

“In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not
thine hand : for thou knowest not whether shall prosper,
either this or that, or whether they both shall
be alike good.”—*Ecc. 11:6.*

THE SOWER

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THE SOWER



“TRAVELLER TO ETERNITY, CONSIDER.”

“COME, O my soul, thy certain ruin trace,
If thou neglect the Saviour’s proffered grace.
Infinite years in torments must I spend,
Which never, never, never have an end.
Yes, I must dwell in torturing despair
As many years as atoms in the air:
When these are spent, as many thousands more
As grains of sand upon the ocean shore:
When these are gone, as many to ensue
As blades of grass and drops of morning dew:
When these expire, as many millions more
As moments in the millions past before:
When all these doleful years are spent in pain,
And multiplied by myriads again,
Till numbers drown the thought, could I suppose,
That then my wretched years were at a close,
This would afford a hope—but, ah! I shiver
To think upon the dreadful words, *for ever*.”

Friend, is the question on thy heart engraved,
‘What shall I do to be for ever saved?’
‘Believe in Jesus,’ is the sole reply,
Believe in Him, and thou shalt never die;
His precious blood gives pardon, life, and peace,
Freedom from guilt, and joys that never cease.”

BETWEEN THE YEARS

IT is a season of great interest, alike to young and old, the closing hours of an old year, and the dawn of the new. The many drown the more serious thoughts suggested by the event, in mirth, and vanity, the dance, or the carouse; while those are not lacking who love to spend the time in prayer, experiencing the blessedness of waiting upon the Lord. High, in a large tenement of a northern city, above its din and bustle, sat a poor, lone widow. That house had seen better days, but in course of time, had been subdivided amongst a number of tenants, all the rooms opening upon a common passage. The widow's attic was dismal enough, yet not devoid of a few comforts, saved from the wreck of former years. She had few friends, and little earthly hope to cheer her. Both sight and hearing were upon the wane, but her faith and hope were in her God. She sat alone that night, during the quiet hours of the fast closing year, reading from the Epistles of St. Paul, and gathering comfort from the words which speak of the believer's blessed place "in Christ Jesus," and the certainty of being for ever with Himself.

No sound was to be heard but that of a piano played in a room below. Young skilful fingers touched the keys, and tune after tune followed each other in rapid succession.

But who was the player? Let us look downstairs and see. The room, whence the music came, formed in many respects a contrast to the attic

above, being large, airy, and well furnished. At the instrument sat a young woman, of about twenty summers, with dark hair, and pale, but pleasant features. Music was her passion, her one employment, and as she remarked to the widow, as they met on the stair a few days before, "It is all my consolation." Poor thing! She little thought as she uttered the words so gaily, that eternity for her was so near with all its great realities of weal or woe. Still less did she ponder the solemn words, spoken long ago by Him who is Truth, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" She was the only child of her parents, loved, indulged, and prized, but alas! she evinced no love for Jesus. His sweet name had no charm for her ears, and her heart and lips were never consecrated to sing His worthy praise.

That old year's night she sat with her fingers nimbly passing over the keys of her piano, and at times singing merrily to the strain.

The sound reached the ears of the widow in her little room, and she thought—surely she is merry tonight. The city clocks pealed midnight, and from the distant street were heard the cheers of welcome to the advent of the New Year, as the passers-by exchanged greetings. Then all was still again, save the piano notes. In a moment, they suddenly ceased, never to be heard again. The gay singer had ruptured a blood-vessel, and lay stretched upon the floor.

She never spoke again, only being able to give

her stunned parents a parting look of recognition. All was consternation, and hurrying to and fro. The alarmed father rushed for a physician, but all too late. As the old year finished its course, and the new-born year dawned, the soul of the maiden-minstrel had passed from the bounds of time into the awful realities of a far-reaching eternity.

Let this brief, sad history, my reader, carry to you an earnest word of warning, yet of loving entreaty. You live for the world, of which God says, "the fashion of it passeth away," and its "friendship" is "enmity against God." You have a choice to make. Let it be for Christ. He is worthy of your choice. He suffered for sinners, "tasted death" for you. He is risen and glorified at God's right hand in heaven, and the Scripture, which "cannot be broken," declares that "whosoever believeth on him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life." Will you have the Son? Do be persuaded; "He that hath the Son hath the life, but he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life."

Satan, your enemy, uses a thousand things to hinder you from being saved—the fear of man, love of dress, a novel, a companion, music, dancing, education, pleasure, a form of godliness, and last, but not least, procrastination—if possible to keep you from deciding for Christ, and thus condemns your soul for all eternity. Perhaps you say, "I am young, strong, full of hopes, the world lies smilingly before me, I have bright prospects of life for years to come; mar not my peace by your dark forebodings."

Or perhaps you seek to reassure yourself with the plea, "I intend to be a Christian before I die." Ah, you trust the devil's "tomorrow," instead of God's "today." Be warned, I implore you, by the above sad history of one cut off in the full bloom of youth by that same "destroyer," who may grasp you when you think not.

TORN IN HALF!

SOME years ago a colporteur might have been seen wending his way through the forest to the door of a country cottage in France. Arrived, he greeted the woman within and offered a New Testament for sale.

Jeanne hesitated. Would the priest approve? that was the question. Still she wistfully eyed the neat little volume.

"Do not be troubled, madam," urged the colporteur. "The priest would sin against God if he prevented you from reading of the love of the good Christ."

At last she produced fifty centimes, and taking the book said, "I cannot refuse, monsieur, but may I be pardoned if it is a sin."

Presently in came Jacques, the charcoal burner, her husband. After his tea Jeanne rather timidly produced her book for his inspection. As she rather feared, he was tired and cross, and upbraided her for spending his money in this fashion.

"But," said she, "the money is not all yours, Jacques. I brought my dowry when we married.

The half franc was as much mine as yours."

"Give me the book," shouted Jacques in a temper. He snatched it from her hands.

"The money was half yours and half mine, you say. Very well, the book is the same. *Voilà!*" He opened the book roughly, tore it in two pieces, dropping one into his blouse and throwing the other to Jeanne.

Several days later Jacques sat in the forest by his charcoal fires. He had finished his mid-day meal and felt lonely. Suddenly he remembered the torn book. He would investigate it.

It was the latter part of the New Testament His rough fingers had divided it in Luke's gospel. He began at the very beginning.

"And will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

Spellbound he read to the end of the story. and then a dozen questions presented themselves. What had he done—the poor lost son? Why was he exiled? Where had he been? What induced him to return?

The questions haunted him. "I wish I had the beginning of the story," he sighed. At first his pride prevented his asking Jeanne for her part of the book.

Meanwhile Jeanne lived her monotonous days, and used her leisure moments poring over her part and spelling out its contents. She began to delight in it, but when she reached the end her interest

was doubly quickened. That younger son—his waywardness, his journey, his sin, his misery, the wonderful change in his thoughts. “I perish with hunger: I will arise and go to my father——.” There the story stopped.

But what happened? Did the father welcome him? Her tender heart longed for a satisfactory answer. She even cried over the story, but she could not screw up her courage to consult Jacques.

The days passed. On one, however, the rain poured down with special vigour, and Jacques came home feeling specially weary. He ate his soup and bread for supper as usual, and at last he blurted out:

“Jeanne, you remember the book I tore in two?”

“Oh, yes,” said she, half fearing.

“My part had in it a wonderful story, but only the end of it. I cannot rest until I know the beginning of it. Bring me your piece.”

“Oh, Jacques! how wonderful!”

“Why?”

“The same story is ever in my mind, only I lack the ending. Did the father receive that wilful son?”

“He did. But what was the sin that separated them?”

She brought her piece and knelt by his chair. Together they read the whole of the beautiful parable, and the Spirit of God who had been working in both their hearts caused its hidden meaning to dawn on them. That was the first of many Bible

readings by the firelight after the soup and bread were eaten, and both have yielded hearts and lives to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The parable of the prodigal son was an absolute novelty to the French charcoal burner and his wife; it is probably quite familiar to the reader of these lines, but have you seen its application to yourself, and has it ever raised in your mind the questions that it did in theirs?

What had he done? was the question raised by the remarkable ending of the story. Let the answer be given in the prodigal's own words: "I have sinned"; and at once we have a confession which common honesty should put on all our lips. We have sinned, possibly in different ways, but we *all* have sinned. The application is perfect. The cap fits us each. Have you worn it?

And when the sinner, weary, disillusioned, and sad, returns homeward to seek the father, another burning question is raised. *Did the father receive that wilful son?* Why, yes, indeed He did. "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." Much more he did, but for details you must turn to Luke 15 and read for yourself.

Again, let us assure you that the application is perfect. If you but turn to God, confessing yourself a sinner, and approaching Him through the Lord Jesus Christ, pleading the merits of His atoning sacrifice, you will get just such a gracious reception as is described. You will be forgiven and

enfolded in the embrace of God’s love. But it cannot be described on paper; you must just turn to God and experience it for yourself.

“WE ARE LEFT—WE MUST DIE”

THESE were the words uttered by one of five women on the wrecked “S.S. Berlin,” when they saw a lifeboat returning to land, leaving these poor, helpless creatures to face what they thought was certain death.

Perhaps the reader is not aware that an event is fast drawing near that will cause multitudes of people to use similar language. We refer to
the Coming of the Lord
for all His people redeemed through the precious blood of Christ (Eph. 1 : 7).

The poor women were afterwards rescued, they did not die; but when the Lord comes for His own, we believe that *the door of grace* will forever be closed to all who are now living within the sound of the gospel. The effect of His coming on the world will be indescribable. Human language will fail to express in its terrible reality, the fact that the last call has been given and neglected or rejected. Those who are *left behind* will include all classes—religious persons, and fools who say in their heart that “there is no God”; the moral and the immoral; the drunkard and the temperate. Money, position in life, science, education, nothing under the sun will avail, for the universal cry will surely be—

“We are left! we are left! we must die!”
Left in your sins. Left for the grave. Left for judgment at the great white throne, where there will be no mercy. Left for an eternity with the devil and his angels, and in the very company you now try to avoid—in hell; (not the annihilation of soul and body, as some would have it,) but to live on for ever and ever without the world and all its pleasures. No cards, no betting, no football, no billiards, no theatres or operas, no dancing, no hunting, no novels, no infidel literature, but the sad, sad fruits of infidelity.

But, dear unsaved one, why need you be left behind? Christ died for the ungodly, and He came to save the world, not to condemn it; and there is not a sinner on earth that He is unwilling or unable to save. He saves to the uttermost. Scripture abounds with instances of His love to helpless and hell-deserving sinners: for He saved harlots; He saved a thief on the brink of hell; He saved a jailor by an earthquake; He saved Saul of Tarsus when he was doing his utmost to stamp out the name of Jesus; and *Jesus can save you.*

Don't say that you are out of the reach of God's heart of love; Calvary's cross proves to you that *God is not a harsh judge*, for thereon hung the “Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.” Behold Him (Jesus) now, who hung there for you. Look and live; and God will be your Father, and Jesus your Saviour. What more do you need?

We beseech of you to settle this all-important question—the destiny of your immortal soul. A decision is necessary, for the Lord will come in the “twinkling of an eye.” The risk is too great to allow any delay, for what shall it profit you if you gain the whole world, (and that is very improbable) and lose your own soul?

Think of those who know the Lord Jesus as their Saviour; what their gain will be—“for ever with the Lord”—to see His face—to hear His voice—to share His love and glory. Perhaps your very dearest relative or friend will be amongst those “called home.” Will they *leave you behind*?

The sands of grace in the glass have nearly run out, for the “coming of the Lord draweth nigh,” and there is not a single line of Scripture that would defer His coming, but many that declare He is very near— “Behold, I come quickly.”

Sinner, your only hope is Christ. Come to Jesus *now*, “for now is the day of salvation”—while you are holding this magazine in your hand. Look not on any one else, not on yourself, not on your sins, not on your religion, *but on Christ alone*, for “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power” (2 Thess. 1 : 7-9).

God grant that you may not be one of these!

"I AM DOING MY BEST."

IT is a common thing to hear men say, when pressed as to the question of the salvation of their souls, "Well, I have turned over a new leaf. That is to say, though I have not been as good as I should have been; though I have been in the habit of swearing, or drinking, or carousing with the ungodly I shall do none of these things any more; and surely if a man does the best he can, that is all that God can require, and will not punish us for what we cannot help." Now, I trust to be able to show the reader of this, that such a system of reasoning as the above is wholly wrong in principle; and if carried out, wholly insufficient to meet his need.

First, its principle is wrong; for what reason or justice would there be in a judge acquitting a criminal of his past offences on the ground of the criminal promising to do better for the future? Would not such a judge be denounced by every right-minded citizen? Is it not a simple matter of justice that the offender should be made to pay the penalty of his crimes, no matter what his promise might be? Now as it is with a criminal in the courts of human justice, so it is with the sinner who has to meet God as his Judge, irrespective of his resolution, whether sincere or otherwise, to lead a better life, after having spent twenty, or thirty, or forty years in sinning against God. Would a hundred years of man's "good living" atone for *one* spent in forgetfulness of God, and of doing

one's own will? Never! such a principle, then, is wrong on the face of it.

But suppose a man's good resolutions were carried out, which as a matter of fact they never are: suppose a man succeeded in leaving off swearing, drinking, stealing, lying, backbiting, hating, lust-ing; envying, deceiving—(let history produce such a man if it can)—it would leave all untouched the *state* that man has got himself into through sin. Take an example: Can an old rotten boat be made a sound one? Would all the patching and mending within the range of man's ingenuity succeed in making that boat a safe carrier for the precious human soul? Nay, my friend, the thing is beyond recovery; and the man who trusts his life in such a craft is the worst of fools. What would be the use indeed of a resolution never to trust himself in another such boat, when in mid-ocean he finds himself sinking hopeless and alone, with no help near to answer his despairing cries? Fool indeed, is he, who, against the warning of friends, sets out in a craft of his own choosing,—painted to attract the eye, while the paint but covers the rottenness till the victim is beyond the reach of help. Friend; if this finds you in a painted boat,—gilded all over with your good deeds,—listen to a warning voice, and get out of it; it is the boat of pride and self-complacency, and will launch you to a certain and dreadful doom; it will let in the water faster than you can bail it out, and ruin and despair will be your end.

Now, have I not shown that neither, nor both of the principles, so frequently and naturally adopted by man, are suited to his need, not even after regarding one of them as capable of being practically carried out? The first fails in the point of *justice*, and the second will not make new what is rotten and condemned. "Turning over a new leaf" is to forget that the old sins are not yet cancelled; in your account to God you are still charged with them, and if allowed to remain there they will bring you into judgment. "Doing the best you can," is like being in a rotten boat with both oars broken; every effort you make but increases your danger. Stop now, look at the matter calmly, and see your state; are you not reduced to absolute helplessness? You cannot lift a finger in your own cause; if you persist in "*doing*," you will find at last that *God is against you*; you cannot produce an unblotted leaf, and you cannot make new what is old and condemned.

Now, my friend, I entreat you to look away from yourself. There was once a man who stood in the breach between you and God; His name was Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God; fix your eye on Him, and you will see how He has met the whole question as to your salvation. Nay, do not grow impatient; if you really *want* salvation, it is here; if you are in *earnest*, you will find it; but you will *never, never* get saved in any other way, nor by any other means, than through this man. Listen, there is *one* sin between your soul and God,

one sin that outweighs all others put together, and that is the *rejection of the Son of God!* You need not count your other sins; begin with this one, and stop. Now you stand face to face with Jesus Christ, the Man *you* have rejected, and you remain His rejecter, with His blood staining your hands. Morally, you cannot evade the charge. Look steadily at the question, and if you do not tremble, your conscience is harder than a mill-stone.

Now look again: The victim of your scorn and hatred is but standing in *your* place; He is your friend, and has taken upon Himself all that you stood charged with by a holy God. He is near you, and is pleading softly for you to take Him in. Will you refuse? Oh! now your other sins float before your mind, and you cannot reconcile them with such a Guest. "I am not fit," you say; but see, on the Cross, your sins were laid on Him (1 Pet. 2 : 24), and that was long before you ever existed or ever committed one sin. God had decreed that Christ should suffer (Acts 4 : 18). Was it because that God was not well pleased with His Son? Nay, for He said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am *well pleased.*" The secret of His sufferings must be sought for elsewhere; it was, that *God loved the sinner.* But He could not justly let him off till that which was due to sin had been fully meted out; wondrous to tell, it fell with all its awful force upon the sinner's *substitute!*

Are you willing to take that place of being one for whom *another* died, thereby confessing that you

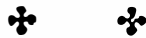
are a *lost* sinner, *helpless*, and without strength to save yourself? Cease now your works of righteousness, and begin by having faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, for it is “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his *mercy* he *saved* us.” Search from cover to cover of your Testament, and you will not find God once holding out a standard of works or measure of attainment as a means of salvation. God has proved by the law that such an appeal to man is worse than vain; “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but *by the faith of Jesus Christ*, . . . for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Gal. 2 : 16). “As many as are of the works of the law are under the *curse*,” but “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being *made* a curse *for us*.” (Gal. 3 : 11, 13).

Now, my friend, stop at once, own your folly, take your place at Jesus’ feet, and rest for ever in what *He has done for you*; then, the language of your self-emptied heart will be:—

“I would not work my soul to save,
That work my Lord hath done;
But I would work like any slave
From love to God’s dear Son.”

Read this again!

THE SOWER



“COME UNTO ME”

“COME unto Me,” no longer stay away,
The Saviour’s voice is calling you today,
His heart of love is waiting to receive
The weary one who will on Him believe.

“Come unto Me,” yea, come in all your need,
’Tis unto such, He’ll prove a Friend indeed,
Not one who comes will e’er be turned away,
He bids thee come, and come this very day.

“Come unto Me,” your heart will be at rest,
Your sins be gone, He’ll bid your sorrows cease,
He’s waiting now, with arms extended wide—
It was for you He suffered, bled and died.

“Come unto Me,” will you His call refuse?
Will you His love and mercy still abuse?
The door is open wide, O enter now
Before Him as a guilty sinner bow.

“Come unto Me,” He’s calling once again,
And will that call to you be all in vain?
Decide your fate, remember you must be
In heaven or hell for all eternity.

THE FATAL CHOICE

THE last rays of a summer's sun were lingering still over the busy town of —, when one who knew the Lord in that place, received an urgent message to attend the bedside of a dying woman.

"She is dying, and afraid to die," were words that admitted of no delay to any heart who knew the priceless value of one precious soul,—who knew, too, that it possessed a secret which could change the fear of death into a song of triumph, even the knowledge of Jesus, who by His death and resurrection has robbed death of its sting, the grave of its victory, and made its dreary portals only the gateway into joy unspeakable for each soul who knows Him.

With a heart longing to speak of Jesus to a needy sinner, His servant's footsteps turned hastily, yet prayerfully, towards the part of the town indicated, taking the messenger, a young woman, as guide.

After winding through many a narrow street, the guide stopped before a dingy dwelling, one of a long row of similar-looking ones, and said: "You will find Mrs. — in the right-hand room of the third storey. You can knock, and go right in, for she will be expecting you."

The house was one let out in single rooms, and crowded with inmates,—a house where poverty and wretchedness, and sin, and haggard forms, and faces with deep lines of care in them, abounded,—a house into which you longed to bring Christ for com-

fort now, as well as for eternal salvation. Your heart ached at the sights and sounds around you, as you murmured in His ear, "And for such, for such, Thou didst die!"

In the room pointed out—the right-hand room of the third storey—a young woman was lying on a poor low bed, apparently dying, also in great concern as to her soul, and as to the hereafter about which she had only very dim, misty ideas, to enter which seemed to her like "taking a leap in the dark," and this leap she feared to take.

On entering the dying woman's room, the deplorableness of it struck you. There were but few things in it, and these of the poorest description. Two little children were playing on the floor with the lid of an old box, and a tiny baby, a sickly, weakly-looking infant, was lying on the bed by the side of its mother, uttering those piteous wailing sounds that move the very heart of the listener, however hardened, when it seems as though the poor little suffering one had not health nor strength enough even to cry, only power to suffer.

In the mother, however, even deeper interest was centred; for the message, though brief, had conveyed this clearly enough, that she was dying without Christ. Sitting by her bedside, the visitor, whom she welcomed eagerly, read to her from God's own Word how Jesus came, and bled and died, to save just such as she. She listened, she asked for prayer, and earnest prayer went up for her that she might learn to trust Jesus.

Jesus and His love, however, seemed to have no power over her heart. She was afraid to die,—terribly afraid to die. She wanted to be assured she would not go to hell, that was all. About this she was anxious. One or two neighbours were in the room, her husband being away at his work, and these gathered round the bed to listen, as once more God's offer of salvation that moment, through Christ and His finished work, was presented to her. His willingness to save, His desire to have her, were pressed upon her. She was moved, almost she was persuaded.

Again she was besought not to put off accepting Jesus and His offered mercy, but to give Him the joy, and herself the blessing, of letting Him save her that night; but beyond the "almost persuaded" she did not get. She wept, she seemed in earnest, she did everything but accept Christ; and, promising to return the following morning, her friend at last left her, asking the Lord on the homeward way to show what it was that hindered that soul, apparently anxious, apparently so near eternity, from closing with the offer of the Saviour.

Again, the next morning, and the next evening, was God's Word read to her, with the same results,—almost persuaded, never quite decided. Jesus was a Saviour to her, but not her Saviour. Sometimes the deciding point came so near, there seemed but a hair's-breadth between her and eternal life. Still she lingered on the shores of death, and deep anxiety

and sorrow filled the heart of the one visiting her, which sorrow was only to be deepened.

Days passed on, and she hovered between death and life, naturally and spiritually. Her interest in the Word of God, her desire for prayer, continued unabated; yet it seemed as though she would put off till the last moment her decision for Christ. Her anxiety for safety seemed great, and the City of Refuge was just before her; still she loitered on the road, within reach of safety, but not safe.

Presently there came a change. She rallied, as to her bodily health; and as her strength increased, her interest in the things of the Lord decreased.

A day or two more, and hopes were entertained of her recovery, and then the evening visits—once so eagerly looked for—were evidently no longer welcome; for she was up in the evening for a short time, and neighbours came in.

With the thought of a prolonged earthly life, desire for eternal life seemed to disappear. It was only for death she wanted Christ. She was afraid to die without Him; but if she were to live, she would rather live without Him. She had only been half-persuaded to become a Christian.

Oh, how the devil laughs at “almost persuaded” souls! He likes to see them almost persuaded,—it kills their consciences; they rest there so often, and never take the half-step farther that lands them at the feet of Jesus. “Almost persuaded” suits his purposes exactly. They have not got Christ, and he does not care what else they get.

Satan knows well their folly, though they do not; for he has tasted heaven once himself; he knows its blessedness, its joys; he knows, too, what it is to lose it, to be an outcast from God; though he never knew our supreme joy, who believe, of being there, because Jesus Himself so loved us, that He died to have us by His side for ever.

About a fortnight after the visit to Mrs.—, there seemed every prospect of her speedy recovery; and then, though grateful to the one who visited her, for kindness shown to her, it was quite apparent there was no longer real concern about the soul. The subject once so welcomed by her was now irksome.

One bright summer's morning, unwilling to give her up, longing with intense desire for her soul, and yet with a deep feeling of solemnity, her friend entered her room. She was up that morning, for the first time so early, and full of the joy of recovering health again, but with no note of praise to the Lord.

Several neighbours were in the room, young women like herself, and there was evidently some object of great interest being discussed. It soon came out what the subject was. A fair was to be held, at a short distance, in a week's time, and Mrs.— was full of the thought of going, her friends persuading her she would be quite well enough by then.

Greatly distressed, her visitor listened, and then solemnly, earnestly, put this question to her:

“Would you give up Christ for a fair?”

“But I am getting well now. I am not dying now,” she answered; “and I do mean to be a Christian some day.”

It was the world had shut out Christ. You would not have thought her world was much, could you have seen that poor dark room, those little half-clothed children, the poverty and wretchedness of everything. But it was a big enough world, even that, to close her heart against the Saviour, to shut Him out. And you, who wonder at her, weigh for one moment your world in the scales of eternity, and say, are you making a wiser choice? Are you taking anything, everything, this world can give, instead of Jesus, and life eternal in Him? Then your choice is like hers—a fatal one.

She chose to give up Christ for “the fair next week,” and Satan cheated her even of the poor paltry joy he offered her.

Solemnly, as though on the very verge of eternity, with this as her last opportunity, was she warned not to risk her eternal salvation for so poor a thing,—for this had plainly been the whole reason of her indecision. She had hoped to get well, and go to the fair, and so she wanted to wait, and put off being a Christian.

It was no new wile of Satan’s; he has tried the same with thousands, saying, “Be a Christian, of course, some day, but not today,—do this first.”

With a sad heart her friend was leaving; but turned back to leave these two Scriptures with her: “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is

the day of salvation;" and, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." For a moment once more she wavered; but a neighbour's laugh prevailed. Her decision was fixed. "I will think of these things another time, but not today."

