

WRECKED,
BUT RESCUED



WRECKED BUT RESCUED:

OR,

“He bringeth them to their desired Haven.”

The Father sent the Son
A ruined world to save;
Man meted to the sinless One,
The cross, the grave;
Blest Substitute from God,
Wrath's awful cup He drained;
Laid down His life, and e'en the tomb's
Reproach sustained.

LONDON;

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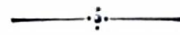
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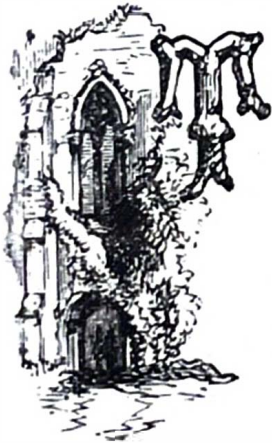
WRECKED, BUT RESCUED;

OR,

“He bringeth them to their desired haven.”



MARY, THE POACHER'S WIFE.



HERE was a heavy fall of snow. I had watched it from the window for some time, as it shrouded the earth, and mantled the trees and shrubs in the garden ; everything outside seemed to make me thankful for the comforts within, and I gladly drew my chair very close to the blazing fire to enjoy its cheering warmth. My thoughts turned to the many who knew no such comfort, and who could see no attraction in the fast falling snow, or the feathery fantastic outline it was giving to everything outside. My reverie was interrupted by a knock at the

door, and, "Some one wishes to see you in the kitchen." I went at once and found there a girl from the village I had known for some time. She had come to ask my husband to go and see a poor woman who was dying and refused to let any of her neighbours go in to see her ; "And *you* could not go," said the girl, "for her room is never cleaned, and never has any air in it. She is a poachers wife, and her husband is a drunkard and neglects her."

"I will see her to-morrow," I said, "if my husband has not returned home ;" and so saying I went back to the fire and my comforts. But I was restless and uneasy ; the burden of that soul was upon me, and I repeated again and again, "To-morrow she might be in hell."

In a few minutes I had drawn my waterproof closely round me and was making my way through the storm, praying all the way that the Lord would indeed give me a message from Himself, and also that I might be guided to the right door, as it was getting dark, and the snow falling faster each step I took. It was a poor place I had been directed to, a dirty court surrounded by very poor houses. At the last house on the left side I stood before a closed door, and asking the

Lord to open it for me, I gently knocked and waited, and knocked again and waited, and tried the latch, but got no answer. A woman from the next house looked out and said, "Ye needna bide in the cauld, for she'll not let ye in." I stood closer to the door for shelter from the drifting snow and prayed in silence, knowing that when God opens a door no man can shut it. Once more I knocked and listened; there was a slight movement inside: I put my mouth to the keyhole and said, "I have a message for you, do let me come in." Slowly the heavy wooden bolt was drawn back, and I found myself inside, and the bolt replaced. I had to lean upon the wall for a few moments in silence, to recover the overpowering pressure of bad air that met me; and by the feeble light of a small oil cruse, or lamp, I saw the emaciated form of a young woman, crouching on a low wooden stool by a few embers of a fire just dying out, and which she was vainly endeavouring to stir into life with a piece of wet stick she held in her hand. Seldom have I gazed with such compassion upon anyone. She was young, and seemed in the very last stage of disease; a hollow cough shook her fearfully attenuated frame; the black lines under her great dark eyes, and

the skin scarce covering her high cheek bones, and the sullen, settled melancholy of her sad suffering face, gave her a very ghastly appearance. She wore a tweed petticoat and cotton short-gown so well known in the Highlands of Scotland; but both were in tatters, and her skeleton arms and limbs were exposed through the many holes. She gazed at me and said, "What's brought you here, and what's your errand?"

"Because I heard you were sick and ill, and I had a message for you from One who loves sick and weary ones."

"Sit doon then, but dinna tell;" and she raised her feeble hand and pointed to two guns and a shot-belt on the wall, and then to a large black retriever, who showed his head and great glaring eyes from below the bed, and growled at me from time to time, heeding little the voice that tried to hush him with, "Doon Ranger; doon Ranger."

At this moment a knock came to the door and a child's voice whimpered, "Mammy, it's me; let's in."

"Shall I open the door?" I said.

"Yes, it's Johnnie."

A dripping child of about five years old, capless and barefooted, came in and crouched beside his mother; his scanty and ragged



“The mother's weary head sank in her hands.”

garments dripping on the mud floor. Vainly her feeble hands tried to wring out the wet from his pinafore and petticoats, and as the little fellow continued to cry, she tried to soothe him by saying, "Dinna greet, Johnnie lad, your Daddy will soon come."

"But I'm cauld and hungry, Mither, and I canna bide nae langer, and Daddy's ower lang o' coming."

And once more the little fellow sobbed aloud. The mother's weary head sank in her hands, the lines of melancholy on her pale face grew darker and deeper; but hers was a sorrow too deep for tears or words. I broke in upon it by saying, "Tell me, when had this child any food?"

"No syne yester'een, as far as I ken."

I ran to the cupboard: it was empty, save a few rabbit-skins and some bird's feathers, and a broken bowl and plate. "Have you no food of any kind in the house?" I said.

"Nane, and my last bawbee went for coals, and they're done too." And again the tearless face sank in her hands.

"Don't lock your door, I'll be back in a few minutes," I said. A shop quite near furnished a few necessary things, and a promise of coals in half-an-hour. I ran back, and, oh, the joy of that starving bairn, as he

devoured what I had brought ! His mother looked on, too ill to share his meal, and tears rolled down my cheeks.

“You’re tender o’ the heart,” said the poor woman ; “its lang syne I shed a tear ; I did greet when my wee bairnie deed, but no syne.”

Poor woman, I longed after her soul : in poverty, and sickness, and sorrow, and without Christ. How terrible ! And yet the moment seemed not to have come for me to give God’s message. I drew my stool near her, and taking one of her wasted hands in mine, I asked a few questions as to “How long she had been ill ?” etc. And as I pointed to little Johnnie, now in rosy sleep on the floor. I said, “You can trust me, can’t you ? Tell me all your troubles, for I want to help you.”

“Weel,” she said, you’re kind to face the storm in sic a nicht and sit doon here to speak to me, and there’s no mony cares for Mary B——, the poachers wife.”

“Your husband is a poacher,” I said “tell me how you came to marry him.”

“Ah, weel, I was but a bairn, when I married, and I thought ae trade was as guid as anither, and he promised I should want for naething ; but he and his mither drink all he

makes by the game; and it's seldom a feather o' it I see, or a penny that it brings me. And then I daurna let a body into the house, for fear they take the dog and guns, or catch himself; and mony a day the bairn and me never sees food or fire, and I'm that weak that I'm ill—ill at getting ayont the bed, and it's cauld when I'm in it."

I saw by the dim lamp-light it was a bed of shavings, with nothing over it but a cotton patch-quilt and a piece of old carpet.

"Well," I said, "and what of your child who died?" I had touched a chord in that weary mother's tearless heart; a few great tears rolled down her cheeks, and she tried to steady her feeble voice and answer my question.

"It is five month syne she was born; I was very ill. After the doctor and woman that was with me had left, nane came to see after me, and John was out all day, and often all nicht, after the game; and I lo'ed the wain, but I'd naething to gie her, and I saw her dwine and dwine by my side, till ae day she geed a wee short breath and deed, and syne I could'na look after, or care for onything, for my bairn deed o' want, and I kent it weel, and it gid sae sair to my heart that I didna greet, and I didna sleep, and I didna

cat, and then the cough came, and John brought the doctor, and he said it was a decline, and I wouldna mend; and it was true, for every day I seem waur and waur, and some days I canna rise ava."

And then the fragile form was racked by a terrible fit of coughing. I silently prayed that the Lord would now give me the right word. As the paroxysm of coughing a little subsided I took her hand and said, "Mary, the message I bring you to-night is from the Son of God, the One who died to save sinners like you and me; and His message to you is this, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Dear Soul, you are in great need of rest: will you come to Him to-night?"

"I would fain have the rest," she said, "but I'm no fit to come; and I've no strength left to gae to the kirk or the meeting, so I canna come."

"Well, Mary, you're very weak and very sinful, but Christ has made provision for just such as you. Have you strength to look at me, Mary?"

"Yes," she said, raising her heavy sad eyes to mine.

"Well, Mary," I said, "the Lord bids you look unto Him and live."

“ Does He ? O, but I’m a poor weak thing ; and I know I’m a sinner, for I was taught that years ago at the schule, and I feel it every day. But there’s none to care for me now, and I’m dying and going I dont know where ! O, what will become of poor Mary B—, the poacher’s wife ? ” And in an agony of soul, she rocked herself to and fro, and tears, long pent up, rolled down those worn cheeks.

I wept too ; for I saw she had judged herself a sinner, and that the Lord’s time for blessing had come.

I opened my Bible, and read from Numbers xxi. 5—9. “ And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt, to die in the wilderness ? for there is no bread, neither is there any water ; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the Lord sent firy serpents among the people, and they bit the people ; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against thee ; pray unto the Lord that He take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent and set it upon a

pole ; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole : and it came to pass, if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived."

After reading this I said nothing, but waited upon God to apply His own word to that sin-stricken one, so near the end of her wilderness journey. A faint smile stole over her lips, and she whispered, "I'm just like one o' them. I've spoken against God, and said hard things of Him mony a day when I was starving here, and when my baby deed ; but there's nae serpent o' brass for me to look to now, and there's naething but hell for me ;" and again she wept.

I opened my Bible, and read John iii. 14—17 : "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. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world but that the *world through Him might be saved.*"

"Oh !" she said, clasping her hands to-

gether in intense relief, "is it true, is it true? Then I can dee happy. He gave His Son for me, and I shall never perish! I know I am a sinner, but Jesus deed for the like o me! O, thank ye, thank ye, for coming to me wi' sic a message;" and she clasped my hand and kissed it again and again.

"Shall we thank God together?" I said.

"Yes, yes!" and; kneeling on the mud floor, we thanked Him who so loved Mary B——, the poacher's wife, that He gave His only begotten Son for her, that she might live through Him.

It was getting late. I helped poor Mary into her bed of shavings, lifted her sleeping boy by her side, lighted a fire and made some tea. Once more I looked at Mary, and felt reproved for the faithlessness of my heart which had doubted for a moment the reality of all this. So quietly had her soul passed from death unto life before my eyes, and accepted Christ so simply, that I could scarcely believe it. But a look at that calm face, as she rested on the bosom of the Lord, was enough to put away every doubt, and I could only praise Him, as I said, "Good-night, Mary; I shall see you to-morrow, if the Lord will."

She gave me such a look, I shall never for-

get it, and said, "O, it is rest! 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'"

I left her, full of thankful joy, and made my way home through the snow. Next day I saw her early, and found her sinking, but full of joy. Through the kindness of a Christian friend, a comfortable bed was provided for her, and I had her room cleaned: and the window, which had been nailed down for years, opened, and a little fresh air let into the sick-room. For all this she seemed grateful; but her heart was with the Lord, and she desired to be with Him.

Each day I saw her for the two or three week she remained on earth, and we read and prayed together; and several of the Lord's people visited her, and were satisfied that she was resting in unclouded peace on the finished work of Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost.

I saw her a short time before she fell asleep in Jesus; she pointed for me to come near her. Her husband was in the room; and I saw she had some last words for me, and I drew near.

"I'll maybe no see ye again, but we'll meet boon;" and, kissing my hand several times, she said "I lo'e ye weel, for ye carried the

message from God to me.” And so we parted here, never to meet again till in the presence of Him who died for sinners.

Reader ! I know not who you are, old or young, rich or poor ; but this I know : if you have not accepted Christ, you are surely lost and going to hell ! There is salvation for you now, if you will have it, and like poor Mary, take God at His word. You, too, can be saved this moment, if you rest upon the finished work of Him who gave His life for you.

MY CONVERSION.

I don't think I ever told you and dear—— what God has done for my soul. You remember me very well, I dare say, as to what I was twelve years ago—a lover of gaiety ; fond, to excess, of hunting and shooting ; addicted to almost everything that young men of the present day delight in. Until I came to Ireland I was, in my religious views, rather High Church, and used to like the beautiful chanting of the Temple Church and St. Paul's, Knightsbridge ; and though I did not fast on a Friday, like some of my

family, I had a certain respect for those who did, and felt sure that on account of it they would have a better chance of heaven than I would. I used to say a short prayer morning and evening, go to Church generally twice of a Sunday and almost always on saints' days, and occasionally taught in the local Sunday School.

Once I had a very severe illness, and was almost at the point of death, but I felt calm and happy, and almost sorry when they told me I was sure to get well. This, I must own, sobered me a good deal ; and for a long time after this I tried to be good, read a portion of my Bible every day, and added a long prayer out of a book to my usual short one. I had, too, dreamy, romantic thoughts about God, and used to indulge in pleasant reveries concerning heaven. But, alas ! as I got stronger the old tastes came back. A nice clever hunt was too good an opportunity to be missed. The tailor took my measure for a new scarlet coat ; the gun was looked over and got into order ; and the old saying was true of me, " When Satan was sick," &c. And thus time wore on.

As you know, I married ; and then a neat phaeton, and comfortable house and garden, with choice standard roses, &c., had to be

attended to, and, I am afraid, like many others, I was decently religious on the Sunday but careless all the week. However, I had family prayers every morning, with the help of a book, and sang at the harmonium in Church, and indeed took some pains to improve the singing.

All this time God was watching me, and, I believe, had marked me for His own. At length I heard of a gentleman in the County Kerry—whom I had known well as a most clever and agreeable, but apparently godless man—addressing meetings on religious subjects, and more than this, that a cousin of my own had become by this means impressed, and was addressing meetings of a similar nature. All this sounded very strange, for both of them, when I had lived amongst them, had been men completely of the world, and we had passed our time together in riding, boating, and the like pursuits. A vague curiosity, therefore, came over me to know what all this was about, and a strange, unaccountable feeling, half of interest, half of dread lest I too should become in time in like manner influenced. I was most comfortable and happy as I was, and did not like to be disturbed, for I felt that that kind of thing must cut at the root of all my then joys

and interests. And yet I felt, too, that they had got something that I had not, and I'd like to know something more about it.

I was not long to be doomed to disappointment. My cousin wrote, proposing a visit. I met him at the crossroads in my dogcart, and as we drove along I could not help thinking to myself, Why does not he, who is so religious, speak on religious subjects, and not on ordinary topics as of old? and so uncomfortable I became on this score that at last I said, "Why don't you tell me something about the Revival?" "Ah!" he said, drawing a long breath, have *you* got everlasting life?" "No," I said; "no, I wish I had, and then I'd have no more of this routine of prayers that so wearies me." For a moment he paused, and then said, quite solemnly, "Prayer is a joy to me now, and not a routine, for I am saved." "Oh," I said, "surely that's presumption to say you are saved *now*; perhaps you may be when you die, but surely you are wrong to say you are saved now." "No," he said; "God says, 'He that believeth on the Son, *hath* everlasting life.' I do believe on the Son, and therefore I believe what God says, that I *have* everlasting life, and thus I know I am saved." Well, by this time we had reached

the house, and, between preparations for dinner, &c., much of our conversation passed off my mind, but I know my impression was, that in saying he was saved he was thinking a great deal too much of himself.

After dinner, he asked whether I would have any objection to get a few people together in the carpenter's shop (a large suitable room), for he would like to give them an address. "Oh," I said, "by all means, if you think it would do them any good. The appointed evening came, and as we drove in, he kept telling me, "There'll be great blessing to-night." "Well," I said, "we'll see." Many came together, and he sang a hymn, and then prayed extempore, and afterwards spoke, giving, as far as I remember, a slight sketch of Bible history, and then impressed upon us his favourite text, "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life." The meeting ended, and I asked, "Where was the blessing?" "Wait till to-morrow night," was the reply. To-morrow came. In the morning we had rashly put a pair of half-trained horses into the carriage, and they ran away for more than a mile with fearful rapidity with us, and when they stopped, from sheer exhaustion, I know the impression on my mind was that God had sent me this to stop me on my head-

long course to hell ; for I then began to feel I was *unsaved*.

The evening came. A young man spoke first, who had had deep religious convictions for some time before, and he said one word that went to my very heart : “ Many of you, I doubt not, are religious—respectable—moral, but perhaps, as I was once, you are not ready to meet your God.” “ Oh,” I said to myself, “ that’s just my case,” and I thought surely those words must have reached every soul in the room as they did mine. That night I asked no more “ Where was the blessing ? ” I felt it had come, and come to me. For some days I was restless and uneasy. I could not go to the flower-show that I had intended to, for I felt the solemn question of my soul’s salvation was unsettled. I tried to read my Bible, but could not understand it. I tried to pray, but utterly broke down. I had no rest, for I did not know God’s Christ. My convictions of the necessity of *knowing* one was saved deepened, and one night I resolved to pray till my mind was at ease ; and I prayed a long time, and again and again—aye, and with tears, too. I went to bed exhausted, and in the morning woke at ease and happy, I knew not well why. And yet I thought there must be

a reason, and then I remembered the oft-repeated text, "He that believeth on the Son, *hath* everlasting life" (John iii. 36). I believe on the Son, and therefore I have everlasting life, for God had said so.

Oh! the joy of that happy, happy day. I knew God had had mercy on me, a poor vile sinner. Was there ever any one so bad as I? I knew He loved me. I knew that Jesus loved me, that He died for me, and that His blood cleanseth from all sin. Oh! I was so thankful; but then next day I was unhappy again, and the next, and the next, for I didn't *feel* I was saved. And then, at last, there came a dear kind letter by the post, to say, "If you look for feelings you are like the Jew that looked for a sign and never got one. Surely, the simple evidence of the written word is enough for you: 'He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life.'" And now, once more I was at rest. "Oh!" I said, "he that believeth *hath*; I believe, and I *have* eternal life." How can I doubt now? God has said it—that blessed God that sent His Son to die for me. Why should I doubt His word? I do believe it; I rejoice in the fact that everlasting life is mine.

Ten years have rolled away since then, and I have never ceased to know, and through

His changeless mercy never will, that Christ has saved my soul from hell, and given me an inalienable title to pass eternity with Him in glory.

Dear——, can you say the same? May the Lord bless this simple story to you.

THE NECESSITY OF MY CONVERSION.

I am truly grateful to you for your kind reception of my letter, giving the account of my conversion, though I own your comment on it much surprised me, and yet, when I remember my own wrong thoughts on these subjects, perhaps I should not wonder after all.

You said, I have been informed, “he must have thought me very wicked, or he would not have sent that letter to *me*.” No, dear——, I did not intend to convey the thought to you that you were, in my opinion an especially wicked person; on the contrary, as people go, I should have considered you decidedly above the usual level in the way of amiability and kindness; my every recollection of you leads me to this conclusion; but, while I say this, I deem it right to set before

you the ruin of the whole human family, and that you, amongst the number, share its consequences. If you intelligently grasp this truth, you will understand how all distinctions of class, education, and moral attainment are at an end, and the whole human family are on an equal footing in the sight of God.

As you have often read and know, the race of man takes its origin from Adam and Eve. He was formed out of the dust of the ground; she was made of his substance, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh. When thus created they were set to stand for God, the centre of the first creation, over which the full control was entrusted to them (Gen. i. 28) but, attached to their tenure of these rights for God, there was one condition. The tree of knowledge of good and evil (God's prerogative) was absolutely and definitely debarred from them. You know their subsequent history; how Satan's craft succeeded too well,—how Eve became his victim,—how her husband is seduced by her, and thus how the place allotted to them is forfeited and lost to them for ever. Man, in his first condition, created sinless but liable to sin, fails under the primal test applied to him, and thus becomes a fallen creature, and is consequently banished from the presence of God. God is change-

less in His holiness. Adam and Eve are sinners now, no longer innocent, and consequently an insuperable barrier exists between them, and our fore-fathers are driven out from before the face of their Creator. Does not this failure influence us? Do we not feel its effects? Most assuredly we do. Just as when a forest tree succumbs to the strokes of the woodman's axe; every branch and tendril, every bud or blossom, each bough or leaf, will feel the influence of its fall, and lose of course vitality. So with us; as yet unborn, but all foreseen according to the mind of God, the whole of Adam's race must feel the effects of his one act of disobedience, resulting in his banishment from God. He falls, his children yet unborn fall with him. When they enter the world in infancy they find themselves shut out from God, "far off" from Him, and "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. ii. 1, 13). What a solemn thought it is, and one we do well to ponder over, that all alike are thus shut out from God by nature. The infant in its mother's arms, the full-grown man in all the vigour of his maturity, the centenarian in his green old age, are all alike in this, their death by nature, and their natural distance from their God.

This truth, once clearly grasped, sets at

rest all thoughts of intrinsic goodness, natural fitness to approach to God. We are a fallen race, a race in whom the poison of sin is found by nature, and as such cannot draw near a holy God, who cannot for a moment brook the presence of evil. It is, of course, quite true that cultivation and moral attainment may work wonders, but where can the man be found in whom there is not the germ, the root of evil, and even were this so perfectly kept under by restraint and strict self government, we must admit it were enough to for ever preclude him from the presence of Him who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil and cannot look upon iniquity." We value, and justly, the amiable and the good, and prefer association with them to companionship with the violent and corrupt; but, alas! we must admit that those most gifted with the grace of nature are before the Lord as much "the lost" as those whose walk and ways preclude us from their company. Adam and Adam's race are doomed for ever; not one exception to the rule has ever been or will ever be found.

Surely, you too, dear——, are not without your place in this general ruin—universal failure; you, too, may trace your pedigree

to Adam, and discover that through his transgression you are amongst the banished from God's presence.

But perhaps it might occur to you that man in later days recovered himself and was enabled to regain his lost position, and that thus, like him, you, too, might have a chance of earning God's good pleasure. On the contrary, the patient study of the Scriptures will most clearly prove that, though the utmost opportunity was given to the race of man to show themselves once more the worthy objects of God's confidence, they only sinned more grievously than before, and thereby increased, if possible, the distance that already separated Him and them, and proved beyond all question that root and stem alike were past improvement—like a farm that some adventurous agriculturist becomes a tenant of. He tries his utmost skill upon the land; the most approved courses of rotation, the most skilful husbandry, the various manures of the newest and best recommended kinds, but all in vain; crop after crop fails; year after year results in sorrow and disappointment; so at last he gives it up reluctantly, and recommences labouring on new soil altogether, and under different auspices.

So with the human race. They had failed under the first experiment. God begins again, and now leaves them to themselves to answer to the dictates of the conscience they had obtained through the fall, and choose the good and avoid the evil if they could, the knowledge of which they had sought, obtained, but could not profit by. Under the light of conscience man was left from Adam's day to that of Moses—but the murder of Abel, the wickedness that brought in the flood, the independent action of the building of Babel's tower, with many another, are the proofs to us that Adam's race, under this new experiment, only proved themselves more utterly unworthy than before of God's good pleasure.

This crop has failed as well as its precursor, and now the God of patience tries a new experiment, and puts one race, a sample of the whole family, under a revealed code of instructions. What nation more favoured than they—what people therefore better entitled to respond to all the care and culture granted to them! But their ways, from first to last, reveal the utter vileness of the human heart. They had hardly got the law they had volunteered to keep, when they are found in rank defiance of its first enactment,

worshipping a golden calf ! Their subsequent history only shows them even more unworthy of their place as God's witnesses on earth, God's servants ; and at last, after many a century of long-suffering and forbearance, God gives them up, and makes them the slaves of those who should have been their vassals had they been obedient to His law. And now another plan begins, another course of testing what the heart of man is, and whether under any trial it can bear fit fruit for God. The Gentile might have said, " My Jewish neighbour I despise, and had I had his privileges I had not been found like him, so utterly disregardless of the claims of God and man." And, therefore, God takes him up next in the person of Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon's king, and puts the sceptre of power into his hands. Can he say " I have never sinned, my history records no failure?" On the contrary, scarcely had the reins of government been entrusted to him, than, afraid to lose them, and without the holy fear of God that should have filled his soul, he plunges all within his realm into open idol worship. Thus the Gentiles, too, are found swelling the ranks of those whose ways are contrary on every hand to God.

But yet again, the balances of the sanctuary-

are put into exercise, and the most searching test of all is now before us. "It may be," God had said, "they will reverence my Son when they see Him." And Jesus enters on the scene. Could there be one more in-offensive, winning, gracious gentle; one less calculated to provoke the enmity of man? He took no place when here. He interfered not with the schemes of man and all their plans of human aggrandisement and worldly honour. But such was their natural hatred of God that the very presence of one like God aroused their wrath, and in result we find that king and ruler, priest and elder, soldier and civilian of the lower rank, combined together to extirpate the only One that ever thoroughly returned good for evil, blessing in exchange for cursing. How utterly is now exposed the utter baseness of the human heart, the unreclaimable condition of the human race!

What can God do now but give it up? His tests are all exhausted. Experiments He has no more to try. He utterly repudiates man in nature from that moment; and the cross is not only the most glaring display of the corruption of the natural heart, but the evidence that man has come to an end before his God, and that in the Second Adam

the race of the first runs out and is no more seen.

Like an hour-glass, whose sand is gradually seen to ebb as moment after moment fleets away, the last grain has now passed through the narrow aperture, and the space above is vacant, while the heap below has reached its fullest measure. In Christ the Crucified the race of Adam ends for ever before God, and all are laid beneath the tomb.

But now the hand of God is seen to exercise its energies, to turn the glass, and once more the sand is seen in motion; not the same, 'tis true, though similar in many ways. Christ is raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; the Head of a new race; the First-born of the new creation; and from Him flows out, as formerly there came from Adam, the stream of life that widens out into the countless masses of the heavenly family. The source of the first race was corrupt and tainted, and, therefore, to every one that took his origin from it the taint was conveyed, and consequent corruption was his state. The headspring of the new stream is infinitely pure, and therefore each who draws from it his source of life is, like it, pure and holy, and without the chance of decay.

The first life was liable to fail, and before it came to us had failed. The new existence, placed within the reach of all, can never fail. It comes from an incorruptible source; it is preserved by One who is Himself the incorruptible.

Christ is the source of this new stream of life, and all who receive Him (John i. 12, 13) have part in it, and swell the waters that are fast rising to their proper level, the ocean of eternal life that's found in heaven. The first to have their part in it were those on whom the risen Saviour breathed (John xx. 22), though, centuries before, God had a people spared 'mid the universal ruin, from Adam down to John the Baptist, and from that day to this the stream has still been swelling on, and, by the power of God, souls "lost" through Adam's fall have turned their eye to Christ, and thus, through faith in Him, exchanged their place in Adam for a place in Him; stepped out of the ruin of the first creation to stand before God in all the liberty and blessedness of the new race that He now sees in Christ, His own beloved Son.

This was the truth that He Himself explained to Nicodemus (John iii.); this was the truth the Jewish teacher found so hard

to understand, "Ye *must* be born again." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," the first creation; "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit," the new race. But here He did not stop; he further said, "The Son of Man *must* be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life," and thus, before the astonished ruler's eyes, was unfolded the way in which he was to be transferred from the low level of the first creation to the high platform of the new family; and, as we learn from chapter vii. and xix., he believed in Jesus, renounced himself in Adam, and became possessor of eternal life in Christ the Son of God.

As to the wondrous privileges and blessings inseparable from this life, the Scripture is not silent, as a careful study of John xiv. to xx. will show clearly.

His "life" is ours as we have seen. His "Father" thus becomes our Father, His "God" our God; His "peace" is ours, His "joy," His "love." His "words" refresh our hearts, His "word" directs our pathway, until His "glory" becomes ours, and we become like Him, and, far more, are with Him for ever. I do not dwell on these, but I would rather pause and ask you, dear

—, whether it is not sadly true that you, with all the human race, are on an equal footing in the sight of God, and, therefore, need, like me, “conversion?” This is freely offered to you now. Do not refuse it, but like me, confess your lost, your dead condition, and believe in Jesus unto everlasting life (1 John v. 13).

A MEDIATOR AND A RANSOM.

(Notes of an Address on Job xxxiii. and 1 Tim. ii. 3—7.)

THE truth of the gospel could scarcely be more beautifully expressed than it is in this passage in Timothy. It is a paragraph that contains a volume of truth in a very little space, and if a soul once gets the real meaning of it—lays hold of it for itself, it puts it into possession of peace with God.

In Job xxxiii. we have the very same thought illustrated by Elihu: Job was as busy as ever he could be, justifying himself, and goes the length of saying, “My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go” (xxxvii. 6). He never made it out, however, for at the end of the story he is obliged to put his hand to his mouth and say, “Behold, I am vile” (xl. 4). The Lord seems to say, “I will never let you go, Job, till you have given up

those filthy rags, your own righteousness, then *I* will justify *you*, I will give you my righteousness." When *you* get into the presence of God, like Job, *you* must say "I am vile."

Job went a little farther in chapter xlii. 5, 6, and said, "I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth THEE. Wherefore, *I abhor* myself and repent in dust and ashes." One of the strongest words in our language, "*Abhor!*" "I *abhor* myself!" Have you let go your own righteousness, now, Job? "Ah! dust and ashes!" he replies. A sight of God produces this. Only the presence of God can enable any to let go their own righteousness; not that they have got any to let go, really, only they think they have. It is like some young man building his hopes on some rich relative, and going on counting, and expecting, and acting as if it were all right, and certain; but by-and-bye he finds he is not in the will at all, his hopes are all dashed, and he is left worse than a beggar. But, when you have got to this place, to *abhor yourself*, then what a comfort it is to turn round and find *God loves you*, is it not? to find "God our *Saviour*" instead of our Judge.

The common thought is that God is our

Judge, and so He is ; but who made Him a Judge ? Who put God on the judgment seat ? You did ! I did ! The sin and guilt of man have forced God into the place of judgment. God must judge sin, or else God and man would be both alike ; neither of them thinking much about it ; and there would be no righteousness ; but, so far from His desiring to take the place of judgment, why even here, to Job, He says, “I desire to justify thee (xxxiii. 32). This is an answer to a question put by Job in the ninth chapter, when Bildad was putting barbed arrows into him, insinuating that he was a hypocrite, and informing him that “the hypocrite’s hope shall perish,” and further, that “God will not cast away a perfect man ” (viii. 13—20). In chapter iv. 2, Job replies, “How should man be just with God ? If he will contend with Him, he cannot answer Him one of a thousand ”—much less the other 999 things. More, “If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean ; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.”

Job saw it was all of no use.

Ah ! Job knew very well, however much he might try to justify himself before his friends, yet in his heart of hearts he knew

he could not stand before God ; and, when he has learnt this thoroughly, the grace of God comes in and shows him how he can be justified. This is what I want to show you to-night. How *you* can be justified. How *you* can be saved, and how you can know it, too ; and I would go farther and say, how you may be saved to-night, for God's salvation is a *present* salvation.

Does the salvation of a sinner rest on what a sinner can do ? No ! On what Christ *will* do ? No ! but on what Christ *has* done. The sinner is utterly helpless, he can do nothing more, Christ *has* done everything.

"It is finished," is the dying Saviour's legacy to a lost, helpless, guilty sinner. How the grace of God pursues a man, seeking his soul ; goes after him when he does not care a bit about it ; seeks him that He may save him. He pursued Saul of Tarsus when he only hated Him. He is pursuing *you*, following *you* in grace to-night, though you do not care for Him, and though you have come in here not caring even about the salvation of your own soul. You say, "Why do you single *me* out ?" I'll tell you. Because I want you to be saved. Oh ! let His grace, let His heart, who is thus pursuing you in love, win your heart for Him to-night.

There are five different ways Elihu speaks of here, in which God may go after a soul, and I have little doubt that almost every heart in this hall has been sought, in one or more of these ways, by God, and will silently range itself in one or other of these classes. You will know, in your own souls, if any or all of these ways have been true of you. But, first, he brings out the person of the Saviour.

It is all very well for me to tell you to come to Jesus, to believe on Jesus, but you want to know who He is; what kind of a Saviour He is. In chapter ix. 33, Job had said, "Neither is there any Daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both." What Job calls a "Daysman," Paul calls a "Mediator." "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus." One who, in the dignity and majesty of His own person, can reach to all the glory of the throne of God; One who can meet the heart of God, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, One who came down to all the degradation, and misery, and sin, and sorrow, and wretchedness of man. One who in the glory of His own person can lay one hand in righteousness on the very throne of God, and lay the other hand

in tender love on the shoulder of the poor sinner. "But," you say, "do *you* know such an one?" I do! I do! His name is JESUS. *Jesus*, the *Man* Christ Jesus. Elihu here presents himself as the type of Christ; and as Job had sighed for the Daysman, Umpire, or Mediator, he now steps in and fills up the gap between Job and God, saying, "Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead; I also am formed out of the clay." That is, I am a man! Such is Christ, a Man, a real Man; the One to whom, for whom, the heavens were opened more than once when He was on earth, and whom the Father's voice from heaven proclaimed to be His own beloved Son, yet laid in a manger. The reputed son of Joseph the carpenter, actually the son of Mary, and really in His nature the Son of God. The reputed son of Joseph He must be, in order to claim the throne of David; actually the son of the woman He must be, to redeem man; but really the Son of God He must be, if He is to meet the claims of God! Oh! to think of being *loved* by this One. Son of God! Son of man! If Son of God, what is there He has not the power to do? if Son of man, He can understand and meet the needs of my heart.

Trace Him through His life. Was there ever such an One? Think of those unknown thirty years at Nazareth. We get glimpses of it that let us know that, spent as it was at home, it was a life of perfection. He was the only One who ever lived a life suited to God, perfectly pleasing God. When He emerges into public life, at His baptism, the heavens are opened for the Father's voice to be heard proclaiming His pleasure in Him. Jesus is One who in the dignity, and beauty, and glory of His own person delights the very heart of God, but One whose heart is so ineffably tender that there is not the poorest or most wretched sinner who could not go to Him and tell out to Him all his woe and all his sin. He bore my sorrows in His life, that He might sympathise; He bore my sins in His death, that He might save. This is the "Daysman," the "Mediator;" this is "the Man Christ Jesus."

