

TIDINGS

OF

LIFE AND PEACE.

EDITED BY GEO. CUTTING.

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

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CONTENTS.

| | PAGE |
|---|-------------------|
| LOOKING AHEAD | GEO. C. 1 |
| CHANGE FOR LOSS, OR CHANGE FOR GAIN, WHICH? | W. G. B. 5 |
| A RETROSPECT (Poetry) | W. L. 9 |
| "BUT GOD——" | W. N. 9 |
| LETTER TO A YOUNG CHRISTIAN | T. H. R. 14 |
| "THOUGH YOUR SINS BE AS SCARLET" | E. J. E. 17 |
| YOUR SOUL | W. G. B. 20 |
| A CRISIS IN THE WORLD'S HISTORY, A CRISIS IN YOURS | GEO. C. 22 |
| "RECONCILIATION" | <i>Extract</i> 28 |
| A LIVING LETTER | W. N. 29 |
| THE CHRISTIAN'S PLACE IN THE WORLD | J. N. D. 32 |
| TWO MYSTERIOUS DISCOVERIES. No. 1 | GEO. C. 33 |
| SIN NOT IMPUTED: HOW CAN IT BE? | O. T. 38 |
| "HOW CAN I GET RID OF MY SIN?" | J. H. L. 40 |
| SANCTIFICATION (Poetry) | W. L. 43 |
| "DON'T FORGET THE GOD ABOVE" | E. J. E. 44 |
| EVERLASTING LOVE (Poetry) | J. C. J. 46 |
| SECOND LETTER TO A YOUNG CHRISTIAN | T. H. R. 47 |
| A HELL THERE IS. WHAT GOD IS DOING TO PREVENT YOUR GOING THERE | E. C—P. 49 |
| SATAN'S PARADISE FOR MAN | J. G. B. 55 |
| A WEIGHTY QUESTION | W. H. B. 56 |
| EXTRACT | J. N. D. 57 |
| TWO MYSTERIOUS DISCOVERIES. No. 1 (<i>contd.</i>) | GEO. C. 58 |
| "GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY" | F. W. R. 61 |
| GOD'S "COME" AND MAN'S "DEPART" | E. C—P. 65 |
| HAVE FAITH IN GOD | O. T. 73 |
| TWO MYSTERIOUS DISCOVERIES No. 2 | GEO. C. 75 |
| "WHO IS GOD?" | L. J. M. 78 |
| WORDS OF PEACE FOR THE SIN-DISTRESSED | P. W. 81 |
| FROM PERPLEXITY TO PRAISE | H. E. M. 88 |
| COMFORT FOR THE CAST-DOWN | GEO. C. 90 |
| "THE WAY OF GOD" | G. W. GY. 92 |
| THE WRECK AND THE REFUGE | 95 |

| | PAGE |
|--|----------------|
| CONCENTRATED AFFECTIONS | J. N. D. 96 |
| FRIENDLESS FOR EVER! | GEO. C. 97 |
| 'THE LIONS' DEN' AND ITS LESSONS | E. H. C. 99 |
| THE DESTINY OF THE EARTH | L. O. L. 102 |
| THE STOLEN GARMENTS | J. H. L. 106 |
| POSSESSION AND PROFESSION | T. H. R. 109 |
| DEEP WATERS | J. H. L. 112 |
| OBJECTS OF INTEREST | E. C—P. 113 |
| THE TWO DIVERS | W. H. B. 117 |
| THE RIVER OF LIFE | F. S. M. 120 |
| THE GLORIES OF THE COMING KING | GEO. C. 124 |
| THE PATHWAY AND ITS END | T. W. P. 128 |
| A GENTILE SEEKER | E. C—P. 129 |
| DESTITUTION | GEO. C. 132 |
| GOD'S KINDNESS, MAN'S HARDNESS | GEO. C. 133 |
| FORGIVENESS AND POWER | P. W. 137 |
| THE WORD IN POWER | W. N. 141 |
| "THEY CRIED," "HE SAVED" | F. S. M. 145 |
| A FAREWELL MESSAGE | K. H. H. 149 |
| DAVID, SOLOMON, AND AGRIPPA | J. S. B. 153 |
| WONDROUS BLESSING | J. N. D. 156 |
| THE MEETING IN PROSPECT | GEO. C. 157 |
| "THE JOY OF THY LORD" | T. H. R. 158 |
| WHY DID HE COME? | L. O. L. 161 |
| "BETWEEN GOD AND MYSELF" | 164 |
| THE RIGHTEOUS KING AND THE INDEPENDENT GUEST | A. D. 165 |
| HAPPY WITHOUT RICHES; REJOICING WITHOUT LIBERTY | 167 |
| BETWEEN "COME" AND "GONE" | GEO. C. 167 |
| "FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE" | W. F. R. 173 |
| FRAGMENT | 176 |
| ALMOST SAVED, BUT LOST | J. H. L. 177 |
| A TIMELY INTRODUCTION | L. J. M. 181 |
| ASSURANCE: WITH GOD'S BLESSING AND WITHOUT IT | GEO. C. 184 |
| "THOU SHALT CALL HIS NAME JESUS" (Poetry) | J. B. S—E. 190 |
| A DEPARTING SERVANT OF CHRIST | 191 |
| THE GOSPEL IN THEORY AND IN POWER | J. N. 192 |

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

LOOKING AHEAD.

AMONG the greatest of the Christian's comforts is the joyful certainty with which he is able to look ahead. When the Blessed Saviour Himself was in this world, He was constantly speaking to His own of what was on before. For Him the Cross, with all its shame and sorrow, was in front. He came here on that account. "He came into the world to save sinners"; and without the suffering and judgment, without the death of the Cross, He must, going back as Man, abide "alone." But beyond the enduring of that terrible Cross there was a prospective joy—the joy of having the Church, yea all "His own," perfectly and eternally blessed; the God of all grace, His Father, would have it so, and all through His own precious death. The blessed Spirit of God has come down from the exalted One in glory to bring into *our* hearts a foretaste of that glorious future. "He shall shew you things to come" (John XVI. 13). So that, even now, we can count this among our sweetest comforts, amid snares and difficulties which call for constant watchfulness, self-denial, and patient endurance:

"To look beyond the long, dark night,
And hail the coming day."

We have reached our *all* when we have reached Him in grace; but we shall not *fully* know all we have reached till we reach Him in glory. How remarkably the Spirit uses the writers of the New Testament to bring the bright future of God's purpose before believers. Beyond a day of apostasy and corruption Jude directs God's called ones. "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

Those whose service brings them in contact with the personal exercises of believers must often have been struck with the Spirit-breathed aspirations of some, as going far beyond the mere mental intelligence of others.

Not long since a youth of twenty was dying of consumption. His Christian father, watching beside his bed the last night of his short stay here below, noticed a more than usually bright smile on his son's face. "You seem to be smiling, Tommy," he remarked. "Yes, father," he responded. "If *I* can't smile, who can? Before me I see the brightness of an eternal day, and not a cloud between!"

Another youth in a remote Lincolnshire village called his mother to his bedside. He wished, he said, to show her something. When she came near, he stretched out his wasted arm, drew back his nightshirt sleeve, and with a peaceful smile of conscious triumph, said, "*Isn't death doing its work beautifully, mother?* I shall soon close my eyes to the darkness and open them in the light!"

How is it that these youths and thousands more of all ages and every diversity of social circumstances can come to the end and contemplate with such calm assurance what is beyond this vale of tears and bitter griefs? One thing accounts for it—the love of God in Christ. The love of God proved at the Cross, where every sinful liability of the guiltiest believer was perfectly discharged. That same love is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, Who gives them to abound in the hope of the glory He has come from heaven to set before them (Rom IV. 25 ; v. 1–8).

But the same blessed Spirit works in *sinner's* hearts. He reminds *them* of the future also; and, oh, what simple circumstances He can make use of!

A seeker of souls on his Master's behalf went one day into the workshop of a village carpenter. No one was there at the time; so he took up a bit of chalk from the bench, and with it, on a piece of rough board near, he wrote in large characters the word

ETERNITY.

When the carpenter returned the servant of Christ had gone; but there in front of him stood the chalked board, and that weightiest of all considerations for dying sinners here below, wrapped up in that one word "ETERNITY." He felt annoyed. Who has been here? he said to himself. Then taking a handful of shavings he tried to rub it off; but the board being rough he didn't find it quite as easy as he thought; besides, the more he rubbed it off the board the more he rubbed it into his own heart. ETERNITY!

A little while after, the same preacher called on the same carpenter. How serious he was that day!

"Do you see those thirteen boards lying against the hedgerow drying?" he said.

"Yes," said his visitor.

"Shall I tell you what I have been thinking about while sawing them out? They are all coffin-lids; and it has come to my mind that I might myself lie under one of them!"

"And *what then?*" the visitor inquired. But he had not yet found the assurance to which all are righteously entitled who rest their souls on the precious blood of Christ, who truly believe in God's beloved Son.

Another year of priceless opportunity is behind you, my reader, never, never to return. If this finds you in your sins, the next may find you overwhelmed by the unrepentant sinner's doom. You are hurrying on. What is your outlook? Here is a tremendous question for you: "What shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?" (1 Peter IV. 17). "*The end,*" mark. It is the God you have revolted against Who has such good news for you. What must be the consequences of making light of it? We beseech you take it to heart—and NOW. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. VI. 2). To-morrow might find the gulf "fixed" between you and your last opportunity. Oh! be wise in time. It will give God joy to bless you. It will honour Christ when you own your need of Him and simply trust Him.

GEO. C.

CHANGE FOR LOSS, OR CHANGE FOR GAIN, WHICH ?

WHEN recently following the body of a believer to the grave, a remarkable inscription upon a tombstone at the side of the path caught my eye :—

In affectionate remembrance of

— — —
who passed suddenly away
in life's bloom.

Here in one brief hour BUSINESS—HURRY—WORRY—
DEATH.

Hereafter CHRIST—PEACE—REST—LIFE.

Change for gain—

Christ for Business, Peace for Hurry,

Rest for Worry, Life for Death.

Till He come, Adieu, loved One.

The epitaph was apparently composed by a Christian husband for his believing wife. But I thought how aptly those four words describe the life and end of thousands in this age of rush and pressure: "Business—Hurry—Worry—Death." Maybe the first three just describe your life, my reader. "Business," with its pressing claims, that, like a slave-driver with heavy lash, goads on his poor victims. Business, morning, noon, and night, week in and week out, from the year's commencement to its close, and year after year. Business with its accompaniment of ceaseless hurry and constant worry. And all ending in what? Successful or unsuccessful—all ending here in *death*.

The story has often been told of a wealthy man of business to whom a kind friend spoke

a few words as to how it would all end. "Die!" said the man; "I haven't time to die." And he had scarcely uttered the words when, stooping from his chair to pick up a paper, he expired. Yes, however busy, hurried, or worried, death is the end, for "It is appointed unto men once to die," and there is "no discharge in that war."

