

THE
WATER OF LIFE:

OR,

A MESSAGE FOR YOU.

“A word
spoken in due season,
how good is it!”

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“CHRIST FOR ME!”

“TIDINGS OF SALVATION!”

“THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL!”

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THE WATER OF LIFE “*FREELY*.”

AT the close of the word of God we read, “I will give unto him that is *athirst* of the fountain of the water of life *freely* ;”¹ and again (in the very last chapter), “*Whosoever will*, let him take of the water of life *freely*.”² If you are *athirst*, my reader, this promise and invitation are for you, and for you “*without money and without price*.”³ How is it that so few “take of” this blessed gift of God? It is just because they do not value it. They prefer that which this world offers to all who thirst, but which can never satisfy—“Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again,”⁴ said the blessed Lord to the woman of Samaria, “but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.”⁵ The Lord Jesus says, “*I will give*,” so that if you had to pay anything at all for it, you could not say it has been *given* you. Have you *taken* the gift

offered you? You can no more pay for this gift, than you can pay for the sunshine you enjoy, or the air you breathe. But some may say, Is it true that this may be mine without cost? Yes, my reader, *without cost to you*, but it must never be forgotten that this gift has been made free for you, a sinner, at the *cost to God* of the precious blood of His own Son, who died, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."⁶ You will never value the water of life until you believe in and know the value of the blood of Christ, which makes atonement for sin,⁷ and you will never value the blood until you know that, apart from it, you are LOST,⁸—LOST for ever." If through grace, God has made you see that you are lost, then you will know that you could not get salvation, or the water of life, save as a free gift from God. Thank God! This is so!

¹ Rev. xxi. 6.² Rev. xxii. 17.³ Isa. lv. 1.⁴ John iv. 13.⁵ John iv. 14.⁶ 1 Pet. iii. 18.⁷ Col. i. 14-20.⁸ 2 Cor. iv. 3.⁹ 2 Thess. i. 7-10.

THE NEWBORN KING.

WHEN Jesus was born in Bethlehem, there came to Jerusalem wise men from the east, saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east.¹ Nothing could hinder the wise men coming to Him. They had seen the star, and now they must come to worship the newborn King! “And, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.”² It was a great favour shewn to them, seeing the star, and so they saw His star, and saw Him too.³

The wise men came to Jerusalem expecting to find that favoured city full of welcome for the newborn King; but in this they were disappointed. But the chief priests and scribes had no welcome for Him,⁴ and therefore had no joy, and Herod, too, had none.⁵ But strange to say, they were all *religious* people!⁶ And Herod said, “When ye have found him,

bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.”⁷ But the wise men “rejoiced with exceeding great joy.”⁸

And if you, dear reader, love the Lord Jesus Christ, you are wise, and will also have great joy and gladness of heart.⁹ That was the portion of the wise men of the east, and it is our portion if we are believers in Jesus. It is the portion of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁰ Do you not pray to Him?¹¹ Do you not tell Him all your secrets? Tell them to no man—“Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm. . . . Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.”¹² But tell all to the Lord Jesus, little things and great things, tell Him everything.¹³ Tell Him to-day, and tell Him again to-morrow.

Ah! you will grow then! and your love and affections will be greatly drawn out for the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will also love “all” those who love Him in sincerity; and you will then be able to say: “Grace be with all them that love

our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.
Amen.”¹⁴

As the angels laud His praise,
As the wise men bring their treasure ;
So to Him our songs we raise,
Praise and worship without measure.

| | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ¹ Matt. ii. 2. | ⁴ Matt. xxvii. 41-43. | ⁷ Matt. ii. 10. | ¹² Jer. xvii. 5-7. |
| ² .. ii. 9. | ⁶ .. ii. 16. | ⁸ 1 Pet. i. 8. | ¹³ John v. 22, 23. |
| ³ .. ii. 2. | ⁵ .. xxiii. 23-38. | ¹⁰ Rom. xv. 13. | ⁴ Eph. vi. 24. |
| | ⁷ .. ii. 8. | ¹¹ .. x. 13. | |

“WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?”¹

THE word which came to the shepherds as they were keeping their flocks by night, was “Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”² An inn is a place where a man is measured : the first floor for the rich, the garret for the poor ; but there was *no room at all* for Jesus ! No room in the great inn of this world ! He was put into the manger when He was born, upon the cross at the end, and in the meanwhile He ‘ had not where to lay his head.’³

Is that the way you treat the blessed

Lord Jesus? What place has He in your heart, if indeed He has any place at all? Is your heart so full of other things, that, like the inn, there is no room for Him in it? If so, you are doing, in another way, what the world did when He came down here in grace to tell out all the love that was in the heart of God.

Has the tale of His love never reached you? He has come down into such scenes as these, and God says, Sinner though you are, I want your heart to trust me, and that you may do so, there is my Son come down, and as a babe—and as to your sins, I have settled that.

This is the blessed truth, that when God could not bear my sins, instead of putting me away, He has put my sins away; and, at the same time, He has dealt with the bad tree that produced as fruit all the sins He has put away.

The flowers of a crabtree are more beautiful than those of an apple tree, but what do I care for pretty flowers when the fruit is bad? I cut the whole thing down! That is what God has done with

man in the flesh. He has sentenced the whole thing entirely ; it is all cut down, and grafted with Christ, and then He expects fruit.⁴

“ ‘Th’ accursèd tree was the reward,
Which this sad world did give,
To Him who gave His precious life,
That this lost world might live.”

¹ Matt. xxii. 42.

² Luke ii. 12.

³ Matt. viii. 20.

⁴ Gal. ii. 20.

THE BIBLE AND ITS ENEMIES.

GOD is for us, and has preserved the Bible for us, and He will always do so, notwithstanding all the efforts of its enemies. God has taken care of the Bible all along, He is jealous of His word and it will always stand. Satan has tried for ages past to stamp it out. Man has tried to destroy it. But all the malice of Satan, and all the efforts of man, cannot get rid of the word of God. They have tried for centuries to destroy it, tried to get rid of it—they have tried to alter the text

to ruin the word—they have tried to induce people not to read it—they have tried to insert books in it that are not scripture. Men try, some in one way and some in another, to weaken the effect of the word, and then they pass away out of the world! —“ So I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done.”¹ The Bible is a wonderful book,² people have burned heaps of copies of it, but here it is as fresh to-day as ever! All the combined influences of evil can never weaken the word of God, and every effort man uses to destroy it fails, and here the book remains as though nothing had happened! And the word of the Lord is more enduring than the rocks, more lasting than the world,³ for the world will be burnt up and the heavens will melt with fervent heat and pass away as a scroll.⁴ It is no use man opposing it — “ For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away : but the word of the Lord endureth

for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”⁵

¹ Eccl. viii. 10.

² 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

³ { Psa. cxix. 89.

{ 1 Pet. i. 25.

⁴ Rev. vi. 14.

⁵ 1 Pet. i. 24, 25.

THE SECOND DEATH, CALLED “THE LAKE OF FIRE.”

THE first resurrection refers to a class of persons, and not to a period of time — “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.”¹ And the second death is the lake of fire, and not at all a period of time — “the lake of fire. This is the second death.”² What persons talk of ordinarily is the first death—the death of the body. But there is the second death—the lake of fire. It reads thus, “This is the second death, the lake of fire.” Thus, there are two deaths—the death of the body, and the lake of fire. This shews the utter nonsense of annihilationists and sweeps away all the untruth of annihilation.³ We read of the “second,” but not

of a third death. The word of God is explicit as to this, there is the second death, but there is no *third* death mentioned, so it says—This is the second death, (even) the lake of fire. The second death includes those who are sent out of the presence of God,⁴ and it says—“The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone : which is the second death.”⁵ Death — eternal death — is theirs, and is theirs for ever. It is *not* annihilation. God does not write smooth words to warn of these awful truths. We do not want to prove what scripture says. Scripture declares it, and that is enough. It is the word of God speaking to man, and you can neither add to, nor take away from it. There is the second death—the lake of fire. Allow me to ask my reader, Are you saved from it? ⁶—“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”⁷ Christ is the only Saviour from the second death—“Neither is there

salvation in any other : for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."⁸

¹ Rev. xx. 6.² Rev. xx. 14.³ Mark ix. 44, 46, 48.⁴ { Matt. xxv. 41.

2 Thess. i. 7-10.

⁵ Rev. xxi. 8.⁶ 2 Tim. i. 7-9 ; Acts ii. 21.⁷ Rom. x. 13.⁸ Acts iv. 12.

LIGHT.

WE often see how beautifully the sun shines, and the sun is the light of the earth. If you put a plant in the window, it will always turn its leaves and flowers toward the light ; and if you sow seed in a field, the plants shoot up their leaves into the light. And can we not say, " Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun."¹

But after all we only get glimpses of sunshine, and we do not bask in the light of an everlasting day. But God would have the light of Christ enter our souls,² and that light shines with *constant* lustre. Turn the shutters of your heart back, dear

reader,³ and let in the gospel light—"the radiancy of the glad tidings of the glory of the Christ, who is the image of God ;"⁴ "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."⁵

But some people refuse to let the gospel light enter them, and they are like men down in a dark cellar, or down in a dark coal mine, who cannot see the sun. The scripture says of people who cannot see the gospel light, as the apostles presented it, that they are lost : " But if also our [the apostles] gospel is veiled, it is veiled in those who are lost."⁶

" Hither is the gospel come,
'Tis the light of God to some ;
Oh, let such in praise unite
To the Lord who gives us light ! "

¹ Eccles. xi. 7.

² Eph. v. 14.

³ John xii. 46.

⁴ 2 Cor. iv. 4.

⁵ 2 Cor. iv. 6.

⁶ 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

LITTLE WORDS IN SCRIPTURE.

IT is of great importance to pay attention to the “little words” in scripture.

In Matthew v. 18 we read “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled;” surely if this be so, every *word* shall have its fulfilment.

Let us now just look at a few passages in the scriptures where the importance of little words comes out.

Turn to John xx., and in verse 2 you find the word “THE :” “They have taken away *the* Lord;” and in verse 13 you find the word MY: “They have taken away *my* Lord.” They are both important words. The definite article “the” singles out the person or thing, while the personal pronoun “my” denotes possession.

At the present time there are numbers of people who speak about *the* Lord, but there is an immense advance when one can say MY Lord. Mary had got there,

and it took so great a hold on her that nothing could satisfy her but having Himself. Oh, to be able to say, “My beloved is mine, and I am his.”

See also John iii. 16 : “God *so* loved the world,” &c. ; now here is another little word—who can fully take in all the meaning contained in that little word? who can measure its length, breadth, and height, or who can fathom its depths?

See again, John xix. 30 : “It is finished.” Let us, beloved reader, never forget that the great redemptive work is a “finished work,” and that this stupendous work was brought about entirely by the love of God, who gave His beloved Son—the Son, too, entering fully into it, and delighting to do His Father’s will.

Surely after such a display of love, at such a cost for you and me, our hearts must be drawn towards Him, as Mary’s was ; and nothing should satisfy us but having Him as our own. May it be so, for Christ’s sake.

THE PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR.

WE see evil working in the world,¹ and hear of one country arming against another ; and people sometimes talk of the gathering together of nations for war. What can it be in this day that gathers nations together for war, leading men to slaughter one another by thousands but “the prince of the power of the air”?² Men rush like unthinking horses into battle! There is a mighty evil spirit at work in this world, and one need not go far to see that it is so. “The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.”³ Some people seem startled when we tell them that the world is under the power of Satan, and they say they have never seen it so before. Man has suffered much from “the prince of the power of the air,” and one is often shocked at hearing of the terrible things done in the world.⁴

The real state of the world is, that it

is under Satan's power ; but he is hindered in the full exercise of it, as scripture tells us—the world is a dreadful scene.⁵ Consider the ruin, sorrow, desolation, and death in it ! It is a fact, that such is the degradation on man's side, into which the world has sunk through sin, as to be under the authority of “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.”⁶

Take care, then, my reader, you are not making this world your home. But on God's side there is to be found grace, mercy, and salvation.⁷ Oh, how clear believers in the Lord Jesus Christ ought to be of the world—for we know that “the whole world lieth in wickedness ;”⁸ that is, it lieth in the “wicked one.” How separate, then, from the world we ought to be !⁹

“Till of the prize possess'd,
We hear of war no more,
And, O sweet thought ! for ever rest
On yonder peaceful shore.”

¹ Rom. iii. 10-18.

² Eph. ii. 2.

³ Eph. ii. 2.

⁴ Rom. i. 29-32.

⁵ 2 Thess. ii. 3-12.

⁶ Eph. ii. 2. 3.

⁷ Acts ii. 21.

⁸ 1 John v. 19-20.

⁹ 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.

SUDDEN DEATH.

DEATH often comes suddenly.¹ One man is drowned, another passes under a wall, and a brick falls upon him and kills him ; another has a fit and dies ; or a man may fall from a house or tower and be killed in an instant. Many people are killed in a moment.² How many have passed out of this world into eternity, who were well and hearty but a week ago ! If the tent pole be taken down, the tent has gone ;³ if the tent pole falls, the story has closed and our earthly history ended.⁴ The sudden deaths of other people are a salutary warning to us, death is busy around us and might be here at any moment. When we are in health and strength we do not think of the uncertainty of our lives,⁵ but we ought to make the most of our opportunities for hearing the gospel.⁶

Delay not, reader, to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ in all earnest simplicity.⁷ The answer is prompt—"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."⁸

¹ Prov. xxix. 1.² Job xxxvi. 18.³ Isa. xxxviii. 12.⁴ Eccles. xii. 7.⁵ Eccles. xii. 1-6.⁶ Prov. xxvii. 1.⁷ Matt. xi. 28.⁸ { John vi. 37.

{ 1 John ii. 12.

SCIENCE

“FALSELY SO CALLED.”¹

THE speculative men and infidels of the day all come from one man – Adam. But if God had formed two or three hundred, or two or three millions of men, of the dust of the earth, instead of only one man,² we should then probably have had these speculative men saying, that they were made of different kinds of dust! and so accounting for the variety of mankind, as they do for everything else God has created.

I thank God that believers should not be led by speculative men's conclusions,³ or have confidence in *their* wisdom.⁴ These often make miscalculations, and they do not agree about the most fundamental of all things—they do not understand the question of life. And if they do not understand and cannot agree about life, how is it possible *they* can understand divine things?⁵

Some people think that science *elevates* man mentally, but it is not so; civilisation

and science merely *expand* man's mind ; and sin makes him mentally incapable of understanding the things by which we are surrounded ;⁶ and sin has also shortened man's life.⁷ See what God says of the *wise of this world*—"Where is the wise ? where is the scribe ? where is the disputer of this world ? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world ?"⁸

They say to believers, You think that you know better than we do ? I may know nothing of their theories and philosophy, but I do know what God has written, which is not a question of science, and that is, that "LIFE and INCORRUPTIBILITY" have been brought to light through the gospel.⁹

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 20.

⁴ 1 Cor. i. 19.

⁷ Gen. v. 27 ; vi. 3 ; Psa. xc. 8-10.

² Gen. ii. 7.

⁵ 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.

⁸ 1 Cor. i. 20, 21.

³ 1 Tim. vi. 20, 21.

