

WORDS OF SALVATION

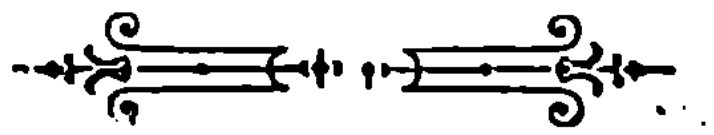


Words of Salvation.

“(He) shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.”—Acts xi. 14.

“Salvation is of the Lord.”—Jonah ii. 9.

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Words of Salvation.

A VOICE FROM THE THRONE.

THE “King’s Speech” is usually awaited with interest by his subjects because it is a speech from the throne.

If His Majesty were free to utter just what he pleased to his people how much more interesting his speeches would be. But alas, he has to consult his ministers before his speech is read.

Now God has spoken and it is of His speech that I wish to say a word.

It is recorded in the Book of Job, chapter xxxiii. 24, that God said, “Deliver him from going down to the pit:

I have found a ransom.”

Has God said this, that man is going down to the pit?

He has indeed said it.

Going down to the pit! Who is going down there?

Well may such a question be asked, for if it be true that man is going thither it

ought to awaken the gravest concern with us all.

Reader, are you going thither?

“No,” say you, “at least, I trust not.”

But let us seek to make sure upon a subject so momentous as this.

Man is going down to the pit

blinded.

It is said in 2 Corinthians iv. 4, “The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.” Awful consideration! Passing on life’s journey day by day and each footfall nearer the end—nearer the terrible leap in the dark, and blinded by the god of this world.

Satan the destroyer has a place as god of this world. What a god! He blinds the minds of those who are beneath his power.

Yes, and not only is man blinded but he is

warned.

God has raised the alarm in various ways; He speaks to men in a dream, in a vision of the night. A sudden illness; a railway accident; the loss of parent or friend; a solemn sermon or address, such are some of the ways in which God speaks.

And many have been quite conscious of the warning but press on, heedless of

whither they go. Oh! you who are going on refusing to heed the warning voice, I pray you, pause and read these lines.

And to some our words are of no avail,
for they are going down

rebellious.

They know the truth of what we say, they are no sceptics these. Indeed, no! They know in the depth of their souls that there is a heaven, that there is a hell, but on they march with head high tossed, their will raised in defiance of God. Oh, sorry sight! Awake, I pray you, before the day of judgment come and you be swept away in a moment without remedy.

But there are yet others of whom I would speak—the

religious.

Painful it is to have to say it, but it is true there are many marked by a regard for religion who are going down to the pit. A religion without reality, a religion without repentance, a religion without Christ! But hark, there is a voice from the throne, and it speaks of such as we have been describing! And what does it say? "Deliver him from going down to the pit:

I have found a ransom."

It is God who is speaking—He whom we have slighted, yes, and He against

whom we have sinned. We have lifted our puny wills against His, but there is no resentment in His heart. He is great and good and true and pure. "Deliver him," says God; "I have found a ransom."

God has given the Son of His love for His ruined creature. That glorious Person has appeared on earth in figure as a man. He has died in agonies unknown, save to the God from whom He came; He has borne the judgment of the Almighty throne which human sin deserved, but He is risen. Think of Him no longer as on the cross, He was there, alone, forsaken, spit upon, reviled and hated. Thank God, He is there no longer, He lives in the glory of God—a Man ascended up far above all things. Wondrous tale of redeeming grace! "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom." Such is the speech from the throne! The ransom has been found and liberty can be proclaimed to the captive. Oh! hear it you who have long been bound in the chains of fear or sin and return unto your God and He will abundantly pardon. There is grace in His heart and might in His arm to free the captive. Turn to Him, I pray you, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

APPRECIATION OF CHRIST.

(LUKE VII. 36-50.)

IN the Gospel of Luke the Lord Jesus is presented as the vessel of God's grace to men; and no incident brings this more strikingly before us than the scene in Simon's house. The Pharisee takes the place of the host, and the Lord is the guest.

But in Colossians i. we are told: "that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." So in the Pharisee's house God turns the tables, and the Lord is the host, and the poor woman is the guest at His feet.

We have no previous record of her, the simple fact that she was a *sinner* sums up her history. She dares to cross the threshold, and we can imagine the look of scorn in the faces of the assembled guests; but she heeded them not, nor the frown of Simon, she had heard of Jesus, and we see her at His feet washing them with her tears, and wiping them with her hair (the symbol of the woman's glory).

I have no doubt her thoughts went back to the days when the smile of innocence had played across her cheek, she meant to tell Him of her dark history of shame and

sorrow, but not one word escapes her lips; those burning tears were more eloquent than any words she could have spoken.

The Lord had become divinely attractive to her heart, and she would shew a wealth of appreciation of Him. What a spectacle for the angels to behold! The One before whom they veiled their faces, yet at His feet bends a sinful woman.

There were other eyes watching at this moment; we see the proud, disdainful look on Simon's face as he reasons in his heart, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner."

In the touching reply of Jesus, we have one of the most lovely parables in the gospel history: "There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?"

We recognise that God is the creditor, we are the debtors, and the only ground we can take is that of bankrupt sinners, with nothing to meet the just claims of the creditor.

This becomes the occasion for the riches

of His grace to shine out. His mind was the same to each. "He frankly forgave them both."

Reader, you may, like Simon, be a "fifty pence" debtor, cultured, religious and refined, moral and upright in the eyes of men; but in relation to God a bankrupt with nothing to pay. The woman was the five hundred pence debtor, society would shun her company, but in Jesus there was the mighty attraction of His grace to meet her in her sin. And here is the difference. Simon had no appreciation of Christ, he had refused Him the common courtesy of the day.

A personal word is addressed to the woman. "*Thy* sins are forgiven." The guests murmur at this—they knew not the glory and greatness of the One who uttered these words. The only effect of seeking to stay the river of grace is, its banks overflow, and a further word to the woman is, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

Reader, may you, like this nameless woman, come to the Saviour with your tale of sin and sorrow: and like her get these wonderful things—forgiveness, salvation and peace.

Since that moment the Saviour has been to the cross, laid the foundation in

righteousness for the blessing of all, and is now seated on the throne of God. But whether on the cross of shame, or the throne of glory, His heart is eternally the same.

Reader, come to Him, bow to Him, and the blessing is yours now.

H. F. N.

**“BE SURE YOUR SIN WILL
FIND YOU OUT.”**

(NUM. XXXII. 23.)

HOW often the truth of this scripture makes itself felt. An incident that has recently happened in the town of C—— is an example of it. A young woman in the employ of a family of well-to-do people was about to take a journey on the railway, on the occasion of her annual holiday. Her luggage, which consisted of a trunk, was placed in the hands of the railway company, and amongst other packages was wheeled on a truck along the platform by an official. However, one of the wheels caught in a rut, which caused the truck to tilt over one side. The trunk mentioned slid off on to the line just at the time an express train was rush-

ing in and was consequently smashed, exposing the contents, which, sad to say, consisted of a quantity of stolen property. She had for some time past been helping herself to things belonging to her employers, but now she was found out. The matter was reported, much to the surprise and disgust of her friends. She probably thought she could go on for an indefinite period regardless of God or man. But God in His goodness speaks once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. A friend of mine with whom she was living spoke to her, and connected the whole affair with God, and indicated to her that He had spoken. She was apparently frightened for the time being, and confessed her wrong, but it was afterwards proved that there was no real work in her soul. She had not heeded God's voice. May He in His wondrous grace give her to see what she is in His presence. If He brings things to light which necessarily expose us, it is all in love and in view of soul blessing. How many there are who can go on in a state of indifference to God. It is indeed well for us to take heed to His word, which says:

“Be sure,”

and whether I believe it or not, my sin will find me out.

Two boys (one was the writer) had certain instructions from their parents, but they disobeyed, and as a consequence smashed a window that their parents had to pay for. They were found out. The scripture says:

“your sin.”

I have to do with God individually. Every man shall die for his own sin (see Deut. xxiv. 16 and 2 Chron. xxv. 4), but it is a blessed thing to realise that Christ has borne the judgment due to my sins and has taken upon Himself all my liabilities and settled them for God and for me. Can the reader say that? There is no presumption in it. To find myself out as a sinner before God and in need of a Saviour and to accept the one of God's own providing means eternal blessing. But to refuse Him is to miss the blessing. In which case, “Be sure your sin

will find you out.”

Saul had strict instructions from God, but he disobeyed, and lied to Samuel the prophet, but the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen found him out. (1 Sam. xv. 14.)

Will you accept Christ as your Saviour? You will not be able to say you never had the opportunity, for you have had many.

You have often been pleaded with, but so far all in vain. To be found out in this day of God's grace, and to have things out with God, will result in being inside with Christ for eternity. I would not miss an eternity with Him for worlds. What it will be I can but feebly enter into, but I know what the present enjoyment of the thought is. It causes me much pleasure; pleasure that no man can take away. Those who find their pleasure in the things of this world are often disappointed. But, thank God, the Christian's pleasure does not depend on these things nor is it affected by them. It has its springs in a Person outside this world.

Does my reader know anything of this? It is God's desire for all. But the question of our sins must first be settled, and God has made every provision for them in Christ. Everything depends upon our acceptance or rejection of Him.

May you accept Him for His name's sake!

A. H. C.

FIVE WORDS. (No. 4.)

“Ye must be born again.” (John iii. 7.)

ONLY five words, but the great importance of them is unknown by a vast number of people.

One might say that practically all the trouble with many so-called Christians to-day is, that this very scripture is overlooked, and it is one that presents a truth which every *true* child of God has to learn at the beginning.

It may be that the reader is one who is indifferent to these matters, or perhaps one who is only a *professor*. Whichever he may be we must remember that both are alike in God's sight, and that is LOST.

The acceptance of this is the basis of everything with God.

You may say, What do you mean? I mean this, that as men naturally we are all alike, and God's word says: "All have sinned, and COME SHORT of the glory of God." Being born in sin there is not one of us who is equal to God's standard and therefore we MUST BE *born again*. Our intentions may be good, but we have not the ability to carry them out, so that Christ has been to the cross in order to make an end of our state, and bring in a *new* one in Himself—a Man in resurrection.

There are many in this day who strive to find some good in themselves and cultivate it, but let us remember that if this had ever been possible, with reverence I say it, Christ need never have died. But

He has died and He came to seek and to save *that which was lost*. Take heed then that “ye must be born again.” A new start is necessary, for the old state and condition will not do for God, He must have a new position before Him entirely, namely, like His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, risen from the dead.

It is a wonderful thought that God has found a remedy, and such a remedy, which through His mercy we can have. And He will give us to see also that the claims against us have been met by Christ in whose perfection we can now appear before Him.

Who would strive with a sinful nature, who seek to reform that which is beyond hope? Better far take God at His word and learn that in order to see the kingdom and know the good things of God “ye must be born again.”

“In darkness many still by works endeavour
To grope their way and find some other door,
One look to Christ would save their souls for
ever;
For Jesus died, and lives for evermore.”

CAESAR AND GOD.

“Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s.” (Matt. xxii. 21).

IT is important to distinguish between the things that belong to men and those that belong to God, for I take Cæsar to represent the highest claim under which a man is placed on earth, and God to represent the responsibility under which men are placed in relation to heaven. “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” How inclusive these words are, summing up as they do man’s duty to his fellow. Are we doing this? If not, then we are not doing our duty to our neighbour. But you say, I am paying twenty shillings in the pound, and I do the best I can. I have never injured any one. Ah, yes, but the point is, that if you have done all, loved your neighbour **AS YOURSELF**, you have only rendered to Cæsar *the things which are Cæsar’s*; you have only met what man claims from you. Have you rendered to God the things that are God’s? I think you will admit that you have failed to render even to Cæsar, that is to your neighbour, what

is due to him. How then with regard to God? What does God claim from us? He claims that, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with *all* thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." Think of it. Have you rendered to God the things that are God's? Have you answered to Him in any one of these things? No, no! What then is your hope of heaven? for on the ground of keeping the law you and I have no hope.

But I will tell you of another claim God has upon us, not this time as a creator God but as a redeemer God; you would have been lost to Him on the ground of keeping His law, for you have not kept it; but God, blessed be His name, makes Himself known as the giving God. "God so loved . . . that he gave his only begotten Son." Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, "If thou knewest the giving God, thou wouldest have asked of him." (John iv. N.T.) Every claim God had upon man has been met by His beloved Son; the righteous judgment due to man's disobedience was met in the cross, when Jesus hung upon it, "made sin . . . that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Christ, in view of that moment, said, "I have

glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." It is because of the finished work of Christ that God can now righteously forgive every one that comes to Him through Jesus Christ our Lord. Have you turned to God through Him? Are you owning God's claims upon you as Redeemer. You should turn in repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Herein is your only hope. God opens this door wide and invites you to come to Him. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat: yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. . . . Come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live." (Isa. lv. 1-3).

Take heed to God's invitations. He gives them, and be sure He means us to accept them. Come, then, and let God have pleasure in you by your owning His claims upon you.

J. L.

THE LAWYER'S QUESTION AND THE LORD'S ANSWER.

“ And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, What shall I do to inherit eternal life? ” (Luke x. 25.)

WE have not been informed in the inspired record who this man was, nor does it very much matter to us just now. It is more interesting that we should consider his question and its answer.

It was a very right kind of question to ask, for most of us have realised before this that we must leave this world by-and-by. Those who came before us are gone, and we also must go the way of all the earth.

Of course, we may live a good many years yet, but, on the other hand, we may pass away far sooner than we expect. How can we inherit eternal life?

This is surely a wise question to raise. The Lord asked the lawyer what was written in the law: to which he replied, “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart . . . and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.”

Yes, but who is my neighbour? Ah,

that is the question. And, further, do I love him as I love myself; can I do so? Could the Jew love the Samaritan Gentile as he loved himself? Impossible! But see; if he does not do so he has not kept the law, and on that ground he cannot inherit eternal life.

At this point Christ speaks a parable. "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead." Who is this certain man? Why, you or me. "Went down from Jerusalem to Jericho"! Is not this what we have done? Jerusalem was the place where God had put His name in the earth; His temple was there. Jericho, on the other hand, was a place under the curse of God. And have not we all by nature turned our back upon God and chosen rather a cursed place—the place where we could do our own will?

Alas, it is too true, as each must know for himself. But worse than this, we have fallen among thieves. In other words, we have come under Satan's power and he has stripped us. I suppose clothing is intended to make us presentable, and of all that could make us presentable to God we have been stripped. What have we

in which to appear before Him? We have lost innocence—that is to say, man as God's creature has done so. Stripped! Such is our plight. And wounded!

Nothing wounds like sin. As I write I am conscious of it. Sin does not always wound the body, but it wounds the mind, the soul, the heart. Awful wounds these! No balm of human provision can heal them. How they smart and ache. Yes, and how they disfigure!

And is it the lawyer, or you, or me whom we are describing? Yes, it is. This is our history. Lying on the world's highway stripped, wounded and half dead. Man—God's creature, for whom Eden was planted. What a fall! Is there no heart to pity? Hark, there is a footstep on the road. Whose is it? "By chance there came down a certain priest that way." So runs the gospel narrative.

But why "by chance"? What a touch of sadness in those words! Was it only by chance? Had not the priest come to look after the poor wanderer? Ah, no! That priesthood set up in glory in the days of old had become a cold and purely formal service. There were no divine compassions in the heart of him who came by chance, and "when he saw him, he passed by on the other side." No doubt

the teaching of this part of the parable is that the priesthood, great and glorious though it was, and having divine sanction too, had never really reached men in their distance from God.

But another person comes upon the scene, and he a Levite. He came and looked upon the poor wounded man and also passed by on the other side. The Levite was a servant in the temple, but alas! he could not help the poor needy traveller.

It seems as though the whole legal system was inadequate to meet man where he really was, for, as we have seen, both priest and Levite passed by on the other side. A certain Samaritan, however, as he journeyed came where the wounded and dying man was lying. He bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn and took care of him. What goodness and compassion!

Supposing for a moment that the foolish man who had gone down from Jerusalem to Jericho and who had fallen among thieves who had treated him so shamefully was a Jew; he would have boasted as to the law that he loved his neighbour as himself. Yes, but a Samaritan, would he have loved him? No, not naturally;

but when he received such treatment from a Samaritan, his wounds being bound up, and he lifted on to his beast and taken to an inn and there so patiently cared for—do you not think he would have loved him then? I feel sure that he would have done so. Love begets love. “We love him, because he first loved us.” God has shewn His great love to us in sending His Son, who came here on earth as a stranger and an out-cast—as a Samaritan indeed; and truly that blessed One came where we were when He gave His life a ransom for many.

As we dwell upon the wonderful story of the love of God revealed in Christ, love is wrought in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, and we turn to Him in grateful surrender, from whom before we had turned away in fear. So love is created in our hearts, not by law but by love, and as we dwell in the warmth and reality of it we love God and love our brother also. And eternal life is ours, known now in part, but to be enjoyed in all its fulness in the world to come. For this we thank God!

SOULS FOR DOLLARS!

A FEW months ago I read a letter from a servant of the Lord living in America, in which he said, respecting the country and its inhabitants, that generally speaking there was very little regard for the things of God, people were so much taken up with making money. One remark he made left an impression on me, it was this: "They are selling their souls for dollars"!

What a terrible thing that people should set more value on money than upon their souls, that they should consider the trifling things of this world of more value than their eternal welfare. It is astounding the numbers there are who will work morning, noon and night for money. And it is the more surprising because there is nothing in it to really satisfy. Solomon, although surrounded with an abundance of everything, could say, "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase." He declared also that all was vanity. (Eccles. v. 10.) Truly has it been said: "There's none but Christ can satisfy." But how little the world thinks of Him! He is rejected by most, and all who seek

to follow Him suffer a measure of reproach. This they esteem greater riches than the treasures of this world, however, for He who was rich was pleased to become poor that we, through His poverty, might become rich.

A young man came to the Lord when He was here upon earth and asked if he might follow Him on earth. He boasted how he had kept the law from his youth, but the Lord knew where he lacked, if it was but in one thing. He loved his riches, and the Lord took him up on that ground. He was not prepared to give up his riches for Christ, he would rather go away with them than follow Him.

Are you seeking riches in this world and neglecting the unsearchable riches of Christ? May you know what it is to accept the gospel of God concerning His Son, that you may share eternal riches in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A. H. C.

INTO HIS MARVELLOUS LIGHT.

SEVERAL years have elapsed since the events of this little story, now recorded, took place. I was then stationed

in the district of N—, in the heart of India, and living without the fear of God. A christian friend, who had resided near me for about five years, had never ceased to pray with me and for my conversion, and at last his prayers were answered in the following manner.

On a cool October morning, a number of the Europeans resident in the locality assembled in the cemetery to witness the consecration, by the Bishop of C—, of an extension of it. The bishop was accompanied by Captain P—, chief magistrate of the district. After walking in procession round the boundaries of the annexed ground, a hymn and prayer concluded the ceremony.

As we dispersed, Captain P— asked me to accompany him to a neighbouring river, and give my professional opinion as to the practicability of throwing a masonry dam across.

As we stood with a Hindu subordinate magistrate close together, between some trees and the river, a shot was fired at him, from behind me, and the bullet passed near our heads. Captain P—, who faced the would-be assassin, instantly snatched a riding-whip from my hand, and rushed at him. As I turned a second shot took fatal effect, and Captain P—,

who had broken the whip over the man, staggered backwards dead.

For the first time in my life I felt conscious of the awful reality of having to meet God unprepared. I might be in eternity in a moment, and my soul lost for ever.

I bent for an instant over the prostrate body of my friend, and seeing that life was extinct, I slowly retreated towards my horse, facing the murderer, who followed me up, pointing his revolver at me. By this time the Hindu magistrate had escaped, and I rode off rapidly to the police station for assistance.

Suffice it to say, that after a fierce struggle, in which he killed another man, this perpetrator of a double murder was captured.