But let me ask you in all seriousness, yet in all kindness, should you be called on, like the one described in the epitaph, to pass "suddenly away," whether you are in "life's bloom" or otherwise, should you find the change *gain*? Would it be with you "Christ for business, rest for hurry, peace for worry, life for death"? Or is all uncertain and dark hereafter? It is for such I especially write. The change for you would be all *loss*. What, instead of business? Not Christ. For the Christ rejecter here there will be no Christ hereafter, save as his Judge. For "after death," what? "The judgment" (look up Hebrews ix. 27). No rest for hurry. There will be no rest for the unrighteous. No peace for worry. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." No life for death. No, no! Nothing but the "second death," which is "the lake of fire" (see Rev. xx. 11-15), for those whose names are "not found written in the book of life."

Dear reader, *now* is the time for you to face these solemn realities, for "now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Here is the place for you to make sure of a happy hereafter. When once the border-line is crossed, your eternity of weal or woe will be unchangeably fixed. If you would have "Christ hereafter," you must begin *now*. If you would have the

full enjoyment of Christ hereafter, decide for Christ in time.

In a large and crowded hall we had closed our gospel meeting with the well-known hymn of which the refrain is—

“Christ for me.”

I spoke to a woman passing down the aisle and found her anxious about her soul, but not decided. Referring to a verse of our hymn—

“Let others boast of heaps of gold,
Christ for me,”

I said, “Suppose I had a heap of gold in one hand and *Christ* in the other, and offered you your choice, which would you take?” She replied, “*Christ for me.*” There and then her decision was made, and she abode by it after. And why not *you*, my undecided reader? It is so simple—to faith. Unbelief falters and goes without the blessing. Faith takes *God* at His word, and believes because *He* says it. *Christ* is God’s last and only word to man now. Everything He has to offer is wrapped up in Christ. “If thou knewest the gift of God,” said Jesus to the woman of Samaria. God is a GIVER, and He has everything to *give*. *Christ* is God’s gift for and to a perishing world. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son,” for it is His purpose that, believing in Him (the Son), we should have eternal life in Him. “This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.” Said I not well that all God offers is *enfolded* in Christ? All that Christ is, *unfolded* by the Spirit. Believing in Him you accept Christ, and “peace, rest, life,” yea, all is yours.

“Then why, oh, why delay?
You may not see to-morrow,
Now is salvation’s day!”

And what about that last affecting word on the epitaph to his loved one, “Till He come”? Yes, Jesus *is* coming again. His last word of assurance to His own is, “Surely I come quickly.” Oh, that will be the moment for Him, and for us who have accepted Him. For Him, “the day of the gladness of His heart.” For us, of the realization of that for which we have been saved in hope. To see Him, to be like Him, to be with Him for ever. To be conducted by Him into the Father’s house, where He has, by going Himself, prepared a place for us. That will be the moment for which we have wished and waited, while we worked for Him during the night of His absence.

But what about *you*, if still unprepared, unready? “They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage, and *the door was shut.*” While the “ready” will be *shut in with* Him, the unready will be *shut out from* Him for ever. Then lips that never prayed will pray, and eyes that never wept will weep. But all to no purpose. Therefore, oh! my reader, delay no longer. Risk not the salvation of your soul another moment. Good intentions are valueless. The one man we read of in Scripture who was “almost persuaded” never, as far as the record goes, came the rest of the way, but was altogether lost. *Decide for Christ, and decide NOW.*

W. G. B.

A RETROSPECT.

As we look on the year which has now closed behind us,
How much do we see that must plainly remind us
Of the love of our God, Who, whate'er may o'ertake us,
Has pledged His own word that *He'll* never forsake us.

We have proved "He is faithful" by how He has led us,
We have proved that "He careth" by how He has fed us ;
However assailed His good hand has been o'er us,
And He's kept the bright hope of His glory before us.

As thus we remember He's ever been near us,
And the way He has taken in trouble to cheer us,
Our faith should be strengthened, and courage endue us,
And zeal for His glory henceforward imbue us.

With eyes fixed on Jesus, His banner held o'er us,
In perfect repose, for *He* knows what's before us,
We'd step boldly forward, His love to enthuse us,
And cry from our hearts "Lord, abundantly use us."

W. L.

"BUT GOD—"

IT is said of Lord Nelson that, when on one eventful occasion he did not wish to see a certain signal, he put the telescope to his blind eye, and then said he did not see it.

Now very much of the infidelity of the present day proceeds on the same lines. The infidel does not "see" certain facts in Scripture. He does not wish to see them, so turns his blind eye to them. They would sadly interfere with his boastful modern thought. He forgets, perhaps, that paganism in former days produced thinkers as great as ever lived, yet their highest thoughts were but contemptibly foolish in divine things. Thus the very effort of scepticism to reduce the word of God to the level of human

thought and nullify its Divine authority is verified in these words, "As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Rom. i. 22, 28). And no greater fool ever lived than the man who determines not to see the facts which God has been pleased to reveal; for underneath all his profession of a wisdom which gives him to bring every utterance of God to the bar of his human reason, his innate desire is to get rid of God and the revelation of His ways. But God *has* revealed Himself, for He would teach us not only *what He does*, but *who He is* and *what He is*. "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong" (Job v. 13). My one desire, dear reader, is to fasten upon your mind and conscience the facts contained and conveyed in the above two words, so oft repeated in the New Testament. To get right hold of them will make you wiser, as to God and yourself, than the wisest philosopher.

In the 12th chapter of Luke we have a man who was blessed with business-intelligence. He could think, but self was the centre and circumference of his thoughts; moreover, he appeared to be as shrewd as he was thoughtful. "He thought within himself" and this produced activity, but it was all *selfish* activity. It was all "I—I—I—What shall I do?" Not only thoughtless of others, he was thoughtless of God and His goodness. Had his heart not been hardened by sin, his thoughts would have looked higher than himself and his barns, even to God, and produced thankfulness. But just as the earthly goal of his ambition seemed within his grasp, another thinker

intervenes, and we read, "*But God* said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee" (Luke XII. 20).

The *One* Who spake thus—the Lord Jesus Christ—knows all about us to-day. He not only knows all about man, but all about God. He knows your best and highest thought, but at the same time He reveals God. I know nothing more solemn and searching than this, that if you are unconverted, God is not in all your thoughts.

But I pass on to another scripture, Acts XIII., where again we have man's thoughts and God's in solemn contrast. Man's highest thought as seen here was to put to death the blessed One Whom God had sent into this world to be a Saviour. The Spirit brings before us twice that word "fulfilled." God had written down in His blessed book the wickedness of man, even to the piercing of His hands and gambling over His clothes, and man had only fulfilled that which was written in the Scriptures. God knew their very worst, and proved it by recording it hundreds of years before. When man at last did his worst to Jesus, we read, "*But God* raised Him from the dead." What immediately follows? Threatenings of judgment? No. Glad tidings is declared. Oh, think of it! In spite of man's badness, God, by this very act, shows out His goodness; and this ought to move and melt your heart. Again, we read in Romans v., "*But God* commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"—died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and was buried, "*but God*"—oh, how I love these two words!—"but God raised Him from the dead." Blessed news!

John Wesley asked, more than a century ago

now, What would St. Paul preach if he came to life again? We ask, What *did* he preach when he was here? We have his own account of it. "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. . . . For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: *but God* hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise," etc. (1 Cor. I. 23-27). Oh, what a God of all grace we have to do with! Man's highest conception fails completely here, and could never understand in its simplicity the ways of God in saving sinful men. My reader, do you understand? Though the finite mind cannot grasp the infinite mind, yet the moment you take Christ as your Saviour and believe the gospel of your salvation, what could never be conceived by man, you will be able to say, as it is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. *But God* hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit" (1 Cor. II. 9, 10).

One more scripture in Ephesians II., where these two words are found (not that I have exhausted them: see Rom. VI.; 1 Cor. XV., and other texts). "*But God*, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved)" (vv. 4, 5). Here again we have God's wondrous thoughts and ways in contrast with man's. It is a terrible picture of man; in his sins, morally dead, without

one aspiration of life Godward. Such is the state, and the marks of it are found in verse 2. We walked according to the course of this world, according to the devil and the flesh. By nature we were the children of wrath, even as others. "*But God*"—"God, Who is rich in mercy." Oh! what a blessed contrast! My friend, I do not ask, Do you fully understand it? Do you see it? Who can take it all in? I cannot understand the great love of God, which had His own heart and heaven for its origin and birthplace. But we can learn the great proof of it, in the gift of His own Son. Not only has He demonstrated His great love in not sparing His Son, but delivering Him up for us all, and with Him freely giving us all things, but He has further demonstrated His love in the gift of the Spirit, "that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." He would prove beyond the shadow of a doubt by an outside act that we have a place in His heart, but He would prove, too, that He has a place in ours, by pouring out His love into them by the Holy Ghost given to us. And whilst we would not for a moment substitute the Holy Spirit for the Scriptures, yet we must remember that it is the Spirit through the Scriptures that gives us the experimental knowledge and enjoyment of His love as seen in His beloved Son.

In closing, let me say that my sole right to address you consists in this blessed fact, that I have made the acquaintance of this blessed God, and am privileged to commend Him to you for your acquaintance also.

W. N.

LETTER TO A YOUNG CHRISTIAN.

THERE are two ways in which Scripture speaks of "abiding in Christ." The first, which is a *privilege*, we find in John's epistle. In the days in which John wrote there were two dangers: one was to go back to the Jewish order, and the other to think that Christ had introduced a system of religion (Christianity) which could be developed and advanced, as new systems are with men. Hence the force of John's word, "Now, little children, *abide* in Him." It is our great privilege; we must neither go backward nor forward, but abide.

Paul speaks in the same way to the Colossians, "Ye are complete in Him"; that is, that there is nothing for us outside of Christ (what a privilege, through grace!) and therefore if we are to have anything Divine — Righteousness, Love, Life, Peace, Joy, etc.—we must have it in Him, not merely *from* Him, but *in* Him. Thus we are taught to *abide in Him*, for we find how empty we are, having nothing in ourselves.

The Gospel is really the message *from God to us* of the fulness of Jesus, and of the perfection of His finished work, so that the word of the truth of the Gospel reveals to us an ocean of righteous, holy love that we cannot get out of, it is so vast. Of course, if I am looking into myself for anything, I am, so far, getting away from the perfection in Jesus, where grace places the believer. I, a poor, empty, helpless, lost sinner, find that the God of all grace has invited me, and welcomed me into the apprehension of the fulness of Jesus and the perfection of His finished work. Well, then, I must not venture outside of that fulness

and perfection, but abide there. If all is perfect—and it is—there can be no development of it to suit man's taste.