This is the One that God presents for your acceptance this evening. Are you afraid of such an One? The hypocrite might be afraid of Him, the Pharisee, the Saducee, might be afraid of Him, but was there ever a trembling sinner afraid of Christ? Never! Never! "My terror," he says (verse 7), "shall not make thee afraid." But ah!

there is a day coming when the terror of the Lord *shall* make you afraid ; there is an hour coming when, if you despise His love and mercy, you *shall* quake before Him. But now is the day of His grace, and “ My terror shall not make thee afraid ” is the soft and thrilling word of the Saviour to the chief of sinners now.

Do you say “ I am innocent ? ” That is a lie to begin with. Never was there one innocent since God put that pair in the Garden of Eden. If you are innocent you have no need of Christ, the Christ of Scripture, the only Christ I can present to you—the One who died because you are not innocent, died to make atonement for your guilt. Christ brings such boundless happiness to a soul, such well-springs of joy unfathomable. There is nothing good, nothing really happy out of Christ. Have you everything this world can give you? its luxuries, its pleasures, its gaiety, its smiles ? Soon you must leave them all behind, and pass away alone into eternity, and if you have not known Christ in time, will you ever know Him in eternity? No, never! If you have not slaked your thirst at the fountain of the water of life in time, think you, you will ever get one single draught thro’ the endless ages of eternity?

No, no ! never ! If you will not have Christ in time, you cannot have Him in eternity. If you enter eternity without Him, you must spend its long, its gloomy, its endless ages without Him ; the word of God tells you so. It is *now* you must be His, if you would be His *then*.

But Job says, “ He findeth occasion against me, he counteth me for his enemy ; he putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths ’ (v. 10, 11). Well, and do you not think it is a good thing for God to mark the paths of a man, when he is going farther and farther from Him : to mark his paths, and arrest him ? Elihu says I will tell you the truth about God, show you the injustice of your thoughts of Him. I would ask you to-night, has the fear of the Lord never made you tremble yet ? “ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Have you never felt it yet ? If you are here to-night quarrelling with His goodness and grace, you are very far from having this wisdom. It is true there is ruin and wretchedness around, but who has made the ruin ? It is man that has caused it, aided and abetted by Satan. It is not God who has caused it, but it is God who has come in to repair the breaches, to remedy what man has ruined ; nay, more

than this, man has ruined himself, and God brings in redemption through Christ. If I come to the cross, what an answer to the thought that God is my enemy. Why, He has bruised His own Son that He might deliver me. So far from having a hard thought towards me, Elihu shows us here five ways God takèd to seek to deliver me.

1st, "God speaketh once, yea twice" (verse 14). The voice of God has been heard by you. He has spoken and you have not heeded. Perhaps, twice this very day you have heard the voice of God through His Word. Tell me, are you converted yet? Have you come to Jesus yet? No, you have not! You are here to-night and still unsaved. You have heard the Word of God but you have not perceived it. You have let it go by you unheeded. Some of us who know the Lord can look back and remember how many times He spoke to us, and we did not listen. We were engulfed by the whirlpool of gaiety and pleasure, and His Word was nothing to us; His voice was not perceived. But has He given you up, given up His pursuit of your soul? No, and if the voice has passed till now, unheeded, uncared for, come to Jesus this evening, I beseech you. Though you may have fortune, favour, everything

that the world can place at your feet, you know that anything this world can give cannot fill your heart. Your heart is empty still if you have not Christ! You are unblessed still if you have not Christ! You are unsaved still if you have not Christ! You are lost, lost, if you have not Christ! You do not like the word "lost?" But it is true. Does it sound harsh? God says it. There is no middle ground, the word of God fixes you, either still among the *lost*, still among the *dead*, still among the *unsaved*, *without Christ*; or *found*, *alive*, *saved*, having Christ. "This my son was *dead* and is *alive* again, he was *lost* and is *found*." Do not turn to your neighbour. It is *you* I am talking to. *YOU*. I want *your* soul to-night. You say, "Why are you so much in earnest, why are you so anxious?" I will tell you. I am persuaded of the reality of heaven and its blessedness; I am persuaded of the reality of hell and its torments; I am persuaded of the reality of the salvation of God, and can I be anything else but earnest, very much in earnest? I beg of you, awake! I entreat you by the terrors of a coming judgment-day. I entreat you by the light of an open heaven. I entreat you by the darkness of that gloomy scene the portals of hell disclose. I implore you.

entreat you,—pause, consider, rush not headlong into that terrible abyss. Hear, hear the word of God, once, twice spoken to you! Will you turn your back on that love; will you turn a deaf ear to that voice, that voice that speaks as never man spake?

2ndly: But God has another way, “In a dream in a vision of the night,” &c. (verse 15.) He will try again in the night, when the eyes are heavy with slumber. God goes to that slumbering one, and awakens his soul by a dream. I could tell you of many an one who thus has been met by God. It may be that some here can remember some terrible dream, something that caused them to awake trembling and affrighted. But tell me, tell me, did you heed the warning voice; did you turn to God with the morning light, or are you still unheeding? Tell me, will you still go on despising, rejecting?

3rdly: There is another way God has of pursuing a soul, “He keepeth back his soul from the pit and his life from perishing by the sword” (verse 18), *i.e.*, He preserves from sudden danger. Well do I remember, when I was a boy of 16, a brother of mine fired at and shot a partridge. The bird, wounded mortally, flew awhile and then fell into the water. “Fetch it,” he said, and I

plunged into the sea. The bird was not worth sixpence, but I risked my life, risked my soul, to get it. Only the mercy of God brought me to shore, a few more yards and I must have sunk, for I was quite exhausted, the distance was long and the tide strong against me. But He spared me, that He might save me. He has saved me now. Perhaps, some of you can remember a time when He thus delivered you from some sudden peril. He spared your life to save your soul; but, tell me, is it saved? Not yet? Then see, He has another way of reaching your hardened and careless heart.

4thly: "He is chastened also with pain upon his bed," &c. This is a way God constantly takes to awaken a soul. One is laid upon a sick bed, perhaps a careful physician has done all that human skill can do, and tender relatives have watched around that couch, and lavished every loving care upon the sufferer, but the case seems hopeless, and the soul is trembling on the very threshold of eternity. God steps in. "I must have that soul," He says; "I will bless the means, I will bring back that one from the very gates of hell." Perhaps many of you can remember some such time in your history, when your life hung as by a

thread, and perhaps you thought you were very peaceful then, quite calm in view of death, not afraid to meet it, and you say you do not feel that calm and peacefulness now. Ah! Satan knows well enough how to give a soothing draught to a dying soul. Perhaps he told you you had never done anything in your life that was much amiss, that you were as good as your neighbours, and God was very merciful. But tell me, though, was your soul washed *then* in the blood of Jesus? Was that the ground of your peace, that He had met death and Satan for you? Or were you just deluded by Satan? He knows how to administer an anodyne to a dying soul—how to make a death-bed easy. Think you his power is not exerted then? Ah! have you never heard that word of God the wicked have “no bands in their death?” Go down on your knees and thank God you did not die: then!

I can very well remember the time when I was thus laid low. Had I that peace, you ask? Had I that balmy feeling? No! not I! I knew the truth too well. I knew I was lost! lost! I knew that if I died I should be lost for ever, and my cry was “Lord spare me, and I will serve thee.” I

doubt not many of you have thus been brought back from the brink of the grave, but has it brought you to Jesus? God delights to carry by the lips of some one the message of His love and grace to a soul thus on the very verge of eternity. "One among a thousand," perhaps, only, will speak the word of the Gospel of peace; nine hundred and ninety-nine will pass by your bed with never a word of Jesus; never a message from God for you; but one may bring you that message, "deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found *a ransom*." CHRIST is the RANSOM; He is also the Mediator. "He gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. iv. 6). This is one of the most magnificent statements in all the word of God; I hardly know anything to equal it. "He *gave himself* a ransom for all." The moment your heart believes in Christ liberty is yours, peace is yours, salvation is yours, blessing is yours, everything is yours. This is the glad tidings that was "to be testified in due time." Thank God it is due time still.

The due time still runs on, and Christ is still waiting to receive you; not now as a Judge but as a Saviour. The One who has met the claims of God is your Friend and Saviour. There He is, alive in heavenly glory

for you to trust in, and the moment you trust in Him you get a present salvation. All God asks of you is to believe in Christ. "Will there not be works," you say? Of course there will be works. "Will there not be a change," you ask? Of course there will be a very mighty change! I have very little belief in conversion where there is not this mighty change; a perfect revolution. Instead of having self for a centre, you get Christ for a centre; instead of having self to think about, and self to be seeking to please, you have Christ to think about, and Christ to please, and Christ to serve; Christ, who has given Himself a ransom for you. With regard to works, they come in in their right place. When we know Christ we seek to please Him. We work for Him, not to get life, but because we have got it. We do not labour to work out our own righteousness, for "He will render unto man his righteousness" (verse 26). "You cannot justify yourself," God says, "but, now, I can justify you, because I have righteously condemned and dealt with your sins in the person of that blessed substitute on the cross," and the consequence is, when your soul is brought to God, the blood of Christ washes your sins away, you know you are

saved, and your heart is left free to please, and serve, and follow Christ.

But there is a 5th way God takes in dealing with a soul, which I can only say a few words on rapidly. "He looketh upon man and if any man say I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not, He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light" (verses 27, 28), *i.e.*, if any soul honestly confesses his guilt. It is scarcely possible, but there might be one such case here to-night. A soul who had never heard the voice of God speaking before; never heard the word of God simply preached; never been aroused by a dream; never been preserved from sudden and eminent danger; never been brought back from sickness nigh unto death, from the brink of the grave. If there is such an one here, let me say, you have heard the word of God to-night; you have heard the voice of God to-night; you have heard the gospel simply preached, and you are responsible *now*; responsible to take your place before God in simple and honest confession, owning your guilt. Then comes the precious word "He will deliver his soul from going down into the pit; and his life shall see the light," *i.e.*, the knowledge of a present and

full salvation. If you are looking only to Christ, resting only on Christ, why, it is what His death has secured for you, that you should *know* the forgiveness of sins; know what His death has done for you. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." There is nothing more to be done, nothing more to be waited for. Christ can do nothing more, and you can do nothing at all.

When an anxious man asked "What must I do to be saved?" the answer was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." It is all God asks from you. Christ has gone up on high in all the perfection of His work for us, and God delights to say, as the fruit and consequence of His death and finished work, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom." If He says that in the Old Testament, He says in the New Testament "Who gave *Himself* a *ransom* for all." Oh! what a Saviour! and God would "have all men to be saved." I would tell the whole world if I could gather them together to listen to me, that when man's efforts were utterly useless, when he could do nothing, Christ "gave Himself," and ah! if there is one word that

could touch a heart that has never been touched before it is this, *He gave Himself! He gave Himself!* and, if He gave Himself unsought, unasked, uncalled for, has He not a claim on your heart? Shall not your heart be Christ's from this moment? Has He not a claim upon it? I can only say, if I had been undecided up till this very moment, I would decide for Christ to-night. Oh! had I ten thousand hearts I would give them all to Christ to-night! And, do not be ashamed to own Him; do not be ashamed to confess Him: do not be ashamed to go home and make a stand for Christ. He was not ashamed to stand for you, and to be scorned, and derided, and spit upon; He was not ashamed to die between two malefactors for you, and do not you be ashamed to own Him. May God give you—each one—to-night to know rest and peace in Himself.

FRAGMENT.

Procrastination.....To put off from day to day.—*Eng.*
Procrastination......The thief of time.—*Copy slip.* [*Dis.*
 PROCRASTINATION.....The thief of souls.—*An Evangelist.*
 PROCRASTINATION..The recruiting officer of hell.—
[R. Hill.

Reader, have you yet believed in and come to Christ, or are you still procrastinating? If so, beware!

HOMEWARD BOUND ; OR, THE
HEART WON.

FAR away on the trackless ocean, many, many miles from sight of land a ship is on her homeward passage from Australia ; she is the bearer of many a home-sick weary one, but none so anxious for the sight of home as Jessie, from the hills of Fife.

Years ago the iron hand of poverty had forced her family to sell their dearly loved little farm, and leave their native land in search of employment over the sea. With breaking hearts, they bade adieu to all that was dear to them, and, after many years of hard toil, they are now homeward bound, having repurchased their little farm in Fife. Far up in the bush lay the body of the valued wife and mother of the family in the cold ground, and Jessie had early to take upon her the care and toil of her father's young family. She had left Scotland a blooming girl in her teens ; now she is returning, worn out by a rough life in the bush ; a fatal disease, too, having laid its relentless grasp upon her still youthful form.

But Jessie heeded little the racking cough that gave her weary days and sleepless nights ;

and often she would smile and say, "I shall be well when I get hame, and see the hills o' Fife again." Her father's strong arms carried her daily on deck, where she lay watching the waves that bore her onwards towards her desired haven; and when the roughness of the weather, or her own weakness, made it impossible for her to be on deck, she would watch with an intense yearning for the first sight of land, and at times fancied she could see the outline of the hills of Fife from her cabin window. As days passed on, the sick one got more weary and faint, and her father saw with sorrow that she must be taken to a hospital, as soon as they got to land. It was hard to convince Jessie that this was a necessity, that deceitful nature of her disease giving her fitful gleams of strength, and a little relief from her cough, blinding her to the fact that she was so very ill; and when at length, she did reach Edinburgh, she could scarcely be persuaded that, for a time at least, she was unfit to continue her journey.

In great grief her friends left her in a ward of the infirmary, while they pursued their journey without her.

I was in the habit of visiting this infirmary, and there I first saw Jessie, the very

day she was left there by her friends. I had just entered the ward, and had been greeted by kindly smiles and welcome looks of recognition from some of the the suffering ones, when my eye rested upon one, who though a stranger, at once awakened my deepest sympathy. She was sitting up in bed ; her face, which was intelligent and pretty glowed with the excitement almost of despair, as she rocked herself to and fro from time to time, and then threw herself, exhausted, on the pillow, in a paroxysm of weeping. After a word or two with some of my old friends, I quickly crossed the ward to where she lay, and after a little tender soothing, she told me through her tears the story just related ; every now and then clasping my hand in almost childish weakness, and saying, "O you'll get them to take me hame? I must see the hills o' Fife again." With a promise that I would speak to the nurse about her, and see what could be done, I left her a little comforted.

As I went out, I called the nurse aside, and asked her what the doctors thought of Jessie's case. "O," she said, "both lungs gone, and no hope of recovery ; and my own thought is, she will never be off that bed." A strong desire filled me to return to that

sad, lone, sick one, and tell her of Christ. I had listened to her tale of sorrow, and seemed unable to do anything but sympathise; and I had failed to tell her of the only One who could satisfy her weary heart. I remembered I had some grapes with me, which I had brought for another patient, so I went back to her, and put them on her pillow, saying, as I did so, "Jessie do you know that Jesus loves you?" No! for if He did He would have taken me hame to Fife, and not left me amongst strangers." "Did any one ever speak to you about Christ in Fife?" "No!" "Did any one in Australia ever speak to you about Christ?" "No!" "Well, Jessie, perhaps God sent you to this hospital to hear about His beloved Son, who loved you so much, that He died for you; and He wishes you to be with Him for ever, in a land far more beautiful than the hills of Fife." She shook her head, as if incredulous, and said, "You never saw my hame." "No, Jessie, I have not; nor have I yet seen the home that God has prepared for those that love Him; but I have read about it, and I know it is more beautiful than any home on earth. Here you would, if spared a little, have many a weary, suffering day, Jessie; but

there, 'God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away'" (Rev. xxi. 4). Visiting hours were over; and having told her of Him who could save her, and make her happy for ever, I left with her a little Testament, in which I had marked for her some passages, and came away.

It was several days before I could again visit the hospital. I went in prayer that the Lord would give me the right word to meet Jessie's case. I found her much in the same state as before; her father had been to see her, and she had again passed through the disappointment of being left behind. I felt it was best to try and interest her with something outside her own sorrowful circumstances, so I spoke to her, as I would to a child, of Jesus, of whom she seemed quite ignorant.

Soon she was melted by the tale of what He had suffered for her; and through her tears said softly, "I never heard of such love. I thought there was no one could love me like Jamie," she said, pointing to a little ring on her finger; "he gave me that, when I left Scotland, and he has waited for

me all these years, and he came in to-day to see me; but I never heard of love like Christ's; it's more than any earthly love, far more."

I rested my head upon my hand, and let my tears have their own way, while I silently thanked God that the exceeding beauty of Christ had won this sorrowful heart. I had felt powerless to help her, but God had given her soul to grasp at once the most blessed of all gospels; for it was the person of the One who had died for her that had captivated her heart.

As I was leaving the ward she called me and said, "Will you write home and tell them I've got One now, who is more to me than the hill's o' Fife—or Jamie?" she whispered, as the colour rose to her cheeks, "though he knows I love him well." Then, after a moment's thought, she said, "No, the Lord will give me strength to write myself, for none of them know Christ."

It was a week before I saw Jessie again; a great change had passed over her face; it was calm and sweet, but the lines of death were on it, and her voice was feeble. She seemed not as usual to notice, as I entered the ward, and I had to lean over her and whisper, "Jessie, dear, you're very weak to-



"I spoke to her, as I would to a child, of Jesus."

day." "Yes." she said, smiling, "I'll soon be hame,—not to Fife," she added quickly, as if fearing I might misunderstand her, "but to see His face. O, tell me more about Him."

We had a blessed hour together. I shall never forget it. We feasted upon our meditation of Him, who is altogether lovely, the chiefest among ten thousand. I felt we should never meet again, for I was to leave Edinburgh for a time: I almost feared to tell her, for she seemed to cling to me, but she answered, "He is enough; He saved, and then He satisfied."

She seemed exhausted, so I left her for a few moments, to speak to a suffering one at the other end of the ward. As I was going out of the door, I turned round to take a last look at Jessie. I saw she was asleep; her sweet face like a piece of chiselled marble; a smile upon her parted lips. She was "homeward bound!" I involuntarily went up to her bed, and gently pressed a last kiss upon her pale forehead. A few days after I had left home, I got a message from a sister in the Lord, to say, "Jessie has gone home, full of joy!"

Reader, do you know anything of the Christ who first saved, and then satisfied Jessie? Has He saved you? Or is your

heart bound up with some earthly love, or in some cherished home, to the exclusion of Christ? The earthly friend may disappoint, and the earthly home pass away from your hands; and "what then?" You are left desolate, for you have no Christ. As one said, "Give me Christ, and I have everything: but give me everything without Him and I have nothing."

There is nothing real, or lasting, or abiding, but Christ. O, if you have Him not, come to Him as a lost sinner; come to Him now! But perhaps you may say, "Christ has saved me, but He has not satisfied me." Ah, I see you have not Christ as Jessie had; for He saved and then He satisfied; and why is this? Do you know anything of earthly love—a love that is satisfied with its object, and seeks nothing outside that object for its happiness? To be in the presence of the loved one, to hear the voice of the loved one, to watch for the smile of the loved one, to be silent in the overpowering joy of that love.—Ah, what you want is, to have your heart captivated by Christ: to be so overcome by His exceeding beauty, like the Queen of Sheba, when she visited Solomon—"There was no more spirit in her." Like Jessie, to say, "I never heard of such love."

Rest not, dear soul, in saying, "I am saved and know it," for the Christ who saves can satisfy, and will satisfy you if you give Him your undivided heart's affection. You cannot have Christ in the one hand and the world in the other. If you must have the world, you must have it without Christ. He can have no place in your ballrooms, your operas, your concerts! You must go there without Him. One said to me lately, "I know I am saved, but I can enjoy these things too." "Can you?" I answered, "then you must be very unlike Him. Nor are you satisfied with Him, for Christ does satisfy me, without such things." O, if you knew for one hour what it was to have your heart filled and satisfied with Christ, you would not be seeking satisfaction from the amusements of a world that has crucified Him. "The end of these things is death." "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

FAITH.—Faith is not a sense, nor sight, nor reason, but a taking God at His word. It is the eye of the soul. It was not the nimble foot, nor the strong arm, that were of use; but the eyes, however dim and weak, directed to the Brazen Serpent.

FIFTY-FOUR THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY SINS!

FIFTY-four thousand seven hundred and fifty sins! And what about them? They were all committed by one man! Surely he must have been a "sinner above all men!" Not so. His own words were that, if he could only live the remainder of his life as he had done the past, he had no fear of reaching heaven at the end. Indeed, his outward conduct was irreproachable and his character blameless. Then, how came he to commit so many sins? On his being asked if he had spent a careful and steady life, he replied that he had always treated his neighbour kindly and had been an honest man, whilst he could not say that he had ever sinned against God. On the truth of the last statement being questioned he acknowledged that he, with the rest of people, had sinned in thought, word, and deed. Thus far he pleaded guilty, and that before God.

Suppose his age to have been somewhat over fifty years, it follows that, sinning thus, at the rate of three times daily, he stood charged with no less than the awful amount of fifty-four thousand seven hundred and

fifty sins! And supposing, further, that he should live to the age of eighty years, he would then be amenable for the round sum of *eighty-seven thousand six hundred sins*.

Now this calculation is on the most moderate terms, reckoning for one sin in word, one in thought, one in deed daily; and yet in how many more points must he have even unwittingly offended!

Thus, then, this man, should he only live on as hitherto, must seek admission to heaven with this enormous charge against him.

Alas! how little the real nature of sin is understood, even by those who profess to shape their conduct by the word of God. How many are drifting down the stream, pluming themselves on the thought that, since they are kind neighbours, and moral, upright, and honest members of society, they have nothing to fear.

But on the "broad road that leads to destruction" there are two sides, and on each side a pathway. The one is frequented by drunkards, profane, godless, and dissolute people; but on the other treads, softly and unconsciously down, the professor of a truth which he does not possess. He who has "a name to live but is dead," who can condemn sin in others, but who forgets that he has sins

of his own. Yet each pathway has the same ending, and each traveller has his doom in the same place.

True, social laws distinguish carefully and well between the drunkard and the sober man, nor is morality, in every way, to be but commended and esteemed ; but the balances of divine equity are far more delicately adjusted than human scales, so that what may pass before the dull eye of man may be faulty in that of God. Now God's standard is that by which each action is to be measured ; and learn, O reader, that if "all unrighteousness be sin," so too, "*thy righteousnesses* are as filthy rags." Such is the decision pronounced by the word of God—such is the result of God's measurement. And surely this is exceedingly solemn ! Bad as open sin may be, the good works themselves, of an unconverted man, are unclean in His sight. Have you bethought yourself of this ? Perhaps, like him of whom you have been reading, you have been building on a blameless life, an amiable disposition, a charitable heart, or a religious character, without recollecting that in thought, word, and deed, you have sinned daily, until you have run up another such accumulation of crimes.

We read that David, the “man after God’s own heart,” wrote of himself that *innumerable* evils had compassed him about, and that his iniquities were *more than the hairs of his head*. Innumerable evils! an amount that could not be numbered; beyond calculation. And yet each one known to God; placed “in the light of His countenance;” “naked and opened before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.” And so with you, dear reader; sins unknown, or long since forgotten, have all been made note of by God; and remember that His word says, “The wages of sin is death,” and “after this the judgment!” Remember this: death is the wages of sin. Your repentance, your tears, your reformation, could never atone for you sin. Nay, the divine sentence pronounced on sin, all sin, every sin, is death. You must accept this sentence in all its fulness. God will never lessen one whit of its severity. It is demanded by divine justice and must be met. O unpardoned soul, whether deeply stained by open sin, or simply as “good as your neighbour,” can you meet this sentence? Can you receive such awful wages? But hearken! A substitute has died. A Daysman has interposed. A ransom has been given! Jesus has “once suffered for sins,

the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God ;” or again, “ God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us ;” or again, “ He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Will you not avail yourself, to-day, of this glorious substitution ? To believe and know that Christ has died for your sins, was delivered for your offences, and raised again for your justification, is to bring your soul on to the ground of *peace with God*. O remember the blood that cleanseth from all sin, that precious blood which can fit a soul for the presence of God on high, where nothing that defileth can enter. O remember Him who died, and who then said “ It is finished,” but who was raised again in proof of salvation being a finished work, finished by Him for us, our substitute, our Saviour, our righteousness, our all and in all. Oh, dear reader,

It is not thy tears of repentance nor prayers,

’Tis “ the blood that atones for the soul ;”

On Him then Who shed it *thou* mayest *at once*

Thy weight of iniquities roll.

Yea, rather, see them rolled away ; “ sins, as scarlet, made as white as snow,” by means of “ the precious blood of Christ.”

SAVED JUST IN TIME.

A SISTER writing February 4, says: "We have been for a little time to B——, and had a time of such refreshing as we have not had for ten years. I must tell you of one case. A poor old man, not knowing he had a relative in the world, having buried his wife and child years ago, himself dead in trespasses and sins, and utterly ignorant of God's way of saving sinners, came to the Gospel preaching; he was awakened; came to know himself a sinner before God, and for a week or two was in great distress of soul, almost in despair. Just three weeks this evening he came to the preaching, and while the word was sounded in his ears, "God so loved the world," &c., Jesus was revealed to his heart as the One that gives "eternal life." He was filled with joy, and after the preaching came forward and confessed Christ openly. He went to his lodgings and told what God had done for his soul—he sat down to supper with a face beaming with joy—he did not taste it—his head fell back—he was gone to be "for ever with the Lord!"

COME !

IT is most blessed to trace the salvation of God, and His presentation of it, as conveyed in this one little word, all through the pages of Scripture. It seems as if He never wearied of repeating the call, while ever there is an ear to hear. Hinted first, as we might say, in the promise of the seed of the woman and the acceptance of Abel's sacrifice, it was plainly uttered in the ears of Noah, "*Come* thou and all thy house into the ark" (Gen. vii. 1), while the voices of the prophets re-echoed it in many and varied strains. "*Come* now, and let us reason together," are His words to Israel; "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Is. i. 8). "Ho every one that thirsteth, *come* ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; *come* ye, buy and eat; yea, *come*, buy wine and milk, without money and without price" (Is. lv. 1). Again, "Incline your ear, and *come unto Me*; hear and your soul shall live." Thus the current of His love and grace may be traced all through the pages of the Old Testament; and, if we turn to the New, it is but to find the gracious

words breathed forth in richer, fuller, wider strains from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ. "God hath in these last days spoken unto us *by His Son*;" but the message is the same "Come!" ringing out, now, over a world whose horizon is dark with the clouds of coming judgment, just as it did "in the days of Noah."

Did space permit, we might meditate with profit upon the different truths connected with this sweet and blessed invitation—the call to *salvation* (Luke xiv. 17), the call to *service* (Mark i. 17), to *discipleship* (Matt. xix. 21), to *glory* (Matt. xxv. 34); but as none of these latter can be responded to, until the first has been accepted, we must linger upon *it*, breathing out, as it does, the tender, gracious, divine solicitations of His heart who uttered it. "COME unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28). Again, "If any man thirst, let him COME unto me, and drink" (John vii. 37); and yet again, in the last page of divine communication from God to man, "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come! and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst COME; and whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17).

One feels almost inclined to let these glori-

ous messages of this “great salvation”—God’s “glad tidings”—speak *for themselves* to the hearts and consciences of ruined sinners ; but if God by His Spirit gives us some thoughts of its *freeness* and *fulness*, we may bless Him for them.

And first as to its *freeness*. How vast, how wide the invitation : “*Come—ALL* ye that labour and are heavy laden :” How unconditional the promise : “I will *give you rest*.” Reader, are you one of the weary ones of this wide groaning earth ? Are you heavy laden with the burden of sin and suffering, and having tried the world and its varied resources, have you turned, unrelieved, unsatisfied from it all ? Here is an offer of rest and peace, from the lips of One who alone can say, “*Not as the world giveth*, give I unto you.”

Or, it may be, having spent the past, the best years of your life, your time, your talents, your self, in the service of sin and of Satan, you now think some preparation is needed e’er you can accept this “great salvation ;” that when you have turned over a new leaf, begun to read your Bible more, or to pray, or to give alms, that *then* you may think of coming to God, and hope to be accepted ! But not so : God makes no bar-

gains with guilty sinners, He asks no preparation from them, for He knows how utterly unable they are, *of themselves*, to make themselves fit for His presence. His grace is like His sunlight; we cannot *buy* it, we do not *merit* it, but we may receive it, and bask our souls in the conscious enjoyment of it. But until we have accepted salvation from Him, and know the Lord J sus Christ as our Saviour, He counts our best works but as "splendid sins;" all our "righteousness" but as "filthy rags."

Thus He offers salvation freely now to guilty sinners, on the ground of the atoning work of His Son. He gives a world-wide invitation; it is "*unto all*," but it is only "*upon all them that believe*," that simply take God at His word when He says, "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" (John iii. 15). "The gift of God is eternal life," without money and without price, requiring no fitness, no preparation, but an empty heart to trust His love, and an empty hand to take His gift!

"He makes no hard conditions,
'Tis only "*take and live*."

What wondrous grace ! How vast, how full, how free ! The heart bows down in the contemplation of it, and yet ever fails to prove its full "breath and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge !"

But if we have barely touched on its *freeness* to "*all*," and to "*whomsoever*," what can we say of its *fulness*, of what those receive who accept this loving call "Come !" It is life ! Eternal life ! Life in the risen Son of God. The one who "Himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree," and "once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." It is life for the *soul* ! Oh ! do you know how to value this ? You know how to prize the return of health to yourself or some loved one, after an illness in which life was despaired of ; and precious doubtless it is. Yet that is but life temporal of the body, and what compared to that of *soul* ? Eternal, never-ending existence which must be spent either in endless joy or endless woe ; endless delight, or endless despair ; endless light and love in the presence of God, or in "blackness of darkness for ever !" Which will it be ? The choice now rests with you. The decision now lies in your own hands. The world-wide invitation now

is "*Come!*" Come, lost and ruined sinner, and on the ground of Christ's finished work of atonement, receive from the hand of God eternal salvation—everlasting life!

"*Come!*" 'Tis Jesus gently calling,
Ye with care and toil opprest,
With your guilt, howe'er appalling,
"*Come!* and I will give you rest."

For your sins He "once has suffered,"
On the cross the work was done;
And the word by God now uttered
To each weary soul is "*Come!*"

But, though this is the invitation of His grace now, a day is fast approaching of which I must warn you, when, if this offer of salvation through Christ has not been accepted, the same lips which uttered the gracious invitation will pronounce the solemn dismissal, "Because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched forth my hand and no man regarded, I will also laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh" (Prov. i. 26). "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41).

But not yet, not now, not while this day of God's grace is running on, and His "glad tidings are sounding forth, are these terrible words uttered in any, even the vilest sinner's

ears. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." And now God's word is "*Come !*" and "Take of the water of life freely." "Tell them," said a young man who was dying in the workhouse infirmary, as his thin bony finger rested for a few moments on the 6th verse of Rev. xxi., "tell them when you speak to sinners that it is *freely*—FREELY—FREELY. It is the message of God from the death-bed of one who, though a great sinner himself, had proved the truth of it." Yes, reader, on the authority of the word of the living God, "who is not a man that he should lie," we say you can "*take the water of life freely*," "without money and without price." Just as you are, in all your sin, your wretchedness, your misery, your destitution, "Come !" Fear no repulse, for the same One who bids you come, also promises "*Him that cometh* unto me I will *in no wise* cast out." Oh, how full, how free, is this "great salvation," and how wondrously blessed it is to find God Himself pressing it upon sinners ; for "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them ;" and now "we are ambassadors for Christ, as though GOD DID BESEECH 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).

Once more then we utter it, "*Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*" O'er the distant hills of your guilt and separation from Him—reaching even to the "far country" of sin, and ruin, and want, to which you have wandered—the unlimited offer goes forth. "*Come!*" guilty one, just as you are; "*Come!*" weary one, with your heavy burden; "*Come!*" ruined one, with nothing to pay; "*Come!*" backslider, with your trembling heart; "*Come!*" helpless; "*Come!*" hopeless; yea, "*Come!*" dying one, unto this gracious Saviour, who offers the water of life freely. God grant that before you lay down this book you may know the joy of this coming to Christ! If you have known anything of the bitterness and misery, the wretchedness and want, of the prodigal's career (as which of us have not?), God grant you may know now the deep, unspeakable, ineffable joy of the return to the Father (Luke xv. 20); of feeling his "kiss" of reconciliation upon your cheek, receiving his "ring" of eternal union on

your hand, and being clothed with his “robe” of perfect and spotless righteousness. Ever within His heart, now to be for ever within His *home*, to “Go no more out.”

God grant that e’er you lay aside this book the utterance of your heart may be:—

“ *Just as I am*—without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid’st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, *I come !*

“ Just as I am—and waiting not,
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come !

“ Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind,
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in Thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come !

“ Just as I am—Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve ;
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God I come !

“ Just as I am—Thy love, I owe,
Has broken every barrier down,
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come ! ”

Can you say, as you see Jesus at the right hand of God, “That is the proof that all is clear for my soul?” God makes Jesus to be the one proof as well as the one accomplisher of salvation. I call upon you who have received Christ to treat every question or doubt as a sin

THE TWO DEATH-BEDS; OR,
"SAVED" AND "LOST."

A CHRISTIAN woman was dying, and sent for a servant of God, to whom she was well known, to be with her during the last and trying moments of her natural life. He came as desired, and kneeling beside her bed, asked the One who had overcome death to make His sustaining and comforting presence felt by this dear, dying child of God. While thus engaged, the woman's husband, a wicked, hardened, dissolute man, came suddenly into the room, and commanded God's servant to rise up from his knees instantly, and cease praying, for he would "allow no more of it."