It may be explained here, that the assassin was a Mahometan fanatic, and his object was to kill, not Captain P——, but the Hindu magistrate, for dismantling a mosque, and he affirmed that he shot Captain P—— only in self-defence.

Deeply moved by these events, I went, as desired by the widow of Captain P——, to tell her how her husband met his death. She was, however, so overwhelmed with grief, that she could not see me; so the bishop, who was with her, came to me in

the drawing-room, and after narrating the facts to him as above, I requested him to pray for me. This he earnestly did, commending me to God who had mercifully spared my life, that He would work a work of grace in my heart to His own glory.

That evening Captain P—— was interred, with impressive ceremonial, by the bishop, in the cemetery at the consecration of which he had assisted in the morning. The criminal was tried, condemned, and eventually executed.

During this time I suffered great distress of mind, and could scarcely sleep, the thought recurring that I, who was not ready for death, had been mercifully spared of God, while P——, who was a Christian, had been taken instead.

I thus realised that God had, as it were, given me a new lease of life, in which to confess Christ, otherwise I had undoubtedly perished in my sins, and suffered eternal damnation.

My christian friend, who had so long prayed for me, at this juncture sought again to lay plainly before me the way of salvation. One day, while in great distress of soul, he handed me a little magazine, "God's Glad Tidings" for September, 1878. In an article entitled "The Justice

of God," it was clearly explained that "there is none righteous, no, not one," but that "being justified *by faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 1.)

I pondered these words several days, and *tried* hard to have faith, but still remained in doubt. One night, having tossed about, sleepless, in great trepidation lest this call should pass and my soul be lost for ever, I came to an end of myself and all *trying*, and cast myself entirely on the mercy of God.

Instantly light flashed into my soul, and, quickened by the Holy Spirit, I knew, that having believed, I *had* faith, was therefore *justified*, and had passed from *death* unto *life*. I shall never forget the blessed peace which filled my soul as I sprang out of bed, and knelt down, praising God whose mercy endureth for ever.

I lay down with a calm sense of rest, never before experienced, and have ever since enjoyed settled peace. It is now with humbled yet thankful spirit that I acknowledge God's goodness in using my feeble testimony to the awakening and blessing of others.

Should this simple story of how the Lord brought me to Himself meet the eye of any careless, indifferent one, such as I

was, I would earnestly beseech that one to decide for Christ at once, while God waits to be gracious, ere he is suddenly overtaken by eternal judgment.

God's invitation is clear and distinct, "Whosoever *will*, let him take of the water of life *freely*." (Rev. xxii. 17.)

Then, "how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. ii. 3.)

There are two aspects in which this great salvation is presented to us—namely, the constraining love of God, manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ; and what the apostle aptly terms the "terror of the Lord." (2 Cor. v. 11–14.)

The first is exemplified in that marvellously gracious utterance of the Lord Jesus: "*God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" (John iii. 16.)

God looked down from heaven, as we read, and saw that there was none righteous among the children of men, no, not one; in that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. iii.) Was His arm therefore shortened that it could not save? No, thank God! "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." (Rom. v. 6.) And "herein is love, not

that we loved God, but that he loved us.”

Surely this is enough to constrain all the love of our hearts in return!

The other aspect presents forcibly the awful consequences of rejecting God's freely offered salvation, with the object of mercifully arresting and compelling attention. “He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God *abideth* on him.” (John iii. 36.)

Let no one delude himself that there is any escape. “As I live, saith the Lord, every knee *shall* bow to me.” (Rom. xiv. 11.) How terrible the position of those who have to confess too late that “Jesus is Lord.” We are told regarding the rich man that “in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments;” and that “there is a great gulf fixed,” which they that would pass cannot. (Luke xvi. 23–26.) Can you say “the love of Christ constraineth” me? If not, then, as in my own case, I adjure you by the fear of eternal condemnation to accept Christ now.

Christian! cease not to pray for unconverted friends, for, as I have shewn, “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” (James v. 16.)

Tract and book distributors, be encouraged, and continue to sow in faith.

“Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” (Gal. vi. 9.)

T. K.

FIVE WORDS. (No. 5.)

“A wise man will hear.” (Prov. i. 5.)

IT would be well to consider the words which follow a little later, also in *five words*: “Fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Prov. i. 7), and then find them illustrated in the New Testament.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was upon this earth He set forth the love of God to man. It is quite true that all that we are naturally was exposed, but He brought the remedy. Sin in all its varied forms had separated man from God. God cannot tolerate sin; but Christ came to take it away.

“God is love,” and it was His will to make that love known, therefore everything which the Lord Jesus did when upon this earth was expressive of it. He could say, “I came to do the will of him that sent me.”

Now with such a fact before us, remembering that “all have sinned, and

come short of the glory of God," it is wonderful to see how God has acted for us.

God made man for His own pleasure, in His own likeness He created him, breathing into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul, with one object, and that to live here for God. But before long the foul finger of sin was seen upon that which God had set up, and from that moment creation was lost.

It was impossible to reinstate man in such conditions, much as he might desire it; God had a greater thought in His mind and that was to bring in "a new creation," which would be beyond the corruption which sin had brought, therefore we see His great goodness in sending His blessed Son made in the likeness of sinful flesh, that He might go into death to take away *sin* and the *sinful nature* and establish in resurrection a new order, a new creation.

Now when upon this earth, the whole substance of what Christ said was this: He had good news to tell, not about sinful man, but about the love of God. The things of which He spoke were the things of divine wisdom, but there was no appreciation, for it says, "they laughed him to scorn," which proves Solomon's words, "Fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Greater wisdom there never was, it was the wisdom of God; greater instruction there never could be, it was the instruction of One who sought the good of His hearers.

If you have up to the present been one who has neglected what God has made known, it is His desire that you should be marked by wisdom and hear that which He says. The scriptures are very clear for they say repeatedly, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

“THE LORD JESUS.”

WHEN the convicted jailor in the prison at Philippi cried, “What must I do to be saved?” the simple answer of the apostle was, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” (Acts xvi. 30, 31.) But how much is involved in this simple answer. It is the only way in which any can receive grace from God. Jesus, who died and rose again has been set by God at His right hand in glory, and there made *Lord*, made supreme, invested with all authority and power, not as we might suppose for the judgment of His enemies, but for the administration of the riches of God’s grace to men. His authority is universal and His power almighty, He is able to subdue the most rebellious sinner to God, and He is able to deliver men from the power of Satan, and also from the power of sin and death. And there is none other who can administer to us the forgiveness of sins, or the salvation of God, or eternal life; all is in His hands, but He is ever ready to administer all this grace to all that call upon Him, for He is

Lord of all. “*Whosoever* shall call upon . . . the *Lord* shall be saved.” God will not bestow grace upon any one apart from the Lord Jesus. He has ordained that all grace should come to men through Him, so that all who receive any blessing from God must acknowledge Jesus as *Lord*, bow to the One whom God has exalted, own the rights and glory of the One who has been rejected in this world. So that every one who refuses to bow to Him is deprived of all grace from God, and must sooner or later come under judgment. “He that believeth not shall be judged.” Grace is proclaimed in His name *to all*. “The same Lord over all, is rich unto *all* that call upon him.” But if men are too proud or self-willed to bow to Jesus as Lord, there is no hope for them, they must perish in their sins. And it is but just and right that the One who has secured this grace for men by going into the place of suffering and death to vindicate the righteousness of God, should be the One to dispense this grace to men, and that all should honour Him. As Son of man He must needs endure all the sorrows of death that He might glorify God in regard to sin, and in view of this God has glorified Him, and now calls upon men everywhere to *bow to the*

Lord. God has decreed that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is *Lord* to the glory of God. That must be fulfilled, therefore, either in this day of grace, or in the coming day of judgment, every one must bow and acknowledge Him as Lord. He is rich unto all that call upon Him. F. H. B.

PROFIT AND LOSS.

“**F**OR 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?” (Matt. xvi. 26.)

We do well to consider these weighty words spoken by our Lord when upon earth.

You may be a shrewd, far-seeing man with regard to the concerns of this life; very little may escape your observation, indeed you think it your duty to attend to your business, your household, and rightly so; you do it no doubt thoroughly, as a business man. You are most anxious that your profits should be good, and that every detail in your business transactions should be strictly accounted for, so that

at the end of the year you may find everything in order. If such matters are binding upon you in this life, what about your soul, the redemption of which is so precious that God has given His Son to die for you? Did you ever reckon how valuable your soul is? Let us reason for a moment. What profit will it be to you if you gain wealth, if all your ambition is satisfied? Even if you could gain the whole world and then pass out of it you would be a disappointed man if you had never found joy in the knowledge of God's love. Death, the "king of terrors," may cross your path and stop you at any moment. None of us are able to resist him. How foolish to postpone this all-important matter. Let no one forget what the remorse throughout eternity will be in the knowledge that we have bartered away our soul for earth's fleeting pleasures and lost the eternal joys of heaven!

What folly, what madness! "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" This is an unanswered question! Can you or I answer it? I confess I cannot. As you read these lines, I think I hear you remark: The picture is a dark one. Granted, it is so; but it is open to us to turn to God and through our Lord Jesus Christ be brought to know salvation.

It is to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Wondrous salvation, from being a guilty sinner to being justified by God. Instead of losing my soul it is saved. Instead of gaining this world I lose it, but, thank God, I shall have part in the world to come.

E. I. E.

ONE PLACE.

“And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.” (Gen. i. 9.)

THE overflow of waters, carrying devastation and destruction in all directions, is continually used in scripture as a figure of universal judgment. The Flood, and the destruction of Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea, are notable examples of this. (See also Isa. xxviii. 15-17, 18.)

This had also often occurred by the submergence of the solid earth in the days before Adam was created.

We know, by the researches of geology, that whole forests of timber and many gigantic animals had been destroyed by

what appear to have been catastrophes which happened to our globe during the unknown ages which intervened between the first and second verses of Genesis i. As to all this, scripture is silent, but the ascertained facts of geology belong to the domain into which man may inquire and for which scripture leaves amply sufficient space.

On the third day, however, God again speaks, and nature obeys its Creator. He then set bounds to the ocean and said to the tumultuous waves of the universal sea, "Hitherto shalt thou go and no further." The waters were gathered together *into one place* and the dry land appeared.

Again the Bible is proved to be ahead of science. Who knew fifteen hundred years before Christ that all the oceans on the surface of the earth *were joined*? How could the writer of Genesis have known this fact, which has only been fully proved during the last century, except by the revelation of God Himself? Let the unbeliever answer if he can. Scripture also asserts that "God put a circle [margin] upon the *face* of the deep." (Prov. viii. 27.) Any believing reader of the inspired writings, nearly a thousand years before the christian era would have known three now universally admitted facts:

(1.) That light could exist apart from the sun.

(2.) That the waters on the globe *formed one vast ocean*.

(3.) That the surface of that ocean *is a curve* and that therefore *the earth is round*.

How many centuries were to elapse before *man* was able to discover these facts *for himself*! God had revealed them ages before.

But we must pass from these thoughts, valuable as they are, to consider others of much more solemn import.

What was the *one place* where God gathered the waters of judgment?

Man is a sinner. There is no denying this sad but universal fact.

The third chapter of Romans is a true description of the state of the human race, to which man himself gives his distinct "amen" many millions of times every day that dawns.

EVERY NEWSPAPER CONTAINS MAN'S OWN RECORD OF THE STATE DESCRIBED IN FEW BUT SOLEMN WORDS IN THE ABOVE NAMED CHAPTER and millions are published all over the world every day. The whole human race, consisting of hundreds of nationalities and numerous languages, is hereby challenged to give evidence as to this awful fact and

there is but one reply: GUILTY! "All the world has become subject to the judgment of God." (Rom. iii. 19 margin.)

My friend, we must face this indisputable but awful fact. How are we to escape the righteous judgment of God?

The gospel of God brings the good news that God has found a Ransom. *He* has planned a way to remove the judgment consistently with His own righteousness and holiness. What infinite love and wisdom He has shewn! "He spared not his own Son." "It pleased the Lord to bruise him." "He hath made to meet on him the iniquity of *us all*." "Who his own self bare *our* sins in his own body on the tree." There, under the burden of judgment, He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" We, who believe, know why it was:

"The judgment fell on Jesus' head,
'Twas in His death our debt was paid;
Stern justice can demand *no more*
And mercy can dispense her store."

In resurrection, the Lord Jesus Christ is now accepted and exalted at God's right hand. Here is the *divinely attested* evidence that all has been fully met. A solid basis has been laid upon which all that God has planned in His eternal love to man can be erected. The dry land ready to

produce by its fertility results for God's glory and man's blessing has come into visible existence.

Reader, are you standing upon the low, swampy marshland of human endeavour, ready to be submerged by the advancing billows of judgment, or have you taken your stand with the risen Saviour and exalted Lord on the firm, elevated ground of resurrection, out of the reach of the rushing torrent which shall soon engulf all who "know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ"? Here is safety and here alone.

J. V.

G O D .

SHALL we think together of God? A vast subject, the fringe of which we can only slightly touch.

God is SPIRIT, present everywhere; He ever was, and ever will be. He is the self-existing—the I AM. And with Him we must all have to do.

Have you ever spent half an hour in reverent consideration of the Being with whom you are so vitally concerned? If you had to interview some one who could do you good, and whose favour would be

of serious consequence to your advancement in the world, you would certainly be anxious to discover what kind of person he was.

Now, God, being infinite, cannot of course be known by the finite mind. But He has revealed Himself "in these last days," and now it is possible to know Him, whom to know is eternal life.

Even among those who do think about God, there is often confusion of thought, and we propose now to speak of four things which characterise God. These are

His goodness,
His mercy,
His grace,
His love.

These terms may at first all seem to mean much the same thing, but in scripture they convey different thoughts.

First, then, with regard to God's GOODNESS, we will look at Matthew v. 45. In speaking of what should mark the conduct of the children of the kingdom, the Lord Jesus Christ speaks of that which especially marks the ways of God. He says: "For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Here, we see that God's goodness is for all creation, and over all His works; it depends not on

the behaviour of the creature, but upon that which God is in Himself. "He is good, and doeth good." From His beneficent hand the evil and the good alike receive. His sun shines upon all, bringing life and fruitfulness and health. The rain falls on the blasphemer's garden, just as it falls on the saint's; and the very man who uses divinely given breath either to curse God or to deny His existence, is every minute a receiver of God's benefits. "He is kind to the unthankful and the evil." (Luke vi. 35.) How many a time has God preserved our lives in danger! Some of those deliverances we have recognised, and have thanked our Deliverer for them; but many people never own God's hand, they call their preservation "luck," and in relating marvellous escapes by land or sea have no word for the protection and goodness of God. But for His goodness they would have lost their lives, and what then? To that solemn question we leave the reader to supply the answer.

No *spiritual blessing* comes to us until we have recognised the fact that there is no hope for us except in the MERCY of God.

As individuals we, each one, need the mercy of God. Our condition is helpless and hopeless. With our sins upon us,

what can meet us but mercy? Have we any merit of our own? can we bring a ransom for our souls? is there no stain upon our character? have we kept God's holy law, without failure, in one jot or tittle? If so, then perhaps we may find some other plea than that of the publican, "God be merciful to me, a sinner."

A cry for mercy befits all of those who see themselves in the light of God's holy presence. What men think of us—what we once thought of ourselves—is not important. The light of God has shewn us what we are, and "that which doth make manifest is light." "Thou hast set," says the psalmist (Psa. xc. 8), "our iniquities before thee, *our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.*"

Thank God, there is mercy for *all*; but our proud hearts are long in taking the lowly place (the only true one), and casting ourselves, unhesitatingly, upon the mercy of God.

Directly we take that place, we set God free—if we may say so, in all reverence—to do what He wishes for us. The work of the Lord Jesus Christ and His precious blood-shedding have met all God's claims against us, and now we may not only experience His 'mercy, but reach to the GRACE of God.

God's grace is in accordance with what *He is*, and not in accord with our acts or our condition or needs. He "hath saved us, and called us, with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to *his own purpose and grace*, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." Grace is that which the divine heart thinks fit to bestow on all who cast themselves upon His mercy.

The new governor of a province desired to set some prisoners free; he had them called before him, and questioned. They all, one after the other, found excuses for their conduct; some declared that they had sinned through ignorance; others brought forward tales of mistaken identity or some other cause for their detention. At last, one prisoner, when questioned, said simply that he had no excuse, that his sentence was just, and that he cast himself upon the mercy of the governor. "Let that man free," was the governor's order.

And so we, who cast ourselves on the mercy of God, go free; more than that, we are taken into favour "*in the beloved.*" It has been well said, "grace refers more to the character of the giver; mercy to the state of the person who receives; grace may give me glory; mercy con-

templates sore need in me; mercy is great, in the greatness of the need; grace is shewn in the thought of the person exercising it."

When we come to speak of the *love* of God, we shall find that, in scripture, love is connected with life and with living; and also that God, in His love, desires the company of the loved ones. "Verily, verily," says the Lord Jesus Christ, "he that heareth my words and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed *from death unto life.*" "For God *so loved* the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have *everlasting life.*" And John writes (1 John iv. 9), "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might *live through him.*" And God desires to surround Himself with a company of redeemed ones, who, as His children, find their delight in Him, as He finds His in them; He sees them in Christ, with all the acceptability of Christ upon them. In the well-known parable of the prodigal son (Luke xv.) all the characteristics which we have mentioned as attributes of God are displayed.

We see a young man, in all the self-will of nature, turning his back on the paternal home, and receiving from the hands of his father a portion, which he proceeds to spend in riotous living in a far country. When all is spent, when friends have vanished, when starvation stares him in the face, the prodigal remembers the GOODNESS of his father; he reflects that in the home which he has left the servants have enough *and to spare*. Then he determines to go back and to cast himself on the MERCY, which alone can meet his case. "I will arise," he says, "and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." The servant's place would have been the prodigal's fitting place now, and we may remark that only mercy would have received him in it, or had to do with him again. But mark the way in which he is received. To be made a servant? Does he receive only that which suits his present state? No, surely. His carefully prepared speech is never spoken; he gets no further than the confession of his sins, and says no word about the servant's place. For the father's arms are about his neck; the father's kisses are on his cheek. The

best robe, the ring, the sandals, all shew unmerited *grace* flowing from the fulness of the father's heart. 'All that the father has to bestow is poured out upon the son, "who was lost, and is found." And the grace springs from what the father is in himself, irrespective of all the unworthy conduct of the son; but more, the son's company is desired, the father's table is now his place, and to live before him and with him will alone satisfy the love of the father's heart.

The sovereign greatness of the love of God floods our souls, and our hearts are bowed in adoration. May He give us more fully to understand:

That God acts in goodness, BECAUSE HE IS GOOD.

That God acts in mercy, BECAUSE HE IS MERCIFUL.

In grace, BECAUSE HE IS GRACIOUS.

And in love, BECAUSE HE IS LOVE.

THE WEDDING GARMENT.

(MATT. XXII. 1-14.)

“**A** CERTAIN king made a marriage feast for his son.” In this parable we get in figure God’s intention regarding His Son looked at as man. The grandeur of the occasion necessitated everything being in keeping with it. All things being ready, and the time having arrived, the guests had to be brought in. The servants were sent to announce to those *already bidden* to come; but they would not. Then other servants were sent with a description of the preparation. (Ver. 4.) But then the guests made *light of it* and went their ways to things they thought more of, while others even ill-treated the messengers, and slew some of them.

This pictured the Jewish nation, who when the long promised Messiah came, rejected the call to honour Him, and even slew some of those who announced the time had *arrived* and the blessings were *provided*. They stoned Stephen (Acts vii.), and did many other acts of violence and wickedness. The king was wroth; “and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.” (Ver. 7.) This set forth the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans,

which set aside the whole Jewish system. God then opened the way for the gospel to go into the highways, that is, outside the sphere of Judaism, to the world, who had no former invitation to the wedding. No doubt the gospel began to go out before the *actual* destruction of Jerusalem, but not before the Jews had killed the servants, and so fully rejected the invitation. In the parable the servants finished their work, and the king *came in* to see if all the guests were suited to the occasion. If the king's son was the greatest consideration to the king, then everything must be measured by what was suitable to him.