⁶ Eccles. viii. 17.

⁹ 2 Tim. i. 10.

ETERNITY.

GOD has given us in the scriptures, an account of eternity, and it is most interesting to read. There is an eternity before each one of us. But

people pursue their business, and run hither and thither, and spend active lives, as though there were no such thing! or they were trying to banish the thought of it. But God has written an account of a new heaven and a new earth.¹ And none but God could give us an account of eternity. God tells us in scripture, what His purposes are—how that there is an eternity of blessing, for all of us who believe in the Lord Jesus,² and that there will never be a moment throughout its long ages, when our communion with Him will be interrupted.³ Just think, what blessing lies before us! Before we knew the Lord Jesus Christ, we dreaded the thought of eternity, and had the weight of sin upon our conscience, but now we can look it full in the face.⁴ God has, also, given an account of an eternity of sorrow, for all those who have not Christ as their Saviour.⁵ And, therefore, for people to refuse the Lord Jesus, and to put off thinking of eternity, is absolute folly.⁶

“Count the gold and silver blossoms

Spring has scattered o’er the lea ;

Count the softly sounding ripples
 Sparkling on the summer sea ;
 Count the lightly flickering shadows
 In the autumn forest glade ;
 Count pale Nature's scattered teardrops,
 Icy gems by winter made ;
 Count the tiny blades that glitter
 Early in the morning dew ;
 Count the desert sand that stretches
 Under noontide's vault of blue ;
 Count the notes the wood-birds warble
 In the evening's fading light ;
 Count the stars that gleam and twinkle
 O'er the firmament by night.
 When thy counting all is done
 Scarce eternity's begun ;
 READER, PAUSE ! Where wilt thou be
 During thine ETERNITY ? "

¹ Rev. xxi.³ 1 Thess. iv. :6-18.⁵ 2 Thess. i. 7.² John xiv. 1-3.⁴ 2 Pet. iii. 7-13.⁶ 2 Cor. vi. 2.

THE SAINTS, WHO ARE THEY ?

THE word "saint" is the common designation of the Christian, the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the apostles in writing address all believers

as the *saints* of God. The apostle Paul in writing to the Ephesians says—"To the saints which are at Ephesus."¹ Every child of God is a saint, no matter who they are or where they are, and "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."² There are only *two* classes of people in the world! saints and sinners, and all men and women who are not saints are sinners.³ All the epistles are addressed to the saints, no epistle is addressed to those who are not. The apostles never write to unbelievers—"To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi;"⁴ "To the saints . . . which are at Colosse."⁵ "All the saints salute you."⁶ For we are what we are, and it is no use some people saying that believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are not what they are. The apostle Paul says, "I am what I am,"⁷ and we, too, are what we are. Jude addresses the saints (rightly translated) as the "called ones."⁸ The apostle Paul writes to all that be at Rome, and says, "called saints," that is, saints "by calling." This is a high calling! Not "called *to be*

saints,"" those two words "to be" have been put in since, in *italics*, and ought not to have been inserted there—they spoil the whole sense! They are put in italics shewing they may be *omitted*, but are often used by persons who mis-use and mis-quote scripture, and it is *their* style of language,¹⁰ not the believers—"For we [the apostles] are not as many, which corrupt the word of God."¹¹ All believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are saints by calling¹² — this is an absolute fact irrespective of our walk.¹³ We must of course walk as saints,¹⁴ but that is because we are such already. Anything short of the fact that we are now the children of God—now saints—is *not* the true scope of the "grace"¹⁵ of God.

¹ Eph. i. 1.⁵ Col. i. 2.⁸ Jude 1.¹² 1 Cor. i. 2.² Gal. iii. 26.⁶ { 2 Cor. xiii. 13.⁹ 1 Cor. i. 2.¹³ Eph. i. 3-7.³ Eph. ii. 1-3.⁷ Phil. iv. 22.¹⁰ Rom. xv. 18.⁴ 2 Pet. ii. 9-25.⁴ Phil. i. 1.⁷ 1 Cor. xv. 10.¹¹ { 2 Cor. ii. 17.¹⁵ Eph. i. 3-7.

{ 2 Cor. iv. 2.

THE DAYSMAN.

NOW what do I find in Christ when He came? I find "a daysman"—the

very thing that Job wanted.¹ Was there fear in Christ? Was any one afraid of Christ? If a sinner was ever so burdened he could go to Christ and thus to God. Now here I find that though my sins hindered me from going to God, they could not hinder God from coming to me.² You will never find a single case in which Christ did not receive the sinner with open arms—never. Now that is what you want. Christ did not say, Get righteousness and come up here; and I will have you. No; but He came down here to meet us here.³ That is an entirely new thing. Christ came in this way to win our hearts thus. And therefore, they reproached Him with receiving sinners, and eating with them.⁴ It is quite true, He replied, but is not a father glad to receive his lost son?⁵ Even so is it with My Father in heaven; and therefore am I come to seek and to save that which was lost.⁶ Now this is grace.

¹ Job ix. 33.³ John vi. 38-40.⁵ Luke xv. 20-24.² 1 Tim. iii. 16.⁴ Luke xv. 2.⁶ Luke xix. 10.

THE GOSPEL TRUMPET.

IT was once said of some men, they were no use as soldiers because they were always thinking. All that soldiers have to do is to obey, and they have no right to think. The bugle sounds and they fall into their ranks, and all the thinking is done for them. So it is with God's gospel. God Himself is the Dispenser of blessing to all whom His blessing reaches, and His gospel gives no uncertain sound. God does not allow of man's reasoning.¹ At the sound of the trumpet—the sound of the gospel—we hear the word of God, and do not come to carry out our own plans.² We come in submission to the gospel call, the only way of blessing, and we are put in acquaintance with God, who gives us the knowledge of Himself and His ways.

Nothing else can do it.³ If each were to think what the gospel ought to be,

one would think one thing, and one another, and some would think very foolish things, and we should never get on that way.

There is only one way, and that is to listen. God speaks in the gospel, and we hear. He testifies to His own beloved Son: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."⁴ And He tells us that *His* work on the cross satisfies Him. And if Christ's work did not satisfy God, nothing else would! But He tells us it does satisfy Him, and when we give up *man's* opinions we see it to be so. A present salvation is proclaimed in the gospel,⁵ a totally different thing to man's opinions. We never could have had salvation if Christ had not done the work for us.⁶

"Oh what a debt we owe
To Him who shed His blood,
And cleansed our souls, and gave us pow'r
To stand before His God."

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 3.

² Heb. v. 9; 2 Thess. i. 7, 8.

³ Acts iv. 12.

⁴ Matt. xvii. 5.

⁵ 2 Tim. i. 9.

⁶ Acts iv. 12.

NO REST IN THE WORLD.

WE are in a world where there is nothing but disturbance, and whichever part of it you look at you see the elements of unrest. The world is full of unrest and turmoil. There is no rest in the town, and no rest in the country, and not much rest in one's family; and you see unrest stamped upon everybody, one running after one thing, and one after another. With one it is the cares of business, with another the cares of a family, and with a third the restless pursuit of pleasure. There is no rest in the *world*! Can you look at the hospitals and call this a scene of rest? or the lunatic asylums and call this a scene of rest? or the prisons, and workhouses, and infirmaries, and so on, and call this a scene of rest? Neither has man rest of conscience or rest of heart.² See how busy man is vexing himself with questions, problems, to which he can find no answer.

And why is there no rest in the world?

Because there is sin here, and “The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.”³

But quietness is that which characterises the people of God,⁴ quietness in this world of unrest—and all the unrest we see around us is not Christianity at all! Peace comes from that which is altogether independent of the world—“He shall not be afraid of evil tidings : his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.”⁵ There is not a shade of hope, or rest, or blessing, without knowing the Lord Jesus Christ.⁶

“ Their mirth, ’tis like the meteor
 That flashes through the sky ;
 Their laughter passes fleeter
 Than flowers that bloom to die ;
 Their gold and silver canker,
 Their gaudy vests decay ;
 Where will their souls find anchor
 When comes the stormy day ? ”

¹ 1 John v. 19.

³ Isa. lvii. 20.

⁵ Psa. cxii. 7.

² Jer. xvii. 9; Matt. xv. 19.

⁴ Titus iii. 1, 2.

⁶ Matt. xi. 23-30.

“THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH.”

I DO not believe that we think enough of the dangers of the scene through which we are passing. Scripture calls this world “the valley of the shadow of death.”¹ That is the whole scene through which we are passing. It is a scene of death, and a dark thunder cloud of judgment² hangs over the world, like a pall hanging over the whole scene. Have you ever thought of the dangers which beset you? Have you thought to-day of the power of Satan?³ There are great sorrows in the world. It is a land of thorns and brambles, a land of suffering and tears,⁴ a land of sorrow and death.⁵

It is not *possible* that an immortal soul can satisfy itself with the vain pleasures this world affords. We are not created to pass here only a few years of ups and downs in such a world as this; and there can be no greater delusion than for a man to say he has no time to think of the future.

But family matters, business matters, local matters, and political matters, take the precedence in man's mind.⁶ If you want to know the history of the world, it is a history of disappointment and tears, and the Christian is looking for the time to come when there will be no more death, and God will wipe away all tears.⁷ If the Christian has any fears at all in this scene, they merely relate to what might happen on this side of death.

We ought to have no fears : " Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God : therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is " ⁸

But the unbeliever fears what is the *other* side of death, the judgment of God on those who refuse the Saviour.⁹

The end of the Christian's course is the Father's house!¹⁰ and in the meantime he

is able to say : “ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil : for thou art with me ; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.”¹¹

¹ Psa. xxiii. 4.

² 2 Pet. iii. 10-13.

³ Eph. ii. 2.

⁴ 1 John v. 19.

⁵ John xvi. 33.

⁶ Rom. v. 12.

⁷ 1 John iv. 5, 6.

⁸ Rev. xxi. 4.

⁹ 1 John iii. 1, 2.

¹⁰ Heb. x. 27.

¹¹ John xiv. 2, 3.

¹² Psa. xxiii. 4.

THE EPISTLES.

IN reading a chapter in an epistle, it is helpful to see the scope of it ; and it is a great advantage to read an epistle through as a whole, as then you get the entire thread of it. Each epistle is written to meet the condition of the particular assembly the apostles were addressing. The epistles answer the different states, or conditions, of the several assemblies, and shew each what they required. Those who had been heathen were *not* to turn again to heathen things,¹ and those who had been Jews were *not* to take up again the law.²

The epistles are very instructive for us. I do not say that one epistle stands before

another, each one is so fresh and flowing that each one comes like fresh, clear water from a spring. Do any of our readers think they cannot understand the epistles? Each one tells us about the Lord Jesus Christ. They shew, in different shades and colours, the complete work of redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross for us,³ and the results which flow from it for the glory of God, and the blessing of those who believe.⁴

¹ Eph. v. 20, 21. ² Gal. ii. 15, 16; iii. 10. ³ 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. ⁴ Eph. i. 3-14.

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE.

HERE in Revelation xx. 12, you see all the dead who had died out of Christ, brought up for judgment. It is a picture of what will occur in eternity, and it is not possible to conceive a more solemn one, when death has passed, and when all God's messengers are called home. Death has passed the soul into eternity, to give an account of the deeds done in the body—"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." No

language can suffice to express, no thoughts can conceive, the awfulness of the scene! The dead stand before God clothed, robed, mantled, in all the degradation of the first Adam. There is no escape —“ And the sea gave up the dead,” all who were drowned in it are there; God will find them out, whether they be at the bottom of the sea or on the top of it. Think of the solemn character of this scene! What a discriminating verse this is—what a cutting verse it is! There is only *one* class of people here before the great white throne, and that is “the dead.” That terrible assemblage is called “the dead.” There is not one believer in the Lord Jesus Christ found in this scene, every believer is included in the sixth verse, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.” The Lord Jesus Christ is now in heaven, and has not yet taken His place on the great white throne, and we charge you, our reader, in the light of the future, that you bow to Christ *now* without further delay.

THE CHRISTIAN'S PATHWAY.

THE pathway of the Christian has its trials¹ as well as the pathway of the unbeliever. The Christian may find himself in tribulation,² in affliction,³ and in the house of death.⁴ But all his trials are like the winds and storms, which make a tree strike its root deeper down into the ground—and “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”⁵ If you know how to pass through trouble rightly, you will then know how to comfort those you find in trouble. Nothing can hinder one who knows the forgiveness of his sins, and having no dread of God, but on the contrary, love for Him—nothing can hinder such an one's joy and energy though he may pass through the greatest trial.⁶ The actual certainty of being with Christ in glory hereafter,⁷ is that which will enable you to lift up your head in some of the deep trials you may have to pass through ; and then you can say with the Apostle Paul—“In all these

things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us ”⁸—because He has ascended above all⁹—and “ 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 ”—any you may have forgotten to name—“ shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”¹⁰

“ Soon all that grieves shall pass away,
And we shall see a glorious day.”

¹ Rom. v. 3-5.

² Rom. xii. 12.

³ James v. 13.

⁴ James i. 27.

⁵ Psa. xxv. 5.

⁶ 1 Pet. i. 6, 7.

⁷ Col. iii. 4.

⁸ Rom. viii. 37.

⁹ Eph. i. 20, 21.

¹⁰ Rom. viii. 38, 39.

THE LIGHT.

THE light makes you see your own state. If you get into the light you will find out what you are. When the shutters of your heart are thrown back and the light streams in, it reveals the real condition of the soul—the ruin into which sin has plunged you.¹ Do you

fancy you have a good heart? it is because the light has not entered.² Do you think you love your neighbour as yourself? it is because the light has not entered.³ Do you think that you love God with all your heart? it is because the light has not entered.⁴ What follows light is the conviction of sin, you see what you are by nature⁵ as though you saw yourself in a mirror. If you remain in darkness you will never be cleansed of a single sin—"Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness."⁶ When believers in the Lord Jesus Christ go to heaven they will be there in the light, and without a single stain of sin upon them,⁷ and they will sing a new song, but what is the new song *about*?—"They sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."⁸

"Nothing but His precious blood,
Can do fallen sinners good."

¹ Rom. iii. 10-18.³ Titus iii. 3.⁵ Eph. ii. 1-3.⁷ Rev. vii. 14.² Jer. xvii. 9.⁴ Rom. i. 30.⁶ Psa. cxii. 4.⁸ Rev. v. 9.

THE CITY OF ATHENS, AND THE UNKNOWN GOD.

ATHENS, the capital of Greece, was the most learned city, it was the centre of all the learning, the wisdom of the earth, the centre of all the philosophy of the world, the centre of civilisation. And in the centre of all this intelligence was the altar erected to the “unknown” God!¹ God was outside all their mythical divinities and unknown. What a censure was their own altar upon them! But that is just what man does, he leaves God out, and we need not go to scripture to learn this; but if we do go, it is all proclaimed there most clearly and distinctly that God is *unknown*. And the heart of man is closed against Him²—he does not acknowledge God in his actions, and we have only to look round and see how man leaves God out! He acts and plans—and cares for—and arranges—as if God did not exist. That is the state of mankind generally.³ But

what terrible ignorance it is for people to be in, to be living in God's own world without knowing Him.⁴ Some people say that men are very clever. Of course they are! the cleverness of man's mind is untold, but if he leaves God out so as not to *know* Him, what does it matter whether he be clever or no?—"For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing. Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."⁵

¹ Acts xvii. 15-31.³ Psal. x. 4.⁵ Acts xvii. 21-23.² Jer. xvii. 9.⁴ 2 Thess. i. 7-10.

THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN.

THE character of the gospel is as when Paul preached it, that it turned "the world upside down."¹ Nothing was to

stand before it ; nothing could be allowed with it : Judaism, heathenism, &c.—it overturned all. It brought in the claims of God upon individuals. It not only brought truth about God, &c. ; but it shewed those addressed to be in a certain position towards God. The gospel comes and says, “you are lost ;”² and it does turn the world upside down. It is a new thing for them to be told, You are all wrong. Paul did this. He stated soberly what it was—gave proofs of it, but could not convince man’s mind. He treated every living soul as a sinner, a child of wrath, a child of disobedience.³ That must be from God, not man, and it turns the world upside down. Paul was sent out to all the world, and so were others also.⁴ His mission was peculiar ; and he brought the claims of God before men, calling every one to repent, warning them they were all away from God, and telling them to submit to the gospel.⁵

¹ Acts xvii. 6.³ Eph. ii. 2, 3.² Matt. xviii. 11.⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 10.
⁵ { Acts xxvi. 13-23.
 Acts xvii. 30, 31.
 Rom. x. 8, 9.

THE BIBLE, THE WORD OF GOD.

UNCONVERTED people read the Bible, just as they read the history of England, but how has man obtained that book? The scriptures came into the world without anybody's leave, and have been put together in that form, but who put them together? No one knows—"But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."¹ Where has the word of God come from? It has come from God. God had asked no man's leave, it has come into the world from God, and here it is. If the Bible had not been the word of God, man would have put it out of the world long ago. There has been no book in the whole world man has so attacked as the Bible, and amongst the many proofs that it is the word of God is the fact that it withstands all man's attacks. Through all the past ages of darkness, wickedness, and infidelity,² the ancient scriptures have been preserved to us, though man has tried to burn them,

and scatter them to the winds. Men and devils have conspired together to blot them out, but here they are to-day as fresh as ever, and as if only just given to us—“The holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”³ For God has preserved them, because He is for all men, and not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.⁴ And this fact is the essence of the gospel.⁵ And the Apostle Paul says—“I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”⁶ So the Bible is—

“Like a star effulgent bright,
Shining thro’ the shades of night ;
Guiding pilgrims on their way,
Up to heaven’s eternal day.”

¹ Isa. lxvi. 2.² Rom. iii. 10-18.³ 2 Tim. iii. 15.⁴ 2 Pet. iii. 9.⁵ John iii. 16.⁶ Acts xx. 32.

DEATH UPON ALL.

DEATH is written upon all,¹ even upon the brightest things. Upon our

hopes, anticipations, expectations, prosperities, dignities. Death upon everything we see—upon all. Death comes upon our speculations, and ourselves. Nothing visible is eternal! The world itself will pass away, so absolute, so total, is its ruin.² Death has come into the world, moral and physical death, distance from God, and so death is stamped upon everything. “For the things which are seen are temporal,”³ and therefore not worth the struggle for, they are made of dust, and in such a state cannot last long, and go back to dust. Some people may tell you that this is a melancholy view of things! but such persons are not sensible to the terrible *reality* of the scene in which we are,⁴ and are not proper witnesses to the fact. It is a real and sober fact. This is only a confession that we must die, and we are living witnesses to this fact. The great fact before each man is, that die he must! And, therefore, the more a man enjoys himself in this world, the greater the *wrench* when death comes.

¹ Rom. vii. 12. ² 2 Pet. iii. 10-13. ³ 2 Cor. iv. 18. ⁴ 1 John v. 19, 20.

THE JUDGMENT BEFORE THE "GREAT WHITE THRONE."

SOME people say that they cannot help sinning ; whether this be true or not, it will be righteous judgment before the "great white throne,"¹ people will be judged according to their works. God never judges people for nothing. Judgment is always according to what people have done, and this always touches man's conscience. All will be searched through and through, and none pass in a crowd ; each will be judged as individuals. It will be a day of reckoning-up—each judged "according to his works."² These are words pregnant with meaning, words we should do well to ponder and seek to understand. All that you have done will come out in the presence of God, and without a single excuse.

There will be no getting away in that day, no message of mercy in that day, no gospel *then* for those who stand before the great white throne. There is no mercy then, "Enter not into judgment

with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.”³ “If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?”⁴

In that dreadful day every one who has died refusing Christ, the Saviour, will be raised for judgment. It is an awful thought. You will be called from your narrow cell to appear before Christ—not then as a Saviour, but as a Judge—to be judged according to your works; and the same almighty power that calls you up from the grave, will cause that you stand there without doubting, questioning, or arguing, and you will be like the man without the wedding garment—“speechless”⁵—and the fearful results of *that* is well known;⁶ “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”⁷

But there is a Saviour *now* from this terrible judgment.⁸ The Lord Jesus Christ says, “He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall NOT COME into condemnation [that is, judgment]; but is

passed from death unto life.”⁹ So the believer can say :—

“ ‘ No condemnation ! ’—precious word !

Consider it, my soul :

Thy sins were all on Jesus laid ;

His stripes have made thee whole.”

¹ Rev. xx. 11.

² Rev. xx. 12-15.

³ Psa. cxliii. 2.

⁴ Psa. cxxx. 3.

⁵ Matt. xxii. 11, 12.

⁶ Matt. xxii. 13.

⁷ Rev. xx. 15.

⁸ 2 Cor. vi. 2.

⁹ John v. 24.

SUBMISSION TO “GOD’S” RIGHTEOUSNESS.

MAN’S righteousness is man’s consistency with what God his Creator required of him. If a man gives an honest day’s pay for an honest day’s work that is man’s righteousness. It is man’s righteousness to pay his debts, to act uprightly, and behave himself properly in the place where God has put him. Not that he always does do so, but *man’s* own righteousness consists in his doing right according to God’s claims.

God’s righteousness is *God’s* consistency with *Himself*. The gospel is the revelation of *God’s* righteousness.¹ His righteousness

46 SUBMISSION TO "GOD'S" RIGHTEOUSNESS.

appears, and that is the basis of the gospel. God's righteousness is so connected with the gospel, that our salvation 'involves, not only the present forgiveness of our sins,² and our having peace with God,³ but we are now also made the "righteousness of God" in Christ.⁴ God imputes *His* righteousness to a man who has not got it. That is the proposition the apostle Paul proves in speaking of God's righteousness, that "God imputeth righteousness without works,"⁵ "To declare 'his' righteousness . . . that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."⁶ So it is not our righteousness,⁷ but God's righteousness we have, if we believe in Jesus. It is *that* we have to *submit* to—"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish 'their own' righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."⁸ "So by the obedience of ONE shall many be made righteous"⁹—that is what we were not before.

Now, I would ask my reader, have you yet "submitted" to God's righteousness?

because the gospel brings us to Him, without any sort of pride or self-complacency.¹⁰ That is how we get righteousness! and thus all is rest,¹¹ and peace,¹² in a moment.

¹ Rom. iii. 20-22.

⁴ 2 Cor. v. 21.

⁷ Phil. iii. 9.

¹⁰ 1 Tim. iii. 6.

² 1 John ii. 12.

⁵ Rom. iv. 6, 7.

⁸ Rom. x. 3.

¹¹ Matt. xi. 28.

³ Rom. v. 1.

⁶ Rom. iii. 25, 26.

⁹ Rom. v. 19.

¹² Eph. ii. 14.

CONFIDENCE AS TO SALVATION.

SOME people say, I hope that I shall be saved, but I cannot yet venture to say with confidence that I am saved. But why do they not speak with confidence? It is because they are not trusting to the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore they are not in the enjoyment of peace with God. If you do not speak with confidence it is because you do not believe what the word of God says.¹ If you have not confidence as to salvation, it is either because you do not know God as you ought to do,² or that you know Him and are not doing things that you know you ought to do.³

God is perfectly satisfied with all the work the Lord Jesus Christ has done,⁴ and if it be so, then surely you ought also to be satisfied? It is not vain confidence

trusting to *His* work of atonement for sin upon the cross.⁵ It is not presumption to say that *He* did the work properly.⁶ It is not boasting to believe what scripture says of the result of *His* work, that we are “saved,”⁷ that we are “redeemed.”⁸ The believer knows it, because *scripture* says it is so,⁹ and the consequence is—“we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹⁰ That is the effect. And more than that, we also have boldness, and access to God because of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.¹¹

And so we are told not to cast away our confidence : “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward ;”¹² “Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.”¹³

“Confidence and peace have fill’d us,
Sweeter praise than tongue can tell ;
God is satisfied with Jesus,
We are satisfied as well.”

¹ 2 Tim. i. 9, 10.

² 1 John iv. 8-10.

³ 2 Pet. i. 9.

⁴ Rom. iii. 24-26.

⁵ Col. i. 19-21.

⁶ Col. i. 15-19.

⁷ 2 Tim. i. 9.

⁸ 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

⁹ 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.

¹⁰ Rom. iv. 25 ; v. 1.

¹¹ Heb. x. 19, 20.

¹² Heb. x. 35.

¹³ 2 Cor. v. 6.

THE BIBLE.

THE Bible is a wonderful book. It has come down through floods and flames. It has lasted through fire and sword. It has outlasted the revolutions of ages ; and in days when empires rocked and thrones shook, this book stood ; and when emperors and kings banded together to stamp it out of existence, God had copies of this book in secret, with His eye on them, and His hand over them, ready to bring them out when needed !

Oh, the value of the Bible ! If you are in the habit of laying it aside in order to take up a newspaper—or any light reading—I would say, “ Halt ! ”

The Bible is a wonderful book, a truly wonderful book ! and you cannot neglect it with impunity and without suffering great loss. “ I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.” (Acts xx. 32.)

A MIGHTY FAMINE IN THE WORLD.

IF you try the world you will find that it does not give—it is not the character of the world to give. The world will *take* a great deal and give very little.¹ It expects a great deal, and *upbraids* a great deal, and gives mighty little! If you think the world cares for you, you make a great mistake. It cares for what it can get from you, your money, and your wit, and when these are gone and it can get no more it has done with you, and will not give you sixpence—“When he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land.”² While you can bring your stock of strength to the world, and while you can play your part in it, it is all very well;³ but come the time when your stock of strength fails, and your intellect weakens, and you find yourself upon a sick bed with your face turned to the wall, what will the world think of you then?

The world is a place of hard bondage; it sent the prodigal into its fields to feed

swine. When he had spent all, then “no man gave unto him,”⁴ and he was held in the bondage of man’s provision—“the husks that the swine did eat.”⁵

That is just the difference between having to do with God and with man. Man makes fair promises, but when the time comes the promises are broken.⁶ But what God promises He will most surely perform. As sure as God is, He will keep His word.⁷ When I believe man, I am disappointed; but God’s word is certain to come to pass, and that is the word of faith which we preach—“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”⁸

“In vain the world invites
Me to its empty feast,
And spreads its gay delights,
But leaves a starvèd guest;
For God who made us only can
Fill up the vast desires of man.”

¹ John xiv. 27.

² Luke xv. 11-32.

³ John xv. 19.

⁴ Luke xv. 16.

⁵ Luke xv. 16.

⁶ 2 Tim. iii. 3.

⁷ Matt. xxiv. 35.

(Heb. vi. 17-20.

⁸ Rom. x. 8-13.

“OUR” RIGHTEOUSNESS.

WE ought not to be afraid to speak of our righteousness, because scripture speaks of it, and all scripture is the word of God. The question of our righteousness is a very important one. There has always been much controversy about it, and it is the root of all the religions in the world. Scripture explains what it is, it says that “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;”¹ and if it be so, we need not ask, What does God think of our *wickedness*?² It does not here say what our sins are to God, but simply what our *righteousness* is—that all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. What a strange robe for a man to throw over his shoulders to come to God in!³ for “There is none righteous, no, not one.”⁴

The only righteous Man upon earth was the Lord Jesus Christ.⁵ And every believer in Him not only has the present forgiveness of sins,⁶ and peace with God,⁷ but is also made the righteousness “of God” in Him.⁸

If some of us have feeble minds and do not clearly take in the fact, it does not alter its being a fact—"Ye are complete in him."⁹

¹ Isa. lxiv. 6.

⁴ Rom. iii. 10.

⁶ 1 John ii. 12.

⁸ 2 Cor. v. 21.

² Rom. iii. 10-26.

⁵ 1 Pet. ii. 22.

⁷ Rom. v. 1.

⁹ Col. ii. 10.

³ Matt. xxii. 11-13.

CONTRAST BETWEEN THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

THE law and the gospel are two opposite things.¹ The law says of the sinner, Stone him ;² the gospel says, Forgive him.³ The law says of the returning prodigal, Lay hold of him and punish him ;⁴ the gospel says, Receive him and do him good⁵—the Father runs to meet him, and falls on his neck and kisses him.⁶ The law says, Do this and thou shalt live ;⁷ the gospel says, Believe and live.⁸ The law says, Love God with all your heart ;⁹ the gospel says, That God loves you.¹⁰ The law says, You must bring to God a righteousness ;¹¹ the gospel says that God brings you one.¹² The law tells you

what you must do for God;¹³ the gospel tells you what God has done for you.¹⁴ The law came and judges and condemns the world;¹⁵ but God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world.¹⁶ The law demanded everything from man,¹⁷ but the gospel is exactly the opposite!¹⁸ No two things can be more distinct and dissimilar than the law and the gospel.¹⁹ The law saith, Do and live;²⁰ and the gospel is just the other way about; the gospel is, Live and do.²¹

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|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 { Rom. iii. 20-24. | 6 Luke xv. 20. | 13 James ii. 8-10. | 18 Gal. v. 1. |
| 2 { John i. 17. | 7 Lev. xviii. 4, 5. | 14 John iii. 16. | 19 John i. 17. |
| 3 { Ex. xxxi. 14, 15. | 8 Acts xvi. 30, 31. | 15 { Rom. iii. 19. | 20 { Lev. xviii. 4, 5. |
| 4 { Num. xv. 32-36. | 9 Deut. vi. 5. | 16 { Gal. iii. 10, 11. | 21 { Gal. iii. 10-12. |
| 5 Acts xiii. 32-39. | 10 John iii. 16. | 17 { John iii. 17. | James ii. 10. |
| 6 Heb. x. 28. | 11 Phil. iii. 9. | 18 { Gal. iii. 10. | John iii. 36. |
| 7 2 Cor. ii. 7, 8. | 12 Rom. iii. 21-23. | 19 { James ii. 10. | Titus iii. 8. |
| | | | Gal. ii. 16. |

“WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?”¹

THE above question is still the question of to-day, just as much as it was when the Lord Jesus Christ Himself was here on earth and Himself asked the question.¹ God is as it were challenging man as to this in the very gospel of His grace which is being preached to-day, for besides being

the gospel of His grace² it is also the gospel of the *glory of Christ*.³ He came to this world to manifest God in His own person ;⁴ to make known all the love and grace that was in the heart of God for man,⁵ but man cast Him out and would have none of Him.⁶ But God received Him back and glorified Him⁷ and so made it plain that He and man were at issue. Man said, “ Away with him, crucify him,”⁸ but God said, “ This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”⁹ What then do you, reader, think of Christ ? Are you in your heart with those who reject Him,¹⁰ or can you say, Whom not having seen, I love,¹¹ and believing in Him, I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory?¹²

¹ Matt. xxii. 41-45.² Acts xx. 24.³ 2 Cor. iv. 4.⁴ 1 Tim. iii. 16.⁵ John iii. 16.⁶ Matt. xxi. 38, 39.⁷ Acts iii. 13.⁸ John xix. 15.⁹ Matt. xvii. 5.¹⁰ Luke xix. 27.¹¹ 1 Pet. i. 8.¹² 1 Pet. i. 8.