Notwithstanding the effort of Satan thus to disturb and embitter the few remaining hours of God's saint, that prayer was graciously answered, and her happy soul, released from its earthly tenement, passed away out of a scene of wretchedness and misery to be for ever with the Lord she loved, which is "far better."

Some months following the above solemn and yet happy event, the same minister of the gospel was requested to visit a man who

was at the point of death, and wished to see him.

Upon entering the room he recognised in the poor, dying man, the husband of the Christian woman whose death-bed he had attended some time before, and whose end was so peacefully happy.

The poor man, turning his restless eyes upon him, said, "Sir, you remember me? I am dying, and I'm lost! Pray for me, pray for me!" But God's servant felt he *could* not pray: his mouth seemed closed, while his heart was full. Again the wretched man, in his agony of mind, besought and entreated of him to pray. He knelt down and uttered a few words, pleading the God of all grace to save the poor perishing one's soul but he felt, in his own heart, they were not real *prayer*! He advised the dying man to arrange his worldly affairs for his family's sake, as he had but a very short time to live, and then left him, feeling that he could neither do nor say anything more. But the most solemn part of this account has yet to be told. The moment approaching, when death, as the "wages of sin," must have the mastery—the man who had time after time rejected Christ as his Saviour, who had often and often heard the gospel of God's

free salvation preached, and would not accept it—this man died in the clutches of Satan, shrieking out as his last audible words, “I AM DYING, AND I AM LOST!”

What a contrast did these two death-bed scenes present! The first one whose sins had been all forgiven, and washed away by the blood of Christ, her Saviour. The happy consciousness of this fact gave the dying woman a deep, settled, unruffled peace, of which nothing could rob her, not even *death*, for it had no terrors for *her*. She was calmly awaiting the glad moment to arrive when *death* should come in the natural course of things, and burst the chains which held down her spirit to earth, that it might soar up to its living source in HEAVEN!

But how different and awfully solemn were the last moments of the poor wretched man. He had lived “without God,” and without hope in the world, and felt himself sinking slowly, surely, into HELL; everlasting perdition was his portion, and he knew it, for with his dying breath he shrieked out, “I AM LOST, I AM LOST.”

Oh! reader, whoever you are, whatever your condition in life, if you do not know what it is to have all your sins washed away through the blood of Christ the Saviour, if

you have not yet had the question of sin for ever settled between God and yourself, do not rest a single hour until it is so. Delay not, nor procrastinate even *one* hour, for by so doing it may prove fatal to your eternal salvation; remember that though you may be in the bloom of health, "In the midst of life we are in death!" Do not deceive yourself, nor lull your conscience by the thought that you have not been guilty of any gross moral wickedness, have not committed many sins during your life, and therefore are not bad enough to be sent to hell! You were born in sin and shapen in iniquity, therefore a sinner by nature. "There is none righteous, no not one," but, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 11, 23). Think not that you have to obtain salvation by your "good works," for "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his (God's) sight" (Rom. iii. 20). Come to God as you are, a lost, undone, hell-deserving sinner. Come now and shelter yourself under cover of the precious blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin (1 John i. 7). The choice is left with yourself to choose either the way to heaven and everlasting happiness, or the way to hell and eternal misery! The gates of heaven are

open now ; oh ! enter while there is time and opportunity.

The "straight and narrow way" which leads to heaven is sprinkled with the blood of Christ, the lamb of God, and even the chief of sinners may tread in that path without fear, having the consciousness of sins put away, and forgiven. Christ has "obtained eternal redemption for us," by His finished work upon the cross (Heb. iv. 12), He has borne God's wrath and judgment on account of sin, all His righteous claims have been met *there*, God is satisfied, and in perfect love is patiently waiting to welcome every sinner who comes to Him through Christ Jesus. If you refuse to know God as your Saviour now, you will one day have to meet Him as your Judge, and hear Him say, "I know you not. Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Reader, and fellow-sinner, if still unsaved, "flee from the wrath to come." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

The gospel is not twilight, still less is it darkness, it is *light* for those who need it.

LIVING ALONE; OR, WITHOUT
CHRIST.

AT the top of a steep hill, where two roads met, and where the wild wintry blasts from the mountain beyond swept right round the corner upon it, stood the poorhouse of the village of B——. Poor it certainly was; a wretched abode. The authorities whose business it was to care for the poor, had chosen it as a suitable dwelling for those who could not afford to have a roof of their own, under which to find a shelter, while the remnant of their weary days was ebbing out. Nothing but the utmost distress of circumstances, or the iron hand of starvation staring them in the face, would force any to seek a home in such a place; consequently, it at times stood quite empty; and, when any had the misfortune to be sent there “to live rent free,” as they were politely told, no provision was made for their daily need, save an occasional scanty supply of coals and a very small weekly allowance from the parish funds by no means adequate to sustain life. I never liked to pass this melancholy abode. It was a two-story house, with the roof in very bad repair, the chimney-cans broken, and the small windows patched with paper

or stuffed with rags. It had two cheerless chambers below, and two above ; the access from the lower to the upper story being by an almost perpendicular staircase.

One day, as I was passing this wretched abode, I observed a feeble curl of grey smoke coming from one of the broken chimney-cans. I stopped to wonder who could be living there. A woman stood a short way from the door, so I went up to her, and said "Can you tell me who is in the poorhouse just now?"

"Auld Peggie," she answered. "She's been sold out o' house an' hame; and she's there noo livin' a' lane."

"Old Peggie," I said; "Is that the old woman who for years has gone about in rags, with a basket on her arm, and a clay pipe in her mouth?"

"The same," said the woman, laughing: "onybody kens her, I'll warrant."

Peggie was an old village celebrity, the terror of my childish dreams; and for years past I had wondered where she lived. "Poor Peggie," I said; "And is she living all alone here?"

"Yes," said the woman; "its a puir place and she has nane to care for either her soul or body."

I would fain have passed the door of that dirty, dreary house, but I could not: there was a soul there "living alone," and "without Christ." I knocked and was answered by a hoarse "Come in." The crazy door creaked upon its hinges as I passed into one of the lower apartments; its mud floor was wet and dirty; its furniture consisted of a closed-in wall bed (admirably constructed to exclude all light and air), a small wooden table, a chair, a low stool, and a wooden plate, a rack on the wall, in which stood two or three plates, a basin, a mug, and a broken tea-pot; on the fire was a small iron pot on three legs. The inmate of this room sat on the low stool by the fire, smoking a much-blackened, short clay-pipe; her cotton gown and cap were dirty and ragged, and her boots almost worn out. Her face was sallow, wrinkled and ill-tempered, and her wandering eye told its own tale; no rest, no peace within.

I sat down without invitation, and, while Peggie continued smoking, I looked to the Lord to show me in what manner I could best present Christ to a soul in such a state of moral degradation. "Peggie," I said, by way of introduction, "You don't know me?" "Hoot," she growled, "I've kent ye from a bairn, you're one o' the leddies from the

G——.” “You are right,” I answered, “though I never spoke to you in my life; but I heard you were living alone here, and I came to speak to you about a Friend and Comforter for such lonely ones as you.” “Whar does He bide?” “At the right hand of God now, Peggie, but once He was down here and suffered and died for you and me, that He might have us with Him for ever.” “Gae wa, gae wa,” she said, waving her wrinkled hand and arm, “if it’s Christ ye mean I’d rather be without Him, I’ve lived without Him mair than seventy years, and I’ll live on without Him.” “But you are very old Peggie, and death must come in at your door some day, and that before long, and how can you meet God as you are; a sinner, laden with sins; you’ve served satan long enough, won’t you turn to Christ now?”

I pressed upon her the nearness of death, and judgment if she continued to reject Christ. She seemed a little frightened, took the clay pipe from her mouth, and laid it at the side of the fire, and gazing at me, said, “Will He save me noo, jist as I am?” “Yes, just as you are, for He came to seek and to save lost sinners like you; and He has given His word that He will save you this moment if you believe upon Him,



I sat down without invitation.

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.' " "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." For a few moments she rested her aged head on her hands, as if weighing in a balance eternal life in Christ, and life without Him! I silently prayed. When I looked at her she had resumed her pipe; her face was callous and unmoved.

I rose, for I had staid to the utmost limit of my time, and said, "Well, Peggie, are you to have Christ now?"

Slowly she answered, "Na, na; I've lived without Him seventy years, and I can live without Him the rest o' my days."

"Peggie," I said, "if you are determined to live without Christ, you must die without Him, and spend eternity without Him!"

It was a week ere I could again be in the village; we lived some miles from it, and only came in once a week. I eagerly longed for the day when I could again speak of Christ to this aged sinner, living without Him. Quickly I ran up the hill, knocked at the door, and getting no answer, went in. Peggie's low stool was empty, the fire was out, her pipe was broken on the floor, the

bed looked tumbled and disturbed. I drew aside the sliding panel of the bed, and stood horror stricken,

There lay Peggie, her withered arms thrown above her head, as if in conflict with some unseen foe. I listened, but there was no sound: her breathing had for ever ceased. I touched her hand; it was cold. She was dead.

On going to the woman who had told me of her first, she would scarcely believe she was dead. She had seen her as she passed the window a few hours before, smoking her pipe by the fire as usual, so that she was taken completely by surprise at this sudden announcement of her death.

I have written this account of Peggie specially for the aged who are still unsaved; O may it be a word of warning to you. You may be very old, but you are not too old to be saved. Your time here cannot be very long, it may be very short. Delay not a moment; put not longer off what you have put off too long already; accept Christ now, lest you perish like those who, refusing to have Christ to live with, must die without Him. Doubtless poor Peggie little thought as she smoked her pipe for the last time, that in a few moments she would be in eternity.

If you are old and grey-headed in sin, there is all the more need for you to be in earnest about your soul's salvation. The young may live many years ; the middle-aged may live some years ; but the old must die soon !

“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.”

THE HYPOCRITE'S HOPE.

“Can the rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow without water? Whilst it is yet in its greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb. So are the paths of all that forget God ; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish ; whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web.”—Job viii. 11—13.

THESE verses, beloved reader, are solemn and searching. They show the necessity of being real, for “the hypocrite's hope shall perish.” How different all is as to the path and hope of a real Christian. This is sweetly given to us in Romans v. 1, 2 : *“Therefore being justified by faith, we (real Christians) have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ : by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”*

A Christian's present portion and hope are here described ; he is justified, has peace with God, stands in grace, and rejoices in hope of glory. This belongs to every simple believer in the Lord Jesus. Do you say, "Oh, that is worth having?" You never said a truer word in your life; and now I would ask you one question: would you like to have it? "Whom do you mean?" do you ask. I mean you dear unsaved reader. I am not speaking to those who are Christians, but to those who are not. "That is a very straight line," you say. It is, but which side of it are you? Do you say, "We are professing Christians?" I do not care a bit what you profess; the devil does not mind a bit your being a professing Christian; nay, more, he will help you to be such. Are you a professing Christian, and nothing more? Then you are a hypocrite! Are you a professor of Christ, and not a possessor of Christ? Then I want to show you your hope. "What hope?" you say. Oh, the hypocrite's hope. We have seen in Rom. v. 2 the Christian's hope, viz., "the glory of God," and he rejoices in that hope. We see the hope of the man who is not a Christian in the verses at the head of this paper. It is a false hope. Before the sharp sickle of death

comes, and you are carried from time into eternity, see to it my reader, that your hope is not this. Is it mere profession without reality? There is no root, then; nothing to sustain the profession; you are like the rush, or the flag without water—wither away you must. Mark the 13th verse, “So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite’s hope shall perish.” “So;” mark that word. “Ah,” I hear some one say, “I am not a hypocrite.” What are you then? A Christian? “No, I have not cared anything about these things.” Totally careless are you? Well, you shall perish in just the same way. “SO are the paths of ALL *that forget God.*” This sweeps the scene entirely; there is not one left; not one. If you are not in full association of life with Christ Jesus, you, too, shall perish; “All that forget God;” *i.e.*, every simple, careless, unconverted man or woman. Do you say, “Oh! but I am not this careless person?” What are you then? “I make a profession of Christianity; in my earliest days my mother instructed me, and as I grew older I became a teacher in the Sunday School, and member of a Church, and now that I am advanced in years I have a good hope.” What is your hope? Are you converted yet?

Have you received Christ; Has your heart tasted the sweetness of knowing His love? Has your soul been washed through the cleansing power of his blood? If you have not been savingly brought to God, the word of God classes you on the same ground as the openly careless. If it is *profession* merely with you, and not *possession* of Christ, it is only hypocrisy; and remember “the hypocrite’s hope shall perish.”

Oh, what a thing for you to wake up by-and-bye in the lake of fire, and then to discover that you have been all wrong! Is it not better to get a burning word of warning now, and wake up in time, while still you can turn round, while still you can get off this road, that, notwithstanding all its pretensions leads straight down into the pit? Would to God I could tear away the garment of external rites, no profession of Christianity—nothing but a saving knowledge of Jesus, will avail them anything. Knowing something *about* Him will not do, you must know *Him*; this only is eternal life. Is it not better to have the conscience cut to the quick *here*, and the remedy applied *now*, than to have the conscience cut to the quick in the light of eternity, and to find out then that you are, what REALLY YOU ARE NOW, an utterly lost

person. What an awful thing to find this out when it is too late, when there is no remedy !

But, dear reader, I hope you have no desire to be a hypocrite, and at least from this moment, if never before, will be in real earnest about the salvation of your precious soul. Are you anxious to be saved? then hearken to the word of God I now quote: "For when we were yet WITHOUT STRENGTH, in due time Christ died for the UNGODLY. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet SINNERS, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were ENEMIES, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement (reconciliation—margin)" (Rom. v. 6—11). God has received the atonement, we receive the reconciliation. In this passage God shows us our natural state in four aspects. "*Without strength,*" "*ungodly,*" "*sinner,*"

“*enemies.*” What a picture of each unsaved soul! Yea, shall I say of you, reader? It was my state once, but, thank God, it is not now. Is your case too bad for God? No. He perfectly meets your need by His blessed Son. You are without strength to do good, though with plenty of strength to do evil. What, then? How does God meet a sinner “WITHOUT STRENGTH?” Have you learnt your own helplessness? Then listen: “When we were yet without strength, Christ died.”

When it was fully proved, after 4,000 years of probation, to try if man had any strength for good, then Jesus came. The time when He came was remarkable. He appeared “*in due time,*” *i.e.*, when it had been proved that man was utterly helpless. “*In due time* Christ died *for the ungodly.*” What a word! What is the ground of a sinner’s salvation? “Christ died!” How can I have any hope? “Christ died!” But I am “without strength.” “Christ died!” For whom? THE UNGODLY! Look at it! Oh, look at it! Drink it in in all its sweetness, “Christ died for the *ungodly.* Have not you been without God all your life? “Christ died for the ungodly.” Do you care to come in among that class now? Did He die for the godly? Where was such a man to be found?

There was not one really godly, not one whose mind and ways met the mind of God, and then, because of that, Jesus came in and died for those who had not met the mind of God, viz., "the ungodly." "But," you say, "How am I to be sure Jesus died for me?" Suppose your name were written in the word of God, would you be more comfortable, or sure that Jesus died for you? No! Because the moment you were going to take the comfort of it to yourself some one might step in and say, "There is some one else of the same name, it does not mean you, He did not die for you." But the title "*ungodly*" no devil in hell can take from you; he cannot say it is not your character; and, if it is your character, then Christ has died for you. Tell me, did you ever think, that *Jesus died for you*? Oh, did you ever think of it, *He died for you*?

But God commends His love in a peculiar way, the total contrast of man's. The apostle names three characters, 1st, "*a righteous man*," that is, a man that one can say nothing against, except that he is rather hard, one who gives every man his due and expects the same in return, who would pay the to last farthing and claim to be paid to the last farthing. Is he one who gains the affection of

people? No. Does the heart go out after such an one? No. He may win respect, but will one die for him? "*Scarcely*," the apostle says. But, 2ndly, give me "*a good man*," one like John Howard or George Peabody, one who will sacrifice himself or his wealth for the good of others, what men call a philanthropist; will any die for such? "*Peradventure*," he says; but, 3rdly, "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet SINNERS, Christ died for US." It comes with a sort of gushing warmth about it that goes straight to the heart. Are you *a sinner*? *Christ died for you*. Oh! what wondrous love!

And now there is a fourth aspect in which we appear "enemies." Are you "without strength?" Christ died for you! Are you "ungodly?" Christ died for you! Are you a "sinner" going on in all the lusts of the flesh? Christ died for you. Are you an "enemy?" He laid down His life for you, that He might reconcile you to God! Oh, will you not say "I have been an enemy, but I ground my arms from this hour, for I see that, when I did not care for Him, He cared for me; I was exposed to the wrath of God, and His Son bore that wrath for me; Jesus has been my substitute; Jesus died for me! How deep

is His love to me ; I see it all. No longer can I be numbered among the ranks of His foes. His love has laid hold of me ; that cross on which my Lord expired has made peace for me, that cross has delivered me, that cross wins my heart. I have discovered the deep untold love of God to me, my heart is caught, caught by the love of God." All this a simple believer in the Lord can say. How great the change when you believe? You are "*justified* by his blood," "*saved* from wrath through Him," "*reconciled* to God," and can now "*joy* in God ! "

What were we ? "Without strength," "ungodly," "sinners," "enemies." But we have heard and believed the Glad Tidings. What are we ? "Justified," "saved," "reconciled," we "joy in God," and all because "Christ died for us." These are blessed realities ! How different from "the hypocrite's hope."

ARE YOU AFRAID OF HIM ?

ON going to look over an empty house, in the neighbourhood of London, which was to let, I found a very clean and civil old woman in charge, who most readily answered all questions—showing me over the place

with the greatest alacrity and attention. Just as I was leaving, my eye lighted upon an old, coverless Bible, lying on the stairs, as if not worth carrying away when the house was emptied of its furniture. On taking it up I asked my old friend what book it was?

“Oh!” said she, “sure ’tis a very good book!”

“Why is it a good book?”

“Because it tells us of heaven and of God.”

“Are you afraid of Him?” I continued.

“Indeed I am,”—quoth she, suiting the action to the word by placing her hands upon her hips, till her elbows stuck out akimbo—“about the only one who I am afraid of!”

Poor dear! How true; how *natural*; a thorough daughter of a coward father—of Adam; who, when he heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the evening, and the question “*Where art thou?*” said, “*I was afraid.*” For once the world is right when it repeats the saying, “Conscience makes cowards of us all.” The fall brought in conscience—*i. e.*, the knowledge of good and evil—and that told man he could not stand in the presence of the Holy, Holy, Holy God.

“ Ah ! ” I replied to her ; “ that is because you don’t know Him as the One who loved poor sinners, and gave Jesus, His Son, to die in the place of such as you and me, who deserved eternal wrath ; and now because Jesus HAS died, IS risen from the dead, and ascended to God’s right hand, He has sent the Holy Ghost to tell us through the word—this Bible—that ‘ *all* who *believe* ARE justified from ALL things ” (Acts xiii. 39). She listened as I tried to tell her of God’s love, and the “ It is finished ” work of the Lord Jesus Christ for sinners ; a work by which all who believe *are* made fit to be in the presence of God ; are fit NOW ; Christ being their fitness ; their sins having been met by His precious blood ; their positive badness all put away ; and the One who did this constituted their positive goodness before 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. 21).

The old woman said she would take this precious book home, and read it ; giving me at the same time, some pins, which she drew out of her dress, to mark one or two of the passages I referred to. Two of them were, “ To him that WORKETH NOT, but BELIEVETH

on him that justifieth the ungodly, HIS FAITH is COUNTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Rom. iv. 5); and, "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). May the Spirit of God have taken home to her heart these two portions; she would then have learned that instead of the loving, giving God being "about the only one she was afraid of," He had Himself righteously removed every cause for fear in giving His Son to die, to atone for, and by His blood cleanse the sinner; and, further, the poor hell-deserving sinner, thus cleansed is "accepted in the beloved," so that not only has guilt been put away, but a perfect righteousness for the once guilty one been established. Thus she would have been able to say, on the warrant of God's word, "I *have* peace *with* GOD through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1). And further, "And not only so, but I joy (make my boast) in GOD throug'h our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 11). No fear; PEACE *and* JOY in its place.

And now, my reader, how is it with *you*? "Are you afraid of Him?" If so, why delay availing yourself of the provision God has made for a fearful descendant of coward Adam. This He has provided in the last

Adam—the second man—God’s own Son, so that instead of being afraid, and trying to hide from God, as your first parent did, you can stand in the full blaze of “*the light*,” and say, “Perfect love casts out fear,” for God Himself—the HOLY GOD—says in His own Word, and THEREFORE I believe it, “Herein is love with us (margin) made perfect that we may have boldness in the day of judgment There is no fear in love, because, as He is, SO ARE WE in THIS world” (1 John iv. 17, 18). It is so blessedly simple. God has said it; Jesus has done it; I believe it; Do you?

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with Him also freely give us all things. * * * It is *God that justifieth*, who is he that condemneth?” (Rom. viii. 31—34.)

“Clean every whit—Thou saidst it, Lord;
Shall one suspicion lurk?
Thine surely is a faithful word,
And Thine a “finished work.”

He who listens without care to the gospel is trifling with hell-fire.

WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

“The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir. Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, the morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye; return, come.”—Isaiah xxi. 11, 12.

“**W**ATCHMAN, what of the night?
Watchman, what of the night?”

This is the word of the scoffer, the sneer of the unbeliever, not the enquiring word of one desiring to know; and I find the counterpart of this scoffing question in the New Testament Scriptures, where Peter says, “There shall come in the last days scoffers” walking, not in the faith of Christ, not in the hope of the gospel, not in the love of God, not in the light of eternity, not in the light of the judgment-day, but walking, like you, who know not Christ, after their own lusts, after their own wills, saying, as you say, “Where is the promise of his coming? It is all very well for you preachers to talk of the coming of Christ, to say He is soon coming; why Paul talked of looking for Him, and the Thessalonians were turned from idols to wait for Him, and 1800 years have rolled round since then, and all things continue just as they were; and you tell us of the

Lord's coming, but it is all a delusion ; better spend your time on other subjects." But, ah ! though you may scoff, He is coming : "The morning cometh, and also the night." He may be here ere you lay down this paper. He knows. Everything around only impresses more deeply than ever on my heart the solemn fact—"The coming of the Lord draweth nigh"—gives certainty, overwhelming certainty to the conviction that that day is at hand. These are the last times ; you are in the last days, and the very fact of your scoffing does but add to the proof, for the word of God tells us in the last days scoffers shall come. But ere He comes what has an evangelist, what has a preacher of the gospel to bring out now ? What must he tell you, but that Jesus, the Holy One and the Just, came down, took that wondrous journey from the throne of God to the cross, to make a way of escape for you from the darkness of the coming night ; that He died to make a way of escape for you ; that He is willing to receive you, waiting to receive you : "If ye will enquire, enquire ye ; return, come."

And, oh, if these lines meet an anxious soul, an enquiring heart, I have "glad tidings" for that anxious one, good news

for that enquiring one. "What are the glad tidings? What is the good news?" you ask. Wherever I see an anxious, a Christ-seeking soul, I have this to tell them, that the Christ I speak of is a sinner-seeking Christ; a Christ who seeks sinners, a Christ who saves sinners, a Christ who receives, and who pardons, and blesses sinners; and, ah, if you are an anxious Christ-seeking soul, I tell you of this sinner-seeking Christ; and who so suited to meet as a sinner-seeking Saviour, and a Saviour-seeking sinner? They are just the ones suited to each other. But if you are one of the class that Peter speaks of, a "scoffer," not ready to meet God, not ready to face eternity, unprepared to stand before the judgment-seat, my solemn duty, dear reader, is to warn you to beware; to tell you solemnly, faithfully, "The morning cometh, and *also* the *night*." "Oh, but," you say, "you have often talked about the coming of the Lord before, and we see no signs of it, things go on exactly the same as ever." Mark what the watchman says. He says, for the comfort of the saved soul, "The morning comes!" Fellow-believer, there is a morning for you, a bright, a sunny morning; a morning without clouds, a morning of unmingled joy, and blessing; a

morning when you shall rise to meet your beloved Lord in the air, when you shall gaze upon Him in all His beauty, the One whom you have never yet seen face to face. For the warning of the unsaved, the watchman adds, "and also the night."

There are three distinct classes of people now-a-days. Firstly, people who know and love Christ ; secondly, people who profess to know Christ and who do not ; and thirdly, people who do not care for Christ, do not want to know Him, and it is to this last class I speak now. To YOU who do not want Christ, I say, Christ wants you ! CHRIST WANTS YOU ! "I never thought of that " you say. True, for the thoughts of the unconverted are all wrong.

O dear unsaved soul, I want *you* to be converted to Him. It is your soul I am longing after. I want you to be saved *now*. I know how the word of grace meets some hearts and the word of warning meets others, and, oh ! I would tell out both to you, for there is a day coming, soon coming, when there shall be no more word of grace, no more word of warning, no more gospel preaching for you ; an hour coming when you shall have heard or read the gospel word for the last time ; and O ! tell me, if that hour came

this day, where would this last gospel word find you and leave you? I ask you, as you must give account before the judgment seat, how does your soul stand before God? Are you ready to meet the Lord if He comes, if He comes to-night? He may come; will you be glad to hear His voice? The heart that knows Him says "Ah, yes, I shall be glad to hear that voice, I know His voice. It will be no strange voice to me. Do you tell me the morning comes? Joyful, happy news! It is the moment of deep, unbounded joy when my eye shall light for the first time on that blessed Saviour."

But, ah! if there is a morning of such unmingled joy to the christian, what about you who know not Christ? Is there any charm for you in that morning? None whatever? There can be no charm for a worldly, Christless heart in that morning; there can be nothing but terror in that morning for you; for that is the morning when the wicked shall be like ashes under the soles of His feet; when "The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings," and "all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble." He will arise with healing in His wings for those who in the long night of His absence have feared His name, have

trusted Him, have fled to Him for shelter ; but for you Christless one, what has the Sun of Righteousness to do with you ? Then one of His beams will blind you for ever.

The soul that knows not Christ prefers the night, loves the night : “ Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light.” The darkness suites the sin-loving soul, the dark night of Jesus’ absence is the very atmosphere that suits the pleasure-loving soul, the Christless soul ; the morning is the atmosphere that suites the soul that knows Christ, that is looking for Him, and waiting for Him ; and “ the morning cometh,” but ah ! there is something more, “ and *also the night.*” He is coming, and coming quickly. He lingers, Peter tells us, because He is “ long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” He is not slack concerning His promise, but He lingers, not willing that YOU should perish, but the moment is coming when He will delay no longer, when He will rise up and shut to the door, when the day of His grace will be over, the door will be shut, and, oh ! what will it be to find yourself shut out then ; You, who vainly think you will be a Christian some

day; you who think you will go on with the world now, and turn to Christ some day, what will it be to you to find the door *shut* and yourself *outside*? No more offer of mercy, no more day of grace, no more gospel preaching, no more Christ for you. Oh, the bitter dark agony! Oh, the terror of that day! to find the Master of the house has risen up and shut to the door and you are *shut out*. You, who meant to go in, but who put it off! O Christless, unsaved soul, I beseech you, in the light of that coming of judgment, awake awake, arise, be warned in time, flee this very moment to a living, loving Saviour. "Turn ye, turn ye." "*Return, Come.*" Oh! RETURN, COME. O scoffing soul, are you determined to go down there, into that awful place, that terrible pit, the abyss of hell? Still the door is open into the Father's house. There are none too hardened for His grace to soften, none too far off for Him to meet, none too bad for Him to justify. Turn ye, turn ye to Jesus now. Why put it off a moment more? He is saving others, He will save you. He is saving many in these last days, and why? Because the time is near when the doors shall be shut. The Lord is sending out warning notes of grace before that hour comes, before the day of

His long-suffering comes to a close. What is the meaning of this great tide of blessing that has rolled on since 1858? "Near thirty years!" you say. Yes, thirty years the Lord has been working in a very special and marked manner; everywhere He has been stirring up men's minds; the gospel has been preached, not only by those in pulpits, but faithful men everywhere have been going forth with the tidings of grace, and the warnings of judgment to come. Men of all ranks, men of high degree and low, have gone about proclaiming the gospel, seeking to win souls. "What is the meaning of this great change, these vagaries?" you ask. Oh, the night comes; the night draws near; and we see already shadows, dark shadows of the coming night, for side by side with this vast tide of blessing what has arisen? Another tide, deep and dark, is rolling its waters also over the world. Rationalism, Ritualism, Spiritualism combined, are rampant now in a way hitherto unequalled; and all paving the way for the man of sin—antichrist—the false christ—when he shall appear.

From all this I am persuaded the Lord is at hand. The cry has gone forth "Behold the Bridegroom cometh." A few years

ago nothing was heard about the Lord's coming, it was a subject no one thought of. Now it is spoken of on every hand, and the reason is, that the time is fast approaching, God's testimony of grace too is heard on all hands, and many souls have believed the glad tidings and are saved. It is this urgency of the charity of God and the universality of its manifestation that tell me the Lord is near. Beloved, unsaved reader, listen to me. I know that you are *a lost soul*—a LOST SOUL, and I know the night cometh. A night that has *no morning*, a long, long dark, endless night, into which no ray of light shall ever come. Oh! lost, lost soul, YOUR *night* has NO *morning*. The night of the christian is illumined by the love of Jesus, and is terminated by a morning that has no evening, "for there shall be *no night* there." Oh, think of that scene, that happy scene, "the city had no need of the sun for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof;" and, "there shall be NO NIGHT there." But listen, "the morning cometh, but *also the night*." Oh! what a night, Christless soul! You pass into eternity without Jesus, and what is it? All night! all night! Is there no morning? No none! No morning to that fearful night. Oh, I appeal to you, I

entreat you ; for a few passing hours of pleasure here will you risk that night that has no morning ? How very long one single night of sleeplessness and pain seems here ! Belike you may have known such a night when you tossed restlessly on your bed. You could not sleep ; in vain you tried this side and that, and in every way sought sleep. How long the night seemed, how slowly the minutes seemed to go by ! The clock in your room strikes the half-hours, and a year seems to have gone by before the half-hour chimes ; a perfect cycle follows, and then the clock strikes the hour ; you could not have believed the night could be so long. How you watch for the first approach of morning. How gladly you welcome the first streak of light coming through a crack in the closed shutter, the day is coming at last, there is a morning to this long night. But, oh, what will it be to be chained to your bed in hell, in impenetrable gloom, *for ever*. Is there no morning ? None, none ! No light coming ? None ! In the terrible darkness of that awful scene, as one has vividly portrayed it, you may hear the fearful ticking of hell's clock, as its long pendulum sways from side to side, seeming to say only the terrible words, *ever, never, ever, never*,

EV-ER, NEV-ER, EV-ER, NEV-ER, EVER-LASTING, NEVER ENDING, EVER-LASTING, NEVER ENDING! Oh, tell me, tell me, will you risk this awful eternity, this never-ending hell? Will you risk it for some bit of pleasure here, some few hours of following your own will and way? Oh, return; return, come! Oh, wandering one, return *now*, come to Jesus *now*. THAT NIGHT has not yet come; oh, return, you shall receive a welcome to the arms of that blessed Saviour. The voice of Jesus speaks "Will you not come to me? Oh, return, return! There is no guilt so great that the blood of Christ cannot cleanse it, no depth of wickedness that it cannot meet, you cannot be too bad for Christ.

Dear soul, are you arrested on the slippery road to hell? Do you say "I have been trifling with eternity too long, I must turn, I cannot face this Christless eternity, I cannot bear the awful reality of it"? Oh, have you come to yourself, wandering one? Then I have good news for you, there is bread enough and to spare in your Father's house. Have you said, "I will arise and go to God, I cannot bear to meet God in judgment, I cannot bear the thought of the night without a morning." Lose no time then; the prodi-

gal, in Luke xv., did not say, I will arise another time, but, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." Would you like to follow this prodigal home and see how he is welcomed? "When he was yet a *great way off*"—that is just where an anxious soul feels itself, "a great way off." But do you think God does not see the turning in your heart, the desire to be Christ's?—the father "RAN" to meet the returning prodigal. God, as it were runs to meet the returning soul. The sinner comes slowly along, saying, "How will He meet me? What will He say? Will He have me?" The father *ran*. Are you the one returning? The father *ran*, that is how He meets you. The prodigal comes along sad and slowly; he sees one on the road; "It is my father," he says; a moment more, "He is coming to meet me;" another moment, "He runs;" a few steps farther he is on his neck, he kisses him. The first thing the soul gets is a kiss, the kiss of peace. Oh, that burning kiss, what does it say? It says, God's heart remains unchanged. That kiss tells that all is forgotten, that all is forgiven. Is there a hard word? Is there a question,

“Why have you been so long? Where have you spent your time and your substance?” No! The returning soul has judged itself, it has brought the sledge-hammer of self-judgment down on itself, “*Father, I have sinned.*” And does not God like to hear that confession, those softened words? He does! And what is the answer? “Bring forth the best robe,” that is Christ; bring the fatted calf, kept for some great occasion, bring it, kill it, “let us eat, and be merry, for this my son was *dead* and is *alive* again, he was *lost* and is *found*, AND THEY BEGAN TO BE MERRY. This is the grace that meets the returning sinner. Oh, if you have never bowed before, will you not bow to Christ now? Shall it not be said of you, that the heart that had long fed itself with the husks the world can give, but was empty still, dissatisfied, having no rest, is filled to the brim, satisfied, at rest henceforth!

