

GOSPEL GLEANINGS

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GOSPEL GLEANINGS.



**“ROW FOR VERY LIFE! THERE’S A
MAN PERISHING!”**

IT was early morning at the pretty watering place of E——, a bright summer’s morning. The blue sea rippled and sparkled beneath the blue sky, and the sun shone cheerily down, but there were as yet but few people astir.

The beach was almost deserted save by here and there a straggler who thought the fresh cool morning hours too precious to be missed.

Had there been any watchers, they might have seen a swimmer strike out boldly to sea through those rippling waves. A strong swimmer he was, and every stroke told, and put the shore at a greater distance from him. He was alone, and a stranger to the place, having only arrived there the evening before.

Had he asked the fishermen, they would have told him of strong and dangerous currents; they would have warned him of risk, and counselled him to beware; but he was in the very prime of

manhood's strength, and he never thought of danger; so on the swimmer went, and never turned his head to see how far he had left the shore behind; till at last, a little wearied, he rested a moment and thought of returning. Then he found he had been carried out far beyond his thoughts or intentions by the strength of the current, and between him and the shore there was a long distance. "It is time, indeed, to return," he said to himself, and struck out once more for land.

But the Lord's eye was on him and He had something to say to him alone on the face of the deep before he touched the land again.

I have said he was strong, and a bold swimmer, but now he found that he had wind and current both against him, and his utmost efforts made no appreciable headway against them. For long he battled on, but the shore was still far off, too far off for any cry of distress to reach it. He raised himself and shouted; no answering voice, no friendly shout replied. Still he struggled on, till worn out by his exertions and utterly exhausted, he felt that nothing but a watery grave was before him. His strokes became feebler and more unsteady each time, and he knew he was losing the little way he had made, and was being drifted seaward. Then he ceased struggling, turned on his back, and gave himself up for lost.

There and then the Lord spoke to his soul.

He had been religiously brought up; nay more, Lord's day after Lord's day, from the pulpit of a fashionable church, he had preached to a large congregation Bible truths as to the way of salvation. He had made Scripture his text, and discoursed ably from it. He had read prayers in public and in private. He had visited in his parish, and administered the sacrament to the dying. He had lived a careful life, and attended to every rite, and till this moment had been on very good terms with himself, fully persuaded that a life such as his was fit to bring to God.

Now, with death and eternity before him, his soul awoke to find he had no hope for eternity, he had never met God, he was not ready to die, he had one thing lacking, he had no link with Christ.

Horror and agony seized him. The noise of the waves seemed to be roaring this verse into his ears again and again, "Lest . . . when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

He felt he had preached a Christ he did not know, and told others of a salvation he himself did not possess. His whole life came before him with its outward ceremonies and its inward hollowness. The life he had so prided himself upon, he loathed now as only a mockery of the God who had said, "My son, give me thine *heart*."

He felt he had given Him his time and his

money, but never his heart; and had thought to merit heaven by these poor gifts. Now he saw them at their true value, "dead works." Now he saw that "without faith it is impossible to please him," that the work that could save his soul must be done for him, and done by another—that the righteousness he had prided himself upon, God looked upon as "filthy rags," and his offerings to God had been like Cain's, bloodless offerings, and "without shedding of blood there is *no remission.*"

It was not concerning his body, but his soul, that he cried there on the mighty deep; there alone with God on the waves, a great cry went up from his heart, "Lord, save *me*, or I perish. God, be merciful to me a sinner, a vile sinner, a hypocrite—save *me.*" Even as he cried the answer came: "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from *all sin.*" "Whosoever believeth on him shall not perish but have everlasting life." Faint and weary, with his natural life almost gone, the once strong man murmured, "Lord, I believe that precious blood was shed for me:" and with that murmur, life, and peace, and rest came to his soul, and then utter unconsciousness.

"Father, father, look ahead, what is that on the waters? surely it's a man," said the young son of the skipper of a fishing smack, which was putting in towards shore. One moment the father looked

in the direction his son indicated, the next he sprang to an oar, calling out to the little crew, "Row for very life, men; there's a man perishing."

The men rowed with a will, not waiting even to ask a question, rowing in silence, bending all their energies to their task. The skipper looked ahead, saw the body of a man sink once, and rise again, rise farther from the shore and nearer to the boat, sink a second time, and this time he concluded it would rise almost close to them if they made a desperate effort: "Bend to your oars men," he cried, "for one last pull and then stop; it is now or never." They did so. When next the body rose it was within arm's length of the boat. Strong arms were stretched out to grasp it, and more than one was prepared for a plunge.

They saw that the man was apparently lifeless, he could not help himself. If he were to be rescued, it must be entirely through the work of those in the boat.

It was no easy task. Had there been more sea on, it would have been an impossibility to bring that apparently lifeless body into the boat. But they managed it, and then took every means in their power to restore animation; making all possible haste towards the shore to get more efficient help. By the time they reached it, they had the satisfaction of seeing the man whom they had rescued show some signs of life.

Plenty of willing hands were found to carry him ashore, but it was a living, breathing man they carried and not a corpse, a living man in two ways, possessing now not only natural life, but life eternal.

A week later in that same fishing smack, the one who had been lifted into it from the waves, in utter helplessness, was sitting in the calm of a summer's evening, telling the skipper and his crew, with some others of the fishermen who had gathered round, the story of what the Lord had done for his soul only a week before, when death and judgement to follow had threatened him.

The men listened intently. He was an object of special interest to them: for had they not saved him from a watery grave?

He spoke to them of Jesus the Saviour, of the impossibility of our doing anything to save ourselves; the work must all be done by Him, or we must be lost; and he read these verses from God's word:

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved). . . . For by grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.”

He illustrated his meaning by referring to his

own condition. "When you saw me in the water that morning, was I in need of salvation, skipper?"

"Ay, ay, sir, indeed you were; as much in need of it as ever I saw anyone yet."

"Could I help myself?"

"No, sir, you were o'er far gone for that; you were like dead."

"Did I feel my need even?"

"No, sir, no, you were past feeling."

"Then I owe everything to you and your brave men?"

"Well, sir, if we had not been by, it would have gone badly with you."

"Exactly; did I pray and beseech you to help me or save me, or take me into the boat?"

"Why, no, sir, you couldn't have done it, and and we didn't need it; we should have been worse than brutes, to see a fellow-creature perishing and not put out a hand to save him!"

"Just so; I did not pray you to save me, I did not help you to save me, *you* did all the work, and I got all the good, I never even lifted a finger for myself. Now, my friends, do you not see how it is with the Lord and us? He does all the work, and we get all the good. We, dead in sins, could do nothing for ourselves. We did not even ask Him to come and save us. He came unasked; He bore the burden of sins; the sinless One suffered in our stead, and now He offers salvation

as His free gift. *He took our place* and offers us His place. You risked getting into my place in order to bring me into your place that morning."

"Oh, sir," said the men in concert, "don't you say any more about that; you make too much of what we did, but we see what you mean, sir; it's very plain. We think God has taught us all a lesson by this."

"One word more, my friends, let me say about your act. Do you think, however long I live, I shall ever forget that morning, ever cease to be thankful to the brave men who rescued me from a watery grave? Do you not think that I shall always carry about with me feelings of gratitude and love for the men who did so much for me? Nay, do not mind my saying it," he continued, as the men disclaimed having done anything but what anyone would do, "I must feel and express my gratitude to you, and this is how it is with us to the Lord. When I know He has saved me at such a cost, I cannot go on just as I did before, as though it were all nothing. I want my life to show out my gratitude and love and praise. I want to be the friend of Christ, as I am your friend to-day."

The men were silent: there was a reality about the whole thing which deeply touched them, and every head was bowed and reverently uncovered during the few words of prayer that followed in

earnest supplication for their souls. In more than one case there was complete surrender to Christ at the time, and the whole of the fruit unto life eternal of that morning's incident, will perhaps never be known till "the day" declares it.

Reader, what must you do to be saved, beyond believing in Jesus?

Nothing either great or small,
Nothing, sinner, no;
Jesus did it, did it all,
 Long, long ago.

"I WILL GIVE YOU REST."

STANDING several years ago, preaching the gospel at a street corner in North London, I especially noticed a young girl, who seemed rivetted to the spot. She appeared to be eagerly drinking in every word, and after I had finished, seemed reluctant to go home. I had been speaking on those precious words of Jesus in Matthew xi., "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."¹

I walked towards her and held out my hand to wish her good night, when she instantly burst into tears, and confessed that she was utterly miserable. Her very heart ached with a felt

burden of her sins, and she longed to know as her very own, that rest of which I had been speaking.

Being pressed for time, I could only stay a few moments then, to seek to point her to Him who once died for such as her, and lives again at God's right hand, a Prince and a Saviour. I urged upon her the importance of an immediate surrender to Christ, assuring her of the danger there was in hesitation. I hastened away, and that night I realised intense joy, in commending her to Him whose heart waits in grace to dispense that sweet rest, known only by those who are brought into relationship with Himself. I felt assured, as my heart turned to God, that He had given me her soul, but felt I could patiently wait, with confidence in Him, till all is declared in that coming day of glory, the anticipation of which has been given to every saint of God.

Several months later, I was travelling by rail in that same part of London, and found myself addressed by someone on the opposite seat in the same compartment, whom I soon discovered to be my former listener.

"I am quite at rest now," she said, "I have turned to the Lord, I know Him as my Saviour, I know He died for me, and I know and rejoice in the fact that God is my Father. I am glad and happy in the enjoyment of it all, for the blood of Jesus has made me whiter than snow; and I am

purged in that blood, and am calm and at rest as I think of the present, or contemplate the future."

I could only say, "Praise God," for I knew that the work that had gone on in her soul was His alone.

Dear christian reader, be encouraged by this little incident, to sow the good seed of the word of God, not being over-anxious to see results, but content to let God give the increase, leaving it in patience to His own unerring wisdom, even, if needs be, till the day when He who sees in secret, shall openly reward.

But I am mostly concerned with my unbelieving readers, for my object in writing is to seek to win their hearts to my Lord. It may be, as I write of rest, that some lips may be inclined to curl, thinking it an unappropriate subject to speak of in a scene where everything is turmoil and confusion, and where anything but rest is daily known. Ah! my reader, none know better than the writer the unrest of the world and everything that is around us, or the unrest of a heart unsoothed by the restful knowledge of God as a Father, and Christ as a Saviour and Friend.

But though you are a stranger to rest, I want you to know it and enjoy it. It is sin that has disturbed man's enjoyment of life, and it is sin that has robbed him of the only true source of rest, and has alienated his heart from God. From the moment that man through sin lost God, and

the rest that is found alone in the knowledge of Him, he has wandered about, a miserable, dissatisfied being, seeking rest but finding it not, in the pleasures of sin. But why could Jesus, when here, offer rest to the heavy-laden? Because He was here to reveal God as the Father; and that revelation was made known when He, in devotedness to His Father's will, surrendered His life to God upon the cross, as the sin-bearer in the stead of the sinner, exposing by that wondrous work, the awful wickedness of the depraved heart of man, and his deep sad need, and on the other hand laying bare the heart of God, in all its compassionate love and pity towards His very enemies, as well as demonstrating to earth and heaven, His absolute intolerance of sin. God, in all His righteousness, was vindicated at the cross, and the need of the sinner met, by the shedding of the blood of Jesus; and God, being perfectly satisfied with Christ's finished work, raised Him from among the dead, and glorified Him at His own right hand. The repentant sinner is now invited into the presence of God, in virtue of the blood of Christ, where alone rest is to be known. As Christ, when in this restless scene, found His rest in the Father, so now, dear reader, it is yours by faith to rest in the same blessed knowledge.

Rest in the world there is none, but in God is sweetest rest. Oh, reader, that you may turn to

God, by faith in Christ, and enjoy this rest now. How tired and sickened the heart must get, that has no repose beyond the resources of this sin-polluted world. But oh, the joy of constantly having the privilege of pillowing the head where John of old pillowed his, even upon the breast of Christ, who was the full expression of the Father, for He could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

"The heart of Christ is beating
 In love to all His own ;
 Though seated high in glory
 He leaves them not alone.
 Lo, I am with you alway,
 To succour and sustain ;
 With you, to bear your sorrow,
 To soothe your aching pain.
 Oh, blessed Lord and Saviour,
 'Tis in Thy heart I rest ;
 I love my head to pillow
 Upon Thy loving breast !"

W.G.

INGRATITUDE.

"**H**AVE you heard of the death of Jimmy S——?" The words formed part of a conversation between two railway-men during a short suburban journey.

"Yes, I knew he was gone," was the reply, given loudly enough for me to hear as I sat in a corner of the carriage. And then followed the

recital of a deed of courage, unknown save to a few, but nevertheless as worthy to be inscribed on the roll of fame as many a deed done in the excitement of battle.

It appeared that one day as Jimmy was walking along close to a canal he heard a cry of distress, and climbing over the fence, he found that a little boy, who had been playing on the bank, had fallen into the water, and was in great danger of being drowned. Without hesitation, though unable to swim, he jumped into the cold water, anxious to save the little one's life. But, alas for him, he soon got out of his depth, and was in as great danger as the one he had come to save.

Some women who had been looking through the fence, but were unable to climb over, saw his terrible plight and ran screaming along the road, to find only a lad in sight. He quickly ran to the spot, and scrambling over the fence was only in time to see an arm reaching out of the water. A stick, flung to him by the women, was stretched out to the hand above the water, and grasped strongly, and with the aid of some children who had run up, Jimmy and the little boy were brought safely to land. The boy was quickly taken home none the worse for his perilous adventure; but Jimmy took a chill, and after lingering a long time, he passed away.

But one remark made by the man who told the

story fixed itself on my mind, and has often given food for thought, not only of this deed of self-sacrifice, but of another sacrifice with which this one is unworthy of comparison. "And what do you think? the parents never even thanked him!" So much for the gratitude of these almost inhuman parents.

But if one's blood almost boils with indignation at the thought of such callousness, think of yourself, my unconverted friend. You have been often told that Jesus died for you, bearing the awful judgement of a holy God against your sin, and yet you have never thanked Him. You are still careless and indifferent about *such* love, for He did not *risk* His life, but gave it willingly, that you might not die for your sins, but rather might live throughout eternity to His praise and glory. Hear His own words, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd *giveth* his life for the sheep."¹ How will you treat such love?

"Is it nothing to you that a Saviour has died?

Is it nothing to you?

Can you carelessly glance at the Lord crucified?

Is it nothing to you?"

Oh, friend, ere the door of mercy be shut, and you be left outside in your sins to perish eternally, to find your place with lost souls in hell, turn to this loving One, who has done so much for

your salvation, and you will find His blessed word ever true, that, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."²

H.W.R.

BOUND FOR ——— ?

"Is this train going to R——?" This was a question asked me not long ago by a gentleman at a railway terminus, who wished to go to that town. I could only tell him I did not know. But as the train was about to start he hurried off to ask the guard who was coming along the platform, and being assured by him, took his seat in the train.

I could not but admire the man's prudence. He wanted to go to R——, and he made sure of the right road by asking the right man at the right time.

Reader, you are on a journey. You are passing along the road of life. There are two roads before you: either one of which you must travel, for you cannot travel both at once. You need not make an effort to go to hell. You will surely get there, if you take no heed.

Dear reader, if you mean to get to heaven, you must be in earnest, and you must make sure of the right road at the right time. Now is the time; now is the day of salvation.

F.A.B.

RITUALISM AND CHRIST.

CONSCIENCES and hearts that have never been exercised about their own need easily take up with externals, and find fault with such as do not observe their superstitions. To eat bread with unwashen hands was a great crime in Pharisaical eyes, who hesitated not, however, to make God's word of no effect by their traditions. He had plainly commanded, "Honour thy father and thy mother;"¹ but these leaders averred that a child giving a gift to the temple was absolved from the responsibility of further caring for his parents, than which nothing can be imagined more heartless and despicable.

People may set aside God's word, and substitute for His teachings the commandments of men, but the Lord Jesus, quoting Isaiah, pronounced their worship in vain, as the heart was far from God. Reader, how much that passes current to-day as worship must in His eyes be regarded as equally futile, and for the same reason! The great

1 Exodus xx. 12

apostle told the men of Athens that God was not worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, and He certainly is not worshipped with men's minds in a ritual or ceremonies of their own devising; for Paul's Master had before declared, "God is a spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth."

Until conscience has owned before God the utter blackness of the heart, out of which "proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness,"¹ nothing has been done in God's sight. Who can escape a place in such a list? The outward, greater sins one may have escaped through God's preventive mercy, but who has not been guilty of pride and foolishness? And we know to offend the law in one point is to be guilty of all.

How, then, is this plague of the heart to be met? What can cleanse such a filthy stable? Let scripture answer: "purifying their hearts by faith."² There the real deep need is met. Faith as to what? perhaps you ask. Let scripture again reply: "that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith which is *in me*,"³ *i.e.*, in Him who once

1 Mark vii. 21, 22

2 Acts xv. 9

3 Acts xxvi. 18

suffered for sins upon the cross, the Just for the unjust ; whose precious blood was shed there, and who is now seated at God's right hand, having finished the work the Father gave Him to do. When one knows one's need thus met, what can the heart do but express itself in worship, praise, and thanksgiving to the God of all grace for "His unspeakable gift."

There was a woman of a cursed race, who, when He was here, addressed the Lord Jesus by a title which gave her no claim upon Him : "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David ; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." The request elicited no reply from Him, but think not He was indifferent to it. The disciples were, for they asked Him to "send her away, for she crieth after us." He would not do this however, for even the Pharisees owned, "this man receiveth sinners,"¹ but He dealt with her conscience.

"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," might seem like a rebuff, but it had the effect of drawing her nearer to do Him homage, as she said, "Lord, help me." This was better : He is Lord of all.

A ruined sinner, however, does not want help but salvation ; help implies that He does part and I do my share ; but that will never do. "It is not

of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy;"¹ and the Lord's reply to her appeal, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs," though apparently severe, was in reality the truest loving-kindness, for it led her to say, "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." To this He responded, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt;" with the result, her daughter "was made whole from that very hour."

Beloved reader, then take this place of being a "dog," with nothing good in or around you, and you shall find all you need in that living Christ now at God's right hand. Is it not sufficient that He says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else?"² Beware, therefore, lest you add ought of man and so despise His absolute grace. Remember, to the despisers it is said, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."³

W.N.T.



"A FEW poor saints of God in the meanest room excel all the unconverted nobility and gentry of the district when assembled in the most magnificent cathedral."

1 Romans ix. 16

2 Is. xlv. 22

3 Acts xiii. 41

A WORD TO PARENTS.

THE article which follows this is commended to the most earnest and prayerful attention of those to whom God has given responsibility over children. Let those who are parents ask themselves what they are doing in view of the ever rising floods of religious infidelity in Christendom. Romanism is sworn to take the Bible out of the hands of your children. Romanism is advancing. Rationalism would persuade them it is made up of old wives' fables. Rationalism is spreading in all directions. You are unable to put your children out of range of the contagion. Infidelity and superstition permeate the literature of the day. They are taught in pulpits and Sunday-schools, in public and private schools, in newspapers and religious periodicals. Your children see it on placards in the streets; they hear it in the parks. Paradoxical as it may seem, the most active country in the world in the circulation of the scriptures is one where the very air is darkened with unbelief in the word of God.

Parents, guardians, Sunday-school teachers, what are you doing to preserve your children from this corrupting influence? We believe there is but one way, and that is, patiently, prayerfully,

and perseveringly to inculcate a love and reverence for God's most holy word. Seek that the words of sacred writ may be stored in both the affections and minds of the little ones.

Remember, the responsibility is *yours* to bring up your children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Do not shirk it. Do not delude yourself that you have discharged your responsibility by committing the religious instruction of your young charges to other persons, however capable they may seem.



YOUNG MINDS BIBLE-STORED.

THE following simple narrative of conversion was originally written with the object of meeting an objection, which some parent had expressed to the writer, against storing the minds of young persons with the letter of scripture when there was no reason to believe that any power had been imparted for understanding what was taught. The facts here set forth go far to shew that such a course may be followed with the Divine blessing, and that a familiarity with the language of God's word will prove a great help and comfort when the Holy Spirit convinces of

sin, and compels the awakened soul to seek refuge from the wrath of God.

One would think that the duty of parents and teachers in this matter was too obvious to be disputed. The Bible should become familiar to the children in Sunday schools, so that their minds being cast, as it were, in a scriptural mould, might be prepared in after-life to understand better those things concerning Himself and His dealings with sinners. We cannot prepare minds or hearts to receive God's truth, neither can we discern those wherein such preparation has been effected, but we can, both with children and adults, sow the good seed, and pray the Lord of the harvest to make it fruitful.

We get examples from God's word : we read of Mary that she kept the words concerning the Babe, and "pondered them in her heart," but understood them not; even to the disciples while in familiar intercourse with their Divine Master all was darkness, as is proved by the expressions, "this is a hard saying," "this saying was hid from them," "they understood not this saying," owing to their worldly notions as to the nature of the kingdom of Christ. Yet the word was preached to them by Jesus Himself to remain in their minds a dead letter till Pentecost, "for the Spirit was not yet given." It was the Lord who opened Lydia's heart, not Paul; yet the word was heard in the

letter by all to whom he preached. Jesus suffered little children to come unto Him, and might not the gracious words He used on that occasion, oft repeated to them by their mothers, have been the means, though not understood, of preparing their minds to receive the gospel preached by the apostles? The mother and grandmother of Timothy were commended, because they had taught him from a child to know the holy scriptures of the Old Testament, though he was not made wise unto salvation till long afterwards, through faith in Christ Jesus, imparted instrumentally by the preaching of Paul.

I would say to every mother, "Go thou and do likewise." "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not which shall prosper." Pray for a blessing—wait for it—expect it. He has said, "My word . . . shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." There is force in this reasoning, and it may be that, with God's blessing, the object of the writer in laying his own example before the hearts of christian parents and others may be accomplished, and some doubting ones may be confirmed in the good old custom of training their little ones in the knowledge of those things which are most surely believed among us, taking for their encouragement the tender invita-

tion of Jesus, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God."

