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OR,
HEAVEN AND HOW TO GET THERE



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WHITHER BOUND ?

OR,

Heaven, and How to get there.

Passing onward, quickly passing,
Yes, but whither, whither bound ?
Is it to the many mansions,
Where eternal rest is found ?
Passing onward.
Yes, but whither, whither bound ?

LONDON :

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GOD'S JOY IN THE SALVATION OF SINNERS.

Read Luke xv.

THE one great thing that I want to bring before you is that the joy of God in receiving the sinner is infinitely greater than that of the sinner himself. Irrespective of everything in you and of you, and of everything you have done, God has His joy, His own peculiar joy, in getting the sinner back to Himself.

Those of you who are familiar with the Scripture will have your thoughts directed to Luke xv., as illustrating most precious this theme! It is the Gospel of the grace of God that it is our privilege to preach; our one desire is to bring you into immediate contact with that large, loving heart of God, and with that which was the most full and blessed expression of it, the work of His precious spotless Son. The first that ever preached the Gospel in the ears of ruined sinners was the Lord Himself; He was the first to proclaim the glorious tidings of salvation. For four thousand years had God been working, as the Lord Himself declares in John vi., "My father worketh hitherto." What was He working for? For the salvation of poor sinners. And then the Lord adds, "and I work;" that is, He takes up the work of His Father. What an earnest, diligent, constant,

2 GOD'S JOY IN THE SALVATION OF SINNERS.

faithful preacher! How devoted! His days spent in work, and sometimes, too, His nights in prayer; wherever He could find an open ear He was ready. As to poor sinners, He always had a message of peace and love: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke iv. 18, 19). This work of grace is going on now, but you know not the moment when it will be the day of vengeance.

Did you ever mark that the Lord in quoting this Scripture stopped at that terrible word, "and the day of vengeance of our God"? That is the reason why He shut the book; had he passed that comma, you would not be where you are just now. There is only a comma; we know not when the last moment of the acceptable year will pass. Oh, the solemnity of the day of vengeance! It shall overtake all those who have been hearkening to the Gospel and have never yielded to its power.

In this 15th of Luke we have unfolded the work of the Son, of the Spirit, and of the Father, and all tending to one blessed point. In the first we get the Son going after the poor, lost, wandering sheep, and going after it *till* He

find it. The Lord has come down into this world for the purpose of seeking and saving that which was lost.

Every clause in this marvellous picture is full of the sweetest grace for our hearts. When He hath found it, what does He with the sheep? Just what He will do with any poor sinner that comes to Him now. He lays it on His shoulder. He lays it on, *rejoicing*. We have not merely the action, but the style of the action —“ *rejoicing*.” It will give Him a great deal more joy to have you on His shoulder than it will give you to be there.

I was asked one day to go and see a dying infidel. I went, and found him in a state which I can never forget. As I went up to his room, his sister told me that a moment before he had been blaspheming God for laying him on that bed, and for all that he was suffering. The chamber of a dying infidel is an awful place to be in. I entered, and saw one who had been a fine young man tossing upon his bed of death in the last stage of consumption. There he was; no getting out of the grasp of that last enemy; all the treasures of the universe could not have saved him.

You, too, beloved friends, must meet that enemy. It is only a question of days, of months, or at most of years.

All the reasonings of the infidel are like cobwebs when he approaches the reality of eternity.

This man was an artizan. He had spent his weeks in work and his Sundays in pleasure. There he was, at thirty-two years of age, evidently dying. I sat down beside him, looking to God to give me something to say; then, drawing my Bible from my pocket, I read this self-same Luke xv. Then I said, "There is one thing I want you to learn from this chapter." Fixing his eyes upon me, he earnestly asked, "What is it?"

It is this, "God's joy in getting you back and pardoning all your sins is infinitely greater than would be your joy in being brought back and forgiven." There was a pause, and he looked at me. "That is good news for me." The effect of which words can be better imagined than expressed: they were the first gleam of hope.

But then came, in broken accents, words which he could scarcely get out (as if the devil were busy at work), "Will God save me, lying here and doing nothing?" I said, "And what have you been doing the thirty-two years you have lived in the world? If you were to live thirty-two years more, do you suppose you would make a much better use of them?"

Again I press this most precious truth, the very essence of the grace of God. Do not talk of your miserable doings. What has the sheep done? What is it likely to do? To wander still farther. It is *lost*. It is not a question of

what you have done, though it is right enough that you should be broken-hearted. What you have done and what you are, all together is but filthy rags.

But what became of the infidel? His soul was blessedly saved, and in a few weeks afterwards he passed home to glory.

But now I have another picture. His brother was close by, and he too was dying. But he was not an infidel; he had been one that had preached the Gospel, but one who had never known the peace of God. I found him miserable; quite a different case. He had no peace, had never known true solid peace. He was one of that large class who think it is right always to have doubts and fears.

I sat down beside him and had a different work to do—to show him that for the weakest believer in Christ there is no such thing in the New Testament as doubts and fears: no such thing recognized. I would assert it in the fullest and freest manner. People doubt because they do not know the heart of God and Christ—they know not what it is to be in His presence. Could I doubt if I felt myself carried above everything by Christ—on the very shoulder of Christ? What should I doubt? Myself? Of course you would be a fool to trust in yourself. The shoulder of Christ? Do you think that if He puts you there and keeps you there you can over

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perish? It is no humility to doubt. It is presumption. My poor friend (the brother of the infidel) was brought into the full liberty of the grace of God and he too died rejoicing.

Well, beloved, see the consummation of all this in what our Lord adds here. What He here says is not that there is joy amongst the angels. He says there is joy in heaven. There is joy in the presence of the angels of God. What He teaches us is that God has His joy. If you had your way the harps of heaven would hang upon their willows for ever; you would rob God of the joy of His heart.

There is the same in the second parable, the woman represents the Holy Ghost. She seeks diligently.

And now we come to the marvellous unfolding of the heart of God. What a picture in the younger son of one desirous to escape from the restraint of the father's house! What a photograph of a fast young man: of a young man wanting to taste what the world is! Depend upon it, if you want to do the same you will find out what it is. "He began to be in want." The time is sure to come when want will stare you in the face. So long as you have anything to bestow, the world will have plenty of room for you. Did you ever hear those lines?

"It is a very good world to live in, to spend in,
The very worst that ever was known to beg, to borrow in."

Let a man's fortune have passed away — he will not be troubled with many carriages. Whatever you may be, whenever you want the world, it does not want you. If you ask me what was the most vivid proof that ever was afforded of the hollowness of the world, shall I turn to police reports and statistics of crime? Never! To what, then, shall I turn? To the cross of my Lord. The world crucified the Lord of glory: shall I expect anything from it? When you want God, He wants you; that is the difference between God and the world. There was no giving in the far country.

“And when he came to himself.” Mark, there are stages in his history.

First, he came to himself. Second, the father came to him. The first is the moment of the gracious visitation of God's Spirit to the heart of man. People constantly say when urged, “I have not love enough in my heart.” Ah! that is the very reason why you should come. God knows that there is nothing but hatred towards Him, still He wants you just as you are. Do not wait till you are a little better, or till you have got a little more love. No; you must come trusting in the love of His heart. The work of conviction cannot be too deep. “Make me as one of thy hired servants;” that is all the length that anyone goes. I do not believe that the element of legality is ever eradicated from any-

one's heart till he knows what God is to him. So long as you reason from what you are to what God is, you are all in the dark. We ought to reason from what God is down to ourselves. The moment the prodigal says, "I will say, Make me as one of thy hired servants," he shows a deep ignorance of the father's character. This always marks the awakened heart.

"While he was yet a great way off, the father ran." That is the father's way. "He ran." Remember, this is not delineated by the pencil of fancy; it is the Lord Himself letting you into the very secret of the heart of God, giving you to understand, if you will, what is in that heart at this moment. The father saw him first. He ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him in his rags and wretchedness. Then the prodigal goes up only to a certain point, omitting all about being his servant. How could he speak about this when the father was kissing him? Impossible. There is not a word of that. The father interrupts him with, "Bring forth the best robe."

You say, "I am not worthy of that."

It is not a question of what you are worthy of, but of what it is in the Father's heart to give. "Let us eat and be merry, for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." Then there is a whole scene of joy awakened up in that house at the return of the

poor wretched prodigal. This is a specimen of the joy that there would be in heaven this day over one poor sinner who turns to Jesus.

But there was one (the elder son) who could not appreciate the fruits of it all, and the Lord turns the whole brunt of the parable upon the Pharisees.

The elder son, coming back from the field, hears the sound of music and dancing. What do the servants say? "*Thy brother is come, and thy father hath killed for him the fatted calf.*" He is angry, and will not go in, and the father comes out to entreat him. Mark what he says in reply. "As soon as this thy son (not my brother) was come." He does not understand what a brother is.

Dear friends, no one can understand anything of what God's heart is but a poor lost sinner who has been saved by grace. The father says, "Your obedience goes for what it is worth, but will you rob me of my joy? won't you let me taste the sweetness of having a poor lost sinner back with myself?" God, oh, marvellous thought! will have the joy of filling His house with sinners saved by grace.

Did you ever mark this, that side by side with this wonderful unfolding of grace you have the awful scene in chap. xvi. ? The same hand that opens the door of the Father's house draws aside the curtain and gives you a glimpse into hell.

There you see the rich man asking for one drop of water to cool his scorching tongue. There is where every soul who reads this will be who dies in his sins. Do not deceive yourselves, you who are hardened; there is such a thing as hell-fire.

You, who are still afar off, I entreat to come to Jesus just as you are, in your rags and wretchedness. It is well you should look on your rags and know they are such, but let them not hinder you.

There must be a work of repentance sooner or later, but when you have gone down into the deepest depths of self-judgment, the question still remains, what is there in the heart of God?

The proof of what is in his heart towards you is the gift of His Son. You could never be in the bosom of the Father till the Son had borne the wrath of a sin-hating God, that rebels like you and me should be brought to the Father's house to walk those golden streets.

"He spared not His own Son." In proportion to the love, to the grace, will be the depth of the darkness and desolation of your soul, if from the very sound of the gospel you drop down into the pit of hell. If there be a place of torment deeper than others, it will be occupied by rejectors of the gospel of the grace of God.

I entreat you with all earnestness, trample not upon God's love, lay not your head on a Christless pillow to-night, or you may spend a Christless eternity.

C. H. M.

“ AND IS IT ALL TRUE ? ”

SUCH was the exclamation made by a negro, not long since, when a patient at an infirmary in one of our large seaport towns.

“ And is it ALL true ? ” Yes, indeed, and not only true, but “ THE TRUTH,” all that is found in the word of God.

A few weeks back a Christian met with a severe accident, and was carried to the hospital in the town of H——. While undergoing treatment, a negro, who had also been injured, was brought into the same ward. After a while, the first mentioned began to teach his coloured co-patient to read. Their spelling book was the Bible ; and as the scholar got on they commenced to read the Gospel according to John. One day they came to that well-known verse—“ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life ” (iii. 16).

“ And is it ALL true ? ” said the negro to his instructor.

Of course he was assured that it was, because it was God’s word. On they went together, until the twenty-fourth verse of the fifth chapter specially arrested the scholar’s attention : “ 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.”

Again the same question was put, “And is it ALL true?” with the same answer, “Indeed it is ALL true.” “Then,” said the negro, “that is for *me*,” and then and there rejoiced in the blessed truth contained in that verse. “*Hearing;*” “*believing;*” “*HAVING;*” “*Not come into condemnation;*” “*Is passed from death unto life;*” five beautiful links in God’s chain of truth, reaching from the precious soul who hears and believes right up to glory.

The dear man was so happy that he wanted at once to go home, to be “absent from the body, present with the Lord;” but that was not to be at that time, as he was cured and discharged from the hospital.

He had to undergo the jeers of several of his fellow patients, to some of whom he one day replied, “Me not make game of God; He stop you sudden;” and ere three days were over one of them died in great agony.

When our friend left the hospital he went to a little meeting of believers which his kind tutor, now also recovered, through the mercy of God, attended, and on being questioned as to his faith and the ground of it, replied, “Me no doubt; me read de same word as you!”

Dear reader, this is all true; and have you been

able to set to *your* seal that GOD is TRUE? Or will this simple soul rise up in judgment against you, who, in the midst of the greatest privileges, have not said, “ ‘Then it is for me;’ ” have not realized that the “ *he* ” — “ *he* that heareth,” is YOURSELF.

And the scoffer: has this fallen into your hands? Oh, take warning; God is not mocked, for though He is “the God of all grace,” the “God rich in mercy,” yet He is “a consuming fire,” and will not have His word treated lightly, or one of his little ones mocked without dealing with you about it.

May all who read this find to their own joy that it IS ALL true, for Jesus has said, “ He that believeth on me HATH everlasting life.”

S. V. H.



LET THE LORD HAVE ALL THE GLORY.

THESE words were spoken by one who had been for many years living in a state of sin and wretched unbelief. Like many, alas! how many, in this day of God's abounding grace, this day of the Lord's long-suffering, he had treated the word and authority of God, “ the *living and true God*,” with utter contempt, and trampled under his feet God's testimony concerning His beloved

Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Infidelity reigned in that heart, as indeed it does in thousands around, in spite of all the blessed privileges a gracious God has given to man. Satan, the god of this world, had *full* possession, and blinded the mind, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine there.

But, blessed be God, *He* is *stronger* than the strong one, the great enemy of souls, and when *He* takes the sinner in hand, when *He* begins to deal with the heart and conscience, when *He* brings a poor, lost, guilty, hard-hearted sinner into *His holy* presence, who can resist His will.

I was asked to visit this poor unbeliever, and found him brought down, unable to do anything. The hand of God had touched him.

The Lord had saved his wife, and now He was about in the riches of His grace to deal with him. I well remember the first visit: what a look of hardness sat on that face, a true index of what reigned in that heart—a heart without the knowledge of God; a heart believing the devil's lie, and not the truth of the living God; a heart deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Dear reader, such is the heart of man naturally. Do *you* believe this? Do *you* believe that *your* "heart is deceitful *above* all things and *desperately* wicked"? God has said *it is*, and this is enough. *What He* says about us *must be*

true. Blessed for us when we bow to His word.

Many visits were paid before there was any apparent work in the conscience. Satan had his captive fast in his slavish chains. He had drawn a thick veil over the mind. *All* was darkness within.

I asked a dear Christian to go and see him. He found him ready to listen to the truth. The Spirit of God had begun His work of conviction. The conscience was aroused, and he was brought to see himself in the light of God's presence. The work went on gradually in his soul, and he was anxious to hear God's word. The precious Gospel was proclaimed—God's love in the gift of His dear Son, and His *delight* to save sinners. The heart was opened to receive the truth, and *now* the captive was free, free for ever, free from sin, free from death and judgment. The eyes were opened, and he was turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Oh, what a change, what a mighty change; no longer hard, infidel thoughts respecting God's blessed word, but a thorough conviction of his true condition, and a reception of Christ into the heart by faith. The poor body gradually wasted away through disease, but the spirit was bright and happy, only waiting for the moment to be released, to be "absent from the body and present with the Lord," present with *Him* who loved him and gave *Himself* for him. Just before passing

away, he turned his dying eyes to his dear wife and said, "Lizzie, let the Lord have all the glory!"

Dear reader, have *you* had your *heart broken* in the presence of a holy God? Do you see *yourself*, a lost, guilty, undone sinner before Him? Can *you* say, like one of old, "Woe is me! for I am undone? Are *you* satisfied with Jesus as a sufficient Saviour for *yourself*? Can *you* say, "Let the Lord have all the glory"? If you cannot answer to one of these, may the Holy Ghost awaken you to a true sense of your *real state before God*, and not only show you *yourself* in His holy presence, but reveal to your heart a true knowledge of *Himself* as a Saviour-God in the person of His dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Be assured of this: the unwillingness, if any, is *all* on your side. "God is not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance." 2 Pet. iii. 9. Do not charge Him with unwillingness.

When the leper came to the Lord he doubted His willingness to cleanse him. He believed in His power, but doubted his willingness. It may be that this is just where you are. You believe in His power, but you doubt His willingness to save. You are bringing your "If," saying "*If thou wilt thou canst.*" Now listen to the Lord's gracious and glorious answer to the poor doubting leper. "And Jesus put

LET THE LORD HAVE ALL THE GLORY.

forth his hand and touched him, saying, I WILL, be thou clean, and immediately the leprosy departed from him." Luke v. 12, 13. Alas, what poor, wretched, unbelieving hearts are ours!

Beloved reader, if *you* did but know the heart of God, and His willingness to save sinners, how rejoiced you would be to accept His gift. He loved the world and gave his son, and has declared that "*whosoever* believeth in him shall not perish, but have eternal life." There is "*no hope*" as to yourself. No improvement, no good works, no moral culture, no round of religious duties, so called, nothing whatever you can do, will save your precious soul from hell. Jesus, and Jesus only, is God's remedy for the sinner. He, *having done all the work* necessary for the salvation of sinners, God in the Gospel offers Him to *you* as a SAVIOUR-GOD. He has declared in the word for your real joy and peace that He is satisfied, divinely satisfied, yea, glorified in the death of His Son, and that the same precious blood which has met *all* His holy claims has also met the deep, deep need of every one *who believes*. How blessed when the heart can say, "*Let the Lord have all the glory.*" Truly *He* is worthy of all praise and glory in the conversion of every poor sinner. May *you*, dear reader, know the reality of it in your own soul.

R. E. K.

FOUR RESULTS OF THE LOVE OF GOD ;
OR, LIFE, PEACE, POWER, AND
BOLDNESS.

“Beloved, let us love one another : for love is of God ; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God ; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love ; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment : because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love ; but perfect love casteth out fear : because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us.”—1 JOHN iv. 7–19.

THERE are four points in this Scripture to which I will draw your attention briefly, because they are all the fruit of this wondrous love of God. First notice the connection between the ninth and tenth verses. The love of God in the ninth verse gives us something we have not got ; the love of God in the tenth verse takes away some-

thing we have got, and which we are only too glad to get rid of, when once we are aroused to think about it. The ninth verse gives us the positive side of the Gospel ; the tenth verse gives us the negative side.

The ninth verse gives us life, eternal life. God says, You have not got it, and I sent my Son into the world that you might get it. In the tenth verse God says, Though you have not got life, you have got *sins*, and I sent my Son into the world to take away those sins.

If we had written those verses, we should very likely have put the tenth verse before the ninth, because the first thing we think about is our sins ; but the first thing God thinks about is revealing His own heart by the gift of His Son.

“ In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.” Eternal life is the gift of God. What sort of life have you by nature ? A transitory life ; and, what is more, a forfeited life ! You may think you are a living man, but God looks upon you as a dead sinner, for your life is forfeited ; and in *your* case, my reader, the day in which you must pay the forfeit may not be far off.

Look around you, death is everywhere. What a world of broken hearts, and widows' weeds, and children's mourning, and open graves, and

sorrow, and trial, and care, this is ; and in it, what a blessed thing it is to have to do with a Living Man, who is alive for evermore, and who says, “ Because I live, ye shall live also.”

What did God send His Son into the world for ? To give you the very same life that Christ has. “ Which thing is true *in him and in you*, because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.” In the person of that Man of Sorrows all God’s heart comes out.

God “ sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might *live through him*.” He comes to give you what you have not got—eternal life—“ life through Him,” not life through your prayers, or life through your tears, or life through your good works, but “ life through Him.” Thank God for that.

What is this eternal life ? Life in the Son of God. Invincible life, invulnerable life, rock-life, resurrection life, life that is on the other side of death and judgment. Would not you like to possess that life ? “ Yes,” you say ; “ what can I do to get it ? ” You can *do* nothing ; God offers it. What is the first thing you do when a person gives you a gift ? You *take* it. Have you taken eternal life, the gift of God ? If not, take it now. The first thing God does is to offer you life through Christ. Does He live ? He does. Do I live ? I do ; and what is more, I can never lose that life. When could I lose my

life? Only the day that Christ loses His. And when will that be? Never, never! I cannot lose this present life, for it is lost already; and I cannot lose the life He has given, for I “live through Him;” it is His own life.

Look up, then, anxious, troubled soul, and see this precious Saviour, and drop at His blessed feet, not like John, as one dead, but like Mary, worshipping, loving—bathing them with tears if you will, but clinging to Him.

You who have known sorrow, bereavement and death down here, what a blessing for you to know you have One to love who can never die! What a comfort to know that I can never hear those words, “They have taken away my Lord out of the sepulchre, and I know not where they have laid him!” I know where He is: He lives to die no more. Death hath no more dominion over Him; and He says to me, “Because I live, ye shall live also.”

Is not your heart drawn to this blessed one? Does it not say, “Yes, I see it is all in Christ; He has died that I might live through Him, and the tendrils of my heart may twine round Him, and there is no fear that that dread, grim monster Death can come in and rudely break those tendrils, or snap the cord that binds my heart to Him asunder”? The link of communion between Him and me may be broken in a moment; a foolish thought will snap that; but the link of

eternal life can never, never be severed, either in time or in eternity. “*Because I live, ye shall live also,*” is His word to me. Thus, you see, the first thing I get is

LIFE, ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST.

“Herein is love, *not* that we loved God.” The Gospel begins by sweeping you and me clean off the scene. *God* loved the world, *Christ* died for sinners, “Herein is love.” People like the law, because it talks a good deal about themselves: You shall do this, and you shall not do that; but the Gospel puts an end to me, utterly ignores me, and brings in Christ—what He is, and what He has done—instead. The positive side of the Gospel gives me something I have not got, gives me eternal life, and then the cross puts away what I am only too thankful to get rid of, my sins. Christ came into this world to give life, and then He died on the cross to put away the sins that separated me from God. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” This propitiatory work is done; God is satisfied, yea, glorified, about sin—and the consequence is, I have

“PEACE WITH GOD, THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS
CHRIST.”

Now if I have eternal life, and my sins are all cleansed away, so that I have peace, there are

two more things still remaining for me. The next thing God does for me is this, He gives me His Spirit.

Yes, when you believe the Gospel, not only do you get eternal life from the love of God, and get rid of your sins as the fruit of the work of Christ, but you get the Holy Ghost, and that is

THE POWER OF A CHRISTIAN'S WALK.

Thus you see, in the ninth verse, you get *life* ; in the tenth verse you get *peace*, because Christ is the propitiation ; and in the thirteenth verse you get *power* to walk, “ because he hath given us of his Spirit.”

But, “ Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.” Therefore, you see, it is a solemn thing to profess to be a Christian, because the moment I take up the ground of being a Christian, I take up the ground of being one who is to show God to this world. I am to show what God is like, because I know Him and possess Him, to a world that does not know Him.

Then there is another thing still connected with this love of God to us. “ Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have *boldness* in the day of judgment ; because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love : but perfect love casteth out fear.” The Holy Ghost says, When the love of God comes into your

heart, fear goes out. Fear and love cannot occupy the same place : as long as you have fear, you do not know His love for you perfectly.

We Christians should be as happy as God's love can make us down here, always looking on to Christ's coming as the next thing, to take us to be with Him up there. Fear is a weed which has no proper foothold in the garden of God : His love casts it out.

What, then, does His love give to you who trust Him ? *Eternal life* from God, *peace* with God, because all sin is gone, *power* likewise from God, and

BOLDNESS IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT,

because the One who is going to be the Judge by-and-by is the One who bore my sins in His Own body on the tree, the One who is my life and my peace now, the One whom I shall be like then, and the One who represents us before God now, for "*as he is, so are we in this world.*"

The reason why I shall have BOLDNESS IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT is, because the One who has taken away all my sins is to be the Judge, and when He is the Judge, I shall be there with Him, and like Him. What room, then, is there for fear ? None. The Lord give you to know this love now, and to be a manifestation on this earth of that eternal life which is Christ's own life, and which He has given to you who believe in His name.

W. T. P. W.

THE THREE RESERVATIONS.

IN the Apostle Peter's last epistle, as his life and ministry drew to a close, the Holy Ghost reveals three different and distinct judgments as impending, though reserved. The first of these judgments is told in 2 Peter, ii. 4, where we read, "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them unto chains of darkness, to be

RESERVED UNTO JUDGMENT."

There is no redemption for them, no atonement, no way for them opened back into that divine presence and enjoyment they have forfeited by their fall; Christ took not upon Him their nature; God spared them not. Into hell they are cast down, bound with darkness as with chains, awaiting the judgment, future and final, unto which they are reserved. What this reserved judgment is Scripture does not reveal; what the deeper doom can be of those who were once angels bright in the presence of God, holy, praising, beautiful, is now unknown. It shall be known in that day when the judgment reserved will be fully awarded.

In the ninth verse of the same chapter we read, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to

RESERVE THE UNJUST UNTO THE DAY OF JUDGMENT
TO BE PUNISHED."

As the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ for sinners is of infinite value, as the redemption obtained by Him is eternal, so the punishment revealed in this Scripture as reserved unto the day of judgment for the unjust, or unbelievers in that redemption is also eternal. What a thought ! Punishment reserved, awaiting infliction from the hand of a just God, in that His day or time of judgment : Whose offers of mercy, then for ever past, have been unheeded, Whose redemption, then no more to be had, has been unaccepted ; Whose way of salvation, then for ever and for ever closed, has been neglected !

The way is open *now*. Salvation now is free to all through simple unfeigned faith in the Lord Jesus. *Then* He will judge and condemn.

Then it is that men will seek for death, but death shall have for ever fled from them. Eternity before them, and no escape, no relief, no hope. Oh ! the untold, infinite, eternal blessedness of having part in the first resurrection, of which our Lord himself is the first fruits (1 Cor. xv. 23), and which none but the "holy" can share (Rev. xx. 6). Are you amongst that number ? Do you love the thought of His appearing, feeling confident you will be one of those who will rise to meet Him in the air ? Or is it a subject which, making you feel your unfitness,

troubles your conscience, and which you would willingly keep out of your thoughts? Alas for you! if it be so. Satan is making you neglect and doubt truths he himself believes and trembles before. Oh, precious, unconverted soul! take now the salvation God has provided for you in Christ, whereby you shall be made meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.

In the 7th verse of the third chapter we read, "But the heavens and the earth that are now by the same word are kept in store,

RESERVED UNTO FIRE."

This is the third and last time judgment reserved is revealed in this epistle.

When shall this be? When shall take place this awful conflagration, lighted by the hand of God, and which he alone can put out? At "the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (ver. 7). There is nothing men without God dread more than the thought of the judgment that is reserved for this world. It will be their time of perdition. It is the consciousness of this makes scoffers say all things continue as they were from the beginning. They would fain think so. They count the Lord slack concerning His promise. Their ignorance is willing, not knowing that his long-suffering reserves the impending judgment, for He is not willing that any should perish.

In that day, when heaven and earth shall pass

away, those who are Christ's shall be found of Him in peace, because without spot and blameless (ver. 14). They have won Christ, and are found in Him, and so are without spot in the day of that divinely searching fire, blameless in the eye of Him who otherwise judges to condemn.

The Holy Ghost closes this testimony with words of warning admonition to believers, "Ye, therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware, lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from ycur own steadfastness" (ver. 17). They are in full consciousness of all that is reserved in judgment for this earth, and are called to walk accordingly, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory for ever and ever" (ver. 18). It is the parting word of the Spirit of God—grace, knowledge, glory. Grace, that won you in the beginning, now leads you on in the knowledge of the One to whom, throughout eternity, will be all the glory. You began with a look, the look of faith and love. Go on with a look day by day; do not withdraw your eyes, and your last will be one long, unending, eternal look, for ever and ever, at the blessed Saviour, whom you will see face to face.

R. B.

FATHER, WON'T YOU READ IT?

It was a beautiful sunny April afternoon. The birds sang sweetly, and everything in nature seemed full of spring life; but one object caught my gaze in striking contrast with all around; a lovely girl of thirteen, fast sinking in decline, sought to gain strength by enjoying the warm sunshine, and her mother carried a stool for the poor girl to rest upon every few minutes, as very little walking exhausted her. As she rested her tired body, I wondered if she had found eternal rest for her soul. I watched where her home was, but found, to my disappointment, it was a police barrack, where I was not then permitted to go by my parents.

The next day, on meeting the poor girl and her mother, I found her reading a book. On enquiring after her health she said, "I am better to-day, for I can read my story-book." I asked her if she had ever read the story of Jesus, to which she sharply answered, "I do not read the Bible, my father would not allow me, and I would not do anything to displease him." "Then you know nothing of how the precious Jesus went about when on earth, tenderly and graciously meeting the need of the sick and diseased in soul and body?" "I have heard of Him," she said. "Would you not like to know

more about Him, my poor girl? " I asked. " Yes, please," she faintly said. The way being thus opened, I quoted several scriptures, dwelling chiefly on the Lord Jesus going about meeting every kind of need; and what first arrested the dear child's mind was the Lord's grace in taking children in His arms, and blessing them, with the invitation, " Suffer the little children to come unto me."

On several other occasions I met the dear girl, and found that the truth was gaining access to her soul. We were ten days without seeing our little friend; excitement had proved too much for the poor weak frame, and she was obliged to keep quiet in the house. When we next met she said, " Oh! I was longing to see you;" so we asked her if she could come down and sit in our summer-house for a while every day, and get rest and refreshment there. To this proposal she joyfully acceded, saying that it was the delight of her heart to hear about the precious Jesus. For three or four days she succeeded in walking to our house, and eagerly drank in the truth put before her; but the task of even walking this short distance proved too great, and on the last occasion when she came she said—her face beaming with joy—" Miss G——, I have thought of a plan by which I can come to you; our servant can wheel me here every day in the barrow, because I cannot

do without hearing the story of the precious Jesus."

The next day, when we met, I spoke to her of the Lord's individual love for souls, quoting that verse, "He must needs go through Samaria," with which she seemed greatly struck, asking, "Whom did He meet there? Was it little children?" Speaking of the woman at the well of Sychar, who took the water of life from Christ, I asked her if she would like to drink of it, to which she replied, "Oh, yes! I would take drink after drink from Him." I then reminded her that this woman was a great sinner, asking if she knew that she was a sinner. "Yes," she said, "I know I was born a sinner." I then spoke to her, in contrast, of Nicodemus, in the third of John, showing her that the openly profane and the naturally amiable must stand on the same platform, and be born again. "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." She was struck with the difference between seeing and entering, and she said, "When I first met you, I could not bear to hear you talk of Jesus; now it is the joy of my heart to listen to you. Do you think I see now?" "Would you like to see Him?" I replied. "Oh! if I saw Him," she said, "if I was able, how I would run to Him. And do you think I would be too big for Him to take in His arms?"

After a time, being quite unable to come to us, the Lord graciously opened the way for me to be allowed to go and visit her; and now a new scene presented itself. Her father was a Roman Catholic, and therefore was thoroughly opposed to our entering the barracks; but love to his daughter caused him to yield to her wishes, which proved, as the sequel will show, of the Lord's ordering, fulfilling His purposes of grace. One day when I went to see her, she cried, "Now I can say Jesus is precious to me, for He loved me, and gave Himself for me." Having found Christ herself, all her anxiety was about her beloved father, that he might know Jesus, who was so precious to her. On one occasion she said to me, "Father allowed me to speak to him last night about Jesus, but I had to hide the bible."

Another day her father asked her what I was talking about; so she went over our conversation in her own simple way, asking him if he would like to have a talk with me. He replied in the affirmative, but added that it must be in her room. I spoke with him accordingly, but he evinced no desire at all to hear me, making an excuse for leaving the room.

After this my poor little friend sank day by day, and she could only speak a few words at a time, which were always about Jesus. "Oh! to see the Lord," she would often say. "Oh!

to be with Him!" One day she said, "Father is very much on my heart. Have you any hope of him, Miss G——?" I answered that I was sure the Lord would make him His own. "Ah, yes!" she said, "because He is the God of all grace." "Yes," I added, "and He is the God of all consolation, too; and He has given you this assurance to cheer your heart."

That night she was dying. When almost gone, she was aroused by some noise. Calling for her father, and catching hold of both his hands, she said, "Father, I would have been with Jesus, only for some noise which wakened me. I saw, oh! I saw streets of gold, and bright and shining courts!" Then asking for her bible, she put it into her father's hands, adding, "Father, won't you read it, and listen to the ladies?" after saying which she lay back, and fell asleep in Jesus.

* * * * *

Some months after the death of the dear girl, her father became seriously ill with the same disease—consumption; and now the Lord graciously began a work of conviction in his soul.

Several times he sent for me, but being away from home, it was some time before I saw him. When I entered his room he exclaimed, in a frantic manner, "Miss G——, don't come near me! I'm only fit for hell, and that will be my

FATHER, WON'T YOU READ IT?

portion!" Seeing that I hesitated to advance nearer, he said, "Will you not come to me, and tell me something to give me comfort, for I am most wretched—too bad for God to look on me?" I then asked him if he were worse than the thief on the cross, whom man was putting out of this world for his bad acts. "No one ever went so far as I did," he said; "for when you came to read the bible to my poor child, I so hated the sight of it and you, that I cursed you in my heart, and took the policeman into the room to hinder her hearing what you read." "Well, as you have gone so far with the thief—who said 'We, indeed, justly,' for you own you deserve hell—tell me, are you content to remain there?" He seemed in great distress, so I said what I could to comfort him.

I waited next day to see if he would send for me, which he did. On entering his room I said, "Well, sergeant, I was both surprised and pleased to get your message." Desirous of resuming the subject of the thief I then said, "I remembered you last night before the Lord, and prayed that you might go on step by step as the thief on the cross did, and be able to say, like him, 'Lord remember me.' If you only knew how those three words comforted me when the Lord was leading me to Himself; they seemed to say, now Lord I have Thy remembrance, I don't need any other. The

answer of Jesus, 'This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise' proved what joy it was to His heart to hear the request. You would say that one fitted to enter that place was a person who had done many good deeds, given alms, and borne a good name before men, &c.; but how different are the thoughts of God."

"That reminds me," he said, "of what Jane read to me about Nicodemus and the poor woman at the well, both were alike guilty before God." He then said, "Dear, dear, Jane! I wish I had listened more to her." "Well," I replied, "listen to the words of Jane's Saviour, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;' (Matt. xi. 28.) After this I left him with the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah to read.

On the following day he received a visit from the parish priest, to whom he told his wretched condition; but the reply to the dying man was, "You have brought it all upon yourself by listening to those outside the pale of the true church; no one can be saved out of that." Directly the priest had left he sent for me, and told me what had been said to him, adding, "But, Miss G——, I have been reading that beautiful chapter in Isaiah which you marked for me, and the two words, 'US ALL,' have fastened themselves on my mind. 'The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of US ALL!'

Would not that include me, bad as I am? but then no one can be saved outside the one church, I'm told."

To this I replied, "That was the very mistake Peter made." I then read parts of the tenth and eleventh of Acts, showing him how the Lord graciously disabused Peter's mind of his prejudices. He then asked me if the same scriptures were in his bible, so I marked them for him, especially these words, "God is no respecter of persons." As an illustration of this, I took the case of the Queen offering a free pardon to all in prison, adding, "But if you were there, bound with shackles and fetters, surely you would receive the pardon; and when free you would, in gratitude to your deliverer, do that which would please him or her, not for deliverance, but because you were delivered." "Oh, yes; you mean 'The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all;' but what about the one church?" He then requested me to pray for him, that the Lord would enable him to believe His truth; so, again pointing out some passages in Acts x. and xi., I left him.

The next morning he sent for me, and as I entered he exclaimed, "Oh, Miss G——, I am all right now, the Lord has turned my darkness into light; the loving and gracious Saviour, the Holy One and the Just, has paid the debt I

owed. I fell asleep while reading that verse. 'God is no respecter of persons,' a fine word for me ; and while asleep I saw—as plainly as I see you—a vessel let down from Heaven that would hold the world, suspended by a woollen thread ; and as I looked on it the thought came to my mind of what you had so often said of the power and simplicity of the way a sinner is saved ; this vessel would hold the world, and yet the woollen thread was not broken." He further added, "There were many of your family in the vessel, and Mr. Tom had one foot in it." This allusion to my beloved brother, about whose soul I was anxious, made me weep. Seeing this, the poor sergeant said, "Why do you weep, Miss G——, don't you know that when God begins a work He will surely perfect it?" And so it proved ; for last year my brother died in the Lord.

The description the poor sergeant gave of the vessel which he saw let down was singularly illustrative of the grace of God, as well as of the power of Satan. He said, "It was truly wonderful to see how easy the way was made for everyone to go into the vessel, as there was a snow white plank from it to the edge of the field, so that one had neither to step down, lest he might slip—nor up, if too feeble—but right on to it. Some were kept from stepping on, by turning aside to tables temptingly spread with

every kind of luxuries ; others, by amusements of various kinds ; but most were deterred from trusting themselves in the vessel through fear that the woollen thread might break. One man, whose gaze was turned upwards to the source from whence the vessel had come, heeded not the allurements around, and went on the plank right into the vessel. I was so much attracted by him that I followed, neither looking to the right hand nor the left ; but what I feared the enemy would use against my entrance into the vessel was the weakness of the woollen thread. How could I feel secure when held by so weak a cord ? But, trusting simply to it and looking upward, without either fear or difficulty, I stepped upon the plank and entered the vessel."

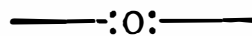
The next day, when I went up to see the sergeant, his wife said, " He cannot speak much, he is so weak to-day." I found his thoughts all centred upon Christ, and he said, " Oh, Miss G——, my heart is overflowing with love to the One who holds the vessel, for I am now in His keeping, and I long to see Him."

He lived for some time after this, and it was beautiful to watch, day by day, his increasing love to the person of Christ who had saved him, and he rejoiced to listen to the word being read to him. On one occasion while I was thus engaged, he said, " Oh, that I had

studied the bible more, it tells so much of Christ." Another time while with him, he exclaimed, "Precious Jesus! I am held in Thy hand, and watched over by Thine eye."

On the night of his death some Roman Catholic friends, according to their custom, put a lighted candle into his hand, and although he had not spoken for many hours, he then said, "Take away that, it is a false light, I do not need it, for I have the light of the Spirit of God now." The next morning when I called I found he had passed away quite quietly, to be "For ever with the Lord."

J. S. G.



LOVE'S WELCOME.

"Doth He not see my ways, and count all my steps?"---
JOB xxxi. 4.

"Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy; to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine."---Ps. xxxi. 18, 19.

"When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him."
---Luke xv., 20.

"His Father saw Him!" Ah, those eager eyes
Had watched through many a dark and lonely
night;
Watched 'neath the silence of the midnight skies.
Till the dawn flooded them with sound and light!

"His Father saw Him!" After weary years
 Of passionate yearning for the well-loved face,
 Now to behold him, through joy's sudden tears,
 And feel the rapture of His Child's embrace!

"His Father saw Him!" All those years of sorrow
 Lost in that moment of ecstatic bliss!
 Peace for the past, and joy for all the morrow,
 Given in the gladness of the Father's kiss!

* * * * *

Is this a story but of Earth's poor love?
 Has it no deeper meaning to impart?
 Has it no sweeter answer from above?
 Does it not manifest our Father's heart?

Whose is the love, so quenchless in its burning?
 Whose is the patience which delights to wait
 For the slow footsteps which are home returning—
 For the lost sinner who is coming late?

Whose are the lips which utter no complaining—
 Ne'er reproaches the repentant one,
 Gives an embrace which knows no half refraining,
 Shouts the acknowledgment of "This my Son"?