Oh, when I see Jesus in that bright morning, that coming morning, will you be there? In that blessed home, that scene of joy and rest, oh, tell me, will you be there, and I? I shall. I know that I shall, but will *you* be there? A little time and then the morning comes. No more sorrow then, no more pain but with Him, and like Him for ever.

What a future ! We did not deserve it, but He gives it ! Will you take from the loving hand of Jesus that free salvation now ? The Lord grant you may, so that in the bright morning when He comes you may be with Him for ever.

GOD SAVES BY FAITH FOUNDED ON THE EVIDENCE OF HIS OWN WORD.

I FOUND a young man, with whom I conversed on a journey, had been earnestly seeking a knowledge of the forgiveness of his sins for many years. That very morning he had been reading his Testament, and thirsting for the water of life. “Would you be willing,” I asked, “to be saved in God’s own way ? And *would now, in this very carriage, be too soon for you to become a Christian ?*”

“Let God save me in any way,” was the reply, “and now !”

“You have been looking for evidence,” I continued, “where you will not find it. God’s word, sealed by the Spirit, is God’s evidence ; none other is needed. If you received, by the mouth, of an angel, the

the message from God that your sins were all blotted out of God's record, you would believe that Christ had saved you. If you were suddenly filled with a flood of light and joy, you would believe that you had received remission of sins." He assented, and I continued, "But in one case your confidence would be founded on *sight*, and in the other on *feeling*. It pleases God to save *by faith*, founded on the evidence of His own word—not by either sight or feeling; and you may now, as you sit in this carriage calmly take the promise of our Lord, 'He that believeth on me *hath* everlasting life' (Jno. vi. 47), and through faith in the sacrifice of Christ, find 'forgiveness of sins.'"

"It never seemed so simple," the young man exclaimed. Seeing that the Spirit was teaching him, I thought best to say no more, and dropped into silence, in confident prayer for him. After some interval he turned to me, with his face beaming with joy, and said—

"I'm not afraid to die now! Those trees are not more clear to my eye than to my soul it is certain that Christ is *my* Saviour!"

God, who had prepared his heart for the message, had revealed to me that "it must needs be" that I should be in that carriage,

and it now became plain why it had been made evident to me I should take that journey, and not have been suffered to stay longer where I was, for God had a work for me to do.

Christian reader, it is not in vain that we trust our Father in the guidance of His Spirit.

In conclusion, a few words to those who are not sure their sins are forgiven. This little book is printed in the hope that you this day may believe the word of our Lord, "God so loved the world; that he gave his only begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER *believeth* in him should not perish but have everlasting life" (Jno. iii. 16).

THE BLOCK TELEGRAPH.

SOME years ago I was waiting one afternoon at the railway station at Edinburgh. I seized the opportunity of speaking to the engine driver of one of the trains, regarding God's glad tidings. He was a great swarthy man. and possessed not only a strong muscular physique but a vigorous natural intelligence, united to a clear decisive judgment. He could discern at a glance

the relation in which he stood to the great system of traffic which was pouring in and out of that busy scene, at one of the busiest hours at the height of the travelling season.

At the time I was speaking to him I saw his eye fixed intently upon some object in the remote distance ; while he was speaking his eye kept scanning from the engine to this place. At length my eye descried the object with which he was occupied. To the engine-driver it was the ruling and governing object at present. It was a great high pole some fifty or seventy feet in height, standing midway between the station and the tunnel under the Calton Hill. Near the top of this pole there are telegraph signals attached. He explained to me that no engine-driver is allowed to enter the tunnel until he gets the signal that the line is clear, but whenever the signal is given he may at once proceed. He further described that from the top of the pole there were arms which projected out at right angles, and when the signal was given that the line was clear they were lowered. This is called THE BLOCK TELEGRAPH. Whenever the arm is lowered it is a message to the engine driver that the line is clear, and he may at once proceed with his train.

I questioned him upon his faith in this block telegraph, and found he was quite at rest as to any consequences. "Do you not tremble in going into the dark tunnel for fear the line may *not* be quite clear?" I asked. He gave such a look of pity and compassion at my suggestion as he answered firmly and very decisively "No, never. I have trusted the signals given by the block telegraph thousands of times, and I know it too well to have any doubts." I said, "Suppose you saw an engine driver of splendid ability, who had much skill in his work, suppose you saw such an one start his train quite regardless of the signals of the block telegraph, what would you say of him?" "I would say he was mad, and would probably pay for his folly with his life. as he clearly deserved to do, and such a case known to the company would be severely punished, and he would be dismissed the company's service."

I then pointed him to the cross, I asked him if he had a like faith in Him who said, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." Christ was the One lifted up upon the cross, and who had made the line into God's presence for ever clear. Christ had completely and for ever settled God's

claims on man ; nay more, far more, He had glorified God in the work of redemption, and God had now glorified Him by crowning Him at His own right hand (Heb. ii. 9). What God required of man was faith in Him who was lifted up on the cross of Calvary, and by faith in Him God could now be "the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26).

Christ had cleared the way into God's presence for man, and "by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. ix. 12). God has, so to speak, lowered the signal for us by receiving His Son into glory, so that by looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, we are now with "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" (Heb. x. 19, 20).

"Looking to the signal of the block telegraph gives your heart perfect rest and confidence that the line is clear. You have no doubts, no fears, when you see the arm of the block telegraph lowered. Why?" "Because I know the signal is true, and reports a fact," he answered decisively. "Well, my friend, if God has given a signal

for you and now invites you to look to it and be saved, He likewise signals what is true, and reports a fact. 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' Why do you believe yon signal, and doubt God's signal? Obviously you believe man rather than God. 'But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us' " (Rom. v. 8). I drew his attention to the sin of disbelieving the signal set up by the railway company, or proceeding in defiance of it. He was, I saw, convicted in his own mind, and was in deep thought, while his eye turned from time to time to the block telegraph for direction. Slowly, just then, the arm was lowered, and he received his signal to advance. He gave a farewell look, smiling as he pointed with one hand to the block telegraph, while with a whistle and a bound the train moved out of the station. The Lord was in grace that day seeking this lost sheep, and we can with perfect rest leave it with Him to own the seed sown that day in faith.

Reader, one word with you. You are on the journey of life, and, if you do not know Christ as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, then you are like the engine driver who would run in defiance of

the signal set up. There is certain destruction for you. But if you “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,” and “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, *thou* shalt be saved.”

DYING ALONE; OR, CHRIST WITH ME.

I WAS asked one day to go and see a poor old woman, who had for many years lived quite alone. “And now,” said her neighbour, “she is dying alone, and I have my husband and children to mind, and can only see her once a day.”

Circumstances prevented my going just at once to see her, but these two sad words, “dying alone,” rang in my ears, and seemed to haunt me from day to day. To live alone seemed to me sad enough, but to die alone, the very depth of human misery. I was young but had known sorrow, and had stood by several death-beds. I had watched the last breath flicker out by the bedside of both rich and poor; but none of them died alone. My own friends were surrounded by every luxury and comfort; everything that love could plan to make the sick-room cheerful, and smooth the dying pillow, was done by gentle hands; and many cherished ones

softly glided in and out with words of comfort and sympathy. I had stood, too, by the dying beds of the poor, and had watched with admiration how every nerve had been strained to provide comforts for the sick one out of their hard-earned wages; and kind neighbours were ever ready to come in and share the weary night-watch. But now I had heard of something new to me, a phase of suffering unheard of before, and I oft repeated those dismal words, "dying alone!" "dying alone!" Death on the battle-field amidst the dying and slain, or death in the crowded wards of a hospital, seemed comfort compared to this, and I even prayed, "Lord, may I never die alone."

Nearly a week after this I found myself on the way to see the poor creature I did not even know by name, but whose circumstances called for my very deepest sympathy—"dying alone!" 'Twas a very low door by which I entered a very small dark room; the window, but one pane of glass, scarcely giving sufficient light to show distinctly the few objects in that chamber; and it was with a feeling somewhat akin to awe I went up to the low bed in the corner, and gazed upon that aged woman dying alone! It was a calm and pleasant face, though much fur-



“As I turned from passage to passage of the blessed Book her aged eyes beamed, and her whole soul seemed to drink in the precious words.”

rowed and wrinkled by care and years; her silvery hair was parted upon her brow, and her white cap and sheets showed no signs of neglect—yet she was dying alone!

“Sit down Miss,” she said, with a kindly smile; “my neighbour told me you would come some day; but I thought likely I would be gone home before you came; but now I hope you have brought me some good word about the Lord.”

“I have His Word in my pocket,” I said.

“Ah! that’s well; His own Word is better than anything we can say. Read for me, please.”

As I turned from passage to passage of the blessed Book, her aged eyes beamed, and her whole soul seemed to drink in the precious words, and, as I prayed with her before leaving, she joined with me in every petition. As I parted from her, I expressed my surprise that she could be so full of peace and joy when dying alone!

“Tsh!” she said, “Christ is with me, and when you have known Him as long as I have known Him, and proved His love as long, you will not wonder. I’ve known Him more than twenty years, and I’ve lived much of that time alone with Him, and now

I've been dying these six months past, alone with Him ; for few come to see me, and there's few I care to see, for I've Christ always with me, and there's no solitude in that."

I came away from that humble dwelling with very different thoughts from those with which I had entered it ; God had a new lesson for me through this aged saint. Her calm face and joyful answer, " Christ is with me," opened up to me hitherto unknown depths in Him, who, though known as my Saviour and Friend, was not as yet everything to me. I saw this aged servant of Christ many times after this, and learned from her what I believe I have never forgotten. One day she told me she had asked the Lord, if it were His will, that some one might be with her when she breathed her last.

" Why ? " I asked, thinking she was dreading to die alone.

" Because, if no one saw me die, they would not know I was as happy to die as to live ; for Christ is with me now, and will be with me then, and I shall be with Him for ever.

Each day, as I left her, I saw she was passing quickly to her desired haven. She

had few earthly comforts, save those the Lord privileged me to take her ; yet she was full of joy, and thankfulness, and unclouded peace. One day I knocked as usual at the door, but got no answer. "Oh," I said "has she died alone?" With breathless anxiety I opened the door ; her hands were clasped, her lips moved in prayer. I stood in silence till her eyes opened, and she saw me. "You've come to see me die, she said: "sit down. If it was not for others, I would rather be alone with Christ, but you'll stay till the end." Then, in thoughtfulness for me, she said—"O, but you are young, and you may not like to see any one die."

"Yes," I said, "I should like to be with you." Pointing to her well-worn Bible, she said—"Read for me once more the last verses of the eighth of Romans."

"For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life ; nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers ; nor things present, nor things to come ; nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." As I closed the Book, I was about to ask her if I should pray. I observed a slight movement of her eyelids, she gazed upwards, a radiant smile lit up her features,

and her happy spirit was with the Lord. I knelt and closed her eyes, drew the sheet over the pale face of death, came out, locked the door, and, having made a few arrangements with her neighbour as to her remains, I returned home.

And now, reader, the lessons learned in that little room were precious lessons to me. Have you learned anything from reading this simple account of one who was truly satisfied with Christ? Can you say, "That is the Christ I have got? Everything to me, if called to live alone: everything to me if called to die alone? A Christ who is above, and beyond, and over earthly circumstances—a Christ who thoroughly satisfies my heart?"

Or, it may be, this little paper is in the hands of one who knows nothing of God's Christ; one who has "heard of Him by the hearing of the ear," but in whose heart is no loving response to His blessed name. Dear soul, listen to me. You will have to die alone, and meet God alone, if you are unsaved. Alone truly, for if you could not say, like the old woman in this story, "Christ is with me," your earthly friends would avail you nothing, and most truly you would be alone; and alone throughout eter-

nity. You would not call it company to have the thief, the drunkard, and the harlot, your companions throughout eternity—shut out for ever from the presence of the Lord, the only One who could save you now! That would be, in the most real and awful sense, “to be alone!” Are you living without Christ? If you die without Christ, you must spend an endless eternity without Him. But listen to me. There was One who died alone, that you might never die alone. Look unto Him and live. He walked a lonely path on earth. “The world knew Him not;” “He came unto His own and His own received Him not.” The Man of sorrows walked alone. He agonised in the garden alone. Alone He died on the cross for thee. Yes; Jesus died alone! “I looked for some to take pity, but there was none and for comforters, but I found none.” He went through death alone for thee, forsaken of God in that awful hour when—

“He took the guilty culprit’s place,
And suffered in his stead.”

in order that, atonement having been made, we might be justified freely by His grace. Alone He suffered, and alone He died! And by the grace of God, He tasted death for every man.

And now, reader, what have you to say to the death of Christ? Is it a light thing that He died alone—that He died for you? God grant that when you come to die, like this poor but happy woman, your end may be peace.

HOW J. S. DIED HAPPY.

J. S. —an old man, who had been a ploughman in former years—was taken so ill that he felt he might not have long to live. Then his thoughts were directed to a life of 70 years without God, and with these thoughts came fears and trouble as to where his soul would go when he died. Hearing of his illness I went to see him, and, after enquiring about his bodily ailments, I prayed to God to open my mouth with the suited word, and to give it power to his heart. “Well, J. S.,” I said, “if this affliction ends in death, where will you go then?” “Ah,” said he, “that’s the thing that troubles me, I’ve been praying and praying these many years, but instead of getting rid of my sins they seem to increase more and more.” Anxious to know if God was really working in his heart, I pressed upon him the fearful realities of eternal judgment. He wept much,

saying, "Ah, what shall I do?" Such an anxious look as he gave me I never shall forget, and we wept together. After some silence I said, "My dear J. S., I have a message from God for you this morning." "What is it he asked. I read to him from the 53rd chapter of Isaiah: "He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities." "What," said he, "is that in the Bible?" "Yes," I answered, "dear J., "and more too, 'the chastisement of our peace was upon him,' and now mark, 'by his stripes we are healed.'" "How is it," he anxiously asked, "I have not been told this before. I have heard the Bible read these 40 years in church, and never knew that was there before, why didn't they tell me?" "Never mind that," I answered him, "you're just in time now; and now listen (for it seemed quite difficult for him to remain quiet), 'All we like sheep have gone astray.'" "Yes," said he, "that's my wicked character." "We have turned every one to his own way." "That's exactly my wicked character," he put in. But now listen further to what God says," I rejoined: "'The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.'" "What," said he, "my iniquities?" "Yes," I answered, "yours; listen

to it again. 'The Lord HATH LAID on HIM the iniquities of *us all*.'" "Praise the Lord," he called out, "praise the Lord it is for me." "Yes," I said, "for you." I turned to his wife and I said, "And you see, Mrs. S., it is for you too." "Yes," anxiously answered J. S., reaching out his hand to me, "but tell it to me now, I shall soon be gone, tell it her afterwards. Oh! tell it to me." I turned and said, "Thus you see that blessed One has been down here, and has gone to the cross, and there He bore the judgment of God for our sins and has for ever put them away, by paying down the redemption price, even His own blood, satisfying divine justice, meeting God's righteous demands, and thereby clearing a guilty one like you."

"Praise the Lord! Oh! how shall I praise Him enough," he answered. He seemed utterly exhausted with the excitement of this good news. I left him quiet for a little till he seemed to rally, and then asked him, "Shall I kneel down and thank the Lord?" "Yes," said he, "but do let me kneel down too." I assisted him up to do so, seeing he was so bent upon it, and we knelt down in the quiet of that solemnised sick chamber together. Then in his feeble and

simple way he poured out his soul in praise to the Lord for what He had done for his soul. I then helped him back into his chair, for heart disease and dropsy combined rendered it impossible for him to lie down, and left the house, promising to call again in the evening. About seven o'clock I called in again and still found him rejoicing in the knowledge of being saved. I talked of the love, the power, and the work of Christ, and he broke out in an ecstasy of joy, "Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Oh! where should I have been hadst Thou not sent one of Thy children in to tell me the way to be saved?" Then he turned to me and said, "I must thank you again for ever coming to me with that message from God, and now the work is done, and I am saved, bless the Lord!"

With my heart full of real joy at God's wonderful grace I left him, and again after two days called. I found him now very sorrowful. As I came in he reached out his hand, saying, "Oh, I have been waiting to see you, I'm in such trouble." "What is the matter?" I asked, as I saw satan had been troubling him, and I looked to the Lord to give me the right word. "I've been so naughty," he said, "for I have been

to-day occupied with worldly things, through people of the world coming in to see me. I want to know, does that affect my safety?" "Can your son cease to be your son," I asked, "because he is not always talking about you?" "Of course not," was his answer. "Then," said I, "listen to what God says through the apostle Paul, '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.'"

"Then," said he, "all is well now, I am happy." He was now quite exhausted, and his strength rapidly failing, so commending him to God, and the word of His grace, I left him. Many visits I paid him after this, and always found him resting on a living Saviour, who had loved him, and died for him, and in Him he rejoiced, until, gradually day by day sinking, he soon after fell asleep in Jesus, who has promised to come again quickly, when, "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."

COMFORT IN THE DARK HOUR.

“**T**HERE never was such affliction as mine,” said a poor sufferer, restlessly tossing in her bed in one of the wards of a city hospital; “I don’t think there ever was such a racking pain.”

“Once,” was faintly uttered from the next bed.

The first speaker paused for a moment; and then, in a still more impatient tone, resumed her complaint;

“Nobody knows what I pass through; nobody ever suffered more pain.”

“One,” was again whispered from the same direction.

“I take it you mean yourself, poor soul! but—”

“Oh, not myself; not me,” exclaimed the other; and her pale face flushed up to the very temples, as if some wrong had been offered, not to herself but to another. She spoke with such earnestness that her restless companion lay still for several seconds, and gazed intently on her face. The cheeks were now wan and sunken, and the parched lips were drawn back from the mouth as if by pain, yet there dwelt an extraordinary sweet-

ness in the clear grey eyes, and a refinement on the placid brow, such as can only be imparted by a heart-acquaintance with Him who is "full of grace and truth."

"Oh, not myself! not me," she repeated.

There was a short pause; and then the following words, uttered in the same low tone, slowly and solemnly, broke the midnight silence of the place—

" ' And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews. And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.....And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha.....they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall.....And they crucified him.....And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads.....And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying.....My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? ' "

The voice ceased, and for several minutes not a syllable was spoken. The night nurse rose from her chair by the fire, and mechanically handed a cup of barley-water flavoured with lemon-juice and sugar, to the lips of both sufferers.

“Thank you, nurse,” said the last speaker; “‘they gave him gall for his meat, and in his thirst they gave him vinegar to drink.’”

“She is talking about Jesus Christ,” said the other woman, already beginning to toss restlessly from side to side; “but,” added she, “talking about His sufferings can’t mend ours—at least not mine,”

“But it lightens hers,” said the nurse.

“I wonder how?”

“Hush!” and the gentle voice again took up the strain.

“‘Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.....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.’”

The following day as some ladies, visiting the hospital, passed by the cots, they handed to each a few fragrant flowers.

The gentle voice was again heard, “‘If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith,’”

A few days passed slowly away, when on a bright Lord’s day morning. as the sun was

rising, the nurse noticed the lips of the sufferer moving, and leaning over her, she heard these words, "Going home. 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith : henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.....'" Her eyes closed and the nurse knew that the hand of death was grasping the cords of life. A moment more and all was over, the soul had gone to dwell in that city where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain....."

GOD OUR JUSTIFIER.

(Notes of an Address on Psalm xxxii.)

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me : my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord ; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found : surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. Thou art my hiding place ; thou shalt preserve me from trouble ; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah. I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go : I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not

as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about. Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart."—Psalm xxxii.

THE way of the Spirit of God is here plain enough for any soul; but in Rom. iv. He gives also an inspired comment, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." If you hire a man, you owe him a certain return, and he has a right to it. It is no question of grace on your part: you owe him his wages. This principle the Jew was always apt to take with God. As the people of His choice they counted themselves hired servants; which the Gentiles, who worshipped false gods, could not pretend to be. Hence the pains taken to disabuse the Jews of a notion so opposed to the glad tidings of grace. In what concerned their souls for ever with God there must be no mistake, nor even guess-work. The apostle sets forth not only the grace of God towards the Gentiles, but just the same to the more decent and orderly Jews. To what an account mercy turns these false thoughts of the Jew! Abraham is the first example given, not in the work he did,

but "he *believed* God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

Are there any souls here at all anxious about their condition before God, and asking how they can be justified? Here the Holy Ghost explains the difficulty you have raised. As long as you take the ground of difference in yourself from other sinners, you will never know what it is to be justified. And why? You thereby deny grace, which alone justifies by faith in Christ.

It is quite true that, when justified, God has a work for each one to do, and loves such deeds, and rewards the doers; but I am now speaking to such of you as are lost. Oh! face the truth, whatever it be. Some of you are no doubt willing to do some great thing (like Naaman); but to *do'* something, either great or small, is *work*. And "to him that *worketh not*.....his faith is counted for righteousness." Are you content to take this place? To be a bankrupt and a beggar with God? This seems a dreadful case, and so it really is; but it is good for a soul to be brought down to the truth. And why wait?

What are you looking for? Some angel to trouble the water? is not the Son of God waiting on you now, as near to you as to the poor man who had been in an ill case so long? There is no excuse for you. He is *near* to all who call upon Him, whether a child, or an aged one, or any other. At any rate wait for nothing more; honour His grace by wishing to bring nothing, but receive all at His hands, because of the mighty redemption He has wrought. You might be the greatest, the richest, the wisest of men; what is the good of any or all that, if you are going down to hell?

Deceive not your own soul—delay for nothing—look to Him only: how long has God waited that you might be saved! He “justifieth the ungodly.” Could God make His grace more simple, absolute, or manifest? Do you plead that you look not to yourself, but to the Spirit to work in you. But the Holy Ghost will not work in you while you do not receive Jesus and His blood for your sins, though it is quite true that He does work in the children of God. This, however, is not what justifies. It is because of Christ’s redemption that God justifies the believer entirely apart from anything wrought by Him. All else is a delu-

sion. Wishing to bring something of yours is listening to the enemy, not to God. You can only be saved by what God has already brought and already given. "To him that worketh not, but believeth, &c."

Not only is it not by what you do, or can do, that you are justified : God would repudiate ought but faith that it may be of His grace. Some think they are feeling rightly because they know there is no other way, and that they are nothing in themselves. But to say, "I'm a poor sinner," though true, is not the truth, but Christ is. It is a question, therefore, of receiving and confessing Christ. Nor does one ever feel his evil so much when he first comes to Christ as after. Danger may be deeply realised—the awful prospect of only waiting for hell-fire. In nine cases out of ten, it is by the true and serious conviction of this just judgment that souls are awakened, though there are those whose hearts are more gently opened to receive the truth. But, for the most part, it is like the man with the pursuer at his heels, rushing to escape, whom God nerved, as well as urged, on to the open door, without a look behind. There is no other way of escape, and one knows it. "To him that worketh not, but believeth, &c." For faith

receives the object that God puts before the soul; to own one's danger is not enough without this.

To believe God's testimony now, as of old, is counted for righteousness. "David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works." Oh! you who desire to present some good works, who cannot receive the gospel of grace as God proclaims it to your souls, why refuse when God invites you? If you have no righteousness of your own, Jesus is made righteousness to those that believe. "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." And there the apostle stops his quotation from the Psalm: I will tell you why. Because he would not mix up the practical consequences of faith with the grace which produces them. For the Holy Spirit well knows the constant tendency of souls to look inwardly for evidence, if not for ground to stand on.

But, if we want to see that the Spirit produces real inward change, turn back to what follows in Psalm xxxii. "And in whose spirit there is no guile." He who is forgiven is made thoroughly upright. Suppose you

are greatly in debt through speculation, prodigality, or any other cause, and you yielded to the temptation of refusing to examine your books and face your circumstances, you would feel at once that such conduct is dishonest. It may be common, but to go on vainly hoping, and afraid to look how you stand, is evidently inconsistent with honesty.

If a good and wealthy friend comes forward and offers to meet all your liabilities, setting you up in business better than before, you might well say, "Perhaps you are not aware how much I owe;" if he answers, that he knows but can provide for all, and sends you to the bank, with unlimited title to draw in his name for every claim: what then? You return to look at your books, not only with confidence, but with uprightness unknown since you got astray; because the means of your friend are enough and more than enough to cover all. Grace alone can relieve as well as produce honesty. You no longer turn aside uneasily from what you owe, and, the more you examine, the more you know how wrong you have been, and how good your friend is to you; and so the knowledge that God gives me righteousness in Christ, and that I am justified in His sight by the mighty work of the Lord Jesus,

takes away guile from the spirit. It is not only the blotting out of evil. Man has been dishonest towards God, but he does not weigh this. He feels what is due to his fellow-man, often because it is good policy, and he wants his fellow-man to be honest to him in return. But where is the equity of caring for men, not for God? He has been dishonest to God all his life; and this is ever the gravest side of man's evil. Abandon all your own thoughts which make light of continual indifference to God and His will. God must give you new life, as well as the removal of your iniquities; and he who is too proud to look to Christ for life and forgiveness will never get to heaven. But he who is forgiven has a change wrought in him by the Spirit; he becomes soft under the grace which also makes him detest himself. The only thing that enables a man to face his sins before God is His grace which has dealt with all in the cross. And not only are iniquities put away, but the old sinful nature itself is condemned. What was the work of Christ for? Was it only for part? only for great sins, leaving you to overcome the little ones? Nay, it was to deal with sin; root, branch, and fruit. Therefore, I beseech you wait no more, for you know not what.

Instead of dreading to look into his accounts, the man who receives Christ sees God's grace and his own evil. If you only heard what he pours out on his knees to God, you might think him the greatest sinner in the town. But don't take fire if others call you what you are and what you call yourself: you will if the flesh is not judged. You have owned yourself as bad or worse before God; if man calls you names, and you take offence at it, does it not prove that you are not walking in the truth of your confession? Preserve before others the sense of what you know to be the truth in your own soul. You have forgotten that you are most sinful; yet you confessed it to God this morning: surely the same thing is true this afternoon! The spiritual man walks before man in the faith of what he is before God. If evil things are said of him, he knows and confesses what is worse of himself. Here is the genuine honesty of faith—"no guile." This is one effect of justification by grace. Guile supposes the desire to appear what we are not. But I don't want to keep up a character, when God has brought me to feel what I am.

And there is another point of moment. God has brought me into a new state of being. There is the old man, which, how-

ever, I am entitled to regard as dead ; but now there is a new man, which I become in Christ. The old " I " abides still ; but there is a new " I," and this new life is Christ. And thus, because grace has blotted self out, and given me a new life and standing, I have not only Christ for me, but Christ in me. I live in the very same life : because He lives, I also live.

But sometimes a man under the hand of God does not wish all out. " While I kept silence, &c." (v. 3). There may be reality in the sense of evil ; only as long as it is suppressed, there is misery. Then one wakes up to feel that all is wrong, and goes to God in the name of the Lord Jesus, the Saviour. " I said, I will confess, &c." As long as there is an effort to hide, there is always a hindrance to that peace and joy in believing which God gives by the gospel. But, when the soul comes and spreads all out before God, there is rest. The heart is now open to God, instead of wishing to conceal from Him. Then one can say, " Thou art my hiding-place " (v. 7). Can you say that He is your hiding-place ? Not to hide *from* God, but yourself finding a refuge *in* Him ? Then you need be no more alarmed at anything,—He will take care of the troubles.

But there is only one way to all this blessing, and that is by Christ and His blood, by the sacrifice of God's own Son ; whereon the Holy Ghost comes down and pronounces you accepted. You need not this night close your eyes without the conviction that all is clear between your soul and God, who is revealed as the God of grace *now*. True, He is also a righteous and faithful God, and a rewarder ; but you have not to do with this yet, and, if you refuse to be saved by His grace, your blood is on your own head. If you turn away, it is saying your own thoughts and feelings are better than Christ.

The latter part of the Psalm is a kind of conversation. "Thou art my hiding place," &c. "Yes," God, as it were, answers. But, more than that, "I will instruct, not only preserve. I want you to understand my ways, I want you to be thoroughly and intelligently happy." What a wonderful way is the guidance of His eye ! A figure of course, yet, expressive not of warning, or hedging up the way, but as a loving parent guides a child, of a look that only love gives, that only love understands. The horse needs restraining from going on too fast, the mule turns to one side or the other and must be curbed ; but "I will guide thee with mine

eye,"—the tenderest, closest, most intimate form of guidance. Do you believe God is willing so to do?

None can do you a more direct injury than those who tell you that you cannot *know* you are accepted and saved. And is this the language of the New Testament only? Even Israel will enter into this blessing by and by; but we have it *now*. I therefore beg you, slight not the word, mock not God. "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked." Who shall describe the sorrow of having heard the gospel pressed, your own conscience saying that you ought to come now, and you refused? There is the most urgent need of your looking to Christ. Whatever hinders, treat it as from the devil; he will be disappointed to see you blest, while many will rejoice. God Himself says, "It was meet that we should make merry and be glad." He has joy in putting the best robe on the poor prodigal.

"He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about." May God give you to receive the glad tidings which He is sending out because He loves you. Do not hesitate more. Listen to God, bring your case really to Him, and receive the blessing which He waits to bestow, through Jesus, the Lord.

SAILOR JIM; OR, MY FIRST SOUL.

WHAT a strange title! perhaps some may remark. Well, I did not give the name of "Sailor Jim" to him, who was saved by the grace of God; his simple story I write for other sailors like him, and it was Jim who always styled himself "My first soul"

I had been but a short time converted, and was very ignorant of the Word of God; indeed, I scarcely knew where to turn for a passage or verse, save those few grand verses that the Lord had pointed me to, when in agony of soul I cried to Him, "What must I do to be saved?" and the answer came with healing on its wings, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi); and "Look unto me and be ye saved" (Isa. xlv. 22). But, though very ignorant even of God's plan of salvation, I knew He had saved me; and that, on the ground of Christ's death and resurrection, God had offered to me, a sinner, the gift of eternal life, and I had by grace accepted it. Never did a doubt cross my mind as to whether I was really saved or not; God had said it, and that was enough for me. Having found peace through the certainty of sin

having for ever been put away by the sacrifice of Christ, and the assurance that my debt had been fully paid by another, my soul rested upon that blessed word, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Soon an intense longing filled me to carry the glad tidings of Jesus the Saviour to others, and I cried daily to God, "O God, send me with a message from Thyself to some soul." In my ignorance of the grace of God, I even said, "Lord make me the means of blessing to one soul, just one soul, and then let me die." I had few opportunities of speaking to souls; too timid to talk to those around me or to any I met outside, I still longed after that one soul, and in confidence continued to cry to God by day, and often by night, for the one to whom I was to carry His message. The answer came in a way I had little expected; and to the God of grace, who hears and answers some of our most ignorant prayers, be all the praise.

James H——, or "Sailor Jim," as his companions called him, had long lived near us. I had often seen him pass up and down, and he was known by me only as a man who was seldom, if ever, sober; the unsteady step, the bloated face, the restless eye, told

their own tales ; he was a drunkard. I had always a deep compassion for such men, and for their wives and families, but I would have trembled to speak to one of his character, and the thought of going to his house, though but a few doors from us, had never entered my mind.

“Sailor Jim” spent only part of his life at home ; during that time he drank the wages he made on his short sea voyages, and his pale, sad wife and sickly children could tell their own tale of want and bitterness to any who had a look of pity for the drunkard’s wife and bairns. One day, as I sat with my work near the window, a noise in the street attracted my attention, it was the rude boisterous mirth of “Sailor Jim” on his way home with a companion in his sin. I prayed as I stood at the window, “Lord save him from hell,” and at once I seemed given the message, “Go and tell him of Christ.” I shrank from it. “What !” I said, “how could I go? Send some one else, but not me.” I tried to forget Jim, but for two days and a night I was haunted by these words, “Go and tell Jim of Christ.”

I was young and unaccustomed to visit the houses of the poor, and the thought of a drunkard’s home terrified me. I had seen

him, I had heard his oaths and coarse language as he passed through the street, and I trembled to think I must meet that man, face to face ; but the words rang in my ears, " Go and speak to him of Christ." The next day, in much fear, and not knowing what I was to say, I started for Jim's house ; it was quite near and easy of access. I wished there had been some barrier or obstruction in the way, to give me an excuse for not going, and I oft repeated, " This cannot be the soul I have prayed for." As I went down the narrow passage and up the outside broken stairs that led to his house I trembled, but a word seemed given me, " You have only to deliver God's message ;" and fear fled. I knocked and the door was quickly opened by a pale, sad-looking woman, who nervously started when I asked if her husband was at home. " Yes," she said, " but he cannot see you, he is ill." With a sense of relief, I was just going to say, " I will come again," when a voice from within called out in a husky, unpleasant tone, " Come in, I must see you."

Looking to God for strength, I went in. I was struck with the air of poverty, not dirt. In the little kitchen the furniture was scanty ; a sickly child sat by the fire, her little head resting on her wasted hand ; and her sunken

eyes and startled, weary-looking face, marked her a drunkard's bairn. I stood to speak to her, but the voice of Jim, in loud angry accents called, "Come in, I tell you, come in."

I passed into the little room beyond. On the bed lay Jim, his bloated face more terrible to me than usual.

"Shut that door, Tom," he shouted.

I closed it, and said, "It's not Tom."

In a moment he seemed sobered. Astonished to find I was not the companion he was looking for, he scarcely knew what to say.

"May I sit down beside you?" I asked.

"If you like to sit down beside a drunken fellow like me."

"James," I said, "I have not come to speak to you about drunkenness at present, I have come with a message from God to you,"

"I hate God," he answered.

"He knows that," I said, "but His message to you is one of love. He has sent me to tell you that He so loved you, that He gave His Son to die for you, and that now, on the spot, before you leave that bed, before you even go on the sea again, He wishes to save your soul."