DEAR MADAM,

Recollecting that you expressed a wish to have in writing some account of the effect on my mind of an early acquaintance with the letter of holy scripture, I devote a spare half-hour to the subject, and will state a few simple facts.

In the boarding school to which I was sent, the Bible was read by the pupils twice daily. Each boy in his turn had to read a chapter before morning and evening prayer; and, by previous study, had to learn to read it well. Thus conning it over many times the words must have been impressed on the memory, but no effort was made to retain them, for we were not required to say them from memory, nor was any attempt made to explain the sense. All was apparently forgotten and fruitless. I left school, and remained for two or three years as vain and giddy as the generality of boys; outwardly moral through a strong love of approbation, but with a vile, polluted heart.

When I was about seventeen years of age my mother died suddenly. This was a first, a deep affliction. A year after this, my sorrow being somewhat alleviated by time, the good providence

of God removed me from home to dwell with a pious family in Liverpool. Here, of course, I was present at the family devotions, a mere listener. After a few weeks it was suggested to me that it was downright hypocrisy to kneel in the presence of God and only pretend to pray; but, I am thankful to say, that in a short time it might be said of me, "Behold, he prayeth." About this time I saw my own depravity of heart and I fasted and strove to reach the standard set forth in scripture, but all in vain.

I had been in Liverpool three or four months, and all efforts after holiness in my own strength had proved unavailing, when one day I recollected that Jesus Christ had promised to free from sin, and that I might come to Him just as I was to be made clean. I retired immediately to my chamber and prayed in the words of the leper, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." The prayer was heard; Satan injected no more unholy thoughts into my mind at that time, and, blessed be God, never has he had such mastery over it since as he had before.

But that day another promise was fulfilled to me, namely, "When the Comforter is come, he shall teach you all things" &c., and I was not only freed from my burden but comforted by the Holy Spirit; and this brings me to the point this letter is intended to illustrate. Texts of scripture

presented themselves to my mind in rapid succession throughout the day, and for many days afterwards, forming regular trains of thought. I *thought* in the language of God's word without trying to do so. I could not have avoided it had I desired. The life-giving truths of the gospel were thus preached to me from the long-forgotten stores of my own mind, just as though some person had proclaimed them in my ear.

How long this continued I cannot now remember. Sin, which had appeared quite dead, revived and struggled; and the full tide of blessedness I knew when I first saw the Lord sometimes ebbed and left me dry and barren. Yet I frequently fed with great delight "in the green pastures" of God's word, and when reading books on practical divinity, or hearing a sermon, found great advantage from a previous acquaintance with the very words of holy scripture, so that whatever quotations from the Bible occurred I could detect inaccuracy, or, if correct, receive them with reverence as "in truth the word of God." It was an advantage analogous to that which a person enjoys who has been acquainted in youth with natural objects in contrast with one to whom such objects are new, when, in after life, he studies their laws and uses.

Nor does the advantage end here. Early impressions never fade, while knowledge acquired in

later life is seldom long retained. In adversity, in sickness, on a deathbed, early acquired ideas

“ Still outlive many a storm that has effaced
A thousand other themes less deeply traced.”

Again when it pleases the Lord to use me as a humble instrument to speak to others of His truth, I am sometimes enabled to utter my thoughts in a succession of unpremeditated passages of scripture quite without effort, as if my voice was under the influence of another agency rather than my own. Now this, I think, would not have been so, had not the language of divine revelation been inscribed upon my mind in early youth.

Do not the foregoing facts and reflections demonstrate very fully the duty and advantage of storing the minds of children, even at a very early age, with the blessed words of the book of God, though they may not appear to understand them?

Should there not be in such cases “line upon line, precept upon precept?” Must not “Paul plant and Apollos water,” trusting that God in His own good time will “give the increase,” as He alone can? Casting in this way our “bread upon the waters, we shall find it after many days.” Or if the anxious parent should never find it here, but dying leave an unconverted child, the affliction itself may prove, under the Spirit’s influence, like the darkness which in the material world restores

to sight the stars unseen by day, the precursor of a heavenly light in the soul—a light which shall become brighter and brighter unto the perfect day, and thus lead to the blissful re-union of the once benighted and erring child with the christian parent, who in childhood sowed the seed, and never ceased until death to water it with the tears and prayers of an anxious though believing heart.

The following testimony is given by Newman Hall. “The very first thing that I can remember is sitting on my mother’s knee, and learning from her lips that glorious declaration, ‘God so loved the world,’ etc. I can still feel her hand on my head, and see her earnest face, and hear the music of her sweet voice. The great truth which was so precious to herself she desired her children to know at least in words from their earliest days. Could the meaning be grasped by a mere babe? Not the meaning of the letter, but oh, as expounded by the voice and the look and the manner of a mother so loving, the Saviour, to whom indeed Christ was ‘all;’ this produced an impression deeper than dialectics, more lasting than logic. As I grew up, everything seemed to throw light upon this truth, and to receive light from it. My mother loved me, and she loved God, and God loved us both, and ought I not to love Him? My mother loved me—oh how tenderly! I knew I was precious to her. But God loved His Son, yet

God gave His Son for me! how much then must God love me! There was some mysterious danger to be shunned, some wonderful benefit to be obtained, and Jesus died for me that I might escape the one and find the other. Should I not then trust that Jesus, shun that danger, and seek that salvation? How dear that text has always been to me! It was the first topic I took for a Sunday school address when to a few poor children in a little school on a Kentish heath, with much fear and trembling, I first ventured to speak of Jesus. It was the first text I took when speaking to a group of hop-pickers in the open air. It was the theme of my first sermon, and during my early ministry I preached from that text upwards of fifty times, till, partly to stop myself in so much repetition, I expanded and printed it under the title of *Christ for Every one.*"

I mention all this to show how deep is the impression which may be made by pious mothers on the minds of little children, and how wise it is to teach them the words of scripture even before they can understand their meaning.

“THE TIME IS SHORT.”

ONLY a FLOWER, but it was pretty; and, as the lady sought to grasp it with her outstretched hand, she overbalanced herself, and falling head-

long down the face of the cliff, was shortly afterwards picked up dead on the sea-shore. Truly, "*the time is short!*"

Only a piece of BROWN PAPER; but alas! it was caught by a gust of wind, and flung with some force in the face of a horse that was standing by the side of the pavement in a London street. Rearing suddenly from fright, the bewildered animal plunged forward, and in doing so, knocked down a lady who had only just before left her home. Trampling her violently under foot, it was not long before the action of that lady's heart was stopped by the icy hand of death. Again I say, "*the time is short!*"

Only a HAIR-PIN! but alas! how fatal to its wearer! She was a young French girl, only fourteen, and one day, while romping with her baby brother, she caught him up in her arms and flung herself suddenly back in her father's chair. As she did so that hair-pin pierced her brain, and in a few minutes she was numbered with the dead. How sadly again did those words prove true, "*the time is short!*"

Only a FLY! but unfortunately it stuck in the throat of Nicholas Breakspear, the only Englishman who was ever made Pope; and in a few minutes his earthly career was closed. Once more the unerring words of Scripture come back in all

their solemn meaning, and ever-increasing force, "*the time is short!*"

These are but just a few examples out of countless thousands of similar cases where, from a comparatively trifling and unexpected cause, sudden death may ensue; and should it thus unexpectedly overtake you, dear reader, where, oh where, let me ask you, would you spend your endless eternity? Would it be with Christ in glory, or with Satan in the depths of hell?

Yes, "*time is short;*" but *eternity* knows no end; and either endless joy or endless sorrow must be your portion. Every moment, as it passes, brings you nearer one of these termini; and ere you have finished reading these lines, the Lord Himself may descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God. The dead in Christ would then be raised; and together with the living saints, would be caught up to meet the Lord in the air; while you, if still an unbeliever, dreaming away your tiny span of life, would be left behind in a doomed world to await the solemn judgement of God. Remember, "*the time is short;*" and then, for you, as unsaved there would be nothing left but *everlasting sorrow!* Ere it be too late, cast yourself now, as a poor, lost, guilty sinner, at the feet of Jesus, and He will save you on the spot.

THE INFIDEL'S DEATH.

ONE evening during the summer of 1896, I happened to be in the vicinity of Hyde Park; and knowing that frequently at that time of the year, men of various shades of opinion, political and religious, were in the habit of airing their opinions in the Park, I decided to go and listen. So I made my way to a spot where I saw several crowds collected.

The first crowd I came to were listening to a harangue by a Trades' Unionist; this did not interest me, so I passed on. The next orator was a member of the Christian Evidence Society; I stayed to listen for a short time, and then went to the place where an infidel was holding forth; and the first words that fell upon my ears were, "*If there is a God, I defy Him; I defy Him to close my mouth. I tell you, men, that the bible is a mere invention, a book of lies; there is no God but Nature; there is no heaven, no hell; man has not a soul; the end of each of us is the grave; there is nothing beyond, no God, no hell, no judgement,*" and with many such words of blasphemy, he continued to speak to his audience, his face meanwhile bearing the expression of a veritable fiend; silently I prayed God to have mercy upon him, and upon those who seemed to drink in his words.

Asking permission to speak for one moment (which was granted), I then quoted the words of the Psalmist, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God"¹; "After this (death) the judgement,"² and John iii. 14—19. I also read Rev. xx. 10 to the end. Scoffing laughter greeted this scripture, amidst which I left.

Four years afterwards, while engaged in the Lord's service in East London, I was asked one afternoon to visit a man who was dying; the man had met with a fearful accident during the day, and lay in a hopeless condition. I at once hurried off to the house to which I had been directed. I was shewn at once into the room where the man lay, and the moment I entered through the door, I stopped out of sheer horror, for as I caught a glimpse of the face upon the bed, I knew the man; it was no other than the infidel I had listened to in Hyde Park. I crept to the side of the bed, but my mouth was closed, and my eyes became rivetted on the man's face, for I saw there such a look of terror, that the sight has never yet been erased from my mind and heart. It was the look of a criminal upon whose track a bloodhound had been set, and had traced him and had him pinned in a corner; the man expecting that every moment the hound would seize him by the throat. As I gazed upon the infidel's face, I found my mind at

1 Ps. xiv. 1.

2 Heb. ix. 27.

work asking questions, and the questions were these—Why this look of terror on this man's face? Why are those eyes rolling and hands clutching? What is it he can see, what is he afraid of? Not of death, for I have heard him say, "*That it is but the end of this life;*" not of God, because he says, "There is no God;" not of hell, because there is no such place; he had said so. Ah! there could be no mistaking that look of fear and terror and blank despair, he knew differently now, he was standing upon the threshold of eternity, and the door was slowly, but surely, opening, and beyond it, he saw what? God, the one he said did not exist; more, he saw the throne of judgement, the great white throne. He knew now, that hell was a fearful reality, that the fearful judgement of a holy and righteous God awaited him, and that there was no escape. He was trying to escape, as his restless eyes and clutching hands clearly told.

I tried to speak to him, but my lips seemed sealed. I whispered God's gracious message of love and forgiveness into his ear; I told him that Jesus had died for even him, but all seemed of no avail. Just one hour and twenty minutes afterwards, he passed away through the door into eternity, to stand his trial before the great white throne, and his parting words were, "Gone! Gone! Gone! Gone!" Yes, everything was gone for him, except judgement.

My reader, what about you? That same Judge, that same judgement, that same hell, waits for you if you are unsaved. Do you argue that, "you are not an infidel?" No, perhaps not, but what will you be benefited by your belief in a God, if you do not know that you are a hopelessly lost sinner, and that to save you, God sent His Son into the world, and that that Son shed His precious blood for you on Calvary's tree? It is, I admit, a fearful thing to deny the existence of God, but it is just as bad to acknowledge that God exists but to say that He is a liar, for that is what you do when you reject His Son Jesus Christ.

The "*all*" in Romans iii. 23, includes you, and the "*no difference*" of the 22nd verse puts you upon the same level as the infidel, but, thank God, the "*whosoever*" of John iii. 16, also includes you. What wondrous love God has shewn to us, that "*while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.*"

Five minutes' inspection of your own heart and life must convince you that you are a sinner, and as such, can never enter God's holy presence, and that you therefore need a Saviour if you are ever to enter God's presence, except for judgement; and where are you to find a Saviour? God has provided one. The whole question of sin was raised at Calvary, and Christ there and then bore the awful penalty: and now God offers to the sinner who believes, pardon, full and free. Will

you, my reader, have this pardon? God offers it now; do not wait until it is too late; do not be deluded; there is no hope beyond the grave, only judgement there. Forgiveness, salvation, eternal life, must be had now or not at all, for "he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."³ Let me wisely counsel you. Take God at His word now, and "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

JED.

"UNTIL."

I.—UNTIL THE FLOOD CAME. (JUDGEMENT.)

"As in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and knew not, until the flood came, and took them all away, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Such are the words of Jesus concerning one of the most wonderful events, next to His own death, that has ever happened since the creation of this world. As then, violence and corruption filled the earth, until God's sudden and solemn judgement overtook all the antedeluvians whilst going on in their

daily round of total indifference and carelessness, yea, carnal ease and pleasure, so is it now.

“Hast thou marked,” says Eliphaz, “the old way which wicked men have trodden, which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood; who said unto God, Depart from us; and what can the Almighty do for them? Yet he filled their houses with good things.”

Yes, men’s hearts are by nature just the same now as then. A godless and corrupt world, utterly indifferent to coming judgement, heeded not in that day the solemn warnings of God’s servant Noah, who was “a preacher of righteousness.” And the same complete indifference, spite of God’s goodness, marks the world of the present day, and will continue to do so until the Son of man comes in judgement, as He most surely will, ere long.

As then, swift destruction fell upon a world of godless sinners; and the overwhelming flood took them all suddenly away in the midst of their carnal ease, so will it be, though in another way, “when the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night.” For, when they shall say, “Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape.”

Everything, as regards this world, will go on

just the same as usual, until all man's schemes, ambitions, pleasures, and arrangements will suddenly be stopped by the coming of the Son of man in awful judgement; and, without a moment's warning, sinners will be cut off in their sins. Yes, there will be no escape for the unconverted then, for "every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, amen."

If then the future, as well as the past, speaks so loudly of God's solemn judgement on this doomed world, how do you, dear reader, stand with God now?

2—UNTIL HE FIND IT. (GRACE.)

GOD is a Saviour God, then and now; but what do you know of His transcending grace? "What man of you, having an hundred sheep . . . doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?" Such were the words of Him who is Himself the Good Shepherd that laid down His life for the sheep. What exquisite grace, what surpassing patience; yea, what untiring love is conveyed in that little word *until*!

Yes, "until he find it;" the loss of even one sheep quickens the footsteps of the divine Shepherd! Over mountain, stream, and rugged rock,

does He gladly wander until the straying one is found. Were it not so, the silly, wayward sheep would remain for ever lost on the dark mountains of sin and folly; but the loving Shepherd's feet, though weary, bruised, and wounded, still press on and after the straying one "until he find it," although the sheep, alas, be torn and maimed, yea, lost and helpless, and far, far away from the fold! But what doth that tender Shepherd do? "When he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost."

All heaven is filled with joy, as well as the Shepherd's own heart, when one repenting sinner is found, for, "all we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." When, and where, did God do this?

3—UNTIL THE NINTH HOUR. (CALVARY.)

LET scripture answer. "And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying . . . My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" In those three hours of darkness, the tremendous question

of sin, root and branch, was once and for ever settled between God and Christ. But oh, at what an infinite cost! Christ must needs suffer; and so, in perfect obedience, the Good Shepherd willingly went down beneath the dark waters of death and judgement in order to "seek, and to save, that which was lost."

There was no other way of deliverance than through the death, and blood-shedding, of the holy Lamb of God. It was God who made that sinless Christ to be sin for us; and under its awful burden did He suffer, "until the ninth hour;" and then, when all was accomplished for the glory of God, the holy sufferer, without a murmur and in divine complacency, yields up His spirit, with those memorable words, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." God, and God alone, knows the full value and eternal efficacy of the death and blood-shedding of His own well-beloved Son. Faith rests where God rests, on that one perfect sacrifice for sin; and the empty grave, and the occupied throne, alike attest that God is satisfied with Jesus. Reader, are you also satisfied with Jesus as well as saved?

4—TILL HE COME. (REMEMBRANCE.)

IF you do, in truth of heart, belong to a living Christ, think on these words; "The Lord Jesus

the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For, as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." Can it be, dear reader, that you yourself are one of the blood-bought company, and can yet forget the Master's gracious words, or be indifferent to the one great longing desire of the Good Shepherd's heart, "Do this in remembrance of me?"

"Lord, let thy love constrain
Our souls to cleave to Thee,
And ever in our hearts remain
That word, "Remember me."

5—UNTIL THE DAY BREAK. (GLORY.)

THE eyes of faith are ever gazing onward to the bright and golden morning! The midnight hour is swiftly passing; the "bright and morning star" will soon appear, and then the daybreak, and "the shadows flee away." Yes, surely all around us are but passing shadows, quickly fleeting, whereas the true believer's joys are all up yonder, where shadows are unknown, and where "all things are of God."

When our hearts are really right with Him, our ransomed spirits long for the glory with an infinitely deeper longing than the child does for its toys. When, in our soul's experience, we can truly say, "My beloved is mine; and I am his," the heart within us leaps with holy joy and expectancy, and longs to be with Him in the day of His espousals. Amid the thickening darkness, and the increasing Babel of false tongues, we who love His precious name long to hear the voice of the returning Bridegroom, "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." Then will our joy be full; the Bridegroom and the bride together rejoicing, and our hearts for ever satisfied. Meanwhile, the language of each waiting soul finds expression in those lovely words, "Until the day dawn, and the shadows flee away, turn my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountains of Bether."

This no doubt looks onward to the future day of Israel's deliverance, when with joy and gladness of heart they will acknowledge their returning Messiah, and own His righteous sway; but oh, that the spirit of these words were more generally found among all God's people to-day, so that, amidst earth's fitful shadows, their deep desire might be that Christ should be everything, yea, "all in all," upon the mountains of division (or Bether), existing all around!

THE SAVIOUR GOD.

“God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” 1 Tim. ii. 3—6.

How little is the truth believed, so distinctly set forth above, that God would “have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth;” and yet there it is, with all its blessed inclusiveness, and for you, my reader, in all your distrust of Him, and with all the sins you have committed against Him.

Man soon curses his fellow-man; and we, knowing the scriptures, need not be surprised, for Romans iii. 14, speaking of the natural man says, “whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.” God’s heart, however, is one of love; He “so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son,” and His desire for poor lost man is his possession of eternal life and salvation, and these are to be obtained, not by working for them, but by coming to “the knowledge of the truth;” first of all, that in yourself you are a ruined sinner, and then, that in Him, and of Him, is alone to be found what you need.

“There is one God:” this is no denial of the three persons of the Godhead so distinctly set out in Matthew xxviii. 19: “baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy

Ghost," and implied, when man was created, in Genesis i. 26, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,"—the God spoken of in the following verse, "So God created man in his own image." The oneness of God is, however, insisted on to keep man from the foolish surmisings and idolatrous tendencies of his own heart. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," is the preface to what was enjoined on them to love Him "with all thine heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might," but which neither they, nor any lost sinner, could ever fulfil. The exhortation to "hear," however, is needed, as showing us that the living God is one who reveals Himself. He is Light as well as Love. Blessed be His name, whilst His light shows up our darkness, it reveals His provision.

"One mediator," no other is needed, "between God and men," there must be no intervening third party, "the man Christ Jesus" alone, for He can stand in man's stead, suffer in his behalf, atone for his sins which bullocks nor sheep could never really do. Yes! most truly so, for it goes on, "Who gave himself," no other man could do this, however wealthy otherwise, for Psalm xlix. 7 declares "that none of them can by any means redeem his brother nor give to God a ransom for him." He who is Christ and God over all, blessed for ever¹ in one adorable person, has however accomplished this,

and unsought, unasked, *given Himself* "a ransom for all." The magnitude of your and my ruin, reader, may be gauged by the price paid; the durability and solidity of my (may I say, your?) salvation and life, by the One who paid it.

Oh, hast thou accepted Him as thy Saviour, and art thou resting in that death of His which He accomplished at Jerusalem? None took His life from Him; He laid it down of Himself. Rest in Him, in His peerless love, in His precious blood which cleanseth from all sin. What He has done is "to be testified in due time." Now is that time, but the pardon it contains for you is fast ebbing away if you do not accept it now. "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry;" that may be now, and when He has come every Christ-rejecter or neglecter will find, as far as they are concerned, His work all unavailing for them. Thank God, it is not so now! How the apostle valued the testimony is shown in what follows: "Whereunto I am ordained a teacher and an apostle, I speak the truth in Christ and lie not, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity." If he thus valued the message for you, a message weighted with eternal salvation for your precious soul, ought not you to value it beyond everything else, and bless and adore the Saviour God who sent His only begotten Son at such a cost to save you? God grant you may, for Christ's sake. W.N.T.

“I KNEW WHEN THE BURDEN FELL OFF.”

THESE words came from an elderly woman, who had evidently led a hard-working life; in fact, some of my readers would have wondered how she had found time for “religious” things. She had left her wood-chopping as I came near, and readily entered into conversation, when she found that I had come with a gospel message. Again one proved what an attractive power there is in the name of Jesus.

She told me of earlier years, when she first knew how serious the burden was. Long did she desire to be relieved of it, before she just became willing to be saved in God’s way. The question had been too serious to be lightly put aside, hence her anxiety of soul. She longed to know how God could be just and yet the Justifier of the sinner. I could well understand the deep feeling with which she said, “I knew when the burden fell off.”

