

# GOSPEL GLEANINGS

*EDITED BY*

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# GOSPEL GLEANINGS

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## PAUL AT ATHENS.

ACTS XVII. 16, 17.

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THE apostle had fared no better in Europe than in Asia. He was persecuted and evil-entreated in Philippi, and had to flee for his life from Thessalonica and Berea. Now he was alone in Athens, waiting for Silas and Timothy. He found no pleasure in the mother of arts, and eloquence, and philosophy. Its beauty of sculpture and statuary, its splendour of architecture, was contaminated with idolatry. As was said by a satirist, it was easier to find a god than a man in Athens; so that his spirit was stirred to its depths within him, as he beheld the city full of idols. What a sight for him who in his unrenowned days was brought up in another city which boasted that not one idol defiled it!

For Paul such boasting was now vain. He had learnt from God, and learnt it for his own soul, that there is none righteous, no, not one; none

that understands, none that seeks after God. Such is God's sentence even on those under law (for there was no question of Gentile evil); that every mouth may be stopt, and all the world be under judgement to God. In short, there is no difference as to ruin; for all sinned, and fall short of the glory of God, as he himself said by inspiration at a later day.

But the love of Christ constrained the lonely saint. The eye and altar of Greece had not a single charm for his singleness and devoted heart. What to him was the far-famed Acropolis with the gigantic statue of the tutelary goddess Pallas Athene, her shield and spear gleaming in the sunlight? What the Areopagus with its dark sanctuary of the Eumenides? What the still striking temple of Theseus? What every public building, every available place, with altars dedicated to deities of besotted mankind, yea, not abstractions merely of an elevated sound, but down to Insolence and Impudence, a religious cover for all lusts, depravities, dishonours and dishonesties? They were nothing but horrors to his spirit, for they simply displayed a people that gloried in slavery to Satan, in religion so false and base as to consecrate the most shameless dissoluteness, and in the most senseless ignorance of the only true God.

Instead of being stunned by such profound

iniquity and darkness, isolated as he was and valuing fellowship beyond any known to us, he looked to his Master as a faithful servant; and with unflinching courage he dared to testify Him Who, being light and love, demonstrated it by sending His Son to make Him known to Jew and Gentile. That very city compelled one of its most enquiring citizens to drink a cup of poison for teaching the duty of heeding the monitor which God has lodged in fallen man. It was what we more rightly call conscience, but regarded by him as a sort of divinity. But on his own showing it only warned him at best against wrong, and never communicated any positive good, and evidently failed to apprise him of the folly of having a cock sacrificed to Aesculapius on his death.

Undeterred by such a fate, the apostle was led to throw himself heart and soul to make known the truth. "So he kept reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout, and in the market-place with those he met with." Alas! the ancient people of God needed the gospel, no less than the Pagans. They owned one living God: a great and blessed truth, where it has also living power. But rejecting their own Messiah, even to the death of the cross, they were now the open and extreme enemies of God and His Son. The only hope for them, "the rebellious" as their own scripture calls them, therefore lay in confessing

their fatally unbelieving error at His feet, Who suffered for sins that He might bring them to God, whiter than snow by His precious blood ; for no less than this does His word assure.

Equally is the Lord Jesus the Saviour of the Gentile through faith in God's testimony to His Son. Such is the gospel, the glad tidings, of God. And we learn from the few and plain words of the inspired historian how assiduously the apostle gave himself up to the work of publishing it, the most gracious message God ever sent to sinful guilty man. If diligent in the synagogue on the sabbath, he discoursed in the agora, or market-place, every day to those he met : deep their need, burning his zeal. The cross of Christ proved that the Jew was no better in heart than the heathen, nay, that he was worse because he turned his greater privileges to pride, and hated Messiah and God Who sent Him after a deadlier sort.

But what and where are you who read these lines? Have you profited by the darkness of the Gentile and the downfall of Israel to judge your own self? Is not all your life fitting you only for judgement and the lake of fire? Or are you setting up the wretched plea that all the world has gone wrong, and that you are no blacker than others? Will this be the smallest comfort to you in the endless punishment of hell? O the folly and the madness of turning away from Him Who

speaks to you in the gospel, as He did through His bondman alike to the idolatrous Athenians, and to the Jews, with such Gentiles as found their way to the synagogue to hear the Law and the Prophets, awakened to discern the abominations of heathenism, however adorned by poetry or the fine arts.

You have privileges still greater than the Jew. You have been brought up where the New Testament is accepted as God's word, no less than the Old. You have in a general way heard of the Son of God come as the Saviour of sinners. You have read that God sent Him that, believing on Him, you may have life eternal and everlasting redemption, without money and without price. How reckless then to go on impenitent and unbelieving! Sinners are perishing every moment: is this no warning to you no less a sinner than they?

Another apostle warns of idols still more engrossing and prevalent than those which shocked Paul at Athens. Invisible though they be, they govern the heart and will quite as much as, or more than, those of gold, silver, or wood, graven by man's art and imagination. What are ease, pleasure, power, honour to all sorts and conditions of men high or low? What is Mammon but the basest of false gods? Riches, more eagerly worshipped by man universally than any one or all

idols together of the heathen world, as the means of gratifying every other passion and desire? Forget not the Lord's solemn word, "Ye *cannot* serve God and Mammon." Who can deliver you from this innate evil but the same One Whom God raised from among the dead, Jesus the Deliverer from the wrath to come? He is equally the Deliverer from present sins and lusts to serve a living and true God, and to await Himself from the heavens.

O sinner, delay not but hear Him now speaking in His word to you personally, that the salvation of God may be yours by faith, now for your soul, then for your body at His coming again.



## WHAT IS TRUTH?

JOHN XVIII. 38—XIX. 16.

**H**ow heartless is a mere religion! Even the cruel Pilate had gentler feelings, and was less blind to righteousness than the Jews who refused to enter the Gentile judgement-hall for fear of defilement. Even he shrank in fear from shedding the innocent blood their chief priests thirsted for. Professing to be law-abiding, with no king but Cæsar, they desired a rebel against Roman authority instead of Him Who said, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's."



In the silence of the Prætorium the same Jesus testified by word and deed before the governor to that further rendering, "and to God the things that are God's."<sup>1</sup> At His meekness Pilate marvelled, yet threatened Him; and he scourged the One in Whom he found no fault.

"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." "Truth" from the lips of Jesus had an ominous sound in his ears. "Came into the world:" strange words! In the presence of this patient and faithful Witness, how the un-earthliness of the words must have struck home to Pilate's heart! But "truth" had given the wound, and he stayed not then to enquire, Whence art Thou?

Yet the *grace*, that *came* too by Jesus, would have drawn him: Jesus, in sight of His cross, yearned for the wanderer's soul: "Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice." But His voice, though full of love, is unwelcome to Pilate: he heard not. That personal appeal, "Sayest thou this thing of thyself?" and now the sword-thrust of the *truth* from Jesus, Whose perfection even he discerned, made it all unbearable; and he seeks to dispel his awful uneasiness with "What is truth?" He waits, he wants, no answer: but if he passes out, it is only to have the solemn impression

1 Mark xii. 17

deepened by hearing from the crowd, "He made himself the Son of God." Dread had seized him before; now its grasp is tightened.

Nor did the warning sound but twice in his own soul. Disturbed upon her bed, his wife had suffered many things in a dream because of Jesus; and when he had taken the judgement-seat, her message comes, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man."<sup>1</sup> Thrice at least, within and without, was there indication of his peril. Thrice too, had he spoken to turn the people from their purpose.<sup>2</sup> Thrice had he attempted to avoid the momentous decision: he had said, "Take ye him and judge him;" he had offered to free Him, not as a just man, but as taking advantage of a custom that set free the guilty; he also sent Him to Herod.<sup>3</sup> But if "he was the more afraid," "they were the more fierce."<sup>4</sup>

What a sham was that boast of his power to do as he pleased: what was it worth? Though he must have felt disgusted with a religiousness that marred their faces with the vehemence of hatred, and raised their voices so high against the guiltless; though he knew, too, at what value to assess their loyalty to Cæsar; though he could be firm when he chose,<sup>5</sup> and had some sense of righteousness and proper caution<sup>6</sup>—a sensible man of the

1 Matt. xxvii. 19    2 Luke xxiii. 22    3 Luke xxiii. 7    4 Luke xxiii. 5  
5 John xix. 22    6 Mark xv. 44, 45

world, you would call him; after all, he yielded, lest Cæsar should sacrifice *him* to the evil pleasure of this turbulent people. Was he willing to release Him? nay, but he was willing to content the people. He *could* have done otherwise; he said so: but he is bound hand and foot, sold to do evil, serving the very Jews he despised. Why did he not drive these people away from the judgement-seat as Gallio did afterwards?<sup>1</sup> *Because he loved the world*: selfish interest, not *truth*, decided him.

Did he ask them, Barabbas or Christ? They put to him, Christ or Cæsar? and he, wretched man! would rather be the Jews' friend, Herod's friend, Cæsar's friend, than the friend of Jesus. The Jews called Jêsus "malefactor," and however he might *seem* to oppose by saying, "Why, what evil hath he done?" they both are on the same side—Satan's. He washed his hands before them, and *said*, "I am innocent;"<sup>2</sup> but God, by whom actions are weighed,<sup>3</sup> declares him one of that base fellowship of darkness with darkness, gathered together against His holy servant Jesus, "both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel."<sup>4</sup>

And now, my friend, a word to you. What think you of Christ? Are you one of those who believe Jesus to have been a good man, while

1 Acts xviii. 16

2 Matt. xxvii. 24

3 1 Sam. ii. 3

4 Acts iv. 27

they comfortably settle on the world's side? For you can no more avoid taking sides than could Pilate. Let me warn you. It is no matter of argument, but a fact, that you are in the world and a *sinner* here. Sin is against God; and it is to Him you have to say about it. In you there is no truth—I mean, nothing that will meet the eye of God. If therefore God, Whom you have offended, has sent His only begotten Son, Him Who is *the truth*, not to condemn you, but to save you, how serious a matter is your thinking lightly of Him!

T.D.

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## THE PHILOSOPHERS, EPICUREAN AND STOIC.

ACTS XVII. 18.

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**A** NEW adversary of the gospel encountered the apostle at Athens. It was not, as at Philippi, the insidious effort of Satan through the spirit of Python which essayed to flatter or patronise the servants of the Most High, but was spurned and cast out with holy indignation, whatever might be the enmity of disappointed selfishness and the world's persecution. Nor was it, as at Thessalonica, the old and ever active jealousy of Jewish unbelief which took advantage

of Paul's preaching the Lord's kingdom, to accuse of rebellion against Cæsar. At Athens philosophers now figure for the first time, never suspending their baneful influence till its career is closed in the coming apostasy. For philosophy occupies itself with phenomena, never rises above second causes, and will not bow to God's authority in revealing Himself in the written word, still less in the personal Word. It is but man's mind, without true activity of conscience or the truth.

“But some also of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers assailed him. And some said, What would this chatterer say? and others, He seemeth to be an announcer of strange demons, because he preached [or evangelised] Jesus and the resurrection.”

We do not hear of the Academicians or of the Peripatetics. The schools that followed Plato and Aristotle respectively lay in the north-west and in the north-east of the suburbs. But those of Epicurus and of Zeno adjoined the market-place, where they crossed the apostle's path, and heard words of grace and truth, not only altogether new to their ears, but wholly subversive of their systems. And their systems did not emulate the idealism of Plato, nor the comprehensive earthly knowledge which was the boast of Aristotle. The Epicureans and the Stoics occupied themselves far more than the others with man's

actual life of every day, opposed flatly to each other, but both directly to God's revelation of Himself in Christ.

With these the gospel preached by His ambassador came into open collision; first, Jesus in person; secondly, the resurrection. But philosophers, with all their speculative activity and lofty soarings above the vulgar, are ever apt as here to show themselves the dullest of mankind in the things of God. The Jews, spite of intense prejudice and envious hostility to a new revelation, never manifested such stupidity as this case betrayed; nor did the gross and half-barbarous Lycaonians or other heathen denizens of Asia Minor. These philosophers seem to have conceived that Paul set forth Jesus and the resurrection, as two divinities, male and female, a division of the gods common to perhaps all forms of idolatry except Sabeism.

The Epicureans were materialists and practically if not professedly Atheists, though they admitted the existence of gods taking no notice of any one. The Stoics were Pantheists, and equally excluded one true and living God with Whom every soul must have to do, but held a soul of the world as god. Chrysippus rather than Zeno of Citium formulated this school, which also held the soul to be a body and perishable; but the Soul of all things, of which the souls of animals

are part, imperishable. Both denied creation; both fancied matter to be eternal. Divine judgment was equally set aside, sense of sin before God, and relationship with Him, on which really depends all moral duty. Chance, according to the Epicureans, characterises the world; Fate, according to the Stoics: the one as easy-going, as the other was severe, issuing in pleasure for the former, and pride for the latter.

How completely was this learned ignorance exposed as corrupt imagination, and set aside by the glad tidings of God! When sin entered to the ruin of our first parent, He then pointed out in a rather mysterious way (till the fact explained it in all simplicity) the woman's Seed Who was to crush the serpent, Satan, and deliver such as looked to Him in faith and repentance. He had marked out the Blessor, as the Seed of Abraham, and yet more restrictedly of David. He had later still shut up the Saviour still more narrowly to the Son of "the virgin" of David's house, thus clearing, seven centuries before, the unique personality of Him, Who should be truly Immanuel, God with us yet man. "Jesus" alone centres all this and more in Himself, Who was to give His life a ransom for many; Jesus, that cured the sick and raised the dead, yet hated and slain by those to whom He did nothing but good; Jesus, Who thus proved man's enmity to God, and God's love unbounded

to man ; for in truth by that sacrifice alone could those who believe be forgiven, receive life eternal, and be cleansed from every sin.

God had from of old testified all this by the law and the prophets. But He had recently crowned His old and written word by the new and stupendous fact, which the Lord had openly and repeatedly attested by His lips, in His resurrection from the dead. Him Whom man killed God raised up again, as He in due time received Him up in glory. How blessed the tidings for all that believe ! How awful the guilt of those who cleave to empty philosophy, Epicurean, Stoic, or any other !

For those it is the indifference of man, insensible of his sins, and blind to the true God Who so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son that the believer might not perish but have life eternal. For these it is the haughty self-sufficiency which admires itself, spouts about virtue, and scorns to own the sins, and to receive a Saviour from God in Jesus. Yet He meekly bore the shame of the cross at man's hand, and God's judgement of our evil, that He might save one from his sins : alike God's grace, and His new justifying righteousness, to which His resurrection affixed a divine seal.

And now, my reader, be assured there is no other Saviour for you, or any other. You may be



unlearned, or a philosopher. But sin levels all to the dust of death. O through Jesus believe in God that raised Him from among the dead and gave Him glory, that your faith and hope may be in God. There is no other way to God. As God is one, so there is but one Mediator, the man Christ Jesus Who gave Himself a ransom for all. But God's testimony claims your faith. To the believer only is the blessing. How could it be for those who do not repent of their sins, nor receive God's glad tidings? O doubt not, delay not, but believe His word that abides for ever!

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## FAITH NOT FEELINGS.

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**F**EELINGS may deceive me, but faith never can. If I see a thing, it is merely my eye that sees. If I believe a truth on God's word, I am looking at it, in a measure so to speak, with God's eyes. The world has a notion that faith only implies confidence as to a thing which is not sure. This is not the meaning of "I believe" in the things of God. My own vision is a poor range of sight; but what of God's eye?

The believer stands upon the highest ground; he rests upon the certainty of what God says. Happiness, too, is the result; for when you believe,

you soon begin to feel. If you believe that God has blotted out your sins, you ere long, if not at once, begin to enjoy it. If I look at myself, I shall always see something wrong. How is this? My sins all gone; and yet if looking within, I see so much that is painful, loathsome, humiliating. The putting away of sin is not a thing that goes on in my heart, but a mighty work that God wrought in the cross of His beloved Son, on which He calls me to rest, because on it He rests.

Am I looking for a sign and token in myself? If so, I shall never have an assurance of it on the right ground. If I think that my sins must be forgiven because I am a changed character (as men speak), can I ever have an hour's real peace? The result must be, that the more one judges himself, the less happy he will be.

What God puts before His children is this—that they should be thoroughly happy in the certainty that their sins are gone, through the blood-shedding of Christ, and yet that they should spare nothing they find within them; judging themselves day by day, because Christ has been judged for them, and God has blotted out their sins, and they cannot endure trifling with that which cost the blood of His Son.

## THE KIND IRISHMAN.

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MY sister and I were walking one day in rather a wild part of Ireland, which we had not visited before. We had gone a long distance, and thought we should like to find a shorter way home.

But the first obstacle we encountered was a deep millstream, with nothing but a narrow, slippery log of wood across it: a plank it could not be called, for the surface was rounded, and seemed to have been washed smooth by the water, which even now overflowed it in some places.

However, we did not like the idea of the long way round, and seeing a man at work on the other side, we hailed him, and enquired if he thought the log would bear us.

The man looked surprised at the question, and replied, "Why, yer honours, the wood is all rotten and slippery intirely, not to spake o' the narrowness. Meself wouldn't say that yer honours can't do anything, but it isn't safe at all, at all."

Upon this my sister hesitated a little, but I laughed at the poor man's warning; and with perfect self-confidence I set forth on the danger-

ous bridge. Carefully placing one foot before the other, for there was hardly room for both, and taking tiny steps, for I dared not trust myself upon one foot, I arrived at the middle of the log; and then, for the first time, a sense of danger came over me. I remembered the deep mill-stream, into which a single false step would plunge me.

In a moment my head grew dizzy with fright, and I felt it was impossible to return, or go forward. I shall never forget my feelings at that moment; the utter helplessness of my condition flashed across me, and I was totally unable to move hand or foot.

There was no railing to hold by, and I began to totter, expecting in an instant to be lost sight of beneath the dark waters below. Ah! deliverance was nearer than I thought, for the kind man on the other side had been watching me all the while, and when he saw my helpless condition, and that I had given up trying to save myself, he, with rapid strides, came to meet me, and seizing my outstretched hand in his, clasped it so tightly that I could not have pulled it away if I had wished it ever so much, and then he drew me safely to the land.

Do you think that he let go before both my feet were firmly planted on the dry ground? Oh, no! and better still, he did not blame my rashness and

folly in trying to get home across that slippery log. He was too glad that I had escaped from being drowned to say anything of that sort; and now I never think of that kind Irishman without a feeling of deep gratitude.

And since that escape I have always been afraid of crossing narrow planks by myself, or doing anything dangerous; for I lost confidence in myself at that terrible moment, and found out what it was to trust in one who was willing and able to save.

Well, perhaps some of you have a good opinion of your own powers, as I had when I began to cross the millstream. You are trying to reach heaven in your own strength; and you are astonished when anyone tells you that it is impossible, and warns you of your danger. But whether you believe it or not, you are not one whit nearer heaven than when you first began your journey; indeed you increase your danger by each step you take.

Ah! you had better give up trying to save yourself, as I did, for the Lord is watching you all the time, and longing to take you in His arms and carry you safely home with rejoicing. But it is no use as long as you think you can help Him by your efforts. On the cross the Lord Jesus said, "It is *finished*," so there cannot be anything left for you to do. He is only waiting until you see

your ruined, lost condition as sinners, and, when you have given up hope and feel the utter helplessness of your state, then God comes in to deliver.

He loves poor sinners. His heart has been yearning over you all the time, and He has sent you many a warning which you have despised. But in spite of all your folly and self-confidence, His eye pities, His heart is full of compassion, and His arm is *strong* to save. He says, "Hearken unto me." Oh, it will be a good moment for you when your eyes are opened to see your terrible danger, and the impossibility of saving yourselves; for you will not then refuse God's *free* salvation.

Do you think it entered my head at that terrible moment when I tottered on the slippery log to refuse the Irishman's outstretched hand? Oh, no! "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." He sees you need a Saviour, and does not keep you waiting; you have not even to ask for salvation, because it is freely offered to you.

*Extracted.*

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## "THIS NEW DOCTRINE."

ACTS XVII. 19—21.

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**T**HE more familiar one may have been with the demoralising vanities of Greek mythology, the less one can wonder at the surprise which greeted the apostle's words in the market-place

of Athens. If some were contemptuous, others were curious. Mental activity works all the more freely where conscience slumbers, and the soul is not purified by obeying the truth to unfeigned love. As political importance too had long vanished thence, quips and quiddities were their resource to fill the vacuum. "And having laid hold of him they brought him unto the Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would therefore know what these things may mean. (Now all Athenians and the strangers sojourning there spent their time in nothing else than either to tell or to hear last news)."

Though there was and had been for some time a remarkable scarcity of brilliant men in Athens, they had, as they boasted, a rich inheritance of the beautiful in art, of exercised and daring thought in philosophy, of finished elegance in poetry, eloquence, and history, along with utter corruption and unnatural depravity in morals, and their gods the magnified image of their own degradation. At that time appeared Jesus the Son of God, the woman's Seed. In Him shone the light of God, and the love of God. To announce Him was indeed new teaching. He, and He only, was the perfect image of the invisible God. "He was in the world, and the world was made [brought

into being] by Him, and the world knew Him not." How besotted was the world! how vain, useless, blinding was its wisdom! The ox knows its owner, and the ass its master's crib. But the world in its highest civilisation knew not its own Creator. And no wonder. It had long stumbled on in the darkness of evil and of gods that were only demons.

But the Jews? They were no better; they were even guiltier. "He came to His own things, and His own people received Him not." They had the law and the prophets, and John Baptist to prepare His way. But their will was engaged against Him. They would have relished a Messiah to put down the Romans and to set Israel at the head of all the nations. This will be when He comes again in power and glory. But He with God made it the first work to save sinners. What would be the worth of His kingdom if sin were not first atoned for? A lowly, gracious, holy, and suffering Messiah was hateful to their proud hearts, because He was infinitely better and higher than they had conceived, and they themselves immeasurably worse.

Philosophy had never found out that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." It never learnt even that when man was made, he and every thing around him were "very good;" still less that he is fallen under sin, and



the creature subjected to man, like man under the power of death. It was to meet this state of sin and ruin that, when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under law, that He might redeem those under law, that we might receive sonship.

What had this to do with science unable to rise above causes and effects? and, when pursued to its utmost height, finding only a blank wall which it cannot pass? So acknowledged one of earth's sages just departed. Science cannot get beyond phenomena, and the general laws deduced from them. Science is but the classification of what exists and the discovery of what the philosophers are pleased to call nature's "laws." But Who produced the phenomena and imposed those laws? There it is blind and dumb; and the utmost it confesses is the existence of primordial facts or causes, of which it can give no account. And why not? Because they point to the First Cause, the Uncaused One Who is the cause of all secondary causes. But this men refuse, and prefer to remain Agnostics, a stronghold of the pride of knowledge. "The world [not by folly only, but also] by wisdom knew not God."