Turning to the women standing round, her friend said: "God grant you may never have to feel you helped a soul on to everlasting ruin."

A laugh rang out as the door closed; it sounded like the mocking laugh of Satan.

It was about eleven in the morning, when this visit was paid. Between three and four o'clock in the afternoon of the same day, the visitor was returning home, still thinking of Mrs., feeling even no power to pray for her, and yet quite unable to think of almost anything else, when a voice said, suddenly, "Have you seen Mrs.— today?"

It was the doctor who had been attending her who spoke, and his manner was very grave.

"Yes, doctor," was the answer. "I suppose she is getting quite well now."

"She is dying!" was his reply.

"Dying! Oh, surely that is not possible, she seemed so well this morning."

The doctor was a man of few words. His only explanation was: "Inflammation, acute. She may not last an hour." And he was hurrying on, but turned back to say: "Probably she will not be conscious; but if you can be of any good to her, you had better go at once."

It needed no second bidding. Hurriedly, trem-

blingly, that well-known door was reached, "the right-hand door of the third storey." On entering, what a sight met the eye! Mrs.— was lying on the same bed on which she had so often listened to the Word of God, but how changed now! Her eyes looked painfully strained, her hands were tearing at her chest as though she would tear something out, and the only words she uttered were: "On fire already. 'God is not mocked.' *Too late! too late!*" It was an awful scene! The same young women who were there in the morning stood by now, as though paralyzed.

Her friend knelt to pray that even now, at the eleventh hour, she might look to Jesus, and be saved. The words of prayer were interrupted by a half-struggle, half-shriek, so unearthly as to be appalling. Her face was the picture of despair, and agony, and wild affright. And with the terrible words. "*Too late! too late!*" once more on her lips, and one last awful struggle, she passed away.

The silence of death fell on that little company. The women cowered together, awe-stricken and trembling, and for a time no one went forward to close the eyes of the dead. That last "*Too late!*" from those dying lips, had seemed like a voice from another world.

Only a few short hours before, those lips, now cold and motionless on earth forever, had said she "would think of these things *another* day, *not* today;" and he, who "had the power of death, that is,

the devil," had taken care that, for her, that other day should never come.

It was a moment of never-to-be-forgotten solemnity. For a time the silence was unbroken even by a movement; and then, in the presence of the dead—terrible witness of the danger, the awful folly, of delay—once more Jesus, and His *present* salvation, were pressed on those who had witnessed that dying scene, and that *this* moment, this only, belonged to them.

She, like they, had intended to be a Christian *some* day, and never meant to *die* unsaved, only to live a little longer without Christ. She had even seemed to start on her road to Him.

The women were deeply impressed; and as once more words of prayer went up for them, deep sobs came from many. I believe that death-bed bore fruit of life, which the coming day will make manifest.

Dear reader, if you are unconverted still,—that is, if you do not know what it is to belong to Jesus,—may this sad story live in your memory as each sorrowful detail lives in mine, and give you no rest till your choice for eternity be made. And may that choice be like the choice of one of old, of whom the Lord could say, "She hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her!" For what was *that* choice? To be close to Jesus for time, listening to Him, worshipping Him, and by His side for all eternity!

“LIFE IN A LOOK.”

ANXIOUS reader; burdened with the sense of your guilt—heart-broken because of it—trembling at the thought of the judgment due to you on account of it; seeing no way of escape, yet longing to know deliverance from it; listen, I have a message for you: “There is life in a look”; “there is blessing in a look”; “there is salvation in a look.”

Are you willing to look? Are you ready to look? Will you look now? You may be saved as you read this paper: before you lay it down you may be quite sure that you are saved.

Not by trying to be better. Not by praying for it. Not by hoping for it. Not by waiting for some feelings within. Not by dreams. Nothing within you. Nothing around you. But by one believing look at that precious Saviour that was lifted up on the cross; “that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3 : 14, 15).

The bitten, dying Israelite in the wilderness, within a gasp or two of death, did not get life by efforts, or feelings, or desires. No. He turned his fast-closing eyes to the brazen serpent lifted up on the pole in the midst of the camp and that one look was sufficient. The moment he looked, he lived (Num. 21:9). There was life in a look.

Glorious truth. God-sent news. Hearken—listen—let not Satan close your ears, ye dying, guilty sinners. The Lord is heralding out in this poor world—sounding out the great, grand, glorious

truth, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved" (Isa. 45:22).

Jesus has died, He will never die again. Once was sufficient to meet all the claims of justice. God is satisfied.

Anxious soul! if Jesus did not die for your sins, then He never will, for He cannot die again. If He did die for them, why this sorrow? Why these prayers, and tears, and sighs, and groans? What do you want? Do you want Him to come and do it again? Surely not! Then look and be saved. 'Tis all done, the sins are all gone. Jesus sits on the throne without them. He has not carried the sins there. The face of God was turned away from the precious, precious Saviour, when He was on the cross bearing our sins. Glory to His peerless, matchless name! He exhausted the wrath of God due to those sins—that wrath which should have fallen on you and me. But now, just look. "The glory of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). If the sins were there, the glory could not shine there. But the sins are gone, and the glory shining in His face proves it.

Dear anxious soul, do not wait to feel—*look*, and look at once. 'Tis a finished work. Whosoever looked to the serpent in the wilderness lived, and whosoever looks to Jesus lives. While you are reading this, you may trust Him. You need not remain unsaved. Do you believe that Jesus did that work on the cross for you? Was it your sins He died for and put away for ever? If so, then

you are looking. Now then, go on your knees and thank Him. Go into the world and live for Him. Open your mouth and confess Him. Be not ashamed to tell others what you have proved for yourself. "There is life in a look." The Lord says, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved." Then each day let your motto be, "Looking unto Jesus" (Heb. 12:2), all the while keeping before your soul that blessed truth, "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear a second time, without sin, unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28).

THE TWO SONS

A CERTAIN man had two sons. . . . Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant" (Luke 15 : 11, 25, 26).

We oftentimes read with interest the parable of the Prodigal's return; but many stop too often at the end of that, and forget that "a certain man had *two* sons." We like to hear how the wanderer was received back, but does the question ever arise, What about the elder son, what became of him?

Are any of those who may look at this little paper still in company with the elder son of the parable? We are all either inside, rejoicing with the Father in His joy, and thus identified with the returned wanderer; or outside, in company with the elder son. If this last, dear friend, why? Look a moment at his history,—“he came and drew nigh to

the house," and hearing the music and dancing, wanted to know what it was all about. Have you ever wondered what made your believing relatives and friends so happy? and have you asked yourself what it all meant?

God the Father rejoices in the return of the lost one; and they have told you how they were once in "the far country," but have now been brought to God, and they are glad. Well, then, how about you, dear reader? Are you angry too? Why? Is not the door open for you, the same door by which the younger brother was taken in? Indeed it is, and still kept open by a hand of love. "He was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him." The servant stands on one side, and the master of the house comes out himself to "entreat"! "As though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." How blessed! God can thus "come out," for the Saviour has been right down into the very depths of death, to enable a holy God to come out in righteousness, as well as grace, and save "all that come unto God by him."

But do you join hands with this poor elder son in his answer to the entreaties of love, "Lo, these many years do I serve thee; neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends"? Look at what this answer is made up of, pride, self-righteousness and selfishness; —pride, in his length of service; self-righteousness,

in his claim never to have transgressed; and utter selfishness, as shown in his complaint that his father had never given him a kid that he might make merry with his friends. He did not want his father's company, but the gift, that he might enjoy it with his friends. Is this like you, dear unconverted reader, outside, angry, and proud? Oh! think, God is keeping the door open, as it were, with His hand on the latch, entreating up to the very last moment.

Don't put this off, by saying the elder son is a picture of the Jew. No doubt he is; but the first elder son we read of was no Jew. Cain was not a Jew, and Cain's has been the sad history of every proud, self-righteous, selfish sinner ever since; and Cain's end, as described in the Epistle of Jude, will be the everlasting end of all such. Oh! pause, and think. You are either inside, rejoicing in company with the Father, having come to an end of yourself; nothing on you but what the Father's grace has provided to cover your nakedness, and rejoicing in His joy at having His lost one back; or else outside, refusing to come in,—“angry, and would not come in;” proud, in standing up in your own strength before Him; self-righteous, in cleaving to your own wretched morality apart from Him; and selfish, in refusing Him the joy of blessing you according to His own heart.

Or it may be you know that you have no righteousness of your own, and you would gladly have the blessing. If so, what saith the Word to you, “we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled

to God"? Everything is done; all that God has of blessing is there for you in Christ, as long as the door of His mercy stands wide open, for "he hath made him to be sin for us (he) who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Sinner, God beseeches you, "why standest thou without?"

Or yet you may know all this, dear friend; you may have often heard "the old, old story" from the lips of some loved relative or friend, and you like sometimes to think of its sweetness, but you don't like "to make a profession"! You think "there is plenty of time yet." You are young maybe, and life is before you. Take care, the day is *at hand* when that door, kept open, as it is now, by the mercy of a God of love, will be closed forever on those then found "angry" and who "would not go in;" and you may be found, too late, an angry arguer with an entreating God, instead of a thankful adoring receiver of His mercy. Oh! bow now, before it be too late, and let Him have His joy in blessing you with all that He has.

"Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke; then a great ransom cannot deliver thee" (Job 36 : 18).

THE SOWER



CHRIST'S INVITATION

“COME unto Me,” He calls in love again
“To all who will, ye weary sons of men,
I’ll give you rest, your burden I will bear,
And have you with Me, all My joys to share.”

“Come unto Me,” this world can never give
The peace you crave, the joy your heart would
have,
Its wealth and fame, and all its pleasures too—
You crave for something that is real and true.

“Come unto Me,” for life is fleeting fast,
And very soon for you it will be past,
Your rapid transit through this world of woe
Will end, and then, O then, where will you go?

“Come unto Me,” My pleadings soon will cease,
No rest, no joy, no offer then of peace,
But far from Me forever you must dwell
Amid the sorrows and the woes of hell.

“Come unto Me,” oh, come this very day,
Come as you are, no longer stay away,
Then perfect rest and peace you will enjoy,
And songs of ceaseless praise your lips employ.

WERE THEY EVICTION OFFICERS?

SOME years ago four of us were spending a holiday at Oban, on the West Coast of Scotland. We arranged to go one day to the island of Easdale for the purpose of scattering gospel tracts and holding an open-air meeting.

We happened to be wearing peaked caps, something after the style of a naval officer's, and with satchels, papers and this head-gear we arrived on the island, looking decidedly official.

We knocked at the door of a cottage, but could get no answer. The next door the same thing happened, and the next door, and the next, till our curiosity was fairly aroused. On first arriving we had seen a person here and there, and cottage doors open, but now every door was closed and no sign of a living occupant to be seen. What did it mean?

After trying to get an answer to our knocking we thought we would try what effect, if any, a hymn would have.

God's hand was leading in the matter, as we subsequently discovered, and we could not have chosen a more appropriate hymn for the occasion. We began to sing—

“The Lord's our Rock, in Him we hide:

A Shelter in the time of storm!

Secure whatever ill betide:

A Shelter in the time of storm!

Oh, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land!

A weary land, a weary land,

Oh, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land,

A Shelter in the time of storm!”

The hour was unusual. It was morning and a week-day. The effect was magical. Doors were flung open, the people came out with smiling faces, and listened appreciatively to the singing.

Interesting explanations followed. The island had recently changed hands, the only industry consisting of a slate quarry. The new owner demanded the payment of rent from the cottagers. The cottages had been built by their forefathers, and they had lived rent-free from generation to generation, and they determined to resist this innovation as unjust.

The owner then gave them six weeks' notice, and this notice expired on the very day our party landed on the island, and they thought with our peaked caps, satchels, papers, etc., that we must be the eviction officers.

When they discovered our object was not to turn them out of their earthly homes, but to invite them to a heavenly home, they welcomed us and our message, and we had a very happy day in their midst.

This unusual experience of ours illustrates your case. The Bible says, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23); and hence "It is appointed unto men once to die, but *after this* the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). That is to say, *you* are a sinner and *you* are appointed to death and judgment. In other words, like those islanders, you are under notice to quit, and the eviction officer is death. Closed doors and refusing to answer a

k̄nock might suffice for the cottagers, *but you cannot evade death*. The point is, Are you ready?

Thank God, though you are under notice to *go*, we have an invitation for you to *come*. Go, you must; come, you may. You have no option as to the eviction, but this only emphasizes the urgency of the invitation, which can only be declined at the peril of a lost eternity. If, trusting the Saviour as your own, you are saved, death could only come, not as an eviction officer, but as the messenger of your Father summoning you to your heavenly home.

Will you not listen to the sweet invitation of the gospel? It will not always sound in your ears. Unlike the islanders, who had six weeks' notice, you do not know the day when death may very unceremoniously pay you a visit. Many a man has left his home in the best of health and never again reached it alive. What if this should be your case? Are you ready?

Oh! listen, as never before, to the sweet story of redeeming love. God has taken in hand the great sin-question. He has sent His well-beloved Son into this world. Jesus has died on the cross, atoning fully for sin, and rising from the grave, is exalted to glory, a Prince and a Saviour.

“Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21) are the two hinges on which swing the door of salvation. Be in earnest; salvation is now offered you if you will accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour. Decide now, and do not wait till the great eviction officer—death—with his skeleton fingers breaks your

heart-strings one by one, and flings you, a poor lost, doomed sinner, into an eternity of perdition. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). Here and now receive the gospel message.

THERE IS BUT ONE WAY TO HEAVEN

SOME years ago I was asked to go and see an old lady, who was on her dying bed, as people say. She was over seventy years of age, and the doctors said she could not recover, or last many days. Old age and bronchitis, together with a severe winter, had been too much for her constitution, and now "*the end*" was come.

She had been asked if she would like to see a clergyman or minister of some sort. She said "No," but she told her son she would like to see me, if I would come. I consented, and went, wondering what she could want to see me for.

I was just a Christian, and that was all. I knew all my sins were forgiven, and why; and my only confidence was truly in the Lord Jesus Christ and His work on the cross, and not in any way in myself. I was also much occupied in doing well unto myself in the things of this life. My soul being safe and all secure for the next world; I thought the next best thing to do was to make money fast, and thus secure my comforts and position in this.

I had known this old lady for years. She was what is called a fine woman, tall and strong, with a clear grey eye, and distinctly cut, stern features; she was upright in both her figure and conduct,

very reserved and proud; few were intimate with her, she was so independent. I was one of those few, and she would sometimes gossip a little with me; I was very young and liked the notice the old lady took of me. Every Sunday she endeavoured to go to a place of worship; church or chapel, but directly anybody took any notice of her, or showed her any attention, such as offering her a hymn book, &c., away she went, never to return, it may be. In this way she had gone over a considerable section of London, and attended, in the course of years, most of the so-called places of worship, especially those in her own neighbourhood.

She would seldom discuss religious matters, but now and then she would say a little. One Sunday she went to one place and evidently heard what is termed a "moving discourse," and was somewhat arrested by it. She was, however, a little late in leaving, and as she did so she observed the preacher come out of the vestry and get into a well-appointed brougham. That was enough for her, she told me; she put it all down as insincere, fine talk, and nothing else, for which he was well paid, &c., &c. This will show you how crude her judgment was, but it also shows how careful those who preach Jesus should be in all things. It has been remarked before, that there is one thing that God, Satan and the world are agreed about, and that is, that a Christian shall be consistent. Those who preach Jesus must be prepared to follow Jesus, or their words will have little weight.

This old lady's one ambition in life was to see

her only son wealthy, and she lived to see it gratified. She toiled and stinted long years, day and night, early and late; to this, and for this, she spent her life. I do not think her son had a carriage when she saw this particular preacher get into his, and this may have made her jealous of him; I know not. I only know she was very angry.

To return to our narrative. I went to see the old lady as agreed; as I entered the room I found all rather dark. The door was softly closed behind me. I could scarcely see anything, only I heard heavy and laboured breathing. The room was panelled with wood, and the house surrounded by high buildings, and naturally dismal; added to this, the yellow blinds were drawn down, all was close and dark, still and warm. I walked to the bed, where lay the old lady.

“Oh, here you are, laddie; I am very ill. I sha’n’t last long, the doctors’ say.”

I think I said “Yes.” I scarcely knew what to say.

She then said: “I asked——(that was her son) to send you to me. I wanted to tell you something.”

“Yes,” I replied, “what is it?”

“Well,” she said, “will you read with me?”

“What shall I read?”

“Out of the Bible,” she replied.

So I read her two or three short passages. I forget what. Then she asked me to pray. I did so. I had never done such a thing before, and I have no recollection of what I said, except that I

had a feeling that this was a case where God alone could help and I suppose my prayer took this form.

Then the old lady said, "Come here, laddie, I want to tell you my ideas; come close. I have never told any one my ideas, not even —— (alluding again to her son), but I want to tell you.

"Yes," I said, "what is it?"

"Well, come close; I have never told any one. Now, these are my ideas, *there is but one way to heaven,*" and then she paused and took breath, "*but nobody knows it, nobody knows it,*" she added emphatically.

For the moment I was simply aghast. I had a small inclination to cry, then a very strong one to laugh, it was so intensely ridiculous and absurd. The sense of how terrible and bald it was as a death-bed confession instantly checked this feeling. I was silent for a short time, and then I said, "The first half of what you say is true, I know; but I don't think the last half is, because there is a text which tells us the way."

"Is there," she said, "read it to me."

With some difficulty I found John 14 : 6, "Jesus saith unto him, *I am the way*, the truth, and the life." I said, "Jesus Christ said that, so He is the way, and we must all look to Him."

"Is it there?" she asked; "are you sure?" I read it again.

She waited some little time, and then she said, "Oh, no, laddie. Nobody knows it! Nobody knows it!"

And this was all she could attain to, after all her journeyings and sermons; and so wishing her a long good-bye, I left her. Two days after she died. "Always learning, and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth," was true of her.

The reader may now possibly query why I relate so melancholy and sad a history. I can only reply, to show how impossible it is for the natural mind to arrive, by its own aid, at the knowledge of God, or the ways of God. This poor old lady possessed a keen intelligence, and readily distinguished between the things that differ in the affairs of this life; she had also heard many learned divines and great preachers, but all was of no avail. She would not submit herself to the Word of God. She was proud and ambitious; in a way honest, and could not consent to take her place before God as a wretched sinner, and accept the blessed Lord Jesus as her Saviour.

She is not alone; to-day many of those who are called the leaders of thought, and great philosophers and scientists, confess themselves to be "agnostics," that is, they own they know nothing but what their five senses can teach them; and though full of scholarship and science, are really as ignorant of what concerns their souls, of what is before them in eternity, and what is due to the glory of God, and what are the counsels of God, as this old lady, who, as regards scholarly and intellectual attainments, was ignorant enough. Water cannot rise above its own level, nor man above man; and man left to himself, knows no more about God and His

salvation, than a fish about the laws that regulate the tides of the waters in which it swims.

Many know there can be but *one* right way. The laws of nature teach them that by analogy; but the melancholy result of all their learning and toil is this. "Nobody knows it! Nobody knows it!" The ignorant and the learned are here on the same platform.

And now, seeing this is so, not merely by my testimony, but by their own confession, why, O reader, if you are lingering in this cloud-land of speculation will you not turn your back upon it all, and place your whole confidence in God? Turn to Him in your ignorance and wretchedness, and He will teach you the way of salvation, and bring peace to your troubled soul.

You will find the death of the Lord Jesus, when once grasped fully by faith, sufficient for all your needs, and such wonders wrought by it, that not only are you saved thereby, but such a provision made for you on all hands, in *all* circumstances, for both time and eternity, that you may be wholly indifferent about your share in the pleasures, honours, and riches of this world, so only that Christ Jesus be manifested in you and by you.

Therefore turn, oh turn from yourself, and turn to God! and if only this little paper be the means by God's grace of persuading you to it, we will together praise God throughout eternity, that He has not only provided the way, but also made it plain to our souls. God grant it, for Christ's sake.

JUSTIFICATION

“AND he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness”—(Gen. 15 : 5, 6).

“If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness”—(Rom. 4: 2, 3).

The gospel for us is exactly on the same lines as it came to Abraham in this starry night scene. He takes God at His word. The Lord imputes his faith to him for righteousness, of which he had none in himself. He stands reckoned as a righteous man because of his faith in God. He rests upon what God was about to do, we on what He has done; but the principle of our justification is exactly the same.

Justification is presented in three ways in the Epistle to the Romans. In the third chapter we get the complete ruin of man detailed, and then the statement, “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (ver. 23). That is our condition by nature. Then we are told that we are “*justified freely by his grace* (God’s grace) through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (ver. 24). In Romans 1 : 5, we read—“Therefore being *justified by faith*, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” In the ninth verse of the same chap-

ter we have—"Much more then being now *justified by his blood*, we shall be saved from wrath through him." So you see justification spoken of in these three ways.

Are there then three ways of justification? No. There are three parties to justification. Do you know who they are? God, Christ and yourself. And what is God's part in it? Listen: "Being justified freely by *his grace* through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Grace is the spring of it all. It all comes from God. And what is the next thing?—"Being now *justified by his blood*"—the blood of Jesus—"we shall be saved from wrath through him." That is Christ's side—"his blood"—His death. And what is your side and mine? It is faith. Righteousness shall be imputed to us "if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being *justified by faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (4 : 24, 25; 5 : 1). What is your side and mine? Faith! God's side is *Grace*. That is the spring. It all flows from Him. And Jesus' side? *Blood*. His death is the instrumental means and basis—the groundwork of our justification. Your side and mine is *Faith!* And what is that? It is the hand put out to take the blessing which God's grace offers, and Jesus' blood secures. Justification, therefore, is *by grace, through blood, and on the principle of faith*—not works.

But there is more instruction in the scene before us as to the basis of the soul's blessing. The Lord

says to Abraham: "I am the Lord, that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it" (ver. 7). To this Abraham replies: "*Whereby* shall I know that I shall inherit it?" (ver. 8). What evidence can I have that I shall inherit the land, is the thought of his heart. The Lord says to him: "Take *me*"—He does not say, "Take *thee*"—"an heifer of three years old and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon" (ver. 9). Why these five animals? Would not one have been sufficient for God? I believe one would have been enough for God, but the five were needed for Abraham, and for us as learners of his lesson. I believe the truth brought out here is to show us that God's way of blessing is always based on death. Sacrifice is the instrumental means whereby you and I can be justified, and whereby God has been glorified in respect of sin.

Only death can put away sin. Death came by sin—the sin of the first man—and sin can only be put away by death—the death of the last Adam. There must be sacrifice. The groundwork of our blessing is the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore God bids Abraham take these victims. But you might say, Why the five? Five is always the number in Scripture that is coupled with weakness. The weakness of man, and the weakness of the soul. There are five people in this room tonight, and all five rest on Jesus, but have different measures of apprehension and enjoyment. Do you think that each one is as happy as the other? I never

knew two people to be equally happy. I find some happy, and others happier still. We certainly ought to enjoy Christ, but our enjoyment will depend on our appreciation of Him; and that is the point here, I take it.

Now, observe these five animals were of different relative values. There was the heifer, the she-goat, the ram, the turtle-dove and the pigeon. The heifer was much more valuable than the she-goat; but the turtle-dove and the pigeon, what were they in value as compared with the heifer? Each victim presents Christ in death, but Christ differently apprehended; Christ, not as God estimates Him, but as you and I estimate Him. There may be five souls in this hall tonight, I repeat, resting on the work of Jesus, and but one having a clear, full grasp of Christ. You will find that person brimful of "joy and peace in believing," with sweet and precious views of Christ, and deep enjoyment of Christ. I come to the one who was only converted last night perhaps, and I find that he has but a very feeble sense of the value of the work of Jesus. One sees the heifer, the other the pigeon, so to say.

Now tell me, Are the souls who are most advanced more truly and certainly saved than those who know little about Christ? Not a bit of it! The most advanced is not a bit more safe than the one who is only just beginning his journey. He may be happier, but he is not safer. Friend, if you tonight can say, I really believe on, and rest in Jesus, then you are saved. If you have found Christ, and have rested your guilty soul on Him;

and His wondrous work—even if you know very little about Him—you are as safe as the most advanced Christian. The man of a day's knowledge of the Lord is as safe as the man with fifty years' experience. They have both found the same Saviour. Ah! but, you say, I do not appreciate Christ as I should. True, but God appreciates Him at His true value, that is the point, and He accepts you on His estimate of Christ, not yours. I value the Lord Jesus greatly, but God values Him infinitely more. Our value of Him does not regulate our acceptance, though it may and does affect our joy. It is God's estimate of the work of Christ, in which the believer is set before Him, and according to which he is accepted and blessed.