THE ANGELS.

HOW often are the angels of God spoken of in scripture. God has given His angels a wonderful place—“ Who maketh his angels spirits ; ”¹ “ Are

they not all ministering spirits?"² The angels are ministers of God that do His pleasure—"I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God ; and am sent to speak unto thee."³ The system of the law was connected with angels, they were intimately connected with the *Jewish* system, and were the highest things the Jews thought of—"An angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water : whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had."⁴ The angels are mighty beings ! "Angels, which are greater in power and might."⁵ We read of Michael, the archangel,⁶ and "Angels, that excel in strength, that do God's commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word."⁷ We read of "an innumerable company of angels ;"⁸ and of "many angels round about the throne."⁹ The elect angels¹⁰ have all kept their place before God, all fill their proper place and have their own fixed sphere of blessing. "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come."¹¹ But they are

interested in man—"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation."¹² When the Lord Jesus was here upon earth He said, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? but how then shall the scripture be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"¹³ He came into the world for the suffering of death;¹⁴ but here He compares the strength of angels with that of men, *we* have not their strength. The Lord was infinitely greater¹⁵ than all the angels! When God bringeth in the first begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him;¹⁶ "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son."¹⁷ And the Epistle to the Hebrews especially shews His *superiority* to the angels and to every *other* created being,¹⁸ and in Ephesians we read that Christ hath ascended to God's own right hand in the heavenly places, far

above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and God hath put all things under His feet.¹⁹ It is quite clear that the Lord Jesus Christ is far above angels, and every one must bow to Him!²⁰ and He says, “He that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.”²¹

“Join all the glorious names
Of wisdom, love, and power,
That mortals ever knew,
That angels ever bore;
All are too mean to speak His worth,
Too mean to set the Saviour forth.”

¹ Heb. i. 7.
² Heb. i. 14.
³ Luke i. 19, 26.
⁴ John v. 4.
⁵ 2 Pet. ii. 11.
⁶ Rev. xii. 7, 8.

⁷ { Psa. ciii. 20.
2 Pet. ii. 11.
⁸ Heb. xii. 22.
⁹ Rev. v. 11.
¹⁰ 1 Tim. v. 21.
¹¹ Heb. ii. 5.

¹² Heb. i. 14.
¹³ Matt. xxvi. 53.
¹⁴ Heb. ii. 9.
¹⁵ 1 Tim. iii. 16.
¹⁶ Heb. i. 6.
¹⁷ Heb. i. 5.

¹⁸ Heb. i. 8-14.
¹⁹ Eph. i. 21-22.
²⁰ Phil. ii. 6-11.
²¹ Luke xii. 9.

THE APOSTLE PAUL, DEFENDER OF THE GOSPEL.

(PHIL. I. 15-17.)

IT was God who had set Himself to bless poor sinners, and whom was He now to send? He had to qualify a man—Paul—to be a clear and fitting channel through which the gospel should flow, to

convey, as it were, the pure and living water from the spring.

The pure and blessed gospel was committed to Paul's trust¹ to keep it pure.² To preach and maintain the gospel, which came straight down from the Lord to himself³—and from him through the holy scriptures to us.⁴ To keep the gospel pure.⁵ And it was so distinct in its character that he calls it “my”⁶ gospel, and so we take heed to Paul's gospel. And he says, “Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”⁷ They may take me to the stake!⁸ they may imprison me!⁹ persecute me!¹⁰ but I endure “all” things!

And he did preserve the gospel of the blessed God in all its purity.¹¹ And he contended for it, maintaining and preserving and keeping it in all its purity, as he had declared he would do—I am set for the “defence”¹² of *the gospel*! “Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the

60 CHRIST THE ONLY CENTRE OF GOD'S WAYS.

Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the GRACE of God."¹³

¹ { 1 Tim. i. 11.
Acts xxvi. 15-18; xx. 24.
1 Cor. i. 17.
² 2 Cor. ii. 17.
³ { Acts xx. 24.
(1 Tim. i. 11.

⁴ Rom. xv. 4-6.
⁵ { 2 Cor. ii. 17.
(2 Tim. i. 13.
⁶ { Rom. ii. 16
(2 Tim. ii. 8.
⁷ 2 Tim. ii. 10.
⁸ Acts xx. 24.

⁹ Acts xvi. 23-31.
¹⁰ { 2 Cor. xi. 23-33.
(2 Tim. iii. 12.
¹¹ 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.
¹² Phil. i. 15-17.
¹³ Acts xx. 24.

CHRIST THE ONLY CENTRE OF GOD'S WAYS.

MAN, as a child of Adam, is not at the centre of the immense system of God's ways.¹ Out of Christ, he does not know the centre; he speculates, without foundation and without end, only to lose himself more and more.² His knowledge of good and evil,³ and the energy of his moral faculties, do but lead him astray the more,⁴ because he employs them on higher questions than those which simply relate to physical things; and they produce in him the need of reconciling apparently inconsistent principles, which cannot be reconciled without Christ.⁵ Moreover the tendency of man is always to make himself, as he is, the centre of everything; and this renders everything false.⁶

¹ Eph. i. 9, 10.

³ Gen. ii. 17; iii. 11, 12.

⁵ Col. i. 19-23.

² Rom. i. 19-23.

⁴ Rom. iii. 10-18.

⁶ 1 Tim. vi. 20.

THE WEDDING GARMENT.

WHEN you are invited to a wedding in this country, you must go in a suitable dress of your own providing. But when you are asked to an Eastern wedding, the question of what you should wear is never allowed to trouble you, because the one in the East who asks you to the wedding, always provides the dress he wishes you to wear ; and for you not to wear the garment which the host had himself provided, would be considered a mark of the greatest disrespect. In the parable referred to, in Matthew xxii., is an account of an Eastern wedding. The king there represents God, and the feast is the feast which God makes for His own Son. It is God who bids to the wedding. We are invited to the gospel feast. Our reader will perhaps say, that to come to such a feast as God provides, he is not fit. But the parable shews that God will make you fit, that He Himself provides the wedding

garment. You cannot possibly make yourself fit for *heaven*.¹ God has a robe that will fit you, and make you ready,² and what is that robe? Christ is that robe.³ What a comfort it is, to be covered with the robe which God Himself has provided. You are thus made fit—eternally fit for God's presence. Nothing but Christ is seen in your dress, and nothing of your own providing. At a wedding in the East, to which the parable refers, it would be an insult to the person who invited you, if you set about preparing another dress to go in. Our robe for heaven is Christ!

“A robe so clean and white
 No fuller's art could shew;
 Surpassing even light,
 And purer far than snow.”

¹ Rom. iii. 10-23.² Luke xv. 22.³ Col. ii. 10; Eph. i. 6.

MAN'S EXCUSES FOR NOT COMING TO THE GREAT SUPPER.

THEY do not openly refuse to come, but think it of far more importance to attend to the farm, the shop, and other

things. You hear a man say, I have my farm to attend to, my family to see to, my cow to milk. If you have a farm it would be wrong not to attend to it. These things are all well in their place, but that is not the point. The point is, that people use good things, mercies received from God's hand, as excuses to forget God, as excuses for not coming to the great supper! A man puts good and necessary things, his family or his farm, the very blessings he receives from God, in the way of his own soul's salvation. Alas, it is so easy to trump up an excuse for refusing salvation. The gospel lays salvation at the door, at the feet of every man, to pick it up, "And they would not come." Not that they could not, but "would not." Their will is shewn to be at work. They are rejecters of salvation!

Luke xiv. 16-20.

MAN'S PURSUITS.

I N mankind there is great variety. There is riotous man,¹ independent man,²

careless man,³ and religious man.⁴ Careless man gives himself up to wealth or pleasure, or whatever he has ; religious man gives himself up to his religion—"I give tithes of all I possess."⁵ Each person in the world is pursuing something, and each thinks the other a fool for not thinking as he does ! One loves wealth and another power ; and so on. You see all shades of characters. Man is diverse in his *ways*, but there is no difference in his 'heart.' "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man."⁶ "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked : who can know it ?"⁷ "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt."⁸ But the point I want to come to is this, that there is a total *contrast* between *Christianity* and the world ; and "They think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you."⁹ "The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not."¹⁰ The Lord Jesus came into the world, and He was totally different from any other man.

“ Never man spake like this man.”¹¹ “ What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him ? ”¹² “ This man hath done nothing amiss.”¹³ “ And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness : God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory ! ”¹⁴

¹ Luke xv. 13.

⁴ Luke x. 31, 32.

⁸ Isa. lvii. 20.

¹² Mark iv. 41.

² Luke xi. 21.

⁵ Luke xviii. 12.

⁹ 1 Peter iv. 4.

¹³ Luke xxiii. 41.

³ Luke xvi. 1.

⁶ Prov. xxvii. 19.

¹⁰ 1 John iii. 1.

¹⁴ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

⁷ Jer. xvii. 9.

¹¹ John vii. 46.

THE PROGRESS OF THE WORLD.

WHEN we see the power of man, all the contrivances of man, where great numbers come together in a great city (such as London), we see his schools, his telephones, his electric lights, his photographs, his phonographs, his telegraphs, his railways ; and we can see how busy he is, and has been, to make himself comfortable in the world.¹ He boasts of his discoveries, nevertheless, as there is no

new thing under the sun,² the principles of things were there already, and man has only been the means of uncovering them, and that very tardily, and he ought to be ashamed he has not discovered them before. We think what power man's inventions have, what power man has, what power nations have. We think of the steam ships, and war ships, ironclads and torpedo vessels, and the progress of the world in it all. The world has never been so dazzling, and warlike, as it is to-day! But what does it all come to? And what is it *all* worth, in comparison with the value of your soul? Now, put the question to yourself, What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?³ The salvation of a soul is of more value than a thousand worlds! But the man of the world says, *I* am so busy, and have so many things to attend to, that I cannot possibly find time for this sort of thing! The man has grasped the world, but he will have to relax his hold, and die and go into the

grave;⁴ and some one else will take his place in the busy scene. And he will soon be *forgotten* as a dead man.⁵ Great possessions in this world have been used, many a time, to induce a man to lose his own soul. But which is best—this life, or life and incorruptibility? “LIFE and INCORRUPTIBILITY”⁶ are to be had, by simply believing God’s message about His Son—“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”⁷

¹ Job xxviii. 12-28.² Eccl. i. 9.³ Mark viii. 36.⁴ Job. xxi. 13.⁵ Eccl. viii. 10.⁶ 2 Tim. i. 10.⁷ John iii. 16.

THE LONELINESS OF DEATH.

THERE is no company in death. Though you be in the midst of all your friends, death is solitary. There is no one with you when you die. Sorrow and suffering isolate and make you feel alone, but when you come to die you are not only tossed upon a sick bed, but have the terrors of

eternity before you,¹ and have to die alone ! We all have to die alone unless the Lord Jesus Christ be with us.² I have seen a stout-hearted man die, but he had the sense that somehow or somewhere he would have to do with God. And one has heard the cry, too, come from a dying man, “Oh, why has not some one warned me of this before?” And now, at such a time, when he is told about the love of God in sending His Son to die for sinners, how willingly he listens !³ and it is not long before he trusts the Saviour.⁴ Death bows many a proud heart, and many a stubborn soul. Ah, why are not men told about the Saviour before they come to their dying bed ? It is cruel to let men pass by us on their way to hell⁵ and not to tell them of Jesus ! But some men are wicked and refuse the Saviour, “So I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done.”⁶

“If we knew when friends around us
Closely press to say ‘good-bye,’

Which among the lips that kiss us,
 First beneath the ground would lie,
 While like rain upon their faces,
 Fall our bitter blinding tears,
 Oh, what words about the Saviour!
 We should whisper in their ears."

¹ Job. xxvii. 20.

³ Job. xxxiii. 22-24.

⁵ Luke xvi. 23-26.

² 2 Cor. v. 8.

⁴ John iii. 16.

⁶ Eccl. viii. 10.

HOW WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD.

THE Lord never speaks "peace" till He is risen from among the dead.¹ "If we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead"² we are justified and "have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."³ If the Lord speaks peace to your soul, what is the meaning of it? It is not a mere passing word, but peace, eternal peace, because it has been made by His having borne our sins on the cross.⁴

Have you known what it is to be lost? and have you learnt that what was due

to you on account of your sins has been borne by Jesus on the cross? If not, do not delay to hasten to God, who beseeches you to be reconciled,⁵ and may He in His grace shew you the vileness of sin, and that Jesus has drunk the bitter cup of wrath, and is now the *risen* Saviour, that you may enter into *peace*.

“ Oh, the peace for ever flowing
 From God's thoughts of His own Son !
 Oh, the peace of simply knowing
 On the cross that all was done ! ”

¹ John xx. 19.² Rom. iv. 24.³ Rom. v. 1.⁴ 1 Pet. ii. 24.⁵ 2 Cor. v. 20.

ABSENT FROM THE BODY,
 “ PRESENT WITH THE LORD.”

THE grave is not the home of the believer—to be absent from the body is to be “ present with the Lord,” “ We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”¹ At death the believer

goes to be with Him, as the Lord said to the dying thief, “To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”² And as Stephen said to the Lord, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”³ And as the apostle Paul said, “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”⁴ “To depart, and be with Christ ; which is far better.”⁵ The words “far better” mean, very much better. We know therefore that it is very much better than being here. And we leave a world of death—a scene of sorrow and trial—for a scene where death can never come. But to depart and be with Christ, blessed as that is, does not express our perfect condition ; our perfect state is when we receive our glorified bodies, which all believers will receive, but this does not take place until the Lord Himself *comes* for His people.⁶ In the meantime it is very much better to depart and be with Him ; though the great hope set before us is for Christ to *come*⁷ *for us* and receive us to Himself—“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with

the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise first : then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we EVER be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”⁸ And again, “ Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”⁹

All believers now belong to the Lord, as scripture declares, “ For whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord : whether we live therefore, or die, WE ARE THE LORD’S.”¹⁰ And thus, every believer who falls asleep goes at once to be with Him.

“ ’Tis sweet to think of those at rest,
Who sleep in Christ the Lord,
Whose spirits now with Him are blest,
According to His word.”

¹ (2 Cor. v. 8.

(1 Thess. iv. 13, 14.

² Luke xxiii. 43.

³ Acts vii. 59, 60.

⁴ Phil. i. 21.