The *king* evidently sets forth God acting in regard to Christ; the *king's son* sets forth Christ as man in relation to the kingdom; *the supper* sets forth the provision to meet man's need, and *the wedding garment* that which fits the guests for being in the place of privilege in relation to Christ and the kingdom. Therefore the first object is Christ, and then those who are to be with Him in His kingdom. When the king came in to see the guests He immediately saw one unsuitable person, and demanded of him, "How camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?" (Ver. 12.) The man was

speechless, and the command was given, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Ver. 13.)

In this parable we get truth which began when Jesus was on earth, which was further developed after He had died and risen, and which has been continued ever since; but the judgment at the close is *still future*. Thus it is a complete picture. The work of Jesus on the tree not only made *the supper*, but also provided *the wedding garment*.

The supper was in figure to meet the need of the guilty conscience, while the garment was something in figure put on to suit the person for the occasion. Jesus bore the sins of His people, which meets their inside need, like the supper; while the righteousness of God is upon all those who believe, and is the wedding garment. These two provisions went together at the first preachings by the apostles, and *still go together*. "Grace reigns through righteousness." God does not pass over sins as if He thought little of them, but He can righteously forgive on the ground of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Men may have thoughts of their own *now*, but they will be speechless in that *coming day*,

if found without the wedding garment. The man might have said he had accepted the supper, but he could not say he had the wedding garment on, while he had on only his own. So persons often say they have accepted Jesus as their Saviour, but there having been no exercise about their sins and need of righteousness, proves they have not on the wedding garment. *They are strangers to righteousness, and so have only deceived themselves by supposing that saying they have accepted Jesus is sufficient.*

The supper and the wedding garment are *still* to be had, and the gospel proclaims both to "whosoever will"; and persons are availing themselves of these provisions of grace. The gospel is still the power of God unto salvation *to every one who believeth.* (See Rom. i. 16.) The parable and every detail of it are of vital importance to every person. Many were called by the servants, but few were chosen for the king's son; only those who had on the wedding garment. So now many are called by the gospel preachers, but only those who have believed unto righteousness have on the true wedding garment, and are thus fit for the presence of the King's Son.

IS GOD A HARD MASTER ?

OUR unbelieving heart says, "Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed," hence, having no sense of need, we remain away from God. But the question arises, Is man, who is so utterly insensible of his *own* need, capable of forming a right estimate of God? If a man's moral senses are so blunted that he does not even know that he is a sinner before God, how can he then be competent to judge of God?

The truth is, man is so altogether in the dark that he needs light from God both as to his own state and as to what God is. These two truths have been fully demonstrated in the cross of Christ. Had there been any other way of solving the sin question the death of the blessed Son of God would never have taken place.

On the other hand, if the heart of God had not been filled with love to His creature the sacrifice would never have been made. Think of the immense cost! The Son of God had to lay down His holy life that sinners might be pardoned, justified and taken into favour. Hence we see in the death of Jesus that man's condition was such that only the

death of Christ could meet his state before God. We also see in that same death the expression of what God is. "God is love."

If God had taken no account of sin and had received sinners into heaven apart from any atoning work done for them or repentance wrought in them, then the devil, ever ready to accuse God, would have said: "God evidently loves His creature, but He is not *righteous*, for He has saved them at the expense of His own righteousness." If, on the other hand, God had banished sinful man from His presence for ever, giving him the just reward of his deeds without any gracious intervention to save him, the accuser would assuredly have said: "God is very just, but He does not love His creature."

A God who could thus unite the richest mercy with the severest judgment of sin, making atonement for sin and expressing at the same time His great love for His guilty creature, cannot be righteously called a hard Master. He is the God of all grace, and only thus can we know Him. And yet, in the face of all this revealed love, men are willingly believing the devil's lie and hiding themselves behind all kinds of vain excuses rather than come out into the light, where they will certainly discover what *they* are, but they will also

learn to know God as the God of all grace. Reader, what about your relations with God? He is the God "with whom we have to do," so nothing is gained by seeking to evade Him. Sooner or later your whole history will be disclosed and everything brought into the light, for God is light. Will you not meet Him to-day in Christ? There is a mercy-seat for the sinner to-day, a place where a holy God can meet and righteously pardon the vilest. Christ is this mercy-seat. Through Him you may come to God. God is for you. His perfect love has removed in the death of Christ every barrier, and now you may know that the heart of God is towards you and His great desire is to bless you.

If you persist in sin and selfwill you not only sin against the holy claims of God as Creator, but you are defying His love as a Saviour God; and think of the consequences of this! It is not *your* fault that you were born in sin, but what excuse have you for not accepting God's salvation? None whatever. It *will* be your own fault if you are lost for ever. You will never be able to say that God did not exert Himself on your behalf. He has brought all His resources forward and given the greatest gift that divine love could give. We tremble to think of the awful conse-

quences of the refusal of His mercy. No excuse will avail you in that day. Every argument of unbelief will be struck dumb in the presence of the holy, searching light of the great white throne. All will be judged "according to their works." To this throne of judgment the believer will never come; the judgment of his sins was all measured out to the blessed Lamb of God when on the cross. He is clear of all judgment and imputation of guilt even here, and is passed from death unto life.

Once again, dear reader, let us urge upon you to let all your false ideas of God go, and as you place yourself in the presence of that blessed yet awful cross you will learn 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." (John iii. 16.)

W. L——B.

OUT OF DARKNESS INTO GOD'S MARVELLOUS LIGHT.

(Concluded.)

HAVING been brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light I desire to add a word in conclusion as to the personal encouragement derived from taking a definite stand.

Soon after my deciding for Christ, my new found faith and joy were tested.

Several men in my service, all senior to myself, called upon me together.

The elder of these greeted me in an easy, yet puzzled and inquiring manner: "Well, what's come over you, man?"

Ordinarily, in such company, I would not have thought of mentioning spiritual things, but it was given me, then and there, to reply quite simply yet firmly, "Just this has happened, that the Lord has laid hold of me, and I mean to follow Him now."

An amused yet reflective look passed over my questioner's massive face, as he deliberately rejoined, "Well, K —, if there is a heaven, and if there is a hell, I would choose the latter, as I know my friends will also be there."

Poor fellow! I have often thought since, that my simple confession, which greatly strengthened me—and I believe one other of the party—in the christian pathway, was God's voice to him.

As far as I know, however, he did not heed it, and a few years later his body was committed to the deep, in the Indian Ocean, prematurely cut off, as the result of a dissipated life.

Let those who despise God's salvation

pause and consider their way ere overtaken by judgment. "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Matt. xvi. 26.)

T. K.

AN ANSWERED QUESTION.

WHILE on the one hand Jesus never satisfied the idle curiosity which lay behind many of the questions which were put to Him, yet He ever responded to a genuine question of one who had real need.

As an instance take blind Bartimæus, a poor suffering soul, blind to everything around him, content, nay compelled to seek assistance from those who chose to pity him. But he was fully awake to his condition; there was a sense in his soul that his need could be met and that Jesus could meet it; so without a moment's delay he cried: "Jesus, thou son of David, HAVE MERCY ON ME." (Mark x. 47.)

As was always the case, Jesus shewed mercy and gave him his sight.

Now, if the Saviour was ready to meet such a case of real need then, we may be sure He still has mercy for the needy. If you do not know Him as your Saviour, per-

haps it is because you have never felt your need. The blindness of Bartimæus is a picture of the sad condition of man—he is blind to his real state before God and he has no idea of how the Saviour delights to shew mercy. The blindness of Bartimæus is a picture of the real condition of the whole of Adam's race, you and I included. Not only was Bartimæus blind, he was also a beggar; but he felt his need, and the Saviour who healed him can meet the need of all who turn to Him. He alone had the power, but in that power He was ever ready to meet a felt need, ever ready to satisfy the longing soul.

Let me ask you a simple question! Have you realised how serious your condition is? Have you been awakened to the fact that unless you are brought to the knowledge of the Saviour for yourself you will perish? This is truly solemn, because *every* man's condition is alike naturally. Thank God, however, there are many who, feeling their need, have cried to Jesus for mercy, and can bear testimony that He did not turn a deaf ear to them, but answered the desire of their hearts. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. x. 13.)

“HE MUST REIGN.”

(1 COR. XV. 25.)

THERE is a great deal of importance attached to these three words. Each word seems to convey much meaning. Let us look at them in their connection and in so doing I trust it will lead to consideration of the Person to whom they refer. There is no one so important in the sight of God as His blessed Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The kings of the earth have set themselves against the Lord and His anointed, but God's King must reign and will do so in righteousness. If any one is to reign it must be He. It is quite true that those who love Him shall reign with Him, but apart from Him none would reign. If others are to reign with Him He must die and rise again in order to associate others with Himself in life. We have all heard of His death, how that He veiled His glory and came into this world and was here entirely to the pleasure of His Father and God, always subject to His will. He had no will of His own. He could say, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” (John iv. 34.) To do His Father's will was His one great concern. He was sustained as a man

down here—a perfect man—such as was never seen before. He died that we might live. We were dead in trespasses and sins. We were dead in God’s sight. There was no life towards Himself. But Christ’s death was not sufficient; if He did not rise again there was no life for us. But God has raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His own right hand for all who will accept Him. Thus we see God’s entire satisfaction in His Son, in His life in this world and all that He has accomplished. Forgiveness of sins is preached in His name on the ground of His finished work. It is those who accept Him as their own personal Saviour, as the only One who can meet their need, that will eventually reign with Him. Those who refuse Him in this day of God’s grace will of necessity be amongst the number who are called His enemies and will be for ever under His feet.

It is most essential that He should reign. He is going to exercise authority over all, and having subdued all He will then deliver up the kingdom that God may be all in all. He will put down all rule and authority and power and be subject to the One who put all things under Him, and God shall be all in all. What a wonderful outlook for all who know

Christ. Is this outlook yours, my reader? If not, why not?

The One who is going to reign is the same blessed Person whom men refused on earth. He came to His own but they refused Him His kingdom and said, "We have no king but Cæsar." There was hatred in man's heart for God's Son. "We will not have this man to reign over us!" was their cry. But He must reign. God has declared it and all things shall be subdued under Him. Has your heart been subdued under Him? Does He reign there? The Christian is one who has Christ written on the fleshy table of his heart. The heart has been touched and Christ has been received and He reigns there. It is all such who will reign with Him. May it please God to draw you to Him in His day of grace! A. H. C.

GOD IS LIGHT.

THERE is nothing men are more afraid of than light; the scriptures tell us, "Men love darkness rather than light." Yet if men only knew it light is the safest place for them. God is light, He dwells in light, and will not for one moment tolerate anything that is sinful. But do

not be afraid ; I would speak to you faithfully, and would invite you to come under the influence of that light as the only place for present and eternal blessing. You are afraid of God ! Then you are afraid of your very best Friend. I will prove it to you. God wants you for Himself, He has sought your confidence, but He must have you in suitability with what He is. He brings this about Himself : He who is light, sends His own Son into this dark world to be “the light of the world.” He came here to make God known. No one could do it as He did it. Christ came into this world of darkness and death, He brought light here, He brought life here, and blessings flowed on every hand. “The light shineth in darkness ; and the darkness comprehended it not.” The world as such did not want the light, so it crucified Him, shewing how dark indeed were the minds of men as to God. “In him [Christ] was life ; and the life was the light of men.” There were a few, however, who saw in that lowly Man, God’s blessed Son, they saw that the whole attitude of Jesus was the attitude of God towards men ; they came to Him, they received Him, and in return He gave them the place of children of God. (John i. 12.) What effect had the

light upon them? It shewed them how helpless they were to do anything, how vile they were in God's sight, but it also shewed what the heart of God was to them, and the perfect way in which, in the Person of Jesus, every righteous claim of God would be met.

They followed Jesus, who said, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

They in turn become "children of light," and become lights in this world.

You would like to be this! My object in writing now is to shew there is no hindrance in the way, you know all will have to come out in *that* day when you *must* appear before God. What is to hinder you having all out in this the day of grace; bare your heart to Him who already knows all, leave no unopened chamber of your heart.

What then? He will fill it full.

Oh, that you knew God, the giving God. God, who has taken such pains to make Himself known to men, wants you to know Him. He invites you to come to Him through Christ Jesus. Will you come to Him? Come, He will prepare you for His presence, like the prodigal was prepared. (Luke xv.)

MISTAKEN ZEAL.

PAUL'S *heart's desire* and *prayer* to God for Israel was that they might be saved. (Rom. x. 1.) God heard and answered his prayer in many cases, and there is a day coming when all who are spared of Israel shall be saved. (Rom. xi. 26.) But the mass, as he goes on to shew, missed the blessing through two things, ignorance and self-righteousness. Alas! how many are like them to-day! They had a zeal of God, but it was mistaken zeal. It was not according to knowledge. (Rom. x. 2.) Brought up in the traditions of their fathers, they clung to them, in ignorance of the fact that the death of Christ was an end before God of the fallen man after the flesh, whether Jew or Gentile. From that moment forth God sought no longer for righteousness *from* man, but was ministering His righteousness *to* man *in another Man, Christ*, whom He had raised from the dead. (Rom. iv. 25.)

But Israel, that is, the mass, steeped in ignorance, notwithstanding their boast of privilege, were still going about to establish their own righteousness, instead of sub-

mitting themselves to the righteousness of God. (Ver. 3.) They still persisted in Judaism and law-keeping, external observance of its ritual, &c., instead of perceiving that God had set it all aside, and substituted His own righteousness in a Man in glory—*Christ*. He is “the end of law for righteousness *to every one that believeth*.” (Ver. 4.)

How blessed! Mark it well, reader, to *every one* that believeth. Christ is a Saviour for the Gentile, as well as for the Jew. The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ is *unto, or towards all*. (Rom. iii. 22.) But the Gentiles, where Christianity has been announced, have followed in the wake of the Jews. They, too, have shewn mistaken zeal, not according to knowledge. What do we see all around us? Millions asking God to incline their hearts to keep the law, and striving to do so in all kinds of ways. Millions, endeavouring to stand before God more or less on the ground of their own righteousness, instead of submitting themselves to God's.

Christendom abounds with good works according to man's estimate, and surely one would gladly appreciate at its highest value everything which is good in this evil world. But it is of the utmost importance

to weigh everything by the standard of God's word; and surely what will not stand the light of it in this day will not stand the light of His presence in the coming one. Men's best works are all more or less mixed with sin, and all mere human religion more or less leaves Christ out. The prophet says, "In *all* their doings their sins do appear." (Ezek. xxi. 24.) And has not God said that salvation is "*not* by works of righteousness which we have done." (Titus iii. 5.) And again, "*Not* according to our works." (2 Tim. i. 9.) And again, "*Not* of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. ii. 9.) Has He not accepted Christ, who said, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have *finished the work* which thou gavest me to do." (John xvii. 4.) And has He not cried, "It *is* finished" ?

Why then continue *going about* in your ignorance to establish your own righteousness? All your efforts are utterly vain. It is too late. God has revealed His righteousness, and set aside for ever yours and mine. Submit yourself therefore to His, and cease at once from your own. Bow to God, and believe His testimony concerning His Son. His righteousness is towards *all*, and *upon all* them that believe. (Rom. iii. 22.) Christ *of God* is

made unto *us* wisdom, *righteousness*, &c. (1 Cor. i. 30.) And David describeth *the blessedness* of the man unto whom God *imputeth righteousness without works.* (Rom. iv. 6.)

And as Paul in the passage we have been citing from continues: "The righteousness which is of *faith speaketh in this wise*, Say *not* in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above :) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) *But what saith it?* That if thou *shalt* confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus [or, Jesus as Lord], and *shalt* believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou *shalt* be saved." (Rom. x. 6-9.) Could anything be more positive? And could anything be more simple? If thou, dear reader, instead of *going about* to establish your own righteousness, shalt confess with thy mouth *Jesus* as thy Lord. And if *thy heart's* belief shalt go with thy confession, that God hath raised Him from the dead thou shalt be saved. Does it? Do lips and heart in your case accord? Do you really believe God's testimony concerning Him? Well, what follows? What does He say? "Thou *shalt* be saved." What? Thou.

Mark it well, *thou*. *Thou shalt*. Did His word ever fail? Impossible. “*Thou—shalt—be—saved.*” Saved from all the power of Satan, sin, the world, and everything that entrammels us here, saved in the power of His risen life from everything contrary to God, and finally saved into His everlasting glory. If *thou shalt* confess, and *shalt* believe, *thou shalt* be saved. “For with the *heart* man *believeth* unto righteousness; and with the *mouth* confession is made unto salvation.” (Rom. x. 10.)

Human righteousness as a ground to stand before God is utterly vain; it ends in death and judgment. Divine righteousness is found in Christ, the Man who glorified God, and whom He has glorified. Which are you trusting in? You will never have a better moment than the present to forsake the one for the other. Submit to the righteousness of God, and you will land in the glory of God. And submission to His righteousness will not lead to license or sin, but the opposite. He gives His Spirit to all such, who works in us in power to walk in practical righteousness here, in correspondence with what we become in Christ—God’s righteousness in Him. Beware then, we beseech you, of *mistaken zeal*.

“ONCE TO DIE.”

DEATH settles the question of what man is before God. In these days of much enlightenment and scientific progress people are apt to forget the tremendous fact that death lies upon man, and that he has to meet God. Indeed, it would almost seem, according to some religious leaders to-day, as if God had no rights in this world. We are told that God is too loving to punish sin and that everybody will eventually be saved. God is thus made to become subservient to the convenience and will of His creature, which in reality would mean that man had become God and that God was dethroned.

And yet in connection with things of this life men are not slow to recognise that there must be such a thing as *righteousness*, and that the government of a country must be founded on this principle. If a king upon his accession to the throne were to decide to pull down all the prisons in the land and abolish all penal laws, what would his subjects say? They would surely rise up against such a proceeding and say, such a king will not do for us; if we are to live in happiness and security, crime must be punished, and if evil is not

to be judged what will become of us, yea, what will become of the throne itself? No kingdom could exist on such principles.

Whatever men say, the words of scripture are very emphatic and plain: “It is appointed unto men *once to die*, but *after this the judgment*.” Man can do wonderful things. Science has made marvellous progress of late years, and man believes himself capable of anything. Of late he has taken to flying, but he always comes down again. But no man has ever yet been able to conquer death. Medical and surgical science can do much to alleviate human suffering, but can they ward off the stroke of death? Men can fly in the air, but can they escape the hand of death? Ah, no!

The presence of death in this world demonstrates the fact that there is a very grave question at issue between God and men. Death was no part of the creation of God. Man was not created to die, but to live. And yet all men die. It is not merely a part of mankind that is subject to death, but death has passed upon ALL MEN—why? Because all have sinned.

People are, as a rule, very eager to find out the cause from the effect. And yet how few ask themselves the question, Why do we all die? Why does this wonderful

creature of God, endowed with such faculties as he is, end his days so soon and so ignominiously, returning to the dust of which he was made? There is only one solution of this question. "Death passed upon all men, for that ALL HAVE SINNED." Behind the question of death is the sin-question. Have you yet faced this question, my reader? If you were righteous you would never die. Death would have no power in this world if men were righteous. Death is not the wages of "righteousness" but of "sin." You have sinned against God, and God is infinitely holy and must take account of sin. Blessed be His name, He Himself has settled both the question of sin and of death in such a way as to bring eternal blessing to the one who believes in Jesus.

At Calvary God went into the question of sin. However men may have come under God's government on account of sin prior to this, the question was never gone into so fully as then. Think of it! a divine Person goes into death on account of men's sins, paying the full penalty and giving to God a ransom for all. Divine justice must be satisfied and the claims of God's holy throne fully met (for, be it remembered, God *has* rights and claims upon man, in spite of what men may say), whilst the

love of God was expressed in the death of Christ in all its fulness. There never was such a scene as the cross of Christ. Divine love gave the Son to die for ungodly sinners; divine justice meted out all the judgment to that blessed One.

