DAY?"

THEY were unusually sad that morning, those two State prisoners: a dream of the night had troubled them. Now, to most men's minds a dream is of very trifling importance; but a strange kind of significance seemed to attach itself to each man's dream on this occasion. What that particular significance was they knew not until they opened their troubled hearts to Joseph, and he interpreted their dreams and dissolved their doubts (Gen. xl.)

Let us leave the Egyptian prison-house, and, coming closer home, ask, "Wherefore, downcast reader, look *ye* so sadly to-day?"

Ah, it is a matter far more serious than any night dream which presses upon *me*, perhaps you will say. Two great realities stare me in the face—a sinful history, a righteous reckoning. And, alas! I can no more deny the one than I can evade the other. GOD IS RIGHTEOUS. I AM GUILTY.

But are you prepared to hear, my dear reader, that there are thousands living on the earth to-day who, no doubt, have sinned as deeply as you have, and yet for years have not had a single hour's sadness about the "righteous reckoning" you speak of?

"Possibly they are, as I once was, so hardened by sin and blinded by Satan that they are not alive to their danger."

Not so. For I refer to those who have been awakened by God to the awful character of sin and its eternal consequences, and yet those souls are now at perfect rest before Him.

Then, why am *I* so troubled?

Well, the cause is not far to seek, although it is humbling enough to have to face it. It is either ignorance or unbelief that accounts for your uneasiness.

What was it that made Pharaoh's butler sad before Joseph had interpreted his dream?

It was *ignorance* of its real import.

But what, think you, would have been the secret of his sadness if it had continued *after* it had been interpreted to him? Would it not be found in the fact of his not believing what Joseph said about it?

Yes, certainly.

Therefore it is we say that it is either *ignorance* or *unbelief* that is the secret of your own unsettled state.

To give further emphasis to this, let me relate an incident or two by way of illustration.

An aged widow in the south of Scotland was mainly dependent on her son Tom for means of daily support. In course of time, slackness of work compelled him to seek employment elsewhere, and he emigrated to America, promising to send his mother all the assistance he could.

Time went on, and so did her expenses, till at last she was so reduced as to be unable to pay her rent. The landlord threatened to sell her furniture, and this naturally disturbed her greatly.

Just then a neighbour went in and found her in sore trouble.

"I cannot understand this of Tom," said her neighbour.

“He was always so kind to you. Do you never get letters from him?”

“Oh yes,” she replied.

“Where are they? Will you let me see them?”

“Oh yes. Just go to the corner cupboard, and you will find them in that teapot without a handle.”

The neighbour took down the teapot, and in it found a letter which the mother had received only the day before. It began thus: “*My dear mother. I hope you received the £7 10s. which I sent you in a post office order.*”

“Have you *got* the money?” she asked.

“I have not.”

“Have you any more letters?”

“Oh yes. You will find the others in the same teapot.”

The next letter contained the very thing needed. Holding it up, the visitor said, “Here is the post office order!”

“I don’t know what that is,” said the mother. “I saw it when I opened the letter, but didn’t know what it was.”

Now, reader, just think of this. For three weeks she had had in her possession what would have delivered her from her deep anxiety and met her pressing need, but she knew not its value, although really hers.

Here is a clear case, then. Ignorance was certainly the secret of *her* sadness. Nor does she stand alone. Many a soul might be found in this land of gospel light whose heart’s sore trouble is traceable simply to this, their entire want of understanding of the message which God in the gospel has sent to them, their ignorance of what Christ has done for them. They suppose that God is making righteous demands upon them, and they would fain meet these requirements, but they find by experience that it is not in their power to do so. Hence their



trouble. Whereas God's gospel, the message He sends to them, tells of His gracious provision for them. If *death is sin's penalty*, the gospel tells the welcome tidings that "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ *died* for us" (Rom. v. 8).

The gospel is not a writ of execution served upon man because he has not been what he ought to be, but a gracious unfolding of what God is as declared in the gift of Jesus when man was at his very worst.

"The very spear that pierced His side  
Brought forth the blood to save."

And of this precious blood He has written: "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul, and I have given it to you upon the altar" (Lev. xvii. 11).

The gospel comes not with an angry threat because you cannot meet the demands of justice, but with an earnest entreaty that you should freely accept the provisions of grace. It tells you that all that was righteously needed to be done *has* been done. It shows you that God's love does not, by lightly passing over sin's judgment, oppose His righteousness. No, far otherwise. In the gospel God's *unbending righteousness*, hand in hand with God's *abounding grace*, is seen bringing the tidings of salvation to the utterly lost. Their voices blend in one in the declaration of the gospel message. Their theme is Christ—Christ as the receiver of sin's just penalty—Christ as the expresser of God's perfect love. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. lxxxv. 10). This is their song, and sweet the refrain to every opened ear!

Stern justice is now as favourable to the believer as tender mercy could ever possibly be. Listen to the Spirit's own challenge: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? . . . Who is He that condemneth?" (Rom. viii. 33, 34).

Is there a voice in God's universe that dare bring out one solitary charge or lodge one single complaint? The Holy Spirit's answer is simply this, “It is Christ that died.” And if that answer is *enough for God*, let every accusing lip be sealed in dumb silence before Him for ever.

---

“SHUT IN” OR “THRUST OUT.”

HE had, from his conversation, been no credit to his friends at home. For some reason he had taken his departure from them, and as it was not by *their* invitation that he was now returning, he was by no means at ease about doing so; indeed, so engrossed was he with the thought of how he would be received, that, notwithstanding his fellow-passenger being a total stranger, he freely opened his mind to him on the subject. Pointing from the railway carriage window in the direction of his father's house, he said, apparently with no small amount of grave misgiving, “*In a few hours I shall either be shut out or shut in.*”

We know not, dear reader, how it fared with him in the end; but this we know, that as surely as you are reading this sentence you will one day be as near as he was to being “shut out” or “shut in”; yea, shut out or shut in FOR EVER.

Nor need you, like this young man, have any uncertain speculations about it. If you are brought to God in the “day of His salvation” (and you are most tenderly invited to come), all will be put right, and your soul set at rest before Him. Christ has suffered to secure all this for those who come to God by Him.

On the other hand, if you linger in guilty indifference till your day of golden opportunity is wasted, then, instead of eternal salvation, it will be certain damnation.