Whose is the heart that so divinely yearning
 (Father and God, 'tis Thine, and Thine alone!)
 Sees the first step the sinner takes returning,
 Runs to embrace, and bid him "WELCOME
 HOME"?

A. S. O.

“SEE THAT YE REFUSE NOT HIM
THAT SPEAKETH.”

It was in the month of June, 1877, that a Christian doctor, still in the prime of life, and living in the small town of —, lay dangerously ill. He had known Christ as his Saviour for many years, and thus could look forward, even to death, quite brightly and happily.

He was attended by two medical men during his illness, and solemnly did he press upon them (believing himself, as he then did, to be on the brink of eternity,) the necessity of coming to Christ. But they treated his message lightly, particularly one of them, while both of them impressed upon him that he must not talk.

Ah! well indeed would it have been for those two men had they bowed their hearts then to that tale of love, told them by one who earnestly longed and prayed for their souls' salvation.

It pleased God, in answer to the many prayers of His people, to restore His beloved child to a measure of health and strength, and he rose from his bed of sickness as one who had known what it was to face death, and deeply as he felt the solemnity of it, yet he also realized, as he had never done before, what it was to have Christ with him through it all. And I

would ask you affectionately, dear reader, if you were brought into the same circumstances as that doctor, if you were lying on what might be your death-bed, would you be able, as he did, to look forward calmly to the future and say: "I know and believe that Christ died for me, and therefore, come what may, I am safe with Him"? If not, I entreat you to come to that Saviour. He is waiting to be gracious, longing that you, vile sinner though you may be, should taste His love, and know, for your own self, the blessedness of His free and eternal salvation.

And now listen: Three months later, and in the same town, a young doctor is dying. Do you ask who it is? Ah! that very young man who treated God's message so lightly is now to prove the consequences of his folly. Injured severely by a fall he lies there, and the doctors gathered round the bed pronounce his case to be hopeless. No medical skill has been spared, but it is of no avail, for the word has gone forth, "This night shall thy soul be required of thee."

Only three days more have elapsed, and a gloom is cast over that little town, and in one of the houses in the principal street the blinds are drawn down, for that young man has passed from time into eternity. Do you ask "What about his soul?" Ah, what indeed? God only knows. Perhaps in the eleventh hour he may

REFUSE NOT HIM THAT SPEAKETH.

have been saved, but there seems little hope of it, and no one heard of another offer of salvation being made to that young man.

Dear, reader, take care ; remember, as you lay down this little paper, God may be speaking to you for the last time through it. “ See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh ” (Heb. xii. 25) ; for “ How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ? ”—(Heb. ii. 3).

That young man, I doubt not, meant to come to Christ some day, when he had a “ convenient season ;” but as far as we know, that “ season ” never came. Come to Him now, I beseech you ; own yourself a lost sinner, and you shall then prove the reality of having Christ as your Saviour. And, oh ! I would solemnly warn you against trifling with God’s offers of salvation ; remember, you, like that young doctor, will have your last chance some day, and if you refuse it, how dreadful will be the consequences ! “ Because there is wrath, beware, lest He take thee away with His stroke : then a great ransom cannot deliver thee ” (Job xxxvi. 18).

But now God is still tarrying ; He has borne with you in love so far. Oh, come to Him at once, and you shall prove how sweet is His peace, which passeth all understanding, and know that neither life nor death can separate you from His love.

E. C. R.

THE BEGGAR'S BLESSING ; OR,
DESTITUTION, DELIVERANCE, AND
DEVOTEDNESS.

“And they came to Jericho : and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimæus, the son of Timæus, sat by the highway side begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace : but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him be of good comfort ; rise, he calleth thee. And he casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee ? The blind man said unto him, Lord that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way ; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.”—MARK x. 46-52.

THE lovely narratives of scripture are given us by God, not merely to show what man is, and what kind of men God can save, but also the way in which a soul receives the blessing. It is quite clear blessing is given and received, and we know our Lord says, “It is more blessed to give than to receive,” therefore I must give God the more blessed place, the place of the giver, and He delights in giving.

There are two things He does,—He forgives, and He gives. He forgives what you want to get rid of—your sins ; and He gives what you

must have, if you are to inherit everlasting glory—eternal life.

You will see in this narrative how God gives, and also how much in earnest a soul is that wants blessing.

Bartimæus is the beautiful expression of an earnest, anxious soul ; he is what I would call a Saviour-seeking sinner. We get a lovely illustration of a sinner-seeking Saviour, in the story of Zaccheus : that is the other side of the picture.

Here we have a man sitting by the wayside, blind and destitute, and he hears of Jesus as he sits there in his misery ; and, my friend, this man is but a picture of what you are, blind and destitute, blind as to your true state, and more than that, utterly destitute, possessing nothing for eternity—yea, in God's sight, lost ! Do you believe that ? Do you believe that these terms—blind, destitute, lost, express as truly as they can your state before God to-day ? They certainly do, unless you have been brought to Jesus, and have received from Him salvation. Bartimæus had heard of Jesus, and so have you, and I believe Jesus had passed by Jericho before this day ; but I will tell you one thing of which you may be certain, He never passed that way again—never. He was on His way to the cross, and had Bartimæus let Him go by that day, he would not have had another

often He may have already passed by you, however often He may have called to you, yet you have no guarantee that He will ever pass near to you again, that He will ever call you again. Now, this moment, is the only time on which you can really count.

“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” is Bartimæus’ cry. What might he have done that day? Instead of seeking mercy from Jesus, he might have made a good day’s business. No doubt, seldom or ever was the road so thronged as it was that day. It was just the time for his business—to make the most out of the crowd as they passed; but he did not do that. He would not let his business come between him and Jesus.

Oh, how many a soul does that! How many an one says, “If I take a stand for Christ, I shall not get on in my trade;” or, “I am so well known in the place that if I come out boldly for the Lord, what about my business?”

What about your business? What about your business when you are in hell? What about your business when you are in those scenes of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, where hope never comes? Of all the Juggernaut cars that ever crushed human souls into everlasting misery, there is not any that crushes more than this one of which I speak—viz., business, progress, getting on in the world,—mammon.

You have heard of the car of Juggernaut, and you know how men and women prostrate themselves before the idol—willing victims—and are torn and mangled by the heavy wheels of the car passing over them? “Yes,” you say; “poor, deluded creatures, I pity them.” My unconverted friend, I ask you, are you any less deluded than they? Your only thought has been how to get on in the world, and what will be the end? Your end will be the grave, where the worms feed on your body; and for your soul the place where the worm never dies, where the fire never is quenched, and where there is nothing but remorse and regret—I do not say repentance, for I believe there is no room for repentance there, though it is a place of remorse and regret and misery—and that for a never-ending eternity.

Bartimæus had found out he needed mercy. Have you found out that? Have you ever sought it? If you do not taste God’s mercy, you must taste His wrath. Mercy you need—mercy or wrath you must have! It is a blessed thing to find out I need mercy. This man had found out he needed it. Had he cried to the crowd that day, he would have said, “Money!” but no; he says, as it were, “Money will not meet the deep craving of my soul; it is mercy I want to-day.”

Have you ever uttered this cry? God knows

your history—knows your need of mercy. God knows what your life has been. A decent life it may have been, but it has been a sinner's life.

What a sweet sound the trembling petition of a sinner crying out for salvation is ! The sweetest sound, save one, is the cry from an anxious, wounded soul. “Is there a sweeter ? ” you ask. Yes, there is a sweeter. It is the note of joy from a young convert ; from one who has found out something of the blessedness of having Christ.

Oh, the refreshment, the sweetness of meeting a soul that is anxious for Christ ! Are you anxious ? If so, do not rest until you are saved, do not rest until you are happy, let your heart go up to Him and say, “Jesus, Jesus, have mercy on me.” It is an individual thing, first finding out one's need of, and then getting mercy. When for a moment the soul awakens, and the light of eternity breaks in,—when you see the judgment day before you, and Satan close upon you, and your sins bound fast round you, and no help in yourself,—then, then it is your soul cries to Jesus.

Jesus delights in blessing you, but you must get to the spot where He can meet you, and what is that ? The state of conscious need ! Are you there ? Bartimæus was.

“And many charged him that he should hold his peace.” The devil of course would try to

stop him from coming to Christ; he would whisper to him "Never mind, you can get another opportunity of coming to Jesus, you get what you can from the crowd first."

"No," says he, "I must have mercy to-day." "Stop, hold your peace," says Satan; and that is what he says to you. As soon as you want and begin to feel after Christ, Satan is by you directly to try and prevent your getting to Him. "You are not the one for Jesus," he will say; "Jesus will not have you; you are too great a sinner; you have been too long in coming, Christ will not speak to you."

But all this does not stop the soul that is in earnest. The soul that is not in earnest may stop and say, "I must wait the Lord's time for mercy," but the soul that is in earnest only cries out the more lustily. Think you He does not love to hear that cry? Ah, yes indeed He does! The moment that word "mercy" is heard in the air Jesus stands still; that word rivets Him; that word commands His attention.

Has your soul cried to Him for mercy? If so, He is thinking of you. You are the very one that is interesting His heart. You are seeking Him, and He is seeking you, and He was doing it long before you sought Him, so it is impossible but that you must meet.

"And Jesus stood still and commanded him

THE BEGGAR'S BLESSING ; OR,

to be called." And what say the crowd now? "Be of good comfort; rise, he calleth thee." The crowd preach the Gospel to him. "Be of good comfort." Are you really wanting salvation? "Be of good comfort." "But I have no comfort. I am miserable." "Be of good comfort." "How can I be comfortable? I acknowledge my sins; I see my state; I fear to die; I could not meet the Lord if he were to come." "Be of good comfort." "Why?" "He calleth thee." Yes, thee. Thou wert calling on Him just now; now He is calling thee. Calling thee—what for? To come as near to Him as you possibly can!

Now Bartimæus comes to Jesus; but he does something else first—he casts away his garment. That garment might have hindered his getting to Jesus; and you know what garment it is that has hindered your coming to Christ. It may be a robe of your own righteousness, and God says such a robe is only "filthy rags." Many a sinner is trying to work out a righteousness for himself, saying, like Job, "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go." "Ah," says God, as it were, to Job, "but I will make you let it go, Job. I will give you such a sight of yourself as will make you glad to let it go—to throw it away as a filthy garment." Have you a garment that is hindering you from getting to the feet of Jesus? Throw it away! Bartimæus

throws his away, and all the proceeds of his business were in that garment, although he was but a beggar. And you, my friend, are no better than a beggar, for what is every one doing in this world but trying to get the most they can from every one else?

This man casts his garment aside, and his bag was in the girdle of his garment, and all his gains were in his bag; but it all went together, and he came to Jesus. Jesus called him, and he came; and Jesus is calling you. Will you not come to Him? Take care, I warn you, lest He say of you, "Because I have called and ye refused I also will laugh at your calamity. I will mock when your fear cometh" (Prov. i. 24—26).

"And Jesus said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" That is the question, anxious troubled soul, He is asking of you now. He knows all about you, all about your anxiety, all about your distress and misery; and this is what He is saying to you. He is putting down as it were a blank cheque, with His own signature at the bottom and saying to you, "Now fill it in."

Is it life you are wanting from Him? You will get it. Is it peace? You will get it. Is it pardon—forgiveness of your sins—you are wanting? You will get it. Fill in the cheque to any amount. What do you ask from Him?

Bartimæus asks, "Lord, that I might receive my sight;" and as though echo had cast the same words in his teeth, back comes the ready response, "Receive thy sight."

The moment you take your true place before that blessed Lord you get from Him everything your soul needs. Is it forgiveness you need? He says, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more;" and again, "I write unto you little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake."

Am I forgiven? I am. How do I know it? Because He says it, not because I feel it, but because I believe Him; it is faith, not feeling. How do I get it? Because he gives it. He gives, and I take. You do the same friend.

"Thy faith hath made thee whole." Have you faith in Him? Do you trust Him? What made Bartimæus cry out? Faith in Jesus. What brought him to Him? Obedience to His word. Faith in Him, and obedience to His word, always go together.

"Thy faith hath made thee whole, and immediately he received his sight." The moment you come to Jesus it is all settled. Have you come to Him? Have you trusted Him? If you have, He says to you, "Thy faith hath saved thee."

Now mark what follows. The Lord says to Bartimæus, "Go thy way." He does not say

“Follow Me ;” and you will notice, throughout the Gospel narratives, He does not say to one of those, whose infirmities He has cured by His power, “Follow Me.” He leaves them free. What does Bartimæus do? What could he do? His eyes are opened, and the first object that meets their gaze is Jesus, the One who has opened them. What can he do but be attracted by the sight, and follow Him? The sightless eyeballs get the power of vision, and he sees what the sinner always sees in the moment of his conversion,—he sees Jesus! He gazes on Jesus, the blessed Son of God, walking this earth in the form of a man, and he follows Him.

Do you think this was disobedience to the Lord? Oh no! The Lord leaves him free. He says, “Go thy way ;” but Bartimæus seems to say, “Thy way and my way have been quite different Lord, up till now, but now Thy way and my way are the same, for henceforward my way can only be Thy way. I must follow Thee now.” It is beautiful! His eyes are opened, his heart is attracted, and he follows in loving devotion.

The Lord grant you may not only receive Christ, but follow Him ; and if you have any doubt in your minds as to whether Christ will receive you, let me give you this one Scripture : “This Man receiveth sinners !” Are you a sinner? Then He will receive you! Precious

word, "This Man receiveth sinners!" The pharisees and scribes flung it at Him as a brand, in proud scorn. He takes it up, as it were, in love and grace, and, oh ! can anything be more lovely—"This Man receiveth sinners!" I thank thee, proud Pharisee, for the word. Thy taunt is blessedly true ; He does receive sinners. He received me, and He will receive you, oh ! anxious, troubled one, at this very moment, just in the same way in which He received Bartimæus.

We have had a picture before us of complete destitution, and then of complete deliverance, and lastly of complete devotedness. Bartimæus was a destitute man, and then he was a delivered man, and then he was a devoted man. The Lord grant that you may be the same !

W. T. P. W.

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NOT READY, AND YET GONE ; OR UNPREPARED.

"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him ; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."—John xii., 48. How shall we escape if we neglect so GREAT Salvation." — Heb. ii., 3. „ It is appointed unto men once to die , but after this the judgment."—Heb. ix., 27.

THESE are solemn words for an unsaved soul. Are you still unsaved, dear reader ? If so, ponder them deeply, and learn their depth in the following sad, but too true, narrative.

It was a glorious morning, and all looked bright and fair, bathed in God's own sunlight, with nothing to betoken any rising storm of anguish and sorrow, as a young Christian wended her way, with light heart, to the house of business where she was engaged, in the town of D——.

Passing through to her accustomed place, she gave a word of friendly morning greeting to one who was soon to leave them (after many years service) to exchange business for a happy home of her own ; and although she knew not she was "miserable, poor, and blind," bright pictures danced before her, and hopes were high, a little, perchance, saddened by the thought that at mid-day her friend and affianced husband was to bid her good-bye for a short time only, when they would meet once more be made one, and separate no more. They parted as friends do part in this troublesome scene, without one thought or warning of the crushing sorrow looming in the distance ; and so her friend left for L——.

A few hours rolled by, and poor ——, who had thought all so bright, and the future cloudless, was seized with violent pains. On it came, stealthily and like a relentless foe, to its cowed and shrinking victim, till in agony she rushed to the young Christian before mentioned, who was in a room alone. Brandy and restoratives were applied, which lulled the agonising pain ;

but the poor face, all scared and frightened, and deathly pale, flushed with a crimson hue, as turning her large dark eyes to the young Christian, she said: "Oh, I thought I was going to die."

What kept the lips silent which ought to have replied, we know not ; but earnestly and lovingly we would entreat the dear saved ones—those who KNOW, and have PROVED the love of God—BE READY with an answer at anytime—at any season. Oh, let not Satan, fear, or a false timidity keep you silent, and bring a remorse which will end but with life. Not that we can of ourselves save a soul—nay, nay ; but we have not delivered our own souls if we are not faithful ; and ever and anon the question repeats itself when too late to be answered. But poor —— grew worse, and in a few hours of mortal agony breathed her last, to meet, we fear, an unknown God. This is sorrow—sorrow our hearts mourn over—sorrow we would fain bury, but that, in telling it to others, some dear unsaved one may read in it the uncertainty of life, and its fairest prospects, and brightest hopes, while those who love the Lord may read a word of warning, and be spared the anguish of one who was not faithful.

M. H. S.

A SIMPLE GOSPEL FOR SIMPLE SOULS.

“ Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above :) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach ; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”—ROM. x., 1—17.

WE have very clearly brought out in Romans x. the difference between man's righteousness and God's righteousness, between simple faith that trusts God, and the works of the law by which no flesh shall be justified.

The apostle begins by saying, "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved," and that, my reader, is my earnest desire for you. Let me ask you, are you saved yet? That is what God wants, He wants you to be saved and to know it too, to have the knowledge of salvation as your present possession. Perhaps you say, "I think a good deal about these things, I am not careless or indifferent; I have struggled for years to do all I can." Yes, there is effort, there is zeal, but as Paul says in verse 2 it is a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

I do not run down your zeal, but it is misdirected, and so it bears no fruit, gives you no rest, gives you no peace in the presence of God.

There are two things brought out in verse 3. They are ignorant, and they are active, "ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness." Activity goes with ignorance oftentimes. If they know a little more they would be more quiet, more restful, distrust themselves more.

"Ignorant of God's righteousness." What is God's righteousness? A risen Christ in

glory ! God's righteousness was displayed first in letting His own Son die on the cross. God's righteousness came out when the Lord Jesus Christ uttered that terrible cry, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," when He drank the bitter cup of wrath to the very dregs.

Why was that righteousness ? Because He stood there in the room of the sinner, and if He stood there in the sinner's place, it was only righteous that He should bear the sinner's doom, take on His own blessed head the wrath due to the sinner, and bear the punishment of the one whose place He had taken.

But there is another part of the righteousness of God. God was righteous in smiting Him when He bore our sins on the cross, but by His death He has met every claim of God. All that God could claim in respect of sin Christ has fully answered, and so when He went into death, He could not be holden of death ; it had no claim upon Him, and God, in righteousness, took Him out of death and set Him in glory. Took whom ? The One who died for sinners, the One who, I rejoice to say, died for me. My reader, can it be said of you that He died for thee ?

But there is another thing, if Christ took my place, bore my doom, it is due to Christ, from God, that God should bring me into Christ's place ! If Christ took my place in love, and

lowly grace, it is righteousness on the part of God to give me a position with Christ in glory ! Grace took Christ into death and judgment, that God, in righteousness, might bring you and me into the place that Christ has in heavenly glory !

Take all human righteousnesses put together, what are they all ? Filthy rags ! That is what God accounts them. If you made a feast in your house and invited guests, could you bear that one should sit down at your table in filthy rags ? “ No,” you say, “ my guests must be clean and clothed.” You are quite right ; and do you think God is going to have you in His house in your garments of filthy rags ? Assuredly He will not.

You may have been going about to establish your own righteousness, you may have helped in all the benevolent schemes that have been presented to you, you may have sent missionaries to preach to the heathen, and yet if you have not known Christ personally as your own Saviour, God looks on all these things as clothing you only with filthy rags.

Paul says his only desire is “ to be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness.” “ I have seen a man in glory,” he says, “ the only man that was suitable to God, and my own righteousness was withered up by the sight, my only thought now is to get to Him, to be

like Him.” Ah, yes, Paul, you have found God’s righteousness, and that has made your own as worthless as dung or dross.

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” The law comes and makes a claim upon man, and man cannot answer to the claim. The law says, “Love your neighbour as yourself,” i.e., if you have £5000 give away £2500. But that is not all, you have still £2500. Says the law, give £1250, and when that is done, still there is the inexorable claim, “Love your neighbour as yourself,” give £625 and so on, for the law says, “I hold you to it still,” till it makes you a beggar.

It was this that the rich young ruler spoken of in Luke xviii. could not stand, if he were to inherit life according to the law; he saw what it must involve, and he went away sorrowful. Why does the Lord answer him as He does? He does it to test him, He saw he was not in earnest: if he had been in earnest he would have said, “Yes, let it all go, so long as I get eternal life, the thing my soul needs.” There is many a soul in hell to-day, who was rich on earth, who would only be too thankful to let it all go if he could, once more to have the offer of salvation.

The law can only make claims on me and convict me that I have not met its claims. and

then condemn me. Christ says, on the contrary; I have met all the claims of the law and I give eternal life. Eternal life was not brought out in the old testament. It was reserved for the Son of God when here on earth to unfold it, and that man could only get this life, by His own death. Moses and the law could tell you how to get a long life on earth, but Jesus only can tell you how to get eternal life with Him; and how do you get it? Only from Himself, and only as a gift, received by faith.

“But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, say not in thine heart who shall ascend into heaven?”—because heaven is a long way off, and Christ’s grace has brought Him down, or “who shall descend into the deep?”—because He is not in the depths, He is no longer among the dead. No! God’s righteousness brought Him out from there; and eternal life is nearer to thee than that, it is nearer than the friend sitting by your side, you may have it by accepting the word in simple belief in your heart.

Do you believe God has raised Him from the dead? “Yes,” you say. Why was He among the dead? For us poor sinners! God in righteousness let Him go into death, but God in righteousness also raised Him from among the dead, and the glory of the Father salutes Him. Do you believe it? “I do,” you say.

And are you willing to own it, to confess the Lord? "Yes." Then, he says, "Thou shalt be saved." Can there be a doubt when God speaks like this? Do you believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead? And do you confess with your mouth that blessed Lord Jesus? You are not ashamed to own Him? Then God says, "Thou," I like the individuality of that word "Thou shalt be saved." Satan says to you perhaps, "No, you will not." Your own heart whispers to you fears and doubts. God says, "Thou shalt." Will He keep His word? You know He will. Then you certainly must be saved or God must break His word. You say directly, "He cannot do that." Then you cannot be lost, if simply believing in Jesus.

You become righteous the moment you believe. You are righteous before God by faith, and confess in the presence of men unto salvation.

The moment you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, God expects that you will not be ashamed before man to own Him, and you will never be put to shame before God.

"For the same, Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." How beautiful! No matter what you have been, you may be steeped in sin of the blackest dye, you may have no character, and no respectability, and no money

in your pocket either, and the devil may be standing by your side whispering into your ear, and reminding you of all your sins. Never mind, have you called on the name of the Lord? Because the man that calls must be saved, "For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved!"

I love to hear the sinner calling on the name of the Lord, for I know there never was one soul that called on Him whom He cast off, whom He refused to hear, never! But do not let this verse make you presume to put it off do not say, because this scripture is true, therefore, I will delay calling till my death bed; I will call then, and He will hear me, and I shall be saved, for oh, my reader, you may never have a death bed on which to call on Him, in one moment you may be hurried from time into eternity, and that call, which assuredly would have saved you, you may never have time to give. Do not risk it for God is not mocked.

Do not you be like one whom I heard of but a short time since, one who knew this scripture well, and who, because he knew it, presumed upon it. He believed it was God's word, believed it was true, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved," and because of this very scripture he put off calling. To all who pressed his soul's eternal welfare on him, this truth was his invariable answer. and

that he intended to take advantage of it some day, he meant to call on the name of the Lord before he died.

“And did he? Was he saved?” I think I hear you ask, “this procrastinator, this presumer upon the grace and long-suffering of God.” I will tell you. He was in the hunting field one day, and his noble well trained horse rose to leap a hedge in pursuit of the game. On the other side of the hedge was a flock of sheep feeding, the sheep were frightened and scattered right and left at the noise of the horse’s footsteps, the sudden movement of the sheep startled the horse and it missed its footing and fell, throwing its rider violently. Instead of “Lord save me,” coming from the rider’s lips as he fell, he exclaimed, “Devil take ye” to the sheep. However, it was not the sheep, but the soul of this man that the devil took at that moment, for these were his last words, as he broke his neck in his fall, and died on the spot! Ah! my reader, there is everything for faith, but there is nothing for presumption in this verse, and do not forget that procrastination has done more to fill hell than has open sin.

Oh, how blessedly free is the gospel! “Who-soever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” But who is it incites to the call? none other than God Himself. He is the spring of it all by first calling on the sinner in

the gospel, and then waiting to hear the anxious soul's responsive call. This is most clear from verses 14-15. "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things." Here is the divine authority for preaching. Who sends? God! Whom does He send? The preacher. And what does the preacher preach? Christ! Have you heard? and have you believed, my reader?

God sends out the preacher, and the preacher preaches, and the sinner hears, and hearing believes, and believing calls on the name of the Lord. The circle is complete, it begins with God and goes back to God. The moment you have called on the Lord what is the next thing? You are saved! That is the Lord's own word. Believing you call, and calling you are saved, and being saved you have eternal life.

Surely God Himself, my reader, is calling you by this paper at this moment, will you not hearken to His voice? Listen, listen to Him now, believe His word and get hold for yourself of God's own righteousness, which is Christ the Lord

It is very simple. Listen only to the word of God. If you do you will be sure to believe. Why? Because “faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God”. Faith is the reception into the heart of a divine testimony. Here the testimony is that Christ died and rose. Faith believes it, and goes further and says “He loved me, and gave himself for me.”

Be simple, my reader, trust the Lord fully, confess Him plainly, and then go on your way rejoicing in Him, which you have every right to do till you see Him in glory, and then you and I will fall before Him in happiest fellowship with God’s redeemed, and say,

“Thousand, thousand thanks to Thee
Jesus, Lord! for ever be!”

W. T. P. W

—:O:—

“GOING DOWN TO THE PIT.”

‘Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have a ransom.’—JOB xxxiii.24.

Look at that drunkard! He is “going down to the pit.”

See that loose liver! He is “going down to the pit.”

Hear that blasphemer! He is “going down to the pit.”

Behold that infidel! He is “going down to the pit.”

View that mere professor—that respectable and respected, that honest and honourable, that most religious and most self-righteous church or chapel member, whether mitred priest or humble layman! He too is “going down to the pit,” for on that road, the word of God declares, all are travelling, whatever their outward, moral, or religious condition may be, who are not delivered there-from by an actual and personal appropriation of the God-found, and God-given ransom?

Yes, that startling expression of inspiration describes fearfully and fully the path of every unconverted man. The whole family of Adam, by reason of whose universally incriminating transgression—for “by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin,” and not only so, but “by one man’s offence death reigned by one,” by the sin of the federal head, which involved the whole of his race in its effects, and thrust it under the reign of tyranny and death, and also by the sins committed by each member of that family—not one of which can clear himself of the charges of personal guilt, or of sin committed voluntarily, and of his own individual desire—this whole family, viewed in each particular member, is most solemnly declared to be “going down to the pit!” Awful journey! Fearful moral descent! Terrific termination!

Barring the divinely-found deliverance, but for the ever-blessed ransom provided by sovereign grace, as the means of escape, “the pit” is the inevitable doom of every child of Adam’s race.

“To the pit” is printed on the finger post that points the way to eternity, and branded by the hand of death on the sinful souls of men.

“To the pit” is the voice of the broken decalogue and the stern command of inexorable justice, and down, down, down, marching certainly thither, some laughing and dancing, some drinking and swearing, some pretending to pray, yet hypocritical at heart, some planting and building and seeking to close their eyes to this fact, is this vast company of imperishable souls.

Yes, my dear unconverted reader, faithfully but tenderly I assure you that you are “going down to the pit.” Such is the awful end of your present course. Attempt no excuse—seek no self-justification, close not your eyes to the truth. Your conscience tells you of sins committed and unpardoned, of mercy offered and rejected, of invitations ignored and set aside, of many an earnest gospel message treated disdainfully, of innumerable advantages and privileges abused, all this and much more, it may be, is standing charged against you, and surely it is not too much to say that your path

is most unmistakeably tending to the pit. Oh! dear friend, be persuaded of your folly, of the imminence of your danger, and lend your whole attention to the other side of the truth—namely, that although man be lost yet God is gracious—and that He has “no pleasure in the death of the wicked,” nay, but the rather “He will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.” Consequently our passage declares—“I have found a ransom.”

Now, observe that it is God Himself who has found the ransom—and the ransom is none other than His Son. “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.” There was nothing better to give, and nothing less could express the immensity of divine love, or meet the infinite need of man. But the whole question was taken up by God, and, through the cross, settled to His satisfaction.

“From this time it shall be said, What has God wrought?” The work of Christ upon the cross is the alone foundation of blessing—for there it was that peace was made—there divine love was fully revealed; there human guilt culminated; there justice sheathed her sword; and there mercy takes her stand—able and free to scatter her blessings unchallenged by justice, or by law. “Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

And as Mercy stands on that blood-stained pedestal we can hear her thrilling accents :—
 “ Deliver him from going down to the pit.”

She proclaims deliverance. Oh ! traveller hearken ! Welcome sound ! Heavenly proclamation ! Stop and listen ! Deliver ! deliver ! deliver ! Oh ! what music is in that word—its gladdening melody thrills the soul !

See yonder malefactor—that “ dying thief ”—true enough he is “ going down to the pit ”—his feet are on the verge of the precipice, the flame is about to encircle him and the worm to gnaw ; the terrors of a lost eternity burst upon his soul ; his case is hopeless ; law, equity, justice, morality, demand his punishment ; his tongue is silent ; he can plead not one extenuating word ; his sins are about to hurl him into the pit—but lo ! by his side there is the ransom. Jesus bears the curse, the judgment, the wrath due to the malefactor—so that when from the sinner’s penitent lips there comes the prayer, “ Lord remember me,” there and then the shout of deliverance is heard—“ To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Unexpected transition from the pit to paradise ! from hell to heaven ! Law, justice, and every opposing element not only yield but are satisfied, they can ask no more. Grace reigns through righteousness, and sways her golden sceptre over the head of this ransomed soul.

Now, reader, do you apprehend the meaning of this? Does your soul understand the truth of substitution? Have you acknowledged your sin and danger? Have you looked the end of your journey in the face, and under a sense of your need have you claimed the blessed ransom? He is within your reach and at your hand to-day. He bids you "Come." Love could not do more. Take example by "the dying thief," and like him get a welcome to all the joys of paradise, instead of experiencing, as your case demands, and your present course involves, all the endless horrors of the pit. "Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom," is God's message to you.

J. W. S.

—:o:—

PAUL THE NEGRO.

A SERVANT of God was a short time ago brought into H—— Infirmary for the benefit of surgical advice. It was a time of much trial both to himself and his wife, who, having formerly been a hospital nurse, now resumed her duties that she might be with her husband.

The Lord had loving purposes, however, in bringing them there, and they were soon able to bless Him for it all.

The day before they came into the Infirmary a poor negro sailor was admitted, suffering from acute lung disease. He had formerly been a slave in South Carolina, but was liberated at the conclusion of the war between the Northern and Southern States of America. He was taken ill at sea during a voyage to the Baltic, and was put ashore at H——, and received into the Infirmary. Mr. —— often heard him coughing during the long, silent hours of night, in the adjoining ward, and enquired who it was that seemed so restless. Being told it was a poor negro who was once in slavery, he expressed a great desire to see him ; so, when Paul (that was his name) was well enough, the nurse let him get up for an hour every morning, and brought him to her husband's bedside. Mr. —— spoke to him about the love of God in giving His Son to die for poor sinners, but his soul was then in utter darkness. In prayer he was commended to God, who alone could enlighten and give power to the word spoken.

Paul could scarcely read at all ; but Mr. —— made him commit to memory some verses of scripture, especially the 16th verse of John's third chapter : " 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."

Paul was very punctual in coming to see his

friend, who was confined to bed with an injured limb, and listened with great attention to the good news of the salvation of God.

About this time a man died in the bed opposite to Paul's. The dying man said, aloud, his sins were all forgiven. The nurse, sitting by his bedside before he died, read to him out of John's third chapter, beginning at verse 14—"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life," not knowing that those were the very verses that her husband had been teaching the poor negro. She observed his large eyes fixed upon her, but he did not say a word, and then left the ward.

The next day she supposed Paul was not so well, as he wished to stay in bed that morning; but about two o'clock an assistant-nurse ran to her, and said, "Come to Paul; he is mad." She hastened to his bedside, and found him sitting up in bed, and surrounded by patients and assistants. His hands were clasped, and his eyes uplifted, the tears streaming down his cheeks, while beads of clear water stood upon his black, woolly head.

He was calling out, "Any time now, God! My sins are all forgiven! I die any time now!" "Dear fellow," said the nurse to herself; "it is enough to make him shout." It seems that

when he knew his sins were forgiven him, he took a mug of water that stood beside him, and threw it over his head, saying, "Lord, baptize me, and take me home!" It was not long before the Lord answered that prayer.

The nurse, seeing he was much excited, bid him lie down and rest, while she went and told the good news to her husband—and together they thanked the Lord.

After this, Paul related the incidents of his conversion to his sick friend, and wished him to write to his mother in America, and to tell her of his new-found joy, saying, "If I get home, I will read that third chapter of John to them."

Paul soon got well enough to leave the Infirmary, and went to work with a kind master for a fortnight.

When asked one day if he enjoyed the Lord's presence, he said, "No ; me enjoy de Lord—not His presence, but Himself."

It was not long, however, before he re-entered the Infirmary—worse as to his poor body, but very happy in the Lord. His bright testimony there will not soon be forgotten. It was his joy to speak of the One who had redeemed him, and the Testament given to him was studied with assiduous attention.

Mr. and Mrs.—— now left the hospital, though the latter continued to visit him up to the time of his death, which was not far distant.

One day, on visiting him, she said, "Well, Paul, how are you to-day?" He replied, "I'm pretty bad, Mum, but my trust is in Christ. I leave it all to Him."

Another time it was said, "Paul, there will be no black men in glory." "No, Mum," he said; "I'm washed white in the blood of the Lamb." When asked if he wanted anything, he answered, "If anything, it is more faith." He often spoke of his God and his Jesus. His great desire was that his poor mother might know the love that had sought and found him.

The day that he died he sent for Mrs. —, and asked her to send nine shillings—all he had—to his mother in South Carolina, and to tell her to read the third chapter of John, and that he was going home to be with Jesus. He continued, though suffering much, rejoicing in the Lord. Ten minutes before he died he said, "Christ is precious," and then passed quietly away to be for ever with Him—absent from the body, present with the Lord—having been, through simple faith in Jesus, "made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light."

Dear reader, can you, like this poor negro, say, My sins are all forgiven? Have you believed God's message of love? for we are told (Rom. v. 8) "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Those who know the Lord will recognize in this true story the personal love of the Lord Jesus. "He calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out." Then He reveals Himself: "I know my sheep, and am known of mine" (John x. 3—14.)

H.

—:o:—

IS IT GOD OR MAN BESEECHING?

How often is it said by those exercised about their soul's salvation, "that they have been entreating, or must entreat, God to be reconciled to them." At once this is a miserable, common, and great mistake, and really infidel in itself; involving as it does the denial of the truth of God, as well as the great exhibition of His love to man in the Cross, together with an absolute insubjection to what He has made known in His word. Yet I must say that in most cases, ignorance of the ways of God and the Cross is indeed the cause of it. And yet is it not deplorable that such palpable ignorance should exist to such an alarming extent, even among the vast majority of professing Christians, and even be expressed in some of the most popular of their hymns? Yet how clear is the word of God on this point; and may God be pleased to use these lines to the

enlightening of the mind of some dear, perplexed soul, in ignorance of the glorious revelation of God's love in Christ.

Before proceeding I would ask two questions, and then answer them from the word of God, which is indisputable. Is it true that the sinner has to beseech God to be reconciled to him? or is God, who, in the greatness of His love, on the ground of the death of His Son, is beseeching the sinner to be reconciled to Himself? We cannot fail to see the immense difference between these two questions, the answer of which involves the clear understanding of the Gospel. Is it God or man beseeching? Let the Scriptures decide.

In what condition does the Gospel suppose man, since the Cross? "Dead in trespasses and sin" (Eph. ii. 1); an enemy of God" (Col. i. 21) in allegiance to the great foe of God—Satan (Eph. ii. 2, 3). The Cross proves this; for it was an expression of the human will against God—"We will not have this man to reign over us." But now, even as to Christ's life we read, "That God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. v. 19). If the law which was before Christ, under which Israel was for 1500 years, demanded what they could not give, and enforced what they never did fulfil,—Christ, when He came, was an ex-

pression of Divine grace to man—not demanding, but in grace giving; not judging or cursing, but not imputing their trespasses unto them.

Man could gaze upon the expression of God in grace in a man—even in Christ. Oh, what a sight! Man was fully tested in the presence of perfect and absolute grace and love, in Jesus, the Son of God. What was the result? They hated Him, and slew Him between two thieves! How this makes one bury his face with shame! And how contemptible to God must be all the pretended goodness of man since that awful event, when he dared to spit in the face of the Lord of Glory—the expression of God in grace—and nailed Him to the tree and exulted in his doings. And remark, the glorious Gospel of God's grace is preached since man did that, since, by the Son of God's presence here upon earth, man was tested to the full, and proved to be an enemy of God. But observe, even in this passage, as far as we have seen as yet, it was God that was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; not man—the rebel man, or convicted sinners—beseeching God to be reconciled to them. It is here we see the aboundings of grace—the rich development of that which God is essentially—Love.

Since the death, resurrection, and ascension of God's Son, how is man addressed? Oh,

the marvels of God's grace, His infinite love, His rich mercy! The Cross of the blessed Lord has only extended infinitely, the ground of God's action, and the sphere of the blessed operations of His love, grace, and mercy. If the Cross was the fullest expression that God ever gave of His love, it also formed the imperishable ground of His acting in abounding grace and mercy to the world, and rendered to Him an undisputed title to justify the ungodly who believe.

Accomplished redemption, with the glorification of the One who has accomplished it, is the broad and blessed ground upon which God now stands, and displays the majesty of His love. He beholds the world lying in wickedness, with Satan its professed and acknowledged god. And now the Gospel becomes the expression of the yearnings of God's heart toward man—to poor rebel man. Observe, not man's desire God-ward, nor his love to God, but God's desire toward man, and the extending of boundless love and mercy to him who is guilty. God defers His judgment—his strange, though sure, work—and now delights Himself infinitely in displaying the riches of His grace, and bringing poor sinners to know its power and the sweetness of His love; thereby glorifying His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now God calls out individuals. makes them

His servants, and gives them a ministry—the ministry of reconciliation. They proceed from the presence of Him who has commissioned them to a perishing world, charged with the word of reconciliation. They gather the multitude, and their words are, “Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor. v. 20, 21). Oh, the triumph of grace! Oh, the super-aboundings of mercy! Oh, the unfettered delights and operations of God’s love since the death of His Son!

If the dark clouds of Divine judgment enveloped God’s Lamb upon the Cross, now they are passed and gone for ever, and the bright beams of the glory of God encircle that thrice blessed One where He now is on high, and the Father has infinite delight in Him. True, he had perfect delight in Him as He lay in His bosom from all eternity; but now He has fresh and new delights in Him. And why? Because He has, by His own death and resurrection, removed the barrier to the outflow of His love to man, enabling Him to carry out His blest and eternal designs of having poor sinners washed from their sins, and brought

into hallowed and eternal relationship with Himself. Quite true is it that God's most cherished object is the glory of Christ; but next to that is man's eternal blessing in and through the Lord Jesus.