Has my reader ever known his sins to be a serious *burden*, or have they been excused as though of little account? God alone knows what your answer to these questions is; but I beg you in any case to look at His estimate of sin. I see Him looking down upon it as such a terrible thing, that Christ must go to the cross and bear my sins in His own body on the tree, if I, the sinner, was to be saved. But as I view Him there, I learn too

that God so loved me as to give Him to die in my place. As one in deepest need, I accept Him, I believe in Him, for I see that there is no other way of salvation.

The one of whom I write had learned this, after all her thoughts and efforts had been found of no avail, and she had rested in Christ and what He had done for her. Some will question her right to say that she "knew," but I dared not, as she was trusting in Christ. God is satisfied with His work, are you? If not, why not? He will add nothing to it, and whilst you remain in the distance arguing about it, you may perish in your sins. Be wise now, own your need as a sinner, and trust Christ as your Saviour.

During the same series of visits I spoke of the gospel to an aged man, and was struck with the response obtained—"I don't know." What a contrast with the former case, and how solemn the words! On the brink of eternity, and in uncertainty as to the future! In a land of bibles, where God has spoken as nowhere else, and yet without Christ. As I sounded the blessed news in his ear, it was with a deep sense of its value, as well as of the value of a never-dying soul. Of the result of that message, I cannot speak, but may my reader see the blessedness of the certainty which God gives to those who believe in His Son.

LIEUTENANT T—— AND THE HIDDEN BIBLE.

“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.”

IN the terrible times of the French Revolution of 1793, there lived in the county of Suffolk, near the sea-coast, a wealthy farmer, originally of Danish descent. A numerous offspring graced his ample board, seven of whom were sons. Unlike too many agriculturists of more modern days, this worthy farmer, whom we will call Mr. T——, did not bring up his boys in idleness and imaginary gentility; neither did he fall into the too common error of supposing that his own calling must of necessity become theirs also. Each was suitably educated for some useful employment or profession, in the choice of which, inclination and adaptability were, as far as possible, consulted.

In the stormy time which succeeded the “Reign of Terror” in France, when devastating wars convulsed the whole continent of Europe, and shook even our island home, when volunteer bands, recruiting companies, and press-gangs kept up a continual excitement throughout the country, numbers of young men forsook more peaceful employment to devote themselves to the vain pursuit of military or naval honours, while many more were forcibly carried on board ship by the press-

gangs, and there compelled, willing or unwilling, to serve "before the mast."

The threatened invasion of Napoleon Bonaparte kept the inhabitants of our seaport towns constantly on the alert, and none more so than the population of Yarmouth and its neighbourhood. It would have been strange, if under these circumstances every one of the seven sons of Mr. T—— had remained unaffected by the general excitement.

Yarmouth Roads were crowded with ships of war; boats with their complement of "blue-jackets" and officers in uniform were continually passing to and fro, and such circumstances naturally exerted an influence on many. Among the rest the subject of this little narrative early evinced a decided partiality for a naval life, and while yet but a boy of twelve years of age was appointed midshipman on board his Majesty's ship *Majestic*.

At this period Edward T—— knew nothing of the Lord Jesus Christ. He appears indeed, in common with all his family, to have been trained in habits of the strictest integrity and moral rectitude, but however valuable such principles may be in their proper place, they are but poor safeguards against temptations from within and from without. Surrounded on board ship by those who despised religion, blasphemed the name of God habitually, and were prepared to ridicule even common morality, it would have been by no means strange

had one so young speedily lost every vestige even of that which early training and home influence had given him. That he did not do so was assuredly owing to the watchfulness and overruling mercy of One who never slumbereth, and who, having purposes of grace towards him, kept him in the hollow of His hand, all through the dangers moral and physical by which he was everywhere surrounded. That he maintained his integrity, and that too in such a manner as to attract the notice and win the confidence of his superiors, his parents had what must have been to them most gratifying proof within little more than a year after his appointment.

A small Dutch vessel having been captured by the *Majestic* off the coast of Holland, was, as usual in such cases, to be sent to England. Under these circumstances it was customary to put a crew on board sufficient to work, and if necessary, to defend the prize, and to select the most trustworthy midshipman to command.

Although Edward T—— was at this time little more than thirteen years of age, his captain chose him for this service, and with eight men under his command he set sail in the Dutch galliot for Yarmouth, where he appears to have arrived without any incident worthy of notice, except the fact that, boy as he was, he was counted worthy of this trust, and fitted to control a crew of eight rough sailors.

Having successfully discharged this duty he shortly sailed again in the *Majestic* from which vessel, after about three years, he passed into another man-of-war called the *Zenobia*. Writing from on board this ship, when about seventeen years of age, to his parents, he speaks of himself as being "where nothing but vice and folly in every shape are to be seen;" as "surrounded by vice of every kind," and "samples of human wretchedness and depravity." What terrible circumstances for a youth at such an age to be in! Up to this time, and for some years afterwards, he seems still to have been ignorant of Christ, while his only load-star was filial affection. For this he was remarkable through all the change of scene, excitement of war, and influences of companionship. Love to his dear parents breathes through every letter he wrote home all through his many wanderings. "Thank God," he exclaimed in one such letter, "those sentiments of gratitude and esteem which were inculcated in my early years, and fostered by the tenderness of my parents, are still dear to me."

In this he is a bright example even to the unconverted readers of this little narrative; and a happy thing it was for himself that through God's goodness to him those sentiments were maintained so warm and true, for without doubt they were instrumental, in the absence of higher principles, in

saving him from many a sorrow by exercising a control over his actions and supplying motives without which he might have been swallowed up in the vortex of evil which so incessantly surrounded him.

Time passed on, and Edward T—— had now become a lieutenant on board the *Volontaire*.

During a long and tedious cruise off the South American coast he was engaged, on one occasion, in reading Rollin's *Ancient History*. His object, in all probability, was chiefly to pass away time, which hung heavily on his hands, by reading a useful and attractive work. Little did he know the momentous consequences which the perusal of that old book would lead to. On what apparent trifles are sometimes made to hinge results of incalculable importance!

Rollin's History contains many references to scripture, but Lieutenant T—— had not so much as a Bible in his possession. Wishing to pursue his study, he inquired for one, but for some time no such thing was to be had throughout the ship. What the size of the *Volontaire* may have been it is impossible now to say, but there were probably several hundred men on board, yet not a Bible was known to be among them. At length a brother-officer recollected that an aged relative had given him one, which, out of respect for the donor, he had accepted but had never since looked at. After some rummaging it was at length

discovered at the bottom of this officer's sea-chest, and handed to Lieutenant T——.

Sitting down to compare the references given in Rollin's work, merely as a matter of historical research, he was led on by Him who from his early boyhood till now had so graciously preserved him from the numberless dangers incidental to his profession and all its associations. It was not indeed as the scoffer or the infidel that he began to peruse the scriptures. He had no doubt been trained up to reverence the Bible as God's word, but that strange reverence with which so many regard the book, while they utterly disregard its exhortations, threats, promises, and pleadings, is not only inconsistent with itself, but often sadly deceives the soul; and but that the grace of God opened his eyes, it would perhaps only have had the effect of causing him to esteem himself better than those around him, who so completely despised it.

But who shall estimate the value of the opportunity now given to this young officer as in the solitude of his own quarters he sat reading the written word? "For 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?" Attracted he knew not how, or why, Lieutenant T—— read on. Rollin's History was forgotten; the Bible so long despised and left at the bottom of his brother-officer's sea-chest was

studied now no longer as a book of reference, but for its own sake. Whether any particular passage was used by the Spirit to arouse conviction we are not told, but ere he laid it aside he had discovered the power of the word, and learned experimentally that "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul."

"The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." Edward T—— was one of these: the "voice of the Son of God" reached him through the written word, on the wide ocean, alone in a crowd of sinners whose very trade was violence; far away from home and all its kindly influences, and without the intervention of one human agent. Brought to Jesus, washed in His precious blood, made a new creature, this affectionate son was now become a child of God indeed; and when, not very long afterward, he was permitted to return home and the long war came to an end, his sense of the great goodness of the Lord and the glorious grace displayed towards him was such that, in the face of many difficulties, he resolved henceforth to devote himself to the service of his blessed Master.

Laying aside his sword and all the trappings, honours, and prospects of his profession, he gave himself to the ministry of the word, and for two-and-thirty years laboured in the gospel with an

earnestness and diligence becoming one who under such peculiar circumstances had learned it as "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

He has gone to his rest ; the *Volontaire* has long since passed from the face of the ocean ; the empty honours won upon her decks, like the smoke of her guns, have fled away for ever. Some of those who walked her planks and climbed her shrouds, it may well be, lie buried in unfathomable depths, waiting for that awful moment when "the sea shall give up the dead that are in it ;" but he who sought and found, and read the long-despised and hidden Bible, lives an eternal monument of the saving grace of God, an example of the blessed truth that "the law of Lord is perfect, converting the soul." J.L.K.

THE GOSPEL AT HOME.

THE privileges of the Israelites were hereditary and descended by birth to the children from their parents. It was not a vain thing to have Abraham as ancestor. But the blessings of Christ are by faith, personal and individual. The children of God are not such on account of fleshly parentage, but are those who have believed on the name of Christ. "As many as received him [Christ, the Light of the world], to them gave he

power to become the sons [children] of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”¹

Do Christian parents consider sufficiently the necessity for their children to be born from above—to be born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever?² It is thus, and thus only that spiritual privilege is transmitted. We have an example of Christian pedigree in the New Testament. The “unfeigned faith” so conspicuous in the life and conduct of Timothy was found in his mother, Eunice, and in his grandmother Lois—three christian generations, in fact.³ In the case of Timothy the good seed was sown in the morning of life; ⁴ it fell into good ground; it bore fruit manifold.

Let the truths of the gospel be taught at home to the children. Let instruction in the word be communicated with the authority of the father and with the love of the mother. Parental teaching may be supplemented but should never be supplanted by the teaching and preaching of others. Let this personal interest and effort on behalf of the eternal welfare of the children be supported by the father’s prayers and the mother’s tears. God will honour the gospel taught thus at home.

1 John i. 12, 13

2 1 Peter i. 23

3 2 Tim. i. 5

4 2 Tim. iii. 15

FOUR SOLEMN REALITIES.

"As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many: and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Hebrews ix. 27, 28.

As we ponder over this solemn statement of the Spirit of God, four startling and tremendous realities, from which there is no escape, force themselves upon our minds, and claim our most serious attention. Briefly, they are these: (1) Death, (2) Judgement, (3) Christ's first coming, and (4) His second coming.

(1). All must admit that the greatest and most convincing preacher the world has ever known is Death. Its voice, too often, alas! unheeded, has now rung through the length and breadth of the earth for well-nigh sixty centuries; and its very presence in our midst is the unmistakable proof, if proof be needed, of man's sin, guilt and total departure from God. Were there no sin, there would be no death; for "when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned." Notwithstanding the appalling fact that death has slain its countless millions in the ages past, and claims fresh victims every day, yet man is careless still, and oft-times

has no thought for the future until his own death draws near. Then, perchance, the question may arise in his heart, "Is there a God; and if so, have I to meet Him?"

Ah! dear reader, death follows sin, as sure as night follows day. Have you then yet faced the question of your own death?

(2). If not, just read the next four words over and over again till you believe them, "After this the judgement." This is the second great reality which demands your earnest attention—"the judgement:" and clearly this refers to the judgement of the dead, although it be equally true that both the quick (or, living) as well as the dead will be judged, though not at the same time. Already the Judge of all the earth has spoken; and His sentence has gone forth, so that "every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

How then, dear reader, if you should die "guilty," can you escape the righteous judgement of God? Does not Christ Himself declare, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Resurrection follows death, and should you die in your sins, you must rise again in your sins, and stand before the bar of God in your sins; to hear from the lips of Him who will then sit upon the Great White Throne, your final judgement, and eternal doom.

Appalling fact! the wicked dead will then be "judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Cain the murderer will be there, and so will Balaam the unconverted preacher. Herod, who lived and died in sin, will be there; as well as Pilate, who found no fault in Christ, yet, when he had scourged Him, delivered Him to be crucified. Felix, too, the procrastinator, and Agrippa, who was "almost persuaded," but lost, will also be there; but, dear reader, the supreme question of all others for you is, "Will you be there?"

Let me answer that question for you. Unless you are now sheltered from judgement by the blood of the Lamb, and know your sins forgiven before you die, you must, you will be there! Well may you ask, if anxious about your soul, "Is there no way of escape?"

(3). Thank God there is! and the third great reality of which this Scripture speaks supplies the answer—mark those two little words, "As," and "so"—"As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered, to bear the sins of many."

Here then do we find the grace that brings

salvation. Sin is in itself an offence to God, a slur upon His fair creation, and the deadliest foe to all that He is in His holy nature as "Light" and "Love." If man, therefore, is to be blest, sin must be dealt with, root and branch, and righteously put away for God's glory, or God and man can never dwell together. Thus the cross becomes the one and only place where God and the guilty sinner could meet. Listen then to the voice of Him who spake from the eternal glory, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God ; a body hast thou prepared me." And so, "the Word was made flesh ;" and in due time the lowly Nazarene, "through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God."

Here then, poor sinner, is presented to your gaze the holy Lamb of God, the divine Substitute, the willing Victim, who "once, in the end of the world, hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." One offering for sin in contrast with the many offerings which had gone before (but which were only types and shadows of the true), was found at Calvary's altar ; for there the blood was shed, and there a complete atonement was made once for all by Him whose name is Jesus. Once was enough ; and by that one offering all who believe in Jesus are "perfected for ever."

Thank God, it will not be few but many, who

will fill Heaven's courts with ceaseless praise, as the answer to the travail of Christ's soul ; for He gave "his life a ransom for many."

Perhaps you ask, "Why 'many' and not the sins of 'all,' seeing Christ died for all ;" but the answer is simple, though solemn : all do not accept Christ as their own personal Saviour, and hence, by their own fault, they perish in their sins. But for all who trust the precious blood of Jesus, sin's judgement has been borne by Him ; and there is therefore now "no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus ;" for "As he is, so are we [who believe] in this world."

(4). But the Saviour's heart will never be satisfied till all the blood-bought ones are with Him in glory ; hence the fourth divine reality of those closing words, "to them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation."

Yes, the Bridegroom is coming for His bride ; and "the Father's house" is the believer's bright eternal home. In a moment He may come, for His promise is, "Surely, I come quickly." Scripture is silent as to the time of His coming, but is very definite as to the place of meeting.

Yes, "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise first ; then we which

are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." The salvation (or, deliverance) for which the believer waits is the redemption of his body, for his soul is redeemed already.

Reader, will you meet the Lord in the air at His second coming? If not, you must be left behind in the doomed world. If you are not for Christ you are against Him, there is no neutral ground. Heaven's door may close at any moment; and you will be shut outside for ever, to mourn, when too late, your madness and your folly in the depths of an endless hell.

S.T.

JESUS THE SAVIOUR.

IN this sad world appeared One, such as it had never seen before. There in a manger lay the Son of God; angels proclaimed His birth; lowly shepherds first saw and worshipped Him, the King of the land; but Herod sought to slay Him. Why was this enmity against the Babe?

Well did Satan know that this Babe in a few years would foil him and take away his spoil. He remembered what God said to the serpent when man first fell under his dominion: "It [the woman's seed] shall bruise thy [the serpent's] head."

When Jesus was born he tried his utmost to destroy Him. He sought to get the Lord under his rule during His temptation.

But from earliest childhood we see in Jesus a life of holiness; in the temple we find Him speaking of His Father, doing His Father's will. During His short life on earth He was ever an utter stranger in a cruel world filled with bitter hatred against Himself.

He was on earth the Man of perfection. Passing along He healed the sick, gave life to the dead, and taught and preached wherever He turned. Men rejected this loving Jesus, and "they thrust him out." But the time came when He must become obedient to death itself.

Betrayed by a false disciple, forsaken of His followers, we see Him on the cross. From judgement to judgement He was taken. Thorns upon His head, spitting in His face, slapping Him with the palms of their hands, yet He opened not His mouth.

But there remains a time yet more solemn—the long hours upon the cross, when God forsook Him, as He Himself cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Our sins had placed Him there, a faultless crucified man. He died, and a soldier pierced His side, and there came forth water and blood to cleanse any who come to Him.

THE TWO TRAINS.

“**I** BEG your pardon for stopping you, sir, but could you direct me to Waterloo Station? I am a stranger in town, and do not know my way.” Thus was I addressed one morning lately when walking up the Strand. Not being very far from Waterloo Bridge, I was enabled quite easily to direct the gentleman who had stopped me. He understood my directions, and at once went forward on the right road.

As I resumed my way and pondered, I could not help thinking how in the smallest matters of every day life, men and women, as a rule, endeavour to be on what is called the safe side. If a train is to be caught, the time is carefully looked up in the time table, and the route to the station carefully noted, and every precaution is taken to ensure being there in time. If the way is not known, then inquiry takes place until the right road is pointed out.

Yet in the longer journey to be undertaken, there are no general preparations made. I passed hundreds of people in the Strand and Fleet Street

that morning, and at Ludgate Hill I stood for a few minutes at the corner, and I heard scores of people inquiring for various points, but not one did I hear inquire the way of *salvation*. No one asked the way to the home of the Son of God. Every one had something else to think about or do; all were too busy, too much occupied with the things of this life to care about the welfare of the immortal soul.

What about you, my friend, who have this paper in your hand? *You* too have an immortal soul, you too must undertake the journey from time into eternity. Have you made any preparations for the journey? Is your passage booked? Do you know where you are going? If not, what a foolish condition, to be on a journey and not to know whither, and more sad still, quite indifferent. And yet is it true to say, *Not knowing whither?* when the merest child knows that, *if it is not to heaven it must be to hell*, that there is no middle course, that we are either lost or saved, that we are going either to heaven or hell.

The man that spoke to me was on either the the right road or the wrong road to Waterloo, and he had common sense enough to inquire. My friend, what of you? I will assume that I am speaking to one who does not belong to Christ, one who is unsaved.

My friend, let me imagine you have arrived at

a station, and are on the platform. Two trains are waiting, one on either side of the platform; the one on the left-hand side has boards all along it labelled in this fashion:—A good time—Plenty of life—Pleasure—Prosperity—Society. The conductor of this train is a wily fellow, and he is careful not to shew all his hand, so he has turned a number of boards over and presented their blank sides to us. Let us examine them and see what is written on them. The first we come to is The wages of sin, *Death*—After Death the Judgment—The JUDGE says, “Condemned already”—Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire—All the dead shall stand before God.

Let me ask you to look more closely into the face of the conductor of this train; there you will see cunning, deceit, malice and wickedness. Read his character written in large letters, “A liar from the beginning;” “the father of lies;” “the destroyer.” He whispers to all as they come on the platform, “All is free,” and thousands enter this train, and exultation is written largely all over this conductor’s face; he rubs his hands with glee, and chuckles to himself, “How they swallow the bait!”

There are boards also on the other train: let us read these—Eternal life—Forgiveness of sins—The righteousness of God—Redemption through

the blood—The fare has been paid—The journey is guaranteed by the righteousness of God—Salvation without money or price—Saved by grace—Glory—and many more sweet and precious things.

Do you see the One in charge here? In His face is sorrow, shame, suffering, pity, love, victory, triumph, glory, grace. You can read His worth and character too, "Chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely;" "The righteous one;" "the sinner's substitute;" "JEHOVAH, God the Creator;" "the way, the truth, the life." Hush, He is speaking; let us draw near and listen to what He is saying, "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be whiter than snow." "Come now, let us reason together." "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed out of death into life." "Now is the accepted time." "Come unto me." This One possesses the passport to glory, and it can be seen in His hands and His side. It is His precious blood.

O friend, the flight of time is fast and sure. Eternity draws on apace. Christ the Son of God has died, and He offers you a present, full, and free salvation. He purchased your redemption by His own death. Believe and your title to glory you may read in His blood.

HOW TO TREAT AN OUTCAST.

I SAMUEL XXX.

THE chapter at the heading of this paper commences with a very dark hour for David, and its close ends with a very bright one, suggestive of "the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow," only with this difference, that the sufferings of the first-named were brought about by his own self-will, and the spoil he obtained was given in unmerited goodness, whilst those of the latter were consequent on His obedience, and the glory He has obtained is an act of righteousness on the part of God.

It was terribly sad for David on his return to Ziklag to find that the great enemy of God and His people Israel, the Amalekites, had invaded that city, smitten and burned it, and carried away captive all that was dear to the heart of His anointed and his servants: but happily for David, Jehovah had said to Moses, "The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation;" and Moses had enjoined on Israel, "Thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it;" and the believer rejoices to know that "the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."¹

Troubles culminated, however, when the people began to speak of stoning David, quite unmindful of how kind he had been when "every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented gathered themselves unto him, and he became captain over them," in the days of the cave of Adullam ; but what of Him who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom, and against whom not only "took they up stones to cast at him," but afterwards cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him."

David, however, encouraged himself in the Lord his God, sought Him through the priest and the ephod, and in answer to his inquiry, got more than he asked by being assured he should not only pursue and overtake as he had requested, but "without fail recover all," which he had not asked, but doubtless heartily desired. God delights to meet need ; do you know it, my reader ? The Lord Jesus in His fearful agony in Gethsemane prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me : nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." He was heard in that He feared ; but the precious Saviour first drained the cup of judgement, tasted death for every man, before He was delivered out of it, raised and exalted to God's right hand.

David now sets forth with the assurance of

victory, and on his way his servants fall in with a poor outcast Egyptian whom they bring to David, who gives him "bread and he did eat, and they made him drink water," and otherwise met his need. We want too, reader, to bring you to Jesus: none but He can do you good, be they who they may. He says, "He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." No terms are asked of you, nor were any of the Egyptian; his need was the occasion of the grace that met him. Grace, however, never makes light of sins that have been committed, nor of the sinner's utterly ruined and rebellious condition; and when grace has been received and need met, then for our good, proving comes, in order not to shake our confidence in "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out,"¹ but that we may know grace fully and enjoy it the more thoroughly.