Be not deceived on this point, for the final issue is beyond all question.

Take advice. God's advice must surely be *good* advice. Here it is: "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near" (Isa. lv. 6). With it hear His gracious assurance, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." Prove His lovingkindness NOW.

The Lord's second coming is at hand, and if you are not, at that tremendous moment, found among those who are "caught up" to meet Him, you will assuredly be left to discover your final doom in the company of those who will be banished for ever from Him. Ponder well those solemn words in Luke xiii. 28—

"YOU YOURSELVES THRUST OUT."

"They that were ready went in . . . and

THE DOOR WAS SHUT."

---

## GONE.

ONE winter's night, in a remote hamlet in Lincolnshire, a man might have been seen walking stealthily up the pathway of a cottage garden, until he reached the window of a room where he knew something was going on which excited his curiosity. His wife had left home shortly before, and he expected she was inside this very room. Nothing could he see, but he could distinctly hear all that was being said. Strange to say, though no one knew he was there, he could not get rid of the feeling that the speaker inside was directly addressing *him*! For a few minutes he must have been more than spell-bound, for what made the whole thing still more remarkable and unaccountable was the fact that the

speaker and his stealthy listener were as yet total strangers to each other. But there was One present at that meeting who knew them both; and there can be no doubt that it was He who had arranged that night's audience, and used it to turn the whole current of the man's life.

The truth is that a gospel-preaching was going on that night in the above-mentioned cottage. This man's wife had been to a similar meeting the previous evening, and having herself found peace with God, had tried her utmost to persuade her husband to accompany her. But he was a hardened, careless, godless man, and her entreaties proved utterly fruitless. Indeed, to show her how determined he was not to go, he pulled off his boots, and was sitting beside the fire when she left the house. Shortly after she had gone, however, he suddenly came to the resolution that he would go too—not that he would venture *inside*. No, he would stand and listen at the window, and form his own judgment as to the character of the unusual “stir” which these meetings were making in the village.

Just as he came up to the cottage window the preacher was reading Ecclesiastes viii. 10, “So I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done.” He drew the attention of his unconverted hearers to the four words in the text, by which God briefly sums up the history of the wicked—

“COME”—“GONE”—“BURIED”—“FORGOTTEN.”

He said: “Though only one of those words is as yet fulfilled in *your* case, yet how soon the second may be true also; how soon they will be saying at your cottage door that solemn word ‘GONE!’ And when they do, what then?”

This simple word went straight home to his soul like an arrow. Yes, indeed, "*what then?*" He *knew* what then; knew how thoroughly unfit he was to die, for to die would be to meet God.

Conscience-stricken, he hastened home to await the return of his happy wife. When she came in, she found him to all appearance pretty much as she had left him, with his boots off, sitting beside the fire as though he had never been out of doors; for he was very unwilling to let *her* know where he had been spending the evening, and still more unwilling to give her the slightest clue to that which was going on in his soul.

However, he found it harder to hide his troubled feelings than he imagined, as we shall see.

In the middle of the night he awoke his wife, and told her he "couldn't sleep."

"Don't you feel well?" she inquired; for it was unusual for her husband to be so wakeful.

"Yes, I'm well enough, but somehow I can't get off to sleep."

After a few words more the wife was fast asleep again. She had no conception what it was that was disturbing his mind. Once more he awoke her, and once more poured the same complaint into her astonished ear. She now expostulated with him about it, reminded him how the night was wearing away, that it would soon be time for him to rise and go to work, and that he ought to *try* and get some sleep; and being still ignorant of the secret of this restlessness, she once more turned herself round, and was soon again in peaceful slumber.

A third time he awoke her; but this time she was determined to know what was disturbing him in such an extraordinary way. After some hesitation he at last groaned out, "I'm so wicked! I'm so wicked!" And with this out came his secret about the meeting. No



more sleep for *her* now. What blessed news! and it seemed all the sweeter because so unexpected.

Next night found him seated *inside* that crowded cottage. No difficulty this time to get him to the meeting! But no peace could he find; and another restless, tossing night followed. The succeeding night found him again in the same place, but, if anything, more miserable. No peace for *his* smitten conscience. This night they both determined not to go to bed at all till the matter was really settled. A little past midnight his soul was able to rest its all upon the work of Christ, and for the first time he was able to rejoice in Him as his own Saviour, and to praise Him for His great salvation.

Death has been more than usually busy of late. He has unexpectedly entered many of the mansions of the great, and made wide gaps in the households of the poor. Many of these could badly be spared, but they have "*gone*." Prepared or unprepared they have "GONE."

"Fixed in an eternal state,  
They have done with all below ;  
We a little longer wait,  
Yet how little none can know."

Thank God, dear unsaved reader, *you* have not yet "gone," though, ere another month shall have run its course, that word may have dimmed with tears the eyes of those you love most and best. Is it not high time to consider these weighty questions, Whither am I bound? Where shall I land? What is to be my eternal destiny? Depend upon it, if you die unconverted, while your friends are bending over your lifeless frame, and with heart-breaking sobs whispering "gone," another word of four letters will be engaging *your* thoughts. For, mark it well; "GONE" for time, means "LOST" for eternity, for every unforgiven sinner.

Oh, the remorse of such an awakening! Oh, the madness of *risking* your priceless soul, even for a single hour! Will you not be entreated? Will you not consider your serious peril in the light of the Saviour's own question, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark viii. 36.)

Thank God, you may yet be saved. But time flies, and eternity may be upon you ere you are aware of it. Haste, then, to the refuge. "Escape for thy life." "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Prov. xxix. 1).

---

### ALARMED OR CALMED?

**H**URRIED off! Yes. It was sharp, short work at last. A sadder end it would be impossible to conceive; for it is greatly to be feared that she was hurried off in her sins. Her history was one of hardened indifference; but it closed with a cry of undisguised alarm. To live in open adultery was grave enough; but to this was added the crowning sin of all; namely, the persistent refusal of Him who would willingly have welcomed and pardoned her, had she bowed before Him as a repentant one. Was it not to such as she that the blessed Saviour once uttered those memorable words, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John viii. 11)? Well may our hearts weep for such, and say, Oh, *why* will ye reject such a Saviour?

When the final summons reached this poor woman, her own lips were made to tell how totally unprepared she was for it. Who could measure the depth of bitter anguish expressed in the last words she was heard to utter on earth—"Oh, the judgment! OH, THE JUDGMENT!"?

