

TIDINGS

OF

LIGHT AND PEACE

EDITED BY GEO. C.

“WE DECLARE UNTO YOU GLAD TIDINGS.”—*Acts XIII. 32.*

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TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

BEYOND YOUR LAST DAY'S SICKNESS,
WHAT?

RECENTLY in the town of S—— was to be seen a long procession of young children passing along the principal streets. At the head of the column was a band of music, whilst all along the line were banners, flags, and other decorations. The novelty attracted many sight-seers. This was intended, for the chief object in the march was to display several large illuminated mottoes.

The leading inscription was a solemn warning to the onlookers. It was repeated, over and over again, in different parts of the line, and read—

“PREPARE FOR SICKNESS AND DEATH.”

Prepare for sickness and death! Indeed! What more serious warning could be uttered? Neither can be averted. One, if not both, will be bound to come. None but the grossly reckless would neglect to prepare for the visits of the doctor and the undertaker. Are you prepared for death? to meet God? to pass the border line? If so, what has prepared you? Is your remedy reliable? If you think it is, has it been tested?

But these young people carried with them their own remedy, their own special prescription, on another banner. And what was it? It read—

“SUBSCRIPTION ONE PENNY AND TWOPENCE A
WEEK.”

Think of it! Prepare for death by weekly payments! Does not the mockery of it all appeal to you?

Your friends may bury you in a grave bought by weekly instalments, or you may select your coffin in oak or elm at a penny a week paid in advance. But after the sickness and death, what then? Will thrift or insurance secure your exemption from judgment? Will this stave off the dreaded reckoning day? Will the fact that you have prepared yourself for *burial* prepare you for judgment? Be not only ready for sickness and death, but be ready for "after death." And, moreover, be sure your proposals are adequate for the emergency, that what you trust in WILL shelter you.

Is there anything, you may ask, that *can* make me surely secure? Yes, thanks to God, there is. There lives to-day a Man at God's right hand, a Man who has broken down the very stronghold of death. Under His protection and guidance you may be led through its very gateway in safety and out to the other side without the least risk of His protection failing. You will not taste its bitterness, but, awaking in the paradise of the blessed, you will find that He who has carried you through will be your joy and delight for ever. He alone can fit you for death. He alone can place you beyond the "Judgment Land."

Do you know Him and His power? Are you relying on anything but Christ to secure you from the power of Death and from the terrors of judgment? "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God."

THIS YEAR MAY BE THY LAST! PREPARE.

S. S.

“NUMBERED WITH THE
TRANSGRESSORS.”

NEAR a great asylum for insane criminals, and almost surrounded by funereal pines, lies the enclosure where the unmourned dead are laid when at last each guilty life is ended. Rows of small iron crosses mark the heads of the rows of grassy mounds, each cross bearing a number, each mound confessing a tragedy.

Three or four of the graves, however, have tombstones in addition to the numbered crosses, and the light falls brightly upon one in the centre that bears the name of “Samuel —.”

A more perfect picture of this world could hardly be imagined than that which thus lies portrayed under the hand of nature. Appearing fresh and green, with the beneficent sun constantly upon it, yet is there the never-ceasing mournfulness of the wind among the pines, while sin and shame and sorrow lurk at every step below.

And yet into such a world as ours came the Lord Jesus Christ, the One “freely given of God.” Though not even “asked for,” as Samuel’s name indicates, all the sunshine of divine grace shines reflected in His name. It stands among other names as that “Samuel” among the tombs: so although we are placed in the midst of ruins we are not hopeless, for we can think with adoring gratitude of this wonderful Man, who in grace was “numbered with the transgressors” and made intercession for them.

If there is a fact that should be vividly real to us, surely it is this: that on one eventful day, hundreds of years ago, Pilate’s secretaries noted down in the Roman criminal lists at Jerusalem

the name of a Man who brought such intrinsic worth into the position that He gained the right to forgive *all* transgressors, whether their offences were many or few (Mark iii. 28).

But this very fact shows that He was not wanted, not "asked of God." He was given of Him, but when He came to His own, "His own received Him not." A race of thieves and murderers preferred one of their own kind to a Man of a different Origin and with different manners, whose life of truth and love was a constant reproach to their sinful ways.

Nor is He asked for to-day. But to those who *realise* that they are transgressors God reveals the infinite value and preciousness of the One He gave to save.

Does the reader ask, "How can this Man save us?" Because He would not save Himself, but purchased the whole world by the inestimable value of the offering up of His own spotless life, that God's glory might be for ever vindicated and His universe freed and blessed.

There is no limit to the power, the grace, and the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. For hundreds of past long years has the sweet persuasiveness of the story of His love drawn myriads of sinners to His side. To all classes of "transgressors" goes this appealing word—"He was numbered with the transgressors." Spotlessly pure Himself, no one of Adam's fallen race could reach Him; so He came down to us, and stands by your side, dear reader, touches your wearied, sin-stained heart, and seeks your confidence. Just as He did with the woman of Samaria in John iv., offering blessings and making her welcome to all His wealth.

Neither pity nor help is to be found in your fellow-beings; do not expect it, they are too needy themselves. But here is One who is free and generous, and who delights to give. Is there anyone else like Him?

“Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope: even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee” (Zech. ix. 12).

The Stronghold is prepared and ready, for Christ has passed through death unto life, the Leader of His trusting people—*yours* if you will trust Him.

And instead of the elusive hopes, which will let you down to despair when they break, you can, in Him, lay hold on eternal realities that are as sure and stable as the throne of God.

So that “to-day” there may flow into your heart such a warmth of forgiveness and consolation, such a sense of your own utter unworthiness and of His surpassing condescension, that you will feel that He has indeed rendered you a “double” portion and been very gracious to you.

Is not this invitation too kind and too good to be refused?
L. J. M.

PROCRASTINATION.

“**I** WILL to-morrow, that I will;
I will be sure to do it.’

To-morrow comes, to-morrow goes,

And still thou art to do it.

Thus still repentance is deferred

From one day to another,

Until the day of death is come,

And judgment is the other.”

A. D. 1632.

FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE.

I SHOULD like to tell you how God led me to Himself, praying that He may use it for His glory in your blessing.

Though from a little child I was always taught to say my prayers, I personally knew nothing of Jesus, the Saviour of sinners. At times I longed to be good, and like many others, thought I could make myself fit for heaven.

When I was one-and-twenty God saw fit to send me a great trial. A dear brother, the idol of my heart, was taken from me by death. My desire after God became greater after this, but still the Lord Jesus was a stranger to my soul.

About a twelvemonth after the death of my dear brother, I had to leave the place where I had lived so long, and go to a situation some distance away. All were strangers to me there, but blessed be God, He led me into a *Christian* family. I soon saw that they were different from myself, and I longed to be a child of God. Day after day I asked God to make me *good*, to make me *feel* better. How I missed the road! Oh, 'tis ruinous to cover filthy sores with rags more foul. True wisdom is to strip them all off before Him, that His grace may make us whole.

“He delights in showing mercy
To a soul that owns its sin.
But the soul that thinks of *earning*,
Not a smile shall ever win.”

One night I was sitting up rather late and took up a little book to read which had been given to me several years previously. It was called *God's Glad Tidings*. This I began reading. When I came to these words, “Verily,

verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24), how plain it all seemed! Now I began to realise that I had nothing to do, that Jesus had done it all: and that, by *believing on Him* who had done it, my sins were all blotted out, for I was free from condemnation.

It is now twenty years since I trusted the Lord Jesus as my own personal Saviour, and He has never, never failed me. Every day only proves what the Spirit says of Him, that "He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." He has given me the blessed assurance that I belong to Him, and with it a peace that no one can take from me. Jesus is mine, and I am His.

If you have not yet begun to trust the Lord Jesus, will you not, dear reader, do so now? He is waiting to receive you. He sends none away. Come just as you are, and though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow (Isa. i. 18).

A. S. K.

It is much harder to believe that I am "without strength" than that I am "ungodly"; conscience tells me that I am a *sinner*, but I must have my *will* broken before I know that I have no strength.

J. N. D.

IN reasoning with unbelievers the Lord answered their conscience, not their question. When one asked Him, "Are there many that be saved?" He said, "Strive to enter in *yourself*."

J. N. D.

GOD'S RICHES.

I HEARD some years ago of a man who owed a sum of money and who could not pay the debt, having no means with which to meet it. When payment was asked he thought the best thing he could do was to go to his creditor and tell him frankly the truth, and then leave himself in his hands. So he went and told him he was unable to pay the debt, or any part of it, and saw no prospect of doing so.

The creditor was a kind-hearted Christian man, who knew how the grace of God had met him when he was a sinner, unable in any way to meet the claims of a holy God; and he knew that if he enforced his claim against the poor debtor who stood before him, it might be his ruin, and that only mercy towards him could avail.

What was he to do? He could not write "paid" on the account which the debtor had put into his hand, for nothing had been paid. He could not put "received," for he, the creditor, had received nothing. There was only one thing to be done. Taking his pen he wrote across the account in large letters "forgiven," and gave it back to the poor, anxious man.

The reader can understand the joy and gratitude with which such an unexpected result was received. The burden was removed and the debtor was free. And though the creditor had lost his money, the grace he had shown found an answer in his heart, for it was the outcome of the grace which he had himself received as a sinner from the God of all grace.

My little narrative, a perfectly true one, ends here; but the blessed lesson to be learned from it

remains to be told. And may the Lord help the writer to tell it, and in doing so to magnify the grace which has reached even to him.

In the first place, it is perfectly clear that when man sinned against the God whose creature he was, he robbed God of His rights, for God had lost what was due to Him from the man He had made, and who belonged to the One who had made Him. God lost man, and man lost God. Man became a debtor to God, in a debt he could never pay, but which *must* be paid, unless God were to be eternally dishonoured and man eternally lost. In the case above stated it is clear that though the debtor had been forgiven, it was on the ground of grace alone. There was no question of righteousness, for the creditor's righteous claim had not been met, and he had lost his money in the exercise of his grace.

When man sinned, though he lived hundreds of years afterwards as a sinner on earth, yet *morally he had died*. Distance from God is moral death to man. But it is blessed to know that, in the death and resurrection of His beloved Son, God has not only recovered what He had lost by the fall of His creature, but He has recovered it in a way that has brought glory to Himself. He has really been *a great gainer!* Instead of the man to whom He had to say in righteousness, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," and whom He had to drive from His presence, the blessed God has, at His own right hand in glory, the Man ("over all God blessed for ever") who has not only paid in His death the debt of man's sin, but has "once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God" (1 Peter iii. 18). That is, that He might in His own holy Person, in

resurrection life and glory, *bring back to God, for the satisfaction of the heart of God*, the man whom God had lost.

Yes, dear Christian reader, God has been a great gainer, for He has acquired riches for Himself through the removal, in the death of Christ, of the man who brought in sin and death; and His answer to "So He drove out the man" (Gen iii. 24) is—first, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him" (Luke xv. 22), and next, the "many sons" whom God is bringing "to glory" (Heb. ii. 10).

Yes, God has indeed acquired riches for Himself. That death at Calvary not only paid, once and for ever, that great and terrible debt of sin, but it has for ever removed from under the eye of God the sinful man who owed it, but could never pay it. And God now tells us of "the riches of the glory of *His* inheritance in the saints" (Eph. i. 18), and that we are part of *His* inheritance. And further He tells us that *He*, God, is "rich in mercy" (Eph. ii. 4).

He, the blessed God, is rich! and rich in mercy towards poor, lost, hell-deserving sinners! And more than this, in "the ages to come" He will show "the *exceeding riches* of His grace" (Eph. ii. 7). You need not make your earthly cares a trouble, dear child of God. He will "supply all your need, according to *His riches in glory* by Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 19).

How wonderful it all is, is it not? And God owes it all, all His riches in glory, to the death of His Son! Is it any wonder that God "raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory" (1 Peter i. 21)? How could He do otherwise?

Turn for a moment to John xvii. 10, and read

these words, spoken by the Son to the Father: "All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine." What do those blessed words convey to your heart? To use a figure with the deepest reverence, they present to my mind, to my affections, the blessed fact of a Divine Partnership, and that the saints are the property. And not the smallest item of that property can ever be lost! If it could be, it would mean that the Son of God had not kept what the Father had given Him! I think those words "given" and "gavest" are the key to the chapter. See how often they occur; and they tell us of the unfailing purpose of God for those whom He has given to His Son.

One solemn word to any who may read this paper, who are yet "in their sins" before God. Just read Luke xii. 13-21, and especially the last verse, "So is he that layeth up treasure *for himself*, and is not *rich toward God*." You may try to lay up treasure for yourself to the end of your life if you will, but what will it avail you when death comes, and you have to leave all behind you? Shall I tell you what you are doing? You are making the fatal mistake of *leaving God out* of your reckoning, though it is with Him you will have to reckon at the end. What does God say to you—" *Thou fool* " (v. 20). He does not often call a man a fool, but that man must be a fool indeed who would sacrifice his eternal welfare for the things that are passing away, and which he *cannot* keep, do what he will.

One word more. The earthly creditor of whom I have written could *forgive*, but his claim was not met. But God forgives, and *righteously*, because His claim has been met, and the debt has been paid by *another*, His own beloved Son. Let

us take to heart, dear fellow Christian, those blessed words, "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. iv. 32); and seek grace to act upon them towards all in something of the greatness of the love of God, who has forgiveness for all, because His Son "gave Himself a ransom for all."

Sinner, all the grace of God is for you *now*. All the love of Christ is yours if you will have it. He "died *for all*," and His death, with all the heavenly and eternal blessings that flow from it, is available for you. But if you refuse it, if you will not come to Him just as you are, with nothing but your sins to bring to Him, you will "die in your sins," and will bear them and the judgment due to them from God for ever and for ever. "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

"Rich in glory, Thou didst stoop,
Thence is all Thy people's hope;
Thou wast poor, that we might be
Rich in glory, Lord, with Thee."

A. P. G.

MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY.—It is not only pretty morality that you want; there is the question of your responsibility to God. It is not only a matter of mending your manners, but of getting your guilt put away. We are both guilty and responsible, and at the same time enemies to God. What we are has been brought out; our enmity has been proved; and that we *can* hate God, shows that there is some relation between us and God.

J. N. D.

HOW GOD'S KINDNESS MEETS MAN'S EVIL.

FROM page to page of the sacred record of God's dealings with men two things must arrest our attention. One is His *persistency* in grace and goodness, the other His *consistency* with holiness and righteousness.

No sooner had sin come in than these two things were brought to light, and as man's history proceeded the blessed story was the more marvellously unfolded.

Death is the penalty of sin. That sentence can never be reversed. But God's intent to bless His creature man was not to be frustrated even by this. He will now make known, in the very hearing of the enemy, that He will not be less persistent in displaying His grace to *fallen* man, than He was full of goodness to *unfallen* man. Yet He soon made it manifest that all should be in perfect consistency with His own holy nature and righteous character.

Was man unthankful to His beneficent Creator? Had he forfeited the enjoyment of the good and made himself a prey to the evil? He had. What, then, could *God* do, under such circumstances? If man was both unthankful and evil, He would declare His sovereign right to be "*kind to the unthankful and to the evil,*" as it was afterward expressed by Christ Himself, the promised "Seed of the woman" (Luke vi. 35). He would overcome the evil that was in man, by the manifestation of the good that was in Himself; and would do this, as we have said, in a manner worthy of His unsullied holiness and unbending righteousness.

Hence, with His own hand, He clothes the guilty pair with that which figuratively betokened that the infliction of the penalty of their sin was a thing already accomplished. That is, that another had died—one who had not rebelled against the will of God—and this in order that a righteous shelter from sin's consequences might be theirs, and they be made conscious of it. How marvellous must it have appeared to them, that the very God whose power and wisdom they had seen in creation, but whose rights they had outraged, should Himself be the Provider of their shelter!

Then, as years rolled by, and man became still more iniquitous, the same blessed truth was only the more fully unfolded, the more distinctly emphasised. Hearken to that conversation between Abraham—"the father of all them that believe"—and his only begotten son, as they ascend to the place of the altar on Mount Moriah. Does Isaac draw his father's attention to the fact that everything had been provided but a lamb for the sacrifice? "*God will provide Himself a Lamb*" is the never-to-be-forgotten answer (Gen. xxii. 8). Had sin against God placed the answer to His righteous claims entirely beyond the bounds of human possibility? Then God Himself would provide the Remedy in His own Beloved Son. "Behold the Lamb of *God*," said His forerunner, centuries after.

But I would draw your attention to a striking contrast as well as a very unique type in this scripture (Gen. xxii.). When you see a tree standing on the bank of some placid river, its shadow in the water appears to be upside down. And so it is in *this* shadow—shadow of Him who

was yet to come. We have in the background of this picture a stray sheep caught in the thicket by its horns. That which betokened its natural power—its horns—had, by the energy of its own will, become so hopelessly entangled that there was nothing but death before it; and against its own will it has to die—die “in the stead of” the beloved son.

But in the blessed Antitype we see the Beloved Son, in all the delight of doing His Father's will, expressing His kindness to sinful men, by coming down from heaven to lay down His life for such silly wandering sheep as ourselves. If we had become hopelessly entangled by the sinful activity of our own wills, the kindness and love of God in Christ would have us delivered; and this by the gracious activity of His own will. What a blessed God!

Then, when all this goodness had been expressed in His mission to earth, and man was so *unthankful* and so *evil* as to cast Him out and with wicked hands crucify Him, God would show that He would be still more kind to man—to man, still the unthankful and the evil—by sending the news of an open door for “repentance and forgiveness of sins” through His precious blood, and this to the worst sinners on earth. And He would send this message, not by a mighty angel, but by the Holy Ghost the Comforter.

Now see how this goodness works. If the judgment of my sin in the Person of the provided Lamb was the expression of God's goodness, that very story of goodness becomes the means in the Spirit's hand of bringing me to repentance; that is, causing me to judge the evil in myself, which

God judged in the Person of my Adorable Substitute.

No sooner had the righteous judgment of God exhausted itself on Him, than we have the expression of the *delight of heaven in His work* by the rending of the veil. And no sooner does a sinner judge himself than there is an outburst of *joy in heaven over his repentance*. The evil in man has been overcome by the good that is in God, and all heaven rejoices.

Just one more evidence of this divine persistency needs to be noticed.

God, of His own free will, came into the garden to seek Adam; and this when Adam had no desire to seek God.

The Good Shepherd came into the wilderness to seek the wandering sheep; and not only would He bear the full consequences of its sinful wanderings, but He would bear the wanderer himself on His shoulders, home to the place of everlasting rejoicings.

What God began in grace at the start shall be consummated in glory at the finish, and in the ages to come He will show "the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 7).

May our hearts be enlarged for a greater enjoyment of that kindness here and a better expression of it to others, until called to be the exhibition of it above, in His presence and in His likeness for ever.

GEO. C.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

A LAST NIGHT ON EARTH.

THE paper was yellow with age, the writing was faded, and the writer was dead. It was a record of "the Doctor's last night on earth." He was but twenty-nine, as he lay there, ending a brief but bright earthly career. It had been a fair one. Trinity College and his course of study over, a medical degree taken, and a happy married life opening before him, his family regarded him with both love and pride. Just three months after his wedding the cholera of 1833 broke out, and he went to the relief of the sufferers in the plague-stricken district of the West of Ireland. There, in the midst of his care for others, he himself was seized with the terrible scourge.

The long hours of the evening of August 15th to the morning of the 16th tell a sorrowful tale of one who had no hope after his earthly day was over; but as the hours rolled by, a praying mother, far away, who had spent that last night of her son's life in an agony of prayer for him, received the message, as from the God with whom she pleaded, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" (Zech. iii. 2).

Her heart was assured by it, and her soul found rest as to her dying son. As Charlotte, his young sister, sat by his pillow all through those sorrowful midnight hours, her own words can tell something of the way in which the God of all grace answered the mother's prayers.

“At seven p.m. Charlie awoke much frightened. Sat beside him. On recovering himself, he said to Dr. McG——, ‘The truest thing that ever was said, is that man is like—the—flower—of—the grass—to-day—is and to-morrow—it is *cut down.*’

“He was indeed in a wretched state of mind then. On desiring him not to despond, he shook his head. When alone he wept; three times anxiously wished he could see the rector. Oh! he was indeed *miserable then*. I proposed sending for Mr. Y——. He said, ‘If the doctors do not fear contagion! But if they do—he has a family—Oh! No.’”

His wife now turned to Isaiah and read the fifty-third chapter, and the poor, troubled sufferer, in bitter sorrow and mental distress, wept much, and, with anxiety, desired to have someone he could speak with. His sister continues:—

“About eleven p.m. Mr. G—— came. They told Charlie, and he suddenly exclaimed, ‘My God! *Bring me anyone* that will bring me salvation!’”

How sweetly the words of inspiration rise before the mind for all thus troubled, “who walk in darkness and have no light.” “The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men” (Titus ii. 11).

“While Mr. Y—— was reading, a dreadful noise was heard, like the firing off of a gun; he alone appeared not to hear it. All left the room save S——. I stood in the doorway. I heard him say in a very weak voice—speaking seemed distressing—‘Oh, my heart—conversation with Mr. Y—— was a *great comfort* to me. Oh, yes, I have been a scoffer. I knew the truth, but—

I feel happy now. Oh! I fear I *ought not*—I am *so great* a sinner.’

“Mr. G——went in and said a great deal. On Charlie saying he felt his sins, Mr. Y—— assured him he need not be troubled, as Christ had washed them away in His blood.”

How many sin-laden souls have pillowed themselves on that “precious blood of Christ,” which, on God’s authority, cleanseth “from *all* sin” (1 John i. 7).

“The doctor smiled, and peace filled his heart, as he, too, proved its value in a dying hour. He added restfully, ‘Oh, yes!’

“At one time, he said, the story of the thief on the cross was more applicable to him than any part of the Scriptures that Mr. Y—— mentioned. I went to Nancy (the old nurse), and sat on the stairs with her and S——. He said much to try to comfort her.

“‘Oh, my darling, I don’t like leaving you indeed; but God will be a husband to you. And *don’t put off your salvation* to the last as I did; but God had *great mercy* on *me*, even at the eleventh hour.’

“He asked Mr. Y—— to pray, and signed to have his hands lifted and joined in the attitude of prayer. A violent cramp seized him during the prayer; but looking on his face, I knew his thoughts were not here. I sat by his head and wiped the cold perspiration of death from his forehead.

“Looking at Mr. Y——, he said, ‘They intend Willie for the “Church.” ●h, I hope he will be a faithful minister of the gospel of Christ.’

“Speaking of something he had said to Mr. Y——, Biddy said, ‘You did more good than

harm.' His reply was, 'I know the world may say I was a good, moral man, but *oh, I am a great sinner!*'

"When the clock struck two a.m. he said to his brother Giles, 'I did not expect you would be here now. I thought you were gone to M——. At this very hour you might have been dancing in that ball, and not at the bedside of your dying brother.'

"About three a.m. he suffered much from cramp. S—— said, 'You will soon hear music that you love so much.' He slowly shook his head, but distinctly replied in very low tones: 'Oh, yes—hallelujah! hallelujah! Thanksgiving and glory and honour and power be unto the Lamb.'

"Shortly after he asked for Mr. Y——, and held out his hand to him, Mr. Y—— not perceiving it till Charlie said, 'Are you afraid to shake hands with me? Do; for I should like to shake hands with you and to *thank you.*'"

The young doctor, conscious of every symptom, knew that his end was nearing, and told his family, "This is the hour when the crisis gets bad."

"In less than fifteen minutes," continues his sister, "he was again in violent cramps. 'They are coming up,' he said, 'and will soon be at the heart, and then all will be over.' And then with perfect calmness: 'Oh, yes; in a few minutes death will come.'

"I remember it, and indeed ever shall. He was lying down. S—— held his hand, and I sat by his head, when he said: 'O death, O death, where is thy sting? O grave——' His voice weakened, and I said: 'But thanks be unto God that has given His dear Sou to suffer on the

cross for poor sinners.' Each of these words he repeated after me distinctly, but so low I could hardly hear him. Oh, I never can forget the anxious way he seemed to catch these words, as if they were to be his last. He became very uneasy in body and mind, and, sitting up, leaned entirely forward. I was behind propping him up, and I heard him say, 'My God! my God! hast Thou forsaken me?' I said: 'No, Charlie, God will not forsake you. Jesus Christ will comfort you, for He loves you.' He said, 'Oh, yes,' and raised his hands. . . . 'Oh, Charlotte, my darling, God bless you.'

"After this there was a long silence. At day-break S—— said: 'Put out the candle.' Turning to her he said, 'Put out the light—put out the light. But God won't put out the light of heaven from *me!*'

"He looked up as he said these words; the doctor asked him if he had any regret or concern at leaving this world. 'None,' he replied, 'except leaving my poor little S——.' Then turning to her he added, 'Oh, my darling, what a world I am leaving you in! But seek the Lord now, call upon Him.'

"After this the candle was put out and all was silent. This was the hour when we heard the bitter Irish cry next door. It was the first sound in my ears that day, and indeed it was the last. At five a.m. we had heard a distant step in the street; it came near, and a boy whistling. As there was no other sound heard, it impressed us all deeply, and he turned his head round and said to us, 'How thoughtlessly that poor fellow goes along! How little he knows what is here.' . . .

"It was daybreak when the last change took

place. Voice and sight were almost gone; he turned, so calmly, to look at her; I saw his lips stir and I handed him something; he opened his eyes and said, 'Oh, no! Why will you take my thoughts off things of more importance?'

"At nine a.m. he called his man-servant and told him to send for two porters from the cholera hospital, and to let them alone remain near him till all was over. They came; once more he asked if the coach had come in, for he longed to see his father; he said something about 'father' again; I only heard, 'My father.' Oh, Charlie, they were the last words I ever heard you speak! He then became insensible and we were taken out of the room."

One sentence more closes the record:—

"The Lord Jesus Christ was there that night."

And to that dying man, as to the dying thief, the gracious Saviour spoke peace and assured his soul that he should be with Himself in paradise.

"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. xxii. 5). S. C. M. A.

The Blessing of a Fixed Heart.—The work of God for us at the cross, and the work of God in us by His Spirit, and the ways of God with us down here, are the activities of His love in order to bring us into the light of His purpose for us, that we might have the blessing of a "fixed heart."

"O God, my heart is fixed" (Ps. cviii. 1).

W. J.

A MARVELLOUS THING.

“**A**ND as Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth” (John ix. 1). And He who came into the world and said, “As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world,” *opened his eyes*. Having spat upon the ground and made clay, and anointed them, He told him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam (by interpretation, Sent). And he went his way therefore, and *washed*, and *came seeing*.

Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. But here was a case: and great was the stir! The neighbours, the Pharisees, the Jews, the parents, all were in agitation. And no wonder, for it was no ordinary event. And though they knew Him not, it was no ordinary Person who had done it. One would have thought, as the news spread, that all would have been filled with delight, and that the Man who had wrought so wondrously would have received an ovation. *But He was not one of them.*

Already it had gone abroad that He was the Christ, and the Jews had agreed that if any man did so confess Him, he should be put out of the synagogue. And this was no small matter in the eyes of religious Jews. Such a miracle as the above was an evident proof that He was the Sent One, the Fulfiller of the promises of God; but to admit it was to condemn themselves. For this they were not prepared. They could not deny the miracle, but it was wrought on the *Sabbath day*. To the neighbours He was a puzzle. To the parents He was a cause of fear for the

consequences to themselves. To the Jews He was a sinner, and they said, "Give God the praise." They little knew that He was God. All with one accord are at fault about Jesus. They loved darkness and *hated the light* (John iii. 19, 20). Hence they hated Him—Light—God. To face that light was to be exposed, and to come out in their true colours. This they could not bear, for they knew nought of the grace that was in that heart of hearts to put their sin away. He told the Pharisees plainly at the close that they were blind, but they neither knew it nor believed it (John ix. 39–41). Hence He added, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but *now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth*" (v. 41).

But how about the man whose eyes were opened? The greater the opposition, the greater the faith that sprang up in his heart. The greater the manifestation of darkness all around, the greater the light that shone into his soul. Not only were his natural eyes opened, but his spiritual ones also. The Jews' determined enmity to Christ brought out a simple and blessed testimony from his lips. In reply to their wicked assertion, "We know that this man is a sinner," he said, "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: *one thing I know*, that whereas I was blind, *now I see*" (vv. 24, 25). And to their retort, "As for this fellow, we know not from whence he is," "Why *herein is a marvellous thing*, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes, etc. . . . if this man were not of God, he could do nothing" (vv. 29–33).