Hence David questions the young man, "To whom belondest thou and whence comest thou?" Two searching inquiries for any soul, which must be faced and answered, for there must be repentance toward God as well as faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.² How does the youth answer? "I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite." In analogous words, "Nothing but a worldling, and a servant of the devil;" and for the

¹ John vi. 37

² Acts xx. 21

proof of this see Ephesians ii. 2, 3. A nice service, verily! for he adds, "my master left me because three days ago I fell sick." We read of another, "then entered Satan into Judas," and when he had done the devil's work and said to his agents, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood," he is coolly answered, "What is that to us? see thou to that;" and did Satan help him then? No! he "departed and went and hanged himself."

"Whence comest thou?" is met by (amongst other things), "we burned Ziklag with fire." All is now fully out; the man had acted as an enemy of David. Man is an enemy of God; "the carnal mind is enmity against God," says His word; also, "there is no difference, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" hence His commendation of His own love is so precious, for it was "while we were yet sinners Christ died for us;"¹ we were neither righteous, nor good, *i.e.*, kind, as pre-supposed in the case for which, peradventure, some might even dare to die. All is now out, and instead of killing the poor Egyptian, David trusts him, "Canst thou bring me down to this company?" he asks, and wondrous to note, He who charges His angels with folly deigns to say, "to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."²

The young man, however, is not so prepared as

1 Rom. v. 8

2 Isaiah lxvi. 2

yet to rest in David ; "Swear unto me by God," says he "that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company." Will the Lord Jesus do either that the Egyptian dreaded? Nay. He says, concerning those who believe in Him, His sheep, "I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."¹ The young man is now in the host of David ; with him when he falls on his foes, who were eating, drinking, and dancing ; and with him when he smote them, and there escaped not a man, "save the four hundred who rode on camels and fled." David's greater Son is coming again, and albeit His enemies may say, "Peace and safety," sudden destruction will come upon them, and they shall not escape.²

Are you, my reader, one of these, or are you of those who will be with Him when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believe?³ If the latter, it will be entirely because you have believed the testimony of God concerning His Son. It is blessed to know that the Lord Jesus not only did all that was needed for the sinner's salvation on the cross, but He has obtained glory in doing it. He claimed this in John xvii., "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O

1 John x. 28

2 1 Thess. v. 3

3 2 Thess. i. 10

Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was ;” and as David insisted on dividing the spoil amongst his friends, so the Lord Jesus says further on in that chapter, “The glory which thou gavest me I have given them.” Could love go further, dear reader? Surely not ; and all, all is yours, if you believe in Him whom God sent, not “to condemn the world but that the world through him might be saved.”¹

W.N.T.

ETERNITY.

ETERNITY, eternity—what momentous issues hang upon that one word, and who shall measure its ceaseless ages, whether past or future, or unfold its deathless import for good or ill, to every child of Adam? As its solemn echoes fall upon our listening ears, well may we ask ourselves, What, by comparison, are all the fleeting things of time and sense, but so many idle dreams ; and what are all men’s loftiest ambitions but dung and dross? yea, only “vanity and vexation of spirit.” Yet, strange to say, once only in all the scriptures of truth does this solemn and heart-searching word occur ; and it is from the inspired pen of the prophet Isaiah that this soul-stirring truth, in all its tremendous reality, is brought before us ;

and by God Himself: "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."¹

Thus do we learn from God's own lips that nothing less than eternity itself is His perpetual dwelling place; and He, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting," declares, "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool, where is the house that ye build unto me, and where is the place of my rest?" What then is the finite in the presence of the infinite; and who, by searching, can find out God? What, too, is proud man but a worm of the dust; and what is time but an infinitesimal atom, a mere speck, as it were, on the shoreless ocean of eternity?

Seeing then, that eternity's heights are measureless, its depths fathomless, its lengths limitless, and its breadths boundless, let me ask you, dear reader, What personal interest has it for you, and where, oh where, will you spend it? Even now, as you read these lines, you are, as it were, standing on its brink; one more step, and you will cross the line and be in it! Forget not, however, that the God who inhabits it is the One to whom every creature must give account, and you yourself must

either meet Him now in a day of grace, or hereafter in a day of judgement. Gaze upward for a moment to yon heavens, and search out, if you can, its myriads of stars; turn your eyes back again to earth, and behold its many sea-swept shores with all their countless grains of sand. Then direct your wondering gaze to all the fields and meadows, and count, if you can, each tiny blade of grass, and each separate leaf that grows on each separate tree. When you have done this, then allow in your reckoning an interval of, say, ten million years between the counting of each individual star, each separate grain of sand, each tiny blade of grass, and each particular leaf. Were it possible for you to make so gigantic a calculation, yet when all was done, and all those countless millions of millions of years had run their course, no nearer would you be to the end of eternity than when you first began to count.

Eternity, then, is your certain goal; as for time, it is but a finger-post to shew you the way; but, let me ask you, which way? For you, is it heaven or hell for all eternity? Christ or Satan for all eternity? Joy or sorrow, singing or weeping for all eternity? None but yourself can supply the answer. Perchance, it may be, this most important of all questions has never really cost you one single anxious thought, or ever aroused your dormant conscience.

While others have made their choice, you, perhaps are still careless; and while countless millions are saved and happy, you alone are unmoved, and totally indifferent. Alas, alas! how can it be that, although God and Christ, the Holy Ghost and Satan too, as well as time and even death itself are all alike in such deadly earnest, yet you alone are not? Why, oh why is this, dear unsaved friend? Think, oh think, of your immortal soul which can never die, but must live for ever either in joy or sorrow, throughout the countless ages of eternity. Why then should your precious soul (which is of infinitely greater value than all the world), be eternally lost, when Jesus, the Son of the living God, has died to save you.

Why weep for ever in the "lake of fire," when glory's gate stands open wide to let you in? Your sins may be, and probably are, more in number than the hairs of your head, but the divine answer to them all is the blood that flowed from the once crucified, but now glorified, Jesus; and God's word declares that "through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." Lost, helpless and defiled, yea, guilty sinner though you are, mercy still pleads for your soul, and the precious blood of that once slain Lamb is the sure and certain—as well as the only—passport to the realms of glory. Such is the eternal value and efficacy of the atoning work of Christ, that God

cannot refuse the guiltiest sinner who rests thereon for salvation ; and pardon, peace, and everlasting life may be yours this very moment, if you believe in Jesus now.

The cross where He died, and the throne He occupies, are the eternal proofs, if such were needed, that "God is just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." In the light of Calvary and all that was accomplished there by the lowly Nazarene, heaven and earth alike testify in unison with all the countless millions of the redeemed, that "God is love." The wounded hands and feet and side of the Man, Christ-Jesus, are the everlasting proof of it ; and to you He sends His own unchanging message of love, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

" Could I with ink the ocean fill,
 Were all the earth of parchment made,
 Were every blade of grass a quill,
 And every man a scribe by trade—
 To write the love of God to man,
 Would drain the ocean dry ;
 Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
 Though stretched from sky to sky." S.T.

"BELIEVE IN THINE HEART."

How many there are who when exhorted to repentance, and to a personal faith in the Lord Jesus, will at once reply that they "*do believe.*" Yet at the same time they are perfect

strangers to the peace, the rest, the joy and the hope which believing in Jesus brings. And like too many who say they "believe" there is no proof in the life that they have "turned to God." Surely there must be a serious mistake somewhere. The only true light on the matter is found in God's word.

It is of no use for any to say we were "born Christians," or "made Christians when christened," or that we "always did believe." Nay, rather we were all born in sin (Ps. li. 5), and have all sinned, and were therefore exposed to God's judgement (Rom. iii. 23). By nature we were all "children of wrath" (Eph. ii. 3); in darkness, under Satan's power, unforgiven (Acts xxvi. 18), "dead in sins" (Eph. ii. 1, 5; John v. 24). All this and more has been true of every one of Adam's fallen race.

And such too is the sad case of every one who has not yet come to Jesus as a lost, guilty, helpless sinner, seeking mercy and pardon at His feet. It is an individual matter between the Saviour and the sinner. There must be repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. He said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again" (John iii. 7). There must be the passing "from death unto life" (John v. 24), and "from darkness to light" (Acts xxvi. 18). There must be a personal receiving of life from the Lord Jesus, for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is

none of his" (Rom. viii. 9). It is only those of whom these things are true, that the scriptures call "believers." Believing like Simon Magus (Acts viii. 13), and like those in Luke viii. 13, 14, will not avail. The eyes of such are upon the advantages brought by the gospel, without the conscience being smitten before God about the heinous sins that have been committed against Him.

Such belief is not to the "saving of the soul" (Heb. x. 39), nor can it bear up against the temptations of Satan and the world" (Luke viii. 13). Believing in Christ signifies a personal trust in Him (Eph. i. 12, 13). It is "coming" to Him (John vi. 35) "receiving him" (John i. 12).

The word to the lost and perishing sinner is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31); and again, "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" (Rom. x. 9). It is a sure word that cannot be broken. All who thus believe "are saved" (Eph. ii. 8), and "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. i. 13; iv. 30). In "receiving" Christ we become God's children (John i. 12); and it is His will we should enjoy this wondrous relationship, and know without a misgiving that He holds nothing against us (1 John ii. 12), and has given us even now the priceless gift of eternal life (1 John v. 13). w.c.

LOVE STRONGER THAN DEATH.

I HAVE read the story of a mother, who, with her only child, a boy of nine, set out on a voyage across the ocean to join her husband in a distant land where he had gone to obtain employment. Their hearts were buoyant with hope as the land in which poverty had been their lot was left behind them. They had lost sight of the land for two or three days and not a sail was to be seen on the far distant horizon, nothing save the wide stretch of ocean all around.

Suddenly the little boy who was sitting by his mother on deck, sprang to his feet and for a moment stood to listen to the awful cries of the passengers and crew below. The ship was on fire! All efforts to check the flames proved unavailing, and the wind drove them along in the direction of that part of the ship where barrels of gunpowder were stored. When all hope was lost, the captain ordered the boats to be lowered.

When the last boat had been lowered and filled, the mother with her little boy ran to the bulwarks of the vessel and begged to be taken into the boat. But all cried out that there was no more room. The poor frantic woman turned away in

despair as the flames made their way on deck.

One man's heart was moved when he beheld the boy's scared look as he clung to his trembling mother, and he cried, "Comrades! it seems cruel to leave the woman and her child without trying to help them; can we not make room for one?"

They agreed to take one but no more, and there was no time to lose. The mother looked at the boat as they rowed back, and life being sweet to her, accounted this as her only hope of deliverance. She gazed lovingly at her child for a moment, and she knew that he was dearer to her than that life itself. She wavered no longer; catching him in her arms, she said, "Alfred, when you safely land and see your father, tell him, with your mother's dying love, how she stayed on the burning ship that you might be saved. Farewell! and may God watch over you."

She fervently kissed him, and with a parting "Goodbye" he was lowered into the boat. As the sailors rowed away, the boy waved his handkerchief in answer to the oft-repeated kiss of his mother's hand. Suddenly the ship was shattered into fragments through the explosion of the barrels of gunpowder, and the poor boy saw his mother no more.

Dear reader, how beautifully such love as this stands out in contrast with the selfishness that is

so much seen in this world. Methinks that boy never forgot through life his mother's great sacrifice. Your heart is probably touched as you peruse the foregoing, but would that you were more deeply touched in contemplation of a far greater sacrifice, made out of love to you.

Two thousand years ago, a Man was seen wending His way to Golgotha, unloved by the surging throngs that hastened thither anxious to witness His death. Did I say unloved? ought I not rather to say hated? For He Himself says, "They hated me without a cause." But what is He on the way to Golgotha for? Listen to the utterance of His own blessed lips, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep . . . I lay down my life for the sheep . . . Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."¹

Do you ask who were the sheep? They were men and women who had wandered away from God because of the waywardness of their sinful hearts, and had become Satan's captives, held tightly in the bonds of sin and death. They were lost indeed in the awful darkness of sinful nature,

1 John x. 11, 15, 17 and 18.

but this blessed Man, who was none other than the Son of God, was found saying, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." To save these lost sheep the penalty of death must be paid by Him whose love was stronger than death, and which many waters could not quench, neither could the floods drown it. Our deserts were to perish eternally because of our sins ; for "The wages of sin is death ; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Through the sacrifice of Jesus, God offers eternal life to all who trust in Him, and this is because His blood has so perfectly atoned for the sinner's guilt. As in the foregoing narrative it was imperative that either the woman or her child must die, so either the condemned sinner or the Man Christ Jesus must suffer the penalty of death on account of sin. The mother-love that surged in that brave woman's breast prevailed over any natural desire she may have had to cling to life, and she unselfishly sacrificed her life for her child.

And oh ! my reader, the tender, compassionate, divine love in the heart of Jesus, that was towards such judgement-deserving rebels as you and I, led Him to allow Himself to be led as a lamb to the slaughter, to yield up His life in our stead. Had the sentence of death been meted out to us,

it would have been perfectly just and righteous ; but, praise God ! it is equally righteous on the part of a holy God, to pardon for ever all who approach Him, through the work and blood of Christ. Reader, ponder over these things.

W.G.

WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN ?

I DARE say you call yourself a Christian : whether you are right, or wrong, God knows. If you have no good ground, it may be a great blessing that you should know this before it is too late ; and if indeed a Christian, the diligent inquiry, in the name of the Lord, will bring more blessing to your own soul.

And now, *What is a Christian ?*—A sinner once an enemy, but now reconciled to God through the death of His Son ;¹ delivered by the Lord Jesus from the wrath to come ;² called by the grace of God to have His Son revealed in him ;³ saved by grace through faith, and that not of himself, but the gift of God ;⁴ redeemed through the blood of Jesus ;⁵ washed from his sins in the blood of Jesus ;⁶ justified by the blood of Jesus ;⁷ quickened together with Christ from death in sins ; raised up

1 Rom. v. 10 2 1 Thess. i. 10 3 Gal. i. 15, 16 4 Eph. ii. 8

5 Eph. i. 7 6 Rev. i. 5 7 Rom. v. 9

and made to sit in heavenly places in Christ ;¹ a son of God by faith in Jesus Christ ;² an heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ ;³ a king to sit with Jesus on His throne.⁴

Such and more it is to be a Christian ; and is it not a great thing to be a Christian ? Yes, it is a great thing in heaven to be a Christian ; and surely it is a poor thing on earth to be anything else. Well, then, are you a Christian ? Some people call it presumption in any one to say he is ; but it is not presumption—it is faith to be able to say, I know I am a child of God, because I know I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ ; for God tells me, that, if I believe, I am His child.

God says in His holy word, “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.” If you believe on the Son of God, it is no presumption to say that you have the witness in yourself. Again, the apostle, by the Spirit of God, says, “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life.” If, then, you believe on the Son of God, is it presumption to know that you *have* eternal life ? Could it be put more plainly in the Bible than it is ? Man’s corrupt heart is ready perhaps to believe about judgement and wrath, but altogether unwilling to believe such wondrous love, as that God gave His Son to

1 Eph. ii. 6

2 Gal. iii. 26

3 Rom. viii. 17

4 Rev. i. 6 ; iii. 21

do all for us, leaving us only to confess that all is already done, because He has assured us of it. "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son."¹

If you think that you are not a great sinner, and that your sins will be pardoned because they are few, you are not a Christian; but if you know that you are a very great sinner, but that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.² If you suppose that your sins are blotted out by any work of holiness that the Spirit of God has produced in your soul, or if you suppose that the merit of your faith has put away your sins, you are mistaken, for faith looks at Jesus, not at itself; but if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ you are a Christian, and this is faith.

The instant you turn to God believing what Jesus has done for sinners, you enter into peace, because all that ever could be done to purge your sins has been entirely finished in the one offering of Jesus Christ. There is no more offering for sin.³

Your former life may have been evil till you believe in Jesus; peace becomes your happy privilege, because the blood has already blotted out your sins. So the jailor at Philippi asked,

1 1 John v. 10 2 1 John ii. 12 3 Heb. ix. 25, 26; x. 10—14

“What shall I do to be saved?” the only reply was, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house ;” and he that very night rejoiced in God, though he trembled with fear when he asked the question.¹ Philip met the Ethiopian ignorant of Jesus, but when the truth was brought home to his soul he “went his way rejoicing.” “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God.”² Peace to a troubled conscience is made by the blood of the cross, and not by walk, or experience or feelings. A believing view of Christ gives peace—a dim view little peace ; but it is from resting on Christ’s work that peace comes, and from nothing else. This is the way the Holy Spirit first gives peace to the conscience, and to this alone must the most experienced believer ever look back ; for “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus.”

And oh ! the graciousness of this salvation is beyond all measure—unsought and unconditional love ; the cheerful and free gift of Him who loveth a cheerful giver—the full proof of a love which nothing but unbelief can check or resist ; for our sins could not. The simple fact that, “God commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,” is

¹ Acts xvi. 23—34.

² 1 John iv. 15.

the proof that nothing but unbelief can hinder any sinner's participation in all the rich blessings God hath to bestow.

Let not Satan persuade you that you are too great a sinner to find forgiveness; for God says that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."¹ If you think you are even the chief of sinners, only believe. The apostle Paul said, "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.*" Take care that, in magnifying your sins, you do not lessen the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Rather magnify that love that forgave so much; and this will be your blessing; for to whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much.

And how much service are God's dear children called on to render, when thus saved? A life of service in everything they do and say. This is their happy liberty. When of the world, they considered it freedom to live for the world, but bondage to live for Christ; so now, when in Christ, it is liberty to live for Christ, but bondage to live for the world. When the apostle beseeches the brethren to live thus, it is not by the terrors of God's wrath (for from these they were already delivered), but "by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, accept-

able unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world ; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." To live as a Christian is to have the love of Christ constraining us to live not unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again.¹ "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."² And inasmuch as we are not our own, but bought with a price, let us glorify God in our body.³



LETTERS TO FRIENDS.

THE letter given below was written in reply to one from a friend very dear to the writer. The extract from this friend's letter calling for the reply is printed also. Perhaps there may be some among our readers who will find their own heart's utterings therein expressed, and to these the reply may perhaps prove helpful.

EXTRACT FROM THE FRIEND'S LETTER.

"Mr. K—— has been holding a mission service nightly this week, and they have made me think a bit—but don't imagine I am a scrap better than I

was—I feel a million times worse for the thinking! It is so easy to go on slowly and unconsciously drifting; and when you realise how *far* you have drifted, what a lot of strength is wanted, how is one to get in touch with all that is right again? Words, writing, emotions, won't do it. It must be a reality, a life. And the more I think, the further away I feel."

REPLY.

"I AM so delighted, my dear M——, that you should open your heart to me. It seems like old times, a decade or more ago, before time separated us, and duty sent me many thousands of miles away from home and you. It was during that time of separation that God spoke to me, as you know, and when we met again we lived in different spheres. I sought to live for Christ, and you—well, the world had a tight hold upon you, a hold which has grown firmer since.

I cannot say how glad I am now to see that you are in some measure realising the emptiness of human things. After all, the man who is not hungry is a poor guest to feed! and if we are to get anything from God, we must come owning our need of it. The spring is a mere useless ornament where no thirst compels us to seek its waters. And the man who is continually rotting

his system with strong liquors despises what the Eastern still calls the gift of God, the blessed gift of water.

In John vii. 37 we read, 'In the last day, that great day of the feast,'—that is, when the crowd of folk ostensibly seeking God and professedly paying Him their homage, was thick as a summer swarm of bees—'Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.' That word is still the same, the fountain still as full, and its waters as satisfying. But how to drink of it? How to lay hold of these parabolic truths practically? I want to drink—but how? I own my thirst—but how am I to assuage it?

I must come personally and definitely to Christ, and pour out my heart to Him. I must own to Him my lost condition, my emptiness, my sin. I must tell Him all, nor must I seek to justify myself in the very least degree. I must come down to the level of the cross, and I must see that it was *my sins* that nailed the Saviour there, that it was the judgement due to me that He endured when God forsook Him in that appalling hour. I must not turn aside to judge myself by other men, or by the standard which they have set up, for so, like Job, I would be for ever boasting my integrity, unless my conscience showed me that even here I had come short; but face to face with Christ, I measure myself with Him, and falling ashamed to

the dust, I cry out, with Job, 'Wherefore I abhor myself, for I am vile.'

In a word, I must see myself not as my friends see me, clad about with kindness and full of pleasant words and ways; not as my children see me, loving and gentle, full of tender care, a pattern and a guide to them, but as God sees me—sees my heart, and knows it to be full of evil and devoted to the ways of the world, and to the things of time and sense. Shew me myself thus, and shew me the stretching expanses of eternity, and shall I not extol the love of God in sending Christ to die for me, to give His life for mine that was forfeited through sin, and to give me, as the fruit of His work (not mine), 'the gift of God,' which 'is eternal life'?

There is no battle to be fought. Christ has fought and won, and it is for us just to enter into the fruits of His great victory. There is no struggle to be made. No sooner do I come to God, owning my need of His salvation and accepting the gift which 'is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,' than I am His, and His for ever. I am 'a child of God through faith in Christ Jesus,' and once that I am His child, I am His child for ever. I may be a bad child, a wayward child, selfish and wilful too but I am His child, praise God; not because of my endeavours to be so, but because of the finished work of

Christ, who laid down the privileges of His own Sonship that I might be an adopted son; who became accursed that the curse might pass from me; who died that I might live.

So that you see, my dear M——, that you have not started to learn God's alphabet in the right order. You have begun in the wrong place. You must take God's order, not yours; otherwise things will never go right.