A wasted life, strewn with wasted opportunities, lay

behind; an upbraiding conscience spoke loudly from within; and certain judgment, well-earned judgment, and nothing *but* judgment on before.

How sad the picture; but, for her, how real! Had she but listened to the Saviour's call, how different it *might* have been! All her sins would then have been blotted out, and her guilty conscience purged. In place of the Judge's righteous and withering sentence, "Depart from Me," the Saviour's smile of love would then have been her bright welcome to the "everlasting habitations."

Alas! it is to be feared it was not so. Though often warned and entreated, though many a gospel tract had been put into her hand, she was wedded to her sins, and, to all appearance, made shipwreck at last—*eternal* shipwreck.

Within a few days of the above sad incident, old John — lay dying in one of the wards of a workhouse in Suffolk. A Christian lady, with whom John had enjoyed sweet fellowship, having at his request been sent for, had called to see him. Approaching his bed, he warmly grasped the outstretched hand, saying, "I think I am going home."

She replied, "You know whom you have believed. Is Christ precious to you?"

"Oh yes; *He is everything to me!* 'The chiefest among ten thousand; the altogether lovely One.' *He has done everything for me*—satisfied God about all my sins, and about all I was (in myself). You know I told you how very bad I had been for years; but the blood has put away everything. Wonderful! All of His grace."

A day or two afterwards the same lady said to him, (speaking of his relatives), "You will be sorry to leave them."

He replied, "Sorry I do not know they are saved; *not*

*sorry to go.* To depart and to be with Christ is far better. I shall soon see Him, and be with Him."

The second bed from old John's was occupied by another old man; but what a contrast spiritually!

"Do you know the Lord Jesus?" inquired the visitor.

"I don't know."

"Don't you know what the Lord Jesus came for? It was to save sinners such as you and I. Don't you know *you* are a sinner?"

"I shouldn't like to say I was a sinner," he replied.

The kind visitor lingered beside him for some time, telling him the old, old story of God's wondrous love—how He gave His beloved Son to die that sinners might be saved; that only those who were washed in His precious blood could go to be with Him in heaven; and then repeated her question, "Do you know that you are a sinner?"

Raising his head, with all the little strength he had, he said, "No; *I should not like to say I was a sinner!*"

Next day, when the visitor called, his bed was empty. He had gone! GONE WHERE? How solemn the silence that follows such a question under such circumstances!

Now, reader, here are three ways of departing. Beware, lest either the first or last be a pattern of your own. You may have too much self-respect to pursue the path of open immorality, you may not be reduced to such poverty as to be called to gasp your last on a work-house bed; but to die without Christ is to be lost for ever, whether your eyes are open to see it in this world or the next.

The last of the three denied that he was a sinner; and, therefore, had no conscious need of a Saviour. His unbelief deliberately shut the Saviour out, and closed the door against God's salvation. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke v. 32), was the Lord's own utterance.

The first could not deny that she was a sinner; but would not have the Saviour. She preferred her sins to Him.

But blessed old John confessed himself to be a great sinner, embraced the great Saviour, and became the happy possessor of God's "great salvation." For him the judgment of his sins was a *past* thing. He believed on Him who had received their full due upon the cross; and, through faith in His precious blood, he passed safely into the promised rest; not alarmed by God's judgment, but calmed by His love.

Now, reader, consider these three positions, and allow us, in view of them, to ask you with loving earnestness the first question that ever fell upon the ear of guilty man in this world, "WHERE ART THOU?" (Gen. iii. 9.) Give God an honest answer. If called to die this moment would you be filled with judgment's alarm, or with heavenly calm?

---

### "I KNOW WHERE I MISSED IT."

**W**HAT a solemn event in your history, dear reader, when death, like a well-trained wrestler, shall clasp your frail body, and, spite of all your struggles in ardent desire for sweet life, overcome you, hold you helpless in his iron grasp, pushing you across the line which separates time from eternity, and land you—where?

Such an event will be but of trifling moment to the world at large, or even to the town or hamlet in which your earthly journey shall come to a close; but for you, how intensely important.

It was once asked by Him who knew how to put a just estimate upon both temporal and eternal things, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole



world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark viii. 36). But did it ever occur to you, unsaved friend, that there is even a possibility of your losing *your* soul? Then allow me to remind you that possibility may grow into probability, and probability into certainty.

Every gospel-hearing sinner in hell at this moment had a *last* opportunity. Dare you say that this is not yours?

Permit me in a homely way to relate a solemn incident. In doing so my prayer is, that God may use it to your eternal blessing. Remember, it is not an over-coloured picture in which you are left to wonder "Is it true?" But one so dreadfully, so painfully true, that its like I hope never to see again.

It was while holding gospel meetings in a town in the West Riding of Yorkshire that I was requested by a Christian woman to visit a sick neighbour of hers, whose last hope of recovery had been dashed to pieces by the opinion of an eminent physician a few days before. To deal with any perishing sinner in Christ's name is always a serious matter; but to have to speak to one so evidently on the verge of eternity, rendered my visit an unspeakably solemn one.

Well, I sat down beside the poor invalid, and soon found that, as to the outward understanding, the sweet tale of redeeming love was no strange sound to her ear. While most readily assenting to all I said, she had but one thing to say in response, and that was, "It's all dark to ME."

I earnestly sought to comfort her with suitable portions of the Word of God, explaining, as simply as I possibly could, God's "way of peace."

The blessed stories of the dying thief and the prodigal's return were spoken of. Similar monuments of grace were held up one after another before her, but still

there was the same sad response, "It's all dark to me"; and then raising herself up with her elbow on the pillow, she said with deep emphasis, "And I know where I missed it."

"What do you mean?" I inquired anxiously.

She then explained herself, and as nearly as I can recollect in the following words: "When you were here two years ago preaching the gospel in the M—— Hall, I was invited by some Christian neighbours to come and hear. I consented, and went. When the preaching was about half over, I felt the Word of God dealing so powerfully with my soul, that I felt I must either *give in*, there and then, and get converted, or else walk straight out; for I *could not bear it*."

"And what did you do?" I inquired.

"I got up and walked out of the hall. Two Christian women, who thought I must be ill, followed me out; and never did they guess it was otherwise, until about a fortnight ago, when I told them all about it. *It was there that I missed it; and it is all dark now*!"