Two things have to be borne in mind. It is *the Word of God* that connects your soul with the Lord, and it is *the work of Christ* by which you are redeemed and brought to God. Abraham knew he should inherit the land on the ground of sacrifice. This is exactly, in principle, what the fourth of Romans gives us as the ground of our knowledge of justification. Jesus has been among the dead, and God has raised Him up from among the dead. He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." All the offences were borne by Him, blotted out, and washed away in His precious blood. On the ground of that finished work of His, we are forgiven, and justified by God. We stand in all the credit and value of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ—not as we appreciate it, but as God appreciates it.

Our appreciation of Christ must ever be feeble, because we are finite. God's appreciation of His work is infinite, and we stand in His own infinite appreciation of the work by which He has been glorified. We stand accepted before God according to His own estimate of the work of His beloved Son. He has "made us accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1 : 6). He was delivered for our offences—therefore we are delivered from them. He was raised again for our justification—therefore we are justified, and He *becomes our righteousness*.

THE SOWER



THE COMING OF CHRIST

THE day of Christ is coming,
And coming very soon,
It may be in the morning,
It may be night, or noon;
We know it's surely coming,
For God has told us so,
'Tis in His Word we read it,
And thus we know it's true.

But e'er that day breaks on us;
From every tribe and race
He'll call His ransomed people
To fill their heavenly place;
Into the air descending
He'll give the welcome call,
And then within a moment
We'll see Him, one and all;

Transformed into His likeness,
Forever to abide,
We'll be with Him who loves us;
With hearts so satisfied.
No sigh, no care, no sorrow,
No suffering and no pain,
But perfect rest with Jesus,
Before He comes to reign.

Then what a day of sorrow
This poor lost world will know,
A day of awful judgment,
A day of deepest woe;
They'll cry for rocks and mountains
To hide them from His face;
The One Who now is ready
To save them by His grace.

To all who've heard His gospel
And from it turned away,
There's nought for them but judgment;
Gone is salvation's day.
Then, sinner, pause and listen,
Believe in Christ and live.
He'll save your soul forever,
And all your sins forgive.

THE MAGNET

“**A**ND now, Professor, you tell us what *you* consider to be the most remarkable fact in Nature.”

This was addressed by one of a group of young students, to a leading scientific authority, after they had been discussing some of the astonishing things that are found around us.

Without a moment's hesitation, he replied: “The most remarkable thing that I know of is the change that takes place in a piece of soft iron when an electric current is passed through it.”

To illustrate his statement he told them the following story.

Some time ago a party of men were boring a trial shaft for a coal-mine. Presently the boring tool broke, far down below the surface. The broken parts effectually prevented any further progress with the work, and it was imperative that they should be removed. Every known device was tried without avail, and it seemed as if the work would have to be abandoned and re-started elsewhere.

A chance visitor, an electrician, suggested that before this extreme measure was taken it would be well if they tried the effect of passing an electric current through a suitably shaped piece of iron lowered by a chain so as to touch the fragments. This was done, and as soon as contact was made the newly-made magnet and the broken-tools were so strongly attached to each other that when the magnet was drawn up the borer was brought up with it and the work of sinking the shaft was soon resumed.

The remarkable thing about the whole affair was that the great work was done without the least apparent change in the iron. Its weight, size, and shape remained the same, and yet there must have been a mighty change somewhere!

Had it not become possessed of properties, new, strange and powerful? Powers of attraction, and a capacity to perform tasks hitherto considered impossible, were exercised in an irresistible way! And what was the secret of these new forces which endowed a mass of cold iron with living and effective powers?

It had come in contact with a new source of

energy from the outside; one that without producing an external change had wrought so mightily that its whole constitution had been revolutionized. But powers far greater than this exist—powers that act in a moral and spiritual way.

How much greater must that power be, which while it leaves a man's body unchanged, turns a drunkard into a sober and law-abiding citizen, a liar into a lover of truth, a thief into an honest worker for others, a rebel as regards God into a lover of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, a blasphemer into a worshipper and a saint, a child of the devil into a son and heir of God?

These changes *do* take place in the souls of those who turn to the Lord for salvation. By the mysterious touch of the Spirit of God a soul that is born again has these and other transforming effects wrought within him. Previously dead in trespasses and sins, without desires after eternal matters, careless of his soul's destiny, with no love except for earthly things, the one born of God first of all becomes conscious of his unsuitability for heaven by reason of his sins; he becomes alive to the terrible danger in which he finds himself; then he turns to the Saviour of sinners, and quickly learns His readiness to pardon, willingness to bless, and, above all, His ability to save a sinner.

Thus Christ becomes the centre of delights and glories, the existence of which had never been previously imagined. He becomes a constant source of satisfaction and an unending theme of praise, and the Holy Spirit sheds the love of God abroad in the

heart so that God, who was dreaded, is now its joy and boast.

Which of these conditions is yours? Are you cold and indifferent to the claims of God and to your soul's eternal welfare, or has His Spirit thrilled your soul with the grace that is in the heart of God for every sinner?

That which is altogether beyond your power to accomplish may be worked in your heart by the Holy Ghost. Your sins will be forgiven; peace with a holy God made yours; your eternal happiness will be secured; power to please God and to resist the devil will be imparted to you. But otherwise, you are in the hands of the tempter; you are away from the God of all grace; you are yet in your sins; you are without hope beyond the grave; you are cold and dead to God.

May you at this hour turn to Him and experience the vivifying power of His Spirit, so that you may learn His gracious favour to you and to every returning sinner: for "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15).

THE MONTREAL DISASTER

ON Sunday, January 9th, the moving-picture shows opened as usual in Montreal and great numbers of children crowded into them. During the performance at the Laurier Palace, in the east end of the city, there arose the terrible cry of "Fire!" At first the exit was orderly, but when a few of the smaller children stumbled and fell, de-

laying those behind them, the eagerness of all to escape produced a panic and soon the children were piled on top of each other in hopeless confusion. In spite of heroic efforts, at least seventy-five children lost their lives, and many others suffered terrible injuries.

How an awful catastrophe like this speaks to us of the necessity of being prepared to meet God, for as the Word of God plainly declares: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). God has provided a Saviour for all, but how few feel their need of salvation. That "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) is either ignored or disbelieved by the great mass of humanity, or else a sense of need would bring them to the divinely appointed Saviour.

The object of bringing this sad occurrence to your notice, dear reader, is to have you solemnly consider how would it have been with you, had you perished in this awful disaster. Perhaps you say, "I do not go to theatres on Sunday; I go to church." Very good, as far as it goes, but we ask, "Have you ever owned yourself a sinner before God and put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour"?

He died, the just One, for us, the unjust, to bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18); but we need to realize our condition and then, like the jailer at Philippi, will the sense of our danger lead us to cry out: "What must I do to be saved." He, on receiving the answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31), soon gave proof

that his question arose from no idle curiosity, for, taking the apostles into his house, he himself washed the stripes he had inflicted only the night before and thus proved the power of the Word of God when received by faith into the heart. "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 3:16).

Oh, dear reader, ponder on what it cost God that you and I might be saved from the consequences of our sin—not alone the death of the body but what Scripture speaks of as the "second death," banishment from God into hell for eternity. Yet God wills not the death of any, and only those will be eternally lost who do not avail themselves of the salvation He has provided.

We would plead with you, then, in view of the solemn issues involved, to get this matter settled now. Before you lay down this paper, turn your heart in faith to God, and tell Him you put your trust in His Son. Then will His precious blood avail to cleanse you from every stain of sin.

Do be warned! Don't put it off! Every time you do so, it becomes harder. "He that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Prov. 29:1).

A PECULIAR PRAYER

A CHRISTIAN tells that when she was a little girl she prayed daily as follows: "O God, make me a Christian some day, but not yet, for I do like to laugh and be happy; but don't let me die sud-

denly as some children do, but make me good a fortnight before I die. Amen." "What a peculiar prayer!" I hear many of my readers say. Yes, indeed, it was a most peculiar prayer, and yet, after all, the child *expressed* the thoughts of multitudes of unconverted persons. The little girl imagined that if she became a Christian she would not be able to "laugh and be happy." And so do many who would not like to be considered children. They have treated the Christian life as a life of gloom and sadness. They imagine that the Gospel is "sad tidings of great misery," instead of "glad tidings of great joy," and are therefore anxious to close their ears as long as they can to the message of reconciliation. But is it true that the Christian life is calculated to make one melancholy and sour-visaged? As one who speaks what he knows, and testifies to what he has felt, I can affirm that it is a happy and blessed life. It is a delusion and a lie of the arch-enemy that the acceptance of Christ as our Saviour and Lord produces sorrow in the heart and gloom on the countenance. On the contrary, the true Christian is the only one who can afford to laugh and be happy. The saved sinner has "joy and peace in believing," and no wonder, for "*A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance*" (Prov. 15 : 13), and the Christian is one of the happy persons spoken of by the Royal Psalmist in Psalm 32 : 1: "Blessed (or happy) is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." Not only is he a pardoned sinner, he is "justified" (Acts 13 : 39), is in possession of "eternal life"

(John 3 : 36), is a "son of God" (John 1 : 12, 13), "an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ (Rom. 8 : 17). No wonder that David exclaimed, "Happy is that people whose God is the Lord" (Psalm 144 : 15). Some look upon salvation very much in the light of an insurance policy—*only of use after death*. What a terrible mistake! At conversion the believer is delivered from sin's penalty, guilt, and thralldom. He also obtains rest of heart and conscience, with the assurance that God is his Father, Christ his Saviour, and heaven his glorious and eternal home. No wonder, then, that he is happy!

"Don't let me die suddenly as some children do," prayed the child. Has not God said that "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, *shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy*" (Prov. 29 : 1)?

God now commands the unsaved reader to repent and believe the Gospel. Every hour, therefore, that you live in unbelief, every moment that you procrastinate, you are increasing your guilt. If you knew that you were to die at ten o'clock tonight, you would immediately accept Christ as your Saviour. And because God is merciful and gracious, you take advantage of it and presume on His long-suffering. Because God delays the execution of the sentence that has already been pronounced upon you (John 3 : 18), instead of immediately availing yourself of His clemency and mercy you despise the riches of His grace and continue in unbelief and rebellion!

"Make me a Christian some day," prayed the

child. You "intend," like her, to become a Christian *sometime*. Why not close with God's offered mercy and become a Christian now? No one intends to be lost. All hope to spend eternity in the glory, and you amongst them. "Delays are dangerous," and especially so in relation to the salvation of the soul.

"*Make me good a fortnight before I die.*" She desired to be made "good" two weeks before her death! She did not wish to be sad and miserable for any length of time. She longed to "laugh and be happy." Thank God, she afterwards learned that true, solid, lasting happiness can only be found in Christ. At this very moment, my friend, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, who bled, and suffered, and died for you. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3 : 15).

"On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand."

THE JOURNEY TO HEAVEN

TWO acquaintances were saying "good-bye," after a few days spent in the same house. One was a child of God, the other not.

"I wonder if we shall ever come across each other again?" said the one who lived for this world. "I don't think it's very probable," replied the other; "but can you give me any assurance that we shall meet in heaven, where the Saviour is whom I love?" "Heaven! why, that seems a very long way off; I

haven't begun to think about it." And so they parted.

At a cab-stand two or three men were waiting about. Another joined them, and going to an elderly man said, Hullo, John, *you* here! How's your rheumatism?" "Oh! I reckon we shan't part company till we get to heaven," was the answer. "Heaven! why, *that's* a far-away place." "Yes, and I believe it'll take me all my time to get there at all."

These are *man's* thoughts of heaven, whether amongst rich or poor. He secretly fears it, for to him it means departure from this life, and so he hopes it may be a long way off. To the Christian, heaven or paradise is "where the Saviour is." To the dying thief Christ said, "*Today* thou shalt be with Me in paradise" (Luke 23 : 43). To Stephen, when being stoned, it appeared quite close, for "he . . . looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7 : 55). No one with his sins on him could wish to find himself in heaven, for nought that defileth can enter there. Yet many are content to go on in uncertainty as to how they can be made fit for heaven, or of the right road there. Only the blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse us from all sin (1 John 1 : 7), and thus make us fit to dwell with Christ in heaven, and Christ Himself is the passport there.

Supposing you knew that to-morrow your life down here was to come to an end, would you not feel that the place where you are to dwell for

eternity was of vastly more importance than the duties or pleasures in which you have hitherto passed your time? When God said to the rich man in Luke 12 : 20, "Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee," what an awful moment it must have been, for was his future to be spent in heaven or hell? Is it not wiser to face the question at once, than to put it off till too late? God sent His beloved Son to earth to die for us, that He might have the pleasure of welcoming poor sinners and publicans and dying thieves to His home in heaven.

Heaven is very near to you. God can either say to *you*, "Thou fool! *this night*-thy soul shall be required of thee," or else, "*To-day* shall thou be with Me in paradise." Oh, remember, that "When once the Master of the house is risen up and hath shut to the door," not all your tears and prayers will gain you an entrance. You have had your offer of Christ and heaven, and rejected it. The Bible says, "*To-day*, if ye will hear His voice."

\$500,000 IN FIFTY SECONDS

NOT long ago the above startling heading appeared in some of our daily papers, and created an immense sensation. What *could* it mean? Some people manage to make money very fast, and we hear of their incomes being so many hundreds of pounds per hour, but the idea of realizing the sum of \$500,000 in fifty seconds seems absolutely incredible! Yet it is an undeniable fact, as we shall see.

The McKinley Act had been passed to increase the duty paid on goods brought into the United States. This law was to come into force on a certain day, immediately after the clock struck twelve. Vessels from all parts were hastening into the various ports in order to pass their goods through the custom-house before the time expired. New York harbour was a scene of the wildest excitement, thousands of spectators were gathered on the quayside, anxiously watching vessel after vessel as they entered the docks.

The clock in the steeple chimes a quarter to twelve, when, in the distance, is spied the masts of an immense steamer, the *Etruria*, making full speed toward the harbour. On she comes, dashing through the foam: will she be in time? The excitement becomes more and more intense as the minutes pass. See! she is just entering the harbour; the captain is seen standing on board, in his hands are the papers which must be passed into the custom-house and signed before twelve o'clock.

Only one minute now, and almost before the vessel grated upon the quayside, the captain springs on shore, and as he dashes up the steps, a ringing cheer is raised, which is re-echoed again and again along the shore! He hands in his papers just *fifty* seconds before the last stroke of twelve o'clock is heard. Yes! he was just in time. Had he been a minute later the difference in the enforced duty would have been the enormous sum of \$500,000.

Only fifty seconds, and yet what a stupendous amount rested upon it! With what eagerness that

captain made for the port. His whole attention was centred on the particular object of being in time! Oh, that men were as anxious to be in time as regards their soul's salvation. How earnestly they strive after the gold that perisheth! If you ask a man when he is going to think about his eternal welfare, the general answer is—"Oh, I need not hurry, there's plenty of time!" Plenty of time, my dear friend; are you so sure of it? Just think it over quietly in the light of God's Word, and you will find that you are deluded by one of Satan's craftiest methods of keeping you from Christ.

What would you have thought of that captain, if, instead of making full speed for the harbour, he had given orders to slacken the pace, saying, "Don't hurry, lads, there's plenty of time?" Why, if a man in his position did such a thing you would think him insane. The idea of losing \$500,000 through such wilful neglect! And yet *you* are doing the very same thing. How so, you say, I have not even the chance of saving such a sum? No, perhaps not, but you have the opportunity of saving your soul, and is not that of infinitely more value? "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

The captain *knew* when his time was up. Had he not known the time, he would have hurried even more, if possible, lest he should be too late. As you, too, do not know when your life may expire, should you not be ten thousand times more in earnest lest you should be behind? Why be drifting about over the uncertain waves of life, which at any moment may swallow up your fragile bark?

Why not make straight for the heavenly harbour, where; like the crowds gathered to cheer the incoming vessels, myriads of angels are waiting to raise an anthem of praise as they view another soul safe in port for time and eternity?

The captain saved the increased duty by a very near shave. He got in, so to speak, by the skin of his teeth. Surely *you* are not going to try and get into heaven like that? Waste all the energy and strength of your life in sin, and then, at the very last, on a death-bed perhaps, try and secure your entrance into heaven by a repentance which is most likely forced out by fear of death and judgment to follow. Oh, do not put it off till then. Accept Christ now, before death strikes the hour that will seal your eternal doom. "Many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13 : 24).

No doubt there were many vessels that did their very utmost to be in port before the time was up, but all their striving was in vain. Even if they were only a minute over the time, they were subject to the increased payment as much as those who were an hour or a day late. If you neglect your soul's salvation; if, when "almost persuaded," you still linger outside, you will have to bear the penalty of sin just the same as those who have given no heed to the things of eternity.

But, you say, surely if I do my best, and try to live an honest and upright life, I shall get into heaven all right? No, my friend, not a bit of it. All your striving and trying will not be accepted,

or excuse you from being too late. Of what avail was it for those vessels that were not in port at the time appointed to say—"Well, I'm sure we did our very utmost to get in by twelve o'clock; we have kept up express speed for days in order to reach the harbour." Would such an excuse save them from paying the extra duty? No, indeed, it would not. The time was stated; all knew when it was, and no excuse in the world would be accepted for being late. Striving was of no use to them, if they ignored the time appointed. Nor will it be to you.

Well, then, you say, how am I to reach heaven? Thank God, a way is provided. He has not only appointed a time for judgment; He has also provided a time for mercy. *Now* is that time, *now* is the day of salvation. He sent His beloved Son into this world to bear sin for us, and all who believe in Him are saved from wrath to come. "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." - *He* has provided the means; all you have to do is to obey His call, and accept the pardon He so freely offers.

THE SOWER



THE DAY OF THE LORD

THE day is fast approaching
When Jesus will appear,
A day of deepest sorrow,
A day of dread and fear.
When He, in brightest glory,
From heaven will come down,
By heavenly hosts attended,
To sit on David's throne.

His enemies will tremble,
Before Him bow the knee;
'Tis He, the Lord of glory
Whom every eye shall see.
But e'er He comes in glory,
He'll call His own away,
To share His joys forever,
In heaven's unclouded day.

He'll give that shout, so welcome
To all who've known His love,
And in one brief, short moment,
We'll meet in clouds above.
The door which now stands open,
Will then be shut for aye,
Then comes, as Scripture tells us,
That fearful judgment day.

O sinner, pause and listen,
 To you the warning's given;
 Where will you spend eternity,
 In hell, or up in heaven?
 In one of these 'tis certain,
 You must forever dwell,
 If you are not in heaven
 You'll surely be in hell.

THE LITTLE MAN IN BLACK

MADAME M. and her husband were young and wealthy and of high social position. They flung themselves with ardour into the gay and fashionable world.

Shortly after their marriage they went one evening to a theatre and witnessed a play in which during one of the acts there was presented "The Slaughter of the Huguenots." The scene was so vivid and life-like that the lady was quite distressed. She knew little of these things, and still less of Christ, though they both were "devout" Roman Catholics—that is, they attended church and went through all the necessary ceremonies.

In answer to her distressed inquiries her husband told her the scene represented the killing of people for holding heretical religion.

"And who had them killed?"

"Why, I suppose it was done by order of the Church: *they were heretics.*"

"And did our holy Church have these poor people massacred for no other reason than for be-

lieving Jesus Christ could save them without the help of our Church?"

"For no other reason, as far as I know," was the reply. "They were not criminals, but heretics," and, briefly, the husband related the story of the massacre, speaking of it without emotion as a mere matter of history. The whole thing, however, so disturbed the mind of the young wife that she begged to be taken home. She could not shake off its effect. She was staggered by the thought that her Church should have foully murdered tens of thousands of the people of God for no other reason than that they firmly believed they were saved by the Lord Jesus Christ apart from priest and sacrament. Sadness settled upon her spirit, and this presently deepened into profound conviction of sin.

Her husband became so distressed and alarmed about her that he called in a distinguished physician. He listened to her story, and finding himself plied with questions which he could not answer, he reported the case as one of "acute religious monomania," and advised as much pleasure as possible to divert her mind.

Acting upon this advice her husband promptly plunged her into such a round of fashionable dissipation as even they had never before known. Night after night they were out, the wife going reluctantly but obediently.

One night, attending a great ball in Paris, they were passing through the long and brilliantly lighted corridor of the great hotel, when from a side door there darted out a little man dressed in black, ap-

parently a clergyman though not a priest. He stepped up to the lady, and without a word of apology or introduction said with great eagerness, "Madame, do you know that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin?"

Quite startled, the lady replied, "What did you say, sir?"

At which the little man in black again declared without comment, but with much pathos, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Then turning on his heel he disappeared.

Madame M. stood for a moment dumbfounded, and then said to her husband, "Did you ever hear that before? It is the most extraordinary statement I ever heard. What can it mean?"

She climbed the broad stairs, entered the lofty saloon, and immediately began repeating to all and sundry the remarkable words she had heard, and asking their meaning.

Noting his wife's unusual behaviour her husband took her home. For days she dwelt on those golden words: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin," until, finally, she found out whence they came. Procuring a Bible she eagerly devoured the New Testament and learned the whole glad truth. Her soul was saved, and a calm ecstasy of joy became her settled portion.

In a few months her husband, too, was reached. During a dinner party to a number of artist, wits, and literary men of Paris, the conversation turned to the ridiculing of religion and Christ and the

Bible. Suddenly he rose, and said, "Gentlemen, I cannot have the name of Jesus Christ made the subject of ridicule at my table. He is the Son of God and our Saviour, and His blood cleanseth from all sin." Mr. M. was a converted man.

The explanation of the sudden apparition of the little man in black was that, being in the great hotel on business, he was seized with an irresistible impulse to rush into the corridor, and tell the first person he met that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin." He obeyed, and hence his apparently mad action. Who shall say that the God who took Philip from crowded Samaria to reach one soul in the desert (see Acts 8) was not directing in this?

Reader, you, too, have sins. Are they forgiven? Do you feel their weight? What is the blood of Christ to you? That precious blood you need. It is your only hope. Without it there is but the deepest pit of gloom for you. With it, there is peace and joy now and heaven hereafter.

A STUDY IN CONTRASTS

A CONTRAST—there is something instructive as well as interesting about a contrast. We appreciate a good house after being in one inferior to it. In some few sentences I may be able to give you an example of this in what came under my notice last week.

At a small refreshment room I met some school teachers taking their lunch, and they were chatting freely about their work with the children. One

asked, "How much of religion do you think they can understand?" I was at a separate table, but close enough to hear. Another said, in reply, "Well, I had to go to Sunday School twice every Sunday, but I never understood anything, and oh, *how I hated it.*" Then another said, "Yes, and in those days they used to talk about being saved or lost. Do you know, I had an old aunt who positively believed that, and she used to go to people's doors and ask if they were saved!" There was a great deal of laughing, and several remarked, "How very absurd." "I wonder who believes it now! Let us ask Mr. W. what he thinks it means to be saved." The one male teacher with them, a quiet, grave person, had not joined in the conversation, or the sad mockery of God's things. In reply to their appeal, he said, "You will find a passage in the Acts of the Apostles which gives us the true idea, 'The Lord added to the Church daily such as were being saved,' as the better rendering gives it. That means we are being saved all the way along. We persevere and walk in right ways and there is no need to talk of being lost in the end." At first hearing I thought he was a Christian, but now could see it was a plan of his own or of man, and was greatly stirred in my soul. "What am I here for?—surely I must confess my Lord."

The scoffers had all left, and when he rose to go, I said—"Excuse me, please, I have been intensely interested in what I overheard of your conversation. What you said of being saved all the way along is true of a believer, but I fear you are

leaving out conversion, the question of sin must be settled first, 'It is the Blood that makes atonement for the soul.'" "Conversion," he said, "it all depends on what you call conversion." To which I at once replied, "Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ—if you don't teach the boys that you're leaving out the foundation." He then sat down and took great pains to explain his theory. "I think we must be a little elastic," he said, "in these days of advanced knowledge, and be willing to look at things a little differently." I explained that having enjoyed God's truth all my life, I did not wish for anything new. I begged him to take his true place before God as a sinner and accept Christ as his Saviour. "Then you can teach the boys the truth. Look how responsible you are in their lives for good or evil." The Lord gave me a suitable message just then for him and all such, "If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." He said further, "We lose ourselves bit by bit so that in the end we are all right—no need for fear!"

He said his time was up. I gave him a tract about Pepita, but he returned it very politely, wishing me every blessing. He really was very kind and patient with me. I said aloud, "Oh dear! If these are our teachers, what about the children?" A young lady across the room gladly received my book, saying, "I shall be pleased to have it, I am a Sunday School teacher. I am often grieved to hear him talk so—I believe he is a good man, but a Modernist." We may notice here there was a

semblance of truth in what was proposed, and this is a snare for unwary feet. We know that believers will be "conformed" and they are exhorted to be "transformed" by the renewing of the mind. Sorrow for the poor misled teacher was almost as great as the joy that I had taken "The helmet of salvation," that I could hold up the head knowing "whose I am and whom I serve." I did not expect to meet such an enemy, but found the precious truth of God was both "shield and buckler." How true is a verse in Romans 1:22, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."