The other way in which abiding in Christ is spoken of we find in John xv., where the Lord plainly shows His disciples, by the figure of a vine and its branches, the impossibility of a branch bearing fruit if it be apart from the vine. The disciples had been accustomed to regard Israel as the vine, but Israel only brought forth wild grapes (Isaiah v. 4). The Lord was the true Vine, and hence He presses on His disciples *the responsibility* of abiding in Him; there could be no life in a branch if severed from the Vine, and to go back to Judaism was to leave the *true* Vine. So that there is with us *a responsibility* to be true to Christ and abide in Him, where grace has set us, for we must ever remember that it is by no effort of ours, but it is simply staying where God's grace places those that believe. "Abiding" does not speak of effort, but of resting in grace.

"Walking *in the light*" is not the same as walking *according to the light*, though what the Lord said is verified, "If a man walks in the light, he does not stumble." Now, Christ is the Light; He said so: "I am the light of the world"; and now that He is gone to heaven it says (2 Cor. iv. 6): "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face [or person] of Jesus Christ." If I see Jesus touching a leper, or letting a poor sinful woman kiss His feet, or any of His words and works, I can look below the garb of His human nature, and see that it was *God* manifest in the flesh—*God's* grace and love and righteousness, and holiness, and truth shone in Him, so that we are in the light of God as we

learn and know Jesus—that is, our souls are. We cannot unknow what we know; “We have known and believed the love that God hath to us.” We know it by God sending His Son that we might live by Him; that He might be the propitiation for our sins (1 John IV.). It is true the light will show me how unlike I am to Christ as I walk in it; and the more I walk in it the more I shall see how little I have attained; but then the light will show what the value of the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, is; that it cleanses from everything that has the nature and character of sin. In the light I do not see *my own* estimate of that blood, but *God’s* estimate of it.

As to not “feeling so bad,” I understand it, because you have been sheltered from evil. It is difficult to believe that we are capable of doing certain evil things, and it is a mercy to be lowly and so kept from falling into outward sin. Peter would not believe that he could deny his Master; but he did, and wept bitterly. What sort of hearts are ours, do you think, that need God’s grace continually to keep us abiding in Christ, or else they would easily wander from Him and neglect Him? To wander from Christ or neglect Him is about as black ingratitude as there can be. It is not so much what we have done perhaps, but what our hearts are capable of that shows we are “so bad.” When we know that, we say continually—

“O Lamb of God, still keep me
Close to Thy trusted side;
’Tis only there in safety
And peace I can *abide*.”

T. H. R.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

“THOUGH YOUR SINS BE AS
SCARLET.”

IT was midnight, when all had retired to rest, and not only so, but it was midnight in my soul. I lay awake thinking, with no small exercise of soul, of the possibility of sacrificing the eternal joys of heaven for the transient pleasures of earth.

“As I lay there my sins rose up before me, sins that I had long forgotten. My anguish of soul was great. The remembrance of my mother’s prayers and my father’s entreaties seemed only to add to my anguish. I thought of the eternal future I was fast hastening to, and of the God whose untiring love and patience I had spurned.”

But He was about to snatch another “brand” from the burning; about to set another captive free.

Six months previous to this, a tract lay upon the table which bore the above title, “Though your sins be as scarlet.” The words seemed to force themselves upon me with irresistible power, and kept ringing in my ears from sunrise to sunset. The tract told briefly of a young man who one evening was on his way to a scene of pleasure, but was suddenly brought to a standstill by a man thrusting a tract into his hands bearing the title, “Though your sins be as

scarlet." He was arrested then and there, like Saul of Tarsus on his way to Damascus. Annoyed at being thus so rudely interrupted in his pursuit, he made an effort to cast the tract from him. But the Spirit of God had already done His convicting work in his soul, and he was constrained to turn into a hall where the Gospel was being preached that evening. Remarkable to say, he there heard the very words from the preacher's lips that had been the means of arresting him in the tract. "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).

What wonderful and assuring words! To that young man they were used; to my own soul also. But have they not a voice to you, my reader? Have such blessed words no charm for you? Is there nothing in them that would suggest to you the gracious attitude of the blessed God? Think! The question of your sins is a serious one. With *Him* about them you must have to do, sooner or later. To *Him* you must render a strict account. You will do well to consider the present situation. You may be shrewd enough in matters of business, far-seeing with respect to things of time and sense; very little escapes your observation. How strange that you have not observed this time—this "COME NOW" of the blessed God. If you accept the invitation—and it is surely a worthy one—it will, indeed, be well with you; but if you reject it, what then? Who can tell the remorse that will fill your soul on that day when you will certainly be compelled, not invited, to hear His voice. But then it will

be the voice of pronounced judgment. We would beseech you, therefore, to "*come now.*"

It may be that one who is reading this paper is weary and sin-sick. To such the words are surely addressed, and we are glad to tell you that God has made provision for you in the sacrifice of His beloved Son. To Him we point you, and say, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29). His work, His worth, is great before the blessed God. He alone can fully estimate its efficacy. If only you knew this, what peace and joy would fill your soul! The Lord Jesus said to the woman at the well, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and Who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water" (John iv. 10). What you need is living water. That spring never runs dry. It flows from a living Saviour at God's right hand. You have proved, it may be, the emptiness of that which the world offers. To say the least, it is not soul-satisfying. "He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again." How true, as thousands have proved. Oh, that you may prove the blessedness of accepting in this day of marvellous opportunity the Lord Jesus as God's great and eternal gift. But it is written, "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh; for if they escaped not that refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven" (Heb. xii. 25).

"No curse of law, in Thee was sovereign grace,
And now what glory in Thine unveiled face!
Thou didst attract the wretched and the weak,
Thy joy the wanderers and the lost to seek."

E. J. E.

YOUR SOUL.

ANOTHER "year of grace" has sped its course, and is numbered with the past nineteen hundred and more since there was born in the little town of Bethlehem "A SAVIOUR . . . CHRIST THE LORD."

Of His life you know—"Who went about doing good . . . for God was with Him"—and making GOD, Who IS LOVE, known to man. For man had lost the true knowledge of God, and is, naturally, still ignorant of Him. "No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

Of His death you know. What was it for? "Christ DIED for OUR SINS," according to the Scriptures.

Of His resurrection from among the dead you know. What was it for? "He was raised again for our justification." That is, that believing in God Who raised Him, you, or I, or any one, however guilty, might be fully cleared from every charge of the sins whose penalty He bore, and in Whose precious blood there is full atonement.

Of His ascension you know. What was it for? That He might now appear in the presence of God for us, and save us all the way through. "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." He is a LIVING SAVIOUR for us at the right hand of God.

Of the descent of the Holy Ghost you know. What for? That He might seal all believers in that risen Saviour, thus appropriating them for

God, and that He might be the LIVING LINK between their souls and Him.

Perhaps of His coming again you may know. What for? To raise the dead (believers) incorruptible, change the living ones, and catch all up together to meet Him in the air, that so we might be for ever with Him.

Are *you*, my reader, one of those thrice happy persons who, if Jesus were to come, would be caught up to meet Him? Or, if death overtake you first, would you depart to be with Him or be reserved unto the judgment of the great white throne? Or are you of the number who, in the event of His second coming, would be left to experience the wrath of God sweeping this earth in devastating judgment? But oh, what is the worth of all this knowledge if your heart is hardened and your soul is lost?

"Another year of grace has sped its course" is a common expression. Why do men call it so, and yet grow increasingly callous as to God's offer of grace, and their own need of it? Why, if still unsaved, do you seek rather to evade, than to avail yourself of, all that grace now offers you? "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose HIS OWN SOUL? Or what shall a man give in exchange for HIS SOUL?"

If you have acted thus in all the years of grace you have enjoyed, do so no longer. Close with God's present offers of mercy, and the present enjoyment and eternal blessedness of saving grace shall be yours. W. G. B.

"HOW SHORT is human life! the very breath
Which frames my words accelerates my death."

A CRISIS IN THE WORLD'S HISTORY, A CRISIS IN YOURS.

ONE of the wise ones of the earth, recently writing on the world's financial affairs, referred to what he called "*a world-shaking crisis*," and truly such a crisis is coming. What significant words! But they will carry the mind of the thoughtful believer far beyond the idea of a temporary paralysis in money matters. If all the millionaires on earth were to become bankrupt to-morrow it would not greatly affect heaven, if at all. But a crisis is rapidly and inevitably approaching which will do so. In one way or another, this momentous crisis is often referred to in Scripture.

The prophet Isaiah predicts such a time in these words—"The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of man shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (Isa. II. 17, 19).

The apostle Paul, in Hebrews XII. 25-30, also draws attention to this "world-shaking crisis," but speaks at the same time of "a kingdom which cannot be moved"; and in the same epistle of a "promise," confirmed by oath, that cannot be shaken. Who would not trust the hand that will shake everything that can be shaken, when we know that it is the hand of Him Who has already declared His wondrous love—a love that never has been shaken and never will?

The apostle John, in the Book of Revelation, enters into more minute detail as to what this "world-shaking crisis" will bring about. In chapter VI., having first mentioned a "great earthquake," he uses the symbol of a fig tree casting her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind. The inhabitants of the earth—the great, the rich, the military, the mighty, the bond and the free, and even kings—are spoken of as sharing one common dread, the face of Him Who sits upon the throne, and "the wrath of the Lamb." They pray, but not to God. What a contrast to the countless thousands who once sang on earth with unspeakable comfort and assurance—

"Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life be passed."

But those whom John describes have no such song upon their lips, no such comfort in their hearts. They have no confidence in "the Lamb" that died for sinners, though He never cast out the vilest one that came to Him. To the mountains and rocks they cry, but not to Him, "Hide us! Hide us!"

Then chapter VIII. continues this solemn picture. Just before the "seventh seal" is opened, so serious a stage is reached in the prophetic crisis that we read, "*There was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour*" (v. 1). How solemnly significant!

But we have a brighter story to tell. True, it speaks of power, but of power put forth for man's blessing.

When Jesus was laid in the grave, everything

hung upon His resurrection. The unbelieving leaders of the people took the greatest care to keep His body within that sealed sepulchre. But more than a thousand years before that God had inspired one of His servants to record what He thought of their wicked determination. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision" (Ps. II. 4). The "earthquake" betokens God's mighty intervention; the keepers become as dead men, and one of His own ministers of power is specially sent from heaven to roll away the stone, to make it manifest to all beholders that He Who had tasted death—our Lord Jesus, that "Great Shepherd of the sheep"—had been brought again from the dead, "through the blood of the everlasting covenant." He Who was delivered for our offences had been raised again for our justification. The "God of power" had put forth His exceeding might in raising the Adorable Substitute. Peace may now be ours. The mighty power of God is openly declared to be on man's side.

But there is more to tell. Not only was God's power put forth in resurrection that repentance and forgiveness might be preached to His revolted creature man, but another marvellous event followed. The Holy Ghost came down to "endue with power from on high" those who preach the glad tidings, and to bring the message in power to the hearts of those that needed it (compare Luke XXIV. 49; 1 Thess. I. 5). It is interesting to notice, too, the contrast between the "mighty wind" that betokened the energy of conquering judgment on the earth (Rev. VI. 13), and the "rushing mighty wind" that betokened

the energy of triumphant grace on the earth, when, at Pentecost, the "Spirit of grace" had come down to dwell (Acts II. 2).