The DEATH of Christ has for ever settled the question of SIN; the RESURRECTION of Christ has solved the question of DEATH. Death is no longer the greatest power known, nor is it the greatest power in operation in this world. The power of death has been broken, and there lives in the glory of God a Man, the Man Christ Jesus, who has triumphed over death. Nor does He live there for Himself, for having overcome death and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, He lives on behalf of those for whom He died. As the living One He communicates His own resurrection life to all who believe in Him, and soon He will come and claim even their bodies, raising them from the dead and changing those that are still alive on the earth. Then will be seen the full extent of His power, and One who has power over death can do anything.

My reader, if unconverted, you are still under the dominion of sin and death. You are just as helpless with regard to the one as the other; you cannot deliver your-

self from the power and presence of sin, nor can you escape death. The Lord Jesus died for all, and the full results of His death and resurrection are available to you. He does not need to die and rise again that you may be saved. He *has* died; He *has* risen again. This ensures you the forgiveness of sins, justification and eternal glory with Him who died for you, if you will only yield to Him. He died for us that we might be for His pleasure and respond to His love even here. Soon He is coming again and will take every redeemed one to be for ever with Himself. He has the keys of death and of hades and will put forth His mighty resurrection power upon the bodies of those who belong to Him through faith in Him. Will you be among the number?

W. L——B.

THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.” (Rev. xx. 6.)

IN the month of September last, when I attended the funeral of Mr. K——, the above portion of scripture came very forcibly before my mind. I had visited

him a short while previously to his death ; he had been unwell, suffering from heart affection.

I shall never forget that visit, he was so intensely happy and spoke of soon going to be with the Lord. I was well aware of the tender nursing, care and affection that he had received from his daughters, yet I anticipated that he might be spared a little longer, when I looked forward for a renewal of those happy visits. But alas ! how little man discerneth. On the night before his death he had expressed a thought of how good it would be if the Lord would come, evidently desiring that they might all realise the truth of the scripture : “ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” (1 Thess. iv. 17.) Not many hours afterwards his spirit had gone to be with the Lord, passing away in his sleep. I understood his wish was to have a hymn sung before his remains left his late residence and also at the grave side, which was, of course, duly carried out. A servant of God spoke affectionately at the grave side of our departed brother, pointing out the necessity of having the reality of things now.

The memory of that beautiful September morning still clings to me, and as we stood around the grave, I more than ever appreciated the following scripture, "To be with Christ; which is far better."

I would most earnestly desire, if this simple account should fall into the hands of any one who is unsaved, that he would flee to Christ now—"Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." "God is good, and desireth not the death of a sinner." "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world: but that the world through him might be saved." (John iii. 16, 17.) I most earnestly entreat you to think the matter over, do not put it off to another day, a more convenient time might never come. Paul never dreamed that when he was on the way to Damascus threatening slaughter against the disciples of the Lord that his sudden conversion would take place; see the account, Acts ix., and read it for yourself.

If hitherto you have had doubts about sudden conversions, I pray the Lord, on your behalf, that He may graciously dispel such fears. The compensation will be great!

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

I pray God that He may bless these simple words. We know that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

W. B.

Belfast.

WHAT SHALL I DO THEN WITH JESUS?

DOUBTLESS my reader has been pointed, on many occasions, and in various ways, to the Lord Jesus Christ as the *only* Saviour for sinners; he may be very well acquainted with the *way* of salvation, but I would desire that we may really feel the intensely solemn position in which we are now, if not under the shelter of the precious blood of Christ.

God in His rich grace is giving you another opportunity of accepting Christ as *your* Saviour and it may be that this is the parting of the ways for you. Upon your choice hangs the destiny of your soul for *eternity*.

There is a time—we know not when,
A point—we know not where,
Which marks the destiny of men
For glory—or despair.

What will your choice be then?

You would not for a single moment accept the idea of being shut out of heaven, you *hope* to get there, yet the only passport there for rich and poor, old and young, for him who boasts in his religion and the darkest of sinners (for God says in His sight there is no difference), is the precious blood of Jesus. Many works and tears and much profession without the blood will not gain admission for you there, but sheltered by the blood of Jesus, you are secure for ever. Have you reached this point yet?

If you turn to Matthew xxvii. 22 you will see the utterance of Pontius Pilate who had at that moment reached the most vital moment of his life. Who was there before him? Jesus, God's blessed Son, was there, the Creator of all! the Sustainer of everything. He of whom all the prophets wrote, and at whose birth into the world angels made known unto men that a Saviour had come. (Luke ii. 11.) Simeon could say of Him, "Mine eyes have seen *thy salvation*" (Luke ii. 30), and later in His pathway John the

Baptist could say, "Behold the *Lamb of God*, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John i. 29.) He who came here to reveal what was in God's heart, making God known as a Saviour God and a God of infinite love. He who is Judge of all, both dead and living, was there before Pilate, falsely accused by men. What a spectacle! The Creator judged by his creature. He who had drawn near to men for their blessing totally rejected by them and afterwards crucified. Yet He took this path to reach us and save us, and endured all the suffering of Gethsemane and Calvary that we might be brought to God and for ever enjoy the love of God, which has been so fully expressed.

Verses 15 to 25 shew us that Jesus is presented to the Jews for the last time before the cross; Pilate says to them, "Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?" And they chose Barabbas, a thief and a murderer, not Jesus. The final offer is despised and this brings Pilate to the most important moment of his life. Every other moment was nothing compared with this for Pilate. He knew Jesus was a just man (vers. 19-24), but *he must decide* for or against Jesus now. The Jews had chosen Barabbas, and Pilate,

perhaps realising a little of the seriousness of his position, cries aloud, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" (Ver. 22.) Pilate has gone from this scene to await the consequences of that momentous decision. You too, dear reader, must reach this point, and you must quit this scene sooner or later. How much for you then hangs upon your choice; why not take Jesus now as your Saviour, bow the knee and confess Him as your Lord? *Now* is the day of salvation.

Satan will, as ever, bring much before you to tempt you to put this question aside. He says: plenty of time, wait until you are older, you will be better able to decide; in fact anything to rob your soul of the blessing to be found in turning to Jesus. But be warned in time, turn now to Jesus, you will never stand at this point again, this may be the parting of the ways for you. How affectionately and tenderly the Lord Jesus spoke. He said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. xi. 28-30.)

APPOINTED TO DIE!

HERE, in words so plain that none can misunderstand their meaning, the destiny of all is put before us. It is appointed unto men once *to die!*

We may claim to possess the finest physique, or boast a long lived ancestry; we may make every effort to safeguard ourselves against sickness and disease but sooner or later we must die. That great appointment must be kept by kings and queens, by princes and people, rich and poor, old and young. None of us can escape the summons to pass out of this world, out of time into eternity.

All that we see and find our happiness in must presently fade from our grasp and we must die. Alone, when the most careless will be subdued, we must take our journey, "the way of all the earth."

But why enlarge, there is plenty of time!

Plenty of time, who said so? You and I may die suddenly. Struck down in a street accident our life may be gone before we have time to utter a prayer; swept

away in a fire, often so sudden and so awful, or laid in a watery grave by a wreck at sea, our days may be brought to an abrupt conclusion. None of us can tell when the call will come, but of this no one is surely in doubt for a moment, that we *must* die. Perhaps my reader may be spared the sadness of a sudden death, but even if that be so, sooner or later his days on earth must draw to an end. The generation which went before us has passed away and our forefathers sleep in a thousand graves. Brought down from the strength of manhood by the wasting hand of disease or led to the edge of the grave in the years of old age, all nations of the earth move on in long procession to keep the great appointment.

It is appointed unto men once to die.

And who can face that dread ordeal unprepared? No repentance in the heart, no faith in the soul, no prayer upon the lips, no precious blood to screen the guilty soul, no living Saviour to whom to cling!—passing out into the darkness alone, unforgiven, unblest. Well may we pause and reflect. Now the gay song of a giddy world taking the heart's attention, then the unutterable groan of a lost soul; now the riotous living of a thankless

creature, who takes the many gifts from the hand of God without owning what is due to Him who gives so freely, then the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth and the indescribable poverty of a soul divested of everything but its guilt and sin.

But after this the judgment!

Solemn words! The judgment—that hour of which it has been written, “I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

As surely as we must die so surely must we appear before the great white throne of judgment, unless indeed we have been reached by the gospel and have found a refuge in Christ Jesus, He who died for the ungodly.

Judgment is God's strange work and we read, “so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.”

Wonderful thought that God intervened for our salvation. Christ was offered as a victim upon whom the judgment might fall so that there should be a way of escape for us. That wonderful Person,

who appeared among men in the likeness of sinful flesh, being a divine Person was great enough to sustain the judgment of the Almighty throne and rise in triumph from the dead, having by dying accomplished an eternal redemption. He has taken life in resurrection and in the glory of God He lives a Prince and a Saviour. No judgment can ever fall upon His blessed head nor can the feeblest believer who trusts in Him ever come into judgment. Of the believer in Him it is said : he " shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life." Believe me, my reader, there is salvation in no one but Christ Jesus, and His work alone must be the resting-place of our faith.

Not of works, lest any man should boast ! " To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

Before He actually expired on the cross our Lord cried with a loud voice, " It is finished " ! That wonderful work was done ; the sacrifice accepted and the way opened by which all may draw near to God and find pardon and salvation.

Who would venture to add his own works to that wonderful work of redemp-

tion, accomplished by Christ upon the cross?

But we must do our part, it is argued!

Our part! what is our part? Nothing remains to be done by any one of us, for the reason that the whole work has been finished by Christ Himself; and the ground of our acceptance before God is pure grace. No one is preferred there, each is as welcome as the other, for all are alike needy.

But having accepted Christ as the Saviour whom God, in His infinite goodness has provided for all men, we shall never come into judgment, and if we die before the Lord comes again, instead of being a moment of terror it is but the hour when we pass into our Lord's presence to await the resurrection.

Death is no longer feared, nor do we stand in dread of the judgment, for it is known that the sting of death has been taken away by the Saviour who died, but who is now risen again and glorified. The judgment of God against sin He has borne in His holy person when at Calvary and in Him thus there is a blessed haven of rest for all.

“A man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry

place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.”

This is what our Lord Jesus Christ has become to multitudes of souls all over the world and in all ages.

May it please God to grant that you may know Him thus and find rest unto your soul.

BISESAR; OR, TURNED TO GOD FROM IDOLS.

A PILGRIM, a Brahmin from Benares, had tramped over a great part of India and as far as Dwarka in Kathiawar, the farthest shrine toward the setting sun; then wearily retraced his steps to Ajmere, the capital of Rajputana. He had left a comfortable home, wife and child, and reputation as of the priestly caste, to don the scanty garb of a religious mendicant, in a sincere search after truth and peace of soul.

He had gone from village to village, clanking the tongs which every devotee carries to tend his fire with—to attract attention, receiving in his iron platter handfuls of flour, and a little salt, from those who either coveted his blessing or

feared his curse. He had cooked his simple meal of chapaties, thin unleavened scones, on the platter, supported on stones, with burning twigs beneath. Having partaken of this fare, with a draught from his lotah—a globular brass vessel that might hold a pint—replenished from the nearest well, he would spread his leopard's skin and rest there—perchance under a banyan or pipal tree or under the stars, his almost bare body and matted locks exposed to the dew of heaven.

In the morning he would rise betimes, smear his face and body with the ashes from his extinct fire, pour out a libation in the bright sunlight, mutter a prayer, it might be to Mahadeo, the great God, and then pursue his dull and dreary way with an aching heart and all hopeless, by fertile hamlets or over arid desert tracts, or through jungles infested by ferocious animals.

Thus Bisesar reached Ajmere, and as he passed along a crowded street, his attention was arrested by one who stood there addressing the passers by.

The preacher was a Mahratta, of prepossessing appearance, kindly open face and beaming eyes, as he earnestly sought to impress his hearers with that which he himself most evidently believed to be

true, and suited to meet their spiritual need.

Bisesar listened attentively, all the time wondering what new religion this was that could make the preacher so happy, as he dwelt on man's ruined condition and the mighty love of God which led Him to give His own Son to become a man and die in man's stead, that the latter through faith in this Substitute might be pardoned and blessed.

As the preacher closed, he observed the bewildered yet eager look on the poor mendicant's face and invited him to his home, where he would expound to him "the way of God more perfectly."

There Bisesar heard at greater length the story of Jesus and His love. As light gradually broke in upon his darkened soul, so long held in Satan's cruel bondage, his desire to hear more increased till, instructed from the word of God and taught of the Spirit, he soon humbly confessed Jesus as Lord, and found peace and liberty.

Reader, have you felt your deep need as a sinner before God?

If so, let me urge you to seek Him with all your heart, as Bisesar sought, assured that He will receive you also. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast

out." (John vi. 37.) "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." (Isa. lxvi. 2.) He is, too, the "rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. xi. 6.)

Bisesar forsook all his false gods, realising that "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv. 12.) He "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven." (1 Thess i. 9, 10.) He relinquished his high social standing as a Brahmin, took the ground of being a poor lost sinner, and found all his need met in Christ, the Saviour of sinners.

Then, his long and weary quest ended, with joy of heart Bisesar sought to live to God, and took his place with the few gathered to the name of the Lord there.

It was a spectacle for angels and men to rejoice over, to see the once poor heathen man, now literally clothed and in his right mind,* sitting among the people of God and devoutly remembering the Lord in His death in the Lord's supper.

Well might one say, as with Peter in

* Bisesar's shorn, matted locks and tongs hung on the wall of the little meeting room for some time.

the case of the centurion, "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." (Acts x. 34, 35.)

It will be seen that two things pre-eminently marked Bisesar. First, he earnestly and with his whole heart sought after God; and secondly, when God's way of salvation, by Jesus Christ, was set forth for his acceptance, he implicitly and without question believed God.

Employment was found for Bisesar, and despite being accounted as dead by his kindred and caste, he lived consistently and happily for some years, testifying for Christ—the treasure he had found—till God called him to Himself.

" 'Tis the treasure I've found in His love,
That has made me a pilgrim below;
And 'tis there, when I reach him above,
As I'm known, all His fulness I'll know."

T. K.

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

WE are all sinners. No one has any hesitation in admitting it, for "being born in sin and shapen in iniquity," it cannot be denied. It only

necessitates one evil thought to prove that one is a sinner; one spot of leprosy to be a leper; and as such under Satan's authority, and under the power of death. How terrible is the condition of men away from God! How much misery and wretchedness lie underneath the pride that prevents one turning in repentance to Christ Jesus, the *living* Saviour.

But are we all agreed as to the consequences of sin? Alas! we are not. Dear reader, do not forget the words of the scripture: "After death the judgment." Every soul to whom the gospel has been preached that has not turned to God in repentance must perish. How solemn!

But thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift—for "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Who was it that was made sin, who was here on earth the Just for the unjust? It was Jesus, the Son of God. Christ was the mediator who was able to maintain the rights of God's throne—maintain the majesty, the righteousness and the holiness of God—and take the sinner's place—He was nailed to the cross and made sin and bore *all* the judgment. Have you heard the Victor's cry, "It is FINISHED."

Where is Christ *now*? In resurrection

and in glory. The Saviour sees and knows you and is the same now as He was on earth and receives every burdened and heavy-laden sinner who turns to Him.

If I submit as a sinner to Christ and and rest my faith in Him my sins will be forgiven, and I shall have a place with Christ in glory by-and-by, and during the remainder of my life on earth I shall ever have Him to turn to—my Lord; my Master, my all. P. W—T.

“ A MORE EXCELLENT SACRIFICE.”

“ **B**Y 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.” (Heb. xi. 4.) In the first place Abel becomes an offerer, he offers to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. Thus he sets forth in a striking way the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, “ who offered himself without spot to God.” “ Abel brought the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering.” (Gen. iv. 4.) It was this alone that God could accept. First, because it pointed to

Christ, the true burnt offering, which ascended to God as a sweet smelling savour. Secondly, because we see in it the soul's acceptance and righteousness before God. It is a great thing for a person to get the right object before him and to consider for the moment the question, "Whom does God accept?" He could not accept us in sin and guilt; He must accept a greater, it must be a more excellent sacrifice. Thus Christ is both the offerer and the offering. This sets the soul at rest and peace, as the eye is turned to Him as meeting all the requirements of God. Christ is both the sin-offering and the burnt-offering. If God is to draw near to us and we draw near to Him, Christ, who knew no sin, must "be made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in him." But in Himself the spotless One, all the fragrance of His person rising up to God; all that precious life lived here under the eye of God finding its blessed answer in His death and resurrection; the blessed proof of God's entire and eternal satisfaction in Him. Thus the believer in Jesus is not only accepted, but acceptable, accepted because of the perfection of the sacrifice and acceptable because Christ as the risen One is acceptable to God. The

truth of this is all made good in the soul by the Spirit of God, and realised by faith, that not only have we our sins forgiven but we are righteous before God and no single charge will ever be brought against us. Perfect love has cast out fear, which had torment. The believer now has peace with God, he is brought consciously into all the unclouded favour of His presence, and thus able to draw near to God "by a new and living way"; he has no more conscience of sins. For Christ has offered Himself as the one sacrifice for sins, and has sat down on the right hand of God. (Heb. x. 12.) The believer in Jesus ceases to look within, he ceases to wonder how he can be accepted, his soul is filled with joy in the thought that he is now brought near to God and made perfectly at home in His presence. Thus he is led to worship. The Spirit of God within him makes him conscious that in his flesh good does not dwell, and he ceases to look in that direction, as his soul is occupied with Christ. The soul has to go through much exercise in order to learn experimentally that the flesh in him is in no way improved, but that it has received its utter condemnation at the cross. Thus we learn the work of God for us, that Christ

in His death put an end to all that we were in sinful flesh, and thus we are able to reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God in Christ Jesus. (Rom. vi. 11.) The believer is entitled to live to God now because Christ lives to God. There is before God a blessed Man in whom He has found all His delight, and in whom all His pleasure has been expressed—His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. May the soul be filled with a deep sense of the greatness of Christ.

E. I. E.

THE PHYSICIAN.

TO the Pharisees Jesus said, "Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." Mercy meant that God was going to relieve man; while sacrifice signified that man was to give to God. Thus the Physician God sent brought mercy as the remedy for sinful man, so Jesus called the needy to come and partake of the remedy He had brought.

However, before this remedy could be preached to *every creature* Jesus had to die and rise again, and after He had

ascended, the Holy Spirit was sent down to give power to the preachers to carry on the testimony concerning the remedy for every needy sinner.

Thus the aspect of the gospel is toward every creature, and is preached with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. This Physician knows each case well, and also knows the remedy which will suit each case, but applies it only when the person is willing to receive it on God's terms. These terms are very simply stated in the words, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." (Rom. iv. 5.)

There must be faith in the gospel. The longer any one delays the more difficult things become. Delay means that the person thinks he knows better than God, and all the excuses he builds up are but so many obstacles to his yielding to the gospel. Every obstacle raised against the reception of the simple gospel is unbelief. Thus delay is unbelief. The word to Zaccheus was, "Make haste and come down." This is a good, wholesome word for any anxious person to follow, for "whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke xiv. 11.) G. W. G.

TO ALL MEN.

IN grace God has brought salvation within the reach of every one. There is therefore no need to groan under the oppression of Satan's power and the dominion of sin. But in order to find this salvation and know the blessedness of relief sin must be forsaken and there lies the great hindrance for multitudes of people.

It is an awful thing to realise that naturally we love our sin. What is corrupt and vile we should most of us recoil from. But our own will! it is this we love, and it is sin.

In His grace, however, God has brought to pass a great salvation and it is available for all.