Yea, there was the awful sight of man with all his pride bowing down to his own handiwork, idols of metal or stone, in blank ignorance of the true and living God Who had sent His Son to die

for sinners and rescue all who believe from the coming wrath. Is He the only potentate, the alone Good, King of kings and Lord of lords who must not punish rebellion? And is it not plain and deadly rebellion against Him to worship, as they were doing, false gods? and such vile gods!

But He is love; and He has proved it by sending His Son to become man (while always God), that He might suffer for sins, and thus save all sinners that submit to Him. To the acceptance of this, the only efficacious sacrifice, God has borne witness by raising the crucified Saviour from the dead. Hear it, ye who are under the spell of haughty scientists. The risen Jesus testifies to His Father's glory, and to the love He is showing even to His worst enemies that repent. If His own birth of the virgin is wholly above the sphere of causes and effects, much more His resurrection proclaims that God acts in that power equal to His love, and righteously interposes to save all that believe. Not even a philosopher could argue that death is the cause of resurrection. No, it is *God* that raises the dead; and He it is Who in the gospel announces these glad tidings that you may believe, and, though a lost sinner, be saved by His grace.

Yes, the gospel is "new doctrine;" and the truth of God is of all things strangest to fallen man—stranger far than fiction.

## THOUGHTS ON JONAH. I.

## DISOBEDIENCE.

JONAH'S history has many a deep lesson for us all, whether we be saints or sinners; and in it we may surely learn the wonderful patience of God, as well as the exceeding riches of His grace.

Disobedient to God's call, to the command, "Arise, go to Nineveh," Jonah is brought before our notice as :

- (1) Fleeing from God's presence.
- (2) Self-willed; and
- (3) Wrapt in the sleep of total apathy.

These three things mark all unbelievers. Man naturally dislikes the presence of God, and sin creates a distance between them. Jonah in this respect follows the same downward course as Adam and Cain; and let us observe that it is of his own free will and choice that he goes down to Tarshish (*i.e.*, destruction), and through Joppa (*i.e.*, a beautiful city). What a striking example is this of the way of the wicked to-day! Attracted by the beauty of this present world, men, led on by Satan, are swiftly treading, in eager haste, the "broad road that leadeth to destruction," and will so continue, unless, in God's mercy, they are stopped before it is too late. Thank God, in Jonah's case (who was really His servant) a great wind is sent across the sea, and a mighty tempest

bursts in all its fury on the ship, in whose sides the wayward prophet lies fast asleep.

Frightened mariners cry in vain unto their gods for deliverance, and in their earnest efforts to lighten the ship, cast forth its wares into the raging waters, which only seem to mock their folly by roaring louder. But human religion and human efforts are both alike in vain; and the dreamer is at last aroused from his slumbers by the urgent cry of the ship-master, "What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not."

Casting lots to ascertain who was the cause of all the trouble, the lot falls upon Jonah; and, on his confession that he had fled from God's presence, the heathen mariners become exceedingly afraid, and their words ring in his ears, "Why hast thou done this?" "What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us?"

His reply is significant, "Take me up and cast me forth into the sea, so shall the sea be calm unto you." Yes, such was the one and only way of deliverance from the storm; and herein lies the one great lesson we have all to learn, that, had not Christ (the sinless Victim) borne the storm of judgement in our stead, we must have been for ever submerged by it.

At this point of Jonah's history, we have presented to us a remarkable type of Christ in

death, and yet, at the same time, a most striking contrast. The prophet (typically), but the Christ of God (actually) went down beneath the dark waters of death and judgement; but where rank disobedience brought Jonah, sinless obedience brought God's Holy One.

Yet, strange to say, the sailors hesitate to act upon the prophet's words, and row hard to bring the ship to land. Oh, dear unsaved reader, has not this, alas! been your gloomy and disappointing occupation for perhaps many a long year? rowing hard, and doing your very best, in frantic efforts to save yourself? But not so is salvation obtained; not by any works of righteousness that we can do.

The more you try the worse it is. Satan, sin, the world and self, are all against you, and there is none to help. But oh, how mighty the change that comes over the terrified sailors, as now we hear them, no longer appealing for aid to their gods, but to the Lord of heaven and earth, Who in mercy heard their cry, yet stayed not the raging tempest until Jonah was cast headlong beneath the mighty waters. Disobedience ends in death, and morally, it was into the place of death that Jonah must go, in order to learn lessons at the bottom of the sea that he could learn nowhere else. This, God willing, we shall see in the following chapter.

## SUDDEN DEATH—SUDDEN BLISS.

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THE words "sudden death, sudden glory,"<sup>1</sup> are familiar to many believers, yet their recent use, by one well known to the writer, was certainly striking. She had long been known as a child of God, and although she had very few educational advantages in her youth, yet she had been a diligent learner in the school of God. The possession of eternal life, and a present standing in the favour of God had been enjoyed by her for many years. Her case was one which forcibly reminded me of the truth that "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." Her life and testimony were such that a neighbour, known to have infidel ideas, remarked to me on hearing of her death, "She was a genuine article. It was a real thing with her."

She went to pay a visit to her son, and whilst there attended the funeral of a child, in company with a christian neighbour. It was on this occasion that she remarked to her friend that sudden death would be sudden glory for either of them. She probably little thought that in two days her time to depart would come. It was so, however, for she was found dead in her bed!

1 NOTE.—"Glory" in scriptural usage is connected with the body as raised or changed at the coming of the Lord (Rom. viii. 18, 21; 1 Cor. xv. 43; Phil. iii. 21). It is true however that saints who fall asleep depart to be with Christ (Phil. i. 23; Luke xxiii. 43). But the popular phrase above misleads as to correct scripture teaching. ED. G. G.

“No time for preparation,” some of my readers may exclaim. But the one of whom I write was already made “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light;” hence the confidence which her remark breathed. Hers was not the boast of one resting in her own works in order to win God’s favour. She had felt her need as a sinner too deeply for that. Hence she accepted Christ as the One Who had met her case in the death of the cross. She was drawn to love Him; therefore death for her could but mean, in the words of the apostle Paul, “to be with Christ which is far better.”

Can my reader take the same view of death? If still in your sins, the thought of death is indeed not a welcome one; for you surely know that “after death comes the judgement.” May this thought alarm you, as never before, and lead you *now* to prove God’s grace! He has taken full account of your lost condition, yet in view of it He loved you and sent His Son to die in the sinner’s place, in order that *you* might be saved. Do not treat this message as that which does not concern you, or you will prove in eternity the solemn result of despising the grace which has been so fully displayed.

Drift no longer towards eternity, without a thought of your never-dying soul! Believe the gospel to-day, and know and own Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord henceforth. c.w.

## LOOKING BACKWARDS.

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“I WITH God must have to do;  
For myself must answer find;  
None can stand for me—ah, no,  
None, however good and kind.”

THERE is a time coming when the concerns of daily life, the pressing questions that call for an answer day by day, the worrying over food and raiment, business, or crops and all the things included in the “cares of this life” will lose their importance and take their true place as the merest trifles compared with the one great question, “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul.”<sup>1</sup> It may be that time has already come for someone who is reading these words, and with what a sorrowful feeling must such an one reflect upon a life, in which trifling things have been pursued eagerly, and those matters have been neglected which are of the greatest importance; seeing that they relate not only to this world but to eternity.

And if this is so, when the evening of life is closing in, when in the beautifully poetic words of the Old Book, “The years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them . . . and desire shall fail because man goeth to his



long home [in the Hebrew, home of eternity] and the mourners go about the streets,<sup>1</sup> how will earthly things look when this life has been for ever left behind?

How vain, how empty must appear the things that were so engrossing here! How utterly futile the eager striving after earthly place or power or riches, when in eternity the soul looks back and sees too late, how the time of probation in<sup>2</sup> this world has been thrown away! The pursuit of empty and unsatisfying pleasures, if no worse, must then seem the most childish folly, seeing that there is no good or lasting result even when the object is attained. Happiness when made the object of life is like the "pot of gold" which is said to be found at the foot of the rainbow: it is always in the next field.

Now all this is just as true of the believer in Christ as of the one who has neglected Him; but how great the difference in their eternal destiny? The believer who has been careless will suffer loss; for no one has a right to expect the best of both worlds; and if anyone makes this world their chief concern, the judgement-seat of Christ will make manifest how evil the choice has been.

The unbeliever, too, must give an account of himself to God, and every idle word<sup>3</sup> will then be recalled in the presence of One who can even now

1 Ecclesiastes xiii. 1—5

2 Luke xvi.

3 Matthew xii. 36

read the heart as an open book and knows its thoughts and intents.<sup>1</sup> What then makes the difference? Simply that the believer has trusted in Christ for salvation, and the unbeliever has not and is therefore "condemned already."<sup>2</sup>

The one who believes in Christ is saved, "hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgement, but is passed from death unto life."<sup>3</sup>

Nor need your faith be great, for salvation depends not on the strength of your faith but on Him Who is its object.<sup>4</sup>

Faith is valuable because it gives honour to God Who will have all men honour the Son even as they honour the Father.<sup>5</sup> And when this blessed knowledge is yours, do not fail to thank God for His abounding grace and mercy to you.<sup>6</sup>

What a blessed thing! What a relief to one who has been long in doubt and anxiety about his eternal future, when he is able to realise that God is for him and on his side to bless and preserve and comfort him, and at last receive him into those everlasting mansions where sin and defilement can never come!

W.E.K.



1 Heb. iv. 13    2 John iii. 18    3 John v. 24    4 John iii. 14-15  
5 John v. 23    6 Heb. xiii. 15; Luke xvii. 18

## THE STONE-BREAKER AND THE BLOOD.

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I WAS on my way to L—, in haste to catch the train, one fine afternoon last year, when my attention was arrested by a man, evidently a stone-breaker, who was standing up from between his heaps of stones in a bewildered way, and hastily trying to get off his goggles, which served as a protection to the eyes in his occupation of stone-breaking.

I then noticed a small wound above his right eye, from which the blood was flowing—the not infrequent result of an upflying flint, after it is struck.

Accosting the stone-breaker, I said, “My friend, the blood I see on your forehead brings to my mind what God says in His word, ‘When I see the blood I will pass over you;’<sup>1</sup> and again, ‘The blood of Jesus Christ [His Son] cleanseth from all sin.’”<sup>2</sup>

What was my astonishment when the poor man burst into tears, and said, “I see it! I see it!! My dear sir, I have been waiting for those words for weeks.” It was God, Who had said, “I wound and I heal,” that had broken the stone-breaker’s heart; for His word like a hammer breaketh the

1 Ex. xii. 13

2 1 John i. 7

rock in pieces;<sup>1</sup> and the same word points to the blood that has made peace for the soul.

“Whosoever falls on this stone [Jesus] shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder.”<sup>2</sup>

To believe in Jesus is humbling to pride, for it makes us know we have *sinned*, and that we come short of God’s glory. To neglect His great salvation is to fall under His unsparing judgement, both now and for eternity. “He that *believeth* is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”<sup>3</sup>

Unsaved reader, be justified by faith in Jesus. Be broken and healed by faith in His word. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth *not* the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”<sup>4</sup> E.B.D.

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## AN “UNKNOWN GOD.”

ACTS XVII. 22, 23.

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**I**N the vast throng of strange gods at Athens the discerning eye of the apostle observed an altar with an inscription which unconsciously acknowledged the ruined estate, not only of its inhabitants, but of all the heathen world. Not that they thereby intended a humbling admission;

1 Jer. xxiii. 29    2 Matt. xxi. 44    3 John iii. 18    4 John iii. 36

yet the words told the fact to him who knew the truth. It appears from adequate witnesses that there were several altars thus inscribed. Paul certainly saw one, and spoke accordingly. In their grossly polytheistic zeal they devoted shrines, not only to all home and foreign deities, but to unknown gods, that not one should miss due honour. This furnished Paul with his plea; and how immeasurably superior to the Apology of Socrates is the appeal of the "apostle of nations!"

"And Paul stood amidst the Areopagus and said, Men of Athens, in all things I behold you more [than others] in awe of deities (dæmons). For coming through and beholding your objects of worship, I found also an altar on which had been inscribed, 'TO AN (or, THE) UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye reverence without knowing, this I announce to you."

Grace with single eye laid hold of what was true to reach conscience and judge the false. No introducer of strange divinities was the apostle, but made known the God whom this altar openly acknowledged to be "unknown." Which of them could deny that the gods of Olympus, the most honoured in their midst, were by their own account the most arbitrary, corrupt, and violent personages within their ken, and afforded to their devotees a basis not of morality but of the vilest and even unnatural indecency? And if this was

the religion of the multitude, kept up by sacerdotal selfishness and sanctioned for state-craft by politicians, what had proud or sceptical philosophers done? Nothing but aggravate the evil by vain efforts to reconcile a world of sin, sorrow, and death with a feeble god, or gods unavailing or indifferent, who left it for guilty presumptuous men to make progress and improve things here below.

For not one of their divinities claimed to be eternal, omniscient, and omnipotent in self-being. Not one of them said, I AM, or was ever said to be Light morally, or Love in the energy of his nature. Yet there is in every human being, unless he be drunk with superstition or fatally poisoned by scepticism, what has been called God-consciousness, and is forced to own, that God there must be. And though no one could by searching find out His nature; yet when presented to man by revelation, his conscience owns that these attributes and this nature are alone worthy of Him.

What then makes the insurmountable difficulty? That little word, but awful, personal, and universal reality, SIN. Yet it alone accounts for the ruin, the confusion, the darkness, the uncertainty, and the misery for man everywhere. And what is it for a good, and holy, and righteous God? Bible or no Bible, a world wicked and wretched is a fact before all. But it is a notion worthy of the

arch-enemy that the eternal God made it as it is ; it negatives all just thought of His goodness, wisdom, and power. That it fell into its actual condition through the transgression of its head is the sole reasonable key, as the Bible distinctly declares it to have been the simple fact. Idolatry and philosophy only added to the mischief by denying the good state which a faithful Creator made to hinge on the obedience of the first man. For man was constituted and tried as a moral being. But they do still worse ; they lead men to disbelieve in the Second man, Who being God came in the light and love of God to save all who believe on Him ; and Who, also becoming man, died as the one efficacious sacrifice for the sins, and rose for the justification, of those who repent and believe the glad tidings. O how worthy of God and His Son !

Man from the first departed from God, Who left him to feel his exile from the paradise of Adam, though not without both sentence of judgement and a revelation of a suffering Deliverer, the woman's Seed. But the race willingly, contentedly, did without His presence and favour, save a few men of faith ; and the rest gave themselves up to corruption and violence, till He intervened by the deluge which swept them all away. Only Noah and his sons, and their wives, with animals clean and unclean, were saved in the

ark; and the present age began. But it was soon marked not only by fresh institutions of God, but by a new evil. As the apostle tells us, "Knowing God, they glorified him not as God, nor were thankful; but fell into folly in their thoughts, and their unintelligent heart was hardened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds and quadrupeds and reptiles. Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to uncleanness."<sup>1</sup> It is his holy account of paganism, and of its utter absence of truth, piety, and moral decency.

Such was Athens, with an unknown God. Such were heathen men who through faith of Christ turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God made known to them in His Son, the risen Saviour. Believing on Him, it was not pardon only they received, but life eternal: the basis of a new nature and walk, seen and made known by chosen and inspired witnesses. Some were as dark and dissolute as any in Athens or Corinth, to whom the apostle wrote after they believed, "But ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified." How was this wondrous change? In virtue of what? "In the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."<sup>2</sup>

1 Rom. i. 21—24

2 1 Cor. vi. 9—11



Thus is God known in His Son and by His Spirit, as scripture abundantly testifies. Take our Lord's few words in John xvii. 3: "This is life eternal, to know thee [the Father] the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou didst send." O turn not away from such grace and truth, but "believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house."

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## THOUGHTS ON JONAH. II.

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### DELIVERANCE.

"SALVATION IS OF THE LORD."

**M**EANWHILE God had lessons to teach His wayward servant; and the first was his own complete and utter helplessness. Flung headlong into the raging billows, death would soon have claimed the sinking prophet for its own, had not the Lord, in His infinite love and mercy, already prepared a most unexpected and supernatural way of salvation.

What human thought could ever have conceived or human mind designed so wondrous a way as God chose to bring the prophet to his senses, and yet at the same time secure for him a full salvation? "Let the potsherds of the earth strive with the potsherds of the earth" at the so-called impossibility of such a deliverance; and let the

higher critics in their boasted wisdom count the story as a fable if they will ; but the Son of God has spoken, and brought to nought their senseless folly.

These are the words of Him Who cannot lie ; “An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign ; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. For, as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” The man who, but a short time before, lay fast asleep in the sides of the ship, is now fully alive to his strangely altered circumstances ; and, out of the fish’s belly, cries by reason of his affliction unto the Lord, and (as is ever God’s way with a soul in distress) He hears and answers too. “I cried . . . . . Thou heardest.” “The floods compassed me about ; all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight ; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.” Yes, dark distress had settled down upon the prophet, for he had indeed been rebellious ; and if salvation is to be brought to him at all, God, and God alone, can deliver. Neither angel, man, nor devil is of any avail to the imprisoned man. Jonah’s stubborn will must needs be broken ; and, no longer able now to do as he pleases, he is carried by the whale to the bottoms of the mountains, and the

weeds are wrapt about his head. "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy." Jonah is now brought thoroughly to the end of himself, which is always the sure precursor of God's delivering grace; and the one and only remedy for all His sin and rebellion finds its truthful expression in those five all-important words, "Salvation is of the Lord." No sooner was the truth thus practically owned, than God's deliverance swiftly comes; for "the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land."

Divine grace has fully met the prophet's need, and divine power has brought him from the place of death on to resurrection ground.

Reader, hast thou yet discovered thine own sore need and danger, as well as utter helplessness? If so, deliverance is only to be found through Him Who died for thy sins, and rose again for thy justification.

The death, blood-shedding, and resurrection of the Christ of God is the one and only way of escape from the certain judgement which lies before thee, if still in thy sins.

A full and complete deliverance from every foe is to be found in Jesus only, Who "suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to

God." But a dead and risen Christ has fully met and answered every claim of divine justice; and, though it may be thou hast been a rebel against God all thy days, yet mercy still lingers over thy soul, and the message from the great Deliverer's lips is as true to-day as ever, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else." S.T.

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## THE INDIAN WOMAN'S BIBLE.

*(Extracted from a recent letter from the Far West).*

WE are passing through some wonderful scenery just now; everywhere are snow-clad mountains, looking like gigantic rocks with sharp edges cutting the sky or lost in the clouds. The lower hills are covered with pine trees, thousands of them only bare poles having insufficient soil to grow in, beyond a certain limit. We drank of a mountain torrent this morning—cold as ice and clear as crystal.

I have been getting on well the last day or two. One lady let me have tea from her teapot and another gave me some honey for my cough. I had quite a long talk with the "honey" lady.

She is the wife of a missionary amongst the Indians in Vancouver Island.

She is a very bright Christian, and wanted to know if I belonged to Christ. She thought I did,

she said. She went on to tell me of the dangers and snares out here, and how easily young men are led astray. "But," she said, "you will always find some of the Lord's people wherever you go."

Then she told me of the work among the Indians, and that the farther they are from civilisation, the more ready they are to receive the gospel.

She told me how they express themselves when they hear and receive the gospel. They say it takes a great load off their breasts which they have had *all their lives*, and which they have tried in all sorts of ways to get rid of.

But I am unable to express the thoughts as she did; it was all so fresh and real. Evidently she and her husband were one in spending their lives in the gospel work and schools amongst the Indian tribes.

She was most plainly dressed, carried her own provisions which were of the plainest character, and always, even on the train, asked a blessing before she began to eat.

She told me of an old Indian woman she used to visit. This old woman asked if she would like to see her Bible, and fetched a handkerchief tied up at the four corners, with over seventy stones in it. The missionary lady picked up the stones one by one, and the old woman gave her a text for each particular stone, and told her a little about the sermon she had heard from that text. Although the stones looked all alike, yet she remem-

bered each one and its connected scripture.

Many other little stories she told me. I felt I could not do better than give her the bulk of the tracts I had in my bag, as she said she had been unable to get any, and she liked to have some with her on the journey.

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## HOW THE LORD LED ME.

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**A**T about the age of eighteen the Lord was pleased to stop me in my wild career, "calling me out of darkness into his marvellous light." Never shall I forget that night when, as a poor convicted sinner, I was made to realise that I stood "guilty before God," and "condemned already." Trembling, I cried for mercy like the publican of old, for nothing but the pure mercy and grace of God could meet my case. I have since learned that this is a point to which all who would know the pardoning love of God have to come. "All have sinned, and come short of His glory,"<sup>1</sup> and are in truth His enemies;<sup>2</sup> therefore, He "now commands all men, everywhere, to repent." To all who repent and believe the gospel He grants a free and eternal pardon.

It is of the greatest importance to see from God's word our guilty, lost, helpless, ungodly, sinful, dead, and hopeless condition. When

1 Rom. iii. 23

2 Rom. v. 10

this is believed and realised, we then gladly receive the salvation which is brought to us by the grace of God, as, and where we are.

While thus made to feel myself a convicted sinner before God, an open Bible was set before me, and I was pointed to the third chapter of John. It was not many days before my eyes were opened to see some of the meaning of those wonderful verses. I read that "God so loved the world [of which I was part] that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever [myself included] believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." From that time forward I have had the joy of knowing that "God *hath* given to us [all believers], eternal life."<sup>1</sup> As an individual, I knew I had eternal life, for "he that believeth on the Son *hath* eternal life;" "he that hath the Son *hath* life." Christ is the fountain, spring, and source of life; for He is true God and eternal life; "the life;" "our life;" the Prince of life.<sup>2</sup>

Christ and His people are one; Himself is the Head, while all believers are the "members of His body." As He Who is the life is the Head, so every member of the body partakes of that life. Eternal life is the gift of God,<sup>3</sup> the gift of Christ;<sup>4</sup> and it is said of all those who receive this gift that "they shall never perish." But for the

1 1 John v. 11    2 1 John v. 20; John xi. 25; xiv. 6; Col. iii. 4; Acts iii. 15  
3 Rom. vi. 23; 1 John v. 11    4 John xvii. 2; x. 28

death of Christ, such a portion could never have come to fallen man. And it is only they who eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, who have this life in them.<sup>1</sup> This does not mean eating in a literal sense, and has no reference to the Lord's supper; but it means that believers, by faith, get their soul's deep need (termed hunger and thirst) met, while trusting Him Who gave His body and blood an atoning sacrifice upon the cross.