How strikingly all this sets forth the way of the Lord to-day with poor sinners born in spiritual blindness. The eyes of the same blessed One, though

still rejected, fall upon men in their deep need. Tens of thousands have heard His voice, saying, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." And they went to Him, the Sent One, and washed, and came seeing. Have you heard His voice? Have you believed His word? *Are your eyes opened?*

If so, and you find your neighbours (modern Pharisees) and even your parents all against you, fear not. Tell out plainly what the Lord has done for you. Happy is the one who can say, "One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see"; for many are groping in the dark, or in the twilight. Faith can say, I know; not I think, nor I hope, but *I know*. Blindness is past, sight is come. No one could be deceived as to the physical difference between blindness and sight, neither can there be any mistake spiritually. A man sees with his natural eyes, and knows what he sees. And when a man receives spiritual sight from God he knows it. He may be an *ignoramus* in natural things, but henceforth, with thankfulness of heart, it is his joy, above all, to exclaim, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

Moreover, the Jews denied the Lord's divine origin. But the more persistent their enmity, the more deeply was the man with his eyes newly opened convinced of it. First he spake of Him as *a man called Jesus* (v. 11). Next he said He was *a prophet* (v. 17). Now he breaks out, saying, "*Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence He is, and yet He hath opened mine eyes,*" etc. And he owned Him as *a Man of God* (vv. 30-33). Lastly, when cast out into His blessed company he believed that He was *the Son of God* (vv. 35-38).

A marvellous thing, indeed, it was, God's own Son, a man on earth, waiting on a poor blind sinner, and opening his eyes. Surely such grace and power, if anything could, should have convinced those wicked Jews. But no, they heard neither Abraham nor the prophets, nor the incarnate Christ. Neither would they believe though He rose from the dead (Luke xvi. 31), nor if the Holy Ghost were sent by Him from the glory (Acts vii. 51). Utter darkness was what they loved, and outer darkness their eternal portion (Matt. xxii. 13).

And herein is a marvellous thing, that to-day, in the midst of the boasted light of the twentieth century, men are as dark and as obstinate of heart as ever, as to Christ. "Higher criticism" criticises the Word of God, and Christ who is therein revealed, instead of letting the Word criticise them, so that they feel their need of the revealed One. And the mass readily swallow Satan's lies concerning Him. Heresies and divisions connected with His holy name abound, and gross darkness covers the lands, and still thickens. To many it may be truly said to-day, "Herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not whence He is."

Speak with any true Christian. He has been brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light (1 Peter ii. 9). His eyes are open, and he knows it. He knows also whence He came who opened them. Yes, *he knows Him*, Jesus, the Prophet, the Man of God, the Son of God.

Read a few verses further, and you will find that the once blind man, cast out of the synagogue, was met by the Lord outside, and he believed on Him, the Son of God. And so also to-day there

are thousands amongst us, from one end of Christendom to the other, who, more or less, have had the same experience, and know what it is to have been met by the Lord and to be in His company, joyfully confessing Him the Son of God. Are you one?

Herein is a marvellous thing, that so many who may read these lines with the Bible in their hands, and bearing the name of Christ in baptism, and constantly reading or hearing the word of the Lord, know not whence He is, and are without faith in His blessed name. A lifeless profession is utterly worthless, but "whoso shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, *God dwelleth in him, and he in God*" (1 John iv. 15). All such dwell in light and love, and none can dwell there *without seeing*.

It is a grand thing to get our eyes opened to see Jesus, to know Him, to enjoy assurance of soul, to confess Him as the Son of God. Pardon, salvation, eternal life, are God's promised portion for the believer. God is waiting, Christ is presented, grace is abounding, love is flowing.

But what a sadly marvellous thing would it be if *you* who hear and know *all about it* should *miss* the blessing after all. God preserve you from it, and give you now, with eyes wide open, to believe on the Son, and to behold His glory, that you may have eternal life. E. H. C.

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
I am this dark world's light ;
Look unto Me, thy morn shall rise,
And all thy day be bright :
I looked to Jesus and I found
In Him my Star, my Sun,
And in that Light of Life I'll walk
Till travelling days are done."

MAN EXPOSED—GOD EXPRESSED.

“ **A**S the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts ” (Is. lv. 9).

As surely as God is love, and man a selfish sinner, this must necessarily be so.

A “scribe ” was, no doubt, regarded as one of the best specimens of humanity when the Lord was on earth. No one, probably, knew his Bible so well as a scribe, for he was constantly copying it. But if you will take the trouble to put the declaration of what a scribe *really* was, as seen by the searching eye of divine holiness, and then consider, side by side with it, the blessed declaration of what God is, as expressed by the only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, you will see that the heavens and the earth are not further apart naturally than these are morally.

First look at Mark xii. 38. Here we get a righteous summing up of the character of the average scribe. It is not hard to see that it is *self*, SELF, SELF, from centre to circumference. Consider it:—

1. “They love to go in long clothing”—*self-importance by personal distinction.*

2. “They love salutations in the markets”—*self-importance in commercial circles.*

3. “They love the chief seats in the synagogues”—*religious self-importance.*

4. “They love the uppermost rooms at feasts”—*social self-importance.*

5. “For a pretence make long prayers”—*pious self-importance.*

6. Their selfishness is crowned by the cowardly meanness of taking advantage of the weak and unprotected. “Which *devour widows’ houses*”—and all this under the garb of more than ordinary sanctity!

Now turn to Philippians ii. 6–8 and you have the inspired delineation of the condescending grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, “who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

Could the distance between the heavens and the earth be greater than the moral distance between these two—between the selfishness that would rob a defenceless widow and the love of One who could, without robbery, claim equality with God, and yet who would lay His glories aside and take a servant’s form in order to serve the defenceless, yea, serve them right down to the death they richly deserved, and then, by His resurrection power in a coming day, change their bodies of humiliation and fashion them like unto His own body of glory?

Notice. He takes *our* fashion in lowly grace that we may shine in *His* fashion in heavenly glory (Phil. ii. 8; iii. 21).

In two remarkable parables the blessed Lord both exposes the heart of man and expresses the heart of God.

The first is the parable of the Prodigal. Man is here pictured as selfishly getting all he can for

himself. Then, gathering it all together, he takes his journey "into a far country." For there, he thinks, without any restraint, he can spend it all on himself. "Out of sight, out of mind," he says. "Once I am far away, I will just do as I like."

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, as it is called, man is seen in the most utter destitution. He has been robbed and stripped, but evidently not without a hard struggle to *keep* what he has got. Still, the robbers are more than a match for him, and "the weakest must go to the wall" in this selfish world. So he is stripped and wounded and abandoned half-dead. Here is another picture of human selfishness. But the story goes further. If the highwaymen had left him helpless, the temple-service-men left him hopeless. Both priest and Levite pass him by on the other side.

At this point another comes into view. He, too, is on a journey. But what a different journey from that journey of man's sinful selfishness as seen in Luke xv.: "A certain Samaritan as he journeyed came where he was." It is a touching figure of the journey of divine love to minister to sinful man in his misery and hopeless extremity. He brings both help and hope. He brings tender compassion in his heart and fullest provision in his hand. He brings power for the present and promise for the future.

What a marvellous contrast! Man "took his journey" away from God to do his *own will* and gratify himself; Christ came from heaven to accomplish *God's will*, and that will His Father's good pleasure in man's blessing. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor,

that ye through His poverty might be rich” (2 Cor. viii. 9).

Has such grace reached the reader's heart? If not, oh, will you not turn to Him now? Pretence and show will not do for God, and you will find nothing that you can really rely on in yourself. All that your soul could desire is found in Christ. Does your conscience want relief? It can only find it in Christ and His precious blood. Will nothing but love satisfy the human heart? Do you crave such satisfaction? You will find it, in overflowing fulness, in the love of Christ.

But if you are determined to continue your journey away from God, we can only warn you that disappointment and destitution, disaster and death will be the end of that course. But come to the Saviour, and do so to-day. GEO. C.

EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT.

THE doctrine of the non-eternity of punishment is a thrust of Satan's against the Son of God. If he can make out that the punishment of sin is a thing that can wear itself out—a finite thing—then the work that met it is a finite work, and the Person who wrought the work is a finite Person. But an eternity of misery can never measure the extent of the work of Christ on the cross, or bridge the distance that lies between the lowest hell due to my sin and the throne of God, where He has seated Him who now measures my nearness to Him, even as He measured my distance when on the cross. H. H. M.

“HIS OWN.”

HIS OWN BY THE FATHER'S GIFT. “Thine they were,” says the Son, “and Thou gavest them Me.” The Father took us up in eternal counsels that He might give us to the Son. We shall be for ever the expression to the Son of the Father's love to Him. How precious to think of it!

HIS OWN BY HIS CHOICE OF US. “I have chosen you out of the world.” When He was here, He called to Him whom He would. It is just as real, beloved brethren, that He has chosen us. He wants us for Himself; He must have us; now He has got us; we are His own.

HIS OWN BY REDEMPTION. “I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.” We cost Him His life. He never could have had the joy of having us if He had not laid down His life for us.

HIS OWN IN THE AFFECTION OF OUR HEARTS. “The two disciples heard Him speak, and they followed Jesus.” He had not said a word to them yet, but the raptured gaze of the Baptist had rested upon Him, and the delight of His heart had expressed itself in the involuntary expression, “Behold the Lamb of God.” And in simple, spontaneous affection the two went after Him, His own in their affections. May God give us hearts like theirs.

HIS OWN TO BE LOVED BY HIM. “As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you.” Could anything equal this? Does it not fill the heart with unspeakable affection and joy? If we had, like Paul, suffered the loss of all things here, would not His love be a sufficient compensation?

C. A. C.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.



RETURN OF A RUNAWAY SLAVE.

PHILEMON 18, 19.

BEFORE I speak from this passage I will briefly sketch the circumstances which led to the writing of this letter, without which the canon of Scripture would not be complete. This letter was inspired by the Spirit, and Scripture would not be complete without it. It appears this beloved man had a servant or bond-slave named Onesimus; this Onesimus was a stiff-necked, cantankerous fellow who loved to have his own way. The meaning of the word Onesimus is unprofitable, and he was true to his name. We may also safely gather from the letter that this Onesimus was the subject of many prayers. These slaves were part of the household and they were often kindly treated, and in a godly household like Philemon's we may safely conclude that Onesimus was the subject of many prayers. I think I am speaking to some here who are the subjects of many prayers, and my cry to God is that these prayers may be answered to-night. We see here, as the story goes, that Onesimus got tired of his praying master, so he departed from his home and went away. I speak feelingly with regard to this, for I see in this man a picture of myself; I was the subject of many prayers. I had a praying mother, but I was stiff-necked and loved to have my own way. One of my greatest punishments was when my mother took me and knelt down with me (and she

often did it when I was naughty) and said, "O God, save my boy! Make him a servant of Thine!" I said, "I must get away; I have had enough of this. I will go to sea." I well remember my mother saying, "I will never let God alone about you." Off I went over the sea; I wanted to see life, but my mother's prayers spoilt everything for me. In every letter she wrote were these words, "I am praying for you." I got away from my home, but I could not get away from God. I cannot refrain from speaking in this way, because I see in this man Onesimus a picture of myself, and I don't think I need make an apology for it, because it is quite scriptural. Paul speaks of himself, and I think it is the Lord's way that preachers should tell how they have been blessed.

I travelled about, and at last I came home in my ship to Glasgow; I thought I would go ashore and enjoy myself, but God was working in my soul. God made me feel in the theatre the soft touch of my mother's hand and a pall came over my soul: I had to give in. I said I would go and hear a preacher, so I went to hear a great preacher who was preaching at one of the kirks there. I went up into the gallery; my heart was aching. I wanted God. The preacher said, "I take for my text Colossians i. 19: 'For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell.'" You say, that was an extraordinary text! An extraordinary blessing came to me. I don't know whether the preacher preached well or not, but I know what happened to me: my mother's God drew near to me. I got introduced to Him on that occasion. He looked right down into my soul, and He said to me, "*I am for you, and you are for Me.*" I said, "I am a poor sinner, Lord." "Yes," He said, "but I

will make you happy ; all the fulness is pleased to dwell in Me." All I needed for time and eternity was found in Him, and I cast my soul on Him.

"I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary, and worn, and sad ;
I found in Him a resting place,
And He has made me glad."

My mother's prayers were answered. I went down to my ship as fast as my feet could carry me, and I got out my paper and wrote a letter. I said to my mother, "I have come to Christ to-night; your prayers are answered." I could not tell you what that letter was to her. Oh, if you only knew what you are causing your parents! Young man sitting there, your father has been praying for you! You think Christianity will make you miserable. I never knew real pleasure till God looked down into my soul and said, "I will make you happy." I could not refrain speaking of myself, because I see myself here in this man Onesimus.

This man went away from his master, went to Rome and was lost to sight. Only yesterday I received a letter telling me about a young fellow I knew in London, who, a year ago, went off to Canada and went on a farm ; a sister who was there was continually speaking to him about his soul. He said, "I thought I should get away from that by coming here." Away in the solitude there that young fellow has come to Christ. Parents, cheer up! Sometimes God keeps us waiting, but I trust there are some here in whose souls God is working. Come to Christ to-night! Let your father's God be yours. This young man went off to Rome, and in that great city he was converted. Paul could say of him, "Whom I have begotten

in my bonds." This letter was written that the young man might go back; he was sent back to his servitude. The apostle said, "I must send you back, because you belong to Philemon; you must go back to where you have been in self-will and serve the Lord." He was willing to go back. That is the beauty of Christianity. Oh, dear young Christians, don't think there is anything commonplace about Christianity! It is morally beautiful, you are left here to serve the Lord. In painting pictures of the saints, people always put a nimbus round their heads: Christians should have the nimbus of the glory of the Lord. I can scrub a kitchen just as much for the glory of God as preach. We can serve the Lord just as much in our daily circumstances as in preaching. Preaching is a small part: the great thing is *practising*.

Having said this much, I am now coming to the letter itself, to the verses to preach from. You would expect to find in this letter some beautiful expressions about the gospel. This letter could only be produced by a Christian. You will find expressions here which convey to us the beautiful simplicity of the gospel.

I want to speak of four words—*clearance, acceptance, relationship, and moral result*. Let us come back to the eighteenth verse. I make use of Paul as a figure of the Lord Jesus Christ; Philemon, a figure of God who has been offended; and Onesimus, a figure of the sinner. We have one man making himself responsible for another. "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, *put that on mine account*." It is one man making himself chargeable for another. Do you know the gospel after this fashion? Do you know in

your soul the import of the fact that Jesus died? What did He die for? You say, He died for sinners, He died for the unjust. He did, but can you say as you sit there, He died for me? There is very great insensibility with people as to their being responsible to God. People are alive to their responsibility to their fellow-creatures, but have you ever faced your responsibility to God—your sins and God? What can be more terrible than to have sins and to be insensible with regard to them? The Lord said, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." Die you must, but to die in your sins, how terrible! No man in his conscience is infidel—he may be in his brain, but not in conscience. I never preach to a man's brains, but to his conscience. Your conscience proclaims your responsibility to God. Unconverted young man, young woman, old man, your life proclaims your responsibility to God! The eye of God rests on the pages of your life; you are writing page after page of history, and not a single line has given God pleasure yet! Your whole life has been marked by self-pleasing. Wake up to it! I don't charge you with stealing, with being dishonest, but with pleasing yourself. It is written of Jesus that He "pleased not Himself." You have been pleasing yourself: your whole life has been terribly wrong. If you don't face your responsibility you will never know the grace of God.

The story has been often told, but I tell it again because it illustrates what I am saying. It is related of a czar of Russia, who was a mighty warrior and a very strict disciplinarian, spending more than half his time in war, that on one occasion when he had been out on campaign,

there was a poor young officer who had got deeply involved in debt. One night he took a piece of paper and wrote down, "I owe Messrs. So-and-so so much, and Messrs. — so much." Altogether it was a great sum. At the bottom he wrote, "I owe all this, but who is going to pay?" He knew the czar was very particular about such things, and that he would be turned out of the army. He could not answer it, and he sought refuge from his sorrow in sleep. The czar was going through the officers' quarters, and seeing a light there went into the room where the young man was. He took up the paper and read it, and his heart was touched. He wrote two words at the bottom, "I, Nicholas." Towards morning the cold aroused the young man from his slumber, and, taking up the paper to have another look at it, he said, "The czar has been here, and the czar promises to pay." When they were on parade that morning the czar came down the ranks, and the young officer said, "Thank you, Sire." "What! what!" he said. "Thank you, Sire." He had the czar's promise to pay and his burden was rolled away.

Out on yonder cross was the blessed Jesus, who wrote a history under the eye of God of which every line gave God pleasure, everything was bright with His glory; yet out there on yonder cross He was nailed between two thieves, "numbered with the transgressors." His hands—you would not like me to know what your hands have done—but His hands were never outstretched for His own pleasure. His feet—you would not like me to know where your feet have taken you—but His feet ever ran in the way of God's commandments: His hands and His feet

were nailed there. And there all that I owed was put to His account.

A divine Person gave divine satisfaction in regard of our responsibility, but never ceasing to be what He was by reason of what He became. Think of it. Blessed Lord Jesus! He had to say, "All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over Me." "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Come and learn at the cross what your sin is, what the holiness of God is. He has settled it all there, met it all there; it was His glory to do it. He it was who spangled the heavens. He spake and it was done. Even when He was bearing sins, He was upholding the universe by the word of His power: He was greater in bearing sins than in creating the worlds.

He has done it: it is not a *promise* to do it, *He has done it*. How do we know that? He has gone back to the spot where He undertook to do it. He said in the past eternity, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God." It is done. What is the meaning of it? "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." That blessed Saviour who died for our sins was raised the third day. The work is done.

Let us go back to *v. 17* and put the two verses together: "If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself." These are the words you want, dear Christians. "If thou count me a partner, receive him as myself." How is God going to receive us? In the same way as Christ, who died for our sins. You will never get peace until you get into the presence of a risen Christ and of the God who raised Him. You will never lose your burden at the foot of the cross, but at the feet of the Saviour who was once there, but who

is in resurrection now. "If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself." There is no difference in the way God receives Christ and the way He receives you. Where you get solid peace is in the presence of the risen Christ and of the God who has raised Him. He took our place in death because God disapproved of us, that we might have His place in resurrection because God approved of Him. You get peace at the feet of the Saviour who has done it. We believe in Jesus who was raised up out of death. I would like to sit down quietly by your side now. I ask you one question—Is there the "ruffle of a leaf," as we speak figuratively, between God and the risen Christ? Where is the risen Christ? In the presence of God. He took our sins and bore the judgment; but He is risen now. He is before God, and there is not the "ruffle of a leaf" between Him and the God who raised Him. He took my place in death because God disapproved of *me*, that I might have His place in resurrection because God approved of *Him*. Are you on that solid platform with God, the platform of a risen Christ? You say, I am shaky sometimes. There is no shakiness in the presence of God who has raised Him from the dead, not the ruffle of a leaf! It is not only Christ who died, but Christ who is raised. You must be either on the ground of your responsibility to God, or on the ground of the risen Christ who has cleared it all away.

The majority of Christians have not got peace; they know that Christ died for sinners and that He died for *them*! But what God wants you to see is that you are on the same solid platform with Him as Christ who has done it. I have got that peace, my soul has been there for many

a long day; I don't look inside, I look away there; He is my peace, He has made peace. Let me give you a nautical illustration. A ship is coming into harbour for shelter. It is important for the anchor to be dropped in good holding ground. They do not drop the anchor inside the ship, but outside in good holding ground. Many try to find anchorage within in their experiences, but the anchor must be outside. "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." Jesus is there, and it is good holding ground within the veil.

Verse fifteen is very sweet: he went away for a season that he might be received for ever. I went away for a season, but I am received for ever. And how are you received? The prodigal said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." Did he receive him like that? No, he did not. So we have here, "Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved." There is relationship.

You will be received as Christ is received. He will put His arms around you, you are never more to go away; it is an eternal relationship. I am received as Christ is received; I am a child of God, a child with the Father; I am received for ever.

I have clearance, acceptance, relationship, and now (verse eleven) I am profitable. "Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me." I was a poor

worthless thing, a brand plucked from the burning, but now profitable to the Father and the Son. We are here for God.

This is a beautiful unfolding of the grace of God. I have clearance by the death of Christ; I am accepted in a risen Christ; I am in the relationship of a child, and I am profitable to the Father and the Son.

I make another appeal to you. After all, the gospel is an appeal to man from God. Am I speaking to anyone here who is the subject of many prayers? Would you not like to be able to write to your mother to-night and say, "Mother, I came to Christ to-night, I came to Him at the meeting; your Saviour is now my Saviour"? May God grant it for His name's sake. W. J.

Satisfied Expectations.—The great question is, "What is Christ and His death worth?" People talk of presumption! *There is nothing too great for me to expect in Christ.* Do not let yourselves be persuaded that you cannot have the sense of what God gives. He would have us have "a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

J. N. D.

Little Faith.—A storm, though it may shake our present faith, is so far from indicating any change in God's love and grace, that, after He rebukes the storm, He rebukes also our unbelief. "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" (Matt. viii. 26; Mark iv. 40). W. H. H.

“MY TIME’S COME.”

HE was only twenty years of age, and, contrary to the advice of his friends, he had gone skating on the ice after darkness had set in. He had not gone very far when he came to a thin place. The ice gave way beneath him, and he was precipitated into the water. Two men, who were passing by at the time, went to his rescue, and with a long pole, which happened to be near at hand, tried to reach him; but his hands were so frozen that he could not lay hold of it, and to their horror they saw him disappear beneath the ice, his last words being:

“MY TIME’S COME!”

How uncertain life is! Have you ever, dear reader, faced the possibility of being *suddenly* taken out of the world? Your end may possibly not be as sad a one as the young gentleman’s of whom we have written. You may live out the allotted threescore years and ten, or a little longer than that, or you may die in the blush of youth; it may be suddenly, or with a lingering illness, but whether one or the other, be assured of this, YOUR TIME *will* COME.

What if it should find you not ready?

Oh, be wise, unsaved friend. Death lies ahead of you, and may claim you at any moment, and then, if you die in your sins, the great white throne and the lake of fire, which is the second death, must be your portion for ever. But, God be praised! we can tell you of One who on Calvary died for sinners, who on the cross bore the judgment of God on behalf of those who believe on Him, and whose precious blood cleanseth from all sin.

E. E. N.

A SOUL'S FLIGHT.

THERE were about 1,600 persons on board the s.s. *Walmer Castle* when she sailed one day from Cape Town.

Nearly 1,200 of these were troops returning from the war, and some 250 saloon passengers, the remainder comprising the crew.

We had had our last sight of the lovely Table Mountain and were now steaming ahead for mid-ocean.

Many of the soldiers had been at the front for more than two years, and were eagerly longing for their first glimpse of old England and the loved faces waiting to welcome them.

The first few days passed happily, but one morning it was reported that one of the soldiers was ill. The doctor said it was a very serious case, and had he been on shore would have operated, but on board it was impossible. Poor fellow! How soon he had been laid low! He had embarked with bright hopes of soon joining his loved ones, and now he was prostrated with illness, his body racked with pain. Several days elapsed, but with no improvement, only increasing weakness, and in a few days he died.

His last call came, and he had to obey its summons, and the spirit left the weary body. A sadness fell upon some of us as we thought of his dear ones at home and their deep sorrow when learning the sad news.

The morning following there was a large gathering on deck; the soldiers, many of them his mates, stood around the body, which lay wrapped in a tarpaulin, while, amidst a solemn hush, the captain read the funeral service. The bugles sounded

the "Last Post," and the body was consigned to its watery grave. Some doubtless thought that this was the end of the poor soldier; and careless ones may have dismissed the event from their minds. But what we had left behind in the ocean was only the body, the former abode of the precious soul. Old Testament Scripture says, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccles. xii. 7). New Testament Scripture says, "All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John v. 28, 29). The soul can never die: it must live on for ever.

Our life on this earth is but for a moment compared with the endless ages of eternity. And yet thousands are hurrying on without realising that very soon they must meet God. The summons may come at any moment.

Reader, are *you* prepared to meet God? Meet Him you must. "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. xiv. 10, 12). But resting on the atoning work of Christ you have nothing to fear. Your sins have been for ever removed from the sight of God, since they were judged at Calvary.

But if still a stranger to the Lord Jesus Christ, you must meet Him as your Judge, and in that day stand condemned before Him. You will have all the blackness of sin upon your guilty soul, for you have refused the salvation God offers you through the death of His beloved Son. Nothing but condemnation can await such a one.

There on the cross Jesus bore the punishment of sin. He bowed His head under the fearful load. The holy lips of Jesus tell with awful distinctness what God's thought of sin is. Out of the darkness when He hung upon the cross suffering such unutterable anguish, came forth that agonised cry from the spotless victim, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

Reader, did you ever say to yourself, "He was forsaken of God for *me*. He suffered that deep agony for me, and all because He loved me"?

If you have never said it, may the vastness of that love take possession of you.

Love proved itself stronger than death. Nothing but His wonderful love could have led Him to offer Himself, the willing victim, to bear the punishment of sin. How is it possible that men can resist such love? Through His finished work, all who believe on Him have peace with God. Need we then fear to meet Him? No. We love Him, and there is no fear in love.

It will be our unspeakable joy to see the One who died for us and to gaze upon His blessed face.

May you be ready to meet Him when your call comes; then to thank and praise Him throughout eternity.

L. M. B.

"Whom having not seen ye love."—"Should you like to get better, Rachel?" said the visitor.

"No; I'm ower much ta'en up wi' Him to want to get better! And I shall be like Him! HAPPY! HAPPY! HAPPY!"

Oh! what power there is in His love to win the heart! Has He won the reader's heart yet?

GEO. C.

GOOD HEARERS.

I HAVE often heard certain people spoken of as being good hearers. It is admitted that good hearers are not general: that many hear as though they heard not.

Who, then, is a good hearer, and how is he described in the Word of God?

A GOOD HEARER IS AN ATTENTIVE HEARER. It is said of Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things spoken by Paul (Acts xvi. 14). The word means holding towards, and implies fixed attention. She meditated upon the word spoken, she set her heart upon it, and embraced it as of the highest importance. Such is a good hearer: thoughtful, serious, earnest; in contrast to the trifling and the shallow.

A GOOD HEARER IS A BELIEVING HEARER (Heb. iv. 2). It is faith that makes the Word profitable. Faith feeds upon it, digests and assimilates it. It is faith that hears the voice of God speaking in the Word, responds to it, and appropriates it to the heart. To the believer the Word is a living reality.

A GOOD HEARER IS A DISCRIMINATING HEARER. He is one who can distinguish the voice of the Good Shepherd from the voice of strangers (John x. 4, 5). Such a hearer is not led away by eloquence, learning, or dramatic display; he is taught by the Holy Spirit, and has spiritual discernment. The Bereans are commended because when they heard Paul and Silas they searched the Scriptures daily to see whether those things were so (Acts xvii. 11). They tested all by the Scriptures, and made God's Word the sole authority. Such is a good hearer: *he knows WHAT he believes, and WHY he believes it.*

A GOOD HEARER IS A RETENTIVE HEARER (Heb. ii. 1; James i. 25). The word of God abideth in him (1 John ii. 14). He holds it fast and retains it as the most precious treasure.

The old writers compare hearers to four things: those like a *sponge*, that suck in bad and good together, and let both run out immediately—having ears, but hearing not; those like a *sand-glass*, that let what enters in at one ear pass out at the other—hearing without thinking; those like a *strainer*, letting go the good and retaining the bad; and those like a *sieve*, letting go the chaff and retaining the good grain. The good hearer searches and compares; he discriminates to retain.

A GOOD HEARER IS A PRACTICAL HEARER (James i. 22–25). His life is moulded by the Word (Rom. vi. 17). Like the good-ground hearer, he brings forth fruit with patience (Luke viii. 15).

There are sentimental hearers like those spoken of in Ezekiel xxxiii. 31, 32. Such seek only amusement and passing enjoyment. But the good hearer longs to learn the will of God, that through grace that will may be done *in* and *through* him.

These are the main features of a good hearer. It follows that a good hearer is the creation of God. It is He who gives the heart to perceive, the eyes to see, and the ears to hear. May He multiply good hearers everywhere, for His own name's sake.

O. T.

“Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.”

LUKE viii. 18.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.



THE RIVAL SCHEMES.

FOR all practical purposes, there are just two of them. One emanates from God, the other from the devil. One the genuine thing, the other a worthless—nay more, a *dangerous* imitation.