How true it is, then, by the last quoted text, that it is not man beseeching God to be reconciled, but the reverse. It is God—by His grace, through His Gospel beseeching man to be reconciled to Him. The ground is that of righteousness: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." May not one fairly say it is God beseeching, and man rejecting those beseechings of grace. How few receive the Gospel! Behold the vast company on the broad road that leads to everlasting destruction! What are they doing? They are despising the beseechings of God in grace—and yet they are besought, and yet they despise. Consummate folly; mad fatuity! Surely they are damners of their own precious souls. Omnipotent Love—stop them, and give them to bow to the power of grace and be reconciled to God "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For 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."—1st Tim. ii., 4-6.

Ah! yes, it is this: there is man in his sins and guilt, an active enemy of God, and feeling the very opposite of good with respect to Him. The Gospel is borne by the Spirit of God to him, which informs him of all this, and makes him sensible of his guilt and enmity to God; also of the love that God has shewn him in the gift of His Son, and it beseeches him to—work? Nay! To cry to God for mercy? Nay! What then? To be reconciled to God—for he hath made Jesus to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that those who are thus reconciled might be made the righteousness of God in Him—might, in Christ, God's righteousness, stand in Divine favour, delighting in Divine love, and rejoice in prospect of eternal glory.

Hearkening to the beseechings of Divine grace, and being reconciled to God, is obeying the Gospel. Alas! we know what will be the terrible position of those who do not obey. If they will not have grace in its fulness, they will have judgment in its fulness, "For the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."—2nd Thess. i. 7-9. Tremendous fact! Stupendous and unfailing

truth! May you, beloved reader, be brought (if unsaved) to be reconciled to God, who waits to receive and pardon you; and, as in the case of the Prodigal (Luke xv., 22), clothe you with heaven's best robe, viz., all that is found in the Lord Jesus Christ. E. A.

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“HE HATH DONE THIS.”—Ps. xxii.

—:o:—

“He hath done this!”. Oh, words of wonder!
Still would my soul their meaning ponder,
Ere in the land of glory yonder
I see Him face to face.

“He hath done this,” by whose creation
Was laid of old the earth's foundation:
Jesus! 'tis He who wrought salvation
In boundless love and grace.

“He hath done this,”—that work's perfection,
(All unto God in full subjection),
Attested by His resurrection,
Hath purchased all our bliss.

“He hath done this,” with faith's deep yearning;
More, more of “this” we would be learning,
While evermore our praise returning
To Him who “hath done this.”
ANON.

SNOW WATER.

“ARE you not ashamed to deceive a dying girl like that? Have you no more pity in you than to try to hurry her straight into hell at once, as well as go there yourself by and bye?”

The words themselves were strong and startling, but the voice that uttered them was so passionately vehement, so almost vindictive in its tone, that I turned well-nigh bewildered to see from whence it proceeded.

I had been sitting by the bedside of a young woman whose days, I had almost said hours, I believed were numbered, and had been bending closely over her that her fast-failing strength might not be tired by the exertion of speaking out, so that I had not noticed, in the engrossing interest of our conversation, that any one else had entered the room. Judge therefore of my surprise when, on pausing for a reply to something I had just said, the words I have quoted above fell on my ear—a surprise certainly not lessened by finding a woman sitting so near as to be absolutely touching me, and who had evidently been seated thus for some time, listening to what had passed, as her subsequent remarks showed.

And what do you suppose had thus kindled

the anger of our unexpected visitor till it blazed forth in words of wrath and bitterness? Had I been speaking daring blasphemy, or seeking to make the dying girl believe there was no God and no Satan, no heaven or hell, no future to hope for or to dread; or if there were a future at all, one which would bring happiness alike to all at some time or other?

No, it was nothing of this kind. I had been reading in Exodus xii. of the paschal lamb, slain on that wondrous night in Egypt, the blood of which, sprinkled on the houses of the Israelites, had been sufficient to keep death and judgment out, when swift destruction, from which there was no escape, filled the houses of the Egyptians with terror and dismay, and each family mourned with bitter agony the loss of the one who had been its glory and its pride.

I had sought to explain to the sick girl that this distinction between Israelite and Egyptian was not on the ground of the one being better than the other, but because God had said, "When I see the blood I will pass over," and thus the Israelite was secure through the word of God and the sprinkled blood of the slain lamb, and that had any Egyptian taken advantage of the blood, he, too, would have been as safe as the Israelite, because the eye of God rested on the blood He Himself had provided, not on the trembling sinner sheltered behind it.

We had turned then to John i. 30, and she listened to John the Baptist's testimony concerning the blessed Lord Jesus, that He was the one to whom this type pointed, God's Lamb, provided not for a nation only, but for the sin of the world.

Then in 1 John i. 7, I had read to her how all-availing His blood is, "The blood of Jesus Christ his" (God's) "Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Anna (for such was the dying girl's name) saw there was safety, saw there was a shelter from the wrath of God against sin, saw God had provided a lamb, but she wanted to know that the blood of that slain lamb sheltered her, she had "no right to it," she said, she had "only sinned, and now she had no time left for good works, or to do anything to fit her for God."

Afraid, in that solemn moment, to speak my own words, or to give her anything but God's word to rest upon, I had then read to her how the Lord Jesus had said, when He was upon earth, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance," and that those same blessed lips had also said that "Whosoever believeth in him" (not doeth good works) "should not perish but have everlasting life," and finally that the Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans these wonderful words, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth" (not

the godly but) "the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." At the end of that verse I had paused a moment, and said in a low tone to her, "The salvation you long for cost God His only begotten Son, it cost the Lord Jesus His life, His blood, His shame, and agony, to purchase it, but it cost you and me nothing at all, we have only to stretch out our hands and take it, and thank Him for it. Is not that a simple way of getting it?"

I had barely asked the question, the last words of it indeed were still trembling on my lips, when the unexpected interruption came.

For a moment I was speechless. The attack on me personally was a trifle, but I was in dismay about the one lying dying by my side. She was hovering between life and death, between time and eternity, she had not hold of Christ as her Saviour, she thought good works a sure foundation, though she had none on which to build, and I thought, surely Satan has shot this arrow at this moment, for I felt in an instant that it was the testimony of God's word to there being "no difference" between men, because "all have sinned," and to the freeness of God's salvation, as His gift, apart from any claim or any worthiness of ours, that had so aroused Satan's enmity and the woman's anger.

Utterly helpless, I turned where alone help was to be found, to the living God, beseeching

Him who knew all the weakness and all the need, to come in and defeat Satan and rescue his prey from his grasp, even though he had come like a wild beast seeking to devour.

In that one moment of casting the dying girl upon the living God as His care, He gave me quiet confidence that He had taken it as His concern, and so all fear departed. What rest, what peace it is when He whispers deep down in the heart, whatever the anxiety is, "Leave that with me, my child, that is my affair."

During that moment, and it was but a moment, of quiet, the woman, whose face and name were alike unknown to me, eyed me curiously, as, having turned round, we met face to face. Then I said, "Is it deception to give any one God's word, and the Lord Jesus Christ's work to rest upon?"

With an instinctive feeling that this was Satan's attack, through the woman, I could not shorten His precious name, or call Him anything but the Lord Jesus Christ, it seemed a delight to call Him Lord as well as Jesus the Saviour.

"Yes, it is," the woman answered with a burst of almost fury, "you made it an easy thing to get to heaven, and you said we had nothing to do for salvation, and that one person was as bad as another, and if that is what you believe and make that poor girl believe, you will

awake from your folly in the depths of hell and meet your victim there, but it will be worse for you than for her."

"It is God says it, not I," I answered, "have you read the Bible for yourself?"

"No," she said, "and you had better not have, the ignorant wrest it to their own destruction. No one can understand it except those ordained of the Church to understand it, but I thank God I have been better taught than you what it says."

"Well," I said, "will you explain to me this verse in Romans iii. 24, 'Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus?' I know I am very ignorant, but I cannot understand 'freely' in any other sense than that we are to pay no price at all for it, if I had anything to pay it would not be free; and, 'by His grace' means to me by His favour, and it would be no favour if I had earned it; and 'through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus' always seems to me the enormous price that another has paid in order that I might get that salvation free. It was too great a work for me to do a bit of, and so God did it all Himself, and therefore it is perfect, and one touch of mine would only spoil it."

"Do you mean to tell me you have nothing to do for salvation?" the woman answered.

“The Lord Jesus Christ said, ‘It is finished,’ and I believe Him,” I replied, “and will not you too rest on His finished work?”

“No, indeed,” said she; “plenty would get to heaven if they could get there in your easy way.”

“How do you propose that I should get there?” I asked.

“Oh,” she said, “you must work, and work, and work, and pray, and pray, and do penance for your sins, and go on working, and praying, and doing penance till you die, and then your soul will still have to be purified, and you must wait till the day of judgment to know if you have worked, and prayed, and done penance enough.”

Shuddering at the gloom of such a prospect I answered, “But God says, ‘To him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly.’”

“Yes, but the Apostle James says, ‘Faith without works, is dead,’” she replied.

“I know he does, but he is not contradicting the Apostle Paul, who says, ‘being justified by faith.’ Faith justifies before God, works justify before men. ‘He that believeth hath everlasting life.’ Works cannot purchase life but are the movements of life. God looks into the heart and sees the faith, men look on the outward ways, and if they see no movement of

life say 'The man is dead: there is no breath, no word, no sign of life about him.'

"I cannot work my soul to save,
For that my Lord hath done,
But I may work like any slave
From love to God's dear Son."

"But my religion is," the woman answered, 'that you must be purified and get white, white, white as snow, before you can get to heaven.'

"Yes," I said, "not only as white as snow, but whiter than snow, before either you or I can be fit for God's presence, for Job says, 'If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and my own clothes shall abhor me.' Snow water is not purifying enough, and that is the purest thing earth knows."

"Then how are you going to get purified except by prayers and good works?" she said, softening slightly for the first time.

"David said, 'Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.' You and I both see our need of being cleansed, the difference is you expect your own works can do it, and I believe nothing but the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ can avail to cleanse me, and what is more I know it has cleansed me, and that the hell you spoke of just now will never be my portion, no never, for God's word and the blood of His Son stand between me and it, and over those

barriers Satan's hand can never stretch to reach me."

Once more her dark eyes gleamed with anger and hatred. "Do not let that poor girl hear you speak such blasphemy," she said, "your presumption is only adding to your sin and folly. The very best saint cannot know he is saved till the judgment day."

"Pardon me, God says that is the privilege of even the babes in Christ, and God took the trouble to write a letter in order that every poor sinner who trusts in His Son might know and enjoy the certainty of salvation now. Listen to His words from your own Bible," and opening the Douay version I read to her 1 John v. 13, "These things I write to you, that you may know that you have eternal life, you who believe in the name of the Son of God." "It is even more plainly put, in your version than in mine. Is it then blasphemy to believe God? Moreover, I would rather enter heaven having the blood of God's own dear Son as my only right and title, than go there through my own good works, if they would take me, which they never could. I would rather go as God's invited guest than pay for an entrance there if pay I could—and will not you? Let your own righteousness, which He calls 'filthy rags' go, and trust His precious blood instead."

The woman did not answer me, but rose from

her seat in the chimney corner, and moving slowly towards the door, went out muttering something which did not reach my ear.

As the door closed behind her, I turned round again to the dying girl. Large tear drops stood in her eyes, and rolled silently down her cheeks, but the restless, anxious, despairing look had gone. She put out her thin wasted hand and laid it gently on mine. "I am afraid this has been too much for you, I am so sorry," I said.

"Oh, not for me, not for me, do not be sorry for me," she answered, "the long dark night is over, I see it all, God gave His Son, Jesus gave His own precious blood, that I might be saved and then He wrote a letter that I might be certain about it now Its for 'him that worketh not;' oh, what love. The only thing that hurt me was to have you spoken to so, and I was so afraid you could not possibly come back again, . . . and yet it was just what passed that made it all clear to me . . . Each moment more light seemed to come and chase away my former dark thoughts."

It was easy to assure her how delighted I should be to come back, and that my only anxiety had been that the Lord would give me the right scriptures, and keep me very calm for her sake.

"And He did, He did," she said so earnestly, "bit by bit, as you read verse after verse, He showed me from His word that all I had be-

lieved before was a lie, that Satan had deceived me into thinking that God was a hard God, who needed our toil and our strivings and our tears, and even then was not always to be appeased, and now I see it is 'freely by his grace' we get it all, instead of hardly by our works ; will you read me that verse again ? ”

How differently I felt as I read that verse for the second time that morning, for wonder and joy and praise filled my heart at the way the Lord had taken to give a soul a sight of Himself, using even the very hatred and opposition of the enemy to work out His own purposes of love.

Fear of the long eternity so close at hand for her, dismay at the thought of the frail thread on which her life hung, dread of the righteous God whom she knew she must meet in that unknown future, and whom she thought a hard God, and her judge, had been filling her mind and making the weeks of her illness a time of unspeakable anguish. She had never been told that Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. In her blindness she imagined she had to grope about to find Him, to work her way to Him, if she could, while He looked on from heaven un pityingly, only ready to condemn each failure.

You, who have listened to the sweet story of the gospel again and again, perhaps from your infancy, who have heard of the love and tender

compassion of God, every day of your lives, and of His willingness to receive you, and have only been careless and indifferent about it hitherto, cannot imagine how, like water to a thirsty soul, the blessed news came to her, that God was ready to save her, willing to have her just as she was, and to give her everything she needed out of His own fulness.

She discovered now that the ransom needed to rescue her soul was mightier far than anything she had dreamed of, but that it had been paid already to the last farthing by another, and she had not hopelessly to begin to try and work it out, and the discovery was perfect rest to her, and deep abiding peace.

It was very pleasant to visit her in the days that followed. She lived near to me, and I could see her each day, and it seemed as though day by day her soul grew in grace, and in the knowledge of the person of the One who had redeemed her.

Every passage of the word of God was so fresh to her; it was not only that it seemed new, but it was new to her, for she had not known even the letter of it.

It was very refreshing to watch its effects, specially when I read to her those words beyond compare, that tell of Jesu's agony, His shame, of the crown of thorns and the purple robe, of the taunting and the spitting, and then of the cross

itself and the hours of darkness, of that awful cry wrung from the patient, suffering, holy lips of the God-man, of the piercing of that blessed side, and the grave.

I was ashamed that I had voice to read it aloud when she was so deeply moved.

More than once she hid her face in her hands and large tear drops trickled slowly through the half closed fingers, while again and again I heard her murmur, as though speaking to One unseen, "For me, for me . . I have lived to be twenty and never knew it before, Lord . . Thou didst suffer for me . . even me."

The story of the resurrection and the ascension, of Paul's sight of the Lord in the glory, and His coming again, these were all very favourite passages with her. No doubt or cloud ever crossed her soul to mar her joy and peace, and the scriptures she loved best were not those that spoke of her own blessing, but those that spoke most of the Lord Himself.

Consumption with her had taken a form of very special suffering, at times terrible to witness even, and yet when I spoke of the suffering, a smile would cross her face and more than once she repeated in a soft low tone—

"Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are."

Each day soon after I went to her, which was always at the same hour, the same woman who

had been so angry the first day, crept quietly in, the moment I began to read, as though she had been watching her opportunity, and took a seat behind me, and then just as I was closing the book, as quietly slipped away again without a word.

As she seemed to wish to escape notice, I never spoke to her, fearing she would not come back if she knew I saw her, and glad she should thus listen to God's own life-giving word.

For several weeks this went on, the one soul ripening fast for glory, the other hearkening at any rate to the words of life, while to me these were weeks of real blessing. The woman's strange conduct never varied, she never entered till the reading had commenced, and left invariably as I was closing the book. Her presence kept me even more dependent on the Lord, for I desired earnestly that His word should be to her a "savour of life unto life," and therefore that He should guide as to the portion, as well as bring it home to her conscience and heart.

Meantime, with Anna, each week brought more suffering of body and less strength to meet it, but as the body grew daily weaker, so in proportion did her joy at the thought of being with the Lord increase.

Death was robbed of all its terror for her. "It is only a short journey," she said, "to reach the side of the One who loves us best.

and if the road is rough, I shall not feel the roughness, and it cannot be dark for His hand will support me, and His presence will light me through." And truly it did !

I was with her as usual the morning of her death, and as usual our strange guest came in for the reading, and went out as it ended, leaving my last hour with Anna undisturbed.

Very much we both enjoyed that hour, though I did not then think it was the last we should spend together on earth, for she seemed stronger and brighter than she had been for days, and was very unwilling to let me go away, so unwilling that I sat on for some time after I would not let her speak or even listen any more, just with her hand in mine.

Even after I reached the door of her room I turned back again to her bed side, for her eyes rested on me with such a loving wistful look.

"Were you wanting to say something, Anna, dear?"

"No," she said, "not exactly I was only thinking how I have watched that door every morning for you and I was thinking if this is the last time I shall see you here that I shall see you and know you the very moment you come home What will it be to meet you next with Jesus !! I think even then I shall be glad to see you come."

The sunlight was playing around her face, but the light upon it was something more than the light of the sun. It put me in mind of that verse in the Revelation, "the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Unconsciously I repeated the verse aloud.

"Yes," she said, . . . "the Lamb slain . . . slain for you . . . for me . . . I shall see Him soon . . . and see those marks . . . oh, what love is His . . ."

For a moment we were both silent, then I stooped down and kissed her once more. Though apparently she was no worse, her whole manner now impressed me with the feeling that it was for the last time.

When I got out into the fresh air I tried to reason myself out of the feeling that I should not see her again on earth, and partly succeeded; yet I went earlier the next morning.

On the door step I met our strange visitor. Her face was pale and her eyes showed traces of weeping. She paused a moment, and looking round, said in a quick half-frightened tone, "Snow water is not enough to cleanse, nor filthy rags to clothe, but the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ is enough for everything." She was gone in a moment, and I never saw or heard of her afterwards.

I went into the house wondering, and was going as usual up to Anna's room, but her

friends met me, and told me she had gone to be with the Lord.

“It was yesterday, soon after you left,” they explained; “when we went into the room there was a look and a smile on her face that did not seem earthly. ‘What is it?’ we asked, but she only smiled again and whispered ‘Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.’ She never spoke after, and not one of us knew the exact moment when her spirit fled—the smile is upon her face still—will you see her?”

Thus the Lord brought her to Himself down here, and took her to be with Him up there, and in the meantime enabled her so to witness for Him, that the impression made on those who loved and nursed her will, I believe, never be effaced.

Truly, dear reader, as the woman said, “Snow water is not enough to cleanse, nor filthy rags to clothe, but the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ is enough for everything,” for time and for eternity. Have you trusted it yet?

X.

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PROPITIATION AND SUBSTITUTION.

My intercourse with saints, and especially with those who preach, has led me to discover a good deal of obscurity in their manner of putting the gospel, and I may add a good deal of

Arminian and Calvinistic controversy, arises from not distinguishing propitiation and substitution. I am not anxious about the words, but about the practical distinction, which is very simple and, I think, of moment. I say the words, because in propitiation, in a certain sense, Christ stood in our stead. Still there is a very real difference in Scripture.

This difference is marked in the offerings of the great day of atonement (Lev. xvi.). Aaron slew the bullock and the goat, which was called the Lord's lot, and sprinkled the blood on and before the mercy-seat and on the altar. The blood was presented to God, whose holy presence had been dishonoured and offended by sin. So Christ has perfectly glorified God in the place of sin, by His perfect obedience and love to His Father, in His being made sin who knew no sin. God's majesty, righteousness, love, truth, all that He is, was glorified in the work wrought by Christ, and of this the blood was witness in the holy place itself. Our sins gave occasion to it; but God Himself was glorified in it.

Hence the testimony can go out to all that God is more than satisfied, glorified; and whoever comes by that blood, is freely, fully received of God and to God. But there was no confession of sins on the head of this goat; it was about sin by reason of Israel's sinfulness; but it was simply blood offered to God. Sin had been dealt

with in judgment according to God's glory ; yea, to the full glorifying of God ; for never was His majesty, love, and hatred of sin so seen. God could shine out in favour to the returning sinner according to what He was ; yea, in the infiniteness of His love, beseech men to return.

But besides this there was personal guilt, positive personal sins for which Israel was responsible, and men are responsible, according to what is righteousness required from each. On the great day of atonement, the high priest confessed the people's sins on the scapegoat, laying both his hands on its head ; the personal sins were transferred to the goat by one who represented all the people, and they were gone for ever, never found again.

Now this is another thing. Christ is both high priest and victim, and has confessed all the sins of His people as His own, borne our sins in His own body on the tree. The two goats are but one Christ ; but there is the double aspect of His sacrifice, Godward, and bearing our sins. The blood is the witness of the accomplishment of all, and He is entered in not without blood. He is the propitiation for our sins. But in this aspect the world comes in too. He is a propitiation for the whole world. All has been done that is needed. His blood is available for the vilest, whoever he may be. Hence the gospel to the world says, " Whosoever will, let him

come." In this aspect we may say Christ died for all, gave Himself a ransom for all— an adequate and available sacrifice for sin for whoever would come—tasted death for every man.

But when I come to bearing sins, the language is uniformly different. He bore our sins, He bore the sins of many. "All" is carefully abstained from. I say carefully, because in Romans v. 18, 19, the difference is carefully made. The first, our sins, is the language of faith, left open indeed to anyone who can use it; but used and to be used only by faith. The believing remnant of Israel may use it, including the blessing of the nations, for He died for that nation; Christians use it in faith, for all that have faith to use it. The second "many" restricts it from all, but generally has the force of many; the "many" as contrasted with a head or leaders, the mass in connection with them. Adam's "many" were in result all; but all as in connection with him. Christ's "many," those connected with Him.

But such a statement will never be found in Scripture that Christ bore the sins of all. Had He done so they never could be mentioned again, nor men judged according to their works. That Christ died for all is, as we have seen, often said. Hence I go with His death to the world as their ground and only ground of

approach, with the love shown in it. When a man believes, I can say, Now I have more to tell you : Christ has borne every one of your sins ; they never can be mentioned again. If we look at the difference of Arminian and Calvinistic preaching, we shall see the bearing of this at once ; the Arminians take up Christ's dying for all, and generally they connect the bearing of sins with it, and all is confusion as to the efficacy and effectualness of Christ's bearing our sins, and they deny any special work for His people. They say, If God loved all, He cannot love some particularly ; and an uncertain salvation is the result, and man often exalted. Thus the scapegoat is practically set aside.

The Calvinist holds Christ's bearing the sins of His people, so that they are effectually saved ; but he sees nothing else. He will say, If Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it, there can be no real love for anything else, and denies Christ's dying for all, and the distinctive character of propitiation, and the blood on the mercy seat. He sees nothing but substitution.

The truth is, Christ is said to love the church, never the world ; that is a love of special relationship. God is never said to love the church, but the world. That is divine goodness, what is in the nature of God (not His purpose), and His glory is the real end of all. But I do not dwell on this, I only point out the confusion of

propitiation and substitution as necessarily making confusion in the gospel, enfeebling the address to the world, or weakening the security of the believer, and in every respect giving uncertainty to the announcement of the truth. I believe earnestness after souls, and preaching Christ with love to Him, will be blessed where there is little clearness, and is more important than great exactitude of statement. Still, it is a comfort to the preacher to have it clear, even if not thinking about it at the moment; and when building up afterwards, the solidness of the foundation is of the greatest moment.

J. N. D.

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KNOWN OR BELIEVED—WHICH?

How vast the consequences involved in the answer to that question! The knowledge of God's plan of salvation by faith in a once crucified, but now exalted Saviour, how general; the fact, how readily admitted; but the power of it—the acceptance in the heart and conscience of the consequences involved in that fact, how little received—and yet how vast the difference! In the end of the sixth chapter of John's Gospel, the Lord shows out to the Jews how completely all the scriptures that spoke of Him had been carried out; and yet, though

these very scriptures were well known by those to whom He spoke, both understood and accepted as the Word of God, did they produce any effect? Did they lead to their acceptance of that One as their Messiah? No. Why not? Let the Lord Himself answer the question. In verse 38 he says, "Ye have not his Word abiding in you." Not You do not know it, but It does not abide.

Ah, dear friend, the knowledge of the plan of salvation is not safety. The being able to give a clear answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" is not security. The question I would address to you is, Are you saved?—not, Do you hope to be? Are you?—are you? Now don't put it from you; don't say, "I know all about it." Don't say, "I hear a sermon every Sunday—perhaps two—and I know all about it." Face the question. Look at it in the light of God's word. Are you saved?

Now, if the Word spoken by the Lord had been believed—if the facts had really been received, they would have produced an effect; the reception of the Word in the power of the Spirit would have produced action. And it is always so. If the word of God comes home in power to my soul, action follows.

In the parable of the seed, the word that abode "brought forth fruit." The woman with the issue of blood hears of Jesus. She believes

if she can but touch his garment she will be whole. She touches, and immediately she was cleansed. The word was not only known, but believed, acted upon, and a result immediately follows. So in the fifth of John—if the searching of the scriptures had been more than the natural mind seeking to satisfy itself, the effect of that searching would have been to have led them to Him. As the Lord says, “Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.” Has the result of your searching of the scriptures been, dear friend, that you have believed God when He says that you have not life—spiritual life—life towards God—that you are “dead in trespasses and sins” ?

“Oh ! yes,” you say ; “I know that.” Pardon me, my friend. I am not asking you now what you know. I ask you, Do you believe it ? Has it abode with you ? Has that word of God taken up its residence in your soul ? Not a pleasant companion, and yet how capable of bringing forth blessed results. Oh, how blessed ! “Dead in trespasses and sins.” Dead—let it abide, do not try to get away from it. Do not try to turn the edge off. “The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing.” Let it pierce into your conscience—“Dead in trespasses and sins.”

Why am I so anxious that this should abide—

should be believed—not only known? It is a fact, whether known or believed; but why should the Spirit of God labour to make that unpleasant fact to the natural man abide in the conscience, but that it might lead to Him who can meet the requirement, who can give life—eternal life—never-ending blessedness in the presence of the One who is the Life—of the One who can say, “I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of death and hades.” Death and hades are conquered, and He possesses the keys. Ah, dear friend, Have you been to Him that you might have life? and, having trusted Him, do you know that you have life? “This is life eternal that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” “He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” “These things have I written unto you that believe in the name of the Son of God, that ye might know that ye have eternal life.” (1 Jno. v. 13.)

In what state are you? Do you believe that you are dead—spiritually dead? Well, the same word says if you believe in Jesus, if you have been to Him, that you have life—life eternal. Has that remained? Not, as I said before, is it known as a scripture, but has it been received in the soul as the truth of God?

Is it rested upon? Is it enough to meet every question that has been raised? Has it abode?

Now I would just show that the truth the Lord put forth in the fifth of John was enough to produce effect in those that believed the scripture. Turn to the first chapter of John and read from the 44th verse to the end. Philip is sure, from the word of God—that which “Moses in the law and the prophets did write,” (the very thing the Lord was urging)—that Jesus of Nazareth was the One he was looking for. The word of God had been received about Him, and it produced action in Philip. Not only does he build upon it, not only does he receive it into his own soul and delight in the One of whom that Word testified, but he would have others to come and enjoy the blessing that he had found. So, dear friend, I would have you, although unknown to me—you, with your never-dying soul, so would I have you “come.” So He the Lord would have you come to Him—that you—one “dead in trespasses and sins,” might have life. Do not delay, come now. Are you without hope towards God? Do you believe it? Oh, if you do, how ready will you be to come. Look unto Jesus and live. “Look unto me, and be ye saved.” Have you looked? Do you live? Read the following true stories which illustrate the difference between knowing and believing:—

A doctor was asked by his patient, "Is it true that I shall not recover?" "Yes," he said, "it is true." There seemed nothing urgent in the case, however, and the patient looked like living some short time. "Ah," said the patient; "I wish I was sure of going to heaven." "Are you not so then?" "No, I know all about the truth; have been a regular church-goer; but I don't know whether I shall go to heaven." The word had been known like the Jews in the chapter; but, solemn fact, "Ye have not the word abiding in you." The Gospel was put before her as simply as possible. She listened. Whilst the words of Life were being spoken, a change came over her face; she threw up her arms, exclaiming "Come, Lord Jesus!" and she was gone. It is not for us to conjecture where—the day will declare it; but how solemn the fact, that there, on her death-bed, she had to say that she knew all about the truth of God; but it was not believed; the power of it was unknown!

Hear of the opposite. God, in His grace, aroused one to the first fact that she was a sinner, "dead in trespasses and sins,"—one exposed to the righteous judgment of God. The word of God showed her what was the consequence of this state. She had no rest. She could not sleep. "Ah!" she thought, "if I go to sleep, perhaps it will be to awake in

hell." She not only knew that there was a hell, but she felt that if she got her deserts it would be the place in which she would have to spend an eternity of woe.

Circumstances often prevented her getting out, and this went on for some time; but one Lord's Day evening she was free to go, but it was late. She hurried off to hear the preaching. She was very late; the last words were being spoken as she entered the place—but she heard them. They were in the fifth chapter of John also. They read, "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 judgment, but is passed from death unto life." Blessed words! blessed to her soul! She heard—she believed. She accepted the Word—it abode in her soul. She passed "from death unto life," and she went on her way rejoicing.

Dear friend, may you, by the power of the same blessed Spirit, hear the words of that same gracious Son of God—believe on that same loving God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not only know the truth of that same precious Scripture, but believing, know the power of it—that coming to Him "ye might have life."

E. C.

VICTORY;
OR, THE CONVERSION AND
TRIUMPHANT DEATH OF A RAILWAY
GUARD.

It is now little more than three years ago that I first saw, and became acquainted with, the subject of the following short narrative. Charles B—— was living then in Edinburgh, and had but a short time previously married a young girl in whom I was much interested, and, for her sake, as well as for his own, I spoke to him concerning his soul's salvation.

He was a fine frank young man, and although not anxious about his soul at the time, seemed impressed, and listened with deep attention to all I said. I was very hopeful about him, yet the time passed and he did not decide for Christ. Soon after this, he and his wife went to live at Broughty Ferry, and I saw no more of him till the following circumstance occurred.

On the day following Christmas Day, 1877, I awoke in the morning with a violent headache, which I feared would quite unfit me for anything during the day if it continued. The weather was piercingly cold, and I had been suffering from a cold for several days previously, so that altogether I felt so unwell that about ten

o'clock I sent a post card to a friend, a short distance from Edinburgh, with whom I had promised to spend the afternoon, saying I did not think I should be able to keep my engagement. Very soon after my card was posted, my headache left me and I felt comparatively well. I rather wondered why I had thus been permitted to break my appointment, but soon I saw God's hand in it all.

A little later in the day a young Christian called, bringing me a letter from his mother, in which she implored me to go at once to the infirmary and see her son-in-law, Charles B——, who was lying there dangerously ill. I, of course, said I would go, and set out directly. This was at the very hour, when, but for my severe headache in the morning, I should have started for my friend's house.

The day previous, the writer of the letter had passed the whole day in earnest prayer and supplication for the soul of her son-in-law; and while thus praying, it was laid upon her heart to send for me. In her earnestness she was in great distress that she could find no one to bring me the message that day, and then it seemed almost as though the Lord rebuked her unbelief, for the word in Micah iv., 9, was brought forcibly before her mind, "Is thy counsellor perished?"

Before night she felt she had got the answer

to her prayer from the Lord, for He gave her this verse, "Fear not . . . thy words were heard." These particulars, however, I knew nothing of, when I first went to see Charles B——, I only knew that he was very ill, and that his relatives were deeply anxious about him, both as to soul and body.

When I reached the hospital the nurse told me he was in such a critical state that I must only speak to him for a very short time ; this of course I promised. Never did I more feel the solemn responsibility of my position, the responsibility of delivering God's message of salvation to a soul who might so soon be in eternity.

Little more than a week before, the sick man had been in perfect health. He was then engaged as railway guard in the goods department. While in charge of a train some of the waggons had gone off the line, near Riccarton, and, in endeavouring to get them right, he received a crushing blow, producing severe internal injury, which in less than three weeks caused his death.

He was in a state of intense bodily suffering when I found him, his head moving from side to side on his pillow, and his eyes rolling with agony, but quite conscious. He recognised me immediately, though it was so long since I had seen him. My first words to him were, "Charles, are you saved?"

He said, "No," but, with a look of intense earnestness, and, grasping my hand tightly, he added, "but, oh! I want to be saved; I want to come to Christ." I could but contrast in my own mind this scene, with the time when I had last spoken to him about his soul; then in the full vigour of youth and strength, he had put off decision for Christ. Now it was of the utmost moment to him to know he was saved.

I read to him from John iii., shewing him that we must be born again, and our Lord's own explanation of how we get this new life, as given in the 14th, 15th, and 16th verses of the chapter, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 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."

How blessed it was to be able to tell him he had nothing to do but to turn his eye in simple faith to the One lifted up on the cross for us, and eternal salvation was his, even as the serpent-bitten Israelites of old were healed the instant they looked to the serpent of brass, lifted up, by God's command, in the wilderness.

Turning then to 1 John v. 1, I read to him these words, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus

is the Christ is born of God." He listened eagerly, and I went on to tell him that, instead of God looking down on us as a severe judge ready to condemn, His word to us now is, "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool." I gave him also the beautiful promise in Rev. xxi. 6, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely," and this further word, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

"Freely," I said, "means gratis, it is for nothing, and now Charles, Christ's part is the giving, your part is the taking. Do you believe He is willing to give it to you now?"

"Yes," he answered.

"Then do you take it now?"

"Yes, I do."

Do you believe that "the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin?"

"Yes."

"Then Jesus says, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life Have you everlasting life?'"

"Yes," was once more his reply. His voice was low from intense suffering and weakness but very earnest. I then repeated to him four

lines, written by a medical man, who was converted on his death bed, which had been already blessed to several souls :—

“ In peace let me resign my breath,
And Thy salvation see;
My sins deserve eternal death,
But Jesus died for me.”

Slowly and emphatically he repeated every word of the last two lines after me. It just seemed as though light had flowed into his soul with every verse of scripture I had read. Truly “ the entrance of thy word giveth light.”

I prayed with him shortly, and though his suffering at the time was at its height not a groan crossed his lips, nor was there a movement from him all the time I prayed. My parting words as I left him were, “ Then you are His in life or in death?” and he answered “ Yes.”

About ten o'clock that night his sister-in-law came from Glasgow to see him. She came for the purpose of speaking to him about his soul. Her first words to him were the very same as my own had been, “ Charles, are you saved ? ”

“ Yes,” was his reply.

“ How was it ? ” she asked, “ and when ? ”

He was too weak to explain fully then, and just mentioned my name.

“ But, Charles,” she said, “ have you the word of God for it ? ”

“ Yes,” he said, “ it is all settled. Miss—— told me that God says, ‘ Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow.’ ”

Little by little he told her all this, as he had strength to speak a few words, between the paroxysms of intense pain.

Hardly believing for very joy and wonder, his sister-in-law said again,

“ But are you quite sure ? ”

“ Yes,.....Jesus died for me.....‘ God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.....that whosoever believeth in him.....should not perish,’.....and I am the whosoever.”

“ Then have you no doubts ? ”

“ None, for Christ says.....‘ Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word.....and believeth on him.....that sent me.....hath everlasting life.’ ”

His faith was firm and unwavering, for it was based upon the word of God, and his sister-in-law left him rejoicing.

I saw him again two days after, and found him still in terrible suffering, but peacefully resting on Christ.

Once more, in the following week I saw him, but could only speak for a very few minutes with him, his weakness was so great, and he was ordered to be kept quiet, but his rest of soul was unbroken.

On the 4th of January, his young wife sat up with him through the night, for the last time. In the middle of the night he complained of being very cold, and sometimes his mind wandered, but for the most of the time he was quite conscious. Once she asked him if there were anything she could do for him—he said, “Yes, pray with me,” which she did. He then prayed, and commended her and their two little ones to the Lord, and seemed to have such confidence that the Lord would care for them.

The next morning his mother-in-law came again, and she and his wife both sat with him until the end—repeating a passage of scripture or a verse of a hymn to him, as he was able to bear it.

As they were thus sitting he suddenly brought up a great quantity of blood. He and they alike knew that now death was near, and his wife asked him if he would like to recover? His answer was, “No, I long to be with the Lord.”

A few hours before he died he was lying very still, so much so that his wife who was repeating a hymn to him stopped, saying to her mother, that she thought he was asleep, when suddenly he who was so weak that it seemed as if he had scarcely a vestige of life remaining, sprang up in bed, and raising his arms, clasped his hands above his head, and sang, in a loud

clear voice, like a person in perfect health, pronouncing each word slowly and emphatically—

“ Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on His gentle breast,
There by His love o’ershaded,
Sweetly my soul shall rest.
Jesus my heart’s dear refuge ;
Jesus has died for me,
Firm on the rock of ages
Ever my trust shall be.”

Clearly the words came out, and he specially dwelt on the word “ firm.” It was the more remarkable because no one had ever heard him sing before.

The effect in the ward was indescribable. It was almost as though a man from the very grave itself were sitting up singing.

His friends told me they longed that many could witness the scene. Death seemed robbed of all its sting, and instead of the darkness and gloom of the tomb, it was a bright triumphant entry into life.

Besides the verses quoted above, he also sang two other lines, the original of which are

“ I am coming, Lord, coming now to Thee,
Wash me, cleanse me in the blood
That flowed on Calvary,”

but which he altered thus—

“ I have come, Lord, I have come to Thee,
Thou hast washed me in the blood
That flowed on Calvary.”

When Charles had ceased singing, his mother-in-law repeated to him—

“ The hour of my departure’s come,
I hear the voice that calls me home.”

“ Oh! that is so sweet, so sweet ” he said, interrupting her at the end of the second line.

They then spoke to him of his own family and friends, and he said, “ I shall never see them again on earth, but tell them that I am with the Lord. I have one brother that is the Lord’s, but tell them all to meet me in glory.”

They asked him repeatedly had he no doubts, no fears? “ No,” he said, “ none, it is all peace ; I am longing to go and be with the Lord. When do you think it will be? Do you think it will be to-day ? ”

His mother-in-law repeated to him Psalm xxiii., “ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” And she said, “ It will not be dark, Charles.” “ No,” he said, “ for Jesus will be with me in it.”

From this time (about 3 p.m.) till he died, which was about 8 p.m. the same day, he wandered a good deal, but every moment of consciousness he spent in prayer ; and about ten minutes before he departed, he clasped his hands, and his lips moved as though still praying, and while thus speaking to the One who

had sought him and found him and saved him, he fell asleep and entered into His own bright presence, leaving his loved ones rejoicing in the midst of their deep sorrow, as they witnessed that, which it was impossible now for their sorrowing hearts to call death, but rather "life begun."

The triumphant joy of that closing scene seemed to lift those to whom he was most dear above the agony of parting, as they looked forward with the certain hope of soon again meeting the one who, during the short period of his knowing the Lord, had given such a bright testimony to Him who had loved him and died for him.

It is at the earnest request of his wife and friends that this brief account has been written. They assured me that the Lord had given them the strong conviction that these things had happened, not for his sake only who had departed to be with the Lord, nor for those of his family who were left behind, but also for the sake of his old companions, specially those employed on the railway, men whose lives are necessarily exposed to constant danger, and who may be called, as he was, in the midst of life and youth to leave this scene for an endless eternity.