There is no room for any uncertainty, for God hath said, "These things have I written unto you which believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may *know* that ye *have* eternal life." No enemy, however strong, can rob a believer of eternal life, for this life is in God's Son; our life is hid with Christ in God.<sup>2</sup>

While we have eternal life here, yet it is in a scene where there is death and darkness all around. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, in mortal bodies." But the day draws near when "mortality will be swallowed up of life," and our bodies will be fashioned like unto His glorious body.<sup>3</sup> No longer in a scene of death and darkness, but for ever with Him Who is the life and light. Looking for Him to bring about this wonderful change is "our hope."<sup>4</sup> There death or decay will never enter. Life and light

1 John vi. 53, 54    2 Col. iii. 3; 1 John v. 11, 13    3 Phil. iii. 21  
4 Phil. iii. 20, 21; Titus ii. 13



will characterise the whole scene. We ourselves, having for ever left behind the clogs of earth, and being clothed in bodies of glory, will then enjoy without hindrance, as never before, the life given when here on earth, *with* Him Who gave it, and *in the place* from whence it came. So we read of those who lose for the sake of the kingdom of God, that they receive "in the world to come life everlasting."<sup>1</sup> Paul also speaks of the "hope of eternal life."<sup>2</sup> There are various other scriptures speaking of eternal life in the future; but they in no way contradict or weaken the truth that it is already given to and possessed by every believer. May God give us to prize His truth! w.c.

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## PRESENT DAY DANGERS.

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ONE of the special features of the present day is the abundant supply and spread of copies of the Holy Scriptures. But the mechanical facilities for the rapid multiplication of copies of God's word operate also in the extensive production of other literature. And for this reason alone men are exposed to the danger of neglecting the Bible because of the multitude of other books which by the very force of their numbers press for attention and weaken the paramount claims of Holy Writ.

But beside the slight with which unthinking

persons, influenced by and absorbed in the exciting literature of the moment, treat the word of God, there is a graver evil abroad on account of the teaching of those who profess to be friends of the Bible, and yet deliberately detract from its divine authority by denying its true inspiration. Like the Christ of Whom it speaks, the word of God is "wounded in the house of its friends." These false teachers in effect deny that the holy writers of old spake as they were moved (or borne along) by the Spirit of God.<sup>1</sup> According to these wolves in sheeps' clothing the precise meaning of scripture is left vague and undefined, and every man is therefore free to form his own 'opinion of the value and worth and teaching of the word of God. And as a consequence the Bible is divested of its supremacy as God's solemn and unerring testimony concerning man's eternal destiny in bliss or woe.

Oh, beware of the cheat of the enemy who would have you neglect or despise that word which alone can "make you wise unto salvation." It is only God's written word which testifies of Him Who came a Light unto the world that whosoever believes on Him should not abide in darkness, and Who said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."<sup>2</sup>

1 2 Pet. i. 21

2 John xii. 46, 48

## IN THE HOUSE OF SIMON THE PHARISEE.

LUKE VII. 36—50.

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THE house was swept and garnished, but alas ! empty. Simon had been precise in observing the prohibitions of the law, as well as its rites and ceremonies. But the many gifts and sacrifices the Pharisee had offered could not make the proud man that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience. He did but make clean the outside of the platter. The heart, out of which are the issues of life, was still defiled, and defiling as ever.

Hence the Lord was invited to the house of a sinful man who was cheating himself with the vain delusion that he was a child of faithful Abraham. But though He was thus asked to a cold, desolate, loveless home, the patient, gentle Master went. He was not deceived by the semblance of hospitality in the open door. He knew that He was bidden to dine in an empty house—a house without a host ; but in that grace, which was of heaven not of earth, He responded. He knew

that there would be a careful avoidance of every outward mark of welcome and respect: no water for the feet, no kiss for the cheek, no oil for the head. Yet the meek and lowly Saviour of men stayed not outside the threshold, but entered to submit Himself to the slight and the dishonour awaiting Him.

What a contrast with that feast which Abraham made for Jehovah on the plains of Mamre, when the three "men" appeared before his tent door in the heat of the day! With what zeal did the patriarch set about the entertainment! "Let a little water, I pray you," said he, "be fetched and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree; and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts." And Abraham hastened to Sarah that cakes might be made quickly, while he himself "ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man, and he hasted to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat."<sup>1</sup> This was a feast to Himself that Jehovah accepted, for it was spread by love and reverence and godly fear.

The same One who was entertained on the plains of Mamre was in the house of Simon the Pharisee who boasted of himself as the seed of Abraham.

But Simon shewed that he was in truth no son of Abraham, for the works of Abraham he did not do. As the Lord said, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day; he saw it, and was glad."<sup>1</sup> But Simon saw no beauty in Him when here in flesh. In his heart he despised and scorned his guest, and judged that He could not be a prophet even.

But if the Pharisee dishonoured the Son, the Father had those who did honour Him, even in the days of His humiliation. What a reception was His in the house of that other Simon—the leper. There it was they made Him a supper six days before the passover. Martha served; Lazarus, the man of resurrection, sat with Him; and Mary in faith and love anointed His head and feet beforehand for the burial. This house was odorous with the homage of love. "Better a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith."

There are those to-day, who are not like those Samaritans who deliberately refused to receive the Lord Jesus,<sup>2</sup> but who make only an outward pretence of receiving Him. Yet, sad to say, at the same time there is no real reverence for His name and person. They fail to honour the Son as they honour the Father. They use the very occasion of His humiliation to detract from His glory. Beware, ye despisers, lest ye perish in your sins.

## WHO HAS LIFE ETERNAL ?

JOHN V. 24.

THERE is no question of deeper moment to any man, woman, or child. It most immediately and solemnly concerns every soul who knows that the alternative is the second death, the lake of fire.<sup>1</sup> Middle place there is none, whatever men may dream. The Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding to know Him that is true. Unbelief alone leaves people in uncertainty. We could know nothing sure, unless God had spoken; and He has spoken to us in His Son. He is the True and Faithful Witness: no mere man could have equal authority. He is God as well as man that we might have divine truth with human pity and tenderness. Never did God so speak by prophets; never man spoke as this man, the Son of the Father withal.

What then was His testimony on this great question? "He that believeth on him is not judged; but he that believeth not hath been already judged, because he hath not believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God."<sup>2</sup> The future and final judgement of the lost before the great white throne<sup>3</sup> is only the public manifestation before God, the glorified saints, and the holy angels, of what is already decided in principle. The be-

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xx. 14<sup>2</sup> John iii. 18<sup>3</sup> Rev. xx. 11—15

liever is not judged. He believes the gospel, and has life eternal. He honours the Son as he honours the Father. He needs not judgement like the unbeliever to compel his subjection. With his heart he believes, as he confesses with his mouth, Jesus as Lord raised again.

Thus the Christian answers thoroughly to our Lord's deliverance in our verse. "Verily, verily, I say to you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, HATH life eternal, and cometh not into judgement, but hath passed out of death into life."

It is in vain to talk of Moses or the law. None ever derived life through the Ten Words, which were really a test to convict man of sin, and to prove the impossibility of being saved on that ground—the ground of self. Innocent Adam fell: how could the fallen race rise out of the pit of sin and death? In Christ was life, as well as truth; and He is the one Mediator, as He is the quickener in communion with the Father. He gives life to him that hears His word and believes God that sent the Son. Christ has the words of life eternal, but they are only valid for him that hears and believes the Father that sent Him. The soul is thus brought into immediate communication with God thus revealed in His saving grace. He is now quickened by faith. He gives the lie to Satan, he repudiates himself as a guilty

polluted creature, he receives grace and truth come through Jesus Christ. He has life eternal, a new mode of being of which Christ is the fulness, given in God's sovereign grace to lost sinners who repent and believe.

Undoubtedly it is this new life which bears fruit to God. The old nature is thoroughly wilful and evil. The mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to God's law, nor indeed can it be. They therefore that are in flesh cannot please God. There is accordingly a new life in Christ through God's grace given to him that believes God's testimony to His Son. And this life it is on which the Holy Spirit acts by the word, to direct the believer in communion, prayer, walk, witness, and worship, in short in all practical christianity. This, however important in its place, is not what the Lord here explains. There is a previous, necessary, fundamental question before the blessed consequences of life can be profitably or even safely considered. I must have the life eternal first, and know that I have it.<sup>1</sup> How am I to know but by God's word that I deceive not myself, or that I am not deceived by another?

This is what the gracious Lord deigns here to make plain and sure. He was just the Person to do it. He was as man the image of the invisible



of God, and He the Son shows us the Father. He is the Saviour of sinners, certainly not while they despise and dishonour Him, but when they hear His word and believe God that sent Him, not yet to restore Israel and all creation, nor yet to judge the world as He will another day. No: God sent His Son into the world that the world, not the Jew only, may be saved through Him.

These are the terms on God's part by which any one may know by faith, which is divine certainty, whether he has, or how he may have, part in life eternal. "Verily, verily, I say to you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath life eternal, and cometh not into judgement, but hath passed out of death into life." Impossible to conceive a clearer message; but man, wicked and suspicious in himself, cannot believe God to be so good as to rise above all his sins and bless him now with so rich a blessing. Think, O fellow-sinner, of the wondrous fact that the Father sent the Son to become not Man only but Saviour, not by law which could only condemn and had no life to give, but in His own love. How else could it be, consistently with our evil but with His own goodness and glory, but by sovereign grace? So the apostle wrote to the Ephesians: "For ye are saved by grace, through faith; and this not of yourselves: it is God's gift, not of works, that no one should boast."

Mark how the Lord adds proof upon proof to make all evident. Not only did He declare that one thus believing "*hath* life," not may or shall have but "*hath*" as a genuinely present new subsistence, the basis of all future holiness exercised here below, but He adds that "he cometh not into judgement." He is already justified by faith; and it is God that justifies: who is he that condemns? Will Christ the Judge judge His own work for him, or the faith that was God's gift? The notion is the invention of fallen Christendom. Its very creeds are false to the word and the work of Christ, Who declares unmistakably that the believer cometh *not* into judgement. Every one will give account of all done by the body; but this for the believer is a blessing, however solemn, because he has life now, and will be glorified then; whereas for the unbeliever it will be everlasting judgement, because not having Christ he has not life, but only his sins and the pride that did without Him.

Nor was the Lord satisfied with an assurance suited to chase away fear and doubt; He gives the further comfort to make doubly sure, that the believer has "passed out of death into life." It was no amelioration or gradual process of any kind. Even here, before verse twenty-five, He intimates that the soul thus blessed had been dead in sins, just like all the rest of mankind, the

favoured Jew no less than the besotted Gentile. But He declares that, believing God as to His Son, the soul has already “passed out of death into life”—the very opposite of judgement, with which it is carefully contrasted.

O sinner, why abide in the awful state of spiritual death, when the Saviour goes so far as to expostulate as well as graciously call you? “Ye *will* not come unto me that ye might have life.” “The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life.” Fear not, but believe. If you doubt and disbelieve, you are indeed lost for ever. You abide in unremoved death.



## THOUGHTS ON JONAH. III.

### DEVOTEDNESS.



*“So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord.”*

JUST as God’s mighty deliverance from death and destruction was His gracious answer to Jonah’s disobedience, so now is it sweet to note that Jonah’s next step is the precious outcome of that grace, and shews itself in two ways, obedience and devotedness to God’s will. Once again the same word sounds in the prophet’s ears, “Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city;” and now the

prophet not only listens but obeys. The message was clear and plain, "Preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." "So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord." True devotedness, so sadly lacking among God's servants to-day, is only really seen when they so preach; and absolute obedience to His word must ever be the one great test. The word was indeed a most solemn one, and well calculated to strike terror in the stoutest heart, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

Judgment's warning trumpet must needs be sounded through every street of that guilty city, for God winketh not at sin as do men; and the exceeding wickedness of the Ninevites, like that of the Sodomites, had come up before Him. A few short weeks, and all would be over. This was not a pleasant message for one to deliver who had himself only so recently received such signal mercy; but God's word must at all cost be sounded forth throughout the length and breadth of that great city; and, in true devotedness, Jonah immediately carries out the divine instructions. Blessed indeed were the results which swiftly followed, as must ever be the case when God and His word are believed. From the king on the throne to the least of all his subjects, all were arrayed in sackcloth and ashes; a general fast was proclaimed, and repentance, deep, real and

universal, characterized the entire city. The king's decree was solemn and heart-searching, "Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything: let them not feed, nor drink water; but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God; yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" This was no mere surface work, nor idle lip-profession, for "God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not." Humiliation and self-judgment are ever the sure fore-runners of divine blessing; and the dark cloud of judgment was thus happily averted from the repentant Ninevites. Faith and repentance as in every true conversion thus went together; yet even these would be of no avail apart from the death and blood-shedding of God's Holy One. Jonah's anti-type must needs lay down His precious life in obedience to His Father's will, and thus vindicate every claim of divine justice and holiness; for only in this way could poor guilty sinners righteously be saved. Yes; the cross of Jesus is the divine and everlasting witness that "mercy and truth are met together, and that righteousness and peace have kissed each other;" and a living Christ upon the

Father's throne is the true token that the sinner who turns to God from his evil way shall "never perish, but have everlasting life." It is no longer now, as at Nineveh, "Who can tell if God will turn and repent?" but rather who can tell "the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." It will take all eternity to unfold this; meanwhile, may we who love the name of Jesus tell out that grace now in all its fulness to a perishing world. S.T.

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## NO TIME TO REPENT.

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I DESIRE for one moment, dear reader, to take your mind back to the end of December last, when, through the disastrous fire which occurred in a Chicago theatre, nearly six hundred immortal souls were hurriedly launched into eternity. It is difficult to exaggerate the awful sadness of such a scene! Heaps upon heaps of struggling humanity, fighting to escape the dread visitant of death!

With fire threatening destruction all around them, scarcely one of that vast audience had a moment of time to think of the safety of their souls. What a rebuke this is to the countless throngs around us, who pass on their way day by day, utterly callous and unconcerned as to the

question of the salvation of their souls. No doubt many intend to be saved at some future time, not contemplating for one moment that they may be suddenly, without warning, called away to meet the God Whose great salvation they have neglected, and Whose love has found no response from their hearts.

Not one of those who perished in that house of pleasure thought, on entering, that they would so soon be called into the presence of God; yea, seriousness is lacking in all those who make pleasure their object in life. Oh, if men were only as earnest for the eternal salvation of their souls, as they are in the pursuit of pleasure and worldly prosperity, what a cause of thankfulness it would be!

But, dear reader, God is not to be trifled with. By such occurrences as this, He warns men of the reality of having to do with Him; and there comes to my mind a solemn word which says, "He that, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."<sup>1</sup> God, in the greatness of His love, has provided a Saviour for all,<sup>2</sup> for He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance;<sup>3</sup> but the solemn question is faithfully asked in the word of God, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"<sup>4</sup>

Oh! beloved reader, my desire in penning these lines is to urge you to procrastinate no longer as to the salvation of your soul, for you clearly see the danger of such a course; and, apart from the possibility of such a visitation overtaking you as that which overwhelmed those seekers after pleasure in Chicago, there is no time to lose, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh! And if men shrink from and struggle to evade such a fire as that to which I have alluded, one's heart almost hesitates to think of the agonising terror that will be the experience of those who, on account of rejecting God's mercy declared through Calvary's cross, have to meet the Lord in their sins. It is solemnly written, as to that moment, "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."<sup>1</sup>

Oh! my reader, in all love and affection, I plead with you to hasten to Christ and be sheltered by His precious blood ere that awful moment comes.

Thus you will learn the heart of God, Whose love still lingers, waiting for you! W.G.



## LEAVES.

Leaves, leaves; yes, nothing but leaves,  
Falling in thousands from numberless trees,  
Yellow and faded, swept down by the breeze,  
Oh! what deep lessons we learn from the leaves!

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## I. LEAVES OF HYPOCRISY.

THOUGH surrounded with every loving token of God's royal bounty, yet the opening page of man's history on earth was marked by a vain effort to hide his true condition from God. Hypocrisy and deceit lurked behind those fig-leaf aprons which Adam and Eve had sewn together, as the sad result of believing Satan's lie; but mark what led to the making of those deceitful garments! Eve's ear was first gained; then her eyes were attracted to the pleasant tree, and quickly the guilty hand was put forth to take the forbidden fruit, which she gave to her husband, and he became a partner in her disobedience. Discovering their nakedness, the fig-leaves were resorted to in order to cover their sin; but, blessed be God, His grace abounded over it all, and His own loving hands provided the only garment suited for His presence, even those coats of skins which so sweetly prefigured His own divine righteousness, founded on redemption.

## COMING FROM HEAVEN.

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THOSE converted to God from dumb idols in Thessalonica were brought into the possession of solid hopes for the future. The morrow was made bright with the hope of the return of God's Son from heaven (1 Thess. i. 9, 10).

It was no visionary hope of some spiritual manifestation of the absent One. Their expectation, which the apostle confirms and develops in the fourth chapter, was of the personal return from heaven of the One Who had gone into heaven. His coming was of such concern for them that they *waited* for it. "Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven." The Son has not yet come. Are you, my reader, awaiting Him?

But not only is the Lord coming; wrath, too, is coming. Of this the apostle reminds them: "whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come," which is "against all ungodliness and unrighteousness." The time of forbearance, of patience, of long-suffering, will soon close by the infliction of this wrath.

Unsaved reader, your morrow is dark. Apart from Christ no ray of hope can illumine your darkness. "Knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men." Accept God's record of His Son that you may be delivered from the wrath to come.

## HIDDEN TREASURE.

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THE Lord, in a parable spoken to His disciples, likens the kingdom of heaven to a treasure hidden in a field, which when a man hath found he hides, and thereupon sells all his possessions in order to acquire the treasure.<sup>1</sup>

It is not an infrequent occurrence in this country for hoards of wealth buried long since for security now to be unco<sup>u</sup>vered casually in the working of the soil. Such treasure trove does not legally become the property of the finder, but reverts to the Crown. In the East the frequent invasions of the land by ravaging armies led men to hide their valuables in the earth, to preserve them from pillage. Sometimes the owners were slain,<sup>2</sup> and the hoards were lost, until brought to light in some chance fashion. If the finder owned the land, then the treasure also would be his.

The question of interest is what was the Lord's meaning in the parable referred to? What is signified by the treasure? The popular interpretation that the parable is a picture of the manner in which

1 Matt. xiii. 44

2 Compare Jer. xli. 8

a man receives the gospel cannot be true. Looking at the value and worth of the gospel we might speak of it as a treasure, but it in no sense follows from this that the gospel is so spoken of in the scripture.

Is the gospel hidden in a field to be discovered only in some haphazard way? Is it not rather proclaimed on the housetops? Is not the sound of it gone out into all the earth? Is not the word of repentance and faith addressed to all men everywhere? The grace of God may have been hidden in Old Testament times, but now it has been manifested, and is made known in the fullest fashion. It is the sinner who refuses to believe what is preached, and to accept what is offered.

Again, is a person who finds the treasure of the gospel, expected to hide it, to sell all he has, and to purchase the field, before he can possess the treasure? Not so; the blessings of grace are gratuitous, "without money and without price." The only one we read of, who was bidden to sell all he had and follow the Lord, went away sorrowfully, being unready to make such a sacrifice.<sup>1</sup> From this instance alone it is clear that if complete renunciation of everything were a condition of obtaining eternal life it would be impossible to men.

It is true that when Christ and His grace are

known, Paul and many another have given up all for His sake. But they did not do so to secure a right to the field containing the treasure, the only means of obtaining the treasure, according to the common interpretation.

The fact is that this interpretation is only gained by torturing the parable and forcing upon it a meaning which its terms do not convey. The field is the world, as the Lord declared on the same occasion, and He Himself is the Man who purchased it for the sake of the treasure (which is the church) it contains. Jesus Christ is made Lord of all. He is constituted Judge of quick and dead. All power is given Him in heaven and earth, and He has acquired rights over all flesh, and those that deny the Lord that bought them shall bring on themselves swift destruction.

But the good news for the sinner is free. The word of faith is not afar off. The apostle Paul says, "The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."<sup>1</sup>

## THE GOD THAT MADE THE WORLD.

ACTS XVII. 24.

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CREATION is a great truth, which unbelief never recognised. It seems not to have been denied among men before the Deluge, though of no value or effect because of their growingly vile condition. Scripture implies that idolatry sprung up after that solemn judgement of God. They were without excuse; because the things that are made, the very reverse of a development, pointed to the invisible, His everlasting power and divinity; and also because when they knew God externally and without dispute, they glorified Him not as God, and were not thankful. Such guilty indifference led them into folly which their darkened heart accounted wisdom; so that they exchanged the truth of God for the lie of the great enemy, and honoured and served the creature rather than the Creator who is blessed for ever. Amen. The shameful lusts before became shameless afterwards; and no sadder proof could be asked than Athens then presented to a godly and discerning eye. They even gloried in their shame.

With admirably delicate tact the apostle, in making known an unknown God, begins with the miracle whose effect is before all eyes, in spite of the disorder everywhere through the fall. Instead of being an announcer of strange demons, he was

the first, at their own invitation to the Areopagus, to assert gravely, graciously, and with all plainness of speech the rights of the one true God. When they themselves sought or at least asked to know what this new doctrine meant, how little they expected such a simple and noble testimony carrying its own self-evidencing power to every unbiassed conscience!

“The God that made the world and all things that are in it, he being Lord of heaven and earth dwelleth not in temples made by hands.” Every clause, every word one might say, undermined paganism without a syllable justly to offend. The grand yet elementary truth left no room for the myths of priests and poets, or for the reasonings of sages in pitch darkness. The remarkable fact is that none of the jarring leaders of religion or philosophy claimed for their gods, home or foreign or unknown, to have made the world and all things that are therein. They attributed that wonderful work neither to any one approaching supremacy, nor to all working together in respective spheres to that common end. So far they unwittingly told the truth. The demons had nothing to do with making the world, or any one of the things that are in it. The true God whom they knew not made them all.

They had their varied dreams. But their schemes as to the origin of all around and above

and beneath, their cosmogonies, so called, are but one speculation more absurd than another. The only rare resemblance to the facts is found in whatever bit of early tradition they might adopt which lingered in men prone to forget. The prevalent idea of the philosophers is eternal matter. So pantheism ruled for ages in India, whence it spread south and west, more and more, as it grows now in Europe and America. Brahm or God had no personality, and hence no creation could be, but the Darwinian development idol. The wretched details of emanation which made polytheism a necessary result are not worth refuting or repeating.

What a contrast are those dark and foul vapours with the clear light of scripture and creation, brief yet adequate before man, with ample and interesting and all-important accounts when the earth was formed, and he was ushered into a scene which was equally suited to prove God's beneficence and to furnish the proper sphere for man's responsibility. The apostle here states, without controversy, the fact which delivered from human dreams derogatory to the truth.

Nor is the God that made all only a Creator. He is Lord of heaven and earth. His authority is constant everywhere. Fallen man writhes under this truth, because it at once appeals to conscience. As a man, I am His creature, and by that tie necessarily His servant. Am I doing His will?