God's scheme is this: To conduct a searching investigation into the sinner's condition; to probe his heart to the bottom, laying bare its secrets, uncovering the sins of his lifetime, thus producing from him an honest confession of it all. Then justifying—clearing from every charge—"freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24). To have everything OUT and righteously settled by God means real *happiness*.

The rival scheme is to hush matters up and make the sinner *merry*. Let him close his eyes and know the bliss of being ignorant of such matters as death, judgment, and the lake of fire; or if he cannot be ignorant, at least forgetful and *merry*.

But does somebody whisper that neither ignorance nor forgetfulness can avert approaching doom? That shutting one's eyes does not avert collisions, but rather increases their probability? Oh! then let's have no half-measures, but out with it boldly—*we don't believe* in your judgment and hell-fire fables! There are no such things! *We mean to be merry!*

Honestly now, reader, which of these two schemes have you hitherto adopted?

MERRY! Ah! it sounds well, but this scheme doesn't work so well as many think. To begin with, merriment, at best, is a poor thing. The fact is, it lacks substance. Froth, but not cream. Sparks, but not fire. Laughter and song and excitement, but not genuine happiness. You must work hard and keep it up, or it is gone, leaving an aching void behind.

Further, this "we-don't-believe" business is not all plain sailing. Something keeps saying, "Supposing we're wrong after all." And however thick the armour-plate of unbelief may be, it needs but a severe illness to give it a nasty blow, and "*face to face with death*" generally pierces it altogether.

Neither scheme is new. Daniel Defoe, the reputed author of *Robinson Crusoe*, writing in *Appelbee's Journal*, May 23rd, 1724, said—

"This is a merry world, that's certain; and if we can but arrive at the perfection of *one thing*, we shall be the merriest generation that ever lived; and you shall hear what it is presently.

"First, the sting of all the bright, fine, polite, pleasant things of life is this ugly thing called Death. 'Oh, madam,' said a lady of quality the other day, to another lady that admired the felicity of her way of living, her plenty, her equipage, attendance, furniture, jewels, and fine clothes—'Oh, madam,' said the lady, 'it is true I live very agreeably, and if it was not for this dying it would be all very pretty; but that cursed article takes away all the comfort of my life.'

"Secondly, the being called to an account afterwards. This is another sting of all the bright,

fine, polite, pleasant things of life. 'Who dare call me to account for anything?' said a hardened creature that I know. And yet, when a grave person that stood by told him that He who made him could call him to account, he turned pale, in spite of all his insolence.

"Now I understand that there is a new way found out to take off the chagrin of the mind from these two things. And if this project succeeds, it will make us all merry fellows indeed. This new project is to scratch out all the ideas of futurity and God, . . . and this, they say, is now very easy to be done. . . . This is that perfection of devilism, which, as I said above, *if we can but attain*, we shall be the merriest generation that ever lived."

Evidently, Defoe saw clean through the thing. The scheme of the evil one is but a hollow and unsatisfactory sham. We would to God, reader, that you saw through it as clearly as he.

Remember, however, that it is not enough to see through the one scheme if you do not adopt the other—if you do not, in a word, have *everything out and righteously settled*.

God's scheme is a very old one. More than a score of centuries have rolled away since the days of Job. He passed through trying experiences, and for long he floundered in the quagmire of reasonings and doubts, and when at last he did get out it was because, abandoning his self-righteousness, he had the truth out with God (Job xlii. 1-6).

The Lord Jesus Christ alluded to it in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. He tells us that "the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God

be merciful to me a sinner"; that is, *everything was out*. He immediately adds, "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified" (Luke xviii. 13, 14); that is, *everything righteously settled*.

Get the matter carefully poised before your soul, my reader, and look at it in the light of eternity. On the ground of the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ—His death and resurrection—God offers you a complete and righteous settlement of all your sins, *if* you will but have everything out with Him, honestly facing the truth in His presence, and believing on His blessed Son.

Now I ask, knowing what you do about yourself and your history, would not a righteous settlement of it all exactly suit you?

And if it would, will you not *at once* fall in with God's scheme by having everything out upon your knees with Him, and then returning to Him your grateful thanks? F. B. H.

AN ELOQUENT PACKAGE.

WALKING down the path of a very pretty village churchyard, I saw a neat monument erected by the members of a large county family to the memory of Martha B——, who supplied, as well as she was able, the place of mother to them when they were bereft of their own mother by death.

Ah! The sight of this monument sent my memory back a quarter of a century, when business took me to the death-chamber of this very person.

What is looked on by many as the "king of terrors" had laid his icy hand upon her, but he

had no terrors for her. In company with my old master, I had gone to lay her poor remains in the coffin. No sooner had we entered the chamber than an attendant handed my master a package inscribed: "TO THE UNDERTAKER." What do you think it contained? A very neatly made shroud, with an explanatory note in the deceased's own handwriting as follows:—

"This is Martha B——'s shroud, and when this is required for her body her spirit will be before the throne of God clad in all the beauty and righteousness of Christ." [More correctly, "the righteousness of God in Christ."]

At this solemn moment, face to face with death, we all heard the sweet testimony of one of whom it could once more be said, "who being dead yet speaketh." And her testimony was an eloquent witness to the grace and power of that precious Saviour who had robbed death of its sting, and converted that king of terrors into a servant to set her ready soul free to depart to the very place where she wished to be—"present with the Lord."

Dear old Martha B——. I can well imagine her sitting peacefully, putting stitch after stitch into that neatly made shroud, and looking forward with joyful confidence to the moment of which I have spoken, when her body would be wearing that last earthly garment and her spirit with the One she loved so well.

Funerals are generally dreary and mournful sights, but on the day when M. B. was buried it was a lovely scene. The sun shone brightly on that grave, surrounded by over a dozen members of the family already referred to, who had assembled from various quarters—no longer children, but men and

women in middle age—to witness the interment of their beloved old nurse and friend. One of their number, much affected, read the burial service, while all lingered at the graveside of this dear old saint, who had won such a place in their hearts.

Now, dear friend, the “undertaker” and the “gravedigger” are stern realities in this poor world; and God only knows how soon they will be performing their pitiless duties for *your* body.

How will it be with your *soul* in that day, may I ask? God forbid that you should be like the silly ostrich. When pressed hard by the hunter, he hides his head in the sand, that he may not behold the stealthy but certain approach of the pursuing enemy. Far better to be like old Martha B——, and *face* the sin and death question, and through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the sinner’s Saviour. So shall your death be the death of the righteous, and your last end be like hers.

Friend! Do I hear you say, What a gruesome subject? It is, indeed, such for you, if you are not saved. For listen further:—

“There is a death, whose pang
Outlasts the fleeting breath.
Oh! what eternal horrors hang
Around the second death.”

As I write these lines I bow my head in prayer for you, saying, “O gracious God, be pleased for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake to open the poor blind eyes of the worldling and break his hardened heart, that he may see his danger and no longer walk the pathway to everlasting burning, but that his opened eyes may behold the grace and beauty of Thy Christ, the Saviour of sinners, Victor over death, Conqueror over the grave: for His name’s sake. Amen.” C. L.

CAPE MISENUM.

TWELVE years ago we were in the vicinity of Cape Misenum, at the extremity of the Bay of Baiæ and opposite Puteoli (now Pozzuoli).

We climbed to the summit of that bold headland, where the fabled trophy of Æneas was set up, and looked around from the top of the promontory.

A more extraordinary sight we never witnessed. The glittering Bay of Naples, with the great city surrounding it, seemed to be sleeping under the very frown of Vesuvius, from whose head rolled up heavy clouds of vapour.

Capri (the ancient Capreæ) stood out in the deep blue of the sea, a vine-clad island, all green and gold.

Baiæ, than which no more beautiful shore exists. The silver Lucrine Lake, and the sombre surface of Lake Avernus with its easy descent, and mysterious Cumæ—all these well-known and wonderful places seemed to combine to form a picture of astonishing beauty.

But, as each feature passed before us, a terrible shade seemed to intervene and to spoil the whole panorama.

Looking at Capreæ, Baiæ, Procida, Ischia, and Naples itself, the horrors perpetrated in each place came vividly before us. We attempted to express them in the few lines that follow. We will only quote a part of the attempted verses, so as not to weary the reader.

“There lies Capreæ, green and golden isle,
Where vine-clad Nature loves to bask and smile ;
Sweet island ! cherished in the warmest rays !
The bloated tyrant’s last, most cruel days

Have changed and blasted thy fair sylvan name ;
 'Tiberius !' I cry, and blush for shame.
 Nor could I look toward Baiæ's gulf again
 Forgetting Agrippina's wreck and pain,
 When (tragic mother) she her grief would hide
 From the rude minion of the matricide.
 Ischia and Procid' in the molten flood
 Recall revenge and wanton deeds of blood ;
 There in the rippling bosom of the sea
 Arose thy shrouded corpse, Caraccioli !
 And like a floating spectre through his sheet
 Struck terror to the gay, advancing fleet !
 Where'er I turn in this refulgent scene
 Some fatal shade will rise and intervene ;
 Norman or Moslem, violence and crime !
 All Naples' bay is filled, in every time,
 With fierce oppression, cruelty, and wrongs,
 And treason lurks beneath Campanian songs !
 While yet I look, the reddening canopy
 Covers black filth and sordid misery !"

That is, in every one of these beautiful spots
 sin, misery, and death had done their work, and
 were still reigning. In Baiæ's bay Nero accom-
 plished matricide ; the worst crimes of Tiberius
 were committed at Capræ. In the Bay of Naples
 King Ferdinand, the guest of the English fleet,
 actually met the murdered man's corpse that had
 risen from the depth ; and the whole history of
 Naples, under Greeks, Saracens, Normans, or
 Italians, has been one long tale of crime and
 blood.

What is true of the Bay of Naples is true of
 the whole earth. The landscape has been spoiled.
 Ever since the death of Abel the earth has been
 stained by innocent blood. Oh, my reader, this
 earth has been stained by the blood of Jesus, the
 Christ ! There is no rest for you here. You
 cannot find one spot on the earth where you can
 rest. The earth, which came out of God's hands

so fair, so beautiful, has been utterly marred by sin, and you must seek real beauty and glory elsewhere.

Yes, you must seek unfading glory and eternal life in Christ Jesus—in Him whose precious blood once tinged this guilty soil, in Him who is now offered to you as a Saviour. He is glorified at God's right hand in heaven, but He calls you to Him. His blood, shed once for all, shall cleanse you from all sin. We were all guilty of that terrible deed, but the very crime which displayed the wickedness of man has displayed the full grace of God; "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."

Turn, then, from this ruined and sin-stained earth to Him who alone is the source of life.

E. L. B.

THE CAPTIVE SET FREE.

THERE are two great forces at work in the world to-day, and you and I, reader, are under the direct control of either one or the other.

God is carrying out, with ceaseless activity, His purposes of grace in regard to the human family: subduing men's hearts to Himself, and by His goodness leading them to repentance and to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. On the other hand, the powers of evil, under the headship and authority of Satan, the great enemy of God and man, are engaged in a constant and diligent crusade against all that is of God.

The great design of the adversary is to counter-

act the testimony of God and neutralise its effect in the souls of men. It may startle the reader to be told that, if he is an unconverted man, he is under the power and dominion of that awful being who accomplished man's downfall in Eden and brought desolation and death into God's fair universe. But it is true, nevertheless; and God has in mercy disclosed to us his real character, that we might know our whereabouts and seek deliverance from his fatal grasp. For listen: he was a "murderer from the beginning," "a liar" (John viii. 44). He is "ruler of darkness," "a roaring lion" (1 Peter v. 8); "a deceiver" (Rev. xx. 10). He is compared to "a dog" (Ps. xxii. 16); "a fowler" (Ps. xci. 3); "a wolf" (John x. 12); "an adder" (Ps. xci. 13). He who is thus described is the one who holds men in his toils, and unless *you* are rescued by almighty power from his deadly grip, you will share his doom in the regions of the lost (Rev. xx. 10).

But God is graciously disposed towards you, dear friend, and if you have found out the true character of the being whose willing slave you have hitherto been; if your heart groans under the tyrant's yoke, and you long for deliverance, then do not despair, for we have glorious news to tell you.

God has heard your groanings, He knows your sorrows, and He has come down to deliver you. In the glad tidings which are now being preached to every creature under heaven the present attitude of God as Saviour is made known; and the blessed fact is brought to light that not only can God deliver needy man from the bondage of sin and Satan, but bring him into present favour and acceptance with Himself.

“When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils” (Luke xi. 21, 22). The strong man armed is the devil, the god and prince of this world, who is “blinding the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor. iv. 4).

But the “strong man armed” *has been overcome* by a STRONGER THAN HE; and Jesus, the triumphant and victorious Saviour, presents Himself to you as “God’s salvation.”

He alone can snap your fetters, and speak words of peace and comfort to your troubled heart; therefore, dear friend, rest your soul unreservedly upon Him. Man’s whole condition, as under the judgment of God, has been fully met in the death of Christ, and the enemy’s power annulled; in Him, risen and glorified on high, the heart of God towards man is declared, and Jesus the Saviour is now available for every Satan-bound captive who sighs for liberty.

“Jesus, Saviour, sin’s dark judgment
Thou hast borne for *me*;
In *Thy* death and resurrection
I am free.”

If you are able, in the simplicity of your faith, to use this language as true of yourself, dear fellow-believer, then it is your privilege to take account of yourself as no longer in Adam; your history as such having been closed for ever in the death of Christ, and God having no more to say to you as of that order. On the other hand, as viewed in Christ before God, you are “a fellow

citizen with the saints, and of the household of God" (Eph. ii. 19).

Christ being the Head of the body, all sustenance and nourishment is ministered by and through Him. He is the direct source of supply, and is at all times available for every member. The way the Lord takes in promoting the well-being and spiritual prosperity of the whole body is by attracting the heart of each individual to Himself, so that in the warmth and intimacy of affection a state is produced which most effectually, however unconsciously, binds the heart of each one to another. As a member of the body of Christ, He is indispensable to us; and as members "one of another" we are indispensable to every other believer (Rom. xii.; 1 Cor. xii.).

And thus the body controlled and fed, and nourished by the living Head, carries out the scriptural injunction and edifies "itself in love" (Eph. iv. 16). The motive power to bring all this about is the Holy Spirit, who dwells within every true believer and maintains in vitality and freshness the living links already formed between the Head of the body and the members.

Dear reader, if you are simple enough to bow to the truth in regard to *yourself*, and to endorse God's solemn statement, uttered at an early epoch of this world's history, "The end of all flesh is come before Me" (Gen. vi. 13), then you will be prepared to admit that if man was to be brought into blessing on a righteous ground, God must take the initiative and *work from Himself*. Accordingly God must dispose of the man who had brought in all the ruin that He might bring into prominence the Man of His choice, the second Man, the Lord out of heaven, who should carry out in

all their fullest detail the purposes of blessing which were in His heart towards man from all eternity. And this was what took place at the cross.

Just at the point where man's guilt reached its climax, the mighty triumph of good over evil is seen. High above man's enmity and base ingratitude towers the majestic love of God, as expressed in that sinless victim on Calvary's altar, *bearing a sinner's liabilities that a sinner, repenting and believing on Him, might go free.*

Here we learn, as nowhere else, the utter incorrigibility of "man after the flesh," who could wantonly spit in his Creator's face, and brand the only Man in God's universe who had a right to existence as a malefactor and a felon. Is there a solitary reader of this paper who has never seen *himself* bad enough to have formed part of that motley crowd on Calvary's brow? If you are a stranger to Jesus, dear friend, you have never yet protested against that act of indignity and injustice; and up to this moment you have been in open arms against God and, therefore, in fullest sympathy with that rabble throng who crucified the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

The world-system, as represented there, could prefer a murderer to the Sent One of God, and hustle ignominiously out of the world the only true Friend the world ever had. All heaven was moved, and the earth enwrapt in midnight gloom, while God measured out, in inflexible righteousness, upon His beloved Son, the judgment so richly deserved by you and me.

Careless one, can you afford to remain indifferent in the presence of such a spectacle?

But the cross is vacant, the grave is empty,
and the Victor is on the throne. God is now
free to come out towards you in blessing. Spite
of all your wanderings and folly, your guilt and
rebellion, there is *only* blessing in the heart of God
for you. Long have you been enslaved by sin and
Satan, but the great Deliverer is waiting to free
you. Yield your heart and life to Jesus *now*, and
heavenly peace and joy will be your present and
eternal portion.

Past the withering cloud of judgment,
Hush'd the tempest's roar :
Sin and Satan's power can triumph
Nevermore.

Soon, enthroned in heavenly glory,
Saviour, Lord, with Thee,
I shall share the golden triumphs
Won for me.

Saviour, Shepherd, Lord of glory,
Teach me now Thy way :
Lead me in the path Thou trodest,
Till that day.

Till that day of cloudless morning
Dawns upon my soul :
And the gladsome songs of victory
Endless roll.

Keep me, Saviour, in Thy footsteps,
Cleaving close to Thee :
Bearing shame and rude rejection
Patiently.

Let Thy love and sweet approval
Bear me up and on :
Pressing Homeward to the goal, where
Thou art gone. G. F. E.

DELIGHTED, BUT DELUDED.

THE purpose of the serpent in the garden was to withdraw Eve from the condition in which the Lord God had put her. She was to sacrifice that, and get advancement from him. She consented; and at once as a "chaste virgin" she was ruined.

The Church, like the Eve of Genesis ii., should be what the hand of God has made her. The cross has brought her nigh to God, but estranged her from the world. And when the principles of the world propose to cultivate and advance the Church, and such proposal is listened to, we see again, what of old we saw in Genesis iii., the mystic Eve has lost her virgin purity.

The serpent would fain give man a garden again. And a happier garden it shall be than God once gave him. He shall have *every* tree in it. The world shall be a wise world, a religious world, a cultivated world, a delightful place, and still advancing. The man of benevolence, the man of morals, the religious and the intellectual man, the man of refined pleasures, all will find their home in it. And this shall be the world's oneness. And all who desire their fellow-creature's happiness, and the common rest, after so many centuries of confusion and trouble, will surely not refuse to join this honourable and happy confederacy!

Nothing will withstand all this but "the love of the truth." Come what may to you, beloved, though it be moral, or refined, or religious in its bearing, it is "unrighteousness" if it be not of "the truth in Christ" (2 Thess. ii.).

J. G. B.

“MY TIMES ARE IN THY HAND.”

WHAT a treasure-store for a “rainy day” is locked up in those six monosyllables, “My times are in Thy hand”! (Ps. xxxi. 15). What a downy pillow for a weary head to rest on in the night season! What a firm support for a tender creeper to cling to in the sunshine!

Looking on the darkest hour with such a resource, David could say, “*Thou* hast considered my trouble, *Thou* hast known my soul in adversities,” and then adds, “How great is Thy goodness which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee!” (Ps. xxxi. 7, 19). And if all this is *on the road*, what will the end be but “one loud eternal burst of praise”?

GEO. C.

WHAT AM I LIVING FOR?

FIFTY years after I have left this world I shall be able to give a very definite answer to the question, *What have I lived for?* But I have not left it yet, and though it should be fifty years before I am called upon to do so, I ought, even now, to be able to find solid satisfaction in the answer to the question, *What am I living for?* If I am living *for myself*, for my own cherished purposes, my own selfish gratification, I am serving a master who is *never satisfied*, do for him what you will, and whose wages will be paid in the bitter, bitter fruit of heart-sickening disappointment. But if it is *Christ* I am living for; if it is *His* pleasure I am seeking; if it is the comfort and profit of those that love *Him* I am set on—then I shall be made conscious of His approval now, and hear the public expression of His approval in that day.

GEO. C.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

TWICE WARNED.

IN the Military Hospital at Benares, the sacred city of the Hindoos, lay Gunner S——, of the Royal Field Artillery, stricken with a serious malady, his life being despaired of.

A young corporal of his battery, who had recently been converted, and to whom the privilege had been granted of visiting his sick and dying comrades, found his way to the bedside of the gunner, and soon discovered that he was without Christ, having no hope, yet careless as to his soul's welfare.

Though somewhat discouraged by the indifference of the sick man, the corporal continued to visit him, oftentimes earnestly pleading with him to turn in repentance to the pardoning God who, in the name of Jesus, offers forgiveness of sins to whosoever believeth in Him.

Eventually the sick man's interest seemed aroused and he began to lament his past wasted life; but, alas! instead of responding to God's gracious offers of mercy, he resolved to make a solemn vow. "O God," he cried, "if Thou wilt spare me I will lead a better life."

Foolish, vain, sinful promise. Foolish; because he had no strength to keep it. Vain; for even could he have kept it, the guilty past would still have been unforgiven. Sinful; for he, a lost sinner, was refusing Christ and trying in self-confidence to make a bargain with the living God he had sinned against.

He misunderstood the glorious gospel message which tells that "when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." He refused to receive a free PARDON for the past. He scorned the only POWER by which to live in the present. He missed the wondrous PROSPECT which is the future of those who, with the cry "God be merciful to me a sinner," have surrendered to the love of God.

From the time he made his vow Gunner S—— began to recover, much to the surprise of the doctors, and it was not long before he was able to rejoin his battery. What about his vow?

Two months passed, during which the battery had been removed to Rawal Pindi, in the Punjab, and it had become apparent that, with the return of health, Gunner S—— had lost his concern in eternal matters! It was with much sadness that the Christian corporal observed that he had returned to his old companions and habits, while the nightly prayer-meeting of the few Christian soldiers, to which he had promised to go, had been forsaken by him.

"I wish you would come to the meeting, Gunner," said the corporal to him one day.

"To tell you the truth, Corporal, I have no heart for such things," was the rejoinder.

"Then, Gunner, I have a solemn word for you to-day. Listen! God says, 'He that being often reproveth, hardeneth his neck, shall SUDDENLY be destroyed, and that without remedy.' Think over that, lad. Good day."

Very shortly after this, a funeral party slowly marched out of the Rawal Pindi Barracks, bearing the body of Gunner S—— to the cold, dark grave.

Little did his comrades think, as they saw him

on sentry-duty in the Gun Park but a few days before, that he was so near to eternity: nor did the corporal realise, as he uttered that almost prophetic warning, that its fulfilment was so near at hand.

Suddenly, while at his post, the poor fellow had been seized with the fatal illness: a few hours of agony followed and he was gone.

Truly "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not."

But why record a case so inexpressibly sad, which one would fain banish from memory? For your sake, dear unconverted reader, with an earnest desire that God may be pleased to speak to you through it. Doubtless God has spoken to you once, yea twice, yet you have heeded it not. Through His mercy you are not yet cut off. He still waits to bless you, for He would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

But His word remains: "Because there is wrath, beware, lest He take thee away with His stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee." These are solemn words of warning; but all God's warnings are sounded that His message of grace may be regarded by those who hitherto have refused to listen to His voice. Once the stubborn heart is opened, He delights to make known His boundless grace, which He has so marvellously expressed in the gift of His beloved Son; grace so free that the vilest, hardest, most stubborn sinner, with repentance toward God and by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, can be eternally blessed; grace so great that its recipients are brought right home to God, to have a place in His house and enjoy His love for all eternity.

May you, my reader, not only hear God's voice as it speaks in grace to-day, but respond to it, and receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified, by faith that is in Christ Jesus.

F. S. M—H.

“NOT TO-DAY.”

“**A**RE you giving away five-pound notes?” asked a woman one day of a person who stood at her door with sheet almanacs for 1905.

There was but little meaning, evidently, in what the woman said; nor do we suppose for a moment that she did not know a bank-note from a sheet almanac. The fact of her asking such a question, however, led the one she addressed to recall some of his past experiences, and the remarks he had overheard at different times whilst passing from door to door, and deepening the conviction he had in his mind, that, supposing he had been holding in his hand as many genuine Bank of England five-pound notes as there were sheet almanacs under his arm, and had offered her one of them, she would, in all probability, have refused it, saying, “Such news is too good to be true.” If persons find it difficult to assure themselves that they have nothing to pay for a penny almanac (as is sometimes the case), it is hardly likely they will accept such a thing as a five-pound note without some kind of explanation beforehand.

“No, thank you” and “Not to-day” are expressions which frequently escape the lips as soon as persons open their doors and a gospel book or sheet almanac is held out to view, thinking, of course, they will be asked to purchase one, and this, even when desirable, is not always con-

venient. Those, however, that have the spiritual welfare of others at heart are not so easily turned aside from their purpose, knowing that such silent messengers as the above are sometimes used of God in blessing to souls. Instead of taking “No” for an answer, and returning home with his almanacs under his arm, the faithful caller uses persuasive means, and gains permission of the good woman of the house to leave her an almanac free of charge. Her “No” is turned to “Thank you,” and the distributor returns home without one almanac left, and retiring to his room he asks God’s blessing on his labours.

The lack of heart-interest in the things of God, on the part of many, shows itself clearly in the way they treat the question of their souls’ salvation and His unspeakable gift. Instead of turning to Him as those that have sinned against Him, asking His forgiveness, they repeat the sin of their forefathers by turning away from Him. They slight His goodness. They despise His grace. The prophet Isaiah describes them thus: “Ye said, No” (Isa. xxx. 15, 16).

But God is not to be defeated in His purpose to save, and while men are wilfully saying “No,” He continues calling them to repentance, and patiently waits. “Therefore will the Lord wait, that He may be gracious unto you, and therefore will He be exalted, that He may have mercy upon you” (Isa. xxx. 18).

When Jesus sat on the well of Sychar and asked the woman of Samaria for a drink of water, she might as well have said “No” at once as coldly reason with Him respecting His request. Had His object in coming into this world only been to make demands upon mankind, we might

as well have said "No" too, for we are all of the same bankrupt stock, and none of Adam's fallen race have anything that is good to bring to God. But when the Lord knocks at the door of the heart, as He did at the heart of the woman referred to, and presents the gift of God in order to give us possession of the same, it ill becomes us to say "No," or even defer it by a "Not to-day."

"Oh, take with rejoicing from Jesus at once
The life everlasting He gives ;
And know with assurance thou never canst die,
Since Jesus our Righteousness lives."

"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. ix. 15). H. H.

NONE ABIDING.

A FEELING of sad loneliness sometimes comes over our hearts as we realise what a changing scene this world is. Either by death or distance one and another become separated from us. The happiest circle gets broken up. "There is none abiding" (1 Chron. xxix. 15).

Such a feeling is well known in the writer's heart, and possibly to the reader's also. Have *you* yet found a home where everything *is* abiding; where sin, and suffering, and sorrow shall be completely done away; where deep eternal joy and peace shall dwell, and where there will be "no more death" (Rev. xxi. 4)?

If that is your certain portion, through grace, it is indeed "well" with you. If not, let me ask, *What is your life worth?* A few more years and you will be gone! All the things in which you now find your daily life down here will have passed

away, and you will be left terribly alone, and that for ever!

Pause and consider. In *God's* dwelling-place sin and death can never, never intrude. *He wants you to share that home; share it with Himself and His Son for eternity.* Will you come? The Lord Jesus has died for sinners. Through His precious death God can righteously and freely forgive the sinner NOW. Only acknowledge that you have sinned; own that there is no hope in yourself. *Trust* the wonderful Saviour, whom God has provided, and one day by His grace you will meet the writer in those "bright courts above." Meanwhile we shall be able to rejoice in our God together, and seek to tell others what we have found Him to be. Decide, dear friend. Do it before you put this paper down. Here is His welcome for you: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you *rest*" (Matt. xi. 28). C. E. B.

IT FOUND HIM OUT.

A MAN'S guilt may be undiscovered by his fellows, but nothing can be hidden from the eye of the Omniscient.

Several miles out to sea on the east coast of Scotland lies a huge sunken rock, barely visible even at low tide, and known as the Inchcape Rock.

Many years ago, so the story runs, a buoy with a swinging bell attached to it was fastened to this dangerous rock by the Abbot of Arbroath.

The clanging bell could be heard far over the water as the buoy danced up and down on the

waves. Well did the sailors understand its warning, and many a time did they bless the kind abbot as they sailed safely away from that dreaded rock.

Not far from this spot a pirate ship was becalmed. Not a breath of wind stirred the drooping sails. The sea lay shimmering in the brilliant sunshine, and the stillness was only broken by the cries of the seagulls as they circled in the air.

Sir Ralph the Rover was a daring pirate. As he paced his deck and looked over the still water, his attention was attracted to a black speck in the distance.

It was the Inchcape buoy. A gleam shot from his fierce black eyes as he ordered his men to lower a boat and row him to the rock.