My next call was to see an old friend who was a happy Christian. She was ill in bed, in pain and much weakness, at eighty years of age. Here I found my contrast, and it was a great one—*light instead of darkness, confidence instead of doubt, a Saviour known and loved, where in the other case man was exalting himself!* The aged Christian was feeding on the Bread of Life. The story in Mark 5 had been read, of the Lord's wonderful ways with the people in His day, i.e., the man in the tombs—the afflicted woman—and the child whom He raised from the dead. She said, with a beaming face, "We've told Him all the truth long ago, haven't we? And He said those lovely words to us, 'Daughter, be of good cheer.' She must have been surprised when He said that; she must have thought, 'Why He's known me all the time'."

And so, dear reader, it is true of you,—*He knows you, loves you and waits for you to come with that touch of faith telling Him all the truth,*

and to receive the comfort of His gracious words. We see by faith the Christ, once humbled here, but all-powerful to heal, and even to restore the dead to life. I assure you we spent a joyful half-hour in His presence! What a contrast to see this faith in God's Word in place of man's proposings! Through grace we were just filled with joy and peace in believing.

I will take another look back at the café company and will tell you that I, too, had an old aunt who went from door to door with the Gospel message, seeking to point sinners to the only Saviour. And now, dear friends, it occurs to me that as I also have become an old aunt and now follow in the path, I will say to you in real affection and concern, "Are you saved or lost?"

This, my first meeting with scoffers and a false teacher, has made me feel sure that the waves of judgment are fast rolling in on this poor world. The best that Satan offers you must prove a "refuge of lies," while the believer has a rich storehouse always at hand—"The Word of the Lord which endureth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:25).

Saved or lost: here is a contrast which our thoughts and words all fail to gauge—so vast and deep in meaning and results. I pray that God himself may be your Teacher here and now, that He may lead you away from the school of man's proposings to find pardon and peace in the work and person of His Beloved Son. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (Jno. 3:36). Build on this rock, my friend, and you are

safe for time and eternity. In place of being "a little elastic" you will be "girt about with truth" (Eph. 6:14). There is nothing uncertain or changing about a faith which wears on through long years. Surely "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

"On Christ salvation rests secure,
The Rock of Ages must endure,
Nor can that faith be overthrown,
Which rests on Christ, the Living Stone."

"God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

FUNERALS PROHIBITED

WHILE walking in a London suburb many years ago, my attention was drawn to a somewhat strange notice. At the entrance to a fine crescent of large and well-built homes, there stood a notice board bearing the following command:—

OBJECTIONABLE TRAFFIC

AND

FUNERALS PROHIBITED.

As I walked along I could not help thinking of that "King of Terrors" whose advent is so dreaded by mankind. There are many who would like to do away with death altogether, and yet they cannot, for "it is *appointed unto men once to die.*" But men cannot bear the dread reality of death; it fills their minds with gloomy forebodings as to the *long*

hereafter. Men may prohibit funerals from passing along that crescent of elegant houses, but they cannot prevent death entering at the front door and laying its icy hand upon one and another.

Oh! death is an awful thing for one who does not know the love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

WHAT IS THERE AFTER DEATH?

How can anybody tell from his own experience? Nobody has ever gone into the grave and come back again. Nobody, did I say? Ah, yes, the blessed Saviour has. He "died for our sins, according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15 : 3), and He was buried, thus proving the fact of His death; but He is risen from the dead, and is now alive and seated in glory at the right hand of God—the Man Christ Jesus. Much more than a man He is surely, for He is the Eternal Son of the Eternal God; but as Man He died, and rose, and ascended to glory.

But who can tell what comes after death? God tells us in His Word. Oh, the Bible again! somebody exclaims. Yes, the Bible, and spite of what infidelity so arrogantly asserts, *the Bible is the Word of God.*

"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9 : 27).

No wonder man dreads death, and dislikes to be reminded of it. He may try to prohibit funerals, though this even must be difficult to accomplish, but when death comes knocking at the door, he cannot refuse him an entrance.

The best plan is to be ready for death when it comes, and if any reader of these lines wishes to

be ready when death does come, be sure of this, you must be ready *before* it comes. Be ready now—don't wait for another opportunity which may never come. The messenger from the eternal world may even now be on his way to your door, and before another week has passed your life's history here below may have ended, and eternity for you have begun.

How may I be made ready? perhaps some reader inquires.

A printed card lies before me on the table as I write, bearing the following words:—

ALL we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us ALL" (Isa. 53 : 6).

This blessed verse of God's Word contains two parts:—first, "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way." This is sadly and solemnly true of both the reader and the writer of these lines. We have gone astray from God, and from the path of righteousness and holiness; we have done it with our eyes open, knowing full well we were doing wrong in God's sight. We are sinners, then, guilty sinners, yea, lost sinners. Reader, will you own this? Will you acknowledge that you are a sinner, a guilty sinner, a lost sinner?

To do that would be to resign myself to hopeless despair, perhaps you reply. Stop a bit, read the second part, "The Lord hath laid on Him"—on whom? On Christ, the holy, spotless Lamb of

God. Yes, "the Lord (Jehovah) hath laid on Him (Christ) the iniquity of us all."

Praise God! my sins are borne, and borne by Christ.

"Our sins were borne by Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God;
He took them all, and freed us
From the accursed load."

For the believer the terrors of death are gone. My sins deserved eternal death, but Jesus died for me.

At the close of one of the late D. L. Moody's great meetings in the Agricultural Hall, London, a man deeply convicted of sin inquired the way of salvation. The preacher was exhausted with the efforts of the day's work, and seeing the reality of the man's concern, and knowing full well the power of the Word of God, he replied, "My friend, if I talked with you all night I couldn't tell you any more than what I am about to say. Go home, open your Bible, turn to Isaiah 53 : 6; go in at the first *all*, and come out at the last."

The man was amazed, and stood watching the retiring preacher. Filled with curiosity he opened his Bible at the words:—

"*All* we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us *all*."

He went in at the first, and he came out at the last. The burden was gone.

HOW FAITH COMES

A MINISTER was once requested to pay a special visit to a member of his church, whom severe illness had laid quite prostrate. The patient was a man with brawny arms, deep chest, broad shoulders. He had a large heart, moreover, and an intelligent, well-stored mind. He professed to be a decided Christian, and had, for some time, occupied the honourable and responsible position of elder in the church alluded to; but had resigned that office some time before the date of the event to be described in the following lines.

The minister found him half-sitting in bed, supported by pillows, placed in position by the hands of his loving and devoted Christian wife. After some desultory conversation on things temporal and eternal, the minister, fearing that his visit was to come to nothing, proposed that the little company present should engage in prayer. On this proposal being cordially assented to, he said to the sufferer in bed, "But what, Mr.—, are we to pray for?" "Oh," said he in reply, at once, "faith, more faith." The minister feared that the patient did not know very much about faith, or that at least he was making Christ, a Saviour, of his faith—thus putting it into an improper place; but said that it was a fair thing to ask, inasmuch as faith was expressly declared to be "the gift of God."

After prayer had been offered for a word in season, and a blessing on it, it occurred to the minister to read and explain what Paul had said on the subject of faith, in a chapter which has communi-

cated the "Light of Life" to many an enquiring soul, the 10th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.

The scales seemed to fall from the eyes of the arrested and earnest listener when verse 17 was reached, in which the Apostle asserts that faith is or comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, just as sunlight enters the house through the unobstructed window.

This fine saying, in which matters are stated in their proper order, seemed to dispel the confusing darkness from his mind, and to drive the terror from his heart. As it is, however, with a man undergoing a surgical operation under chloroform, some little time elapsed before he thoroughly grasped what he had learned.

He lived to testify, by a tender walk, a chastened bearing, a charitable spirit, and a joyous, grateful frame of mind, to the reality of the happy change that had come over him; and never for some time after that could he come near enough to be able to shake hands with the friend who had prayed for and explained the Word to him, without shedding tears of joy and gratitude.

And now, dear reader! if you have set out upon an anxious search after the way of everlasting life, beware of putting faith in the place of the Saviour. This is like a deep and treacherous quagmire near the way to your true home. If you turn aside and step into it, you will not make one inch of progress till you are lifted clean out of it. You are not saved by a work, or an act of your own mind. Doubtless, your salvation comes of trusting Christ; but

remember you are not saved by a thing, but by a Person. You are saved by your heaven-sent Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, and not by your faith, except and in so far as it is the empty hand which lays hold upon Him.

Instead then of seeking faith in the cold dark region of your own heart, look out from self to the Sun of Righteousness. "Seek ye the *Lord* while He may be found, call ye upon *Him* while He is near." Fasten the eye of your heart upon a revealed Christ. Do not think of faith as a thing separate from Christ. Your looking to Christ in confidence is faith. Make Christ, not faith, your object. Come to Him, and to God through Him, straight as an arrow to the mark. Wash yourself in the fountain of His blood—accept His righteousness in exchange for your own. Drink from His hand the living water of His Spirit, and you will live and rejoice eternally in Him.

THE SOWER

ETERNAL LIFE

“Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins” (Acts 13:38).

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1).

BLESSED be God, for ever blest!
And glorious be His name!
His Son He gave, our souls to save
From everlasting shame.

Had we worn sackcloth, and in dust
Cast ourselves humbly down,
Covered our miserable heads
With ashes for a crown.

That would not save us from the curse,
Nor end this endless pain;
Nor quench the fire, nor ease the heart,
Nor wipe away the stain!

The eternal life, His life laid down
Such was the wondrous plan;
And Christ, the Son of God, was made
A curse for cursed man.

The Lamb of God, our sins He bare,
 Himself for us He gave,
 His woes were ours, and all our sins
 Were buried in His grave.

In Him we live, He is our life,
 In Him we sit above;
 With Him for ever we shall share
 The Father's boundless love.

THOMAS BILNEY, (A.D. 1530).

THERE was in Trinity College, Cambridge, a young doctor, much given to the study of the canon law, of serious turn of mind, and of bashful disposition, whose tender conscience strove, although ineffectually, to fulfil the commandments of God. Anxious about his salvation, Thomas Bilney applied to the priests, whom he looked upon as physicians of the soul. Kneeling before his confessor, with humble look and pale face, he told him all his sins, and even those of which he doubted. The priests prescribed, at one time, fasting; at another, prolonged vigils; and then, masses and indulgences, which cost him dearly. The poor doctor went through all these practices with great devotion, but found no consolation in them. Being weak and slender, his body wasted away by degrees, his understanding grew weaker, his imagination faded, and his purse became empty.

“Alas,” said he, in anguish, “my last state is worse than the first.”

From time to time an idea crossed his mind, "May not the priests be seeking their own interests and not the salvation of my soul." But immediately rejecting the rash doubt, he fell back under the iron hand of the clergy.

One day Bilney heard his friends talking about a new book; it was the Greek Testament, printed with a translation, which was highly praised for its Latinity. Attracted by the beauty of the style, rather than by the divinity of the subject, he stretched out his hand; but, just as he was going to take the volume, fear came upon him and he withdrew it hastily. . . Was it not the Testament of Jesus Christ? Might not God have placed therein some word which perhaps might heal his soul? At last he took courage and, urged by the hand of God, he slipped into the house where the volume was sold in secret, bought it with fear and trembling, and then hastened back and shut himself up in his room.

He opened it—his eyes caught these words: "*This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.*" He laid down the book, and meditated on the astonishing declaration. "What! St. Paul the chief of sinners, and yet St. Paul is sure of being saved!" He read the verse again and again. "O assertion of St. Paul, how sweet thou art to my soul!" he exclaimed. This declaration continually haunted him; and, in this manner, God instructed him in the secret of his heart. He could not tell what had happened

to him: it seemed as if a refreshing wind were blowing over his soul, or if a rich treasure had been placed in his hands. The Holy Spirit took what was Christ's, and announced it to him. "I also am like Paul," he cried, with emotion; "and, more than Paul, the greatest of sinners; but Christ saved sinners. At last I have heard of Jesus." His doubts were ended—he was saved!

"I see it all," said Bilney; "my vigils, my fasts, my pilgrimages, my purchase of masses and indulgences, were destroying instead of saving me." All these efforts were a running out of the right way!

Bilney never grew tired of reading his New Testament. . . . A witness to Jesus Christ had been born by the same power that had transformed Paul, Apollos, and Timothy.

"WHERE'S THY SOUL?"

“WHERE'S thy soul?” It is a definite personal question. Don't put it aside unanswered. It was asked, not by a minister from the pulpit, nor by a neighbour of his friend next door, nor by a district visitor of some poor invalid pining at the point of death. The inquiry was addressed by a young man *to himself*, under exceptional circumstances, which gave to it special emphasis.

A sturdy Yorkshire collier, in the prime of health; he had reached manhood's estate, pursuing "the common round" of a selfish life, wholly oblivious of spiritual things. He had never entered a church; he had never heard a sermon; he had

never attended a prayer meeting; he "cared *nowt* for that sort."

One day, in the midst of his ordinary toil, tidings reached him that his mother had just been drowned. The shock almost stunned him, yet immediately the query flashed into his mind, "Where's her *soul*?" It was an agonizing problem which he could not solve. While pondering it, fearfulness and trembling came upon him, and another question rang in his ears, as though a voice from heaven, "Where's *thy soul*?"

Conviction of sin followed; a season of darkness and deep distress. Through ignorance of God's Word, and of God's plan of salvation, weary months were passed in groping after a ray of hope. The anxious inquirer missed no opportunity from which instruction might be derived. And it was on a New Year's Day, while listening to the message of Divine Love, that the sinner was enabled to believe "the Word of reconciliation," and to rejoice in the knowledge of redemption through "the precious blood of Christ." There and then a new life was begun, a life of faith in the Son of God, beautiful in unreserved consecration, in full assurance, and in glad confession. The testimony of this "new creature" was a perpetual psalm. It ran through various stanzas, but was never more happily expressed than in the favourite lines—

"My soul through my Redeemer's care,
Saved from the second death I feel,
My eyes from tears of dark despair,
My feet from falling into hell.

“Wherefore to Him my feet shall run;
My eyes on His perfections gaze;
My soul shall live for God alone;
And all within me shout His praise.”

More than fifty years have elapsed since the conversion here recorded, and (at the time of writing) the subject of it is still in the body. “In age and feebleness extreme,” he is waiting for the dissolution of the earthly house, “having a desire to depart and to be with Christ.”

When I sat beside his bed, not very long ago, his face was marred and swollen with suffering, his poor heart was feebly fluttering within its walls of flesh; but his spirit rejoiced in God the Saviour. Having told me the story of his early irreligion, and of the remarkable change wrought in him by the Spirit and Word of God, he added, with particular emphasis, “Mind you, I don’t go back to that, to build on it now. The question with me, as I lie here, is, ‘How is it with thy soul to-day? Where’s thy soul *now*?’ And, thank God, ‘I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.’ Since I gave myself into my Redeemer’s hands, fifty-two years ago, I have never for an hour doubted my safety in Him.”

Happy old pilgrim! His face is steadfastly set Zionwards, and he goes “from strength to strength.” The “outward man is decaying,” yet the “inward man is renewed day by day.” To sit at his feet for ten minutes was always a good sermon for his

pastor. Even now, with the memory of his simple testimony, there comes a quickening breath of spiritual power, as one re-echoes the personal challenge, "How is it with thy soul to-day? Where's *thy* soul *now*?"

Surely indifference to the welfare of the soul is nothing short of criminal folly. Neglect of the soul

"Is suicide, where more than blood is spilt."

There is no more generally accepted truth than the existence of the human soul; yet there is no truth more commonly disregarded by men. The *body* reigns everywhere. Its appetites are pampered, its charms are cultivated, its claims are deemed imperative, its wants are catered for with unwearying diligence. The body is fed, nursed, adorned, comforted; every limb clothed, every organ gratified. But the *soul*, alas! is under-valued, famished, forgotten; its claims are slighted, its eternal destiny is unheeded, its very existence is ignored.

Thy soul is really *thyself*: the living being that sojourns within the vesture of human flesh—thinking, speaking, acting—using the body as a vehicle of communication with the world.

Thy soul, with all its attributes—conscience, reason, will, affections—destined for immortality, but ruined by sin, is of infinite moment.

"God to redeem it did not spare
His well-beloved Son;
Jesus, to save it, stooped to bear
The cross, with all its shame."

“*Where’s thy soul?*” Hast thou surrendered it, by faith, into the Redeemer’s hands? Art thou committing the keeping of thy soul to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator?

Do not suppose that there can be safety or happiness otherwise. The sensualist, hoping for satisfaction in carnal husks, may say to his soul, “Soul, take thine ease: eat, drink, and be merry.” But “in the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits.” “For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world and lose (or forfeit) his own self?” (Job 20:22; Luke 9:25, R.V.).

Only the Christ of God, who is “the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls,” can save, and feed, and keep them unto life eternal.

“Lover of souls! Thou know’st to prize
What Thou hast bought so dear.”

He who laid down His life for the sheep will not suffer to perish any who hear His voice, follow where He leads, and trust Him simply, fully, and for ever.

Reader, there is no question that more seriously concerns you and me than the personal inquiry, “How is it *with thy soul* today?” Happy for us if, believing in Jesus and leaving all to Him, we can sing the sweet refrain,—

“It is well, it is well with my soul.”

Shortly after my conversation with the aged Christian whose experience is recorded in these

pages, I was travelling in the country by train, and for part of the journey, had the compartment of a railway carriage to myself. It was evening, and at a roadside station a workman entered, bringing his bag of tools. His day's toil was over, and soon he began to whistle. It might be rude of him to do so, but he did not intend any rudeness; and presently I perceived that he was whistling a sacred melody.

During a momentary pause, I said, "Friend, I think I know that tune. I hope you enjoy the hymn that it belongs to." "Thank God I do, sir," was the reply. Then, with some emotion in his voice, he added, "And when I can't sing the words, *I like to whistle the tune.* It does me good, and cheers me up a bit; for it's true, sir, indeed it is—

'It is well, it is well with my soul.' "

Once more, dear reader, how is it with you?

A TEXT THAT IS NOT IN THE BIBLE

“‘IT is never too late to mend.’ Do you believe that, Miss H.?”

“Of course I do; I believe everything that is in the Bible.”

“But that saying is *not* in the Bible, you may search from the first chapter to the last, and you will not find it.”

“Still it is quite true, is it not? everybody believes it.”

“Well, Miss H., I for one do not believe it. It is a flat contradiction of the Word of God.”

“What! do you mean to say that there is anyone who is past mending?”

“Yes, that is just what I do mean, and the person who is past mending is *yourself*, and every other sinner on the face of the earth.”

The young lady to whom these words were spoken seemed greatly surprised; she had never thought it possible that anyone should be *past mending*, and little did she know that she herself was one such.

My reader, have you ever thought of this matter? The Bible is plain and positive on this point.

It describes us *all* as “*filthy*” (Psa. 14 : 3), and it shows us that nothing, that we can do, will make us clean (Jer. 2 : 22).

It says, that we are *all* “*under sin*” (Rom. 3 : 9), and utterly “without strength” (Rom. 5 : 6) to deliver ourselves.

Once again, it tells us, that we are “*dead*” in trespasses and sins,” and altogether without hope (Eph. 2 : 1-12).

There are many other verses in Scripture which teach us that we are past mending, past reforming, past improving. But, thank God, though it is too late to mend, it is not too late to be saved.

We are past mending, but, thank God, we are not past saving! We are sunk deep in the mire and filth of sin, but the strong arm of Jesus is able to *save* us, though no power in heaven or earth can *mend* us.

Reader! do you want that arm of power to save *you*? Then I will tell you what to do.

Get down upon your knees, and say, “O Lord!

I am just what Thou dost say I am. I am ungodly; I am vile; I have done nothing but sin, and I deserve to be put into the flames of hell forever."

Tell it all out to Jesus, take the low place of a poor unworthy sinner at His feet, and put your whole-hearted trust in Him as your Saviour. Remember it was for sinners like you that He died. Think of the blood which He shed to make atonement for sin. Then, look up and say from your heart, "Lord Jesus, I am guilty and helpless, but Thou art able to save, Thou did'st shed Thy blood *for me*, and I, a poor sinner, rely upon the merits of that precious blood. I trust in Thee, I confide in Thy love, and I flee to Thee for pardon."

If words like these come from your heart, they will reach the Saviour's ear. And what will be the result?

You will be pardoned and saved for ever! Yes, for the Bible says, "*Believe (or trust) on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.*"

THE PHOENIX PARK MURDER

MANY years ago, when walking down Phoenix Park, Dublin, a woman, selling apples from basket, opposite the Viceregal Lodge, pointed out me a round hole in the grass at the roadside being the exact spot where the body of Lord Frederick Cavendish lay just after he was murdered. said to this woman

"If *your* body had lain there dead instead of

Lord Cavendish's, where would your *soul* now have been?"

"Your honour," said she, "you have given me a very hard question to answer; but I hope to get to heaven at last."

"Do you side with Lord Cavendish or with his murderers?"

"Oh, sir," she said, "it was very kind of the noble lord to come from England to help us, and it was very wicked of those cruel murderers to kill him."

"Then you sided with Lord Frederick?"

"Yes, sir, most certainly I did."

"My good woman," I added, "this very much reminds me of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who in such love and compassion came from heaven to do this poor world good, and of what this wicked world did to Him. Let me also ask, Do you side with the Lord Jesus Christ, or with the world that murdered Him, and still rejects Him?"

"Oh, sir, it was very good of that Saviour to come and do what He did, and it was very wrong indeed for Him to be treated so badly."

"But you have not answered my question about the Son of God as you did about Lord Frederick. Have *you*, then, as a needy and helpless sinner, accepted that blessed Saviour as your substitute, trusted His finished work, and taken shelter under His precious blood, who came 'to seek and to save that which was lost'?"

Alas! alas! from the indifferent manner of this

poor woman, she was evidently more interested in her apples than in the Saviour. Just like those Gadarenes of old, who preferred their swine to the Lord Jesus, who had come to their country, through the storms of Galilee's lake, to cast a legion of demons out of the poor demoniac bound in Satan's chains, and to set him free to love and serve his Deliverer.

I had, therefore, to pass on with another unsatisfactory evasion of the all-important question, the salvation of the never-dying soul. But this is by no means a solitary example of the sad, sad rule of preferring the fleeting things of time and sense to the soul's eternal welfare. Is our *reader*, I wonder, an exception to that rule? Think about it solemnly, friend, and give the answer to God, who is *light* as well as *love*, and who knows your heart. "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many: and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:27, 28). What are *you*, dear soul, looking for? Is it for Jesus and glory, or for judgment and hell?

A few weeks later I was walking through the grounds of Bolton Abbey, Yorkshire, where the Duke of Devonshire has a seat, and where a monument is erected to the memory of Lord Frederick Charles Cavendish, whose father at that time held the title.

I noticed on this monument the following striking inscription:

*“Full of love to that country,
Full of hope for her future,
Full of capacity to render her service.*

Murdered in Phoenix Park, Dublin, within twelve hours of his arrival,” &c.

Reader, I would not for one moment seek to undervalue what Lord Frederick Cavendish, as Chief Secretary, sought to do for Ireland, nor do I desire to discuss how much his murderers should be deprecated, for that is no part of our theme: but when reading those three first lines of the inscription, most forcibly it struck me how infinitely more applicable, in the higher sense, they were to the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, who in such love and grace for guilty sinners came so far to this world, and suffered so much at their hands. Yes, of Him, and Him alone, can we truly say:

*Full of love to lost sinners,
Full of hope for their future,
Full of capacity to render them service.*

“Who suffered for sins once, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.”

So full of love unfathomable, love divine, that He, “being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every

knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that *every tongue* should confess that *Jesus Christ is Lord*, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2: 6-12).

Friend, receive of that fulness of love, and be enabled to say of Him, as the apostle Paul said, *He* "loved *me*, and gave *himself* for *me*." Then go and tell it to others.

So *full of hope* was He, that it is written of Him, "He shall *see of the travail of his soul*, and shall be satisfied" (Isa. 53:11); and, "who, for *the joy that was set before him*, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12 : 2).

Reader, have you accepted the benefits wrought out on that cross, and can you "rejoice in hope of the glory of God"? And will you contribute to the fulness of that blessed Christ of God, by receiving Him as your present Saviour and eternal satisfier, to be with Him for ever, to the full joy of His heart, and of yours, when faith and hope will have ceased?

So *full of capacity* was the Lord Jesus, that He *alone* was able to meet the just claims of a holy God, deliver lost sinners from hell, put away their sins by His unspeakably precious blood, bring them nigh to God, give them peace and joy and eternal life, go and prepare a place for those who accept Him now by simple faith, and come again to take His Church, for which He bled and died, ere long

to be for ever with Himself in co-heirship, companionship, and glory.

Reader of these lines, let me ask, When do you mean to become a privileged recipient of the fruit of His wonderful divine *love, hope, and capacity*, which is still held out for your acceptance in this day of His grace and long-suffering mercy? *Do* be once more warned not to allow the last opportunity to escape.