Am I pleasing Him as the motive of my life? But now I am a fallen man, departed from Him, and like to do my own will, though knowing it is opposed to His. But if He is Lord of heaven and earth, He must call me to account for my mis-doing; and what and where must be my portion, especially if I go as I am? He could not be the good and holy and righteous, as He must be as the true God, if He were indifferent to His own honour, and to His creature's dishonour, habitual too as it is.

He does "not dwell in temples made with hands." So implied the prophet Isaiah to those who rested on that boon in their midst, soon to fall. So Stephen precisely said; and Paul who then heard with unbelieving ears now proclaimed it in faith and love to the Athenians more devoted than any on earth to that show in honour of the demons that consecrated every vile lust. Will the Lord of heaven and earth endure or pass by such iniquity? Will He not execute judgement not only on the demons but on their votaries because of their rebellion against Himself?

Therefore it was that the apostle had preached Jesus and the resurrection in the busy haunts of men, before they hied to the Areopagus. Therefore it was that God was sending to all mankind the glad tidings of a dead and risen Saviour. The God that made the universe, the Lord of heaven

and earth, Who dwells not in temples made with hands, deigns to look on one that is poor, and of a contrite spirit and trembling at His word. His goodness leads the sinner to repentance; and where shone His goodness as in Jesus? It was this that attracted the woman that was a sinner; it was this that won the hard robber to penitence and faith on the cross; it was this that overwhelmed Paul the crusader of law into the most lowly saint and sufferer for Himself.

This is the One that is now announced to you. If you, who have no righteousness fit for God, have not yet submitted to the righteousness of God in Christ, your need, your danger, is as real as that of the Athenians. O look to Jesus, the life, the life eternal, that you may live to God now and ever more. The gospel is not only remission of sins to every one that believes, but life through Christ's name. He that suffered for the sins of every believer is the giver of life eternal now, and will raise him up at the last day.



## THOUGHTS ON JONAH. IV.

### DISPLEASURE.

*It is better for me to die than to live"*

**S**UCH alas! is man's heart, that Jonah's reputation would, from the closing chapter of his history appear to have been of far greater importance in

his eyes than the signal mercy God had shown to the wicked city; for instead of rejoicing in the wondrous grace that had spared more than six-score thousand persons that could not discern between their right hand and their left, besides much cattle, he dares to find fault with God for being "slow to anger, and of great kindness." The prophet, having announced judgement, was now exceedingly displeased and very angry at the sudden turn of events, when the Ninevites turned from their evil way. But God's holy eyes had beheld their true and genuine repentance as they sat in their sackcloth and ashes; and being plenteous in mercy unto all that call upon Him, and seek Him with their whole heart, He had acted in the same grace to Nineveh as He had previously done to His disobedient servant. Yet, strange to say, this unlooked-for mercy on God's part only raised the bitterest feelings in poor Jonah's heart, and the averted judgement only rankled in his breast, and displeased him exceedingly.

But alas, alas! do we not sometimes find it so with God's servants, who, seeking either the world's applause, or their own personal reputation, are more concerned with this than the infinite goodness which delights to save and bless even the vilest? Self-justification mingles with Jonah's hot temper, as he angrily exclaims, "I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I

was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish ; for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me ; for it is better for me to die than to live."

"Doest thou well to be angry?" was the divine reply to the querulous prophet, as he sulks outside the city wall, under the shadow of a self-made booth ; sullenly waiting to see what the end would be. Oh ! how unlike His divine Master is Jonah now ; the former making Himself of no reputation ; the latter filled with wounded pride ; the former giving thanks to His Father, though His testimony had been refused by Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum ; the latter groaning in spirit, though his preaching had brought to repentance the whole city of Nineveh. But what is God's answer to His wayward servant's discontent and displeasure ?

The same loving hands that had prepared the great fish for Jonah's salvation now prepare a gourd to protect him from the sun's scorching rays. "So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd." Selfish ease, however, is as bad as wounded pride ; hence a worm prepared by God smites the gourd, and when the morning came it had withered. "And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind ; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and

wished in himself to die, and said [for the second time] It is better for me to die than to live."

Angry with God for His mercy to the repentant Ninevites, yet still more angry at the loss of the gourd which had ministered to his personal comfort, Jonah now dares to contend with God, and emphatically declares, "I do well to be angry, even unto death." "Then said the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night; and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six-score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?" Here the scene closes; but oh! what lessons may we learn of God's patience, and man's impatience; God's heart, as ever, delighting in mercy, but man's displeased and angry when the goodness of God leadeth men to repentance. "Oh! the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past finding out!"

S.T.



READER, if you obstinately disobey the gospel of God, revealed from heaven to you, you must suffer the eternal wrath of God, revealed from heaven against you.

## A LETTER TO A SCEPTIC.

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DEAR TED,

The occasion of my writing to you is not in connection with your health. I trust you will appreciate this departure from what must have become monotonous to you. I confess that I hoped to have had an opportunity before you left home to speak to you about another matter. This desire arose from the simple denial on your part of belief in the historical accuracy of the scriptural account of the crossing of the Red Sea.

Now, I am too well acquainted with recent criticisms to be surprised; and further, the spread of infidelity, with a parallel growth of religious superstition in the so-called churches, is what I am taught to expect in the scriptures which are denied.

I am not so illogical as to put it forward as a proof; but yet I think it right to say that after fifteen years of close acquaintance with the scriptures, I have no hesitation in saying that the whole is a revelation from God. I do not claim to understand it all; if I did, that would rather go to prove a finite mind like my own as the source of it.

The fact is, the word of God, as it professes to be,<sup>1</sup> is sharper than a two-edged sword, and like

<sup>1</sup> Heb. iv. 12

that weapon, when it has entered into a man, it needs no further proof of its nature. It does its own work, and carries its own conviction. If any man carefully and deliberately read from Genesis to Revelation, with an honest desire to discover if it be of God, he will be convinced long before he gets to the end ; and every additional page will yield additional proof.

The Bible has not for its object the shewing of its consistency with human writings and deductions. But its complete uniformity of purpose, and its perfect consistency with itself in all its very varied parts, are proofs sufficient when duly weighed, of its divine source ; especially when it is remembered that it has come from the pens of a great number and variety of writers, scattered over a period of many centuries.

Of course I cannot enter into this subject in the small compass of a letter ; but the question of the unvarnished truth or lying imposture of what is alleged to be God's word, God's revelation to man, God's inspired scriptures, is of such unparalleled importance that I do not apologise for asking you to carefully weigh the following words of the Lord Jesus Christ : "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me ; for he wrote of me ; but if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"<sup>1</sup>

“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”<sup>1</sup>

And so you see the Lord claims the same authority for Moses' writings as for His own words. And surely the life of Jesus was too astoundingly great, and noble, and beautiful to allow the admission that He was an impostor. However, God took care by voice and vision to testify Who He was.<sup>2</sup>

But whatever His life was, His death (so utterly unreasonable and meaningless if the scriptures be not true, so absolutely necessary if scripture was to be fulfilled) bore evidence above all to the purpose of God, promised, figured, and typified in the Old Testament, and then fulfilled in the atoning death of Christ. I do not stop here, for now comes the all important fact: “He rose again the third day according to the scriptures.”<sup>3</sup> He had told His disciples that He would.

There are two fundamental miracles claimed in scripture, which virtually cover all others. The first is creation, which cannot be denied in substance, although unbelief may find ground for questioning the manner of it.

The second is resurrection. This is greater than creation. And the resurrection of Christ is,

1 John xii. 48    2 Matt. iii. 16, 17; xvii. 2—5    3 I Cor. xv. 4.



even from the merely historical point of view, beyond honest question. If these two miracles are admitted, then the basis of the whole of scripture is admitted. If they are not true, then Christ was an impostor of the blackest dye, and every writer of scripture has uniformly and consistently forged a lie; for uniformity of purpose, and consistency are plainly stamped on the whole. The line of purpose is traceable and easily discovered through it all. Think of it, dear Ted, that, to put it mildly, God has been looking on for ages, without Himself vouchsafing a single authentic statement, while men have been deluded into believing that they are sinners, and that He in love sent His Son to suffer death and sin's judgement in the sinner's stead, as Christ said, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."<sup>1</sup> It is not too good to be true, but too true to be doubted.

The truth is that the Bible is a moral book, and addresses itself directly or indirectly to the conscience. And so since all are sinners it is naturally resented. All through want of seeing that God probes the wound to give evidence of its unsuspected existence, and all in grace in order to heal; or perhaps I might better say, in order to create the desire to come to the healer, who is Christ.

Although I am assured of these things from scripture, I believe I owe much to an object lesson which I had many years ago. My brother was by far the cleverest in our family. He was a medical man in a prosperous practice in Yorkshire; an M.B., and a B.Sc., and withal honourable and upright before men in his daily life. Yet he was a materialistic sceptic until he came to the last day or two of his life. Then, without any pressure or persuasion from those about him, he suddenly seemed to discover, and freely and fully acknowledged the folly of it all, but with remorse most painful to witness. Calling me by name, he begged me to destroy his sceptical books, etc. His conscience had at last been reached; and the light of the Truth had at last shone in by the only way (*i.e.* through the conscience) that the light of revelation ever enters to the saving of the soul.

I leave these thoughts with you, with the desire that you may give them your earnest consideration.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

D. T.



GOD looks most where man looks least. He says, "My son, give me thine heart." We cannot trust God with too much, or ourselves with too little.

*From D'Aubigny's History of the Reformation*

## THE CONVERSION OF A TRINITY HALL DOCTOR.

THERE was in Trinity Hall, Cambridge, a young doctor much given to the study of the canon law, of serious turn of mind and of bashful disposition, and whose tender conscience strove, though 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 priest 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, his purse became empty. 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; and urged, as he said, by the hand of God, he walked out of the college, 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, and 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."<sup>1</sup> 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. "Oh assertion of St. Paul, how sweet art thou to my soul," he exclaimed; "I also am like Paul, and more than Paul, the greatest of sinners. But Christ saves sinners. At last I have heard of Jesus."

His doubts were ended, he was saved. An unknown joy pervaded him, his conscience until then sore with the wounds of sin was healed: he felt peace passing all understanding instead of despair.

“Yes, Jesus Christ saves,” he declared, “I see it all: my vigils, my fasts, my pilgrimages, my purchase of masses and indulgences were destroying instead of saving me, for all these efforts were but a hasty running out of the right way;” and it was not long before he fell on his knees and exclaimed, “O Thou Who art the truth, give me strength that I may teach it; and do Thou convert the ungodly by means of one who has been ungodly himself.”

*Extracted.*

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## “THE COUNSEL OF PEACE.”

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*“The counsel of peace shall be between them both.”*

*Zech. vi. 13.*

**I**T is most important to see that the counsel of peace is entirely between God and Jesus. The moment we begin to rest our peace on anything in ourselves, we lose it. And this is why so many saints have not peace. Nothing can be lasting but that built on God alone. How can you have settled peace? Only by having it in God’s own way; by not resting it on anything, even the Spirit’s work, within ourselves, but on what Christ has done entirely without us. Then will you know peace, conscious unworthiness but

yet peace. In Christ alone God finds that in which He can rest; and so it is with His saints. The more you see the extent and nature of the evil that is within, as well as that without and around, the more you will find that what Jesus is, and what Jesus did, is the only ground at all on which you can rest.

Had it been only Christ's own personal perfectness, all the result would have been to show out the more clearly our sinfulness and ruin by the contrast. But according to "the counsel of peace" He gave Himself. Peace was ever His. It was for us that "He made peace by the blood of the cross;" and there is He unto God "a sweet savour of rest" for us. Our peace is established in what He did; and "the counsel of peace" is "between them both." Jesus has accomplished that which God purposed toward us. All is done; and Jesus, both the accomplisher and the accomplishment, in proof that all is finished has sat down on the throne of God. He has not called us into the counsel, which really is entirely independent of ourselves, "between them both" accomplished, sure, and everlasting. God has publicly [in heaven] owned His acceptance of Christ's work by setting Him at His own right hand. The Holy Ghost is sent to witness to us that He is now on the throne of God, having "by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

## AN HOUR OF QUICKENING.

JOHN V. 25.

HAVE you ever considered the import of this verse for your own soul? Do you not know that the Lord speaks to you that hear His word, as He did to such as listened in the days of His service? He speaks with unwonted seriousness now.

“Verily, verily, I say to you, An hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that heard shall live.”

It was sin that brought in death, not for the body only at decease, but for the soul at once. Such is man's state ever since the fall. There is no cure, no remedy. “It is appointed to men once to die, but, after this, judgement.” The dread hung like a funeral pall over all the hearts of men generally. They therefore in despair gave themselves over to present indulgence and gross uncleanness, at length falling victims to Satan's delusion, and worshipping as gods the demons who allowed every evil passion, so as to become yet more depraved and rebellious against the true God by their false religions.

But there were individuals who clung to the hope of a Deliverer from sins and the evil one, the tempter, such as Abel, Enoch, Noah; and doubtless even in those early days, many more

whose faith was less striking and instructive than that of the few recorded. And when after the deluge it was not only corruption and violence but strange gods, God called out to Himself "the fathers" of scripture. In due time He had an elect people in a land which He chose for them that they might be His witnesses as the everlasting moral Governor. But Israel broke down, as previous dealings, through human weakness and the enemy's subtlety. Judah, no less than Ephraim, disobeyed the law, and went after idols like the heathen or even worse, in the face of prophet after prophet "till there was no remedy." Having therefore one Son, His well-beloved, God sent Him also unto them (a remnant returned from Babylon for this fresh trial in His rich mercy), saying, They will reverence my Son. But those husbandmen (for such is the parabolic designation) said among themselves, This is the Heir: come, let us kill Him; and the inheritance shall be ours. And they took Him and killed Him and cast Him out of the vineyard.

In view of this rejection already come in spirit, the Lord here proclaims that "an hour cometh and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that heard shall live." His rejection was the Jew's national ruin, uprooted from the promised land. But when the guilt was plain (for in the foregoing part of this chapter,



verse sixteen, the Jews sought to slay Him), He brings out a far deeper need, flowing out of a glory far higher than Messiah's, and from a fountain of grace unfathomable, that eternal truth also which we call Christianity.

Mercy had ever wrought, and souls had clung to the hope of life and righteousness, a better land, and the city that has the foundations, with every other gleam of light that shone before them from the coming Seed of the woman, Seed of Abraham, and Son of David, Who should overthrow the old serpent and bless those who waited for Him, as all the elders did, and fill not the hearers only but the land and the world with glory.

Yet the rejected Messiah opens out unexpected treasures in the hour of His humiliation; and not the least of these privileges is the present gift of life eternal as the believer's known portion. It was most fitting that this gift should be consciously possessed now, not yet for the body but for the soul, as adapted to a life of faith. It was a grand means of honouring the Son. "For as the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth, so also the Son quickeneth whom he will." The Old Testament speaks of life eternal (or its equivalent) for His future earthly kingdom when He comes in power and glory. But the New Testament discloses the wondrous truth that the believer is vouchsafed to have it now, when the worst evil prevails, and the

Lord crucified by the princes of the world, ignorant of God's hidden wisdom; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory, the true God and Eternal Life.

Moral restraints of the law, the only divine ritual, the only sanctioned priesthood, the only divinely honoured sanctuary, had all been tried; and Israel grew worse and worse. The only inspired prophets had written, as far as the people generally were concerned, only to increase their guilt. Messiah had come, accomplished prophecy, wrought miracles of unparalleled power and mercy, taught the truth and lived it beyond all comparison, but was hated more and more and without a cause. But while this deadly enmity was drawing out, He, the Son of God, announces this wondrous hour in all plainness of speech. Men were dead, the Jews no less than others whom they despised; but during an hour when this was made clear, He made equally clear that it is now an hour to hear the voice of the Son of God, and for those that heard to live.

O my reader, have you heard that blessed quickening voice? If not, hear, for it is His word, Who is the truth. He has been speaking ever since! That hour is not ended; but who can say how soon it may end? For He is coming, as this Gospel is careful to tell us in chapter fourteen, verses one to three; and coming without having

a given sign, or an outward circumstance in heaven or a human change on earth. All depends on the secret fact of the children of God fully called, His heirs, and joint-heirs with Christ. Who will dare to predict that which belongs solely to Him that calls? If any one says in his heart that He delays, in order to put it off, His own word warrants us to re-echo that he is an evil servant. He is careful to impress on His own that He is coming "quickly." How sad for any to cavil, dispute, or try to explain away!

But if you are not one of His, why should you bring destruction on your soul by now refusing to hear His voice? He has proved His love by dying for you. Doubt Him no more. Hear His voice, and you shall live—live of His own life eternal. None but a captious and heterodox reasoner could pretend that He gives any life to the soul short of that. Christ is the life of every believer; and it is now not eternal only but risen, as He showed later, and imparted on His own resurrection day. Hear Him therefore, I beseech you, that your soul may live, and you may follow Him, and suffer with Him, waiting till He comes from heaven to receive you to Himself, that where He is, you may be also, in the Father's house. The Son of God secures the power, but it operates vitally only on the hearing of faith which is the gift of God.

## LEAVES,

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### 2. LEAVES OF PRIDE.

“PRIDE goeth before destruction ; and a haughty spirit before a fall.” The dark weed which had found entrance into Eden’s fair garden, when Satan suggested to the woman, “ye shall be as gods,” struck its roots deeply in the soil, and centuries afterwards re-appears, no longer as a weed but as a big tree, in the days of Nebuchadnezzar.

Walking in his palace at Babylon, it found expression in the king’s words, “Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? But while the word was in the king’s mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, Oh, king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee is it spoken ; the kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field ; they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.” Only twelve short months before this heavenly voice was heard, God, in mercy, had sent the idolatrous king a solemn warning in that mystical dream,

which Daniel had so faithfully explained, but which the king had forgotten. In a vision of the night the eyes of the Gentile monarch had beheld a tree, great and strong, in the midst of the earth whose branches reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the ends of the earth. The leaves too were fair and the fruit thereof much; but lo! a watcher and a holy one came down from heaven, who cried aloud, "Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit, . . . nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth." Every word of God must needs come to pass; and in the very same hour that the proud idolater had boasted so loudly the vision was fulfilled, and the king was driven from among men, until he was made to know that "God doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" Reader, beware of the leaves of pride!

### 3. LEAVES OF PROFESSION.

SURELY these leaves are all around us to-day; and the religious world is just as full of mere profession now, as when the Master was here, exposing, as He ever did, the empty pretentiousness of the scribes and Pharisees. Returning from Bethany to Jerusalem, Jesus hungered; and the holy eyes of the Messiah fell upon a fig tree which was in the

way, but alas! when He came to it, He found thereon "nothing but leaves." What a sad but graphic picture was this of Israel's then state! Spite of all God's ways of grace and mercy towards that favoured nation, yet was there no fruit for God, and nothing to refresh the heart of the lowly Nazarene, but simply the barren leaves of a false and hollow profession. Little wonder then that the fig tree fell under the solemn curse of Christ, and "presently withered away" as an eternal object lesson to all those who have but "a name to live," and yet are dead. Yes; how true it is that the barren leaves of mere profession must, sooner or later, wither away. "So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish." O dear reader, is this thy state? and art thou standing now, under the eyes of God, with no other covering than the miserable leaves of a mere hollow profession?

#### 4. LEAVES OF DEATH.

HYPOCRISY, pride, and mere profession, all have but one terminus, and that is "death." The world is full of faded leaves; and the very air we breathe grows old. Needless is it to say that all men's reasonings can never set aside the plain word of God, "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

Pause then, dear reader, if still in thy sins, and take to heart the warning words of the prophet, "We are all as an unclean thing; and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." Whither, oh! whither, art thou bound? and, when thy tiny life comes to its close, like the faded leaf thou treadest under foot, where, oh! where, wilt thou spend thy long eternity? Forget not, "the wages of sin is death," and "after death, the judgement." O careless one, die not in thy sins like a faded leaf; for "the harvest is past; the summer is ended, and thou art not saved."

Sinner, forget not, 'tis Satan deceives,  
 Learn then this lesson from autumn's sere leaves,  
 Death lies before thee—God's love o'er thee grieves,  
 And life without Christ is just "nothing but leaves."

S.T.

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## CHRISTIANITY.

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**I**F any man can believe, that at a time when the literatures of Greece and Rome, then in their meridian lustre, were insufficient for the task, the son of a carpenter, together with twelve of the meanest and most illiterate mechanics, his associates, unassisted by any supernatural power, should be able to invent a system of theology the

most sublime, and of ethics the most perfect, which had escaped the penetration and learning of Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero; and that from this system, by their own sagacity, they had excluded every false virtue though universally admired, and admitted into it every true virtue, though despised and ridiculed by all the rest of the world; if any one can believe, that these men could become impostors for no other purpose than the propagation of truth; villains, for no end but to teach honesty; and martyrs, without the least prospect of honour or advantage; or that, if all this had been possible, these few inconsiderable persons should have been able, in the course of a few years, to have spread this their religion over a great part of the then known world, in opposition to the interests, pleasures, ambition, and prejudices of mankind; to have triumphed over the power of princes, the intrigues of states, the force of custom, the blindness of zeal, the influence of priests, the arguments of orators, and the philosophy of the world, without any supernatural assistance; if any one can believe all these miraculous events, contradictory to the constant experience of the powers and dispositions of human nature, he must be possessed of much more faith than is necessary to make him a Christian, and must remain an unbeliever from mere incredulity.



## THE BEGINNING OF HAPPY DAYS.

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“I suppose that was the happiest day of your life,” said the servant to me when I told her that I had been converted on the previous Lord’s day. “No,” was my reply, “to-day has been the happiest.” We had been, with the other assistants, according to the wholesome rule in that christian household to the preaching, where there was a very earnest speaker, and my new-found joy had been increased by the ministry of the word that day.

The servant’s question expressed a very common idea that, on conversion, a sudden wave of joy must be felt, reaching its highest point at once. Christian experience is that the longer the new life is lived and the more its effects are realised, the greater the happiness becomes.

When first convicted by a sense of sin and guilt, the greatness of the deliverance through faith was not fully felt; but on the second Lord’s day there came a testimony of how like the prodigal son I was, and how like him I had been freely received. Then indeed tears of happiness filled my eyes.

The above comes back to my mind after many years as though it was but yesterday; and when I visit the old town nestling beneath the chalk hills

of the Chiltern Range, it is as when one returns to his birthplace.

One recalls the white earnest face of the preacher, as in his Master's name he called on souls to repent, repent, repent; and not without grave cause, for sin in some of its ugliest forms was to be found in that decorous and highly religious place. But where sin abounded, grace has much more abounded; and the gospel of the grace of God is now set forth as God's remedy for man's ruin and degradation.

As one grows older and sees how easily the young may be misled and fall into evil ways, the sense of the Lord's goodness grows stronger for the gospel I received through faith, bringing the knowledge of Jesus Christ Who is the source of ever increasing joy.