Drawing alongside the buoy, he leant over the boat and cut the rope which held the bell. As it sank to the bottom with a gurgling sound, Sir Ralph exclaimed—

“The next who comes to this rock
Won't bless the Abbot of Aberbrothok.”

Then he returned to his ship and sailed away. After many years of roaming and plunder, Sir Ralph at last steered again for the coast of Scotland.

As he sailed in the direction of Arbroath a storm came on. The wind rose to a hurricane, fashing the sea into a fury of crested ridges and black seething depths, and obscuring everything in a thick cloud of mist and spray. So violent was the storm that the sailors were forced to let the ship drift and completely lost their bearings.

As night approached the wind fell, but the gathering darkness became even more dense than the mist.

Knowing they were in the vicinity of the Inchcape Rock, intense anxiety prevailed amongst the crew, who could distinguish the dull roar of breakers above the storm. How they longed to hear the Inchcape bell ringing over the angry sea. But, alas for them, it was buried below amongst the seaweed years ago.

Suddenly with a fearful crash the ship struck. It was the Inchcape Rock! A huge hole was pierced in her side; the water rushed in, and she began to sink. In frantic despair Sir Ralph cursed himself and his wanton deed. Within a few moments the ship sank, and Sir Ralph perished.

Though he had escaped the punishment of his guilt at the hands of his fellow men, yet his sin had found him out at last.

The sins of a lifetime must, sooner or later, be confessed to God. Not a boy or girl, not a man or woman, can escape this exposure, for it is written, "*Every tongue shall confess to God.*"

This confession must take place either in the Day of Salvation or in the Day of Judgment. Behold, *now* is the Day of Salvation, and the penitent sinner who comes to Christ now confessing his guilt receives full forgiveness on account of the atoning work at Calvary.

But if a man refuse to repent in the Day of Salvation, he must, in the Day of Judgment, appear before God and make full confession of his sinful past.

His own lips will prove his guilt, and everlasting punishment be his fearful doom.

Reader, art *thou* still unrepentant, thy sins still unconfessed?

On which then of these two days shall thy life's history be disclosed?

Shall it be *now* in the Day of Salvation, or shall it be in eternity in the Day of Judgment?

If thou choose not the first and the forgiveness offered thee, then the condemnation at the Day of Judgment must be thy portion for ever.

But why shouldst thou perish when full forgiveness is proclaimed? Turn now, as lost and guilty, to the Saviour, ere it be too late. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2). L. M. B.

WHO HAS THE KEY?

IT was a severe test for the young king's wisdom, but the issue was happy—could hardly be happier. A note of highest admiration was sounded from one end of the land to the other, until the royal story was in everybody's mouth, and with it the real secret of the king's extraordinary discernment. "They saw that the *wisdom of God* was in him to do judgment" (1 Kings iii. 28).

Who has not heard of the remarkable appeal for impartial judgment recorded in that chapter, and of the seemingly insurmountable difficulty that thereby faced the newly crowned Solomon?

Two women stood before him, both of questionable moral character. Their evidence was absolutely conflicting. Indeed, one witness flatly contradicted the other. Then there was manifestly too much self-interest in both to trust the testimony of either. To crown the difficulty, there was no disinterested witness on the spot who could throw any light upon the puzzling problem. Indeed, this fact seemed to be the only point in which

the evidence of the rivals absolutely coincided. "*We were together: there was no stranger with us in the house, save we two.*"

Each mother firmly insists that the living child is hers, and there is no third witness. Who, then, can righteously and certainly point out the true claimant? What key can unlock such a difficulty? *Who has the key?* Who can dissolve the doubt?

WHAT WILL LOVE DO? is the key; and the one who holds it is *God*. Into young Solomon's hand God was pleased to place that key. "*I know what love will do when its object is in danger,*" he said to himself. "So I will call for a sword and put it to the test." Forthwith a sword is brought. "Now let the living child be divided, and let each take half."

This was enough. There is a speedy, responsive flutter in one bosom there. Love is not slow to make its voice heard. "O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. Let *her* be the gainer and me the loser, rather than any harm should come to the child," said *tender, yearning love*.

"Let it be neither mine nor thine," said *cold-hearted envy*.

Can you not discern the very soul of pathetic pleading in those first three words of the real mother—"O MY LORD!" For "her bowels yearned upon her son," we read.

The trial was over! God's key had been tried at both hearts, and the one that answered sprang open immediately. But did it cost that heart nothing, think you? Yea, it cost *much!* "But the cost shall be mine," she said; "not my child's!"

What an interesting tale for that boy to hear,

if, years after, he grew up to manhood. How often would the story be recounted by him, to his mother's praise and his own deep comfort, as the object of this well-proved affection.

Would my reader understand and profit by this figure? Then all he has to do is to put himself into the living child's place. That child had not performed a single act of service for its mother. It had brought her into suffering; and she had laboured for it, but that was all. But she loved it; though at that time there was no love in return.

And what, as a sinner, have *you* done? What have *I* done? Nothing but evil. What have we brought Christ into? Nothing but toil and shame and suffering. "I have a baptism to be baptised with," He said; "and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke xii. 50). Thank God, His soul-travail is past; it *has been* accomplished. His suffering is over. But for whom did His holy soul once enter those dark waters of death? Let the Spirit answer. "He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter iii. 18).

Yes, His love has been put to the very utmost test; and has He not every right to claim us as His own? Look at that mother, when the king's decision had been made known. How warmly would she press the child to her bosom, and, with ardent kisses, say, "*Mine own!* MINE OWN!"

But there is another side. Think of the lad growing up unmoved by her love, untouched by her disappointed tears, regardless of her untiring services, coldly content to leave the claims of her love entirely out of his calculations! Do you cry shame on such conduct, and abhor such in-

gratitude? Then pause a moment and seriously consider, lest something infinitely worse should be found in your own heart.

Oh, have you not heard of the Saviour's agony and blood-like sweat in Gethsemane? Did the contemplation of your being left exposed to the sword of judgment, or His receiving the blow Himself, cost Him nothing? Was it nothing to Him that you should be left in the hands of one that not only did not love you, but actually hated you?

With that harlot's child it was one thing or the other; the king's word might sever the mother from him, or the king's sword might sever him from life itself.

With the unrepentant sinner it must be both. The sword that cuts him off in judgment will cut him off from light and love for ever!

The agony in Gethsemane is past. The judgment of Calvary is no more. Jesus has died and risen. A "greater than Solomon" now fills the throne of God in glory. God claims it as His right to-day to bless you, but only through Him. He wills not your destruction; He waits your coming; He wishes your blessing.

Will you, then, not come to Him through Christ, confessing your sin, pleading His mercy, submitting to be loved as He wants to love you, delighting to be pressed to His bosom and welcomed as "*His own*" before the gaze of wondering angels? If He has every right to judge you through what *you have done*, He has every right to bless you through what *Christ has done*. Own what *you* have done. Believe on Him because of what *He* has done. Then tell the tale of your deliverance to others.

GEO. C.

"FIRST LOVE."

I HAVE just come across a few words which I wrote forty-three years ago yesterday, the day after my conversion; and as they are the simple breathings of a new-born soul yearning after a new-found Saviour, and feeling at the same time the sweetness of redeeming love, I feel constrained to quote them now; for sure I am that the spirit which they breathe is common to every such soul, and that the lisplings of the babe are ever welcome:—

"It is far beyond me to tell one-thousandth part of His love towards me! Surely it is no light thing that He should have undergone agonies innumerable, both mentally and bodily, not to reward Himself, but to render me happy—me who helped, by my sins, to crucify Him! It was no mortal love which induced Him so to do; and if He loved me then so kindly, He certainly loves me now, though I have sinned daily against Him and have daily forgotten Him; but even as I was against Him, so may I now make Him my delight, and may the Holy Spirit guide me in the true path and dwell within me."

"O Lord, take Thou my heart,
Thy life for me was given;
And when this life shall part,
I'll sing Thy praise in heaven."

Such dawning aspirations, in the bright morning of eternal life, must be the blessed experience of every one in whom God's Spirit has begun to work; for that Spirit produces two feelings in the soul: first, hatred of sin; and then, love of the Saviour! The two go together;

and I may say they go in proportion. When the sense of sin is profound, so will be the heart's appreciation of the Saviour.

And therefore we read: “For to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little,” but when one has discovered that there is really no little sin, no sin which could be blotted out but by the blood of the Son of God, then forgiveness assumes its full, deep meaning, and the atoning agonies of our blessed Lord make Him unspeakably dear to the heart.

Hence the very best sign of conversion to God is love for the Lord Jesus Christ. The new-born soul has not only found in Him relief from the fear of impending judgment, but a Friend, a Saviour, a Redeemer, and that in a way so intense and actual that “it is far beyond him to tell one-thousandth part of His love.”

And this may be what is called “thy first love” (Rev. ii. 4), a love that is wonderfully warm and rich and gushing—a new affection which has, indeed, a mighty expulsive and attractive power, and one which should but deepen all the way along, so that whatever growth and development there may be in the fuller enjoyment of God, yet the love of Christ, sweetly realised, should be the infinite ocean of delight—a love which “passeth knowledge.”

Oh! but it is a most—*the* most—healthful exercise of soul to sit down and get the heart saturated with the love of Christ—just to let Bethlehem, and Sychar, and Gethsemane, and Calvary tell their heartsome tale, until the whole soul is ravished, and all that is of the world—that robber world—is excluded and forgotten. That is “first love”! A wonderful love, a divine

love! In the power of that love the Christian life is a career of holy delight; without it the course is dark and insipid and irksome. The one thing that constrained Paul to live and suffer and die as he did was the love of Christ.

May reader and writer be thus constrained.

J. W. S.

AWAKE!

YE sinners who sleep on the brink of the grave,
Awake! There is One who is mighty to save.
God's judgment He bore; was laid in the tomb:
Now raised, He invites you to share His bright home.

Why wander ye still in the broad downward road,
Despising God's mercy, and slighting the blood
That for sinners was shed upon Calvary's tree,
Proclaiming to all men a pardon so free?

Ye Christians who sleep in the ranks of the dead,
Awake! for the Saviour has died in your stead.
Awake, thou that sleepest, and on thee shall shine
The Christ from His glory, and light shall be thine.

The moments are flying, and short is the time;
The future thou hast not, the present is thine.
Then rouse thee, O slumb'rer, make haste to proclaim
To the lost and the hopeless thy Saviour's blest Name.

Awake! for the coming of Jesus draws near.
Awake! for the Morning Star soon will appear.
When with a quickening shout all His own He will raise:
Eternity's ages they'll spend in His praise.

E. M. H.

NO TIME TO LOITER.

“**A** LITTLE while, 'twill soon be past.
Why should we shun the promised cross?
Oh, let us in His footsteps haste,
Counting for Him all else but loss;
For how will recompense His smile
The sufferings of this little while!”

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

REACHED AND RESCUED.

IT was at the close of a summer day in 1902 that a few of us were sitting in the vicarage of the late Rev. A——, of L—— D——. During the course of conversation our host told the following incident, which occurred whilst he was an army chaplain in India.

“Amongst the officers of our regiment was one young lieutenant, whose genial manners had made him a general favourite. It was whilst we were stationed at —— that I was persuaded to join this young officer with a few others in a hunt. For some miles we cantered on, Lieutenant —— being some little distance ahead of us.

“Suddenly we saw his horse rear up, and with a stifled scream from the rider, both disappeared from sight. Spurring our horses, we galloped forward to learn what had happened. The mystery was soon explained. Our companion had ridden over an old covered pit, where in time past food had been secreted!

“Ropes were quickly procured and lowered, and very thankful we were to have him once more amongst us.

“But what a change had taken place! In that short space of time his hair had turned white, and the flush of youth had vanished.

“Reviving with the fresh air, he told how, without a warning, the earth had given way beneath him. Plunging down into the darkness, amidst the hiss of serpents, he lay half stunned

at the bottom of that pit. Afraid to move, he thought each moment would be his last.

“Feeling himself on the very threshold of eternity, his eyes were opened. The past with its neglected opportunities came crowding back to his memory! The agony of soul he passed through, as he found himself face to face with death, was loudly borne witness to by his altered appearance.”

This young officer was suddenly awakened to the fact that the path on which he was seeking his pleasure was beset with deadly danger.

One plunge placed him beyond his own power of recovery, and he knew it to his utter dismay.

Now, mark this, my reader—

The first sin you ever committed, in defiance of God’s holy will, *you* took that plunge!

From that moment, as far as you are concerned, your case has been absolutely hopeless. You can never undo that sin, and its consequences are inevitable. God holds the record.

But there was this difference between you and the young lieutenant. He was instantly made alive to his terrible predicament; you, probably, were not. But that does not make your case less serious. It is not difficult to see that even twelve hours of unconsciousness at the bottom of that serpent-infested pit could not possibly have made his case any better. And so with you.

But perhaps you have at last been made aware of your danger? Your ruined, helpless condition before God has come alarmingly before you.

Listen, then, while I tell you of One who can save you. Moved with divine compassion, the Son of God has come down to where you are.

From that spot where the bright rays of un-

created glory shine, down into the gloom that enshrouded this poor world in darkness, Jesus came.

Taking your place in death, expiation for sin was made. From the side of Christ, pierced by the Roman spear, flowed forth, in cleansing power that precious blood.

Will you not avail yourself of it ere it be too late?

If it was a joy to those officers to have their companion safe amongst them again, how much deeper will be the joy in heaven when you cast yourself upon Christ!

Give God that joy before you lay this paper down.

E. L. M.

YOUR CHARACTER.

(FROM TWO STANDPOINTS.)

WE all have a character in the eyes of our fellows, but they only judge according to appearances. And being fallen creatures, with hearts and minds defiled by sin, our thoughts about one another are often very wide of the mark. We are so accustomed to sin in ourselves, that we are very apt to excuse it in others, in order to maintain our own characters. And there are very few who do not like to be thought better of than they actually are. But whatever our character may be among men, we shall very soon have to leave this scene, and therefore the all-important question for each is, Will my character bear scrutiny in the light of God's presence when I appear before Him?

Now there are thousands around us who are accounted most exemplary persons in the eyes of

others. Their home, their business, their religious life is externally all that their family and friends and acquaintance could wish. No one can justly point the finger at them. Good citizens of this world, they are accounted to have a good prospect in the next. But what is the actual fact?

God has said, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. lv. 8, 9). Hence the vital question for each to ask himself is, not what do I think of myself, nor what does my neighbour think of me, but *what does God think of me?* What is my character in His sight?

A man's clothes look very different in the darkness to what they do in the light. And a man's character looks very different in the darkness of this world to what it does in the light of the presence of God. Hence, friend, we beseech you to take it to heart and weigh it well. Will *my* character bear the light? No one who has seriously weighed this momentous matter ever came to any other conclusion than the negative. Nothing can be clearer in the Word of God than that whatever I am before man, *I am totally unfit for God.*

Take a few Scripture examples: *Adam and Eve* were quite content with their fig leaves till the Lord God came into the garden. *Job* was quite content with his own righteousness till, as he expresses it, the Lord took him by the neck and shook him to pieces (Job xvi. 12). When he let it go, God put him right. *Isaiah*, in the light of the throne of the Lord, said, "Woe is me, for I am undone," etc. (Isa. vi. 5). And the Lord put

away his sin (*vv.* 6, 7). *Saul of Tarsus* was steeped in self-righteousness, till stopped by the Lord and exposed by glory-light on the Damascus road. How gladly he boasted in God's righteousness afterwards! One might cite many more cases did space permit.

Dear reader, your character may be excellent before men, but you have a double character. Listen to what God says about you. "There is *none* righteous, *no, not one*; there is *none* that understandeth, there is *none* that seeketh after God. They are *all* gone out of the way, they are *together* become unprofitable; there is *none* that doeth good, *no, not one*" (Rom. iii. 10-12).

Now it is not the slightest good to try and take the edge off this searching scripture, or to shirk it in any way whatever. God says precisely what He means, and means precisely what He says. If He had said, There are not *two* righteous, you might possibly have been the happy exception. But as He has said there is not one, there is no loophole of escape. Romans iii. has been called a photograph of fallen man taken in the light of God. It is a moral picture. It is a *perfect likeness*, and the sooner you confess it the better.

A man might as well seek to clothe himself with a spider's web as to think himself fit for God by what he is or does in his fallen condition. You have a double character, whoever you are. You may be accounted "excellent" before men. But Scripture comes in and sums you up, "*irremediably bad.*" What, then, are you going to do? Will you persist in the folly, propping yourself up in your own righteousness, or will you be wise, and set to your seal that God is

true? Will you confess that His verdict is the just one, and submit to the righteousness of God? (Rom. x. 3-10).

No character but that of Christ will stand in that day. By nature, whatever we are, we have no part in Him, no link with Him. Hence the first thing is to bow in self-judgment before God, own your good-for-nothing condition in His sight, and then to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son, in the accepted Man in glory. He died for the guilty, the ungodly, the lost.

The moment you own sincerely that you are a sinner (we say *sincerely*, for tens of thousands call themselves miserable sinners in a formal manner, who would scorn to own it if faced with it personally) Scripture meets you, saying, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15). He has, to God's glory, died that forgiveness and salvation might be proclaimed to all. "*To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins*" (Acts x. 43). "*Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*" (Acts iv. 12).

Why is it that thousands on all sides are missing these blessings? Because, deceived by Satan and their own deceitful hearts, they think that a decent moral life and an outward observance of religion will suffice. Alas! alas! how successful Satan is in his deceit!

Dear reader, wake up, look this momentous matter in the face. There is no time to lose. Your only opportunity will soon be past. God is waiting, and willing, and ready to receive all

who come to Him by Christ. But it is sinners He bids, not self-righteous ones. If your character is good enough, what need have you of Him? Own you are guilty, lost, undone. Believe on the Lord Jesus, His Son, and His precious Word comes to you, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. x. 17). And He will not only work in you by His Spirit, for all is of His grace, but He will put His Spirit within you. And by His power He will form Christ in you and produce His character, which alone will bear the light of His presence.

Whatever your natural character and outward conduct may be, there is no hope for you beyond this present life *apart from Christ*. But His blessed Word says, "*As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name*" (John i. 12). And most surely will He return and claim them all shortly for the place prepared for them in His Father's home. Bow to God's word about yourself. Rest on the Beloved Son and His finished work, and most surely will you be one of those who shall enjoy that happy lot. E. H. C.

What is faith?—Faith is my thinking God's thoughts instead of my own. God says, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more": I think so too. God says, "Children of God through faith in Christ Jesus": I think so too. God says we stand in favour: I think so too. I do not know how God could prove His favour more than by sending His Son. He says, "An heir of glory, joint-heir with Christ." I have everything Christ has, as a child with my Father.—J. N. D.

GRACE ALL-PREVAILING.

THERE is no theme so marvellously engaging as the story of God's grace to sinful men, and no aspect of it more refreshing than that which brings before us its unbending persistency. It overcomes evil with good. This it has done, is doing, and will do. High heaven will be crowded with witnesses of its conquests. When the Germans conquered France they did not win the *confidence* of the conquered. But wherever grace conquers, the heart's full confidence is won, and won effectually.

It is by grace that Satan's dark designs are defeated, sin's foul stain wiped out, and the heart's deep sore perfectly healed.

It is on this ground that a Saviour-God and a home-welcomed sinner can joyfully feast together; and when the "grace that reigns through righteousness" has its own way, no peace-disturbing murmur shall ever intrude on its sacred domains. The one who complains of such celebrations and talks of his own merits must of necessity find himself outside that circle, and this by his own self-exalting pride.

Think of the nineteen centuries that have rolled by since grace came into this world in the person of Jesus, God's well-beloved Son. Instead of His crucifixion and shameful death stemming the flow of this precious grace, the floodgates were thereby flung back, so that a deeper, wider, mightier stream might flow on and on and on. And, blessed be God, this stream flows on *still*.

What an extraordinary witness of the determination of the God of all grace to bless sinful men.

“The river of His grace,
Through righteousness supplied,
Is flowing o’er the barren place
Where Jesus died.”

“Behold, now is the day of salvation”—but salvation through grace alone. Thousands are still the subjects of its unwearied persistency. May the reading of these few lines richly add to the happy number.

Just one striking instance of its prevailing power the writer would here like to record with this end in view.

The subject of the story has been for some years known to the writer, and from his own lips he heard it.

Before his conversion intoxicating drink was his overpowering besetment and, under its baneful influence, his wild violence was a terror to all who came near him. During his last bout, before God’s deliverance came in, it took six strong men to hold him. There was generally such a tendency to self-destruction that every knife or dangerous weapon had to be removed out of his way. How like the cruel murderer that he served, and in whose hand he was, for long, too willing a slave!

But the blessed One at God’s right hand had *His* eye upon him, and that for blessing.

One day at his work he was accidentally struck in the eye by a chip of iron, which very seriously injured it. This necessitated his being removed to the Leicester hospital, a few miles from where he lived. But there was one big boon in connection with this occurrence, it gave him time to think. But, alas! he was not brought to genuine repentance. In his own strength only he re-

solved to be different if God would only spare his life and let him get better.

Well, he did recover, and returned home, but only to do worse than he had ever done before! Was grace, then, to be thus defeated? Not so. Remarkable to say that, shortly afterwards, the accident was repeated! For a second time the very same eye was struck by a splinter of iron, necessitating his immediate return to the hospital. Fresh vows and resolutions followed. But, like the first, these were doomed to be as completely shattered. Coming back to his old associations, there was, of course, the renewal of former temptations, and these soon proved that he was no match for them. Like "the sow that was washed," he turned to his "wallowing in the mire," and speedily forgot all his good intentions.

Then came another pull-up, in the shape of a very severe attack of influenza, accompanied by fresh resolutions to reform his life, but only followed by fresh outbreaks of wickedness. Yet, with all this, God's grace was still as persistent as ever. To an onlooker his case might have been considered utterly hopeless. But not so with God, as we shall see. What a God He is!

One night he was in his bedroom, and in the act of undressing, when something transpired which proved to be the turning-point of his history. He had, as he said, just thrown his braces over his shoulders, when he distinctly heard, or thought he did, a voice saying: "PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD." He turned sharply round to his wife and asked if *she* had said that. "No," she replied, "nor did I *hear* anything."

"Then it must be *God*," he exclaimed, and

instantly dropped upon his knees, his wife kneeling with him.

There and then *as a sinner*, not as a self-reformer, he sought and found the Saviour.

Notice this, my reader. True conviction has regard to the sinful history of the past, and the person so convicted honestly pleads guilty and humbly seeks for mercy. With repentance for the past comes God's present forgiveness of all. The precious blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, both clears and cleanses the vilest sinner that comes to Him.

All that had come in this man's former experience was a desire to find in himself some future merit on which to stand without charge before God. He knew it was no use to look into the past for it. That was bad and black enough. But if he could, by turning over a new leaf, and by sticking to his resolution, establish a good character, and thereby induce God to wink at the past, he might eventually be able to pass into heaven on that ground.

But this sudden call to meet God—for he could regard it in no other light—to meet Him just as he was, knocked all such vain thoughts into hopeless confusion. Men seem slow to take it in that when God judges He will judge the *whole* of their history, not a part. "*Every* idle word, *every* secret thing," will have to be accounted for then.

In Psalms x. 11, 13, 14, the human heart is laid bare thus:—"He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: He hideth His face; He will never see it." "He hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it."

But what is the inspired reply?

“*Thou hast seen it.*” And, moreover (as we learn from another scripture), *will require it* also. “God requireth that which is past” (Eccles. iii. 15).

Suppose for a moment that it were possible that at a certain point in a man’s history he thought he had become good—yea, as good as he ought to be—and that therefore he could safely stand before God on the ground of that goodness. God would surely have a double indictment against him:—

First, that he had ignored God’s right to judge him for all he had done as a sinner, in the early part of his history, as well as the rest of it.

Second, that standing self-righteously on the reformed portion of his history, he had denied the necessity for the sacrifice of Christ and wilfully refused the provision God had freely held out to him in that blessed Saviour.

In the first part he had ruined himself, in the second he had shut Christ out as God’s only remedy for his ruin.

But what a blessed contrast to this is a case of genuine repentance toward God and simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!

“Could the creature help or ease us,
Seldom should we think of prayer.
Few, if any, come to Jesus
Till reduced to self-despair.

“Long we either slight or doubt Him,
But when all the means we try
Prove we cannot do without Him,
Then at last to Him we cry.”

Reader, have you thus been brought to Christ?
Or are you still blindly satisfied with hopeless
fancied self-improvement?

GEO. C.

MY PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCE WITH CHRIST:

HIS PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCE WITH ME.

THERE is nothing, perhaps, which more affects a person awakened by grace than being led to see the way in which the Lord Jesus became known to individual souls according to their need when He was here. And it was this downstooping of love to personal and individual need, and His ability to take up every case in a perfection of knowledge and wisdom, as well as of grace, which wins our hearts. It teaches us also that when the hour of His suffering came there could not be a history of sins attaching to any sinner brought to believe in Jesus which He had not entered into, in order that that soul might get the sense that *it had been known of Him* in that hour of His dying love, and *its* sins and guilt borne by Him as the Lamb of God's provision.

We have only to look at one or two instances in Scripture to learn how the whole sinful history of those who had to do with Jesus was known to Him. He could say of the sinful woman in Luke vii., "Her sins, which *are many*, are forgiven." She was known, and her *many* sins, of the Lord; and the faith that sought Him was known also. His word to the Samaritan woman (John iv.), "Go, call thy husband," and then His relating to her that part of her guilty history, showed His perfect knowledge of all that ever she did. He knew that the impotent man in chapter v. "had been *now a long time* in that case," and that the woman in Luke xiii. had been bound of Satan *for eighteen years*. If it

were mere knowledge, it would be as the psalmist said of old, "too wonderful for me," the knowledge of One who "*has* searched me and known me." But when I read such a text as this: "Who His own self bare *our* sins in His own body on the tree," I am deeply thankful that One has to do with me of whom Elihu of old spoke to Job, "He that is perfect in knowledge is with thee," and that I have to do with Him. If I look at Gethsemane, I say, There is One in the agony of that garden who felt about sin as it ought to be felt about. *I* could not say that. If I look at Calvary, I see One who could meet the glory of God when "made sin," but One who bore *my* sins, for no one else could have *my* sins upon Him but Christ, and He has taken them, and they are gone *from me*, as well as from before God.

In the Old Testament we get intimations of this blessed way in which God has secured the accomplishment of the word which the Spirit of Christ indited for forgiven souls: "Far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions *from us*." *My own sins* no longer lie heavy on me. In Leviticus xvi. the High Priest confessed the sins of the people on the head of the scape-goat. It could not be said of Aaron that he knew them all. But in Jesus there is the One who is perfect in knowledge. Again, in Leviticus vi. 26, we read of the sin-offering: "The priest that offereth it for sin shall eat it." Why so? It is not in this act to satisfy the holy claims of God, as when blood was carried into the Holiest, but the need of the individual sinner, or of a company of individual sinners; and the offerer would feel, God has given

a priest who can take up *my case* fully, and this is found in Jesus.

I have given the above subject prominence because of the need of souls. What I have dwelt upon brings the precious Saviour very close to the faith of a soul, that it may have personal dealings for itself with Him, in order that it may be free to enter into the common portion of the saints. It is to this end the apostle puts that verse into Ephesians i.: "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." There is the other side which needs to be known. That while Jesus can take up the individual history of every soul that He has to do with, and is able to save to the uttermost, yet He is the One who alone could secure the glory of God and meet His holy claims. As to His claims on a lawless, self-willed sinner, I could not answer him one of a thousand; and as to His glory, I cannot meet it. One word, in the presence of His glory, could alone escape from a sinner's lips—"Undone." The claims of holy glory have been satisfied, and the Spirit of God is not only the seal to the believer of the forgiveness of his sins, but also of the righteousness which subsists in the glory of God. Instead of saying, "Woe is me, for I am undone," in the presence of the divine glory we can rejoice in hope of it, in the knowledge that all our sins before God have been atoned for, and that the brighter the light of the glory shines, the more it shows how completely they have been put of God's sight, and that God has been glorified in the exigence of His holy nature as to every question of sin and guilt. There is no straitening now; the full fountain of mercy is open to the

chiefest of sinners, and the love of God can be the enjoyed portion of the believing soul. The death of Christ has opened the way for its outflow, and the Spirit of God can shed it abroad in the heart of a forgiven and justified sinner.