“If that’s true,” he answered, “that’s the best message I ever got; but its not likely that the God I’ve been blaspheming for years, should send you with a message to me, as I lie here half-drunk.”

I then told him very simply how the Lord had saved me, and given me a great desire to be sent with the glad tidings of salvation to some one else, and that I believed he was the man God was going to bless. He was much moved; tears ran down his cheeks; and when I rose to leave, he pressed me to return. I gave him a little tract, called “Pray for the drunkard.” It was scarcely the kind of tract I would have given now to one in Jim’s state; there was little of Christ in it; it was an appeal, to those who knew Christ, to pray for the drunkard. I had written it some little time before, on seeing a poor drunkard reel out of a public-house, who called on the passers-by to save him from hell; it was the only tract I had in my pocket and I left it. The Lord in His infinite grace used it, and the few words spoken, for the salvation of poor Jim.

Early next day his little boy was at our door, with the message, “Could you come and see my father?” No longer trembling, I ran up Jim’s broken stairs; he met me at

the door, and, with sailor warmth, shook me again and again by both hands, saying, "Well, God bless you, I'm your first soul: may you win many more. I am saved simply through believing what Christ has done. He gave His life for me, and I've been hating Him and killing my poor Betsy and the children all this time; but she'll come to Christ too, and we'll all be happy together." A shade passed over his face, and he said, "I wish to speak to you alone."

We went into the little back room, where we had our first conversation. As the light fell upon his face, I observed for the first time he looked very ill, and that the bloated appearance had given place to a livid hue; his lips were bloodless, and his whole frame shook. He was a man in the prime of life, but sin had wasted a strong and manly frame.

"James," I said, "you are ill." "That's a small matter; the doctor says I have heart disease, but it is not that I want to speak about. I know my soul is saved, but how am I to escape the drink? If I ever go out again, I'll fall, as sure as I am alive, and what dishonour that will bring on Christ's name!" So, saying, he laid his head on the table and wept like a child. I felt powerless

to speak to him for a few moments, and looked to God for words to meet his case.

“James,” I said, “have you trusted God fully with your soul?” “Yes, yes,” he answered, “and I wish He would take me safe home this minute. I can trust Him with the wife and bairns, but I cannot trust myself to keep from that cursed drink, which has all but had me in hell. O, you don’t know what it is, dear lady! The thirst for it, the craving for it is on me now; and, at times I would even sell my wife and children for a glass of grog.” “O! James,” I said “this is terrible, but the One who has saved your soul can keep you from this too. Will you trust Him about this?”

I knelt down to ask help from the Lord for such a case. In a moment James was by my side, and in heart-rending accents was crying to God, as only a saved soul could cry, for deliverance from the power of the awful temptation. As he rose from his knees, he said, “Now I can trust Him for both soul and body; I’m not afraid to go out now; nor on the sea either, though it is worse than the land; I see Christ is enough for every temptation; but I wish He would take me safe home.”

The next day James was laid on a bed of



"He laid his head on the table and wept like a child."

sickness, which kept him indoors for many weeks. "No doubt," he would often say to me, "this illness came to keep me from the temptations I dreaded outside; and that I might learn of Him who is more to me than all the earth could give." We often read together, and it was beautiful to see how the grace of God shone out in poor Jim. He longed after other souls, and used to urge me to speak to the drunkard especially." "Ah," he would say. "I'm your first soul, but not your last; do not rest satisfied with one soul. The poor drunkards! I only wish to go out again, to tell them of One who does love them; for the drunkard believes that God hates him, and that everybody else turns from him too."

In a few weeks James was better, and ready to go to sea, and I saw him less frequently than before; but his house no longer bore the aspect of a drunkard's home; the wife and children were neat and clean; the sick bairn had sundry little comforts provided for her; and James had ever a cheerful word about the Lord when we met. Many were his little love-tokens to me; scarcely a voyage that he did not bring me something; a shell a pincushion, a heart made of pebble, were all gifts to remind me of "My first soul," as

he said. He had given me his likeness, in a large wooden frame, soon after he was converted, but, a few weeks later, he asked me to return it, saying, "You must not keep that ; I was not sober the day it was taken ; besides it was the likeness of one who hated Christ, and I wish to destroy it."

One day I saw him, just as he was starting on one of his short voyages, and we had a happy time over the Word, which had now become his delight, ere we parted. A few days after, a message came to me, "Come and see Betsy H——. her husband is dead." I hastened to her. Through her tears she told me she had had sad news that morning ; Jim's ship had reached London, Docks, with his lifeless body—"Sailor Jim" was dead !

I could weep with that sorrowful widow, but with joy I could say with certainty, "He is with the Lord." His comrade brought but a few particulars, but these were full of interest. He said, "Jim was lacing his boot upon deck, when he fell back, and called out to me, 'Bill, come here, I know I'm dying ; but in a few moments I shall be with the Lord. Tell my wife to give her heart to Christ ; and tell the lady who told me of Him, I'm safe home.' He then raised his hand and smiled, and was gone to be for ever with the Lord."

I have written this story for sailors, or for any who may not know Christ, whether sober or drunken, whether your life is spent on land or water. If you are unconverted, you are on the road to hell, as he was ; but the grace that met him and saved him, cries to you, " Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord ; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool" (Isa. i. 18). Won't you come now ? Soon the day of grace will be over for you, and in eternity you will forever regret, when too late, that you rejected Christ. Listen to the voice of Jesus speaking to you, " Come, come ! Come unto me ! Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." God desires to save you. " Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. ii. 4).

Flee from the wrath to come ? In a moment, like Jim, you may be called from earth. Be ye also ready !

Jesus came into the world to accomplish two grand purposes ; to bring God into the world, and to put sin out of the world ; to bring God into the world that I might *know Him*. You cannot know God by looking at the tables of stone ; the law is not the revelation of His character. *Jesus* is the only true and full image of God. A Christian has a knowledge of God incomparably above and beyond the knowledge possessed by unfallen man.

I'M ALL RIGHT, SIR; OR, DO YOU
KNOW THE LORD?

WHEN preaching the word of God some years since in the town of B——, in Devonshire, I was urgently requested by a christian lady to visit a young man, evidently dying, but, she feared, not yet converted. The time at my disposal only permitted a visit just before a gospel meeting, on the afternoon of the Lord's-day, and, the hour having been fixed, the young man was awaiting my arrival, it having been arranged that I should see him alone. He had been some months ill, and often confined to bed, but when I knocked at the door of the clean and exquisitely tidy little house in which he lived, he himself opened it, and bade me welcome.

One glance at the pallid face with its sunken yet bright, unnaturally bright, eye, the heaving nostril, and high cheek bone, combined with the emaciation that had left him little more than skin and bones, told me that his time was short, and ere long he would be hurried into eternity by the ruthless ravages of consumption. He told me his history, the date of his illness, the illusive hopes of recovery, the failure of all treatment,

the wasting of his strength, &c. ; but that hearing I was a doctor he thought he would like to know my opinion of his case. It was needless, but I examined his chest, only to find evidences of the most extensive lung destruction compatible with life.

When I had done, he said very quietly, "Well, sir, what do you think of my case?" "Has not your own medical man told you?" I replied. "No, sir; I could never get any-one to tell me my true state, but I want very much to know." I could only reply to him, "You are very ill, my dear fellow." "Do you think I shall get better sir?" "I cannot hold out any hopes to you of recovery," I gently rejoined. "But do you think I am near death?" "It is quite impossible," I replied, "for me to say positively, but I fear you cannot last very long." "Thank you, sir, for telling me so plainly," was his immediate reply, while I noticed that he was quite unmoved or startled; "I always thought it was so, but I could get no one to tell me the truth."

His queries were all over, and now I felt my turn had come, so I passed on with, "You do not seem to be at all distressed by my opinion of your approaching end; may I ask are you prepared to die?" "Oh, yes

thank you, sir; my mind is quite made up on that point." "That is very nice," I said; "and what is the ground of your confidence?" "Oh, I have thought a good deal on these things, and when I was able, of course, I went to church, and I have read my Bible, and prayed; and I'm all right, thank you, sir." "All that you have spoken of is very good in its way," I rejoined, "but still, it will not avail before God. You have need, as a sinner, to be washed in the precious blood of Christ. Do you think you have known the blessedness of that yet?" "Thank you, sir," he politely replied, "I think I'm all right on that score, and I'm not afraid to die." "But, have you been converted?" I persisted. "Oh, I'm all right, sir." "Then you are quite sure *you ARE* saved?" I replied. "Thank you very much, sir, for your interest in my soul's welfare, but I think I may say, *I'm all right*;" and again the glib "all right" fell from his lips, but the more he strove to persuade me he was "all right" the more deep became the conviction in my mind that he was *all wrong*, as the issue will show, for in all his replies you will notice there was not one word about Jesus, and the soul that is not "right" about him is all wrong, depend upon it.

My time was gone and I had to leave, feeling that, like a skilful swordsman, he had effectually parried every one of my thrusts, and it was with real sadness I now, on rising, took his hand and bade him good-bye. Again he thanked me for my visit, so, still holding his hand, I said, "I never expect to see you again on earth, shall I see you in heaven?" "I hope so," was the faltering reply. "Well," I answered, "I am sure through grace, I shall be there, because of that which the Lord Jesus has done for me; why then are you saying, 'I hope?' If you know Him you may be certain of it, even as I am." He made no reply, so looking him full in the face, I said, "I have but one more question to ask, will you answer it?" "I will if I can, sir." "Tell me then, do you know the Lord?" "I—I beg pardon, sir, I don't quite understand you." "You don't understand my question?" "No, sir, I don't quite know what you mean." "Oh," I replied, "I mean, do you really, truly know the Lord Jesus?" Again he replied he did not comprehend my query. "Why, it is very simple," I added; "I will explain myself, however. It is one thing to *know about* or *of* a person, and another thing to *know* that person, is it not?" "Quite so," was his

answer. "For instance," I went on, "Miss M—— (naming the lady who had brought us together), told you about me and told me about you, thus, we each *knew* of each other, but could you say we *knew* each other?" "Certainly not sir." "But now, having met, seen, and conversed with each other, if anyone asked you to-morrow if you knew me, what would you say?" "I should, of course, say that I *knew* you," was the firm reply. "Well, then, my dear friend, that is what I meant by my question, for it is the most real thing possible to meet, by faith to see, and to converse with the Lord Jesus Christ. This only, is eternal life, as He Himself said, 'And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (Jno. xvii. 3).

And now, I ask again, DO YOU KNOW THE LORD?" He paused a moment, and then, with evident perturbation of spirit, rejoined, "I cannot reply to that question, sir, but I promise you I will think of it." "Farewell," I cried, as I wrung his hand and hurried off to the meeting, lifting my heart to God that this last query might be an arrow of conviction as to his true state, for to me it was clear he was unsaved and knew it not, standing on the verge of a Christless eternity, for

if Christ is not known here, how can one know Him there.

I saw him no more. Three weeks after my visit he died, and soon afterwards I received through Miss M—— the message he sent from his death-bed to me. It was to the effect that my last question, "Do you know the Lord?" had gone like an arrow to his heart. He weighed it in the solemn silence of the night and found he did not know Him. He knew many things about Him, but Jesus, the Lord Himself, he did not know. Terrible was the discovery. The foundations of His peace and rest were all broken up. He saw he had been resting on self, on what he himself had been doing for salvation. This discovery was followed by ten days of deep anxiety as he realised his ruined, lost state. Then the Lord had revealed himself to his troubled heart. He trusted Jesus simply. He could now say he *knew* Him, not merely of Him. Another ten days of peace and joy in Christ followed, and then he passed away to be for ever with the Lord, giving a bright testimony for Jesus and His finished work, as the sole resting place of his soul ere he departed.

And now, dear reader, "DO YOU KNOW THE LORD?" It will be an easy matter

for you to give a decided answer on the spot, for you will fully comprehend its import. Oh, how much hangs on the reply. Heaven or hell, and that for eternity. If, like Paul, you can say, "*I know whom I have believed*" (2 Tim. i. 12), happy is your case. Forgiven, cleansed, washed, justified, a child of God, a joint heir with Christ, you stand now at peace with God, in all the favour of His love, just waiting for translation to that scene of brightest glory into which Jesus will usher you when He comes to gather up "His own," to be for ever with Himself. But if, alas! like Pharaoh, you have to reply, "*I know not the Lord*" (Exod. vi. 2), terrible is your case. Uncleansed unforgiven, unwashed, guilty, *Christless*, LOST, you stand in a position of imminent danger, for the word of God hath declared, "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" (Jno. iii. 36). Lose no time, I beseech thee, in coming to the Lord. Oh, list the word that says, "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee" (Job xxii. 21). You can never have peace till you acquaint yourself with God. Fear not to cast yourself upon Him, He is "the

God of peace." Doubtless, you know much about Him, and belike, in this have rested until now. My friend, this is not eternal life. To *know* Him, alone is that. Eternal life it is thou needest, this He gives to all who will take it from His hands by faith in Jesus; taste His grace, believe His love receive His gift—eternal life, know Himself, and henceforth let thy whole life be a witness for that blessed God, who "so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jno. iii. 16).

WHO IS GOD?

WHEN travelling the other day with a friend on board one of the small steam boats which ply back and forward between the piers on the Thames, it was our privilege publicly to preach the gospel to the many fellow passengers who thronged the deck of the vessel. The circumstances of the case did not allow much more than the reading of the precious word of God in their hearing. Our time was, of course, very limited, and the people were in constant movement. I noticed that some listened, some turned away so as not to hear the sound, some derided,

some criticised. The effect was different in different cases; but at the close, and just previous to our disembarking at our landing place, one man, who had listened only to criticise, asked the question "*Who is God?*"

On looking at him I observed that he was well dressed, and from the manner of his conversation that he was far from being uneducated; and yet such was his question,—a question asked soberly and solemnly, in the very centre of the most civilised city of the most civilised country on earth! Well might it startle! It was not prompted, however, by ignorance, but by infidelity,—that cold, heartless, daring accompaniment of the boasted enlightenment of the nineteenth century, that raiser of doubts, that which seeks to question the truth, but which can settle nothing and can never satisfy. Infidelity was the parent of that blasphemous question. On hearing it my friend made the beautiful reply, "*God is love.*" "No," said the infidel, "God is hatred, for God curses." My friend rejoined, "God is love, and God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." We heard no more, but had to leave him in the hands of that God who loves such as he, and

who desireth that such should be saved.

It will be seen that my friend made rather a reply than an answer. He showed rather *what* God is than *who* God is.

But methought in the question, "Who is God?" two points were admitted; first, that the man himself was ignorant of God, and, second, that he allowed in his very words the stupendous fact that "*God is.*" He did not ask "Who *was* God?" as he might have enquired of some earthly potentate who had passed off the scene to be heard of no more, but, "Who *is* God?"

True, God cannot be seen nor heard, yet "*God is;*" true, sin may be rife and rampant, yet, "*God is;*" true, there may be no miraculous interposition, yet "*God is;*" true, evil men and seducers may wax worse and worse, yet "*God is;*" "*I am that I am.....*" I AM, this is my name for ever and this is my memorial unto all generations" (Ex. iii. 14, 15). Faith believes this and acts on the strength of it. Infidelity sees fit to deny, and, in spite of both creation and revelation, boldly to say, "Who is God?" It may be remembered that when the Apostle Paul was in the city of Athens he beheld an altar with this inscription, "To the unknown God." It might have comported with Athenian

philosophy to ask, "Who is God?" But is christian London to be placed on a par with heathen Athens, and must a similar declaration of this "unknown God" be made now? To the men of Athens Paul spoke of two things; first, man's responsibility to God, "for in Him we live, and move, and have our being; and, second, the appointment of a day of judgment.

Now all men are responsible to God, and they know it. And responsibility ends in judgment—a judgment which will embrace all, except such as have "fled for refuge"—for "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27).

This is the clear and certain decree of a God who is not unknown—it is His appointment. So says that precious book of which God is the author. And now I would ask my reader this question: Whilst admitting and owning that *God is*, dost thou *know* Him? *Dost thou know God?* This is no cant expression, no unintelligible demand. To know God is the blessed portion of all His children. It is not knowing something about God in creation, or through sacred history—it is knowing *Himself*. Granted that many of His children are but little acquainted with the "mystery of godliness," and might find a

difficulty in answering objections raised by infidelity, yet they know God, they "know the truth," and this knowledge has the effect of creating that repose of spirit, of heart and of mind, even under circumstances the most crushing, yea, when in view of death itself that makes the objects of envy of their professedly wiser yet infidel neighbours. He who knows not God is not His child.

The knowledge of good and evil was acquired through the disobedience of our first parents, and with that knowledge came sin and death; but now, in christianity, the knowledge of God the Father is made good to the believing soul in the power of the Holy Spirit, and this is eternal life. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (Jno. xvii. 3). And so the Apostle Paul says, "*I know whom* I have believed" (2 Tim. i. 12). So also it is written to the Galatian believers "after that ye have known God" (iv. 9). Clearly, therefore, God is not only revealed through the word in the person of the Son, but is made actually known in the souls of His children. They once were sinners, like others, but, wakened up by the Spirit of God to a sense of their lost condition, they came to Him, by faith, who bids all

welcome. Believing on Him they become the sons of God, and "because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6), is the divine record.

Thus, to them, God is known; and the sweetness of a Father's tender care, a Saviour's perfect and eternal love, and the Spirit's joy and comfort furnish their well known delight, making the journey through the earthly vale of tears one of peace and communion till it shall end in the gladness of the Father's house on high.

" And then shall the mists be removed,
And around us thy brightness be poured;
We shall meet Him Whom absent we loved,
We shall see Whom unseen we adored."

PEACE, DO YOU KNOW IT?

READER, do you know the meaning of this little word? If you know Christ, you do, for "He is our peace," and His legacy to the sorrowing ones He left behind Him, when He went up on high, bore upon its perfumed breath the balmy, healing, and comforting message of peace. "Peace I leave with you, *my* peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John xiv. 27). It was that word which rang

through the vaults of heaven, and was proclaimed by the multitude of the heavenly host as they ushered in the glad tidings of the Saviour's birth, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace" (Luke ii. 14). But if you do not know Christ, it is a little word of five letters, without meaning, and without power to you: it is a word seldom, if ever, heard, from your lips, for it has no place in the world's category of expressions; it uses any other word you like—happiness, joy, mirth, fun, but never peace; and why? Because they know it not! "The way of peace have they not known" (Rom. iii. 17). "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isa. lvii. 21). Ah, some one may say, it is very easy to talk of peace, when you have nothing to trouble you; wait till trial comes, and difficulties are on every side; where is your peace then?

A friend said to me lately, "You seem to me to live in some enchanted scene, where care never enters; you appear to have no troubles of your own, and are never worried by those of other people! Is it a dream you live in, or is it a reality?" She knew not what it was to have abiding peace, "The peace of God which passeth all understanding."

As I was going up the staircase of the Edinburgh Infirmary one day, I met one of the nurses. "Are there any in your ward, nurse," I said, "very near death?" "O yes," she answered, "I have just left the bedside of a young girl who has been in some months; she is in very great suffering, day and night, and I should be glad to see her at rest: I do not think it can be many days now. She is a wonder to me; for she never murmurs and seems quite cheerful; and she has no friends to visit her, and the ladies who come seem to pass her bed unnoticed." "Will you take me to her?" I eagerly said. She turned back with me; I was soon standing by the sufferer. Just as we entered the ward, two nurses were endeavouring to ease her position by moving her gently in a sheet from one side of the bed to the other; and though this was done with great tenderness and care, a looker-on could see it was agony to the dying girl: great tears rolled down her sallow cheeks, though no sound or cry escaped her, save a gentle "Thank you, that will do now." It always unnerves me to see suffering, and I had to sit silent a few minutes after the nurses had left, and, as she lay with closed eyes, I feared to disturb her. I spent the

little time in prayer that God would give me the right word for her. Her breathing soon showed me she was not asleep; and though her eyes were still closed her lips sometimes moved, and a very sweet smile passed over her features, which otherwise would have been plain and unattractive.

I gently laid my hand on hers, and said, "Will you tell me your name, dear?" she answered; and, trying to raise her heavy eyelids, she said, "I cannot see you now, but I like your voice." "Well, Agnes," I said, "I think you must have listened to a much sweeter voice than mine ere this time." "Yes, yes!" she answered with great earnestness, and, as if gaining a little gleam of strength (like the last flicker of a candle just dying out) to tell the good news for the last time, she breathed out her full heart's story of love. "Yes, here in this bed He met me, that loving Saviour; it was in the stillness of the night, four months ago, He came and spoke peace to my soul. None ever spoke to me of His love in dying for poor sinners like me; and when He saw me suffering here, He just came and told me Himself; and, oh, I have had such peace ever since! The suffering is nothing in prospect of being with Him so soon." And

again she smiled, one of those long, lasting, radiant smiles I had seen before. "And you know Him too," she said, trying to press my hand with her swollen, helpless fingers. I was just telling her of the Lord's love to me too, when the nurses returned to move her again, and I hastily left the ward. As I said, "Good-bye, Agnes," she whispered, "Do come to-morrow."

To-morrow came, and the next day, and I was unable to visit Agnes; and when at last I found myself in her ward, I feared to look at her bed, lest it should be empty; but no, her poor suffering body was still there, and a nurse sat on the bed, supporting her head on her shoulder. I saw she was just passing away. "O nurse," I said, "I am too late, and Agnes wished me to come again." In a moment she heard my voice the sweet smile came once more, and she felt over the bed for my hand. "Very soon you will be passed the reach of all suffering," I said. I know not if she heard me, but her lips moved, and the nurse said, "I think she is trying to speak to you." She sank back exhausted on the pillow. I knelt down close to her to hear if possible, her last words. There was silence for a few moments—a strange stillness seemed over all the ward;

gently, yet clearly, her last testimony of her Saviour's love came: "He gave me peace! perfect peace! abiding peace! Soon I shall have everlasting peace with Him!" The lips closed, the sealed eyelids opened not—in a moment the happy spirit of Agnes was with Him who so loved her, and who had saved her, and given her peace through His blood, the moment she rested upon His finished work.

Reader, do you know anything of that peace which Jesus gives? and has He ever said to you, as He said to that woman, who was a sinner, "Thy sins are forgiven; thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." (Luke vii.) Ah, some may tell me, "I think Christ has saved me, and yet I have no peace." And why is this? Simply because you have not accepted the full salvation offered to you. Salvation is freely offered, and peace as freely proclaimed or preached to all who will have it. The two go together: "Saved through His blood, we have peace." What should we have thought of her to whom the Lord said, "Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace" (Luke viii.), had she said, "Well, I believe I am healed, but I have no peace in the knowledge of it."? Impossible! the knowledge

of pardon must bring peace; and it is a denial of the truth and word of God to say, I am saved, and have no peace.

Suffering Agnes, whom, perhaps, few might envy, knew this peace, and she was kept "in perfect peace," her mind stayed on God. O do you know what it is to have your mind stayed on God in every circumstance? to be able to "joy in God," to "rejoice in the Lord," and that, perhaps, in the most trying circumstances? If so, you know a peace which the world can neither give nor take away. It may be this little book is in the hands of some weary and heavy-laden one, "weary because of the way;" yet you know the peace-giving power of the death of Christ; you can say, "I have that peace, but I want that deeper soul-satisfying peace that comes from abiding communion with God? do you walk with Him? is He your life, your all? "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever" (Isaiah xxxii. 17). I have been much comforted lately by that precious word, "the very God of peace" (1 Thess. v. 23). Once only is our God called "The very God of peace," and that where the hearts of His people are directed to the coming of the Lord. O what peace,

what rest for each weary one here—the prospect of the Lord coming for His saints? Is your heart often sick and weary? Cheer up!

“The way may be rough,
But it cannot be long.”

For you, sorrowful one, there is a sweet word from Himself: “Behold, I come quickly.” “I will come again and receive you unto Myself.” Say not, you are troubled and cast down, with such a prospect before you. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” Dear soul, do not live below the privileges God has called you to enjoy. The very God of peace has not only called you, and saved you, but His Word is full of the most exquisite sunbeams of peace for this cloudy wilderness path. Some go on with their heads hanging down, and their eyes ever dim with the dewdrops of Baca; and so they miss much rich blessing by the way. “Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” “Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless.”

THREE CONCLUSIONS.

“Concluded all under sin.” “Concluded all in unbelief.”
“Conclude that a man is justified by faith.”

IT is a wonderful comfort for the heart amidst all the uncertainty that prevails around us to have the tried word of God to rest upon. While men are discussing topics of the gravest kind, and speaking and writing concerning them as though God had not in His grace given us a revelation of Himself, while they are wearying themselves with ever changing and all unsatisfying speculations, both as regards God and as concerns their own condition, it is no slight gain—though men may deride us as simple—to have God’s conclusions on which to lean, and to enjoy the light which flows into the soul when once the heart has taken its right place in His presence. It is in the 3rd chapter of Galatians and the 22nd verse, we meet with the conclusion which I have placed first on my paper, viz. :—

(1.) “*The Scripture hath concluded all under sin.*” When we reflect that “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment,” a more solemn declaration than the above for any child of Adam can hardly be conceived; for the expression implies being

under the hand of another, even as a slave is under the hand of his master, or, as the children of Israel were under the iron yoke of Pharaoh. And where is deliverance to be found? In thine efforts, Christless soul? Nay, Satan will smile at them all. As there is but one name God owns, so there is but one at which Satan trembles, and that is the peerless, priceless name of Jesus. Believe in that precious name, and you have deliverance, you are saved; but reject Him, and though, like the Jews in the 8th chapter of John's Gospel, you may say, "we were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, ye shall be made free," the Lord's answer will be true of you as of them, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin;" but, "if the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Neglect Him, however, and whatever you may think of yourself God concludes you still "under sin."

There is another very solemn conclusion of God's, the second, on my paper, and it is found in the 11th chapter of Romans and the 32nd verse:—

(2.) "*For God hath concluded them all in unbelief.*" How frequently, alas, we meet with those who would consider you insulted them if you did not own them as christians,

and would retort, "We are not heathen;" yet they give no evidence of trusting in the Lord Jesus, but, on the contrary, appear to be resting in themselves. Faith is with them a subject they have mastered, part of a polite education in which they have been reared. They are at home with gospel truths, will even converse with you about them, and can demonstrate to you points of doctrine with the same precision as they would a problem in Euclid. But all the while you feel they are strangers to Jesus, to the Son of God Himself, they have never felt their need of Him, nor come to Him for mercy as lost and ruined sinners, and hence, though they may say, "We see," they really are blind and "their sin remaineth." Oh, that such would listen to those words of Jesus, "If ye were blind ye should have no sin," would bow to God's conclusion of them as given in our text, and as empty sinners having nothing in themselves, neither works, nor faith, nor feelings, would take the place before Him of utter unworthiness, as the Syrophenician woman did of old, to whom He said, when she pleaded there were at least *crumbs* for dogs, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt" (Matt. xv. 28).

But we turn with joy to the conclusion which I have placed last, and which will be found in the 3rd chapter of the Romans and the 28th verse:—

(3.) “*We conclude a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.*” How blessed thus to find it is no “open question” but “concluded,” and “IS JUSTIFIED” is God’s word of all who rest in Jesus: “He is just and the justifier of Him which believeth in Jesus.” Of His sheep Jesus says, “*I give* unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.” Is that enough for thee, beloved soul, or dost thou want to *earn* it? Thou canst not, for He *gives* it. And who are His sheep? Let Him speak: “My sheep hear My voice.” And what does that voice say? “Him that cometh to *Me* I will in no wise cast out” (John vi. 37). Then rest thy weary soul upon His bosom of eternal love. Let not thy legal heart challenge His right to give thee eternal life. He has the right to do it. It cost Him His life, all His sufferings, that hour of darkness, that shutting out from the presence of God (which belongs to thee by nature) when He took the sinner’s place upon the cross, was made sin for us, and exclaimed, “My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?” Oh, rejoice in it, that whilst

thou hast the right to nothing but hell, Jesus has the right to forgive sins, to give eternal life; and blessed be His name He ever exercises that right to the sinner in His presence. He is the true and only good Samaritan, who when he saw the poor wounded man "had compassion." Dearest reader, rest assured, however, that had the Jew in that parable been aught but a wounded man and utterly unable to help himself, he would have despised and rejected the kind offices of the good Samaritan. Hence the grace that shines in that narrative, the oil and wine, and all the rich provision were for a natural enemy; and such art thou by nature; but, ah, how precious if thou hast learnt by the Spirit's teaching that thou art indeed without strength, but being so that Christ has died for the ungodly and that God justifies the ungodly who believe in Him. None else are saved or justified, for He came not to call the righteous; but all who trust Him are, for "we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."



THIRSTING.

JOHN iv. 13, 14.

PART I.

“He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again.”

“Shall thirst again”—and oh! how soon!

She comes to draw ere yet 'tis noon.

The weary Master sat to rest

And watch'd the empty pitcher brought,

Well knowing He alone possess'd

The “living water” which she sought.

Thou too art thirsting, and in vain

Thou drinkest here to thirst again.

“Shall thirst again”—For what? For bliss?

It grows not in a soil like this.

For fame, the mirage of the brain?

It mocks the traveller's aching eye—

For riches? they are care and pain,

Nor one short hour of peace can buy.

Are these thy quest? they cannot fill,

But needs must leave thee thirsting still,

“Shall thirst again”—for ever thirst.

Come, lift the veil and know the worst.

See Dives with his parched tongue,

And not a moment's solace given;

Hear cries of burning anguish wrung.

From souls designed for God and Heaven.

Their doom is fix'd, thou still art free,

Why wilt thou thirst eternally?

PART II.

“But he that drinketh of the water that I shall give him
shall never thirst.”

“Shall never thirst!”—Oh, wondrous thought!

What! in this barren land of drought

Is there a river of delight

Whose streams of healing ceaseless flow?

Wells there a fountain pure and bright

Unstained by human guilt and woe?

Oh, weary Pilgrim! Taste and try,

When all thine earthly springs run dry.
 "Shall never thirst."—Above the skies,
 'Tis there the well-spring takes its rise ;
 Its waters feed that blessed tree,
 To mortal longings lost thro' sin,
 Unguarded growing now and free,
 Where no fell fiend can enter in.
 "Take, eat," thy Saviour says to thee,
 "Yea, drink, oh friend ! abundantly."
 "Shall never thirst."—How canst thou thirst,
 When He is there who lov'd thee first !
 E'en here His presence to thy heart
 Is nearer than the dearest friend,
 Though now we only know in part
 What there is perfect, without end.
 To live is Christ, to die is gain—
 Then drink, and never thirst again !

TWO DIFFICULTIES.

THERE is as much difficulty in persuad-
 ing some people that they are *lost*, as
 in assuring certain others that they are
saved.

And yet "*saved*" or "*lost*" describes the
 condition of all. The reader of this book is
 either "*saved*" or "*lost*," and of a truth this
 is a very solemn fact ! Pause, dear reader,
 and seriously consider in which of these two
 conditions thy soul is at this moment.

Now, each of these terms is used in the
 Word of God, and each is intended to con-
 vey a distinct meaning, as well as to mark off
 the different states in which people on earth

are seen by God. But can it be said of any one on earth that he is *lost*, whilst still the door of mercy is open and space for repentance may be allowed? Do not the bright rays of hope shine on the heart of even the most hardened, the most obdurate, the most sinful? This may, indeed be true. This earth is yet the scene of mercy, pardon, and salvation. Nevertheless, we read in 2 Cor. iv. 3., "If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that *are lost*," and this has reference, clearly enough, to those who were within the sound of that Gospel, and who could turn a deaf ear to it. They were living men on earth, and yet *lost*. Yes, there are people living on earth who are *lost*. Is my reader one of them? If so, may it please the God of all grace, by His Spirit, to reveal thine awfully perilous condition to thee, ere thou fallest into the place from which there can be no recall, no return, no retreat. Let us thank God that thou, though *lost*, art not yet irretrievably, eternally lost. There is still hope for thee.

But who is so unwilling to be persuaded of his lost condition? Not the drunkard, for he knows it; not the dishonest, immoral, vicious, degraded being, whose ways have cast a blot on society. For all such, condemnation and everlasting punishment are reserved, and

they know their fearful doom. It is almost unnecessary to tell them that they are lost, "The wicked shall be turned into hell." There is, however, another class, one that is far removed from what is morally corrupt, nay, one, the characteristic of which is not only a regard for purity, decency, uprightness, respectability, &c., but even for religion in its outward forms.

Now, it is quite possible to be thus religious and yet to be *lost*. There is no saving virtue in religion as such, nor in any of its forms.

The well known conversation between the Lord Jesus and Nicodemus may be instanced. This Nicodemus had three qualifications, each of which gave him a standing as a religious man. He was a "Man of the Pharisees," a Master of Israel," and a "Ruler of the Jews," and yet it was to this man that the Lord said, "*Ye must be born again.*" That is, his state, his nature was such that a second birth was absolutely necessary ere he could "enter the kingdom of God." As to his state, he was *lost*. Again, in Romans x., we read that the prayer of the Apostle Paul for Israel was that "they might be saved:" and yet he gave them credit for having a "zeal of God." They were zealous toward God and yet *lost*.

From such instances it is plain that a man may be not only moral but may even possess a religious name and at the same time be *lost*—may have a name to live and yet be dead.

Now, it is such people who are so hard of persuasion. They measure themselves more by the rules of society than by the word of God. They judge of themselves by their neighbour and not by the divine standard. They have their hopes of heaven and yet have not been “born again.” Their zeal towards God consists in efforts to establish their own righteousness and they have “not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.”