So that Sunday, long ago, was not the very happiest day of my life. If it was, my greatest happiness would now lie behind; whereas my hopes are fixed on "a far serener clime," a place where sin and woe are done away, where myriads washed in the blood of Jesus shall see His face and find their chiefest joy in praising Him.

W.E.K.

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"COME now, and view that manger,  
The Lord of glory see,  
A houseless, homeless Stranger,  
In this poor world for thee."

## “ENOUGH OF THY RELIGION: PUT IT ON THE DUST HEAP.”

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“**T**ELL thee again, comrade: religion is good for women and children, but not for men,” said Jonathan R——, an old hardened miner, to one of his fellow-workmen who had recently decided to follow Christ. “Thou art already almost like a woman; I do not know such a milksop as thou art, and really if into the bargain thou dost become a saint and a Bible reader, thou wilt end by being frightened at thy own shadow. Let thy religion go, comrade, throw it on the dust heap. Thou art now only half a man: what wilt thou become when thou art religious, I would like to know?”

“I believe I shall lose nothing by the change,” replied Roger M—— in a voice which could scarcely be heard amid the laughter and jests of the workmen.

Roger and Jonathan with a hundred others were employed in a coal mine. Roger had been brought to a conviction of his state of guilt and ruin before God. He had believed on the Lord Jesus, and found pardon; but he was the only

believer among these rough colliers. He had been converted some months, and in spite of the jeers and scoffs of which he had an abundance, he had not abandoned his religion.

One fine afternoon Roger was descending to the bottom of the mine in the cage. When he reached the bottom, he proceeded immediately to hand some tools and provisions to a lad who was waiting to receive them.

In a few moments the cage was empty, and Roger was about to get out himself, when suddenly an ominous sound which he knew only too well struck his ear and blanched his cheek. It was the dull sound of water flowing rapidly. His long experience enabled him to judge at once that a neighbouring stream had worn a passage for itself into the mine. A few minutes more, and his workfellows would be overwhelmed and lost.

He had already one foot in the cage to ascend; it was only necessary to pull the cord, and an instant after he would be out of danger. The temptation was great for a man who could not be called brave: but he recollected that his comrades, strangers as they were to the love of Christ, were not ready to meet death. The thought of the Saviour filled and strengthened his heart: he would not flee without warning the others of their danger. Leaping quickly to the ground, he seized the lad, put him in the cage, and while pulling

the cord, said to him, "Go and tell the village that water has broken in, and that we are probably lost. We will seek refuge at the extremity of the right gallery. Make haste. Good-bye."

In the twinkling of an eye, the cage was raised, and disappeared with its small load.

Roger was perfectly acquainted with the long and narrow passages tunnelled out to obtain the coal. Traversing these with the utmost haste, he soon found the miners, and made them aware of the danger in which they stood. It was a terrible moment; each and all were about to flee, some this way, some that. They lost all self-control, and wished to save themselves at all hazards. His noble resolve had imparted to the timid Roger a great calmness and steadfastness of spirit. He told them what to do, and invited them to follow him with their picks to the end of the right gallery. This was the most elevated part of the mine.

With their picks, the miners succeeded in digging a kind of chamber more elevated still. There, they hoped to be on a level above that which the rising water would reach. They had managed to collect some provisions but hardly sufficient for one day. In this chamber were the poor miners, having before them, afar off an uncertain deliverance, and close at hand, death by hunger, or water, or suffocation.

During the long and dismal hours that followed, Roger besought his comrades to turn to the Saviour. When the first moments of excitement were passed, his companions listened to him as those face to face with death.

In the meanwhile their friends, who were joined by all the able-bodied in the village, made super-human efforts to reach them. Guided by the message which Roger had sent by the lad, they sunk pits above the gallery without an instant's relaxation. The morning of the fifth day, a hollow sound of blows coming from the interior, struck their ears. They redoubled their efforts, and at length they reached those whom they were seeking to rescue. Many of the unfortunate men had succumbed, but more than half, and Roger among them, were still alive.

After being taken to their homes, needful restoratives were administered to them. They recovered pretty quickly from the effects of their terrible imprisonment. But none of them forgot the impressions produced on their souls during the hour of their inexpressible distress, and the precious fruit of conversion was manifested in their lives.

Among them was Jonathan R——, the same who was the first to mock when Roger made his profession of christianity. When he heard that Roger might have saved himself, and abandoned

the others to their fate, he cried, "I said that religion would make Roger more of a milksop than he was before; but it appears to me now, comrades, that it was just this that made him accomplish an act of heroism. The Bible, that can make a timid man like him risk his life to speak to us of the Saviour, should be good for us all; and, as for me, I put myself alongside of Roger."

It is written of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Hereby we have known love, because he has laid down his life for us; and we ought for the brethren to lay down our lives."<sup>1</sup>

*Translated.*

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## THE SELF-SUFFICING GIVER OF ALL THINGS TO ALL.

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*"Nor is he served by human hands as needing something, himself giving to all life and breath and all things.—Acts xvii. 25.*

THE God unknown at Athens, as everywhere else among the nations, the apostle first made known, as the maker of the world and of all things therein. Even this man soon gave up.

He heeded not the evidence of His everlasting power and divinity in the world of creation. He forgot the traditional knowledge which all had at first, weary of glorifying Him, and unthankful for His mercies. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into nature worship, and next into deified humanity if we so may call the chief object of their adoration invested with sex and the like human properties. The multiplicity of religions attested the loss of the one true God: no splendour of image or of temples could hide but only publish the imposture. How circumscribē the Omnipresent Lord of heaven and earth within man's work?

Next in verse 25 witness is borne not to His creative majesty alone but to His goodness. "Nōr is he served by human hands as needing something, himself giving to all life, and breath, and all things." In these respects too God was an unknown God to the heathen world. They thought Him morally such a one as themselves. Their conviction was that the gods had no pleasure in man's happiness, but rather in casting down the exalted and reversing the prosperous. Thus none was to be called blessed till his life came unscathed to an end.

The apostle set before the Athenians One who, good in Himself, does good actively, even in the



world out of course as it is now, since man's fall brought in sin and death universally. Yet He who needs nothing for Himself makes His sun rise on evil and good, and sends rain on just and unjust. Nor has He left Himself without witness in doing good, and giving from heaven fruitful seasons, and filling hearts with food and gladness. So it was among all the nations whom in times past He suffered to go in their own ways of ignoring Him: He gives to all life and breath and all things. How simple and self-evidencing the plain fact to make known the God whom confessedly they knew not! What a contrast with all the false gods (the real demons) of the world who debased their devotees to their own rebellious evil and mischievous selfishness, enabling also their priests to prey on the guilty fears of mankind.

The true God gives to all life and breath and all things. Even in a ruined world this active beneficence went out impartially. He makes the grass grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man, to bring forth bread out of the earth, and wine that gladdens man's heart, making his face shine—shine more than with oil; and with bread he strengthens man's heart. He makes darkness, and it is night, wherein all the beasts of the forest creep forth, the young lions roaring for their prey, and to seek their food from God. The sun riseth: they retreat, and lay them down in their dens.

Man goes forth to his work and to his labour till the evening. How manifold are Thy works, O Jehovah; in wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is full of Thy riches. They all look to Thee, that Thou mayest give them food in its season; Thou givest them, they gather; Thou openest Thy hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled; Thou takest away their breath, they expire and return to their dust. What a comment is Psalm civ. on God's sustaining goodness!

Yet Athens had little ear to hear though the truth carried its proof to every unbiassed ear. The apostle was cut short on Areopagus. The pleasures of sin monopolized his hearers in general. God's judgement was an intolerable idea. Let us eat and drink, talk and laugh; for to-morrow we die. But God is not mocked. Nor is man a mere animal with higher mental capacity than the brute, but made in God's image, after His likeness. The Judge of all "formed" him alone of earth's denizens, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, man only having his soul in immediate association with Him as His moral governor and in direct responsibility to Him in his peculiar nature and place. Whatever men shamelessly speculate, no beast has a conscience toward God, as man has, drug or deny it as he may. Hence infinite compassion flowed to man in his sin and ruin.

He who was God but became man, the woman's Seed, deigned to be the unparalleled gift of divine love, that lost man might believe and be saved. For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall have life eternal. For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes on Him becomes a child and a son of God; and if so, he receives the gift of the Spirit, the Spirit of adoption, crying Abba, Father.

No doubt that the new relationship creates fresh wants. But God is ever the same bounteous giver; and if He be for us, who against us? He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him grant us all things? Who shall lay charge against God's elect? It is God that justifies: who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yea but rather that was raised up, who is also at God's right hand, who also intercedes for us: who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? According as it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we were reckoned as sheep for slaughter. But in all these things we more than conquer through Him that loved us. Truly every good gift, and every perfect giving, comes down from above, from the

Father of lights, with whom can be no variation or shadow of turning.

Why then should you, my reader, if you have never yet believed, die in your sins? Why longer yield to the destruction and bondage and lie of Satan against the Saviour God? The truth alone can and will set you free. Behold and believe on the Son; He shall set you free, and you too be truly free.



## “IT IS FINISHED.”



A FEW years ago, there lived in Northern Germany a young man, who, though he had been brought up in the Roman Catholic religion, believed neither in God nor Satan, heaven nor hell. He became noted amongst the ungodly where he lived, as the most depraved and demoralised of them all. Thoughtless in the extreme, he rushed madly (though unconsciously) down the broad road that leadeth to destruction.<sup>1</sup>

He knew he was wicked, and became alarmed at the fact, saying to himself, “There are none so

bad as I. If it should be true that the wicked go to hell, there is no mistake as to where I am going." Haunted by this thought, he became wretchedly miserable, and in sin he could find no pleasure. "Oh!" thought he, "If only it were possible for me to be saved!" What could he do? Often had he been told of penances, of prayers, and of convents where monks and nuns spent their days hoping thereby to atone for their sins, and he felt that no work would be too great, no anguish or torture too severe, if only he could hope thereby to be saved. He decided to become a monk, but wished to go to the strictest convent in the whole world, where the penances were the most terrible.

After making enquiries, he heard of one some hundreds of miles distant from his home. Not being able to afford to pay the expenses of the journey, he resolved to walk the whole way, begging as he went, thinking that even the suffering that this would cause him, would gain him one step towards heaven. Long and weary was the journey through strange lands and under a scorching sun, and when at last he came in sight of the old monastery, he was so weak and faint that he could scarcely crawl along. But oh! how he longed for rest for his soul; rest for his body was but a minor matter.

Having arrived at the gate of the convent, he

rang the bell, and after waiting some few moments, the gate was slowly opened by an aged monk, so feeble, that he was scarcely able to walk.

“What do you want?” queried the old man.

“I want to be saved,” he replied, “and I thought I might find salvation here.”

“Come in,” said the monk, and led him to a room where they were alone together.

When they were seated, the old man said, “Now, tell me what you mean, my friend.”

“Oh! sir,” responded the unhappy German, “I am a lost sinner. I have been so wicked. If it is possible for me to be saved, I am willing to do all that can be done. I will submit to any penance; I will do the hardest of work; I will bear the bitterest torture, if only I can be saved. Only tell me what I am to do, and I will be most willing to do it.”

“If you are willing to do what I tell you, my friend,” replied the aged monk, “you will retrace your steps homeward, for all the work has been done by another, whose expiring words were, ‘It is finished!’<sup>1</sup> Have you never heard that ‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life’?<sup>2</sup> Have you not read His own blessed utterance, ‘I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished

the work which thou gavest me to do?'<sup>1</sup> O my friend, Jesus, the Son of God, undertook to bear the full punishment of your sins. He became a substitute for you. He has done all the work necessary for your salvation, and God is satisfied with what His Son has accomplished. Then why should you try to add to a work that the Lord Jesus Christ has finished? Why try to do what He alone could do? To want to work for salvation is simply saying, 'Christ has not done enough.' It is casting contempt upon the perfect work of the Son of God upon the cross to attempt to add to what He has declared is finished. God has accepted His finished work, by which He has been glorified, and is now righteous in pardoning and saving you, a lost and guilty sinner. But it is solely upon the ground of that work. Having suffered and died for your sins, God has raised Him from among the dead,<sup>2</sup> and exalted Him a Prince and a Saviour;<sup>3</sup> and He is now in heaven, proof to our hearts (often so unbelieving) of God's perfect satisfaction with the work of the cross. Were it not for my age and infirmity, my escape from this monastery would be a testimony against it. But I am just waiting for my Lord to come, according to the testimony of the word of God, and take me home."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John xvii. 4

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 3-4

<sup>3</sup> Acts v. 31

<sup>4</sup> John xiv. 3, Acts i. 11, 1 Thess. iv. 16

Thus, the gracious heaven-sent message poured with living power from the lips, yea from the heart also, of this aged and infirm disciple of Christ, into the anxious heart of the weary seeker after salvation. O what glad tidings were these for a poor unhappy sinner! He eagerly drank it all in, seeing that he had nothing to do, and found rest of heart in trusting in the perfect, finished, atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, and rejoiced in Him as his Saviour.

“Nothing either great or small,  
 Nothing! sinner, no,  
 Jesus did it, did it all,  
 Long, long ago!  
 It is finished! yes, indeed,  
 Finished every jot,  
 Sinner, this is all you need,  
 Tell me, is it not?”

O my dear reader, are you one of those trying to work to be saved? O hearken to the word of God, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.”<sup>1</sup> It was, “when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”<sup>2</sup> “But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” “Not of works, lest any man should boast.”<sup>3</sup> The work of atonement is finished. Were it not so,



none could be saved, for though we were to work all our lives, we could never work our way back to God, against whom we have sinned. But, blessed be God, the one perfect work of Christ upon the cross is sufficient to clear the guiltiest sinner who in it puts his faith, and makes him fit for the presence of God.

“God could not pass the sinner by,  
Man’s sin demands that he must die  
But in the cross of Christ we see  
How God can save yet righteous be.”

If, beloved reader, you still have doubts as to whether all has been done that you might be saved, I would ask you to open your Bible and read Hebrews x. 12—14, “But this man [Christ] after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down at the right hand of God.” “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (two sweet for-evers). O how wonderful is the grace of God, who is rich in mercy!<sup>1</sup> In the ages to come He will show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

Reader, you have not to tramp weary miles to be saved. You have nothing to do, but to bow to the testimony of the word of God, owning the infinite value and perfection of the finished work

of Christ, thus becoming sheltered under His precious blood, which cleanseth from all sin.<sup>1</sup>

“Long I yearned for peace of conscience,  
Joy of heart, and rest of soul,  
Panting for a loving Saviour,  
Able e'en to make me whole.

Weak and vain my best endeavours,  
Working, hoping to be saved,  
O that I could find salvation !  
Thus my heart, with longing craved.

All the work's been done by Jesus !  
It is finished, He has cried.  
O how sweetly fell the message,  
From the lips of Him who died.

Finished ! Finished ! Here I rested,  
Peace divine now filled my heart.  
Thus to know, with Christ in glory,  
I shall have a victor's part.”

W.G.

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THE WRATH TO COME (1 Thess. i. 10). Sinner, thou hast heard the sentence of God, as it stands upon record in His sacred and immutable word. Wilt thou lie down under it in everlasting despair? Wilt thou make no attempt to be delivered from it, when it speaks nothing less than eternal death to thy soul? Flee, then, this moment from the coming wrath to Jesus, the appointed Deliverer.

## “CHOOSE LIFE.”

*“I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.”*

*(Deut. xxx. 19)*

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MANY years ago an earnest evangelist was preaching in a hall in North London; and in a moment of curiosity a man strolled into one of the services. This man had lived anything but a godly life. He was, in fact, an out-and-out worldly man, the race-course having an immense attraction for him. This and other evil pursuits went very largely to make up the life he lived. He was a good mechanic, and could earn a good wage, when he gave his attention to his work. But, as the result of the godless way in which he lived, his home was a scene of desolation and poverty, and his family was neglected.

Strolling this particular evening into the gospel service, he sat down, wondering how much fun he would get out of the proceedings; and as the dear servant of the Lord gave forth the message of God's love to poor perishing sinners, this man sat and ridiculed and called it nonsense. The speaker, glancing at the man's face, saw what was in his heart, and looking straight at him, said, “Friend, I will give you two words which I defy

you to forget, and they are these, Choose life, Choose life, Choose life ;” and so impressed was he with his own message, that he repeated it some fifty times, emphasizing it more and more each time.

The man sat trembling with rage and saying to himself, “How many more times is the fool going to say that,—Choose life?” However when he left the meeting, the words went with him ; when he went to rest at night, he dreamed of the speaker and his “Choose life.” They were ringing in his ears when he went to work the next morning ; his very watch ticked “Choose life ;” the bell he could hear in the distance rang out “Choose life ;” he could not get away from the words, try as he would. They nearly drove him mad, and he was forced in self-defence to inquire further into the matter. Then he found from the scriptures that though he was alive, yet he was dead—“dead in trespasses and sins.” He also found out something else, which was that “life” was offered to him, a life for which he had nothing to pay, but which he had simply to accept as a gift. He saw himself a sinner on the verge of an eternity of woe, already condemned ; and the thought drove him to the blackness of despair. Then again came the words, “Choose life,” while God in His mercy revealed to Him the person of His Son as the sin-bearer on Calvary’s cross, and as the giver of a

new life. In that moment the scales fell from his eyes, and he saw that Christ died for him, and that He (Christ) was the life he was to choose. There and then he chose life and took Christ as his Saviour, resting his all upon His finished work; and to-day he is a devoted servant of the Lord, telling others about God's glad tidings, and seeking to win them to the Lord Jesus who saved him and gave him eternal life.

Now, my dear reader, how is it with you? Have you ever realised what the words, "Choose life," mean? But perhaps you may say, as this man did, I am alive, I have life. Dear soul, do not count the life you live here as "life." It is but an existence during time; the real thing lies beyond this. No doubt as an intelligent person, you are acquainted with the old story of the "fall" in the garden of Eden. But did it ever strike you what was involved in it all? what the consequences of that "fall" were? If not, let me tell you. We read in Genesis ii. 7 that "The LORD God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." We are also shown that God made man a responsible being, put him into a place of responsibility, or in other words, God told man, that while he was free and at liberty to partake of everything else in the garden,<sup>1</sup> the tree

of the knowledge of good and evil he must not touch, the penalty for disobedience being "death." We know what the result was: man disobeyed God and thereby forfeited every claim or title to life; his inheritance became death, nor could man in any way regain life; for God drove him forth out of the garden, and placed cherubim with a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life.<sup>1</sup> God could not allow man, who had now become a sinner, to have life: man was outside of the place where the "tree of life" stood, and between him and it was the "sword of flame," turning every way. And so man stands in the place of death, a sinner, not alone by practice, but by nature, his very incoming into the world being of sin, while death is his portion.<sup>2</sup>

Dear reader, have you ever thought how you and I are involved in all this? and what a horrible position it places us in? If not, ponder over it now I beseech of you; and then think that you have to meet this outraged God in eternity, this God who is holy and righteous, who hates sin, and cannot have it in His presence; and then tell me, if you can, how you, a sinner by nature and by practice, will be able to answer Him, and to satisfy this sin-hating God when you do meet Him. How will you, with sins upon you, be able to stand in His presence? O my dear friend,

1 Gen. iii. 24

2 Psalm li. 5, 2 Sam. xiv. 14

can you not see what a hopeless position you are in?

But, thank God, this is but one aspect of the picture: let me show you the other. God has said, "Choose life." Let me give you His exact words, "*I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.*"<sup>1</sup> Here then is hope for you yet, sin-laden as you are, helpless, and without strength. Let me tell you how you are to choose life. God, though a sin-hating God, does not hate the sinner, and it is not His will that the sinner should die; He has no pleasure in it.<sup>2</sup> He wants the sinner, but without his sin; and being full of love, for "He is Love," and knowing how helpless man is, being without strength,<sup>3</sup> and so unable to do anything for himself, He knows also that if man is to be saved and have life, the saving power and the life must both be from outside man. For that ALL men<sup>4</sup> being equally lost, one could not save another: therefore He sent His only Son<sup>5</sup> into the world to open the way of life again. The Lord Jesus Christ, before He could do this, must needs become man, go to the cross to bear the penalty for our sins and to be a sacrifice for sin, our evil nature. Thus He took the sinner's place in

1 Deut. xxx. 19

2 Ezek. xxxiii. 11

3 Romans v. 6-8

4 Rom. iii. 23

5 John iii. 16

death and judgement ; and on the cross at Calvary, He, the sinless one, the spotless Lamb of God, perfectly satisfied God in respect of sin ; and so we that believe can say, He bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

Now when He tells us to "Choose life," what does He mean? Simply this. We have no life. That was forfeited long ago. We are in the place of death, dead in sins. Christ has borne the judgement for us, He has met the sword of flame ; and He who has done this is offered to us, even that eternal Life which was with the Father and was manifested to us.

What then have we to do? may be asked by some. You must do what God tells you ; and that is, with the simple unquestioning faith of the child, stretch out the hand, take God at His word, believe Him when He tells you Christ died for sins, and that He is satisfied with that work of propitiation, and will in righteousness justify you though a sinner. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. O dear reader, do not rest until you have settled this great and weighty matter ; remember death may soon claim his own. Flee to the refuge thus set before you, even to Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. There is no time to be lost, therefore "Choose life."



## FAITH IS SURE AND HUMBLE.

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**T**HERE is certainty as to our sins if we believe God, Who makes us feel their reality and their evil in His sight and the anguish of our own souls also. No less is there certainty as to the Saviour, Who died and rose to save us. He suffered for our sins, Just for unjust: did He, could He, suffer in vain for a single believer? God's word is pledged to the contrary: it were to dishonour the atoning work of His Son. It is as impossible that God can lie, as that His propitiation can fail to faith. To the unbeliever who hears and rejects God's glad tidings in Christ, it is the saddest and weightiest aggravation of his guilt. So our Lord puts it as the great demonstration of the world's sin, which the Spirit should give, as He is come now,—“of sin, because they believe not in me.”<sup>1</sup> It was wicked to break God's law; it was far worse and less excusable to reject God's Son, come down in infinite love not to judge but to save.

Yet there are not merely natural men but Christians drawn by them into the delusion, that it is a lowly feeling not to be sure of eternal life

or of our salvation. If assurance depended on our good state or on our merits in any way, it would be so. But it rests on what Christ is to God for him that believes. The question is about the Redeemer, not the redeemed. Romans v. is distinct, plain, and conclusive in cutting off all thought of desert from those who are justified by faith. They were without strength, they were ungodly, they were still sinners, they were enemies, when Christ died for them; and this not only to reconcile them to God through His death, but that they might, having been reconciled, much more be saved by (or in virtue of) His life.