Read 1 John v. 9—13, and do not strive to obtain a gift! No gift was ever gotten so. It is not here a question of a race and of an ultimate prize. It is a question of your possessing that gift by which alone an entrance is affected to the stadium. The gift of salvation is the ticket which admits you as a competitor in the christian race, so that for the present we want to keep the question of the race and the reward out of our thoughts. It is my object now to speak of the 'free gift' which God offers to all without distinction. To obtain a gift held out to me, I must hold out my hands to grasp it as one that wants and means to have. All is yours. The gift is held out to you. The gift is yours for the mere taking of it. The gift of life everlasting, prepared and perfected upon the cross of Calvary nearly nineteen centuries ago.

O my dear M——, you can never enter into my heart and tell the difference there is between what it now is, and what it was ten years

ago, when the stage and the gaieties of a godless world were everything to me.

Oh, how I used to long for the next play to come along to take me out of myself and kill dull care. And then how quickly fled the glamour of applause, and how soon the narcotic influences were dissipated! But now, praise God, there is peace and rest within because of the work of Christ; and there is joy before me, because I know that however much God may be dissatisfied with me, yet He is satisfied with Christ, and my entering into glory depends upon Christ and not upon myself. God looks at me as in Christ now. My life is "hid with Christ in God." He sees Him and is well pleased.

Read then in its order the next verse in John vii. 38, "He that believeth on me . . . out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." That is, if I come to Christ confessing my emptiness of all that is good. He satisfied me, filling me with Himself, and God looks that I should overflow—not keep all this blessing to myself, but overflow with it; bubble over with it, so that I myself may be a fountain, drawing my supplies from Christ, and passing them out in turn to satisfy the thirsty souls around.

I am,

Your most affectionate friend,

L.L.

AN EPISTLE OF CHRIST.

2 CORINTHIANS III.

THE apostle calls the believer an epistle of Christ. He is a person upon whose heart God has written Christ, as Moses wrote the law on tables of stone. This the apostle opens out, but first he states what Christians are in contrast with the law.

A Christian is a person on whom Christ is engraved, not on tables of stone, but on the fleshy tables of the heart. Considered seriously, one must see that many have not this. We find some persons very amiable, and others with a trying nature. But the apostle does not refer to mere differences of natural character. Natural amiability of character is not Christ graven on the heart. It has nothing to do with being a Christian, which is a positive, real work of God—the Holy Ghost engraving Christ on a man's heart, putting Christ into his thoughts, his words, and his ways, just as the law was put upon stones.

Your own conscience must judge if this is so with you. It is true there may be failure. A man who is seeking to make money does not always succeed; but everybody knows what his object is. Just so, *Christ is the avowed object of a believer's life.*

THE FINGER OF GOD.

I—CREATION.

“WHEN I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him?”

What a volume of truth lies hidden in these precious words, “the work of thy fingers;” and how sweetly do they express the infinite glory, majesty and power, as well as matchless wisdom of Him who alone could say, “I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”

Yes, truly, “the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork.” “He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.”

Well may we say, like Elihu, “Stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.” Who but the “Ancient of Days” could speak to Job out of the whirlwind, such words as these: “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the

earth? declare, if thou hast understanding." "Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?" "And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?"

Earth, air, and sea alike proclaim the power of God; but when our eyes gaze upward to the vault of heaven, they are lost in wondering admiration at the countless myriads of unnumbered stars, which, each night, like a mighty army hang out their golden lights in infinite space, and illuminate the firmament with a beauty and splendour that testify to nothing less than the marvellous wisdom of God's fingers.

The fixed planet in its dazzling lustre, and the flashing comet in its headlong speed rushing through unknown, unseen, and countless worlds, proclaim as eloquently as the tiny blade of grass or the fragrant lily, that each and all of them are the divine work of God's fingers.

In the quietness of His presence who made all these things, well may we pause, dear reader, and ask ourselves the psalmist's question, "What is man?"

2—LAW.

LET scripture answer. Man, in all ages and under all circumstances, has clearly manifested his com-

plete departure from God. This began, as we know, in Eden's fair garden; and the breach only widened in every succeeding age, until the cross brought out in all its tremendous reality, the bitter hatred of man's heart to his Creator.

About fifteen hundred years, however, before Christ came, a striking crisis was reached in man's history, when around Mount Sinai's top, the glory of the Lord shone "like a devouring fire." There for forty days and forty nights, God and His servant Moses had communed together; while the Israelites at the foot of the mountain danced in their folly round a golden calf. Yet, only a little while before, this very people when listening to the words of the Lord had with one voice declared, "All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient." At the close of those forty days' communion, "God gave unto Moses two tables of testimony, tables of stone, *written with the finger of God.*" Man had no hand in the framing of those ten commandments, but it was God's own fingers that wrote them out, as the expression of His righteous and holy claims upon His creature; for we are told that "the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables."

Every word of that holy law was but the divine intimation of what man ought to be, but what, alas, he was not; for, as the result shewed, the

very first of those commandments had been broken ere Israel received them. "As he [Moses] came nigh unto the camp, he saw the calf and the dancing; and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hand, and brake them beneath the mount." These broken tables were, however, soon replaced by a second set, which like the first were written by the finger of God, and placed unbroken in the ark; where, spite of all its many wanderings, they so remained until, four hundred and seventy-nine years later, it found its true resting-place in Solomon's temple.

What a marvellous object lesson should those unbroken tables within the ark have been to that rebellious people; for were they not, in the purpose of God, the precious type and symbol of Him who in His sinless perfection could say, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart?" Thus two things were proved: man's inability to keep the law, and the perfect obedience of that blessed One, who magnified it, and made it honourable. "Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified, for by the law is the knowledge of sin;" yea, "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them." "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions." "Holy, just and good," as it was, is, and ever will be, yet was it never intended to

give either life or righteousness to man, but only to show the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

3—FOUND WANTING.

IT is a long journey from Sinai to Babylon; and more than six hundred years before the coming of Christ, that great city had become the centre of Gentile rule and imperial power. The palace of Belshazzar presents a striking contrast to the smoking mount; yet, strange to say, in both these places, the fingers of God were manifestly at work.

It was night; and around the banqueting table of the idolatrous monarch sat a thousand of his lords in festive state; while the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines, drank to the praise of the heathen potentate's gods out of the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from God's holy temple at Jerusalem. The sounds of revelry rose higher and higher in that scene of carnal ease and pleasure, as the king's guests drank wine together in honour of those gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, in whom there was no breath; while He who alone is worthy was to them an unknown God. Little did Belshazzar think that he had come to his last banquet, and that even then, in the height of his mirth, the dark angel of death was drawing near. Suddenly the haughty monarch's countenance was seen to change; his thoughts troubled him, the

joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another, as his terror-stricken eyes gazed on the wall of his palace. There, over against the candlestick, one of the strangest sights ever seen on earth was being enacted, for lo! on the plaister of the wall came forth the fingers of a man's hand; and solemn, indeed, were the mystic words there written, for they were God's last message to the idolatrous king.

Let us seek to take in the meaning of at least one of those words (perhaps more solemn than the rest), that went like an arrow to Belshazzar's guilty conscience. "*Tekel*. Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting." Yes; every motive, thought, word, and action of Belshazzar's wasted life was placed by God Himself in those heavenly scales, where false weights are unknown, and the terrible outcome of it all was now written before the king's eyes by God's own fingers—"Found wanting." What all the wise men of Babylon, and all the astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers were unable to interpret was made perfectly plain by Daniel, the revealer of secrets, as he solemnly charged the king with pride, idolatry, and failure to glorify the God who had given him breath. Amidst the hushed gaiety of that banqueting hall, did God's unerring judgement of that wasted life stand recorded in those two heart-searching words, "Found wanting." It was the

closing scene of the Gentile monarch's life; for in "that night [as the scripture saith] was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain."

Reader, whoever thou art, thine too is a wasted life, with the same verdict brought against thee, if thou knowest not the God whose fingers wrote that monarch's doom on the wall of his palace.

4—GRACE.

WHEN all was gone as regards man, and it was proved after four thousand years trial that Jew and Gentile were both alike "found wanting," Jesus came; and in His holy Person grace and truth entered this dark world. Love, light and life were found alone in Him; yet had He nowhere to lay His head. Whole nights were spent in prayer by that dependent Man, as in perfect obedience He wakened morning by morning, "to hear as the learned."

Descending from the Mount of Olives, where He had passed the previous night, Jesus, early one morning entered the temple, which was soon filled with an attentive audience. Suddenly however, the Lord's discourse was interrupted by the entrance of certain scribes and Pharisees, bringing with them a woman taken in adultery, whom they set in the midst. "Master," said these religious leaders, "Moses in the law commanded

us that such should be stoned ; but what sayest thou ? ”

Were these words uttered in order to show their zeal for the punishment of sin ? Nay ; rather were they only the evidence of a preconcerted and deliberate attempt to accuse God's Holy One. The plot however was well laid, for had the Lord simply acted on their suggestion, they would at once have declared Him to be no better than the lawgiver ; while on the other hand, if He should not so direct, they would have accused Him of being indifferent to sin. But the subtle craft of these religious hypocrites was for the moment allowed to pass unnoticed ; and Jesus, as though He heard them not, “ stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground.”

Was He then indifferent to the law's righteous claims ? Far be the thought ! His very action indicated otherwise ; for it was the self-same fingers that centuries before had written the words, “ Thou shalt not commit adultery,” on Sinai's tables of stone, which were now writing on the floor of the temple. But Christ's enemies were not to be denied ; “ so when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her : and again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.”

The searcher of all hearts had spoken ; and as

His scathing words rang through the temple, light divine pierced the guilty souls of those hollow professors ; and "being convicted by their own conscience, they went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last." Their proud lips silenced and their hypocrisy exposed, these would-be upholders of the law quickly fled from the light which had withered up all their assumed righteousness, and proved them to be just as guilty in heart as the poor erring one whom they had brought.

The convicted sinner and the sinless One were now alone ; and for the second time Jesus lifted up Himself—but not to fling the stone of justice at the one whom the law had brought in guilty. Yet His was the only hand that had the right to do so, for He alone was sinless. Surely that second gracious stoop clearly pointed onwards to His cross, and to that wondrous act of humiliation which took Him down beneath death's dark waters to atone for that woman's guilt and sin, that she might go free. "Stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted," the stone of judgement which she deserved was about to fall, soon after, on that divine Substitute, who came not to condemn the world, but "to seek and to save that which was lost."

Yes, the blood which flowed from Calvary's altar was the one and only answer to the righteous

claims of a broken law, in the light of which, Jesus, seeing none but the woman before Him, saith unto her, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?"

"No man, Lord," was her brief reply.

Faith had now found its refuge as well as its object in that blessed One who was not only her Saviour, but whom she now owns as Lord. "Neither do I condemn thee," said the lifted-up Saviour, "go and sin no more." Thus was God glorified that day in the temple; while hypocrisy was exposed and silenced, the law maintained, and the sinner uncondemned. Perfect love had triumphed over all; for "where sin abounded, grace had much more abounded."

S.T.

HAVE YOU THOUGHT OF ETERNITY?

SOME time since, an old man, whose lot in life had been almost everything that could be desired, as far as earthly comforts were concerned, stood in conversation with an intimate friend, and was surveying his past career. "With an almost pardonable flush of pride he feelingly said, "Ah! if ever there was a man who had cause to own, 'Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all

the days of my life,' it is I; for I know God has been very good to me, and I have much to be thankful for."

His friend turned to him, and laying his hand gently upon his shoulder, said, "But cannot you finish the remainder of that verse?" The old man's face instantly became clouded over, and his eyes dropped, and he miserably remarked, "I have never thought of that!" Dear reader, you probably know what that scripture to which he alluded, goes on to say, "And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever!"¹

The poor old man had centred his thoughts on this life alone, and had apparently never given it a thought that this life is not all. Poor man, I fear, alas! he represents many in these pleasure-loving days.

Oh! my reader, if it was not for eternity, I would not for one moment attempt to disturb your enjoyment of life, or distract you from the pursuit of what pleasure can be derived from the world's resources. But the certainty of eternity having to be spent by each one of us either with Satan in the bottomless pit, or with Christ in glory, prompts me to take up my pen earnestly to entreat you through the medium of this magazine, to answer the question as in the light of the presence of God, as to whether all is right

between your soul and God? A smooth and enjoyable pathway through life is not worth a moment's thought at the end, if the outlook for eternity is fraught with uncertainty or hopelessness. How absolutely worthless are all the gains through life, if the soul is eternally lost!

My friend, God is not to be trifled with. Be not deceived. God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. If the affairs of this life are allowed to exclude all serious thoughts of a hereafter, it is but fitting that that hereafter be spent in the company of that arch-enemy of the souls of men, who has been yielded to rather than God. If God is shut out of your thoughts through life, He must in righteousness shut you out for ever from His presence.

Listen! Have you ever weighed the Lord's searching question with regard to this very subject? "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

I have read of a fair lady who had had all that her heart could wish through life, but who, when upon her death-bed, asked to be taken to the window that she might view once more her fine grounds and much that wealth could procure, pathetically exclaimed, "And must I leave all this?" Ah! yes, it must all be left, and she must

pass into eternity another victim of that satanic delusion that there is time enough to attend to eternal things when death approaches.

God has, in compassionate mercy, drawn the veil aside and allowed the reader of His word to gaze upon an awful scene: the other side of death, a man who had lived solely for himself through this life in the very lap of luxury, suffers the torments of the lake of fire, as the first penalty of his sins, the greatest among which, being his utter forgetfulness of God, upon whom he had been dependent for every earthly blessing showered upon him through life; and this, as a warning to you and me, dear reader, lest we, through our own neglect and folly, expose ourselves to the same awful doom.¹

Be warned then, my friend, in time, and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, and own Him as your Saviour and Lord. He has passed through death and gone into the heavens, that you, if you believe in Him, may be able triumphantly to say with perfect assurance, with the psalmist, "And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." None but those washed in the blood of Christ can ever hope to dwell therein; but that blood, dear reader, avails to make even you whiter than snow and fit for the presence of God.

W.G.

“I CAN PICK OUT THE GOOD PEOPLE.”

I WAS leaving Luton, where I had been holding gospel services, and was travelling on to Wisbech to proclaim there the unsearchable riches of Christ to both saint and sinner.

The busy station of Peterborough was reached. Doors opened and banged. Guards shouted, “Change here for Cromer and Lynn.” I found myself on the platform by the side of a well-dressed gentleman, who asked me in courteous tones if I could inform him at what time the next train would start for Cromer. I told him that I could easily do so as I was going that way myself. The express rushed in, and we entered a compartment together.

Although our first stop would be Wisbech, and my destination, I took out my Bible and began to read it, as I usually do when I am travelling. Many a “sweet morsel” have I gained in this way. The gentleman who had spoken so pleasantly to me on the station watched me for a short time in silence; then to my surprise, he attacked me in an ungentlemanly style. The word of God appeared to have aroused his indignation. For some time I allowed his uncomplimentary remarks to pass without notice; for a

servant of God is privileged to follow in the footsteps of his Master, "who when he was reviled, reviled not again;" but at last I put down my Bible and looked my fellow-traveller in the face. He stared at me in return, and angrily asserted, "I have been amongst religious people for twenty-seven years, and am able to pick out the good people from the bad."

I remarked quietly, "You then are wiser than God; for He says in His word, "There is *none* righteous, no, not one. There is *none* that seeketh after God; there is *none* that doeth good."

These words of the living God seemed to touch the conscience of my companion, for he was silent.

With a swift prayer to God for help I followed up my advantage and spoke to the gentleman kindly but solemnly of his position before God. I told him that he was correct in assuming that I was a "bad man," for God's word confirmed his opinion of me. I was *a sinner*, but Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and He had saved me. His precious blood had washed my sins away, and I was on the road to heaven to be with Him and to be like Him; for "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

My friend replied, "I believe you are right."

"Nay," I rejoined, "it is Christ and His word

that are right. Believe this and you are right too."

At this point I had reached my destination and was obliged to drop the conversation. As I alighted on the platform the gentleman wished me a courteous "Good afternoon," and I shall probably see him no more on earth; but I can pray for him that the seed dropped by the wayside may have fallen into good ground.

Dear reader, let not Satan deceive you; there is one way to God and it is through His Son, who died for this guilty world. Jesus says, "I am the door; by me, if any man enter in he shall be saved." Rest for man with God in glory was ever His design. This could only be accomplished by death, the death of the Lord Jesus. His death gives life to the believer. The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ is unto all and upon all that believe. For rejecters of God's righteousness there is no salvation. The millionaire and the beggar, the cultured and the ignorant, the Pharisee and the publican, if they would enter heaven must go through the same Door. Christ will not "pick out the good people from the bad," for it is written, "I am the door; by me if *any man* enter in he shall be saved."

W.B.



GOD'S WAY OF ESCAPE.

“I’D better come up.” The speaker was a well-preserved man of about fifty years of age, who, as I mounted the hill, climbed out of one of the top windows of a tall public-house and stood upon the broad coping of the window beneath. He had around his body a wide belt to which a strong cord was fastened, and a small appliance was fixed on the lower part of the window frame, apparently to check his descent.

I judged that he was about to test a life-saving apparatus, for after a short conversation with those in the room, he let himself down, and hung suspended by the cord.

The trial, however, was disappointing, for the cord refused to move; and after great efforts had been made by a young man in charge above, he used the words already recorded, and clambered back again.

The incident, which was of rather a humorous nature to a few spectators, gave rise to thoughts in my mind as to how he would have fared if there had been a fire in the house, instead of this act being a trial only. The man would have had

small chance then of ever getting back into the room, for suffocating smoke, if not burning flame, would probably have rendered escape impossible.

But many, to-day, are trusting for the salvation of their immortal souls to things much less trustworthy than this experimenter was. His escape would probably, on better acquaintance with the apparatus, have proved a success; but theirs is an impossibility.

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?”¹ says the inspired word of God, speaking of the work of Christ, the Son by whom God has, in these last days, spoken unto mankind. For it is the salvation brought to man by Christ, who died for sin upon the cross of Calvary, and there completed the work of redemption to God’s glory and full satisfaction, which is now offered for man’s acceptance. “Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things.”²

Supposing a fire had broken out in the public-house mentioned, and the owner resorted to his patent fire-escape, only to find it had become fixed again so that he was hanging in danger of death, and the fire-escape manned by brave and competent firemen had arrived, what should we think of him if he chose to be left to his own

1 Heb. ii, 3

2 Acts xiii. 38, 39

faulty apparatus, rather than to trust himself to the tried escape brought by the firemen?

But there are many who are trusting themselves to their feelings, good works, prayers, and the like, none of which can wash away a single sin, nor make a man righteous before God.

The truth is that all are "guilty before God," and as such, are unable by any means to save themselves; but there is a divine way of escape provided by God Himself, and suited not only to meet the vilest sinner's need, but which has satisfied every claim of God's holiness. "Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth a propitiation [mercy-seat] through faith in his blood . . . that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."¹

This One has died, and it is through His finished work on Calvary's cross that God is able to forgive and to justify guilty man who believes.

Now, dear friend, how do you stand before God? The question merits your consideration; nay, it demands your attention, for God "commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."² If your sins are not removed by the blood,

1 Rom. iii. 24—26

2 Acts xvii. 30, 31

you will have to face that awful judgement day; and who can stand before God? for "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."¹

To-day the way of escape is open; to-morrow it may be too late; for the day is soon coming when God's longsuffering will be over, and then He will enter into judgement with those who have rejected the Saviour.

H.W.R.

A DAY WITH CHRIST.

MATTHEW IX. 1—35.

THE events described in this chapter were comprised in the work of one day by Him who went about doing good, for God was with Him, even Jesus our Lord.

At the commencement, we have the man sick of the palsy, whom others brought to Him; and to this one Jesus says, seeing their faith, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee;" words that tell of His own joy in conferring such an inestimable blessing, and His desire not only that the recipient should have it, but be joyous in its possession.

Does my reader know this for himself? Mark, there was no procuring cause on the part of the one to whom the words were addressed. Trust

in the grace of Christ there was on the part of those who brought him ; but it was pure and unmerited mercy that the helpless one had shown him, and that which was given him was what the wealth of worlds could never buy.

A blessing is also proclaimed to you, my reader : “ through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things ; ”¹ not because you are worthy, but because, “ when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. ”² Are you shutting yourself out from this benefit by your unbelief of your need and of the divinely appointed cure ? It will be your eternal ruin if you persist in doing so, and you may never have another opportunity other than the present.

Of course, the human religionists disliked the grace of the Lord Jesus, and were inwardly accusing Him of blasphemy ; but He searches their hearts and asks them why they were thinking evil, and He puts it to them as to which was easier for Him to say, “ Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk ? ”

This “ evil ” is occurrent to-day ; men still think it impossible for a man to know for a certainty on earth that his sins are forgiven ; but the believer rejoices to know it is so, and that Christ has His rights in this respect ; and like the multitudes

which marvelled and glorified God, when the once-palsied man arose and departed to his house, he too will thank God "that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." Nor will it be in any way strange to him, seeing that He who is in one glorious person both Son of man and Son of God bore the full judgement of sins on Calvary's cross, when He said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" and made a full propitiation for them, as from His side on that tree "there came out blood and water."¹

The next event of the happy day was the call of Matthew from "the receipt of custom" to follow Jesus; a call instantaneously obeyed and appreciated; for we know from Luke v. 29 that it was Matthew who "made Him a great feast in his own house," though with becoming modesty he does not tell us so here; and other publicans and sinners came in, with whom Jesus ate, to the disgust of the Pharisees, but to His vindication of what He was doing: "They that be whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick."

Is my reader such a sin-stained, sin-sick soul? You see your welcome then, and rest assured He never fails to carry through every case He undertakes, till He has His patient with Him in eternal glory. To the Pharisees He said, "Go ye"—they would not have been at home at the feast, only

needy sinners are—"and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

God had spoken similar words to Israel, who like men had transgressed the covenant, and dealt treacherously against Him, saying, "I desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."¹ Reader, have you this knowledge in your heart and for yourself: "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world?"² If so, to use the language of our chapter, you will be a new bottle with the new wine of the "new creation," where all things are of God, and the joy of the Lord will be your strength.