Then to another thing would we draw the reader's attention. Both at the sepulchre and in the gaol of Philippi (Acts XVI. 26) we have an earthquake recorded. At one, as we have noticed, the keepers became as dead men. At the other, fearing the consequence of allowing the prisoners to escape, the keeper would have killed himself had not mercy intervened. In the former, when their terror was over, they were prepared to tell lies for money. In the latter, grace had its triumph; the keeper was converted. God's mighty power over material things shook the foundations of the prison and the fetters from the prisoners. His gracious power shook the hardened gaoler out of his sinful indifference, and caused him to cry with trembling, "What must I do to be saved?" Years before that, the same gracious power had reached one of those very prisoners—then a proud, intolerant Pharisee—and had brought him to the ground as a subdued and trembling suppliant, crying, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

In different ways (perhaps not two exactly alike) He has brought about, through His own gracious intervention, a *soul-saving crisis* into the histories of tens of thousands of sinners. He chooses His own time and His own methods, and who shall say Him nay? We select one striking example of His unique way of doing things.

God's distinct interference for the awakening of *Admiral Judson*, early in the last century, was as unexpected as the earthquake that brought the Philippian gaoler out of his bed.

Before the age of twenty he had imbibed sceptical notions from a college companion, E——, whom he considered his dearest friend. Before departing for a holiday that year (a horse-back tour), he disclosed to his Christian father his infidel sentiments. After all the care bestowed upon his early training, the news came upon his parents like a stunning blow, turning the fond hope of twenty years into bitterness and anguish.

The father's prayer in the family circle that morning, the look of deep trouble on his face, and the silent farewell tears of his mother fastened themselves in his heart and went with him on his purposed wanderings.

Resolutely he proceeded, but the unexpected "soul-crisis," unknown to any but the blessed God, was near at hand. Calling at his uncle's, he met a young clergyman, who, finding he was not a Christian, gently and tenderly urged upon him the importance of eternal things. This little talk greatly affected him.

Considerably softened, he pursued his journey that day, halting for the night at a country inn. Showing him his room, the landlord apologized for placing him next door to one who appeared to be dying. Young Judson assumed an air of supreme indifference as to sleeping close by, though expressing pity for the sufferer. But in the silence and darkness of his solitary chamber his bravery entirely left him. He could not sleep. Sounds came from the sick room which carried their own reflections. But we had better quote the words of his biographer: "Was the dying man, Judson wondered, prepared for the change which awaited him? He blushed as he felt the prejudices of

childhood again creeping over him. Prepared! What preparation was needed for an eternal sleep? But still the question would return. Into what scene is his spirit about to pass? The landlord had spoken to him of a *young* man. Was he, like the faithful friend whose warnings of yesterday were yet fresh in his mind, a Christian; or, like himself, a sceptic, the source of unutterable sorrow and anxiety to pious parents? What were the feelings of the dying youth in this testing hour? What would be his own in a like situation? Suppose he were now stretched on the bed of death, could *he* look with philosophic calmness towards the final moment, sure that the next instant his soul, with all its capacities for joy and sorrow, would have gone out like an extinguished taper? Ah! there was a shuddering in that soul which prophesied of a *future*, a future of conscious bliss or woe, a future of righteous retribution.

Through the whole night his spirit was tossed upon a restless sea of disquietude and doubt. Daylight proved a much more effective ally of reason. The young philosopher sprang up, relieved, reassured. On leaving his room he went immediately to the landlord, with kind inquiries after the sick man.

‘He is dead!’ was the reply.

‘Dead!’

‘Yes, he is gone; poor fellow; the doctor thought he could not survive the night.’

‘Do you know his name?’

‘Oh, yes; he was from Providence College—a fine fellow; his name was E——.’ (Judson’s infidel bosom friend.)

Where were reasoning and philosophy now?

These few words had struck away their very foundations. Judson made his way back to his own room, where he spent several hours in a state of wretchedness, bordering on stupefaction. The words 'Dead! Lost! Lost!' rang continually in his ears. He needed no argument to convince him that the doctrine in which he had trusted was a lie. Every instinct of his awakened soul bore witness that, after death, there is a dread *beyond* into which his miserable friend had entered, and on whose slippery brink he himself stood, just ready to follow."

Further on his journey he could not go. Mounting his horse, humbled and broken-hearted, crushed under a sense of guilt, he made for home. The "crisis" had been reached—a crisis that moved heaven itself, not to "silence" but to *rejoicings*. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

Was there ever such joy over *you*, my reader? If not, may the crisis come to-day!

GEO. C.

"RECONCILIATION."

"**R**ECONCILIATION is the bringing back into the enjoyment of Divine favour those who had lost it. It is being brought back to the condition of right relationship with God. It is the standing of man in peace with God, according to the truth of God's character in virtue of redemption; man being brought back morally in a new nature, which by the Holy Ghost appreciates redemption in Christ and joys in God as well as has peace with Him" (Rom. v. 10, 11, margin).—*Extract*.

A LIVING LETTER.

2 COR. III. 3.

"**H**AVE you ever heard the gospel before?" asked an Englishman of a respectable Chinaman, whom he had not seen in his meeting-room before.

"No," he replied, "but *I have seen it*. I know a man who used to be the terror of his neighbourhood. If you gave him a hard word he would shout at you, and curse you for two days and nights without ceasing. He was as dangerous as a wild beast, and a bad opium smoker; but when the gospel of Christ took hold of him he became *wholly changed*. He is now gentle, moral, not soon angry, and has left off opium. Truly the gospel is good."

What the gospel evidenced in this man was brought about in those of whom the apostle could speak as now being "the epistle of Christ."

What had they previously been? Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners. "And such were some of you."

But the apostle adds, "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."

Now they are the living letter of Christ. The world is getting its knowledge of the blessed Saviour from what it sees of Him in the lives of believers. How solemn, then, if we are misrepresenting Him, and those around us are not getting a correct idea of the Lord, but live and die in ignorance and darkness!

What Paley's "Evidences" could not do in convincing scoffers and sceptics, would be done by the power of Christ as manifested in the lives of Christians, did we but understand what it is to be a living letter known and read of all men.

For nearly 2000 years the blessed Lord in glory (Who never wrote a letter on earth that we know of) has, by His Spirit in the hearts of believers, been writing one long living letter for this world to read. But when read in our lives, is it seen that we adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things?

Again I ask, do we *show* as well as tell what great things the Lord has done for us? (Mark v. 19; Luke VIII. 39).

How this is brought about is clearly seen in Titus II. 11. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared; *teaching* us that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." The grace that saves is the grace that *instructs*, in order that the letter might be free from blots and manifest to all. We are the living epistle of Christ.

In the scripture quoted (2 Cor. III. 3) the apostle declares the Corinthian saints were the epistle of Christ ministered by him, "written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." True spiritual ministry in the gospel is not merely communicating our thoughts to the hearers; it is not producing by "persuasive words of man's wisdom" a faith that stands "in the wisdom of men." It is the Spirit writing Christ on the heart. Hence the apostle adds, "Our sufficiency is of God" (2 Cor. III. 5).

Thus we have not only the *place* where Christ writes,—“*the heart of man*,” but Who it is that writes the letter—the Spirit of God. And when this blessed Person has got full and unhindered possession of the heart, then He writes “Christ” upon it. Christ is seen in us and coming out of us, producing the very ways and exemplifying the words of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The great purpose of this “letter” is publicity. Christ’s letter is not marked “Private.” It is to be “known and read of all men.”

My dear reader, could we but realize in a better way the depths of darkness from which He has delivered us and the height of the glory to which He is raising us, we should enter more fully into those words—

“Join all the glorious names
Of wisdom, love, and power,
That ever mortals knew,
That angels ever bore.
All are too mean to speak His worth,
Too mean to set our Saviour forth.”

Never was there a day like the present when we needed to speak His worth and show our Saviour forth. Let us seek to stir the heart that is all too prone to grow cold, and lukewarm, and silent. Think of His love: think of His grace. “Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor.”

George Herbert quaintly sings of it—

“Hast thou not heard that my Lord Jesus died?
Then let me tell thee a strange story.
The God of power, as He did ride
In His majestic robes of glory,
Resolved to ‘light, and so one day
He did descend, undressing all the way.”

Then he goes on to describe how He disposed of His royal apparel—

“The stars His tire of light and rings obtained,
The clouds His bow, the fire His spear,
The sky His azure mantle gained ;
And when they asked what He would wear,
He smiled and said, as He did go,
He had new clothes a-making here below.”

He would be seen in His saints.

Oh think of it again. He Who was the Man of sorrows, He Who knew no sin, was for us on the cross *made sin*, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. We may well exclaim, What a Saviour!

Reader, trust Him, love Him; then show and tell to all around what a blest Saviour you have found.

W. N.

The Christian's Place in the World.—The world could not understand Christ; but He knew the world thoroughly. He was ever mixing with everybody, but always *Himself*, and never the world; and we are by rights as much strangers in it as He was. Flesh and Satan and the world always go together; but He was ever drawing round Him everything that was of God, and judging all that was not. If you were a great man you would get a good place in an inn; if you were a little man you would get a little place; but He got *no place at all*. Have your souls got the thorough conviction that you have none either, and that all that you have to do is to *overcome*?

J. N. D.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

TWO MYSTERIOUS DISCOVERIES.

No. 1.

IT only seemed a commonplace occurrence, but there was a great deal in it. Several members of one family had been sent on urgent business and were returning. A general famine was prevailing in all the surrounding countries, and the pinch of want began to be sorely felt everywhere. In their own land corn could hardly be obtained for money. Hence, when tidings reached this family that, in a certain land, it was possible to purchase corn, they decided to travel thither and secure, if possible, at any cost what would meet their bodily necessities.

It was at a wayside inn, and on their homeward journey, that one of this little band of nine made the mysterious discovery which we now refer to.

Their minds had already been greatly disturbed by what had occurred during their short visit to that immense store. Something had happened many years before, not at all to their credit. Of this their consciences had been forcibly and unexpectedly reminded; and it must have been strange enough to *their* minds, that this reminder should have come through no less a person than the Chief Administrator of the vast abundance stored in the huge granaries. This great man seemed to have some good reason for questioning their integrity. In order to put their sincerity to the test, he had taken the unaccountable measure of detaining one of their number,

as a guarantee for their return with their youngest brother, of whom they had spoken.

They were thus going back to their aged father with *one less* than he would naturally expect. Ten went; only nine were returning. How would *he* feel about it? They might well ask themselves such a question, for they could not forget how a similar occurrence had, once before, affected him. In that case eleven had left home and only ten had come back. Indeed, they had themselves darkly referred to this missing one in speaking of their family affairs to the all too inquisitive "lord of the land."

It was while all this was fresh in their minds that the mysterious discovery we are considering was made. The following is an accurate account of the occurrence:—

"As one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money; for, behold, it was in his sack's mouth. And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, it is even in my sack! And their hearts failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?" (Gen. XLII. 27, 28).