Do I hear some soul saying, If I could only get the same word from the Lord as the sinful woman of Luke vii., "Thy sins are forgiven," I should be happy? Let me ask, Do you think the prodigal had a doubt about his father's forgiveness when his father was on his neck and kissing him? Impossible! And if you see in the death of Jesus the outflow of the love of God to the guilty and lost, and it has reached your heart, whose office is it to glorify the work done *for God* as *for you*, in the depths of Calvary?

Is it not the work of the Holy Spirit? Could He shed that love abroad in the heart, except on the ground of His own witness, as to the perfection of the offering of Jesus, and, therefore, that sins and iniquities are remembered no more against those who come to God by Him? An unrepentant sinner is never troubled about his sins; a repentant sinner sees them in the light of God, and through faith in Jesus finds how God's love has met the whole question, and that for ever.

T. H. R.

EXTRACT.—"The largest mind of man that was ever heard of could never discern God's ways, while the "little child" who looks to God has God's wisdom."

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

THE SECRET LET OUT.

THERE was a special attendance at the judgment hall that day in Cæsarea.

Such was the extraordinary interest in the trial that it had drawn some of the very highest in the land all the way from Jerusalem to be present at it. The case for hearing had made no small stir among the heads of the Jewish nation in particular. Indeed, in its far-reaching influence it could only be placed in point of significance next to the most important arraignment the world ever knew, or ever will know. We refer to the day when, about twenty-seven years before, Jesus, in lowly grace, stood before His accusers.

Possibly some of the very "elders" that were present when Jesus was brought before the council at Jerusalem were that day to hear the case against His servant at Cæsarea. There cannot, at least, be the slightest doubt that it was the remembrance of the first that accounted for the keenness of their interest in the second.

Jesus shall certainly die, was their foregone conclusion in the first. *Jesus is surely risen* was the painful fact that confronted them in the second.

No more powerful witness to the reality of the resurrection could be found than Paul the prisoner. The once intolerant persecuting Pharisee is now the ardent follower of the once crucified Jesus of Nazareth. At all costs, therefore, must his mouth be stopped, and his vexatious testimony effectually crushed. The great question was,

“What shall we do?” It was not the first time they had anxiously asked it (Acts iv. 16), and, for them since then, things had grown worse rather than better. Let the services of one of the greatest legal orators of the day be secured, no matter how high the fee. Far and near was the tidings spreading that the One they had crucified had risen again from the dead, and so intolerable was this becoming that the silencing of such a ringleader as Paul was worth anything.

But for more than a thousand years it had been foretold, concerning their wicked rage, that He that sitteth in the heavens would laugh: the Lord would have them in derision (Ps. ii. 2, 3).

They might as well have paid an orator to prove, at broad daylight, that the sun had not risen that day, simply because it had been hidden behind the clouds from *their* eyes, as to try to prove that Jesus was not risen because, since death, *they* had not seen Him. Sun-rising never brought a greater change to the aspect of the earth than a sight of the glory of the risen Christ had made in the life of Saul of Tarsus; and the most eloquent oratory in the world could no more deny the one than the other. We should like to have asked those “elders” from Jerusalem a question or two as they sat in court that day.

Do you not recognise in the prisoner an old friend and ally, the champion persecutor of the disciples of “the Nazarene”? Look the prisoner steadily in the face, if you can bear it, and honestly tell us if this is not the very man who took an active part in the murder of Stephen and was prepared, on your authority, to go further still?

When, then, did this marvellous change take place, and how? You cannot plead ignorance;

for, from the stairs of the castle in Jerusalem, you heard it from his own lips. That Jesus is alive from the dead, and that the prisoner knows it, is the only solution.

But look at his face once again. You cannot fail to notice those battered marks, for they are as plainly defined as the tale they tell. If you were to examine his back you would find many other such marks there. What abundant evidence of Jewish stonings and Roman rod-beatings! Can you not imagine what days and nights of suffering every one of those marks brought him? Tell us plainly, then, how you can account for a man, brought up as Paul was, receiving them. Would any such brand have been upon him if he had remained an orthodox respectable Pharisee in Jerusalem? Did you ever hear of such a case, or of even a Sadducee being so treated for what *he* professed to hold? How, then, do you account, we repeat, for what you see on Paul's body? Shall we tell you? Every woundmark is a witness to his faith in Jesus risen. They were all received for preaching it. It was said of him after his conversion, "He which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed" (Gal. i. 23).

Look at him once more and consider. In this world he has not gained anything. As to that which a Pharisee counts most dear—human applause—he has lost everything. Yet he regrets nothing. Does he look like a disappointed man, or as one who feels disheartened because he is playing a losing game? Not he! You have only to look at him to be convinced that he is the happiest man in the judgment hall. "*Cheerfully,*" he says, "do I answer for myself." He knows

“whom” he has believed. Jesus is risen. He knows Him in the place of unlimited power, and he is unspeakably happy to leave every issue of his short life in His unerring hand. Happy servant! Who can say that a new day had not started for that man, and that the light of the glory of a risen Saviour was not the dawn of that day?

But it is to the case of Felix, the officiating judge, that we desire to draw your special attention.

After the memorable public hearing of the apostle, just referred to, we find that Felix, the governor, arranged for a private interview with the imprisoned preacher. What further did he want to know? We are not left to guess. He desired to hear a little more “*concerning the faith in Christ.*”

Now, whatever such a hearing meant in the mind of the judge, the opportunity was not to be lost on the part of the prisoner. With fearless outspokenness he “reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.”

But perhaps some reader may inquire, Was all this immediately connected with “the faith in Christ”? Yea, verily; and it has been so recorded for us by the Holy Ghost in Scripture.

Is not this, then, worthy of our consideration who live in a day when God’s judgment is becoming increasingly ignored or quietly dropped out? If the apostle Paul in that day took care to bring the solemn truth of “judgment to come” to bear on men’s consciences, let us beware of the serious consequences of leaving it out in this. Let us ever keep our preaching in full accord with God’s present attitude

towards men in the gospel, but let us not forget that one feature of that attitude is that He "now commands all men everywhere to repent"; that is, Because the day for future judgment is fixed, and the Judge appointed, He calls for present *self-judgment* (Acts xvii. 30, 31). The gospel rather *accentuates* God's judgment upon sin than belittles it. Certainly it never hides it. As sure as sin is sin and God is God, *sin must be judged* wherever it is found. The better a man understands what is righteously due from God for his sins, the better appreciation will he have of the exceeding grace that preaches repentance and remission of sins in the name of Him who died for them. No epistle speaks more plainly of judgment than that which most fully unfolds the gospel—*i.e.* the epistle to the Romans. The gospel concerning *Christ* is the gospel of *God*, and Christ is the expression of *all* that God is, not a *part* of His nature and character. It is important to notice that the one who was inspired to write that *gospel-epistle* has told us what was his universal practice in preaching. "I shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and to works meet for repentance" (Acts xxvi. 20).

Let modern preachers not assume to be wiser than the apostles. Such wisdom, at best, would only be dangerous folly.

But to return to Felix. Under the faithful words of that unflinching witness for Christ "Felix trembled," and well he might; but that meeting only resulted in the postponement of the solemn matter for a future hearing, and this at his own convenience. Now, had we been in

Cæsarea that day, and been present at that special hearing; had we known, moreover, that Felix had personally arranged that interview, we should have considered him a very likely case to be converted, especially if under the weighty words of Paul we had seen how the judge "trembled." We should have considered that, to say the least, there was very convincing evidence that the governor was truly anxious about his soul! And all the more would our judgment have been confirmed had we known that, for two whole years, these private hearings were *often* repeated. We might have said, Though Felix the governor seems very slow to *confess* his faith in Christ, by *this* time he must have got something worth having. He must surely be a secret believer! Yet all such hopeful surmisings would have proved utterly groundless.

Do you ask, Why? Ah! there was *a secret*, and that secret the Holy Ghost has been pleased to disclose. He expected a bribe! "*He hoped that money would have been given him of Paul.*" Had conscience spoken loudly? Greed for gain seems to have spoken more loudly still. If Satan could not silence the voice of the preacher, he would, at least, try to silence the conscience of the hearer: and sadly successful were his efforts.

The time came at last when Paul and Felix had to part. The rest of the story, as far as Felix is concerned, must wait for its telling another day.

But, my reader, what of you? Probably an occasional hearing for the space of two years would represent a mere fraction of the opportunity God has given you. Have you profited thereby? Are you converted? Have your sins been blotted out? Have you received the Holy

Ghost? Are you happy in view of the Lord's return? Should a negative be the true answer, then as surely as Satan had a baited hook that secretly held Felix, he has one that holds you.

God knows what it is. Do *you* know? And if you do not, is it not high time you did?

If eternal blessing had been held out to you on the ground of good conduct in the past or a promise of good behaviour for the future; if *personal merit* had been the divinely fixed price for a divinely proffered blessing, there might have been some semblance of excuse for your being without it. But when it is repentance, that is, honest *self-condemnation* for the sins you have committed in the past and simple faith in the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, you are left absolutely without excuse, no matter what may be the secret of your continuing in unbelief.

May the soul-destroying secret, whatever it is, be dragged to the light of His presence before you go a single step further.

One word more. Felix had a *last* hearing. So will you. Take this to heart at once. It is not the day of judgment now, but the day of grace. The apostle John made a mistake when he wanted *present judgment* to fall on those who would not receive his Master (Luke ix. 54); but no writer was inspired to write more of *coming* judgment than this very apostle.

The grace that brings salvation to *all*, hides the judgment of sin from *none*.

To-day "*grace reigns* through righteousness." Will you not bow to it at once?

Grace expects *from* you nothing more than self-condemnation. Grace brings *to* you nothing less than eternal salvation.

GEO. C.

“I SHOULDN'T LIKE TO ROB *ANYBODY*.”

AFTER a gospel preaching the other night, in speaking to a young man, the question was put to him, “Would you like to think you were robbing God?” He replied in the words at the head of this paper. The way in which he said it carried conviction with it. He really meant it.

Reader, I should like to pass the question on to you and to ask whether you would like to think that *you* were robbing GOD. Never thought about it! Then it is quite time it had your serious consideration. God Himself it is who puts the question. Listen! In Malachi iii. 8 He asks, “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me.” Is such a thing possible?

God in wondrous love has given His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, even to death in order that it might be possible, in consistency with His holiness and righteousness, for you to be brought back to Himself. “It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”

Came—from whence? From God. The heart of God is towards you, His love is towards you, and through the efficacy of the work of Christ upon the cross of Calvary a righteous basis has been laid so that God can come out to you in the character in which He delights to do so, *i.e.* that of a Saviour-God. He is bent upon recovering you from the snare of the devil for His own pleasure and for His own heart's joy, as well as for your present eternal blessing. Again I put the question, “Will a man rob God?” Are you doing so? Robbing God of the joy He would

find in forgiving, in pardoning, in receiving you and having the pleasure of your company? There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over *one* sinner that repenteth. May there be with you repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. May it never be said to you, Notwithstanding all My grace, My mercy, My loving-kindness, My long-suffering—"ye have robbed *Me*."

J. R. T.

FOUND OF GOD.

HEART-SICK and homeless, Lucy — wandered through the streets one memorable Sunday evening. Few would have guessed that, under a gay exterior, her heart was restless and unsatisfied.

Well-dressed and good-looking, there was much that would attract the natural eye, and, apparently, no want was there; but the naked truth was apparent to herself and to God. Pride and self-will had caused her to leave a comfortable home, and now in a strange town she drifted nearly penniless and quite disconsolate.

How like her condition to all without Christ! Appearances count for nothing in the presence of God. It is good for a soul to be brought face to face with things as they are seen of God.

His Word shows plainly the moral condition (*e.g.* Rom. iii.), while the Spirit of God is active in bringing souls to a sense of their soul-want, disclosing also, to faith, the Person by whom all that want can be met in fulness of mercy.

To have no need of Christ is awful want! Sin has reduced all to a state of moral poverty, and it is a great blessing for a poor sinner to

be made rich morally by the Lord Jesus Christ (Ps. xxiii. 1).

This He delights in doing, and Lucy — this particular evening was one of the subjects of His loving-kindness.

As she sauntered through a side street, her attention was arrested by some young men who were inviting passers-by into a little room to hear the gospel. "Will you step in?" she was asked; "all is free."

Accepting the kindly request, she seated herself at the back of the room. At another time, perhaps, she would not have heeded the invitation, nor have found in the simple story of God's grace such a depth of interest.

But she was just in the circumstances and state to heed the tender message, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world."

God's voice claimed her attention to this blessed Person. "The Lamb of God is the Son of God" (John i. 34).

The value of His precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish, in its redeeming and atoning power, and as cleansing from all sin those who trust in Him, was also presented.

At the close of the meeting the preacher urged the solemn consequence of turning from such grace, and asked any who were anxious about their souls to remain. Lucy — stayed behind, and expressed, in reply to a question, her real desire to be saved at once.

Immediately that small gathering resorted to prayer, crying to God to give the desired blessing.

With what gladness that little company heard

her say later, "I little thought that I should have spent the evening in a mission-room, least of all that I should be saved. It is a very great blessing for me!"

On being asked where she lived, she mentioned her lodging-house, and one knowing the place asked her if it was her home. "No," she replied, "my home is at ——"

"Then how is it you are here?"

"I am sorry to say I had some words with my parents, and ran away from home, but now I feel I should like to return."

"Will you write to-night, and ask if they will have you back?"

"Yes, willingly."

Her new-found friends then ascertained she had no money for the return journey, which they immediately subscribed.

Her lodgings were quite close to where one of the number lived, and, much to the joy of those interested, he told them next day that a telegram had been received, bearing these two short sentences, full of love: "Come at once. Welcome home!"

What a restoration this was for Lucy ——, and what the grace of God had effected for her! It had restored her to her home, and what was inestimably more blessed, brought her from the condition of soul-want into the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Are you conscious of your soul-need, dear unsaved reader? The same grace is available for you. Christ Jesus the Lord is seated on mercy's throne, a sure witness of God's attitude towards perishing sinners. He is ready to forgive and bless you (Rom. iii. 23-6).

L. O. L.

SHADOWS IN THE SEA.

“The sea is His, and He made it.”—Ps. xciv. 5.

WHILE staying at the seaside recently this psalm was often upon my mind. The greatness of the Creator is seen in His works. Our Lord spoke in parables, and illustrated things spiritual by things natural, and I would like to record some of my reflections on the sea. As most have seen the sea, they will be able, I hope, to understand the few thoughts I have to offer. First I will ask you to think of the sea as

An illustration of the vastness of God's mercy. There is a breadth in God's mercy that is wider than the sea. Those who look over the sea from a high cliff on a clear day may think what a distance they can see, yet they have but seen the merest fringe of what is to be seen. Even those who have travelled round the world have comparatively seen but little. No one can form an accurate conception of the vast extent of the seas. Put every island and continent together, and try to think how extensive they would be, and yet they are only about one-third of the seas.

Such is the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. There is a length and breadth that passeth knowledge. Preachers and poets have tried to describe it. They have used every illustration known to them to set it forth and sing its praises, but after all they have failed. Human thought cannot conceive, nor human tongue express the love of God in the redemption of sinners. Eternity alone will unfold the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness to sinful men.

The sea illustrates God's power to sustain. You see large vessels of many hundred tons' weight

sailing upon the ocean, and yet how safely they ride! Do they burden the bosom of the deep? No. Multiply their number a thousandfold, and still it would bear them. The sea seems to say, Do not be afraid to burden me; I can carry both your large and small vessels, however numerous. He who made the sea invites us to cast our burden upon Himself, and He has promised to sustain us, and our burden, too, to carry and to bear. Bring to Him what burden you will, duty or care or need, and you need have no fear of oppressing Him. You cannot overburden omnipotence or exhaust the infinite. Cast all your anxiety upon Him, for He bears you on His heart.

The sea shadows the incomprehensibility of God's ways. You cannot look far into the sea. You cannot trace the path of a vessel upon it, or the way of a fish in it. Such are the ways of God. "Thy judgments are a great deep." "Thy way is in the sea, and Thy footsteps are not known." Human life is full of mystery. God's dealings in providence and in grace cannot be comprehended by us. We cannot understand why He afflicts and crosses His people; why He spares the wicked and removes the righteous. If the works of God are unfathomable, how much more must He be in His nature and in His counsels! It is ours to trust; to walk by faith, not by sight; to endure as seeing Him who is invisible.

The sea illustrates the continuous efficacy of the grace of God in the atonement of Jesus Christ. The filth of many large cities, towns, and villages has been cast into the sea for generations. What has become of it? Does it still exist? Science answers, "No, it is not to be found; the sea being salt is continually cleansing and removing the

filth cast into it." Such is the virtue of Christ's atonement. Millions upon millions before the throne of God have brought their sin and guilt to Jesus Christ, and have found perfect cleansing in His blood. Multitudes have come to Him for cleansing and deliverance from guilt and defilement. Such is the pardon provided in Jesus Christ. "I will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea," not that they may remain at the bottom, but that they may be cleansed and removed, so that when sought for they shall not be found. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

"Blest Lamb of God, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till every ransomed saint of God
Be saved to sin no more."

The sea also proclaims God's bounty and the boundlessness of His resources. What vast stores of food are produced by the sea! And yet we consume a mere fraction of what it is capable of supplying. Things innumerable are found there, things small and great. The sea is full of God's riches, and proves His superabundant bounty. Such is the grace of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The riches of Christ are unsearchable. He is able to meet all our need, however great and varied, however oft-recurring and increasing. One thing that induced the prodigal to return to his father was that "in his father's house there was bread enough and to spare." Let the same fact lead us to God in Christ. He is able to meet our every need and relieve our every fear. He is able to make all grace abound toward us—"able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think."

One point more in conclusion. *The sea warns*

us of the terribleness of God's anger and of our utter inability to meet it. There are times when the sea rages and everyone is full of terror and dismay. How weak and helpless are men at such times! What need of a skilful captain, a strong anchor, a safe harbour! "Who can stand in Thy sight when once Thou art angry?" Such is the question suggested at such a season. There is a time coming when God will arise to judgment. How needful before then to be anchored to the Rock of Ages, to be sheltered by the blood of atonement, and to have Jesus as the Captain of our salvation! Acquaint now thyself with God, through Christ, and be at peace.

O. T.

DISCIPLESHIP.

DISCIPLESHIP means waiting on the Lord without distraction, and you are content to follow Christ into all that into which He can lead you. If you only get beneath the surface and see all the divine workings active down here and the object of them, you will be amply compensated. It is a greater thing to give *oneself* than to give one's means. The more a man has in this world, the less disposition he has to give himself. The Lord directs in that way. The Lord proposes discipleship, to forsake all and follow Him (Luke xiv.), but then He directs into the light of all divine workings, into the light of all the operations of grace down here, and the end and purpose of them, the workings of the Son, and the Spirit, and the Father (Luke xv.). That is much greater than possessing things down here.

J. N. D.

The Love of God.—"The love of God has done something—has done something according to our necessities, and according to the divine glory. It has given Jesus: and Jesus has accomplished what was required, in order that we might participate in divine righteousness; and thus He has placed everyone who (acknowledging that he is a lost sinner) believes in Him, in the secure relationship of a child, and of a justified soul before God according to the perfection of the work of Christ. Salvation belongs to this soul according to the declaration of God Himself. Loved with such love, saved by such grace, enjoying such favour, let it cultivate affections suitable to the gift of Jesus, and to the knowledge it has of Him and of His goodness." J. N. D.

"THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD."

"**L**EAD the way, Lord, where Thou pleasest,
 Only keep me near to Thee,
 Caring not to see the distance,
 Well content that Thou dost see.

"Have I not my all committed
 To Thy keeping long ago?
 Knowing Him whom I have trusted,
 More I do not care to know.

"Teach me still the priceless lesson
 Walk by faith and not by sight;
 Give a childlike heart to trust Thee,
 Waiting for 'the perfect light.'

"Every step in all the journey
 Shall reveal Thy care and love,
 When with opened eyes I trace it
 From the radiant heights above."

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

SURE ANCHORAGE.

HOW many have borne witness to the value of the naked Word of God to convert the soul! "Read me that chapter" (John xvii.) "whereon my soul first cast anchor," said John Knox upon his dying bed.

"I may boast of profound, unfeigned (I believe divinely given) faith in the Bible," writes another well-known servant of God in more recent days. "I have, through grace, been by it converted, enlightened, quickened, saved. . . . Many have been indebted to others as the means of being brought to God, to ministers of that gospel which the Bible contains, or to friends who delight in it. This was not my case. That work, which is ever God's, was wrought in me through the written Word."

And yet another has written of the Word of God: "What strikes one as the great witness of the Scriptures being the Word of the living God is the one great voice that is speaking all through them in powerful moral accents. It is evidently from beginning to end the same voice. . . . It is a mighty voice with no uncertain sound, always addressing itself to men. Had sin not come into the world there might not have been the necessity for this voice to speak, but since the time that man departed from God this voice has never been silent. This voice will at times address the most solemn questions to man, questions to which man must at some point or other furnish an answer."

Yet another testimony of one who, like the foregoing, has now departed to be with Christ, as related to me by himself. In early life he had been a sea-captain, as godless and careless as such men often are. Later he had amassed wealth, through a tobacco or cigar factory, which he owned in the city of G——, in Sweden, and was living a life of worldly self-enjoyment. His only child was married to an officer in M——, in the south of Sweden. She had given birth to her first child, and her father was invited to join her mother for the christening, which was to be a very grand affair.

In those days the railway had not been completed between the two places, but a long piece at either end was made, on which ran a couple of trains a day. My friend had travelled over the first piece, and drove from its terminus to where the second piece of line started, but arrived just too late to catch his train. Most aggravating to a man of his hot, impatient temperament! But there was nothing for it but to pass the time as best he might in this little wayside station, where there was not so much as an inn where he could procure refreshment. He entered the small waiting-room and paced up and down for a considerable time, smoking cigar after cigar. At last he flung himself down on a chair, and perceived, for the first time, a large, well-worn book on the table before him. Out of curiosity he opened it to see what it was, and began to read. He read on and on, riveted to the spot. He thought he had never heard such wonderful words in all his life. It was the seventeenth of John, the chapter on which grand old John Knox first anchored his soul, and on which the ex-sea-

captain came to an anchor likewise. He read it, and reread it some three times. And so absorbed was he that he did not notice that the station-master had entered to announce that the train was about to go. He was awakened to consciousness by a sound at his elbow, and on turning saw the station-master there, on his knees, with clasped hands, and eyes lifted to heaven, as he fervently prayed: "O God, save this dear gentleman." He then rose up and told the passenger that the train was on the point of starting. It was he who had placed his Bible there, in hopes that it might attract the attention of some stray passenger.

On getting into the train, my friend resolved that he would obtain a copy of the book which contained such wonderful words for himself. The gaieties connected with his grandchild's christening put the thought out of his head for the moment. But on returning home he went to the bookseller's to purchase one. But before entering the shop he looked up and down the street, as he thought all his godless friends must be watching him doing such an unwonted thing. Very bashfully he asked an assistant: "Have you such a thing as a Bible in your stock?" "Oh, yes, sir, here is a case of them; select for yourself." He chose a small thin one, and slipped it into his breast-pocket, where, he assured me many years after, he had carried it ever since.

What the Bible had done for him, or rather what God's living voice therein had done, was soon to be tested. On the return of his wife she pressed him to take her to the theatre. Very reluctantly he did so, for he was a very attached husband, though he had a misgiving as to the

propriety of doing so, now that he had turned to God. The whole time he was at the play he was miserable. "Never ask me to go to the theatre again," he said to his wife. "You may go if you like, but I will never go there again." Such is the effect of God's voice reaching a soul, when it is admitted and bowed to. The soul is brought to God. It loves God, and delights in that which pleases Him, while it shrinks from, and hates, all that is unsuited to Him.

Dear reader, has God thus spoken to *your* soul? If not, "acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace."

W. G. B.

BENEATH THE SURFACE.

IN my unconverted days I was considered to be the life and soul of the company I kept. I could sing, and dance, and crack a good joke. Indeed, I was known as a good all-round entertainer. In the early part of 1892, as corporal I was stationed at Alexandria, Egypt, where the Lord had been working among precious souls in both the army and navy, many of whom I shall see through grace shortly. In the room I lived in was a young Christian corporal. That young man used to puzzle me to no small extent. He always looked bright and happy, was never ruffled, never downcast. He never joined us in our concerts or parties; never went in for such amusements. Nor was he ever in the canteen (the soldiers' drink-shop). In all his spare moments you could see him seated on his cot with his open Bible, poring over its pages, undistracted by the yells and scoffs of his Christ-rejecting comrades, of whom, to my shame, I was chief.

But there came a time later on when a great change came about. One morning, while the troops were cleaning up their kits, I was on with my usual pranks, trying to amuse them with a comic song, when I espied Corporal W—— walking leisurely about the room with his Bible under his arm. Presently, when the noise had somewhat died away, he came over to me. And, oh! the look he gave me I shall never forget, the longest day I live. He said to me, "You seem to be a happy-go-lucky sort of a chap, and never seem to know a care. You seem to be all right on the surface," but—pausing, he put his large hand upon my shoulder, and, as our eyes met—"how is it *below* the surface?" he inquired. "Is it all right *there*? Is your soul all right?"

Without a moment's hesitation I replied, "No, it is all wrong." "I thought it was," he said, "and thanked God that I had found it out." As he opened the pages of that blessed volume, and pointed me to the Saviour of whom it testified—*his* Saviour—the pretentious mask I had been wearing was torn away, and I was left exposed and naked, in all my sins, a truly wretched man.

Dear reader, it is not my intention to dwell further upon my own experience, but I do desire at this time to commend this young man's faithfulness to all who trust and love the Saviour. He did not know much, but he *loved much*. Like his Master, he loved even his enemies.

We may not be able to preach or teach much, but we can all take a lesson from the lepers of old, who could not hold their peace, with such tidings to tell. Oh, spread the joyful news abroad—Jesus saves, Jesus saves! W. Y.

THE REVOLVING LIGHT.

(AN ILLUSTRATION.)

WALKING along the Denes at Lowestoft on a dark night, it is most interesting to watch the movements of the revolving light in the lighthouse, situated on the top of the thickly wooded cliff.

A few moments of intense darkness, then the beams from the "High Light" shine brilliantly forth, illuminating trees, waste land, and seashore. Then comes a period of darkness, followed yet again by the bright flashing light. This continues till morning, when such light is no longer needed.

If you have never seen any point of similarity between the Lord's Day and the revolving light of a lighthouse, it may be well to consider the matter for a moment.

The revolving light shoots forth its rays for a limited space of time and then disappears, but only to reappear a little later.

The Lord's Day, rightly understood, renders a similar testimony. It is intermittent; only one day in seven are its privileges to be enjoyed. Sailing on the sea of this world are thousands of craft—merchant ships, men-of-war, passenger boats, pleasure yachts—all exposed to the deadly perils of storm and tempest, of rocks and sandbanks. To these vessels the lighthouse renders eloquent and friendly testimony.

But you also, my reader, are sailing, sailing on *life's* ocean. Perhaps your vessel is a merchant ship. You are a man of business; you hurry here, you hurry there; you rise early and toil late—all in order to get the "nimble shilling."

You are keenly alive to the best bargains. You know how to buy, and how to sell. You commence on Monday and wind up on Saturday night. Then comes Lord's Day. Shops are closed, and business is at a standstill. Why? Why this cessation from business one day in seven?" It is a day of rest, you say. Yet perhaps you grudge its quiet hours, and long for Monday's dawn, again to plunge into the whirl and bustle of business life.

But possibly you are crossing life's ocean in a pleasure craft. Lord's Day to you offers special facilities. You mount your bicycle and take a run into the country; or you play a game of golf, or perhaps you light your pipe, and with rod and basket in hand you haste away to a well-known spot by riverside or seashore, to indulge in a day's fishing. God's Word describes such to the letter, "Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. iii. 4).

But whatever vessel you may be sailing in, and whatever may be your peculiar pursuit, the Lord's Day, like the bright revolving light from the lighthouse, has a clear testimony for you. The light continually revolves; the weeks continually roll on.

In the present day the tendency to secularise the Lord's Day is on the increase; pleasure and business are fast monopolising its quiet hours. But be that as it may, the day remains distinct and separate from all the rest—"the first day of the week"—and as such it presents a distinct testimony to the world, and not less to you, my dear reader.

Now why should the first day of the week be observed differently from all others? Why the

cessation of business and general religious characteristics be so much in evidence? What does it mean?