To such, and any others yet without Christ, who may read these pages, may he, being dead,

yet speak, and say, as with a voice from that unseen world of intense reality, "Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation," for God says, "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

J. D.

—:o:—

THE TWO STATES OF MAN.

EVERY one living on this earth is either in one or the other of two states. The question as to which of these two states you, dear reader, are in, is most important.

These are given in the 3rd chap. of John's gospel, which reads thus "*He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already.*" One state is "he that *believeth*," the other is "he that *believeth not* in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Now this belief is with the *heart*—"with the heart man *believeth*"—and it is not the mere assent of the mind. There are two important facts dependent on these two states "He that believeth on him *is not condemned.*" How blessed is this! "Not condemned" is a state which is consequent on believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. The one who believes in Jesus is passed from death unto life,

and shall not come into judgment (or condemnation) for his sins, because they have all been borne by Jesus his Saviour, when He suffered for them on the cross.

But, the other truth is, "he that believeth not *is condemned* already because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." An awful fact for an unbeliever. How is it with you, fellow sinner? Is this judgment of God hanging over your head? Do you say "Why is that?" Because "all have sinned" (Rom. iii. 20). Listen to the word of God (Ps. liii. 2): "God *looked down* from heaven *upon* the children of men, *to see* if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back; they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Are you aware that this scripture is in the word of God, shewing that God has inquired into, so to speak, the real condition of things on earth, and has written His opinion of it? And this too is given three times in that word. (See Ps. xiv. and Romans iii. 9—20). Is your opinion of things, God's? And if it be so with you, what will you do? Because "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven *against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*" (Rom. i. 18). As we have seen, man is condemned *already*.

Do not attempt to keep God's holy law as a means of salvation: you will never keep it. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of *sin*." "Moreover the law entered that the *offence* might abound" (Rom. v. 20).

"But then, what must I do to be saved?" you may say. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," answers the word of God. "This is the work of God, *that ye believe on him whom he hath sent*" (John vi). "It (righteousness) shall be imputed, if we *believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences* and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 24). "Being now justified by *his blood*" (Rom. v. 9). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." But "*He that believeth is* NOT CONDEMNED."

G. J. F.

—:O:—

FRAGMENT.

"A CHRISTIAN has always the ground of being perfectly happy before God, because he is perfectly saved."
(J. N. D.)

THE SINNER'S LIFE-SIZE LIKENESS, AS TAKEN BY GOD

THE EYES	No fear of God before them	Rom. iii, 18. Ps. xxxvi, 1.
„	Full of adultery	2 Peter ii, 14.
THE MOUTH	Full of cursing, bitterness, and deceit	Rom. iii, 14. Ps. x, 7.
„	Speaketh great swelling words	Jude 16.
THE LIPS	The poison of asps is under them	Rom. iii, 13.
„	Speak lies	Isa. lix, 3.
THE TONGUE	An instrument of deceit	Rom. iii, 13.
„	A world of iniquity	James iii, 6.
„	An unruly evil, full of deadly poison.....	James iii, 8.
„	Defileth the whole body, being set on fire of hell	James iii, 6.
„	Full of mischief and vanity, or iniquity	Psalm x, 7.
THE THROAT	An open sepulchre	Rom. iii, 13.
THE MIND	Void of judgment (see margin)	Rom. i, 28.
THE THOUGHTS....	Thoughts of iniquity	Isa. lix, 7.
THE HEART	Deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked	Jer. xvii, 9.
THE HANDS	Full of blood	Isa. i, 15.
„	Defiled with blood	Isa. lix, 3.
THE FINGERS.....	Defiled with iniquity	Isa. lix, 3.
THE LEGS	Walking after the lust of the flesh.....	2 Peter iii, 3. Jude 16; compare Gal. v, 19—21.
THE FEET	They run to evil	Isa. lix, 7. Prov. i, 16.
„	They are swift to shed blood	Rom. iii, 15.

J. W.

CANST THOU BELIEVE?

“AND when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him. And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them? And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me. And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oft-times it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou deaf and dumb spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.” (Mark ix, 14—29.)

This ninth chapter of Mark shows us what it is to have to do with the Lord Jesus *personally*, and there is nothing so real, as to have to do with Christ, to meet Christ, and to hear His voice speaking words to you, that go to your heart and meet its need; for the Lord Jesus, whom God presents to me now, for the acceptance of faith, is the very same Jesus who walked this earth for three and thirty years, and therefore it is so blessed to trace His pathway down here.

In the end of Chapter viii. Jesus had been asking His disciples, "Whom do men say that I am?" They answer that some had said one thing, and some another, but all had said wrong. Peter beautifully owns Him, "Thou art the Christ." He was the reputed son of Joseph the carpenter, the One who had for years wrought with His own hands. His countenance betrayed what kind of a man He was, "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." And why? Because, I believe, the Lord never met a sorrow that He did not make it His own, and never met a grief that He did not bear it. He carried every sorrow in His heart that He took away by His power, and therefore the Scripture says, "He was acquainted with grief." And if this be the character of Jesus, there is no kind of sorrow that may not go to Him now, and tell out all its bitterness, all its weary grief.

He had always leisure when on earth to attend to every one that came to Him, whoever that one might be. He had not leisure sometimes to eat, but if there was a heart that needed Him, Jesus had always leisure to attend to that heart and meet its need. He meets the widow with her dead son, and raises the dead ; meets the leper and cleanses him.

In Luke vi. you have a beautiful picture of a vast multitude healed by Him of every kind of disease. Did he send a few away helped? No! He healed them *all*. He sent away no convalescents, as we speak, but all went from His presence *cured*.

This ought to have shown who He was, but those round about with their guesses were completely wrong. Peter alone says, "Thou art the Christ of God, the Son of God." Then the Lord says, "I am going to die." Peter did not understand this; he had not yet learned that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission."

Have *you* ever learned yet the absolute necessity of death coming in between your soul and God? If you have not, you *must* learn it, if not now, you must learn it in a future day, when you taste the *second* death yourself; and what is that? The lake of fire!

In the beginning of Chapter ix. the Lord

takes up Peter and James and John to a high mountain, and they see His glory, see a miniature picture of the day that is coming when that glory will be displayed. When He comes down from the mount, He comes at once into a scene of misery.

I find in this chapter a picture of what the world is, of what man is, and of what the power of Satan is—of what the power, too, of Christ is.

As the consequence of His death, He is able to bring out this, that all power “in heaven and in earth is given unto me.” By His death He has bought the whole world. He bought the field for the sake of the treasure in it. He has the power to deliver every heart that cares to be delivered from the bondage of Satan. Every heart that cares to be made free, He has the power to make free. Those that want to know His power *shall* know it. Those who want to know Himself shall know Him.

This poor child was filled with the power of Satan. Do you say, “That is not my case?” It is your case unless you are brought to the Lord. Paul says he is sent to the Gentiles “to open their eyes,” that is the first thing “to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.” What does that mean if you are not under Satan’s power?

And again (Col. i. 13), "Who hath delivered us from the *power of darkness*." What does that mean, think you? It means that man unconverted, man unsaved, man unblessed, man unwashed, though he may talk of being free, is still under the power of Satan, under the power of the enemy of souls.

People say, "It is impossible that we are under Satan's power, we do not believe in Satan, we do not believe in hell." Do you not believe? I do! And I warn you by the blinding power of Satan now. I warn you by the terrible certainty of the lake of fire in the future, not to *despise* the *Word* of God, and I beseech you to accept the *Grace* of God now. I warn you by coming judgment, do not let Satan deceive you.

People do not like to own they are led captive by Satan, but God's Word says you are under the dominion of Satan, unless you have been brought to Jesus.

Have you ever been brought to Jesus yet? You know whether you have or not. "I have been religious," you say. That will not do. The father had brought his son to the disciples, brought him within the sphere of religious influence, but it was all of no use. Had he been brought to Christ? No! Never! And none but Christ could meet his case, or can meet yours. Nothing but the delivering power

of Jesus is sufficient for your need. It is humbling to have to confess that your case is too bad for any remedial measures short of the divine power of God, in the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ ; but is it not better to see and own your state now, and to be delivered from it, than to find out too late, by-and-bye, that God's word is true, and that you have been the vassal of Satan, when there is no longer any deliverance. Satan has blinded you and deceived you, and now you are with him for ever ; for let me tell you this solemn truth, those who keep company with the devil in time, must keep company with him through eternity, and those who know Christ in time, will know Him, and be with Him through eternity.

“ In the place where the tree falleth there it shall be.” If your tree were cut down to day, where would it be ? Oh ! Christless soul, where, think you, would you be ? If you are not brought to the Lord yet, you are Satan's slave, however much you may dream you are free.

You are like a man condemned to death, who has committed murder, and his country's laws have doomed him to die, but he has fourteen days respite, and he hopes still in some way to get off at last, so that the sentence will not be carried out in his case. But the fourteen days draw to a close ; the last night

before the day fixed for the execution has come : let us enter that felon's cell. The man is fast asleep. You would have thought he could not sleep the night before his execution ; but there he is, his head resting on a hard bolster, fast asleep. A few hours and he will be in eternity ; but now he is asleep and he dreams. Listen, he is talking in his sleep. He thinks he is at liberty ; he talks of the river he played by as a child ; he makes an appointment for the morrow ; he dreams he is free !

“ He is deceived,” you say. True, he is deceived, but still he dreams he is free. Now the turnkey puts the key in the door, the lock goes back with a harsh grating noise. Ah ! he is awake now. Is it to freedom he wakes ? No ! no ! The prison walls are a reality ; the handcuffs, the sheriff, the hoarse cries of the crowd are all realities, the executioner and the gallows are terrible realities, and to these he wakens. The dream is over. Death and judgment are before him, and there is no escape. The last hour of the respite has expired, and there is no pardon !

He is alive to his condition now ; and oh ! Christless soul, you too will wake up some day ; take care that you do not wake up in hell, wake up to find God's word is true, that you are under Satan's power, for *there* you will be under it for ever and ever !

But to you who do want Christ, you who know you are bound and are seeking liberty, what have I to say to you? I can tell you with joy what a Christ you have to turn round to; One who has wrought out a perfect and eternal redemption for you by His own death upon the tree; One who has now gone up on high, having finished the whole work of redemption. What is the only thing He is looking for from you? For you simply to trust Him! He is not looking for you to improve your condition, but to trust Him!

“Bring him *unto me*,” Christ says of the child in this chapter. If deep be the need of your heart, deeper still is His desire to meet your need. “Bring him unto me.” Charming word to fall on the ears of an anxious soul from the lips of Christ.

Why was it a *dumb* spirit here? Because it had not a word for God! And that is just like you. You have never had a word for God till now. And how long have you been a sinner far from God? All your days. “Of a child.” Ever since you came into this scene.

“And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire and into the waters to destroy him.” The grand object of Satan is first to deceive and then to destroy you!

Look at this picture of helpless agony, and hopeless impotence, but not too helpless and

hopeless for the hand and heart of Jesus. It is the picture of a sinner in his sins. He must be brought to Jesus. You are brought to the Lord *as you are*, and he meets you *just as you are*. He only looks for you to give up all thoughts of being better, and simply trust Him. "If thou canst do anything," the father says. Is that the language of faith? No, of unbelief. What is there He has not power for? Mark the Lord's answer. Jesus said, "The 'if thou canst' is not my side but yours, not have I got power, but will you exercise the faith that draws down the blessing? The 'if thou canst' is, canst *thou* believe? Canst *thou* trust me?"

See the effect of this on an honest soul, "And straightway the father of the child cried out and said with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." Here was faith. When he comes to the Lord first, he says "*Master*;" but when the Lord turns the "if thou canst" back on the man, as it were, faith springs up immediately in his heart, and he says "Lord!" "Lord, I believe." Can you say "Lord, I believe," to Him just now?

What will bring showers of blessing down on you this moment? "*Lord, I believe.*" That is the link between the Lord up there in glory, and you down here in your sins.

"I am waiting for you to trust me," says

Jesus. "I can do no more for you than I have done. I have done everything that God demanded, and that your state required. I have met Satan for you, met judgment for you; can you trust me?" Do you say, "Lord, I believe?" Then it is all settled. Not "Lord, I feel," or "Lord, I desire," but "Lord, I believe." Is this the language of your heart, Christless but Christ-seeking soul? Then it is a settled question, the indissoluble link is formed. The Lord never *helps* people to be saved. He saves them outright.

This evil spirit was not only dumb but deaf. "How is this a picture of me?" do you ask? I will tell you. Not only have you never had a word *for* God, but you have stopped your ears to every word *of* God. Not one word of God's has ever entered your soul, or pierced your heart. You are *deaf*, and *dumb*, and *dead*, and *lost*; sinner take care that you are not damned too!

If you would have rest with Christ above, if you would escape the horrors of hell, turn to Jesus *now*. Still the sweet words of Jesus sound forth, "Bring him unto *me*;" but a day is soon coming when He can only say, "Depart from me," for evermore.

"And the spirit cried out and rent him sore, and came out of him, and he was as one dead." There was a tremendous struggle at the last.

The devil does not let go his prey without a terrible struggle to hold it still. "You had better put it off," he says, "do not be so decided just now, wait a bit." Satan does not like to lose his vassals.

"He was as one dead." That is what a soul feels like. But *Jesus* lifts him up and he arises. He is set free by Jesus! Can that emancipated soul ever get back to its old condition? Never! Never!

The sow goes back to its wallowing in the mire, truly. But why? Because she is a sow! And the dog to its vomit, because it is a dog; but if a sheep gets into a ditch, and it is taken out and washed, it gets as far from the mire as possible.

When a soul is brought to the Lord, and learns it is a sheep of Christ's, I do not say that soul might not slip and get down into the mire, but it would not become a sow, And presently the Shepherd's crook comes in, and the sheep is drawn back. It does not love the mire, and the sow does; there is the difference. Never have you seen a sheep in a ditch but it was struggling to get out of it.

"*Jesus* took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose." What power, what dignity it gives! I have been taken up by Christ, delivered by Christ. I did *nothing*, he did *everything*.

This is a scene that tells of the perfect deliverance that Jesus gives to those who trust in Him. I ask you, do you trust Him? If so, may your heart be filled by the amazing blessing of knowing He has perfectly delivered you from Satan, and you are set free to follow Him. Christianity is to know Christ and to enjoy Christ. May your heart be only occupied with learning to know Him better, and with the enjoyment of Him day by day till He comes.

W. T. P. W.

—:o:—

FRAGMENT.

“THE veil of the temple being rent from top to bottom, I see the holiness of God: but the very stroke which has thus unveiled the holiness of God has put away the sin that would have hindered my standing in the presence of that holiness. I see what God in His love has done for us in the person of Christ. I see that the bruising of His Son has taken place. Here I get God Himself coming down to me, and I am enabled now to go back with Christ into the rest of His holiness. In the death of Christ I see the fearful vengeance of God against sin; and the rending of the veil, which displays God's holiness and love to man.”

(J. N. D.)

"THE HEARING OF FAITH."

O Christ, I hear
Thy cry, "'Tis finished " pealing!
Words to me dear,
For there I find my healing
Suspended high.
On Thee the curse descended,
And Thou didst die,
And so my soul befriended.

Thy Cross is bare ;
Thy grave, O Christ, is empty !
And now I share
The love of Him who sent Thee.
'Tis only so
That sin can be forgiven,
And sinners go
To dwell with Thee in Heaven.

By God thus seen,
I need no other fountain.
Blood maketh clean,
Blood moves sin's mighty mountain !
Yes, blood alone—
And not poor man's oblation :
No tear, no groan—
Christ's blood is God's salvation !

A. M

“I KNOW WHERE I MISSED IT.”

WHAT a solemn event in *your* history, dear reader, will it be 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?” (Mar. viii. 36.) But did it ever occur to you, unsaved friend, that there is even a *possibility* of your *losing your soul*? And allow me to remind you that *possibility* may grow into *probability*, and probability into *certainty*. For ought you know you may be having in this little paper your farewell address from the God of all grace.

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, which I pray that God may use to your blessing. Remember, it is not an over-coloured picture in which you are left to wonder "It is 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 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:—"Its 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 : “ *Its 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 enquired anxiously. She then explained herself, and as nearly as I can recollect in the following words.

“When you were here two years ago preaching in the M——Hall I was invited by some christian neighbours to come and hear the gospel. 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 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 enquired.

“I got up and walked out of the Hall. Two christian woman, 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 its all dark now.*”

Feeling concerned about her, I went again the following day to see her, but her face wore the same blank despairing look, and the same sad words came from her lips.—“Its 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 enquire with interest "Whose case is it?" I reply "IT IS YOUR OWN"—*My* case? Yes YOURS if still unsaved. Don't forget, I pray you, that the long-suffering 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. Knowing the terror of the Lord, let me warn and beseech you with all earnestness to 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; may you not be having the last note of entreaty that God intends to sound in your ears? What remorse will be yours, in its intensest bitterness, if, like the rich man, you suddenly wake up in hell

some day, and while mocking memory holds up before your eyes every golden opportunity lost for ever, you will have to say to yourself—"I know where *I* missed it,—and now the great gulf is FIXED, and I am LOST—for EVER LOST. 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 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 death, or shelter you from 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" I mean.

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 congregation through all 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 your sinful transient pleasures in it? Can the latter really be possible? *God is your witness*, and one or the other is true of you.

But if you are truly anxious, as a 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, and 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 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:

“Take the guilty sinners name—
The guilty sinner's Saviour's claim.”

He who was once upon the *cross* a *sin-bearer*, is now upon the *throne* a *sin-purger* so that instead of the believer's sins appearing 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 hath declared,
There remaineth no more to be done;
Christ once in the end of the world hath appeared,
And completed the work He began.”

GEO. C.

—:O:—

GOD'S NEW YEAR.

Exodus xii.

It is to the 2nd verse of this chapter that I desire specially to call your attention, “This month shall be unto you the beginning of months.” Why, my reader, do you think the Lord says this? Why does God say to Moses and the children of Israel that they should begin a thoroughly new year? Do you think this

was the commencement of the year? Not at all, but God said, "From this moment you must commence to reckon your year," and why? Because God was going to do a wonderful thing for Israel on that 14th day of the month, and what was that? He was going to show them what *redemption* meant!

I ask you, my reader, Do *you* know what redemption means yet? You need it as much as Israel did, for as the children of Israel were in bondage in Egypt, and served Pharaoh and his taskmasters, so you and I were in bondage to a greater than Pharaoh, even to Satan himself. I ask you again then, Have you been redeemed from under his power? If you have not, you have not begun to live yet! You have not begun a year that has God for its commencement. That is the point here. Israel began a day with God, there was a link formed with God that day, and they were always to have in remembrance how God brought them out from the land of Egypt, now they were redeemed by the hand of Jehovah!

Israel's redemption was from under Pharaoh's cruel power; and yours and mine, my reader, is from under the still more cruel power of Satan, for you are the positive vassal of Satan, if you are not redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ. If you are not on the Lord's side, you are positively against Him, if you are not shel-

tered by the blood of God's slain Lamb, you are still exposed to the righteous judgment of God, and who knows when that judgment shall fall.

"But," you may say, "why do you speak thus strongly? my sins never trouble me very much." Very likely, but sin troubled Christ a great deal, you may never have spent a sleepless hour on account of sin, but sin cost the Lord Jesus Christ His life's blood. We think very lightly of sin, not so God. The only measure God has for sin, His estimate of what sin is, is the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ is God's measure for everything, for man's sin, and man's distance from God, as a sinner, and likewise the measure of the believer's righteousness, and the believer's nearness to God, I look up and see where the blessed Lord is now, and I say, That is the measure of my nearness to God, because I am accepted in the Beloved.

In the 7th verse of chap. xi. God says "the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel." What was the difference? Were not the Israelites sinners as much as the Egyptians? Surely they were, yet the Lord put a difference. "What was the difference?" you ask. "Is there this difference between people now?" There is! "Have all sinned?" All. "Have not some sinned more than others?"

Yes, that is true, but that does not take away from the fact that all have sinned. "Oh" perhaps you say "some are educated and others not." No that is not the difference, for that distinction ends in the grave, and though some are rich and others poor, some young and others old, yet these are only differences in the eyes of man, not in God's sight.

The difference in God's sight is this, that some in this world have begun a new year with God, have begun to live. I ask you my reader. Have *you* begun to live yet? If you have not, you have been dying all this time. You may say "I have life." Yes, natural life, I grant you, but what is it? A constant battle with death. Have you a life that can enjoy God? Eternal life? Have you a life that is fit for God, that can stand in His presence, and enjoy that presence? "Ah" you say "I am afraid of Him." Then it is perfectly clear that you do not enjoy Him, nor can you enjoy Him till you know what the 12th of Exodus brings out.

Exodus xii teaches that man must die because he is a sinner, and the consequence is, I read, there was not a house in which there was not one dead, there was death in every house the night God redeemed. Have you written the sentence of death upon yourself? Do you recognise that it needs as much the power of God to deliver a soul now from the grip of Satan,

as it did then to deliver Israel from the power of Pharaoh? God came down to deliver Israel that night, but He maintains His right to judge. You may make light of sin, but God never does! Sin He must, and will judge, but after man's sin, and before the day of judgment, at the great white throne, He comes down as a Saviour, and provides a way by which man may escape the judgment and be for ever in His own bright presence in glory.

Man has only a nature fit to die and be judged. "How do you know?" do you ask. Because the One who was spotless, who had no need to die, I see dying in the room of the guilty sinner, and "if one died for all, then were all dead."

The Lamb of Exodus xii is a lovely type of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was to be kept up, from the 10th to the 14th day, that if there were any blemish to appear, it might appear, which points to the three and a half years, during which that blessed One walked this earth, the spotless Lamb of God "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners."

You and I needed a spotless Lamb, we needed that One without blemish outwardly and inwardly; needed Him to give Himself for us, to die instead of us, and He has done it!

God says to Israel, I am going to pass through the land as a judge, to vindicate my character,

as the One who is holy, and righteous, and if you are going to escape my judgment you must take the way I have marked out for you.

“I will smite the first born” God says—that is—the very pride and flower of nature. “And the blood shall be to you for a token.” Directions most simple, and most plain were given. The blood must be put where the eye of Jehovah could see it, outside, not inside. What were Israel to do? Simply to avail themselves of the blessed provision the Lord had given them.

And will not you do that too, my reader? God has provided a Lamb, even His own Son. It needed the shedding of the blood of the Son of God to redeem one sinner. So great was your need, and so rich His grace, so priceless your value in the sight of God, that you may say, He gave His Son for *me*, for me!

Oh what depths of love for Christ to give Himself for me! Did you ever believe that yet? Has your heart ever bowed down and owned it, and believed it? If it has not, bow down and believe it to-day.

You may say “I do believe it.” Then of course you know you are saved. “Oh” you say “I could not say that.” Then you do not believe the gospel, for it is the gospel of our salvation. You may say “I believe the Lord Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Has He saved *you*? I ask. “No.” Why? Has He re-

fused to? I know He has not. How is it you are not saved then? Ah there is one little link wanting. The Saviour has died and lives again. "Yes," you say, "I believe that" and perhaps you may add, "I would fain hope He died for me."

You must get farther than that, He did die on that very day of the Passover, while thousands, and thousands of lambs were being slain on every hand, to keep up the Passover memorial. There outside the walls of Jerusalem, Christ the fulfiller of the Passover, was hanging on a cross of wood, between two thieves. Christ was the great reality to whom the Passover pointed, the divine antitype. But to know Jesus has died suffices not. What follows the killing of the Passover? "They shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts, and on the upper door post of the houses wherein they shall eat it." Supposing I had gone to a house and beheld no mark of blood on the door, and I go inside and say, I do not see any mark of blood outside your door. "No," the owner answers, "but I have slain the lamb, and the blood is in the bason."

"Well," I say, "do you not know God passes through the land to-night?"

"Yes, and the blood is in the bason, that is sufficient."

"But God says you are to put it *outside*."

“Oh, I thought as long as the blood was shed, the lamb slain, that was sufficient, I did not want to be a marked person.” Would it have been sufficient? Assuredly not! Judgment entered every house that had not the blood sprinkled outside it!

What has that to do with us, you ask? Ah! there lies all the difference between salvation and damnation, between the blood sprinkled, and the blood shed. The soul that knows the blood sprinkled is secure, having a present salvation, the soul that only knows the blood shed, is waiting for a certain damnation.

You must have that blood sprinkled where the eye of God can see it. It is the application to my own soul of the Saviour's death—that I not only know the Saviour died, but that He died for *me*! Your knowing the truths of the gospel is of no avail, you must have the personal application of them to your own soul. Where the soul has not had to do personally with Jesus, as his or her Saviour, there is nothing waiting for that soul but judgment, for God says, “When I see *the blood* I will pass over.” Not when I see your tears or prayers, or your reformation.

There is but one thing commands the eye of God. It is the blood! There is one thing gives divine assurance to the soul. It is the blood!

Can you say—I take the bunch of hyssop

(hyssop is the meanest thing in nature) I judge myself, I condemn myself, I see I am a poor ruined sinner, and with a trembling hand I sprinkle that blood. I believe the Saviour died for *me*; gave Himself for *me*. Ah, you may well believe it, it is the one damning sin to disbelieve it! It is the crushing crowning sin to doubt it—which the lost in hell will ever remember and regret.

You will be judged for your *sins* in that day, but the one crowning sin will be that you have slighted that precious blood.

Faith puts it on the lintel and the two side posts, where the eye of God can see it. Where does the unbeliever put that blood? On the threshold, where in scorn and contempt he tramples it underfoot! Awful deed of unbelieving folly!

I charge you solemnly with trampling that blood underfoot, if you neglect or refuse to accept this great salvation. If you do not honour and trust, you make light of and trample on this precious blood. And what remains for you? “A certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.” Oh! mark it ye triflers, ye souls that make light of a Saviour, who go on with the world, the foam upon the waters not lighter than you in your pathway down here, till you find yourself floated into hell fire for ever!

Oh soul, soul, how you will repent your folly when you get there! Christless soul, how bitterly you will repent your folly!

There was not a house in Egypt in which there was not one dead. It was the first-born of man bearing the result of his own sin, in the houses of the Egyptians, in the houses of the Israelites, it was the substitute, of God's own providing, for the guilty man.

The Lord give you to apply the bunch of hyssop now, to credit that the blood of Christ settles every question for the soul that simply trusts it.

Oh turn, turn now to that precious Saviour and trust your soul to Him this very day.

W. T. P. W.

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"STRIVING TO BELIEVE"

"I'VE been striving to believe that these twenty years."

Such was the reply given by a respectable well conducted man, who bore the highest character for truthfulness, to one who was pressing God's salvation upon his acceptance, telling him that because Jesus had shed His blood, and met the holy and righteous claims of God against sin, all that God required of a sinner, was to own, in true repentance, what

he was, and to believe God's record concerning His Son, the result of which would be that he would have everlasting life and should not come into condemnation, but would pass from death unto life.

But all he could say was “I've been striving to believe that these twenty years.”

“What! *striving to believe?*” rejoined the other; “now, will you kindly state for my information, something that has happened in your town lately; anything you please.”

Of course he complied, and told him of an occurrence, well known to have happened within a few days of this conversation.

“*I'm striving to believe you,*” was all the reply his friend made.

Now I have mentioned that the man bore the highest character for truthfulness. He was looked upon as one incapable of telling a lie; he knew this himself and could not brook the insinuation that what he had just stated was a falsehood. It caused him to completely lose his temper, and he angrily demanded on what ground the other doubted his word for a moment.

“Ah!” answered he, “you will not let me treat you for one moment in the way that you have been treating God these twenty years! I must believe *your* word on the spot, but you have been doubting *God's* word all this long time!”

Doubtless it was the means of opening the poor moralist's eyes to see where he was in God's sight, for "he that believeth not God hath made him a liar." The day will declare it. What I want to ask my reader is, Has *he* believed God? Harken to what the scripture saith "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater." What is this witness of God? "This . . . which he hath testified of His Son." I read "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." (1. John iv. 14.) "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 8.) He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." (Rom. iv. 25.) "The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah liii. 6.) "Be it *known* unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man (a dead and risen Christ) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins and by him, all that *believe* are justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) "He that heareth my word (says Christ) and *believeth* on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." (John v. 24.)

My reader, God testifies to the value of the atoning work of Christ. The rent veil speaks of what God can do on the ground of that work

—how He can open the way for His love to flow out, and for poor sinners who were far off to draw nigh. The empty tomb, the risen, ascended, glorified Jesus “crowned with glory and honour,” speak of the delight of God’s heart in Him who not only satisfied His claims but glorified Him on the earth, so that God’s only answer was to glorify Him at His own right hand; there, He has set Him forth, “a propitiation through *faith* in his blood
 . . . to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which *believeth* in Jesus.” (Rom. iii. 25, 26.)

What say you to these things, reader? Will you *trust* God? Will you *believe* Him? *Striving* to believe means that you doubt Him, “almost persuaded” is still to stand aloof. “King Agrippa believest thou?” Reader, believest *thou*? “Almost” will not do—you may be “almost” in heaven, and sink for eternity into the depths of hell. Be warned, I beseech thee. *Believe* God’s word. “What saith the scripture? Abraham *believed* God and it was counted to him for righteousness” (Rom. iv. 3.) “To him that *worketh not* but *believeth* on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” (Rom. iv. 5.)

“Abraham *staggered not* at the promise of God through unbelief (alas! how many stagger

now!) but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being *fully persuaded* (not almost) that what He had promised, he was able also to perform, and THEREFORE it was imputed to him for righteousness, Now it was not written *for his sake alone*, that it was imputed to him: but *for us also* to whom it shall be imputed *if we believe on him* that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." And what is the result? "THEREFORE being justified by *faith* we have *peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Again, the apostle John says (1. John v. 13.) "These things have I written unto you that *believe* on the name of the Son of God; that ye may *know* that ye have *eternal life*." I ask you then again, my dear reader, Do you *believe* God? Do you believe His record concerning His Son? Do you cast yourself simply, entirely and unreservedly upon God, believing Him *because* He has spoken? Not because you feel it, realize it, or understand it, but all this flowing *from* having taken your stand upon His word? Can you say "I rest my soul for eternity on God's word, on what He testifies concerning His Son?" Then dear reader, enter into the enjoyment of what God provides for your *present* portion. Let not Satan deprive you by telling you that you must wait to get to

heaven for it. No, we *have* redemption, we *are* saved, we *are* made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, we *have* forgiveness, we *have* everlasting life, we *have* deliverance from sin, from Satan, from the world, from the fear of death, and from the dread of judgment, we *are* brought to God, we *are* accepted in the Beloved, we *are* light in the Lord, we *are* sealed with the Spirit. God's word is my authority for all this. Hence it is daring presumption to doubt it, It is true humility to accept it and rejoice in it.

“Believe, and God's Salvation sure
Is free to every one;
In manifested righteousness
He honours thus His Son.”

But on the other hand—

“He that *believeth not* God hath made him a liar.” (1. John v. 10.)

“He that *believeth not* the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God *abideth* on him.” (John iii. 36.)

“He that *believeth not* is *condemned already*.” (John iii, 18.)

“He that *believeth not*, shall be *damned*.” (Mark xvi. 16.)

The Lord lead every reader of these pages to flee from the coming wrath, and to rest on that Saviour of whom His word so fully testifies!

H. P. A. G.

“I DO BELIEVE THAT, AND I AM
SAVED.”

After man had sinned, when “the Lord God drove out the man “ He took care to furnish him with a conscience. And the effect of the word of God even on the natural conscience is, that people are often alarmed at their state before God. And when accompanied by the quickening power of the Spirit of God, they can never be happy and at rest before Him, without knowing (through faith) that God is for them.

It was in this state of mind the writer found a young married woman in the town of B——. Many had visited her, and spoken to her of the Saviour’s love, but no comfort could she get. Fast sinking into eternity under the ravages of consumption—distracted in mind—and her poor body racked and sore with spasmodic coughing—Whatever shall I do? was the all absorbing thought with her. She knew she was not ready to meet God. She had no righteousness fit for Him, she was sure as to this, and all this was to the writer the clear proof that God had indeed begun His blessed work in her soul.

Looking up to Him who alone can meet the soul’s need, the word in Rom. x. was given, and read from verse 5 to 10. The word at the 9th verse in a moment met her case. “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." She exclaimed, "I do believe that and I am saved." She rested in simple faith upon the word of God, and from that moment she was calm and peaceful, her soul had found rest. She would say occasionally when visited afterwards, the enemy had tried to fill her mind with doubts, but she could repose in the Lord's love and all was rest.

She was permitted to remain some few weeks, but with all her overwhelming sufferings she could rejoice in Christ Jesus, and often would she exhort her dear husband (a Christian) to cleave to the Lord, and to the word of His grace. She had apprehended the way of the Lord, to be gathered only in His Name, and remember Him in His death till He come ; but she never had the privilege here on earth. Hers the better portion, "With Christ which is far better."

As her end was approaching, after remaining some time seemingly unconscious of everything around her, she looked up and said (and they were her last words)

"Then shall I know,
But not till then,
How much I owe."

and passed away to be for ever with the Lord.

And now, dear reader, if still unsaved, oh do not put off this momentous question of your soul's eternal salvation for another moment, but let me persuade you to spend a few moments at least, over this great question. What can equal it? You are exposing yourself to the fearful judgments of God so long as you remain unsaved. Should the hand of death lay hold of you in your sins, it must fix you for ever in eternal misery.

Why, oh ! why should you die in your sins, and thus choose death rather than life ? Oh think I pray you, what a death—the second death—the lake of fire of Rev.xx.15. Will you then deliberately put down this, and recklessly go on your way as before, and thus neglect the great salvation which God has provided? Oh trifle not with your immortal soul, it is at stake.

Perhaps you are saying "How can I know my sins forgiven"? Or, may be, like many others, "How can I know I have the right faith"? Now just let us see what God says about the *object* of faith. Satan may be occupying your mind with your works, or your faith, or even your lack of it, in order to hinder you and keep you from looking away from everything to Christ. It is Christ Himself that God offers to you in the gospel. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in *him* should not perish but have everlasting life"

“ I HAVE IT IN THE WORD.”

Jno. iii. 19. And again, “As many as received *him*, to them gave he power to become the sons of God” Jno. i. 12. “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved” Acts. xiii. 31. “The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son cleanseth us from all sin” 1 Jno. i. 7.

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“I HAVE IT IN THE WORD”

SUCH was the blessed confession of one who had learned to trust the Saviour, and to rest in what the Word of God declares concerning Him, and the work He accomplished for sinners. Weak, from heart disease, unable to drink of the world's streams, as others, who but thirst again, this dear young girl had heard the joyful sound, had received the glad tidings of salvation, and was now *quite sure* that she was *saved*. Why this certainty? From whence does this rest of conscience and heart spring? Does she differ from you or me? Is she, because delicate, and shut out from much of the evil around, the less a sinner? No, dear friend, no such plea arose from her heart, no mention of her own goodness, her happy feelings, her good training, her grand experiences. What then made her so sure of her salvation? I will tell you.

Having examined carefully the state of her body, and after deciding with her mother what was best to be done, she said, “Ah well ; whatever happens to her, she is ready

for both worlds". Turning to the sufferer, I asked her if this was true? "Yes" she said at once. Wishing to be quite plain with her, I said "Then are you really saved?" "Yes" was her decided answer again. Seeking still further to know the ground of her confidence, I asked what made her so sure about it? With a bright smile she looked and said "I HAVE IT IN THE WORD." So it was; for as a lost sinner she had believed God's record about His Son, that He had come to seek and to save that which was lost. In other words, she had appropriated to herself the Saviour that the word of God reveals; God's "faithful saying" (1. Tim. ii. 15.) and Christ's finished work (Jno. xix. 30.) were the ground of her confidence, and therefore she could be quite happy about her soul's salvation.

Many others have this same confidence, and I am sure, without exception, all would endorse the sweet and blessed confession of this bright young believer "*I have it in the Word.*" What a perfect answer to all the unbelief of the human heart, and the insinuations of the devil! Thus it was, the Lord Himself met Satan in the wilderness, by referring him directly to the written Word; thus too, the believer can defy all the attacks of the enemy. And if confidence in God's word thus gives certainty, rest, and peace, and that too in view

of eternity, say, dear friend, do you not covet it? It is a common thing, and never so common as now, to speak of the "uncertainty of life;" but how blessed to have God's own authority that I am "*secured for eternity*," as I once read on a country tombstone.

The apostle Peter, (1 Pet. i. 24, 25), after comparing man to the grass which withereth, goes on with the glorious contrast, "*But the word of the Lord endureth for ever, and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*" Dear friend, the glad tidings of salvation is made known to you from the word of the Lord; the same word which tells you so faithfully that you are *lost* if an unbeliever; that as a sinner you are unfit for the presence of God; and that if you remain in this state, His righteous judgment must be poured out upon you; the wrath to come must be your portion, and the lake of fire your doom. Remember too, *this word* endures *for ever*, and so will your torment, dear friend, if you refuse to bow to it and the Saviour it makes known.

O reader are you not condemned by this word? Does your conscience not awake up to the reality of being *saved or lost*. The same unalterable word assures you as much of the former, if you trust now in the Saviour, and rest in His finished work, as of the latter, that long eternity of "weeping and wailing," if you refuse

God's invitation of mercy. Again I would plead with you as to the importance of being *sure* of what lies before you. If careless, oh be roused by the certainty of coming judgment! If anxious, be even now persuaded to rest on what the word of God declares. Look away from your frames or feelings, your joy or sorrow, right away from *yourself* altogether, and rest in what Jesus has done; accept God's testimony as to the value of that work in that He hath raised Him from the dead. "Let *God* be true but every man a liar," and therefore your own heart.

Give Christ all the credit, and God all the praise, and rejoice in the knowledge of a perfect Saviour, and through Him a full and eternal salvation. He Himself says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my word shall not pass away." Therefore be assured, dear friend, that if this Word be not the ground of your confidence you are still on the wrong road, and bound for judgment; but, if otherwise, then rejoice in the glad tidings, that that Word tells you of; make your boast in the work that has been done, and better still, in the One who has done it, and if challenged by man or devil as to your salvation, let this be your simple answer "*I have it in the Word.*" What a resting-place! That Word which can never fail—that "faithful saying" which is as true to-morrow as to-day, as certain for eternity as now.

T. E. P.

SEVEN "BUTS" OF SCRIPTURE.

It sometimes happens that a stream is deflected from its course and turned in an opposite direction by a very small obstacle. Just as, not unfrequently, a trifling event may completely alter a life or materially affect a career, and, in the same manner, we shall find, in the seven passages about to be quoted, a remarkable change of thought or action intimated in each case by the little monosyllable "but."

The first is found in Eccles. xi. 9. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; *but* know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Can it be that the Spirit of God condescends to use irony, when the young man is thus urged forward in the pursuit of the natural inclinations of his heart, and in the gratification of the eye? Can there be, in this passage, a contradiction of the uniform condemnation of this very thing that is found elsewhere in the word of God? Can the sins that are every where denounced, in the plainest terms, be lawful here? Nay, there is neither irony, nor contradiction, nor allowance of sin. In

reaching this point, and using contrast to produce its natural effect, the line of thought changes—the stream is deflected—by one little monosyllable, and the young man assured that "for all these things God will bring him into judgment." "*But know thou*" says the Spirit of God to the profligate, the drunkard, the worldling, "that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap," and just as surely as sin is sown so will judgment be the harvest.