It is a libel on God and His Son and the redemption, of which the Spirit is the divine and living Witness, for the vilest of sinners who believes to doubt. It is to blow hot and cold, and flatter oneself that it is humility. Yea, the enemy is there at work to darken God's glory, and unwittingly slight the efficacy of Christ's blood. For, as we have heard, scripture is quite clear that it was to save the lost He came, and for our sins He died. Real humility sets to its seal that God is true, and that Christ's blood cleanses from every sin. Through Him, as the apostle preached,<sup>1</sup> remission of sins is proclaimed to you; and by (or in) Him every one that believes is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by

the law of Moses. What possibly more precise?—every believer justified from all things! What room for thinking of self to doubt God's grace, or Christ's efficacy?

At bottom it is not humility at all, but rather pride and unbelief. For what else is the allowance of self, bad or good if this can be, but to shroud the grace of Him that justifies the ungodly?<sup>1</sup> The Lord anticipated and corrected this natural tendency, even in one that is on his way to God, when in the parable of the lost son He represents him when come to himself proposing to say, Make me as one of thy hired servants; but the Father cutting it short by His order to His servants to bring forth quickly the best robe and put it on him. That thought of the prodigal was real humility yet shallow; for had his sins been better weighed, he deserved no such place, and his past character wholly unfitted him for it. He was in fact far worse than he had yet realised. But the grace which forgave all and clothed him with such a robe as he had never before worn, which made for him, yea for the Father, a feast beyond all precedent in that house, is beyond man's mind, suits the Father's love and glory, and is due to the infinite excellency of the Son's redemption. There and then, as the prodigal entered into the wondrous truth, "It was meet to

make merry and be glad"—yea, for the Father and all around Him, he was led on into the deepest and best humility, dropping himself in simple utter self-judgement, as unworthy of mention or thought, to enjoy unfathomable grace in its source and ways and counsels. And the New Testament reveals all these, many as they are for this very purpose.

Take again the actual case of Peter in Luke v. 8, and in Acts iii. 14. No doubt there was gracious humility when he said at Jesus' knees, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. Yet this was really why he ever needed the Lord's presence. But how much sounder his humility when, once purged, he had no more conscience of sins, and could say to the men of Israel, notwithstanding his own awful sin after that first utterance, "But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One." Only a purged conscience and a truly humble heart could have said so. Grace gave Peter entire superiority to self, as it can give us also by faith. One who had denied the Lord repeatedly and publicly would never have dared to charge others with denying Him, unless he was conscious that his own guilt in this respect was forever effaced. But this is what grace effects in every respect for him that believes on the Lord Jesus.

## “SEEK, BUT SEEK NOT.”

*“For thus saith the LORD unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live; but seek not Bethel, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beersheba: for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nought. Seek the LORD, and ye shall live; lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour it, and there be none to quench it in Bethel.” (Amos v. 4-6)*

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**G**OD's first warning command to man was “eat not;” but man, allowing himself to be overcome, ate, and so received the just judgement of God for his disobedience. Yet even to fallen man Jehovah God gives the promise. The fulness of this, though Adam understood it not, we can rejoice in to-day. Through Adam's sin all his seed shared his condemnation—death. But Adam was not the only one to sin. The firstborn, Cain, for whose birth Eve blessed God as the giver, sinned too, and that in a most terrible fashion. Righteous Abel lived to shew that, while the curse must still have been ringing in his father's ears, the God who uttered it was not only Light but Love as well; for his was a sacrifice offered up by man and had respect unto by God Jehovah. It was a sacrifice of faith, yet in the eyes of man it appeared

far less likely to satisfy God than the gift of Cain who had to toil unremittingly for what he offered.

#### THE SACRIFICE OF ABEL

But however inexplicable to the mind of man, here in the very beginning God manifested His nature, mind, and order. Man, lost and fallen, had forfeited all claims to the approval of God, nor could any work of his own possibly restore him. The firstlings of the flock were wholly God-given; and Abel was not in any way connected with their being; but the chief reason for their being accepted was that they foreshadowed Christ, the One who was to come and be slain, the Seed that was to bruise the serpent's head, the God-sent Son who was to annul the curse of Adam, to atone for sin, and to reconcile to God as many as believed and owned their need of it.

After Cain the whole world fell into corruption and violence, so that God sent Noah to preach righteousness among them; but the word fell upon unheeding ears, so that the foretold judgement descended sudden and swift, overwhelming all save the faithful few and a selection of the beasts and the birds as well; for though these latter at least had not contravened the divine will, they were man's heritage and suffered with him. Although God communed with the patriarchs in promises to them and their seed, He did not deal in a

special way with man until Moses, that through him His chosen people might be blessed ; and we know how, the very day after the triumph-song of deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, the hosts of Pharaoh, and the Red Sea's waters had been sung, this chosen people favoured above all nations, fell into unbelief and open rebellion against God.

#### THE SIN OF ISRAEL

The great sin of Israel was that they forgot God, their Saviour, preferring the works of their own hands. It was after all the same old story of a yearning for materialism, for things seen (*eidola* in fact) which meant that "faith" had no place. "The things which are seen are temporal," and it is striking to note that the Spirit of God speaks of two of the most imperishable things that man knows, silver and gold, in the New Testament as typifying that which is corruptible.<sup>1</sup> This of course is after the dispensation of symbol and figure had been fully explained and set aside in and by the great Antitype, Christ Jesus. God had pointed to Christ by both silver and gold ; but now that He had come and completed the work of redemption, manifesting in His every act the righteousness of God, they were wholly set aside, for all God's symbols were prospective, and in no

single case retrospective. To use them any more was to fall into superstition and idolatry.

#### THE CALL OF AMOS

Hark then how Amos is crying out to this fallen nation ; and yet the first cry of all is that in which God bids them turn to Him. The offer of life is held out still ; for although man may fall and fail continually, changing as the wind, yet God is ever the same. He abideth faithful. The injunctions, "Seek not Bethel, nor enter into Gilgal and pass not to Beersheba," are very striking. There was then as now the yearning for things seen on the plea that they called to mind the spiritual unseen, appealing to the senses and emotions. Bound up with the very name of Bethel were manifold blessings and many traditions. Just so the Empress Helena made much of the cross and of so-called relics of Christ. Just so the crusaders saw their object accomplished in the capture of the battered wall of old Jerusalem, knowing nothing of "Zion, the city of the living God ;" just so men in their thousands bow to-day to relics of religious antiquity.

Thus was it in the day when Amos was the voice of Israel's God. History repeats itself with far more deadly and fearful accuracy in things spiritual than temporal. The Jew observed the letter, having lost sight of the spirit ; and to-day it is the outward observance that counts above all with



men. Knowing that the gospel is no bondage, the professing Christian is lax and indifferent, where the Jew was strict and stern. But for most men it is an outward rite that admits into the church and makes a member of Christ; even as the old Norseman dedicated his child by baptism to his war god Woden! Thus from Cain down to our present day we read the same story; and has it not been of God's wisdom that the crescent of Islam has prevented Jerusalem from being the fetish city of the world?

#### BETHEL GILGAL AND BEERSHEBA

It was at Bethel that God spoke to Jacob in a dream, and gave the promise of the nations that would flow out of his loins, and above all of the One through Whom all nations of the earth would be blessed. Few spots on earth were more sacred to the Israelite than this.

It was at Gilgal that the reproach of Israel was rolled away. The penalty of disobedience and rebellion was removed; the promised land lay before them, and Gilgal was the very gate to its possession. At Gilgal they crossed dry-shod the intervening waters of Jordan, God opening them a way. More wonderful than the Red Sea passage was this, for it was the fulfilment of all their hopes. Milk and honey were stored up for them, and the richest fruits that the earth could yield

were theirs. Could they want more than this?

Beersheba too; what memories, what associations, did that name call to mind? Abraham, "our father Abraham," dwelt there. Who greater than "the friend of God?" Yet there was One who proclaimed in the day of apostasy to the Christ-despising Jews, "Before Abraham was I am." To the Jews of Amos' day Abraham was everything; and doubtless a place in "Abraham's bosom" the greatest blessing that hope could offer. But Beersheba not only recalled Abraham. What of Hagar and God's pitiful dealing with her in her extremity? What of Israel? for it was here that God called "Jacob, Jacob," and bade him fear not, comforting Israel, and repeating the blessed promise of Bethel.

Thus we can well see how these three places were hallowed above all others in Jewish eyes; and yet the cry of Amos is, "Seek them not," but "Seek ye me, and ye shall live." This then was God's chiefest desire, and still is, that men might live; and this could only be achieved by seeking Him. There was no life in Bethel, in Gilgal or in Beersheba. True that God had given revelations in a special way in all three: but what of that? The places had no virtue in themselves; the pool of Siloam could not bless without the angel of God.

## PROCRASTINATION.

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**H**ow intensely solemn it is to trifle when the salvation of your soul is at stake! You make appointments in your business, and every nerve is strained to keep them. You have matters to settle in connection with your money, your land, your homes; all are promptly attended to. Never for one moment, in all these things, do you dream of procrastination. But when it is a question of the salvation of your soul, you say, "Not now; some other day."

One shrinks from writing of those who have died in their sins. It is saddening to the heart to contemplate the agony they must endure, but the motive in writing is to warn those who are still living, that they may turn to Jesus from their evil way, and be eternally saved.

At a certain gospel meeting, one man raised his hand to indicate that he wanted to be a Christian.

"I am glad you have decided to be a Christian" said the preacher.

"No" said the man, "I have not decided, but I will do so later on."

Soon after, he was taken ill, and the preacher visited him, and said, "Will you decide now?"

“No,” he replied. “If I decide now, people will say I was frightened into being a Christian.”

He recovered and went into the country, but again had a severe relapse. He was again visited and urged to decide for Christ.

The sick man said, “It is too late now.”

“But,” replied his visitor, “there is mercy at the eleventh hour.”

He replied, “It is too late for me; this is my twelfth hour.”

A few hours afterwards, he died, a victim of the devil’s lie, “not now, there is plenty of time.”

The preacher says: “We wrapped him in a Christless shroud, we put him in a Christless coffin, buried him in a Christless grave, and he went to spend a Christless eternity in a Christless hell.”

Oh! reader, one’s very heart aches to learn of such a sad end of one who might have been saved, had he not trifled with the grace of God. “Be not deceived,” says the scripture, “God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”<sup>1</sup> Eternal realities warrant no delay; God’s time is now. “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”<sup>2</sup> Further, God says, “To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”<sup>3</sup> “Behold!

<sup>1</sup> Gal. vi. 7

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah i. 18

<sup>3</sup> Heb. iii. 15

now is the accepted time ; behold ! now is the day of salvation.”<sup>1</sup>

True it is, that none who are lost for eternity meant to be. Then why, dear reader, hesitate? May I not lovingly appeal to you to put off no longer coming to Jesus? He waits to receive you, saying, “Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”<sup>2</sup> Why bear that load of sin one moment longer, when He has suffered for it upon Calvary’s cross?

He has died for you : He has shed His precious blood to purge away your sins. Oh, in the face of such immeasurable love, is He not worthy of your love in return? Why stay away from Him, when by doing so, you are prolonging the misery of your sinful condition? Why, O sinner, will you allow the subtle enemy of your soul to deprive you of the unspeakable joy which the knowledge of Jesus as your Saviour will bring?

W.G.

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## THE UNSELFISH GIVER OF ALL THINGS TO ALL.

ACTS XVII. 25

**H**ERE again was a grand truth with evidence all around, incontrovertible yet open to every reflecting mind when once pointed out. God is not only the Maker but the Lord of the

universe, dwelling not in sanctuaries made with hands ; as Solomon confessed when he built and dedicated the holy palace for the Jehovah God of Israel : " Behold, the heavens and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee ; how much less this house that I have built ! " It is He Who bountifully cares for all, even the least of His creatures ; how much more for man whom He set at their head !

" Neither is he served by human hands as needing something, himself giving to all life and breath and all things."

The One infinite God announced is as independent of His creatures as He is the source of all that is derived and the giver to all of their sustained being, and of everything they enjoy. Of the world as it is the apostle spoke ; of its fallen estate where sin and suffering and death reign. None knew better than the preacher that, when God made man and introduced him to the earth, He saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. Yet this, necessarily true of its Maker if His power and wisdom and goodness be equally great, is habitually forgotten by reasoners from present phenomena, and by none more than natural philosophers, who assume the contrary in opposition to all reason and conscience. For to suppose that the Good, Holy, and Righteous One, made a world of evil, and a wicked race responsible, at their everlasting peril,

to do good, is the most extreme of moral paradoxes, and if this were all would imply a malicious fiend, instead of the Father of lights.

But the very fact of a divine beneficence persistently lavish in goodness to the creature, fallen, ungrateful, and blind to its countless fruits every moment, is all the more pertinent and powerful a witness to His gracious character. Take only one evident and constant fact by which every creature benefits, according to the words before us, "Himself giving to all life and breath and all things."—"The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their food in its season. Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." Why the bright orb that rules the day, and the small to rule the night, and the stars? Why the circumambient atmosphere, and the waters in all their varied supplies, and the diverse disposition of the earth, to meet the wants of life in all its extent, and in the immensely differing demands from the highest to the lowest and least of animated beings here below?

For plant life, so essential to animals, His wisdom had previously provided. As vegetables have not locomotion, their food is within their environment; their supplies surround them above and below; and with what abundant results! Now that animal life forms so vast a part of the supply, not only to man but to a vast portion of

one another, we easily overlook the immensity of every day's provision for those creatures which are made to seek it, whether we look into the air the waters or the lands throughout the globe. Yet even for the ordinary man with a family, consider (as few do) what thought and labour of many sorts and in many a land to lay on the table a common breakfast for young and old!

Our Lord deigned to use those facts for the disciples. "For this cause I say to you, Be not anxious about your life, what you should eat and what drink, nor for your body, what you should put on. Is not the life more than food, and the body than raiment? Look at the birds of the sky, that they sow not nor reap nor gather into granaries; and our heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much more excellent than they? But which of you by anxiety can add to his stature one cubit? And why are ye anxious about raiment? Mark the lilies of the field how they grow: they toil not nor spin: but I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed as one of these. But if God so clothe the herbage of the field, which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into an oven, will he not much rather you, O ye of little faith?" Not a sparrow falls unheeded; not a hair of the head uncounted! Think what boundless supervision yet distinct provision this means every moment on



the part of the One Supreme for beings so manifold from the enormous whale to the invisible infusoria, each and all objects of His vigilant goodness. What a contrast with the world's most renowned epic, when its heavenly sovereign went yesterday to a feast among the blameless Ethiopians (and all the Deities with him), and returns not to his Olympian seat till the twelfth day, whatever the urgency of need meanwhile!

And if such be the active beneficence of God to man and the lower creation subjected to vanity through its fallen head, what does He not feel for the human race endowed with an immortal soul, and having a spirit capable of fellowship by grace with Himself? No reasonable man doubts the witness of God to man in creation. It is no doubt but partial, and goes not beyond His power, wisdom and goodness. There is the difficulty of an inferior yet mighty energy in opposing malice, of suffering, and of moral evil; and the darkness and doubt resulting from this conflict, equally evident, strange, and to man insoluble, that the most exercised and profound of earth's sages acknowledged that only a revelation from God, or divinely competent messenger could lead souls out of the labyrinth of superstitious falsehood and philosophic uncertainty into the light from above.

Divine promise shed the light of promise to and

in the Star of Bethlehem for all that believed. But man that had this light traditionally instead of in faith, Israel, believed in his own competency, and instead of pleading the promise of grace, accepted the condition of obeying the law, and fell under its curse "because there was no remedy." In due time to a feeble remnant returned to the land from Babylon, the promised Messiah came. But their heart was haughty and blind to their sins, and because He did not first bring in the kingdom and glory for which they were as unmeet as to stand before the judgement seat, they refused and hated Him.

Yes, they hated the light in Him, and the love that avowed His mission to save the lost, and the holy truth such as none other spoke, and immediate power over disease, demons, and death itself, all of which attested the only true God come down to deliver from the coming wrath, and to bless the believer with life eternal and everlasting redemption. In the death of the cross, at the will of His people vainly boasting in the law, and at the hands of lawless Gentiles, He accomplished God's will to the uttermost, and offered up to God the perfect sacrifice for every one that believes the glad tidings of God.

Thus and here only, in Christ the object of faith, is God's unspeakable free gift; in Whom the Father discloses and furnishes every good

gift and every perfect giving, in witness to lost man, and in effect to the believer. The former is left without excuse; for the partial revelation in creation and the constant goodness of God materially, ought to have made him welcome that which is perfect in the deepest, fullest, provision of saving grace. But man's unbelief does not make the faith of God of none effect. He who repents and believes the gospel finds all grace and truth verified in Christ Jesus, though not yet to sight. For how many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the Amen unto the glory of God by us.

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### **“DO YOU THINK WE ARE SAFE?”**

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**N**OT long ago I spent fourteen days in the Island of J——, telling out “the unsearchable riches of Christ,” and many hearts were cheered and blessed. The time came for me to leave the island, and a number of kind christian friends came to Victoria Pier to bid me “God speed.”

It was a cold gloomy morning; our ship was tossed to and fro in a manner anything but encouraging to the passengers. Presently the storm increased to an alarming degree, and a gentleman who was sitting beside me, looked at me with visible anxiety in face and manner, and said, “Sir, do you think we are safe?”

“Yes,” I said, “I am, for Christ is my saviour. He has given me eternal life, and has told me in His word that I shall never perish.”

My companion looked at me in surprise, and said, “That is a good stimulant.”

“Yes,” I answered ; “both for time and eternity.”

I gave him some gospel leaflets, and spoke to him of the work of Christ, the only ground on which God could righteously forgive and justify. He listened with attention, and when I had finished speaking he thanked me in a very gracious manner. My earnest prayer to God is that I may meet him in the Father’s house.

Dear reader, the question asked by my travelling companion was a solemn one. Put it to yourself, wherever you are—“Am I safe?” “Shall I perish?” “Are death and judgement awaiting me?” If so, listen now to the tender voice of the Lord Jesus, which says, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” There is no true rest or peace apart from Christ, for He has made peace through the blood of His cross. God is not willing that *any* should perish but that *all* should come to repentance, and live by faith in Christ. But if you cling to your sins and persist in rejecting God’s glorious Son, you must perish, and that for ever ; His own word declares it.<sup>1</sup>

W.B.

## ARE YOU WILLINGLY IGNORANT?

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I HAVE been struck very much of late, by the fact that the majority of people are willingly ignorant of the future, and seem to care nothing about it. Why is this? Because the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.<sup>1</sup>

Now, dear reader, are you one of this class, having your mind blinded by the god of this world? You may answer "No," without a thought, but think, and weigh the matter over in your mind. Do you know that the Lord is good and gracious, not willing that any should perish? Do you know for yourself that God is love, or do you suppose that God is a hard God, and that it is very difficult to serve Him?

If you think this, you beyond doubt have the gospel hidden from you; you have your mind blinded by Satan, "lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto *you*."

But why should you be thus deceived and blinded by that enemy of souls, who ever seeks to lead astray, and into darkness away from the light and love of God, and cause you to have such

wrong thoughts of Him? What happiness does he give you, or what satisfaction after all? None whatever; for the pleasures of sin, which is all he can give, leave only an aching void, a vacant craving; and when death claims you, he will forsake you, and you will enter into the presence of a holy God unprepared,<sup>1</sup> eventually to be cast into the place of torment, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched, prepared for the devil and his angels.<sup>2</sup> It is easy to be deceived, for we read in 2 Cor. xi. 14 that Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light, but *do not be deceived*; God is not mocked: "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, my friend, know that God is love, and full of compassion, gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy; blessed is the man that trusteth in Him.<sup>4</sup> "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him: Herein is love not that *we* loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son the propitiation for our sins."<sup>5</sup> Now in the third chapter of John you are plainly told, "Ye must be born again." It is no use thinking that to live a good life and to do good will save us, nor will the mending our ways; no, we have to be born anew.<sup>6</sup> For we read in John

1 (read Rev. xx. 11—15)      2 Matt. xxv. 41      3 Gal. vi. 7

4 Psalm xxxiv. 8

5 1 John iv. 9—10

6 (read 2 Cor. v. 17)

iii. 6, 7, "That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I say unto thee, Ye must be born again."

So beautifully simple is the way of salvation, that many do not believe it, but Christ says (and let us take His word for truth), "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life, for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

So we see from this that there is not some great thing to do, nor anything hard, for God has sent His Son, and He has done all the work to redeem us to God, and we have only to accept it as little children. We cannot help in our salvation, for we are helpless sinners, but when we believe we have eternal life given us, then we may do service for Him who has saved us.

Therefore believe now on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who has offered Himself a sacrifice to God and suffered the judgement from a holy God for your sin, to set you free. It is written, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God

has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved, for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.<sup>1</sup>

What caused the holy Son of God  
To stoop so very low?  
What brought Him from His glory bright,  
To bear man's weight of woe?

'Twas love, 'twas love to ruined man,  
Whose sins He deigned to bear;  
That sinners, through His death of shame,  
Eternal life might share.

For this did God most kindly give  
His well-belovéd Son;  
And nought could keep the Saviour back,  
Until His work was done.

W.

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## “SEEK, BUT SEEK NOT.”

(CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 128.)

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*“For thus saith the LORD unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live; but seek not Bethel, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beersheba: for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nought. Seek the LORD, and ye shall live; lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour it, and there be none to quench it in Bethel.” (Amos v. 4-6)*

**I**F Bethel has been so fraught with blessing to one, virtue must be there,—so men speak as if God favoured one small corner of the earth beyond all others! From the knowledge of this



failing, religion-mongers have filled their coffers. Not fifty years ago, a child visionary, Bernadette Soubirous, imagined that the Virgin Mary appeared to her at Lourdes, therefore millions of Mariolaters have paid her court at this very spot, expecting to receive a special blessing there, but finding none except in their own disordered imaginations. This is only a modern case in point to show that the tendency toward materialism still is strong as ever.

It is true that God gave a revelation on three distinct occasions at Beersheba; but neither Abraham, Hagar nor Jacob, went there with any idea of obtaining a blessing: on the contrary, Hagar was there in the deepest distress, her son left to die, and she herself without hope. Jacob was there later, full of dread and fear; and it was God's love and grace that met the need of each. The place was less than nothing. In later days when Israel had wholly left off faith, when the letter became everything, then, when Ichabod had been sounded and the Presence was no more with them, some means of chafing the chilling limbs had to be resorted to. Outwardly at least, Bethel seemed to satisfy. Its memories when pondered on must have thrilled the heart; and surely this was something! Its traditions appealed to the emotions like the Pyramids, the Sphinx, the Catacombs, the great church of St. Peter, with its even pre-Christian memories, appeal to many men to-day.