⁵ Phil. i. 23.

⁶ (1 Cor. xv. 51-57.

(1 Thess. iv. 14-18.

⁷ 1 Thess. i. 10.

⁸ 1 Thess. iv. 16-18.

⁹ (Tit. ii. 13.

(Rev. xxii. 17-20.

¹⁰ (Rom. xiv. 8.

(1 Cor. iii. 23.

THE EVANGELIST.

THE evangelist comes on a mission such as the archangel never was entrusted with,¹ and the bearer of a message which might at the same time, in the compass of one brief hour, both overwhelm the mightiest monarch with terror and dismay,² and fill the heart of the child of want and sorrow,³ or the criminal, with the sense of pardon.⁴ He comes to a ruined race as the Ambassador of the King of kings, and His message needs none of the adventitious aids of eloquence or song to add force to the dread warnings of eternal judgment⁵ or the wondrous offers of a free forgiveness⁶ and never ending blessing⁷ which He brings to rebellious creatures whose day of grace still lingers on.⁸ He differs from the ambassadors of earthly potentates in this, that while they are charged with a message from the sovereign whose court they have left, He not only brings the Lord's message, but is

at the same time privileged to deliver it in the Lord's presence. Nay, more, it is only as he has the consciousness of being in His presence⁹ that he can discharge his mission, and declare his message in a manner befitting Him whose servant he is.¹⁰

¹ Eph. iv. 10, 11 ; 2 Cor. v. 13-21.

² Acts xxiv. 25.

³ James ii. 5 ; 1 John ii. 12.

⁴ Luke xxiii. 41-43.

⁵ Mark ix. 44, 46, 48 ; Rev. xx. 15.

⁶ Acts xiii. 38, 39.

⁷ Eph. i. 3-7 ; 1 Thess. iv. 16-18.

⁸ 2 Cor. vi. 2.

⁹ 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18.

¹⁰ 1 Cor. vii. 23.

SOME PEOPLE TOUCHY ABOUT THEIR RELIGION.

SOME men are rather touchy about their religion!¹ and they say, I shall go my way and you may go yours. Why are they so touchy? It is because if they are wrong in their religion the question then is, where are they?² The super-structure of a man, so to say, rests upon his religion, it is, as it were, the being of a man;³ man is as nothing without his religion! So they say, they are "sincere."⁴ But they cannot rest upon mere *sincerity*⁵ because a Jew may be a sincere Jew, a Mahometan a sincere Mahometan, and so

on, and a man may even be very sincere in professing to be a Christian, and yet *not be a Christian at all!*⁶ for some people call themselves Christians and do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ! Now, one reason why a man is so touchy, is because he is not perfectly sure he has the *right* religion.⁷ And he knows, that if he is not doing right in the Lord's sight, he is necessarily wasting both his time and his money.⁸ And therefore he is religiously like Israel of old, he does *not know*, and will *not consider!*⁹—"The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people do not CONSIDER;" and God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."¹¹

¹ John ix. 34-41.⁴ Rom. x. 2-4.⁷ 2 Tim. iii. 6-8.¹⁰ Isa. i. 3.² Gal. i. 6, 7.⁵ Matt. xi. 28.⁸ Prov. xv. 8-10.¹¹ 1 Tim. ii. 4, 5.³ Rom. i. 19-22.⁶ 1 John ii. 22, 23.⁹ 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4.

CAIN AND ABEL.

OUR reader is no doubt, as familiar with the names of Cain and Abel as

household words, you have heard of them from childhood when you were in the nursery? If you go back to Genesis you see that they were the first two men born into the world.¹ And those first two men are the heads of two great lines or streams into which the whole world is divided. We have in Cain and Abel the representatives of the whole world, and you are ranged under one or the other of those two men. You are religiously under one or the other. Cain was a tiller of the ground, and Abel was a keeper of sheep,² and scripture shews us the character of Cain's religion on the one hand, and of Abel's on the other. And we are told that the character of Cain's sacrifice and all his offering to God was really evil,³ because he refused to own his real state in the sight of God, and thus we read—"Unto Cain and to his offering the Lord had not respect."⁴ Even a child can understand that statement. Scripture is all plain,⁵ all distinct throughout, but through the whole range of sacred writ there can hardly be a clearer statement, than the Lord had *not*

respect unto Cain and to his offering. Some people have their own notions about religion, but these two principles stand on the frontispiece on the first page, so to say, of the Bible, and the matter is settled as to which of the two offerings God had respect — “The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering.”⁶ But in the present day the principle of *Abel's* offering is often denied,⁷ and therefore it is needful to see how plain and distinct are the two principles shewn in scripture. Cain was a religious man and went to work in real earnest as though matters were all right between him and God and God had forgotten the past.⁸ It was not all done in a moment without consideration, “In process of time”⁹ he brought of the fruit of the ground, and you might have thought from a natural point of view that Cain's offering was the best of the two, and that it appeared a proper sacrifice of honest labour? But Cain had brought of the fruit of the ground which *God had cursed*,¹⁰ and therefore *all* was rejected! and the consequence was that his countenance fell.

And so God said to Cain, "Why art thou wrath? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin [that is, a sin offering] lieth at the door."¹¹

But Abel *acknowledged* the fall of man, and God accepted his sacrifice, his offering shewing that he owned death to be the wages of sin and in type or figure (as the Jewish sacrifices also)¹² how the question of sin is settled—"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead YET SPEAKETH."¹³ It tells you that you cannot come to God apart from Christ's atonement for sin, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."¹⁴

¹ Gen. iv. 1, 2.

² Gen. iv. 2.

³ Gen. iv. 7.

⁴ Gen. iv. 5.

⁵ Prov. viii. 8, 9.

⁶ Gen. iv. 4.

⁷ { Heb. ix. 22.

⁸ { Lev. xvii. 11.

⁹ Rom. v. 12.

¹⁰ Gen. iv. 3.

¹⁰ Gen. iii. 17-19.

¹¹ Gen. iv. 7.

¹² Heb. x. 3-7.

¹³ Heb. xi. 4.

¹⁴ John i. 29.

THE PROGRESS OF THE "WORLD."

THERE is no denying the progress of the world, but it is progress without

God.¹ All the fine arts, and all the science, is all progress without God.² All the refinement, perfection in a way, is refinement without God.³ That is what the progress of the *world* is! If you go abroad into the world, what do you find people are expecting? They are looking for improvement, for some change for the better in society. Are they looking for "judgment"?⁴ Not at all! They are not thinking of judgment, but of *progress*; and they are saying, "Peace and safety,"⁵ and saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?"⁶ A great many events in the world may occur, and have their own importance in our eyes, but these events do not glorify *God*, for what man calls progress, God calls retrogression.⁷ The world is breaking the bonds that somewhat held it.⁸ God is little thought of, reverence for Him is being given up. Everywhere there is a loosening from His claims;⁹ words are now openly uttered—open hostility to the Christ of God!¹⁰ not against the *profession of Christianity*, or *philanthropy*, or *morality*, or *benevolence*;

they will have christian kindness, love, goodness, but *not* Christ !¹¹

The cross of Christ has closed the history of the world as to improvement and betterment,¹² and this makes this aspect of the death of Christ of such importance.¹³

¹ 1 John v. 19, 20.⁵ 1 Thess. v. 3.¹⁰ Luke xix. 14 ; James ii. 7.² 1 John ii. 15-17.⁶ 2 Pet. iii. 4.¹¹ John vi. 26 ; Luke xix. 14.³ 1 John iv. 5, 6.⁷ 1 Cor. i. 20 ; 1 John ii. 15-17.¹² John xii. 30-32.⁴ 2 Thess. i. 7-10.⁸ 2 Tim. iii. 13.¹³ Gal. vi. 14.⁹ 2 Tim. iii. 1-5.

ALL HAVE SINNED,

AND

COME "SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD."

OUR sins are numbered by thousands and thousands and tens of thousands, and more than we can count,¹ or think of, are registered against us. And numberless sins are registered against us we might not suppose to be sins.² If a man says that he is a sinner, and he really *means* it,³ that man is not far from the kingdom of God. But he must mean *more* than he is a sinner. He must mean, that we have all sinned, "and come short of the glory of God."⁴ Otherwise it is breath wasted to say, as some people do, "We are all sinners."⁵

But the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth every believer in Him from all sin,⁶ from every stain of it. It cleanses us from every sin we have ever committed, from this sin and that sin, from *all* the sins we have ever committed.⁷ And no question as to our sins can hereafter be raised against us ;⁸ and so we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.⁹

All our sins are gone ! and their stain is completely obliterated, sins though red like crimson are made whiter than snow.¹⁰ So the apostle says, “ I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name’s sake.¹¹ And again, “ Believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”¹²

¹ Gen. viii. 21.

² Psa. xix. 12.

³ Luke xviii. 13, 14.

⁴ Rom. iii. 23.

⁵ Rom. i. 32.

⁶ 1 John i. 7.

⁷ 1 John ii. 12 ; Rev. v. 9.

⁸ Col. ii. 10-13 ; Eph. i. 6,7.

⁹ Rom. v. 1.

¹⁰ Isa. i. 18.

¹¹ 1 John ii. 12.

¹² 1 Pet. i. 8.

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE.

IF you die in your sins you cannot then come to Jesus,¹ and you will be judged for them before the great white throne. Well, you say, what am I to do? Why, take refuge in Christ *now*,² that you may

know the forgiveness of your sins now,³ and not have to stand before the great white throne to be judged for them.⁴

The great white throne is to be such a throne as that neither you nor I have yet set eyes on! A throne set to bring out in terrible array all *man's* worthlessness, and the worthlessness of *his* works—"judged according to their works."⁵ The earth and heaven will flee away from the face of Him who sits on the throne,⁶ and the light of God will shrivel up everything which cannot stand the light. The light of the "great white throne" will shrivel all man's *pretensions*!

And the punishment of *every one* who stands for judgment before it is that of being cast into "the lake of fire."⁷ But if, reader, you come to the Saviour now,⁸ if you know your need of Him and come to the Lord Jesus Christ now,⁹ you will *never* stand for judgment before the great white throne.¹⁰

¹ John viii. 21-24.

² 2 Cor. vi. 2; John vi. 37.

³ 1 John ii. 12.

⁴ John v. 24; iii. 35, 36.

⁵ Rev. xx. 11-15.

⁶ Rev. xx. 11; 2 Pet. iii. 7.

⁷ Rev. xx. 11-15.

⁸ 2 Cor. vi. 2.

⁹ John vi. 37.

¹⁰ { John v. 24.

{ Rev. v. 9, 10; xx. 6.

WHAT THE BIBLE DECLARES.

WHAT the Bible declares from Genesis to Revelation is the utter ruin of man,¹ and God's complete remedy.² It shews the *complete* ruin of man on the one hand,³ and the *complete* remedy God has provided on the other.⁴ This is all *plain* in scripture. It is not the Bible that saves people, but the Lord Jesus of whom the Bible speaks⁵—the Lord Jesus Christ is the Person, and the Bible points us to Him.⁶ It is like a finger-post upon the road—the finger-post points you to Him who is “the way.”⁷

And it is wicked to read the Bible as people do to criticise it ;⁸ we should read it to learn⁹ more of “HIM, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth,”¹⁰ “the Son of God.”¹¹

If the Bible leads you to come to the Lord Jesus, you will find great blessing!¹² And if you do come to Him, you will then get “peace with God.”¹³

¹ 2 Cor. v. 14-21.

² { 1 John ii. 12.

{ Col. ii. 8-10.

³ Rom. iii. 10-18.

⁴ Eph. i. 3-6.

⁵ Luke xxiv. 27.

⁶ John v. 39.

⁷ John xiv. 6.

⁸ { 2 Cor. ii. 17.

{ 2 Pet. iii. 16.

⁹ Matt. xi. 29.

¹⁰ John i. 45.

¹¹ John i. 49.

¹² Eph. i. 3.

¹³ Rom. v. 1.

“ZACCHÆUS,
MAKE HASTE, AND COME DOWN.”

ZACCHÆUS was a rich man, and he wanted to see Jesus. He desired to see Jesus, and climbed into a tree to see Him, as He passed by.¹ And when the Lord Jesus came to the tree He looked up, and saw a man who sought to see Him, and said to him: “Make haste, and come down.”²

Did the Lord ask Zacchæus to give up his riches? No, He told him to make haste, and *come down*. Is that what our reader does? Do you make haste to come down to Jesus?³ or are you waiting to do good to other people,⁴ or wanting to give money to some one,⁵ or to make yourself better?⁶ I never do ask a man to come up to Christianity, but I ask him to come *down*. When a man “comes down,” the Lord will lift him up—“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”⁷

¹ Luke xix. 1-10.

² Luke xix. 5.

³ John v. 40.

⁴ 1 Sam. xv. 22.

⁵ Acts viii. 20.

⁶ Luke xix. 10.

⁷ James iv. 10.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

THERE was no one in the whole world deserved the love of God,¹ and yet He “so loved the world,” that He gave His only begotten SON, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.² And this verse declares not only the love of God, but also that He has found a *Saviour*! And when you come to consider it, what more could God have done? He loves those who did *not deserve* His love!³ as scripture says, “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”⁴ Therefore, if a person thinks that when he began to love God, it was not until then that God began to love him, he is all *wrong* in his thoughts of God’s love. “His great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins.”⁵ We were dead in trespasses and sins, that was our *state*! we were *unrighteous*, not righteous;⁶ we were *ungodly*, not godly;⁷ “Christ died for the un-

godly!"⁸ Not knowing the great LOVE of God, is a great *lack in many*. It is a great thing to know the *love* of God!⁹ I doubt not that much of the misery of the lost¹⁰ will be that they will find out hereafter there had been love in the heart of God which they would *not* accept. But believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are now saved,¹¹ and can now say, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us ;"¹² and "We love him, because he first loved us."¹³

¹ Rom. iii. 23.

² John iii. 16.

³ { John iii. 17, 18.
2 Cor. v. 14.

⁴ Rom. v. 8.

Eph. ii. 1-4, 5.

⁶ Rom. v. 7, 8.

⁷ Rom. v. 8-10.

⁸ Rom. v. 6.

⁹ John iii. 16.

¹⁰ { Acts xiii. 40, 41.
Mark ix. 44, 46, 48.

¹¹ { 2 Tim. i. 9.

{ Tit. iii. 5.

¹² 1 John iv. 16.

¹³ 1 John iv. 19.

NO REST IN CREATION !

A MAN will tell you, that he is not coming to hear the gospel, but is going to walk out and worship God in creation. But he is foolish to talk like that, because a man who only knows God in creation can never be a worshipper. Moreover, rest is not there, and he can-

not find it, and the things he sees around him are all in disorder. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."¹ And he finds *death* in creation! The gospel is not the power of God in creation, but the power of God unto "salvation."² I do not turn to creation to learn salvation. God has far more interest in me than in creation, because He sent His Son to die for my sins.³ We are taught the glory, and power, of God in creation. "The heavens declare the glory of God,"⁴ but they do not tell us God's way of *salvation*. "I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."⁵

¹ Rom. viii. 22.² Rom. i. 16.³ 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.⁴ Psa. xix. 1.⁵ Rom. i. 16.