"But," says the young man, "these are the pleasures of sin, and are we not to be happy? Are we all to be gloomy and morose? Are we to have no pleasure?" Well, the pleasure that is bought at the cost of the soul, and that brings with it future punishment, if not present remorse, is dear indeed. Moreover it is not a question of pleasure, for there is a region of joy outside the province of sin that throws the transitory "pleasures of sin" into the shade. Come now, young man, be honest and tell me, whom you deem the happiest, the worldling or the true christian? The man whose conscience is harrowed and stained by sin, or he whose sins are pardoned and who can look death, judgment, and eternity calmly in the face, who can truly say "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"? As one of your-

selves I ask you for an honest answer. Ah ! your conscience bears witness that a course of ungodliness is one of misery, that the sinner is the dupe of the devil and is being fooled into hell. Think of being a fool for ever ! "Fools make a mock at sin" Well then; I say, that the pleasure which harrows the conscience, violates the word of God, and secures future judgment, is pleasure falsely so called. It is an *ignis fatuus* leading on to the bottomless quagmire. It is sugar in the cup of deadly poison. Young man, take your fill indeed, *but* know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

Now let us turn to our second illustration. "We did esteem him, stricken, smitten of God and afflicted, *but* he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." (Isaiah liii. 4-5.)

What a discovery for the now aroused and troubled soul to make, the soul that, with other sins, had been emphatically a rejector of Christ, guilty—so to speak—of His blood, what an amazing truth for such to learn that the "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," who during His earthly life had not where to lay His head, and ended that life upon the cross of shame, there abandoned by His disciples, and,

because of the burden of sins He then bore, forsaken by God Himself, forsaken but not forgotten, enshrowded in darkness but an object of infinite delight to the Father's heart, stricken, smitten of God and afflicted,—what a wonderful fact to apprehend that “he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities!” Ever blessed substitute! We adore Thy grace! Thou didst die for sinners. It was our iniquities that wrung from thy bosom the cry “My God my God why hast thou forsaken me?” “All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all,” For no other reason did He die. The sinless one indeed, “*but* he was wounded for our transgressions . . . and with his stripes we are healed.” “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” Oh! sinner think of this. What a flood of love follows our little monosyllable here, *but* he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. It was followed by judgment in the first instance, by mercy here.

In continuation of this glorious theme we find in our third instance, “Though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain, and when they had fulfilled all that was written of him. they

took him down from the tree and laid him in a sepulchre, *but* God raised him from the dead." (Acts xiii. 32.) As to the sepulchre of this blessed One, Satan, with man for his confederate, had things all his own way. When Jesus was born He was laid in a manger for the Inn had no room for Him, and throughout His earthly career He was the constant object of Satan's malice. The cross was the grand proof of this. Here the enemy thought to avenge the course of defeats he had suffered; here man too joined in the wicked cause, and the greed of hell was satiated when the "great stone" was rolled to the mouth of the sepulchre. The victory seemed complete. Death wrapped itself around the Lord of Glory. "But God raised him from the dead." Hallelujah! Becoming interposition, suited answer to that life of devotedness! What else could await Him whom death could not hold? "The Lord is risen!" Thrilling words. Satan is abashed—death is overcome, and over the work of redemption are written the words "It is finished." God raised Him. What an eternal rebuke to the enemy. He who was "delivered for our offences was raised again for our justification." What rest for the troubled conscience! "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Our four remaining instances are in character similar to one another, each presenting God in the exercise and energy of His grace meeting the ruined condition of man. Thus in Psalm cxxx we read "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord . . . If thou Lord shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord who shall stand; *but* there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared." Here we find a soul in deep distress, crying out of the depths, and dreading lest God should mark iniquity, an experience not unlike that in Romans vii. There is an evident struggle, and perhaps an effort to conceal iniquity, a fear to make known the worst, and to lose the hope derived from iniquity not being marked. Such a hope is vain; such an effort is futile. God must know the very worst; there must be a full confession and a total and unreserved surrender. It is vain to conceal any part of the truth. Yet the soul shrinks from a full disclosure; it dreads retribution; it cherishes false thoughts of God, and its misery is deepened!

What a blaze of light pours in, however, when the soul can say "*But* there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared!" Who is a pardoning God like unto thee? Why hide from such a God? The poor demoniac said to Jesus "I beseech thee that thou torment me not." He had no other

idea of the Son of the most High God than one of judgment. He little knew that Jesus had crossed the stormy sea of Galilee just to heal and clothe and befriend him. He did not know the true nature of God thus manifest in the flesh. He feared indeed, but had no hope of forgiveness—but now forgiven—or at least healed, he feared, and loved, and followed. There is the fear of torment; and there is the fear of forgiveness. How terrible the one! How sweet the other! Reader, mark the divine order "there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared."

Again, let me quote from Titus iii. 3-4-7. "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another, *but* after that the kindness and love of God toward man appeared . . . that being justified by his grace we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Notice the sevenfold description of man's fallen condition, the exact and awful delineation of human depravity, guilt and ruin. What more complete than the word "hateful" and yet how true—how deserving of hate—as in Rom. i. 30. "haters of God," or, perhaps more correctly, "hateful to God." Is not God "angry with the wicked every day?" Is not sin hateful to Him? Can He look on it? Yet

observe the glorious, the surprising contrast, "*But* after the kindness and love of God toward man appeared." Human depravity is exceeded by divine love—spite of all the well-merited judgment—the hateful condition; spite of all the tide of sin, the kindness and love of God appear, and by His grace He justifies! Dear reader your attention is called to this magnificent attestation to the divine nature. Weigh in your mind the two statements: balance the one by the other and see the astounding preponderance of the love of God over the guilt of man.

Such another passage comes before us in Eph. ii. "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the Spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation, in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others, *but* God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." Again we find sin met by love—God rich in mercy and great in love! This passage states more fully than even the previous one the extent

of the fall—this speaks of death, that of sins—this of the state, that of the conduct—this of the believer being quickened, that of his being justified. But notice how the complete race both of Gentile and Jew is embraced—all equally guilty and spiritually dead—all children of wrath. But at this very juncture divine love declares itself! When dead in sins, it is then that mercy and love act, and by divine power the soul is quickened, and blessed beyond all measure. God Himself, apart from anything on the part of man, acts for His own glory and according to the grace of His own heart, and man becomes the debtor. It could not be otherwise! Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

And now for the last of the seven. "*But* when he was yet a great way off his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell upon his neck and kissed him." Luke xv. 20. The clinax of all! How transcendent! See the prodigal, the "*young man*" who had taken his fill, and now returned empty, who had taken his own way and had been reduced to want, see him retracing his wilful way—slowly and humbly and just as he was—filthy and forlorn and fearful—at a distance indeed "*but* when he was yet a great way off his father saw him!" How was this? Ah! the father was on the outlook—love is always hopeful—and

what then? "He had compassion!" and then? "He ran!" love is always energetic; and then? "he fell upon his neck!" Oh! that embrace! Distance, sin, selfwill, prodigality, everything of the kind overcome! and then he "kissed him"—love is always intimate—a kiss is the emblem of nearest and dearest affection—the lovers token—and then? In the stillness of profound self-aborrence, solemnly, fervently, irresistibly says the prodigal "Father, I have sinned . . . and am no more worthy . . ." Enough! love has won the day! and its happy prisoner is clothed and feasted amid the music of the Father's house. Ah! reader, leave God out, and what then? Let God have His way, and then? "God is love."

J. W. S.

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THAT WONDERFUL WORD "GRACE."

How precious is the little word grace! How often do we meet with it on the page of inspiration. It adorns every book, and wherever it is found, it makes itself known by the lustre that surrounds it. The angels in heaven, who are the witnesses of God's ways, may enter in some measure into the meaning of the word grace, but it remains for the fallen sons of Adam,

to prove experimentally the full, blessed, and everlasting import of it. "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. v. 21. This very precious text teaches us that the sphere of the operations of grace is in a world universally blighted by sin. This wondrous grace of God reaps for itself laurels of unfading glory in a scene where sin and death prevail. Its glorious head is seen towering above the most lofty monument that sin ever raised; it sits enthroned there, and acts in its own sovereignty for man.

Let us see how sin has reigned unto death. To be brief, "the wages of sin is death;" sin is universal, and consequently death. Death stamps the first creation. Look at the world before the flood, sin reigned universally unto death then. Judgment sweeps the mass away. Grace spares a remnant. Again, look at the state of the world at the time of Abraham; sin reigned unto death in the shape of idolatry. God was forgotten! They desired not the knowledge of His ways. They did not like to retain God in their knowledge. The Scripture says, "They are without excuse," Rom i. 20. God, in grace, calls Abraham out, separates him from an idolatrous world, and makes of him a great nation.

Again, look at the world when the Son of God came into it. Man in every position of life joined hand in hand to get rid of Him. Kings and rulers, priests and people, formed, as it were, one common level upon which to stand, to express their wickedness, and to hurl the blessed One from the scene. "Away with him, crucify him, crucify him," found expression from the lips of the representatives of the human family. "We will not have this man to reign over us" were words echoed in the heavenly courts above, as they were expressed in the actions of that vast multitude, who exulted in the shame, sorrow, and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. As we look upon the earth at this period cannot we say, sin reigned unto death? Was it not a tremendous step for man to take, to lay hands upon his Creator, and because He resisted not, to crucify Him, and stain the earth with His blood? Oh! can you penetrate the gloom, the moral darkness, that covered the earth then? Impossible! Heaven blushed at the crime, and the earth to express its emotion, was convulsed to its very centre.

Sin had triumphed, even to the death of God's spotless Son. Here is the only place where you can rightly measure human wickedness and fully see what man's heart is capable of doing. Oh, that the world, instead of boasting of its attainments and progress, would but own

its wickedness as expressed in the death of Christ! Upon that ground God will judge the world by and bye. Christ said in view of His death, "Now is the judgment of this world." Alas! poor world, if thou hast forgotten thy sins in murdering and rejecting the Son of God, God has not. The gleaming sword must be drawn, and He must and will be avenged for the blood of His Son. Oh, awake to this! Reader, awake to this!

But could death hold the Son of God? He had submitted to death; He, the gentle unresisting Lamb was led to the slaughter. Man's sin was expressed thereby, but at the same time atonement for sin was made. God's justice was satisfied in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. God was glorified about sin. Yea, the very thing that expressed man's sin and ruin was the very thing in the hand of God to meet the ruin, and remedy it, and give sinners who are brought through grace to repentance and faith in Christ, a place above it for ever. Christ triumphed over death, and as the Prince of life rose from the dead, and there He now sits at God's right hand in glory. Grace now takes its stand on the ground of accomplished redemption, of God being glorified about sin, lifts high its head and reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Did sin reign unto death? Now

grace reigns through righteousness. Did men congregate together to take counsel against God's blessed Son? Did they put Him to death—stain their hands and the earth with His blood? God has raised Him up, and now grace, on the ground of that death, brings salvation to a guilty world. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men," Titus ii. 11. To every land, to every town, to every house, yea, to every individual sinner, does this wondrous grace of God come, with a free and full salvation in its hand. Grace takes its stand upon the efficacy of the death of Christ and saves the vilest sinner beneath the sun. It triumphs over the foulest sin, and in the persons of such whom it saves, it raises up a monument for itself, the glory of which is never to fade! And, blessed thought! righteousness marks all its ways. It reigns through righteousness. The death of Christ has so settled the question of sin with God, that grace steps forth on the ground of absolute righteousness and dispenses its blessing of salvation far and near. Blessed and happy reality!

Beloved reader of these lines, do you know anything of this blessed grace of God? Is your soul saved by it? If not, you are living in death. Death surrounds you, death fills your soul, you are away from God, in your sin. hastening to

your doom! O awake! O awake to this awful reality! But grace reigns through righteousness, and brings *you* salvation. Will you not receive it? It points you to the cross of Jesus and tells you that it was obtained there at an infinite price, and presents it to you as a free gift. Sin's wages have been paid, now the gift of God is eternal life. Rom. vi. 23.

Ah, then, my reader, accept at the hands of God's grace, salvation for your soul. Linger no longer. "Remember Lot's wife!" Remember how it is written, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Heb. ii. 3.

E. A.



THE BUTLER AND THE BAKER,

Genesis xl.

The little episode of the chief butler and the chief baker in the history of Joseph is full of interest, and unquestionably something may be learned from it.

By no violent transition of thought are we thereby reminded of the two malefactors who were companions in suffering with the anti-typical Joseph, the Lord Jesus at Calvary.

But let us first take a glance at the central figure in each case: Joseph was (1) separated from his brethren by their wickedness, and

(2) was the revealer of secrets to burdened hearts, as Daniel during the captivity. Just so was Christ refused by His own, betrayed and sold for so many pieces of silver to the hand of enemies, but was nevertheless in His humiliation, the revealer, as well as the revelation of what was in the heart of God for us. Joseph had done nothing amiss, being himself guiltless and pure, but became (3) the companion of the guilty, and the touchstone in the very scene of his sorrow and shame for exaltation or judgment to them. How perfectly does this shine out in Christ; on the cross one thief continued to revile while the other was secured by grace, and becoming "Redemption's earliest trophy" as the hymn says, accompanied the blessed One, his Saviour, to paradise.

Joseph, and he only, could supply the solution of that grave question which stood between the two and royal favour, and no sufferings or bonds of his served to divert him from considering the grievous case in which his companions lay. How thoroughly is he at leisure for them, evincing an unsolicited interest and concern for their sorrow, and laying himself out to unfold to each the true state of his case. How beautifully and how touchingly true of Christ Himself, if we trace His precious ways of mercy and compassion towards the sorrowing, suffering sons and daughters of humanity! Dear reader,

have *you* ever thought that Christ has leisure for you, that He is really interested in those that draw near to Him, and that He alone is able to lift that imperfectly-concealed load that burdens your conscience, and remove the constant sense of aching void and unrest that oppresses and wearies your poor heart, hide it how much you may? Believe it, dear reader; believe it even now, for His own blessed lips declared "I will give you rest," and again, "Ye shall find rest unto your souls." Oh, that now at length you would come to Him who pleads with the weary and the heavy laden, and assures them beforehand of His ability and His willingness to bless!

Each of these companions dreamed a dream. In the visions of the night God had spoken to them supernaturally, to produce a divine impression or to awaken conscience, as doubtless He does even to this day (see Job xxxiii. 14-17.) Only Joseph could interpret, for Christ alone is the key to every communication, of whatever kind, which God makes to the soul. His gracious word of John v. 21, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment" is not a whit more true in blessing to the believer than "the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" is true against those who, because of their

impentence in their sins, are irreparably lost. In each case it is from the Man once here in suffering and in shame, but for sin not His own, that the final issue must be learned. His sheep hear His voice who says "Come unto me;" the rejectors of His grace will learn at last at the solemn session of the "great white throne" (Rev xx. 11) that their eternal doom is pronounced alone by Him!

Within three days (how suggestive of death and resurrection, the foundation of all that God is doing) their heads were to be lifted up, the one to blessing and the royal favour, the other, (where "from off thee" is added) to utter ruin, these being the ultimate and irrevocable results admitting no appeal. And it is well we should clearly recognize that the cross is the alone basis of all final issues, and final indeed they are, for the cross unfolds both grace and judgment, vindicating God in righteousness because He is light, while in no degree invalidating man's responsibility, although it be true that God is love! The butler and the baker, like the two Jerusalem thieves, were in the same condemnation and we may reasonably and safely infer that they thoroughly deserved the displeasure of the King. How true is this of every sinner, whatever be the issue of his case.

See now the compassion of Joseph's heart, "Why look ye so sadly to-day?" he says; he saw

that their agitation was great, their countenances betrayed the depth of their trouble. But, dear reader, the true Joseph reads your conscience and your heart, and though your face may be gay with smiles, and your ways full of frivolity, He knows there is a worm at the root and that often you are ill at ease, especially if God speak in the dark of night to your soul in visions upon your bed! Christ knows the burden of your heart, poor sinner, and He puts Himself before you as the expositor of God's mind to all who have forfeited His favour! How pathetic was the cry "there is no interpreter!" How little they knew that a divinely qualified one was at their very side; and hearing their cry how promptly does he cast them upon God. Interpretations belong to Him. "Tell me them, I pray you," he says. He who stood there a prisoner for God was in no difficulty, he addresses the conscience first as to what would alone satisfy the King, as set forth in the first dream, and then he seeks to draw to himself the heart of the one who has received this divine revelation of grace through him for testimony and service after he is free.

How beautifully does it suggest the grace of Christ to us in His work and in His person, the One who to the sinner says "Tell me," and whose touching word to the believer when it is well with him is, Think on Me, make mention of Me.

The butler had told his dream at once, waiting not for his companion's story, for he was truly earnest as well as anxious, and he got his heart made happy by receiving the word. The baker only came forward with his dream, when he found the interpretation of the other was good; really he had no faith in Joseph and probably would never have allowed the dream to escape had not his looks betrayed him. His dream revealed what he was, as well as upon what ground he sought to recover favour; he was careless and indifferent, allowing even the fowls of the air to ravage that which, as typical of his self-righteous religion of works, he purposed to use to render himself acceptable to the king.

The carnal things of man, be they prepared ever so daintily with all the skill of the confectioner, will never be accepted of God; they may attract the birds of prey, but will surely and necessarily be refused of Him. Each of the dreams indicated purpose of heart and revealed to the dreamer what should be the result of the intention he had conceived; one, as it were, significantly attesting that nothing but the blood of **Christ** will suit God—

“Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to His cross I cling,”

the other alleging that God can be propitiated with a present pregnant with oneself and com-

mandatory of one's own doings. In expressing the juice of the grape, the butler added nothing to it; he presented in the fruit of the vine an unmingled offering of its precious sap and unequalled fragrance, and thus the heart of the king was in figure diverted from the offender and conducted to another and satisfying object, the vine itself; whereas the bakemeats spake only of the maker of them, and brought down added indignation upon the guilty one! In fact, it was Cain's offering and not Abel's—a religion of the flesh which, whether rationalistic or ritualistic, God cannot accept, for its principle is not of faith but of works!

How sorrowful a rebuke for our poor hearts is found in the closing verse of the chapter—“yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.” Surely it speaks volumes of what man is. All had come to pass according to the word of Joseph, and yet is he unbefriended and forgotten!

To sum up the lessons that are before us:—God accepteth no man's person, all are alike guilty, having forfeited His favour and incurred His due displeasure; but the blood of Christ gives, through grace, righteous and abiding acceptance with Him while the very choicest of man's works is utterly obnoxious and ends in irrevocable judgment. Lastly, how the heart of Christ must be grieved beyond expression

when we forget the One who, being refused of man, has appealed to those who have learned grace from His lips in the scene of His unjust condemnation, to remember Him who has turned our mourning into joy and gladness !

The Lord grant that you, my reader, may learn the lessons of this chapter very deeply.

1. Christ has leisure for you ; have you leisure for Him ? “ Seek ye him while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.”

2. The anxious, earnest soul who gets into the presence of Christ, having faith in His person as the arbiter of his desperate case, receives a true and a blessed solution of it according to grace.

3. That nothing will atone for sins but the precious blood of Christ which is both the cause and effect of God’s favour. 4. That being saved

thereby, the simplest, sweetest, happiest thing is to respond to His invitation and appeal, by thinking of Him and making mention of Him !

May He awaken all who read these lines to the discovery of His fitness for the need, and His value to the heart of every poor sinner who draweth near unto God by Him. W. R.

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LIFE THROUGH DEATH.

How very often God in His sovereign grace, makes the occasion of the death of one the means of bringing life and blessing to another.

This was blessedly exemplified at a small village in Suffolk last summer.

The Lord had called home to Himself a dear young man, who had been a bright and blessed witness for Christ. I had the privilege of being present at his funeral, which took place at the village of F——, where the body of the departed one was committed to the grave to wait the moment when “the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.

Several waited the arrival of the funeral, and many of the villagers were standing at their garden gates. I was asked by one of them to go in and see her son, a young man about twenty years of age, lying very ill, and evidently in a rapid consumption. I spoke to him about his soul, and soon found that he was quite ignorant of *God's salvation*. Like many others, he could talk about *himself*, and thought he was as good as other people, having done nothing very bad or wicked, and that he was quite fit to die. It was *himself* and his good character he was resting in. There was no sense of his guilty state; no sense of God's holy require-

ments ; consequently no knowledge of God's gracious remedy for his ruined condition as a sinner ; all was darkness and death. Oh ! how thoroughly Satan, " the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." 2 Cor. iv. 4.

I well remember the unhappy look of that face, which through God's sovereign grace was, shortly after, so bright and cheerful. I sought to direct him as a poor lost sinner to Jesus, the Sinner's Friend ; and affirmed that *salvation* was to be found in Him alone, that every thing had been done by Him on Calvary's cross, to meet the terrible condition we all are in by nature, through Adam's sin ; that God has raised Him from the dead, and that now He is a living Saviour at the right hand of God, willing and waiting to save all who believe in Him.

After the funeral he was visited by one or two Christian friends, who also spoke the word of the Lord unto him.

Not many weeks had passed away when I received a letter from one who had visited him again on the Lord's day. He found him very weak in body, but happy in spirit, " trusting in Jesus." He little thought it would be the last visit, but on the following Wednesday he passed away to be for ever with the Lord. He

was full of thanksgiving and praise to the Lord for having sent His servants to tell him of Jesus and His love. The Lord had saved his soul, and given him joy and peace in believing; he had passed from death unto life.

If you are *in your sins*, dear reader, you are *out of Christ*, and exposed to the judgment of God. You need, not only forgiveness of sins, but a new nature, a nature fit for the presence of a holy God, and this is to be found only in Christ Jesus, the Man who has brought life out of death; the One who said to his servant John, "Fear not; *I am the first and the last: 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. 17, 18.

The first man's sin brought in death, the second Man "our Saviour, Jesus Christ, hath abolished death, and hath brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel," 2 Tim. i. 10. He went down into the stronghold of Satan, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Hebrews ii. 14, 15. Sin and death mark the first man, righteousness and life the second Man. *Where are you?* have you ever seriously asked yourself this solemn, yet important question? That you are in the first

man and *in your sins*, or else that you are *in Christ* and not in your sins, is a fact. If in Adam you are *guilty before God*. Oh, terrible reality! May you be awakened to the consequences of such a condition.

Do not put on a covering of self-righteousness, thinking that this will avail you anything or hide your real state before a holy, heart-searching God. It may be very well before man, as, alas! very many are deceiving themselves with "a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof," 2 Timothy iii. 5. It will *not do for* God. You must have on the wedding garment; the garment of God's providing, and not your own filthy robe of self-righteousness. "*All our* righteousnesses are as filthy rags," Isaiah lxiv. 6. Will you dare to go into God's presence with such a covering? Christ Jesus is God's righteousness for *every one* who accepts God's testimony, for *every one* who believes the record that God hath given of His Son. Then as to *life*, nothing short of *eternal* life will do for you, and no other has God to give, and *this* life is *in His Son*. God hath said: "He that hath *the Son* hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life," 1 John v. 12.

"Life is found ALONE in Jesus,
ONLY THERE 'tis offered thee—
Offered without price or money,
'Tis the gift of God, sent free.
Take salvation—
Take it Now and happy be."

Jesus has been down into death and under the judgment of a holy, sin-hating God, that guilty sinners might be forgiven, and that lost sinners might be saved. Through *this Man* is preached unto *you* the forgiveness of sins: and by Him *all that believe are justified from all things*. Acts xiii. 39. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to *save sinners*.” 1 Timothy i. 15. “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.” John v. 24. Can anything be more simple, more precious, more soul-satisfying? Surely it is enough to make the heart leap for joy.

Why *all* this for those who HEAR AND BELIEVE, AND LIVE? The only answer is—*Jesus*, God’s beloved Son, He paid the penalty—sin’s wages—death, on the Cross. His blood has been shed on the Cross, without which there can be no remission, or putting away of sins—“He gave Himself a ransom *for all*,” (1 Tim. ii. 6); and *now* God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. A righteous God’s claims having been righteously met once and for ever by Jesus, God has righteously raised Him from the dead, and righteously set Him at His own right hand, and

crowned Him with glory and honour : and *now He is God's* righteousness for *all* who believe. God grant that *you*—in His rich mercy—may bow to His unfailing word, and know the blessed reality of having life through His death, eternal life, life in resurrection—and righteousness, *God's* righteousness, which alone can fit you for His presence throughout the countless ages of eternity.

R. E. K.

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THE case of the woman of Canaan wonderfully brings out the heart of God. She was one of an accursed race (“cursed is Canaan.”) That is where grace ever comes. She is an outcast, and she takes the place of a dog. Why not give up all hope? Because she abandons all title and claim in herself, but the need which casts itself on pure bounty; and there was, she asserted, an overflowing abundance of grace which could even give some supply to the dogs—“Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the master's table.” The Master could look beyond the children, and there was a fulness that did not leave even the dogs without provision. She knew God and Jesus ten thousand times better than the disciples around.

J. N. D.

“ONCE IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.”

“WILL you try and say a few words to a new little patient of mine, before you leave the ward this afternoon?”

It was the head nurse, in one of the large wards of a city hospital, who spoke, and her manner was peculiarly grave and thoughtful, so much so, that I asked at once, “Is there anything special in the case, Nurse?”

“It is as sad a one as I have seen since I have been in this hospital, and that is many years now,” she said; and the tears stood in her eyes.

It was a rare thing to see Nurse K. so moved. She was a bright cheery woman, universally liked and respected by the patients, to whose wants and comforts she attended with unwearied patience. Every one of them seemed to cling to her as to a tower of strength. The ward was a different place if Nurse K. were out for a holiday. She knew me well, and often gave me hints as to the actual state of the sufferers, which helped me greatly in seeking to say a few words to them of Jesus the Saviour.

“What is wrong with your new patient, Nurse?” I asked.

“Consumption, Ma’am. She will not last more than forty-eight hours, if she does that; but poor child, what is so sad is she is only seventeen, and she is a wife, and has been a mother. She lost her little baby some months since, and from that time has just pined away, so they tell me. Her husband brought her in last night. He would not part with her till now it is too late; the doctors can do nothing for her. If they had only brought her in sooner!” the kind woman added, “and she is such a pretty young thing to die—and the worst of it is, I am sure she is not prepared to die. Maybe she would listen to you if you would speak a few words to her. She is in the bed at the right hand corner, the other end of the ward.”

Nurse K.’s words thrilled me with deepest interest. I did not wonder that the tears stood in the kindly-hearted woman’s eyes. Only seventeen, a wife, and a mother, beautiful, dying fast, and *Christless*, or “not prepared to die,” as she expressed it. My own heart was full, as I walked down the ward to the bed indicated.

When I reached it, my interest deepened in the young sufferer. She looked almost a child, and so lovely. Never had I seen so fair a face. She was propped up in bed nearly in a sitting posture, and was gasping for breath. Large drops stood on her white brow, and trickled

slowly down her face. A bright colour was on her cheek, which looked almost transparent; a still brighter light in her eye; but it was very evident that grim monster, Death, had laid his cold, iron hand remorselessly on this young and beautiful and beloved one, and was hurrying away with his prey.

I have hardly ever felt as awe-stricken. It seemed as if no words, almost no prayer, would come. She looked, as Nurse K. said, too fair to die; and yet we both knew surely she was dying fast, and dying without Christ. Eternity just a hand's breadth in front of her, and she not ready to meet God!

She looked up as I came close to the bed, and smiled sadly. It was a bright day in early summer, and I had in my hand some lovely roses and ferns. She looked longingly at the flowers, and I said, “Would you like to have some of them?”

“Oh, so much,” she answered, “they are so beautiful.”

She spoke with difficulty, but showed great interest as I placed the flowers on her bed, and began to arrange the finest of them in a little vase to stand by her side.

“It is so kind of you. I am so fond of flowers,” she said.

“So am I,” I answered, “they are some of God's own handiwork; the God who seeks us

to be His children, that He may show us a Father's heart; the God who gave His own Son Jesus our Lord to die for us, to save us. Do you know Jesus?” I whispered.

Never shall I forget how that young face changed. Her brow darkened, and a look of thorough hatred gleamed from her eyes. Only once before in all my life had I ever seen a look like that, in a woman's face. It was not weariness or indifference, it was hatred to the very name of Jesus.

In a moment I was silenced, the shock was so great of seeing a dying girl turn so decidedly from the fountain of life. Then, I thought—I hoped—perhaps it was only a look of pain, and stooping down, I repeated in a low voice, “‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ Would you not like to possess this everlasting life?” I asked her.

Again came that terrible look of deliberate rejection. “I do not want to hear of these things,” she said, “I am too weak.”

“I know you are very weak, too weak to talk;” I answered, “but you will let me read to you a verse or two of God's own word. I will not tire you.”

“I do not want to hear,” she said, “it is too late now. Once I might have listened, and

believed. Now it is too late. I am dying, and I do not want to hear,” and she closed her eyes as much as to say, You may as well leave me, my decision is final.

Horror stricken, I stood as though rooted to the spot. She was so young, so interesting; it seemed too awful to think she was just about to lose this life, and the next too. I could not leave her thus; and when I could speak, I said, “It is never too late to trust Jesus. He says, ‘Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.’ He would not cast you out; He would receive you, and take you to Himself. Come and try Him.”

Once more her brow darkened. “You are kind,” she said, “but I do not want to hear; it is too late. I know I am dying. Once it might have been. Not now.”

Nurse K., who had followed me down to the bed, and heard all that passed, looked greatly distressed, and said, “Listen to the words of Jesus, dear. You know you are very ill; turn your thoughts to God.”

“I do not want to hear,” was the only answer, and she turned her head from us to the wall. The nurse and I looked sorrowfully at each other. I had no resource but to leave, but before I did, I repeated three verses of Scripture, in as clear a tone as I could command.

“The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

“He that believeth on the Son hath life ; he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

“Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.”

There was no response—no movement even of a muscle of the face, and sadly I turned away. “She has been like that ever since she came in,” Nurse K. said. I tried to read a hymn to her, but she would not listen. She said always, “Once it might have been, but now it is too late.”

Never did I leave a hospital ward so sick at heart. Never had I seen exemplified quite so plainly our enmity by nature to God. Here was one dying, and knowing it, with nothing left on earth, and yet unwilling to have Jesus and His glory.

That fair young face with its expression of hatred to the Son of God haunted me. I could not rest for it, and longed to see her again, hoping some ray of light might have entered her soul. But no ! twenty-four hours after she had told me so decidedly she did not want to hear of Jesus, she was in eternity.

“How did she die ?” I asked Nurse K.

“As you saw her,” she said ; “she seemed to have no fear of death, but to the last she refused to listen to the Bible, or anything sacred. I never saw the like since I have been a nurse.”

"Once it might have been, once I might have listened and believed. Now it is too late." The words ring in my ears yet, though months have rolled by since they were uttered by those dying lips.

Once, before then, she had heard of Jesus; once she had been inclined to listen; once she had been near salvation—near it, but missed it, and missed it for ever.

Has this been your case, my reader? Have you once listened, and almost believed? Have you once been near salvation, but missed it hitherto? If so, may the Lord make this poor girl's case a warning voice from the dead to you, lest the devil tempt you to put off decision for Christ till another day, and lead you as he did her, on and on towards eternity, blindfolded, and even on the very brink of that awful eternity lull you still, so that no warning cry of danger reach you or rouse you,—lest God leave you alone, and you wake up and find yourself shut out from Him for ever and for ever.

"My Spirit shall not always strive."

X.

“NOW THEN DO IT.”

“And Abner had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, Ye sought for David in times past to be king over you: Now then do it: for the Lord hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies.”—2 Sam. iii. 17, 18.

“Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold we are thy bone and thy flesh. Also in times past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel. So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord; and they anointed David king over Israel.”—2 Sam. v. 1—3.

DAVID, as many of my readers will doubtless know, is a most beautiful type of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a type of the Lord during His time of present rejection by the world, and therefore I use this Scripture as an illustration,—an illustration at once most simple and most blessed.

David is a lovely type of Christ, both as to His personal worth, His personal beauty, and the majesty of His work. We have the wonderful way in which David disposes of the giant who was the terror of Israel, and yet, though he did that work, the fact that he was not accepted, and that is exactly like Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ did that wondrous work, defeated Satan and destroyed his power,

and men cast Him out. I ask you, Have you taken your place by His side yet? or do you too refuse to acknowledge Him? The moment Christ is persecuted, it is an utter impossibility for you and me to be neutral,—we must either be for or against Him.

In this chapter, Saul was dead, and there was a movement to make David king; but the moment had not arrived yet. There goes out, before the manifested power of David as king, this man Abner, and he had communication with the elders of Israel. He goes out, as the Evangelist goes out, and says, “Ye sought for David in times past, to be king over you, now then do it.”

The Evangelist says, “In times past you sought for Jesus to reign in your hearts, now then do it!” I suppose few, if any, who read these pages, have not known some moment in their history when they thought they would like to know Jesus as their Saviour; but has He ever had His right place in your heart yet? “Never!” you say. Why? I leave you to answer my question.

But if Jesus has never been really known by you yet, I bring you this message from God,—“*Now then do it?*” Now, as you read these lines, bow to Jesus; bow before that blessed One who died and rose again; yield Him your heart; give Him your confidence;

let Him be the One who reigns supreme in your soul's affections, and controls your life.

Abner gives a good reason why David should be their king; and I have a good reason why you should yield your hearts to the blessed Jesus. Abner says, "By the hand of David Israel will be saved from all their enemies." And what shall I say to you of the Lord Jesus? When He is born into the world, God says of Him, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins."

Are you among His people, my reader? If so, you are one of those whom He saves from their sins; if not, you must bear your sins for yourself, and bear the consequences of them for all eternity.

You may have been born and brought up under the sound of the Gospel, but that is not enough; God calls on *you* personally for a decision, and for a decision *now*. Whenever the soul is addressed by God, it is always "*Now*." He always brings a soul to the point.

In the sixteenth chapter of 1 Samuel, we have the *person* of David brought out. "Of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to." There is a type of Christ. If I were to ask a Christian, What about Christ? he would answer as the Bride in the Canticles, "He is *altogether lovely*." He is the One on whom God's heart is set. What is like the moral beauty of

Christ, coming down into this wretched world of sinners to make God known? In Him all fulness dwelt.

And therefore, if I tell you of a Saviour, Who is this Saviour? Son of God, and Son of man, “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” Death had no claim on Him, because He was the absolutely sinless One.

How do I know I am not fit for God? Because Christ was absolutely sinless, and God has taken Him into glory, and I am sinful, and therefore not fit to go there; and therefore, if all the Gospel were contained in a description of what He is, His perfection would be no comfort to me, for it only puts Him further from me.

But what do I get in the 17th chapter of 1 Samuel? There I get David’s work. Jesse sends his son to see how his brethren fared. And the Father sent His Son not merely to see how we fared, but to be our Saviour. He saw how we fared. Under Satan’s power, ruined, wretched, and miserable, and unable to extricate ourselves. Man was at a distance from God, and under the power of a terrible foe too mighty for him to cope with.

Israel was terribly afraid of this giant, who stood and, cried “Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.” None answered this fearful challenge; not one was

found to fight this awful foe. Where was Jonathan that day? Where were the other sons of Jesse who followed Saul to the battle? All dismayed. They could not fight, because they knew it was hopeless!

David goes down alone to the valley of Elah, he fights the giant, and comes off a victor. The giant falls. He uses no armour, he carries no weapons, but a sling and a stone; alone he faces the foe, and kills the one who had been Israel's terror, with his own sword. What does this all mean? What does it point to?

The Philistine disdained David for his youth and apparent weakness. Does not this remind us of what the Spirit of God says, “The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness?” Go and tell a man he is to be saved from death by the blood-shedding and agony of the Son of God; he does not like that, does not understand it. Yet this is the power of God though men deem it foolishness. The power of God is a spectacle of deepest weakness, when Jesus the Son of God went out of this world hanging between two thieves! Betrayed by a false friend, and denied by a true one, and when He could have exercised power not doing it, wearing a crown of thorns, buffeted, scorned, and derided, sent from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod to Pilate again, and from Pilate to a gibbet, and there dying in

solitary agony outside Jerusalem. Every one forsaking Him, even those who loved Him. None to take pity, none to comfort ; alone He hung there ; and when every one else had forsaken Him, God forsook Him too, in those hours of darkness, and that awful cry comes from the darkness, " My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me ? "

Oh, my reader, can you make light of this story ? Hell will be an awful hell to you, as you remember it there, as you think there of what that cross might have been to you, and that you have despised it, made light of it, and that now it is of no more avail to you for ever.

Look at this valley of Elah and the conflict there. It is a picture of the cross. David cuts off the giant's head with his own sword, and the Spirit of God says in Hebrews, of Jesus, that He took a body that " through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Satan had the power of death, and after death is the judgment, and therefore death is an awful thing for an unconverted soul. Satan wields that power of death over you, and you are afraid, for you know well that after death is the judgment.

You must die, because you are man, and Jesus became a man that He might die to give you life. What a blessed Saviour! Will you not give Him your heart just now? Or, will you risk dying with your sins upon you, and the judgment of God before you? Will you risk standing before the great white throne, and listening to the awful catalogue of your sins, as they are read out from the opened books, and this the crowning sin of all that you were *afraid* to confess Christ,—a coward?

You have heard of Christ often. You have listened to God's testimony concerning Him. Now I ask you what are you going to do? Are you going to decide for Him now? to give Him your heart's allegiance now?

Abner says, "You sought for David in times past to be king over you."—and do not you remember a day when sickness came upon you, and you thought of death, and feared to meet God, and then you thought you would like to have Jesus as your Saviour? But the time went by, and you recovered; and the world got its hold on you renewed, and you are unsaved to-day. You have not received Jesus yet. "*Now then do it!*"

Or, I doubt not, many of you who read this paper will remember the time when you were impressed under a gospel preaching; when you almost decided to come to Jesus; almost, but

not quite, and you are undecided to-day. Be undecided no longer. "*Now then do it!*"

Possibly some of you will remember a day when the one you loved best was taken away from you, and in your sorrow you longed to have Jesus as your Friend,—to have Jesus to turn round to. You desired to have Him, but you did not take Him; and to-day your heart is still a stranger to His love, His sympathy; let it be so not another day. "*Now then do it!*"

Be decided to-day; open your heart to-day, to receive the message God sends to you, lest God should leave you alone, leave you to mourn for ever in bitter agony and remorse, your folly and your indecision.

Perhaps you say, "I have often thought of these things, and almost made up my mind many a time." "*Now then do it,*" says Abner to the elders of Israel; and "*Now then do it,*" say I to you. Now then belong to Christ. How long does it take to decide? A moment is enough. Unconverted soul, "*Now then do it.*" Undecided soul, "*Now then do it.*"

Will He have me, do you ask? Try Him. Will He receive me? Put Him to the test. He has shown His desire to have you by His death. He says, "*Whosoever will.*" Are you willing to be saved by Him? That is the only thing needed.

In times past you wanted to be the Lord's. “Now then do it.” In times past you thought you would come to Jesus; “Now then do it.” Decide for Jesus, and decide *now*.