It means this—*Christ is risen*. If Christ is not risen, why, then, a Lord's Day? But He *is* risen, and the Lord's Day is a witness to that great and wonderful fact. There is a Man out of death, and that Man none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. i. 4). But where is He now? His tomb is empty: He yet lives. But where? Listen! He lives in the power of an endless life at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

The Lord's Day, as it comes round week by week, testifies to the undeniable fact of His resurrection, and, as a natural sequence, to His ascension also, where He is made Lord and Christ.

As resurrection preceded ascension, so death preceded resurrection. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3). That was His object in dying, to purge our sins; but what was the immediate cause of His death? Listen. From man's side: "Ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."

"Man the cross to Him awarded;
 Man the Saviour crucified;
 Thus, man's judgment stands recorded:
 Thus was justice satisfied!
 By the glory
 Christ was claimed on earth who died."

Beloved reader, have you seriously thought, as the Lord's Day comes round, that you either belong to the world that crucified Christ, or you

are on God's side, who has given answer to the world's treatment of His beloved Son, "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it" (Acts ii. 24); "this Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses"? If still on the world's side, your position is perilous in the extreme. This world has rejected Christ, and you are still of it. He has been accepted by God, and is now in the place of power at His right hand, exalted there as a "Prince and a Saviour."

Yet His death, which, on the one hand, so fearfully evidenced the hatred of man toward God, on the other hand manifests pre-eminently God's great love toward man: "God commendeth His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Think of it! The crowning act of man's iniquity proves but an occasion for the display, in all its blessedness, of the love of God. Marvellous, stupendous truth!

"Oh, the cross of Christ is wondrous!
 There I learn God's heart to me;
 Midst the silent, deepening darkness,
 'God is light' I also see.
 Holy claims of justice finding
 Full expression in that scene,
 Light and love alike are telling
 What yon woe and sufferings mean.
 My guilt was borne by Jesus
 In darkness on the tree."

"Mercy and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

Beloved reader, in the face of this love, what is your attitude? God's beloved Son has been to the cross. There He has told out all the deep,

deep love of God. There has He opened up a way for divine mercy to flow out to guilty rebels. There has He established the unalterable truth of the very character of God. There has He revealed His righteousness. There has He made peace. Now, as the risen One, alive again from among the dead, He sits on high—the Dispenser, the Administrator of all God's blessings. "What will you do, then, with Jesus, who is called Christ?"

But a word of warning. As the lighthouse shows the path of safety, it also warns of danger by announcing the presence of rocks or hidden sands, as the case might be. And the Lord's Day not only announces the glorious fact of Christ's resurrection, with all its concomitant blessings, but it warns in most solemn tones of coming judgment. The Christ whose resurrection it proclaims was refused and cast out by this world; and what did that blessed One say as the dark shadow of the cross cast itself across His pathway? "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more." How profoundly solemn! The last glimpse this wretched world had of Christ was when with one unanimous voice it said, "Away with Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" And when shall it see Him again? Ah! no matter when. It *shall* see Him.

"Every eye shall then behold Him,
Robed in dreadful majesty;
Those who set at nought and sold Him,
Pierced, and nailed Him to the tree,
Deeply wailing,
Shall the true Messiah see."

"When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from

heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" (2 Thess. i. 7-10).

Dear reader, once more I appeal to you by the testimony of the Lord's Day. It warns you of coming judgment. "The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now 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" (Acts xvii. 30, 31).

"Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little" (Ps. ii. 12). "Flee from the wrath to come" (Matt. iii. 7). Humble yourself at once in the presence of your God. Crave His pardon for your many sins. Cast yourself unreservedly upon the atoning merits of His blessed Son. He has one word for all such: "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

"Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

J. H. E.

Extract.—"Christ's death was morally the end of man driven out of paradise: His resurrection the beginning of the new state of man according to the counsels of God."

J. N. D.

HEART BEYOND MIND.

IT is no uncommon thing, in moving about among the children of God, to find a man's spiritual affection far beyond his scriptural light, and, alas! not less common to find the intellectual understanding of the gospel very far beyond the heart's real enjoyment of its true riches.

Recently the writer came across a striking example of the former. In point of light you could hardly say, speaking figuratively, that he was over the "Red Sea"; yet in his affection he was unmistakably over "Jordan" and bore the most distinct evidences of moral fitness for the heavenly land. Let me relate, as nearly as I can from memory, the case I refer to, and may God stir the reader's heart by it as it stirred the writer's.

In a country lane in South Wales I accosted an old man who said that his age was eighty-five, though his mental and physical powers still seemed vigorous. His dust-covered boots told of a long country walk, and he spoke of having walked fifteen miles when he came to the end of his journey. He could himself neither read nor write, but his daughter, he said, could read English; so I gave him a book for her. His earnestness of manner and brokenness of spirit attracted me at once. Almost his first sentence was, "Blessed be God, if He stripped me, shirt and all, I should love Him still!" I replied, "If God stripped you, even to your shirt, it would only be because *He* loved *you* still." As he looked weary, I invited him to take a seat with me on the side of the road, and we leaned on a low boundary wall together. What a time we had! I felt it was well worth the whole journey from east to west. What overflowings when he

spoke of Christ; yet when the eye got turned upon his inward feelings and experiences, the unsolved enigma made him falter. I tried to help him by drawing his attention to *God's* satisfaction in the righteous settlement of the whole sin question.

“ You believe Jesus died for your sins ? ”

“ Oh, yes.”

“ Does *God* know it ? ”

“ Oh, of course.”

“ Does He ever *forget* that His Son suffered for your sins ? ”

“ Never.”

But I could see by his inquiring face that he did not see what I was at. So I said, “ Let me give you an illustration. Suppose you go to the village shop, and the youth who keeps the books reminds you that there is a matter of 2s. 6*d.* against you. You inform him that your wife called more than a month ago and paid it. The master is called, he looks at the books, and says, ‘ It is certainly down here against you.’ But you say, ‘ Don’t you recollect sending out to get a five-pound note changed for my wife when she called ? It was then that the half-crown was paid.’ ‘ Oh, yes, now I remember it ! It is we who are wrong with the books.’

“ Now,” I said, “ how could the shopkeeper remember that the matter was settled, between him and your wife for you, and remember that you owe it at the same time ? It would not be *just*. But God is just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. And of all such He says, ‘ Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more.’ ”

This seemed to touch the dear old pilgrim, and he said, “ If you have time I will tell you some-

thing." Then he began that part of the "old, old story" which speaks of Christ's sufferings and death, and in a most impressive way repeated about a dozen verses. How he learned them, not being able to read, I cannot say. Then he poured out his heart's praises to the blessed God, who had given His Son, and said, "What sluggards in thanksgiving we are! how *can* we thank Him enough?"

Then I inquired about his spiritual history, and this caused fresh bursts of thanksgiving on his part. His father, a Christian, had died when he was a lad. After he had been dead some years, one night he dreamed that his father came to him and said, "Peter, I want you to come where I am. Will you come?" And he said, "Yes, father, I will." This seems to have awakened him, and he commenced at once to attend the prayer meeting at the little chapel.

As he went on, his longings after Christ increased. One morning, while driving his master's milk-cart, he said, a thought came strongly into his mind, and made a great impression on him. If I could only see the Saviour's footprints on the ground and each had a circle round it, so that I knew it was *His*, I would follow those footprints and reach His very presence. He mentioned this to the minister, who told him he would find those footprints in the Scriptures.

"Did you not find out *where* He has gone?" I inquired, and then spoke of my own soul having reached Him in the place where He now is:

Then he again poured out what I little expected. He knew He was upon the throne of God, as both our "*High Priest*" and "*Advocate*"—Mediator between God and man (although he did not use

the term Mediator). Even as Advocate he regarded Him as pleading the cause of *sinners*. He did not understand, evidently, that when it is said, "We have an Advocate," the "*we*" only refers to those whom He is addressing—the children of God, and not the unconverted.

He said he had the same feeling about the "footprints" three mornings in succession, and on the third occasion Christ Himself came so vividly before him, that he felt he got his "education" on that very spot. Instead of seeing the footprints he had seen *Him*. He was persuaded of this, and one had no ground for contradicting him. Would that every believer had a like "education"!

He recognised gratefully God's providential hand over him for many years past. Once, while helping to repair some tumbledown cottage, he had a marvellous escape. In pulling it about, they saw a big crack in one of the walls; he ran upstairs to see how it looked *inside* the house, when suddenly it collapsed. The roof fell, when the wall and floor gave way, letting him down, and smashing the staircase. Those outside dare hardly come near to look at the consequences of this collapse to him, feeling sure he must have been killed. Yet in some unaccountable way he had escaped practically unhurt. On another occasion, in a quarry, he had just pulled out a stone, which proved to be a kind of keystone, supporting a heavy mass, and its removal brought all down immediately after, smashing his shoulder, causing a compound fracture of his arm, and cutting off some of the flesh off his leg. He would have bled to death but for a farmer, who tightly bound up his arm; yet he was able to

walk home three miles. Stretching out his arm with evident joy, he said, "I have been able to work for my living ever since."

I could not help contrasting this dear, happy, old pilgrim in his poverty, with the pleasure-seekers on motor-cycles, in motor-cars, and in the well-filled brakes and carriages that drove past while we were speaking together (it was half-day holiday at S——). He on his weary, dusty, fifteen-mile walk, at eighty-five, praising God, and evidently envying nobody.

Still more marvellous, it seemed to me, that one who lived so near to God should be so ill-instructed as to what the gospel is, that he should be practically judging of his acceptance before God by his own state of soul. He said with a good deal of feeling, "I hardly know *how* I could walk nearer to Him. Not two hours of the day pass without my *talking* to Him." Yet with all this he was evidently trying, like many others, to arrive at a kind of spiritual self-satisfaction.

How it filled MY heart with thankfulness that God had not only given more light to ME, but allowed me to be in that country lane, that day and that hour, to share the comforts of the gospel with this dear old saint of God.

With the light God has given us how *responsible* we are! May not many of the evils that have befallen us be partly attributable to our withholding that light "from those to whom it is due" (Prov. iii. 27; 2 Kings vii. 9)? If half the time spent in *criticising* them were spent in the self-denying service of *helping* them, how Christ's heart would be refreshed, and our own souls made to overflow with the joy of pleasing Him, who gave His all to get them.

GEO. C.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

GOD'S NEW ERA FOR MAN.
PASSED OVER, SAVED, ACCEPTED.

Passed over.

“**T**HIS month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you” (Exod. XII. 2). This was what the Lord bade Moses say to the children of Israel in Egypt just before their exodus.

It was a fatal day for them when they sold their brother Joseph into Egypt, for in so doing they eventually enslaved themselves to Pharaoh, who ruled them with rigour. For a while after Israel came down to Egypt all things prospered with them, and the river of circumstances glided smoothly on. But at length the storm of Pharaoh's wrath beat heavily upon them: jealousy at the rise and progress of the people moved him to cruelly oppress them; and, amongst other inventions, he sought to reduce their number by casting all the newly born male children into the River Nile.

It was when they cried unto the Lord in their trouble that God took means to deliver them out of all their distresses. He sent Moses, His servant, who entreated Pharaoh again and again to let them go; but all in vain.

It was here that God stepped in and bade the children of Israel take to themselves a lamb—each household must take a lamb, a male of the first year without blemish—and kill it, and take of the blood and sprinkle it on the two side-posts

and on the upper lintel of the door, and this for an express purpose—that God, Who was to *pass*, in the person of the destroying angel, through Egypt in unsparing judgment that night, might see the blood; and wherever that blood was sprinkled He pledged His word not to enter, but wherever that blood was not, the wailings of sorrow were heard in all the houses of the Egyptians.

Reader, that lamb is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who took the storm of God's wrath and judgment against sin, that all who appropriate Jesus as their deliverer from the coming wrath are seen by God to be sheltered by the blood of Christ, and are absolutely safe and passed over. Do you think there was any difference between the Egyptians and Israel morally? There was none. Why, the latter were at that time reaping the fruit of what they had sown in rejecting Joseph, who was a type of the Lord Jesus. They had, with all men, merited the judgment of God, and must go in judgment either in themselves or in the blood of the lamb. Can you say, dear reader, "Thank God, being now justified by His blood, I shall be saved from wrath through Him"? (Rom. v. 9). In Romans iv. 25, He was raised, for my justification from offences; but here He dies—His blood is shed—in order that by His death I may escape the wrath which will one day burst over a Christ-refusing world.

Had any Israelite refused to obey the command of Jehovah to take a lamb and sprinkle the blood, then he must have surely lost his first-born, and had himself to blame for it. And you too, my reader, if you do not avail yourself of the sacrifice of Christ, must perish eternally. There is this blessed difference between then and now, and that

is: *Israel* was enjoined to take a lamb; but now *God* has provided the Lamb. He has measured out the judgment on Jesus, and now waits upon me to approve His great gift to this world by accepting the same for my deliverance from God's wrath against the sins which I have all too truly committed against Him, and to know also that the grace of passing over all those sins has found a righteous ground in the blood of Christ, the slain Lamb.

Saved.

“Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will shew to you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace” (Exod. xiv. 13, 14).

The sacrifice was over; the judgment had come. It had come into every Egyptian's house; into every house that was *not* sprinkled with blood the angel of judgment entered. But where the blood was sprinkled, from there the people emerged in safety, and hasted out of Egypt toward the Red Sea. When they came there and found it to be a barrier to their progress, and then lifted up their eyes to behold the Egyptians marching after them, they were filled with fear, and cried against Moses in all bitterness of spirit. Will Pharaoh, after all (type of the god of this world) be able to wrest the people out of the hand of Jehovah, Who had taken them up in sovereign mercy? “It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?” “It is Christ that died,” as we have seen; but God will now demonstrate His power in Christ's resurrection, which tells of complete victory over every force of evil—“yea,

rather that He is risen again." In Egypt we see God's wondrous provision of mercy. That men might not perish, He gave His Son, He judged His Son; but here we see in type how the god of this world, the Pharaoh-prince, employs all the hosts of evil to force Jesus unto death, and for the moment he succeeds. Jehovah opens the Red Sea, and into death the people go; but the way of the death of Jesus proves the way of life to God's people, for they come out at the other side in triumph, whilst the waters rolled back upon the enemy and destroyed the whole host of them.

What is there now to fear? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Israel are permitted to look upon their enemies dead on the seashore, never to dominate them more; and we too are permitted to see the god of this world paralysed for ever by the Lord Jesus Christ, Who went into death, but Who came out in all the triumph of the power of resurrection. It is a great thing to stand still and view God's work. If He fights for us, He succeeds, and we hold our peace. Ours is to obey, to have faith in God Who speaks, to accept the death and resurrection of Jesus as the only means of our absolute safety from the wrath of God against sin and the power of the enemy who would lead us captive at his will to perdition.

"Ah!" says one, "I have many a struggle against sin, but I rarely come out victorious." But why need you struggle? Stand still, and see how God has given Christ to take up the struggle, and see *His salvation*—not what *you can do*, but what He *has done*. Then you will be able to say, "Thank God, I see the saving power to be with God, and not in myself, and so rest in God's salvation—in His fighting."

Accepted.

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it” (Lev. XXIII. 9–11).

There is an end in view in all God's workings of grace; it is not like Him to do anything imperfectly.

It was, no doubt, a great work to be mercifully saved from the judgment they deserved in Egypt, and God might still have left them there; but His gracious object was to bring them out, and He did. It was also a great work to deliver them from the power of Pharaoh at the Red Sea and bring them safely through to the wilderness. He might also have left them there, but that was not His intention. God brought them out of Egypt to bring them to the good land of Canaan.

The blood saved them from judgment in Egypt, and the power of God saved them from the enemy at the sea; but now they were to be before God in the land, in all the acceptance of the first-fruits of a new harvest, of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the great antitype.

And now, dear reader, if you are covered by Jesus' blood there can be no condemnation for you. If God is for you—and He is—no enemy can overthrow you; and though the forgiveness of your sins in itself gives you no title to glory, that is, no position of acceptance, yet we are able by the grace of God, which has no less a

place than the glory of God for us, to say, as in Ephesians I. 6: "To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved." The blessed Lord Who was the Lamb without spot and blemish, and Who bore away the judgment of God against sin, has been accepted, in all His worth as the resurrection first-fruits of a new harvest, by the God Who forsook Him when bearing sin.

Millions of sheaves have been gathered in and accepted in that same Beloved One Who is on the right hand of the throne of God.

That we cannot be accepted apart from forgiveness of sins is clearly set forth in Ephesians I. 7, which states that in the Person in Whom we are accepted we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. So that the mercy and grace of God comprehends the whole of our history, from the sinful state and practice of Egypt, where for our sins we needed the blood, to the throne of God, where we need the Person of the Beloved for our acceptance.

May God give you, my reader, to see how you are indebted to the Lord Jesus Christ for your sins passing from before God; your salvation from the oppression of sin, behind which is the whole force of Satan; and your acceptance in the Beloved for the presence of God in glory. For all this He has compassionately given His Son. W. T.

Extract.—"God's ways are behind the scenes, but He moves all the scenes which He is behind. We have to learn this, and let Him work, and not think much of man's busy movements. We have only peacefully to do His will." J. N. D.

THE VALUE OF ONE SOUL.

(A GOSPEL-PREACHER'S LETTER.)

BELOVED BROTHER,—You will have wondered at my long silence, but I wish to tell you that I have for a long time been very unwell. This year has been well-nigh the closing up of my service here. In January I caught that terrible disease, diphtheria, and some three times over I have lingered between life and death, my doctor even telling his wife he should never bring me through. I am yet not much more than convalescent, my throat very weak, and my hearing entirely gone on one side. My nerves are shattered, and I am physically unfit to sound out “the glad tidings” as once I did. But, thank God, my *life* may still tell the same story. God is faithful.

Oh, how blessed to awaken as from a dream! The Spirit of the living God is working marvelously upon the minds of many. The light of the glorious gospel, with the Holy Ghost's power, is extending from place to place. And although not personally privileged, as once I was, to carry it to hearts sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, yet I long to encourage my fellow servants in the gospel to *go out* and *go on*. The magnificent summer of God's grace is being wrapped in its autumn mantle, and these bright harvest times must soon give place to the chilling, wintry blasts of judgment.

Oh, what value the blessed Lord set on one soul, as we see in John's Gospel! See Him as He beheld Simon, Philip, Nathanael, Nicodemus, the woman of Samaria, and other solitary ones. And shall His servants be less concerned as to the value of one soul? An admiral of the British

Navy was court-martialled for turning round his ship in time of danger, and so damaging the ship. It was proved against him. But when his turn came to be heard, he said: "Gentlemen, I did turn the ship round, and admit that it was damaged; but do you want to know why I turned it? There was a man overboard, and I wanted to save him, and I did save him! I considered the life of one sailor worth more than all the vessels of the British Navy."

No wonder he was vindicated. He set value on the life of one sailor. Oh let us not underestimate the value of one poor sinner! We find reports to-day of souls being brought to the Saviour in scores and hundreds. We read them with eager interest; they command our joyful attention. But what of the account of even one soul saved at a smaller meeting? Is there not a tendency to regard such as only a very tame affair, to be hurriedly passed over? Let it rather be recorded as a matter of such magnitude as to call forth our hearts in joyful praise to God. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

To use our figure, I believe the Lord has, at times, to turn the ship round, and apparently arrest the progress of more publicly successful work to teach His servants the value of *one soul*. This is my experience, and I believe the experience of many another.

I would say, then, to my fellow servants, "Let there be no hidden truths." Bring all to the light. Do not hide what might cheer, and quicken, and fire the heart. Be up and doing. "Why stand idle?" Buy up the golden opportunity. We know that prayer is answered, we know the

willingness of God to bless and save. By His grace let us endeavour, in the few short moments left, to spread the blessing, so that shouts of praise and victory may ascend from our little corners to Him Whose victory it is.

We have the right Master, Jesus at God's right hand. We have a right motive, if the love of Christ constrain us. We have a right message, Be ye reconciled to God. We have the right power—"My Spirit, saith the Lord." W. N.

“NO, NOT TO-NIGHT!”

SOME years ago the writer, at the close of a gospel preaching in the town of B——, made his way to the back of the hall in order to speak to a young man, whom he knew, about the salvation of his soul. At the close of half an hour's conversation he left him, having admitted he knew himself to be unsaved, and that he knew full well (having been brought up by Christian parents) that Jesus had died, the just for the unjust, to bring the poor, guilty, ruined sinner to God, and—most serious admission of all—that ultimately he fully meant to avail himself of God's offer of salvation. Upon the necessity of an immediate decision being pressed, it was put aside with the remark at the head of this paper, “No, not to-night!”

The next morning came the news of a case of suicide, and upon further inquiry it proved to be the young man who had been spoken to the previous evening. He had thrown himself before a passing train, and in that way had hurried himself from time into eternity, with those fatal words warm upon his lips, in response to the

gracious invitation of God, which says: "Come *now*, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. I. 18). You say, How terribly solemn! True; it was indeed: terrible in its eternal consequences.

My reader, how is it with you? Are you saying in your heart if not with your lips, "No, not to-night!" to all the overtures of Him Whose infinite grace and mercy abundantly pardons all who come to Him through Christ? You may have listened to the gospel story many, many times; you may know full well the faithful saying, so worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; you may be perfectly cognizant of the fact that you are a sinner, and yet be unsaved. You may with the best of intentions be persuading yourself that some day you will avail yourself of God's offer of salvation, and yet be committing soul-suicide. My unsaved reader, pause, and for one moment face the future with its eternal realities. Cast your mere good intentions to the winds, for the road to the lake of fire is paved with them. While there is still opportunity, cease neglecting your soul's eternal well-being. Above all, remember that, though *you* may be saying, "*No, not to-night!*" *God* is saying, "Behold, *NOW* is the accepted time; behold, *NOW* is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. VI. 2).

"God speaketh once, yea twice. . . . He openeth the ears of men, that He may withdraw man from his purpose. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword" (Job XXXIII. 14). He will not always be saying *NOW*.

May God never have to say to any who may

read these lines, "Because I have called, and ye refused . . . when distress and anguish cometh upon you, *then* shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer . . . for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord" (Prov. i. 24-29). For remember:—

"There is a time—we know not when,
 A point—we know not where,
 That marks the destiny of men
 To glory or despair.
 "There is a line, by us unseen,
 That crosses every path,
 That marks the boundary between
 God's mercy and God's wrath." J. R. T.

PERFECTION REACHED

NOT BY SELF-IMPROVEMENT, BUT IN
 SELF-DESPAIR.

THERE is no doubt an inward conviction in every soul awakened by the Holy Spirit that **nothing but perfection will do for God.** "It shall be perfect to be accepted,"—"no blemish" pointed to this in God's instructions about the peace offering (Lev. XXII. 21).

A very momentous question therefore soon arises. *Can perfection be reached in this world?* and, if so, *when and how?* Is it possible, without either lowering God's standard of holiness or His estimate of sin, to arrive at it?

Looking at the question in one light, we should without any hesitation answer, Yes. But not, perhaps, in the way that the reader may have been wont to regard it; and certainly not by *getting rid of* indwelling sin—"sin in the flesh"; nor by any attainment through personal conse-

cration, important as personal consecration is. Let us briefly consider this matter.

There are three ways of looking at it. Perhaps an incident that transpired recently in South Wales may help us in considering the first of these.

The writer, while visiting different shops and houses in a small Welsh town, came across a middle-aged woman sitting in a conveyance. It afterwards transpired that a kindly person, at whose door she waited, was preparing a cup of tea for her.

After a few words about soul-matters she very seriously and earnestly gave it as her opinion that no one in this world could possibly *know* that he was saved and fit for heaven; that, at least, *she* had never come across such a person. "Well, then," said the writer, "look at me, for I know!"

She opened her eyes with a sort of unbelieving amazement and exclaimed, "*Then you have reached perfection, have you?*"

"Yes, I have," he responded firmly, which made her still more astonished; for she evidently thought he meant he had reached it through some personal, *spiritual attainment* with which he was pharisaically satisfied.

So he went on to explain, "I have reached perfection, but not the perfection of my own personal merits. I have reached *Christ*, and found perfection *there!* On His merits I rest."

Does the reader ask, *When* did he reach it? It was when he reached Christ. But here comes a most important consideration; for there are *two* great occasions in which we reach Christ.

First. We reach Him when, as self-despairing sinners, we flee from ourselves to Him; when, ceasing to believe in ourselves, we believe on Him,

and rest our all upon Him. Reaching Him, we have reached God. And though, later on, we may know Him better and enjoy Him more perfectly, we shall never, through all eternity, get further than this. We have been "brought to God in Christ," and there is nothing beyond that.

Second. There is a sense in which our reaching Him is *future*. Only at His coming again shall we personally, actually reach Him so as to be face to face with Him. And only then shall we be absolutely conformed to His moral likeness in glory. "It does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, *when He shall appear, we shall be like Him*; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John III. 2).

But, it may be asked, is it not possible to reach perfect conformity to Christ now? The answer is as short as it is emphatic—NEVER!—never here below. To be absolutely, actually like Christ there must be an entire absence of the "flesh" in you; that is, an entire absence of your own will as contrary to God's—the "will of the flesh," the "carnal mind." Mark the contrast between Christ and those who are His in John's epistle. "*In Him is no sin*" (1 John III. 5). "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves*" (1 John I. 8). This is conclusive enough.

But let us return and more closely consider the way in which we first reach Christ. It is of all importance to see that it is not by our success in *self-improvement* that we work out a title to come to Him, but in *self-despair*; that is, in despair of finding any merit in ourselves whereby to commend ourselves to Him. We could only cast ourselves at His feet as helpless, hopeless sinners. He perfectly worthy of our

heart's confidence: we absolutely unworthy of His.

By way of illustration let us suppose a case.

A sea captain discovers that, through missing his course, his ship has struck some hidden rock, and a serious leak the consequence. Four things in their due order come before him. First he tries to *pump* out the water and *repair* his vessel. In this he utterly fails. What next can he do? He signals for *ship carpenters* to *help* him to repair his disabled vessel, but they assure him that the injury is such that *repair is impossible!* What now? He sees clearly, that with all speed he must make for the nearest port; for the leakage is gaining upon him, and will soon get the mastery. But having missed his way, he is in a maze of uncertainty, so he hails *a pilot*, for he must secure a more trustworthy guide. But when the pilot discovers the real state of affairs he refuses the responsibility. "**Give up your vessel,**" he says, "and get to shore."

Only one thing more is now left. In hopeless despair of getting his own ship to harbour, or of any one else doing it for him, he mentally abandons her, and forthwith signals for the lifeboat.

Now if it could have been possible for the lifeboat to be a perfect means of rescue, and absolutely perfect in itself, when he had stepped on board it he would, in a sense, have reached perfection, but only a perfect way of *escaping from* his own wrecked vessel. He had escaped from the hopelessness of one vessel to the perfection of satisfaction in another.

So with all who really come to Christ. They are brought by the Holy Ghost to abandon all hope in themselves, though often after

months and even years of vain struggling after *self-improvement*. To use our figure, all manner of "ship carpenters" have been resorted to, but in vain. The so-called "means of grace" are, in the minds of many, only a sort of "Christian endeavour" to accomplish *in themselves* what can be found nowhere but in Christ.

But here our figure fails; for there is more than a perfect means of escape through Him Who died for us and rose again. In Him there is perfect acceptance under the eye of God. Having been brought to Christ, and having believed the gospel of God's salvation, through Him we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise — the "earnest" of what is yet to come. We are linked by that Spirit with all the perfections of that risen and glorified Man. In Him, in God's account, all those perfections are ours. See Eph. I. 6, 13, 14; 1 Cor. I. 29–31; Col. II. 9, 10. Faith puts her fearless *Amen* to all that God says of Christ, and of those who have fled from self to Him, who are now seen by God as *in Him*, and whose acceptance therefore is as unchangeable as the merits of His beloved Son.

To sum up in brief:—

(1) When will perfection be reached *by consecration or spiritual attainment* in this world? NEVER while indwelling sin is there; and if we say that we have no sin, we only *deceive ourselves* (1 John I. 8).

(2) Can perfect satisfaction of heart and conscience be reached? And if so, when? When all self-hope is abandoned and simple trust in the death and personal worthiness of Another (Christ) takes its place before the soul.

(3) When will *absolute* perfection be reached,

so that in every respect I shall actually be just like Christ in glory? When I reach Him at His coming again. Then even my mortal body shall be quickened by His indwelling Spirit and fashioned like unto His own glorious body; when "I shall see Him as He is," and, according to God's eternal purpose, be "conformed to the image of His Son" in glory.