Feeling concerned about her, I went again to see her the following day; but her face wore the same blank, despairing look, and the same sad words came from her lips, "It is all dark yet."

The next day severe hæmorrhage set in, and in a few minutes she was hurried away—whither?

Nay, friend, there the curtain must fall. She left no ground for hope, as far as man can judge; and it is greatly to be feared that she died as she lived.

And now I would turn away from such a soul-harrowing spectacle to another case, well-nigh as bad, and one with which *you* ought to be well acquainted. Do you inquire with interest, "Whose case is it?"

IT IS YOUR OWN.

"*My* case?"

Yes, YOURS, if still unsaved. Don't forget, I pray you, that the longsuffering of God, and your guilty soul, were never so near parting company, and that *for ever*, as now that your eye runs from side to side of this sheet of paper. Consider your position in view of eternity. Has not God been giving you special privileges of late? Death has been coming very near, but it *has missed* YOU. God's grace has been at work near you too; others have been blessed, but you *have missed* IT.

Listen to me; you may be having the last note of entreaty that God intends to sound in your ears. What remorse will be yours—remorse in its intensest bitterness—if, like the rich man, you one day suddenly wake up in hell. Then will mocking memory hold up before your eyes every golden opportunity lost in hardened unbelief, and you will have to say to yourself, “The great gulf is FIXED, and I am LOST—FOR EVER LOST, and I know where I missed it. Lost within reach of salvation; lost with my foot on the very threshold of the door of mercy; lost with gospel tracts in my possession and gospel sermons ringing in my ears.” Oh, then, lest this should ever be your own case, while *salvation* is still held out to you, let me entreat you to bow your heart to the Saviour. Let no mere appearances deceive you. “There is a way that *seemeth right* unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of DEATH” (Prov. xvi. 25).

Think not that understanding the way of salvation will either comfort you in the hour of death, or shelter you in the day of judgment. Hear the word of the Lord. “The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall *remain in the congregation of the dead*” (Prov. xxi. 16). Remain WHERE? Where GOD SAYS you shall remain—“*in the congregation of the dead.*”

“And what congregation is that?” do you ask. It is the company that shall stand for judgment before the

great white throne, within *one word* of the lake of fire—that righteous word, "Depart."

Depend upon it, dear unconverted soul, if life's journey closes upon you in your present condition, *you* will make one in that congregation—and do not forget what God says—you shall "remain" in that sin-cursed company throughout eternity. Stand still, and think, I entreat you. God's all-searching eye is, this moment, upon you. Does He see you repenting and heartily desiring to receive the blessing He delights to bestow? Or does He see you turning aside once more to the world and the sinful transient pleasures in it? Can the latter really be possible? *God is your witness*, and one or other is true of you.

But if you are truly anxious, a confessed sinner in the searching light of the presence of God, let me remind you that the all-cleansing blood of God's provided Lamb has been already shed; the soul-saving work of that same blessed Person has been already finished. "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 6). Upon the cross the requirements of God, and the need of the sinner were both righteously met. God has declared His eternal satisfaction and delight in Christ and His work, by raising Him from the dead and giving Him glory. God's love can now flow into your heart without any let or hindrance on *His* side. It was perfect love that found and gave the sacrifice; and now that all has been accomplished, the same perfect love beseeches you to be reconciled. Why not then.

"Take the guilty sinner's name—

The guilty sinner's Saviour's claim"?

He who was once upon the cross bearing sins, is now in heaven without them, having made purgation for them (Heb. i. 3); so that instead of the believer's sins appear-

ing in the presence of God *against* him, He who bore his sins appears now in the presence of God *for* him (Heb. ix. 24). "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 9).

"Then doubt not thy welcome, since God has declared  
There remaineth no more to be done ;  
Christ once in the end of the world hath appeared,  
And completed the work HE begun."

---

### "NOTHING SAID RESPECTING YOU."

A PRISONER, condemned to death, hoped for a reprieve to the very last. Half an hour before the time fixed for the execution the governor of the jail entered his cell, saying, "I have a communication from the Secretary of State." Upon hearing those words a smile of hope played over the pallid countenance of the condemned man ; but the governor had not finished all he had to say, and added, "But in that communication there is nothing said respecting YOU ; *you must therefore die !*"

Unconverted reader, we also have a communication to make, not from man, but from God ; and we think you will find that in it there *is* something said respecting you. But judge for yourself. "He that, being *often reprov'd*, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Prov. xxix. 1). Is there nothing in that message respecting you ? Read it again, and think seriously before saying "No."

Once more. "As I live, saith the Lord, *every knee* shall bow to Me, and *every tongue* shall confess to God. So then *every one* of us shall give account of Himself to God" (Rom. xiv. 11, 12). There is certainly something



there respecting you. Take it to heart. "For the wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23); and "he that *believeth not* is condemned already" (John iii. 18). "He that is *not subject to the Son* shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 36, New Trans.).

But listen again; for the message has a bright side. There is *love* in it, *salvation* in it. Thus it runs: "But God commendeth His *love* toward us, in that, while we were yet SINNERS, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save SINNERS" (1 Tim. i. 15).

Is there not something there of deep importance concerning you? Is not your own *name* there? Fall then, at once, low at the Saviour's feet and confess it.

"Humbly *own* your name,  
Boldly the blessing claim."

---

## FEARING BECAUSE FORGIVEN.

"IF Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared" (Ps. cxxx. 3, 4).

This is not a slavish fear. It is not a fear of *losing* His love, but of *grieving* it. It is a fear which has its very *spring* in the knowledge of a love that can never be either checked or changed; a love that spent itself upon me when I was utterly degraded, irrecoverably lost; that shares its all with me now that I am eternally saved.

Who would not fear to grieve such love as this? "*Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name?*"

Nothing can move the soul to holy, jealous care like the forgiving love of God in Christ. Let us suppose a case by way of illustration. A farmer is in financial difficulties, and spring rent nearly due. He has nothing

to meet his landlord with but the pitiable tale of misfortune and poverty. A little before rent day, however, he receives a short note from his landlord, saying, "My son, who occupies the farm next to yours, has been moved with pity by your adverse circumstances, and undertakes to pay the whole of the rent now due. Come with the other tenants to the rent-day dinner. Your half year's receipt shall be ready."