In chapter v., all the tribes come to David, and say, “Behold, we are thy bone, and thy flesh.” They say, We are yours. That is all you have to do. Just simply come to Jesus; trust in Jesus. What a moment it is when you make Jesus Lord of your soul, Lord of your heart,—when you own His authority. There is subjection to Christ; you yield yourself to Him. You say to Him as the children of Benjamin said to David in 1 Chron. xii. 18: “Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse.” Thine are we, Jesus, and on Thy side, Thou Son of God. Is it so with you, my reader? Can you look up to that blessed Saviour, and say, “I am thine, Lord Jesus, Thy love I own, has broken every barrier down”? You have waited long enough, “Now then do it!” You were going to give Him your heart long ago, “Now then do it!” The Lord press this word home on your soul. The moment a sinner comes to Jesus, the Lord says as the first thing, “Thy sins are forgiven thee,” and then the soul gets the knowledge of being united to Christ. We become bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh.

The Lord Jesus died for our sins; but, He

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rose again from the dead, and links with Himself every soul that believes in Him, so that He can say to Mary Magdalene, “Go to my brethren, and say, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”

Christ is the other side of death, and judgment, and the wrath of God, and so is every soul that trusts in Him, for it is united to the risen man in glory by the Holy Ghost sent down, and given to every soul that trusts His name.

What a portion! Accepted in the Beloved, past death and judgment, and linked with the living Lord, and soon to be with Him in glory. Oh, my reader, if you have never bowed to Him yet, “Now then do it,” the Lord says; “Now then do it,” heaven says; “Now then do it,” the evangelist says; “Now then do it,” the church says; “Now then do it,” angels say; “Do not do it,” Satan says. The great adversary says, “Do not do it now; put it off!” Satan whispers in your ear “No one denies that you can only be saved by the blood of Jesus; it is all quite true, but—but—put it off; do not decide now; there is time enough.”

Do not listen to his whisperings, my reader. If you want to escape the damnation of hell, if you want to be the Lord's, if you want to be with Christ in glory, if ever you are going to be Christ's, if ever you want to be in heaven with Him, put off your decision no longer, nay
“NOW THEN DO IT.”

W. T. P. W.

THE OPEN DOOR.

To knock was now unnecessary ; the cottage door stood open ; the visit was expected, and I was welcome. But thus it had not always been. Once that door was closed ; and the knock, though repeated, had failed to evoke a response, and I had moved away in quest of doors and hearts that might be open. Now all was changed ; and taking the open door as an index to an opened heart, I confidently entered the clean little house, and soon found myself seated at the long table which stood in front of the window, and on which there lay a Bible ready for me to use and explain, according to the need of the two who sat beside me, eager to hear the Word of life.

The Spirit of God had been working in their souls,—had created a feeling of insecurity,—had shown that “ all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,”—had produced deep conviction of sin, and a profound desire for mercy. Blessed and all important work—the *sine-quâ-non* of divine life in the soul—the pre-requisite of vital Christianity, without which there cannot possibly be pardon, peace, or glory. “ Except ye repent,” said the Lord Jesus Christ, “ ye shall all likewise perish,”—and this matter of full, honest, thorough self-judgment is the badge, stamp, and token of divine life within.

Let me enforce this truth; let me call your most serious and attentive consideration, dear reader, to this fact, that the knowledge of God pre-supposes judgment of self. Think not that because you may be morally better than your neighbours, you can therefore slip the truth of repentance. They “have sinned,” and so have you! They have “come short of the glory of God,” and so have you! Their hearts are “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,” and so is yours! Be not offended by this classification, nor deem me mistaken in your case. Four words in the third chapter of Romans settle it beyond all controversy—“*There is no difference.*” This is the conclusion of the Spirit of God Himself. Humbling, sweeping, unsparing it is, but fearfully true.

In the sight of man there may be, and certainly there is, a difference, but in that of God there is absolutely none! “For” He adds, “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” (May I refer you to the case of Nicodemus in John. iii.,—the case of Paul in Phil. iii., and 1 Tim. i.,—the case of the prophet Isaiah in his sixth chapter, and that of Job in chap. xl.) To convince of sin is the primary work of the Spirit of God; such conviction leads to repentance; and the best of men by human reckoning must learn and own that

they stand on the same spiritual level as the worst, by the divine. This lesson had been learned by the two inmates of the cottage. They had found that their morality and good character were of no value in the matter of salvation—nay, that their *good works* were only “*splendid sins*” in the sight of a thrice holy God, and the consciousness of this made them long for mercy—sheer sovereign mercy, at His gracious hands.

What a moment for the carrier of good news! “John,” I said, “Is all well at last? Are the clouds departed?” “No sir!” said he. This was evident from the poor sad face of the speaker. He felt his burden of unpardoned sins, and like many others awaited a changed *feeling*. He thought that peace was the result of an inward experience, instead of that of the cross of Christ. A common mistake. Peace was made by the blood of the cross, (Col. i. 20), made there once and for ever to the satisfaction of all the claims of divine righteousness, and is now had and enjoyed by faith, *and not feeling*. “Being justified by *faith* we have peace with God,” (Rom. v. 1).

Albeit, there surely is the *feeling* of inexpressible gratitude as the consequence of deliverance by the finished work of Christ. But it is faith in Christ and not feeling in myself that gives me peace with God

How the soul must be driven from refuge to refuge till it rests on Christ alone! “Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.”

“John,” again I said, “does the Lord except *you*? Does He shut *you* out from that blessed statement? Would He cast *you* out if *you* came to Him?” After a pause of deep meditation John made answer—“No, He would not cast *me* out.” “Then will *you* come to Him? will *you* trust Him now?” Another pause, and then slowly and solemnly, “*I will.*” Enough! Each refuge abandoned, each shelter vacated, Christ alone, according to the authority of His precious word, was trusted, and the longed-for peace enjoyed through the simple act of trusting Him. I turned the open Bible back to Ps. ii., and read, “Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him,” and that verse I marked as the sheet anchor of the faith of this new-born soul. Sweet anchorage! “The wind bloweth where it listeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

This wonderful transition took place in the hearing, and under the observation of the young wife to whom now I turned, and as I looked, I saw the tear of anxiety moisten her eye. And no wonder. To witness a miracle—and such is every true conversion—to see, in the calm presence of God, under the operation of the word and Spirit, a soul “pass from death

unto life," and yet feel that one has no part in such an experience, is enough to make one weep. And she wept. No doubt the thought of the eternal separation that might and would occur, did she remain unconverted, added its own weight at this awfully solemn crisis. But the moment had come for her conversion too. Oh, the grace that binds hearts together in time as well as in eternity. I turned to Rev. iii. 20, a passage which I felt quite free to use in such a case. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me."

"Who speaks these words?" I asked.

"Jesus," she replied.

"Where does He stand?"

"At the door of my heart."

"What is He doing?"

"He is knocking."

"What does He say?"

"If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him."

"Do you hear His voice?"

"Yes."

"Will you open the door of your heart, and make Him welcome?"

"Yes."

"That is, you trust Him alone?"

"Yes."

“Now I gave your husband Psalmii., you shall have a similar passage from Jeremiah xvii. 7; ‘Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord.’ Glorious declaration! Blessedness is the portion of that man who trusteth in the Lord!” And in order to find how far there was intelligence in the word of God, I said to her, “Can you tell me what he has who believes on the Son of God?”

“Everlasting life,” was the answer.

“Then do you believe on the Son of God?”

“Yes.”

“And what have you got?”

“Everlasting life.”

And the tears, and the weeping, and the burden, and the sins all were gone together.

“When last I called, your cottage door was closed, I knocked and knocked again, and wearied of waiting I passed away. Not so did the Lord. He stood and continued knocking at your heart until this day. On the present occasion, when I came, I found the door open; I entered, and was made welcome. And so in His patient love has the Lord at last found the door of your heart open, and has come in to sup with you, and you with Him. What a guest; and how infinitely worthy of a life of complete surrender to Him, after all His deep eternal love to us.”

Reader, would you not know this blessed-

ness? Will you not welcome this patient Saviour, who for long has knocked, in various ways, at your door? The last knock will sound one day; and the retrospect of your obduracy will be the bitterest ingredient in the cup of your endless sorrow.

J. W. S.

—:o:—

HE DIED FOR *ALL*.

I WAS one day visiting a poor woman, who had been bedridden for years, and a great sufferer, but when expressing some little word of sympathy she said, “ Well, I *do* suffer, but I have Christ with *me*; my case is not half so bad as that of a poor old woman I have heard of to-day, living out at M——. She is over 80, and has no one to nurse her, but her infirm husband; she is worn out with pain, and her one cry is, ‘ Oh if I could but die to get release from this agony; but she is without hope, without Christ, and will not let anyone speak to her about her soul.’ ”

It was too late to go such a distance that night, but I could not forget what I had heard. So old, in such pain,—longing to go,—and yet—only a terrible blank beyond.

The next day I ventured to see her: having

crept up the narrow stairs I found the poor creature moaning with pain, vainly seeking a moment's ease.

“Who are you, and what have you got?” she said inquiringly; but when after a little while I was going to read a few verses, she said, “Shut that book, I don't want to hear it, I know all about it; oh, the pain, the agony I'm in.”

And so she could only moan over the misery of her poor diseased body; she would speak of that, and nothing else.

O dear unsaved one, will you not be reconciled *now*, while you have health and strength? He hath made Him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin, and now as though God did beseech by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

The next day the snow lay thick on the ground, and I was busily engaged in preparations for leaving the neighbourhood, but still I felt I must go and see her once more.

I found her just as suffering, and every remark about her soul was only met by the tale of her weary, weary pain. O how helpless I felt then, as she poured out the heart-rending story of all she had gone through; I could only stand by her bedside, and cry to our God, in my utter weakness, that in His grace, He would open those poor blind eyes, and show her Christ,

before it was too late. “*I know* He died for *all*,” she said impatiently.

“But that would be of no avail unless He died *for you*,” I said. “I know He died for me,” she said.

Well, I could only answer “If *you know He died for you*, you must be saved, for surely He did not *die in vain*.”

There was a moment's silence, and then in such an altered voice she suddenly called out, “O, I see it now; He did die for me, yes, for me; I know He died for me.”

The poor hard old face seemed to relent at last, and the tears poured down as she clasped my hand exclaiming, “Oh! I do bless God He sent you to tell me this; I see it all now, He bore *my* sins. He died for me, I know it was for me, bless Him and praise Him for it.”

With full hearts we thanked Him together; she seemed as though she could hardly let me go; but she said at last “Well, good bye, my dear friend; you have been a good friend to me, and I know I shall meet you above.”

I never saw her again; she soon fell asleep; though some of the Lord's dear people visited her, and found her quite happy, resting in the finished work of Christ, knowing that He had died for her. He had done it all. Reader, can you say “He died for me?”

B. B.

DELIVERANCE AND HEALING.

1 Peter ii. 24.

THAT which distinguishes the exercise of a soul that has been brought into the presence of God is a sense of the exceeding evil of sin, and a yearning desire to be freed from it, and from its darkening and enslaving power, rather than the desire of forgiveness, or of escape from the punishment which is felt to be its due. The light of God's word, brought by His Spirit to bear on the heart and conscience, not only reveals the judgment which sin merits, but produces a hatred of sin itself, and a sense of the terribleness of the *state* of one who as a sinner is unfit for the presence of God. Peter learned this, when, at the first miraculous drought of fishes, he became, in measure, conscious who and what the Lord Jesus was, and besought Him to depart from Him because he was a sinful man.

And now in this precious portion of the word, when referring to the blessed fact of our sins having been borne by Christ Himself in His own body on the tree, he speaks, not of forgiveness, but of deliverance and healing—of our being dead to—or rather becoming delivered from sins (God having removed our

transgressions from us) and of our being healed by His bruise. The state of sin, and guilt, and soul disease exchanged for a state of peace, and of holy liberty and spiritual health, resulting in that life unto righteousness which is the earnest desire and purpose of every quickened soul.

The gracious Lord grant that this may be increasingly known and realized by His dear saints.

G. B. M.

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FRAGMENT.

FAITH is the soul's reception of a divine testimony. It is my heart simply assenting to what God says. When He says, I am utterly lost—"This, my son, was *lost* and is found," I believe it. That is faith. When He says, "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world *to save* sinners," I believe it. That is faith. When He says, "He that believeth on the Son *hath everlasting life*," I believe it. That is faith. So then by faith I learn I am *lost*, that Christ *came to save*, and that believing Him I have eternal life. Faith is a very simple thing. There is no question of feeling.

W. T. P. W.

PERSUADED OR LOST.

“And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto his people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I shall heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.”—Acts xxviii. 23-28.

No reflective person could read this chapter without being impressed with the thought of how beautiful and comely is the closing scene of the actual historical life of the apostle Paul, because, though we have his writings after this, yet this is the last bit of narrative of this blessed man.

It is lovely the way the curtain drops on him here. Full of Christ, and pressing Christ on everybody else. Though there was much out-

wardly to depress him, a prisoner bound with a chain, yet he can speak to those about him of a Saviour. He had something to say about Jesus, and God sent people to hear what he had to say.

He persuaded those who came to hear concerning Jesus! Are *you* persuaded yet concerning Jesus, my reader? What an awful thing it is that men have to be persuaded concerning Jesus! What an appalling thing for you that any one should have to persuade you about the Person on whom your eternal destiny hangs! That you are so blind, so indifferent, or so hardened by sin, and led by the devil, that the Holy Ghost has to *persuade* you to escape hell, and to flee to Christ! Who would need persuading to escape from a burning house? And yet men need to be persuaded to flee from the everlasting burnings!

It is an amazing thought where man is, and where the gospel finds him! Born in sin, and at a distance from God, and *liking* the distance, his heart opposed to God. "The carnal mind is enmity against God."

We are on very good terms with ourselves till God opens our eyes, and yet living all our lives strangers to God; perhaps not outwardly opposing Him, but living to do our own wills, to do as we like, and at a distance from God!

It shows what man is, and where man is! At a distance from God, and liking that distance, and I might say, ever increasing that distance!

Have you not fled from God oftentimes, my reader? You know you have! Fled from God, and from His word, and from His testimony, and why? Because you do not know Him.

Cain went out from the presence of God, and his offspring built up three great systems of trying to do without God—commerce, pleasure, and science. Jabal inaugurated commerce; Jubal, pleasure; and Tubal Cain science; and look where you will, the world is divided into these three great streams. Satan uses all three to work on the mind of man, and fill his heart and keep him away from God. He has woven a three-fold cord which is not quickly broken. till God in His mighty grace snaps that cord, breaks the heart bound by it, and awakens a man to see that he is a sinner, and a ruined sinner, and more, a wretched sinner, most probably, for man has to own that with all he gets he is not happy if he has not Christ.

Man goes on with a bad conscience, and that prevents his being happy. You, my reader, if you are without Christ, cannot say you have a good conscience, for if God called you to His bar to-day you would fear to meet Him. You have no peace, no pardon, no know-

ledge of forgiveness; a knowledge of sins you have, and therefore you have a bad conscience.

Jesus is the only ground of peace for the conscience, or rest for the heart; and therefore, Paul persuaded all who came to hear him concerning Jesus; and similarly I would seek to persuade you concerning Jesus, and first to persuade you that you have not got Him!

Do you ask me "How do you know?" I answer, Can you say you have? Does your heart know at this moment eternal life, forgiveness of sins, the knowledge of cleansing and pardon? Do you love to sit at His feet and hear His words? Does your heart enjoy communion with Him? Can you look up into His face, and have free unclouded intercourse with Him?

"Oh, no," you say, "I do not know this." Then it is clear you have not got Him. And you *need* Him. I ask you, Do you want Him?

I rejoice to tell you Jesus wants you. That ascended man in glory, the friend of sinners wants you, wants to bless you, wants you to have the joy of knowing Him, wants to have you on His throne with Him by and bye.

Oh! let me persuade you concerning Jesus. He came down to save sinners. Are you anxious for salvation? Here is blessed news for you, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Be persuaded con-

cerning the object of His mission, and when you are persuaded that you are the object of His mission down here, joy will fill your heart.

There is a curious thought in people's minds oftentimes, even when they see they can do nothing to save themselves. They think it is something that Jesus is *going* to do that will save them, not something He *has* done. But it is a *finished* work the Saviour has accomplished, and that work and that Saviour, the Spirit of God, seeks to put your soul into connection with, that you may know God's salvation.

What are you waiting for? Why do you delay? Shall I tell you? You are waiting for damnation! You are delaying till the storm of eternal judgment overtakes you. Now, the mighty hand of God has stayed the tide of resistless judgment, swept it back while the sweet words of His grace are told out, while men are persuaded to accept salvation! Salvation is pressed on you now, my reader, and there is nothing kept back from you but judgment!

The salvation of God is sent to you, and you are shut up to this, either to receive what God sends or to reject it. Which will you do? If you reject it there may meet you at the next step God's terrible judgment, and can there be

wrath and indignation more terrible than will be poured out on those who have despised God's salvation?

If there be one thing that can sink your soul deeper into hell than another, it is the fact of your having put from you in cold blood, and perhaps with contempt or bitter scorn, God's Son, and God's salvation. Oh, I would persuade you now concerning Jesus, for if you die without Him, you must spend eternity without Him. If you *will not* have Jesus here, you *cannot* have Him there.

Do you say, "If I came what would He do?" He would receive you. "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Cast yourself on that Saviour's grace, and you will get pardon for your sins, salvation, peace, blessing, just where you are, and as you are. He will let you know that He has put your sins away out of God's sight, and He will fill your heart with joy.

But deep though your joy will be, His own will be deeper when He sees you coming to Him. Who was the most glad the day the prodigal came home? The father! It is the father who says, "It is only meet that we should be merry, for I have displayed my heart, my love has turned the fear out of his heart, my house has got a guest to-day it has long wanted, it is meet that we should make merry

and be glad." That is the God that I would persuade you to turn round to. Give Him the joy to-day of receiving you, and get the joy to your own heart likewise.

You have often been touched, my reader, I doubt not, but never persuaded. You have often been moved, but never decided. You have been convicted before, but you are not converted yet. Be persuaded now!

Do you say like king Agrippa? "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. *Almost* will never do. The man who is only *almost* persuaded, is *altogether* lost.

Almost is of no avail. It is no good to say, "Let me perish at the very gates of glory." What is the use of that? You perish still. Why perish outside? Why not pass in to those scenes of joy and gladness? I will tell you why you do not. It is because of want of purpose of soul, want of decision, want of earnestness. Oh, be persuaded! Go in! Taste the joy and the blessedness of the Father's house; join in its music and its merriment!

Paul says, "I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." "I do not want you to be a captive to a Roman emperor," he says, "but I would to God you knew the Saviour as I know Him,—knew your sins forgiven, as I do,

—knew that you had a living, loving Lord up in the glory, and that you were going to spend eternity with Him ! ”

Do you say ? “ I have difficulties.” Difficulties to receive Christ ! Difficulties to have blessing ! There is one difficulty I can tell you of that you will never get over, and that is the difficulty of escaping the judgment of God if once you get under it ! Oh, let not your history, my reader, be summed up in these words, “ Almost persuaded, altogether lost.”

There are some who will not be persuaded, as we read, “ Some believed, and some believed not.” Turn to Luke xvi., where the Spirit of God draws aside the veil and shows us the awful future of a man who would not be persuaded to accept God’s salvation.

Do you say ? “ This is only a figure, or a picture.” I ask you, Do you think the lips of incarnate truth ever spoke language merely to excite admiration or curiosity, because of the drawing of a vivid picture ? Far be the thought ! If Christ, the Son of God, gives a picture of what the condition of the lost sinner is, it is drawn with the hand of inviolable truth. He has told out, with awful, solemn reality, what the pit of hell is. Take care lest that terrible pit engulf you !

Mark the pitifulness, the paucity, the scanti-

ness of this man's prayer, as he says, "Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue;" he who might have had every blessing in this life, if he would only have accepted it, begs now for one drop of water, and his petition is denied.

Look at it, unconverted soul. He does not ask for some chalice, filled to the brim, with the cooling draught. No, only for one drop, on the tip of the finger, and that prayer is not granted!

Do not forget it, my reader; you who never pray on earth, you will pray in hell. Prayers do ascend from the pit of hell, but those prayers are unheeded! They pass unnoticed, and are answered never!

Now, God says, There are streams of living waters flowing, and you may drink of them and thirst no more. Oh, how senseless is the soul to put from him those living streams, and fall into that awful place, where he shall ask for *one drop* of water, and have that prayer denied; for remember this, there is *thirst* in hell, but there is *no water*.

In the end of Luke xvi., you have the future of the lost soul portrayed, and not only the future, but the past and the present. "Son remember." There is the past. "Now—thou art tormented." There is the terrible present. "A great gulf *fixed*." There is the future.

What about the past? Memory brings before the soul, your life on earth, your lost opportunities, gospel preachings despised, or slept under, Christ and God's salvation rejected or neglected. Oh, how bitter your memory will be. Your memory and your sins you will carry into hell. Your conscience and your memory go down with you. "Son, remember." Oh, what that memory will bring back to you! You will remember your thoughts, even your despisings of the love of Christ. As you have listened to the gospel on earth, may be you have often thought the preacher mad, or a fool. In hell you will apply those epithets to yourself.

Look at it again. For the past, *memory*. Memory goading you with its reproaches as to what might have been. For the present, "Now, thou art tormented." What an awful now! And for the future what must you see between yourself, and perhaps some of those nearest and dearest to you, some whom you may have loved the best on earth,—friends, old companions? A great gulf *fixed*. They have a better portion than you for ever, and for time too, for they had Christ in time. Between you and them there is a great gulf fixed eternally, between you and those scenes of joy and merriment, scenes of holy delight, scenes where Christ is everything, and every heart is filled with Him.

Sometimes, I think, those songs of rapturous joy that sound through the arches of heaven, may reach even to the depths of hell, and as you hear borne on the wave of sacred melody that precious name—Jesus, Jesus, Jesus—theme of every tongue, oh, what uncontrollable agony will fill your heart; what remorse; what bitter, bitter anguish as you think that you might have been there, but you would not!

Who will you blame, do you think, in that day? God? No! You will own His righteousness in putting you in hell. Will you blame Satan? No! Satan did his best to persuade you it is true, but you will not blame him then. Will you throw the blame on inconsistent Christians? No! You will blame the only the right person,—*yourself*. I recommend you to blame that person to-day. Blame yourself for your unbelief, and be persuaded to turn right round to Jesus!

Are you unpersuaded still, by the grace and love of the Lord, or by the terrors of His judgment? I leave you then, to your own hard and impenitent heart, and to the impending judgment which will surely reach you; and turn to look at a word from the man in Acts xxvi., who was not almost, but *altogether*, out and out persuaded.

“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." (Rom. viii. 38, 39.)

Jesus died to make me clean, He lives to keep me clean; who shall separate me from Him?

The apostle Paul takes up difficulties here, and he says, Shall these difficulties prevent the love of Christ from coming down and filling your heart with joy? Not at all. In everything we are more than conquerors through Him who loveth us. The love of Christ is the secret of strength, and the comfort of the heart! What will keep me in the presence of all that can touch me? The love of Christ! If I get into trouble for Christ's sake the Lord comes to me; I become the special object of the care of the Lord, if I get into trouble for His sake; I am persuaded that nothing can separate me from His love. Are you persuaded, my reader? This is a blessed persuasion!

Range the whole universe from the highest height to the lowest depth, nothing can separate me from Christ. He is beyond the highest height, and He has gone lower than the deepest depth. Angels do you think of?

He is above them. Life? He lives for me. Death? He has gone through it for me and annulled it! Is this your persuasion, my reader? Are you persuaded concerning Jesus? to yield your heart to Him,—to be His? Not any longer be like the man who was *almost* persuaded, still less be like the man who was *never* persuaded, but be like the man who could say “*I am persuaded*, that nothing shall separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, my Lord.” God grant that this may be your persuasion from this day forward.

W. T. P. W.

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THE JUSTICE OF GOD

IN JUSTIFYING THE UNJUST THROUGH THE
REDEMPTION THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS.

“THERE is not a *just* man upon earth, that *doeth good*, and sinneth not.” (Eccles. vii. 20.) Such are the words uttered by the Spirit of God through Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived, and surely all men do well to take heed to them. Another servant of God, the apostle Paul, some thousand years or so afterwards, corroborated this statement in similar language. “There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all

gone out of the way, they are altogether become unprofitable : there is *none that doeth good, no, not one.*" (Rom. iii. 10—12.)

The all-important question that we find in the book of Job, at once presents itself. If there be not a just man, but "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," "*How then* can man be *justified* with God?" It is a blessed point in a sinner's history when he is brought sincerely and earnestly to ask this question. But thousands, instead of seeking the reply at once in God's Word, deceived by Satan, and their own thoughts, having discovered that they are unfitted for the presence of a holy God, set to work to improve their condition, and justify themselves. The natural thought is, "If I am not just and good, I *must be*;" and they *work*, and *do*, and *strive*, and *try*,—vainly seeking to establish their own righteousness, being ignorant of God's. (Rom. x. 3.) Oh, when will sinners learn that "all their righteousnesses are as filthy rags," (Isaiah lxiv. 6), that whether they trust in their own righteousness, or go on in their wickedness, that both alike will lead them straight to hell?

Beloved reader, should you be one of that large class, who, shunning open wickedness, think that by your morality, honesty, religiousness, and such like, you will obtain the favour of God, pause, I pray you, this moment, and,

in answer to the momentous question, “How then can man be justified with God?” listen to His own blessed reply in the 3rd of Romans, “Being *justified freely* by His grace through the redemption that is in *Christ Jesus*: whom *God* hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood . . . to declare . . . at this time, His righteousness: that He might be *just*, and the *justifier* of him that *believeth in Jesus*.” (Rom. iii. 24—26.)

What precious words of comfort for a poor anxious, burdened sinner, vainly striving by his own efforts to extricate himself from sin and its consequences. “Justified freely by His grace;” justified, that is, *cleared, freed, delivered*, and that *freely* by God Himself, not on the ground of works of righteousness which we have done, (Titus iii. 5), but by *His* grace, His undeserved favour, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Cease, then, self-righteous one, from your own vain efforts to save yourself. “It is *God that justifieth*,” God alone (Rom. viii. 33); you cannot justify yourself,—impossible! “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.” (Jer. xiii. 23).

God has made a gracious provision for your deep need; and has given His own dear Son as a propitiation for all. Redemption is found in Him

alone, whose precious blood was shed on the cross in atonement for sin. All the claims of God, who is infinitely holy, have been perfectly met in the death of His own Beloved. He now as a righteous, holy, and just God, is ready, willing, and waiting to *justify* all who believe. Precious, precious message of grace. "God is *just*, and *the justifier* of him which *believeth in Jesus.*" How very simple; "*believeth*;" reader, dost *thou* believe? You must, if you would be saved, for, "He that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 16.) God has raised Him from the dead to His own right hand in glory, and the message of love and peace comes to you now,—“Through this man is preached unto you *the forgiveness of sins*, and by Him *all that believe are justified from all things*,” &c. (Acts xiii., 38, 39.)

Cease, sinner, cease from your own works, cast your deadly doings down; it is "*God that justifieth*," and there is no God else," saith He, "beside me; a *just God and a Saviour*: there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." (Isa. xlv., 21, 22). "Being *justified by faith*, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v., 1.)

What a wondrous plan! *Justice* has had its course, and *justice* has been more than satisfied. *Justice*, stern justice, which once shut

the sinner out from God, now brings him *to God*. (1 Peter iii. 18.) The just stroke of divine judgment for sin fell upon the Holy and the *Just One* upon the cross of Calvary, and *justice* now stands arrayed on the sinner's behalf to *justify* him from all things the moment he believes. The precious blood of Christ has atoned for sin; justice raised the Sin-bearer to the throne of glory, and *all who believe*, are *justified in Him*. Beloved reader, are you a true believer? Can you take your place among those who can say of Him, "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for *our justification*," (Rom. iv. 25); and, as we get it also in Peter, "For Christ also once suffered for sins, the *Just* for the *unjust*, that he might bring us to God." (1 Peter iii. 18.)

The sinner, justified by faith, becomes a child of God, and is called to walk worthy of Him in that blessed relationship, having no more to say to sin, which brought His Saviour to the cross; and by His works, the fruit of faith, is justified before men. (James ii. 14-26). But should he sin, God has made a gracious provision for this also; the Saviour is his Advocate. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous." (1 John ii. 1.) And how comforting to find that the *justice of God* is still arrayed on his behalf; for, "If we confess our sins, He is

faithful and *just* to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.)

In contrast with the blessed results flowing to the poor sinner, who, ceasing to justify himself, justifies God against himself, and is therefore justified by Him, let us notice in conclusion what He has said about the unjust, who refuse to be justified. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the *unjust* unto the day of judgment to be punished." (1 Pet. i. 9.) The same Lord who justifies the believer, will judge the unbeliever, and punishment, *eternal punishment*, is his portion. (Matt. xxv. 46.) "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 36.) Oh! my reader, to which class do you belong, the just or unjust? The former, justified by God, walking a path which as the shining light, shineth more and more unto the perfect day, await that glorious moment, when the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, when the *resurrection of the just* (Luke xiv. 14) shall take place, and those who are alive and remain shall be changed. (1 Thes. iv. 15-18.) The latter, the unjust, neglecters and rejecters of the grace of God, pass swiftly on in their blindness and sin, to reap the fruits of their folly in eternal misery and despair.

Many speak of the mercy of God, and precious it is to know that He is merciful; but God is not calling upon sinners to trust in His mercy, but something far better even than that,—we are invited to *trust in the justice of God*. Well may the apostle write, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation." (Heb. ii. 3.) My reader, are *you* justified in the risen Christ?

E. H. C.

—:o:—

"NO DIFFERENCE."

"FOR there is *no difference*: for *all* have *sinned*, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans iii. 22-23.)

BE the man rich or poor, learned or illiterate, moral or immoral, refined or unrefined, he has sinned, and also come short of the glory of God. So that there are these two things; not only have you sinned, but, you have come short of the glory of God.

There are moral differences; there is of course a deal of difference morally between a drunkard, and a sober man; there is thus a great difference between Nicodemus in the third chapter of the gospel of John, and the woman of Samaria in the fourth chapter; between the dying thief, and Saul of Tarsus, the pharisee of the pharisees. A wide moral difference between the rich, law-observing ruler, and the woman of the city. But

the one has sinned, and so has the other. Nicodemus has need to be "born again," and so has the woman of Samaria; and there is as much need for Saul of Tarsus to hear the "still small voice," as the dying thief.

People who have as they suppose few sins, often think that they stand a better opportunity of being saved than those who have more sins. Not so; often the reverse is the case. The individual who thinks he has some goodness of his own to fit him for the glory of God, trusts to this, and is *lost*; while one who is aware from his past conduct that he has no goodness, trusts to Jesus, and is saved. The young ruler, with all his religious impressions, and kneeling to the Lord, "went away sorrowful," while the repentant weeping woman of the city went in peace, her sins forgiven. The repentant prodigal is welcomed home, and has the best robe put upon him, and is brought into the Father's house, while the pharisaical elder son "*would not go in.*"

Did you ever think it was only *one sin* that caused Adam and Eve to be shut out of paradise? Sins, not even one, can be allowed where God is. There is no communion between light and darkness. And as well might a drowning man trust to the waves to save him, as a man to his sobriety, honesty, or what he may term his good works, to deliver him.

“*No Difference.*” These words are once more used in the epistle to the Romans, chap. x. verse 12 :—“ For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek ; for the same Lord over *all* is rich unto *all* that *call* upon Him. In the first “no difference,” the door is shut to all, so to speak ; in this the second “no difference,” the door is open to *all*. In the first, you have no righteousness of your own to fit you for God’s presence ; in the second, He provides a righteousness for you. Since the death and resurrection of His Son, He welcomes all comers. He is *rich* unto *all* that call upon Him. Be he who he may, aged or young, whatever the previous life, “ *Whosoever* shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ Just as in the first “no difference” all are involved in one common ruin, so in the second “no difference” *all* shall be saved who call upon the name of the Lord. How many are sincerely calling upon the name of the Lord, who do not *know* that they are saved, and why? Because they do not believe God ; they do not believe that He is as good as He is. This verse of scripture was quoted to a man anxious to be saved, and he replied, “ Why, I have been calling upon the name of the Lord for twenty years, and did not know that I was saved before.”

In the Old Testament, the Lord commanded that when Israel were numbered, every man

was to give a piece of money. “a ransom for his soul” from twenty years old and upward, each man was to give a half-shekel (a shekel is about 2s. 3½d.) The rich were not to give more, and the poor not to give less than half-a-shekel. Here the rich and poor met together ; the rich man might have wanted to have given more, and the poor might have wanted to have given less, but no, both were to give alike, there was “no difference.” This illustrates the truth, that all receive salvation on the same terms, not that you have to give half-a-shekel (perhaps if salvation had to be paid for, many more would get it).—For

“ Jesus paid it *all*—

All that I was due.

So nothing, either great or small,

Remains for me to do.”

What a happy thing it is to be able to say that God is satisfied with what Jesus His beloved Son *has done* for me.

Salvation is put within the reach of all. It is as near as your mouth and your heart, for “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.” (Romans x. 9.)

My reader doubtless believes that the Lord Jesus Christ died for sinners ; let me ask, Have you ever in your life *thanked* Him for dying for you ?

Let none think that they are not good enough to be saved. It is because *none* were good enough, that God sent His Son to die for all, that, through Him, those that believe might be saved.

W. R. C.

—:O:—

WOULD DEATH BE GAIN TO YOU?

“DOES Mrs. H. live here?” “Yes, Miss, I am Mrs. H.”

The speaker glanced at the face of the person who had just opened the door, and answered her question: there was an expression of great peace there she thought, and as she continued, “I hear you are a Christian, is it so?” the quiet and decided reply in the affirmative did not surprise her much. After a little conversation, Mrs. H., at the request of her visitor, related the story of her conversion.

I was brought up by a kind person whom I was accustomed to call Aunt. She took pains to instruct me in the Scriptures, and sent me to a Sunday School, where a dear christian clergyman taught me and many others the way of salvation.

When I was thirteen, a young governess came to stay with us. One day, not quite a week after, she went to hear a sermon which

was preached in the village. Being deeply impressed by it, on her return, she related to us all she could remember. As my Aunt and I listened, we noticed her heave a deep sigh, she rose, but before we had time to ask what ailed her, she sank upon her knees and her head fell upon her breast. We bent over her—she was dead! My Aunt hurriedly told me to fetch the doctor, but I was so frightened that when I arrived at his door I could not utter a word. At last, however, two physicians came. One look at the kneeling figure sufficed—Emma was quite dead. She had died, they said, as she heaved the deep sigh which first startled us.

In the course of time the poor young thing was to be buried, and on the following Sunday, our clergyman begged that all the young women of the village should sit opposite to him, in the gallery, as he wished to speak in his sermon that day of the solemn and sudden death, which had taken place in our midst. The day came, and we took our places as he had desired. The text chosen was, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Phil. i. 21.) Fixing his eyes upon us, he earnestly asked, "*Would death be 'gain' to you?*" Again and again the question was repeated. "Gain!" I knew death would not be that to *me*. "I am not ready," I said within myself, "I am not

saved." How his question rang in my ears! While the only answer my heart could give was "No."

The service was over, and we wended our way home; but how different all was to me now! Everything seemed changed; my happiness had vanished, and in its place there came a deep gloom. I could not speak to any one of the sorrow and anxiety that I felt, so I bore it in silence; but my Aunt wondered at the change she saw in me, and one day she said, "It's no use your fretting yourself ill like this, grieving so for poor Emma; it can't do her any good; and as for you, it's unfitting you for everything." She was, however, ignorant of the real cause of my sorrow.

Some weeks passed slowly by, when one day, a young clergyman called upon my Aunt. "Well," he said, "the death of that young thing should be a lesson to each of us, don't you think so? Like a voice bidding us be ready." Sitting at the further corner of the room, I heard what he said, and though had I tried to speak about my soul at any other time, I should have found it impossible, yet in that moment I forgot everything in the pain that his words caused me. "*I am not ready to die,*" I sobbed. Mr. W. came across the room: kindly and soothingly he told me of that which could fit me perfectly for the presence of God;

of One who did not spare His own life-blood in order to save me—of His perfect love, love too great for me to understand, but in which I could share. He told me God's own message of peace and pardon. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." (Acts xvi. 31.) After this, he used to make me go to his house, that he might read and pray for me.

I knew that I was a sinner ; I dared not even think of meeting a holy God as I was, unwashed, unforgiven ; but God's grace and mercy met me. Peace came at last, as, one day, the kind friend, who had so often tried to lead me to look outside myself, and "unto Jesus," pressed upon me that "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John i. 7.) I believed it. Believed His blood was enough to put away all my sins ; believed on Him who suffered, that I might not ; who atoned for sin, that God might be glorified. 'Tis years since then ; and though alas ! I have often sinned, and grieved the God, who, in love brought me to Himself, I have never lost the peace He then gave me.

Reader, death may come suddenly : Would it be *gain* to you ? You may be young—so was Emma ; yet, she was "cut down as a flower of the grass, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven." Earth may attract you, and hold your heart, but if you put off this

great question, in order to pursue and “gain the whole world,” what *gain* will it be in the end, if you lose your own soul? (Mark viii. 36.) To one tied down to earth by the brilliancy of his riches, and possessions, God said, “Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?” (Luke xii. 20.) Another such, “Clothed in purple, and fine linen,” and who “fared sumptuously every day,” died, and was buried, “and in hell, he lift up his eyes, being in torments,” and cried for mercy, when too late, saying, “I am tormented in this flame.” To him it was said, “Son, remember, that thou in thy lifetime received thy good things; . . . but *now*, . . . thou art tormented.” (Luke xvi. 25.) Was death gain to these? And will *you* follow their example?

Perhaps, as this true story is being read, there may be one, who, like Sarah, truthfully answers, “Death would not be gain to me; I am not ready;” who, looking within, sees “sin,” and rightfully fears its “wages”—“death.” (Rom. vi. 23.) If there be one such, listen! “The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom. vi. 23.) The Son of God has suffered for you, died for you, *just because you are a sinner*. He does not ask you to work; He knows your best efforts are “filthy rags.” He offers a *free gift*—“Eternal

life ;” brings salvation to you, and beseeches you to have it. Now, His work of redemption is over, and at His own right hand, God has crowned His Son with “glory and honour.”

Thus He tells you how satisfied He is with the work of Jesus.

Would you know who they are who *can* say, “Death would be *gain* to me”? They who are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ : such, if “absent from the body,” are “present with the Lord.” To such, He says, “This day shalt thou be *with me* in Paradise.” Is death “gain” to these? They, who know the Lord, be it even faintly, answer, They are “with Christ, which is *far better*.”

They there shall see His face,
His name their brows shall bear,
Where once on earth, in weariness
They carried many a care.

For such there is reserved
A crown of purest light :
And “worthy they,” their Lord declares,
“To walk with me in white.”

S. C. M. A.

THE HAPPY CHOICE.

IN the pages of the March number of "God's Glad Tidings" for 1876, was narrated the solemn account of one who "meant to be a Christian some day," but, alas ! for a mere passing vanity, rejected Christ, rejected eternal life, rejected God's offered mercy, and made "the fatal choice" of the world and its attractions ; until death with his cold icy finger, made her sensible of her folly, and then, "Too late, too late," bursting from her frantic lips, told its own tale of woe, as she passed out of time into an endless eternity.