If you do, you will in judgment assuredly find yourself where *escape, love, and hope* never enter. You will discover then, to your eternal remorse and shame, what absolute power that blessed Son of God has to maintain His holiness upon all who now refuse such manifested *love, hope, and capacity*.

I beseech you, therefore, leave the murderers' ranks! "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," and be "filled into all the *fulness of God*," for His peerless name's sake.

THE SOWER



THE WARNING

“For when they shall say, Peace and Safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them.”

—1 Thess. 5:3.

SPEAK not of the good time coming,
Say not “Happy times draw nigh.”
Lo! the clouds with terror looming,
Darken o’er the future sky!
Undeceive thyself, O mortal;
To the winds such dreamings give!
Think upon the fearful purging
That the earth must first receive!

Rather tell of wrath and vengeance
Pending o’er this guilty race;
In its shame still glorying—boasting;
Deaf to all the calls of grace—
God forgetting—God dishonouring—
Guilty world, thy doom is nigh!
Fear unknown will seize upon thee,
When He shakes the earth and sky!

Sodom’s fall but faintly pictures
What thy awful lot will be;
It had not so many warnings,
As the Lord hath sent to thee,

Grace refused, makes judgment sorer—
 O what grace hast thou refused!
 Guilty world, thy judgments hover,
 All escape for thee is closed!

Yet as in the case of Sodom
 Lot departed ere it fell;
 So, the Lord will come from heaven
 Take His church with Him to dwell,
 Ere destruction's work commences,
 On this Sodom's guilty ones.
 They, the salt, alone preserve it—
 They removed—the judgment comes!

To the ark and from destruction
 All who'd be preserved, then haste;
 Christ's alone the Ark of safety—
 Come—and full salvation taste.
 Tarry not for reformation—
 (Sinners—Jesus died to save).
 Art thou lost? He came to find,
 Thou, believing, life shalt have!

Then, amid the coming glory
 Which the church with Christ shall share
 Thou shalt have thy happy portion,
 Bride of His—His image bear—
 Then His earthly people gathered,
 Earth made clean and Satan bound;
 Thou shalt with thy Saviour reigning,
 O'er a happy world be found!

AFTER MANY DAYS

THE late J. Russell, of Bradford, England, was an excellent open-air speaker, whose voice could be heard, on a quiet evening, at an astonishing distance.

In the neighbourhood where he lived, there lived also Joe Braley, a rough man of unenviable notoriety, often in prison for poaching, wife beating, housebreaking, or other crimes, and nearly always wanted by the police. Having selected a promising house for his midnight work, at some distance from town, he bent his steps along the river bank one evening with his bag of burglar's tools, when suddenly a distant voice fell distinctly on his ears. Curiosity prompted him to follow the sound for half a mile along the river, until he found himself on the outskirts of a crowd listening to the earnest words of a gospel preacher.

About an hour later, as the preacher was sitting at his evening meal, a knock was heard at his front door and the servant announced that Joe Braley wanted to see Mr. Russell.

At once he went to the door, while Mrs. Russell, naturally timid and knowing Joe's character, crept quietly behind her husband in the darkness. There at the open door stood a sturdy figure, and a gruff voice asked, "Are you Mr. Russell?" "Yes I am," was the answer. "Do you know me?" "Yes, Joe, I do." "I want you to come for a walk with me." Then Mrs. Russell made known her presence by laying hold of her husband and beseeching him not to venture out at that late hour

into the dark night, but remonstrance was in vain. Together the preacher and the poacher walked in silence, Mr. Russell meanwhile wondering what could be Joe's errand. On they went until out of the town and up a lonely lane between two high hedge rows. Then Joe came to a sudden halt and said: "You know what my life has been. I started out on an errand of burglary this evening. As I crept along the river bank a voice fell on my ears. Scarcely knowing what I did I walked on until I came to a crowd and heard you preaching. I afterwards inquired your name and address that I might see you. I want to know if all you said is true."

"Yes, Joe, every word of it," was the reply.

"Then do you think there is any hope for me? Can Jesus save such a sinner as I?"

"Yes, Joe, I have no doubt about it whatever, seeing He can save to the uttermost."

"But though you know much of my life you don't know all. There is hardly a sin under the sun which I have not committed. I should not like to swear that these hands have not been stained with blood. Can there be any mercy for such a deep-dyed sinner?"

"Yes, Joe; the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son, cleanseth us from all sin."

"Then I want you to see me bury these things and kneel with me upon their grave."

Cutting the turf carefully, he dug a little grave and deposited there his revolver, skeleton-keys, and sundry house-breaking appliances. Then treading down the earth, he re-laid the turf and he and the

preacher knelt in the darkness crying to God for mercy. As they rose, Joe left Mr. Russell and was heard of in the neighborhood no more. What had befallen him was a secret; if living, it was evident he had put distance between himself and his old associates as his only chance of a better life.

To his children growing up around him the preacher often told the tale of his midnight adventure, though now far removed from the scene, and wondered what had become of Joe.

Thirty years passed by, and the whole country was *en fete* with Sunday School celebrations; the gathering in Veel Park being by far the largest. About 30,000 scholars, beside many thousands of parents and friends met there on that occasion. Mr. Russell, now in the serene and yellow leaf, was present, with his family.

A well-built and neatly dressed gentleman came up to him and gripped his hand, "Why, Mr. Russell, I am delighted to see you."

"You have the advantage of me," said Mr. Russell.

"Don't you know me? I know you and have reason to know you. I should have known you a hundred years hence. Don't you remember Joe Braley?"

"You are not Joe Braley, are you?"

"I am, but praise God I am not the Joe Braley you knew. I love the Lord and have been preaching His gospel for years, and (turning to a lady at his side) this is Mrs. Braley. She also loves the Lord. And my three daughters are all be-

lievers. Forget you? Never! We must forever praise God that we knew you."

Among the many glad hearts that returned from the immense gathering, not one thrilled with truer joy than did that of the dear old servant of God, as he told the tale of the long lost one—found, and the truth of the divine promise, "Cast thy bread upon the waters! for thou shalt find it after many days."

ETERNITY

A GAY and worldly lady had a godly servant. Night after night she was kept up until four or five o'clock in the morning waiting for her mistress's return from her fashionable parties; and night after night when the mistress returned home she found her servant reading the Bible or some other good book. One night the mistress looked over her shoulder and asked laughingly: "What melancholy stuff are you reading this time?" But her eye caught the word, Eternity; and suddenly the laugh was changed for a strange feeling of sadness. Sleep fled from her eyes, and mirth from her heart, and the word Eternity still haunted her, until a conviction of her sinful condition broke her down before God, and seeing herself as a poor wretched sinner on the way to eternal ruin, she was led to put her trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Eternity, what an immense word that is! You and I must exist for ever and ever. But where? The Word of God tells us that there are two places in which souls will spend eternal ages, "And these

shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25:46).

Reader, have you ever thought seriously about these things?

"Time is swiftly gliding by,
Death and judgment draweth nigh."

If you have never come to the Lord Jesus Christ and received him as your Saviour, your portion if you continue in this state must be to perish forever. And dear friend, you have no excuse to offer, for God has shown his love for you in sending His own dear Son to die upon the accursed tree, that you might have eternal life in Him. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

THE TWO WILLS

A TRADESMAN, on his deathbed, once hurriedly called me in to make his will; and it was well no time was lost in attending to it, for before sunset that day he passed away to his long home.

His mind kept clear, but his body was so feeble that his hand had to be held for his signature, which was one mass of scribbles, but which sufficed, because it was duly witnessed.

When the witness had withdrawn, and the dying man had somewhat revived from the exhaustion of the business, which was very complicated, I remarked to him,—

"Mr. L——, I have handed the will to your wife, and your affairs are now settled for time, and

are all right for *this* world. May I ask, are they also all right for eternity and the *next* world, to which you are so rapidly hastening? For these eternal realities are of infinitely more importance than the fleeting things of time and sense."

"Well, sir," said he, "I have been thinking a good deal about that too since I fell ill, and have been anxiously waiting to see someone about it, and am glad you have named it now, for I have driven both matters *very late*."

"Well, Mr. L——, I am glad to hear you are anxious about that too. Then what is your *will* about your soul for all eternity?"

"Oh," said he, "I want to be all right; but I have been a wicked man—a real bad one."

"That's right," I added, "let all out to God, for you are just the very one for Jesus; just the one to be a monument of His grace and mercy, for He did not come to call the righteous but *sinner*s to repentance,—having no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Jesus died for *real bad ones*. He died, the Just, for the unjust, that He might bring us to God; and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin. Do you, Mr. L——, see that you deserved the wrath and judgment Jesus received on Calvary's cross at the hands of the Holy God you have sinned against?"

"Yes, I do indeed!" said the dying man.

"Then, do I understand that, as a helpless sinner, you receive Him as your Saviour and substitute?"

"I *do*, most gladly."

“You believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and are saved, are you?”

“Indeed, I do.”

“Well, if you really do, Mr. L——, your soul’s affairs are all right for eternity and the next world. You have bowed to *God’s will*, and have set to your seal that God is true. Your soul’s eternal affairs were settled by your Substitute on the Cross, and the whole thing is in His safe keeping.. Your life is hid with Christ in God, and when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. And when we see Him, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

A delay of just another hour or two and this man would have been for ever too late for both his temporal and spiritual affairs to be settled favourably. His earthly ones would no doubt, in time, have been surmounted, with difficulty, confusion, and perhaps some quarrelling among the relatives; but oh! his immortal soul’s eternal ones never could have been favourably settled, no, not even in the eternal lake of fire. Friend, thank God *you* are not yet too late to know *your* soul’s salvation settled; but mark, God says: “Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2). It is right enough to set your earthly affairs straight, if you possess but a shilling in the world you are leaving, but how sad to think of how often the soul’s eternal things are put off till the last, and, it is to be feared in very many cases, till it is for ever *too late*. It is very solemn; but there is but one instance, so far as we

know recorded in God's Word, of a soul being saved at the "eleventh hour," and that one is the thief at the cross. One such case there is, that none might despair; *only one* that none might presume.

Therefore, do not for one single moment presume upon your deathbed to get such a momentous question settled. Furthermore, you might never see a deathbed, as is so with many. How fearful for the soul to wake up in hell and find Satan having had *his will*, and that it is too late to alter it. For, as the tree falls, so it lies. That rich man who lifted up his eyes in hell, being in torments, wanted an alteration. He craved a drop of water on the tip of the finger to cool his tongue, and a message of warning to be sent to his five brothers still on earth,—but it was *too late*. The reply he got for himself in hell was, that there was a great gulf fixed between himself and help; and for his brethren, that if they believed not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead. He might have left all his earthly affairs straight, and as clean as a new pin, but what about that *then!* Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.

Reader, what about knowing *your eternal* affairs settled ere it be too late? Ponder it, we beseech you!

When this world had the option of choosing either a Saviour or a murderer, they chose the murderer, and Pilate delivered Jesus *to their will* to be crucified. Permit me to ask, Are you still on the world's side, whose will got rid of Jesus? or have

you bowed, and has your heart sided with God, and received God's Christ? Because the answer to this question lets out the whole secret.

God "is long-suffering to usward, *not willing* that *any* should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up" (2 Peter 3:9,10). Where will your soul be *then*? "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die?" (Ezek. 23:11).

Jesus said, "Whosoever *will*, let him take the water of life freely."

Will you take it, and know your immortal soul's eternal affairs favourably settled for ever?

TO HIM THAT WORKETH NOT

"Now to him who worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."—Rom. 4 : 4, 5.

TROUBLED soul, are you bowed down beneath the burden of your sins? Accept, in simple faith, the Divine statement at the head of this article, and salvation is yours. Are you toiling, working, striving to be better than you are? Read carefully these blessed verses, and you will see the

utter fruitlessness of all your efforts in the flesh to please God.

Do you say, like thousands more, "But *we must try*"? Try! Try to be better! Try to improve *the flesh*; try to make up to a holy God for the mis-spent past; try to expiate your sins by your self-righteousness! for such it is. You may as well try to change the Ethiopian's skin or the leopard's spots (Jer. 13 : 23). When you can accomplish this, then may you do good who are accustomed to do evil. "If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me" (Job 9 : 30, 31). "For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God" (Jer. 2 : 22). "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. 64 : 6).

No; salvation is not to him that worketh, but *to him that worketh not*. God's thoughts are not as ours. The natural thoughts of the natural man are always opposed to the thoughts of God. "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6 : 5). *Man* thinks it is to him that worketh; *God* says it is "*to him that worketh not*." The little word *not* makes all the difference. The greater part of the religious machinery of Christendom is founded on the forgetfulness of it, and tens of thousands perish eternally through failing to pay heed to it.

Men work, and set others to work, in numberless ways for salvation; but God says distinctly that it

is "*to him that worketh not.*" His word is clear, plain, and decisive—"worketh not." You may have your own thoughts about it, dear reader; but there stands the imperishable statement of the Word of God, "*worketh not.*" God says what He means, and means exactly what He says. You may fancy it means something slightly different; you may pare it down; you may add to it; or you may pay no heed to it—it in no way alters it. Salvation is "*to him that worketh not.*" You may be saved today, this very hour, *now*, without a single work of any kind whatsoever—past, present, or future. Whoever you may be, wherever you may dwell, whatever you may have done, God's "*worketh not*" is for you.

One work only is necessary for a sinner's salvation, *the finished work of Christ*; hence *your works* are entirely excluded as the ground of your salvation. They are all imperfect, faulty, sinful; but the finished work of Christ is perfect, complete, infinite, and God is glorified thereby. Hence it is that we read, "But to him that *worketh not*, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. 4 : 5). Bow to the word of God, believe on Him, and the blessing is yours.

How very simple! Salvation is of *grace*. If a man does so much work for another, clearly it is not grace to pay him for the work done. It is a debt owed. Hence, also, if a sinner does a number of good works (!) in order to be saved, God is his debtor, grace is ignored and set aside, and the

sinner can take the credit of his own salvation. But the Divine plan is "to him that worketh not." To him that ceases from his own fleshly efforts to be good, casting his deadly doings down, "but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly," the *faith* of that man is counted for righteousness. This is the way of grace, and all the glory redounds to God. The wretched heart of man struggles to the last moment to take the glory to itself. "To him that worketh not" makes nothing of man. But "believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly" magnifies God's grace, and glorifies Him for ever.

Dear reader, will you give up your works, and believe on God? We are justified *by faith*, and *not by works*. God justifies the *ungodly*. Who? The *ungodly*. Not the godly—note it well—but *the ungodly*. If God justified the godly, nobody would be justified at all. Such a people is not to be found. True godliness is the fruit of justification, not the ground of it. God justifies the ungodly that they may become godly. Do not imagine that God justifies ungodliness; far be the thought. But when a man learns, in the presence of God, that all his doings are mixed with sin, and confesses he is ungodly, then He justifies him from his ungodliness.

"*Christ died for the ungodly.*" Hence God justifies the believer on the ground of His finished work. His faith is counted for righteousness. His wickedness condemns him; his best works are mixed with sin; his own righteousness is as filthy rags—but on the ground of the infinite sacrifice and finished work of Christ on Calvary, God, having raised Him from

the dead, justifies the soul that believes on Him. "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness *without works*, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. 4 : 6-8).

Dear reader, is this blessedness yours? Precious, soul-comforting doctrine of the living and imperishable Word, God imputeth righteousness *without works*. There it is, over and over again, in every Bible in every language in Christendom. To him that worketh not (Rom. 4 : 5); without works (Rom. 4 : 6); not according to our works (2 Tim. 1 : 9); not by works of righteousness which we have done (Tit. 3 : 5). Of works? Nay (Rom. 3:27); not of works (Eph. 2 : 9).

"The good for nothing, helpless ones,
Find mercy on the spot;
For thus the Gospel message runs,
'To him that worketh not.'"

O that one could write these golden words with the point of a diamond upon every self-righteous heart in Christendom! How many a tempest-tossed soul would find a haven of rest and peace, did they but take God at His word with the simplicity of a little child.

"Weary, working, burdened one,
Wherefore toil you so?
Cease your doing, all was done
Long, long ago."

Yes, troubled heart, the finished work of Christ could bridge the awful gulf that separated a lost, guilty sinner from the Living God. The rotten planks of human righteousness will land all who trust in them in the lake of fire for ever. Once again we press it upon you, reader, as we value your precious soul, God says, "*To him that worketh not.*"

But are there no works whatever? some may reply. Ah, yes, there are works which God can accept; but only those which are the fruit of faith. Time enough to talk about them when you have rested in simple faith upon the finished-work of Christ—when you have believed God and are justified. As long as you are in your sins, every work, act, deed, word, thought is defiled. "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth *no good thing*" (Rom. 7 : 18). "The heart is deceitful above all things, and *desperately wicked*" (Jer. 17 : 9). "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was *only evil continually*" (Gen. 6 : 5). But justified, we receive the Holy Ghost, who is alone the power to produce good works, the fruit and evidence of faith, to the glory of His Name.

THE SOWER



ETERNITY

COUNT the little drops of water
That within the ocean lie,
Count the many stars that twinkle
As you look into the sky.
Count the sands upon the desert,
And upon the ocean's shore;
Count the moments in your life-time,
Gone, but to return no more.
Count the leaves within the forest,
And the tiny flakes of snow;
Count the blades of grass in summer,
And the shining drops of dew.
Count the tears which all the millions
In so many lands have shed,
Count the stones in all the grave-yards
Telling where they've placed the dead.
Count the birds which soar above us,
And the atoms in the air,
Count the many many blossoms
Giving fragrance everywhere.
When your counting all is done
Eternity has scarce begun.
Then reader, say, where will YOU be
During all eternity?

BREAD CAST UPON THE WATERS

THE shades of a winter evening were rapidly deepening, and flinging obscurity over the subjects which lay upon the tables of a well-known London dissecting-room, a quarter of a century ago, as a group of medical students might have been seen standing round one of these tables, evidently, for the moment, deeply engaged. The fading light, shut books, closed dissecting cases, and somewhat grave faces of the dozen listeners showed that anatomy was not the topic in hand, as a seated student, who had till then been busy with his part, replied to the queries that came from every quarter of the group.

The conversation had been begun by S——, a typically thoughtless and careless young would-be medico, who, in passing the seated dissector—known to be a Christian—had railingly said, “Well, Spurgeon, how many have you baptized lately?” Medical students are notorious for their love of bestowing a *sobriquet* on all and sundry, from professors downwards; so the student thus addressed had, soon after he joined the college and it leaked out that he occasionally preached the gospel, been dubbed with the name of the well-known and popular preacher.

“I do not baptize; I only preach the gospel, when, and as best I can,” was the rejoinder.

“Oh! you don’t baptize, you only preach. Come, tell us what you say;” and the loud tone of banter in which this was said quickly gathered, as it was intended it should, a little coterie of kindred spirits,

expecting some fun from the roasting of the young Christian. At that moment, however, the senior demonstrator of anatomy, a grave, demure man of whom the students stood rather in awe, joined the group, and took part in the conversation later on.

“You want to know what I preach, do you? I preach glad tidings; the love of God to ruined man, the death and resurrection of His Son the Lord Jesus, and that faith in Him alone secures salvation; that man is guilty, undone, lost, and that the ‘Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.’ Human efforts are all in vain. Man’s so-called good works are all valueless to win salvation. ‘Salvation is of the Lord,’ and ‘the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles;’ whosoever will may have it, without money or price. ‘The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.’ The last time I preached I spoke on the 10th of Acts, where it says about the Saviour, ‘To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name *whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.*’”

“And do you mean to say that your sins are all forgiven, and that you are saved, Spurgeon?” continued his first interrogator.

“Through God’s grace I can most certainly say so. I have had that joy for more than a year now.”

“Well, that is presumption, and no mistake,” “Did you ever hear the like?” “That’s rather too good to believe,” put in a chorus of voices at once.

Nothing daunted, the assailed one replied, “How can it be presumption to believe God? If my salvation depended on my good works I might well

be filled with doubt and uncertainty, but if it depend, as it does, on the perfectly finished and accepted work of the Lord Jesus for me, it would be presumption to doubt that salvation, when God says-so plainly in His Word to every believing soul, 'Thy sins are forgiven. Thy faith hath saved thee. Go in peace' (Luke 7). When an awakened sinner once asked, 'What must *I do* to be saved?' God's Spirit replied, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *thou shalt be saved.*' And further, He has said in Ephesians 2, 'By grace *are ye saved* through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; *not of works*, lest any man should boast.' It surely cannot be presumption to believe the God of truth, when He says He sent His Son to save me, and that when I trust in Him I am saved."

"But you do not give sufficient place to our works," put in the senior demonstrator, who had been listening quietly till now.

"If God gives them no place, sir, had we not better leave them out of consideration? It says in Romans 4., 'If Abraham were justified *by works*, he hath whereof to glory; but *not before God.* But what saith the Scripture? Abraham *believed* God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that *worketh* is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that *worketh not*, but *believeth* in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.' Our works are either 'wicked' (Col. 1:21) or 'dead' (Heb. 9:14), and certainly they cannot save us. Christ's work is finished, by it God has been glorified, and it is due to Christ that the one who forswears his own

works, and trusts alone in Him, should partake of the benefits and fruits of that atoning work of His, by which alone can sin be put away."

"Ah! that makes it far too easy," said one; "Depend upon it, Spurgeon, you are all wrong," said another; and with varying other such comments the gathering broke up, and the dissector was left alone to pack up his tools in quietness, wondering, the while, what God would bring out of the incident. The bread of life had been simply presented: whether any were hungry enough to eat thereof was a question. At any rate, the young believer found comfort to his heart in the words, "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days" (Eccles. 11:1), and "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:11).

Two days later this young student was again busy with his scalpel and forceps, sitting alone at a table, when one of his seniors, named J——, brought his part, instruments, and book, and seated himself opposite to him, and began to dissect. Work went on quietly for a little, and then J—— said, "That was strange stuff you were telling the fellows the other afternoon. I said nothing at the time, but I don't believe what you were saying. I don't at all pretend to be a religious chap myself, but I am sure a man would need to work hard to get to heaven. Your way of it would not be mine at all, if I cared for that sort of thing, which I don't."

“It is not my way, J——, it is God’s, and that makes an immense difference. When the Lord was upon earth, and the Jews came and asked Him, ‘What shall we do that we might work the works of God? do you know what He answered them?’”

“No. What?”

“‘Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent’ (John 6:29). To believe in the Son of God is all that you or I have to do to get saved.”

“But, man, it stands to reason that we ought to do something ourselves. Why, by your way everybody may get saved. Do you believe they will?”

“No; I believe nothing of the sort, for alas, all will not take the place of being lost sinners, and hence do not feel their need of a Saviour, and so do not trust Him. His words are true: ‘They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.’ The whole, the righteous—or those who think they are such—need Him not, but sinners are welcome to Him. As one of the latter I have received Him, and He has saved me out and cut, blessed be His name!”

“Oh, that’s easily said, but I don’t believe in your way of salvation at all, and you will never convince me that that is the way to be saved;” and so saying J—— relapsed into silence, shortly after left the table, and for the rest of their student life took uncommon good care not to give an opportunity for a *tete-a-tete* with the man who knew Christ had saved him.

Some years rolled by; student days ceased, the

ardently longed-for diplomas and degrees were possessed, and while J—— went into practice in the far West, the other went north of the Tweed, to extend his knowledge, while filling the post of house physician in a large hospital. To that same city, in course of time, who should come but J——, attracted, as he supposed, by certain medical advantages of which he would avail himself; but led doubtless by the gracious hand of God, who had not taken His eye off him since the day an arrow, shot at a venture, had pierced the worldly coat of mail he wore in the London dissecting-room. Great was J——'s surprise to find that his former acquaintance was chief in those wards where he wanted to gather clinical information. Flung thus across his path again, J——'s friend felt greatly interested in him, and one Lord's Day said, "Do you ever go to hear the Word of God preached now?"

"Sometimes; but I have not been since I came north. Where do you go?"

"I? Oh! I go to —— Street."

"Who preaches there?"

"The preachers are various."

"Do they preach well?"

"That would be an open question. I believe they preach the truth, and that is what you and I want. You might do worse than come;" and so saying, a little notice of the meeting was handed to him, which he took, with the remark, "Perhaps I will turn in some night."

That evening the preacher was reading the 7th of Luke, when the door gently opened, and the un-

believing, but evidently interested, young doctor entered. His surprise was not small to find in the preacher the one who had invited him; but the Lord's sermon of twelve words: "*Thy sins are forgiven. Thy faith hath saved thee. Go in peace,*" soon riveted him, and though he did not go "in peace," he left impressed, and aroused to a sense of his need and danger, such as he had never experienced before.