Oh, dear reader, if such be thy condition, submit at once to the righteousness of God, and acknowledge that thou art *lost*. Place no more any confidence in thy good works, which, although praiseworthy and commendable, cannot help thee in the matter of salvation. Own thy lost condition before thy God and then by faith lay claim to Him, and to His all-sufficient work on Calvary, who “came to seek and to save that which was *lost*.” Thus alone can there be any hope for thee.

Secondly. It is the privilege of all true

christians to *know* that they are *saved*, and for this unspeakable blessing they are indebted to the word of God. Thus, for instance, in 1 John v. 13, we read, "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." Whoever, therefore, truly believes on the name of the Son of God, not only has eternal life, but is expressly taught in this passage that he is to be a *conscious* possessor of it. He is to *know* that he has it.

Now, observe that the knowledge of salvation is derived by the believer from the word of God. That word is the alone source of information on the point, and is, thank God, quite sufficient, and if sufficient it satisfies him who believes it. He who thus accredits the word of God is consequently freed from all doubts respecting the certainty of his salvation.

Then, wherein lies the difficulty of assuring certain people that they are saved? In this, that instead of accepting the word of God as the means of knowledge they apply to their faith, their feelings, their holiness, their love to God, &c., and inasmuch as all such internal evidences are of a changing character, therefore, there can never be settled assurance. No doubt, "love, joy, peace," and

such like, are the fruit of the Spirit, the work of the Spirit in the soul, but they are not the ground of salvation, nor do they furnish the knowledge of it. The ground of salvation is the work of Christ on Calvary, the knowledge of it is supplied by the word of God to him that believeth.

Therefore, my beloved reader, if indeed thou hast renounced thine own works as a ground of salvation, and hast, through the Spirit of God, accepted the "precious blood of Christ" as thine only title, learn that the word of God bids thee *know* that thou *art saved*. Yea, thou *art* saved, thou *hast* eternal life. "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life" (John iii. 36); so that thou mayest go forth in the calm and "full assurance of faith" to live a life of joy, of holiness, and spiritual activity, waiting till thou shalt see Him, who loved thee and gave Himself for thee, who liveth now at God's right hand, from whence He will quickly come to take thee and all His blood-bought people to dwell with Himself for ever.

"His love, not thine, the resting place,
His truth, not thine, the tie."



MEPHIBOSHETH; OR, THE KINDNESS OF GOD.

“ And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake? And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba. And, when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant is he. And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet. And the king saith unto him, where is he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar. Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar. Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant! And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually. And he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am? Then the King called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house. Thou, therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons. And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micha. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth. So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet.”—2 Sam. ix.

IN this chapter we find a lovely expression that might well touch any heart, “ The

kindness of God"—the very last thing our hearts would have discovered. We might think of the wrath of God, of His sternness to execute righteous judgment, or His severity to punish sin, but "The kindness of God," who would have thought of this? Have you tasted it, beloved reader, or do you wonder that the Spirit of God should have used such a term, considering who are the objects of His kindness? This is how God gratifies His own heart, viz., by bestowing His love on those who deserve none. He saves the *poor lost* sinner.

Here we have a lovely picture of the *grace* of God, which comes out to the perishing. David is a figure of God, seated on His righteous throne, and he turns to ask, "Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God to him?" and God says, "Is there one of the lost children of Adam who has not tasted my love, is not blessed, saved, that I may lavish my love upon him?" From Saul David had received the very worst treatment, he hated him because he believed David to be God's man, but the day of persecution is over, Saul is dead, and David is firmly established on his throne. No bitter memories fill his heart, but, as one ready to bless, he enquires,

Is there one of the house of my bitterest foe, that I may show him the kindness of God? Seated on His throne of righteousness, God seeks objects for *His* favour.

In Eden the enmity of man's heart first appeared. Man believed the devil's lie, rather than God's word; his rebellion, then declared, ran on century after century, till on Calvary's cross man consummated his guilt by slaying the Son of God. Such is the history of man as reviewed by the Spirit of God. You may seek, my friend, to patch up your character, but God is holy, and you must stand the test of His holiness. God's character had to be vindicated before He could righteously bless one of the fallen race of Adam. The day comes when every foe will be trodden under foot, but *now* the foes are sought, that they may be blessed. But you will not allow you are a foe! Are you the friend of God? "A friend must *show* himself friendly." You say you love the Lord in your heart secretly, but Scripture says, "The friend must *show* himself friendly." Was Mephibosheth really one of David's foes? He kept out of David's way. He had to *be sent* for, which shows the old feeling of the house of Saul lurked in his bosom. When Adam sinned he hid himself amongst the

trees of the garden. God came and called "Adam, where art thou?" It is the same story still, man seeks to hide himself from the presence of God.

To Mephibosheth David said, "I will surely show thee kindness for *Jonathan's* sake." Jonathan here is a type of Christ; and it is the fact of Christ having died and risen that gives God a righteous platform, from which He *can* proclaim pardon to the sinner. God and sin cannot meet save for the judgment of sin. Sin could not be in His holy presence, but, beloved reader, when you die, you *must* stand in His presence, and exactly as you are. If you have lived all your days without God, you will be eternally without Him, and will see God only to hear that fearful word "DEPART," which will righteously consign you to the lake of fire. Oh, seek now to lay hold of the true character of God! He can only bless according to His nature. The claims of His throne must be maintained. "The throne is established by righteousness" (Prov. xvi. 12), and "Righteousness is the habitation of His throne" (Psalm xcvii. 2), so it must be for Christ's sake, if thou gettest blessing.

Christ died, "The just for the unjust," and this is why God can now come to you, a

guilty sinner, and offer *you* salvation full and free. The cross of Christ has put away the great barrier that stood between God and man. Sin hindered God coming out to man, and man going in to God. That question, however, was fully gone into and settled on Calvary between God and Christ. Before He died, as the victim for sin, Jesus uttered those precious words, never to be forgotten, "It is finished," and now you, a poor, vile sinner, are invited into *His* presence, who is "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity."

The question of sin is settled on the cross in a way that meets the conscience of a sinner, and satisfies the throne of God. *He* is satisfied. It is not enough you should be ; God the creditor *must* be satisfied, and then you *ought to be*. He has raised Him, Jesus, from the dead, who gave Himself as the sacrifice for sin, and thus God proves every claim on His part has been fully met. Christ *my* substitute, He who died for *my* sins, is raised, and by faith I *now* see Him seated on the very throne of God, and thus God can righteously say, "Is there one enemy of mine unsaved, that I may show him my kindness." Is my reader an enemy? Then I have good news for *you*, salvation for *you*, though you be, ruined, yea because you are a ruined, good-

for-nothing sinner. I do not merely talk to you about it, but I show it to you, God grant that your eyes may be opened to behold it, and your heart to taste its joys.

Ziba (verse 2) is a useful witness, and can tell King David of such an one as he seeks, and he describes truly his condition; "Jonathan has yet a son, *lame* on his feet." "Lame;" How did he become so? This it is important for us to enquire. From chap. iv. 4, we learn that "Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of his feet. He was five years old when the tidings (of their death) came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth." They fled because they now feared David, who, they judged, would surely requite Saul's guilt on his posterity. Thus man reasons of God; and Adam, having believed the devil's lie, found he was naked, and sought to flee from God. At five years of age Mephibosheth became lame, but *you* were born so. "Lame!" What does it mean? It pictures man in his weakness. Have you not tried to mend your ways, and to please God? Made all sorts of good resolutions, and broken them as soon almost as

they are made? You are lame! helpless! impotent! There is nothing in you but sin! Romans iii. 12 gives the verdict, "There is none that *doeth* good, no not one;" and Romans vii. 18 confirms it and gives the reason, "For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) *dwelleth* no good thing." If there is *no good in you*, it cannot come *out* of you, So you had better cease trying to extract what is not in you, and instead thereof come to Jesus simply.

But Mephibosheth was not only lame in his person, he was at a distance. "Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel in Lo-debar." But David said, "Where is he?" Look at the grace that seeks a careless heart! All this time there was not a throb in the heart of Mephibosheth; he was utterly careless about David. How often do souls plead, "Oh, I must do something, feel something, before I *can* come to Christ? Had Mephibosheth one desire, one feeling with regard to David? Did he do anything? *All* was on David's part. Mephibosheth was in Lo-debar, and you are in the world, away from God, a sinner a beggar, living on the devil's charity, fain to fill your belly with husks (worldly pleasures) in the "far country," as the Lord Jesus puts it; engaged

with every little bit of passing vanity the devil can cast before your eyes, as a bait to engage your mind, lest one thought of God should enter there. With some it is music, others painting, some dancing, and some science—everything or anything that will detain the heart in the “far country.”

Like fugitive Cain, men seek to be happy *without God*. He built a city and *in it* originated all that which now so engrosses man in the world. Jabal went in for COMMERCE, “and was the father of such as dwell in tents, and have cattle ;” Jubal for PLEASURE, “He was the father of such as handle the harp and organ ;” and Tubal-Cain for SCIENCE, or the more intelligent appliances of the mind of man, being “An instructor of every artificer in brass and iron” (Gen. iv). This three-fold cord was made not to be quickly broken and all to keep man in peace without God. But you say, “I have to earn my bread.” So have I, but how is your heart engaged? Is it *engaged* with the things of this life, or are your affections set on things above, whilst you are careful to “provide things honest in the sight of all men?” “Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord” (Rom. xii).

I remember once talking to a company of

workmen about the everlasting welfare of the soul. They were standing idly at the close of the meal hour. One, who was smoking, answered my appeal with this remark, "We have no time to think of these things." I replied, "You have time to smoke, time for everything, but the things of God."

Dear unsaved reader, your heart is at a distance from God, but, though your heart has not one throb for God, His yearns over you; He knows your heart and life, your proud will that would blame God, rather than humble yourself before Him; but His eye is on *you*, that He may show you His kindness. But what is the kindness of God? Let us look for a little at Titus iii. 3, and learn what it means. First we get a picture of the condition of man without God: "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." Here is the language of a heart that has humbled itself in the presence of God; to such an one God will unfold His kindness. "*Foolish*," who can escape this characteristic? "*Disobedient*," this feature first showed itself in Eden, when man would go *his* way, rather than God's. Since then disobedience has largely developed

itself. We see it in the servant to his master the child to the parent, and how constantly in the creature to God. "*Deceived,*" by whom? The god of this world. "*Serving divers lusts and pleasures.*" "Oh, I have only enjoyed that which was suited to my station in life," you may say, but what does God say to these things? "Serving divers lusts and pleasures." I do not deny there is pleasure in the dance, the race course, the theatre, and the wine cup, but sin is mingled with all; they are "the pleasures of sin." In them all the creature is following the bent of his own will—that is sin. "*Living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.*" What grace in God to *seek* one who has been hating, not his neighbour only, but God Himself!

Such is the picture the Spirit draws of unsaved men, but, when this was his state, "the kindness and love of God appeared," more truly the "Philanthropy of God," not that which seeks to raise the masses of men, by educating and improving the old fallen nature, which, alas! helps to blind man to the fact that his nature is a condemned thing before God, that *it* cannot please God. "The philanthropy of God" showed itself in another way altogether, namely, in giving Christ to

die for man: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." The first thing God does is to save us, and that not by any act on our part, but by what He has done. Do not say you know "the kindness of God," if you are not saved; first He saves you, *then* you get to know your Saviour-God: "By grace ye are saved . . . not of works lest any man should boast." It is: "To him that worketh not, but believeth." Believeth what? "That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4).

But to pursue our subject. "King David sent and *fetches* Mephibosheth." He did not say let him come to me, but sent and fetched him. In the same way God acts towards the sinner. His word deals with the conscience, the soul feels as if personally addressed in the midst of the congregation. The preacher knew nothing of the workings of the heart, but God, the searcher of hearts, did, and was thus, by His word, singling out the soul, and sending home the arrows of conviction. "David sent," and God, by His word, speaks home to the soul, and Christ died to *bring* us

to God. He took my place in the day of His death, and now He gives me His place in the glory of God. The moment the sinner believes, Scripture says of him, "Accepted *in* the beloved."

"When Mephibosheth was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence." Does he excuse himself? How real a thing it is when the soul is brought into the presence of God; it sees itself as God sees it; conscious of guilt, the soul is quiet. David broke the silence, and said, "Mephibosheth." He named him by his *own* name. How his heart would throb. "He knows all about me," he would say; "he has called me by my name." He did not say rebel, fugitive, though both were true; his character he does not give him, but this lovely word "Mephibosheth" meets his ear. And what were the first words which Saul of Tarsus heard when blinded by the sight of the glory of God, Jesus spake to him? "Saul! Saul!" His own name! Thus God makes the sinner feel He speaks to *him*.

Mephibosheth said, "Behold thy servant!" and Saul said, "Lord what wilt *Thou* have me to do?" Their hearts were captivated by the one in whose presence they were. In John x. we read, "The sheep hear his voice;

he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them." Saul said, "I alone heard the voice that spake." The soul that is in God's presence loses consciousness of all else, He engrosses it. "Behold thy servant." David replies, "Fear not," Is there a trembling soul reading this book, faint-hearted yet believing? "Fear not," for God says, "I will surely show *thee* kindness:" not for anything in you, but for Christ's sake. "If I only had deeper feelings of love to Christ, a softer heart then I might think he would bless me." Is this the language of your heart? No, he would not, your feelings would not help, but hinder; it is because of Christ, because of that which He did, that God can bless you. No experience, however good, would help in your salvation; what Christ is, and has done is the ground of it all. "But how am I to know I am saved?" Because the word tells you, "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life." It does not say, "*feels it hath*," but "*hath*." God says so. Not for *your worthiness* sake, but for Christ's sake. He is worthy.

Mephibosheth utters but one word, but it is a word of tremendous self-judgment—"What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look on such a dead dog as I am?" "A dead

dog!" What so loathsome? Is there any question of worthiness here! Assuredly not! He has done with himself, and accepts thankfully undeserved favour. "Do thou likewise," beloved reader. And David said to Ziba, "I have given to thy master's son *all* that pertained to Saul, thou therefore, and thy sons, shall till the land for him; and Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants." Why are we told all this? Because God delights to recount what resources He puts at the service of the one whom His grace has saved: "Life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23). When you have received Christ you have *everything*.

And further, "Mephibosheth shall eat bread *always* at my table." How? As an alien, a stranger? No, "As one of the king's sons;" and "Thou shalt bring in the fruits that thy master's son may have food to eat." All the rich provisions of the king's table are his now. For a little time? No! "ALWAY" (verse 10), and "as one of the king's sons," for a new relationship is formed, no longer is he a rebel, a fugitive, but a child of the king: "Know ye not that ye are all the *children* of God by faith in Christ

Jesus." You are a child of God the moment you truly believe in Jesus, and there is no fear of your ever being turned out.

"So Mephibosheth *dwelt* in Jerusalem." Jerusalem is a symbol or type of the presence of God, the place of blessing. He never left it, nor can you leave the place His grace has given you, viz., "Seated in Christ in heavenly places;" but God wants you to *enjoy* your privileges, and to know, as to the communion of your soul, the delights of His presence. "I have lost my sight of Jesus," I hear someone say. What has caused this? Your walk tells on the communion of your soul; see what has caused this; judge the sin that has made you lose the consciousness of your Father's smile: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive." He desires you should ever enjoy the riches of his grace. You feel your weakness, and so you should. "Mephibosheth.....was lame on both his feet," and continued so all his days. His nature was not changed, and are you discouraged, young believer, because you find in you that same bad heart, lusting after what you have declared yourself dead to? Your heart is bad, and ever will be, the flesh is in you, but the sense of this, and sorrow on account of it, is a sign of life, not

of death, and Scripture prepares us for all that which so troubles you, and makes you almost doubt if you have believed to the saving of your soul. The old nature is in you, though you have believed, and have the life of God in your soul, but your privilege is to live out Christ, and *reckon* the old nature dead. Do not obey its dictates. Christ is your life, and He the only One you have to obey. Let Him guide you: "He calleth his own sheep by name, and *leadeth* them." Be careful and prayerful. Own your own utter weakness. You have *in* you the Holy Ghost, and He will be power for you to live like Christ and testify for Him.

"Mephibosheth did eat *continually*." He enjoyed his privileges, and thus had power to meet responsibility when it came. In chapter ix. we see him feeding; in chapter xvi. the kingdom of David is upset, the king has fled, and Mephibosheth is left behind in Jerusalem, and David, deceived by Ziba, repents of what he had given to Mephibosheth; but our David will never do so. "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Does this change Mephibosheth? No! In chapter xix. we find David returned; and what had been the moral state of Mephibosheth during his absence? He had

“neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed till the day he came again in peace.” He was a true mourner, his heart abode true to David. A lovely picture of an unworldly saint! He had *no fellowship* with those who were pleasuring in the day of the king's absence. How rebuking such a word, such faithfulness! His trust in David was unfeigned. He had been slandered. “He hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king, but my lord the king is an angel of God, do therefore what is good in thine eyes” (Chapter xix 27). Have you been slandered? learn from Mephibosheth, he trusted his case in the king's hands; he had learned his grace and would trust his righteousness. David now would have divided the land between Mephibosheth and Ziba, but the former said, “Let him take *all*, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again.” He cared not for the riches now that he had David. How important the principle here! Many a saint has lost his peace, by asserting his rights and contending for earthly property. May we follow the footsteps of Mephibosheth and be true mourners in the day of our Lord's rejection, while in spirit we are with Him where He is.

“HE IS OUR PEACE.”

Christ's grave is vacant now,
Left for the throne above ;
His cross asserts God's right to bless
In His own boundless love.

'Twas there the blood was shed,
'Twas there the life was poured,
There mercy gained her diadem,
Whilst justice sheathed her sword.

And thence the child of faith
Sees judgment all gone by,
Perceives the sentence fully met,
The soul that sins shall die !

Learns how that God, in love,
Gave Christ the sins to bear
Of all who own Him Son of God,
That they His place might share ;

And cries with wond'ring joy,
As He is so am I,
Pure, holy, loved as Christ Himself,
Who shall my peace destroy ?

Reach my blest Saviour first,
Take Him from God's esteem :
Prove Jesus bears one spot of sin,
Then tell me I'm unclean !

Nay ! for He purged my guilt
By His own precious blood,
And such its value not a spot
E'er meets the eye of God.

WHERE IS THE LAMB?"

"Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"—GEN. XXII.

"Where is the lamb?" Earths thousand hills
 Could furnish none like Thee;
 Jesus, whose name heaven's praises fills,
 Thou, Thou hast died for me.

In Thee, as man, God's holy eye
 No taint of sin could see;
 And therefore couldst Thou stoop to die,
 'Th' atoning lamb for me.

"Where is the lamb?" Poor trembling soul!
 Look back to Calvary's tree;
 'Tis Jesus Christ who makes thee whole,
 His blood avails for thee.

Then go and tell what He hath done,
 With soul at peace and free;
 Go, say to many a weary one,
 "He'll do the same for thee."

FRAGMENT.

God acts in grace. It is the acceptable time—the day of salvation. He opens the door through the blood of Christ, and proclaims peace and a sure reception to all who come. The work is done: His character fully glorified with regard to sin.....We needed a mediator, who, while maintaining the glory of God, should put us into such a position, that He could present us to God in righteousness, according to that Glory. Christ gave Himself as a ransom. But He must be a man, in order to suffer for men; and this He was.

“BOAST NOT THYSELF OF
TO-MORROW.”

“Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what
a day may bring forth.”—PROV. xxvii. 1.

IT was in one of the sick wards of a crowded city poorhouse that the following solemn events occurred, which have left too deep an impression on me ever to be effaced, and the memory of which, again and again, comes to me, as a voice from eternity, bidding me seize the present moment to speak *now* of Christ to any Christless soul within my reach, for to-morrow may be too late; and, oh, dear reader, may this little paper have a voice for you, saying to you, “To-day, if ye will hear his voice harden not your heart.”

I had been visiting constantly some of the sick ones in the poorhouse, and, as I one day approached the bed of a dear sufferer in whom I was deeply interested, she said, “Oh, I am so glad you have come, I have been watching the door all the morning in the hopes you would be in to-day.” “Why, Maggie,” I said, “you did not think I should forget you?” “No, no, it wasn’t that,” she answered, “I knew better than that, but I thought, maybe, you mightn’t find out where

I was, and it wasn't so much myself I was thinking of either, glad enough though I always am to catch sight of a bit of your dress coming round the door, but there's a poor young thing in this ward that I want you sorely to speak to ; maybe, she'll listen to you."

The Lord had opened Maggie's heart to receive the glad tidings of His love only a few weeks before, and now she was ever anxious that others should know the precious Saviour whom she had found. Since my last visit, a few days previously, my poor friend had been removed from a ward, in which I knew the occupant of each bed, to the present one into which I had never before been, and this accounted for her fear that I might not find her. I looked round as she spoke. The ward was a very large one, with beds ranged each side, beds across the top, and a double row of beds, turned head to head, down the middle. Oh, the tales of want, of sorrow, and of suffering, written upon the faces of the occupants of them ! nearly all were comparatively young, few had reached the age of thirty, and my heart ached as I asked, "Which bed is your friend in Maggie?"

"She is not a friend of mine," she said,

“she is much above me, and its little I know about her, for she has not been in here many days, and she does not talk to the nurses as most do, but I know she has seen a deal of trouble. She came in here because she couldn't bear that her husband should see her dying of want before his eyes, and she thinks she'll be well in a month and able to go out again, but the doctor says she will not live much more than a month, and there is no one to tell her that, or to speak to her of Jesus, and I am afraid she hasn't much thought about Him herself. Many a time I've longed to go to her in the night when her bad times came on, if I were only able.”

Maggie's illness had left her partially paralysed and quite unable to move. I was waiting till she ceased speaking, to ask her again which was the bed, when a half-cry, half-moan, followed by such a distressing cough, and seeming struggling for breath, made me look up. In a bed, at no great distance, and half sitting up, was a lovely girl, who, from her appearance, could scarcely have seen twenty-one summers. I needed not Maggie's “That is she,” to tell me it was the one of whom she had been speaking. A more complete contrast to the scene in which she was could not be imagined. You

could only picture such an one in a home of luxury, with every loving care being lavished on her, instead of lying on a little workhouse bed in a crowded ward, a tin mug with water in it by her side the only refreshment for her parched lips, and dependent for all care on the kind feeling of the pauper nurses. These though rough in appearance, seemed really kind hearted. At that first half-cry two of them had gone quickly forward to her, and one raised her in her arms, while the other gently put back the masses of beautiful hair that had fallen over her shoulders, speaking evidently soothingly to her.

Well I knew that the colour of her cheek and the bright light in her eye were no signs of health, even if the cough had not told too plain a tale, and yet it seemed impossible to look on her and believe that death was as near as the doctor pronounced. I longed to go to her, to be a sister to her, above all to tell her of Jesus, but the nurses stayed by her side. A patient, too, from the next bed, the only one in the ward able to be dressed, was standing at the foot of the bed, and I feared to add to her distress by going forward. I could think of no excuse for seeming to intrude. In vain I searched my pockets for a little bottle of Eau de Cologne, that I generally

carried when I went to the poorhouse, and had often found useful and refreshing to one and another ; this day I had forgotten it. I had given away, in other wards, all the grapes I had brought in with me ; how I longed for a few of them now !

Presently I heard her say, “ Am I *very* ill ? I can’t be so *very* ill. If I were dying, nurse, what should I do ; oh, what *should* I do ?

Though really addressing the nurse, her large dark eyes fell on me, as if speaking to me, and instinctively I half rose to go to her but the devil whispered ; “ You could not speak to her with those three women standing round, and while she is so suffering ; you are just throwing away an opportunity by being so hurried ; you are a stranger in this ward ; even the nurses do not know you ; you would only provoke them, and frighten her, by intruding now. Better come back to-morrow, and bring anything you can think of, she may be alone then, and you may be able to get her away from here, and to see her often while she lives ; you will only defeat your object by being in such haste.”

I did not recognise the voice, the advice seemed good, and yet I knew not how to leave the ward. I had already long overstayed my time, but yet I lingered and

lingered; but the three women still stood there, and my coward heart, beguiled by Satan's suggestion of "Expediency," won the day. I will come back early to-morrow, I thought, and, saying this to Maggie, I rose to leave.

Many times before reaching the end of that long ward I nearly turned back, for the eyes of the sick girl seemed to follow me, and deep down in my heart the words still sounded "If I were dying, nurse, what should I do?" but the devil's "to-morrow" again triumphed.

All through a restless night the words rang in my ears, "If I were dying, nurse, what should I do?" In vain I tried to comfort myself with the deceiver's words.

Next day, as early as I could gain admittance, I went to the poorhouse, taking with me the finest grapes I could procure, and other things that I thought an invalid might fancy. As I opened the door of the ward I saw the nurses all engaged at a long table near the door. I was glad. She will be alone I thought, I will go straight to her, without waiting to see Maggie first. I felt that I had no message, no words, and yet that I must go to her, and I could only ask the Lord to do as He would. Without speaking to any one I walked straight up the ward towards

her bed. A screen, which sheltered it from the fire, also hid the lower half of the ward. And oh ! the sight that met my gaze, as I passed that screen, I shall never forget. Was it the sight of suffering and weakness ? the sound of a tearing cough, or restless moaning, that thrilled me so ? No, no, even these could not have produced such a pang of anguish. All was still ! A clean, course sheet was drawn up over the bed ; too well I knew the meaning ; too well I knew that the still, silent form underneath that slight covering would never listen to human voice again, had gone beyond the reach of human aid for evermore—and oh ! where ? Where ? The agony of the moment was unutterable. I stood rooted to the spot till one of the nurses took me by the arm, and, leading me to a seat by Maggie's bed, said kindly, " You are over tender of the heart for sights like this, my poor young lady, though even we, who get pretty well used to them, have been sobbing like children over that poor young thing that's gone. I've never seen the like in my time here."

I could not answer her, the very kindness of the woman only bowed me down afresh, for she was one of those before whom I had feared yesterday to speak of Jesus to the one

now in eternity. Presently she spoke again. "The men are going to bring in the shell just now to remove her," she said, in a low, hurried tone, and you look fit for the coffin already, let me take you into another ward till it is over." "No, no, nurse, it is not fear of the sight of death that has upset me so," I said; "but oh! where has her soul gone? Did she know Jesus? Was she saved? That is my trouble." The woman looked still more solemn. "Eh, but that's the great question of us all," she said, and, the door opening at the moment, she turned my chair quickly round that I might not see what followed, and hurried away to her duties.

There was absolute silence in the ward, never had I so realized eternity, or the value of a soul, till then, and my own failure looked blacker and more hideous. I leaned my head on my hand and sat motionless. As soon as I could speak, I asked Maggie, "When did she die?" "It was just at daybreak that she got all of a sudden much worse," she said, "and the doctor came in to see her. He did not think there was any great danger, but, an hour or two after, she died just quietly, so the nurse told me, and a little before she died she thought she was better. I heard the night-nurse, that's the woman that spoke

to you, repeating the Lord's Prayer to her, but she is'nt sure if she had her senses then." Some strange feeling prompted me, and I asked, "Has the woman from the next bed who was up and dressed when I was here yesterday, gone away?" for I noticed that the bed was empty and made up as for a new patient. The hesitation in Maggie's manner made me look quickly up. "What is it, Maggie?" I said, for tears filled her eyes, "she surely cannot have died too?" "Yes," she said, "she died in the night; when the other one got worse she jumped out of bed to go to her, as she often did, but fell on the floor, they thought it was a faint at first, but it wasn't, she was really dead. It was her heart, they say, but no one knew there was anything wrong with it; she had been ill with rheumatism most all winter."

I could ask no more; the very room seemed whirling round me. Oh, for that one day back again; for that lost opportunity of speaking for Jesus! Two, out of the four in and round that bed yesterday, were in eternity to-day, and a third was willing to listen, and ready to own the deep importance of the Lord's salvation. I had thrown away the opportunity and now it was *too late*. My poor friend seemed to enter into the agony

of my soul, and attempted no words of comfort till after a long, long pause, then she gently touched me, and said, "Did you not tell me once that *He* knew exactly all our weaknesses and all our failings, when He loved us so much; that He chose us and died for us?" She was turning teacher and comforter now; her words came to me, as from the Lord, and fell on my heart as the Lord's look must have fallen on Peter's; she had struck the right chord, and the pent up tears flowed freely. Maggie waited awhile; then, presently, very softly she said, "There are many very ill in this ward. In the bed under the window in that left hand corner lies one who can't last long, and no one goes near her; will you take her the message you brought to me? maybe, the Lord would like her to hear it from you."

I could but recognise how divine grace had taught and refined her; she loved her Lord and she knew I had failed in courage for Him, and she loved her earthly friend, and her heart was full of sympathy for the agony that failure had caused.

Almost reverently I took that poor, wasted hand, that rested on my arm, and held it for a moment in mine, while my heart echoed Peter's cry of old, "Lord, thou knowest all

things. Thou knowest I love thee ;” then rising, I turned towards the bed she had pointed out.

The same fatal disease—consumption, was fast hurrying the one whom I now saw to an early grave,—an early grave, I say, for I found out afterwards she was quite young, though a more experienced eye than mine might have failed to detect any sign of youth about that wan, haggard face, with its deep lines and dull, hopeless expression. There was nothing to deceive here, the hand of death was only too plainly marked.

As I neared her bed she feebly lifted her mug to her lips—it was empty. I went closer and said, “Will you try a few of these grapes instead of the water?” She did not answer me, only looked at me as if half bewildered. I fed her with as many as she could take, then, as I put some more on the bed within her reach, she said, “Who are you who will show any kindness to me?”

“You would not know me if I told you my name,” I said, “but I am not the only one ready to show you kindness, I have a message for you from One who loves you.”

“Ah, you’ve made a mistake, I knew you had,” she said, and the wee glimmer of light that had come into her face died out again,

leaving it more wan, and haggard, and hopeless than before. "Why, there's never a one in all this wide world that would do as much as you have done just now for Jenny, let alone love her." "I have not made any mistake, Jenny," I answered, "the One I speak of is not in this world now, He was in it once, but now He has gone back to heaven, and it is from heaven that He sends you His message; would you like to hear it?"

She shivered, and a look of terror came over her face, "Is it God or Jesus you mean?" she said, "why, they hate me worse than all. The devil wants my soul and he will have it very soon, but he's the only one that wants me;" and the look of hopeless terror deepened as she went on,—“Lady, I tell you, you don't know me, or you yourself wouldn't stand by my bedside and talk to me,—go away,—you've been kind to me, and I wouldn't like any one to see you talking to the likes of me; why, my own father and mother have forsaken me.”

Silently I cried to the Lord for the right words to speak. Then I said, "Jenny, Jesus was the friend of sinners; when He was on earth Jesus died for sinners; He will be *your* friend if you will have Him."

"No, no," she said, "they always told me

God hates sinners, and I've been wicked since I was ever such a child. I'm not very old in years now, lady, but I'm old in sin, it is too late now. I can't change my life—it is past,—and *God hates sinners.*” “It is you who are making two great mistakes now, Jenny,” I said; “it is *not* too late, and God does *not* hate sinners—listen to this—these are His own words, ‘God commendeth his love towards us in that while we were *yet sinners* Christ died for us;’ and again, ‘When we were yet without strength in due time Christ died for the *ungodly*;’ does that sound like God’s hating sinners? He hates sin, hates it so much that He gave His own beloved Son to die to put it away, that He might be able to show only love to the poor sinner.” I saw she was listening intently, and I went on; “It is not too late for *you*, either, Jenny, for God is still saying ‘*Now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation;’ and Jesus says, ‘Him that cometh unto me I will *in no wise* cast out.’ *Jesus* wants to have you, the devil would seek to destroy your soul I know, but Jesus wants to save it—will you let Him? ‘The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us *from all* sin.’ Jesus is able and He is willing to save you—will you come to Him? will you trust Him?

Jesus is a Saviour, Jenny, a Saviour of just such sinners as you and I."

"Ah, lady, you—I believe He will save you, but you don't know all my sins. He *won't* save me—no, no, it's too late, too late, too late." "Listen," I said, "God's own words are best, 'Though your sins be as *scarlet* they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool;' and Jenny, your heart and mine are both alike, bad in God's sight, and Jesus will receive you as willingly as He received me."

"Would He have me? are you sure?" and for a moment a gleam of hope lit up that poor face; then it passed again, as evidently a fresh remembrance of her past life came before her, and she said in tones of wailing despair, "No, no, not me, my sins are *too many*. He couldn't bear to have me near Him." I turned to Luke vii. and began to read of the woman at the feet of Jesus. "Was a sinner," she murmured, "*that's* like me. Did He turn her away?" "No, Jenny, He had only a welcome for her; He has only a welcome for you; listen still," and I read on. When I came to the verse "her sins which are many *are forgiven*," she gasped out, "Is that verse really there? you wouldn't deceive a dying woman; does He really say

that? You look true, and you've been kind to me; read it again, and read it slowly; I didn't know that verse was in the Bible." I read it again. "That must have been some one just like me," she said, half to herself, "her sins which are *many*." "Yes," I said, "and shall not this be like you too, '*are forgiven*'?"

"Sins be as scarlet—are forgiven—precious blood—Jesus," she muttered, and her head, which she had tried to raise a little, sank back on the pillow. I pressed the juice of some grapes into her half closed mouth, and bathed her forehead with some Eau de Cologne, then I said, "You are very exhausted, I had better leave you for to-day." "Oh, no," she said, though she spoke with effort now, "don't go, tell me more—I shall be gone when you come back—tell me all now—all His message—read me that once more—you know—about All forgiven—did you—say—that was me? My—sins—are—many."

"Jesus says it of every one who trusts Him. He says to you, if you trust His precious blood, 'Thy sins are forgiven.'" "Which—are—many—are *all*," she put in; her soul clung to that. "Yes," I said, "that is it, and there is something more that He says,

“Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.”