On the day of its publication, a sorrowful group stood around an open grave in the churchyard of one of the pretty villages of Huntingdonshire. The inscription on the coffin-plate, telling of only twenty summers having passed away, since her birth, made the sorrow more poignant, that one so young, so beautiful, and so beloved, should be severed from those to whom she was so dear, and, were it not that the bright gleams of the resurrection morn gladdened the parents' hearts, sad indeed would have been the prospect. "In sure and certain hope" was no unmeaning word

to them, but it was a ray of holy sunshine amidst the blinding tears of sorrow.

The contrast in her history, to that of the one to whom I have alluded, suggested a few details respecting my short acquaintance with Adah H——, trusting the Lord may own them in causing my reader to make “The Happy Choice” she did, ere it be “too late, too late.”

The sands of 1875 had well nigh run their course, when I first heard of the illness of Adah, and asking the Lord to give me a word from Himself to meet the need of her precious soul, I wended my way across the then bleak and desolate fields, where the plough was breaking up the fallow ground ready for “the principal wheat, the appointed barley, and the rye in their place.” (Isa. xxviii. 25.)

My destination, a small low thatched dwelling, with a neat garden adjoining, and the usual out-buildings of a farm, was soon reached, and I was gladly welcomed by an anxious mother, who conducted me to the chamber, where her suffering daughter, a fair, interesting girl of twenty, lay. The bright tinge upon her cheeks, the penetrating glance, the distressing cough, the wasted frame, all indicated the dreadful nature of the disease that has carried so many to an early grave.

As I approached her side, I said softly, “Well, dear, you are very ill.”

“ Yes,” she replied faintly.

“ And do you think you will get better ? ”

“ Oh, no ! ”

“ And would you like to get better ? ”

“ No.”

“ Well then, are you quite ready to go if it should please the Lord to take you ? ”

She bowed her head, as if assenting.

“ Bless the Lord for that,” I rejoined, “ it is something to know that. Are all your sins forgiven ? ”

She nodded assent.

“ All put away by the precious blood of Jesus ? ”

Again she assented.

“ So that you can now say ‘ I am saved ’ ? ”

To this there was no reply.

“ If death were to put his cold hand upon you at this moment, or the Lord Jesus to come, would you go right up into His own presence for ever ? ”

There was no answer to this query, so I repeated the question, awaiting anxiously the response, and after a short pause, she opened her feeble lips to give me that disheartening reply which so often blights the expectations of the evangelist, “ *I hope so.* ”

“ Ah, dear soul,” I replied, “ that will not do. I do not like that answer, for do you know that is the pillow on which Satan gets so

many souls to rest? Alas, to find out the delusion when it is too late! 'I hope so' in the sense that you have used it, is not found in the word of God, because you have a little doubt about it, haven't you?"

She nodded assent.

"But the word of God says 'He that believeth *hath* everlasting life.' 'These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may *know* that ye have eternal life.' (1 John v. 13.) This is the privilege of the believer the moment he comes to Jesus. But Satan seeks to hinder the soul from grasping this, because it glorifies the Lord Jesus, and proclaims settled peace.

"I may tell you I have not come to alarm or excite you; neither have I come to talk about religion to you; you have heard enough of that. I have come across these fields to-day at God's bidding, to present *Jesus* to you, to tell you He loves you, and that He wants you to be with Himself in glory for ever.

"But first of all I must ask you one question, and I pray you to think over it before you reply, as it is a most important one, and it is this,—Can you put your finger upon a moment in your history from the time you first knew anything, up to this very moment, when you have ever had to do with God about your sins?"

Her bright piercing eyes were rivetted upon me; and the tears came rolling down her cheeks, but no response. Again I repeated the question, and then as the flood-gates gave vent to the tears that came thicker and faster, she uttered three words that I shall never forget, words that lay bare her true condition,—words that came from a heart truly convicted of sin. “No, I CANNOT.”

“No, I cannot.” Only think of this, dear reader. See what a blindfold Satan had put over her eyes, and with what an opiate he had lulled her conscience to sleep, saying, ‘Peace, peace!’ when she had never known the peace God is preaching by Jesus Christ, or the living reality of the second birth, and its peace-giving power.

Well might she have no better answer to give than “I hope so.” How true it is, “There is a way that *seemeth* right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”

“Ah, dear soul,” I exclaimed, “do you see how Satan has been deluding you all these years, and brought you to the very brink of the grave, and almost within the gates of an everlasting hell: because you have never owned your need of Jesus as your Saviour.

“Do you not see that you have never owned yourself a lost sinner, and it is only a lost sinner that needs a loving Saviour, for in

the 19th of Luke, 10th verse, it is written, 'The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.' And blessed be God, a lost sinner and a living Saviour can meet together at this moment.

"Mark, it is not good, moral, upright, or religious; but, *lost*. As Jesus Himself declared, 'I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.'" (Matt. ix. 13.)

The plough of conviction had now done its work. The fallow ground was broken up, and the seed thus scattered had taken root; for she exclaimed, "I see it now, I am a lost sinner, but Jesus is my Saviour."

"And are you quite sure he is *your* Saviour?"

"Oh, yes!"

"And can you now say that you are saved?"

"Oh, yes, Jesus is my Saviour, I am saved."

We wept tears of joy together, and there was joy in heaven at that moment over *one* sinner, whose happy choice was made, made at once, and for ever. Not almost, but altogether persuaded. She had decided for Christ, and being justified by faith, had peace with God. (Rom. v. 1.)

At this juncture a knock at the cottage door announcing some kind enquiries after her, bid fair to interrupt her new-found joy. But so desirous was she of learning more of her now

precious Saviour, that she exclaimed, "I do hope mother will not let them come in, for I have never heard anything like this before."

"I have no doubt they are most kind to you," I replied, "but you need something now for your precious soul to feed upon; you want to hear about Jesus, for He is the Bread of life, and if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever." (John vi. 48-51.)

At her request, we thanked the Lord together for His delivering mercy in opening the eyes of the blind, and bringing life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

I then left her quite happy, and without a doubt in her soul. I visited her several times after to find her "always confident," and to use her own words, "*Longing to be with Jesus.*"

On one occasion I said to her, "Well Adah, if it should please the Lord to raise you up again,—though according to nature there is not a ray of hope,—still nothing is impossible with Him; would it be to go back into the world?" Her firm negative indicated the "good part" she had chosen.

She had done with the world, its vanity and religion; with herself, her hopes and fears. And she had now one object which filled the vision of her soul, and that object was Jesus, "The chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely."

On the 25th of February, she fell asleep, and her happy spirit passed from this world of sin, trial, and suffering, into His own presence for ever.

And now, dear reader, I put the question to you, Can you say that you have ever had to do with God about your sins. If not, you are “condemned already,”—a captive of Satan taken by him at his will, and if you do not break company with him, the place prepared for him and his angels, shall be your portion.

I beseech you then, be like Adah H——; own your lost condition, make “The Happy Choice” just now as you read this. Come as you are to Jesus and *be saved*. Hear His own gracious assurance—“Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.” The most depraved, or moral,—the scoffer hitherto, or the “religiously disposed,” all are welcome, for God makes one sweeping assertion—“There is no difference,” “all have sinned,” all are guilty. (Rom. iii.)

Therefore, “Choose you this day, whom ye will serve,” and may your choice be as one of old, who said, “As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.” (Josh. xxiv. 15.)

T. M.

THE SOUL.

It is sad, very sad, to think how little people think about their soul, which tells the tale of how small a figure it is valued at by them. Some, alas, say that man has no soul,—that he dies just like the horse or cow, and then ceases to exist. With such deluded ones it is useless to reason, therefore, with feelings of pity and sorrow, I must leave them with God, bringing one verse to bear on their conscience, trusting in His abundant mercy, that ere it be too late; they may be led to acknowledge the truth, and repent. Hearken! “Fear not them which kill the body, and *are not able to kill the soul*, but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both body and *soul* in hell.” (Matthew x. 28.)

Others again, who do not wish to make God a liar by denying His record, yet, by their ways evidently shew that they have never been roused up to the inestimable value of the ever-existing soul. Oh, what an overwhelming fact for reflection. My reader *must* exist as long as the eternal God does, either in heavenly glory with Christ, or in the “blackness of darkness” with the devil. (See Matt. xxv. 46.) Is the former to be your happy portion? Then it comforts and cheers your heart to be reminded of it. But if unsaved, no wonder, as

you read these lines, a sadness comes over you ; or it may be, you are already beginning to get impatient, and want to dismiss the thought of the soul, and eternal things, and are about to lay aside this paper ; but friend, GOD SEES YOU, and may say, “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.” (Luke xii. 20.) What then ?

“Oh then—the judgment throne
 Oh then—the last hope gone !
 Then all the woes that dwell
 In an eternal HELL.”

Do, then, I pray you be wise, and let the Saviour's words bring you to *present* concern. “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own *soul*, or what shall a man give in exchange for his *soul* ?” (Mark viii. 36, 37.) Just consider—your soul of more worth than the whole world. Jesus Christ, the faithful and true witness, affirms it. That, by itself ought to throw a man into serious and solemn thought, though it seems to me people never value the immortal soul aright till they learn that nothing less than the awful suffering, death and blood-shedding of the Son of the living God, were necessary to redeem it, “For it is the BLOOD that maketh an atonement for the SOUL,” (Leviticus xvii. 2,) and “without shedding of BLOOD, is no remission.” (Hebrews ix. 22.)

It may be, by the blessing of God that these lines or something else, have brought you to be in soul-trouble; if so, whatever you do, do not delay its salvation. "Now is the accepted time!" Evidently "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh," or the "angel of death" may be hovering round; therefore, let nothing great or small, lead you to put it off. "REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE;" she was no better off than those in Sodom upon whom the lurid flames of fire and brimstone fell. I entreat you, unsaved one do not lay your head upon your pillow, till you have made "your calling and election SURE." Let there be no risk or *hoping* about *that*. God, says what He means, and means what He says, so mark that word "SURE," and send the verse (2 Peter i. 10) to anyone who says it is presumptuous to be sure, in order that they may not be left in uncertainty and danger, but get the "KNOWLEDGE of salvation." (See Luke i. 77.)

Do you say in deep distress, How can I get this assurance? I reply, by putting this question, What gave the Israelite who, in obedience to the word of Jehovah, went to the flock, killed a firstling, and applied its blood to the lintel and two side-posts of his door, *to be assured* that the destroying angel would not come in, and smite his first-born? Because God had said "When I see the BLOOD, I will

pass over, and the plague *shall not* be upon you." (Exodus xii. 13.) The BLOOD was outside for the EYE OF GOD, and secure enough was every Israelite wherever the mysterious token was seen; for again I repeat, God had said, "When I see the BLOOD I will pass over." So now sinners who as guilty and helpless ones, have really trusted in the "precious BLOOD OF CHRIST" may be perfectly certain, without a shadow of a doubt, inasmuch as the Scriptures cannot be broken, that "they HAVE redemption through His BLOOD, the forgiveness of sins." (Col. i. 14.) And further, of such God says, "Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Hebrews x. 17.) Hence they can sing—

"I do believe it, I do believe it,
I am saved thro' the blood of the Lamb
My happy *soul* is free,
For my God has pardoned me
Hallelujah to Jesus' name."

The believer's soul is saved now. (See Peter i. 9.) True, he waits for "the redemption of the *body*," but every moment brings that nearer, as it is written, "Now is our salvation *nearer* than when we believed," this refers to the full salvation of soul and body; the former we have, the latter we wait for, and at any moment the Saviour may come, and "change our vile body, and fashion it like unto His glorious

body" so shall we be "for ever with the Lord."

And now, dear reader, should *your* soul be still unsaved, may God grant that you be led to deep concern as to its eternal destiny, and the immense importance of getting it saved *now*. Do not be like one of old, "almost persuaded."

"Almost" cannot avail;
 "Almost" is but to fail;
 Sad, sad, that bitter wail
 "Almost"—but lost!

Think of the unalloyed blessedness which is offered you in the gospel; think too, of the dread alternative—"body and soul in hell." By the joys of heaven, by the torments of hell, I entreat you, seeing this may be your last appeal, go down upon your knees, and call upon the Lord, "Who is rich unto all who call upon Him, for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

And let those of us who *have been redeemed to God* by the blood of the Lamb, be very careful to walk consistently, "letting our light shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father." Let us not get weary in well doing, but go on in a straight undeviating path of faithfulness to God, and devotedness to Christ, till face to face we see our Saviour, and are like Him, and with Him, for ever, and for ever. The Lord grant this and save the unsaved reader. H. T.

MORNING-GUARD AND NIGHT-WATCH.

A WORD TO SOLDIERS.

“And Pilate willing to content the people,—delivered Jesus, when he had scourged Him, to be crucified. And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Prætorium, and they called together the whole band.” Mark xv. 15, 16.

THE Evangelist speaking of Pilate says, he “delivered Jesus when *he* had scourged Him,” and, as, of course, Pilate was not the executor of this infamous sentence himself, it devolved on his myrmidons, the Roman soldiery, to carry it out. Scourging was a custom almost peculiar to the Romans, and even they rarely scourged except when they crucified. The scourging which our Lord received was a most severe and barbarous infliction, and perhaps the utmost efforts of our imagination will underrate the torture it produced. The Roman scourge was formed of thongs twisted together; and in order to increase the severity of the lash, small cubic pieces of bone were woven into it; such was the implement with which the soldiery inflicted their sanguinary flagellation. That these unfortunate men were brutal and ignorant, by profession and custom, we may well surmise, for the sequel in the following verses gives us an insight into their hearts, in the treatment our blessed Lord sustained at their hands. “And they clothed

him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head. And began to salute him, "Hail! King of the Jews! And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him. And when *they had mocked him*, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him."

The mockery of a royal robe, crown, and sceptre, with attitude of feigned homage, follow the scourging, and these certainly were *not* part of Pilate's sentence. From the cruel and satanic depths of their own hearts the soldiers devised these insults, followed by taunts, spitting and buffeting. Yet for the sake of wretched, worthless, and brutal human nature, the Son of God endured "this contradiction of sinners." Perhaps, my unconverted reader, you are one who can truthfully plead, that you possess a humane disposition, and sympathetic heart; and would shrink with horror and aversion from such wanton insult to so harmless and innocent a Being, as these soldiers knew the "King of the Jews" to be. Possibly! yet the word of God tells us "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jer. xvii. 9). There are many who would shrink from open cruelty to a victim; yet in their hearts are at enmity against

God, and the holy name of Jesus is often on their lips mingled with curses and imprecations; while those servants of His who endeavour to honour Him in their lives, become the objects of their bitterest persecution and hatred. I have heard of dear godly men in the ranks of our Army, who, when they are seen to bend the knee in prayer, instantly become the butt of their company; and oaths and coarse laughter, frequently accompanied by a shower of belts, boots, and other missiles are hurled in derision at the kneeling ones.

Now what is this but a repetition on a fainter scale, (and perhaps more in accordance with circumstances and modern manners), of the scene of mockery we have just been considering in Pilate's Prætorium? It is *still* quite possible to deride the Redeemer in the person of His humblest follower. Ah, poor sinner! when you come "to consider your ways," and look into your heart, do not you see that it is at best but a reflection of the dark natures of the soldiery of that awful period. But, "COME NOW, and let us reason *together*, saith the LORD: *though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*" (Isa. i. 18). Perhaps you ask "How can this wondrous change be accomplished?" By the precious cleansing life-blood of the Son of God,

“Who came to minister, and to give his LIFE a ransom for many,” (Mark x. 15), for “*the blood is the life :*” and, “without shedding of blood is no remission.” (Heb. ix. 22). “*It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul !*” (Lev. xvii. 11.)

Let us pass from the Prætorium to Calvary, and gaze upon that spectacle which transpired, when on the cross Jesus made atonement to a holy God *for us*, and took the sinner’s place, to endure *in our stead*, the righteous wrath of an offended God. See the soldiers ! some drive the nails into His sacred hands and feet, from whence flows that blood which could wash their souls whiter than snow. Unhappy men ! the blood of Jesus on their hands and garments, while they were unconscious of its priceless value, and eternal efficacy to cleanse from all sin ! Next greedy of what personal advantage they could reap in this horrid work of murder, they seize His garments, and make shares of them ; till, struck by the woven fineness of His seamless vest they gamble for a prize, to touch but the hem of which, would have brought healing to a believing sufferer. Then, “Sitting down they keep *guard* over him there.” (Matt. xxvii. 36. New translation).

But above the diabolical spirit which pervaded this hour, when the power of the prince of darkness reigned paramount, the voice of the

crucified Christ rises in accents of divine appeal,
“*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do !*”

Thus was His blood poured out, sprinkled, spilt,—and what is spilt we know can never be taken up again:—that which He paid to God for *our ransom*, *He never took back*. If He had taken His blood into the tomb, there would be now no cleansing fountain to wash us clean: redemption would not have been complete, if *the price* had not been paid in *blood*.

Dear soldier in the weary campaign of life! *you* can be washed in that fountain and healed by those wounds! Lift up your eyes like the dying malefactor to that awful cross, and its expiring victim, and know of a surety, that the blood which flowed from His pierced brow, His nail-bound hands, and that side riven by a soldier’s spear, is *still* of full efficacy to blot out *your* sins for ever; and give you a divine ground of acceptance with God: for Jesus has now entered into the holiest, “*having made peace by the blood of his cross.*” He is not dead, He is risen! No longer is He in the tomb guarded by Roman sentinels; for, to manifest full proof of His resurrection, the angel of the LORD descended and rolled away the stone, at whose presence the keepers shook, and became as dead men (Matt. xxviii).

In the *morning* they scourged and crucified

Him, and *at night* they sat down to watch His tomb! I have sometimes wondered were these men who trembled and fainted in a death swoon, some of that band, who two days before set at naught and mocked the Lord Jesus. As superstitious Romans,—and the Romans were *very* superstitious,—what terror must have filled their souls when that radiant angel from the host of heaven rolled back the stone and sat on it. But, dear reader! in spite of this divine miracle, we find the soldiers, when their fears had passed away, taking a bribe from the chief priests to say, that while they *slept*, His disciples had stolen the Body. It was death to a Roman to sleep at his post; even amongst the Jews it entailed a severe penalty, for we read of Herod commanding the keepers to be put to death when the angel of the LORD delivered Peter out of prison. (Acts xii. 19). Supposing they had been overpowered with drowsiness, profound indeed must that sleep have been, which would render the *night-watch* so insensible, as to be unconscious of the breaking of the sealed stone, and the rolling of it away, for we are told it was a “*great stone*.” Alas! there are many in the present day who like these sentinels have had solemn warnings of the evil and soul-deluding course they are pursuing, yet still harden their hearts, until, perhaps when really sleeping in the drowsy lull of sin, they will be

met face to face by the terrible angel of death, and for *them* there will be no escape. The cross and tomb of Jesus may have been a subject of life-long mockery, and in an hour when they are not aware, they will fall into the power of the Prince of darkness.

I remember hearing an incident which occurred to my father when a young man, and officer in a cavalry regiment. He was returning one Lord's-day morning from guard at the Castle ; the charger on which he rode was high-bred and restive ; something on the route startled it, and it became unmanageable, finally rushing impetuously down several streets, until suddenly turning a corner, it was confronted by a large city church. The doorway was high and vaulted, and stood open, as it was the hour for service ; the fiery animal probably mistaking it for a barrack gateway, darted in, still carrying its rider in his saddle. The surprise and shock experienced by the congregation may be imagined, at seeing a horse covered with foam, and a man in helmet, uniform, and sword equipments in their midst ; but the still and unusual appearance of the place completely quieted the horse ; and my father described his feelings as those of the deepest shame and distress, when he dismounted in the aisle, and endeavoured to apologize for what he had neither foreseen, nor been able to prevent, for he feared the assembly

might imagine that he had purposely ridden in, to mock the preacher and play a wild soldier's prank. Although he was then an unconverted man he had much respect for the Word of God and all godly persons.

This little incident seems to me a faint picture of what might at any moment happen to those, who in the morning of life give a loose rein to that fiery steed *sin*: urged on by passion, in an unguarded moment it may master many, who now think they keep it in with strong hand and decent bridle, and where it will lead them they can never surmise, until they find themselves unexpectedly, (not face to face with a *human preacher* of heavenly glad tidings), but in the awful presence of Him who is Himself, the Living Word, "the Word made flesh!" that Saviour whom they set at naught in the careless bye-past of their lives.

One word more ere parting. Let me ask you to look on another, and very different picture, in which that young officer of whom I have been speaking rises to memory. A man in the prime of life, lies pale and pain-worn on a sick couch; a disease so subtle and critical that the physicians cannot specify its seat or duration, has been for three years undermining a constitution naturally energetic and robust; but the sufferer has cast his burden of sin and pain at the foot of the cross, and when the death-

angel comes to release him, *peace*, not shame will be his portion. I stood one night at his bedside—child-like, to receive his good-night kiss; for I was then but a child. He was winding his watch, and I had to wait until he finished, and placed it under his pillow. How well I recollect the circumstance! But *time* was over with him, and he never needed to refer to that watch again to know the hour. I passed from his room, and in the morning awoke fatherless. Two hours after that last “good-night,” *his soul was required of him*. Rupture of the chief blood vessel of the heart, had suddenly and unexpectedly taken place. He became unconscious, and in less than half an hour had moaned his life away. Thank God! I believe only his human life!

“Brief life is *here* our portion,
Brief sorrow, short-lived care;
The life that knows no ending,
The tearless life is *there*!”

Dear reader! may your last *night-watch* find you reconciled to God; and washed in the blood of Jesus, resting in that divine Substitute on whom, “THE LORD *hath laid the iniquity of us ALL*!”

R. B. K.

A WARNING, AND THE WAY OF ESCAPE.

MY dear reader, in the consciousness that you *must* meet God, and perhaps sooner than you or I think, allow me to ask you a solemn, plain, pointed question. Are you saved? Suppose you had to meet God this moment, while you are reading this, would you meet Him as a *saint*, or as a *sinner*? Washed in the blood of Christ, or still in your sins?

Now face this question, put it straight to your heart, and have it settled with God now, lest you die unsaved; and should you do so “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” (Heb. x. 31.)

“Oh, that you were wise, that you understood this, that you would consider your latter *end*,” for as surely as you are alive, and reading this paper, if you die without being saved, mark,—I do not say reformed, but saved—many men reform themselves, and turn over their *new leaves* as they call it; but it is not *reformation* God wants, not *new leaves*, but a *new book*, for “Ye must be born again,” (John iii. 7)—I repeat, if you die without being saved, so surely will you spend eternity in the lake of fire.

Oh, my friend, do take this plain and pointed

warning given in love to your soul. If without Christ, no matter what else you may be, *moral* or *immoral*, *religious* or *profane*, you are on the wrong road, the road that leads to hell, with your back towards God, and your face towards the pit, each breath hurrying you on to it; a little while longer, and all will be over for ever.

Oh! sinner, sinner, stop and think. What about the end when it does come? What will you do with the broken law? What will you say to an offended God? How will you meet the One who died to save you? These are solemn questions. I know you do not mean to be in hell, neither did any who are now in it, reaping the bitter fruit of their sins, but they are there. Some one has said "Procrastination is the thief of time;" but ah, procrastination is the thief of souls. Take care you do not lose your soul through it. You are putting repentance off, like Felix, to some convenient season which may never come. You are putting it off, and may meet God sooner than you were bargaining for.

You will not be awakened now. You do not and will not feel your need of a Saviour now, until you find yourself in hell in torments, like the rich man in Luke xvi., and then you will feel you need a Saviour, but it is *too late*. Oh, could you but hear the bitter wail of the lost soul, its hopeless despairing cry,—"The harvest is

past, the summer is ended, and I am NOT SAVED, I have let the golden opportunities given me all slip past, and now here I am, DAMNED. Fool that I was, to waste my life over earth's trifles, and let heaven's realities slip through my fingers. Oh, that I had one more chance; but no, I am *lost, lost*, ETERNALLY LOST."

"Ah," said one to me one day when pressing upon him the consequences of dying in his sins, "you never saw any one that has come back to tell us there was such a place."

"No," said I, "I'll give the devil more credit than that, for I am sure he is not going to hunt a man like a bloodhound for twenty, forty, sixty, or more years to get his soul to hell, and then when he has succeeded, let him out again. Never. And what is more, God has to say to the matter, and if a man will not have CHRIST and GLORY, then he chooses the devil and hell. And God has fixed a great gulf, so that there is no passing from one place to the other. Hell is an awful reality—an eternal fixture; and there it stands, in spite of all man's unbelief.

Oh! the love of God thus to come after you to save you from such a doom, and to make such a way of escape for you. How gracious to speak to you so often, and in such various ways to bring you to Himself. Oh, how He

loves; truly "God is love," not willing that any should perish.

Do you want an expression of His love? He gave His Son to die for sinners. That is your name—"Sinner." When there was nothing about you but your sins, He gave Jesus to die for you. "God commendeth his love towards us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 8.) And just listen to what He says in 1 John iv. 10;—"Herein is love, *not that we loved* God, but that *he loved* us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Oh! what love, the *offended* One coming after the offender with forgiveness, and pleading with such to be reconciled—saved. Will you spurn such love as that? Yea, can you turn your back upon such a God as that? Could you have a greater proof of His love to you than He has given? Oh, fall upon your knees at once, and own yourself LOST, and trust that heart of love that has so expressed itself to you. And if you refuse it, what do you deserve? What you will assuredly get. The lake of fire.

Once more, I beseech you for your precious soul's sake, think of the end of this your Christless course. The end will come. And then what a scene, should you have a death-bed. The breathing becomes difficult; the

cold sweat stands on your brow; the last struggle comes. A mighty effort as if to keep off some unseen enemy; the hands drop; the eye is fixed, and the weeping, heart-broken friends have witnessed the awful death of a **CHRIST REJECTER**. Then comes the Christless shroud; the Christless funeral. As they follow your body to the grave, they sorrow as those who have **NO HOPE**: then broken-hearted they return, leaving your poor body till the judgment-day, when body and soul shall be re-united to appear before the great white throne, be judged for your works, and pass away for ever into the lake of fire. Do you say, I am unkind, and harsh in speaking thus? Do not think so. It is because I do not want you eternally lost that I thus speak so plainly, in hope that the Spirit of God may awaken you, e'er it be too late.

But perhaps you are a seeker after this salvation, longing to know your sins forgiven, willing to listen to everything anyone can tell you, if only they can enable you to say *I am saved*. The gospel in one sense, is not new to you; you have heard it often, know all about it, but cannot say you are saved. When asked, How is it you are not saved? You say, "Well, I really cannot tell you, but there's a something I cannot seem to get past."

Do you not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?

“ I do, indeed, but I cannot feel I am saved. I do not feel I have undergone this great change ; this new birth.”

Ah ! yes, I see, that is the secret. You want to FEEL saved. Now God never says *feel saved*. Just look now how Jesus puts it 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 into life.”

The first thing is HEARETH. Have you heard the word ?

“ Yes, I have.”

“ And BELIEVETH on Him than sent me.” Now do you believe the Father sent His Son for you ?

“ Yes, I do really.”

Well, you see there is no feeling there. It is *heareth*, *believeth*, and what next ?

Hath, not *hopes to have*, but “ HATH everlasting life.”

The person that has *heard*, and *believed*, *has* life, and *shall not* come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life.

You see the work is all finished. Jesus has done it all, long ago. Now it is not your works, but your faith. Just be simple, and trust Christ. The moment you believe in Him, blessing is yours.

W. E.

A LAST WARNING ; OR, "JUST IN TIME."

"Just in time," I exclaimed, as I stood with a friend on the pier at—— watching the departure of the large passenger steamer 'E. O.' My exclamation was called forth by seeing a gentleman come rapidly down the pier, elbow his way energetically through the crowd of bystanders, and, though the gangways had been already removed and the ship was in motion, throw hatbox and small portmanteau first, and then spring lightly from the pier, and land safely on the deck of the vessel.

"He was indeed only just in time, how narrowly he escaped being too late," answered my friend ; "I admire his courage and determination to make a desperate effort to gain the vessel while there was still even a hope. But what a risk he ran ! It reminds me forcibly of an incident that occurred not long ago to one whom I knew well, and whose description of it made a very forcible impression on my memory, it seemed to me such an instance of the patience and longsuffering grace of our God, of His unwillingness that any should perish, and of the warning cries that He sends out."

"Tell me," I said, and he gave me the following short account, using, he said, as nearly as he could remember them, his friend's own words.

"A little time back I was spending the afternoon of the Lord's Day in distributing Gospel books and tracts among a number of miners in the county of——. It was a lovely summer's day, and the men were gathered in groups here and there, either sauntering slowly along, or sitting under the trees talking together and enjoying the pure air and the sunlight. The sunlight seemed a joy in itself to them, and the fresh air, after working all the week through, in the darkness and unwholesome atmosphere of the mine. I was well known among them and received many a hearty 'Good day,' or 'God bless you,' as I passed in and out among them, now sitting down to read for a time with some, now speaking a few words as to their soul's salvation with others, as I gave them the little silent messengers which all told the same tale, though by different pens and in different ways, of the Saviour's love,—the old, old story, so wonderful, yet so divinely true, the story of that Saviour's Cross of shame, His death to win life for guilty ruined man.

"I had given away nearly all the large package of books I had brought out with me, and was returning slowly to my home ; I had

almost reached it, indeed I was crossing the last field that separated me from my own garden gate, when I met two young miners coming slowly towards me. I stopped as we were about to pass each other, and selecting two little books from the few that remained in my hand, I held out one to each and said :

“ ‘ Will you accept and read this ? ’ ”

“ Each took the book I held out and thanked me, and one, a fine, strong, healthy, and handsome young man of about twenty-five or twenty-six, stood still and read out the title-page of his, ‘ Just in time. ’ ”

“ A deep feeling of solemnity, amounting even to awe, crept over my soul, and looking up into his frank, open countenance, I said :

“ ‘ Yes, my friend, and God grant that you may be just in time for salvation, just in time for heaven. ’ Again I repeated it, ‘ God grant that *you* may be just in time. ’ ”

“ He was a stranger to me, and I could not account for my sudden and deep interest in him. We had met for the first time that afternoon, and to look at him you would have said he had long years of life and health before him. ”

“ He did not sneer or scoff at my words, though he seemed surprised at a stranger thus so solemnly accosting him. ‘ Thank you, ’ he said quite earnestly, and we each passed on

our way, I going home to ask the Lord of the harvest for His own blessing on the seed sown by the wayside, that He would not allow it to be devoured by the fowls of the air, so ready to snatch it away. Even as I prayed this young man's face came before me again and again, till I cried ' Bless him, Lord ; save him.' Little I thought how soon, and under what circumstances, we should meet again.

" On the following Tuesday night, only two days later, I had just retired to my room for the night, and was about to extinguish my light, when a loud knocking at the street door made me throw up my window to see what was the matter.

" ' Who is there ? ' I asked, seeing a young man standing at the door.

" ' Are you Mr.—— ? ' was the answer.

" ' Yes. ' "

" ' Will you come at once and see a young man in E—— Street ; he is dying, and wants you. ' "

" ' Have you not made a mistake ? I know no one in E—— Street. ' "

" ' No, sir, are you not the gentleman who gave a young man a book on Sunday afternoon called ' Just in time ' ? "

" ' Yes, I am ; what of it ? ' "

" ' Please come at once, ' he said, ' and I will tell you going along. ' "

"Hastily I dressed and went out into the summer's night, guided by my companion. On our way towards E—— Street he told me that his mate had gone down the shaft that afternoon as usual, and had jumped out of the bucket ere it reached the bottom ; he had done it dozens of times before and feared no danger, but this time, as he jumped, his foot slipped. The descent of the bucket closed an iron trap door, thus making a firm foundation for the vessel to rest upon. Owing to his foot slipping he was a moment too late to get clear of the iron door, and was caught by its closing and crushed between it and the side of the shaft. His breast bones were broken in, and he was lying there, his friend said, in terrible agony, unable to speak, only making a gurgling sound if he attempted it, and just gasping for breath, while life seemed ebbing fast away.

"By the time the young man had finished his story, adding many details which I need not relate to you now, we reached the cottage, and I entered. What a scene met my gaze ! There lay the fine strong man, whom I had seen only two days before in the full vigour of health and youth, now absolutely helpless. The pallor of his face was ghastly, his eyes were almost starting in their sockets, feebly he gasped for breath, and over him hung his young wife, the wife of but one short week,

with lips and cheeks almost as colourless as his own, in speechless, tearless agony.

"He looked fixedly at me as I entered and tried to speak; it was useless, no word would come.

" 'Shal I read with you and pray for you?' I said.

"He made a low hissing sound, the only approach to 'Yes' he could make.

"I read to him that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life;' and I spoke to him of the love of God in desiring his salvation; of the efficacy of the blood of Christ to save him; I told him he was lost and ruined by nature, but that Jesus came to seek and to save the lost—that Jesus had been seeking him, wanted him, that having done the work by which sin could be put away out of God's sight, he could now bring the sinner right into God's presence. As simply as I could, I besought Him to take his place as a sinner and trust Jesus as a Saviour, and then I knelt down and besought the God of all grace to give him faith now to lay hold of Christ ere it were too late, to give him the knowledge of the forgiveness of all his sins through that precious blood which cleanseth from all sin.

"Even as I prayed, one after another of his

mates came crowding into the little room, all full of rough sympathy, and many a coat sleeve was brushed across the eyes of brave men to hide the tears that would rise unbidden at the sight of the strong man's agony, and the young wife's speechless woe.

"The scene was too much for me, and for a few moments I went outside into the open air, lest I should break down entirely, for rarely, if ever, had I seen a sight so pitiful.

"I had been but a few minutes out of the room when my name was called hurriedly, and I returned to the sick man's side. As I entered the room his eyes rested on me entreatingly, with a look at once despairing and beseeching. Again I said, 'Shall I read and pray,' and again came the painful effort on his part to speak, and then the low hissing sound of assent. I read to him this time the story of the father and the prodigal (Luke xv.), and then I also read to him the prayers of the Pharisee and the publican, and repeated this one verse: 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.' And while strong men bowed and wept, I cried to God once more, to the living God, to save his soul now at the eleventh hour, and to give him the knowledge of pardon and peace and salvation through the blood of the Lamb.

"As I finished, his face changed. The damp

of death and the pallor of the grave were upon it, but hope lighted it up, despair had fled. He signed for a drink, and his wife held the glass of water to his lips while she raised his head gently to enable him to take it. He drank a little, and then, to the amazement of all, he who had been unable to utter a sound beyond the low hissing noise so painful to listen to, said out in a clear painless voice, and with eyes lifted up as though he saw the one to whom he was speaking.

“ ‘Just in time! God be merciful to *me* a sinner, for *Jesus Christ's* sake, Amen!’ ”

He had scarcely uttered the last word when his head fell back on the pillow, a little shivering sigh escaped him, and we were in the presence of the dead.

“ Never shall I forget the scene ; to many a one present it was a warning word from the very gates of death, the brink of eternity, and God used it for blessing.”

Reader, will not you take warning by it, lest for you not, ‘ Just in time,’ but ‘ Too late,’ be the terrible words that record your fate ?

X.

THE TWO INVITATIONS.

Read Proverbs viii. ix.

THE eighth chapter of Proverbs gives us His person, the ninth His work, the eighth what He is, the ninth what He has done. You may ask, "Who do you mean?" I ask you in return, Who do you think I mean? of whom could the words be written, or spoken, that we find in Prov : viii. save of One, who though He was rich yet for your sakes became poor, Him of whom the apostle also says, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ"? Yes, my reader, it is Jesus, Jesus! We get the person of the Lord Jesus first then, in these chapters, His beauty; He speaks in a way that ravishes the heart that knows who, and what He is, and then when He has unfolded to us what He is, He tells us what He has done, and that is the Gospel.

If I bring you God's Gospel, I bring you a person and a work, a person for the heart, and a work for the conscience. We have both a heart and a conscience, and, God be thanked, He has given us what meets the needs of both. There is nothing in the world that fills or satisfies the heart, but when Christ is known you have everything, and will set your Amen to

this 11th verse "Wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it." Christian, what do you say, will you not put your Amen to that? "All things that may be *desired*," not *attained* even, but *desired*. Let your heart go out east, west, north, south, in all its vastness of desire. All you can desire is not to be compared with what I have! "And what have you?" do you ask. I have *Christ*, and I wish you had, for "*Incomparable*" is the word when we speak of Him!

There are two words that mark the world and the worldling, one we have in the end of the eighth chapter, and the other in the end of the ninth. The one is *death*, the other is *hell*. That is the end of the world and the worldling. Do you love the world? You will get *death*. Are you going to be the world's guest? (the foolish woman is the world). Her guests are in the depths of hell!

I find two spread a feast, two have guests, and you are invited to both feasts; I can only say the one who accepts the invitation of the foolish woman is, like her, a fool. "Her guests are in the depths of hell." There is the end of the world! What a solemn thing then is it to be of the world! Would you not rather belong to the Lord Jesus? Would you not rather accept His invitation? Listen to His words

THE TWO INVITATIONS.

again. His voice is heard. It is the voice of the risen Son of God that speaks; wisdom enthroned at God's right hand. "Unto you, oh men I call; and my voice is to the sons of man." It is the voice of Jesus calling you. The Gospel comes to you, not from the feeble lips or pen of an evangelist, but as the voice of the living Lord Jesus at the right hand of God, speaking straight down from heaven to you.

"Oh! ye simple, understand wisdom." A simple person is unconscious of the state he is in, but the Lord knows your state. Does any one know it like Jesus? None! You have never been awakened to it, you have never trembled at judgment to come, never recoiled from the depths of an eternal hell, but God knows your state, God knows your sin, God knows your danger. From the very heights of glory there comes down the message again to you, "Oh! ye simple, understand wisdom." "Do not slight me," He says. "*Do* understand." What does He want? Your blessing! He wants *you*, not yours, but you. And why does He want you? Because of His love!

What is the prize the Saviour takes back to the glory with Him? A poor guilty sinner, whom He has snatched from the jaws of hell. Grace brought Him down, and when He goes back, what is His prize? A sinner! Where

is the illustration, you ask? Look at the thief on the cross.

Christ came to refute the devil's lie, that God did not love us. "I will go down myself," He says. Does that look as if He had no interest in us? He came down and became a man, and died that He might take such as you and I to be in the same place as Himself.

Do you believe it? If you do, you will bow down at His feet in adoring wonder, and say, "What love! and how I have slighted it!"

"Hear, for *I* will speak." He loves to gain the sinner's ear, because if He can get your ear He will get your heart next and your conscience. Will you not listen to His voice? Hearken to what He has to give. "Riches and honour are with me, yea durable riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver." The Lord knows His own worth, knows nought but Himself can meet your case. He knows what will be the effect if you get Him. "Riches and honour" are with Him. What honour will it be to make your bed in hell? Where will your riches be then?

When death comes, what power can help? what strength stay? You are dragged with resistless force from this scene, friends cannot help you, physicians cannot keep you back from the cold grasp of death, and *after* death the

judgment. You have been the world's guest, and you go to the place of the world's guests. "Her guests are in the depths of hell." Who would be the world's guest?

"Durable riches" are with Christ. Durable, *i.e.* they cannot fade away. You have struggle to fill your treasures and have never made it out. "I will *fill* their treasures," He says, *i.e.* there shall be no room even for more. Oh! who would not have to do with Jesus?