MAN'S KNOWLEDGE.

IT is an evident fact, that however intelligent a man may be, he is not satisfied with his own knowledge or wisdom, "For in much wisdom is much grief."¹ A man may probe down into the

earth, strata after strata, and yet he gets no certain knowledge. Give his intellect the greatest scope he gets no certainty,² and by-and-by nothing to him becomes certain. Yet people talk of man's *intellect!*³ But no man in the world is ever satisfied with knowledge, because the mind of man cannot be satisfied with it, "He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow;"⁴ and "the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing."⁵ And nothing does satisfy but the gospel.⁶ The mind of man has great capacity and receives what is put into it, if God be left out anything can be put into it, man or Satan can put anything into it.⁷ Your mind has no balance if God be left out; and then thirsting and thirsting to the last after knowledge, death seizes you and you have to go *somewhere*,⁸ and where you do not *like* going! and so you vanish out of the world.⁹ We have logical minds, reasoning minds, and therefore it is well to look into the fact, there is no such thing under heaven, as an unbeliever in the Lord Jesus Christ, with a satisfied heart.¹⁰ You never

can be satisfied without believing 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.”¹¹

¹ Eccl. i. 18.² Job. xi. 7.³ Rom. i. 22; 1 Cor. i. 19, 20.⁴ Eccl. i. 18.⁵ Eccl. i. 8.⁶ Rom. v. 1-11.⁷ { 2 Cor. iv. 4.

{ 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.

⁸ Luke xvi. 23, 24.⁹ Eccl. viii. 8-10.¹⁰ { Isa. xlviii. 22.

{ Isa. lvii. 21.

¹¹ John iii. 16.

SCIENTIFIC INFIDELS.

A MAN may know a great deal and be
 very self-complacent, for by itself
 “Knowledge puffeth up”¹ and yet he may
 know nothing as he ought to know, if God
 be left out of his thoughts; for the fear of
 the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,² and
 He has said of man, “I will destroy the
 wisdom of the wise, and will bring to
 nothing the understanding of the prudent.”³
 A man may observe the results of God’s
 power and Godhead in creation and yet
 fail to connect what he is observing with
 divine power and Godhead,⁴ as indeed
 many infidels have failed to do. Again,
 he may refer the things he is studying

to an almighty power, but none of the wonderful works of God, as the manifestations of His power, ever revealed what God is Himself.⁵ We know Him only as revealed in the person of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.⁶

¹ 1 Cor. viii. 1.² Psa. cxi. 10.³ 1 Cor. i. 19-31.⁴ Rom. i. 20-23.⁵ Job. xi. 7-12.⁶ 1 Tim. iii. 16 ; John i. 18.

THE WORLD NOT IMPROVED.

THE world is no nearer God than it was eighteen hundred, or six thousand, years ago. The world is always "the world," and has *not* improved.¹ It changes its outside appearance, but its heart is just the same.² It puts on another dress, but it is not in the least changed at its root, "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."³

Has there been any alteration in the world for the last eighteen hundred years in its relation to God? It has not altered one bit, it is just the same to-day as it was then. In a certain sense it is even more in darkness now than it was when the Lord Jesus Christ was here upon earth,

and it is quite a mistake to suppose that the world is getting better and better.⁴ We are living in a world that is *against* God ! and it is a fact that a man against God is also a man against his *neighbour* ;⁵ and so we see to this day in the world, discontent, and violence, and murder everywhere. And scripture tells us that perilous times will come, *not* good times ! “ In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God ; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof : from such turn away.”⁶

And we have only to look into our *own* hearts to see, that “ by *nature* ”⁷ we were all opposed to God the Father ! and to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory !

¹ 1 John ii. 15-17.

² 2 Tim. iii. 1-13.

³ 1 John v. 19-21.

⁴ { 2 Cor. iv. 4.

{ 1 Cor. i. 19-31.

⁵ Rom. i. 30, 31.

⁶ { 2 Tim. iii. 1-5.

{ 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.

⁷ Eph. ii. 2, 3.

“THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD.”¹

CAN you travel about the world, and look around you, and say that everything is good; all is calm; all is magnificence, beauty, glory, and peace? That everything is grand and magnificent, and draws out the worship of your heart? And man is so good, he is almost a god?² Is that the way you walk about the world? Where do you put all the disagreeable sights? If you begin to sweep away all the disagreeable sights, and things, and bad people; you will become the more fastidious the further you go, and we should have no world left!³

¹ Gal. i. 4.

² { Rom. iii. 10-18.
 { Rom. i. 18-32.

³ { 1 John v. 19.
 { John iii. 16.

GREAT CALAMITIES.

TERRIBLE things happen to men in the government of God.¹ Sometimes we hear of some great convulsion of nature in a distant part of the world, of some great earthquake, and a town or villages

swallowed up. Terrible calamities happen! At times from floods, blizzards, and famines; and sometimes from fires, shipwrecks, and wars; and sometimes from fevers and pestilences. And yet man refuses to learn the *littleness* of himself. Why, even the very works of his own hands he cannot always control, and they often destroy him! Do not calamities, happening as they often do, give weight to the fact that there is no real satisfaction to be found in things down here? In the calamities which happen to man there is God's voice, reminding us of *greater* calamities still to come,² and yet some people say that God is too merciful to punish the wicked!³ "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."⁴

Awake! reader, to the condition of things—"When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them . . . and they shall not escape."⁵

¹ 2 Pet. ii. 4-6.
² { 1 Tim. v. 3.
 2 Pet. iii. 10-12.
 Rev. xxi. 8.

³ { 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.
 Rom. xi. 22.
⁴ Prov. xxix. 1.
⁵ 1 Thess. v. 3.

THE JUSTICE OF GOD.

FOR any one to suppose that God can be *only* love without being light,¹ would be to suppose that God could be inconsistent with Himself. If God were *only* love, where were His holiness,² righteousness,³ justice,⁴ and His faithfulness? “God is faithful.”⁵ If God were *only* love, where were His holiness? “Who is like thee, glorious in holiness?”⁶ If God were *only* love, where were His truth? “A God of truth.”⁷ If God were *only* love, where were His justice? “Doth the Almighty prevent justice?”⁸ What keeps the believer happy is the *justice* of God! that God is not only love, but “holy,” “righteous,” and “just” in all⁹ His ways — “Just and right is he.”¹⁰ And His attributes *necessitate* it.

But the infidel dares to say that *God* is only love.¹¹ Now, not one person in the whole world has peace with God, but that it is based upon the *justice* of God. “That HE might be JUST, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”¹²

¹ John i. 5.⁴ Deut. xxxii. 4.⁷ Deut. xxxii. 4.¹⁰ Deut. xxxii. 4.² Isa. vi. 2, 3.⁵ 1 Cor. i. 9.⁸ Job viii. 3.¹¹ 2 Tim. iii. 8.³ Psal. cxlv. 17.⁶ Ex. xv. 11.⁹ Psal. cxlv. 17.¹² Rom. iii. 26.

PETER'S SHORT SERMON.

THAT is a very short sermon of Peter's recorded for us in Acts x. He does not attempt a learned discourse. He does not teach various doctrines. He does not expound an epistle. He simply describes the Person, the walk and ways of the blessed Lord Jesus, and His death and *resurrection*. He states the facts, and does not attempt to build up a laboured discourse. He merely relates the facts, not omitting the fact of His *resurrection*, as some preachers do now-a-days, and it is very important to see this—and the result is that people were converted !

Here is the sermon, which is not many words, and may be read in less than two minutes : “ Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS ; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ : (he is Lord of all :) that word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all

Judæa, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached ; how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power : who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil ; for God was with him. And we are the witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem ; whom they slew and hanged on a tree : him God RAISED UP the third day, and shewed him openly ; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through HIS name whosoever *believeth* in HIM shall receive remission of sins."

These are the words, remember, by which the first Gentile company were converted to God, and which tell you *plainly* the way to be *saved*—"Whosoever *believeth* in him shall receive remission of sins."

THE LOVE OF GOD.

THE love of God is different to what most people think. It is not like man's love, but the love of God reaches out to the *whole* world. For God so loved "the world."¹ And when did God "so" love the world? When it became good? No, not when it became good, but when it was *bad*² Nor is it said, God so loved the children of Abraham, that He gave His only begotten Son; or the children of the fathers, or the children of Israel. God's love could not be so *limited*. Nor is it said that God so loved the elect. Oh, no! God's love, the Lord Jesus Christ declares, goes out to the world, the *whole ruined family*,³ and people cannot narrow it to *their* notions,⁴ however much they may attempt to do so.⁵ "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.”⁶

“What shall we do to make it known,
What God for *all* mankind has done!”

¹ John iii. 16.

² Rom. iii. 10-19.

³ John iii. 16.

⁴ Isa. lv. 8, 9.

⁵ 2 Cor. ii. 17.

⁶ John iii. 16.

MAN'S SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS.

IF a man sets up to be righteous, God will break that down, as He did Paul.¹ We are easily satisfied with ourselves; a very little righteousness will do. And there is another thing too: man is content with doing his own will, he knows no obedience.² Will that do when God comes in? Christ came not to save the righteous but sinners; therefore, if man is to be saved, he must be treated as a sinner.³ Where was all the boasted righteousness of Saul of Tarsus?⁴ He must be taken up as a poor sinner.

All man's self-righteousness turns out to be pride when it is traced to its root. The “elder brother” in the parable says, What!

will he take in a prodigal?⁵ His pride will not let him come in to be in company with such an one. There are plenty of elder brothers now, and younger ones too.

Vain man would set up to be wise : he is like the wild ass's colt.⁶ What is his wisdom?⁷ He picks up little scraps of knowledge, and calls that wisdom ; it is man's wisdom, spinning thoughts to exalt himself. Man is "lighter than vanity."⁸

But "There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen."⁹ Real wisdom lies there.

¹ Phil. iii. 4-8 ; 1 Tim. i. 15.

² Rom. iii. 10-18.

³ Matt. ix. 13.

⁴ Phil. iii. 9.

⁵ Luke xv. 28-30.

⁶ Job xi. 12.

⁷ 1 Cor. i. 19, 20.

⁸ Psa. lxii. 9.

⁹ Job xxviii. 7.

A MULTITUDE OF SINS.

MAN in the flesh commits thousands and tens of thousands of sins. He sins every day, and every moment. Sins pass through his heart called "evil thoughts,"¹ and all the corruptions of them. There are sins of thought, motive, purpose, action. If you could pass a bird's-eye view

over your life, you might see nothing you have done but what you might somehow be sorry for. Our sins are as numerous as the hills and valleys, as the trees of the forest.² Think of your own sins, the sins of other people in this country, and of the sins of every person in the world. What an awful catalogue!

Have you ever thought what sin is? Who is able to estimate what sin is in the presence of God? Who is capable of saying what sin deserves?³ Who could weigh up the punishment due to a sinner? And how is a man to get rid of his sins? He certainly needs a Saviour!⁴ One who is *worthy* to undertake his cause, the One who is *able* to carry him through.⁵

In full view of the whole history of the world, God sent His Son to be the Saviour —“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.”⁶

It is a merciful deliverance to be delivered from the “wrath to come.”⁷

The great question for you, reader, is—

are you a believer in God's only begotten Son? There is no sin that equals unbelief in the Lord Jesus Christ, and rejecting the Saviour.⁸ We would warn any father or mother who fails to teach their child the only way of salvation.

¹ Matt. xv. 19.² James v. 20.³ Rom. vi. 23.⁴ Matt. i. 21.⁵ Heb. vii. 25.⁶ John iii. 16.⁷ 1 Thess. i. 10.⁸ { Matt. xxi. 37-44.

{ 1 Thess. i. 7-10.

THE WORLD AND ITS TROUBLES.

IF you look at the world you are not satisfied with its condition. You could not be content with all the sorrow and suffering you see around.¹ If you look at Europe, it presents the same unsatisfactory appearance; and if you come nearer home, you are surrounded equally with sorrow and suffering. And, if *you* are not satisfied with it all, and the nations are not satisfied, how can you imagine that God is? Things as they are are not satisfactory to God;² it is all a scene of disorder and ruin before Him.³ God

looks down upon a scene of sin, evil, and corruption, and there is not a bright spot in it.⁴ The world is full of tears and death,⁵ and sorrow and crying, and pain,⁶ and no one can claim exemption, from the palace to the cot, because sin is in the world.

Now, if you look at Revelation xxi. 8, you see what characterises the world *morally*—"The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and liars." When God sums up the *world's character* He begins with the cowards and ends with the liars!

It is a system,⁷ the fruit of man's departure from God ;⁸ and it is a mercy that death has come into such a scene, otherwise it would have been the promulgation of eternal sin and misery for us all.⁹ Now, what is the remedy for all this?¹⁰ Who can sympathise with and relieve the sorrows of a poor sinner, when, perhaps, not a single eye or heart cares for such?¹¹ There is only ONE¹² who can do it, and that is JESUS CHRIST THE LORD.¹³

“ Vain the stone, the watch, the seal,
 Christ hath burst the gates of hell,
 Death in vain forbids Him rise :
 Christ hath open'd paradise.”

¹ Rom. viii. 22. ⁵ Rom. vi. 23. ⁹ Rom. iii. 23. ¹¹ Matt. xi. 28.
² 1 Cor. i. 19, 20. ⁶ Rev. xxi. 4. ⁹ Gen. iii. 22-24. ¹² { 1 Tim. ii. 5.
³ Rom. iii. 10-18. ⁷ { 1 John ii. 15. ¹⁰ { 1 Cor. i. 21. { Acts iv. 12.
⁴ 1 John v. 19-21. { Rom. i. 29-32. { John iii. 16. ¹³ John vi. 37.

DEATH NOT CERTAIN

TO BELIEVERS IN THE LORD JESUS.

SOME people say that one thing is certain, and that is we shall *all* die. But any one who submits to the word of God knows there is no certainty that believers in the Lord Jesus will die at all. It is *not* true that the Christian must necessarily die!¹ And if you search the New Testament you find it very seldom speaks of Christians dying, and the early Christians were taught not to look for death, but to wait for the Lord coming from heaven for them.² And when He comes, all believers who are alive upon the earth will not have to die,³ but will be changed in a moment, and be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, to be for ever

with Him ⁴ Scripture expressly declares, "We shall not *all* sleep."⁵ Therefore, death is *not* certain after all! and yet some people dare to say that death is certain.

Do not suppose, dear reader, if you are a believer in Jesus,⁶ that you must of necessity die. For the Christian to have to die should be reckoned as an *uncertainty*. Instead of looking for death, you should be "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body,"⁷ you should be waiting for the Lord's coming!⁸ for our hope is to meet Him in the air, and to be for ever with Him: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."⁹

"Comfort through all this vale of tears
In blest profusion flows,

And glory of unnumber'd years
Eternity bestows."

¹ 1 Thess. iv. 17. ⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 51; 1 Thess. iv. 17. ⁷ Rom. viii. 23; 2 Cor. v. 4, 5.
² 1 Thess. i. 10. ⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 51; 1 Thess. iv. 17. ⁶ 1 Thess. i. 10; Phil. iii. 20, 21.
³ 1 Thess. iv. 17. ⁸ John xiv. 1-3. ⁹ 1 Thess. iv. 16-18.