“Yes,” she slowly said, and her whole face changed and brightened, though she could only speak in a whisper now, “that’s all—for—me, all: God—does—not—hate—sinners; Jesus—died—for sinners; my sins—which—are many—are *all* forgiven; I do—trust—Him; Peace—Peace.” Her eyes closed. I sat in silence for some little time, then, thinking she was sleeping, I moved to go. She opened her eyes. “Good-bye,” she said, “I can’t—thank—you—now; next—time—I see—you I shall—be able—to.”

I wondered for a moment did she think she would get better; but she added after a pause, “Up there; with Jesus, the Friend of sinners.” She was right. I never saw her on earth again, but I look to meet her, as she said, “with Jesus, the Friend of sinners.”

Dear reader, do you know that your sins, be they few, or be they many are *all* forgiven? One single sin is enough to sink your soul in hell for ever; but the blood of Jesus is enough to put away the guilt of a whole world. Oh! delay not to come to Him; to-morrow may be too late for *you*; to-morrow *you* may be in eternity. Will you risk meeting God with all your sins upon you, and

this crowning sin of all, that you refused all His offers of mercy, despised the blood of His Son, would not have Jesus as a Saviour? The devil wants *your* soul to destroy it, and he says "to-morrow;" Christ wants your soul to save it, and He says "*to-day*"—"now." Whose voice will you listen to? Whose friend will you be? The devil knows well how many a one his fatal "to-morrow" has lured on, till they have found themselves sinking in the black morass of eternal ruin, with *no* escape. Christ's "to-day" leads into life, and light, and peace, and joy unspeakable for evermore; for, "In thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

THE OLD BLIND KNITTING MAN.

WHEN in Somersetshire some short time since, I passed an old blind man, feeling his way along by means of a walking stick. His calm, peaceful countenance, and his silvery hair frosted by many a winter, quite arrested my attention, and the desire I had to speak with this old man was not to be resisted". I felt anxious to know whether he was a believer in the Lord Jesus or not; and I had an inward conviction that it was possi-

ble he possessed "Peace with God." Just at this time a little girl came up, and entered into a brief conversation with him; and the very kind manner he evinced in speaking to the child only increased my desire to speak with him; accordingly I walked up to him and repeated a verse of a hymn that then came to my mind:

"I heard the voice of Jesus say:
'I am this dark world's light;
Look unto Me, thy morn shall rise,
And all thy day be bright.'
I look'd to Jesus, and I found
In Him my Star, my Sun;
And in that light of life I'll walk,
Till trav'ling days are done."

The old man attentively listened, and then calmly said, "That hymn is in my hymn book;" which he informed me was one with raised type, by which blind persons, assisted by their fingers, are enabled to read. He further informed me that he possessed a Bible, adding, "I'd rather give up *all* my knitting and netting, than give up my book; it gives a peace that the world can't pluck out or meddle with." From this I gathered what he then told me, that he earned his livelihood by knitting and netting articles which he then sold. "You have heard the voice of Jesus then?" I said. "Yes," he replied, "I have," and then went on to say,

“Many people think it presumption for one to say he *is* saved ; but there are the *promises* : ‘ Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have eternal life ; ’ again, ‘ There is therefore *now no* condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.’ *I believe* in the promises.” I shook hands with this dear believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, glad to have met with him, and, bidding him good day, I parted from him, feeling in myself that, if we should not meet again on earth, we should meet again “ Where partings are no more.”

Allow me to ask you, dear reader, have you peace with God? a peace (to make use of the old blind man’s words) “ which the world can’t pluck out, or meddle with ; ” a peace which this cold, hollow world cannot possibly give. It may afford you pleasure, it may give you amusement, but give you PEACE it never can. You may be a troubled, anxious soul, desiring to possess peace with God. You say, “ I believe that Jesus died for sinners, and that He was raised from the dead ; but to say, I *have* peace, I could not.” You *do* believe that Jesus died and rose again, but you *fail* to see that all *are* justified who believe that Jesus was delivered for *their* offences, and raised again for their justifica-

tion. It seems to you, so to speak, "too good to be true," but why should you doubt God? He does not lie; yea, scripture says, "*He cannot lie*" (Titus i. 2). The secret in the old blind knitting man having peace with God is simply this, he believes the *Word of God*. Did he believe what man has to say, he would consider it a great want of humility to say he *is* saved; or, did he consider his feelings on the matter, they would in no way help him, rather the reverse. It is not what man's theology may teach, or what one's feelings (whether happy or miserable feelings) may suggest, but, "What saith the scriptures?" (Rom. iv. 3).

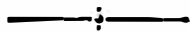
The blessed, unfailing word of God assures me that God is satisfied with, yea, glorified by, what His beloved Son suffered upon the cross of Calvary more than eighteen hundred years ago. God's answer of satisfaction to Christ's death is the resurrection. "*God raised Him from the dead*" (Acts xiii. 30). It is not that the debtor is harder to satisfy than the creditor? The debt has been paid for *all* that believe, justice asks no more, her sword is sheathed. The death of Jesus has met the demands of God. "In that he died he died unto sin *once*; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God" (Rom. vi. 10). God

desires the confidence of the anxious one. God has given His Son that the sinner might see He has kept nothing back from him. Adam's fall (as we say) and our fall in him, were the result of *want of confidence* in God. Satan insinuated that God had *kept something back* (Genesis iii. 4, 5). The insinuation was received, the lie credited, the man driven out. Nevertheless, God has not left us to perish, but, in order to prove that He has kept nothing back, He *gives* His own blessed *Son*, not an angel, nor an archangel, but His Son.

"God *so loved the world*, that he gave his *only* begotten Son, that *whosoever believeth* in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16).

"Therefore being justified by (not for) faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1).

"Frames and feelings fluctuate,
These thy Saviour ne'er can be ;
Love itself may oft abate,
Learn thyself in Christ to see ;
Then be *feelings* what they will
Jesus is thy Saviour still."



MY POSITION; OR, THE CONSEQUENCES OF MY CONVERSION.

HAVING told you of my conversion, and the necessity of it, I will now proceed to speak of my present position in the sight of God.

It was not in a moment that I saw my full security. I knew life was mine because God had said, "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life;" but still the thought would ever and anon come over me, What if I cease to believe? the world is full of trial and temptation; Satan reigns there; what if some device of his upsets my faith, and, after all, I lose the prize I have just received, and be worse off than ever? I lived in fear and trembling, and, though no doubts existed as to my present possession of eternal life, how long this priceless gift might be continued to me was a question I could neither solve nor fathom.

I scarcely remember, after this lapse of time, through whom or how the blessed certainty first reached me of eternal security, though I still can call to mind the rest it gave me. It seemed new life to me; my present up to this was bright, my future gloomy;

now both present and future were alike undimmed in lustre, for I saw that God was for me, and that thus none could prevail against me. The two most mighty hands throughout the universe enclasped me; the two most loving hearts in being beat in kindness toward me, and thus no ill could touch me. Satan might pluck the sheep from out the fold of Judaism, but never from the Shepherd's or the Father's hand (John x. 27—30).

Apart from God, the unseen powers might prevail; and were it not for Christ's love, visible adversaries might assert their claims: but invisible things cannot detach the christian from the love of God, and things that are seen cannot succeed in separating the weakest babe in Christ from His unbounded ceaseless love (Rom. viii. 33—39).

Eternal security was mine, through mercy, as well as the present possession of eternal life. Not that I felt that the trials of the way were lessened—far otherwise, for difficulty after difficulty rose unknown before, 'as if that, now being free from Satan's bondage, he would try to make my path as rough as possible; but then I knew it could not last for ever, and to depart and be with Christ would be more

enjoyable the more the present scene was dark and dismal. How truly had death lost its sting, the grave its victory. To die were gain, because it was to be with Him who loved me and gave Himself for me, and the day of judgment, once a cause of fear when sin was known, now no more brings terror, because I have learned that perfect love which casts out fear and hence have *boldness*, because I know my standing is as Christ is before His God (1 John iv. 17, 18).

It is true that subsequently it was mine to learn that at the judgment seat of Christ each thought, each word, each action, would be tested in His presence ; the history of my life as seen by Him, unfolded there and the works of the flesh exposed, and, in blessed contrast those of the Spirit recognised and rewarded (Rom. xiv. 10—12 ; 2 Cor. v. 10) ; but this, so far from reproducing terror, was but found to be an occasion of the deepest joy, for then a glorified body would be mine, and, nothing hindering the action of God's indwelling Spirit, I should rejoice to learn from Christ Himself the full extent of all the ways of grace from first to last ; God's providential mercies, before I knew the Lord, in keeping me from many a danger, many a snare ; and since I knew Him, His preventing and restor-

ing care, checking the outbursts of my selfish will, and in love recalling the poor heart that might have wandered far away from Him. But neither this, nor the more easily learned truth of "no condemnation," for a moment dimmed my sense of calm security, but rather on the contrary filled my heart with a deeper sense of the wondrous mercy that surrounded me.

I think about this time the blessed truth of priesthood dawned upon me; the need of it I long had felt, and surely had experienced its action; but what it was that kept me free, encompassed as I was with weakness, or who the person was that thus was interested in me, I could scarcely have explained to anyone. But when I knew that Christ's activities were still in exercise towards me, those energies that first had prompted Him to leave His throne of glory and brave shame and suffering, this was cause for fuller praise than ever, and led up the soul to occupation with the One whose service was as ceaseless as His constant love.

One's daily life bore testimony to how much there was of nature's weakness still attaching to one; I do not say of sin, for that involves another principle, but how much need of sympathy and intercession

there existed, while still the body struggled through the world which yet was groaning beneath the curse that fell on all the first creation. It was true the next was certain, and one knew what it was to be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ; but still one felt the body compassed with infirmity, and full of weakness, hindering the progress of the soul, whose instincts all were heavenward and holy, and therefore felt the need of another's supporting strength to carry one through the wilderness. This was found in Him who ever liveth to make intercession for us. His priesthood of a higher and more lasting order than that of Aaron, He exercises a similar office, and with never-wearied hands (compare Exodus xvii.) maintains His people in God's presence, sympathising with them all the while ; and He is fitted for this, in that He, while still on earth, passed through the very scenes and circumstances in the midst of which we now require His care and sympathy. What rest it gave the heart to know that Priestly care never wearied, and that this was the duty of the One whose love was strong as death, and many waters could not quench it. And not alone His intercession, but His service was soon found to be my

portion, for, from John xiii., I learned that, as He washed His people's feet while still on earth, He now performs a similar gracious office towards us, only of a higher order.

From on high He sees the danger we are in through contact with a world where He is not, and therefore through His word preserves our souls from its contamination, bracing with bands of truth our loins, too prone to weakness, and thus preventing us from falling when the pressure comes ; and not only this, but should we, like Peter, have been sleeping when we had best been watching, and like him have failed when trial came, I learned that He, as our servant in His patient love, will use His word to pierce our hearts, and eradicate the root of evil whence the failure sprang, and then come in in love, and once more fill our souls with joy in blessed intercourse with Him in whose presence is fulness of joy. But this latter truth brought in the knowledge of His *advocacy*. He with watchful care had known the coming trouble—Satan's wiles and our imperfect preparation for it—and in His love had pleaded for us that our faith might fail not, though our feet might slide.

An earthly advocate will undertake our case, and may succeed, or the reverse. He

is but man after all, and as to do with men, and consequently doubtful are the issues; but Christ is One whose advocacy cannot fail. Our cause that he has undertaken, He will carry through; and though the process is for us most humbling, and the more so in proportion to the extent of failures, still the result is not uncertain, for His righteousness and His propitiation have not altered, though our approaching failure has brought into play His advocacy (1 John ii. 1, 2). How sad that such should ever be required, but how much it magnifies the grace of Him who, when we were lost, sent us a Saviour; when we are weak, provides an High Priest; and when we fail, has given an Advocate.

But these were not the only truths that gave me cause for praise. It was true that I had learned my sins were forgiven through that faith that has Jesus as its object, and therefore is the right one (Acts xiii. 38, 39), and because so many texts abounded on the subject, could have no doubt that the worshipper once purged should have no more conscience of sins—that the moment I believed, the sins of my past lifetime were gone, and that eternally. To doubt this, were to doubt the Word of God, and reduce the sacrifice of Christ to the level of a Jewish

ordinance. With them each fresh recurring sin demanded fresh atonement; with us, the believer is perfected for ever as to his conscience in the presence of God (Heb. x. 10—14; Eph. i. 7; 1 John ii. 12., &c.) It is true the child may fail, and does, but his sin does not affect his standing; on the contrary, because he is His child, his Heavenly Father deals with him, with chastisement of more or less severity, and leads him to confess his failure, and learn His faithfulness and righteousness in granting him forgiveness. It is true sins unconfessed may end in the sin unto death, so we do well to judge our hearts, lest the faintest stain of sin remain upon us, and thus involve still closer fatherly dealing, even unto our removal from the scene where we in grace are left to glorify the Father, in the place of Him whose testimony on earth was closed at Calvary. Paul possessed a purged conscience, yet he said, “Herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence, both towards God and men” (Acts xxiv. 16). How blessed thus to keep the balance of the truth.

My sins then had ceased to be a trouble to me, for I knew that I was washed for ever in the blood of Jesus, white as snow; and now the Holy Ghost had come to dwell in the

body fitted for His presence. What a blessed truth was this: for I was fitted for conscious sonship (Rom. viii. 15, 16), worship (John iv. 14), testimony (John vii. 38, 39), and many another privilege besides, of which both Rom. viii. and many other chapters (Ephesians *passim*) tell us freely; and now my thought must be in no wise to grieve Him who deigned to dwell within me, and secured me, till the moment he should change my body for a heavenly one (Eph. iv. 30; Rom. viii. 11).

But though this blessed truth entranced my soul, I felt within the springs of evil and the old nature's tendencies as strong as ever. This produced unhappiness. To do the will of God was my desire, but my untamed heart within prevented this, and I found the more I strove against it, with its evil thoughts and tendencies, the more completely I discovered my helplessness and utter inability to overcome it. The sturdy heart of evil was my foe; I hated it, I strove against it, but I could not free myself; it more than matched me, until at last, I ceased my striving, turned from self to God, and then found out that Jesus was not merely my Saviour from my sins, but my Saviour from myself! He bore my sins, it is true; but at the cross my hate-

ful self died likewise, and I could see my old man crucified with Him (Gal. i. 20; Rom. vi. 6—11).

What joy was this? The one with whom I had fought was dead for faith; I had died with Christ, and pommel a dead foe I need do no longer, but rather let him lie in peace; then, as alive to God in perfect liberty, press on toward the One whose perfect work had saved me, from my sins, as well as from myself. I took my place henceforth on new creation ground in full deliverance, "Alive unto God in Jesus Christ" my Lord; and this truth of death involved results of more importance than I had at first supposed. Dead to sin no doubt I was, and therefore having done with it, henceforth to live to God, but dead to law, I found another consequence, and simply for this reason, it was to men in the flesh the law had been given—the Jews, in days while yet God recognised and tested still the first creation, but through Christ's death, had passed out of the condition to which the law attached, and before God, was in the flesh no longer, therefore was the Lord's freeman, henceforth to walk after a higher standard Christ Himself, and thus fulfil the law of Christ (Gal. ii. 19; iv. 1—17; Rom. viii. 4). But then though true

that the law no more directed me, save so far as it was incorporated into the law of Christ, surely (I thought) it was still my righteousness before God, in that Christ had kept it for me. This, too, I found a fallacy; to wear a robe of righteousness, the man must still exist who needs this covering, but my old man had died with Jesus, hence nought remained to cover up or hide; thus Christ's keeping of the law (though surely blessed in its place) was not my standing in God's presence. But what it was 2 Cor. v. 21, and other not less manifest passages informed me. No longer righteousness so blessedly suitable for earth was mine, but heavenly righteousness. that of God Himself. In perfect consistency with both His nature and His character, so perfect was the work of His Son, He now can bestow on us a standing suited to His glory and our need, and in that righteousness we stand before Him in His Son,—righteous because the claims of righteousness were met for ever at the cross. What a blessed place—righteous even in the presence of a righteous God.



SETTLED AFFAIRS ; A DYING TESTIMONY.

I HAD known Mrs. M—— for some years as a simple believer in the Lord. A few months since her husband, drawing near to three score years and ten, passed away from this scene. The children were all gone before, and now the empty chair and silent voice told their own tale, “Be ye also ready.” A few months rolled by and she sent for me again. She was beyond aid, she was only following her husband. One day I learned from a sister-in-law, who waited on her, that she had all her worldly affairs settled. Going to her side, I said, “Your sister tells me all your worldly affairs are settled, is this so?” “Oh, yes, they are all settled ; I’ve nothing to think about,” she replied, not lifting her eyelids. “And the Lord has settled all your spiritual affairs?” She opened her eyes, and with great emphasis replied, “*I* could do nothing at that, the blood of Christ in its solitary dignity has settled all that. I’m too weak to speak more.”

They were her last sensible words to me. Two days after she passed to be for ever with the Lord.

What a testimony! It is magnificent in its simplicity. "THE BLOOD OF CHRIST IN ITS SOLITARY DIGNITY HAS SETTLED ALL." What rest, peace, and joy it gave to her soul I can truly witness. God grant to you, my reader, to know the settling power of that precious blood in its solitary dignity for all the affairs of your soul. Add nothing to it. It avails before God for the blackest sin, and avails in its own SOLITARY DIGNITY.

ETERNITY.

Oh! can it be that I must spend eternity in hell,
 In misery unutterable, amongst the damn'd to dwell?
 No rest, no peace, no light, no love, but never-ending cries,
 And this for ever, no redress, no prospect of relief?
 And 'tis myself that I must blame for dwelling with the lost;
 Pardon was often offered me, I knew what it had cost:
 I knew a Saviour gave His life to save a ruin'd race, [grace.
 But I cared not, I spurned Him oft, and trampled on His
 Eternity! oh, what a word! to never, never end: [send?
 Will death ne'er come, will mem'ry cease, will any comfort
 But no, I must live ever on, in madd'ning anguish'd pain,
 And listen to the shrieks and groans of those who cry in vain.
 Too late, too late, no respite now, the day of mercy's o'er
 Their home they've reached, here they must dwell in anguish
 evermore. [peace,
 But, bitter thought, it might have been a home of love and
 Amid the happy and the blest whose praises never cease,
 Whence sorrow if for ever gone, where tears ne'er fill the eye,
 No anguish there, no sorrow, care, nor e'en the faintest sigh.
 And in this home I might have been, but like a fool would not,
 I took my choice, and this alas! is my most hapless lot.
 I lov'd the pleasures of the world, I lov'd its worthless toys,
 Though many a time I proved e'en there how fleeting were its
 joys;

But Satan lur'd me on and on, I listened to his lies,
 Persuaded that in following him I proved that I was wise.
 He told me it was time enough whene'er I feared to die,
 A christian's was a gloomy life, he could do nought but sigh.
 Give up the world? what foolishness while I was young and
 gay ;

I might be saved some other time, and please myself to-day,
 There was no fear that I would die for many long, long years,
 And so I might enjoy myself, dismiss my foolish fears.
 He said my friends would laugh at me and turn away in scorn ;
 I listened to him—heeded all ; oh! would I'd ne'er been born!
 For now throughout eternity, through never-ending years
 I must endure his taunts and sneers, his mockings and his jeers.
 Oh, why did I obey his voice when oft he bade me wait?
 He duped me well, I trifled on, until it was too late!
 The lake of fire is now my home, here I must ever be, [nity.
 While years roll by, yes, maddening thought! throughout eter-
 Reader, I ask

Where wilt thou spend eternity in heaven or in hell? [dwell?
 Wilt thou amongst the blest be found, or with the lost ones,
 Choose now at once, make up thy mind, the Saviour says
 "To-day." [Him nay?

He loves thee well, He pleads with thee, and wilt thou say
 Oh, look at Him on Calvary, behold His bleeding side!
 It was for *thee* in deepest love, for *thee* that Jesus died.
 His love's so great, so boundless, free, Himself He would
 not spare,

And now the loving heart is pained to see thou dost not care ;
 O, scorn Him not, turn not away, reject not love so great,
 Nor listen to the tempter's voice which often bids thee wait ;
 Reject Him not, the one true Friend, untiring in His love,
 Oh! taste its value here on earth, then deeper drink above.

HOPES OF HEAVEN; OR, THEIR OWN WAY.

HERE are few who, if asked where they
 hope to spend eternity, would give the
 answer, "I have no hope of heaven." Men
 hope to get there somehow ; yes, even from

the very brink of hell, they hope to glide, in some frail bark of their own construction, over the rippling waves of some silvery tide, right into an eternity of ease and rest, or at least freedom from the ups and downs and vicissitudes of life here. Their dreams of a future are misty enough, it is true, but their life here is spent in a mist or a vapour of unreality, and eternity seems but an expanse of the same dream, only without trouble. To have to meet God, to answer for a mispent life of sin ; to have to stand face to face with the One they had rejected, are facts seldom or never thought of ; and so many a soul sink's half asleep, into an endless eternity of woe, and is roused by the terrible realities scarcely believed in at all.

Now, why is this, when the Word of God is plain, and the way of escape is clearly pointed out ? “ If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost ; in whom 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. 3, 4).

It was one of those sultry summer days, so still that not a leaf moved ; and the clear shrill note of the blackbird piped and warbled, as if enjoying the undisturbed silence of its

own exquisite melody. I lay under the shade of a great tree, seeking beneath its branches relief from the glare. Numbers passed up and down over the green meadows, on their way to the river-side; and my heart oftentimes longed to know the secrets of not a few who came and sat beside me, on one of the iron seats placed for the comfort of weary ones. How few, I thought, know much of Him who sat weary and footsore by the wayside well, and, while asking from the hand of a poor outcast a drink of water, made known to her the "living water." She had no hope beyond present blessing; nay, she had judged herself even unworthy of that, and she doubted the veracity of One who offered her more. And, oh, is it not so still with many a weary desolate heart like hers? Thirsty and way-worn they know not Him who has said, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life" (John iv. 14).

My reverie was disturbed, first, by an aged man who sat down on the seat by my side, groaning as if oppressed by the burden and heat of the day; he leaned forward on his well-worn staff, and took off his hat, to put



WHITE.

"My reverie was disturbed, first, by an aged man who sat down on the seat by my side."

back the silvery hair from his silvery temples, and again he groaned aloud.

“The day is very hot, and you are tired,” I remarked. “Yes,” he answered, “but that’ll soon be all over for me, there’s a brighter place beyond, and the sooner I’m in it, the better, now; I’ve seen eighty-five summers here, and it’s time I was gathered to my fathers. “Oh,” I said, “then you have a hope beyond?” “A hope beyond!” he repeated, and as if wondering whether I had my senses, he muttered, “Surely, surely; all this time here and no hope beyond! sad work that would be.” “Oh,” I said, “perhaps you do not quite understand me; I mean, have you got the question of your sins settled, so that you can meet God without fear? How long have you known Him?”

“Known Him? All my life, to be sure; and you and I will know Him better when we get to heaven, I suppose.” “But what ground have you for supposing you are going to heaven at all? Is it on the ground of your own works, or the work of Christ?” “’Deed, neither; to be plain with you, I’ll just go the way of my fathers, and it will neither be your preaching nor religious talk that will either keep me out of heaven or put me into it.”

True, my friend,” I said, putting my hand

on his arm, to stay him, as he rose to go on his way, "but listen to me: the Word of God says, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God' (John iii. 3). What do you make of that?" "Ah, these things don't trouble me, and it's a pity they trouble a young woman like you. Take things easy and bide your time, and no fear but you'll get to heaven at last; that's my way." "Oh, but it's not God's way," I said; but he hurried on.

I had but time to commend this aged man's darkened case to God, when a young man of delicate appearance came on the foot-path. He walked with difficulty, and often held his hand upon his back, as if in pain; and his wan face and feeble step, and the blue veins, that too plainly showed their tracery on his fragil hands and temples, told me that, though quite young, he had known much suffering. As he sank down exhausted on the seat, he apologised for taking that which was, of course, as free to him as to me, and this gave to me an opportunity of addressing him.

"You look ill," I said, "and this resting-place is as much yours as mine, or rather, we have together to thank others for the provision made for our weak and tired bodies.

Grace is a wonderful thing," I added, "it provides for our need, irrespective of who we are or what we are; so God in His grace and love, provides salvation for you and me."

There was silence for a moment or two, and then, as if musing over his own suffering, he said, "Yes, I have been very ill, laid down in great agony with rheumatic fever, and now, though able to get out a little, I never expect to walk upright, or pursue the avocations I once took such delight in. I feel mine is a blighted life, and I desire to be at rest in a land where there is no pain or sickness. I do not think I shall be long here." "Indeed!" I said, "and does the prospect of leaving this scene give you pleasure?" "Yes," he answered, mournfully, "I am sick of the world; it has treated me badly, and I long to leave it." "And where will you go to?" I asked, solemnly; "you cannot die like the dog. You will have to spend an eternity somewhere. Where will it be?" "Oh, that does not trouble me much; anywhere would be better than this." "Nay," I said, "hell would be worse!" "Oh," said, as a shade of annoyance crossed his face, "of course I know that, but I hope to go to heaven."

"On what ground?"

“O, I have suffered so much here, I am sure there must be brighter days in store for me ;” and, so saying, he rose, as if unwilling to pursue the conversation. “Stop one moment,” I said, “I may never see you again, you are on the wrong road for heaven. If you have not bowed to Christ ; if you have not acknowledged yourself a lost sinner in God’s sight, accepted the salvation He offers you without money and without price, you are on the wrong road. ‘Neither is there salvation in any other ; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved’” (Acts iv. 12). He bowed and hurried on, saying, as he went, “Your way is not my way. I trust in the mercy of God.”

His place was soon taken by a quiet, respectable-looking woman, who sat knitting in silence for some time, while her little delicate boy played at her feet. My heart was sad because of the two who had passed on their way, and I had no word for her. I handed her a little book, which she received gladly and read at once. When she had finished it, I said, “Have you accepted Christ?” “I don’t know.” “Did you accept that little book I gave you?” “Yes, certainly.” “And why ‘certainly’ of the one, and not of the

other? One is a very trivial thing, but your whole eternity depends upon your having accepted Christ or not. Of course then, you have no hope of heaven?" "Indeed, I should be sorry to say that, I had godly parents, and I was a nurse once, and I am sure the prayers of the dear lady I attended on her death-bed will not be unanswered." Her last words were, 'Mary, we'll meet again.' "And is that all you are resting on?" I said. "Yes, and I think that's a good deal." Poor soul I thought: "a good deal!" and it leaves out Christ, and "there is no salvation in any other."

I had a few quiet moments for prayer, when loud and boisterous mirth roused me to see two gay young girls on the grass near me. Their flaunty finery and tinsel ornaments, and hollow, heartless merriment, told of a hope that would perish, "like the crackling of thorns under a pot" (Eccles. vii. 6). "You seem very merry," I said, "but this world won't last for ever, and what then?" "O, a better I suppose, said one, quickly: "there's time enough to make ready for that too. My plan is make the best of this world, and get the best of the next also." "Ah," I said, but you forget, 'The fashion of this world passeth away.' 'Love not the world

neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever ' (1 John ii. 15—17). 'The wages of sin is death,' and you may die in your sins."

"Oh," said one, starting to her feet, "there's time enough for religion some day." And so they left me.

A middle-aged woman, with a basket on her arm, just came up in time to hear the last words, and, looking at me, said, "That's terrible! but these are two of the worst girls in the place;" and taking the New Testament from her pocket, she said, "It is a blessing to be well brought up, and have religious teaching. Never a day but I have my lesson out of this; but, then, I had praying parents, and was early taught the road to heaven."

"Oh," I said, "how long have you been on it?" "Many a day; indeed all my life." "And have you ever been converted?" "O, I don't know, but I'm sure I'm on the right road, for all that, and I would not give up my

hope for anything." Then, looking at me from head to foot, she said, "You are English, I suppose, but I am Scotch, and we are taught these things from our youth." "What things?" I asked. "O, how to serve God faithfully here, and get to heaven at last." "And what about the death of Christ?" I said. "I am Scotch too, but my Bible tells me that Christ came 'not to call the righteous but sinners' (Mark ii. 17), and, 'As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that doeth good, no, not one' (Rom. iii.), and that it's simply and only because of the finished work of another, that I have any right to heaven at all. Christ paid the debt for me, that I might have what His free grace offers to all. He gave His life that 'whosoever believeth in him should now perish but have everlasting life' "

Deliberately she put her Testament in her pocket, saying, as she did so, "That may be your way, but it is not mine," and she too passed on.

Little more than an hour had elapsed since I left the house, and I returned weary and heartsore.

But this is no uncommon case. If you have been accustomed to speak to souls, by the way, in the trains, in the steamers, in the

shops, you will know these are no uncommon cases. Souls are perishing all round us ; we pass them daily in the busy street, or, it may be, on the quiet country road, or even under the same roof with us ; because they will have their own way, and reject Christ—Him who said, “ I am the way.”

Should this paper be read by any in such a case, let me entreat you to turn to Christ now. In a world where “ all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ,” there is much to blind you to the danger you are in. Awake, awake ! Soon it will be too late, too late !

“ The door of mercy’s open still,
And Jesus says ‘ whoever will.’ ”

Come ! come ! Jesus ready stands to bless you, but it must be in His own way, and not in your way. The end of your way is death ! His is the way of life. Listen to His voice of love ; it speaks to you, reader, to you. “ Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.” “ Behold, I stand at the door and knock.” Delay no longer : open unto Him now, that you may be saved.

HOW TO BE HAPPY.—The truly happy man is he who has no interests but Christ’s ; the truly unhappy man is he who has no interests but his own.

THE THREE BRIDGES.

I BEHELD, in my reverie, an island on which a dense crowd of people was assembled. The island lay low, and was secured from inundation by a dyke, but, although this dyke was of great magnitude, it so happened that the waters of the surrounding ocean were on a constant increase, and would, in course of time, sooner or later, break all bounds, and overflow the island. This fact was generally known by the inhabitants, and at certain seasons had the effect of producing fear and trouble amongst them. They felt that they must be overtaken and perish, unless indeed, escape could be effected.

I noticed moreover, that not far distant from the island, beyond a channel deep and rapid, there was a land of much beauty, and, from the elevation of its surface above the water, it was perfectly secure from inundation. To reach this land was an object of desire to the inhabitants of the island.

Now, a bridge had been thrown across the channel at a fearful cost by one, who had an interest both in the island and its people. It was erected at his own expense and was free

of all toll or charge. Passengers might cross freely.

It so happened, however, that the kind builder of this bridge was little cared for by the islanders, and the bridge, therefore, which lay open to them, was much neglected. By this time it was very old, although still strong and firm—but in construction it was narrow, and, to the casual observer, of a somewhat unattractive appearance. Thus, this bridge was unpopular. The travellers were few, and these few had to be urgently persuaded to cross by it at all. Nothing but the sense of their danger, whilst on the island, would have induced them to set forth. On the bridge was a rise, over which they had to walk, and by this they were soon lost to the sight of the people on the island. I detected on the faces of the travellers marks of joy and gladness, and the further they went their step was the firmer, and, though none dared to loiter, yet I found that on overtaking one another they would speak together, and would specially notice the kindness of him who had constructed so good a bridge. I saw that sometimes they became footsore and sometimes weary; frequently difficult and rugged places had to be crossed, and now and then I noticed that from inattention

there was a fall, and he that fell received a stain that adhered to him ever after. Yet the bridge was perfect and each traveller reached the shore of the land of beauty. Now, I wondered much because so few sought to escape by the bridge; but presently I discovered a reason.

Higher up the channel I observed a number of people in commotion. At that point two bridges had been built, one older than the other, and apparently more substantial. They had been erected after considerable premeditation, and with skill and care, so that the first bridge might not be necessitated, nor its rough and narrow pathway made a matter of compulsion. On each of these bridges a heavy toll was charged. I looked closely. I saw that a number of agents were employed in directing passengers to each, to the one were carried in arms or on beds many who were either too young to walk, or else feeble and near to death, and, having been safely placed on the bridge, they were entrusted to the care of nurses, whose business it was to soothe, to lull, and to administer various drugs, which produced sleep and insensibility. Moreover, the nurses paid great attention to their patients. No pains were spared. All that could charm the

senses was lavishly granted. Attire the most costly, and music and clouds of incense, added their enchanting power to the scene; but withal I noticed that at a certain point of the bridge was a hole over a part of the channel that was exceedingly deep, and where no foundation could be obtained for a pillar. Through this hole I saw with horror that the passengers, unwary and blinded by the clouds of incense and stupefied by the narcotics, fell, and were carried down by the stream.

With feelings of terror I turned to observe the other bridge. There I saw able-bodied people busily employed in all kinds of work. None were idle. It was a condition on this bridge that the passengers should thus exert themselves. Without doing so none could cross. Many went on hands and knees. Many walked by themselves draped in garb of deepest black, anxious only for retirement from their companions. But, owing to the hardness of the terms, none were either happy or certain of reaching the end. As I looked along the bridge, and it was very long, I saw that it failed to touch the shore, and it was impossible for the passengers to cross the space. Again I shrank with horror, and turned from the awful sight.

I then looked toward the island, and, in spite of the numbers that had crowded on the different bridges, I found that the majority remained where they were, satisfied to risk the inundation. Accordingly, they strove to banish from their minds the fact of their danger; some were drinking, some eating, some planting, some building, but at the best giving signs of disregard to the near approach of their destruction.