It aroused what are known as "the higher feelings," just as an impressive ceremony, with soul-stirring music, or even a great painting, stir up the most lethargic of men. This being so, could it be wrong to seek it and be so aroused and fired up in the soul? A thousand times yes! God longs for us to seek Him, and that not through any apparent or outward agency. On every side there are Bethels and Gilgals to-day into which men are entering, to which they seek, imagining that by so doing they are pleasing God, and hoping perchance to find Him there; yet He bids them seek Him directly and Him alone, *not* them.

These Bethels of external show, of pomp and magnificence, or even of "voluntary humility," are after all but "dumb idols" from which He yearns that all should turn to seek and serve Him, the living and the true God. Every rite, however orderly it may seem, every ceremony however beautiful or impressive, is, if ordered by man, but a Bethel to which we must not seek. God has appointed a way in Christ through Whom entering all shall find Him. The greatest blessing of time and eternity attached to all who seek Him and Him alone. But what a curse to those who slight Christ Who is come, and who seek their own Bethels and Gilgals still, their "houses of God," their "calvaries." "Beware lest He break out like fire . . . and there be none to quench." L.L.

## CHRIST OR THE WORLD.

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IT is of all importance in these days of wide profession to be real, not assuming to be what you are not. If you believe in and know the Lord Jesus Christ, then be "out and out" for Him. He bids you come to Him, and He is outside of and rejected by the world, so that to confess Him means a complete severance from the world.

There are many that try to have both Christ and the world. They would like to hold, as it were, Christ in the one hand and the world in the other: but this cannot be. You must give up one or the other.

Now, dear friend, of what gain is it to you to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Why, you have your sins forgiven,<sup>1</sup> you are saved,<sup>2</sup> you have peace with God,<sup>3</sup> the certainty of a home in glory with Christ for eternity,<sup>4</sup> and many other countless blessings. But supposing you choose the world; is this any gain to you? You are able to drink of its pleasures, to mix with its society, and you can make yourself apparently comfortable in the world. But what becomes of the world? Why, it passeth away, and the lusts thereof.<sup>5</sup> It is going on to judgement, and is at this present moment ruled by Satan, its god and prince. This is the world of which God says, "Love not the

1 Acts x. 43      2 Acts xvi. 31      3 Romans v. 1

4 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17      5 1 John ii. 17

world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world, and the world passeth away, and the lust thereof.”<sup>1</sup> Moreover, dear reader, this is the world that has yet to answer for the crucifixion of Him whose love and grace was slighted and rejected.

Then which will you have, Christ or the world? “Well,” you say, “I do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and am glad I know Him as my own personal Saviour, but I cannot quite give up the world, or I fear I should not be happy. I must have a little pleasure, and I see no harm in just occasionally going to this place or that to enjoy myself. Why, if I give up the world entirely, I shall be quite melancholy and miserable.” Well, dear friend, if this should be the language of your heart, I must say I am not surprised that you are not happy. You say you believe in Christ, He is your Saviour, and yet you must have a little of the world. Oh, seek to be satisfied with Him! Be quite decided for Christ. Let all else go, and I am sure you will be perfectly happy. I would plead with you to shrink from the world, and all that is of it. Never mind what others may say

or think of you. They may taunt you with seeking to do away with all pleasure and enjoyment, but you can then triumphantly say,

“O worldly pomp and glory,  
Your charms are spread in vain,  
I've heard a sweeter story,  
I've found a truer gain.”

Let me say once again, if you know Christ, be true to Him, and let Him have the whole of your heart. I have often, alas! seen those who have through grace been brought to know Christ as their Saviour, who, not being completely weaned from the world, have hankered after it, and have soon been engulfed in its snares. “The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”<sup>1</sup> Be wholehearted for Christ, and then you will with brightest anticipation look for His coming again, when your heart will be completely satisfied, and His too. If you have believed in Him, one thing is certain, you are not of the world, you do not belong to it;<sup>2</sup> your conversation (or citizenship), is in heaven.<sup>3</sup> It may mean suffering to you to walk in separation from the world, but remember the Lord suffered here at the hands of the world for you. I exclaim, in closing, “Shrink from the world: cleave fast to Christ; and prove the all-sufficiency of His love and grace to fill your heart.”

W.G.

1 James iv. 4

2 John xvii. 16

3 Phil. iii. 20

## REASONS FOR THE HOPE IN US.

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**B**ELIEVERS are exhorted to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."<sup>1</sup>

The following extract is commended to our readers.

"*What are you?*" "The chief of sinners, sir. 'This is a faithful saying and worthy of acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.'"<sup>2</sup>

"*But of what denomination are you?*" "I am a Christian, sir. 'The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.'"<sup>3</sup>

"*No doubt of that, but I mean what is your persuasion?*" "I am persuaded, sir, 'that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'"<sup>4</sup>

"*To what body of Christians do you belong?*" "To the one body, sir: 'there is one body.'"<sup>5</sup>

"*Well, what are you a member of?*" "Of that one body, sir: 'Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.'"<sup>6</sup>

"*Do let me know something of what you are. What*

1 1 Pet. iii. 15  
4 Rom. viii. 38, 39

2 1 Tim. i. 15  
5 Ephesians iv. 4

3 Acts xi. 26  
6 1 Cor. xii. 27

*name do you call yourself?"* "A child of God, sir, and 'joint heir with Christ.'"<sup>1</sup>

*"Who orders your mode and place of worship?"* "The Lord Jesus, sir: 'For where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them.'"<sup>2</sup>

*"Tell me then, what is your creed?"* "The word of God, sir: 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.'"<sup>3</sup>

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## EVERY NATION FROM ONE SOURCE, AND UNDER GOD'S CONTROL.

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*"And of one [blood] he made every nation of man to dwell on all the face of the earth, having defined ordained seasons and the bounds of their dwelling." Acts xvii. 26.*

THE apostle next adverted to the providential arrangement for man as he is over the earth. If men departed from God so as not to know Him, as they assuredly desired not the knowledge of His ways, it might have been thought that the origin of nations was not utterly forgotten. But man readily lets slip what humbles him, as he accepts or invents the fable of moral progress, because it humours his vanity. Nor was any part of the race more inflated with self-satisfaction than

<sup>1</sup> Romans viii. 16, 17

<sup>2</sup> Matthew xviii. 20

<sup>3</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 16

the Greeks who then heard of the true God, not only in His creative and sustaining goodness, but in His forming those communities called "nations."

After the deluge, sent judicially to sweep away a generation corrupt and filled with violence, sacrifice was made the ground on which the world that now is was set.<sup>1</sup> The principle of government too was introduced; "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."<sup>2</sup> Flesh, not the herb only, was now free for his food, but not the blood, reserved for God to whom life belongs.

But the renewed earth saw man renewing his iniquities. Even Noah the governor failed to govern himself, and disappeared from further notice, as Adam after the fall. As men journeyed from the east they found a plain in the land of Shinar where they decided to dwell, instead of replenishing the earth as they had been enjoined. Their device was to centralise by erecting a city and a tower, and make themselves a name, for God was in none of their thoughts, lest they should be scattered. Union was strength; and they would be independent. But Jehovah scattered them abroad by the new, simple, and effective means of confounding their mutual communications by differing tongues; for hitherto the whole earth was of one lip and of one speech.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gen. viii, 20—22

<sup>2</sup> Gen. ix, 6

<sup>3</sup> Gen. xi, 1—9



Thus, instead of a vast commonwealth of all mankind, the divine Governor brought about man's dispersion first, and at length in Peleg's day<sup>1</sup> the division of the earth. Whatever might come by migration or resolution, the nations after their families and tongues occupied their lands to the apostle's day and to ours. God is not mocked.

"And of one [blood] he made every nation of man to dwell on all the face of the earth, having defined ordained seasons and the bounds of their dwelling."

So the prophets from Moses to Malachi, confirmed by the New Testament, declare that the King of kings and Lord of lords at His coming in power and glory will judge them *as nations* in their respective measures before the eternal judgment not only of the dead works individually, but the secrets of darkness and the counsels of hearts. Compare for the former Deut. xxxii. 41—43, xxxiii. 26—29; Pss. ii. 5, 9—12, ix. 8, 9, 15—20, x. 16—18, xlv. 4, 5, xlvi. 4—7, lxxvi. 10—12, cx. 2, 5, 6, cxlix. 6—9; Isa. ii. 10—22, xiii. 6, 11, xiv. 26, xvii. 12—14, xxiv. 1, 21—23, xxvi. 9—11, xxix. 5—7, xxxiv., lxiii. 1—6, lxvi. 15—16; Jer. xxv. 30—33; Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.; Dan. ii. 44, 45, vii. 23—27; and even more pointedly if possible in the twelve shorter Prophets, in particular Joel iii. 1, 2, 9—14; Obad. 15—21; Micah iv. 11—13, vii. 15—20;

Nahum i. 2—6; Hab. ii. 13, 14, iii. 12, 13; Zeph. iii. 8, 19, 20; Hag. ii. 6, 7, 22; Zech. ix. 13, 14, x. 3—9, xiv. 1—4; Mal. iv. 1—3.

Vain imaginations can alter neither facts nor His control who will soon prove that, whatever the wicked rebellion of man, He works all things after the counsel of His own good and holy will. All the nations sprang from one forefather; all were involved in common sin, as ignorant of God as of themselves. Death from the first entered for parents and progeny. None can dispute that so it is now. The Athenians to their great loss knew not why it was. Revelation alone explained how sin came in; and happy he who on God's authority believes it and looks to the only Deliverer. Man could ruin but not save himself. Yet is it by His Son become man, Christ Jesus, that God righteously saves the chief of sinners, but only on his faith, not surely in his unbelief; for faith honours God, and the Son no less than the Father.

It is true that all nations from their rise forgot God, and that no one manifested the evil more than those to whose conscience the apostle was appealing. Notwithstanding their willing ignorance, God interested Himself in their actual circumstances, defining the appointed seasons of their national life, progress and fall, with the bounds of their dwelling. Their fresh trial as world-powers, on the ruin of Israel and Judah, only

eventuated in greater pride, in compulsory idolatry and in persecution of such as clung to the confession of the true God who had ordained them to rule.

Thus we see the prophet Jonah sent even before the catastrophe of the chosen people to the capital of the Assyrians; and the correction of the narrow selfishness which never appreciates goodness to the bad outside its own limits. God on the contrary would let His warning fall in presence of repentance. But as this touched the self-importance of the messenger, he fled till humbled by God's mighty hand. Even then in his fear that divine mercy might arrest judgement, he sulked till he took to heart the moral of the withered gourd that had sheltered him from the burning sun, and wrote the tale of his own folly and the pity that delighted to spare a mourning city of Gentiles, "wherein are more six score persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle." Such was the God that Israel little knew, and the heathen not at all.

If it be so in only the seen and the temporal, how much more does His goodness in Christ extend to sinners, in view of man's loss of relation to Himself and its everlasting consequence! For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world and forfeit his own self? and what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Only what God

gives and does can save the lost. None but the only-begotten Son of God has life to bestow on the dead in sins when they have heard His voice. None but the Son of Man on the cross could avail to bear God's judgement of sin. Do you not know that Himself tells you so, that believing on Him you may not perish but have life eternal? What then clearer than that the Lord Jesus is the object of faith? Him the sinless one God made sin for us, who were His enemies, whether Jews or Greeks.

How plainly then salvation is not of works but of faith, that it might be according to grace, God's grace, not ours. Thus it avails for Gentiles in all their deadly ignorance and evil, equally as to Jews in their high-minded pride as to the law which only condemned them. Grace in Christ opens the blind eyes to see and judge self with all its sins, and the dumb lips to bless the God who commends His own love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. What has not God meant and found and given to the believer in that death? What does it not proclaim in the gospel to every lost creature? Thus it is that God has answered human distrust and disobedience and ruin by giving His best and unspeakable gift to save His worst foes, and make them through faith in His Son to love and serve Him who first loved them with a sovereign and creative love only possible to Himself.

## “WHOM TO BELIEVE AND WHAT TO BELIEVE.”

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**I**N this day of man's free thought when all claim liberty to enjoy their own opinion (especially religiously), it is difficult to know “whom to believe or what to believe.” No wonder uncertainty prevails, particularly as to the soul and eternity. The mass of professed ministers of Christ and preachers of the gospel only give an uncertain sound as to God and eternity, with nothing definite as to how souls may know and enjoy present forgiveness of sins in perfect peace with God, and in the sweet assurance of everlasting life and happiness.

May be the reader is of such a class, living in the region of uncertainty respecting pardon and peace, or the new birth and eternal life: perhaps still worse, belonging to the larger class who are totally careless and indifferent. In a land nevertheless of loud profession, where Bibles are cheap, and circulated freely, so that to bear the name of Christian is but in contrast to the poor uncivilised heathen, many have only a name to live, yet dead, being actually without Christ and God in the world: yea, perhaps taking shelter under the fact that there is little reality anywhere. Modern thought, too, with its amazing strides of science, determined only to believe in its discoveries, or

what is considered in harmony with it, affords another excuse.

All this assuredly is shutting out God, and His written word, the sure and only chart through a sinful world, and telling of Christ the one and only Saviour. Thank God, He and His written word abide, and testify to what He is, for "God is love," and this is now revealed in His own beloved Son, as John iii. 16 clearly states, as to gift and purpose; "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."

Such is the clear and precious statement of God's love to a guilty world, His unerring word giving the fact of God having sent His Son: no less that He has come and died, as the one and only sacrifice for sin and sinners, moreover that He is now at the right hand of God, the everlasting proof that all is done, and God glorified. On this precious solid truth the gospel is founded, and is preached by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. To receive or believe this momentous fact, ensures life, salvation, and peace: to refuse or despise it, is to give God the lie, involving unmis-takeable judgement by slighting His love, so fully expressed in the death of His only begotten Son.

Let the reader seriously remember that God has bound up the scriptures with the gift and death of His Son; yea, His gospel, which has been de-

clared for over eighteen hundred years, states the undeniable fact. This Paul, the great apostle and chief of sinners, preached, as he states to those who had received it at Corinth, telling them in chapter xv. "how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." Without this faith was vain, and all were in their sins. But Jesus who had died for their sins, had not only been buried, but the scriptures declare the glorious truth of His resurrection, which is the everlasting proof that the sins for which He died, are settled and gone for ever, and to this God bears witness in His own gospel, yea, enjoins all to believe in Him, respecting their sins, and His satisfaction about them.

It is not therefore a question of man's opinion, good or bad, or his puny thoughts of the scriptures, which, alas! in this free-thinking age are legion, but of God's own testimony to the death and resurrection of His well-beloved Son. To believe in God brings forgiveness, justification, and peace, and puts believers of to-day in company with Abraham, the father of all believers. He trusted God, that his seed should be as the stars of heaven, when he had no child, and nature was against him; but, "he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith giving glory to God," and being fully persuaded that what

He had promised He was able also to perform.

This is recorded for all believing souls of to-day, not in a promise of what God *will* do, but in what He *has done*; for thus run the unerring scriptures; “now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;” adding the truth of Jesus as the Substitute for the sins of all His believing people, “who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”<sup>1</sup>

Now, dear reader, what say you in answer to these realities: have you simple faith in the living God, who in love to sinners delivered up His Son to die for them, and in righteousness raised Him from the dead, that He may freely and fully justify in the value of that death which enabled God the Judge at Calvary, to be the God of peace in resurrection? If so, then are you once and for ever justified, and can take up with divine certainty the language of Romans v. 1. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Peace with God, unchanging, unbroken, dependent upon what the Saviour has done at the cross, and now is in resurrection: no less opening by faith unto the present standing of the favour of God, while with joy we hope for the glory of God.

1 See Romans iv. 23—25



Such the offers and provision of God's grace, in and through Christ Jesus; to receive it is to be saved: to reject it is to be without Christ in denial of God and His word, involving judgement to come; for it is appointed unto men once to die, and after death the judgement; but Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many (not a few but all believers), and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.<sup>1</sup> See to it, therefore, my reader, that you are no longer in doubtful uncertainty, much less among the careless and indifferent, but of those who have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

G.G.

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### A CALL—BUT NO ANSWER.

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“**F**IRE! fire!” is the cry that is heard coming from a window; and soon the passers-by who see the smoke arising from the house, re-echo the call, till at last the fire engine is seen driving furiously towards the ill-fated dwelling. The firemen answer to the summons, and soon the flames are extinguished.

But what a mercy the call was answered! Yes; but a moment is rapidly approaching, when men will call, in terrible earnest, too; but they will receive no answer. “Then shall they call upon me,”

saith the Lord, "but I will not answer."<sup>1</sup> Ah! friend, that dreadful time may come to-night. It may be before you have retired to sleep that the Lord will come and "in the twinkling of an eye"<sup>2</sup> take all those who have trusted in Him to be with Himself for ever. Then the door will be shut.

Reader, where wilt thou be then? With the Lord, or shut out for ever? Oh! if thy sins are not all washed away in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, think that thou wilt be left without to spend eternity in the lake of fire.

But pause—heaven's door is now open, and the Saviour says, "Call unto me, and I *will* answer thee."<sup>3</sup> O unpardoned sinner, speak now and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner,"<sup>4</sup> and the answer will come, "Thy sins are forgiven . . . go in peace."<sup>5</sup>

Dear friend, I beseech you to call *now*, for God says, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."<sup>6</sup> To-morrow thou mayest call, but it may be too late.

Do not seek to turn over a new leaf, neither endeavour to be better, or to be religious, but come to the Saviour; for it is the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, that cleanseth from all sin.<sup>7</sup>

Come now, repenting of thy sins, to the Lord Jesus Christ, for He says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."<sup>8</sup>

J.W.

1 Prov. i. 28    2 1 Cor. xv. 52    3 Jer. xxxiii. 3    4 Luke xviii. 13  
5 Luke vii. 48, 50    6 2 Cor. vi. 2    7 1 John i. 7    8 John vi. 37

## SHELTERED.

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SOME time ago, being some distance from my home, I was caught in a very heavy shower of rain, and having neither macintosh nor umbrella with me, I stood in great danger of getting wet through. Casting about for some means of protection, I espied a gentleman, snugly ensconced under an umbrella, and further protected by the side of a house. I was taken with the situation, and made my way towards him.

As I drew near, he said, "Will you take shelter under my umbrella? it is large enough for both of us." I thanked him, and gratefully accepted his generous offer, and soon found that it was as he had said, quite large enough to protect both him and me from the rain. We soon entered into conversation, and after one or two common-place remarks, I thought I saw an opportunity for speaking a word for my Master, and so observed to my kind friend, that it was a grand thing to find real shelter when we needed it. He assented. I then asked if *he* was sheltered—not from the rain, for I knew he was—but from the *wrath of God*, by the *blood of Christ*.

Intuition told me he would know what I meant ; and his answer proved this, for he said, "Ah ! praise be to the name of God, I do know what it is to be sheltered by the blood of Christ." Continuing he said, "It is ten years since Jesus saved me. I was always a good-living man, never immoral or profane, a strict attendant at my place of worship. I gave to the church and poor funds as largely as my income would allow, and I was very well satisfied with myself. My friends and relatives looked up to me with respect, and pointed to me as a model man. But how little I really knew myself I was soon to prove.

"Crossing the road one day on my way to business, I was knocked down by a cab, and received very serious injuries ; so critical was my condition that my life was despaired of. For a long time I was not allowed to speak, and indeed I had no desire to do so. One day, my doctor, a godly Christian, said to me, 'Mr. R., you have had a very narrow escape from death ; suppose you had died, WHAT THEN ?'

"I shuddered, for the thought was so horrible to die. My own heart told me, that in spite of my model past, I was not fit to die. The doctor saw my condition, and very gently he unfolded to me, not *man's* way of salvation but *God's*. He told me many things I had heard before, of which I did not know the truth ; and the Spirit of God opened

my eyes to see, that if I had died as the result of my accident, I should have been lost for eternity. But not this alone ; He (the Spirit) revealed to me the person of Christ as the substitute, found and given by God, to answer in my place to God for my sins, which He bore in His own body on the cross. Thereby too was God glorified in His death, so that His light, love, and justice was in no wise abated. Thus He could be the justifier of the poor sinner believing in Jesus. When I saw this, and what it meant to be sheltered by the blood of Jesus, ill as I was, I was bound to cry out, 'Glory to God in the highest ;' and ever since it has been my delight to be just as zealous and much more earnest than aforetime ; but how different the motive power within ! Formerly I lived and worked to gain salvation, now I am living and working because I have salvation, because I seek to please and glorify my Saviour, and because I want others to know Him."

This was the story told me by my friend. As the rain ceased shortly after, I bade him God speed, and left him.

Now, my reader, do not think I have told you this incident to amuse you ; to be candid, I have not, but rather to put the same question to you, **ARE YOU SHELTERED BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS?**

Perhaps you may plead ignorance as to my

meaning. Let me take you to Exodus xii. There we have the record of one nation in bondage to another, groaning under a cruel yoke, powerless in themselves to effect their own deliverance, and (naturally speaking) having no future before them but perpetual slavery. The people in every respect as to themselves were as good as dead.

But deliverance was at hand. Jehovah, the God of their fathers, knew their state, and was about to visit Egypt, and bring a dire calamity upon Pharaoh, and compel him to release Israel. A fearful judgement was about to be executed. Jehovah on a certain night would pass over the land and slay the first-born of every creature, both man and beast, sparing none, not even the heir to the throne of the Pharaohs.

Did I say none were to be spared? Yes, some were to be spared. Jehovah was unwilling that any in Israel should perish, so He commanded Moses and Aaron to speak to the people, telling them of the day of the judgement and how to escape it. They were to take a lamb, a male of the first year, and without blemish. They must kill it, and with a bunch of hyssop, sprinkle the blood upon the two door posts and upon the lintel over the the door, so that it could be seen outside; whilst they were to remain inside the house. Sheltered beneath the blood, they were to roast the lamb and with unleavened bread and bitter herbs were to eat

it. With girded loins, staff in hand and shoes on feet (ready to travel) were they to eat it. Then when Jehovah passed through the land that night He would look for the blood, and at the sight would leave that dwelling safe from judgement, while all the rest would be visited, and the first-born slain.

Oh! you may say, what has all this to do with me? Not perhaps historically, but a great deal in reality, because it speaks to us of man's lost condition and God's way of salvation. Let us look at the two things, and compare notes.

## ISRAEL.

1.—Israel in Egypt were slaves, in bondage to the Egyptians.

2.—Judgement was coming upon Egypt—on high, low, rich and poor alike—none could stay it, and there was no escape from the sword of the slayer; the Egyptians were condemned.

3.—The people helpless, not able to deliver themselves.

4.—Jehovah made a way of escape. A substitute is to be provided, and its blood sprinkled in the appointed

## UNSAVED READERS.

1.—Men are sinners; slaves to sin by nature (Ps. li. 5), and practice (Rom. iii. 23).

2.—Judgement is coming upon this world, which is full of sin, guilty and condemned (Rom. iii. 19). No escape for the natural man (Heb. ii. 3). Condemned already, only waiting for the execution of the judgement (John iii. 18).