The next Lord's Day found the doctor again present, as an aged and grey-haired servant of God sweetly unfolded the touching parables of Luke 15, and showed how, when man was *lost*, Jesus came after him, when he was *dead*, how the Spirit quickened him, and when he returned repentant, how the Father welcomed and rejoiced over him. Conviction of sin was now evident in the young physician, and two Lord's Days later, when he again heard his medical friend preach from the words "Wilt thou go with this man?" he felt he must decide for Christ that night. He stayed to the second meeting for anxious inquirers; and then in converse with his friend, as they walked towards the hospital together, admitted that he had never been easy since the conversation in the dissecting-room. Persuaded in his mind that what he had heard was not true, he had gone home, searched the Bible for support, only to find that he was wrong himself, and that what he had heard was the truth. Convinced that he was wrong, and that God's salvation was free to all, by simple faith in Jesus, he had balanced the blessings of the gospel against "the pleasures of sin for a season;" the

devil had kicked the beam the wrong way, so he shut up the Bible, and turned again to the world with its sin and folly, but had never had an hour's peace. Now he saw he was lost, and was asked, "Do you believe that Jesus came to save the lost?"

"I do, I believe He came to save me, and I believe in Him." "Then are you not saved?"

"That is just the difficulty. I don't feel sure."

"Well," said his friend, "if God is worth believing on two counts, why not on the third? When God says in His Word you are a lost sinner, what say you?" "I believe Him," he replied.

"Good. And when He says He sent His Son to die for you, and that if you trust in Him you shall be saved—what do you say?"

"I believe Him with all my heart."

"Quite right. Now, then, when he says, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life' (John 3:36), are you going to doubt Him?"

"That won't do. If He speaks truly on the two counts, He must speak as truly on the third. Yes, I see it. I believe in His Son, and I have everlasting life. He says it, and it must be true. Thank God, I am saved, forgiven, without any works of my own—by simple faith in Jesus."

"One question more: 'Wilt thou go with this man?'" "I will go!" was the emphatic reply; and the doctor started for glory, and is yet on the road; sure of the end through grace.

Reader, have you started yet? If not, just start at once.

A PRISONER IN ABYSSINIA

A white man was unjustly seized by an Abyssinian King, and made a prisoner.

After some weary months had gone by he was allowed to leave his cell, though still loaded with heavy iron chains on his ankles to prevent his escape.

One day another white man discovered him, but he was too closely watched by the King's soldiers to give the prisoner any help; however, he obtained permission to give him a book. The prisoner was much disappointed. He did not care for books: food or clothes would have pleased him much better, so he threw the book on one side and forgot all about it.

At the end of three years he thought about the book once more, and took it up to amuse himself. As he was holding it, he felt something hard under the cover. Quickly he pulled it open, and what should he find but a file, the file he had wished for so long!

Without losing a moment he started off to the forest, where he could be unobserved, and there, hour after hour, he filed away diligently at his irons, till, at last, to his great joy, they fell off him, and he succeeded in making his escape. His only regret was that he had made so tardy a use of the gift, and neglected the means of his deliverance for three almost interminable years.

“Is there anything we have neglected?”

Have we neglected the Scriptures? Perhaps for long years the Old Book our mother gave us has

been unopened, the Book she made us promise to read. Alas, it has lain covered with dust and neglected while we were serving sin!

But one day, we, like the prodigal son, come to our senses and find that sin has bonds and heavy chains. We remember the Bible, and open it to see what help it can give us; and we read, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me (i.e., Jesus Christ) He hath sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18, R.V.) "Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered" (Isaiah 49:25).

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work for us will deliver us from our bonds. Faith is a file which will cut our chains. Our chains may be very strong and heavy, and we may be hardly able to move under them (like poor Neufeld in Omdurman), yet the file of faith is stronger still, and more powerful than any sin which binds us; and, used steadily and bravely, with God's help, we shall soon see all our fetters lie at our feet, and gladly leave them behind us. Then shall we go on our way rejoicing in Christ's salvation, and the glorious liberty of the children of God.

TO THE READER

WHAT shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? If you had the wealth of a Rothschild, the money king, if you stood on the loftiest pinnacle of literary fame, or

political ambition, if your name were adorned with all the honors which the universities of this world could bestow, if your brow were wreathed with laurels, and your breast covered with the medals of a hundred victories, what would it profit you? You must leave all, you must pass through the narrow arch of time into the boundless ocean of eternity. Men of princely wealth, men of literary fame, men who have ruled by their intellectual power, men who have held their thousands hanging entranced upon their lips, men who have reached the very highest point of naval, military, and forensic distinction, have passed away into eternity; and the awful question as to such is, "Where is the soul?"

Beloved reader, we beseech thee, by the most weighty arguments that can possibly be urged upon the soul of man, not to turn away from this subject until thou hast come to a right conclusion. By God's great love, by the cross and passion of Christ, by the powerful testimony of God the Holy Ghost, by the awful solemnity of a never-ending eternity, by the unspeakable value of thy immortal soul, by all the joys of heaven, by all the horrors of hell,—by these seven weighty arguments, we urge thee, this moment, to come to Jesus. Delay not; argue not; reason not,—but come now, unsaved soul. Just as you are, with all your sins, with all your misery, with all your misspent life,—with your dreadful record of mercies slighted, advantages abused, opportunities rejected,—come to Jesus, who stands with open arms and loving heart ready to receive you, and points to those wounds which attest the

reality of His atoning death upon the cross, and tells you to put your trust in Him, and assures you you will never be confounded.

May God's Spirit carry home this appeal to thy heart, this moment, and give thee no rest until thou art savingly converted to Christ, reconciled to God, and sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, for His blessed name's sake.

“WHITHER BOUND?”

AN appalling catastrophe took place by which a steamer, in a rough sea and on a dark night, collided with a man-of-war outside Gibraltar Bay, resulting in the loss of about 600 persons. The cries of the drowning men and women, heard on the Spanish coast, are said to have been most heart-rending. What made the accident all the more saddening was that they were just about to anchor in the bay.

Dear reader, you are at present like a vessel sailing on the sea of life: May I whisper in your ear, “Whither bound?” Do you consider this a hard question, or it may be, unanswerable? Were you, as captain in charge of a vessel, asked through the speaking-trumpet by the captain of another vessel passing you, “Whither bound?” would you reply: “I cannot tell; it would be presumption to answer such a question.”

What I ask you is really the question of questions—one which ought never to be left unanswered. Your worst enemy, Satan, wishes to keep you in a

fog of doubt as to where you are and whither you are bound. If you are like a ship out at sea without a rudder, without a compass, without a chart, tossed about by every wind of opinion that blows, and in danger of foundering on some sunken rock of secret sin, your life is not worth living.

A real Christian has Christ for his Captain, a spiritually-enlightened conscience for his compass, the Bible for his chart and hope for his anchor. He is chartered for the port of glory. Not only does he know whither he is bound, but at times, with the telescope of faith, he can see the land of his adoption afar off, and rejoice in the anticipation of ere long stepping on the golden shore to dwell in the blissful presence of God, and of meeting many of his dear ones who have gone before and are waiting to welcome him. His Captain, who knows all the quicksands, rocks, and other perils of the deep, has undertaken to steer him safely and bring him at last to his desired haven. He has never lost a vessel, and never will. He has said: "This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which He has given me I should lose nothing."

Will you take Him to be your Captain, and commit the keeping of your soul to Him as to a faithful Creator? Or will you continue to be your own captain, doing as you like, indifferent as to what your future end may be, misled by false lights, and at last making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience?

Thousands who have all their lifetime dreamed of sailing for heaven, have waked up when a little

distance from the end of their voyage to know that they have all along been on the wrong track, and have at last collided with the inflexible justice of the living God, and sunk into the bottomless sea of perdition.

Again I ask, "Whither bound?" 'For the harbour of a blessed immortality, or the rocky shore of everlasting destruction? Let me entreat you not to remain in doubt a moment longer. Jesus has died as your substitute, to save you from your liability to punishment; and He lives to conduct you to His own bright home beyond the swelling flood. Trust Him now with all your heart and you will be able to say, "I am bound for glory; I'll weather the storm; it won't be long; I'll anchor by and by."

THE COMFORT OF THE BLOOD

THE blood was my first comfort, and I believe it will be my last comfort. . . . I feel as though the Lord were leading me from earth to heaven, by the steps of the 23rd Psalm. 'The Lord is my Shepherd,' . . . and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.'" The words came slowly from the lips of the dying man—a doctor—passing away from a loving wife and children, in the prime of life, with a rest and joy in the Lord I have never seen surpassed. A few days later he passed away with "Bless the Lord" on his lips.

Many physicians are infidels. Why, I cannot say. I would that all such could have seen this dear friend of many years patiently pass through

months of weakness, always rejoicing in Christ, and then at the last bear witness to the comfort of the despised blood of Jesus.

Ah! there is no real foundation for the soul apart from the blood of Christ. That blood cleanseth from all sin, removes every stain, purges the conscience, purifies the soul, relieves the distressed and sin-burdened heart, and sets the one who trusts it perfectly free in the presence of God. Death is robbed of its sting, the grave of its victory, and "judgment to come" has no meaning for the one who rests only on that which the Holy Ghost calls "the precious blood of Christ."

What folly can exceed that which despises God's only way of salvation—Jesus' blood? No solid, real comfort is found apart from Christ and His blood.

What a portion is the Christian's! He has a title without a flaw, and a prospect without a cloud.

Infidel, what comfort will you have on your deathbed?

THE SOWER



A DIVINE TRAFFIC SIGNAL

STOP, poor sinner, stop and think
Before you farther go!
Will you sport upon the brink
Of everlasting woe?
Once again, I charge you; stop!
For, unless you warning take
Ere you are aware, you drop
Into the burning lake.

But as yet there is a hope
You may His mercy know;
Though His arm is lifted up,
He still forbears the blow;
'Twas for sinners Jesus died,
Sinners He invites to come;
None who come shall be denied;
He says, "There still is room."

THE PRESUMPTUOUS CAPTAIN

"SHALL you anchor off — Point, Captain?"
asked a passenger.

"I mean to be in the dock with the morning
tide," was the Captain's brief reply.

"I thought perhaps you would telegraph for a
pilot," returned the passenger.

"I am my own pilot, sir," and the captain whistled contemptuously.

"He's in one of his daring moods, and I'll guarantee he means to take the narrow channel," quietly remarked a sailor, as he passed to execute some order.

"Is it dangerous?" asked the same passenger, uneasily.

"Very, in a gale, and there's one coming on, or I'm no sailor," replied the man; "but if any man can do it, it's himself. Only he might boast once too often, you know."

Evening came, and the gale was becoming what the sailors call "pretty stiff," when the mate touched my arm, arousing me from a pleasant reverie, in which a happy welcome home held a prominent place.

"We are going in by the narrow channel, sir," said he, "and with the wind increasing, we may be dashed to pieces on the sandbank. It is foolhardiness, to say the least. Cannot you passengers compel him to take the safer course?"

I felt alarmed, and hastily communicated with two or three gentlemen and, proceeding together to the captain, we respectfully urged our wishes, and promised to represent any delay caused by the alteration of his course as a condescension to our anxious apprehensions; but, as I anticipated, he was immovable.

"We shall be in dock tomorrow morning, gentlemen," said he. "There is no danger whatever. Go

to sleep as usual, and I'll engage to wake you with a land salute."

Then he laughed at our cowardice, took offence at our presumption, and finally swore that he would do as he chose—that his life was as valuable as ours, and he would not be dictated to by a set of cowardly landmen.

What a picture of foolish self-confidence! How like poor man everywhere! Man thinks that he has the power by his own efforts to find his way to the harbor of eternal safety; and he so often takes offence if anyone suggests that he is wrong in his calculations, and that he is in the wrong way. Let me ask you this simple question, "Are you sure that you are in the right way? Do you know, do you have the authority of the infallible word of God to assure you that all is well with your soul?" The word of truth declares, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 16:25). Confidence in your own goodness is but a way to death—the second death in the lake of fire. Oh sinner, take heed to these solemn eternal realities; for if you miss your way, the result is eternal loss. It need not be loss but infinite gain. God has declared that "by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).

But to continue my story. We retired, but not to rest; and in half an hour the mate again approached, saying, "We are in for it now; and if

the gale increases, we shall have work to do that we did not expect."

Night advanced, cold and cheerless. The few who were apprehensive of danger remained on deck, holding on by the ropes, to keep themselves from being washed overboard. The captain came up, equipped for night duty, and his hoarse shout in the issue of commands was heard with difficulty in the wild confusion of the elements; but he stood calm and self-possessed, sometimes sneering at our folly, and apparently enjoying himself extremely, surrounded by flapping sails, groaning timbers, and the ceaseless roar of wind and wave. We wished we were able to sympathize in such amusement, but we supposed it must be peculiar to himself, and endeavored to take courage from his fearless demeanor. But presently there arose a cry of "Breakers ahead!" The captain flew to the wheel—the sails were struck; but the wind had the mastery now, and the captain found a will that could defy his own.

"Boats, make ready!" was the next hurried cry; but, as too often occurs in the moment of danger, the ropes and chains were so entangled that some delay followed the attempt to lower them—and in the meantime we were hurrying on to destruction. The passengers from below came hurrying to the deck in terror, amid crashing masts and entangled rigging. Then came the thrilling shock which gave warning that we had touched the bank, and the next was the fatal plunge that struck the foreship deep into the sand, and left us to be shattered there, at the wild waves' pleasure.

It is needless to dwell upon the terrors of that fearful night. I was among the few who contrived to manage the only boat which survived, and scarcely had I landed, in the morning light, surrounded by bodies of the dead and fragments of the wreck borne in by the rising tide, ere I recognized the lifeless body of our wilful, self-confident presumptuous captain.

How like this captain the Christless sinner is. Over and over again the voice of God has rung in the ears of his soul, and yet, what has been the sad result? The counsel of God has been despised, His reproofs have remained unheeded, and on goes the poor lost sinner to his eternal doom, blinded by the god of this world—Satan. “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them.”

Sinner, awake from your sleep of death, your soul-destroying stupor. There are breakers ahead. Judgment is coming. You know not what an hour may bring to you. If unsaved, it may bring endless doom. Look now in simple faith to the Lord Jesus Christ. He came to save such as you from sin, by dying in the guilty sinner's place. What a blessed word is this, “the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). You are lost, according to the word of God. Hear it: “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). But you need not be lost, dear sinner, for God has said in the very

next verse, "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." God offers salvation free of cost to those who will accept it.

Salvation can be had on such wonderful terms, because Christ has died in the sinner's place. He has borne the awful judgment which the sinner deserved, and the sinner who receives Him as Saviour is justified from sin.

What wondrous love it was that led Him to die for such as us. Can you refuse such a Saviour, and can you choose to go on in sin's dark ways, to find yourself forever lost? Come to the blessed Saviour now, and you will find such joys in Him as earth can never give.

THE HIDING PLACE

THERE is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves" (Job 34:22). "A man shall be as an hiding place" (Isaiah 32:2). Whenever Adam sinned he tried to hide himself from God. But there was no thicket in the garden of Eden dense enough or dark enough for that. Sin is a bird of the night, and from that day till now men have been seeking a hiding place, and, apart from God's mercy in Christ, seeking it in vain. As sure as in broad daylight, black is seen to be black, "be sure your sin will find you out." *God's omniscience* makes this certain. One who had suffered much as a prisoner says that the most painful circumstance in his terrible confinement was a loop-hole in his cell, by

which he knew that the eye of a warder was on him night and day. He was haunted by the glitter of that never-closing eye. And so the eye of a holy and all-seeing God is ever upon us; "He setteth our iniquities before Him, our secret sins in the light of His countenance."

And just as the prisoner could see that glittering eye with his own, so conscience is within us the eye of the soul that reminds us that "Thou God seest me," and that "There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves."

How foolish the attempt of the sinner to hide, excepting in Christ! He wants to run away from himself, and from God, and no man has ever yet reached the goal in that race. What does he gain by all his foolish attempts to hide? Christ tells us, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light." Out of Christ all the hiding places are "refuges of lies." And so I think it was Augustine who said, "that if you want to run away from a sin-hating God you must run to Him; if you would hide from Him, you must hide in the arms of His love and mercy." Christ is the true hiding place. "He is the man who is an hiding place from the wind, and the covert from the tempest." What a refuge to our soul it is *to have this man to confess our sins to*. When the daughter who has wandered far comes back to her mother's home, and is en-

folded in her mother's arms, what a relief to her heart it is to tell her mother everything. Why not trust Christ's far greater love, and unburden our souls, and make "a clean breast of it" in prayer to Him? We are assured that "he that covereth sin shall not prosper"; we are also assured that "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And He to whom we confess has the power on earth to forgive sins. What a harbor of rest does the soul find when Christ says, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee."

No wonder that he who hides in Christ, and obtains the peace and joy of forgiveness, finds Him to be the one hiding place amid all the troubles of life. He will ever be saying to himself, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul! for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

"THE REPRIEVE"

AN evangelist tells of a criminal for whom he interceded and obtained a reprieve. When he took it to the condemned man, and put it into his hand, such was the effect upon him that he fell down at his benefactor's feet as if he were dead. And no wonder, when it is considered what a terrible thing it is for a man to be condemned to die the death of a criminal, and what a release it must be for a man to be assured that his sentence has been remitted, and that his life is to be spared.

Some years ago a young man was apprehended, tried, and condemned to be executed for the murder

of another young man, which deed he committed under the influence of strong drink. I do not know that he was worse than thousands of other young men, but that night he was excited with intoxicating liquor, and being insulted, or fancying that he was insulted, he did in a moment what he could not undo, and what he must atone for, to law and justice, by dying on a scaffold. Now, looking at that sad and painful case, will you answer one or two important questions?

First—An attempt was made to obtain a reprieve, but it failed. The answer was, “The law must take its course.” But let us suppose that a reprieve had been granted, and that it was taken to the cell, but that the prisoner was so indifferent about it that he would not take it into his hand and read it, deliberately refusing to have anything to do with it. What would you have thought of his conduct? Would you not have thought either that he had lost his reason or that he was hardened to an indescribable degree?

Well, now, is not *that* the very way in which you have been treating the offer of a free and full forgiveness, which God hath sent to you in the Gospel of His Son, and which, up to this moment, you have refused as unworthy of acceptance? “Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is *preached* unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

Second—Being condemned by God’s law as a

sinner, and meriting eternal death, have you made up your mind to suffer the punishment and meet the death you deserve? The poor man of whom we have spoken could not do otherwise than meet his fate; he had no choice. The sentence pronounced upon him must be executed: "The law must take its course." It is otherwise with you. An application for mercy will not fail, if you make it in the name of Jesus Christ. Nay, more, God proclaims His mercy to you in the Cross of Christ. He offers you pardon. He presents to you a reprieve. Nay, more, He prays, He beseeches you to receive it. He even commands you to believe in His Son and be saved. What then will you do? Are you resolved to take your chance, as people often foolishly say? Must the law, in your case, take its course? Are all the representations of Divine wrath, and all the pleadings of Divine love, to go for nothing? God forbid; for how shall you be able to stand and answer on that great day? One thing is certain, if you die unsaved, you do not go to your fate unwarned.

This which you now read will be a witness against you. It is said that in the olden times one of the governors of the Isle of Man was accused, tried, and condemned to die. Interest was used on his behalf, and the sovereign granted a reprieve; but it fell into the hands of his enemy, who kept it till after the execution. Dear fellow-sinner, I have not done that with you. I beseech you, before we part, to consider that life is sweet and the soul is precious, and death near; also judgment is cer-

tain, God is just, and eternity long. Oh, will you not be persuaded to own your guilt, to confess your sins—especially the sin of unbelief—and before you lay this little paper down, to turn a believing *look to Jesus?*

DO YOU HOPE, OR KNOW, THAT YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE?

THIS question, dear reader, is one of the deepest importance, and your answer will evidence either that you are, if *hoping, still* in uncertainty as to the the salvation of your precious soul, and consequently without peace with God; or, if *knowing*, in the conscious enjoyment of God's grace toward you through the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom you believe.

Most of those to whom I put my query answer decidedly, "I *hope*", very frequently adding, "it is impossible to *know*." If you agree with such a reply, allow me to show you from Scripture that it is not only possible, but actually contemplated by God, that whoever believes in His Son should not only have eternal life, but know that it is possessed even now. To effect my object, I cannot do better than relate how one who, like you, "*hoped*," was led to "*know*."

I was preaching the gospel in the south of Ireland, having but one evening to devote to that particular place. In the afternoon a young believer informed me that her mother had promised to come to the gospel meeting at night. She was an elderly person, by no means opposed to the things of God, but had never given evidence of having simply re-

ceived the truth of the gospel in its peace-giving power. Anxious as the daughter was for her mother's blessing, she was nevertheless importunate that I should not speak personally to her for fear of her being offended, and laid rather a strict embargo on my lips, should I happen to come in contact with the old lady.

At the close of the evening gospel meeting, as I was standing near the door, I saw Mrs. H—— (whom I recognized from the afternoon's conversation) passing slowly out. Offering her a little tract, and at the same time expressing a wish that she might receive no harm on her way home from the rain, which was falling in torrents, she replied that she did not think she would, and further, that she was glad she had come, for she had much enjoyed the meeting.

As I had been speaking on the text "Be it *known*, therefore, unto you that the Salvation of God is *sent* unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it" (Acts 28:28), I added, "I trust you now know the salvation of God, and have eternal life."

"I *hope* so," was her reply, showing no desire to pass me.

"But why should you only 'hope,' my friend when God wishes you to 'know' that, if believing in His Son, you have eternal life?"

"Well, sir, I believe in the Son of God, and all I can say is I 'hope,' and I don't think any one can 'know' as long as they are in this world."

"If you will permit me," I answered, "I will

show you just one little verse in the Word of God which-will settle that matter definitely."

"You need not trouble yourself," said she, "I know the Word of God well. Ever since I was a child I have studied it, and I don't believe there is a verse you can show me that I don't know."

"Just one, Mrs. H——."

"Well, where is it?" said she.

Taking her large-print Bible from her hands, I found and read to her, "These things have I *written* unto you that *believe* in the name of the Son of God, that ye may *know* that ye *have* eternal life" (1 John 5:13). I read it a second time, and then said, "Do you believe in the name of the Son of God?"

"I do," was the emphatic reply.

"You really do own that you are a lost sinner needing salvation, and that nothing but the bloodshedding of the Son of God could avail to put away your sins?"

"I do."

"You repudiate all thought of salvation by your own works, confess that you are an undone, guilty, lost sinner, and now simply believe in the name of the Son of God?"

"I do," was again the short and sincere answer I got.

"Well, then, granting all that, have you eternal life?"

"I hope so."

"Oh," was my reply, "I see it now; in the days when you went to school, which is, of course, a

'great while ago, they used to spell differently then from now.'

"How so, sir?"

"Why, *k-n-o-w* used to spell *hope* in those days?"

"Not at all, sir."

"What did they spell?"

"Why, of course, they spelt *know* the same then as now."

"There is a mistake somewhere," I replied, "there must be, for you say you believe in the name of the Son of God, and He says, 'These things have I written unto you that *believe* in the name of the Son of God, that ye may *know* that ye have eternal life,' and you stand there and tell me that you only *hope* you have it."

"Let me see that verse myself," said the old lady, suiting her actions to her words by diving her hand into her pocket, and taking out and adjusting her spectacles. Once and again she read slowly to herself, and then most emphatically out aloud, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life." The Spirit of God blessed her perusal of the sacred message, and filled her heart with peace as she believed it. "Hope" died on the spot, and faith and amazement mingled had full possession of her soul. Looking up, she now added, "Well, is it not strange? For, often as I have read the Epistle of John, I never saw that verse yet. Of course I must have read it, for I am very fond of St. John's writings, but I never saw it in the light I do now. I am very glad

you spoke to me, sir, and showed me that verse. Dear me, how dark I have been, and there it was all the time and so plain too; I wonder I never saw it before!”

“Well, thank God you see it now, and you believe it simply as it stands, don't you?”

“Oh, yes, there's no room left for 'hoping' or doubting now; I'm *sure* now, and I have to thank you for drawing my attention to the Lord's Word.”

We had a little more conversation, and then, seeing that she was now resting simply on the Lord and His blessed written Word, I bade her “good-night,” closing our short and only possible earthly interview with this question, “And now, Mrs. H——, if a friend meets you on your way home and asks, ‘Have you eternal life?’ what will you say?” With a face now beaming with joy in the assurance of God's salvation, she replied, “I should tell them that I *know* I *have* it because I believe in Jesus, and God has said, ‘These things have I written unto you that believe in the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life.’ Good-night, and good-bye, sir.”

To her it was truly a good-night, and to me truly good-bye, for not many weeks after the dear old lady passed away to be for ever with the Lord, in the sweet enjoyment of the present possession of eternal life.