There was not only an uncomfortable mystery in the incident itself, but it must have proved a fresh pang for their already uneasy consciences; for it could hardly fail to be a fresh reminder of the time when they had returned to their father not only with *one of their number missing*, but when money was in their possession, received from the foreign spice-merchants to whom they had *sold* the missing one (*twenty pieces of silver*).

There will be very few readers of these pages

who will not have been familiar with this story from the very earliest recollections. We refer to it now as an illustration of the marvellous grace of God in Christ to sinners, whose offences are all better known to the One they have sinned against than the sins of Joseph's brethren were known to him. Joseph did not know *all*. God did. The God that "found out" their iniquity has found out ours. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do" (Heb. iv. 13).

Another has well said that *grace* supposes all the sin and evil to be in us, and all the goodness in Him. The sin is put away at the cost of the very One against Whom it was committed. As John Newton, speaking of the death of Jesus for himself, wrote :—

"Thus, whilst this death my sin displays
In all its blackest hue,
Such is the mystery of grace,
It seals my pardon too."

In the history of Joseph we get a rich example of this precious grace. It is here that we get the first intimation in the types of Scripture that a *Man* would be the centre of attraction for the famine-stricken children of men everywhere, with resources not only sufficient to satisfy the hungry for a few years, but to fill *everything* for eternal ages (Eph. iv. 8-10).

As we know, Joseph was the greatly beloved son of his father, and that with the expression of this peculiar affection his brethren had no sympathy. They hated him and sold him into the hands of the Gentiles. So with the Greater than Joseph—greater in every way. In humilia-

tion and suffering He went down immeasurably lower, but His exaltation was incomparably higher. Then His influence is infinitely wider; while, as to His personal worth, He has no equal. He is peerless. In Him perfection has found its full height. Eternally and unchangeably blessed is He! All praise to His adorable Name.

Joseph's brethren, as a family, were amongst the last to find out his place of exaltation and supreme authority; and so it will be with the brethren of Jesus according to the flesh. But when, at the end, they will be brought to repentance, there will be nothing but grace for them. So here. What stint was there in the kindness shown to these brethren of Joseph? None whatever. It was as though he had said: "I will not recompense you for your hatred; and you shall not recompense me for your blessing. What you have sown in undeserved hatred, you shall reap in unmerited kindness, and my heart shall rejoice to have it so. You put me into the pit; and sat down to your meal without me! But I will not put *you* into the dungeon; you shall eat and drink with me and share the best that can be put upon my table." This was grace indeed. How refreshing!

But it was not all. If the covered-up story of their sin was a mystery to their sorrowing father, the witness of Joseph's grace in the money found in his brothers' sacks might well be a mystery to them until it was solved by the knowledge of the love which he bore them. When they had *their* opportunity to show their hatred, they made instant use of it. But the very first opportunity Joseph had of showing his care for them, moved with tender compassion, he made good use of it.

All this is only a shadow of the great and

blessed realities of the Gospel. Jesus, Beloved Son of the Father, made Lord and Christ, is proclaimed to all men everywhere as a present and ever-accessible Saviour—*yours*, reader, if you desire Him. The kindness and grace of Joseph is but a type of Him of Whom the Apostle wrote : “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).

Do you not need the kindness of such a Friend, dear reader? Have you *never* yet felt the pinch of soul-famine? Is not this why you find no attraction in such a Saviour?

The first mention of forgiveness in Scripture is the forgiveness of Joseph for his brethren's sin. Have *you* no buried secrets for which you need God's forgiveness? Are you not aware that those secrets, sooner or later, *must* be faced in the searching light of His holy presence? It is so. They must either be freely forgiven in grace, through the precious blood of Jesus, or be remembered against you in judgment. All may *now* be blotted out; all frankly forgiven. *Then* “God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil” (Eccles. XII. 14).

Remember the words of one who knew the impossibility of standing clear of sin's consequences if he came into judgment, and the blessedness of forgiveness also. “Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified” (Ps. CXLIII. 2).

If you miss God's forgiveness and come into judgment, you will heartily wish you had never come into the world at all. Indeed, far, far better

that you had *not* been born than meet the eternal consequences of wilfully disregarding the gracious call of such a Saviour as Jesus is. But why should such a calamity overtake you? Jesus still says, *Come*. What a discovery will be yours if you wake up at last just *too late* for God's forgiveness! Bear in mind, you will have all eternity to brood over the madness of it! But again we remind you, Jesus still bids you come.

GEO. C.

SIN NOT IMPUTED: HOW CAN IT BE?

SOME years ago, when visiting — Union, I read in one of the wards the 32nd Psalm. After reading it through, I called the attention of the inmates to the first two verses as showing who were truly blessed; not those who have never sinned, as natural reason would suggest, but those whose sins are forgiven. They listened attentively to what I said, and agreed that such a declaration was most encouraging to guilty sinners. Coming to the second verse, I read over again the words, "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." I then asked them this question: Can you tell me how God can consistently impute no sin to those who have sinned? You admit that all have sinned, and that God cannot excuse sin, or overlook it in the least, for He has said, "I will by no means clear the guilty." Yet there are those to whom He does not reckon sin! How can it be?

They opened their eyes in astonishment, and knew not what to say; clearly the question had never struck them before. Proceeding, I said, Let me show you, from the 53rd of Isaiah,

how that question is answered. The sixth verse will be sufficient: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Here is the explanation: Jesus Christ, in love, came into the sinner's place; God laid, or made to meet, on Him all our iniquities; they were transferred from the guilty to the sinless One, that He might bear the punishment they deserved, and put them away by the sacrifice of Himself. In the New Testament we read the same language: "He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Because of this, God does not reckon sin to those who trust in Jesus; their sin has already been reckoned to Him, and once and for ever put away by Him. Hence the believer in Jesus stands clear, free from all condemnation, and accepted by the holy God. Would you have the blessedness spoken of in this verse, you can only have it by accepting as your substitute the Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for your sins. Our Lord Himself says, "He that believeth in Me is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already." See, therefore, how your present and eternal happiness depends upon your relation to Christ. Accept Him and sin will no longer be imputed to you; you will know the blessedness of peace with God. But if you reject Him, you are condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on you. Reader, have you seriously thought of this matter? Have you accepted Jesus as your Saviour? Remember, "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12).

O. T.

“HOW CAN I GET RID OF MY SINS?”

IT was Christmas morning. The great peal of bells from St. Isaac's Cathedral, St. Petersburg, rang out their chimes. The falling snow had covered everything outside with a mantle of white, and there was an exhilarating freshness in the air. The keen frost had converted the great River Neva into one expansive bridge that stretched from shore to shore. On its icy bosom a continual stream of traffic poured in all directions. Even steel rails were laid upon the ice for an electric car.

Comfortably seated in a sleigh, we found ourselves that morning gliding over the ice and snow to the other side of the river, a distance of nearly a mile. We were not out on what the world would call a pleasure trip, yet there was real pleasure in it—the exceeding great pleasure of telling the story of a Saviour's dying love to those poor, downtrodden Russians, who were eager to drink in the blessed message of life.

After a four-mile drive we arrived at our destination on the outskirts of the city. It was no magnificent building where the message was to be told, but in a simple yet good-sized work-room, which was crowded with eager faces waiting to hear the old, old story. To most of them it seemed altogether new. A hymn heartily sung commenced the meeting. Unlike our English Gospel meetings, some of the congregation, instead of the preacher, opened with prayer. That morning the opening prayer arose from the lips of a young man of about nineteen summers. Oh, how he prayed! It ran something like this,—

"O God, I am burdened. Month after month I have longed to be free of my load. When shall I be saved? I have come here once again to get peace for my troubled heart. Oh, God, I must have it this morning. I cannot live longer unless I get peace for my soul." Tears streamed down his face. Strong men wept as he pleaded, and "Amen, Amen" resounded from one end of the room to the other.

Our simple story was easily told that morning, for it is easy to preach under such conditions. Luke VII. and the history of that poor, sinful outcast who sobbed her heart out at the feet of Jesus, her deep need, and His exceeding great love, were subjects that occupied our attention. His words, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," fell with heavenly charm on her poor, sin-distressed heart. She believed them, and unquestioningly thanked Him and went on her way rejoicing in the Saviour.

Our meeting closed, and we found ourselves seated by the side of this same young man. With tears coursing down his face he said, "*Oh, how can I get rid of my sins?*" We pointed him to Jesus, and Jesus only; to His precious blood in all its solitary dignity and atoning worth. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John I. 7). Do you believe He died for you? we asked. "Yes," was his reply. Do you believe the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin? "Yes," was his answer. What does it cleanse us from? "All sin," he replied. Whom does it cleanse? "Those that believe," he said. When does it cleanse us? "The moment we believe." Quite right. Now, we asked, do you believe He died for *you*? "Yes,"

he answered. When? "Now." What, then, does the blood of Jesus Christ cleanse *you* from? "All sin," he answered. How many? "*All* sin." When? "Now." Are you sure? "Yes." What makes you sure? "Why, Jesus says it in His Word." A beam of joy lighted up his hitherto sad face. A simple expression of gratitude flowed from his lips. "Thank God," he said, and off he bounded to carry the glad tidings to his home.

The great transaction was done. A seeking sinner and a seeking Saviour had met. One to confess his guilt, the other in sovereign mercy to say, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgression for My own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Isaiah XLIII. 25). Blessed words!

Now, dear reader, may I put this question to you: How does the momentous question of your sins affect *you*? Does it hang as a great burden on your heart as it did with my young Russian friend? Every throb of your beating pulse bears you nearer and nearer to eternity. You must meet God, and this question, which hitherto you may have sought to evade, will be thrust upon you. The smallest speck of sin will bar your entrance to the holy presence of God. Cleansed you must be, if you would see "the King in His beauty." No personal merit will gain you admittance. No pleading of past good intentions or pious deeds will suffice to effect an entrance. You must be cleansed, undefiled, and fitted to be there. What can give you that fitness? Nothing but the blood, the precious blood of Christ. By it we are *forgiven* (Col. I. 14), *cleansed* (1 John I. 7), *justified* (Rom. v. 9), *made*

nigh (Eph. II. 13), *robes made white* (Rev. VII. 14). By it heaven will be peopled with a blood-bought host, who shall eternally praise the Lamb once slain. Will you be there to join in that heavenly *Te Deum*? Will your songs of praise mingle in the holy chorus? Then you must be washed, cleansed, and sanctified. Take, then, my friend, your true and befitting place at the feet of Christ. Own your guilt and sin. Confess it to Him. Tell it all out in His ear. None knows you so well as He; no one could deal with you so kindly as He: if you confess your sin [mark! not pray for forgiveness, but confess your sin], He is faithful and just to forgive you, and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness (1 John I. 9). You will then hear Him say, "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins. Return unto Me, for I have redeemed thee" (Isaiah XLIV. 22). May this blessedness be yours is my earnest prayer. J. H. L.

"What can wash away my stains?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
 So that not one spot remains?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus."

SANCTIFICATION.