Now we have the ruler doing Him homage, with his daughter "even now dead;" "but come and lay Thy hand on her, and she shall live" is pleaded, to be met by Jesus arising to follow the man, with His disciples. When did He ever deny any?

On the way, however, the poor woman whose life was ebbing fast must needs come and touch the hem of His garment, for her thoughts were right about Him, "If I may but touch his garment I shall be whole;" and how was she received? "Daughter [to the palsied one it had been 'Son']—faith puts you in rela-

1 Hosea vi. 6

2 1 John iv. 14

tionship], be of good comfort [to him it had been 'of good cheer'] thy faith hath made thee whole ;" and the Holy Ghost adds, "the woman was made whole from that hour." So it will be with you, my reader, if in all your need you just come to Him.

Arrived at the ruler's house, there are "the minstrels and the people making a noise." These with their laughing scorn have to give place, and be put forth while He goes in and does just what the ruler had asked Him to do—He "took her by the hand, and the maid arose." No wonder that, as marvel was expressed on the occasion of the first miracle, so again "the fame hereof went abroad into all that land."

Then, when Jesus is departing thence, two blind men follow, and saluting Him as Son of David, ask for mercy. On His getting within a house, and they with Him, He asks them, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" to be met with their "Yea, Lord ;" and followed by His touching their eyes and saying, "according to your faith be it unto you ;" so that their eyes were opened.

Then we have the dumb man possessed with a devil brought to Him; the devil was cast out, and the dumb man spake ; and as he was not charged as the blind man had been "that no man know it," we can well believe his tongue was used in the

Saviour's praise. Anyhow, we again will, for the third time, side with the multitude and say, "It was never so seen in Israel," and not with the wretched religionists who committed the sin that hath never forgiveness, in attributing His glorious power to "the prince of the devils."

What a day to have spent with Jesus, the Lord of glory. My reader, has it any attraction for you? There is a further comment, "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every sickness and every disease among the people." I trust, with the writer, you can add: "He has met my eternal need; all praise to His blessed name." W.N.T.

CURIOSITY.

READER, pause awhile; I have somewhat to say to you. Perhaps the little word I have put at the heading of this paper may have aroused *your* curiosity. Perhaps, too, it may have been in a moment of curiosity that you took up this copy of *Gospel Gleanings*. May God bless His word in it to your soul.

Curiosity has a great share in the nature of nearly every man and woman, and often leads them

into difficult circumstances, and peculiar places. In the case of any notable event, such as the passing of the king through some great centre of population, thousands will be drawn together by curiosity to see the sight. If some great preacher or speaker is announced to hold forth in a certain place and at a certain time, how the crowds gather—often long before the time announced—and the building is often filled with curious folk; some of them have come to see the place; some the preacher; some to see other people; some to show off their own and to see other persons' clothes. In fact, it would be no hard matter to multiply instances of the working of curiosity.

We have even instances of it in the Bible, and one at this moment recurs to my mind; you will find it in Luke xix. 1—9. Read the passage yourself that we may go over it together.

The scene is Jericho; and on the day of which this passage speaks, a report has reached the city that the wonderful Man who has worked such miracles as giving sight to the blind, feeding five thousand people with a very small supply, and had even raised dead persons to life, was to pass through the city that day on His way to Jerusalem. Along the main thoroughfare, from gate to gate, a great crowd collected to see Him. Some perhaps had seen Him before, some were to see Him for the first time; and amongst the latter was a little Jew

named Zaccheus, who was eaten up with curiosity to see Jesus.

This Jesus seems to have had a peculiar interest for Zaccheus, for had He not opened the mouth of a fish and taken from thence a coin wherewith to pay tribute? and Zaccheus was the head of the tax-farmers, and "he sought to see Jesus, who He was." He was curious, but when he got to the route, he found the crowd so great that his way was barred. He was too short to see over the heads of the people, and he dared not attempt to elbow his way through the crowd; for, had he not left the cause of his brethren, and taken office under their oppressor, the tyrant of Rome? and further, had he not by the collection of taxes from his brethren made himself a rich man? Yes, he had, and in consequence was thoroughly detested by those of his own nation, and he feared to put himself into the power of those who would not scruple to injure him if occasion offered.

So his curiosity became earnestness, and earnestness determination. Zaccheus espies a sycamore tree, and up this he climbs. The crowd may laugh, or jeer, or cry out in derision, it has no effect on the publican. He has come out of his obscurity, and is in dead earnest; he is determined to see Jesus now, and nothing shall stop him.

There is more than curiosity in the heart of Zaccheus; he has the intuition that the coming

of Jesus means something very great to him; and beside, they say at Jerusalem that there are those who will never let Jesus leave Jerusalem again alive. Zaccheus has found out that this is his last chance of seeing Jesus. It is now or never for him, and Zaccheus is very earnest. So he climbs the tree. Presently there is a murmur along the route, and Jesus and those with Him are coming. Zaccheus is all expectation now; the Lord draws nigh; the eyes of Zaccheus are on Him. Does Jesus see him? No, surely not. Will He pass by without noticing the man in the tree? Ah, no! "He came to seek and to save the lost," and Zaccheus was lost. Both knew it by this time; the Lord had always known it, now Zaccheus awakes to the truth. Here is Jesus at the foot of the tree; His eyes are lifted—those eyes of love and pity, those searching eyes too. Those silent lips are unclosed, lips that for the poor sinner had only words of love and grace, and from them issue forth words, precious to the heart of the tax-gatherer: "Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for to-day I must be thy guest."

And what does Zaccheus do? Sit tight in the tree and let the Lord pass by, and so lose his last chance? No, he comes down in haste and joyfully receives Jesus. Happy Zaccheus, he no longer knew *about* Jesus, but he knew *Him* per-

sonally, and Jesus had called him to Himself. What? Zaccheus, the rich man, the publican, the sinner, the renegade Jew, the Roman tax-farmer, had Jesus called this one? had Jesus gone to the house of such an one? Yes, the heart of Zaccheus is full of joy, he knows now who Jesus is, he calls Him "Lord," he knows to whom he is speaking. He is happy in the forgiveness and presence of the Lord. Salvation had come to his house that day. The seeking Saviour had found the lost one.

What about you, my reader? Has the Seeker found you? If you are not saved you are lost, whether you realize it or not. Your position is not dependent upon your knowledge of it; if you are lost, Jesus is seeking you. Wake up! wake up! and ask yourself the question: "If Jesus passes me by to-day, where shall I be to-morrow, and for eternity?"

YED.

THE PIPE OF PEACE.

THE remark, "I think I'll smoke the pipe of peace," was made in the presence of the writer by one in an unwashed, unforgiven, unsaved condition. He spoke as an enemy of God by nature, a rebel against the throne of God,

who has declared that "There is *no* peace—to the wicked." They "are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt."¹

It is also written that "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." This has been experimentally proved by the one whose desire it is to tell you how you may be saved from such a condition of unrest, and know "peace with God," and also "the peace of God which passeth all understanding."²

There is nothing calculated to make one more miserable than being in a ship with a contrary wind and a troubled sea; alarming in the extreme, cold and cheerless; causing fear to many a sinner. To walk the deck, you cannot. To sit at table with any degree of comfort, you cannot. To lay the weary head and weary heart to rest, you cannot. One is tossed to and fro like a drunken man until that wicked nature which we all possess causes many to give vent to their feelings, casting up "mire and dirt," cursing the very God of heaven for their unhappy lot. Such are the wicked—in a constant state of unrest. "No peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

Do you know that "peace" has been made? Yes! and who made it? The eternal Son of God "made peace by the blood of his cross."³

1 Isaiah lvii. 20, 21

2 Rom. v. 1; Phil. iv. 7

3 Col. i. 20

Nineteen hundred years ago, that all-glorious person, "the Son of God's love," did the work. He took the place of the guilty one and met God the Judge as to the question of sin, and settled it for ever by offering Himself as a sacrifice; and so He who was made sin made peace.

What infinite love was this! What grace, that He, the holy, spotless Lamb, should willingly subject Himself to such depths of suffering as are expressed in Psalm xxii., for me, a good-for-nothing wicked one, that I might have peace with God.

Where was peace made? On the cross. How can I obtain it? By faith. "Therefore being justified by faith, *we have peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ."¹

What! must not *I make* my peace with God?

Don't talk so, foolish man, when peace *has been made* with God long, long ago.

What must I do then?

Only believe it; *believe it, man, and the blessing is yours for ever.*

Some may say, When can I get this peace? We read in the book of Job: "Acquaint *now* thyself with him [God], and be at peace."

Now is God's time. Be wise, therefore, and respond to the gracious invitation of our Lord Jesus, the One who gives rest (or, peace) to every

troubled conscience, to every sin-sick, heavy-laden one, that comes to Him.¹

Remember : There is no peace to the wicked.

Remember : Jesus has made peace.

Remember : You can have it by believing.

Remember : It is yours now if you but acquaint yourself with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

(1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.)

Until I saw the blood
 'Twas hell that I was fearing,
 And dark and dreary to my sight
 The future was appearing ;
 While conscience told its tale of sin,
 And wrought a weight of woe within.

But when I saw the blood
 And looked to Him who shed it,
 My right to *peace* was seen,
 And I with transport read it ;
 I found myself to God brought nigh,
 And victory is now my cry.

C.H.C.

NICODEMUS.

NICODEMUS had a mere human conviction of Christ ; he knew that He was a teacher come from God. When they saw His miracles, many believed on Him. How many Christians are like that now ! giving a mere human assent to who He is. It is not insincerity or dishonesty, but they do not know Him, nor care to know what He came for, nor whether they have any part with Him.

GOD'S SALVATION.

How true it is that "salvation is of the Lord," as Jonah proved when ejected from the fish's belly, after three days and nights of most solemn heart-searching at the bottom of the sea, where he had to learn that a will opposed to God's must needs be broken. God's salvation is the theme of scripture from Genesis to Revelation ; but let us briefly meditate on seven precious truths connected with it.

I—THE ROCK OF SALVATION (*Foundation*).

Everybody is a builder ; but the question arises, "on what foundation?" Are we like children on the seashore, who erect their pretty castles on the sand ; or are we building on the Rock, Christ Jesus? Tears, feelings, prayers, good resolutions, and all that springs from man, are sandy foundations, which will all come down with a crash beneath the swelling tide of judgement ; but all who build upon the solid rock are safe for time and eternity. What does the psalmist say? "Oh, come, let us sing unto the Lord ; let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation." "He only is my Rock, and my Salvation." "Other

foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Hence the believer can sing :

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

2—THE GARMENT OF SALVATION (*Clothing*).

"All our righteousnesses," saith the prophet, "are as filthy rags;" and Joshua, the high priest, had to part with his when he stood before the angel of the Lord. Filthy garments will neither do for God nor heaven; and if not clothed now in righteousness divine, by and by we shall be "found naked." The man who crept in unawares to the marriage feast without the wedding garment was bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness. Who then shall provide this garment? In every case it must be God Himself, as fully proved with our first parents in the garden of Eden; or, later on, with the man out of whom Christ cast the legion of unclean spirits. Yes, we must needs be clothed, and the garment God provides is the "garment of salvation." "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

3—WELLS OF SALVATION (*Refreshment*).

When thus firmly fixed on the Rock, Christ Jesus, and clothed with righteousness divine, we

begin our wilderness journey, and need constant refreshment by the way, for this world is but a "dry and thirsty land, where no water is." Hence the prophet exclaims, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." There are hidden depths there that know no sounding, as Sychar's outcast learned the day she was asked by Israel's King for a drink of water; and her thirsty soul drank in the meaning of those golden words, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." Joy and refreshment thus go together, for Jesus says, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink; yea, drink abundantly, till "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

4—WALLS OF SALVATION (*Protection*).

"Thou shalt call thy wall salvation, and thy gates praise." "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks." Yes, strength and protection are the favoured portion of the redeemed of the Lord. "For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her [Jerusalem] a

wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her." When, in the days of old, Israel's hosts marched round the walls of Jericho, and the priests blew with their ram's horns for the seventh time on the seventh day, those mighty bulwarks fell with a crash as the people shouted ; yet, strange to say, the scarlet line was still flying from the window of Rahab's house, for (we are told) "she dwelt upon the wall," and that portion of it fell not, but was to her a "wall of salvation" when all the rest lay in ruins. The scarlet line was the true token ; and the house with its saved inmates survived the wreck, for it was built on the wall of salvation, or what, at least, proved such to her in answer to her faith.

5—THE LAMP OF SALVATION (*Testimony*).

Salvation, in Isaiah lxii. 1, is compared to a "burning lamp ;" and if proof were needed, a lovely illustration of its truth is conveyed in the fact that the five wise virgins who went forth to meet the Bridegroom were each the possessor of a brightly burning lamp. So too, in the days of Abraham, was the lamp that passed between the pieces of the sacrifice, a precious token and witness to the patriarch of God's final deliverance of the nation in days to come. Salvation, unaccompanied however by a corresponding testimony, would indeed be a poor thing ; for, in the purpose

of God, it is ever His way that those who possess salvation should be a testimony for Him, and "shine as lights" in this present dark and evil world. Not only was the lamp in God's sanctuary always burning, but the lamps in Gideon's broken pitchers were the precursors of victory, while the Master's faithful words to His own can never lose their wondrous meaning, "Let your loins be girt about, and your lamps be burning." In other words, the path of separation and a true testimony must needs go together, if we would be "like unto men that wait for their Lord."

6—THE HELMET OF SALVATION (*Hope*).

"Let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet the hope of salvation." Faith and love may well be ours to enjoy, as believers; for we walk by faith, not sight, and "love never faileth." Hope, however, is the anchor of the soul, and the heart's deep longings can never be satisfied till we are with Him and like Him up yonder. Hence salvation includes the redemption of the body, for which we still wait, and nothing less than Christ Himself is our hope. We do not, as believers, hope to be saved as regards our souls, for Christ is even now our life; but hope amidst the conflict wears her helmet, and with longing eyes looks up, and sings: "Come, Lord Jesus." Thus sustained

and protected, hope awaits His triumph-shout "in the air," when we shall see His face, and in a moment our bodies shall be changed and "fashioned like unto his own glorious body." "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus."

7—THE CUP OF SALVATION (*Gladness*).

Well may the psalmist sing, "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord." Sorrow beyond all telling was the portion of the lowly Nazarene, as He drank to its dregs another cup, the cup of wrath, that He might fill our cup to overflowing with joy and gladness. It is indeed a cup of full salvation ; but that it might be ours to enjoy,

"Guilt's bitter cup He drains,
Nothing for us remains,
Nothing but love."

It is in the overpowering sense of this matchless love, so all-absorbing and so all-satisfying, that we can now, with worshipping hearts, drink salvation's cup and call upon His name who, throughout the eternal ages, will ever be the object of our unceasing delight and joy.

S.T.

SAINT OR SINNER ?

READER! Have you ever considered what is the difference between a saint and a sinner ? and can you decide *which you are* ?

God says, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ;" "there is none righteous, no, not one." A saint then is not a person who is better than his neighbours, either by nature or practice ; for in God's sight all are alike *unclean* as to their nature. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? not one." And all have sinned in their ways,—“there is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not.” “For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”

A saint then is not a man without sin, or without an evil nature. Nor is he one who by a long course of piety (as is often supposed) has reached a state of holiness or perfection. No. It is neither what he *is* naturally, nor what he *has done* which makes one a saint. No one was ever born a saint ; nor has any one ever made himself a saint by his good works.

Some persons are more amiable, kind and moral than others, but the most amiable, kind and moral are sinners and *must become saints* or they will as surely be shut out of heaven as the most vile and hateful and immoral. Heaven will be peopled with saints and hell with sinners, and this world will furnish the people for both. Moreover, if a man dies a saint or sinner he will remain so *for eternity*. How all-important then to know *what* I am and to have it decided beyond question.

What then is a saint? God says, "a sanctified one"—that is, one who was neither holy by birth nor *life*, but one who has been *made holy*, or sanctified.

Reader, do you receive the scriptures as the word of God? Have you bowed to what He says? Listen: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God."¹ What a list of human wickedness! Do you find *yourself* here? Remember that he who could say, "touching the righteousness which is in the law *blameless*" had also to say of himself, "the law slew me"—"I had not known sin but by the law"—except the law had said "*thou shall not covet.*"² Have you found that the law is *spiritual*? and has its application to our *thoughts—desires—looks—as well as ways.* (Matt. v. 20—28: read this, and see how *you* can stand it.)

"Thy law demands a *perfect heart*
But we're defiled in every part."

Who then *can* be a saint? Listen again, and you will hear God telling those He has warned in the very next verse. "And such *were* some of you: but ye *are washed*, but ye *are sanctified*, but ye *are justified* in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."³ Saints then *were*

1 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10

2 Rom. vii.

3 1 Cor. vi. 11

sinners, many of them of the deepest dye. But they *are* washed, sanctified, justified. Have you been? Has this great work been done *to* you, *for* you? We entreat you not to make light of it. Sinners for hell—*saints* for heaven. Yes, washed, sanctified, justified sinners for heaven—the unwashed, unholy, unjust for hell, and both for eternity.

You cannot wash yourself; “for though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God.”

Baptism will not wash you. Many a baptised one will be among the unwashed in hell. No, my reader, it is “by the Spirit of our God.” It is being “born again”—“born of water and the Spirit”—the washing of water *by the word*—the work of God’s Spirit *in* thee, the work of God’s Son *for* thee. No washing avails but “by the Spirit of our God”—no justification but “in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Are you *washed*? If so, Christ is *precious*, yea, is *all* to you. You trust in His blood, believe on His name, rejoice in Him. Do you despise Christ, think little or nothing of Him? You are no saint, whatever you may call yourself!

See to it, my reader, if you would enter into the city of the saints, you must have *title* and *meetness*, you must be “washed, sanctified, justified.” You must be a saint now to be a saint in heaven, none

are made so there but here. So on the other hand hell does not make sinners ; but it is their final habitation. Which are you now, saint or sinner ?

J.B.

THE WORK OF GRACE FOR AND THE WORK OF GRACE IN MAN.

MATTHEW XXVII. 38—44 ; LUKE XXIII. 39—43

THE Saviour, the Son of Man, was dying: the just One in the place of the many unjust; bearing sins in His own body on the tree. This was His great work for us. But of the two malefactors between whom He was crucified, both of whom had reviled Him, one became converted and showed a work of grace wrought in him.

The work of grace for us and the work of grace in us are not one and the same thing, any more than the death of Christ for the robber and the change inside the robber (by the means of which he ceased to be a blasphemer and owned Jesus), were one and the self-same thing. The former is outside of us, and was in and by the Christ; the latter is in ourselves, though wrought there by grace.

What is it which hinders God and a sinner meeting and being together? True, the sinner's will is opposed to God, his heart's affections, too, are alienated from God; and doubtless if he as a sinner were in the light of God's presence, he would find soon enough how it discovers all the

sin of the creature. But the difficulty was not in the creature, however sunk, alienated and deluded he may be. There was another question, one of far higher and deeper import; viz., How could God in His holiness and righteousness meet a sinner who has by sin done dishonour to God? Sin is an insult to God, to God in His majesty and being—and the soul that gets into light knows this to be so.

So far as God is concerned, the work of grace in us is never separated from the work of grace for us. From the day of the fall and man's exclusion from Eden, God wrought in man, but always upon the ground of what He meant to do for man. And in working thus in man He has constantly presented some object to the mind, in which the work for man was shadowed forth. The sacrifice offered by Abel; the victims of the patriarchal worship; the sacrifices of the sanctuary, etc., all pointed onward to the work which Christ was to do for man, work by which God alone could be just while justifying a sinner, work which alone can ever satisfy the conscience of a sinner in the presence of God, about sin. But the work in man preceded the work for man in all these cases. At Calvary, the Son of Man gave Himself a ransom for us. From that day onward, the work of grace for man has had nothing added to it; nothing new from the time that by one sacrifice He perfected for ever them that are

sanctified. But though the work for man is finished, yet is the work of grace in man quite as needful now as ever. That it is wrought in man by the Holy Ghost, through faith in the work accomplished for man, is true; but it must be wrought in man, or man is lost.

The peculiarity of the conversion of the robber upon the cross is that it is a case in which grace was working in a man to open his heart to Christ, at the very time that Christ was doing for man that work without which no way was opened for God to bless, nor open for man to come for blessing.

On this account the distinctness of the two things is the more easily seen, and this may help some to see how they should not confound them together, and how impossible it would be for the one to be exchanged so as to be made to take the place of the other.

Justice had brought the two evil-doers, for their misdeeds, to the violent death of the cross. There they were surrounded by a mass who cared not for them, but who were gathered to the spot to revile and blaspheme the dying Saviour.

The robbers heard the revilings and adopted them, for they cast the same in His teeth. But an entire change came over one of them. Light broke in upon his soul and in this case it was the light of life—eternal life. God had taken His rightful place in the man's soul. The effect is

immediate ; and remark that he rebukes His fellow-malefactor, "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation ? and we indeed justly ; for we receive the due reward of our deeds ; but this man hath done nothing amiss." When the candle of the Lord searches a man, it is sure to discover sin in him to himself. It must be so, for righteousness and holiness are inseparable from the light of God, and man is unholy. The light detects and shows the unholiness. Yet is there in this experience of the thief also another feeling expressed. He knew sin to be inseparable from himself ; he knew it, and yet he sought to put it down with an unhesitating mind. He rebukes his fellow-malefactor for doing the very thing which he himself had done before, and the which he had but just ceased to do.

This was, as man would count it, practically inconsistent. Quite so. Conscience, when it gets into God's presence and has the light of life, acts in a way which is very inconsistent with human thoughts of consistency and propriety. He was inconsistent as a man, but consistent as a saint. It is strange that first dread and hatred of sin which leads us to put our mouths in the dust and to condemn sin in ourselves—part of our being as it may have been. But it is a blessed instinct of the new life, of life divine in a soul, that sin must be condemned for it is hateful.