When the rent day comes, and the promised receipt is actually put into his hand, what a debt of LOVE and gratitude he feels he owes them?

But, for the sake of illustration, let us carry our supposed case a step farther. A few months later, in the same year, in passing through one of his meadows he sees something which greatly distresses him. A number of cattle have strayed into a field belonging to his landlord's son, and have made shocking havoc of a standing crop of great value. He knows well that his kind neighbour had bestowed great pains, and spent many pounds upon this very crop. But what touches him most of all is, that on going to drive them out he finds that these destructive oxen are his *own*! How came they there? Alas! he soon discovers how. They have strayed through one of his own badly-kept fences! What words can describe his mortified feelings? "It is almost more than I can bear," he says. "How can I look him in the face again? What *will* he think of me for such a shameful return for all his kindness? for it is entirely through my own carelessness."

On reaching home he finds an invitation from the landlord and his son to go and spend the evening with them. "Ah! they don't know what damage my cattle have done," is his first thought.

However, upon reaching them, he soon finds that they *do* know—know all about it. They patiently listen to his tale of self-condemnation for the careless way he had kept

his fences, and though he cannot help noticing how grieved they look, yet they seem more generously kind, more touchingly tender than ever, and ere he returns home they assure him of forgiveness.

Now watch that man the next day. He is up with the skylark, and is as busy as the bee. He can scarcely find time to take his meals. "No more ill-kept fences," he says; "not a single gap shall be left if *I* can discover it." How jealously he seems to examine every weak or doubtful place, and with what energy he goes about to fortify them! Stop that farmer, and inquire the cause of all this busy activity, and he will tell you that *love, forgiving love*, is the secret.

We feel that we may leave the application of our figure to the reader himself, and simply quote once more what Scripture says: "*There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be FEARED*" (Ps. cxxx. 4). The heart-felt sense of divine forgiveness will not make men careless about their conduct, but the very opposite: "To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little" (Luke vii. 47).

The Christian made *happy* in the knowledge of the forgiving love of God in Christ will *fear* to grieve a love so true and tender. His constant prayer will be—

"Arm me with jealous care,  
As in 'Thy sight to live."

## COMMUNION AND VICTORY.

(EXTRACT FROM A LETTER TO A YOUNG SOLDIER.)

**W**HAT a tender plant communion is! It is of heavenly origin, and was brought into this world by the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. No wonder, therefore, that it needs such jealous care and culture in such an atmosphere as this. What is so remarkable about it is,

that, unlike most exotics, the sunshine of this poor world is often the very worst thing for it, and it has even been known to thrive better under stormy skies than under the most smiling beams of earthly prosperity; better amid hard looks, bitter words, or even hard blows, than under the kindest treatment that the world could possibly offer. I don't doubt, dear J——, that you know something of this in your barrack-room experiences. But with every opposition we are sure of victory in the end. And what does it matter how much an army may *seem* to suffer defeat during a severe night struggle, if the men are fully assured that a brilliant victory is theirs at day-dawn? And not only shall *we*, through grace, be victors in the end, but "*more than conquerors*, through Him that loved us" (2 Sam. xxiii. 10).

---

## WHAT IS YOUR VERDICT?

### LETTER TO AN ANXIOUS SOUL.

**M**Y DEAR FRIEND,— . . . In one sense I cannot say I am sorry to find you passing through such deep soul exercise, for it will probably only end in the deeper blessing. But, from your letter, I fear you are far too much occupied with the reality of your faith and the genuineness of your conversion, and too little with Christ Himself, as the personal Saviour whom God puts before your soul.

Whatever be the consequences to *you*, the fact remains the same, that in the gospel God has spoken to you about His Son. "The gospel of God . . . concerning His Son Jesus Christ" (Rom. i. 1-3).

If a great artist were to send one of his paintings to another for inspection, we should not expect the receiver of the picture to go on talking about his own eyesight,

and the like, but to express his judgment as to the merits or demerits of the painting, to the credit or discredit of the artist who executed it. He might treat the picture with indifference, or perchance turn from it with disgust; he might feel constrained to applaud it, or, valuing it *very* highly, he might, if within his power, desire to possess it; but in both cases it is the painting and the painter's skill he is thinking of, *not* of himself or his refined tastes, and the like.

Well, the figure is at best but a beggarly one beside the reality, for God puts CHRIST before you. He has much to say about His blessed, glorified Son, much about the wonderful work He accomplished, and in which you are interested, belonging, as you consciously do, to the class for whom the work was done. He came to save *sinners*.

God asks you for your verdict, as to the merits of Jesus. Worthy or unworthy? Trustworthy or not trustworthy? What have you to say? What think ye of Christ? Can you from your heart say He is worthy? Even suppose you never reached nearer than the *outside* of the gates of glory, and only heard, as you stood there, the heavenly choir singing, "Thou art worthy"; could your heart join on the outside what the countless voices of the redeemed were singing *inside*? If you could, then rest assured that therein lies the secret of your moral fitness for that glory.

Real faith is believing in the worthiness of the provided Saviour, with a sense that you are lost without Him. All the merits are on His side, the guilt and need on yours; and this will be the same in principle to the very end.

Do not stop to question therefore, Have I really believed? Am I right in calling myself a Christian, and the like? But rather ask, Is the one who died for sinners



really worthy of my heart's confidence? Can I do without Him, and be at rest?

May the gracious spirit of God direct your heart to that glorified Saviour at the right hand of God, wearing upon His blessed brow the certain proofs of what *God* thinks of His finished work and peerless Person.

---

### TIME'S SOWING AND ETERNITY'S REAPING.

**I**T is as plainly seen in the lives of God's children as in the Book they dearly cherish, that whom He loves He chastens. Now if you are unconverted, we have one serious question to ask you. It is this: If God is thus dealing with those who trust Him and love Him, when they sin: if in this world *they* are allowed to feel the consequences of their disobedience when it occurs—to reap what they sow—what kind of reaping will *yours* be in eternity, for a lifetime of sin and hardened unbelief? “The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?” (1 Peter iv. 17). Do bear with me while I solemnly remind you of what the end *will* be: for if the door be shut upon you as you are, *most certainly* will you reap in hell all you have sown on earth, and the consequences of your sin will be ETERNAL! Oh, what a reaping! Listen.