O FILL me, Saviour, with *Thy* deep compassion
 For those *Thou* lovest, even unto death;
 To spread *Thy* fame inspire a living passion,
 And use me wholly to my latest breath!

Suffice the past for selfish thought and pleasure,
 To Thee, my Lord, henceforth alone I'd live.
 All this world's glories by *Thy* death I'd measure
 But, oh, an echo of *Thy love* I'd give.—W. L.

“DON'T FORGET THE GOD ABOVE.”

THE midnight train was about to leave the station to catch the steamer early the following morning, bound for the Canadian shores. Many loved ones had gathered round and were standing upon the platform to bid farewell to their friends and relations. Among them was a fond mother taking her last leave of her boy. The expression upon her face told its own tale, as with these parting words she left him, “Don’t forget the God above.” The thought passed through my mind, that no doubt she had trained him in the ways of God, and was anxious lest, amid his new companions and surroundings in another land, he might, perchance, forget the One Whom she had trained him to fear.

As the train moved slowly out of the station, and with the words still fresh in my memory, I said:

“You have a Bible there?”

“Yes,” said he, “it was a present from my Sunday-school teacher as a keepsake.”

“Well, I hope you will read it,” I said, “and that this and your mother’s words will lead you to know and confess Him Who died your precious soul to win.”

A few days elapsed and the vessel reached her destination, and we parted.

It may be possible, my reader, as you read these lines, that *you* need to be reminded of Him Who is above, Who takes account of things as they really are, and to Whom you are an object of interest. You may have been prosperous in life, and even been like the man of whom it is written, “He fared sumptuously every day.”

Everything may have gone so well with you that you prefer to have no interruption in your plans by the intrusion of eternal things. You have rocked yourself in the cradle of ease and indifference; all, that you might not entertain God in your thoughts. Be frank and honest with yourself. Is it not so? You must admit it is. But is it not written, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God"?

Is this not the truth? I trust, my friend, you may not open your eyes to the reality of it when it is too late. Lend your ear to the voice of God. Bow your heart to Christ. Confess the name of Him Who stooped in matchless love and grace to come near to you, in order that you might make His acquaintance and live to serve Him Who is worthy of it. Remember His words to Jerusalem, "Now in this thy day." Do not let the pleasures of a passing scene rob you of an eternity of bliss. Men fear death. They try hard to ward it off, but in vain. It is a terrible intrusion upon the most pleasing circumstance as well as the most untoward.

Meet God you must! You cannot evade His scrutiny. These are days of callous indifference, and, with the majority, it is as with Gallio, who "cared for none of those things." But listen. God has fixed a day when all shall bow the knee, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. Oh, that you might own His authority now. But whether you do or not, we can, upon the authority of Scripture, tell you "that God hath made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ."

There are myriads to-day who can testify to the worthiness of the exalted Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, that you also may help to swell the ranks

of such witnesses. The blessed God waits in patience to welcome you. The everlasting doors have been flung open. The King of glory has gone in, and been received with joyful acclamation. Thrice blessed Saviour! Thou art worthy to be trusted, loved, and adored! Soon eternal praises will begin, and Jesus will be delighting over all the once lost wanderers brought home to God.

WILL YOU BE THERE? E. J. E.

EVERLASTING LOVE.

“Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”—JER. XXXI. 3.

WE love Him, *because* He loved us
 Long before we loved Him;
 Loved us with a love eternal,
 Love that never could grow dim.

Love that found its full expression
 When He hung upon the tree;
 When He cried to God in anguish,
 “Why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

Love that loved when man’s deep hatred
 Did the worst that could be done;
 When the hordes of hell surrounded
 God’s eternal, only Son.

Love that loved us though we wandered
 Far upon the downward track;
 Love that ne’er could be contented
 Till *He* found and brought us back.

Yes, He loved with love eternal,
 Vast, by man unmeasured yet;
 And the wondrous love He showed us
 Did our love to Him beget.

We love Him, for He first loved us;
 May our love still deeper grow;
 May the Holy Spirit present
 Teach us more of Christ’s to know.

J. C. J.

SECOND LETTER TO A YOUNG
CHRISTIAN.

IN answer to yours, I send you a further word on "abiding in Christ." First of all, it is a great thing to see that "in Christ" is where *God has put* every believer in Him. Secondly, I think you put, so to speak, the cart before the horse in your mind; that is, you take 1 John III. 9 as if it were written, Whosoever does not practise sin abides in Him, rather than as *it is* written. Abiding where grace has put us is the way not to sin. It is clear that Christ and sin cannot go together; grace has led us to the precious Saviour; there we are in safeguard, and learn to abandon our own will and way through having Him as the spring of our life.

But there is a third thing which we have to take into account, namely that the Spirit of God does not speak to us in any other way than as truth really *is*—He *could not* lower it to *our* experience. We may say *we ought* to be this or that, and then have to admit that we are not, but truth must abide what *it is*, and Christ is the truth, and hence we have before us that which is Divinely perfect. We must not confuse between abiding in Christ, which is our settled place, and growing up into Christ. A child is a child abiding in its father's love and care as its own place, though it may grow in the apprehension of its privilege.

Of course, if we were always *consciously* abiding in our privileged place, not sinning would *practically* characterize us, and this is what is before you. But *God makes it* to be characteristic of a

Christian, though it is evident from chap. II. that He has made provision for us in the advocacy of Jesus Christ the Righteous if we do sin. John writes to us about what has come to light in God and in Christ, so *that we should not sin*, and though it is true, as James says, that "in many things we all offend," yet we are to walk in the light that shines in Jesus, and there is healing in those beams, though they will show us every inconsistency—everything not suited to Christ.

This light of God shows us His estimate of the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son. It cleanses from every thing that has the nature and character of "sin." Then, if we have the sense of how clean the blood of Jesus has made us in God's sight, we are careful not to get spotted. We need to be watchful and careful, remembering that our responsibility as well as our privilege is to keep close to the trusted side of Jesus.

The advocacy of the Lord is to the end that we should be kept in the sense of where grace has put us. When the Lord foretold Peter of his *fall*, He did not pray for him that he should not be sifted, but that *his faith* (in Christ and in His grace) should not fail. Do not be discouraged at what you find in yourself. It was just because you *are* what you *are* that Christ died for you and intercedes for you. His intercession it is which keeps us "close to His trusted side" in the sense of His great salvation. How often should we leave Him but for that, though *we* may little have had the consciousness of His intercession.

Remember God is the God of all grace.

T. H. R.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

A HELL THERE IS. WHAT GOD IS DOING
TO PREVENT YOUR GOING THERE.

Read Job xxxiii. 14-30.

*"GOD speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth
it not.*

*In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep
sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the
bed;*

*Then He openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their
instruction,*

*That He may withdraw man from his purpose,
and hide pride from man.*

*He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life
from perishing by the sword.*

*He is chastened also with pain upon his bed,
and the multitude of his bones with strong pain:*

*So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul
dainty meat.*

*His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen;
and his bones that were not seen stick out.*

*Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and
his life to the destroyers.*

*If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter,
one among a thousand, to show unto man his
uprightness:*

*Then He is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver
him from going down to the pit: I have found a
ransom.*

His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth:

He shall pray unto God, and He will be favourable unto him: and he shall see His face with joy: for He will render unto man his righteousness.

He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not;

He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.

Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man,

To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living."

Friend, there is a pit; God Himself says so, and speaks of the reality of going down into it. It is easier to go down hill than up, is it not? You may think that it is difficult to go to hell, but unless you are really seeking salvation, you have only to go on doing as you do now—neither more nor less—and you will presently land yourself there. "Oh," you say, "your creed is old-fashioned, and I don't accept it. For that matter, I never receive what I can't prove or what I can't understand."

Stop a minute. Do you understand all that you see around you? Can you explain matters which go on before your eyes every day? Why, in that field near you are a pig, a goose, a sheep, and a cow, and they are all alike eating grass. But in one case the food goes to make bristles, in another feathers, in another wool, and in another hair. Can you comprehend and explain the difference of operation? There are many matters which you and I cannot understand: and if we could we should either raise ourselves to an

equality with God, or drag God down to our level.

There is a pit, and God warns you of it and of your danger of falling into it. But He not only warns you: He takes infinite pains to prevent your descent thither. If He speaks plainly of the pit, He speaks with equal clearness of the way which He has provided for escape from destruction. God speaks once, yea twice. Have you heard His voice? He spoke to you in that accident, that illness, that bereavement, that loss; His voice rang out at the grave-side. He spoke to you again in the little book put into your hands by a well-wisher. Your mother's prayers, your father's entreaties, your sister's example were God's voice, sounding not once or twice, but many times, in your ears. Did you heed the message? Do you say that you were too much engaged—that business is exacting, that your daily life is very full, and that from early morn to dewy eve your head, hands, feet, and mind are fully occupied? And that is true. But note the goodness of God. He seeks and finds an opportunity when you loudly assert that you have none. He never slumbers nor sleeps, and in His infinite mercy He speaks to men, as we have just read in the Book of Job, "in a dream, in the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men." If the day is occupied, He often avails Himself of the night; and sometimes in those watches of the night there comes to us a whisper of some such words as these: "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."

Then, further, in this wonderful Book of Job, we read that God "keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword."

Have you ever been in a railway accident, ever been near death, by drowning, or by fire, ever just escaped being run over by a horse, ever fallen from a tree, or taken poison by mistake? If you had died, under any of those circumstances, where would you now be? "I don't know," you say. But do you not know? The pit would have been your fate—the pit from which Divine love preserved you—and, hitherto, you have never thanked God, or recognized His goodness, in saving you. The sword is kept back; we hear strange stories of hair-breadth escapes from sword or bullet, but do we remember that it is the goodness of God which has preserved us from the imminent danger of going down into the pit? Oh, that you might learn the wonderful truth, that you, individually, are dear to the heart of God! Perhaps you have never spent five minutes in seeking to know God; perhaps the very thought of God is repugnant to you; and yet to that God you are an object of love and interest.

Elihu, in the passage which we are considering in the Book of Job, mentions another way by which God approaches men, and that is the way of *sickness*. Man "is chastened also with pain upon his bed." Sometimes, when in health, you have no time for thoughts of God. An illness comes to you, and death seems very near. It may be that the thought of eternity looms large before your mind. Weakness is great; dislike of food becomes pronounced; "the life abhorreth bread, and the soul dainty meat," and you cry, when some savoury dish is brought you, "Take it away; I cannot even look at it." Your "soul draweth near unto the grave, and your life to the

destroyers." This is the moment of God's opportunity; and there appears upon the scene a messenger, an interpreter from God, a servant with a Divinely given message. The power of that message—revealing man's lost and ruined condition—should lead you to turn, in faith, to God, Who—His own preliminary work being accomplished—has now the joy (Luke xv.) of giving the command, "Deliver him from going down to the pit; *I have found a ransom.*" Oh, the joy to the great heart of God, but oh, the cost of the ransom! Calvary was the cost; and we read (Matthew xx. 28) that the "Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and *to give His life a ransom for many.*" He gave His life for me, a worthless, helpless sinner, without one spark of affection for Him, without one desire after Him, without a thought, unless it were a thought of hatred, about Him. And I should have been as ready as another—had I been present, at Calvary—to drive the cruel nails into His loving hands, and to thrust the spear into His side. Oh, wonder of grace, He loved *me*. It was not a general, but a personal love. The Christ of God loved me and gave Himself a ransom for me. And of me, God can justly say, "Deliver him." Think of the mighty co-operation of the Three Persons in the Holy Trinity. The Father sent the Son; the Son came to do the Father's will, and to finish His work upon the Cross; and the Holy Ghost brings triumphant acknowledgment of the delight of the Father's heart in that accomplished work. All depends, not on *my* appreciation of the work, but on God's. The words are: "*I have found a ransom.*" God has been glorified. Redemption

has been accomplished. Death, as God's judgment on the sinner, has been abolished and the ransom is accepted.