The light of life shining in quickening power into a soul separates between it and the sin itself and gives it an altogether new estimate of what sin is. "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? and we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss." How full, both in the general statement and in the particular detail, is his confession of sin. What an abandoning and disclaimer of all human righteousness. "We indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds." And it was light, not vague and ill-defined that shone in upon his soul, but clear and distinct; for it was the light of a contrast between the Christ of God and himself. "But this man has done nothing amiss." Himself and the Christ were in his conscience contrasted the one with the other. His language was that of faith, and, little as he knew it, he was in the hour of the Lord's being forsaken by all, giving the description of Him which will be owned of God to be true of Christ alone. "This man hath done nothing amiss" will be loudly proclaimed as true of Christ alone in the glory; and all of us that will be there will know and own the perfectly graphic, distinctive description, as being His alone. Of Adam's race, not one from Eden down to the placing of the great white throne; not one, save the seed of the woman, of whom it could be

said in truth, "This man hath done nothing amiss."

God, sin, himself, the man that is Jehovah's fellow, these were not only new experiences of his soul, they marked that he had a new life and had got into a world of light, where things are seen just as they are. But his faith went further, and he sees not only the personal peculiarity of the sinless One at his side, but also that there was in Him a heart on which, spite of all the contrast between the Christ and himself, he might cast his every care. "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." The glories and the kingdom and the majesty of the Lord break in upon his soul—sinner as he was—and yet he saw in that One there was the only rest, the alone hope for him. This also is an instinct of the new nature. It will see and own the contrasts between the Christ and what we are; but it will cleave to Him in spite of our misery and His gloriousness, it will cleave to Him as being all our salvation.

Christ had His rightful place in this poor sinner's soul, and no mistake about it, and this place was His from the time that the rocky heart was riven open. But what the thief experienced in his own soul of the blessed work which God was doing, while it fitted him to receive the grace, could not appear in heaven in place of the blood of the Lamb of God shed upon the cross; it could neither justify God in justifying a thief, nor dis-

cover to the thief that which in the light is his justification before God. Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. Christ was then and there shedding His blood, the just One in place of the unjust. And whether that poor thief, or any other sinner, were ever saved or not, He is risen from the dead and gone into heaven. The way is plainly set forth, in which God declares He is free to bless the vilest of the vile ; the way too in which the vilest of the vile that comes by it finds a way of peaceful access to God. If no one upon earth cared for that new and living way, yet *it is a new and living way*, and it is open, open for God the Holy Ghost to come down by, and open for man to draw nigh to God even into the holiest of all in the heavens. The work of grace in us cannot be substituted for, and cannot be put in the place of this the work of grace for us ; the work of grace in me cannot vindicate God's holiness so as to justify Him in moving in favour of me a sinner. And clearly so far as it is a work of grace wrought in me by God, He has moved in my favour to work it ere ever it was wrought.

Many may turn faith into a work for themselves to work, but they will find that the Spirit convicts of *unbelief*, and that all their rest is in the Lord Himself, and in the work that He has wrought for poor sinners.

A CAPTIVE IN THE CHAINS OF LOVE.

A BRITISH merchant, in a Turkish vessel on the Levant, had his attention directed during the voyage to an interesting slave, a Mussulman, with whom he soon fell into conversation. He found him intelligent, quick, of strong affections, and drew from him some particulars of his history. Free-born, he had been made captive in war.

The merchant was touched with sympathy for the captive; the more he knew of him, the deeper was the interest he felt in his welfare; so that he began to think of effecting his release. Inquiring as to the sum requisite, he found that it was considerably greater than the mercantile profits of his entire voyage. Still he could not abandon the thought, and spoke to the captain to whom the Mussulman belonged, offering a price. His offer was accepted; but the slave, overhearing part of the conversation between the captain and the merchant, and mistaking the design of the latter, supposed that it was a purchase to retain him in slavery, and sprang forward, his eyes gleam-

ing with indignation, crying out, "And do you call yourself a free-born Briton, an enemy to slavery wherever it exists, and yet you purchase me? Have I not as much right to freedom as you have yourself?"

He proceeded in this strain of indignant invective; the merchant turned his eyes affectionately on him and said, "I have bought you to set you free."

Instantly the storm was hushed; the Mussulman burst into tears, and falling at the feet of his deliverer, exclaimed, "You have taken my heart captive. I am your slave for ever!"

Reader, you may be ready to say with the Jews of old, "We never were in bondage to any man." But this, however true socially, is in a more momentous respect a mistake. Unlike this Mussulman, you and I were not even free-born. Man, indeed, was created free; but our first parents became slaves of Satan who deceived them, and all their offspring have been born in slavery. The Mussulman felt the yoke, and groaned beneath it. We, alas, naturally love Satan's yoke, and never conceive that we are his slaves. So completely are we in bondage, that we hug the chains by which we are enthralled.

The Turkish captain detained the Mussulman slave for profit to himself; but Satan's design, in deceiving and enslaving us, is to effect our eternal

destruction. The laws of Turkey (cruel and unjust as they might be) gave to the conqueror of this Mussulman and the captain to whom he had been sold, a title to detain him in bondage. The word of God pronounces sentence of eternal death upon the sinner. Duped by Satan, you have sinned willingly and with all your hearts; and the more you assert your freedom, the more clearly do you own your responsibility for all the sins which have brought and fastened on you the sentence of eternal death.

The merchant pitied the poor slave; and has not God, has not Christ, had compassion upon us? Desirous as the merchant was to emancipate the slave, the only way in which he could effect it was by paying the ransom-price. But where is there one, competent on the one hand and willing on the other, to ransom us from the bondage which oppresses, and the destruction which awaits us? One there is. His very name expresses the work He undertook. "His name shall be called JESUS, for he shall save his people from their sins."

You think it a munificent act of the English merchant to ransom this poor slave at the cost of more than all the profits of his voyage. And so it was. His pity for the slave outweighed his value for the treasure, and he freely expended it on his ransom. But what is all this to the love of Jesus, to the cost at which He "gave himself a ransom

for all to be testified in due time?" Oh! that this love might win the confidence of your hearts.

The poor slave, accustomed to cruelty and injustice, had hard thoughts of his deliverer. Unaware of his generous designs, he supposed that the merchant was trafficking for gain. One cannot wonder that he should think so, nor blame him for entertaining this dark suspicion of his, as yet, little-known friend. What has Christ done that you should distrust Him? Behold Him in the garden. Behold Him on the cross. See there what is in His heart towards the poor slave of sin. See there at what cost He fulfilled the mission which at the outset He so touchingly proclaimed: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives . . . to set at liberty them that are bruised." May you, dear reader, in receiving the tidings of His love, find yourself freed from every yoke, and willingly devote yourself to His service for ever.

Have you fallen at the feet of this gracious Deliverer? Have you by faith seen Him turn upon you, as it were, His eye of compassion while He said, "I have bought you to set you free?" You know Him as the One who "bought you with a price." What a price that was! The profit of a voyage. Not all the treasures of the world, East, West, North,

South, are worthy to be named, in comparison with the price paid for our redemption. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the **PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST.**" All language fails to set forth the love of Jesus.

It was to set us free: free from guilt, from death, from judgement, that He laid down His life. It was to break the yoke of sin, and snatch us from the destroyer. It was to set us free in the knowledge and enjoyment of God's perfect love, to delight in His will, to serve and worship. To have no object but Christ, and no will but God's is liberty indeed. Oh! that the love of Christ may constrain us that our souls may respond to the exhortation of the apostle, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."



MAY I BE QUITE CERTAIN THAT I AM SAVED?



IT is a great mercy that, at a time when many are departing from the faith, many on the other hand are increasingly earnest about the soul's eternal interest and are anxious to be sure that their sins are forgiven and that they are saved.

But there are some who say that we cannot know that we are saved. Now, the all-important question is, what does God say about this matter? and it is this question that I want to answer.

The first thing that occurs to me is this: that God would have us rejoice in the Lord always, not only now and again, but evermore.¹ This is God's will concerning all who believe in Jesus. Would He wish us to rejoice and be happy if we did not know that we were saved? Surely He would not. Then John the Baptist came to herald the coming knowledge of salvation.² And again John writes in his epistle, "These things have I written unto you that believe . . . that ye may know that ye have eternal life."³ What words could possibly be plainer?—showing that it is the will of God that they who truly believe in Christ Jesus should be quite certain that they are saved.

But when we come to look at what the work of Christ upon the cross was (and it was a finished work) we shall see yet further that we may and ought to know that we are saved. Indeed, God would have us give Him thanks that we are His. "Giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we

1 Phil. iv. 4; 1 Thess. v. 16

2 Luke i. 77

3 1 John v. 13

have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”¹

It is a matter of immense joy to the soul to see that the whole question of sin has been raised and settled on the cross, and this between God and His Son. The Lord Jesus was our Substitute, and took our place on the cross, and all that was against us He took on Himself. God raised Him from the dead, and has glorified Him in heaven at His own right hand. When, therefore, I look up and see Jesus crowned with glory and honour at the right hand of the Majesty on high, I rejoice, because then I know that all that God had against me has been for ever put away.²

His work, then, was a finished work, and our sins were all laid on Him. Those of us who believe on Him can say, Christ “bare our sins in his own body on the tree.”³ God knew our every sin and He has laid every one of the believer’s sins on Jesus : there is not one that was not laid on Him. Christ will not die again, and therefore if our sins have not all been borne by Jesus they never can be ; “the blood of Jesus Christ, his [God’s] Son, cleanseth us from all sin.”⁴ “By this Man [Christ Jesus], is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all who believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”⁵

¹ Col. i. 12-14

² Heb. i. 3 ; ii. 9

³ 1 Peter ii. 24

⁴ 1 John i. 7

⁵ Acts xiii. 38, 39

JUDGEMENT.—The blessed Lord has taken the cup of judgment in our stead who believe in Him, and consequently there cannot be any condemnation for those who believe. Jesus said, "He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation [judgement], but is passed from death unto life."¹

Then again, as to

DEATH. There is not and cannot be any for the true believer in Christ, because on the cross Christ died for our sins; He died in our stead, and He has thus received the wages of sin due to us, which is death. There is no death then for the believer, but he may fall asleep in Christ and wake up at once with Him, but this is not death: "Absent from the body, present with the Lord."² And not only our sins, but

OURSELVES have been put away, for we were only dead in sins and consequently we were only like salt that has lost its savour—no good to anyone for anything. The only thing, then that was left, was to make an end of us, and this God has done on the cross. We have been nailed to the cross with Christ. "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that we should not serve sin."³ Most people are always trying to improve

poor humanity, whereas man is past all remedy, and God has made an end of the believer in the death of Christ. It is the privilege of the believer to say that He is dead and alive in the risen Christ: Our "life is hid with Christ in God."¹ We who believe are born of God, and have been made new creatures in Christ, having been made alive in Christ who is our life.² "He that hath the Son hath life."³ But then, again we need a

RIGHTEOUSNESS in order to stand before God. We have not any of our own; all ours, at the very best, is but filth and dung. As, therefore, we cannot produce any of our own, God, in His wondrous grace has taken our sins, laid them all on Christ and given to us His own Son as our righteousness. God has made Christ "unto us wisdom and righteousness,"⁴ and we are righteous in Him, and as He is before God.⁵ The righteousness of God was once against us, but on the cross Christ has fully met all its divine claims. Now it is no longer against us, but for us, on our behalf; and not only so, it is upon us.⁶ And, what is still more wonderful, being made new creatures in Christ, we are God's righteousness in the glorified Christ.⁷

Then further as to our

PEACE. We cannot make our peace with

1 Col. iii. 3

2 Eph. ii. 1, 5

3 1 John v. 12

4 1 Cor. i. 30

5 1 John iv. 17

6 Rom. iii. 22

7 2 Cor. v. 21.

God, therefore the Lord Jesus has made it by the blood of His cross.¹ And "being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."² Christ is Himself our peace.³ He is the fountain-head of it, and we have peace, perfect peace, as we have Christ.

And now, will you suffer me, dear friend, to ask if you have this peace with God, and seeing that it is God's mind that we should know without a doubt, that we are saved, do you know that you are saved? Do let me ask this. I do so in all love, and with one anxious desire that you might give "thanks to the Father who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."⁴

"LIFE OR DEATH?"

FROM the flippant way in which many pursue their course through this present life, one would almost think that their conviction was that their existence here was to be perpetual. Few, indeed, pause to contemplate the tremendous fact that the termination of their life here but launches them into an endless eternity. In the heart it is often said, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry," but to-day few care to ever add, "for to-

1 Col. i. 20

2 Rom. v. 1

3 Eph. ii. 14

4 Col. i. 12

morrow we die." The thought of death is shunned, and the mind seems to be entirely concentrated on extracting as much pleasure and enjoyment as possible from this present life.

Such a picture as this, as it meets the anxious gaze of the seriously-minded Christian, must almost overwhelm the heart with sadness, in view of the solemn fact that it all must end in one thing, and that is—death! How faithfully has the ancient preacher declared, "There is a way which seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."¹ And also to the young his wise voice is solemnly and warningly heard, saying, "Rejoice, young man in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgement."²

As the eye scans the giddy multitudes in their thoughtless pursuit after sinful pleasure the solemn announcement of the word of God is borne in upon the mind, "The wages of sin is death."³ One after another is snatched away by the icy hand of death every day, seemingly producing but little effect upon the masses around. But is not God speaking in all this? Oh, my reader, have you not often sighed at the sight of death all around you? Has it not cut home to

¹ Prov. xiv. 12

² Eccles. xi. 9

³ Rom. vi. 23

the very core of your heart, to see the suffering, misery, and death, that reign on every hand, all the effect of the entrance of sin into this world? And, as you have thus pictured it, have you not earnestly longed for life? "Oh! for continuity! Oh! for something lasting!" were expressions that came from the lips of an ancient philosopher, as he neared the termination of his existence in this scene of death.

Do you think, dear reader, that such a scene can afford real joy and happiness? I answer, "No." An old hymn truthfully says, "True joy the world cannot afford." Suppose you heed not what I say, and turn to the world, seeking its friendship, mixing with its pleasure-saturated society; going to its balls, its music halls, its theatres, yea, cramming your mind with its learning in its varied branches of science, art, philosophy and the like, and then, tell me honestly, Are you happy? Is that heart of yours satisfied? Have you found what your longing soul needs? Nay! I wait not for your response. I know it is all disappointment to you; it all ends in death. Often has Satan led souls on, keeping their spirits buoyant in the whirl of excitement, till death, that terrifying, unwelcome visitor, comes suddenly along and closes their earthly career, ushering them into the presence of Him whom they have crowded out of their thoughts, and the knowledge

of whose ways they desire not.¹ But oh, listen, ye thoughtless pleasure seekers, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement."² Death and judgement in all their horror are before you. Oh! turn ye! turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die? Hear words from the gracious heart of God, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live."³ God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."⁴

O, lend your ear while I tell you how He is able to offer you life. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."⁵ "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."⁶

O, my friend, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was God's gift in proof of His love to the world, took death as His portion, that you might have life. Coming from the glory's highest height, obedient to His Father's will, He went to the cross and bowed His holy head in death. We read of how He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.⁷ And in virtue of His atoning death upon the cross, we hear Him

1 Job xxi. 14 2 Heb. ix. 27 3 Ezek. xxxiii. 11 4 2 Peter iii. 9

5 John iii. 16

6 John v. 25

7 Phil. ii. 8

saying, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgement, but is passed from death unto life."¹ He that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live."² He died that you might live. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."³ Was ever love like this? He endured the cross, despising the shame,⁴ that you might enter into everlasting life and the blessings of His own home in glory.

Having gone into death and risen triumphantly over it, He can introduce you, a poor guilty undone sinner (if only you come to Him and trust in Him) into the joys and eternal happiness of His own glorious home, yea, bring you into the enjoyment of the love of the Father's heart. It is only in resurrection that real life can be fully known and enjoyed. "This is life eternal," says the Lord Jesus to His Father, "that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."⁵ "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."⁶ He was made sin,⁷ and suffered, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God.⁸

As the wages of sin is death, He must suffer death, since He took our sins upon Him. O, beloved reader, it is yours to choose between life

1 John v. 24

2 John xi. 25

3 Rom. v. 8

4 Heb. xii. 2

5 John xvii. 3

6 Rom. vi. 23

7 2 Cor. v. 21

8 1 Peter iii. 18

and death. Do you choose the world, with all its attractive pleasures, which lasts but for a moment, and all which must end in death, or do you choose life, eternal life, in and through a crucified, risen and glorified Saviour? O, put it not off one moment longer, for not only may you die, but what is far more likely, the Lord may come, whose coming will seal your awful doom, if unsaved. O, come to Jesus, believe in His name; get sheltered by His blood, and receive everlasting life, and you will not dread either death, or the coming of Him of whom the scriptures say, "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry."¹

"The wage of sin is death,
 And life, the gift of God ;
 Then sin no more that wage to earn,
 Nor judgement's cruel rod.
 Accept God's gift, His blessed Son,
 And endless life, His death hath won !"

W.G.

SALVATION.

THIS term implies a danger of perishing; and viewed in relation to the soul of man, the word of God shews that such is really the case. Man is a sinner and needs a saviour, and God in His infinite love and compassion has made that provision; and now through the gospel of His

grace He publishes abroad this glorious salvation.

In the Epistle of Jude it is spoken of as the "common salvation;" in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as a "great salvation;" and in the fifth chapter, as an "eternal salvation."

It is the common salvation in respect of its universality, for the command of our blessed Lord to His disciples was, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." It is a great salvation because of its momentous issues, as well as of Him by whom it was procured. It is an eternal salvation inasmuch as it will last for ever. Well might the apostle Paul say, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth."

My dear reader, to you is the word of this salvation sent. Have you heeded the message? It speaks of life, and liberty, and joy. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven."

J.H.



UNDER LAW. Although God was present in the midst of Israel, He was not openly revealed. He was hid within the veil, within which the high priest, shrouded in a cloud of incense, alone approached His holy throne.

HOW DO WE BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD?

IN a paper on the "Children of God" received recently the following paragraph occurs; "How do we become the children of God? Not, as some people tell us, in a moment of religious excitement, nor by the influence of some sudden feelings. In Holy Baptism we are made the children of God, members of Christ, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven. When we are born into the world we are like poor waifs and strays in the streets of a wicked city. We have no true name, no real home; we are utterly alone. Then God in His mercy adopts us to be His own children. In the Holy Sacrament of Baptism we pass out of the streets of the world into our Father's House—the Church. The evil which is borne (*sic*) with us is washed away and forgiven, even as the waif of the street is washed clean in pure water. We receive a new name, which is ever to remind us Whose we are and Whom we serve, for it is a *Christian* name. We receive a new strength; the Holy Spirit comes to us as He came to our Lord in His Baptism."

Why do we quote all this misleading teaching? To emphasize the necessity of examining the scriptures and of learning directly from them. Here we have a person earnestly declaring we become the children of God in the ordinance of baptism, while others with equal or greater earn-

estness connect it with dying to self. How we need to cleave alone to the teaching of the Holy Spirit as given in Holy Writ, where only we have an absence of uncertainty and inconsistency.

There are several erroneous statements in the quotation given above, but it is proposed to refer now only to some scriptures that afford a reply to the question at the head of this article.

From an important passage in John's Gospel we gather two main facts as to the means whereby a person becomes a child of God. We see (1) that on the part of those so blessed of God there is the reception of Christ and faith on His name, and (2) that on the part of God, the new birth is His work entirely, human effort of any kind being specifically excluded. The passage runs thus: "He [the Light] came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children¹ of God, even to them that believe on his name, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 11—13).

There is not the slightest intimation here that the children of God become such either by passing through the waters of baptism or by living a strenuous Christian life. But we do find in juxtaposition, in this passage as so frequently in the

1. It is well known that in John's Gospel and Epistles, the Greek word signifying *sons* [of God] is not used, but always that for *children*.

Inspired Volume, the two great cardinal principles, viz.—(1) man's responsibility, and (2) God's sovereignty. On the one hand man is responsible to receive the Sent One of God in faith, and on the other hand God begets within him a new nature in relationship with Himself, whereby those who were "children of wrath" (Eph. ii. 3) and "children of the devil" (1 John iii. 10), become the children of God.

We also find an additional principle in the passage which is of both interest and moment. This power, this title, this authoritative charter of birthright is not granted to those only who received the Lord in the days of His flesh, but to those also who believe on His Name in the days when He is on high. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children of God, even to them *that believe on his name.*"

This statement therefore is made in comprehensive terms which look beyond to embrace those that should, as the Lord said, "believe on me through their word [*i.e.*, that of the apostles] (John xvii. 20).

The non-reception of the Christ was true of the Jews especially. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." The Lord said to them, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." Moreover the reception of the Lord's emissaries was placed

upon an equal footing to the reception of Himself. "He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me ; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me" (John i. 11 ; v. 43 ; xiii. 20 ; Matt. x. 40). The Lord was before the people as Heaven's, as the Father's, Plenipotentiary and was sufficiently accredited as such by the character of His own message, as He said, "He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words [sayings] hath one that judgeth him ; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John xii. 48).

The reception of the Lord was undoubtedly an act of faith. When He rebuked the Jews for not receiving Him, in a passage already quoted, He added, "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another and seek not that honour that cometh from God only?" (John v. 43, 44) ; and Peter speaking on behalf of those that received Christ said, "We have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God" (John vi. 69, R.V.). But after His resurrection the word of the gospel went forth through the apostles and others, and by such means He was "preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world" (1 Tim. iii. 16). Now in this connection we hear of receiving the word of the gospel. Samaria did so (Acts viii. 14). The Gentiles did so (Acts xi. 1). The Bereans did so (Acts xvii. 11). The Thessalonians did so (1 Thess. ii. 13). Receiving the word was the act of

their faith. Paul's testimony to Jew and Greek was, "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts xx. 21). In like manner Peter declared to Cornelius and his friends, "Through his name [Jesus] whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). For "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved"(Ac. iv. 12).