And now, dear reader, I trust you will be as simple as was the one of whom I have written. If you know that you are a ruined lost sinner (and you must know it if you accept the testimony of

the Word of God), just look away from yourself simply to Jesus. You will never get peace by looking to yourself, or trying to realize or feel assurance. This is obtained only by simply receiving God's testimony to you. You must receive His witness *to* you before there can be any witness *in* you. Nothing can be simpler. I must be in a relationship in order to enjoy its proper affections, or fulfil its duties. I must *know* that I am a son of God before I can feel like one; so must you. I must know (and I do know) from God's Word that I "have eternal life," before I can (and I do) feel that I have it; so must you.

“Lord Jesus! we, believing
In Thee, have peace with God;
Eternal life receiving,
The purchase of Thy blood.

Our curse and condemnation
Thou bearest in our stead;
Secure is our salvation
In Thee, our risen Head.”

THE SOWER



ALMOST, BUT NOT ALTOGETHER

“Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.”
Acts 26 : 28.

OH! what a countless host there are that stand
Among the almost Christian, halting band,
Whose *knowledge* of the way of life seems clear,
And yet no *fruits* of righteousness appear.
That cold assent which rests but in the head
No living influence can ever shed;
'Tis with the *heart* the child of God believes,
The Gospel tidings gladly he receives.
His faith its heavenly origin can prove,
It triumphs o'er the world, and works by love,
Profession's empty lamp will not avail,
When the great Bridegroom comes His saints to
hail.

Those foolish souls that have not loved Him here
Will not amid that favour'd band appear,
Who grace the triumph of their Lord's return.
They have no oil—Ah, whither shall they turn?
In vain will they entreat the wise in heart,
No portion of their oil can they impart;
Their lamps were kindled first by power divine,
And, fed by grace, will never cease to shine.
Alas! eternal darkness and disgrace—
Await those souls that lack the oil of grace!

THE POWER OF THE BLOOD

A SERVANT of the Lord relates the following incident, which is a remarkable example of the grace of God.

I was coming along one of the worst streets of this very wicked city at about two o'clock in the morning, a week or two ago, when a woman of the town came up to me and said, "Sir, are you a minister of the gospel?" On my saying that I was, she said, "For the love of the Saviour; come with me, there is a woman dying here without God." She was so earnest in her entreaty, that I went with her, and though I knew that it was a very wicked neighborhood, and that the police record was chiefly filled from it, I was hardly prepared for what I saw. In a miserable cabin, through whose roof you could count the stars, on a wretched straw pallet lay a bundle of rags, surrounded by other bundles as filthy. When I got accustomed to the struggling light, I distinguished the wasted form of a woman apparently about sixty, the clothing round her flecked with blood, and her slender face showing that she was slowly bleeding to death from her lungs. Around her were women who, like herself, were sinners, yet each vied with the other in kindness to their sister in misfortune.

The poor woman looked eagerly at me and, half raising herself, clutched my hand and gasped out, "The blood, the blood!" They said she had raved like that for some days. It was no raving, however. At first I thought she referred to her bleeding, but she again said, "The blood, the

blood!" I saw what she meant, and whispered to her, "Do you mean the blood of Christ?" "Yes, yes, if it cleanses." "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," I answered. "That is what I have wanted these forty years," she cried.

On inquiry I found she was an Irishwoman, and that when she was twenty she was walking the streets of Dublin. Passing a building one night, she heard the sound of a voice and, stopping, she peeped in at the door. The preacher's voice was heard, and the words he spoke were these, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." She left the porch, but through all her forty years of sinful life she remembered these words in part, and now they haunted her. I opened my Bible, and read the passage to her, and spoke to her of the woman who had been a sinner (Luke 7:37); how she came to Jesus, and He had not rejected her. And again I whispered in her ear the words she loved to linger on. "From all sin," she said once more, and, clasping her hands together, she died.

Oh! the mighty value of that precious blood of Jesus, God's beloved Son. Sinner, is it precious in your eyes? Has it cleansed away your guilt, the sins of your past years?

The word of God has told us that we are all sinners, and not one of us can put away a single sin; and remember, dear friend, that sin is no light thing in God's sight, for He has said concerning the heavenly city, "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever

worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." None can dwell in that heavenly city, but those whose names are inscribed in that heavenly book. Your name may be on a "church" register, or it may be on an earthly roll of honor, but if your name is not engraved in the Lamb's Book, you cannot dwell in the city of God. See those solemn words in Revelation 20:15, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Before you can be fitted for glory, your sins must be washed away. There is only one thing that can put away sin, and that is the precious blood of Jesus.

We know very well that the blood of the Lord Jesus is despised and rejected in these days, and that men are depending upon their own character and morality for salvation. If you are among this number, you are self-deceived, and if you reject God's plain way of salvation, you will awake from your sleep of deception when it is too late. From the beginning to the end of the book of God, through a period of thousands of years, the blood is brought before us. Every sacrifice in the Old Testament was a type of Christ in His work of atonement on the cross. The sinner must have a substitute—one to die in his stead. The Word says, "He loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20); "For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

God has proclaimed, "Without shedding of blood is no remission," and in love to our lost and guilty souls, the blessed Lord Jesus came down, all the way from the glory of heaven to the gloom of earth, and died a victim on the tree, for me, for me, a hell-deserving sinner. And when I come to Him, and trust Him as my Saviour, He washes me as white as snow. It is His precious blood that does it. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7).

Friend, will you believe what God says, and will you come now to that loving Saviour, who died that you might live?

ABSOLUTION

ABSOLUTION from the lips of man I do believe is little short of blasphemy. But there is such a thing as absolution from God, and that the publican received. "He went to his house justified rather than the other." When a sinner believes in Christ, his sins positively cease to be, and, what is more wonderful, they all cease to be, as Kent says in those well-known lines—

"Here's pardon for transgressions past,
It matters not how black their cast;
And, O my soul, with wonder view,
For sins to come here's pardon too."

Can you tell what a happy man the publican was, when all in a moment he was changed? He no longer walked alone; he sought out the godly, and he said: "Come and hear, ye that fear God, and

I will tell you what He has done for my soul." He did not smite upon his breast, but he went home to get down his harp, and play upon the strings and praise his God. You would not have known that he was the same man, if you had seen him going out; and all that was done in a minute.

"But," says one, "do you think he knew for certain that all his sins were forgiven? Can a man know that?" Certainly he can. And there be many that can bear witness that this is true. They have known it themselves. The pardon which is sealed in heaven is re-sealed in our own conscience. The mercy which is recorded above is made to shed its light into the darkness of our hearts. Yes, a man may know on earth that his sins are forgiven, and may be as sure that he is a pardoned man as he is of his own existence.

And now I hear a cry from some one saying, "And may I be pardoned this moment? And may I know that I am pardoned? May I be so pardoned that all shall be forgotten—I who have been a drunkard, a swearer, or what not? May I have all my transgressions washed away? May I be made sure of heaven, and all that in a moment?" Yes, my friend, if thou believest in the Lord Jesus Christ, if thou wilt stand where thou art, and just breathe this prayer out, "Lord, have mercy! God be merciful to me a sinner, through the blood of Christ." I tell thee, man, God never did deny that prayer yet, if it came out of honest lips. He never shut the gates of mercy on it. It is a solemn litany that shall be used as long as time shall last, and it

shall reach the ears of God as long as there is a sinner to use it.

Come, be not afraid. I beseech you, use the prayer at once. Stand where you are; endeavour to realize that you are all alone, and if you feel that you are guilty, now let the prayer ascend. My brother, I assure you, not in my own name, but in the name of God, my Father and your Father, it shall not be a useless prayer. As sure as God is God, him that cometh unto Christ He will in no wise cast out. Come with me now, I beseech you; tarry no longer; God is yearning over you, as the father in the parable yearned over the prodigal son.

Let every reader of this article pour out his heart before God, and let this one cry go up from all lips, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Let us use this prayer as our own *now*. Oh, that it might come up before the Lord at this time as the earnest supplication of every unconverted heart that reads these words.

OLD BETTY

"SHE puzzles me, she do, truly," said young Mrs. Whitby to her next-door neighbour, as they stood at their doors having a bit of a gossip.

"Well, if what you say is correct, so she do me," was the answer. "But I don't believe in them religious people; they're mostly deep. She's no better than she ought to be, depend on it."

The subject of conversation was Mrs. Whitby's first-floor lodger, a little, grey-haired old woman, who was not liked by the neighbours, partly be-

cause she kept her business to herself. They were annoyed that they could find out almost nothing about her, except that she earned a scanty living by chopping wood at the workhouse. She was scrupulously clean and neat—that was another offence. Then she went to church on Sunday, and she was never known to use bad language, however much provoked she might be.

Betty paid her rent every Saturday as regularly as clockwork; she could not have remained at Mrs. Whitby's a day if she had not. Lately she had done a quite inexplicable thing. She had actually taken in and fed an orphan girl, who had been turned out of her place, without a character, by an angry mistress!

"I thought you had more sense, Old Betty, than to burden yourself with that good-for-nothing hussy," Mrs. Brown from over the way said to her.

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these . . . ye have done it unto Me," Betty replied, with a strange smile on her worn face, as she passed by on her way to her work, breakfastless,—for she had only bread and cocoa for one, and that she left ready for her guest.

After some weeks had passed, Betty, with the union master's help, obtained another situation for her charge, and left her there with sweet words of comfort and encouragement.

If any of the neighbours were sick, Betty always found time to run in and make their bed, and would often sit up all night with the dying. More than one despairing and terror-stricken soul had been pointed by her to Jēsus; and through her influence,

lips that had never moved in prayer since childhood's early years, had been led to falter out a broken cry for mercy. "God be merciful to me a sinner, for Jesus' sake," was sometimes all they had strength to say.

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

Betty would repeat such words as these over and over again to some sufferer, and an "Amen, Amen!" would be feebly murmured. But many, alas! passed into the presence of the righteous Judge all unprepared.

A death-bed repentance is certainly not granted to all: there is indeed great reason to doubt whether many are really brought to repentance in this way. Let no one put off seeking pardon from God, through Christ Jesus, until he comes to die. There is in the Bible, as has often been said, only one instance of a dying repentance,—that of the thief on the cross. One was saved at the last hour, that none may despair; but only one, that none may presume.

When Felix heard the Apostle Paul "concerning the faith in Christ," and listened to his words regarding righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, he trembled. Yet he answered:—"Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." So men are apt to say still. But a "convenient season" may never come to any of us; and the Word of God says, "*Now* is the accepted time; *now* is the day of salvation."

“Can’t you lend us a bit of tea, Old Betty?” a man asked one cold winter’s night. “I’ve been out of work a month, and my missus is just craving for a cup.”

“I wish I could,” sighed Betty; “but I’ve had no tea or sugar for weeks. I guess the Lord don’t think I need tea, or He would have sent me some before.”

“Come now, no joking. I know ye earned sixpence today. Give me twopence, old woman, just for the sake of your religious character, you know.”

“I ain’t got the money, friend. A penny I spent on bread, and twopence on cocoa, and the rest I gave to the Whitbys; they’re most starving, I fear.”

“You’d no call to give it ’em; they’ve never a good word to say for you,” said the man, as he turned on his heel.

Gradually the little acts of kindness, and the sweet words of peace, forced themselves into some of those stony hearts and melted them, till at last Old Betty might be seen going to church, accompanied now by one weary woman whom she had won to an interest in Divine things, and now by another, and another.

But when the long winter was ended, and the glad, joyous spring-time burst over the land, God called away to her eternal rest this servant of His, “of whom the world was not worthy.”

‘Now the labourer’s task is o’er;
Now the battle day is past;
Now upon the farther shore
Lands the voyager at last.’

In life she loved Him, in death she trusted Him. Had she not such promises as these on which to lean:

“Fear not; for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee” (Isaiah 43:1, 2). “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me” (Psalm 23:4). “He will be our guide even unto death” (Psalm 48:14). “Even *over* death” many believe to be the better rendering of this text.

Who does not desire a peaceful, happy, death-bed? And that those only can look for who have taken the Lord Jesus as their Saviour and guide.

Various were the opinions about Old Betty's death in Garden Row. Some were indifferent. Some felt intensely relieved that she was dead, and could no longer be a silent, daily reproach to them, for they loved darkness rather than light. Few, but very few, shed bitter tears of sorrow and regret.

“Ah!” remarked Mrs. Brown, “she'll be buried by the parish in spite of all her pride and stuck-up ways!” But no; a respectable young girl came the next day and made arrangements for the simple funeral, paying all expenses. Mrs. Brown's mouth was effectually stopped, for she recognized the “good-for-nothing hussy” whom Betty had befriended, and deemed it prudent to be silent.

In a nameless grave in the part of the churchyard reserved for the poor lies the body of this

one of God's saints, awaiting the glorious resurrection, when the Lord Himself shall "gather in His own," and shall say "Well done" to all His good and faithful servants.

What a glad time that will be for all who have loved the Lord Jesus Christ, and followed Him, when He to whom all hearts are open, and from whom no secrets are hid, shall come to judge the quick and the dead! But how about those who in that day are not His? Alas for them! "Then shall He say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Oh, while the day of grace lasts, "Come to the merciful Saviour who calls you." Come now, *just as you are*, without one plea, but that Christ's blood was shed for thee.

CHRIST ALONE

ON a Sunday evening in summer, in a northern seaport town where I then labored, a young man came up to me just after service, and said that a young lady, an Episcopalian, wished very much to see me. I at once acceded to her request, and in accordance with her wishes appointed the following evening for the interview.

Exactly at the time set she appeared, and very soon the reason of her desire was seen. She told me that she had for a very long period been under a deep sense of sin, that in her anxiety she had many months before gone to her minister in London and that he—being very high church—had enjoined

her to take the Sacrament fasting, and regularly to confess her sins. Instead of getting better, however, she only got worse. Her sins troubled her more than ever. And though she most religiously trudged morning after morning a great distance to early communion, her load was never lifted, nor her heart cheered for an hour.

At last, after a whole winter of this routine, she came north to Aberdeenshire, at the solicitation of a friend. Here, as in London, however, salvation was her chief concern. And here, alas, as in London, she was held away from Christ by church forms and rules. But one night, quite by accident, and as she confessed afterward, with no little misgiving, she came to our humble church. And there, in a moment, the simple reading of the text, accompanied by a brief paraphrase of it, was used by God to flash light into her soul. "Instantly," she said, "I felt I had been on the wrong tack for years. I was trying to provide a righteousness for myself, but now I saw that Christ had provided a righteousness for me." Christ took the place of her own strivings, and resting entirely on Him, she entered into peace.

The text from which the sermon was preached that night was Gal. 2:17; and its whole drift was to shut men up to Christ only. The paraphrase ran somewhat as follows: If any man says that he needs anything but Christ—that he must add good works or church observances to faith before he can be saved—then he is saying that faith in Christ is not sufficient; that is to say, it is insufficient; that

is to say, Christ's atonement is insufficient; that is to say, that Christ, having presented an insufficient atonement, is yet Himself under the curse of the law which He has not fully satisfied; that is to say, that, inasmuch as He tries to get me to believe His is a sufficient atonement, He is a minister of sin, seducing me to believe in what never can deliver me. You see either Christ is everything, or He is nothing. He is a complete Saviour, or else a minister of sin.

Which? This woman with all her heart said, "God forbid," to the latter alternative, and took Christ as her all. Reader, what have you done? Or, if you be undecided, what are you going to do? If you put one atom of trust in yourself, if to faith in Christ you add one good work as a ground or condition of salvation, Christ has become of none effect to you. You are maligning His redemption. You are saying it is not sufficient, when God says it is sufficient.

This woman found it sufficient. The unrest of years fled. She was at peace with God, being justified by simple faith. My reader, trust what God says to be true, viz., that Christ has fully answered for you, and that you have only to accept His sacrifice to be immediately and eternally saved.

In what a fearful position God's Word puts the unbeliever. If we say we have not sinned, and so do not need Christ, we make God a liar. If we say that we need anything besides the redemption that has been provided, and is offered to simple faith, we make Christ the minister of sin. If we

only neglect His great salvation, in God’s sight we judge ourselves unworthy of eternal life. Will that be your condition? No! dear reader, judge rather that if one died for all, then all have really, if they would only see it, died in Him, and are in Him possessors of pardon and everlasting life.

“I HADN’T THOUGHT OF THAT”

STANDING on the platform of W—— railway station one day, I watched a fine motor car pass over the level crossing close by. A man who was waiting for a train saw it too and turned to me, saying, “I wish I owned that car and a thousand pounds a year as well.”

“Why do you wish that?” I asked.

“Oh,” he replied, “I’d have a grand old time rushing round the country; I’d enjoy myself.”

“Would that completely satisfy you?” was the next question.

“I think so,” was the reply, “until old age crept on.”

“And then?”

“Oh,” he said, “I should die with the knowledge that I had had a grand old time, and I suppose that would be the end of me.”

“But, sir,” I said, “how can you say that would be the end of you, when God’s Word declares that ‘it is appointed unto men once to die, but *after this* the judgment’ (Heb. 9:27). You will *have* to meet God, and what will it benefit you to know that you had a grand old time while on earth, and rejected the Saviour?”

“Ah,” he replied, “*I hadn’t thought of that.*”

How like the natural man. His only thought was for the pleasures of this world, and careless as to his soul’s salvation—perfectly indifferent towards God, who in love and grace sent His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to die in the sinner’s stead at Calvary. I shall never forget the solemn look on his face as I spoke to him of the terrible judgment that must fall on the one who would have to stand before God (a holy, righteous God), without Christ as his Saviour, and of preferring the pleasures of this world to the Lord Jesus Christ. I trust the Lord blessed His own word which was spoken to arouse his conscience so that he might see his own ruined state, and God’s grace which provided a Saviour to meet him in it. He held out his hand and shook mine, as his train steamed into the station, saying, “Goodbye, and thank you.” I trust I shall meet him in the glory.

And now, my dear reader, a word with you. How do you stand in God’s sight? Have *you* ever thought of the fact that *you* too have to meet God? and if you are not sheltered by the blood of Jesus, you will hear your eternal doom pronounced. *Now*, while there is time and opportunity, flee to that precious Saviour who died, whose precious blood was shed to save *you*, and do not let the pleasures of this poor, guilty, condemned world, or any of Satan’s devices, hinder you from being saved.

“Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2).

THE SOWER



WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY?

SINNER, time is quickly passing,
Soon will end your day of grace,
Soon your course on earth be finished,
Soon be run your sinful race.

Many times you've heard the message
How that Jesus died to save,
How on Calvary He suffered;
Rose triumphant o'er the grave.

And in love He still is calling,
"Come and I will give you rest,
Weary thou and heavy laden,
Lay thy head upon My breast."

If you still refuse to listen,
And His loving calls obey,
When your course on earth is finished,
Then will come the fatal day.

Then away from Him forever,
Where no hope will ever come,
For the moment life is ended,
Sealed forever is your doom.

Come to Him this very moment,
Let not one more day go by;

Plead the blood of His atonement,
'Twas for you He came to die.

Onward then to glory going,
Tread the path your Saviour trod,
Till you rest with Him forever,
In the paradise of God.

A GREAT DELUSION DISPELLED

THERE she sat with an angry and defiant expression on her face. She was evidently a lady belonging to the upper classes, who had for some reason remained at an inquirers' meeting, held at the close of a gospel address given by a well known evangelist.

A Christian gentleman—an army officer—noticed her sitting bolt upright with an indignant look on her face. He asked a woman if she would go and speak to her.

“No thank you,” was her answer, “I would much rather not.”

Another woman refused, with the remark, “But if you are anxious that she should be spoken to, why do you not speak to her yourself?”

Reflecting that this formidable-looking personage would hardly have stayed to an after-meeting unless she desired a word with someone, he ventured to approach her with the inquiry, “Are you waiting to speak to the preacher?”

“Oh, dear no; I have no desire whatever to speak to *him*.”

"Perhaps you are waiting for a friend?"

"No, nothing of the kind," she replied in haughty tones. He was about to beat a retreat, when to his surprise the lady said, "If you will sit down I should like to put a few questions."

"Will you be good enough to tell me what this preacher has been preaching about?" she inquired.

"What has he been preaching about?" the gentleman responded, "why, I have seldom been privileged to listen to a more clear, faithful, gospel address."

"What! you liked it. I thought it detestable. He said that some of us were converted and some were unconverted, that some of us were dead in trespasses and sins, and some had passed from death unto life. He even went so far as to say that some of us were Christians and some of us were not Christians."

"Pardon me," the gentleman replied, "I think he said some of us were *true* Christians and others were only *nominal* Christians."

The lady retorted hotly, "Pray, am I not a Christian?"

He replied, "I cannot say, for I know nothing of your life."

She replied, "My life! what has my life to do with it? I was baptized as a child; in due course I was confirmed; I attend my church, not only on Sundays, but frequently on week-days; and I am a regular communicant. When in London I have a district which I visit, and when in the country I

sometimes take a class in the Sunday School. *Now, pray, am I not a Christian?*”

He replied, “I do not for a moment doubt what you have told me, but all this would not of itself, or necessarily, constitute you a *true* Christian.”

“What *can* you mean?” she replied tartly. “You all seem to have taken leave of your senses. Perhaps you will say what you consider is the right definition of a Christian—a *true* Christian?”

The gentleman replied, “A Christian is a believer in and a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.” He then read to her:—

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, *I never knew you*” (Matt. 7:22, 23).

A solemn pause of quite two or three minutes ensued. God’s word went home in mighty power. The lady’s eyes were opened to see the profound mistake she had been making.

“Is it possible,” said she, “that I am all wrong, and that the preacher was right in what he said? If I am wrong, tell me where I am wrong.”

Again the Bible was opened and the gentleman read:—

“As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name:

which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12, 13).

Simple, but profoundly important questions were pressed home. Have you received Christ as your Saviour? Do you ask, How? By believing on His name. By faith in Him. Have you been ‘born . . . of God’? Has that definite personal transaction taken place between you and God? After a few moments of thought, the lady replied, “No, I know nothing of this in my own experience.”

Alas! she had been taught, like many others, to trust partly in ordinances, partly to her church, partly to her own doings, and only partly to the sacrifice of Christ. She was astonished when she was told that in the matter of justification Christ must be all.

By request the gentleman visited her several times, and little by little the truth of the finished work of Christ dawned upon her mind.

Nor did she any longer doubt that he who trusts in Christ receives salvation the moment he believes. The gentleman pointed out to her:—

“By grace are ye saved through faith” (Eph. 2:8).

“God . . . hath saved us . . . not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace” (2 Tim. 1:9).

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life” (John 3:36).

At last in her own drawing room on bended knee she received the Lord Jesus Christ as her own pe-

sonal Saviour, and knew there and then that she was saved, that she was a *true* Christian.

My reader, is it right with your soul? Are you on the *right* foundation? Are you saved, and do you know it for certainty? Do not rest till you can answer these questions in God's presence in the affirmative.

THE DAY WE LIVE IN

A WRITER describes present-day conditions of life in the following striking words:—

“We are living in a day of headlines, snapshots, taxicabs, and music halls, in a day when the scramble for the prizes of life has become a mad passion. It is a day of fever, fret, and fume, when competition for earthen toys is so keen, and the margin of profit in commerce has become so fine, that the one cry beating through the air is ‘Hurry up.’ No one seems to have time to pause till, worn out in the pursuit of gewgaws and vanities, a rest cure becomes imperative, the clock is stopped, and all action, mental as well as physical, must be proscribed or prohibited for an eighth part of a year.

“We are living in a day when high ideals are fast yielding to the pressure of creature comforts; when principle is being exchanged for expediency; when self-sacrificing Christianity is being bartered for self-centred materialism; when the Christian sense of sin is being regarded as a bygone superstition; when it matters not what you believe, but only what you do, and when you may do what you like, provided you are not found out.”

It will not be denied that in these words, serious as they are, is much truth. The war came with a sobering shock to many, but it has already begun to fade away into the recollections of the past, and "modern life" is in full swing again.

In the face of the facts to which the above paragraphs call attention, what becomes of the loud boastings, which we hear from day to day, the constantly repeated assurances that the age we live in is one of unprecedented progress and general advancement? Man is hailed, by a popular monthly, as the conqueror of the earth, the sea, and the air, and the probable conqueror in the near future of other worlds.

Which opinion is true? Is the day we live in one of advance or of retrogression?

He who looks at things from God's standpoint, and accepts His Word as a lamp unto his feet, will have no difficulty in answering this question. He will without hesitation declare that with all the wonderful strides in physical and material things, the human race is going from bad to worse, traveling with ever increasing rapidity down the hill, under the subtle leadership of "the god of this world," who blinds men's minds, until the awful consummation, foretold by the same word of prophecy, is reached.

The truth is that man, far from being a conqueror, has been utterly conquered. Instead of proudly wearing the victor's laurels, he lies in the dust, the degraded victim of the designing enemy of righteousness and truth—"the prince of this world."

The line of the hymn is assuredly true, that affirms: "Man is a total wreck, can never reach the shore."

Is there no hope, then? Is there no outlook but one of darkness and gloom?