But is there no such thing as *growth in practical conformity to Christ now*? Thank God, there is. We cannot reach Him without longing to be like Him, and feeling humbled that we are not. But the more we get near Him the more are we morally conformed to His image. It is in *beholding His glory that we are morally changed*, by the gracious operation of His Spirit in us. When we *turn to ourselves* in order to find a sort of spiritual self-satisfaction in our own attainments, we *turn from Christ* where alone true satisfaction is to be found. Here is the mistake of thousands. Are you one of them, my reader? The Holy Spirit will not occupy you with what is produced in you, but *with Him Who produces it*. Moses wist not that his face shone. Nor was Stephen occupied with himself when his face shone.

God has found all His heart can possibly desire, yea, perfect satisfaction in Christ; and having bestowed all upon *you*, He now desires that you should find all *your* heart can wish for in the same blessed Person. Look there for it, dear reader, and joyfully exclaim, "Not I, but Christ." All that I am, for God's acceptance and good pleasure I am in Christ. Accepted in the Beloved. "Complete in Him." "Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John I. 16). Here is perfection indeed.

GEO. C.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

ETERNITY.

FRRIEND! Hast thou ever thought of Eternity? Hast thou ever thought that a moment is sufficient to usher thee from the place of hope into that state of existence in which, for countless ages, thou mayest bewail the wasted opportunities of time?

When God made man "He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Gen. II. 7). Man has in the future a co-extensive existence with the Creator, for he came into being by the breath of God.

Then, seeing that your personality can never pass away, that you must of necessity exist as long as God exists, what are your prospects when you leave this scene? Leave it you must. You cannot stay here always. The world itself will pass away. Preparation must be made, and at once. Delay is dangerous. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. VI. 2). To-morrow may be too late. Death may intervene, and "there is no pardon in the tomb."

This is the day to find mercy. If you are not pardoned in time, you can never be pardoned in eternity. *As* you leave this world, *so* shall your state be for ever. Fixed for weal or woe. "As the tree falls, so shall it lie."

You are a sinner—"for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. III. 23). Adam sinned in the garden of Eden, and sin

drove him from the presence of God. Man has been away from God ever since, and, but for one thing, must have been separated from God and blessing for all eternity. That one thing is: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John III. 16).

"Why," you exclaim, "that is the very thing I am depending on—the love of God. He will never condemn a poor soul to everlasting punishment!" Let me say a word in reply, dear reader.

God loved the world (that is, the people in the world), He sent His Son to put away sin. The world despised Him. Christ died for sinners; and whosoever believes or trusts in Him is saved from the wrath of God. If you have not believed in Jesus, if you have not accepted Him, the Son of God, as *your* Saviour, you are still connected with the world which crucified Him. Think you, God will pass over the treatment meted out to His Son when here? No, sinner! Of this we solemnly assure you. Therefore, "flee from the wrath to come."

While man was dishonouring Christ, where was the love of God centred? On His blessed Son! See the heavens opened, and hear that voice from above: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."

Man's enmity pursued the Son of God relentlessly in this world, and found its full expression in His death upon the cross. There all hope for man, outside of Christ, was ended. God showed His satisfaction in the work of Jesus by raising Him from the dead and seating Him in heavenly glory. And now the glory of God is shining in

the face of Jesus Christ. To reject that blessed One is wilfully to put yourself beyond the reach of the enjoyment of God's love.

Should you stand before that terrible judgment seat (Rev. xx. 11) without the shelter of the blood of Christ (only lost sinners are seen there), you will find no mercy. In *time* you might have been saved by the grace of God; in *eternity*, you will be judged according to your works. Having ignored God's gracious promise in His blessed Son, you will have proved yourself eternally unworthy of God's notice, and will surely get your portion in the lake of fire. This place, though prepared for the devil and his angels, will become the abiding-place of all those who follow in his ways.

Helpless! HOPELESS! DAMNED! Between the lost and all blessing a *great gulf is fixed*. Outside the region of the love of God; blotted from the memory of the blest; your portion amid weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Oh, if the *thought* of the terrors of the lost soul be so fearful, what will the *reality* be?

Sinner, we implore you, be warned in time. Turn to Jesus; He is your only hope. "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." If He came to-night, and you were still a stranger, you would remain a stranger for ever. Take Christ now, and be happy.

P. D.

A Test.—The substance of the Pharisee's prayer was, "I thank Thee for *what I am*." The rejoicing of faith is, "I thank Thee, Thou hast taught me *what Thou art*." How do you stand?

ROBBED, RUINED, AND RESCUED.

LUKE X.

THE words at the head of this paper not only apply to the man that was found in a half-dead condition between the cities of Jerusalem and Jericho, but also to each one of Adam's fallen race. "As a bird wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place" (Prov. xxvii. 8). The fond but forgetful mother when in quest of food sometimes stays away too long, leaving sufficient time for some ruthless hand to rife her nest and rob her of her young ones.

Our object, however, is not so much to dwell upon the figure of the bird referred to as to track the footsteps of the man that "wandered from his place," a *place* which may be rightly styled "God's place," for Jerusalem is distinguished in the Scriptures as the city of His choice. The man referred to had no more right to start for Jericho than Jonah had to sail for Joppa after the Lord had distinctly told him to go to Nineveh. "We have turned," says the prophet, "every one to his own way."

The account of the ruined man on the roadside given in the Scriptures is as follows: "A certain man *went down* from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead."

Downward roads are often dangerous, especially on dark nights, and in such parts of the country as Cumberland and Caithness, where signals and caution-boards are frequently found on the more precipitous parts of the road as a means of warn-

ing cyclists and others, reminding us of the responsibility of Christians in regard to those that are "walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. II.). "The course of this world" is a downward one, and dangerous indeed, and "the prince of the power of the air" is none other than Satan himself. The same left Adam and Eve bereft of the youth and beauty of innocency in the garden of Eden after robbing them of their portion in God (Gen. III.).

In one of the tramcars in the city of Glasgow some time ago a man was found sitting in a dead-asleep condition, and the conductor appeared to be at a loss to know what to do to bring him to consciousness. He had been both slightly and severely shaken by the shoulders, as one stage after another of the journey was reached; nor were any fares forthcoming. So after shaking him once more and shouting aloud in his ear, the conductor with his forefinger and thumb lifted the poor fellow's eyelid, as though fearing he might be dead after all; instead of which the man had been robbed of his reason by means of strong drink, and was utterly unconscious of his condition at the time, or of the claims made upon him by the conductor, or of what awaited him at the journey's end. Assistance was called for, and the man was lifted out of the tram, laid on the roadside, and left behind!

All very well for persons to say, "It served him right," which we do not wish to deny; but the question is, Did we deserve anything better from the hand of God than to be "left behind" in our sins for ever? And let us bear in mind that apart from His mercy as shown us in Christ

Jesus, such would have been the case. After having been "dealt with after our sins and rewarded according to our iniquities," we should have had to confess, "It serves *me* right." But what a contrast to this in what the Psalmist says: "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him" (Ps. CIII. 11).

There were three persons who could witness to the downright destitute condition of the man that fell among thieves. He was seen first by a priest, then by a Levite, and last of all by a Samaritan. The two former simply looked at him and went their way without offering him the least assistance.

The priest is spoken of in the Old Testament as an important person, and was called upon at times to act as God's representative, and when anything like leprosy made its appearance in the forehead of an Israelite, if only in the form of a pimple or spot, at once the priest was commanded to "look," and whenever the affected part was proved to be leprosy, the person was pronounced "unclean." After this both priest and people stood aloof from the leper. With his lip covered, crying, "Unclean, unclean!" he was left outside the camp (Lev. XIII.). The reference made to the above may help to explain the conduct of the priest and the Levite towards the man on the roadside, who, though not a leper, was "unclean" as he lay weltering in his blood.

"And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side" (*vv.* 31-2).

There appears to have been but one person on earth that would have anything to do with the deserted, half-dead man, whose misery had made him a suitable subject for the mercy which he afterwards received at the hands of this very one. Being a perfect stranger, he had no claim whatever upon him. So we read:—

“A certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee” (*vv.* 33–5).

The movements of this Samaritan, you will observe, were marked by a continual *coming down*—first, from his own place towards the city of the curse; secondly, from off his own beast, so as to identify himself the more fully with the one he had come to serve and to save; thirdly, by bending over his almost lifeless form whilst pouring in the wine to revive his spirit and the oil to heal his wounds. The result of this was, the man was raised up from his fallen condition; and being made to sit on the Samaritan's beast, he was not only carried along the road, but cared for at the inn at the Samaritan's expense, and finally left there for a time in the charge of a confidential person to await the Samaritan's return.

It is not possible for a person to interpret the parable of the Good Samaritan as applying to himself as one brought to “know the grace of God in truth” without confessing himself to be the man that wandered from his place, by put-

ting himself with those of whom it is written, "They are *all* gone out of the way." Robbed by Satan and ruined by sin, nothing is so becoming as to cry—

Nothing but mercy will do for me,
Nothing but mercy full and free.

When this point is reached in the history of the soul, how comforting are those words of Scripture, "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy" (Ps. CXLVII. 11). The once ruined one, now rescued, can say of Christ, "Who was rich," yet for *my* sake became poor, that I through His poverty might be rich (2 Cor. VIII. 9).

Lord, beneath Thy searching eye, see a helpless sinner lie,
From whose heart goes up the cry, "Unclean, unclean!"

Leper-like disease within, hidden deeper than the skin,
All my nature full of sin—"Utterly unclean!"

To Thy holy eye alone this my case is fully shown,
All its depths of evil known, "Proving me unclean."

Priest of God upon the throne, Who for sin didst once atone,
Having borne the wrath alone, "Thou canst make me clean."

H. H.

"WANTED."

TOWARD the close of a gospel preaching, one night, in a small north of England town, a knocking was heard at the door. A Christian sitting near the entrance responded, and then earnestly cast his eye round the audience, as if in search of some one. The preacher, noticing this, paused in his address; whereupon the Christian in question raised his voice and in-

quired, “ Is Mrs. — here ? ” On the woman rising, he continued, “ You are *wanted*, please ! ” The woman left, and the meeting proceeded.

It appeared afterwards that a relative had suddenly died. Only three nights before, in that very room, this man had looked into the face of this same gospel preacher, as he sounded forth God’s message ; four days later the preacher looked into his hearer’s face, pale, and still, and rigid in death ! We do not know that there was any very definite testimony left behind as to his reception of the gracious message. No doubt the solemn message of his sudden death sent that night to the gospel preaching was a warning from God for every careless sinner there.

Unexpected events soon happen. In a Welsh coal-mine recently, a sort of sub-inspector of the workings had been longer on his round of examination than was usual, and as it was Monday morning, and he had to make his report before the men could commence work, they went to seek for him. The sad but silent tale of the cause of delay was soon clearly told. He had evidently done his best to warn others : he had just written “ DAN—— ” (part of “ DANGER ”) on the side wall of the mine, and in the midst of writing the word the roof had given way, crushing him to death, and burying him on the spot. Was he ready ? Ah ! no hope of that as far as it is known. A witness at the inquest had met him the day before (Sunday) with his pockets filled with bottles for a “ good spree ” that day. It was his last ! There the story ends for us, but not for him.

The reader is still here, and it is to his case we would now address ourselves.

It was a matter of melancholy interest when the word "*wanted*" was addressed to that individual in the particular gospel meeting to which we have referred. But did you ever consider that the same word is applicable to *every* gospel hearer? Yes; he, too, is wanted. *God* wants him. It is this fact which accounts for any such a thing as a gospel preaching in this poor world.

Sometimes you see the word "WANTED" on the notice board outside the door of a police station. Some culprit has escaped justice, and the representatives of the law describe the man for public identification as accurately as possible. *Why* they *want* him we all know well enough. They want to inflict a just penalty upon him. He has forfeited his liberty and deserves no longer to be at large.

But is this why the gospel declares that God wants the sinner? No. It is grace, not law, that seeks him—grace that brings the tidings of forgiveness and salvation.

But let the Scripture answer. In writing to young believers in Thessalonica, the apostle says: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: *whereunto He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (2 Thess. II. 13, 14). GOD wanted them. He called and awakened them. He turned their hearts to Himself. He won their confidence. Wherefore? All that they might share Christ's glory, and be eternally with Him, and that He might be admired and glorified in them. It was all for His *own* good pleasure! What could be more wonderful?

“God wants *me!*” perhaps you exclaim. Yes! As surely as *Bartimæus* was wanted, that his eyes might be opened by Jesus; as surely as *Joseph* was wanted by Pharaoh to serve the best interests of that king and his people; as surely as *Jacob* was wanted to come down to the land of plenty, there to behold his son’s glories and share his bounties; as surely as *Rebecca* was wanted to be the bosom-companion and wife of Isaac, the typical heir of the heavenly land; so surely are *you* wanted. Yes, *you*.

Bartimæus was called; Joseph was called; Jacob was called; Rebecca was called; and quite so surely *you are called*, and *called* because *wanted*.

We who are believers are living witnesses that it is so; we enjoy abundant proof of it.

Did He not send His Son to suffer and die in order that everything which could possibly disturb, either His heart or ours, might be effectually and eternally swept away? Would He have done all this if He had not wanted us? No. Christ “died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him” (1 Thess. v. 10).

Did He not send His Spirit that we might understand the love that bestowed its all upon us, and that we might enter into those blessed relationships in which He would have us eternally enjoy the same?

Nor is this all. He has given one more remarkable proof that He *wants* us. He has promised to come again and take us to the place prepared! “I will come again, and receive you unto Myself” (John xiv. 3). The Father’s house is our destined place, the Father’s affections our eternal portion. How marvellous the thought!

It was true that the awakened, famished

prodigal wanted the chance of earning a livelihood in his father's house; but how overwhelming the grace that met him! How the lavish bestowal of the *best* in the house, with all the father's merry-making, in the best place, must have swallowed up every thought of meriting a meal in the meanest place as a hired servant! He *began to be in want*, and this sense of want ended in famine-stricken despair, but with it a decision to arise and go to his father, and there to tell the worst of his sad and sinful case.

But he was not the only one who had a want. There was a want in his father's heart—the want of unsatisfied affections. These, when satisfied, were expressed thus: “This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.” They “began to be merry”; and the father defended his own merry-making. “It was *meet* that we should make merry and be glad!”

With this before us, may we not say to you, dear reader, *You are wanted*. *God* wants you—wants you for everlasting joy and blessing! Make haste and prove it for yourself, prove it on the very spot where you are? GEO. C.

“WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE?”

WHEN God created man and talked with him, all was in unity; but directly sin entered by Adam's disobedience, he departed from God and two sides began. Outside the garden of Eden Adam begat his family, and they were all born in sin, and away from God.

Although man had given up God, God did not give up man, but gave him light about the way

by which he could return. Cain was born away from God, but added to that, he refused to accept God’s way of return, and killed his younger brother. Abel was also born away from God, but by faith he offered a lamb for his acceptance, and by that came over to God’s side. The Lord Jesus calls him a prophet (Luke XI. 50); for he set forth God’s way of acceptance.

God must have witnesses to the way man can return to Him, so Seth was born, in figure a resurrection-man, in whom the line of those who come over to God’s side was maintained.

These two lines have been continued ever since, and there is a great moral gulf between the two. This gulf is *not yet fixed*, and so, day by day, some accept God’s way and cross by the *only bridge*.

In olden times God gave witness that those who wished to cross over must bring a lamb, which was a figure of Christ, and which formed a bridge for the time being. Until Christ Himself fulfilled every sacrifice which had been offered, the lamb typically met God’s requirements. Now that Christ has done effectually all the work to God’s satisfaction, He has *established* a bridge by His death and resurrection. By this, persons not only cross from the side of sin to God’s side, but are privileged to know in their own souls what they are delivered from and what they are brought to.

God’s gospel heralds this way, and preachers cry: “Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding” (Prov. IX. 6). They also warn their hearers that the bridge will be withdrawn, and the gulf *be fixed*. Those who have already died in their sins found the gulf

fixed as soon as they reached the next world (see Luke XVI. 26).

God's gospel does wake up some careless souls, and they immediately desire to flee from the wrath to come. They are called upon to repent—that is, to judge themselves and their careless ways—and believe the gospel. The bridge is still open, and there is nothing to pay to cross it, but it will only admit repentant sinners. Faith which follows repentance takes the bridge and passes over to God's side.

There always has been, and still is, much opposition from companions who would seek to divert the one who is about to cross over, because they feel that if one of their company crosses the bridge it is another witness against their position as on the side of sin and the world. Now the god of this world has many false bridges, such as ritualism, reformation, human religion, and when men wish to reach God's side they are often persuaded to take one of these, but they do not reach across the gulf, and those who take them are deceived. There is no way over except by God's provision through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

After persons have crossed over to God's side, and are safe from the wrath of God, then another difficulty arises.

Ever since Israel made the golden calf which was introducing what was false into their worship, there became two sides for *worship*. Moses cried, "Who is on the Lord's side?" The calf was made as an object of visible worship, and was in direct violation of the command, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me" (Exod. xx. 3). In making the calf Aaron had gone over to the side

of false worship. Israel had no idea in their own minds of giving up God entirely, for Aaron had built an altar and made proclamation, “To-morrow is a feast to Jehovah” (Exod. xxxi. 5), thus attaching the Lord’s name to what was false.

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai and saw the calf, he cried: “Who is on the Lord’s side? let him come unto me” (Exod. xxxii. 26), which meant, Who will take a stand against *departure from God* in worship? Who will return to the Lord’s side and practise only what He has established as suitable for His holy presence?

When Christianity began the Spirit of God directed the apostles to give instructions as to what would maintain pure worship: but after their death, men began to introduce what answered to the golden calf. Believers got cold, and then began all sorts of practices which are a denial of both pure religion and pure worship. Thus the cry of Moses may well resound still, “Who is on the Lord’s side?” Those who return to the Lord’s side find the Spirit’s help in their worship, and are able to worship in spirit and in truth. They can frequent the *spiritual* sanctuary and find that Christ is Son over God’s house, and as companions of Christ they can, without any room for fear, approach Him Who is a consuming fire. Then in public testimony they can receive help from the sanctuary (Ps. xx.), for it is the sanctuary of strength.

Thus every unsaved person has to choose between two sides for salvation, God’s side or man’s side; while the believer has to choose between two sides for worship and service, either God’s side in holy separation to Himself, or man’s

side where each can do that which is right in his own eyes.

May both saved and unsaved review their respective positions in the light of eternity.

G. W. Gy.

KEEP NEAR THE LORD.

WE often forget the vastness of the need around us, and the immense variety of it that may come within our reach even in a single day. Think of the great variety of service in the path of the blessed Lord when here below, in which He allowed some of His own to have a tiny share. Rolling away the stone from the grave of Lazarus was a very different thing from telling blind Bartimæus that the Lord was calling him, or handing the broken loaves to the hungry five thousand, or fetching the ass's colt for His use.

Only those near Him had the privileged chance of such service; and probably not one of those so privileged had any idea of it one hour before it was their joy to fulfil His wishes. How little Mary Magdalen imagined what her peculiar service was to be that resurrection morning!

Oh, if we were more in His company, should we not see more of His mighty acts, and be ourselves more largely used in that which *He* counts true service? Would you serve Him effectually, keep near Him constantly.

GEO. C.

The End of Hope in Man.—"Christ's death was morally the end of man driven out of paradise: His resurrection the beginning of the new state of man according to the counsels of God."

J. N. D.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

FROM HEART TO HEART.

THE following letters have been supplied by the one to whom they were originally addressed. Through reading them God brought the dawn of a new day to his soul.

Believing that, in the hands of the Spirit of God, they are well calculated to bring like blessing to many more, we gladly send them forth in these pages, with slight alterations here and there.—ED.

FIRST LETTER.

“DEAR OLD FRIEND R——,

“Many a time I have looked at your address, which daily stares me in the face, for I have it on my memo file, and transfer it week by week, as the pages are removed; but I’ve put off and put off till I’m quite ashamed. I was glad to hear you had called, but sorry to miss you. I suppose my people told you I had gone to Egypt, but perhaps they did not; anyway, that is where I was.

“But I’m not going to write about that. When next you come to Manchester give me an hour; or, better, spend a night with me. I’ll put you up with pleasure.

“Now for the real object of my letter.

“I want to know how you are getting on. Somehow, I’ve had you on my mind for several days, and I feel that it is of the Lord.

“Dear old friend, have you come in yet? Or are you any nearer? Or are you still striving to settle the intellectual difficulties, that you have never yet been able to—*and never will*—FIRST?

“I wish I had seen you! I should like to have asked if you thought it had, so far as you could judge, made me happy; if it had ‘lasted,’ as they sometimes say!

“And I should so like to have said, ‘Yes, it has lasted. And it has bettered week by week, too!’

“R——, my old friend, what are you waiting for? You know me well, I think, though for years we have scarcely met. After you left O—— Street things came into my life that altered it very much, and I became a hard, aimless, careless man. And worse!

“I got money, but money did not satisfy; and position, but that didn’t; indeed, everything that men sell their souls for, I think I had, or had the power to get. I was the slave of sin, and miserable with it; though I didn’t recognize either of these facts then, or till long after.

“I gave up business, and thought to find rest and peace in travel and leisure, but it was not in these. Fourteen months of it sickened me, and I went into business for myself. ‘At last,’ said I. ‘Now I’m my own master! I have just work enough, and not too much, and can do just as I like!’

“Well, even if it were true, which is not quite the fact, *you* know whether rest and peace follow this. They don’t.

“Something under eighteen months afterwards, restless as ever, seeking pleasure in worse than doubtful ways, and still not knowing what was wrong, *I came across a man who had got peace.* And he said he had found it by taking the Lord Jesus as Saviour and Master.

“To my then mind anything more preposterous could not well be imagined.

“But there was no getting away from the fact that *he had peace* and I had *not*, though I had tried every way I knew to get it, and had for years been conscious that sin held me in absolute bondage; that, try and try as I would, I could not get the mastery; and that at last I had despaired and given in to it as beyond remedy, though I knew it was ruining and killing me.

“I have never before told this to a soul, but it is true. Now I heard, *for the first time*, that victory could be had over any sin *through* JESUS CHRIST. I tried hard to think this out and see how it could be, but couldn't see it at all.

“To be brief, I calmly decided to try it for myself, to take it on experimentally, if I may say so.

“I really didn't see at all how it could work; in fact, I do not think I can say anything but that I really did NOT believe that it could.

“But I had come to the end of myself, and I knew my own impotence. So I decided to take and follow Christ.

“‘With what result?’ you may say. Just this, (and it is just eleven months ago, so it has had a fair test now). The last eleven months of my life have been the happiest, beyond comparison, of all the days I have lived. I am better in mind and body than I have been for many a long year—if ever as well.

“Lastly, but *chiefly*, I have found Matthew XI. 28, 29 to be wonderfully, gloriously true. You know the verses well. So did I, in a sense, but only as words. Now I know it as a fact. The words are—and no words have been sweeter to me—‘Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek

and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest *unto your souls.*'

"That's the rest I needed, and I didn't know it. Now I have got it.

"Have *you*, old friend? And if not, why not?

"Take two more texts, spoken and written no doubt for the gracious help of us weak ones:—

"'My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.' 'Him that *cometh* to Me I will in no wise cast out.'

"Believe me, old friend, I came in fear and doubt, but I *came*: came knowing myself to be a *lost* sinner, but for God's grace to me through Jesus Christ. And He did not cast me out.

"I am a slow and stupid scholar, but I have learnt that He never fails. I have learnt that there is a wonderful joy in trusting the Lord; and I have learnt that the *enjoyment* of love which was entirely absent will come, and does come as we walk with the Lord.

"To know that you had found Christ would be a great joy to me. Will you write me when you can, and forgive my long silence?

"Your old friend."

SECOND LETTER.

"DEAR OLD FRIEND R—,

"I know that God can and does use trouble to bring us to the knowledge of Himself. I want, if possible, by God's help, to give you a spiritual lift. I want to leave argument and controversy altogether, and deal only with admitted facts.

"But in support of what I have said as to trouble I just ask one thing: Do we find that prosperity leads men to God? 'Seldom, if ever.' To say 'Never' is truer in most cases.

“Since the last word was written I have been to our M. H.

“On my way back I was thinking of destroying what I had written and writing only on the spiritual side; but on re-reading and on reconsideration I have decided to let it go, because I myself have found that not only *can* real Christianity and business go together, but that they do so *naturally*; business cares and worries are immensely lightened by their union.

“And, besides, I know that your mind will so run on your troubles that if I did so write you might say: ‘It sounds all right; but it’s all very well for him!’

“Now I’m going to give you a little more personal experience—experience, too, which I think comes to all who are drawn by God’s Holy Spirit towards Him—and you will see if it fits your case, and can accept my testimony as to the efficacy of the treatment—or, rather, the remedy.

“Now, a year ago I did not believe in anything very much, I think. I did believe in a general kind of way that there was a God, but beyond that, I fear, nothing—at any rate, nothing that was any use.

“But what I most strongly did NOT believe was that there was a devil. Even after I had decided for Christ—for a very short time, truly—I did *not* believe in the personality of a devil. But I do now, of course.

“Now for my point.

“It is the devil’s business to ruin souls—by all and any means he can. Vast numbers are ruined by being lulled into indifference. When a man is awakened, then a very favourite method is to tell him ‘there’s plenty of time’; when a man is

so awakened that he knows this to be untrue—for there is *not* plenty of time—another plan is to tell him that under his then circumstances it is ‘mean.’ This is one of his *lowest* methods; for it panders to the feelings of a man who reckons himself to be, if nothing else, at any rate FAIR. He tempted me in this way. Praise be to God that He defeated this too in my case. I pray Him that He will, in His mercy, do so in yours if this attack is made—and that is what I am expecting, and so writing on.

“Now, R——, the Lord has laid you on my heart; and as His servant I am bound to try to bring you to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“You *need* saving; you *know* it. You know you cannot save yourself. You say that you have lost all confidence in your power even to keep to your present standard. Thank God for that! It is a fact which we are slow to learn; when learnt it is a step towards God—humiliating, as it is, to our self-love. But we are not won nor saved by self-love or self-esteem; far from it.

“I want to say that even if it were true that it is easy to BE a Christian when all is fair and bright (which is not the case), it is not so easy to *become* one then.

“And we have got to *become* first.

“I know well that God *reached* me through trouble.

“With all my heart and soul I thank Him for the trouble that took, at the time, all the brightness away from my life. It came to me just after I had reached my ambition in business life—of succeeding my father—and what I lost was my incentive to that ambition. Success became ashes in my grasp.

“It was, as you may know, a love affair. I held on till she married; then I resigned. I travelled, and found no peace in travel. The rest you know. I tried business—no peace in that. Time went on. At last I met a man who had the peace I had sought in love, money, travel, work—had found it twenty years before, and had it all the time. It had lasted twenty years; while I had tried all these things, and everything else the devil could offer. I sought it, and I have got it, and nothing can rob me of it; and I want to pass it on to you. I have told you all this to show you that there is a parallel, if a rough one, in our cases. Whatever the difference, the parallel lies in this: that we have both the same need—rest for our souls—and both of us have found it wanting in the things of the world.

“The one question for me was, and for you is, ‘Can I have it?’

“The answer is, ‘Yes.’

“Question: ‘How?’

“Answer: ‘Come unto Me . . . and I will GIVE you rest.’

“If you are like me you will be tempted to doubt it. ‘Can it possibly be true? It seems so impossible, so absurd,’ rang in my head incessantly.

“Thank God, it is true! I have proved it—and tested it now for twelve months nearly—and it *is* true. Better than that, ‘the half has not been told.’

“How many difficulties are raised by the enemy of souls!

“Really there is only one, namely, ARE YOU WILLING?

“Are you willing to give up sin and to follow as God shall lead?

“If you can say ‘Yes’ to that, if you *will* say ‘Yes’ to that, there is NO OTHER difficulty.

“Satan raises lots. EVERY ONE is answered when you *will* answer the only real one I have given above; *every one* is answered in John VI. 37: ‘*Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.*’ It doesn’t seem possible, I admit—or, rather, it does, but it didn’t once; but it is true.

“Let it sink deep into your heart; let it answer every difficulty the father of lies may raise. It *can*, and, thank God, it *does*.

“There may be lots of things to straighten out; they have their time and place later. God will do that when, and not till, the heart is surrendered to His keeping. He can’t do it before—and you can’t do it at all.

“Then you may say: ‘How am I to come? What does it mean “to come”?’

“As nearly as I can put it, it means: ‘O Lord God, I am weary and in trouble, and sick of sin and wandering; I have come to the end of myself. I am an unworthy and miserable and lost sinner, without hope and without merit. But, O God, I am coming to Thee, trusting in Thine own promise; coming to Thee believing with all my heart that Thine only Son Jesus died for me, in my place, to bring me to Thee by faith in His blood alone. O God, I believe it. Help Thou mine unbelief.’