There is no word whatever to indicate that the ordinance of baptism is in so much as a single instance regarded as a means of communicating life. Baptism, on the contrary, is the symbol of death, not life, as Romans vi. shows. Referring to believers, the apostle writes in this epistle, "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into [unto] Jesus Christ were baptized into [unto] his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into [unto] death" (Rom. vi. 2—4). The scripture gives no support to the assertion that what is the figure of death and burial is also the figure of the impartation of life. For this act the figure of the new birth is used by the Lord Himself (John iii. 5), who said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." This new birth, as another apostle tells us, is not by the water of baptism, but of "incorruptible [seed], by the word of God which liveth and abideth for

ever" (1 Peter i. 23). James also speaks similarly, "Of his [the Father of lights] own will, begat he us with the word of truth" (James i. 18). So Paul speaking of his instrumentality as a preacher of the word to the Corinthians, says, "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel" (1 Cor. iv. 15).

These testimonies quoted from Paul, Peter, and James unite in giving us the means of the new birth in terms, which, not being metaphorical, cannot be misconstrued. This means is declared to be the word of truth in the gospel. But when the Lord spoke of the necessity of being "born of water and of the Spirit," He employed water as a figure of the word of God, as He also did, allusively, when He said to His disciples, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you (John xv. 3). And the same sense underlies the Lord's great object-lesson in the upper-room when He poured water into the basin and washed the feet of the apostles (John xiii.; compare also Eph. v. 26; Tit. iii. 5), the cleansing virtue of the word being prominent in these instances.

But the power effectually operating through the word is the Holy Spirit of God, without whom that word is unavailing. This the Lord is careful to make clear with emphasis; for in speaking again to Nicodemus of the agency of the new birth, He omits all reference to the water; "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit . . . : so is every one that

is born of the Spirit (John iii. 6—8). This omission is highly significant, and undoubtedly implies that the essential and sufficient Agent in the new birth is the sovereign Spirit of God.

Water when used alone and when used figuratively has the sense of washing or cleansing. In this sense it occurs in the prophet Ezekiel where Jehovah speaking of the necessary work upon the people of Israel before they enter into possession of the earthly blessings of the future millennial kingdom, says, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, from all your idols will I cleanse you" (Ezek. xxxvi. 25). Jehovah goes on to speak of the new birth it is true, saying, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." But the function of the water in this connection is the removal of uncleanness, while the renewal of the heart and the spirit is represented as the work of God alone.

This metaphoric usage of "water" is to be found in the New Testament in a similar sense. Passages have already been referred to in John xiii. 10; xv. 3; Eph. v. 26; Titus iii. 5, which are conclusive that water being an emblem of the word cleanses, but we search in vain for a single instance of the word by itself quickening. The Son of God quickens whom He will (John v. 21), and so does the Holy Spirit of God (John vi. 63;

2 Cor. iii. 6), whose life-giving power will even be applied to the body also (Rom. viii. 11). But nowhere have we a fuller or more decisive statement of the Spirit's sovereign action in bestowing new life than by the Son of God Himself in John iii. 8, "The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is *every one* that is born of the Spirit."

Baptism therefore is never spoken of in Scripture as either the sign or the means of the new birth, although it is used as a figure of the purgation of sins (Acts xxii. 16). The truth is not whosoever is *baptised* is born of God, but "Whosoever *believeth* that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John v. 1).

This subject might be pursued further, with a further accumulation of evidence, only to reiterate the proofs already stated that a man becomes a child of God not by submission to an ordinance but by faith in his heart on his own part, accompanied by the effectual inward working of the Spirit of God employing the word of the gospel. As Paul said to the Galatians who erred sadly in seeking to supplement the grace of God by works of law, "Ye are all the children [sons] of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26). And in this sentence we have a categorical and authoritative reply to the question with which we started.

THE RIFT IN THE CLOUD; AND THE BLUE BEYOND.

THE day was showery, and heaven's vault was filled with clouds of all kinds, and of every variety of colour, while thick darkness covered the horizon, betokening a coming storm. The rising wind scattered the clouds in all directions; but in the midst of the heavens there stood out in singular clearness, and quite distinct from all the rest, a thick bank of solid white cloud, which seemed each moment to grow whiter by reason of its remarkable contrast with the surrounding darkness. So striking was its appearance, that it at once brought vividly to my mind that coming Day of Judgement, when the present heaven and earth shall have passed away, and God's great white throne shall be set in infinite space.

What an awful day will that be for every unsaved sinner; yea, for young or old, rich or poor, who have died in their sins, and who will then have to stand before God to be judged, every one according to their works. As these thoughts flashed through my mind, my gaze was suddenly attracted by another dark cloud black as night, in the very midst of which was a big round hole; and, through the rift of its awful darkness, I beheld a lovely patch of deep blue sky beyond. Divine mercy seemed to shine through that open rift, and to have

set her throne in that heavenly blue; and I thought of the Heavenly Man who had passed through the storm of judgement for me, and had gone back to His Father's right hand as the everlasting token that my sins were gone through His wondrous death, atoning blood and glorious resurrection. In virtue of His finished work, and accomplished victory, He now occupies the very centre of the glory of God; and the heavenly blue in the rift of that dark cloud seemed lit up with the eternal brightness of my future home. Small wonder was it that my thoughts travelled back to God's way with His people of old when He brought His ransomed army through the waters of the Red Sea; and I pictured to myself that wonderful moment when He caused the pillar of cloud to change its position from the front to the rear of that blood-sheltered host. While it was darkness to the Egyptians, it gave light by night to the Israelites; and God's glory, of which that cloud was the precious token, thus became their rearward and protection; while, in the morning watch, utter destruction fell upon their pursuers, as their chariot-wheels were removed, and Pharaoh's mighty hosts sank like lead beneath those closing waters. Led by delivering grace and power, the redeemed of the Lord had previously passed safely through those walls of water, yet on dry land, to the other side; and, on the shores of resurrection, now sang

to Jehovah their songs of triumph and of praise. What was their security in the midst of the sea became, later on, their joy in the tabernacle; and, when idolatry came into the camp, and the tent of witness was pitched outside, that same cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the tabernacle door, while the Lord talked to His servant Moses, and every man worshipped at his tent door. That same pillar of cloud (by day), and of fire (by night), guided them in all their journeyings through the trackless desert, going before them for the space of forty years as the unchanging token of Jehovah's presence with His people. Four hundred and seventy-nine years later, when the ark had found its true resting place in Solomon's temple, "the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God." "And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped and praised the LORD saying, For He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever." Just one thousand years later, Jesus came as a stranger into His own world to do His Father's will, that will involving His own suffering and death as the divine sin-bearer; and having glorified God in His spotless life, He settled every question

on the cross, where He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. His work finished, redemption accomplished by the shedding of His precious blood, He rises on the third day triumphant over sin, death and all the power of Satan ; and forty days after, He leads His disciples out as far as Bethany ; and while in the act of blessing them on Mount Olives' top, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven, a cloud receiving Him out of their sight. Only a little while before, the Father's voice had been heard on the Mount of Transfiguration, as a bright cloud overshadowed them, declaring from the excellent glory, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye Him."

To that glory whence He came, He returned a mighty conqueror over all our foes ; and in the face of that glorified man there shines now the glory of God. Thus, delivering grace, guidance, worship and glory are all connected with a cloud ; while the "bow in the cloud" as in the days of Noah is still the perpetual sign of God's mercy to the earth. I saw a good many rainbows that afternoon, and then my thoughts carried me on to the not far distant future ; and, in the vision of my soul, I anticipated that wonderful moment when the dead and living saints, raised and changed, shall "be caught up together in the cloud to meet the Lord in the air." How bright and glorious will that moment

be for all the blood-bought family. But alas, a terribly solemn day will surely follow for every unbeliever.

Yes, the murdered man of Calvary will most certainly return to execute judgement on all His foes, for the Scripture declares, "Behold He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him; and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen."

If the rift in the dark cloud that August afternoon, and the blue beyond, spoke to my soul of God's mercy and love in a dead and risen Christ, none the less did the dark cloud itself foretell the coming storm of judgement which will shortly overtake this guilty world, while the solid white-robed cloud in the midst of the surrounding darkness betokened that awful day of reckoning when there will be no escape for either Christ-rejecter, or Christ-neglecter. All who have died in their sins will be there. Meanwhile grace lingers over the scene of Christ's murder, and "mercy rejoiceth against judgment."

S.T.

OFTEN REPROVED.

IT is hard to conceive of any individual passing through the whole of a lifetime without being in some form or other warned as to the intense reality of having to do with God. Nor is

it so ; but it is sad to reflect that His reproofs are often unheeded by those who would find it to their everlasting blessing to listen to His warning voice. We are told that "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not."¹ His object is ever for man's blessing, that his soul may be kept back from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword. How often has God during the last few years called man's notice to his own helplessness, and also demonstrated His own power as a God to be feared. We cannot soon or readily forget the awful visitations that have of late caused the whole population of the world to shudder. Cities have been hurriedly swept away, thousands of lives lost by volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and fires, not to mention the many who have been hastily launched into eternity by railway accidents. But in spite of all, men are still hastening on, bent upon the pursuit of the world's unsatisfying pleasures, heedless of the solemn fact that while God in grace warns, yet He will not be mocked.

Oh ! my reader, see that you refuse not Him that speaketh. We have seen that God speaks at least twice, but He may not speak for the third time. May God give you to be wise like a young man whom the writer well knew, to whom He spoke by way of warning ; but he heeded His voice, and became happily possessed of that

which the world will ever fail to yield, even life eternal in God's beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The child of Christian parents, he had gone from home to pursue his own way, glad to be free from their firm yet loving restraint. He was sharing a bed in lodgings with a young man who had been brought to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and who, without a single misgiving, could lie down to rest at night, assured that should the Lord come before morning he would depart to be with Him.

On one occasion they retired to rest as usual apparently in the best of health ; but on awakening in the morning our young friend found his Christian companion had passed away—he had gone to be with the Lord. God had in mercy left behind the one who was unprepared to meet Him ; but how solemnly had He spoken to him. Do you think he could ever again be indifferent to the reality of death? No, he trembled to think of what the consequences would have been had the Lord taken him away instead of the other. He would have gone to hell.

Ah ! how readily he now thought of Him, the knowledge of whose ways he had till now desired not. The truths he had learnt from childhood were recalled to mind as he thought of eternity, and his lack of preparation for it. How well he knew the sweet story of God's great love dis-

played in the gitt of His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. It was no fresh news to him to be reminded of the wretched state of man by nature in his alienation of heart from God because of sin ; nor had his parents failed to put before him the wonderful way in which God had thought of man when thus at a distance from Him, providing a perfect Saviour in His Son, suited to meet the need of the most reprobate sinner.

He had heard of His lowly grace in His coming from glory, of His going to Calvary's cross, of His atoning death endured there, of His perfect sacrifice for sin, of the shedding His blood for the purgation of sins ; of the glory brought to God by the accomplishment of that wondrous work, also of his being raised from the dead by the Father's glory, and given a place at His own right hand. How it all came back to his mind, and in simple faith he cast himself upon the mercy of God, and owned the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord.

My reader, permit me to urge you to decide for Christ now, as you read this, for this is your opportunity, and it may be your last. God has doubtless spoken to you once, yea twice. Therefore remember, "He that, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."¹

W. G.

JESUS GIVING AND OUR FINDING REST.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matt. xi. 28, 29).

THERE is a marked distinction between what is said here of Jesus giving rest and our finding rest, and the distinction is of much importance. He does not tell me to do anything in order that He may give me rest; the word simply is, “Come unto me.” But in order that I may find rest, He says, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.” Practical obedience in this case is made necessary.

It is of great moment to see the connection these two things have one with the other; the children of God often lose the present practical enjoyment of the rest which Jesus has given them because of not taking heed to it.

It is most blessed to notice the connection there is between Jesus receiving “all things” from His Father, as He says in a previous verse, and His asking us to come unto Himself. He does not say, “Come unto me” as the despised and rejected One merely; but, “Come unto me” as the One “despised and rejected” indeed “of men,” yet

having in Himself all that men eagerly seek after, all that they count estimable, every thing that is an object of human ambition. There is in Him whom the world has rejected, not only every thing that is suited to our need as sinners, but that also which can satisfy the utmost desire of our hearts ; therefore His invitation is, Come.

“SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.”

No more important injunction finds a place within the covers of the word of God than that which has been appropriated by the writer for an indication of the main subject before him at the present time. Added significance exists in view of the fact that this exhortation fell from the lips of the incarnate Son of God, and we must, even to-day, recognise their full weight as being divinely expressed by a divine Person, of whom it was witnessed, “Never man spake like this man!”¹

It is not for one moment that we would attempt to depreciate the value of any expression in that divinely-inspired volume or to set any assertion within it in a place of supreme importance beyond all others, for every word of God is pure, and “all scripture is given by inspiration of God,” but special heed is needed at the present time to such a word

as this, when we contemplate the intensely sad and lamentable way in which the scriptures of truth are either being given up and abandoned altogether, or mutilated by unholy hands in such a manner as to make them yield countenance to any and every human notion that springs from the sinful and misguided mind of ruined man. My reader, be entreated to close your ears against all the Satanic attempts of these modern times to sow distrust of the word of God in the minds of not only the simple, but also of the educated mass who look for spiritual help to those who assume the place of ministers of God. Search the blessed scriptures for yourself. Search them diligently, for they testify of Christ.

But first of all, let me impress you with the fact that the whole of the scriptures is a message from God to man, and there is not a word too many, nor one less than is needed. Many are readily prepared to accept certain agreeable portions as being of God, while scorning similar recognition of other portions, on account of their extremely faithful nature and their unswerving and unbending declaration of what God is in His righteous intolerance of sin, and of what man is in his hatred of heart towards God.

Further, many portions of the word of God meet with strenuous opposition in consequence of their loyal witness to the divine perfection of the Lord

Jesus Christ, who is presented to the reader as the incarnate Word. Hatred to Christ is undoubtedly at the bottom of all attacks upon any portion, or the whole of the word of God, no matter be they made by those who are renowned for their professed piety or by those who make no attempt to screen the fact of their animosity to a God of light, as also to His beloved Son.

No, my reader, your safest course is to search the scriptures for yourself upon bended knees before God, with the expressed desire that He would give you a correct and spiritual understanding of all that He would convey from their pages to your soul with the end in view of your eternal blessing. If you have a honest desire before God to come into possession of the truth, you need not shrink from what you may have to read, nor be afraid of a single utterance of that life-giving word that has for many centuries ministered sweetest consolation and hope in the power of His Spirit to the saints of God, when experiencing that tribulation which is their promised portion while upon earth. That the scriptures will tell you the truth, you can rest assured, for God does not mince matters in any wise when He has man's blessing in view. If you are wise enough to search the scriptures, you will find faithfully asserted the humiliating fact that sin has alienated man's heart from God, and that death has followed in the trail of sin, for it says, "Death

passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”¹ Terror might flood your anxious heart at the thought of this, and you might be prompted to sink down in despair, and give up all hope of the possibility of ever being recovered from the abyss of degradation and ruin into which sin has plunged you ; and well you might. But stay ! Oh, listen for one moment to the loving entreaties from the heart of a Saviour-God, recorded within the scriptures, “As I live . . . I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked ; but that the wicked turn from his way and live ; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways ; for why will ye die?”²

But can the wicked, when they turn to God, be allowed to live, and God at the same time maintain the holiness of His throne, and the supreme righteousness of His nature ? Ah, my reader, still further search the scriptures, and you will learn indeed, “How God can save, yet righteous be.”

Listen. “Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom !”³ God here, in the blessed scriptures of truth that men so ardently despise, declares the glad tidings, in all their divine sweetness, that He Himself has found a way of accomplishing a perfect, full deliverance, for all who turn to Him in true repentance.

Oh, reader, the ransom that He has found is His own beloved Son, the Lamb of God who was fore-

1 Rom. v. 12

2 Ezek. xxxiii. 11

3 Job xxxiii. 24

ordained to bear away the sin of the world. He was led to the slaughter ; He yielded up His life in the stead of the life of the sinner, His blood was shed, which avails to cleanse from all sin those who come unto God by Him. He lives again at God's right hand, in consequence of which the scriptures can further assert "God our Saviour . . . will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."¹

Oh, reader, "Search the scriptures, for they are they which testify of Christ." W. G.

THE DEATH OF A CONVERTED LIBERTINE.

BUT he is gone, having "departed to be with Christ, which is far better" than staying down here sighing and suffering.

And how came He to be with Christ? It certainly wasn't because he had led a religious life, and had gone to church or chapel regularly for years. It wasn't for any love he had for things sacred, nor was it for his quiet and sober life. No, indeed it wasn't for any of these things, it wasn't

for any "works of righteousness that he had done," that he is now in Heaven.

How was it then that *he* met death so calmly, peacefully, joyfully; and sank, as if to sleep, when he knew that death stood by to close his eyes?

Because, instead of vainly attempting to *make himself better*, he, "through the tender mercy of God," had been led to BELIEVE ON JESUS the Christ, as the One who bore the sin of the world, "suffered, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God," and freely offered to him, as He now offers to all, "*Redemption through His Blood, even the forgiveness of sin.*" This the dear departed believed, and "his *faith* was counted to him for *righteousness*," and this faith IN THE LORD JESUS enabled him to face death fearlessly—aye, to greet death as a friend—for "the sting of death is sin . . . but thanks be to GOD who GIVETH . . . THE VICTORY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, our Lord."

God's word declares that "the wages of sin is death," that "all have sinned"—and therefore all must die, unless someone, without sin, and consequently not under the power of death, would die, and so take sin's wages, thus making a way of escape for all who would accept what He offers. CHRIST, the SINLESS ONE, THE SON OF GOD *has* died, "who HIS OWN SELF BARE OUR SINS IN HIS OWN BODY ON THE TREE."¹ Now *who*

will believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST and be saved?

Pray don't throw this down, scornfully saying, "Oh, I hate this continued cant of Christianity, I don't see that Christians are better than other people." Perhaps not—but then "What's that to *thee*?" Certainly their misdeeds will not be laid to your charge, and 'tis equally certain that their faith won't *save you*. If dissatisfied with their living, believe on the LORD JESUS—for your eternal life depends on this—and then shew to others in your own self what your idea of a Christian is. But don't pass heedlessly by this word of warning, lest the denunciation be fulfilled on you: "Because, saith the Lord, I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded . . . I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh."

"Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets, Behold, ye **DESPISERS**, and **WONDER AND PERISH**; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."

G.S-M.



“WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?”

MATTHEW XXII. 42.

THIS is a solemn question for the heart. Christ asks the question of the Sadducees and the Pharisees who had been asking Him questions. How pointed, personal and important it is: “What think ye of Christ?” Eternal happiness or misery hangs upon it. In another place we have our Lord asking His disciples: “Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” And they said: “Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremiah, or one of the Prophets.” Such answers as these only show that men refused to own our blessed Lord as the Son of God. They were willing to acknowledge Him as a Prophet, but they would not give Him His true place, as the Christ, the Sent One.

Further the Lord put the question to His disciples: “Whom say ye that I am?”¹ And Simon Peter answered: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” This was the answer of one who knew from the heart in whom he believed. Thousands to-day are occupying the place of Christians who have nothing more than a head-knowledge of Him. But will this save the soul? Will this satisfy God? Will this meet the desire of the

heart of Jesus? Oh, no, dear friend. There must be heart-work to please Him. "For the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." ¹ "And with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." ²

Now let me ask you as before God Who knows your heart: How is it with you? Do you believe on Him as the Son of God Who died on the cross to wash away your sins? Can you say from the heart, He loves me, and gave Himself for me? If you have not yet come to the Lord Jesus Christ, and received Him as your own personal Saviour, I beseech you to come just as you are. Put it off no longer. Remember that now is the accepted time: now is the day of salvation. To-morrow may be too late. What a solemn thing it would be to be shut out from heaven and all its glories, and that for ever; for our blessed Lord hath said: "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins. Whither I go, ye cannot come." And there is none other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. ³

May it be your happy choice, dear reader, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ that you may be saved. Believe on Him with all your heart as your Lord and Saviour. Call upon Him while He is

1 1 Sam. xvi. 7

2 Rom. x. 10

3 Acts iv. 12

near, for His own words declare that whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved. And why not call on Him this very moment, confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father? He is waiting to receive you now. He wants you to come just as you are with all your sins, and He will receive you and pardon you, and make you one of His own for ever. Think of His love in coming down into this dark world to bleed and die to wash away all our sins. None but God could know the full extent of our ruin; and none but God could provide a remedy; and blessed be His name, He has done this in the finished work of His own dear Son. God could not forgive sin and be holy, so He judged it in the person of His own dear Son, for all who believe in Him. For God delights to forgive the sinner, Christ having made a full and perfect atonement, so that God can now be just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

Then give up looking to yourself, or anyone else. Let nothing hinder you, but come and He will save you for time and eternity. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."¹ In the death of the cross divine love comes out in all its profound reality.

May I ask you, dear reader, do you know this

love of God toward you? If you do not, may God in His grace give you to know it now, through faith in the finished work of Christ. Then you will be able to say, if asked what you think of Jesus, "He is the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether Lovely One. He's my Life, my Shepherd, my Friend, my Saviour, my Lord, and my All." May He be so to you, dear reader.

E.P.B.



"Sweet was the hour, O Lord, to Thee,
At Sychar's lonely well,
When a poor outcast heard Thee there
Thy great salvation tell.

"Thither she came ; but oh, her heart,
All filled with earthly care
Dreamed not of Thee, nor thought to find
The hope of Israel there.

"There Jacob's erring daughter found
Those streams unknown before,
The waterbrooks of life that make
The weary thirst no more.

"And Lord, to us, as vile as she,
Thy gracious lips have told
That mystery of love revealed
At Jacob's well of old."