The explanation of my reverie is easy. The island is the world, secured from judgment by the dyke of time. Nevertheless time will cease and judgment come, and "the heavens *shall* pass away with a great noise, and the elements *shall* melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein *shall* be burned up" (2 Peter iii. 10). Such is the fearful but certain end of this world. The feeling of insecurity, produced by the declaration of the judgement of God, creates in the mind a desire for safety. To escape the judgment of God is the object before the mind of the sinner. But what is to be done? Sin has come in and has separated the soul from God—the moral distance is infinite. God hates sin, and must punish it. How then can the sinner come near Him? Only thus: "God so loved the world that He gave

his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). God had an interest in the world and in the people of it. He loved them, though He hated their sin. He planned their salvation, whilst He punished their sin. He brought in security for them on the ground of the judgment of their sin. He formed the bridge of atonement in the death of His Son on the cross, whereby sin is "put away," and the soul of him that believeth put in possession of "everlasting life." This wondrous bridge was erected by God Himself, and is open for the guilty sinner without money or price. Strange to say, yet true, this bridge is unpopular. It is narrow, though free, and man prefers a road that gives more latitude to his own will.

Hence he has constructed other bridges. There is the bridge of Baptismal Regeneration. It is of comparatively recent date, and promises well. On this bridge people enter young, and are cared for by a large and diligent staff of ecclesiastical nurses, who deal profusely in ritualistic arts and practices. They absorb in themselves the conscience of their patients, and silence their frequent fears and misgivings by any kind of spiritual opiate. At one point, however, the bridge breaks

down. It fails to span a deep chasm in the channel called *salvation*. The passengers can never say that they are saved, forgiven, justified or made children of God. They become outwardly religious, but remain unpardoned. That question is viewed as a matter wholly of the future, and hence they move on unwarily and die in their sins. They cannot enter the land beyond the river.

Another bridge has been reared for those who are more able for work than the young. This is the bridge of works. Constructed originally in the days of Moses (in order to prove that the strongest man was only "without strength"), it has been exceedingly popular ever since. It seems to flatter the pride of man by saying, "if you can do these things you shall live." Hence many make the effort. Now, one man entered on this bridge and succeeded in reaching the further extremity, when to his horror he found the incompleteness above referred to. He turned at once, and, retracing his footsteps, he warned his fellow-travellers by the following words: "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified;" and again, "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." Not as many as refuse to enter the bridge, or, having entered it, break

down on it, but as many as are on it, and are doing their utmost to persevere to the very end. This man, having forsaken the bridge of works, found safety in that of faith, accepting salvation on terms that were free —“without money, and without price.”

The majority, however, are careless. They believe in coming judgment, but they have “no fear of God before their eyes.” They eat, they drink, they buy, they sell, they build, they plant, they live, in short, for self and time, and put the claims of eternity aside. Some are infidel, some men of business, some men of pleasure: all have their own thoughts and engagements, but all turn a deaf ear to the voice that calls to them.

Dear reader, if you should be one of them, let me beseech you to “flee from the wrath to come;” or, on the other hand, if you should be on the bridge of works or on that of Baptismal Regeneration, let me in like manner warn you of the impossibility of entering the kingdom of God on that plan which was never made nor intended by Him.

The rather let me invite you to Him who says, “Come unto me *all* ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will *give* you rest” (Matt. xi. 28).

Oh, the unspeakable sweetness of this rest !

Rest from judgment and the fear of it ; rest from legal effort and the need of it ; rest in the joy of a known salvation, and rest in the conscious love of Him who, at the cost of His own life, made heaven the certain abode of all who trust in Him.

THE TWIG LET GO.

BEING asked by a friend to visit a dying man in the infirmary in Edinburgh, one before whom the simple truth as it is in Jesus had been put over and over again, and who seemed deeply exercised as to his state before God, but who as yet had not “*peace with God,*” I went. I found the dear fellow very grateful for a visit, and glad to hear the old, old story. He listened attentively to and acquiesced in the truth of it all, 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 ;” that God sends a message of love to all, and through His word by the Holy Ghost beseeches poor sinners to be reconciled to Him (2 Cor. v. 20).

Spite of all this I could see, and he frankly owned, that he had not the joy of these

blessed truths in his own soul. Looking up for guidance I tried every way I knew to put the good news before him. The same ready acknowledgement as to the TRUTH of it all followed, but still no peace, no joy.

At last I told the dear man that there must be a something between his soul and God that none of us—those who had visited him—could get at, and that he must have it out with Him; some “twig” he was still clinging to; and I then repeated to him the well-known story of the boy who, while wandering along the edge of a high cliff on the sea shore, tripped his foot, and over he went. In his agony of fright, his hands mechanically clutched at the first thing they touched, this happened to be a twig of a small bush growing on the face of the cliff. His fall was for the moment arrested, and there he hung, shouting for his father, who was not far off he knew. The father heard the cry of his child, looked over the edge of the precipice, at once grasped the danger, saw he could not help him from above, got down to a ledge of rock many feet below the lad, and called out to him to let himself drop. The boy still kept on screaming for help, his little arms growing every instant more weary, his

hold on the frail twig getting weaker, and it seemed as if it were slipping, slipping through his poor aching fingers. His father again spoke, reminded his son of his strength, his ability to catch him ; all, however, was of no avail ; the terrified child still clung, and still screamed for help. At last the father shouts in a tone of authority, "*let go that twig*, I command you, let it go ;" the word was obeyed, the little hands opened, and straight into the strong, strong arms of his loving father dropped the frightened boy.

"Now," I said, "I don't know what it is, but *you* are clinging to some twig or other. You see yourself a sinner, you bow to what God says His Son has done for such, *yet* you have not peace with that blessed God. Whether it is *your* prayers, or *your* repentance, or *your* something else—*self* in some shape—that you are still hanging on to, and so not resting simply on the word of the living, loving God, who gave His Son, I can't tell. You must go to Him about it ; my parting word to you is *Let go that twig*, and you will find yourself a poor, foolish, struggling thing in the 'everlasting arms' safe—saved to all eternity." With this I left the dear man, looking to the Lord to take him in hand.

On my next visit, a few days after, I happened to enter the long ward at the end farthest from his bed. However, he soon caught sight of me advancing towards him. The expression of joy, of triumph, which lit up his face was indescribable, and, while yet a good way off his bed, he quite shouted with laughter, and said, "I've let go the twig—I've let go the twig." My own thought was that the nurses and the other patients would consider the dear man had gone clean out of his mind, as it was, he had really "*Come to himself.*" There was no mistake about it, however, he HAD let go the twig, and he was resting on the word of God about the finished work of the Lord Jesus, and what it says of His satisfaction in it, in that He raised His Son from among the dead, seated Him at His own right hand, and sent down the Spirit to testify, through the word, of accomplished redemption, and of His delight in the One who did it.

Just as I had judged, the dear man had been secretly clinging to something of his own—as he now owned—mixing up his prayers with Christ's finished work, looking for better feelings in himself, and judging of his acceptance by feelings instead of by God's word; but, through mercy, between the time

of leaving him with the words "Let go that twig," and my present visit, when he met me with the shout, "I HAVE let go that twig," light had broken in with power upon his soul and he had discovered that all his unrest, lack of peace, and absence of joy, resulted from his being occupied with *his belief* in the truth rather than with God's word itself; his love too, and thoughts about God instead of *God's* love and thoughts of good to him. But he had been turned right round to God's side of things, hence his unclouded joy and undisturbed peace. We had a blessed time together, praising God for all His wondrous love, and the way He takes to manifest it. This peace and joy *remained* unclouded to the end, through a time of intense bodily suffering, when, not many days after, he departed to be with Christ.

And now, dear reader, let me ask you, have *you* let go the twig? Do you ask, "What is it?" Self in some shape or other, and most likely *religious self*, for I would address those who have had some exercise of soul as to what they are before God, and yet do not like to look on the truth, as to what they **REALLY** ARE in His sight, full in the face; will admit they are sinners, but afraid to own they are "LOST," and "*without strength*" to be any-

thing else, consequently are struggling and striving to be, or do something, and thus really getting deeper and deeper into the mud.

Oh, may you be led to give all this up. One knows something of the terrible exercises many quickened souls go through, and the more earnest and honest they are the deeper the exercise. How often one hears such saying, "Must not *I*?" "What can *I*?" or, "What may *I*?" That's just the twig—*I*, *I*, *I*. Oh, let it go, turn from it, may be from sheer exhaustion, downright despair even, and to your intense surprise and unbounded relief, find that salvation and peace are in what Christ is, and not what "*I*" is. You will then find what the dear man one has been speaking of, found, the marvellous relief and rest it is to learn that God has been glorified by the work of His dear Son. He has been, is, infinitely satisfied with *IT* and *HIM*, and wants you—poor self-accused one—to be satisfied with this blessed One.

Disheartened, downcast as you are, and ever must be as long as twig "*I*" is clung to, God would have you look *up*, OUT OF YOURSELF, and see in Him, the ascended, seated man in the glory, an object, His object, that will induce you to let go everything, and find

all your joy in Him. May the word of God come in and separate you from THIS TWIG if you won't let it go. "Sanctify (set apart, separate) them through thy truth, thy word is truth" (John xvii. 17).

PEACE WITH GOD.

"**T**HEREFORE .being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1).

Reader, have you this peace with God?

Jesus Christ has made peace through the blood of His cross (Col. i. 20). He needed not to make peace for Himself, it was for sinners, for you, for me His blood was shed.

Peace with God is a reality, not only for eternity, but for time. "We have," said the apostle, while yet living, "peace with God." This implied that all that once stood between himself and God was taken out of the way; further, that God Himself was satisfied with the work of redemption, and that he was accepted in the beloved. So, to-day is it the privilege of the believer to enjoy that peace with God which the Lord Jesus Christ has made through the blood of His cross, and with boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus (Heb. x. 19). Are you seeking

to make your peace with God? If so, learn from the written word that Jesus Christ has been beforehand with you, "having made peace;" give up, therefore, your peace-making, and accept it at the hand of the Prince of Peace, the one mediator between you and God.

Let us for a moment look at what took place on that awful night when the destroying angel passed through the land of Egypt, commissioned with death to every firstborn son. We will enter a house. There is feasting; they are merry-making; they seem to have no cares, no anxieties, no forebodings. How strange, passing strange. Does not that mother care for the fine youth at her side? Yes, she loves him as a mother only can. That father, has he no heart? Then why this carelessness, why this trifling when death is near? Tell them of the danger, warn them; there may not be a moment to spare. Father! mother! your son will be taken; death is on the wing; God had said He will smite the firstborn. But they are unmoved. We seem as those that mock to them. They had heard the solemn proclamation, but heeded it not; they believed it not. In the morning that loved child is found a corpse, never more to cheer by his voice. They

call, but he hears them not; he is gone, gone for ever. Wailing takes the place of mirth, anguish and remorse fill every soul; alas! it is now too late; unbelief has borne its fruit.

We enter another house, the father, the mother, the eldest son and the younger children, are feasting. Joy, rest, and peace seem to be the portion of all. How can this be on such a night, such a fearful night, when that unrelenting foe to all earthly happiness is hovering o'er the land? Has no one warned them? Or having heard of the death angel is it possible they have not believed? Ask them. Oh, father, oh, mother, care you not for your first-born son? Do you not know that to-night death may lay his icy hand on that child? He may be even at your door. Calmly they reply, "Jehovah sees the blood." "But, what of that" we ask? They reply, "He has said, 'When I see the blood I will pass over you and will not suffer the destroyer to enter your houses to smite you'" (Ex. xii. 23). But has the blood been shed? They answer, "Yes, it has, and is put where *God can see it.*" But are you not afraid He may overlook it and you? "No, He is faithful that promised." Peace reigns in that house, and the mother, in

faith, stakes the life of her first-born upon the word of the living God.

Reader, have you no care? Are you under no anxiety, as you think of sin, and death, and judgment, and hell? Are you careless because you believe not that "it is appointed unto men once to die but after this the judgment;" and after judgment the lake of fire? Awake! O sleeper, in time, or eternity will find you *lost*, for ever *lost*.

God's holy, spotless Lamb has been slain, His blood shed, and He is now entered into the holy place by His own blood. (Heb. ix. 12.) "Having obtained eternal redemption for us." God sees the blood, the sinner may come into His presence, sheltered beneath that blood that cleanseth from all sin.

"I hear the words of love
Jehovah sees the blood,
Accepts the mighty sacrifice,
And I have peace with God."

It may be, my reader, your condition is that of one troubled and anxious because you believe in these things, and yet think that as you are you dare not meet your God; your sins, you fear, shut you out from Him. No, not if you will come *now*, but let it be *NOW*. The Lamb has been slain, the blood is before God. He is satisfied. Why do you fear? Were it not for the blood you might well

tremble, for "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). But, again, we read, "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. xvii. 11). For whose soul? Your's? "God commendeth his love toward us in that while *we* were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8).

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

ALMOST PERSUADED.

THERE are, we doubt not, moments of deeply solemn and special importance in the history of every child of Adam, when the voice of God is distinctly heard speaking to the soul, and when the conscience, suddenly aroused to a sense of guilt, becomes troubled and anxious in the prospect of a never ending eternity. The absolute uncertainty of life, and the equally sure and terrible certainty of death also force themselves at such seasons upon the mind, filling it with darkness and fear, and the dread reality of a day of judgment, when the secrets of all human hearts shall be manifested in the searching light of "that great white throne," and in His holy presence, before "whose face the

earth and the heaven will flee away, and there be found no place for them" (Rev. XX. 11).

It is because we feel persuaded that you, dear reader, have doubtless had such thoughts at times, but let them slip, that we are anxious to address a friendly, and yet most solemn word of warning to you, ere this, the day of God's sovereign grace and mercy, closes, and the master of the house rises up and shuts too the door. You know, if you have read your Bible, that *then* it will be *too late* to think seriously of these things, and that *then* He who is now longing to save your precious soul will only "laugh at you calamity, and mock when your fear cometh." And why? His own words will then be, "Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded.....Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but shall not find me."

What solemn words are these! and as we think of them, we are compelled to be plain and honest with you, and to ask every reader of this paper the self-same question that Adam had to answer, when hiding from the presence of the Lord amongst the trees of the garden, "*Where art thou?*"

Is it not true that over and over again you have been convicted of sin by the still small voice of conscience, but you have passed it by as of no moment, and you are still unconverted, unsaved, Christless, "having no hope and without God in the world." God Himself has often spoken to you, it may be by the terrors of hell and a coming judgment, it may be through the multitude of your sins, or perchance by the solemn admonitions and warnings of His Word, revealing to your heart the hollowness and vanity of this present evil world, and pointing you, as He ever does, to the cross of His own beloved Son, where "He who knew no sin was made sin for us."

Or, peradventure, He may have laid His hand upon you in sickness, bringing you down to the very gates of death, and the borders of the grave ; yet, though He has chosen some, or, all of these means of drawing your soul to Himself, you have up to this moment still refused His grace, despised His love, rejected His Christ, and resolved to have the world as your portion here, and the flames of hell as your portion hereafter.

But let us pause a minute, for this, perhaps, may not be exactly your present condition. You may be what men would call a

very religious person, or your language like that of King Agrippa, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a christian!" As a child you remember that you attended a Sunday school but now you, who were once a scholar, have become a teacher. You were always outwardly moral and upright in your conduct, but latterly you have felt that you ought to be more religious, so you now pray night and morning, read your Bible regularly, attend a place of worship as often as you can, have been baptized, and, it may be, admitted as a communicant to the Lord's supper; all these things were necessary to keep up appearances and to maintain your character before men, for you wanted people to think you a christian, and you were "almost persuaded" to be one.

This has answered all very well for a time, but, let us ask you, what will its value be when the solemn summons is heard coming straight from eternity, "Thou fool! *this night* thy soul shall be required of thee!" You don't like to think of this, for it makes you feel uneasy, restless, and disquieted, because in your heart you really know that your sins are not yet forgiven, you have no peace with God, the load of guilt is still unremoved; and why? Because you have not yet simply

come to Jesus, you are not quite satisfied with Christ, you are only "*almost*" instead of *quite*, persuaded that His most precious blood has made a full atonement for your sins, and that upon the ground of that finished work He has for ever made peace with God. The world and its attractions, sin and its pleasures, Satan and his wiles, are all too much for you, and, like Felix, you have resolved at a more "convenient season" to give your heart to Christ.

Is it so with you, dear reader? Well, God tells you that "there is but one step betwixt you and death," and after death the judgment.

The Lord Himself grant that you may be warned in time by the solemn fate of King Agrippa. Let us look at it! (Acts xxvi.)

Everything that the natural heart could covet or desire had he got, wealth, ease, luxury, position, and the power that would gratify the loftiest ambition, for his cup of earthly pleasure was filled even to the brim, and to all this were added the regal splendour and majesty of a throne.

But mark the striking contrast here presented. There sat the king, in all the pride of life, surrounded by those who were ready to gratify his smallest whim, and with every

thing at his command, but withal a sin-stained, lost, and ruined man, a captive in the chains of Satan, and there stood Paul, brought, 'tis true, from his lonely cell to receive sentence from the lips of such an one, with nothing but his chain, as far as this world was concerned, the prisoner of man, but also of Jesus Christ, for whose sake he had suffered the loss of all things, and did count them but dung and dross that he might win Christ, and be found in Him. Yes, what were all the pomp and glitter of that eastern court to that faithful servant of God, or in comparison to the One that filled his heart? it was as nothing to him, yea, less than nothing, for the Christ of God was his, and he was Christ's, and Christ is God's. It was indeed a contrast, and brings to mind those ever memorable words of the blessed Lord Jesus, "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?"

And what a sermon! It is of Jesus that Paul speaks, the lowly Jesus, the despised and rejected Jesus, "the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for *all*," the sinner's perfect substitute, Son of Man, but also Son of God, blessed for evermore! Such

was the person that Paul the prisoner, presented for the king's acceptance, and His precious death, His glorious resurrection and ascension, these were the mighty themes on which the apostle discoursed with all the solemn earnestness and deep reality which such wondrous truths must of necessity call forth.

It was really just what suited Agrippa's case, for, one by one, in all their telling force and power, he spoke of deliverance from the power of sin, of Satan, and the world, the bringing of souls from darkness into light, forgiveness of sins through a Saviour's precious blood, and a glorious inheritance among them that are sanctified. And what effect did it produce upon Agrippa's sin-stained heart? Was it God's glad tidings to him, and did his soul bow down before the divine reality and glorious magnificence of sovereign grace and the precious truth of an accomplished salvation, or did he despise the offered mercy, and thus incur the so much sorer punishment by treading under foot the Son of God, and counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing? Alas, alas! the golden opportunity had fled, he listened to the subtle voice of the tempter, and though conscious of the solemn truth of all that Paul

had brought before him, it did not touch that cold, hard heart, except to make it tremble, for the love of the world was still there, his lusts and passions still there, and Satan's hand was binding him by a stronger chain than ever to those chariot wheels which would surely carry him down the "broad road to destruction."

He had seen, as it were, all the glories of heaven unfolded before him; he had reached the very threshold, and gazed in upon that countless ransomed host; his ears had listened to the music of those golden harps, and caught the echo of that glorious, never-ending song, but he was only *almost persuaded* to be a christian, and so the tempter triumphed, and while the publicans and harlots were entering that scene of light, and life, and rest by their thousands, the awful darkness of eternal woe was fast closing in upon his own soul.

What a terrible picture! Can you bear the thought of it, beloved reader? How is it with you? Can you any longer barter your soul's salvation for the paltry pleasures of this world, or remain another instant only "*almost persuaded*" to decide for Christ? How much longer will you halt between two opinions? If the Lord Jesus has for ever

“put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,” and if His precious blood be your only hope, as it must be, why not rest satisfied with what has satisfied God, and believe the record of his own word, “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

The words of Israel’s God remain unaltered to this day in all their living force and power.

“When *I* see the blood I will pass over you, and the blood shall be *to you* for a token.” That precious blood (without shedding of which there was no remission) has indeed been shed, and God has set forth His own Christ “as a propitiation (or mercy-seat) through faith in his blood,” and, in virtue of this, there is full forgiveness of sins for every one that believeth.

What then are you waiting for? “Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation.”

Is it not enough for you that the Son of God has died to set you free, and that through His cross He has for ever removed out of the way everything that was against you, and contrary to you? Cannot you trust the One whose love was stronger than death, over whose soul in that dark and solemn

hour rolled all the waves and billows of divine judgment, and who, in order to pluck you "as a brand out of the fire," endured what you can never know or fathom, the terrible realities of that moment when even *He* had to say, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

But He who thus went down into death itself was there for you, and, blessed be God, Satan's power was then crushed for ever, as it is written "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." His own words now are, "I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, amen, and have the keys of hell and death!" "When he had by himself purged our sins (and not till then) he sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high," and this was the divine proof that the work was completely done, that He had made a full end of sin, and in His own royal person not only met, but satisfied all and every righteous claim that God could have against the sinner.

Yes, thank God, it is indeed a finished work! the cup of wrath has been drunk to the very dregs, that you might have another cup,

one, truly, that you did not deserve, but one that His own matchless grace now freely offers you, even an overflowing cup that He now bids you drink, and in this cup are pardon full and free, mercy rich and boundless, forgiveness of sins, peace, justification, redemption, and eternal life, a sevenfold draught of heavenly blessing, and all yours through simple faith in Him.

'Tis boundless love indeed ! Are you satisfied with it, or only "*almost persuaded*" to drink of it? He Himself beseeches you to drink of that life-giving stream, and, as surely as you do, so surely will you find His blessed words are true. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." No longer then will you be only "*almost persuaded to be a christian,*" but, having the Christ of God as your everlasting portion, you will be able to enter into the full meaning of Paul's answer to Agrippa, "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."

A LIGHT ON THE STARBOARD BOW.

WELCOME sound! It fell upon my ear, and caused my heart to leap for joy. I had been standing at the bow of the vessel which was carrying us over the wild Atlantic and was endeavouring to pierce the darkness of the night, and trace an outline of the shore. The rain drizzled and the wind blew cold and frosty over the arctic current, and over icebergs which floated in the vicinity. The rolling ocean beneath and around was black as ink, and no sound could be heard but the howling of wind. I was meditating on the love of Him whose hand had brought us in safety over so many miles of trackless and stormy sea, and was comparing the voyage to the life of man—the sailing out of port, full of hope—the plunging forward in each day's life, not knowing the events of the next—the adventures — the dangers — the ups — the downs—the expectations—the prospects—the desire of the haven beyond,—when my reverie was broken by the cry of the man on the look-out, "A light on the starboard, sir!" and the answer from the officer on the bridge, "Aye, aye."

The light that was seen declared the pres-

ence of land. It was from a lighthouse. The voyage was therefore at an end, and with it all the suffering and sickness, the rolling and tossing; and the quiet waters of the harbour were near at hand. The announcement of the light was welcome in proportion to the discomfort that had been experienced. How fair were the rays of light that fell from the lighthouse over the dreary waste of waters, and how cheerful the shout that told us of the longed-for end!

But another light is shining and casting its fairer rays over another dreary waste, and another cry proclaims the haven of rest.

Mariner on the ocean of life! thou art outward bound, but whither? Thou hast sailed from port and hast discovered a trackless waste around thee. It may be thou art uncertain as to thy future. All dark around, all black within, no guiding landmark, only the dismal howl of disappointed hopes and broken resolutions; and thou art alone. It may be thy soul has proved the world to be but an empty void, and that sin has spoiled and tarnished what God's hand had made so "very good." Yea, that life itself is but a vapour, and that time is carrying thee swiftly onward to the appointed doom of "death and judgment."

But stay! A light is shining. Its rays are clear and unfaltering. It guides securely. That light in the midst of darkness is Jesus. "I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John viii. 12).

Lost soul, look to Jesus! Salvation for thee is in Him. He says, "Look unto me and be ye saved" (Isaiah xlv. 22).

Anxious soul, look to Jesus! Relief for thee from all thy burden of sin is in Him. He says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28).

Struggling soul, look to Jesus! He fought the fight of faith and won the day. "Looking unto Jesus, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. xii. 2).

Every soul! "See Jesus crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. ii. 9), sitting on the Father's throne, the mighty work of salvation finished, and, through Him proclaimed, light for the blind, pardon for the guilty, salvation for the lost.

Reader! there's a light in heaven for thee.

FOUND AT LENGTH.

VARIOUS are the ways the Lord has of bringing souls to Himself. Sometimes He sends a tide of blessing, many are suddenly brought to a sense of their danger in the dire necessity of their case; they let go all hope in themselves, and, like one who has fallen from a ship into the raging sea and gladly grasps the rope let down for help, they cast themselves just as they are on Christ, the only refuge from the storm.

Others hear the words of love, the gospel of the grace of God, as if they never heard it before; the heart is attracted, is taken captive; they wonder that they were so long deaf to the calls of the loving Saviour, they find such a rest in Him as they never dreamt of before, the heart seems to overflow with praise, and they go on their way rejoicing.

Very different was the case of one spoken of in the following incident.

While staying one summer on the coast, I often visited some of the Lord's poor people, at a little distance, and was much refreshed. A day of heavy rain prevented me on one occasion from doing so. I looked to the Lord for work, and the case of a family near, who were living without God in the world,

recurred to my mind. I had been several times to see them before, but found them so much engaged with their worldly affairs that they cared little for the things of eternity. I will go once more, I thought, and in a few minutes was at the house. I had the same reception as before, no repulse for myself, but no welcome for the message I carried. As I was leaving, I said a word as to the danger of despising the precious blood shed on Calvary, and, much discouraged as to the result of my visit, I crossed the passage leading to the outer door, when a feeble voice from the stair leading to the attics said, "What did you say just now about the blood of Christ?" Turning round, I saw a very old woman with all the marks of extreme poverty. She said I am very ill, I must soon die. I have been seeking the Lord for fifty years, and still carry the weary burden of sin. I have been a great sinner; tell me, is there hope for such a one? I am afraid of death." "What you want to know," I said, "is the love of God. The Saviour sought you all those years you were so unhappy, only trust him *now*: 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.'" As I was leaving, she said, "Will you come back and see me?" I promised to do so.

In a day or two I again visited the old woman, and read the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, and tried to press home the words, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "I wish I could say," she replied tremblingly, "that my iniquities were laid on Him." I commended her to the Lord, feeling, as I went home, sure that he would soon speak peace to her troubled heart. Some days passed, and a neighbour told me the old woman was dying and wished to see me. I lost no time in going to her. As I entered the room a gleam of sunshine came in at the little window, showing more fully the poverty of the abode. In a bed on the floor lay the old woman; her relations had all forsaken her in her illness and distress, but a kind neighbour stood by the bed and said to me, "She has been asking often for you during the day, now she seems to be unconscious." Bending over the bed she said, "——has come." She did not seem, although in a measure aroused, to recognise the name, and the woman said, "She spoke to you one day on the stair about your soul;" she turned round immediately, and, seeing me, with a great effort she sat up in bed. "I want to take your hand," she said. I went to her; eagerly she clasped my hand and

said, "You told me of the precious blood of Christ. I believe the Lord sent you to me that day." "And have you rest now?" I said, "you know the Lord laid all your sins on Jesus?" "Yes," she replied, "I have peace with God through Jesus Christ; I die happy!" I left, thanking the Lord for His goodness. In one or two hours after, the spirit departed to be with Christ. No more doubts nor fears, no more poverty nor sickness, but perfect rest for ever.

Many souls are in the same state that poor woman was in during the years she said she sought the Saviour: doubting and fearing, yet with gleams of hope, they know not why, that ere they leave this world they will be prepared for heaven; many of the Lord's people, they say, were all their lives in darkness. No such teaching as this is to be found in the Word of God. Of those who were brought to Christ in the days of the apostles, each had his own story to tell as to the means used, but the result was always the same; they knew their sins were forgiven, and they confessed Christ with joy before the world.

Reader, no offer of salvation *may* be given you at a dying hour like that in the case just mentioned. You may be taken suddenly, or

the body be so racked with pain that you cannot think of spiritual and eternal things or the Lord may come suddenly, which to His people is their brightest hope. There will then be no time for settling this momentous question.

O cast yourself on Him now, who hath said, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out;" because, "Now is the accepted time and now is the day of salvation."

SALVATION FIRST, WORKS AFTER.

WHILE passing along a country lane, on my way to visit a sick man, I overtook an old countryman, to whom I offered a tract, at the same time asking him if he knew the gospel.

"Well, sir," he replied, "I believe it's the word of Jesus Christ."

"Quite so," said I, "but can you tell me what it contains?"

"I am very glad, sir, to listen to any one as can tell me about it."

"Well, listen," I replied, "and I will endeavour to do so."

"It tells us that the blessed God loved poor undone sinners, that He sent His dear Son to die for such—that Jesus, upon the

cross at Calvary, bore the sinners' sins, was judged in the sinner's stead, finished the mighty work to God's entire satisfaction, was taken down from the cross and buried, but that God raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in glory ; and He now sends a message to you and to me, telling of forgiveness of sins and eternal life to be had through simply taking Him at His word about this precious work of His Son. Now, have you eternal life ? " I enquired.

" I can't say as I have, sir, but I believe in Jesus Christ, I do trust Him, and I try to go on as well as I can."

" But Jesus died for *sinners* ; listen, ' God so loved the world '—Do you belong to the world ? "

" Yes, I do."

" Well, ' that whosoever '—Does that include you ? "

" Oh, yes."

" ' Believeth on him should not perish, but *have* everlasting life.' John says in his epistle, ' I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His Name sake ; ' and, again, he says afterwards, ' 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.' Now, my

dear friend, don't you see the difference between your trying to go on well, to improve yourself for God, and God loving you when nothing but a sinner? Do you know that you are by nature a *lost* sinner, that there is not a particle of goodness in you?"

"I don't know about that, sir, I hope to get on and be better."

"But if you get better you won't want Christ. He died for the *ungodly*; your only title to the Saviour is that you are a ruined sinner."

"Well, I do feel that I want something *new* in me."

"Yes, that's just what you do want; you need to be born again, to have a *new* nature, and then there will be new fruits. All the cultivation in the world won't make a crab-tree produce sweet apples, unless a sweet graft is grafted on it; so with all your trying you'll never get any fruit from your ruined nature acceptable to God. The only way you can have this new nature is by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you remember about the Israelites being bitten by fiery serpents, and God telling Moses to make a brazen serpent and set it on a pole, and that every bitten one who looked on it should live? They did not get better and then look,

but the moment they looked they were healed. Now, you must look away from yourself, all ruined by sin, to Christ—you can have eternal life by just believing on Him. You cannot go to heaven without it. The Lord said to Nicodemus, who was a most religious man, and who had every opportunity for serving God according to the law, that except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. Your old nature hates what God loves, and loves what God hates; so that if it were possible for you to go into heaven in your natural condition you would very soon want to get out again. At the cross God judged the old nature in the person of Christ, the sinner's substitute, and now bestows a totally new nature on everyone who believes on His Son."

"Well, sir, when I was laid aside some time ago through illness, I pondered a good deal, and I read in the New Testament about a certain man having a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and coming for three years to seek fruit from it, but he found none; and how his vine dresser asked for it to be spared another year so that he might dig about it and dung it, and then if it didn't bear fruit it was to be cut down. Now I think that fig-

tree is me, and that the Lord has been seeking fruit but has never got any."

"Just so ; that is what I have been trying to show you. Now look in the 8th chapter of Romans, and you will there read that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and that they who are in the flesh cannot please God. The mistake you have been making is that you have supposed that the old nature had to be improved, that salvation was to be obtained that way, instead of bowing to God's word, which says you are lost, guilty, ungodly, and without strength. You have unknowingly been trying to shut yourself out from Christ : for if you had any goodness belonging to you Christ would not be wanted, at all events not as a Saviour. God's word says that He died for the *ungodly*."

"But I think if I was pretty right to-day I might be wrong to-morrow ; I know I've got sin in me."

"Yes ; but God not only gives a new nature, but He gives also the Holy Ghost to dwell in the believer to enable him to carry out the desires of that nature, and so bring forth the good fruits. The old nature still remains in the believer, but he has to treat it as a judged thing, and God's Spirit helps him to keep it from acting. But what gives

confidence is that I know Jesus did a perfect work for me on the cross 1800 years ago, and that no alteration in my feelings can ever alter that work, nothing can undo what He did. It is looking outside of myself that gives me settled peace. Now, do take God at His word, own that you are nothing but a sinner, but tell Him that Jesus died for sinners."

"Thank you, sir, thank you; I am so much obliged for what you have been telling me." And we parted.

Dear, anxious reader, it is for you I write. Have the difficulties of the subject of this paper been in anywise similar to your own? Have you, in common with him, been expecting to get salvation and peace with God, as the results of your works? No wonder, then, that you are still unhappy. You have been looking long enough into the gloomy regions of your own heart, let me beseech you to look *out*—out to Christ. Will you still refuse to believe the good news that there is nothing to do but to take God at His word? He says that "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life" (John iii. 36). If you really do believe on the Son you have everlasting life; then why doubt it? Oh, what a sight! Jesus, the spotless One, hanging on the cross, meeting wrath for you—the waves

of God's judgment rolling over Him there. He cried out, "*It is finished*," and gave up the ghost. Oh, what a sight! Jesus risen from among the dead, and seated at the right hand of the majesty on high! (Heb. i. 3.) The glory of God shining in His blessed face, once marred and wounded!

Dear reader, He is on high *without* thy sins; take one look at Him bowing beneath them on Calvary's cross—bend thy ear to catch that cry that rings through the darkness. "It is finished;" and then with joyful eyes follow Him up to the highest point in the universe, the throne of God, and know that He sits there the accepted One—that He lives to die no more. With thine eye on Him doubts will vanish, difficulties flee away; and thou wilt be able to say, Himself bare *my* sins in His own body on the tree. Thou wilt then be able to walk through this world seeking to glorify Him, anticipating that blissful moment, fast hastening, when He will descend into the air to call us away from this scene to meet Him, and be with Him, and like Him, for ever.