You are determined at all cost to cling to your sins. Alas! how closely will their memory cling to you in perdition.

You “love darkness,” and the blackness of darkness for ever awaits you.

You choose the companionship of godless sinners; their laugh and their joke are your delight. But remember

there will be *no society in hell*. In the "outer darkness" you will never see your sinful associates; bound "hand and foot" you will never reach them. You may hear their remorseful wail, but never again their empty laugh.

The company of real Christians you carefully shun. In eternity you will be as far from them as the fixed gulf and your own sins can separate you.

You listen to your soul's great enemy, utterly regardless of the pleading voice of Jesus. But there will be one word from His holy lips which you will be compelled both to listen to and to obey—that dreadful word *DEPART*—and from that moment never again will you hear His voice throughout hell's dreary night. You will find, moreover, that the one you *did* listen to—your deceptive murderer—has reached the lake of fire before you. (Read Rev. xx. 10–12.)

Oh, beware lest such a doom be yours! Repent of your sins before it is *TOO LATE*; own your guilt before God. He waits to be gracious to you, and if you believe in Him who shed His precious blood for you, "*He will abundantly PARDON.*"

---

## TREMBLED—ASTONISHED—ATTRACTED.

**I**N greater or less degree these three words enter into every true conversion. But we wish to show that, without the last, the first two are worthless.

"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" asks the risen Man of power; and at this exposure of his daring wickedness the mad persecutor, the very champion of Christ-despisers, *trembles*. "Who art thou, Lord?" he inquires. And oh what grace and tenderness are found in the exalted One's answer! "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." Saul is "*astonished*" at this wondrous grace, for the One

whose power had just smitten his body down to the earth could as easily have smitten his soul down to hell. But instead of this He there and then declares Himself to be the sinner's *Saviour*. "I AM JESUS!" Well might the apostle say afterward, "The grace of the Lord surpassingly overabounded" (1 Tim. i. 14, R.V.).

What is the sequel? This glorified Saviour becomes, for ever after, the one controlling *attraction* of Paul the apostle.

But there may be trembling under the preaching of the Word without attraction of heart to Christ. Witness the case of Felix. Though he *trembled*, it could only have been the trembling of natural fear; for there was, with it, no desire after the One whom the apostle preached. It was not like the jailer's "trembling," which was accompanied by the inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?"

Again, there may be astonishment without either the trembling or the attraction. The Jews, in Mark vi. 2, were "astonished" when they heard the words, and saw the works of the Lord Jesus; but with their astonishment there was no trembling as to their own sad state, and instead of being attracted to Him they were "offended at Him," as we see immediately afterwards (Mark vi. 3, 6).

Then, what trembling and astonishment will there be in the day of judgment, but no conversions there! "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all the kindreds of the earth will wail because of Him. Even so, Amen" (Rev. i. 7). Reader, do you ever think of it?

---

## THE STUDENT'S CONVERSION.

## A WORD TO UNSATISFIED SEEKERS.

A YOUNG Scotch student was spending the winter of 1837 with a family in the town of Leamington, in the capacity of private tutor. He had been carefully and religiously brought up, had just finished his university course with brilliant honours, and was, withal, aspiring to the *ministry*. But, alas! he had never been brought to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. With a highly-cultivated intellect, great transparency of character, and stirring moral worth as to outward behaviour, he was as yet a stranger to grace. He was religious, but knew not what it was to be a new creature in Christ. In the November of that year, a circumstance occurred which turned the whole tide of that young man's life. Here is his own account of it.

"I happened, one day, to turn up to the mineral spring. A young man entered the building whose appearance at once attracted my observation; his coarse linen frock contrasted with the gay apparel of the groups before me. He was emaciated, and walked forward with a feeble step. After drinking of the water out of a vessel of earthenware, which was placed beside a number of tumblers, he, without having apparently observed anyone, again slowly withdrew. After a little I began to descend the hill, in the middle of which the spring was situated, and found the young man sitting at one of the bends of the winding path which slopes gently down the declivity. I spoke to him. His diffident tone of voice, and his modesty of manner, at once enlisted my sympathies. During several weeks afterwards I frequently visited his father's lowly cottage. My intercourse with the young man soon gave me ground to conclude that, if my theoretic knowledge

of gospel truths were greater than his, he, unlike myself, had experienced their sanctifying power. Truly his was the better portion. When he spoke of the Saviour's love to sinners, and His obedience unto death for their redemption, he at times gave vent to his gratitude with tears of joy. Pointing to his clothes on one occasion, he said, addressing his father, 'These will be no more needed. I wish you to sell them. The price of them will be enough to pay for my coffin.' He seemed like one who had obtained 'everlasting consolation, and good hope, through grace,' to have not a shadow of doubt or anxiety on his soul as to the prospect of eternal glory. One evening, about sunset, he fell asleep."

The student's soul was reached by the arrow of conviction. That poor country lad had a secret of peace to which he was a total stranger, and the question flashed upon him, "Could *I* thus calmly pass into the immediate presence of the holy and just Jehovah? Am *I*, like him, sheltered from the terrors of 'the wrath to come'?" The question, too plain to be evaded, and too urgent to be postponed, constrained the earnest inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" Many a struggle followed this awakening before peace and liberty were really reached. Like thousands more, he began by trying hard to put himself right with God. He tried to find love in his heart for God, instead of believing the love which God had manifested toward him, in the gift of Christ. Again let me quote his own words, written at that time. "How miserable a state of mind is that in which sorrow, like a heavy load, weighs and weighs upon the heart, and tries to find relief in tears, but cannot find it! How miserable, above all that is most miserable, to wish that the heart was full of love towards its God and Saviour, and after all to feel that it is as cold as ice, and as hard as adamant! I cried to the *unknown God* with my voice,



and often cried in despair. The cry seemed never to reach His ears; and then I was so troubled that I could not speak." The fact was he was reasoning from what he was at his best for God, and not from what God was to him at his worst. In other words, it was a fruitless effort to find merit in self, because of what a bettered religious self was, instead of putting confidence in God because of what God was. He was ransacking all the workings of his unsatisfied heart to find satisfaction, and no wonder he was bitterly disappointed. A village pauper might as well search every hole and corner of his comfortless cottage in order to find how much wealth there is in the Bank of England, as a sinner to search his own heart in order to discover what there is in the heart of God. No, dear reader; God's heart is not so learned. Man cannot by such searching find out God. "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, *He hath declared Him.*" The gospel begins with the heart of God, and comes to the heart of man. For *God so loved* the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). "*God commendeth His love* toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). God can only be known in Christ, redemption only secured by Him, and peace and pardon preached through Him. God has found eternal satisfaction in His finished work, and has caused every divine glory to shine in His countenance as the risen Man, and He wants me to find my satisfaction, therefore, where He finds His—not in self, but in Christ; in Him, and in no other. Is this where my reader is looking for it?