THE LAW—WHO KEEPS IT?

I NEVER yet met a man who said that he kept the ten commandments! No honest person will say that he keeps the law. But some people say that they *ought* to keep it, but the question is not whether they ought to, but whether they do keep it? It is one thing to be told to "love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might,"¹ and quite another thing to ask yourself the question whether you have done it. You very well know it has not been the case! The law came and told man what he ought to be, and found him the opposite of what he *ought* to be. The judgment of sin was according to the measure given, and that measure was the law. By the law is the knowledge of sin,² not of *righteousness*.

¹ Deut. vi. 5.

² Rom. iii. 20-26.

A RANSOM.

WHEN a man takes his place, his proper place as a lost sinner,¹ he then finds that God has found a ransom.² It is not you who have to find it, but God finds it³—"I" have found a ransom.⁴ If God did not find it, you could not possibly do so. Do you think to find a ransom in your tears? or in your good works? or in your prayers? or in long days and nights of fasting for sin? or in some long pilgrimage? or in building a vast cathedral? You cannot find it in any one of these things,⁵ nor in all of them put together.⁶ And "they that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him."⁷ "Beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee."⁸ The ransom has already been found by God,⁹ and One of *infinite* price!¹⁰ and One which fully meets God's demands,¹¹ and completely delivers

every believer “from going down to the pit”¹²—“I have found a ransom.”¹³ And believers know the ransom God has found¹⁴—“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all.”¹⁵ “And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”¹⁶

“Not the labour of our hands,
 Could fulfil the law’s demands;
 Could our zeal no respite know,
 Could our tears for ever flow,
 Nought for sin could e’er atone—
 But Thy blood, and Thine alone!”

¹ Acts xvi. 29-31.

² Job xxxiii. 22-24.

³ John i. 29.

⁴ Job xxxiii. 21.

⁵ Job xxxvi. 18, 19.

⁶ { Jer. xvii. 5, 7.

{ Heb. ix. 22-28.

⁷ { Psa. xlix. 6, 7.

{ Rom. iii. 23.

⁸ Job xxxvi. 18.

⁹ 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

¹⁰ 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

¹¹ Isa. liii. 5.

¹² Job xxxiii. 24.

¹³ { Job xxxiii. 24.

{ 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

¹⁴ { 1 John iv. 9, 10.

{ Eph. i. 6, 7.

¹⁵ { 1 Tim. ii. 4-6.

{ Heb. vii. 25.

¹⁶ 1 John i. 7.

DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

CHRISTIANITY is really death and resurrection!¹ We have died with Christ,² and that is true of us as Christians. We have died with Christ, we are dead

with Him, that is absolute. It is really true of every Christian—we are dead and *risen* with Christ.³ There is no deliverance otherwise. There is no other way for us, there is no life for us but through death. Christian liberty is, that I am in the life⁴ of the One who died. But every Christian does not know this! It is true, however, of every believer, and faith lays hold of it. Scripture insists on our being dead with Christ, not in Him, but “dead with Christ,”⁵ dead and risen with Him. *Risen* with Him,⁶ that is absolute, too!⁷ You cannot put Christ under ordinances! and therefore you cannot put the Christian. I am going through the world in the life of Christ, there is no making the best of both worlds.⁸

“For me, Lord Jesus, Thou hast died,
 And I have died with Thee;
 Thou’rt risen : my bands are all untied;
 And now Thou liv’st in me.
 The Father’s face of radiant grace
 Shines now in light on me.”

¹ { Rom. vi. 8–11.
 { 1 Cor. xv. 17.
² 2 Col. ii. 20.

³ Col. iii. 1.
⁴ Col. iii. 3.
⁵ Col. ii. 20.
⁶ Col. iii. 1.

⁷ Eph. ii. 1–6.
⁸ { 1 John v. 10.
 { Rom. xii. 2.

THE REASON I'M SURE I AM SAVED.

TO the question how I could be sure that I am saved for ever, I would reply, it is simply because "I believe God."¹

That is to say—I believe every word that He has spoken, both as regards my own ruin and death by nature, as well as the truth concerning "the gospel of the glory of Christ."²

Through faith I understand³ that Christ Jesus came into the world to seek, no less than to save,⁴ just such as I am ; and to prove that I understand it, I do not slight God's offer of eternal life through Christ, but look *outside myself* to Him for every good thing, and find that in Christ God has met all my need.

Now, just as a hungry man is certain as to when his wants are satisfied, so do I know beyond a doubt, on the authority of the word of God, who "cannot lie,"⁵ that Christ Jesus settled the entire question of my guilt at the time when He, in

obedience to the Father's commandment," "appeared to put away sin" (its root, branch, fruit, and all), "by the sacrifice of himself."⁷

Nor did He die in vain ! for now I can well afford to have nothing, to be nothing, to know nothing, to be careful for nothing apart from Christ up there, alive again from the dead and sitting in all the calmness of conscious victory over all His and our foes, at the right hand of the Majesty on high. And *now*, in the joy and power of such resurrection,⁸ the single object of my existence is to testify by a holy, holy life that Christ is formed in my heart not only "the hope of glory,"⁹ but the absolute, *unalterable* certainty of everlasting acceptance with God.¹⁰

¹ Acts xxvii. 25.² 2 Cor. iv. 4.³ Heb. xi. 2.⁴ Luke xix. 10.

Tit. i. 2.

John x. 18.

Heb. ix. 26.

⁵ Col. i. 27.⁶ Col. i. 27.⁷ Eph. i. 6 ; Col. ii. 10.

THE SILVER CORD, OR THE GOLDEN BOWL.

OUR life depends upon God in whose hands is the breath of our mouth !¹

and only a thin veil hangs between us and eternity. Children die, and men and women die, sometimes in a moment, and all at once eternity's curtain is drawn aside. But it is a stupendous fact, that notwithstanding the *uncertainty* of life, most people are so occupied with business—so absorbed by money-making or various cares—that they are unconscious they are standing upon the brink of eternity! It needs but a snap of the silver cord²—a little break of the golden bowl³—just the putting out of the candle⁴—and man is launched into *eternity*! We are but dying men amongst dying people, and those of us who know the Lord Jesus Christ ought not to be afraid of preaching the gospel.⁵ “Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken!”⁶

“Time is short and swiftly flying,
 Let us then be real;
 Man on every side is dying,
 Fixed for woe or weal.”

¹ Isa. ii. 22.

² Eccl. xii. 6.

³ Eccl. xii. 6, 7.

⁴ Job xxi. 17.

⁵ 2 Tim. iv. 2-4.

⁶ Eccl. xii. 1-7.

GOD TAKES ACCOUNT OF INDIVIDUALS.

SOME men like *generalising*. They want everything done for general good, the general benefit of mankind, the elevation of man, the rights of man asserted.² For everything done for the general education and exaltation of the whole race.³ But that is socialism—never mind the individual. But God works in the opposite way, and blesses individuals—“He” that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life,⁴ “He” that believeth on Him is not condemned,⁵ “Whosoever” believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins,⁶ “Whosoever” believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God,⁷ “Whosoever” believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.⁸ Where then are men’s *general* rights? With some men, now-a-days, everything must be done for the *masses*! But God takes note of *individuals*—For “who-soever” shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.¹⁰ And, therefore, the gospel has to be preached to every one,¹¹

for the blessing of each individual who accepts it¹²—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.¹³

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|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----|------------------|-------------------------------|
| ¹ { 1 John iv. 5, 6. | ⁴ John iii. 36. | " { | James iv. 4. | ¹⁰ Rom. x. 13. |
| ² { 1 John ii. 14-17. | ⁵ John iii. 18. | | Rom. iii. 10-18. | ¹¹ { Mark xvi. 15. |
| 1 John v. 19. | ⁶ Acts x. 43. | | 2 Tim. iii. 1-5. | 1 Tim. ii. 4. |
| James iv. 4. | 1 John v. 1. | | John xvii. 9. | ¹² 2 Cor. ii. 16. |
| ³ John xvii. 9. | ⁷ Rom. x. 11. | | 1 John v. 19. | ¹³ John iii. 16. |

THE AUTHORITY OF THE WORD OF GOD.

I MAY be led to recognise the authority of the word of God, through the effect it has had upon me ; but, evidently, it is not this effect which gives it its authority. The authority lies in the word itself, independently of the effect produced by it ; or of the opinion man forms of it. It possesses intrinsic authority. The judgment of the last day will prove it, “The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”¹ It could not be otherwise with the word of God ; but it is important clearly to establish this principle.

The word of God can be of no profit, if

it be not received ; nevertheless it retains its full authority, because it is the word of God. Unless the existence of any divine communication be denied, this principle cannot be questioned. He who denies all such communication is an unbeliever. So that the point is not to reason upon what the church possesses in the scriptures ; but to convince an unbeliever. Moreover, this unbelief does not destroy the authority of the word ; for the rebellion of man cannot destroy the authority of God. The day of probation is granted to man : the day of judgment will make good the authority of God. The word itself establishes this principle, “ And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear : for they are most rebellious.”² “ He that believeth . . . hath the witness in himself.”³ “ He that believeth not God hath made him a liar : ”⁴ here is the guilt of him who believes not. The authority then, of testimony from God is independent of the judgment man may pronounce upon it. The testimony will itself judge man.

¹ John xii. 48.² Ezr. ii. 7.³ 1 John v. 10.⁴ 1 John v. 10.

“A MULTITUDE” OF SINS.

CAN you recollect twelve sins you committed before you were fourteen years of age? You cannot remember half the number of the sins you committed when you were young. How many have you committed during your lifetime? You have forgotten the most of them! Could you count all the naughty things you have done; naughty things to-day, yesterday, and the day before, and so on? You do not know a quarter of the number of your sins, nor a fiftieth part of them. There are sins of thought—sins of intention—sins of deed. How then are you going to meet the account against you of *all* your sins—secret sins, sins by day, sins by night, sins of the hour, day, month and year? You do not know the number, and have but little appreciation of the magnitude of them. It is God alone who knows the number, and the wickedness of them. So it says, “Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall

hide a multitude of sins."¹ You perhaps think that you know a great many sins of your past life, but God knows thousands and thousands more, He knows "a multitude" of them. And if they are not *all* forgiven you, they must sink you down into everlasting ruin. The catalogue of them is a dark one, and terribly black in contrast with the whiteness of the "great white throne."² It is only *now*,³ and through Christ alone,⁴ that you get the forgiveness of your sins.⁵ If you do not accept Him as your Saviour, you will die in them. "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."⁶

¹ James v. 20.² Rev. xx. 11.³ 2 Cor. vi. 2.⁴ Acts iv. 12.⁵ 1 John ii. 12.⁶ John viii. 24.

NO "MERCY" IN THE LAW.

SOME people are going back to the ancient law—Thou shalt do this, and thou shalt not do that,¹ and so on ; but the law knows no mercy. There is no *mercy* in the law!² You acknowledge the law, that the man who does these things

shall live by them,³ but there is no mercy. If a man is convicted as a breaker of the law he has no chance at all, and why? for the simple reason that men are judged “according to their works,”⁴ as David says — “If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?”⁵ But “the law is good, if a man use it lawfully,”⁶ it is good for convicting him of sin. But if you want *mercy*, you must appeal to the Crown.⁷ The law condemns everything contrary to sound doctrine, everything contrary to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God!⁸

“As I hearkened to Thy law,
I was greatly filled with awe,
Till Thy gospel brought to me,
Life and immortality.”

¹ ENO. XX. 1-17.

² James ii. 10.

³ { Rom. vi. 5.
Gal. iii. 10-13.

⁴ Rev. XX. 12-15.

⁵ Psa. CXXX. 3, 4.

⁶ 1 Tim. i. 8.

⁷ Rom. ix. 15, 16.

⁸ Rom. vi. 12, 13.

⁹ 1 Tim. i. 9-11.

¹⁰ 2 Cor. iv. 6.

WHY THE LORD JESUS WENT DOWN INTO DEATH.

MAN had gone into death, and Satan had his power of it. But when the

Lord Jesus Christ came and went down into death, He did so that He might destroy him that had the power of it.¹ The Lord Jesus went down into the enemy's domain, into the prison-house, and drew back the bolts ; He went down into the dungeon, and brake the shackles ; He went down into death—"That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."² Satan lost his power and could not hold Him, and He arose from the dead conqueror of our mighty foes!³ All the waves and billows went over Him ;⁴ that He might "deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."⁵ Now, some people say, that you should cling to the *cross*, but the Lord Jesus is not *now* on the cross ;⁶ nor is He in the grave, "He is not here : for he is risen, as he said" ;⁷ and the answer to such as seek Him upon the cross, or in the grave, is, "Why seek ye the living among the dead ? He is not here, but is risen : remember how he spake unto you."⁸ "The Lord is risen indeed"!⁹ and is now in *heaven* at

God's right hand, "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."¹⁰ "Wherefore HE is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by HIM, seeing HE ever liveth to make intercession for them."¹¹

"Death and the curse were in our cup—

O Christ, 'twas full for Thee!

But Thou hast drained the last dark drop,

'Tis empty now for me.

That bitter cup—love drank it up;

Left but the love for me."

¹ Heb. ii. 14.

² Psa. xlii. 7.

³ Matt. xxviii. 6.

¹⁰ Eph. i. 20, 21.

² Heb. ii. 14.

⁵ Heb. ii. 15.

⁴ Luke xxiv. 5, 6.

¹¹ Heb. vii. 25.

³ Col. ii. 12-15.

⁶ Eph. i. 17, 20, 21.

⁹ Luke xxiv. 34.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

AS regards the question of praying for the Holy Spirit, we doubt not that many pray for that which they already possess. Scripture teaches us, in manifold places, that all believers do actually possess the Holy Spirit;¹ and there is not much intelligence in praying for what one has. The Christian may long to know

more of the Spirit's unhindered energy and gracious ministry²—more of His holy fellowship³—more of His blessed unfoldings of Christ to the heart.⁴ He may earnestly desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit,⁵ so that flesh may be as though it did not exist.⁶ All this we can fully understand and enter into. But the idea of praying for the Spirit, as if one had Him not, is a simple giving up of our place as Christians, “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”⁷ But if a man pray for the Spirit, it is evident that he does not consider himself possessed thereof, or, in other words, he considers himself none of Christ's.

Oh, that the Holy Spirit might lead all true Christians to know the things that are freely given to them of God.⁸

“What moved Thee to impart
 Thy Spirit from above,
 Therewith to fill our heart
 With heavenly peace and love?
 ’Twas love, unbounded love to us,
 Moved Thee to give Thy Spirit thus.”

¹ Eph. i. 3.
² Eph. iv. 30.

³ Phil. ii. 1.
⁴ John xvi. 14, 15.

⁵ Eph. v. 18.
⁶ Rom. viii. 9.

⁷ Rom. viii. 9.
⁸ 1 Cor. ii. 12.

THE GOSPEL IN THE VILLAGES.

THERE are, in some of the villages, a few of the Lord's beloved ones in utter spiritual destitution, longing for something, which, alas! is not within their reach. They do not know the things which ~~are~~ freely given to them of God. They have not peace with God. They do not even know the full forgiveness of sins¹ and eternal life.