No nation under heaven is excepted; no race in the wide world is excluded. The civilised inhabitant of the West has no more claim than the idolator of the East. God has made of one blood all nations of the earth and His salvation is presented in the gospel as suitable for all and available for all.

Not only so, but it is also for *all men*

irrespective of social position. The highest in the land has no more claim than the humblest member of the community. You may preach God's great salvation in the squares of Belgravia or the slums of Whitechapel. No one can arise and say: Ah, yes! but it is not for me, for it is presented to all men.

And further, it is sounded in our hearing *without distinction even as to our guilt.* That some persons are more guilty than others no one would question for a moment, but all need salvation. A ship at sea may have one hole in her hull and sink slowly, but another may have six or eight and settle down and speedily founder. It is only a question of degree. You cannot arise among us and say, I have never sinned; I am the blessed exception to the general rule; I am the image of a blameless life. Ah, no! All have sinned and come short of the glory of God and all need salvation, and, thank God! He has brought it within our reach.

In addition to this let me say that salvation does *not lie in a system of ordinances.* It was to be found there in the days of old, but those days have ended long, long ago.

Salvation is now to be found *in the knowledge of a Person.*

“ Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God [and] our Saviour Jesus Christ.” (Titus ii. 13.)

This is the outlook of the Christian, “ the glorious appearing of the *great God* our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

The first characteristic of our Saviour is that He is the great God.

It is indeed very wonderful to see that a divine Person has become man's Saviour. Marvellous mercy ! It was God, against whom we had sinned, and from whom we had wandered in selfwill and rebellion of heart, but it is He who has become our Saviour. God the Son became man and appeared here on earth, bringing all the greatness of Godhead into manhood and as a man He became the victim upon whom the judgment which our sins deserved fell. He died and shed His blood, in the efficacy of which sins are forgiven.

If we look at the scripture (Titus i. 2), we shall see that God is referred to as He *who cannot lie*. And God has become our Saviour—the great God, who cannot lie. Here then is a haven of refuge for the anxious, storm-tossed soul who has found this and that in which he has trusted fail him.

How immutable ! how secure ! how

reliable! the great God, who CANNOT lie. Do you seek for the truth in this world, where a hundred voices are to be heard? Cast yourself upon God, bend your knee in prayer to Him. His ear is not heavy, that it will not hear. You can trust your all to Him, *He cannot lie*. What rest to a weary soul!

“But I fear He may spurn me, for I am sinful!” do I hear you say? Ah, no! He never will act thus, for of Him it is said (Titus ii. 13, 14), “The great God our Saviour Jesus Christ; *who gave himself* for us, that he might redeem us.” To me it is a most wonderful thing that God is here spoken of as having given Himself. I learn in that the mercy of God. No sacrifice which I could bring could meet the need of the hour—of my sins—and He gave Himself. I see in that also the love of God. Has He given Himself for me, a poor, lost, erring man, whom nobody would love if they knew him? He has, and I see in what He has done that He has loved His fallen creature and I need not fear Him.

In what He is as the great God I see His greatness; His strength to accomplish salvation for me.

In what He is as God who cannot lie I learn how trustworthy He is. I cannot

trust men, but I can trust God, for He CANNOT lie, and moreover I can go to Him, known in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself a ransom for all. (1 Tim. ii. 6.)

He is the great God—the Son, who died, but who is risen again and ascended up higher than all heavens.

To Him then turn for salvation. No arm but His can give it to you. But He can and will.

“Look UNTO ME, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth : FOR I AM GOD, AND THERE IS NONE ELSE.” (Isa. xlv. 22.)

THE END OF AN IMPIOUS FEAST.

IT was night, the streets of Babylon were deserted, the gay life of the city had ceased, the merchant had forgotten his merchandise, the drunkard slept amid his winecups. Yonder is the palace of the king, that pleasure-loving monarch.

It is the night of the banquet, an impious feast is being held within. Suddenly the festivities are interrupted by fingers of a man's hand-writing upon the plaster of the palace wall. A strange feeling took possession of the king. His countenance

was changed; his thoughts troubled him; his lords were astonished. What could it all mean; why this rude interruption? Quickly he sends for the wise men in his kingdom, determined to know what this writing could be, but they are unable to interpret its meaning. Could not the wise men in his realm soothe his troubled heart? Impossible! These were the fingers of no ordinary hand. Was it not the writing of Him in whose hand was the very breath of the king? Assuredly it was the writing of none other than God.

But Daniel is called, the man in whom was an excellent spirit found, and light and understanding also, he will make known to the king the interpretation of the thing. How aptly Daniel illustrates another Person in another kingdom, who alone can make known the holy scriptures and unfold God's thoughts. It is by the Holy Ghost alone that this is done. Men may be clever, shrewd and farseeing, able to discern the face of the sky and the planets, but no man, it is written, by "searching can find out God," it is the Spirit of God alone who can reveal to us the power and greatness of this blessed Person. But Daniel stands before the king, he rehearses his grandfather's doom, and recounts what had befallen

him, and predicts that the same doom would come upon the king also. Tremblingly he listens to the prophet as he interprets those words, "Mene, mene, tekem, upharsin." Mene: God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. Has the meaning of these words any bearing upon you? They surely have. God has numbered your days and mine, and He will one day finish them; He will bring our life's history to an end. The eye of the great Unseen had scanned and marked the whole career of Belshazzar and brought all his glory to an end, and if such a thing as that should happen to you and you were snatched from a whirl of pleasure to face the great "for ever," what then? That which constitutes your life, but which ends in disappointment, will come to an end; and death, the "king of terrors," will lay his icy hand upon your shivering frame. How will you meet that moment? In the day of judgment the eyes of the Judge will be fixed upon those who have refused the gospel when mercy's day is over, and they will hear Him say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. xxv. 41.) Such is the emphatic statement of holy scripture. And we do well to take heed

to it. But our God is the God of mercy, of grace, of love, and judgment is His strange work, although He must execute it.

These are careless, indifferent days with many, and thousands are running the risk of *losing* their precious souls for a few fleeting moments of pleasure. What folly! Belshazzar was weighed in "the balances and found wanting." We have all been weighed in the balances of divine justice. The cross of Christ is the exposure of the heart of man, but also the bringing to light of the heart of God amid the silent and deepening darkness that shrouded the blessed Saviour: "mercy and truth there met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other"; light and love told its wondrous tale. The cross made known the fact that man was found wanting. But the blessed Son of God stooped in death to meet that want and to supply man's desperate need by the great work of redemption, securing a full and free salvation. Glorious fact! It is for you, at your disposal, for your acceptance. Your eternal destiny depends upon your treatment of God's message. If you reject it it will be an eternity of woe, but if you regard it in the light of scripture, and give heed to the voice of God, a glorious future

will open out to you in the end. Let the history of Belshazzar be a warning voice to you ere it be too late.

E. I. E.

THAT LITTLE WORD, "IF."

THIS is a word which has to do with man, but is not applicable to God. There is no "if" with God.

I think that the use of the letters "D. V." for the Latin form of "God willing" is out of fashion, for the very idea of subjection to the will of God is distasteful. But the little word "if" is often on our lips, and denotes that we may not be able to do that which we propose, or wish.

"If" suggests doubt, and so the tempter uses it, when addressing our Lord in the wilderness (Matt. iv. 3-6), he says, "*If* thou be the Son of God."

Hitherto man had been led captive by Satan, but here was One who stood where man had fallen, who overcame where man had been vanquished. And the victory was due to the fact that God was perfectly manifested in the incarnate Son—God was, as it were, brought into the field of conflict. The Word became flesh—had become man, and, as such, subject to the Father; and He shewed forth both His

divinity and humanity, by taking the subject place, as He answered the tempter.

“*If* thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross,” scoffed many who passed by upon the hill of Calvary. No natural man—no one, who is not born of God—can understand the love of Him who hung on the cross, and who could, at any moment, have come down—could have left the world, and gone to the Father. Had He gone then, He must have gone *alone*, the purpose unaccomplished which brought Him to the cross. Love decided the question, it was love which held the Lord to the cross; love, not human power, which brought Him there; love, not Satan, which called Him to remain there, and to endure the shame, the reproach and the mockery. “Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame.” The joy was that of doing the Father’s will, of accomplishing His purposes of saving men, of winning His bride, the church. All this was before His holy soul, and He knew well that none but He could do the work which proclaimed Him—spite of that scornful “if”—the Son of God!

Christ Himself uses the word “if” when a band of men and officers come to the garden of Gethsemane with the purpose of

taking Him prisoner. The very mention of His name had caused those men to fall to the ground, but He allowed them to take Him, in order that His own should be free. "If ye seek me," He said, "let these go their way." His was the

Love that no tongue can teach,
Love that no thought can reach,
No love like His.

We read in the first chapter of the Gospel according to St. Mark that a leper came to Christ, but doubted, not His power, but rather His willingness, to cure such as he was, "If thou wilt," he says, "thou canst make me clean."

The heart, as well as the power, of the Christ of God was revealed. "Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him." There was no need for this personal handling, one word would have availed to effect the cure, but the divine touch was to convince the leper how needless the "if" was which questioned the Saviour's love and infinite compassion.

On another occasion the power rather than the willingness of Christ to cure was doubted. A father brought his son, who had a dumb spirit, to the Lord (Mark ix. 22), "If thou canst do anything," he said, "have compassion on us, and help us." The disciples had failed to cure the

sufferer, and now a doubt of the Master's ability is heavy upon the father's heart. Note the difference of our Lord's treatment of this case. He throws back the "if" upon the supplicant, and replies, "*If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.*" (Ver. 23.) We lose something of the force of the passage in the translation; "the 'if' is with you, not with Me," is something like the meaning of Christ's words.

And now we come to an "if" used by God. We have said that there are no "ifs" with God; there are none which refer to His own character or work; the "ifs" all apply to man.

"If"—so runs the divine word—"thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Look at the passage carefully. The "if" is God's, but it has to do with *you*. God's word is "*thou shalt,*" and with that word there is no "if." If you bow the knee, and surrender the heart to Jesus, as Lord, who, by His resurrection, has proved His lordship, and "who was declared to be the Son of God, with power . . . by resurrection from the dead" (Rom. i. 4), if you accept Him, as Saviour and Lord, you "*shall be saved.*"

How simple, but how eternally blessed, is this great truth!

We will look at one more scriptural "if"; it illustrates the way in which men often receive the changeless statements of God, and seek to introduce into them an element of uncertainty.

In Genesis xxviii. we read that when Jacob found himself an outcast, with only a stone for his pillow, and, humanly speaking, beyond hope, the Lord appeared to him and said, "*I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.*" Here is a distinct promise, without reservation, dependent entirely on the will of the promiser, and not upon the condition or conduct of him to whom the promise is made. Surely such a promise should have been received and accepted in humility and trust; but Jacob imports an "if" into his answer, and says, "If God will be with me . . . then shall the Lord be my God." (Gen. xxviii. 20, 21.)

This "if" was addressed to One who had just undertaken to *be with Jacob*, and *keep him*, and bring him again, and *never leave him*, until He had done all of which He had spoken. Ah, foolish, doubting

Jacob! He had to lead a long and crooked life before he learned to trust God absolutely.

Are you like Jacob? Do you bring forward your "if" to God? If not, take the promise held out to you in Romans x., "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."

E. C——P.

NAAMAN THE LEPER;

(or, "NOW I KNOW.")

HE was captain of the host of the King of Syria, a mighty man of valour. He had led a mighty army to certain victory, for God had given deliverance to Syria by him. But he was a leper.

Elisha was making his way through the land of Israel, where death, dearth and disease presented itself. He was equal to every emergency. The captive maid tells her master of the prophet in Samaria who could cure him of his leprosy. Hastily he drives in the direction of the house of Elisha with his gallant horses and imposing chariot, in proud and haughty mien, thinking the prophet would come out to him and "strike his hand over the

place, and recover the leper;" but not so, Elisha could not bend to the pride even of such a great man as Naaman. He sends his messenger out to him, requesting him to wash seven times in Jordan and his flesh would come again to him, and he should be clean. (2 Kings v. 10.) But the saying did not please Naaman; he said: "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" Assuredly they were to the natural taste, but there was not anything in them that might suggest God's way of cleansing. The proud man turned and went away in a rage. Have you, my friend, ever turned away in a rage when God's way of blessing has been suggested to you? Naaman refused to bend to the prophet's word: "Go and wash in Jordan seven times." The dark, dismal waters of Jordan did not appeal to this mighty man of valour. The death of Christ may not suggest itself to you as having anything to do with your eternal blessing, nevertheless, it is the divine way and the only means by which your sins can be forgiven and blotted out from before the eye of God for ever. The waters of Jordan are a type or foreshadowing of that wondrous death, and there cannot be any blessing apart from Christ's death.

The little maid and the servants in Naaman's house were all intent upon their master doing what the prophet had bidden him. "If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?" (2 Kings v. 13.) Was not this sound advice? At last he turns his horses in the direction of the Jordan. He dismounts and goes beneath the waters "and dips himself seven times . . . and he was clean." You must go down to be cleansed, in other words, you must bend your will to the death of Christ.

Naaman returns now to all his company, and stands before the man of God, and says, "Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel." (2 Kings v. 15.) What a confession, "Now I know." Can you say, my friend, Now I know? Can you speak in such a positive manner as this? Naaman's pride vanished, his will is yielded and he gives glory to the God of Israel. May you be able to say as Paul in a later day, "I know whom I have believed." May you be able to speak with the same assurance through faith in a living Saviour. May you have to do with Him in a personal way. He is willing, He is ready, He is waiting to save you.

A GREAT SIEGE.

(2 KINGS VI. AND VII.)

THE siege of Samaria, of which the record is given in the second book of Kings, chapters vi., vii., is a remarkable illustration of things as they are to-day.

The King of Syria had gathered his armies together and came up against the city and besieged it until the utmost distress prevailed among the inhabitants.

It is my purpose to use the details of those unhappy days to indicate to my readers certain serious events which I see to have taken place in our day.

The investing army of the Syrians which lay about the walls of Samaria is suggestive of the hosts of darkness which have laid siege to this world.

Satan and his hosts have encompassed this world to hold the inhabitants thereof in bondage.

Possibly some may consider what I say as foolish, for to them these things have never been manifest, but let me assure all such that I have ample evidence to support what I say.

The great deceiver has not allowed his designs to be known. Will he acquaint

men with the fact that his armies are investing them, to the end that they may be retained beneath his power? Not he! Rather will he labour to conceal what he has in view and fling delusion over the hearts of all. But, believe me, those besieging armies are relentlessly drawing a tighter hold upon the city (this world) until, when reduced to utter helplessness the inhabitants will be carried away into a fearful bondage.

In the city of Samaria the people were brought to terrible straits. It is recorded that an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver. An ass's head and dove's dung! What food for a man!

Man, who has been set in dominion in the creation brought to this!

And of what is this a figure? I judge that it represents the food upon which persons are living, I mean the moral support on which they are leaning. How degrading and defiling for human beings to be reduced to such food as that which fetched a high price in Samaria—an ass's head and dove's dung! And how degrading and corrupting are the elements presented for the sustenance of the peoples of the world. Take much of the

literature of the day and ask yourself if it is fit for human consumption ; consider the drama, which attracts the largest crowds, and having surveyed it say if you judge it to be fit for the occupation of God's creatures.

I say it is altogether beneath the dignity of a man to feed upon such things. We well remember, many of us, a moment in our history when it occurred to us that we were *men*. We said to ourselves: Shall we grovel in these things; shall we taste what is indelicate and impure and fill our minds with the filthiness of the flesh? No! It is beneath the dignity of a human being; it is abhorrent, it is loathsome.

Not only is famine, with all its horrors, upon the people of the world, but pestilence is wasting the land.

The outcome of siege is pestilence and this world has felt its fearful touch. How is it, think you, that there are thousands and thousands swept away every year by consumption and thousands more die beneath the withering hand of cancer? Who is there among us that has not groaned in his spirit as he has seen the victim of consumption languish and die although the sufferer is still in the bloom of youth; or has seen the pained look in the face of the person who is bowed under

the pang of the cancer, or some other dreadful disease?

These terrible things have become indeed a pestilence in the earth and our greatest men find it impossible to stamp them out. Ah, me! These are some of the awful ills that are upon the peoples of the world as the outcome of the besieging army that lies about our walls. And devise as you will you cannot remove them; remedy them to some extent you may, but ever and again there rises the cry of the helpless sufferer and the groan of afflicted peoples. God is not the author of these things; indeed, no! In His governmental dealing with men He has *allowed* them, but they have their source in the awful fact of this world being bound by the armies of the destroyer.

In the stress of the terrible days in the city of Samaria of which I have written a prophet arose who stated that the word of the Lord had been spoken, and that a measure of fine flour was about to be sold for a shekel and two measures of barley for a shekel in the gate of Samaria.

There were scoffers it is true, and there are scoffers to-day.

Happiness to be found in Christ, and salvation from the power of Satan and sin by belief in Him as Lord! No, no! This

is all a fable ; better far enjoy the pleasures of this world while you can. And further, just think of salvation being found in such a simple way. If the Lord made windows in heaven might such things be ! With such words as these the crowds pass on. But mark you, salvation from the siege is to be found, FOR I HAVE FOUND IT. You may say it is not possible to know it. But there are those who have found deliverance, and no longer groan beneath the cruel bond of the enemy's power.

Would you know what they know ? Then follow me yet a moment longer.

There were four leprous men in the gate of Samaria, and they said one to another: Why sit we here till we die ? The famine is in the city and if we sit still here we shall die. Let us fall upon the hosts of the Syrians, they can but kill us. Wise counsel that ! They arose to seek their deliverance and, behold, the Lord had intervened on their account. The enemy was gone, and yet the inhabitants of the city still thought themselves to be at the mercy of the besieging army. So is it in our day. The Lord has intervened and the power of the enemy has been broken by the Son of God. That blessed Person was pleased to come into the

besieged city (this world) and He has vanquished the besieging host in that He has died out of this world and has taken life in resurrection. He has ascended up where He was before, as Man risen from the dead. Thank God, no besieging army can trespass there!

In the city of Samaria a measure of fine flour *was* sold for a shekel and two measures of barley *were* sold for a shekel.

This suggests how Christ has been presented to men, the humbled, lowly, sin-bearing One who died upon the cross—the fine flour, but not only so, He has also been presented in the gospel as a risen and glorified Christ for the obedience of faith among all nations.

And there are thousands who have found in Him a Saviour, One through whom the power of the enemy has been broken.

As to our sins, He died for them, being delivered for our offences; and as to our sinful state before God in which the enemy had power over us, well, He, who knew no sin, has been made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. (Rom. iv. 25; 2 Cor. v. 21.)

And He is risen, this is illustrated in the barley sold in Samaria for a shekel, for the barley harvest was typical of Christ's resurrection.

And have you known this blessed One, who has made a way out of the beleaguered city in His death. Have you followed Him through death, accepting before God that you must die, for "the wages of sin is death," and passing under the waters of baptism have you acknowledged that the end of all flesh has come before God? And we can approach God in all His merit and perfection as the risen One, realising that He, our Lord Jesus Christ, is the measure of our acceptance. Have you put your faith in Him—the risen One? He is Lord of all. *Satan* is beneath His power. What calm assurance fills the soul as one is given to know Him AS LORD. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

If you are given to know Him thus the power of the enemy to you will be broken, for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. And you shall find your support in His love—blessed balm for a sorrowing heart. And your food shall be to meditate upon His perfections and His glories—the "Bread of life" come down from heaven.

May the Lord grant that you may be awakened to see your true bondage and to rise up and find salvation in Christ Jesus our LORD!

“THIS MAN.”

THESSE two words are often used in the New Testament with reference to the Lord Jesus, and it will be interesting to look at a few scriptures where they occur.

In John vii. they are mentioned four times, in the first instance in verse 15. The Lord Jesus goes to the Jews' feast of tabernacles. The Jews were zealous of their feasts, but they thought nothing of the Son of God. They were happy with a religious order of things without God. This is very plain by the way they treated His Son—the One who had come from God, freighted with the love of the Father's heart. Some said, He was a good man, others that He was a deceiver of the people, and there was much murmuring among them concerning Him.