At last the clouds dispersed from the young student's heart, and the glory of gospel light shone in. Let him still tell his own tale. In a letter to his father he thus

writes: "I am now convinced that, after hearing it a thousand times over, we still remain ignorant of the gospel, unless we see clearly, and feel joyfully, that Christ is offered to us, wretched, lost sinners, in all His fulness as the free gift of God. I am sure of this, that for a long, long time I have been deceiving myself and making myself miserable every day, through ignorance of the free, glorious gospel, while I imagined that I clearly understood its gracious character. For long the painful feeling preyed upon my mind that I must do some good works myself, or God would not accept me in Christ Jesus; and my misery was, that while Satan thus blinded my eyes, I found myself unable to do the good work that I would. Now I see that the gospel is quite different—that it is free, and full, and *wholly of grace*." And at another time he wrote: "The giving up of all things—of all earthly possessions, of father, mother, sister, brother—is easy, compared with giving up all our fancied righteousness—our own works. This is the last and most difficult thing that the earnest seeker finds to do. We often fancy, and often say with our tongues, '*None but Christ*. I place my whole dependence upon Christ. I know I am nothing, can do nothing—He is my complete Saviour;' and *yet all the time we are trusting to and looking for something in ourselves*."

Perchance my reader may be one of this very class. You are worried, and disappointed, and distressed, because *you* cannot be what you ought to be. But suppose you were, what then? Why, like the Pharisee in the parable, you could then go before God and tell Him *how well satisfied you were with yourself*; that now, being "*what you ought to be*," you could stand in your own righteousness before Him; and while thanking Him for His great kindness in giving His Son, yet, that as far as you were concerned, you could manage very well without Him.

Now, perhaps your whole soul rebels with utmost indignation against such a thought, and yet is this not the very thing your deceived heart is seeking after, viz. *self-satisfaction*? You hear the precious testimony of the work and worth of the Lord Jesus Christ. You listen again and again to what God has plainly declared concerning *all* who believe on Him—that they are justified from all things (Acts xiii. 39), that they shall not come into judgment, that they have passed from death unto life (John v. 24). And yet you turn from the perfections of a glorified Saviour at the right hand of God to your own wretched self, and say mournfully, “If *I* were this, and if *I* were not that, it would be different, but ——.” But—why your eye is simply on the wrong person—that is all; it is *self* instead of *Christ*. The moment you really turn to Christ, and give up all expectation from self, your heart will be at rest. Till then, instead of happy assurance, your heart will be filled with the “ifs” and “buts” of unsatisfied desire and of miserable uncertainty. May the Holy Spirit of God so turn your eye and heart to Christ. God has glorified Him upon His heavenly throne, and that because He perfectly satisfied and glorified God when bearing our sins upon the cross. May it be your happy experience to “worship God in the Spirit, and *rejoice in Christ Jesus*, and have *no confidence in the flesh*” (Phil. iii. 3).

“In *self* there is nothing in which I can glory ;  
In Christ I'll rejoice to the end of the story.”

---

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

---

“SPADE-ACE GUINEAS, FOURPENCE  
EACH.”

IN the year 1888 a poor man, while digging a foundation for a new house on the outskirts of a town in the midland counties, unearthed a parcel covered with lead. It need hardly be said that curiosity soon impelled him to open it, and, upon examination, he found that it was filled with bright, yellow coins, in a good state of preservation, about sixty in number. These he readily sold to neighbours and fellow-workmen at various prices, averaging about threepence and fourpence a-piece for the whole of them, little knowing that they were *bona fide* golden, spade-ace guineas, of the reign of George III., and valued at a considerable sum by those who understood their real worth. When the man's good fortune became known, along with the reckless manner in which he had parted with the discovered treasure, what a talk it made, to be sure! Some blamed, and some pitied. “What a fool!” said one. “How stupid!” said another. While others exclaimed, “What a pity that the poor man had not been better advised as to the value of his discovery, and thus made the best of it.”

What the man's own feelings were it is hard to say, but it was certain that a real prize had been within his grasp, and that, to his own annoyance and mortification, he had parted with it for a mere trifle.

Now the writer could not help thinking, as the story was related to him, of another man who acted, on one occasion, even far more foolishly than this.

Who, that has thoughtfully considered the history of Esau, will not say that his was the greater folly? For one morsel of meat he sold his birthright; for one bit of present gratification he sacrificed his title to a vast



inheritance, and found afterwards, to his sorrow, that his father's blessing and the forfeited inheritance went together; and that, in sacrificing one, he had lost them both. He had deliberately bartered away the one for a mess of red pottage, and the bitterest tears of remorse could not win back the other. The former he *might* have had, but would not; the latter he *would* have had, but could not. What a sad bargain was his! and all the remorse in the world could not alter it. Solemnly does it read in God's Word, "Thus Esau despised his birthright"; and not less solemn are the Holy Ghost's comments upon his conduct. "For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears" (Heb. xii. 16, 17). Poor profane Esau!

But does Esau, with this Derbyshire labourer, stand alone in the world's history, think you? Are there not other monuments of like folly? Alas! yes; their name is legion—men and women a thousand times more foolish than this man with his spade-ace guineas. He only sacrificed gold coins for a few copper ones; they are sacrificing an eternal weight of glory for the empty baubles of time. In their estimation "the pleasures of sin for a season," in this dying world, are of much more consequence than "the pleasures for evermore" in the presence of the blessed God. And yet their ears are not strangers to the sound of that solemn question, asked by the blessed Lord, "*What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*"

No doubt the poor workman in question was never told the real value of his parcel of coins, until they were out of his reach, and, consequently, the few coppers, that he did know the value of, were thought to be a good



exchange for the shining coins, whose worth he knew not. He had probably never seen a *bona fide* spade-ace guinea before, and how did he know that these might be nothing but gilded medals?