I have been to some villages, and I can only declare to you that what has come under my notice, even in my very limited sphere of observation, is enough to make the heart bleed. Thousands of souls sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. Not a sound of the gospel; not a breath of spiritual life; not a leaf stirring; here and there, perhaps, some poor famished sheep, without pasture or care, destitute and desolate.

While contemplating this heart-breaking condition of things, I have asked myself,

again and again, the question, Can nothing be done to meet it? And now I must relieve my heart by seeking to press the question upon you. I would ask you, dearly beloved in the Lord, are we all discharging our holy responsibility to the villages of Great Britain and Ireland? The Lord, in His infinite goodness, has given us His gospel, in all its blessed fulness—given it to us, with a clearness unknown since the days of the apostles. I say not this in a boastful spirit, for what have we that we have not received? But then, what are we doing with this glorious gospel, and with all the heavenly truth as to the church of God, the body of Christ, its position, its portion, and its prospect? Are we doing what we ought and what we might to make it known? Are we seeking to share our precious things with others? Are we making loving efforts to carry the knowledge of them into the dark and destitute villages around us? I long to have a full, clear, heavenly gospel preached in every village throughout England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland—

preached in the streets, if possible, or preached in the cottages by the living voice and the silent tract.

“ In the Lord believing,
We have peace with God,
Resting for salvation
In His precious blood.”

¹ 1 John ii. 12.

DARKNESS.

THERE are many parts of the world where the gospel has not reached, where the glad tidings have not reached,¹ where darkness broods, where darkness is settled upon the land,² where the power of Satan reigns.³ And “the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.”⁴ What a state of darkness are people in who know not God!⁵ and that is the darkness the *world* is in.⁶ Man by nature loves darkness,⁷ the world loves⁸ it, and Satan loves it!⁹

A man of the world may even be a man of research, a man of science and learning, and yet be in darkness, and having his

“mind blinded,”¹⁰ and be following the gross ignorance of his nature! Blackness and darkness are in his heart, because he is shutting his eyes to the truth of what he himself is by nature,¹¹ and of his own need of the Saviour;¹² his past life dark, his present dark, and his future darker still! for unless he turns to the Lord Jesus Christ his end will be “outer darkness.”¹³

But no believer in the Lord Jesus, however feeble, is now in darkness—“Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.”¹⁴ “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”¹⁵

Every believer in Christ does “not abide in darkness;”¹⁶ and every one who does not believe in Him, does so abide.¹⁷

“Clouds on clouds our way may darken,
But His rainbow shines above;
And in storms and winds we hearken
To His still small voice of love.”

¹ Mark xvi. 15.

² Psa. lxxxii. 5.

³ 1 John v. 19.

⁴ Psa. lxxiv. 20.

⁵ Eph. ii. 12.

⁶ 1 John v. 19; John xvii. 25.

⁷ John iii. 19, 20.

⁸ { John iii. 19, 20.

⁹ { 1 John v. 19.

¹⁰ Eph. vi. 11, 12.

¹¹ 2 Cor. iv. 4.

¹² Eph. ii. 3.

¹³ Rom. iii. 23.

¹⁴ Matt. xxv. 30.

¹⁵ 1 Thess. v. 5; Col. i. 13.

¹⁶ Eph. v. 11.

¹⁷ John xii. 46; 1 Pet. ii. 9.

¹⁸ John viii. 12; xii. 46.

THE BIBLE : NO BOOK LIKE IT.

THERE is nothing like scripture. Take, for instance, any human writing of the same date as the Bible ; if you could lay your hand on some volume written three thousand years ago, what would you find ? A curious relic of antiquity, something to be placed in the British Museum, side by side with an Egyptian mummy, having no application whatever to us or to our time, a musty document, a piece of obsolete writing, practically useless to us, referring only to a state of society and to a condition of things long since passed away and buried in oblivion.

The Bible, on the contrary, is the book for to-day. It is God's own book, His perfect revelation. It is His own very voice speaking to each one of us. It is a book for every age, for every clime, for every class, for every condition, high and low, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, old and young. It speaks in a language so simple that a child can under-

stand it ; and yet so profound that the most gigantic intellect cannot exhaust it. Moreover, it speaks right home to the heart ; it touches the deepest springs of our moral being ; it goes down to the hidden roots of thought and feeling in the soul ; it judges us 'thoroughly. In a word, it is, as the inspired apostle tells us, "Quick and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."¹

And then mark the marvellous comprehensiveness of its range. It deals as accurately and forcibly with the habits and customs, the manners and maxims of the nineteenth century of the christian era as with those of the very earliest ages of human existence. It displays a perfect acquaintance with man, in every stage of his history. The London of to-day and the Tyre of three thousand years ago are mirrored, with like precision and faithfulness, on the sacred page. Human life, in every stage of its development, is por-

trayed by a master hand in that wonderful volume which our God has graciously penned for our learning.²

¹ Heb. iv. 12.

² 2 Tim. iii. 15-17.

THE FUNERAL CARRIAGE.

HOW often we see the funeral carriage passing along the streets, taking man to what is called "his long home."¹ It is not a sight that fills one's heart with gladness, but is one that damps people's pleasure, and sends a sort of thrill through some, and makes them miserable, and to hang down their heads—because *death* is there, and they have to meet it!

But it is a wholesome lesson to be reminded of death—"It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart."²

And, my reader, the funeral carriage may some day come and call for you! But God has no pleasure in man's death—

“I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God ;”³ “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.”⁴

¹ Eccles. xii. 5.² Eccles. vii. 2.³ Ezek. xviii. 32.⁴ John iii. 16.

GOD OUR HIDING-PLACE.

IT is a remarkable fact, that so long as the sinner is at enmity with God, he is at peace with himself; at peace with the world; at peace with the devil; but the moment he is brought into full peace with God, he is at war with himself, with the world, and with the devil. Hence, no sooner do I know God as my Justifier than I have to cope with a host of spiritual enemies, within and around. This makes me conscious of another need; I want a hiding-place into which I may retreat at all times, nay, rather out of which I may never venture to shew myself. Now, God

is this hiding-place. "Thou art my hiding-place ; thou shalt preserve me from trouble ; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance."¹ "If God be for us, who can be against us ?"²

These are some of the "songs of deliverance" with which a Saviour-God doth compass about His justified and hidden ones. Would that we were more filled with them ! Alas ! that we should be more characterised by murmurings and complainings, than by songs of triumph. Surely, if we would but ponder our mercies and blessings more deeply, our songs would be more abundant. Who have such reason to be glad as those who are justified by, and perfectly hidden in, God ?

"In God's own love abiding,
No change my heart shall fear,
And safe in such confiding,
For nothing changes here."

¹ Psa. xxxii. 7.

² Rom. vii. 31.

SETTLED PEACE.

WHY is it so many complain of a lack of settled peace? Because they have not come to the end of *self* and the *world*, and made Christ their *all*.¹ Depend upon it, reader, this is the secret of the matter. Can Christ not give settled peace?² To be sure He can, if He is trusted. But He is not trusted, so long as something else, no matter what, is added to Him. If a man has not settled peace, it is because he has not accepted Christ alone as his peace, for assuredly Christ is a settled peace to all who *really* have Him. It is easy to *profess* to have Him, and, at the same time, to have fifty things as well. How can there be settled peace when this is the case? Impossible. If, in the most hidden corner of the heart, we are adding the weight of a feather to Christ, we must get rid of that feather, before we can taste of true gospel peace. We must turn the scale upside down, and empty out the very dust of our own

righteousness, and put Christ and Christ alone in the place of all. Then shall we have peace, settled peace, profound peace, eternal peace ; a peace which nothing can ever disturb.

“ 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.”

¹ Eph. ii. 14.

² John xiv. 27.

THE BELIEVER'S ETERNAL SAFETY.

SOME Christians are troubled as to whether they will hold on to salvation.¹ But if the believer could hold on to it, it comes to this, that you must be in a certain condition to do so. How can you hold on to salvation when you are asleep ? or, if you should lose your presence of mind ? or, if you lose your reason ? or, how can you do so, if you are dying ? The dying thief hearing the words of the Lord Jesus, “ To-day shalt

thou be with me in paradise,"² would not have troubled himself as to whether he would hold on to salvation. People talk of holding on because they neither see the full plan of,³ nor full scope of,⁴ the gospel. They think that the responsibility of the sheep is to hold on to the Shepherd's shoulders,⁵ but the sheep is entirely in the Shepherd's care,⁶ and has no hands, as the parable shews us,⁷ wherewith to hold on. Our safety depends upon the good Shepherd, and upon His word, "They shall never perish."⁸ And, as one of the Lord's sheep, you are as much in acceptance when you are awake, as when you are asleep—"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee ;"⁹ "Even to your old age I am he ; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you."¹⁰ And this is true of even the youngest, and feeblest, of His sheep.¹¹

"How safe are we within His keeping !
Safe awake, and safe when sleeping."

¹ Luke xxiv. 38-40.

² Luke xxiii. 43.

³ John iii. 16.

⁴ Col. ii. 10.

⁵ Luke xv. 5, 6.

⁶ Luke xv. 5, 6.

⁷ Luke xv. 3-6.

⁸ John x. 27-30.

⁹ Heb. xiii. 5, 6.

¹⁰ Isa. xlv. 4.

¹¹ Matt. xviii. 14.

MAN BEFORE THE FALL.

MAN is a wonderful being, and you see him especially so if you look at him in the garden of Eden before the fall. God formed him out of the dust of the ground, “and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.”¹ God made man in His own image, and he was outwardly beautiful and inwardly innocent. God made him as lord over the creation, and gave him dominion over all the animals and so forth, and withheld nothing from him which could make him comfortable and happy in the world. In the garden was everything which could delight his heart. He was placed on his trial under the most favourable circumstances, and you find that nothing was withheld which could make him happy, he had everything given him as man, and he was there in innocence, and sin was unknown. It must have been a

wonderful world when *sin* was unknown !
 “ And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.”²

¹ Gen. ii. 7.

² Gen. i. 31.

GOD'S WAY OF SALVATION.

IF Adam, happy in innocence, did not keep ONE commandment, but fell, would it not be a fearful thing for us, fallen in sin, and surrounded by innumerable temptations as we are, to have our eternal salvation to depend on our perfect obedience even to one command ? No ! my friends, redemption through the blood of Christ is a very different thing from our trying to keep the commandments. We must have redemption FIRST through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins ;¹ and obedience will come after. Not the obedience of law-keeping FOR salvation. That is impossible when you have got it FIRST. Oh ! no, it is what Christ has done for me that has saved me ; I should be glad to hear even one out of

ten give the glory to Christ. Just think how some people try to keep the law!² Bright, intelligent men, but as ignorant of God's way of saving sinners as any Jew or Mahometan on the face of the earth. Is not this an instance of the truth of that statement of the word of God: "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"³

"Working will not save me;
Purest deeds that I can do,
Holiest thoughts and feelings too,
Cannot form my soul anew."

¹ Eph. i. 7.

² Gal. iii. 10-13; James ii. 10.

³ 1 Cor. i. 20, 21.

MAN'S LITTLE GREATNESS.

IT does not fall to the lot of many men to have their names embalmed in the pages of history. It may perhaps fall to the lot of some great warriors, and statesmen; but how very few they are! Even if a man be thought much of to-day, it often happens that he is thought but little of to-morrow.¹ And after all, the greatest man in the world can hold but a corner.

The life of man, too, is such a little span that when he comes to his dying bed, and looks back at the past, it seems but a few hours.² All his pleasures appear but a thimble full ; and his joys he might put on his little finger nail !

“The man may once have worn a crown ;
But death brings all his glory down :
And stops the current of his heart,
When he presents his fatal dart.”

¹ Eccl. viii. 10.

² Psa. xc. 5-10.

THE VOICE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

NEVER was there more urgent need of keeping close to that one grand and paramount authority—*the voice of holy scripture*. No human language can possibly set forth, in suited terms, the value of the full, clear, competent, because divine, authority of the word of God. “It is written” is a sentence which every christian man, woman, and child should seek to have engraven on the very tablets of the heart. We can move on with a firm step and a peaceful mind, when we have that high authority for our position and our practice.

No doubt, there must be the power of the Holy Ghost to give energy to the new man in treading the path indicated by the written word. Our blessed Lord and Master, our divine Exemplar, did all His works by the power of the eternal Spirit ; He was ever the obedient and the dependent Man.

This is our model. May we study it profoundly ! May we have grace to bow down, *in all things*, to the supreme authority of holy scripture !* We are met on all hands with the conflicting opinions of men, the theories, the notions, the schemes, and the systems of the human mind. Some would send you to the left and some to the right ; some give you partial and misapplied truth ; others positive and palpable error. Others again will furnish you with ingenious theories which they have worked out by their own mental efforts ; worked out, as they doubtless believe, from scripture ; but still it is not scripture but merely the deduction or conclusion of a human mind drawn from scripture.

* Acts xx. 32.

THE EVERLASTING SECURITY OF CHRIST'S SHEEP.

IT is not because we do this or that,
but because He liveth, we shall live
also.¹

Before one of Christ's sheep can perish, one must be found more mighty than God. For, says Jesus, "I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all ; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."²

Oh ! my fellow-Christian, reject not these precious words of life. Thou surely needest them, or they would not be given thee. Say not, if this be true, then, I may sin as I like. Nay, no true believer can say so. He cannot like sin. Sin cannot be the believer's object. It was so with Judas ; he sought opportunity to betray Christ. Not so with Peter, yet he fell. Oh, beware ! Watch and pray, lest thou enter into temptation. Still, child of God,

for thy comfort, remember—"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, *we* have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous : and he is the propitiation for our sins."³

"Safe in Christ ! safe in Christ !
 He's our glory ever :
 None can pluck us from His hand,
 We shall perish never."

¹ John xiv. 19.² John x. 28, 29.³ 1 John ii. 1, 2.

THE BELIEVER'S HOPE.

IN regard to the believer's hope, it is not as people say, the "holding the doctrine of the second advent," but "waiting for God's Son from heaven."¹ This is not a dead, dry doctrine. If we are really waiting for God's Son from heaven we shall be sitting loose to the world.

I *have* Christ for my soul's need, and I am only waiting for God's Son from heaven, for Christ to come from heaven, to take His church unto Himself,² that where He

is we may be also,³ and that may be this night. I am not looking for Antichrist, for signs, for movements amongst the nations, or for the Jews' return to Palestine, but for this one holy, happy thing—I am waiting for God's Son from heaven. Oh, do not let us be inconsistent, do not let us contradict that, seeking to grasp Christ with one hand, and hold fast the world with the other. If we know our position "within the veil"⁴ we must know our position "outside the camp,"⁵ reproached, it may be, scorned, hated, suspected, of all who are not outside, but in the joy of fellowship with Him. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory.⁶

" Christ is coming, coming for us ;
 Soon we'll hear His voice on high ;
 Dead and living, rising, changing,
 In the twinkling of an eye."

¹ 1 Thess. i. 10.

² 1 Thess. iv. 16-18.

³ John xiv. 3.

⁴ Heb. x. 19, 20.

⁵ Heb. xiii. 13.

⁶ Col. iii. 4.