Then again in verse 27 the people declare: “We know this man whence he is,” but they would not have Him as the One who had come from God. They knew not God, therefore they would not have His Son. He was the One who had come to make God known, and if they refused Him they refused the One who sent Him.

In verse 31 we read that some believed and said, “ When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done ? ” But the Pharisees and chief priests heard this and at once send officers to take Him. He could not be taken before His time had come : some would have taken Him but no man laid hands on Him. The officers returned without Him and when asked the question, “ Why have ye not brought him ? ” answered, “ Never man spake like this man ” ! His words overpowered them, how could they take Him ? They had never heard any one speak as He spoke.

In Luke xv. 1, there were those who drew near with the express purpose of hearing Jesus, and it is said He ate with them. But “ the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. ” In Luke xxiii. we see Him as a prisoner. There was a certain feast at which it was the custom to release a prisoner. On this occasion there stood two, side by side. One was a murderer, the other Jesus. The people had brought Him to Pilate as One who had perverted the people, but Pilate said, “ I find no fault in this man, ” but the people desired Him to be crucified. They would not have Him. “ Away with this man, and

release unto us Barabbas." This was their cry. So He was crucified between two thieves.

Lastly, He is now in the glory. Having been into death He has risen again triumphant over every foe, and forgiveness of sins is preached in His name. (Acts xiii. 38.)

If the reader would have to do with God, he can know his sins forgiven because of the finished work of Christ. "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." A. H. C.

COMMANDED.

WE are all under obligation to God. We may not realise it, nor indeed accept it if we do realise it, but the fact remains, for it is written, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being." (Acts xvii. 28.) There is no such thing as free agency or freedom of conscience as men affirm to-day; some of us may be of opinion that it is so, but our opinions are worth nothing when we come to view things in the light, and from the standpoint, of the unalterable word of the living God.

In the first place we are the handiwork of the Creator God, we have been brought into being by Him, His hand has fashioned us. He is the potter, we are the clay, and shall we turn round and say to God, "Why hast thou made me thus?" (Rom. ix. 20.) Yet men to-day in their pride and self-will even dare to attempt to throw off all restraint and responsibility and even say as they did long ago, "How doth God know, and is there knowledge with the Most High?"

We believe most certainly in the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. Think of the command which has gone forth, "But God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts xvii. 30.) Mark, all men everywhere, whether religious or irreligious, refined or rude, whether a millionaire or a pauper, a king or a peasant, all alike are called upon to repent. This command has been issued not from a royal court, but from God Himself. It was issued nearly two thousand years ago, and it has never been withdrawn.

Many have repented and believed the gospel.

Have you?

From the throne upon which a risen and glorified Christ sits the command has

gone forth, bringing in its train the welcome news of forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those that are sanctified. The mighty work of redemption has been accomplished through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. We delight to praise and do Him homage; He is worthy.

But why should men repent? Listen! "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts xvii. 31.)

Such was Paul's message to the Athenians and philosophers who spent their time in devotions to an unknown God and such is the message to you. Will you not heed it? It will truly be to your present and eternal happiness if you do.

Why should you repent? Because very shortly God will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained. That is the same blessed Person through whom God is pleased to offer a full and free salvation. .

The fact is this, that in the day which God has appointed, of which we have spoken—the thousand years of Christ's glorious reign—such a period of peace and prosperity will prevail over all the world

that God commands every man to repent and turn to the Lord that he may enjoy those days of happiness and of joy.

In that day Satan will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit; peace will prevail among the nations, who will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. The curse shall be withdrawn from the earth and "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree." In that blest day the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as a rose. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

God looks upon His creature in compassion and grace and in view of such a day of blessed peace and rest and happiness He commands him to repent so that he may come into the blessing of that day instead of perishing.

It should not be forgotten, however, that the day of judgment will come, but the day appointed of which we have spoken hardly speaks of it, but of that day when our Lord will be King over all the earth. May God grant that the readers of this paper may indeed repent and acknowledge the Lordship of Christ in this the day of grace. E. I. E.

“I DON'T BELIEVE IN YOUR GOD.”

TWO men were walking along a country road talking together, when suddenly one of them exclaimed, “But I don't believe in your God.”

“Very likely not,” replied his companion quietly, “I thought it might be so, but may I ask why?”

“You say He is almighty,” said the other, “Most certainly,” was the answer, “and that He is love,” continued the speaker, “Yes, indeed, the scripture asserts both these things most clearly,” replied the second speaker.

“Then I don't believe in Him,” was the response he received.

“But why not, tell me why not?” was

again asked, “ what has that to do with the matter? ”

“ Look around you and see all the sickness, sorrow, pain, death, and all the terrible woes and evils, the wars, murders and distresses that constantly take place in this world. Do you believe your God could put a stop to them if he chose, as I suppose He could if He is almighty? ”

“ Yes,” replied the other firmly, “ I certainly believe He could.”

“ And He does not and you say He is love? ”

“ Yes,” He is love and He does not,” repeated his companion.

“ Well,” said the other, “ I cannot understand it, and I cannot believe in such a God, unless you can tell me *why* He does not.”

“ I think I can tell you why not,” was the quiet remark.

“ I wish you would tell me,” came with some show of warmth from the other. They stood still in the road and looked one another in the face.

“ Do you really wish to know? ” was the question. “ I am afraid you will not like what I have to say, but I will tell you if you really wish to know.”

“ Yes, I do,” the man replied.

“ Well, you ask for it, and you shall

have it in the form of a question. You stand here to-day upon this road a rebel against God, convicted by your own words. You have never bowed to His claims nor acknowledged His rule. If He were to-day to begin to put the wrongs of this world to rights by asserting His authority and forcing by His judgments all to submit themselves as He will do in the future, what must He do with you and such as you? He must take you straight from this spot on which you stand and put you into His prison of hell, there to endure eternal penal servitude—the second death. But judgment is His strange work and He does not wish to do this, for ‘He is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.’ This is why He waits.”

They separated without another word.

The cross has vindicated God’s nature. “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. Yes—

“WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH.”

In the face of this blessed fact, alas that any should be found who dare to say:

“I don’t believe in your God.” J. V.

GOD SPEAKING.

THESSE are the last days, of that there can be no doubt. Not the last days of the world's history exactly, but the last days of this dispensation.

God has spoken in His Son. In the days of old He spoke to men by His prophets at different times and in different ways. Sometimes men heeded what He said, but alas! too often they turned a deaf ear to what He had to say. God has spoken for the last time, He will never speak again during the present period. It is important, therefore, that we should know what He has said, if it concerns us, and that it does concern us is certain. I am a sinner; I am lost and perishing. What has God to say to me and about me? This is an important question. The first thing He speaks of is the greatness of His Son, the One in whom He has spoken. He is the Heir of all things; the Creator; He is God; His throne is for ever and ever.

Not only has God spoken of the personal greatness of Christ, but He has also spoken of a

Great Salvation

which He has provided for those who are

needy. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Truly there will be no escape, for if we turn to the Jewish system we shall find that God has given it up. Those sacrifices offered under the law never put away sins and never made the comers thereunto perfect. Of what use then would it be to turn back to them?

God has spoken in His Son and His word is sharper than any two-edged sword. It smites us in our conscience, and too often we turn away angry at the sense of sin and shame of which we are made aware. But let me urge the reader to be patient and hear what God has to say. If the sacrifices offered in the days of old did not take away sins a

sacrifice has been offered

which is great enough to take away sins and put them away for ever. That sacrifice was the offering of the body of Jesus Christ.

It is as though God said, I know that you cannot bring a sacrifice which I can accept, and even if I could accept it, it is not great enough to meet my need and yours, so I have given my only begotten Son that He may die as the victims died in the days of old, and He is great enough

to meet all the need. Thus God has spoken to men. It is well worth our while to hearken to what He has to say. That wonderful sacrifice of Jesus Christ is available for all and great enough to meet the need of all.

You may approach in the value of it, and God will receive you, sinful though you may be, and through that precious blood which flowed when Jesus died your sins shall be put away.

It is said that Christ has entered into the holy place, indeed heaven itself, having obtained an eternal redemption.

An Eternal Redemption!

That is to say, we shall, if we avail ourselves of it, never be carried away into bondage again. In the days of old the children of Israel were delivered from Egypt, redeemed by the hand of Jehovah, but in spite of all He had done for them they rebelled against Him and were carried away into a captivity worse than that which they endured in Egypt.

In addition to an eternal redemption God speaks to us of

remission of sins,

for it is appointed unto men once to die,

but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many. Alas! there are some who will not acknowledge their sins and although they know well that they are behind them they decline the work of the Lord Jesus, through whose shed blood sins alone can be put away. Is it not written: "without shedding of blood is no remission"! Depend upon it if we neglect so great salvation our doom will be a very terrible one.

God has spoken of a Priest also who lives on high for us,

a great High Priest,

who is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God. How wonderful to hear that there is such an One available for us! We are not left without a priest and He who lives on high to serve us thus is the Son of God. He has been on earth as a man and touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He is able thus to enter into all our trials, sorrows and difficulties and intercedes before God on our behalf. What rest and peace there is in the realisation that we have a Priest ever living and ever active on our account before God.

He is able to save us to the uttermost, that is, right on to the end until we are

safely at home in heaven with Him to whom we owe so much. And we have a throne of grace to which we can always come to find help in every time of need. In our weakness and failure it is a great encouragement to have a throne of grace where He who is our great High Priest sits, to which we can always turn for help and protection. In this way God has spoken of a great salvation brought within the reach of all in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. None need perish, but all may be saved, not only from judgment to come but saved day by day from the difficulties and dangers of every day life. Do not then neglect so great salvation, for apart from it there is no escape from the wrath to come, nor the difficulties and dangers and sorrows of every day.

“NOTHING TO PAY.”

“**A**ND when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.” (Luke vii. 42.) Such is the way God forgives a sinner! Most of us, some time or other, imagine that we have to do *something* to obtain God’s forgiveness. To suit our ideas the verse would have to read, “when they had paid as much as they could he kindly forgave the rest.”

But our Bibles do not read like this. The fact is, we could not pay anything. We have nothing! We have nothing to recommend us to God except our need. But it is just this point that we are so slow to reach. We do not like to think that we are so bad, so needy, so lost that we can do nothing.

I remember a man saying to me once, when we had been speaking of God's way of salvation, "But, sir, it would make nothing of me." Yes—nothing of me, but everything of Christ! This is just God's way. There are hundreds of other ways: but there is only one right way. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv. 12.)

We may have different kinds of sins: our lives may be very different in the eyes of man. But in two ways we are all the same. We all have sinned and we cannot put away our sins.

If we turn to the passage in Luke vii. we shall see that both were debtors and neither could meet his need.

This describes our state exactly! Thank God if we have been aroused to the sense of our need! How gladly we shall avail ourselves of God's way of blessing.

Though we could do nothing to meet our need, something had to be done; for God cannot pass sin by.

God's *holiness* demanded that sin must be judged!

God's *love* provided a Saviour who bore the judgment!

By the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ the question of our sins has been for ever settled. Christ died for us—for the ungodly—and God has raised Him from the dead.

On the ground of that finished work of Christ, God can forgive. Forgiveness is preached to us through the blessed Saviour who died "the just for the unjust."

God knows that I can do nothing—that I have nothing to pay. His message to me is all about what Christ has done. "Be it known unto you . . . that through this man is preached unto you forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 38.)

M. W. B.

MAN'S INVENTIONS, GOD'S INTERVENTION.

"**L**O, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." (Eccles.

vii. 29.) Thus wrote Solomon, the wisest man of his day, and that he was right it is evident by what we see all around us. That men soon began to scheme and invent is recorded on the page of holy scripture in the book of Genesis. They began early, according to the early chapters, and have continued ever since.

“Let us build us a city,” they said, “and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven.” How ambitious and full of pride the people were, altogether forgetting their Maker! They sought to gain eminence and make a reputation. Having begun to do this, God said, “nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.” (Gen. xi. 4, 5, 6.) Evil ideas prompted their hearts, which were only evil continually. Such is the comment of scripture. The Creator is greater than the creature, “for he is God over all, blessed for evermore.” It is His thought that man should glorify Him, for He has made Himself known in such a way that men should worship and serve Him. In the verse already quoted it is seen that the human race had settled down to do their own will, which was, alas! in direct opposition to the will of God. They would journey from the east and discover “a plain in the land of

Shinar," and dwell there, and in the energy of their own strength and imagination of their own hearts make themselves a name. What a Babel it became, what confusion! Man did not like to retain God in his thoughts and in spite of the education and culture that in fancied wisdom is boasted of to-day, the people of the earth, speaking broadly, "are without hope, and without God in the world."

But God has intervened, blessed be His name! He has devised means that His banished be not expelled from Him. (2 Sam. xiv. 14.) Wondrous fact that God could set One at His right hand—the delight of His heart—to be a "mercy-seat" through faith in His blood, and thus to declare His righteousness and shew His forbearance. All through the ages down to the present time we see how God forebore with man. Truly, he is an object of interest to God! But let us not forget that the day of grace will not continue forever, for God has "appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world . . . by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts xvii. 31.) What will be the issue of the ushering in of that day to you, if still careless and indifferent?

You must pass out of the world in that condition and you most surely come under God's hand of judgment. You will have missed your last opportunity. Awful thought! See to it now and be persuaded to turn to Him in this the day of grace.

Not long ago I went with a friend to visit a man in one of the States of America. He was evidently dying, but did not appear to be conscious of it. When asked how he was, he said in a boastful way, "I shall soon be able to go to work." But before a week had passed he was dead. How solemn it is that naturally we desire to leave God out of our thoughts. We plan and scheme as Jacob did, until God comes in that He may "withdraw us from our purpose and hide pride from us." How great is His mercy to His creature. God seeks to make us feel our need of Him. He takes us a way similar to that which Jacob passed, but the end He has in view is our blessing. He is a God that delights in blessing. Happy is that man who accepts it from His hands. May grace be given you to turn to God and you will find Him rich in mercy.

THE GREAT SHOUT.

IN the fourth chapter of the first epistle to the Thessalonians, verse 16, we read that the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. What do these three things mean? The Lord's shout will gather all those who love the Lord Jesus together in the air to meet the Lord, so that they may be with Him for ever. The voice of the archangel indicates that God's dealings with the Jews (His earthly people) will be resumed; whereas the trump of God will raise the dead, that is, those who belong to our Lord Jesus Christ. What a wonderful day it will be when the Lord comes, what joy to meet Him and to be changed in a moment into His likeness! but what sadness, yea, what misery, to be left behind in this world for judgment. It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. If any of us should die without having had our sins washed away in the precious blood of Christ, we shall not be raised when the Lord comes (Rev. xx. 5), but shall be left until that day when we shall stand before the great white throne. (Rev. xx. 12.)

There will be no hope for any one then, for Christ will sit on the throne as Judge, not as Saviour. He is waiting as a Saviour now, ready to receive all who turn to Him. He is both ready and able to save, and none that turn to Him will be refused. The time is short for the Lord is coming again and may return at any moment to gather His people together. May the reader be found ready at His coming!

M. B.

JESUS PRE-EMINENT.

WHENEVER and wherever the believer sees Jesus, it is to him a happy sight which always gladdens his heart. There are three special instances in which it is recorded that Jesus was "in the midst"; they relate to circumstances connected with His death, His resurrection and His glory.

IN HIS DEATH.

We read: "They crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst." (John xix. 18.) Here we see how man sought to degrade Jesus, by placing Him between two evil-doers, in order to number Him with the

transgressors; but this had been already foretold by God's prophet (see Isa. liii. 12), and thus scripture was fulfilled.

When Jesus had been thus placed between these two evil-doers, they found themselves in closer company with Him than they had ever been before. They themselves were in a miserable plight; their feet had gone the last journey in crime, and their hands had done the last act of violence, for both feet and hands were nailed to the crosses on which they hung. But their tongues were loose, and with them they both reviled Jesus, as we read: "The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth." (Matt. xxvii. 44.) But to this Jesus was silent, for when He was reviled, He reviled not again.

However, God's sovereign grace wrought repentance and faith in one of the thieves, and although he was helpless to do anything himself, yet Jesus—although nailed to a cross—was free to act in power and blessing. When the repentant man spoke to Jesus in faith and owned Him to be Lord, and asked for a place in the coming kingdom, Jesus had an answer *ready* for him in the words, "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke xxiii. 43.) These words involved

much, for this man was a great sinner; but Jesus was a very great Saviour, and even at such a moment could do everything for a sinner who could do nothing in return! How pre-eminent was Jesus! He was indeed a Saviour, and took away in a moment the sins of that man, which had been accumulating for years.

To the unrepentant sinner *Jesus was silent*; His words of warning and entreaty were over; He gave no answer to the unbelieving remarks which the thief made, when he said, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us." It was as though he said, The learned men do not believe your claims to be the Messiah, and therefore I doubt it, but prove it now by saving thyself and us. Jesus was silent! He could have referred to His miracles, to the transfiguration, or to the scriptures, but He was silent. Jesus died, and, alas! the unrepentant sinner was left to die in his sins!

IN HIS RESURRECTION.

When Jesus rose from the dead, He sought the company of His disciples, in order to take His place with regard to the new dispensation. Without invitation, or even waiting for the door to be opened, He entered and took His place in the

midst of them. We read, "The same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled came Jesus and stood in the midst," and then He spoke the first word, "Peace be unto you." (See John xx. 19.) How pre-eminent He was at that moment! and all those present gladly recognised His right to the place He had taken. Having spoken peace to them, then "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Thus He prepared them for the day of Pentecost; then the Spirit was shed on them abundantly. Christianity was commenced by Jesus, as a result of His death and resurrection, at which time He took His place as Head, and we read, "Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord." (John xx. 20.) How simple was the beginning!

Sad changes took place after that time, for in Laodicea Jesus was outside, and had to say, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." The professing people of God of to-day have lost the original simplicity, the mustard herb has become a great tree, and instead of simplicity there is haughtiness, and a desire for political power; the pure meal has been permeated with leaven. His word is pre-

eminent, but alas, in the systems of men, human opinions prevail, and Jesus is *outside*! Where is the only place for the heart that is loyal to Christ? Surely outside such a state of things, and in company with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

IN HIS GLORY.

In ascension Jesus had no rival, for all in heaven own His right to the place which God has called Him to. The apostle John wrote concerning what he saw, "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne . . . and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain." (Rev. v. 6.) The elders represent the glorified saints; twenty-four, the number used, corresponding with the number of the courses of priests allotted by David, as seen in 1 Chronicles xxiv. 1-19. These saints in heaven, as seen in Revelation, are typified as a priestly worshipping company. No wonder the Lamb was pre-eminent in the midst of this company.

What sort of place has He in each of our hearts and ways to-day? is a wholesome question for each one of us to ask himself or herself.

G. W. G.

“GIVE ME THE LIGHT!”

MR. E—— was, as a young man, one of those whom the world deems fortunate. Born to wealth and position, endowed with good abilities, and with a handsome and striking personality, many would have thought—as he himself thought at that time—that there was nothing lacking to make his life happy and successful. Doubtless many envied him his life of gaiety and “pleasure,” so called; and his powerful, athletic frame awakened admiration.

And yet he was, as regards true happiness, afar off, “without hope, and without God in the world.” As he himself expressed it: “I was, until the age of twenty-three, **IN** the world and **OF** it. I delighted to exceed all my boon companions, and to dare what they would not dare. I was an acknowledged leader, and boasted that I was on the way to hell myself, and that I would have plenty of companions there! Thus I ran riot, seldom opening my lips without an oath, serving Satan well.”