But can the thousands of unsaved gospel-hearers, in this land of light, plead a similar ignorance? Impossible. If man did not know the worth of his soul, God did; and the price He paid to redeem it, even the precious, precious blood of Jesus Christ His beloved Son, puts the stamp of His estimate upon it. "None can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: for the redemption of *their soul is precious*, and it ceaseth for ever" (Ps. xlix. 7, 8).

Well, reader, you may never be the finder of even one spade-ace guinea, but you have had scores of *golden opportunities* put into your hand—opportunities of getting your soul saved. What have you done with them? Are you prepared to give account to God for the way you have used them? or have you trifled them away with guilty recklessness?

If so, remember that as surely as the man we speak of came to his last guinea, so will you come to a last soul-saving opportunity; but with this important difference—he knew, when the last was being parted with, that it *was* his last, and it is more than probable that *you will not*. God is, by the very message you are now reading, giving you another chance. Will He ever offer you another, think you? This one is the most solemn you have ever yet had, because you never before had an offer so near to a lost eternity. In God's name we call upon you to stop. Get upon your face before Him; thank Him that your soul is still out of hell; confess to Him your crimson sins, your proud neglect; tell Him of your guilty hardness, your daring unbelief; nay, unbosom your whole soul before Him. Yet remember that neither the bitterest

penitential tears, nor the most heartfelt cries for mercy, nor the most unreserved confession of sins, can possibly atone for your guilt. Nothing, nothing but the precious blood of Christ can do that. The penalty for sin is death, and nothing short of the death of a God-accepted Victim can therefore meet your deep need. But Christ has died; God did accept His precious sacrifice, and the Holy Ghost came from heaven at Pentecost as the witness of it. All you have to do, therefore, to obtain salvation is, as a sinner truly repenting before God, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour; for "to Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive *remission of sins*" (Acts x. 43), as well as an "inheritance among them which are sanctified" (Acts xxvi. 18).

But, miss your final opportunity of salvation (and, again I warn you, *this may* be the last), and then, instead of *your sins* being put away, *you* will be put away; instead of an inheritance of eternal blessing, "want" shall come upon you like "an armed man" (Prov. vi. 11), and you will be left without one drop of water to cool your tongue, or one ray of hope to shine upon your dark, eternal, inevitable future. How often, think you, through the never-ending night, will a lost soul recount the precious opportunities which he threw away with as much indifference as a child tosses beach pebbles into the ocean? See to it, my reader, that such a destiny shall never be yours.

But a *bright* side is also suggested by the profit-and-loss question just referred to. Let us consider it a moment.

A quaint old Christian, of a few generations past, used to speak of three things that would cause him to wonder when he reached heaven. His first surprise would be to find many whom he never expected to meet there; his second, to miss many whom he fully expected would be

there; but that the greatest wonder of all would be to find himself there.

There is, however, a greater wonder than these three put together; viz. the cost the blessed Saviour was at to bring any of us there. The Son of God laid aside His heavenly glories, and, according to the parable (Matt. xiii. 44), sold all that He had in order to secure for Himself the treasure which He saw hidden in the field; *i.e.* in this poor world. And in what did this treasure consist? Why, of a number of poor, guilty sinners as bad as bad could be!

And what could He do with such people in heaven? Can defilement enter there? Never. He would wash them from every stain of sin; clear them from every breath of condemnation; and then present them to Himself in heavenly glory *with exceeding joy*, unblamable in holiness, unrebukable in love. And if, when He came on such an errand, the world would give thirty pieces of silver to get rid of Him, He would still not only give up all that He had, but surrender His life as well; *all*—all to possess the precious treasure. He would allow nothing to turn Him aside till the purchase was completed. What love! No love like His! Will it not, fellow-believer, be our eternal wonder and joy? God grant that each dear reader may form part of that treasure in the coming day, and be found His happy, humble follower in this.

---

## WHY UNBELIEVING?

**B**UT what avails it for you, my reader, if, though Christ *has* once suffered for sins, though God has raised Him from among the dead, though the Holy Ghost has brought from heaven the tidings of the infinite value of what has been done—what avails it for you, we say, if you believe it not?

A certain mother in Lincolnshire received from a lady at some distance a letter. Her daughter had been engaged by this lady as domestic servant, and the letter was to explain the best railway route and give full particulars of changes, etc.

With this letter in hand she went to a shopkeeper of our acquaintance, told him where her daughter wanted to go, and asked him to tell her the best way of getting there. After doing his best to furnish her with the needed information she allowed him to read the letter. “Why, Mrs.—,” exclaimed he, “the lady has given you all particulars *here*! Why come to me?”

But even this did not satisfy her, for she afterwards carried her letter to the Grantham Railway Station, eight miles off, to inquire there the best route for her daughter, though only to be told once more what the lady had told her already!

Here is an illustration of the needless trouble which unbelief gives to those who listen to its dangerous reasoning. Had she simply believed what the lady had said, she might have quietly rested and confidently acted. But she could *not* trust her, and consequently looked for other evidence.

Now, my reader, *God* has spoken. It is *His* message that comes to you. It was *His* heart that devised the righteous way of bringing you to His own eternal glory.

His Holy Spirit has, by His own chosen instruments, plainly recorded how you may make use of that "new and living way," and be certain that you are in it.

"Through this Man [Christ] is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things." "And whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Acts xiii. 38, 39; Rom. viii. 30).

"He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that GOD IS TRUE" (John iii. 33).

"He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar" (1 John v. 10).

"Abraham believed *God*, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 3).

What God *said* Abraham *believed*; and he believed what was said, *because of Him who said it*. No other consideration had a feather's weight with him. Abraham did not bring in his feelings as evidence, and if you, my reader, have been tempted to do so, just pause a moment and consider the folly of it. How could all the happy feelings in the world add one jot to the truthfulness of what God has said? In Matthew iv. 4 the blessed Lord Himself links "It is written" with "The mouth of God," and in this manner defeated the tempter. Let it be your wisdom to do the same.

The character of our blessing will depend on *what* God has said; our *faith* will rest on the faithfulness of Him who said it.

"We believe the testimony of *God* which He hath testified of His Son" (1 John v. 9); and nothing can shake the assurance of the soul that rests on such evidence.