Now, the believer is truly a child of God, a new-born babe in Christ. "He shall pray unto God"—so we read in our chapter from the Book of Job—"and He will be favourable unto him." In the new translation of the Bible, we find in verse 27 of the chapter, "He singeth before men." Yes, the miserable are made happy now; the weak are strong; the busy find time to sing, and that *before men*. Of what does the believer sing? Of mercy and truth, and of God's grace to him. There is no hiding anything now; there is no fear of men's opinions, approval, or scorn. "I have sinned," the man confesses (Job XXXIII. 27), "and perverted that which was right, and *it profited me not*." Has sin brought you profit? Has it made you happy? Has no bitterness followed its indulgence? Or has sin laid up a store of trouble for the future? Are not God's books posted up to date? And is there a credit or a debit account for you in those books?

Listen further to the words which follow in our portion of Holy Scripture. Here we have a worthy theme for song. "He has redeemed my soul from going down to the pit," the Christian sings, "and my life shall behold the light."

There is no uncertainty here, no waiting, or hoping, or wishing, but there is the simple fact, known and declared, of accomplished redemption. The living Christ—not a religion, or a system, but a personal Saviour—is appropriated by faith; and in the light of the revelation of that Christ of God, the happy soul now lives. Think the matter over and decide for yourself. Think of

the care which the Father has taken of you; think of the means through which He has spoken to you; think of the vast, unspeakable love which provided a way of salvation for you; and may a sense of all that He has done and is doing for you bind your heart, in chains which love only can forge, to the heart of Him Who at tremendous cost delivered you from the pit, and found a ransom for you. E. C.—P.

SATAN'S PARADISE FOR MAN.

“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 the honourable and happy confederacy.

Nothing will withstand all this but ‘the love of the truth’; nothing but faith in that Word which gathers a sinner to Jesus and His blood, and the hopes of a poor world-wearied believer to Jesus and His kingdom. 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’” (2 Thess. II. 10).

J. G. B.

A WEIGHTY QUESTION.

"What think ye of Christ?"

WHILST God by His Spirit, through many and varied instruments, is causing the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ to shine into men's hearts, Satan is seeking to blind their minds and thus keep them in darkness. One of the enemy's devices is the subtle doctrine of Unitarianism. Some servants of the Lord had been addressing a small crowd of listeners on the quay of a fishing town, nearly all of whom were evidently seafaring men. The speakers departed, but the hearers still lingered, when a well-dressed man stepped forward and requested to be heard.

He also spoke of Jesus, but not as the little band of Christian workers had done, or as He is presented to faith in the Scriptures,—“The only begotten Son, Which is in the bosom of the Father.”

As a good man, an example for men, he spoke of Him, but of His eternal glory as Son of God, yea, God Himself, not a word.

Closing his discourse, the stranger intimated his readiness to answer any questions his audience wished to put.

Although it was not difficult to see that his remarks were far from being appreciated by the simple-minded hearers, no one came forward, and the crowd was beginning to disperse, when an old fisherman, strongly built and grey-bearded, laid his hand on the stranger's shoulder, saying, “Sir, may I ask you a question?”

"Certainly. What is it?"

Slowly the old man repeated those searching words uttered in the Temple—

"What think ye of Christ?"

"Oh," was the reply, "he was a very good man."

The old man fixed his eyes on the speaker's face and solemnly said—

"Sir, remember He is *the Son of God*."

Making no reply, the stranger walked away, while the little crowd gathered around our old friend, inquiring what had passed.

For many years George K—— had trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ as His Saviour and believed on Him as the Son of God, and, though unlettered in this world's learning, God's Spirit had made Christ's love a very real thing in his heart.

Whether the arrow of God's Word reached the Unitarian's conscience the Day will reveal; but, dear reader, *your* salvation depends on the answer your heart and mouth give to the old fisherman's inquiry and text—

"What think ye of Christ?"

W. H. B.

Extract.—"There were evil spirits, who sought to creep in among the Christians, and to speak or act, pretending to be the Spirit of God, and thus to confound everything. Christians of the present day hardly believe in such efforts of the enemy as these. Spiritual manifestations are, no doubt, less striking now than at the time of which the apostle speaks; but the enemy adapts his means of deception to the circumstances in which man and the work of God are found." J. N. D.

TWO MYSTERIOUS DISCOVERIES.

No. 1—continued.

WHEN the second journey to "the land of plenty" was decided on, the first mystery was still unsolved. Indeed, their wonder had considerably increased since that memorable halt at the wayside inn, for on reaching home, "Behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack"! Had the money been returned and the sacks sent back empty, it would have been no matter for either fear or wonder. "NOTHING FOR NOTHING" is the motto for this world's markets, well understood if not plainly expressed everywhere. But that every man's sack should be filled when corn was at famine price, and the money found there also, was past comprehension.

No surprise, then, that "When they and their father saw the bundles of money they were afraid"! (Gen. XLII. 35). What could it possibly mean? It was so utterly unlike what they could reasonably expect, that the discovery filled them with suspicion and dismay. It was too wonderful to be real; too good to be true; and certainly too much for nothing! The very endeavour to account for it brought them to their wit's end completely. Why? They had no idea of the real feelings of "the lord of the land" towards them. Here was the true secret.

It is ever so with sinful men until they learn something of "the grace of God in truth." This grace asks man for nothing more than a frank confession of his guilt, and holds out nothing less than an eternity of overflowing blessing.

The God Who commands man's repentance is the God Who commends His own love, and communicates His gracious desires for man's happiness (Rom. v. 8; Acts xvii. 30). "I know the thoughts that I think towards you," saith the Lord, "thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end" (Jer. xxix. 11). God had thoughts of *good* for the very creature of whom He had to say, "*Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually.*" How marvellous!

How this Divine goodness was touchingly portrayed in Joseph! "Ye thought *evil* against me: but God meant it unto *good*." And it is added by the Spirit of God, "He comforted them, and spake kindly unto them" (Gen. L. 20, 21).

As already noted, the sons of Jacob started on their second journey to Egypt with this mystery still unsolved, and even more firmly than ever was it fastened on their minds. Indeed, it was the chief topic of the whole family before starting. To prove the integrity of the intending purchasers and make a good impression on "the man," the father was as anxious as the sons. Hear old Israel's advice:—

"Take the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices and myrrh, nuts and almonds. And take double money in your hand, and the money that was brought again in your hand: *per-adventure it was an oversight*" (Gen. xliii. 11, 12).

It was not the first time Jacob had said something similar. When compelled to meet his offended brother, Esau, he had said, "I will ap-

pease him with a present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me" (Gen. xxxii. 20). Is not this exactly how an awakened sinner, with uneasy conscience and pressing need, tries to put things right with God? He would fain satisfy God if he could, but all he has to give does not even satisfy himself. A little balm, and a little honey and sweet spicery are all very well in their place, but they cannot take the place of *bread*. If they could, why go down such a distance to buy corn?

A few nice promises of better behaviour for the future, and redoubled efforts to make amends for the past, do not settle the terrible sin question in God's sight, and there is a dreadful famine in the awakened soul till that is settled.

But God has found satisfaction for Himself, and found it in Man, not in fallen man and his best endeavours, but in "the Man Christ Jesus," and the precious sacrifice He offered. Truly, what satisfies God may well satisfy a poor needy sinner, and it does satisfy him, as tens of thousands can testify joyfully.

On this ground, therefore, and *on no other*, can a sinner be accepted before God. But let the vilest on earth to-day only own his guilt and believe God's declared satisfaction in His raised and glorified Son, and he will be able to say, with the "chief of sinners": "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. viii. 33, 34). Blessed triumph this!

So in the lovely picture before us. Had they known it, the One Whom they most feared

was the very One Whose heart was yearning for them all the time, and He was prepared to make every provision for their present need free of cost, and to make intercession for them before the King into the bargain, so that "*the best of the land*" might be theirs. What encouragement for the vilest to come! Myriads have proved the welcome Jesus gives. Is the reader one of them? Why not? GEO. C.

"GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY."

A BRIEF MEDITATION ON LUKE II.

IF it be permitted to select one passage of Scripture as being especially beautiful where all comes from a Divine source, or to speak of a favourite passage of that which is all "given by inspiration of God," and the question were asked as to what portion of Scripture appeals most to the heart and in which greatest delight is found, it is probable that most Christians would turn instinctively to Luke II. Apart from the affecting character of the narrative, and the simple beauty of the language, the events recorded there are of such vast importance in connection with the dealings of God with mankind, and show in such unmistakable terms the disposition of God towards men, that they command the attention and wonder of all those who have any interest in such matters.

Truly a wonderful theme is opened in the chapter: no less than the entry of the Son of God into the world which His own hands had made. For it is God Himself Who comes to

visit and redeem His people. Little did the Roman Emperor think, when he sent out the autocratic decree that all the world should be taxed, that he was but an instrument in the hands of God to cause the Saviour-King to be born in the place which God's wondrous purpose had determined hundreds of years before. And so there takes place in the village of Bethlehem an event which causes every eye in heaven to be turned on this earth rapt in wonder and attention, for "Heaven's Beloved One" is down here amongst men as a blessed heavenly visitor.

There has probably been no moment in the history of this sin-stained world when there was less for God than when Christ was born. All the nations were sunk in the darkness of heathenism; God's chosen people were in hopeless subjugation to the pagan Emperor, and, while careful to maintain the outward observances of the Jewish ritual, were in reality little better than the heathen around them; four hundred years had passed since the death of Malachi, the last of the long line of prophets. It might well be said that all light that existed for God here was well-nigh extinguished. Not quite extinguished, we know, for there were a few faithful souls waiting for the consolation of Israel; but the light was only flickering in the hearts of a few.

But now is dawning the most blessed day that has ever been seen by man, the day of which the ancient prophets looking darkly into the future spoke in glowing words, the day of which David sang in the Psalms, the day which, long before, God revealed to the rejoicing eyes of the patriarch Abraham. For *Christ is born*. What

blessed words are those uttered by the angel to the shepherds, but true, thank God, for every creature under heaven who will receive it—"Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord"; words which, though so familiar to every ear, come ever with freshness and delight to the Christian's heart.