It is difficult to convey an adequate

idea of the intense earnestness and self-
abhorrence with which he would refer to
this Christless period of his existence,
longing that all should magnify the Lord
on his behalf. He loved to say that
Deuteronomy xxxii. 10 described his
history (and this text was one of those
upon his memorial card)—“He found him
in a desert land, and in the waste howling
wilderness; he led him about, he in-
structed him, he kept him as the apple of
his eye.”

But, to continue the story, often told by
himself. “Returning to my house after a
cricket match, with two or three others,
we came to a wide ditch, spanned by a
plank. I proposed that we should jump
the length of the plank, instead of walking
over it. The proposal was a wild one, and
they first tried to dissuade me, and then
defied me, which only made me the more
determined; and though I knew it was a
risk, I was too foolhardy to care. One
tried, and failed. This was enough for
me, and with one bound I cleared the
whole length of the plank. But as I came
down on the other side an awful pain shot
through my head. I would not let the
others know it, and, while they laughed
and applauded, I made an excuse to return
to the house. There I writhed in agony.

“Presently the pain passed off, and in the evening I joined my company, and was merry as any of them. Next morning I awoke to find myself a helpless log; I was paralysed. Never could I describe my feelings better than Job’s wife did—‘Curse God, and die.’ Everything was spoiled. I could not bear the sight of my gun. My former revelling, in which I had delighted, made my helplessness more intolerable. I often asked my servants to wheel my chair behind some trees, that I might weep unseen.

“Three years of open rebellion followed—oh, what years they were!—and hard thoughts of God. None dared to speak to me of Him, for my temper was so violent that they feared me. Life was worse than a blank.

“Amongst other Christians who doubtless prayed for me was a cousin, Mrs. T——, for whom I had a sincere affection. The only thing I disliked about her was her religion; but though she must often have spoken to God about me, she had never spoken TO me about spiritual things, until one day—a day that changed the whole course of my life; never shall I forget it.

“To pass away the time, I had a workshop fitted up with every requisite. Here

I learned to turn, and many hours were thus spent. I generally went to my shop directly after breakfast; but on this particular morning, in my 'working clothes,' as I called them, I walked into the drawing room and sat down. I had never done that before. Soon I heard a timid knock at the door, and my loud 'Come in' brought Mrs. T — . I saw a little black book in her hand, which aroused my suspicions.

"'Sit down, sit down,' I cried; for I could see how nervous she was.

"She paused, and then said, very gently: 'Charlie, God loves you.'

"I replied angrily: 'You and your God, and your love! It looks like it! I'm a helpless log. Is this love? I tell you, Theo' (his favourite name for her), 'I believe this life is a school. I was the worst boy in the school, and God hit me hard. I was going to hell, and He stopped me,' little thinking of the meaning of my own words.

"'Did I not tell you God loved you?' Mrs. T — replied. 'Your own words have said it—'I was going to hell, and HE stopped me.'"

"I started. For the first time in my life the truth came home—love did it.

"After a few minutes of silence, I asked:

‘Tell me, Theo, can it be possible that your holy God loves me?’

“‘Yes Charlie, He’ does; your own words admit it. Shall I read a verse for you?’

“‘Go on, go on,’ I said crossly; and she began to read John iii.

“‘I know that,’ I interrupted, and began in a flippant way: ‘There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus —.’

“She stopped, and asked quietly, ‘May I read one verse?’

“‘Go on, go on,’ was my only answer; and she read: ‘Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.’

“She said no more, and soon left the room; but God had spoken. If miserable before, I was now ten times more miserable. More than that, I saw myself nothing but sin—sin seemed everywhere. Wretched outside before, I was now wretched within. I cursed myself, wished I had never seen Theo, and vowed she should not again be admitted to my house. My work lost its interest; everything else did, too. So a fortnight passed, in untold misery, till one evening, as I went into tea, who should be there but Theo!

“ Later on, when I found myself alone with her, I said : ‘ Theo, if I had known you were coming, you would not be here. Do you know, since you spoke to me I have been ten times more wretched than I have ever been in my life. I wish you had left me as I was,’ I added crossly.

“ ‘ O Charlie, I am so delighted to hear it.’

“ ‘ Delighted, are you ? Thank you. You are a nice friend !’

“ ‘ Charlie, God is speaking to you.’

“ ‘ He is shewing me how bad I am, if that is what you mean. I never saw myself such a sinner before ; I am nothing but sin.’

“ ‘ Yes ; God is speaking,’ she said.

“ ‘ I tell you what, Jesus is a holy God. He would not listen to such as I am. Write out a little prayer for me.’

“ ‘ ONE WORD OF YOURS WERE WORTH ALL MY written prayers,’ she urged ; but at last she wrote out a very simple, real prayer, and gave it to me ; and so we parted for the night.

“ After my man-servant had left the room I tried the little prayer, but could not say it ; and, as miserable as ever, I fell asleep. Next morning I desired the man to leave the room, and, when alone, again I tried the little prayer, but could

not say it. Suddenly there flashed back that verse which Mrs. T—— had read: ‘ Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.’ I remembered that I had heard that the Holy Spirit is a light, and I cried aloud: “ O God! I have heard thy Holy Spirit is a light; give me **THE LIGHT.**”

“ In a moment the room seemed flooded with light. The burden of sin was gone. I was full of joy, and it was so instantaneous that I could not conceive what had happened; but I shouted for joy: ‘ Theo, what has happened? The burden is all gone; I am full of light!’ Then I told her all, and she could only rejoice.

“ ‘ God has answered your prayer, and given you His Holy Spirit,’ ” she said.

Mr. E — always ended the recital of this story with the same assurance: “ From that hour it has been nothing but joy. I never have had the shadow of a doubt.”

And this exceeding cloudless joy in God was his blessed experience for forty years, during which he delighted to bear witness how fully Christ satisfies. Though laid aside by paralysis, and dependent on others (for he was obliged to have his servants

wherever he went), yet hundreds, it is believed, could testify that he carried sunshine with him always and everywhere he went.

Christ was his one theme. It was this that characterised him. The blessed Person of Christ was the one object before him. The living word, God's manna, he fed upon; the written word, God's lamp, by this he walked; and it is written: "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John viii. 12.) The Bible was his constant companion, and he loved to repeat it, also to quote beautiful hymns, some of which he would alter to express his own experience. A well-known hymn of Madame Guyon's was an especial favourite: "A little bird am I." Mr. E—— paraphrased it thus:

"A shattered wreck am I,
 Enjoying now a chair;
 And full of life I sit and sing
 To HIM who placed me there—
 Content a shattered wreck to be
 Because, my God, it pleaseth THEE."

Very clear was he as to the believer's security in Christ, and would ask of doubting Christians: "WHOM are you doubting?" He was much used of God in

establishing weak believers, and also in his circle of personal friends and relatives.

He it was, too, who on one occasion put a placard on his gate saying that any one who called before twelve o'clock the next day would have his debts paid. Only one person appeared before noon, and his debts were paid. He went and told the good news, whereupon quite a crowd appeared in the afternoon. But he said: “Look at my placard. It says: ‘Before twelve o'clock!’” And from this incident he preached the gospel, shewing how many refuse to believe God’s good news.

But the long years of happy service were suddenly ended. Brighter and brighter the light had shone, the glory of God filling the earthen vessel, so that all might magnify the Master; it seemed now but a step into the immediate presence of the Lord he loved.

He seemed as well as usual then, but the next day, in his chair, he passed away. “Lord, take me,” he said simply, with his happy eyes uplifted. And “he was not, for God took him.” He had previously said to his gardener: “I am like a caged bird: some day you will come and find the bird gone.” Happy bird! How pleased to fly home!

**“MAN DIETH . . . AND WHERE
IS HE ?”**

(JOB XIV. 10.)

A SOLEMN question indeed! And how important that we should have no uncertainty as to the reply.

Many years ago this question was asked, and the one who asked it was quite unable to satisfy himself with any definite answer. If a tree was cut down it might sprout again, he said, but man lieth down and earth knows him no more. *He* did not rise and live on earth again.

But is the grave the end of man? Has he ceased to exist? Has he come to an end for ever?

Infidelity, in its blindness, would have us imagine so. Some would like to believe it; but their consciences make them feel there must be a reckoning day some time. But what saith the scripture? Do our Bibles tell us anything about what is after death? Indeed they do! Two cases are given us in the New Testament.

In one case, the Lord Jesus Christ draws aside the curtain, as it were, which hides the unseen world and shews us

a man in hell.

Let us not foolishly ignore this solemn warning.

Comfort, luxury and indifference had marked this man on earth. But he died, and in hell he lift up his eyes being in torments. (Luke xvi.)

But we must not think that, since this man was rich, if we are poor we shall be all right. We are told that the fearful and unbelieving, the abominable and murderers, the whoremongers and sorcerers, as well as idolaters and all liars have their part in hell, whether rich or poor. How solemn this is! (Rev. xxi. 8.)

The fearful! Are we *afraid* to confess Christ? Is the world's laugh to rob us of an eternity of bliss? “Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.”

The unbelieving, too! *God* has spoken. “I can't believe,” said a person once. “Indeed, *who* can't you believe?” was the reply. Unbelief, when God speaks, is sin.

The abominable, and all liars! What a list! If *we* die in our sins nothing but judgment can be our portion. Yes—*our sins*! How we dislike to think of them! And yet, one day they will all have to be faced. (Rom. ii. 16.)

To-day God waits to bless us. He desires to save and to pardon. (1 Tim. ii. 4.)

But if we refuse His offer of salvation;

if we go on in our sins and ignore His call to repent, what then? Judgment will be our portion, not pardon—the judgment which our sins have merited. How solemn and yet, how true!

There is another case. A thief who, on his own confession, is receiving the due reward of his deeds is dying on a cross. (Luke xxiii. 39.) Even man recognises his sin.

In his last moments he turns to Christ, the Saviour of sinners. Is there hope for a man like this? Thank God, there is! No sinner, who takes his place as such, turns to Christ in vain.

What an answer he gets from Christ!
 “To day shalt thou be with me
 in paradise.”

And will Christ receive any to-day in the same way? Will He receive a sinner who deserves judgment? Will He take me just as I am? Will He take *you*, dear reader, and give you a place with Himself in paradise? How surely we can say “*yes*,” to all these questions; He will! “God justifies the ungodly.” (Rom. iv. 5.) “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom. v. 8.) None who come to Him will He cast out. *None*; no, not the worst! (John vi. 37.)

We *deserve* a place in hell: He *gives* a place in paradise. Paradise is where God is: paradise is heaven.

Nothing that defiles can enter; but, wonder of wonders! the sinner who turns in repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus has title there. His title is Christ.

“Thou shalt be with me,” who was the “thou”? a sinner. Who was the “Me”? The Saviour of sinners.

Reader, which is your destiny, heaven or hell?

M. W. B.

THE THRONE FILLED.

THE Lord Jesus Christ was once a lowly babe in the manger at Bethlehem. The inn was full, there was no room made for Him. The cattle stall was reckoned good enough. And the same state of things abides to-day but on a much larger scale. The hearts of many of God's creatures are so full of something or other that there is no room for Christ. He is not in the manger now. He grew to manhood, doing nought but His Father's will as He grew. At the age of twelve He was in the temple with the doctors of the law, hearing them and ask-

ing them questions, and He astonished them with His understanding and answers. His parents, who had sought Him sorrowing, were amazed when they found Him and questioned Him as to why He had so dealt with them. He had left them and appeared to have gone His own way, but He soon indicated to them that He had been about His Father's business. We get in Luke ii. 49 the first recorded words He ever uttered. He came to do the will of Him who sent Him. He was not the son of Joseph as was supposed, He was the Son of God. (See Luke iii. 23-38.) But He was subject to His earthly parents. At the age of thirty He entered upon His public ministry, at the commencement of which He proved Himself to be superior to the enemy and was therefore able to deliver those who were under his power. He went about doing good, healing the sick and raising the dead, but every step He took brought Him nearer to the cross of Calvary. It was a downward path, but He must needs tread it. He trod it faithfully and never turned aside. He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." He was nailed to the cross by wicked hands. But He Himself *laid down* His life. He was obedient to the Father's commandment.

He is not on the cross now. Loving hands took Him down. There was one there who consented not to the deed of them that crucified Him. He laid Him in his own new tomb. Yes, He who could raise the dead, must lay in death Himself. He raised others with His own death in view. Man killed the Prince of life. (See Acts iii. 15.) But He is not in the grave now. The One whom man killed God raised by His own glory from among the dead and He is now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He is the only One competent to sit there, the only One worthy of such a seat, and He fills it. God alone knows His full worth.

His birth, pathway, death, resurrection and ascension were all necessary to meet God's righteous and holy claims with regard to man's guilt and the whole question of sin, in order that he might be brought into blessing and favour with God.

Has the reader any sense of His worthiness? Is your heart crowded out with other things? Are you consenting to the deed of those who crucified Him? These things are great realities.

I would like you to remember four things, they are these :

1. The manger is empty.

2. The cross is bare.
3. The grave is vacant.
4. The throne is FILLED.

A. H. C.

FILTHY RAGS.

WHO would think of putting on filthy rags to go and meet the king? No one!

Who would think of putting on filthy rags in which to appear before God? No one! Oh, yes! but there are some who do. Never, surely, no one could ever think of such a thing. But it is so, truly. Let me explain. The scripture says that it is "to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

And there are many who really desire to please God, who say they must do certain works of righteousness for salvation in addition to believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a solemn word in the scripture which says, "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Reader, which shall it be, faith in God's word and justified by Him and accounted righteous, or our righteousness—filthy rags?

NOT OF WORKS!

THERE are many people who have been awakened to see their need. They know that they have sinned and hence they have a guilty conscience, particularly as they realise that some day they will have to stand before God. Many serious thoughts pass through the mind. Is God angry with me; is there any hope of my obtaining the forgiveness of my sins? Perhaps if I turn over a "new leaf" and try to do better, curb my temper and seek to shew by my life that I am sorry for what I have done, then God will be gracious to me. Does the reader not understand that our salvation does not depend upon our works? If it did our case is hopeless. But we need not lose heart for the scripture says: "Not of works, lest any man should boast." The fact is just this, a great work had to be done and we could not do it, but that work, great though it was, has been done.

What was the work that had to be done? Now the teaching of scripture is clear that sin demanded a sacrifice. In the days of

old when the children of Israel were in the wilderness God ordained by the hands of Moses and Aaron that every one who sinned must bring an offering, a sacrifice. In some cases a bullock, in some others a lamb or a goat. At all events a sacrifice must be offered and moreover blood must be shed.

Of those sacrifices the scripture states, they never took away sins and never made the comers thereunto perfect. All that was done was this, the blood of the victim was put between God's holy eye and the sin of the offerer, but the sin remained there for all that.

Such a condition of things could not continue for sin must be put away and God had no desire to bring His holy judgment upon men. Far otherwise; it is written: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.)

The Lord Jesus came here as a man and gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God. (Eph. v. 2.) Wonderful word! He who was the Creator, the Son—God, gave Himself as man for us. And who were the us referred to? They were idolaters, these Ephesians to whom

the Apostle Paul wrote. And did Christ give Himself an offering and a sacrifice for them? He did. But more, it is said in another place: "He died *for all*." That is to say a sacrifice has been offered before God for all. God had all men in His thoughts when Jesus came here into this world: "God so loved THE WORLD." But one thing must be remembered. It is this. When the people in the days of old brought their offerings to Moses and Aaron they had to identify themselves with the sacrifice which was offered.

They had to bring their offering; we have not to do so. God, in grace and goodness, has provided the sacrifice, but each one who is to be blessed must identify himself with the sacrifice. In other words each guilty person must approach God through the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ. We have no works to do, for before the Lord Jesus actually died on the cross, He said: "It is finished"! That is to say, the work was done. And how do we know that God accepted the sacrifice which was offered? Because He raised up Jesus our Lord again from the dead and gave Him glory. But is there nothing to do? No, nothing; it is "not of works, lest any man should boast." God has chosen, and He has a right to

choose, that all shall be put upon the same platform before Him, and the Saviour who offered Himself as a sacrifice is for all. Some may be more guilty than others, no doubt that is true, but the fact remains that there is none other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved. A simple illustration may help the reader to see how unnecessary our works are after the great work which our Lord Jesus Christ wrought on the cross. Some little while ago I saw a man running along the street in a sudden storm of rain seeking for shelter. Presently he came to a building with a portico, into which he hurried, but although beneath a strong roof, sufficient to shelter one from the heaviest storm, he still held up his umbrella. It was not needed of course, as the reader will see. And are our works needed together with the work of our Lord Jesus Christ? No, the blessed truth of the gospel is this, that the moment a soul rests its faith in the Lord Jesus all the value of His finished work is credited to them by God and they stand under God's eye "in Christ Jesus."

Will Christ ever be lost? Impossible! and the feeblest believer is as safe as He. Will Christ ever come into judgment? Never! And the feeblest believer will

never come into judgment, for it is written: "Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world." (1 John iv. 17.)

SATAN'S SLAVE BECOMES THE LORD'S FREE MAN.

THE fifth chapter of Mark's gospel opens with the power of Satan in full exercise over a man, so that he was his complete slave. All the efforts of his fellow-men to remedy his condition were in vain, so he remained a miserable spectacle to others, while the real misery was only known to himself. His history was a long one, for "he had devils a long time." He dwelt "amongst the tombs," "could not be tamed," "night and day in the mountains," "crying, and cutting himself with stones."

In short, what was said of this man's physical condition was that he was among the dead, untameable, restless and miserable. Now all this is but a figure of the moral condition of every one, until the light and power of the gospel effects the

change. Jesus arrived on the scene, unasked for by the man or his neighbours, and He was immediately met by this poor slave of the enemy. He knew not the Deliverer, but only thought of Him as a tormentor, and so said, "I beseech thee, torment me not." The Lord had come to "preach deliverance to the captive," and so He commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. Everything was at once changed; the works of the devil destroyed, and the man was found "*sitting,*" "*clothed,*" and "*in his right mind.*" If slavery sets forth in figure man's natural condition of heart, deliverance sets forth the change that is wrought in the heart of the one who has to do with the Saviour of sinners.

Sitting is rest of body, in striking contrast to his being night and day in the mountains, and would set forth *rest of heart*, as the Lord says in Matthew xi. 28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Clothed is another contrast to his former condition, for in Luke viii. 27 it is added, "he ware no clothes," which is a type of man's moral condition. Adam, when he had sinned, sought to conceal his true condition by a fig-leaf covering; but it availed nothing, for he said to God, "I

was afraid, because I was naked." In Adam's case "the Lord God made coats of skins, and clothed them." A covering formed out of the skins of animals, a beautiful figure of the covering for the guilty sinner wrought out by the death of Him who was the fulfilment of all the types of slain animals. So in Mark v. we see the man clothed, a figure of how the sinner is clothed with divine righteousness, the result of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, as beautifully set forth in Romans iii. 22, the righteousness of God *unto all*—ALL persons—not Jews only, but every creature; and then, "*upon all them that believe.*"

There was a third feature of this man's blessing, namely, "in his right mind." When first he saw Jesus he thought He had come to torment him. What a wrong thought—his poor thoughts were all wrong; so with man in his unconverted state; his thoughts are not God's thoughts—they are as far apart as heaven is from earth. When any one has to do with Jesus everything becomes changed. How complete the deliverance, through His "destroying the works of the devil." The slave was now the Lord's free man. The gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, testifies to this power for

man's *present* deliverance, so that the heart of the believer can be brought into these blessings: namely, *rest* from the fear of judgment; *clothed* in divine righteousness; *understanding* of divine things.

But have all believers thus apprehended the result of Christ's work, namely: *sitting, clothed, and in their right minds*? How the beautiful scenes narrated in the gospels as benefits to men's bodies are seen in the light of the Holy Spirit to refer to the deeper needs of men's hearts! When the people besought Christ to depart *He departed*. They would rather have their worldly gains than God's grace. Such is man. He loves darkness rather than light. The Lord now in heaven works by His Spirit; but men resist the Spirit as they resisted Christ, thus proving the world is unchanged, and just travelling on to judgment. Nevertheless, one after another gets delivered, and so God's house is filling up. How soon the door will be shut we know not. The word is, "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." (Heb. iv. 7.) No word for *to-morrow*, only for *to-day*, and *any* slave of Satan *can* be made the Lord's free man.