“My dear old friend, come in your own way and your own words, but COME! Only by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ can we be saved.

“Will you try it? If it doesn’t act in your case, it will be the very first in which it hasn’t. Is God going to fail *you*, do you think? Malachi III. 6: ‘For *I* the *Lord* change NOT.’ (And verse 17,

‘They shall be Mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I shall make up My jewels,’ is a beautiful one.) So are Isaiah XLI. 10 and XLI. 13.

“Lastly, TRY IT.

“If you are dreadfully ill, and I hear of it and take you a bottle of medicine which I know from my own experience has cured me of the same disease; if many others, I know of, also testify to its absolute efficacy, and I tell you of them, how much benefit would you get if you placed it standing on the table and said, ‘Oh! but perhaps it wouldn’t cure me’?

“None at all. But if you even took it on the principle that death was certain without it, and it *might* cure you if you took it, it would do so if it really were a cure.

“The gospel of Christ is like that. *The faith that will cause you to take it will save you; one grain less will NOT.*

“And, however much we may recoil at the idea, the Bible gives us only ‘saved’ and ‘lost.’ The saved are the ‘whosoever wills’; the lost are the ‘whosoever won’ts.’

“‘*Whosoever will*, let him take of the water of life FREELY.’

“Try it, my old friend. Go on your knees and have it out with God, and TAKE His great gift of Jesus.

“It means eternal life; forgiveness of sins past; power to resist sin in the future; sonship with God.

“It means happiness here; help in trial; a glorious life; a peaceful and radiant death—a going home, not a going into judgment.

“Try it, old friend.

“God never fails.

“J. S. C.”

(Other letters to follow.)

"PEACE REJECTED.

CZAR'S FATEFUL DECISION.

No Payment."

SUCH was the announcement on the 24th of August last during the peace negotiations between Japan and Russia. Japan demanded the payment of a large indemnity, which Russia refused to give. The negotiations were almost broken off, but through the good offices of President Roosevelt Japan was prevailed upon to withdraw her demand, and the result was that peace was made between the two contending nations, and the bloody war brought to an end, to the satisfaction of the whole civilized world. How different are God's terms from man's! Let us try to set out both:—

GOD'S TERMS.

MAN'S TERMS.

No payment demanded.	Large payment demanded.
Full payment made.	Payment refused.
Peace made.	Peace rejected.

In other words, Christ having made full payment of all God's righteous demands against the sinner, peace *is made*, and instead of making any demand whatever upon the recipient, God offers it *free*.

A little hymn puts it clearly and concisely:—

"The one full payment cleareth
His memory of all debt."

How different from man's thought, the product of a guilty accusing conscience:—

"The trembling sinner feareth
That God will ne'er forget"!

But what does He say? "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. x. 17).

On what ground? Does God make light of sin? Far from it. On the ground of the “one sacrifice for sins” made by this Man, i.e. Jesus Christ (verse 12); and having offered this “one sacrifice He has for ever sat down on the right hand of God,” in token that His work is finished; and He, the One Who accomplished it, is accepted by God in token of His infinite satisfaction in that work and in the One who accomplished it for His glory and our eternal salvation (see chap. v. 9).

But upon what terms does God offer this salvation, this peace? He offers it for our acceptance *by faith alone*. “To him that *worketh not*, but *believeth* on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom. iv. 5). And again: “If we *believe* on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being *justified by faith, we have peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. iv. 24; v. 1).

Do not, therefore, dear reader, make the “Czar’s fateful decision” and “reject peace.” He may have been fully justified in doing so, in view of the large payment demanded. But condemnation alone awaits you at the hand of a righteous God if you reject the peace He offers. He was righteous in making it at the cost to Himself of “the blood of His [Christ’s] cross” (Col. i. 20). He is righteous in justifying the one who believes in Jesus (Rom. iii. 26). And He will be righteous in judging all who, in the hardness and impenitence of their hearts, reject peace upon such marvellous terms (Rom. ii. 5).

Delay, then, no longer. “Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace.”

W. G. B.

FALLACY AND FAITH AS SEEN IN CAIN AND ABEL.

THE remarks sometimes dropped with reference to Cain's offering express, alas! all too clearly, the sympathies of men with that mistaken offerer. Cain's offering ignored man's death-sentence, and that the ground was cursed on account of sin. It implied that man, a ruined sinner, can approach the living God through his own merits. Hence his offering was most presumptuous (Gen. II. 17 and III. 17, 18).

God in His patient grace reasons with him: . . . "Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well" (i.e. offerest correctly) "shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin" (or a sin offering) "lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him" (Gen. IV. 6, 7). But he would not hearken. "He that hateth his brother is in darkness," etc. "He that committeth sin is of the devil." "Cain, *who was of that wicked one*, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous" (1 John II. 11 and III. 8, 12).

How different Abel's offering! His approach to God was not in his own merits. His offering intimated that sin must be atoned for by the death of a spotless victim. He did not approach as a natural man. He knew he could only be accepted through the merit and death of another. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh" (Heb. XI. 4).

The fat would represent the intrinsic excellencies of the One who took the sacrificial place. No bloodshedding in Cain's offering, whilst that of Abel suggests God's estimate of the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God," etc. (Heb. ix. 14).

Faith bows to God's verdict as to sin, and accepts God's remedy; *fallacy* blindly ignores the one and openly rejects the other.

E. F. M.

WHAT IS DONE ONCE FOR ALL, AND WHAT IS REPEATED.

THE lack of discerning between these two things is often a source of much discomfort to young converts.

We may look both at the work of the Spirit and the work of the Saviour in three ways—as to the past, the present, and the future.

In the past a work was done *in* us by the Spirit which produced a great moral revolution. I refer to what is commonly spoken of as the "*new birth*." It is not until after the *indwelling* of the Spirit, which is perfectly distinct from the new birth, that we have any intelligent understanding of what has really taken place. We know there has been a *change*, but instead of the change we desire—that is, from soul-trouble to solid peace—it is a change from the surface-peace of indifference as to sin to a distressing inward struggle because of it.

Now where such work within is real (and it

must be if it is of the Spirit of God), it can never be repeated. The new beginning is not a new beginning according to the flesh. It is far more than a new start made *by* you; it is by a distinct operation of God's Spirit. It is His new beginning *in* you, with which you are to be henceforth identified. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." **It is as impossible to repeat the one as the other.**

It is this work in our souls by the Spirit that produces a sense of what sin is. According to our measure, small as that measure may be, we are made to see sin as God sees it, and to realize that nothing can satisfy His righteousness in connexion with sin short of its unsparing judgment. We are now brought to judge sin *as* sin, and to condemn ourselves for committing it. In other words, we are brought to "repentance toward God."

It is at this point that the greatness of *another* work becomes an immense reality to our souls. We hear, in the gospel testimony, that an offering has been made to God, by Christ on the cross, which has effected a settlement of the sin question *once for all*. "But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. x. 12). Where? On the very throne of Him to Whom the offering was made and by Whom it was accepted.

He who thinks he can disturb that "once-for-all" settlement must expect to succeed in finding a flaw in the work that effected it, and when this is done, may consistently charge God with the blame of accepting it. Can such be found? Impossible!

Death can have no dominion over the risen Jesus. *He will die no more.* That work *cannot* be repeated, and since God has accepted it, it *need not* be repeated. Believing on Him, its benefits are all yours.

We have, as yet, only been looking backward at the two great necessities mentioned by the Lord to Nicodemus in John III. "Ye *must* be born again." "The Son of Man *must* be lifted up."

Let us now take a look forward.

Such is the love of God in Christ that, in the necessity of that love, He must have us with Him where He is. But can our mortal bodies go to heaven? No. Hence another thing must be done first. How and when will this be brought about? Let Scripture speak. "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body" (body of humiliation), "that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. III. 20, 21). The divine guarantee for this mighty change and the power by which it will be effected is found in His indwelling Spirit. "He shall quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. VIII. 11).

Will this change in our bodies ever need to be repeated? Never! That sinless state will, in the twinkling of an eye, bear the stamp of eternity. "Eternal in the heavens" is the way the Spirit of God describes it (2 Cor. v. 1).

But it may be asked, What about the journey between these two secured ends?

Two things cover the whole distance: *Christ*

ever liveth for you (Rom. VIII. 34; Heb. VII. 25):
His Spirit ever dwelleth in you (John XIV. 17;
Eph. IV. 30).

Our needs and weaknesses, our joys and sorrows, our trials and temptations, are all known to our exalted High Priest; and by His blessed Spirit He ministers to us seasonable help.

But what if we dishonour His name and grieve His Spirit?

His *service* is not the less continuous. It now takes a different character.

“If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” We have the exalted Man as an Advocate pleading *for* us; and His blessed Spirit our Advocate pleading in us. It is thus we are brought to repentance, confession, and forgiveness. This gracious work will continue until, by the same Spirit’s power, we are translated to our glorified Saviour’s presence. **But neither present things nor things to come can interfere with His finished work in the past, nor can they frustrate His promised work in the future.**

It is only with His *present* work we can really interfere. When, by careless walk and worldly ways, we grieve the Holy Spirit of God whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption, it is part of His gracious service to grieve *us*, until being brought to the confession of our sins He can again comfort us, and deepen in our souls our cry to the Lord,

“Arm me with jealous care
As in Thy sight to live.”

GEO. C.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

—♦—
FROM HEART TO HEART.

(Continued.)

THIRD LETTER.

“DEAR FRIEND R——,

“I wrote four letters to you yesterday, and destroyed them all. And I don't know what to say now.

“But I must at any rate say this: that your spiritual difficulty lies between *you* and *God*. To a certain point any real Christian can help; but only as God's instrument to *tell the truth*. More than that neither I nor any can do. And beyond a man's own level, moreover, he cannot help his fellow-man.

“But the real fact is—I have found it so myself, and it is common knowledge—that there is a very real reason for this, namely, that we are not commanded or intended to look to one another, but to look to God. I cannot, I think, help you more. I have told you what faith in Christ as Saviour has done for me: I point you to God's Book, and you can see that what He has done for me is what He promises: and you can see that what He has done for me He is more than willing to do for you.

“Now your part comes in. You must *know* that God has been dealing with you: you must *know* that He has been drawing you by His Spirit. That is the truth. That is the real and only explanation of your wrestling. It is God's Holy Spirit working in your heart against the devil and his powers.

“I know it is very hard to understand; but a thing is none the less true because incomprehensible. I know very well that I can never convince either your heart or your head. But that is not necessary, for it is not God’s way.

“The Bible is true. God loves us. God wants us for Himself: wants us with a desire that we cannot realize. Wants us and loves us so deeply that He *willingly* GAVE His only Son, Whom He loved, that we, accepting Jesus’ finished work as our only claim on God, might be reconciled to Him. Now our Saviour’s sacrifice is made: ‘it is finished,’ and when He left this earth He promised that the Holy Spirit should be sent, Who should ‘teach them all things.’

“It is the work of the Spirit to draw us to Christ Jesus; to lead us to accept Him as Saviour and Lord—and then to teach us of God. Now, I am perfectly sure that this is what has been going on in your heart.

“But now you have arrived at the stage when you have had the whole truth presented once again: you have the evidence; you have God’s own Word; you *must* decide, *for* or *against*.

“You are passing through just the same struggle that all who come in anything but early youth must pass. Believe me, to every doubt and every difficulty you *can* find the answer in God’s Book if you will only try: it is there.

“The way to God is, in reality, easy to you now. It is, ‘Come.’

“And I must earnestly remind you that there is a text which says, ‘How shall we escape, if we *neglect* so great salvation?’

“We dare not neglect it. Things do not *drift* upstream, but down. Men do not *drift* into heaven;

if they neglect they drift—they drift *down*, and are eternally lost.

“It wants only one act on your part, and that the simple act of accepting God’s testimony, that Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Could anything be more simple? Why distress oneself by wondering ‘why’s’?”

“Again, you believe *me*. Is it not wonderful that you should be able to believe me and not able to believe God? But it is not inability; it is not *I cannot*, but *I will not*. Unbelief of God’s Word is sin: and unbelief in Christ is the greatest sin of all in God’s sight, I believe.

“Now I said your difficulty lies between you and God; and it does. And I ask you, is there, *can* there be, any difficulty on His side? Is He not willing? Or not able? Surely He is.

“Then are you? If so, stretch out the hand of faith and receive the offered Saviour. It will all come right. Difficulties and doubts will just melt away.

“Read again: ‘There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but *God is faithful*, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able’ (1 Cor. x. 13).

“‘Your doubts and fears are of the evil one, but God is able to keep you from falling’ (Jude 24).

“Dear old chap, look up again those texts in your Bible that that little book gives, for the gospel is indeed the ‘power of God unto salvation to all that believe.’

“I do not know what else I can say.

“I do know that your business worries will, or may, distract you; but I also know that there is nothing that can help you in this trouble like peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

“And I give you two more texts which, like all the rest, are true, and have been blessed to me.

“‘The fear of man bringeth a snare, but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord *shall be safe.*’

“‘Whoso hearkeneth unto Me shall dwell safely, and shall be *quiet from fear of evil.*’

“Your old friend,

“J. S. C.”

FOURTH LETTER.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“Glory be to God! I am so glad to read your news!

“Not a bit surprised, though full of thanks.

“In desperate haste now; but will write again.

“Yours in the Lord,

“J. S. C.”

FIFTH LETTER.

“DEAR FRIEND R——,

“Again I say, ‘Glory be to God.’

“I am so glad: I do not know how to say it!

“And I shall be so glad to see you—either here or at your home.

“I will not definitely promise to come over for Whit-week end; but I will look into it and come if I possibly can.

“By a marvellous coincidence Easter Day, 1903, was the day of my decision: we are indeed yoked as brothers in the Lord.

“Like yourself, I do not understand much yet; that is, in comparison with the depth of the unsearchable riches of God’s love.

“But I do now know I am saved; and I know that ‘He is able to keep.’ I have proved it.

“I have found that failure is *impossible* if I

keep looking to Jesus—and *certain* when I look away.

“The devil will not leave you alone; do not expect that. But his power is broken; the ‘Stronger than he’ has defeated him; and whatever way he tries to tempt you, do not forget that there is victory, as well as pardon, through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Brother R——, my heart is raised in thanks to God for His goodness and mercy to you and to me.

“Follow on; and God bless you and your wife. One point I add. Bible study and prayer are *the* means of growth.

“Christian fellowship is something to be deeply thankful for; but *lean on Jesus*.

“Yours in His service,

“J. S. C.”

THE UNCERTAINTY OF LIFE.

NEARLY fifteen hundred souls were on board the great ship *Campania* when she sailed from the Liverpool landing-stage. This company was made up of all classes—business men, tourists, and emigrants. The first part of the voyage passed pleasantly. Then signs of bad weather were seen, but still no one was seriously alarmed. They had faith in the captain and his crew. Then came the climax. A great sea swept over the ship, and at once the deck became a tumult; men, women, and children were thrown hither and thither in the rush of the waters. The ship rights herself, the water goes back, and once more order and discipline are restored. Then the roll is called, and the passengers learn that five of their shipmates have been washed overboard.

We, in our arm-chairs at home, read an account of the catastrophe, and remark that five lives have been lost. But, reader, look at it in a different light. If those washed overboard were unforgiven, five *souls* had been lost—five undying spirits launched into eternity!

This incident only serves to show the uncertainty of life. In our daily life we run the same risks as those who were on board the *Campania*. When we travel on our railways, or when we are at work in the mills or factories, our lives are constantly in jeopardy. Friend, have you thought of the possibility of being taken away? Have you taken the advice of Amos? Are you prepared “to meet your God”? Have you made your confession of allegiance to Christ—for Him to live, for Him to die? You know not the day or the hour when you may be called away.

Come to the Saviour,
Make no delay,

for “now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation.” Oh, reader, Jesus is waiting with outstretched arms to receive you. He Who died on Calvary is waiting in heaven above to receive you. Come to Him while you may. Make your decision while it is time: in eternity there will be none to make. May God bring you to this *now*, for His name’s sake. Amen. T. W. P.

“WHAT is it keeps me back,
From which I cannot part?
Which will not let my Saviour take
Possession of my heart?
Some cursed thing unknown
Must surely lurk within;
Some idol, which I will not own,
Some secret bosom sin.”

A HAPPY MAN.

EVERYBODY is seeking happiness; and many and various are the ways taken to reach the object. The miser amasses riches, the scholar applies himself to learning, the statesman studies politics, the ambitious man tries to soar above his fellows, the religious man becomes an ascetic. Why? "Because in these things they hope to find it."

The niece of a servant of Christ thought she could find it in the glare and glitter of fashion. One day her uncle asked her to go for a drive in Rotten Row. This is one of the places in London where rank, wealth, and beauty are to be found at certain periods of the London season. She wondered why he had chosen this particular place for a drive, but when they reached their destination he said to her, "I want you to look into every face, and the first person upon whose countenance you see peace and happiness written call my attention, but do not speak to me until you do." They drove silently round. He was praying, and she was intently gazing at the grand carriages with their occupants, representing the beauty and fashion of the metropolis.

Half-way round she said, "Uncle, I think we will turn back." "Oh, no," he said; "keep on looking, and tell me the moment you see a happy, peaceful face." No word broke the silence. After having traversed the whole length of the Row, the coachman was instructed to drive to a very poor neighbourhood. Getting out at a poverty-stricken house, the uncle invited his niece to accompany him up some six flights of stairs. They entered a room occupied by an old woman

who existed on half a crown a week—parish relief. As soon as she recognized her visitor she burst into praise to the Lord for His goodness in sending His servant to see her. Out of a full heart she praised the faithful goodness of God to her.

As they drove home together the niece said, "Uncle, I do not understand it, but that old woman in her poverty has got something that I could not discover in the faces of the votaries of fashion in Rotten Row!"

Would you like to know what made that poor woman so thoroughly happy?

It was the same thing that made David sing for joy. In Psalm xxxii. he tells us that when he thought of the past, the present, or the future, it was one grand vista of blessedness.

I wonder if you would like to become a downright happy person? If so you must do what he did. The thirty-second Psalm is a very brief autobiography. David tells us that once he was so miserable he could not sleep at night, and was troubled all day. God had put His hand upon him. Now that is just what God often does—He makes a man miserable about his sins because He means to make him happy without them. It is a real mercy when God thus puts His hand upon a man and dries up all the springs of his sinful happiness in this world.

David thought he should be happy if he could gratify his passions and not let anybody know he had done so. He tried hard to keep it to himself. At last one day God sent His servant to bring his sin home to him. "*Thou art the man!*" You know the story.

Perhaps God will do the same with you as you

read this. Is it not true of you that you have sought happiness in sinful ways and tried to hide the truth from God? If so, now just do what David did. Make a clean breast of it. Tell God the truth. If you do, you will find that instead of His hand being upon you day and night, He will direct your eye to a Man spoken of in the first Psalm, who day and night meditated in God's holy law, whose conduct, ways, and walk were such that God could speak of him as "blessed" because of what *He was*, and what *He did*; and He will show you how, in the twenty-second Psalm, that same Man, the only one who could rightly claim such blessedness, the Lord Jesus Christ, endured the heavy hand of God in judgment in order that you might know that your sin is *covered*.

There is only one covering that can hide sin. It is blood, the precious blood of Christ—that blessed Man Who died under the judgment of God for your sins. In looking back He would have you know your sins are *not lightly passed over*. They have been *righteously covered*. This took place at the cross. There we see, in that awful night of judgment, that sin was blotted out. There its full penalty was meted out to the Man Who never deserved a particle of the judgment He underwent.

Then, again, David could say, "My transgression is forgiven." The work that put sin away is past, the knowledge of forgiveness is present.

Who gets it? The man who confesses; the man who believes. "*I confessed*," "*Thou forgavest*." "Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that *believe* are justified from all things." Confess

now, believe now, and you too may be sure of a full, free, present forgiveness.

But you say, What about the future? Well, that is all provided for. "The Lord imputeth not iniquity." This means that the Lord will never, never, never lay those sins to your charge which He has righteously covered and graciously forgiven.

He will never bring you into judgment for them. He Himself says so—"shall not come into judgment"—and you may rely upon Him keeping His word.

Do you wonder, then, that David invites you to be glad in the Lord, and to shout for joy? Are you happy? If not, why not? H. N.

SATAN REBUKED—MAN RECOVERED.

THERE stands a sinful man in filthy garments. His case seems hopeless, for Satan is there at his right hand to resist him. But *God's* messenger is there also; and God is *for* that sinful man, although He by no means makes little of his true state. His filthy garments are *called* "filthy garments." Man's deservings are plainly expressed in the same sentence which records his deliverance: "*Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?*" God has not a single good thing to say of this man, and he not a single good thing to say of himself. But if God has no good thing to say *of* him, He has a good thing to say *for* him. It is plainly proclaimed in the very presence of the enemy, and to his eternal "rebuke," that God is *for* this sinful man. Oh, blessed revelation!

Yet, since the days of Zechariah III. still greater wonders of grace have come to light. Man has come out in wickedness more bold than that of

even Satan himself; and this when perfect goodness was expressed in "the Word made flesh."

Satan said to Jesus: "Cast Thyself down" (Luke iv. 9). *Man* did not wait for that, but tried to "cast Him down headlong" (see verse 29 of the same chapter).

Satan suggested that He should make stones into bread. *Man* gave Him "gall for His meat."

Satan never spat in His face. *Man* did—Jew and Gentile alike spat upon Him.

Satan suggested that He should take the kingdom from him without the cross. *Man* put Him on the cross, and proclaimed Him only a mocking without a kingdom. The only sceptre placed in His hand was a reed, derisive emblem of human weakness.

Even the wild beasts, when He was with them in the wilderness, never tore His flesh. It was left for man to do this; and he did it!

Well may we exclaim:—

And couldst Thou be delighted
With creatures such as we,
Who, when we saw Thee, slighted
And nailed Thee to the tree?
Unfathomable wonder, and mystery divine,
The voice that speaks in thunder
Says, "Sinner, I am thine."

Can any reader resist such grace? GEO. C.

Confident in self-despair.—The substance of the Pharisee's prayer was, "I thank Thee for *what I am.*" The rejoicing of faith is, "I thank Thee Thou hast taught me *what Thou art.*" And come what may, faith can always sing—

In self there is nothing in which I can glory.
In Christ I'll rejoice to the end of the story.

THE LAST PLUNGE.

“**I** AM going to have my last plunge,” said a young man one Sunday morning, as he ran up the diving-board at some public baths. He little thought how prophetic his words would be as he sprang off that board and dived deeper than usual into the water, but his head came violently into contact with the bottom of the bath, causing concussion of the brain. He had to be carried home by his companions, and was shortly afterwards a corpse.

I recall the circumstance now, in seeking to address a word to any, young as he was, who may be inclined to plunge into the gaieties and pleasures of this world, heedless of the consequences. Remember *your* “last plunge” will come, and it may be much nearer than you think.

Now do not lay down this paper and say, “I don’t want to be reminded of such things.” Read on: we have something more to tell you. Will you still persist in your path of worldliness and sin regardless, it may be, of a mother’s prayers, a father’s counsel, or the faithful entreaties of a friend who may have spoken to you the word of truth? Such a message may become the gospel of your salvation: if you hear it and receive it now, it certainly will.

Many are being saved, why not you? The Word says, “The way of life is above” (or upwards) “to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath” (Prov. xv. 24). Jesus, God’s own Son, came down from above that He might open the way of life, the upward way, for the wise. Will *you* be wise enough to take that way? He, Who was the spotless, sinless One, and on Whom death

had no claim, went down into it that He might meet the claim that it had on you and me. He "once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter III. 18). Think of the love that did all this for you! How can you despise it? You know well enough, perhaps, the *terms* of the gospel, *but have you accepted it?*

A young man who had been to a gospel preaching one evening, some years ago, was urged by a servant of the Lord, who walked part of the way home with him, to get the question of his soul's salvation settled that night before he went to bed. He replied, "We will have it settled now," and there on that roadside he confessed Jesus as his Lord; and believing in his heart that God had raised Him from the dead, he was saved (Rom. x. 9), and has been walking in the happiness of that salvation ever since.

Perhaps, my reader, you have arrived at a place where two ways meet. Which way will you take? "The way of life is upward to the wise." Oh, think of the tremendous issues at stake: your immortal soul, its eternal happiness, its everlasting woe. To be Satan's servant here must end in Satan's portion hereafter. He never did one single bit of good for you, and never will. But, accepted here, Jesus our Lord will bring you present peace and an eternity of bliss and happiness. He died to procure it; He lives to bestow it. He seeks the straying; He saves the lost. "We beseech you not to receive the grace of God in vain . . . behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 1, 2.)

T. W. P.

ON DISPUTING WITH INFIDELS.

ONE of the numbers of *Tidings of Light and Peace* closed with a short article entitled "Don't Dispute with Infidels." The following letter bearing on the same subject may be interesting and profitable to some. It was written by the late Bishop Suter and published in a New Zealand paper; he had been challenged by a Mr. Flowerday (who had been attacking in the papers the teachings of Christ) to hold a public disputation with him, and he replied as follows:—

"To the Editor of the 'Colonist.'

"SIR,—I trust Mr. Flowerday will not think me discourteous if I decline his invitation. I might plead the pressure of other duties, but I do not. I decline it because I do not think it would do any good. Allow me to remind Mr. Flowerday that the Sermon on the Mount was addressed in the hearing of the people specially to Christ's disciples—to those who were willing to take up that position, to learn from Him, to those who showed by their actions that they took Him for their Teacher and Master, and were seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness—its directions were addressed and its promises held forth only to such persons. Only to such persons are its teachings applicable. It is the charter of a kingdom the subjects of which are essentially learners of Christ. Further, if it were otherwise, I cannot conceive that Mr. Flowerday will discover or give utterance to anything which has not already been made a matter of objection for the last fifteen hundred years and more; neither, on the other hand, have I the presumption to think I can

discover any new answer that has not already long ago been made to such objections. Both objections and difficulties, and the answers thereto, have long ere this been before the world.

“It is no new thing that Christ’s words should meet with opposition; they have ever done so; they ever will. Both He and His doctrine are a *foundation-stone* to some and a *stumbling-stone* to others. This has ever been so since the first hour of Christianity. If, however, Mr. Flowerday or any one else desires or is willing to accept any help that I may be able to render them, by myself or by reference to books, in coming to a better understanding of some of the difficulties that they may feel in the Lord’s teaching, I can only say that my time will be at their disposal by day or by night: I would make time for such an object. I think they would find me no unsympathetic dealer with such difficulties, having already felt some of them myself, and still hoping to be a learner as well as a teacher. In the meantime I must remind your readers that an attack unanswered is not necessarily unanswerable.—Yours, etc., A. B.”

SATISFIED.

THAT I am Thine, my Lord and God,
 Ransomed and sprinkled with Thy blood,
 Repeat that word once more,
 With such an energy and light
 That this world’s flattery nor spite
 To shake me ever may have power.
 From various cares my heart retires;
 Tho’ deep and boundless its desires,
 I’m now to please but One;
 Him before Whom the elders bow,
 With Him is all my business now,
 And with the souls that are His own.

This is my joy which ne'er can fail,
 To see my Saviour's arm prevail,
 To mark the steps of grace ;
 How new-born souls, convinced of sin,
 Yet by His precious blood made clean,
 Extol His name in every place.

With these my happy lot is cast
 Thro' the world's deserts rude and waste,
 Or thro' its gardens fair ;
 Whether the storm of malice sweep,
 Or all in dead supineness sleep,
 Still to go on be all my care.

See the dear sheep, by Jesus drawn,
 In blest simplicity move on ;
 They trust His shepherd-crook :
 Beholders many faults will find,
 But they can tell their Saviour's mind,
 Content, if written in His book.

O ! all ye just, ye rich, ye wise,
 Who Christ's atoning sacrifice
 Deem foolishness, and slight,
 Grant but I may (the rest's your own)
 In shame and poverty sit down
 At this one wellspring of delight.

Indeed, had Jesus ne'er been slain,
 Or aught could make His ransom vain,
 That it availed no more ;
 Were His unbounded mercy fled,
 Were He no more the Church's Head,
 Nor Lord of all, as heretofore :

Then, so refers my state to Him,
 Unwarranted I must esteem,
 And wretched all I do ;
 Ah, my heart throbs, and seizeth fast
 That covenant which will ever last,
 It knows, it knows these things are true.

JOHN GAMBOLD, 1711-71.