3.—Man is unable to work the works of righteousness, none can do good (Rom. iii. 10). All are without strength (Rom. v. 6).

4.—God has, in sovereign grace, made a way of escape for guilty man, He has provided a substitute in the

place. They were to be protected by the blood until judgement had passed. It was to be as God had commanded, and their safety lay in obedience.

5.—The Israelites had to believe Jehovah and do as He directed. There was no safety in Egypt on that awful night of judgement, but where the blood was. Suppose one family killed their lamb and very nicely roasted it, and with loins girded shut to the door and sat themselves down to enjoy their repast, but failed to put the blood on the appointed place, they might have said, "We are safe now, we are as good as our neighbours next door." So they were, but with this difference—the neighbours had the blood over the door and these had not—and when the LORD passed over the land, judgement would fall upon them. *They had not obeyed.* They had no blood for Jehovah to see.

person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and Christ offered up Himself; He died, His blood has been shed, and now God can not only forgive the sinner who believes on Jesus, but welcome him as a child, and give him the child's place and portion in Christ. All is of grace from first to last.

5.—Man must believe God now, and Christ must be the object of faith. There is but the one way. You, my reader, may be in every respect a good, honest, upright, moral, religious, benevolent person, in fact, a model man, as my "umbrella friend" had been, but do not deceive yourself, nor let Satan deceive you; being as good as your neighbour, or very much better if you like, will avail you nothing, unless you are washed in the blood of the Lamb; then, and then only are you safe, safe from judgement.

The truth of the gospel is, God so loved the



world (of which you and I form a part) that He gave His only begotten Son (the Lord Jesus Christ) that whosoever (this includes you and me) believeth in Him (not in ourselves or in anything we have done or think that we could do) should not perish (our rightful due) but have (no doubt nor question about it) everlasting life (not annihilation nor even perpetual death). Wherefore if you have the Son you have life, and if not, then let me tell you you have not to wait until you get to the Great White Throne to know your fate; you may know it now, condemned already and awaiting judgement, and for the righteous Judge in His own time to send you into everlasting punishment.

Oh, the matchless love, the sovereign grace, that could forgive three such great sinners as Saul of Tarsus, you, my reader, if a believer, and the one who signs himself

F.R.S.

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### “SOME ONE BELONGING TO HER.”

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IT was “visiting day” in the infirmary of a South London workhouse. Most of the patients had friends and relatives at their bedsides, but one aged woman lay there helpless and lonely with no one to take any notice of her, so I made my way to her side.

On addressing her, I saw that she was paralysed, and scarcely able to speak. One side of her face was drawn up in a painful way, and it appeared doubtful whether she even understood what I said. At any rate, I received no satisfactory reply to my first remark.

Then I asked her, "Have you no one belonging to you"?

"Yes," the poor quivering lips stammered forth instantly, with difficulty, but in a tone of triumphant certainty—"Yes: Jesus Christ"!

Scarcely a word more did I succeed in drawing from her, but this was enough. The palsied bed-ridden pauper possessed what many of earth's mightiest know nothing of. No friends nor relatives to visit her like her fellow patients, yet she was not alone—less alone than many of them, for she had "Some one belonging to her," yes, and One to whom she belonged for time and for eternity, One nearer and dearer far than earth's nearest and dearest—the One who had died to redeem her, and to whose palace of glory she would soon go from that pauper's bed.

"My beloved is mine, and I am his."

Reader, do *you* belong to Him, and does He belong to you? If asked the question, "Have you no one belonging to you?" could *you* answer, "Yes: Jesus Christ"?

*J. Conyers. Taken from John Newton Cardiffian*

## THE CLERGYMAN'S DISCOVERY.

A CLERGYMAN sat in his quiet study in a Yorkshire village. He was an earnest man, throwing the whole of his energy into the work he had undertaken, so that for years, he preached two or three times every day in one or other of the scattered hamlets which composed his parish.

His conduct too was irreproachable; and, as he preached the law, and urged his people to keep it, inculcating morality with much diligence, it is not surprising that a change became evident among them, and outward and gross sins far less frequent. If he was not well pleased with himself, others were well pleased with him: he was spoken of in the religious literature of the day as "the most perfect example of a parish priest which the nation had produced."

And now this exemplary man sits studying his Greek Testament. He is deep in the third chapter of the Ephesians, and has come to verse eight, when a long word arrests him—"The *unsearchable* [unexplorable] riches of Christ."

"The apostle uses remarkable expressions," he thought: "he speaks of heights, depths, lengths, breadths, and unsearchables, where I seem to find everything plain, easy, and rational. Surely though I use the words 'gospel,' 'faith,' and 'grace,' with

him, my ideas of them must be different from his."

So he determined to find out what the apostle Paul's "ideas" really were, and with this in view studied anew all his Epistles; and oh, the discovery he made! The Holy Spirit who indited them used these marvellous scriptures to show the model clergyman that he himself was nothing else than a guilty, lost, and undone sinner.

He had assented to the truths of the gospel before; he had believed them in his head, but he had never bowed to them with his heart, never accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his own personal Saviour, and believing on Him found life through His name. It was only as so much dry history that he had hitherto believed in His birth and death, His blood-shedding and resurrection; now he saw that they were vital facts on which his own eternal salvation depended; and as a lost and helpless sinner he laid hold on the hope set before him; he fled for refuge to a God-given Saviour; and he exclaimed with the apostle Paul, "The Son of God, who loved *me* and gave himself for *me*."

Ah, then he understood the apostle's glowing expressions. Oh, what lengths and breadths and depths and heights he now saw in the glories of of Him who had gone down to death, even the death of the cross, for his sake. Oh, how unsearchable, how past finding out, the wisdom and

the grace that had formed such a plan, and formed it in order to save *him*.

And what a change came over his preaching, too! He felt himself that there was no hope for a sinner except in the blood of Jesus; and no possibility of doing anything acceptable to God, except first made "accepted in the Beloved." He told his hearers they were lost, and needed a Saviour: that a Saviour had been provided for them by God Himself, and that they were welcome to come to Him just as they were.

It was not reformation he now preached, but Christ—Christ crucified, Christ risen, Christ glorified—and God honoured his testimony. Instead of outward morality, there was an inward change, even "from darkness to light," from "death unto life," in very many of his hearers; and from these little Yorkshire hamlets was many a jewel taken to shine in the Saviour's crown for ever.

The voice that proclaimed to them their need and God's great provision for it is silent now; he is resting from his labours until the resurrection morning; but the truth he learned and then taught is sounding in your ears to-day: are you giving a merely rational assent to it, or is the Christ of God the one living object of your heart? have you believed on the Son, and believing, obtained life through His name?

## LEAVES.

*(This article is concluded from page 93).*

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### 5. THE LEAF OF PEACE.

LET our thoughts revert for a moment to that solemn time in the world's history when man, left to himself and without law, lived in carnal ease and in every conceivable lust and pleasure; for thus the holy record runs, "the earth was corrupt before God," yea, "filled with violence, for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." Yes, those antediluvian ages simply reeked with sin; and Eliphaz the Temanite, in telling language, thus refers to them; "Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden, which were cut down out of time, and whose foundation was overflowed with a flood, which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for us? Yet he filled their houses with good things." God, as ever, was rich in grace; and many a warning as to coming judgement was freely preached by His righteous servant Noah.

But, as then there was but one way of escape from impending wrath, even so now is there but one way of salvation. What the ark was to those within it at that solemn time of universal judgement, so is Christ to all those who have fled to Him for refuge now. Yet, even then, amidst the awful desolation of a doomed world, may we

not learn some divine lessons from the birds of the air and the leaves of the trees? First, the raven, sent forth from the open window of the ark, returned not thither again, but doubtless, as an unclean bird, fed on that which suited its nature. The dove, however, which followed it, could find no resting-place on earth for the sole of her foot, and (like the true believer now) weary of the scene around her, returned to her true and only home. A week elapses, and then for the second time Noah again sends forth this precious messenger of peace. Judgement had now done its work on a sin-stained world; and at the eventide the dove returns, not with a fig leaf (the emblem of man's sin), but with an olive leaf in her mouth, which she had plucked off, and which to Noah's heart was the lovely token of peace and rest.

Reader, dost thou know anything of the peace that Christ has made "by the blood of his cross," and of the rest which Jesus gives to all who come to Him, or art thou still a lost sinner, outside the Ark of God's salvation?

#### 6. THE LEAF OF PROSPERITY.

IF not, but on the other hand thou hast through grace accepted God's olive leaf of peace, and found pardon for thy sins through the precious blood of Jesus, may it then be the joy of thy

ransomed soul to find in Him, the Christ of God, thine "all in all"! Constant meditation and communion of heart with Him is the only way to realize prosperity of soul, and thus shalt thou prove the truth of the psalmist's words, "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Drinking freely from the living streams of refreshment to be found only in a risen Christ, thou shalt in due season bring forth fruit to the Master's praise and glory; and beneath the sunshine of His loving smile, thine upward way shall be marked with that ceaseless prosperity which He alone can give. May this indeed be thy happy lot!

#### 7. LEAVES OF HEALING.

It is a long way from the garden of Eden to that bright millennial day when "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea;" but lo! a bright and wondrous vista opens up before my soul. He who is Himself God's tree shall supplant all that is of man, and yet bring in rich and endless blessing not only for Israel, but also for the nations of the earth in the coming day of His kingdom and glory. Behold "the tree of life," not now in Eden's garden, but in the midst of the street of the city, whose roots



stretch forth on either side of that pure river of water of life, which, clear as crystal, flows from the very throne of God. No cherubim are there with flaming sword to guard the way of that tree of life, and we look in vain for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, or the fig-leaf aprons. The Prince of life and peace is reigning now, the way to the tree of life is open to all, and God Himself declares that, "the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations."

"Hosannas glad, thou Prince of peace,  
Thy welcome shall proclaim;  
And all creation shall rejoice  
In thy belovèd Name."

S.T.

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## A MARVELLOUS ESCAPE.

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**W**HILST riding on the top of a London tramcar, I witnessed an accident, which, although harmless, might have caused death, or at least serious injury, to more than one of a large number of passengers. In some way, the rod which connects the car with the overhead electric wire became detached, and in swinging about, struck an upright post, was knocked from its socket on the top of the car, and fell. In falling, it threatened the heads of the passengers on the

back of the car, and had it fallen six inches lower, more than one of the passengers would have been struck, and perhaps killed.

Indeed, the rod, in falling, seemed to be coming straight for my head, though I was untouched. Supposing however it had smashed my head to pieces, what would have been the result? A mangled corpse, an interested crowd, a newspaper report, an inquest, a funeral with perhaps another interested crowd, and an opportunity to preach the gospel of God's grace.

And what then? Perhaps you say, "That is all." But not so. We find in John iii. 16, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Thank God, everlasting life is not for this world only, but also for that which is to come.

Dear reader, such an accident may happen to you. In that case, how will you fare? Are you able to trust your all to Christ, or do you not believe in Him? We never know what may happen to us, and it is a terrible condition to be unprepared for death, and after death the judgment. Dear reader, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be saved. Do not treat the matter with indifference, lest you spend eternity in torment.

## WHAT IS YOUR DESTINATION ?

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**R**EADER, you are at this moment travelling along a path which infallibly leads either to heaven or to hell. Your uncertainty as to what the end of the road may be makes not the slightest difference as to the fact.

You enter a railway carriage as it leaves the metropolis. Shortly a fellow-passenger inquires your destination. "I am not quite certain," you reply, "but I hope I am on the way to Edinburgh." "To Edinburgh, sir! you are going direct to Southampton!" "Indeed, I hope not," you say; "I have had my misgivings, certainly, and I have not felt quite sure; but still I hope I shall get to Edinburgh." "Sir," replies your companion, "you have your back towards Edinburgh, and every mile you travel you are a mile further from it, and nearer Southampton. Be persuaded, and alight at the first station we reach."

Ah, my readers, you would know better than to act thus in undertaking such a journey. You know well that if you are journeying in a wrong direction, your own uncertainty as to whether it is right or wrong makes no difference as to the

fact; and therefore you make sure before setting out.

But in the solemn question of eternal life or eternal death, you suffer yourself to be put off with uncertainties. You are journeying with more than railway speed to eternal bliss or to eternal woe. Which is it? "I am not quite certain," you reply. If so, then you may be, for aught you know, on the highway to eternal ruin. "I hope not," you answer. But can that hope of yours in any way affect the facts of the case. If you are on the way to destruction, this false hope may allure you onwards, but cannot change the way of death into the path of life. And if you are really saved, and on your journey to the celestial city, how much better for your peace, and progress too, to know really, and of a certainty that this is the fact.

*Extracted.*

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## TO SEEK GOD.

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*"To seek God, if indeed they might feel after and find him, though he is not far from each one of us." Acts xvii. 27.*

**T**HE diversity of nations gave the heathen of old, as it gives the unbelieving now, occasion to deny the unity of the race. But God made of one (blood) every nation of men to dwell on every

face of the earth, whatever local traditions aver, whatever the dreams of early poets or of later philosophers or geographers. Man readily forgot himself, as well as God. If God was unknown, so was man's origin and creation: the very formula of *si deo, si deae*, betrayed his ignorance. Religiousness is natural even to the most corrupt of mankind; faith acceptable to God is supernatural. Superstition suits the devil not less than scepticism. Neither pleases God, who never left man that left Him and was justly banished by Him without the testimony of creation without<sup>1</sup> and of conscience within.<sup>2</sup>

Hence the apostle by the simple statement of divinely attested facts sets aside alike a multitude of independent deities and of independent nations derived from these Satanic impostors. He asserts one true God and one common race, whose fears, with independence of God and self-centering confidence in man, and means of effecting it in direct opposition to God's declared will, brought on dispersion by the different languages in their lands, after their tongues, their families, and their nations. For up to the deluge mankind was but one community, and, whatever their growing corruption and violence, no strange gods were set up against God. Nor had God inaugurated government as a human institution having author-

1 Rom. i. 19, 20

2 Rom. ii. 12—15

ity from Him. When He did, it was left neither to fate nor to chance, but He determined the seasons, and the limits of their dwelling. Job xii. 23, &c. from early days shows how distinctly this was known by those who had the fear of God; and Deuteronomy xxxii. 8 goes even beyond what the apostle declared to the Athenians.

But providential disposal of the nations was far from all His care. He felt graciously for every soul of man, who in losing Him had lost the only and the necessary centre for the heart, and the basis for all true morality, of which known relationship to Him must be the corner-stone. This is touched in verse 27, as His great aim for them individually—"to seek God,<sup>1</sup> if haply they might feel after and find him, though he is not far from each one of us." For man was fallen from God, and sin reigned in death; and thus death passed upon all men, for that all sinned. The sad fact is patent and undeniable. But God remained the God of goodness and mercy, ready to hear and forgive. But man must seek Him, conscious of sin, misery, and darkness. Hence God from the garden of Eden held out to guilty man, even before he was expelled as an inexcusable rebel, the hope of a Deliverer from the

<sup>1</sup> The Lord, as in the Authorised Version is a bad reading: "God" is in the best copies, and required by the truth intrinsically. What had the nations to do with "Jehovah"? What could they know of Him whom God made Lord and Anointed?

power of Satan, and, O what grace! to be born of woman, though the woman drew the man into her disobedience.

From the day of man's departure from God, one must seek God in grace and by grace. God uses means of all kinds to exercise the conscience as well as attract the heart. And He whom we know as the Lord Jesus Christ was ever the object of faith in some true way, however small the measure. God's goodness leads to repentance. The grace of Christ emboldens the weary and burdened sinner to confess his sins to God; and now that He is come, all is deepened and sure by the glad tidings of His grace. Even for the Jewish saints much was lacking which is now revealed in the gospel: how much less did poor benighted souls among the nations apprehend? Yet there were Gentiles who believed throughout the law, and we see in the book of Job believers before the law who were not of Israel. We may enter into the apostle's cautious language, "if haply [or indeed] they might feel after and find him, though he is not far from each one of us." Compared with the gospel after Christ's work, it was groping in the dark, save at least where the True Light was shining.

In every case of real conversion to God faith supposes the sinner brought to judge himself and own his sins to God, to renounce self-defence and

to cast himself on God's grace in Christ. It was this grace that secretly drew, hindered despair, and sustained faith in the face of the most varied and serious difficulties; to know what God has wrought for the sinner in Christ's death and resurrection brings the believer into solid and abiding peace. But even before the Son of God came, and gave us an understanding to know Him that is true, God was not far from each one. If He interests Himself in a nation and its king and the meanest subject, if He will call into account national responsibility, as well as every soul that comes into judgement at the close, how He yearned over every troubled soul that sought Him! He that counts every hair of the believer's head and takes notice of each sparrow that falls took deep concern in the perplexed Gentile who hated his sins, and yet turned to God about them: it might be through the slightest gleam of the Light of men. No, He was not far from each one then; and now we hear the fullest clearest testimony that there is no difference of Jew and Greek; for the same Lord of all is rich toward all that call upon Him. "The word is near thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach: that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in thy heart that God raised him from out of the dead, thou shalt be saved."



## MAN'S HEART, AND GOD'S.

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I HAVE a friend, who, by studying the form and expression of a person's face, can, with an amount of success, tell the main characteristics and tendencies of his nature, and often utilizes the moments when travelling by any conveyance, in scanning the features of the other passengers. Much interest is felt in taking note of the varied traits of character, that, to a limited extent, are portrayed upon the face. Some betray a bright disposition, and others are morose and dull. Some are of an intensely callous temperament, while others again reveal a nature fraught with seriousness. Hardly two are found alike.

But there is one thing my friend cannot do, and that is, read the heart of the object of observation. This God alone can do; and He has declared man's heart by nature to be deceitful above all things and incurably wicked; and the question is asked, "Who can know it?" There can be but one answer: "God alone." All things are naked and open to His eyes. God is light, and as such, reveals the intense darkness of man's heart, and however much a man may seek to shroud himself in a cloak of respectability he cannot hide from God the real state of his heart. He doubtless can from his fellows, and may for a long time deceive them.

The tendency of the heart of man is ever to drift further and further away from God; hence, "he that trusteth his own heart is a fool."

But the heart of man has never been more fully exposed than when the Son of God was in this scene. Though here Himself with a heart full of tenderest pity, compassion and love to His creatures, yet no response was found from the evil heart of man, but in return for all His love they gave Him bitter hatred and enmity, which culminated in their giving Him a cross. Calvary ever reminds us of the true character of man's heart. Sinful in the extreme man took that opportunity of venting upon Him who was the Light of the world, all the malice and envy that he could possibly be responsible for. There was sorrowfully exhibited all that man really is in the fearful sinfulness of his nature. The light and love of the heart of a Saviour-God in the person of Christ was met by the degraded and sinful tendencies of the heart of man.

My reader may say, "Well, I should have been thoroughly ashamed to be among that rabble that clamoured for the blood of the blessed Son of God. I am thankful to say I have not fallen to such demoralized depths as that." Ah! my friend, that heart of yours is not one whit better than the hearts of those who at Golgotha earnestly cried, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him."

If you turn to the seventh of Mark you can read what the Lord Jesus Christ had to say as to the heart of man: "From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."<sup>1</sup> There is no loop-hole here for you, for the Lord was not describing any isolated individual, but was stating a solemn truth concerning all men by nature. Well, if this is your natural condition, even to the very seat of your affections, with such a black catalogue against you, then there is no hope of salvation finding its spring in anything connected with yourself; hence you are utterly lost!

What is to be done? Oh! dear friend, I have no greater joy than speaking of that which has been done by God's beloved Son to bring an eternal salvation within your reach. While the cross of Christ stands as a testimony to the horrible amount of wickedness and sin that floods man's heart by nature, nevertheless it stands also as an eternal testimony to the compassion and love found in the heart of God towards those who grasped at the opportunity of the cross to unquestionably prove their bitter enmity towards Him. Oh! friend, you and I must together droop our

heads with shame as we realize that there we were righteously exposed in all the treachery of our sinful hearts; but on the other hand, we can raise our hearts in joyful wonder to know that there also was revealed the ever-gracious heart of God in all its tenderness and pity to such as were guilty in their sins, and lost.

The blood of Christ is that alone which cleanseth from all sin.<sup>1</sup> The death of Christ has secured an object to trust in, infinitely better than our own deceitful hearts, and the blessed message to you, dear unsaved reader, at this moment is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."<sup>2</sup> The love of the heart of God has given Him to provide an object in glory in the person of a risen Christ, for all who put their trust in Him. Come to Him, dear trembling sinner, own Him as your Saviour, and be for ever saved.

W.G.

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### "I AM WAITING FOR MY LAST SUIT."

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SOME time since, I was holding special gospel services in the town of P—— which is noted for shipbuilding. In this same town lived an old christian man, known as "Old Abraham." He had been a sailor in his younger days, and could tell stories of peril and shipwreck.

When I called on "Old Abraham," I found him

1 1 John i. 7

2 Acts xvi. 31

down, sitting in his arm-chair by the side of a blazing fire. His face shone with joy when he found that I had come to talk with him of Jesus.

In the course of conversation I led him to speak of his own conversion. He told me he had been made to see himself as God saw him, by reading Romans iii. He found also in the same chapter that a guilty sinner like himself could be justified freely "by the grace of God." His soul rested on Christ and His full redemption.

As the dear old saint told me of God's love to him, his face showed a peace the world could never have given him. He was over ninety years of age, and his feet were nearing the gates of the celestial city. But nothing could dim his spiritual vision. He grasped my hand in his withered palms, and exclaimed, "Before you go Mr. B—— I will tell you a grand thing: I am waiting now for my last suit."

Yes, "Old Abraham" was not looking for death, but for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall transform the believer's body of humiliation into conformity with His body of glory.<sup>1</sup> He was expecting not to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon. He was "waiting for his last suit."

Dear reader, "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." We read in the scripture, that they that were ready went in with the bridegroom to the

marriage, and the door was shut.<sup>1</sup> Are you ready? "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

W.B.

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## READING THE BIBLE IN A TRAMCAR.

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**H**AVE you ever tried it? How is it that so few Bibles are seen in the week, in a so-called christian land abounding with them?

People are not so ashamed to carry a Bible on the Lord's day. But where is it in the week? It is seen at a prayer meeting or Bible reading, but in the tram or train anything but that.

Why is this? Perhaps some would excuse themselves on the plea that one ought not to make a show, and thus be pharisaical; but let every Christian examine his or her heart, and how many can give this as the true reason?

One little knows what effect the practice may have on fellow-passengers. If there are other Christians, it may be the means of making them bolder for Christ. The unbeliever may glance at a verse as he looks over you, and God may bless it to his soul. Then for yourself, you have food to digest which will help you through the day and give you power to face the world; for are you not going forth with the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God?<sup>2</sup>

L.B.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxv. 10

<sup>2</sup> Ephesians vi. 17