Having to do with Christ becomes the true test, for He gives *true rest, true clothing, true understanding*; while Satan

gives the imitation of these three blessings, saying, “Peace, peace; when there is no peace” (Jer. vi. 14); man’s righteousnesses which are only “filthy rags” (Isa. lxiv. 6); and the way that seems right unto a man, but the end thereof the ways of death. (Prov. xiv. 12.)

The question for each one should be, Have I got what is true, or what is false? what is of God, or of Satan? Am I the Lord’s free man or Satan’s slave?

G. W. G.

“GOD IS LOVE.”

I SHOULD like to draw your attention to the way God has proved His love to men.

Looking round upon creation we see evidences of God’s power and wisdom, but if you look at the Lord Jesus in His life here on earth you see God’s love personified. He, God’s blessed Son, came from heaven, “the Son of his love,” to make the love of God known to men! He came to bring that love here in His own blessed Person and to leave it here in the hearts of His people. The law demanded “thou shalt love,” but there was no response, only

hatred of the human heart came out, and the love of the Son of God was refused. This was man's answer to "God's love." God could not express the extent of His love in a greater way; He could not give a greater Gift, He would not give a less, for nothing less could satisfy the claims of His throne. God's love then was expressed here in Jesus. His every act told it out, His words made it known. Again and again we read, "He loved." "Behold how he loved." It was the love that was in His heart that made Him accessible to the vilest person or the youngest child.

John the evangelist often speaks of himself as the one whom "Jesus loved." It is love that begets love. The love that was in the heart of Jesus flows into the hearts of those who accept Him as their Saviour and Lord, "We love him, because he first loved us." "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we *loved* God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 9, 10), and again in verse 14, "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."

God had you and me in view, my dear reader, and proved His love by sending His blessed Son into this poor world. The Saviour proved His love by coming and dying in our stead; it is His precious blood that cleanseth from all sin.

There is no fear in love. God has desired to so make Himself known, that you should love Him. Does His wondrous love find an answer in your heart? Are you attracted to His blessed Son? Do you know Him as your own personal Saviour and Lord?

J. L.

TWICE BLIND.

SOME months ago I was sitting in a railway carriage waiting for the train to start, when an old gentleman entered the same compartment and at once engaged in conversation. He passed a remark about the light in the carriage to the effect that it was very good. To which I replied, "Yes, some of us have learned to appreciate the light, but sad to say there are those who do not," and I quoted a verse of scripture: "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than

light, because their deeds were evil." (John iii. 19.) These words were spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ when here on earth, who, as long as He was in the world was the light of the world.

At this point I found the old gentleman to be a believer and while our conversation continued a blind man was brought and placed in our compartment in the opposite corner to which I was sitting, who listened in silence.

After a while the train started, and I felt I would like to have a word with the poor blind man, so I went and sat beside him, and putting my hand on his knee, I said, "If I were to ask you if there is one thing you would like in preference to anything else, what would you say?" His answer was very striking and just what I wanted to get at. He said, "I'd like to see the light." He meant that he would like to see the light in the carriage of which we had spoken, he desired his natural eyesight. But I soon found that he was blind in a twofold way, he had neither natural nor spiritual sight. So what could I do but point him to the One who, when here on earth, could open blind eyes, who was light to those who sat in darkness. Not that he should expect his eyes to be opened, but that he might see the light of

God as it shines in the face of Him who sits on the throne. I pointed out to him that he did not need his natural eyesight to behold Him. I said, "I always feel sorrow for those who are blind because I was blind myself once. For eighteen years my eyes never saw the *Son*." He replied, "Thank God you can see now then." I went on to explain to him how we are all naturally blind towards God, and we need our eyes opened. The man in the Gospel of John (chap. ix.) could say: "One thing *I know*, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." He may not have had certainty of much else, but he knew he could see, and we can be as certain of spiritual sight as he was of natural sight.

I reached my destination and had to say "good-night" to my friend, trusting that the result of our short conversation proved a blessing to his soul, and that he turned the eye of faith to the only One who can impart sight to those whose minds, Satan, the god of this world, has blinded.

I understand bees will not work except in darkness, and I am afraid many people follow their example. They prefer the darkness. Their deeds will not stand the light of God. If the light exposes us, it is not to condemn us, but that we might

see our true character, and if ready to own our condition before God the light would attract and not repel.

Those who read these lines are not twice blind. Thank God for natural eyesight. But what about His Son, whom He has seated at His right hand for our acceptance. Have you admired Him yet, dear reader? The day is coming when He will be admired of all. Are you walking in the light or in the darkness? All the darkness and distance and gloom of Calvary were His, in order that you and I might be brought into the light of the love of God.

A. H. C.

A GREAT WAY OFF.

“**W**HEN he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.”

It was thus that the prodigal son was received when he arose and came to his father. But what a reception! Did he expect to be received thus? No, indeed! And in the case of many who have found the “far country” a hard place how gladly

they would return if they could only feel that God would be gracious to them.

Has the reader ever longed to come to God? Perhaps as you read these words you say to yourself, I have wasted my substance with riotous living and I have spent all, but there, it is no use to hope in God's mercy, for I am sure He would never hearken to me.

It is just here that a great mistake is made. There is joy in the presence of the angels of God OVER ONE SINNER THAT REPENTETH. And to repeat the words we began with it was when we were yet a great way off that we were seen, that there was compassion. Oh, wondrous and blessed truth! Although a poor lost sinner, yet when he returns he is received with compassion and goodness. Many a one has a deep longing in the heart to leave the sin and wretchedness in which they are but they are haunted with a fear that God is against them and will be hard upon them. It is not so, as many can testify who have repented and turned to God. Remember the words already referred to: "when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." He came as he was, no doubt all dirty and in rags and tatters,

and you had better do the same. You may be tempted to try and patch yourself up a bit, but, believe me, it is all unnecessary, you may come as you are and just now, and all the love and grace of God is for you.

“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John iii. 16.) It is God’s delight to make us fit for His presence and it is a great joy to Him to place us before His face, accepted in Christ Jesus, and in virtue of His precious blood to put away all our sins.

Let the reader ponder those words: “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us FROM ALL SIN.” (1 John i. 7.) Yours may be a sad record of sin and shame, the remembrance of which causes you even now to blush and hang your head, but the value of that blood shed on Calvary’s cross is so great in God’s esteem that in virtue of it, and of it alone, your sins shall be forgiven if you turn to God in true repentance. May God, by His Spirit, enable you so to do!

“MERCY! MERCY!!”

A STORY is told of a young woman who was charged with the murder of her only child. She stood in the dock to be tried for the grave crime of which it was feared she was guilty. The jury, having considered all the evidence, being asked what their verdict was, pronounced her guilty.

No sooner had the poor woman heard it than with earnest gaze and outstretched hands to the judge she uttered the piteous cry of, “Mercy! mercy!!” No heart could have remained untouched at such a moment.

This young thing, hardly out of her girlhood years, charged with such a terrible crime and now when known to be guilty alone with her awful fate before her. I am sure that not only the judge but many others would have been only too glad if mercy could have been shewn her, and it must have been extremely hard for the judge to pass the final sentence of the law. Could mercy be shewn her there in the court? No; the court was not the place to dispense mercy, only justice could be

given there. There is a place, however, where mercy has been shewn and of that place I desire to speak to the reader. In writing to the Romans the Apostle Paul said: "God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all."

Here then is hope for the most desperate case: all concluded in unbelief. A solemn position to be in, truly, before God. Why do you not believe Him? You may tell me there is much in the scriptures which you cannot understand and hence you cannot believe; or again, you will perhaps say that there are so many hypocrites that you have decided not to follow religion at all. Both of these statements are no doubt true, but neither of them furnish a reason which can justify you in remaining an unbeliever. Let me ask you if you have ever thought that "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork," so that you are without excuse?

If God is, and the creation declares that plainly enough, then His creatures ought to acknowledge Him. Why, even the beasts know those to whom they belong and those who give them their daily food; but man does not know and will not acknowledge his God.

No, it is true, alas! God has concluded

all in unbelief, but to what end? Is it to strike in judgment; is it to punish the evildoer and make him obey? Ah, no! Wonderful words they are truly: “THAT HE MIGHT HAVE MERCY UPON ALL.” Upon all! Yes, indeed; none are excluded. There is the murderer, the thief, the unclean person; yes, my reader, and you and ME. You say, possibly with a sense of pride, I am no thief, nor murderer, nor drunkard, nor unclean person. No, but we are UNBELIEVERS and “God has concluded them ALL IN UNBELIEF, that he might have MERCY upon ALL.”

Blessed words these! Mercy upon all. The poor woman in the assize court who pleaded for mercy could only receive the cold sentence of the law, because there was no mediator, no one to suffer in her stead.

In our case, however, it is so different. We have sinned against God; we are unbelievers, but He will shew us mercy, because there is a Mediator and He the Son of God, Jesus Christ. In love and goodness He became man and bare our sins in His own body on the tree. It was there at the cross where He died, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. There is mercy now for all, for the law's full penalty has been borne by the holy and spotless One who came out of heaven.

Mercy therefore for all—for you—for me. Thank God! I have heard the blessed story of divine mercy and have known the sweetness of being forgiven. Not by works of righteousness, lest any man should boast, but according to His mercy. Such is the way God has acted to us. And has my reader never known the sweetness of forgiveness, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus?

Oh, that you may know it and thus rejoice in the knowledge of mercy so freely shewn. But it occurs to me that perhaps you are careless and have never, like the poor woman of whom I spoke, had to face the fact that you are guilty and that you must die. . Another passage of scripture states that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God: that every mouth is stopped and that all the world is GUILTY before God. Before God! Ah, yes. Often we do not appear guilty before our own eyes, nor indeed perhaps before the eyes of others. But before God—GUILTY. Solemn word! Friend, this is too serious a matter to be trifled with, and you do well to seek God's face without delay.

He will be gracious to you as He has been to thousands more, if you seek Him in true repentance and sorrow for your sins.

There is no harshness in His heart towards us ; no desire to punish us for our offences, quite the reverse. God will abundantly pardon all who turn to Him. And there is a way—a righteous way by which we can be blessed.

“ The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth us from ALL sin.” His blood has been shed, not only so, it has been carried within the veil and presented in heaven before God.

If you approach in virtue of that precious blood and through Christ Jesus, you will be accepted—you will receive mercy. Ah, yes ! and much more. There is full and free forgiveness for all who come to God by Him, for we are “ justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus : whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins. . . . To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness : that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Rom. iii. 24–26.)

“ Thousands have fled to His spear-pierced side,
 Welcome they all have been, none are denied ;
 Weary and laden they all have been blest,
 Joyfully now in the Saviour they rest.”

HOW GOD RECEIVES SINNERS!

WHEN our Lord was upon earth, Pharisees and Scribes murmured against Him, saying, "This man receiveth sinners," &c. (Luke xv. 1, 2.) He replied to them in parable, and in the course of His teaching, narrated the familiar story of a certain man who had two sons. It is a striking word for the conscience of the Pharisee. We would shew from it what a wonderful reception God gives to sinners to-day, who return to Him in true self-judgment. The younger son, enjoying the pleasures of sin in a distant land, far from his father and his home, is a striking picture of the sinner's course to-day. We may not all have run to the same excess of riot as he, but all without exception have sinned (Rom. iii. 23), all have lived more or less in self-will and sin and pleasure-seeking far from God.

A moment arrived in this young man's history when he had dissipated all his portion, and he began to be in want. Have *you* reached that point, whatever your career may have been? To begin to be in want is a sign of an awakening in

the soul as to our condition, and there can be no rest till the want is satisfied.

But what will satisfy ? Naturally we each, like this young man, devise our own plan, but devise in vain, to meet our case. In some form or way we foolishly turn to man. With legal efforts to stay our soul hunger, our deep distress is only increased ; till, learning the utter vanity of human aid, reduced to utter wretchedness, we, like he, come to ourselves. It is the true turning point in the spiritual history of a soul, when it discovers God's verdict of its case and state to be true, and that apart from divine aid there is no hope.

It is then, like the prodigal, as figured in the story, that we begin to think of God, and heaven, and home. Wisely now, he resolves to return to his father, confessing his sin and unworthiness. Be ye wise also. Sinners we all are, and utterly unworthy of relationship with God. The realisation and acknowledgment of it is the way to blessing. Yet the prodigal resolved to ask to be made as one of his father's hired servants. Notwithstanding all our confession of sinfulness, how natural it is to the deceitful human heart to cleave to some filthy rag of self-righteousness ! "He arose, and came to his father." What was the manner of his

reception? How many an earthly father in kindred circumstances, perceiving the return of a good-for-nothing son, who had dishonoured his name and brought reproach on the family, would have barred his door, or recounting his misdeeds, given him some menial place, in accord with his own desire. But hear our Lord's blessed description of the conduct of this father, thus setting forth the blessed ways of grace of our God. What heart naturally would conceive such thoughts of Him? "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." (Ver. 20.) Who can fathom the depths of grace and love set forth in this wonderful picture? Long before he reached the door of the paternal mansion, the father's eye espied in the distance the form of that long-lost, wayward and wicked son. Compassion of heart followed that look of blessed recognition. And in love he hastens towards him. Falling on his neck with affection and joy, his lips (for such is the force of the original) covered him with kisses! What a meeting!

And this, dear troubled soul, as you make your way back to God, is how He will meet and receive you. The eye of God is on the look-out for you, His heart

is full of compassion toward you, He is hastening to meet you, to cast His everlasting arms around you, and to cover you with the kisses of pardon, reconciliation, and perfect peace.

You in your conviction may pour out your soul before Him in the language of the returning prodigal. But as your heart utters the tender and endearing name of Father, as you begin to realise the manner of your reception in the consciousness of His fond and loving embrace, how can you add more than confess your sin and unworthiness, and bow silently before the highest conceptions of grace and love?

And not one word of reproach! He, the father, knew the proud and rebellious heart of the returning son, and that the depth of need had led to true repentance. Enough. Freely, fully he forgives all, graciously he runs to meet him, and satisfies his own love in the welcome. What a lovely picture of God's grace and love in the reception of the self-judged to-day? Have *you* come back to Him? Will you come! Do you confess your need, your guilt, your unworthiness? God knows your heart. Freely, fully He forgives you all in the name of His dear Son. His precious blood cleanses you from all sin. Grace, from the God of all grace, meets you in

righteousness through Christ, and love, the love of Him who is love itself, will lavish on you, as the father did on the once prodigal son, all that His heart can devise for His, and heaven's, and your joy. The best robe, the ring, the shoes, are all yours. With Him you may share the fatted calf. The music, the merriment, the dancing begin this day. And God as your Father says of you, as He has of tens of thousands, who through grace have bowed to Christ and believed the gospel, "*This my son was dead, and is alive again: he was lost, and is found.*"

E. H. C.

THE CERTAINTY OF CHRISTIANITY.

A YOUNG man said in my hearing recently, "You can be certain of nothing but death." I thought to myself: I am not so sure about it, if there is anything I am uncertain of it is death. But one of the beauties of Christianity is that it gives a certainty that nothing else can. I am referring to Christianity proper. Not that idea of looking at every one as a Christian because we live in a so-called Christian country. The real thing is that

which is connected with Christ, and nothing is proper apart from Him. To be connected with Him is to know One outside the reach of death. Those who are thus in touch with Him expect His sure return for them. They look for no great event before that. (1 Thess. iv. 16.)

But be sure of it, for the Christian, death is most uncertain. For without a doubt some will still be alive when He comes into the air. The Apostle Paul said, "We shall not all sleep, but *we shall all* be changed." We shall not all go out of this world by way of death, nor are we looking forward to dying. We are looking forward to our Lord's return, who is coming quickly. That much-looked-for day will soon arrive, we shall soon hear that well-known voice, and see Him face to face.

But what about those whose bodies have been laid in the grave, who sleep in Jesus? They too will hear His voice, every one. No slab of marble or granite will keep them in. They will come forth. That same One who at the grave said, "Lazarus, come forth," will speak again, and they that hear shall live. Then all shall be changed to a glorious body like unto His own body of glory, and shall be caught up together to meet the Lord in

the air "and so shall we ever be with the Lord." We shall be fit to be there because of His finished work. These poor bodies will never go to heaven, they are not fit for heaven. They are made of the earth and for the earth.

This is the expectation of the Christian, the blessed hope we are looking for and with no uncertainty do we hope for it and wait with patience. If we are uncertain we are not in the enjoyment of true Christianity.

An aged saint said to me the other day, "There will be a glorious open-air meeting presently, and I shall be there." She referred to Christ's return for His own, and spoke with much certainty as to her portion—"I shall be there." Can you say that, dear reader?

Sad to say, many who profess to be Christians are by no means certain of anything. A man of this class once said to me that the Apostle Paul died in hope, indicating that he was certain of nothing, and to endorse his statement asked me to read Titus i. 2, which I did. But I found nothing about death in it, rather the opposite, also most profound certainty. It reads thus: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." If the God that

cannot lie promised it what could be more positive. So the very scripture that this good man based his uncertainty upon assures us of a certain hope. Such is often the case.

Yes, while in a world that is passing away, where everything is uncertain, the Christian can look beyond and say everything lies before him. God has opened up another world, a wonderful system that Satan cannot touch, of which Christ is the centre. He has robbed the enemy of his strongest weapon, that one in which he trusted—death. Satan has had to part with the keys of death and hades, and Christ now holds them. He is complete Victor.

Is it any wonder then that the Christian has certainty when in association with such an One? If Christianity does not afford certainty it is not different to anything else. But it is peculiar in character as connected with Christ, and nothing can alter its character.

Are you a Christian, dear reader? Do you know anything of this certainty, or are you certain of nothing but death, and judgment beyond? The apostle said, "I know *whom* I have believed." Everything is connected with a Person, a divine Person, none less than Christ Himself.

Do you know Him? Apart from Him you can be sure of nothing. You have heard about Him, but have you made His acquaintance?

Blessed is your portion if you have.

A. H. C.

WHAT IS HELL?

THE question is often asked, Where is hell? Without attempting to locate hell, for where it is matters little to us just now, it is very important to know what hell is. To put it in plain and few words it is that place where persons will be shut out from the presence of God for ever. The well-known scripture, Luke xvi., shews this. We read that there is a great gulf **FIXED**.

But you may say: It is a place! Granted, but there is also an awful condition in which those are who find themselves there.

In Luke xvi. the rich man in hell sees, feels, speaks, and the awful fact is present to him that he is shut out from God. Terrible position! And that state fixed for eternity. He is not occupied with the question whether hell is under the earth or above it, or indeed where it is at all.

The fact that he is there is enough. He has no sense of companionship and he wants none. Tell my brethren, says he, lest they also come into this place of torment. Company affords no hope nor gives any comfort. Alone in the blackness of darkness, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Oh, my reader, I pray you to flee to Christ lest you ever come to this terrible end.

But why is man here, for we read that this place was prepared for the devil and his angels, not for man at all. (Matt. xxv. 41.)' It is because he persists in going there. He will not heed God's warnings nor listen to His appeals of love. God has made the way of escape clear. His own blessed Son came here to open the way back to God. "He is the way, the truth, and the life." God gives Him to be the Saviour of men, God has no one else to offer you. All depends upon how you treat Him. Bow to Him; accept Him; own Him as your own personal Saviour. Alas, you may accept creeds and doctrines and be lost, but if you have "Jesus" as your own personal Saviour this can never be. If you will not have Him, then your

case is hopeless. If in the face of this fact you still refuse the Lord Jesus, there can be nothing else before you but destruction. Therefore let me entreat you to bow to Christ and receive Him as your Saviour.

Perhaps you may fear that He will not receive you, but I can repeat His own words to assure your heart: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.)

J. L.