Then He unfolds what He is. Of old He was the delight of God, and would not you like to have fellowship with God? What is that, do you ask? Why, to think with God about Christ. God's great thought is not merely to meet you in your need, but He brings you into the circle of His own joys, of His own delights. What a blessed thing to be brought into the circle of the joys of the Father's house, to have fellowship with God about His Son!

"My delights were with the sons of men." Not merely was He sent by the Father, but from all eternity He had His eye upon us and His heart toward us, and therefore He comes into this scene in lowliness and grace and becomes a man. You would have thought if there were anything He would shrink from becoming, it would have been a *man*, for no creature has ever so dishonoured God as man from the very beginning, commencing with the

sin of Adam, and ending with the cold-blooded murder of the Lord Jesus Christ. Man would not plume himself as he does if he remembered his history, the progeny of an out-cast thief. The first man was a thief, and the next man was a murderer! None has so dishonoured God as man, and yet, marvel of marvels, the Lord Jesus becomes a man and was on this earth, that He might manifest what God is to man, and that He might manifest too, what man in dependence in God is.

“Hearken unto me, oh ye children . . . hear instruction and be wise.” Mark the graciousness of the call. If you have gone on without Jesus till now, an unsaved sinner, “hear instruction and be wise;” do not be a fool a moment longer. Practically an unsaved soul is a fool! A sinner on his road to hell, a moment more and he may drop into it, and God offering him salvation and he refusing it. Is not that the height of folly?

Do you say, “I hope to have long life”? Yes, but will you get it? You may not live through this night. This very night you may pass into God’s presence with all your sins on your head, and with this added one, that the very last words on which your eyes rested, were words of entreaty to you to listen to His voice, and you refused the entreaty. You did not care to know Christ, you did not want His

word. Oh ! man, oh ! woman, how terrible ! In eternity, and no Christ, no Saviour !

“ Whoso findeth me, findeth *life*, and shall obtain *favour* of the Lord.” It is a great thing when a man finds life. The world’s guests meet with death and damnation hereafter, but wisdom’s guests find *life* and God’s *favour*. God can say to the sinner who trusts Jesus, “ Blessed, happy soul, you stand in the favour of God.” Let Satan charge you as he will, “ Stop,” says God, “ he trusts my Son.”

“ But he has been such a guilty man.” “ My Son *died* for him, his guilt is gone.” The moment you trust in Jesus, God takes your side: your eye is turned from yourself to Christ, you find Jesus, and finding Him, have found Life. How beautiful to be able to say like Andrew, “ We have found the Messiah.”

The perishing sinner says, “ I have found a Saviour,” and the Saviour says, “ Rejoice with me for I have found my sheep which was lost.” Heaven thrills with melody at the sight of Jesus and the sinner meeting.

It is finding *Jesus*, that is *life*, not “ finding peace,” because the devil is as good a manufacturer of peace as possible, but he never helped any one yet to Christ. He will help people to peace through their feelings, or through their works, but never will he help them to find Christ, and you must have Christ, and

life, or you must exist in the lake of fire as long as God lasts! This is God's truth, and yet you do not care about your soul! Oh, be wise, be wise!

“What has He done for me?” do you ask. “Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars.” What are seven pillars? Seven is spiritual completeness. It is a finished work; the house is built. Christ prepares the place for us by stepping from earth to heaven, and now, all is ready. He has spread a feast, a feast suited to God, worthy of God, and now the word has gone out “all things are ready.” All God's requirements are answered by the Lord Jesus Christ, the blood of atonement has been poured forth, the blood is on the mercy seat now, all is done, and God says, “Come and sit down by my Son, and feast on all that he has prepared.” God has sent out the glorious news that not only the House is ready, but He who bids you welcome has taken His seat there. Out go the messengers now and carry the invitation. Sinner, God wants *you*; anxious soul, God wants *you*; guilty defiled one, God wants *you*; troubled heart, God wants *you*; “turn in hither,” turn in where Christ is. Oh, wanderer from the Father's house, wanderer from God, wherever thou art, or whatever thou hast done, hear His word—“turn in hither.” It is not go and do some-

thing, it is "come eat of my bread." God's living bread is Jesus who died and rose again, who suffered to bring us to God.

Oh, starving soul, will you not eat? Oh, guilty wandering one, will you not pass within the portals of that seven-pillared house. There is none to keep you back, no repellant voice to daunt you, no Cerberus to guard the way. The only word is Come! come! come! Come in your need, come in your guilt, come as you are. Why do you delay? "I will think about it," you say. Yes and drop into hell while you are thinking about it. "But give me time" Time for what? Time to be damned? You want time to put it off. But you must either accept the invitation, or refuse it ere you lay down this paper: which shall it be? Christ accepted and Christ confessed; or, Christ rejected and damnation your portion? "Drink of the wine which I have mingled" He says. There was sorrow for Jesus that there might be joy for you; there was death for Jesus that there might be life for you; there was vinegar and gall for Jesus that there might be wine for you, "Come, drink of the wine that I have mingled." The wine of the joy of the heart of God is mixed, the joy of His heart in having a sinner brought home to Himself.

Christ drained the last dark drop of the cup of judgment, and He has passed on to us the

cup of salvation filled to the brim, and all we have to do is to drink it. Let Him have the joy of saving your soul just now. Your joy, if you and He were to meet at this moment, would not be a thousandth part as great as His joy, however great yours might be.

If you refuse Jesus, refuse to be wisdom's guest, you must be the guest of the world.

The foolish woman has a house, she sends out her invitation, she can make a noise too, and she has things to attract. "She sitteth at the door of her house." And a large house it is too, there is plenty of room in it, and she calls passengers. Listen to her invitation, note the mockery of the language, it is so like the gospel—"Whoso is simple let him turn in hither." "Do not good people go here or there?" "Do not Christians go into this and that?" "There is no harm in it, of course it may not be quite right, but there is not so much harm." "Stolen waters are sweet." Yes, sin is the sweetest thing under the sun, you must go above the sun to get what is sweeter: Christ. Sin is doing what you like, and do not you do what you like? Sin is an awful thing, and sin God will judge in those who reject Christ; but men roll it as a sweet morsel under their tongues; scripture speaks of "the pleasures of sin."

"Stolen *waters*." The world has no wine to

give, no real joy, yet the world has its charms and allurements, and you choose these. “There is plenty of time” you say. Yes, Satan always promises plenty of time. “You do not need to be in such a hurry about this matter” he says to you, and you believe him, and drop into the depths of hell as the result. Oh, do not be the world’s guest, the world that murdered Jesus, do not listen to the devil’s gospel. Thousands of souls believe the devil’s gospel, “It is all quite true, but there’s *time enough* yet,” they believe this, they enter the world’s house, they become the world’s guests, and mark the terrible result, summed up in a few words by the divine pen, “her guests are in the depths of hell.”

Make your choice, dear reader, this day. Shall it be the world? Or, shall it be Christ? Oh, be wise in time, let Jesus hear you reply at this very moment from the depths of your heart—

“My heart is fixed, eternal God,
Fixed on *Thee*;
And my immortal choice is made
Christ for me.”

W. T. P. W.

FROM HOPE TO ASSURANCE.

Few save those accustomed to move in and out among the circles of christians know the various states of soul in which they are. From all, profitable lessons can be learnt, the different needs, the many wants, the many spiritual requirements in the way of peace, rest, joy, &c. In perhaps nine cases out of ten, one meets with the same difficulty on their part, viz. non-assurance of salvation, unconscious of a present forgiveness, and as a result, there is no real rest of conscience and soul. Moreover the despair, the anguish of spirit depicted on the countenance, the restlessness within, is such as the mind can but ill conceive, unless it has been plunged into similar experiences. Further, what is perhaps galling to the consciously delivered child of God is, that by many so-called ministers of the gospel such a state of feverish anxiety, distrust of God and His precious word is recommended as the only right one; this, eagerly swallowed by their flock only adds fuel to the fire, another drop of sorrow to that already well filled cup of despair. In such a case we need to urge a repair to the light and testimony of Scripture; if it speak after such a sort as to warrant this kind of christian experience, then let anguish fill the

soul and never let her be free from being tossed about on the stormy ocean of doubts and fears, keep the haven as far off as possible ; but, on the other hand, if it condemn this, if the gospel provide an everlasting consolation, if it promise a present eternal life, and offer a consciously known forgiveness of sins, then rest upon this blessed rock, it is the word of our God, it is the christian's sure resource, and, made a living reality by the Holy Ghost, it fills the heart with peace and joy. But enough, I must begin with that which is more immediately the subject of these remarks.

Labouring in a little village of our Isle, my custom is to visit a few of its inhabitants. The occupant of a poorly furnished room drew more especially my attention, for she had been reported to me as one that cared for the durable things of God. Gaining an entrance, I sat by her side. There on her table lay the ponderous volume, which for not a few years had been her solace. She had reached long since the summit of life's hill, and was fast descending. Friend after friend had dropped off, earthly comforts had failed, and reduced to very indigence, and crippled in both her legs, she presented outwardly but a poor spectacle. But she was in very truth a chosen vessel, one prepared beforehand for glory, a beggar raised from the dung-hill to be seated soon amongst princes, an

heir of God and joint heir of Christ, yet *was she ignorant* of these divine facts, these potent truths. Such realities so unique in their character, were to her as yet unmeaning words.

“And so you love the word of God,” said I, “and doubtless Him of whom it speaks?”

“Indeed I do and have for many years.”

About His love we spoke at some length, and then alluded to what that affection provides.

“And so you have trusted Him with the joy of one who knows that eternal life is hers.”

“Ah,” said she “that is another thing, to pray for it is right, and to venture to suppose we shall have it by a continued perseverance is not wrong, but there can be no certainty in this vale of tears.” And with a face a too faithful expression of inward sorrow, she struggled from day to day, from hour to hour, wrestling and agonizing for that priceless gift, which a faithful Lord and Saviour had not only offered her, but better still, had even said *she possessed*. How strange to pray for what we are actually in possession of, to hope for what we have, to desire what we have already got. Turn with me to John iii. 36, and read, and, in passing, allow me to caution you my reader, as it was thought needful to advise her: study contemplate, read and re-read those precious words, every one perfectly simple yet having a depth which the soul finds is—shall I say more

than—equal to the greatness of the want. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” Where is feeling in the verse? It is excluded. By what law? That of *faith* which counts and builds upon the unchanging promises of the yea and amen, which arrogates no superiority but His, which desires nothing more on the point of salvation than what He has deigned to see fit to reveal. Immediately the light entered in, dispelled the darkness, and gave rest where all before was anxiety. Those peace-giving words, “*hath everlasting life*” were God’s seal to her belief. No longer waiting to feel, and pray, and hope, possession was hers, its enjoyment soon followed. It was the blessing of the Lord which was making rich, and if no sorrow accompanied it, certainly no grief was its result.

How wrong then dear reader, is it to dispute your title to this eternal inheritance, to call in question your salvation. Has God declared that faith in his Son is all that He demands, and that as a consequence such an act is followed by eternal life *as ours*, and glory secured in the self-same way? Search for yourself. He has neither by His Son Jesus Christ our Lord spoken in vain, nor yet has the subsequent testimony of the Holy Ghost proved other than a confirming of the words of our Lord when in writing to the Ephesians He

declared that "by grace are ye saved."

Lean with your whole weight on so precious and stable a foundation. Others are like shifting sands, or a house built without a solid basis. May God in His infinite grace open the now half closed eyes, so that not with dimness of vision you shall see men as trees walking, but with calm and holy gaze look into heaven itself, where the anchor of your soul is "*sure and stedfast*." Let me beseech you not to rob your heart of that privilege so excellent, that peace so unchanging, that comfort so unfailing, which a godly determination to repose on the words of our Lord so faithfully gives. And may I close with this, that not only will you be the gainer, but better still, He and His work will be honoured as nothing else can glorify

E. J. C.



NOTICE TO QUIT.

THE moment man begins to live, he begins to die. He comes into the world, and the moment he enters it, he is under notice to quit it. "He is of few days, and full of trouble; he cometh forth like a flower and is cut down; he flecth also as a shadow and continueth not."

Job xiv. 1, 2. "He dwells in a house of *clay*, on a foundation of *dust* that the *moth can crush*."

Job iv. 19. Poor frail mortal; He comes into the world in weakness and helplessness; yea, nothing is so weak and helpless as he. He quits it in shame and dishonour, unless God meet him in grace, while a wasted life comes after him to meet him at the judgment seat.

"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment," Heb. ix. 27. Notice has been given him. Quit this world he must;—stay here he cannot—sooner or later the term which was granted him will expire, then he leaves this body, this clay tabernacle, and passes away, but where? Ah, that is the solemn question. Where?

How solemn it is to think of a person under notice to quit, certain that he must leave, and yet making no provision for his leaving, till that grim officer (death) comes to turn him out: then it is too late to seek for the assurance of another house not made with hands, and he passes into eternity, into outer darkness and black despair, duped by Satan, occupied while here with the present, forgetful of the future. The notices unheeded—the warnings despised—the appeals rejected—until he is turned out. "We know," said one of old, using the language all christians are privileged to use, "We *know* that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were

dissolved, we *have* a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." 2 Cor. v. 1, 2.

Ah yes, thank God, the christian *knows*, —he is *sure*,—there is no doubt about it,—no uncertainty. We *know* we have another house eternal in the heavens; we are going to be clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up of life. And he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God. 2 Cor. v. 4, 5.

Oh, how blessed this is. God has wrought us for this very thing. He it was who gave us notice to quit, He it is who has provided us another house, "a building of God," and wrought us for glory above. And while here we groan in this *tabernacle*, which is but a temporary abode, till we put on our *house* from heaven, an abiding and eternal abode.

My reader, can you say, I know all this blessing for the joy of my own soul now? Have you really trusted Christ yet? His death is the basis of all this blessing. "He who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. v. 21. Have you trusted Christ, and found a resting-place for your soul, and received such assurance from Himself, that you can say, I know that if Christ were to come to-night I should leave this

the body, a house not made with hands, and pass into the heavens, to share glory with Christ above for ever? This wondrous blessing, and this confident language to express it, are the privilege of all those who have found out they are lost, and have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

Do you say, Oh, I am comfortable and happy enough here, I have plenty of amusement and joy here, I don't want to turn religious and melancholy just now, plenty of time for that when one gets old. Well remember; young persons die as well as old ones, and if you die in your sins, you will be *damned*. If you die without Christ, you will live for ever without Christ in the lake of fire. God is righteous and must punish sin, if you refuse the way of escape, you must perish for ever. It is Satan who whispers in your ear, "Plenty of time." God says, "*Now* is the accepted time, and *Now* is the day of salvation." 2 Cor. vi. 2.

"Oh, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end." Deut. xxxii. 29. Remember this, the price you must pay for your pleasures is great. It is your soul. You are selling it to Satan for the gratification of a little *lust*, a little pleasure and selfwill here, but what will your portion be there? The unquenchable fire with all its pains, and the never dying worm with all its gnawings.

"Hell is darkness deep and awful;
Turn, poor sinner, turn and flee."

Thank God, there is a way of escape. Poor worldling, there is a Saviour for you. Godless, Christless, thoughtless, prayerless though you be, Jesus died to save you. "He came into the world to save sinners." (1 Tim. i. 15.) No goodness have you to bring, yours has been a wasted life. No goodness does He require, and He offers you a new life, eternal life. It is God showing love *to* the sinner, not seeking love *from* the sinner. Oh, what a wonderful thing the Cross of Christ is! every question is answered there. God's character has been vindicated, His righteousness maintained, and He has been glorified. An insulted and offended God has Himself undertaken the cause of the wretches who offended and insulted Him, and provided a perfect sacrifice. And the work accomplished must be in accordance with the value of the sacrifice. That sacrifice is none other than the Lamb of God. And His *person* gives all the value to His *work*. The blood has been shed, and He who alone can estimate the value of that blood has shown His acceptance of the sacrifice and raised His Son from the dead.

Trust Him, and Eternal Life is yours.

M.E.

WITHOUT WARNING.

IT was a fine summer evening, and the beach of the little watering place of W—— was crowded with those who, after the bustle and labour of the day, had come to seek a few hours rest and recreation on the shore. Numbers of little boats danced merrily on the waves, which were beautifully lighted up by the rays of the setting sun.

In one of these boats were two or three young men, who intended, when at a sufficient distance from the shore, to refresh themselves by a bath.

Soon one was seen to dive into the water, but, to the surprise of his companions in the boat, he did not rise to the surface. Anxiously they watched the spot where they had last seen him ; what could it mean ?

John S. was a capital swimmer, perfectly used to the water, and it was, doubtless, without a thought of danger that he had taken that plunge.

Several minutes had now passed, and their anxiety rose to terror. Then a boat put off to the rescue from the pier. The people on the shore had seen the accident, and were anxiously awaiting the result.

As soon as the boat had pushed off from the shore, there was a movement in the crowd, and a man rushed forward in wild haste. It was the father of John S. His eager, distracted gaze followed the boat as he stood on the pier, powerless to save his beloved son.

After several minutes of agonizing suspense, the boat was seen returning, and hundreds strained their eyes to see through the gathering gloom what had been the result of the errand of mercy.

“Is it life or death?” was the eager cry, as the boat touched the pier. The mournful silence of the boatmen answered the question, and the father’s agonized gaze fell upon the lifeless body lying in the bottom of the boat.

Dear reader, do you think that poor John S. when he left the shore that evening, had any idea of the sad fate that awaited him? And yet how suddenly, in the prime of youth and strength, was he cut off without a moment’s warning.

And, my reader, are you sure that any warning will be given *you*? “*This night thy soul shall be required of thee,*” was the solemn word to the rich man in the gospel. Short notice, surely! but even *that* may not be given you.

Oh! my friend, if still without Christ, think, do stop and think, into what may the next step plunge you; you know very well that it might be that place where no mercy can ever reach you.

It matters not how upright, how religious you may be in the eyes of your fellow-men, all this will not avail you; Christ, and Christ alone,

must be your safety. You must either accept or reject Him, and if a rejector, God speaks a solemn word of warning to you. "He that being oft reproved hardeneth *his* neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Prov. xxix. 1.

Oh! do not let this fate be yours. *Now* mercy is offered to you. God loved you so much that He gave His only Son to die for you, that you, a lost, hell-deserving sinner, might be brought as near to Himself as it is possible to be. His death has atoned for *every* sin of *every* poor sinner who simply, unreservedly, casts himself upon Him for salvation.

His death has met all the claims of justice, and opened the way for you to come right into the presence of God, and to find your *home* there. What greater proof of His love could be given?

Can you any longer refuse to accept such a matchless gift? Can you any longer prefer your own paltry *doings* to that great work *done*—completely finished on calvary's cross? Oh come to Him at once, as a poor lost sinner, and cast yourself upon Him, and *Him alone* for salvation.

Then you will be ready—ready, should He come to take all His saints to be with Him; ready, should the call be to you individually. "Him that cometh to me, I will *in no wise* cast out." John vi. 37.

C. H. P.

AN APPEAL TO PLEASURE SEEKERS.

It is well in all occupations or engagements, sometimes to pause for a moment, and weigh the different circumstances connected with what we are occupied in and with.

Stay then for a moment dear friend, and let us look together at the source, scene, and period of these pleasures you are now, so busily, engaged in seeking.

God's word tells us plainly of two kinds of pleasures; and we want you now to look at the matter seriously in His presence, and see which kind is the best. In Heb. xi. 24-27 we read "By faith Moses when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the PLEASURES OF SIN for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured as seeing him who is invisible."

From this passage we find Moses forsook these *pleasures of sin*, because he had faith in him who is invisible."

Now let us look at the source, scene, period, and final end of these "*pleasures of sin*," as revealed in the Word of God. First, their

source is sin, “*pleasures of sin*,” that which is so terrible in the eyes of the God of light, that He had to make His only begotten Son “sin for us” before anyone could be saved (2 Cor. v. 21).

Next, the scene of their enjoyment is this earth; for, as there can be no sin in heaven, there certainly can be no “pleasures of sin” there either; and what about this earth, what does the Word say? “The heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Pet. iii. 7). Then their period—“for a season” (Heb. xi. 25). Yes, for the verse we have just been looking at, shows that *this earth*, where we are now, will be burnt up; and we have seen there can be no place for the pleasures of sin, in either heaven or the new earth for God will then be all in all (1 Cor. xv. 24-28.) And should death come to you as you are dear unsaved pleasure-seeker, do you think there will be any pleasure in the grave? any pleasure in hell? No! the “pleasures of sin” are only “for a season.” Lastly; their end—“death.” “The wages of sin is *death*” (Rom. vi. 23) and after death the judgment (Heb. ix. 27).

Oh, stay then, dear friend, in the very midst of your heyday of life and pleasure here, with perhaps all that human nature can delight in, and remember it is only *for a season*. then

death—after death, judgment followed by the “lake of fire” (Rev. xx. 25).

But you may say, “my pleasures are not those of a careless giddy, worldling, they are religious: I delight in doing my best for God.” Let us ask then, have you faith in Christ? Faith in Him as your Saviour: HEART FAITH, not HEAD FAITH, the one saves (Rom. x. 9), the other condemns. (James ii. 19). If not, if your religion is merely an empty round of Christless observances, Rom. xiv. 23 tells us that “*whatsoever* is not of faith is sin.” Your religion may be your pleasure, but if it is not “of faith” it is but another form of the “pleasures of sin,” only “for a season,” its end death.

But now let us turn to the other pleasures. “In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” Psa. xvi. 11. What a contrast to the pleasures of sin; their source—the presence of God; their scene—His right hand; their period—for evermore. Faith in Christ will at once lead you into His presence, even while here on earth, through the “rent veil” (Heb. x. 19, 20); and in His presence there is fulness of joy, so that although the christian’s path here may be one of suffering, and affliction with the people of God, he has full access into the presence of God, within the veil, where there is fulness of joy. And the One who is now at God’s right

hand, is his present possession and comfort and pleasure; and the end his joy for evermore.

Oh ! if this little paper should fall into the hands of some careless, light hearted, votary of pleasure, consider where all your pleasure is leading to ; and before it is too late, turn to the One who is now warning *you*, as He did Noah "of things not seen as yet" (Heb. xi. 7). All may be bright and gladsome now, but 'for a season,' and then your spirit must return to the God who gave it. If you neglect Him here, can you face Him there ? Think !

When the celebrated painter, Sir James Thornhill, was painting the interior of the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral one day, just as he had completed a portion of his work. he stepped backwards on the scaffolding, on which he was standing, to see the effect of his painting, utterly unconscious of the danger he was in ; one more step, and he would have been plunged headlong into the air, and dashed to pieces on the stone floor beneath. His assistant, who was near, in a moment seized a brush full of paint and daubed it right across the picture that was just finished, utterly ruining it. Sir James sprang forward, in dismay, to find, however, that by this seemingly cruel act, his life had been saved through God's mercy. Oh, dear careless reader, God wants to spoil this world and its pleasures for you, because

He sees "the end thereof is death;" and He knows too, how fearfully near you may be to the edge of the narrow scaffolding, which separates time from eternity: one step more and you may be gone without recovery. "He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." (Prov. xxix. i.)

Oh, dear reader, are you one on whom this world's pleasures pall, but still without anything better? Listen to Him who said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Oh, come and close with His gracious offer while the day of His mercy lasts; come to-day, to-morrow may be too late. He is waiting NOW, to-morrow He may have "risen up and shut to the door." (Luke xiii. 25.) It will then be too late.

Once more then, the "pleasures of sin," are only "for a season," here in this world, they end in death, judgment, and the lake of fire. God's pleasures are, through grace, commenced *here*, even in the midst of affliction and sorrow, and last "for evermore" in His own presence.

May the God who, in grace gave Moses to choose as he did, lead you, dear reader, to choose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," and "by faith," to endure "as seeing him who is invisible." He will if you trust Him.

J. R. B.

WRECKED AND SAVED.

SOME years ago, when in W——a friend requested me to visit an aged Christian woman in whom he was especially interested; and whilst seeking her cottage, I enquired of a respectable woman who was standing at her garden gate, whether she could direct me, which she at once did. Having thanked her, I enquired how she stood as to Christ, and then noticed how sad she looked; her reply showed that she was unsaved, a stranger to grace and to Christ: and seeing her grief I asked the cause, which she related with much feeling in a few words.

Her husband had been master and part owner of a fine barque, which had sailed but a few months before for the North Sea, and when nearing her destination, the wind being fair and the captain full of hope of making his port on the morrow, the vessel struck upon a rock. It was night, and the captain and crew had only time to lower a boat and get into it before she foundered: the boat happily lived, and all were mercifully preserved, but the captain's little all was gone. This was not all, for his nervous system then received such a shock that his health gave way, and a fatal malady had set in, and it was only a question of months at the most and he must die, and his place know him no more.

Poor fellow, his health, calling, savings, (for

the vessel was uninsured) were thus gone in a moment, and his poor wife had only the sad prospect of widow-hood and poverty. Her tale moved and interested me, and after speaking of the love of God to sinners, I asked to see her husband, but he was then out walking, so I promised to call as soon as able.

I could not rest, and soon found myself again at their house: he was within and received me courteously. Seeing my interest he soon acquainted me with his state of suffering, and also of the whereabouts of his soul. It was my joy to find him in exercise of soul, the Lord having graciously used this affliction to awaken his conscience as to his guilt and unfitness for God, and his cry was that of the gaoler of Philippi, "What must I do to be saved?" He saw the great mercy of God in thus having preserved his life, and kept his soul from going down into the pit. There was the prepared ground for the incorruptible seed, and it was my privilege to tell out the precious Gospel of God, which in His grace had given me peace and joy in believing.

He listened to the tale of love, and the Spirit of God was with the Word making it true in his soul, giving him to see Jesus as his Saviour, and His finished work as that on which he could rest for eternity. He received the word not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the

word of God, and hence peace with God was his by faith in Christ. It was newness of life and his soul was filled with praise, and no wonder. To know the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour, who had washed him from his sins in His own blood, delivered him from the wrath to come and brought him to God: this was indeed blessed and glorious.

How grand and precious is all that God confers on faith, which ever takes Him at His word, the complete forgiveness, the life eternal and its place and portion in Christ, a new existence with a new sphere and all of God; and an object of infinite rest, satisfaction and delight; the living Saviour in the glory of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us, and who is at once our life and righteousness and all. And how blessed it is for the believer to learn and know that in Christ's death he died, as a child of Adam; and in Christ risen and glorified he has life, is a new creation, a child and heir of God and joint heir with Christ: that the flesh in which is no good and no change, being always and irremediably evil, God has judged and condemned in the death of His own Son, and that consequently the believer, sealed with the Spirit and united to Christ in glory, is not in the flesh but in the Spirit.

What a contrast, and how grace has wrought, that instead of being in the flesh and in his

sins with death, judgment and wrath before him, he is in the Spirit, and in Christ, in whom is no condemnation. Instead of dreading Christ as the Judge to punish, he knows Him as the One who in deepest pity and love bore the penalty of guilt and sin, and rising out of death became the life and the living Saviour to give the victory over evil, the Priest, merciful and faithful to sustain in the path of faith, and the Advocate with the Father to restore the soul when sin has come in to break communion through unwatchfulness and unbelief. And oh! the wondrous love and grace that leads us, when defiled, to place our soiled feet in His hands, to submit our walk to Him, and thus again through confession to know restoration.

How many believers judge the Saviour to be like man, even to give us up when unfaithful, but then, blessed be His unchanging love and grace, His faithfulness as the Shepherd and Saviour comes out in its unfailing perfectness. If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins: it is with the Father, not as with God, because relationship is formed and ever abides, and righteousness is before Him for us in Jesus Christ: relationship abides but communion is interrupted; the standing and

relationship are ever the same, ever in Christ and as Christ, and children of God; but the state varies, for sin is still in us, though not on us, not imputed, blessed be God: the flesh is in the believer but he is never in the flesh, and ever in the Spirit, and consequently he is exhorted to walk in the Spirit.

The wife's case, alas! was very different: her present circumstances completely absorbed her to the exclusion of all thought of her soul and its future; how one pitied her in the prospect of poverty and widow-hood here, and in the rejection of Him who seeks to save and bless for ever. As for the husband, he lived nearly two years, and then the news came that he had gone to be with Christ, which is far better, and that his end was peace. Thus God in infinite wisdom and grace reached this precious soul, breaking up all that made this life and scene pleasing and profitable, that he might awaken him to Himself and eternity, and unfold His love in the gift of His Son, that believing he should not perish but have everlasting life. The husband through God's grace turned from his loss and sorrow to Christ, to his eternal joy and gain; the poor wife, absorbed by her circumstances and filled with her loss and sorrow, had no ear or heart for Christ, and before her were poverty and sorrow here, and endless torment and woe if continuing unrepentant and unbelieving.

And now, dear reader, let me ask you about yourself. Is the conscience purged and the heart right with God? Have you been to Him about your sins? Are you utterly careless, or are you professing His name and yet unforgiven and unsaved? What a future awaits any so continuing, and dying in their sins, or alive in them when Christ calls His people home, when the door will be shut! It is too awful to dwell upon—the eternal wrath of God, the lake of fire which is the second death, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. Oh! the eternal remorse and the eternal torment. Oh! the night without a break and without an end, the blackness of darkness for ever! And why? because you would not come to Christ that you might have life. The Lord in His boundless pity and grace touch your heart, enlighten your conscience, and draw you to Himself to receive pardon and life whilst it is yet the acceptable time, the day of salvation. Then you will find your happiness in living to Him and to His glory in this world; and, when He comes, in living with Him in the Father's house for ever, when we shall gain His image, and never more go out.

A DELIVERER AND A DELIVERANCE.

“Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke then, a great ransom cannot deliver thee.” (Job xxxvi. 18.)

“For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.” (1 Thess. i. 9, 10.)

In these two verses you have a *deliverer* and a *deliverance*. There had been a living person presented in the gospel which the Apostle Paul had preached to these Thessalonians, who had attracted their hearts; it was no question with them of giving up their idols, but they had another object which occupied and controlled them, even Jesus, who had delivered them from the wrath to come.

There is something which *has come*, and there is something *coming*. What *has come*? Salvation for the vilest! What is *coming*? Wrath! wrath, sure, certain, divine, and eternal, the wrath of God!

Paul says, in this tenth verse, “Which delivered us,” not delivered *me*, Paul, but *us*. Who are the *us* of whom he speaks? Every single soul that trusts Jesus. It is not *will deliver* in the day of judgment, in the day of wrath, but every soul that trusts Jesus is *delivered* now.

Turn for a moment to the 36th chapter of Job, which speaks of this coming wrath. (Elihu really is a type of Christ,) and he says, "I have got to speak on God's behalf." There is where the evangelist comes out. Elihu speaks for God, and the evangelist speaks for God, and to whom? To men, for their souls' eternal welfare, that they may listen, and be warned to flee from the coming wrath.

"But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath." That is very like Romans ii. 5, "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath." The hypocrite heaps up wrath! What a thought! But, you may ask, What is a hypocrite? A hypocrite is a person who does not look things in the face, who keeps up an appearance outwardly which is not quite a reality, and he heaps up wrath. "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke; then a great ransom cannot deliver thee." Now there is a ransom that *can* deliver. You have heard of this blessed Jesus who has given Himself a ransom for all; you have heard the precious tidings that God, knowing your need, sent His own Son down to meet that need, to be the Saviour.

It is blessed tidings that Jesus has given Himself a ransom for all, there is no limitation, it is for all! Are you, dear reader, an unsaved

sinner, are you a troubled, an anxious soul? To you I say, He gave Himself a ransom for *all*. Jesus has gone to the treasury of God, and has deposited there a price that is more than sufficient to ransom every single soul that trusts His name, and He sends forth the tidings of this ransom. The, moment then, the glad tidings come to you, what does God expect? That you should bow down at once, accept them at once, trust Him at once.

You know you are a sinner! It is no use to try and escape the conviction that you have sinned! You know you have, and there are two consequences of sin: first there is death, and then there is judgment. You must be blessed under His favour, or crushed under His judgment; you must know His love, or taste His wrath.

“Because there *is* wrath,” beware oh careless, oh undecided soul! Do you seek to stop your ears now to the warning of judgment coming? You will not be able to stop your ears when God speaks to you in the day of His wrath.

“Because there *is* wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke.” One moment, and God might take *you* away. Perhaps you say, “I am young and have plenty of time before me.” Let me ask you. Have you a lease of your life? You know you have not! Before another sun rises upon this earth, you may be

gone into eternity. God is saying to *you* now, Beware ! “Beware lest he take thee away with his stroke.” *Then*, what then ? “Then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.” No ransom can meet your case then. Could there be a greater ransom than the blood of Christ ? “No,” you say. Well then, the more reason that you should bow down your soul now and get blessed by that Lord Jesus Christ while there is a ransom that *can* deliver you.

If you die in your sins you are out of the pale of Christ’s arm ; His mercy cannot reach you there. If you are to taste His grace, you must taste it *now*. When will He save you ? *Now* ! When will He bring you to God ? *Now* ! You say, “When I die He’ll be merciful.” My friend, when you die you will be damned ! It is *now* He will be merciful, *now* He will save you. “Now is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation.”

The devil whispers to you, “There is no such hurry, put it off.” The devil too would tell you, no doubt, “It is quite true there is wrath coming, quite true God is going to judge the world, quite true you must be a christian or come under judgment,” but he always finishes off his sermons with this, “you need not be in a hurry about it, put it off.”

Satan puts himself in company with scripture oftentimes to suit his own purpose. He will tell

you that "You are a sinner, and it is quite true the blood of Christ is the only way of salvation," but then he adds, "there is plenty of time, you must think about it, you must have time for reflection, you cannot get it all at once." That is Satan's most successful trap nowadays; he would give you time to think about it, time for reflection, and you put it off, and die in your sins and are damned, and there is plenty of time for reflection then.

Oh my unsaved reader, God says to you, Beware! you who are trifling with your soul's salvation, you who are tampering with your lusts, wanting to give the rein to them for a while longer, wanting to keep the pleasures of this life, the pleasures of sin, "*beware* lest he take thee away with his stroke, then a great ransom cannot deliver thee."

Why will there be no great enough ransom then to deliver a soul? Because the greatest of all prices has been paid already, and you have rejected it, and there is none other, none greater.

Do you still say "I will think about it, I will take a little time?" "Beware lest he take thee away." One word from God and that silver cord of life is for ever snapped; one word from God and that heart of yours throbbing high with hope now, ceases to beat, and you have gone from time into eternity for *ever*.

The words of the poet are true, "All men think all men mortal but themselves." Have you not often taken up a newspaper, and seen among the list of deaths the name of some one whom you have known? And you have said, "Poor fellow, how sudden!" but you have not thought that to-morrow *your* name might be in the paper too, and someone else might be saying the same words about *you*.

Again I warn you, "Beware lest he take *thee*," unpardoned, unblessed, unrepentant, unsaved, unconverted sinner, *thee*! "Then a great ransom cannot deliver thee." Oh! what folly to risk thy soul, what folly!

Your folly reminds me of an account I heard the other day of a vessel coming up channel. In some way she got out of her course, and, a storm rising, the wind drove her on to a reef of rocks, where for a while she stuck fast. The crew, however, succeeded in getting her off the rocks, and she proceeded on her way without, as they thought, having sustained any very serious damage. But they were mistaken in their thought, they soon found that the vessel had sprung a leak, and the ever increasing severity of the storm made their danger imminent. The captain hoisted signals of distress, and sought to lighten the vessel, but amongst the valuable cargo was a great quantity of spirits; the crew got at the spirits, the captain

likewise partook freely, and after doing so, the pumps were neglected and the vessel began to fill rapidly.

There remained still, however, a hope of safety for that ill-fated crew. The signals of distress had been seen from the shore, and the life-boat put out to their relief. But as the life-boat drew near the sinking vessel, the captain, maddened by the effects of drink, came to the side and swore he would shoot the first man who left the ship, and would fire on the life-boat if she attempted to come alongside.

“Madman,” you say! Yes, madman he certainly was, but he stuck to his purpose. Again the men in the life-boat hailed; “You are sinking, let us save you.” Above the wind and storm came the captain’s answer back, “My ship is a good one, she has weathered many a storm and she will weather this one, we will not desert her, we do not want your help.” “You are filling fast,” shouted the men from the lifeboat. “The vessel is right enough,” shouted the intoxicated captain, and with his pistol drove the lifeboat off. What was the result? The storm raged on, the lifeboat put back to shore, the night wore away, and when morning broke what was to be seen? No vessel, struggling and fighting with the tempest, but pieces of a wreck floating here and there, and on the shore lifeless corpses thrown up by the waves, the

witnesses of the folly of those who had perished because they would not accept deliverance.

You say, "They were fools." I agree with you, but is *your* folly less than was theirs?

God offers you pardon, blessing, salvation, eternal life *now*, and you put them all from you; you do not want to be saved yet; is not this greater madness than theirs, for your danger is imminent and *eternal*.

Awake, my dear friend,—"Because there *is* wrath." You may say. "I do not believe it!" Did the folly of the captain make the storm less violent, or their danger less great? No! no! and your disbelief does not make the word of God less true. There *is* wrath, there is danger, and you had better turn to Jesus now, you had better get the salvation of your soul now.

Is there judgment coming? Yes! Will it overtake the christian? No! because it overtook Christ instead of him, and He bore it all, so that the apostle can say, "Who *hath delivered* us from the wrath to come."

Faith in Christ Jesus is what God calls you to have, as we get in Col. i. 4. "Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus." You must have simple faith in Jesus. What is the next thing? "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 trans-

lated us into the kingdom of his dear Son ; In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." It is not, " who *will* deliver us," but who " *hath* delivered us." Not only too is the believing soul delivered from the coming wrath of God, but he is delivered now from Satan's power. What does God do 'the moment a soul trusts Jesus? Why, He takes him out of Satan's kingdom and puts him into the kingdom of His dear Son ; takes him out of death and puts him into life ; takes him out of darkness and puts him into light.

What have we got now? In whom, (Christ) we have redemption ;" the ransom is paid, the prisoner is set free. Suppose you had a slave, and put 5000 dollars on that slave, and I go and pay that down ; why do I pay it? it is not that I want to keep slaves, but I want to turn that slave into a free man. Satan's slaves become God's free men. You are no longer Satan's slave, you are bought with a price, you are God's free man.

" And may we go and do as we like?" You ask. Surely you would like to please the one who has bought you with such a price, the one who has done all this for you !

What do you do for a friend you love on earth? Why, you like to please him ! That is it ! The person I love I like to please.

Christ has brought me out of darkness into

light, and I know where I am going and what is before me. The man who is in the dark, does not see where he is going, for Satan never lets his people see where they are going, lest they should be warned, discover their danger, and turn back, but when a man is in the light, he knows where he is going and stumbles not.

“In whom we *have* redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” We *have* it, not hope we shall have it. This is what the sinner gets who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. “Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.”

If you have trusted Jesus, the deliverer, you can go and thank your Father that you have the knowledge of redemption, the company of Jesus, the forgiveness of all your sins, eternal life, and an inheritance above.

Are you halting still, still undecided? To you then I say, “Beware lest he take thee away with his stroke, *then* a great ransom cannot deliver thee.” Let that ransom deliver you *now*. Why let 1878 run out and leave you still undelivered? Be persuaded! Seeing that wrath is coming, turn now to Jesus, trust Him simply, cast yourself upon Him unreservedly, and then you, like Paul, will be able to happily speak of Him as “Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.” God grant it to you my reader, for His Son’s sake.—Amen!

W. T. P. W.