Thank God, there is. But it is a hope utterly different in its nature from the hope entertained by the typical man of the twentieth century. It is no hope for the human race as such, but a hope held out to as many as will

"Leave the poor old stranded wreck,"

and betake themselves to Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ, who came into the world from the glory of heaven, shed His blood upon the cross to make it evident to all that sin was a terrible thing in God's sight, and must be judged. As the sin-bearer He suffered, and for our sins He died.

Now, mark this point—it is vital—"This Jesus hath God raised up" from among the dead, and He lives in heaven today, the Head of a new race. Your only hope, reader, is to lay hold, by the hand of faith, upon the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus be divorced in thought, in outlook, and in reality from the humanity which is derived from fallen Adam, becoming in this way linked in risen life with the glorious Head of the new race.

Oh! the joy of knowing, not only that Christ died for my sins, but that I have died with Him (see Romans 6:8). In His death my links with Adam's ruined family were, in the reckoning of God, dissolved. Risen with Christ (see Colossians 3:1), I

have new links formed with that glorious Person in heaven.

This every real believer in the Lord Jesus Christ can say. What about you, reader? To which race do you belong? To the race that is going down to doom and hopeless despair? Or to the race that has Christ for its Head, and whose future is the glory of God? Are you one of "the children of this world" or one of "the children of light"?

SHOT AND SHOT FOR

WE had finished a day's mission work rather earlier than we expected, so before driving into the town for the night, we took a new road that would lead us farther round into the country. We were beginning to think we had gone too far, when we saw an old countryman tying sheaves in a field.

Jumping out of the vehicle, I went to a gap in the hedge where was a hurdle and, leaning over, gave the aged man a few tracts.

"It's time the soul was saved, isn't it, mister," I said.

"That it be, sir, and I had a great scare yesterday," he replied. "I got shot."

"Shot! what do you mean?" It seemed queer for a shot man to be tying wheat; but there he stood before me with a wisp of straw still in his hand.

He then showed me his forefinger with a hole in it. "It's in there, sir, the shot is—agin the bone, I think, and I've another in my shoulder."

"How was it done?" I asked.

"Some gents were shooting along here, and they

didn't see me among the wheat, so they fired at the birds and hit me."

"What a mercy you were not killed!"

"It be that, indeed, sir. If they had fired off the other barrel I think it would have killed me."

"And where would you have gone?" I inquired.

The old man was speechless, and tears began to trickle down his weather-beaten face. Now we knew why we had come round by that way.

"Suppose somebody had been shot for you yesterday; suppose it had been a fatal shot, and this person had died to save you from dying. God has spared you, and sent us to you, and now I have a little tale I want to tell you."

Leaning through the hedge toward my weeping hearer; who was below me in the ditch, I said:—

"There was once an army that rebelled, and, as it was in time of war, they all deserved to be shot for insubordination; but instead of shooting every man, the chief officer agreed to execute every tenth man. So they were drawn up in line, and the count began—1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10. The last had to stand out and be shot, and directly this was done, all the nine for whom he had stood, were saved. He died for, or instead of them, and as he was accepted instead of them, they could not justly be shot."

"But do you think the tenth man died willingly?" I asked.

"No, sir, I daresay he didn't."

Here my story failed. There was a second edition of it, however, which did not fail: for in that

regiment there were a father and son, who stood side by side, and as the counting went on, the son saw his father would be No. 10, and himself No. 1 in the next set. There was no need for him to die; the curse of death was not to come upon him. Yet he resolved to save his father, so just as the fatal number was about to fall upon the object of his love, he stepped into his place of condemnation, and pushed the condemned one into the place of no condemnation. The son became No. 10, and was shot; the father became No. 1, and escaped. No. 1 became No. 10, and No. 10 became No. 1. How like His love who is the First, but who takes our place as the Last, that we who are the last may be first! For God "hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

As that precious soul looked into my face through tearful eyes, I felt that he was grasping the great truth, and that the Spirit of God had prepared the soil for the seed and the seed for the soil.

"Do you see, Jesus has been slain for you? has died the death that ought to have come to you?"

"Cut off, but not for Himself" (Daniel 9:26).

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

"If I come over the hedge, will you kneel with me and thank Jesus for dying for you?"

The man assented to this suggestion, so I was soon across the hurdle, and in the ditch, close to the spot where he had been nearly killed the day before. We bent our knees, and I began:—

“O Lord, Thou didst mercifully spare this man yesterday, and now Thou hast sent us to tell him of Thy love; help him to thank Thee.”

“Now, you thank Him,” I said.

Putting his hands together, he got as far as “Thank you, Lord Jesus”——“for dying for me,” I prompted, and he repeated.

As we rose, and I prepared to hurry back to my friends who were waiting, I looked at my handful of tracts, and the first one was headed, “Thank God, I’m Saved!” Handing it to him, I said, “If you really believe Jesus died for you and thank Him for it, these words are true of you.”

Friend, have you believed in Him who came into the world to save sinners? Can you say, “Thank God, I’m saved”?

APPETITE LOST—HAPPINESS FOUND

A SIGNAL-BOX on the Underground Railway, London, is hardly the place to look for light, yet there the Sun of Righteousness constantly shone in one heart at least.

“Will you come to our meetings?” he asked of a mate, as he handed him a notice.

Not he! A walk in the park was more congenial after being suffocated for the public good all the week.

“But we will provide you with a good tea,” urged the Christian.

Now a good tea for nothing was a slight temptation to this single stranger from the country; so one

fine Sunday afternoon in July he went with his friend, but he lost his appetite before tea-time.

A dear old believer was preaching, and as the young railwayman listened, he found the danger signal was against him, and that he was running express towards a collision with his Maker. He felt miserable, more miserable, most miserable. They might have their tea, and the cake, too, if they liked, his one desire was to get out; so he took up his hat to bolt.

But sentries kept the door to buttonhole young men, and they stopped him.

“You will stay to tea with us,” they said kindly.

“Tea be bothered!” said he, and he shook them off.

“Go to your lodgings,” said the devil; “they will be playing and talking rubbish there. You will soon forget these outlandish notions.”

How often it is so, that the chit-chat of the table and society effectually take away impressions that have been made. But it was not to be so in this case.

All the way home it seemed as if destruction were at his heels so that he could say: “The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow” (Psalm 116:3). He seemed to hear the thundering express of Justice close behind him, and there was no escape. “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be pun-

ished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess. 1 : 7, 8, 9).

When he arrived at home everybody was out, and the room doors locked. Throwing himself upon a box at the top of the landing, he sobbed himself to sleep.

Next morning he found himself in bed, but had no recollection of how he got there. Going to the dark signal-box for his day's work his mate inquired:

"How did you like the meeting?"

"I'll never go to that fool of a place again; it made me wretched," he said with disgust.

"I'm so glad," sweetly replied the Christian.

This seemed so exasperating that, as he told me afterwards, only grace prevented his striking the speaker; but though he had declared he would "never go to that fool of a place again," he was there at the first meeting, and before the week was out.

The same preacher preached, and his text was: "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 3:16).

Here were blessed couplings for a lost railway sinner. *God and the world. God loved and God gave. He gave His only begotten Son for the benefit of whosoever believeth in Him, that such an one should not perish, but as a contrast have everlasting life.*

As he listened, he said in his heart, “ ‘Whosoever!’—that’s anybody, that’s me—‘believeth.’ I can, I do, I have believed, and, on the authority of God’s word, I shall not perish, but have everlasting life.”

He wept, he sang, and he experienced John Newton’s words:—

With pleasing grief and mournful joy,
My spirit now is filled;
That I should such a life destroy,
Yet live by Him I killed.

From the underground signal-box to midsummer sunshine was not a greater change than that wrought in this friend. He had been among those “In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor. 4:3, 4). But Jesus had come “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Acts 26:18).

That is many years ago, but the light still shines, and the enlightened one has done his best to pass on that light to others.

Once he had the word “ETERNITY” written in large letters on his arm, and walked the streets with that arm outstretched. On another occasion he shouted Gospel texts through the main thorough-

fares of London. He is getting old now, and for the last thirty years has worked for his Master in a quiet village.

Who is he? I may only tell you his nickname, "Jesus Only." He earned it by carrying a bag upon which the words were inscribed—words that often gave offence in the train and elsewhere, but they were his motto—

"Jesus Only!" when in spring-time
Bloom and beauty so abound:
"Jesus Only!" when the autumn
Scatters dying leaves around.

"Jesus Only!" when the sunshine
Sheds in streams its glory down;
"Jesus Only!" when the storm-clouds
Change the sky to darkest frown.

"Jesus Only!" when companions
Come in bands along our way;
"Jesus Only!" when the dearest
Of our loved ones pass away.

"Jesus Only!" whilst I'm living,
Holding converse with my friends,
"Jesus Only!" when I'm dying,
And the earthly conflict ends.

THE SOWER



THE SINNERS' FRIEND

OH! Saviour, let Thy Spirit fill
An empty vessel as It will,
And may It meet some needy soul
That waits for Christ to make it whole.

Now graves from grief are filling fast,
Darker and darker grows the past,
And still the world moves on its way,
Bolder and bolder, day by day.

We would that men would cease to mock
At time's old monitor, the clock;
That they would seek to know and see
Where they will spend eternity.

Christ is the way for sinners sore,
His open side, the entrance door;
The invitation is to all
Who will accept His gracious call.

Oh! Come, poor sinner, come, and see,
What Christ the Lord will do for thee:
He'll fold you in His arms and say,
"Just rest your soul on Me to-day."

The light will come to those who seek,
 And to the lowly and the meek;
 To those who own themselves as lost,
 Accept God's gift, once bought with cost.

Then in that land of joy untold,
 Christ shall His glories all unfold;
 And we shall sing through endless days,
 The great Redeemer's matchless praise.

SAVED IN THE CLEFT OF A ROCK

“**S**AVED in the cleft of a rock?’ I know what that means. I was saved that way once; nor can I ever forget it.”

“How did it happen? Tell us about it.”

“You remember when the railroad first came through our town, it was a single track. You know where it runs in that long curve at the foot of the hill, how little space there is between the rocks on the one side and the deep water on the other?”

“Yes; I have often thought what an awful accident it would have been if the train had run off the track there. Just enough space for a train to pass without striking the rocks on the side of the hill.”

“And no place for a person to stand on the other side if a train should come while he was there. It's an awful place, or it was once, before the second track was laid and the roadbed widened. I shudder whenever I think of what might have happened to me there.

“It was when we were yet boys, and not long

after the railroad was built. My sister and I were coming home from school, and we thought it would be shorter and easier, as well as more pleasant, to try the railroad instead of the long walk over the hill-path. We knew that it was after the time for the express, and that no other train was due: so we felt safe enough. We hardly thought of danger anyway. She was older than I, and I left care to her. We were going along leisurely; I was throwing stones into the water and she looking on, when suddenly she screamed, as she caught my hand,

“ ‘Run! The express is coming!’ ”

“I heard its roar, and then the whistle as it came near the curve, but could not see it yet. Boys, you know, soon learn to tell trains and locomotives by the different sounds and by the differences in their whistles. I knew that it was the express. My heart seemed to stop. Had my sister not forced me on, I might have been powerless to run. We ran as fast as possible; but what are the feet of children in a race compared with an express train, and that train behind and trying to make up lost time?

“Had we gone back we should have been safe, for we had only just started on the narrow and dangerous place when we heard the train. All that long run was ahead before we could reach a spot wide enough to let a train go safely by: and not far behind came that express. It was a cloudy day and in the early winter, so that it seemed quite dark, especially on that side of the hill. Perhaps it was the darkness, perhaps the curve, that prevented the

engineer from seeing us; he did not see us: the train came on as swiftly as ever.

“Oh! the awful terror of that minute, for it was but a minute! Each moment we felt must be our last. We could hear the roar of the train coming nearer and nearer, and did not know but that it was almost upon us, yet dared not look around lest we should lose time: we dared not even speak. Tightly holding each other’s hands, we ran on. All this, you need not be told, took less time than it takes to tell it.

“Suddenly the whistle blew. The engineer had seen us, but too late to stop the train. Whether or not the whistle made my sister notice, I don’t know; but just then we reached a place where a large piece had been blown out of the rock by the side of the track; it seemed as if the rock had parted and a wedge had been taken out. Before I had time to think, my sister let go of my hand and at the same moment threw her arm about me and pushed me into that cleft in the rock. Then she threw herself forward and crowded me into the opening.

“Hardly had she done this when the train rushed by and left us safe in the cleft. We were saved, saved by a single moment only. Had we gone ten yards farther the train would have caught us, and—well, I would not be here to tell about it.”

“That was a narrow escape, surely.”

“Yes; and I never think of it without a shudder. We were saved by that cleft in the rock. If ever children were thankful for anything, we were for

that cleft in the rock. I often think, What if it had not been there!”

“But what has all that to do with the sermon of the minister yesterday? I don’t see why that should have such an effect on you. Of course it was a good sermon; but you and I are good, honest, fair men; and it need not concern us about God’s punishing sinners. I believe He will, but not such men as you and I are.”

“I’ll tell you why it concerns me, and, I fear, you too. We are in the way of danger, and, unless we are careful, in the way of death. Destruction’s express train is coming along; it will soon overtake us. Then what? That sermon meant me; and I am afraid that it meant you too.

“But it was not so much of that I’m thinking; I cannot forget that Rock that the minister said was cleft for us. It is the cleft in the rock that is on my mind all the time. I know what it means.”

“I do not quite understand its meaning.”

“Had you been, as I, saved in a cleft of a rock once, you would understand. We are both on the wrong track, and in the way of destruction; it is coming too, and not far behind. Running away will not do; we cannot get out of its way by running; we must find some place to hide, some place where destruction’s train cannot reach us. Right alongside of where we are is a Cleft Rock; and in that is the place to hide. That Rock is Christ; and that is what the minister meant when he said that we must ‘hide in the Rock, Christ.’ That is what is meant by the hymn,—

“ ‘Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.’ ”

“I have made up my mind to hide in that Rock:
I know what it means now.”

“Well, it does have more of a meaning to me
now than it ever had before.”

Will you let it mean the Rock in which *you* are
hiding, reader?

GOING HOME

IT is a solemn moment for all when death draws near, and they know that they must soon leave this world and pass into eternity. But for those who have put their trust in the finished work of the Lord Jesus there is no fear. They can face death in peace, for to them to die only means to go home and to be with the One they have known as their own Saviour.

Two such cases come before me now—two lads of about eighteen, living in the same locality, and having both been employed in coal-pits. To the one, death came suddenly after only a few hours' suffering; to the other, it was after several weary years of pain and sorrow. But both were ready and happy to go, because they were resting on the Word of God, and knew the forgiveness of all their sins through the precious blood of Christ.

The first of these lads was known as having been somewhat wild and troublesome, even at

school, but some time before his death he had been converted in a mission hall, and "after that there was such a difference in him," as one who knew him well said. He knew he was saved, and delighted to tell others of the One who had saved him.

One morning he went out as usual to his work. In a few hours he met with an accident, and though taken at once to the hospital, it was soon seen that the poor lad had not long to live. To his mother, who had been sent for, he said, "I am going home, but not to F——. I am going home to Jesus," and shortly after he passed away to be with the Saviour he had known and loved.

The other lad had been a cripple from boyhood, but was at times able for light work about the coal-pits. As he got older, this was given up, and he suffered much, and finally consumption set in. He was often spoken to of Jesus and His power and willingness to save him, and when in the hospital for an operation, he trusted in Him.

Towards the end he was taken to a sanatorium, where he could have more care and comforts than at home. He took his Bible with him, and asked a Christian relative to mark some of the texts that had been blessed to him, so that he might easily find them.

Three weeks after, when it was evident to all, and even to the lad himself, that death was near, he asked the same relative to read one of the marked texts. It was this:

"Come now, let us reason together, saith the

Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isa. 1:18).

His friend then put a question to him to know on what he was trusting in that solemn hour. The dying lad replied, “Yes, I’m trusting in the Lord Jesus,” and in less than two hours he, too, went home to be with Jesus.

Both these lads, young as they were, could calmly and joyfully face death, relying on the word of God.

Will you, too, whoever you may be, receive into your soul that same word which makes known a Saviour? and then, whether or not death comes to you, it will be well with your soul.

ALMOST! BUT LOST!

A MINUTE more and he would have done it; another minute would have meant safety, life, loved ones, home. And the difference of that one minute was the difference of the whole world to George Carter; the difference between time and eternity, life and death.

It was Saturday night; his week’s work on the farm was done, and with his wages in his pocket, Carter came from his home in the village of Woodhurst to spend the evening at the nearest market town, in order to do some shopping for the wife and bairns at home.

What delayed him until the last moment, none will ever know. Not drink, for he had not touched

it and, save for his purchases, all his week's wages remained in his pocket; but late he was, and when he hurried up from the town towards the station to catch the last train, he found it later than he thought. Why, oh why, had he delayed so long?

He must get home, his wife would be waiting and watching, the youngest baby in her arms, the elder two dreaming perhaps of what father was going to bring them home from the town. Yes, he must hurry, and he rushed up the road to the busy little junction when—what was that? Was it the whistle of the last down train coming in, the last train that could bear him to his home?

He must catch it. He must! In desperate haste George Carter reached the station and made a rush for the train.

Yes, the train was there, and at the down platform ready to depart, nay, just starting. The return half of his ticket was in his pocket, so rushing down the steps and through the subway the man bounded up the steps to the down platform.

Dashing past the ticket collector, he cried, "Woodhurst!"

"You cannot go by that!" shouted the young official, seeing the awful danger; but Carter paid no heed. He raced alongside the moving train, gripping his parcel under his right arm, so that only his hand was free; with it he clutched at the hand rail of one of the carriages, and seized the handle of the door with his left. Men shouted to him to let go, but he opened the door, made one desperate effort to spring on to the footboard, missed the step, and

fell; fell; with a terrible crash, between the foot-board and the platform. The next coach came and knocked him underneath.

He had almost caught the train, almost sprung to safety. Almost, but not quite!

Men ran to help, and women screamed in terror as he fell. Twelve wheels went over him before the train was stopped. There on the rails he lay, all that was left of a fine, strong, healthy man. One minute would have meant life. He had almost caught the train.

George Carter's soul had gone into eternity!

And, oh, the pathos of it all! There were tears in the most hardened eyes that night when tender hands picked up the man who had lost his train and lost his life; for the cruel wheels that had robbed the kind father and husband of his life, had broken the precious parcel to pieces, and there, scattered in fragments over the line, was a gaily painted wooden engine, a toy the labourer was taking back to the little folks at home.

The last train went on its way; but one passenger was left behind. He had the return half of his ticket; he had plenty to pay his fare many times over; he had not spent his wages in drink or sin; but they bore to the parcels office that night the mangled body of a fine young Englishman, lost, for want of a moment of time!

He meant to catch the train; he fully intended to be a passenger on the railway that led to home, and love and safety; he was almost in time, almost, but

he was lost. One moment's delay had meant danger, disaster, and death!

He was a kindly, sober man, but that did not save him from the consequences of the delay. Nor can it save any who trifle with the message of God's love.

Many a man hopes to be all right at the last, and thinks the last train will wait for him—the train of salvation from God's station of repentance, and pardon through the death of Jesus Christ—simply because he is upright and moral, a kind husband and a loving father.

“Plenty of time! God is merciful!” they say. Aye, men cry that, and forget that it is only because of God's great mercy that there is time for the lost sinner to repent at all.

Are you trifling, trifling away the time that God has given for seeking Him? Are you quenching God's Holy Spirit, who pleads with you to repent?

God's time is *now*, His offer of mercy is for you *today*: it will not always be so. Solemn are His words of warning. The day is coming when the last invitation will be given, the door shut!

Every life has its Saturday night, the end of the long week of opportunity, and there will come the moment when the last train is gone, for home, and glory, and heaven.

Are you going to miss it, miss it by a minute, because, though you mean to be saved some time, you refuse to accept Christ's salvation *now*? Take care, lest that mean for you also, death and disaster.

“Almost persuaded, harvest is past;
 Almost persuaded, death comes at last.
 Almost cannot avail, almost is but to fail;
 Sad, sad, that bitter wail—almost, but lost.”

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCES

WHILST living in the village of S—— one morning an aged milkman met me as he was going up to the village green for his milk to retail in the neighboring town. When we met, he stopped, looked at me, and said, “Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting.”

“Thank God,” I answered, “I know it.”

“Yes,” said he, “and so do I, and moreover I have Christ now, so that my side goes down plumping weight.”

“Yes,” I said, “I have Christ too, thank God,” and we passed on.

Do you know, my reader, that God has put you into the balances; and not only you but everybody, and that all have been found wanting, for “*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God*” (Rom. 3:23) ?

Do you know that this is true of you? If you do, have you accepted Christ, the only perfect One, the only One in whom God could find full weight in every respect, who satisfied God as to the question of your sins and mine? He offered Himself without spot to God. He finished the work God gave Him to do, for He said when on the cross, “It is finished” (John 19:30); and thus glorified God, and God has glorified Him in that He has raised

Him from among the dead, and exalted Him to His own right hand as a Prince and a Saviour (see Acts 5:31). Do you know that blessed One as your Saviour? You have heard of Him. His fame has gone out throughout the world, but have you accepted Him as your Saviour? Do you know Him as the One who has taken your place at the cross, as the One who has exhausted all God's righteous judgment in your stead, whose precious blood was shed to cleanse you from all your sins and guilt, if you simply believe on Him, and own Him as your Saviour? For "*the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin*" (1. John 1:7).

How precious to know Him as such, because then should God call you to account today you will not be found wanting. "*Every one of us shall give account of himself to God*" (Rom. 14:12). "*Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth*" (Prov. 27:1).

If you are still unsaved, still heedless and careless of your never-dying soul, and God should call you to render your account today, how sad it will be for you. What account will you render to God then? You will find you will come sadly short, and that too without one single excuse. Ponder, I pray you, these solemn realities, cease your own efforts to make up the account, and accept Christ the blessed Substitute. Cast yourself entirely upon Him, and rest in His finished work and all will be well.

"*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*" (Acts 16:31).

A SHROUD BLESSED: A WEDDING GARMENT REJECTED

WHEN God saved a young artillery officer of my acquaintance, He made him very keen upon getting other people saved too. It is the usual way; if a man discovers that he is lost, sinful, and on his way to death and judgment, and then learns that the Lord Jesus Christ died to save him, it changes his whole life and feelings, and he cannot keep the good news to himself. He wants everybody to know that Jesus is the one and only Saviour for sinners.

Well, so it was with my friend. Naturally he thought of his family first, and when visiting them he looked up an old nurse of his, that he might tell her of this great Saviour. Now she was a Roman Catholic, and while she listened respectfully to what he had to say, she was sure she did not need this salvation that he was talking about. And why? "Ah, master Eddie," she said, "I don't need that; I have paid ten and sixpence for a shroud that the Pope has blessed, and sure if my old corpse is wrapped in it I'll go straight into paradise and no purgatory at all."

Poor creature! we smile at her ignorance. And yet she was no more ignorant than the cultured lady who imagines that she is going to heaven clad in her own righteousness, or that self-righteous man who talks proudly of having "done his best, and what can a man do more?" We grow indignant at the priestly deception practised upon people who are held in popish darkness; but they are equally de-

ceivers who preach works and character for salvation from Protestant pulpits, instead of turning the eyes of men to the Son of Man who was lifted up upon the cross of Calvary that they might live.

People forget that it is God that must decide the question of their fitness for heaven, and not themselves; if they remembered this they would endeavour to discover what He thinks and says about it. Then they would learn that He has said, "All your righteousnesses are as filthy rags"; that, "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Romans 3:20); that "There is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Romans 3:12); and it is "Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephes. 2:9). So that neither Papist nor Protestant can be saved by their works, and neither a shroud that the Pope has blessed nor a robe of one's own righteousness can give fitness to any soul for the paradise of God. The wedding garment is needed. Have you never read what is to happen to the man who ventures to intrude at the marriage feast without the wedding garment? Then get your Bible and read Matthew 22:1-14. It will surely open your eyes.

The fact is, "All have sinned," and while most people hide away their sins and proclaim their good works and so pass muster with their friends, they cannot hide their sins from God, and it is with God that we all have to do finally. If He had been indifferent to our welfare and future we might have been excused for struggling with this question ourselves. But God cares for us; He does more. He

loves us and gave His only-begotten Son for us. He has provided for all a way of salvation. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). And now every sin-burdened man and woman may come to the Lord Jesus and lay their burden at His feet. He will give them a robe of righteousness in which there is no flaw and upon which no stain can come, but He will first obliterate their sins, for the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. Neither pope, priest, nor preacher can do this. "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved."

It is all so plain in the Bible that a child can understand it, and we do marvel that men and women who seem to have all their wits about them when their worldly interests are in question should be so blindly stupid about this question that matters most of all.

The God-made way stands open. Forgiveness will greet you at the narrow gate of it; there you will meet a pardoning God, and at the end of it is heaven. Joy and peace in believing will be your heart's own portion if you will enter that way. Then come now. Repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ is the way and there is no other. "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and . . . was buried, and . . . He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3, 4).

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