Well may we say, in the words of the Apostle Paul, "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. III. 16). The human mind is only amazed and perplexed at the wonder before it; the mystery is entirely beyond its grasp. And even the Christian, with his renewed mind, when he reflects on Who was there in the form of a babe, can only wonder and praise. For this Child, differing not in outward form from any other, was the God Who inhabits eternity, Whom heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain, before Whose face earth and heaven will flee away when He comes in judgment. And there was no room for Him in the inn, the first of many indications that there was no place for Him in the world which His hands had made, and that His pathway in this scene was to be one of suffering and rejection ended by Calvary's Cross.

Not the least touching part of the chapter is the testimony of Simeon and Anna. These two faithful Israelites, who had lived in obscurity so far as men were concerned, and were now nearing the end of life's journey, suddenly come into view and render a most glorious testimony to the blessed One Who lay there unrecognized and unnoticed by those around. How great the privilege for the aged Simeon, who all his life had been patiently awaiting the coming of the

Messiah, to be allowed to hold in his arms Him Who was not only the Messiah of His earthly people, but also the Saviour of the world! And like many another since, who has learned something of the blessedness of Christ, he is now ready to depart in peace, for his eyes have seen God's salvation.

Dear reader, is Christ anything to you? We have not the privilege of knowing Him after the flesh. The day when that was possible has passed never to return; but if you receive Him by faith now your eyes will surely see Him one day, not in humiliation as a man down here, but "sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." And the believer, whose heart has been won to the lowly and crucified Saviour, views with great delight the prospect of seeing Him crowned with glory and honour, and confessed by a world which now slights and ignores Him. Then will be fulfilled the promise, spoken by a prophet of old, and precious indeed to every heart that has a spark of loyalty or affection for Christ, "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty" (Isa. xxxiii. 17).

F. W. R.

"Thou art the everlasting Word,
The Father's only Son;
God manifest, God seen and heard,
The heaven's beloved One;
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou,
That every knee to Thee should bow.

"Image of th' Infinite Unseen,
Whose being none can know,
Brightness of light no eye hath seen,
God's love revealed below.
The light of love has shone in Thee,
And in that love our souls are free."

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

GOD'S "COME" AND MAN'S "DEPART."

(SUGGESTED BY A GOSPEL ADDRESS, BY J. W.)

MAY we say, speaking reverently, that the great God desires companionship? Within the courts of heaven are angels and archangels, are living creatures, are cherubim and seraphim; and for God's pleasure "they are and were created." The sons of God shouted for joy at the thought of a world peopled with the human race; "Wisdom" was ever with God, rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth, and His delights were with the sons of men.

It is the purpose of this God to surround Himself, for His own pleasure, with men who are brought into close relationship to Himself as children.

And He will carry out His purpose. Time may seem to run swiftly, the ages pass along; but "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Satan has *seemed* to thwart, but has only succeeded in an *appearance* of delay in the carrying out of Divine purposes.

Ever since the fall, God has constantly used to man one word which reveals His attitude towards him, and that is the word of invitation—"Come."

We read that God "came down" to see the condition of matters upon earth. The expres-

sion is, of course, a verbal accommodation to man's understanding, or *want* of understanding. There is no need for God to "come down." All things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do. He knows you, my friend, exactly as you are, and that because *you are an object of interest to the heart of God.*

What did God find when, in the language of Scripture, He "came down"? He found that man, left to himself, had filled the earth with corruption and violence. Upon such a scene judgment must fall. But mark the goodness of God. Before judgment descends and the flood comes He gives full and long warning through Noah, a "preacher of righteousness." Not only so. With the warning God offers *a way of escape.*

With the mercy which distinguishes Him at all times God, for a hundred and twenty years, preached through Noah—"COME."

That preaching won no converts. Men scoffed even as they scoff now; they ridiculed Noah and his ark. Imagine the scene of the ark-building transferred to modern times! Think of cheap excursions to see the piece of stupendous folly—a ship built on dry land! Could we not picture a laughing, shouting crowd assembled, while wits are sharpened and jokes are cracked upon the patient old man who so strangely wastes time and material upon a monstrous erection? We might possibly see a leader of the fun draw from his pocket a bit of chalk and scrawl in big letters upon the side of the ark the words "Noah's Folly."

Transfer that picture to Noah's days. Next morning that young man has another theme for his wit. He wakes to hear an unfamiliar,

pattering sound upon the roof of his house. Putting his head out of the window he is astounded to find water falling from the clouds. Before the Flood, the "Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth . . . but there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground" (Gen. II. 5, 6). The terror of the young man would be heightened by the advent of one of his gay companions of the day before, and the alarm would be again increased by another friend coming in, declaring that he had to walk through water as he made his way along. See that young man on the housetops later on. As the water follows him, he climbs a tree. As the tide rises higher, he gains the topmost branch. What must he have felt at the point of destruction had he seen ride by, in majestic security, the ark, on which he could still read his own writing—"Noah's Folly."

Who was the fool, the man who believed God, and who acted in faith, as he was told to act, and thus escaped the general destruction, or the man who laughed at God's invitation, "Come"?

Peter, in his second epistle, argues from three instances of God's warning, and then of His executed judgment, that the future has also judgment in store. He "spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Peter II. 4). He "spared not the old world, but saved Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter II. 5). He "turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes" (2 Peter II. 6). If God thus acted in three well-known instances, argues the writer of the epistle, He assuredly knows

"how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." Think of all the wickedness which meets God's holy eye as He looks down on any large city, or, for that matter, on any village.

Patiently, through many long years, God had pleaded with men to come to His ark for safety. But Noah was the only disciple. And the word to him is: "Come thou, and all thy house, into the ark" . . . "And the Lord shut him in" (Gen. VII. 1, 16).

In the Book of Job there is reference to the story of the Flood, and we are shown that the word with which man has always answered God's "Come," is "Depart." "Hast thou," says Eliphaz the Temanite (Job XXII. 15-17), "marked the old way, which wicked men have trodden? which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflowed with a flood: which said unto God, Depart from us: and *what can the Almighty do for them?*"

What can He do, indeed, when warnings are neglected, when mercy is refused, when an offered remedy is scorned? You had better consider.

Now, let us go on, through the long centuries, and note again the Lord's word "Come."

In this connection we will turn to Isaiah I. 18: "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."

God is not now speaking of the manner of accomplishing a fact, but of the fact itself. We know that all the Jewish sacrifices pointed on to the precious blood of Christ, which alone can "cleanse from all sin." But here God is asking men to

have confidence in Him, and to reason with Him. Perhaps, my reader, you have never thought about your sins at all. If so, it is quite time that you seriously considered them. Even if you have only committed ten a day, they will run up to a large number in a year, and a proportionally larger one when it is multiplied by the number of years in which you have lived in sin. Now, God's ledgers are posted up to date; your long-past sins, which you have forgotten, and your recent sins of to-day, are entered against you. And yet God says: "Come, let us reason." And He would point out that you can never pay the debt which you owe Him. His "Come" is uttered in kindness; it is the invitation of a Friend desirous to give good advice. He is prepared to clear the pages. And in this same Book of Isaiah we find Him saying (XLIII. 25): "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions *for Mine own sake*, and will not remember thy sins."

But you must *come* to God in order that He may do all this for you. It is not enough for us to hear His invitation; we must accept it. We must have faith in the means provided by God for our cleansing. "Whosoever believeth in Him [the Lord Jesus Christ] shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43).

The request to "Come" is, then, a wonderful one, for it implies the bestowal of cleansing and forgiveness. On your acceptance or refusal depend tremendous issues.

Job speaks of the way in which God's invitations are received and answered. He says (Job xxi. 12-15): "They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go

down to the grave. Therefore they say, *Depart from us*; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways. What is the Almighty that we should serve Him?"

In the two invitations to which attention has been called we find God saying:

"Come," to be sheltered from judgment.

"Come," to be washed from your sins.

In each case man's answer is "Depart."

The patience of God is not exhausted. The Saviour of mankind, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who came to reveal and manifest the heart of the Father, repeats the invitation; and in words of pathetic sweetness says to the weary and the heavy-laden:

"Come unto Me, and I will give you rest."

Poor, weary worldling, with a heart unsatisfied, with a sense of the emptiness and the hollowness of the world's formalities and of the shams of society, God's love says to thee "Come." He speaks with no voice made uncertain by misgivings; He has no doubts or fears concerning results. Clear and forcible rings His grand "*I will.*" My friend, if you have not the rest which Christ pledges Himself to give, the reason is not that He has failed to fulfil His promise, but that you have not come to claim it. This world is not large enough to fill Thy heart:

*Thou hast made us for Thyself;
And the heart never resteth
Till it findeth rest in Thee.*

How was Christ received when He "went about doing good"? The loving word from the long-suffering God drew forth, as aforetime, the word

of rejection from the heart of man. We read of Him, Who so tenderly invited the weary and the heavy-laden: "And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw Him they besought Him to *depart out of their coasts.*"

Not only rest of heart is offered us. God invites us to enjoy a feast, provided in celebration of the establishment of righteousness, in connection with the work of His Son. And His word is: "*All things are ready. Come.*"

Everything that can effect good for man, and render him fit for God's company, is ready. Come.

Some of the guests whom God invites to His feast have no desire to accept the gracious invitation. Their lips are too studiously polite to form the word "Depart." They "*frame excuses,*" and each one less satisfactory than the other; worse, because less honest, than downright refusal. Far better be real, even if your answer be a blunt "No," than be hypocritical, and invent pretexts, when your heart is saying, "*I will not come.*" Remember that God may accept your excuse and never repeat His invitation.

Shall we turn to the last Book of the Bible, the last chapter, and almost the last verse? As we read the seventeenth verse of the last chapter of the Book of the Revelation, we realize that there are some who *have* accepted God's invitation. There is a Bride spoken of who has responded to the call, and who, with eager, throbbing heart, echoes the "Come" of God. "Come," she cries, "Lord Jesus." Others who "hear" of the blessing in store reiterate the "Come." And the last invitation, in the day of grace, seems to transcend, in its inclusiveness, all that have

gone before! In spite of cold receptions, in spite of scanty response, in spite of long and tedious waiting, the word from God sounds, for the last time (for you, my reader, this may be the very last time), through the habitable earth: "*Who-soever will, let him take the water of life freely.*"

Was ever such solicitude for the blessing of others? Was ever such a display of long-suffering patience and love?

Oh, may a warm response go up to the presence of God from some one who may read these lines.

We have now added to our list of invitations. And we find that the "Come" of God, so far as we have seen, furnishes five motives for coming. Let us enumerate them:

Come, to be sheltered from judgment.
Come, to be washed from your sins.
Come, to have your heart satisfied.
Come, to partake of My righteousness.
Come, to share in My glory.

The invitations will not go on for ever. The day of grace will come to an end. Then conditions will be reversed. Then many will seek to come, and will be refused. The One Who now says "Come" will then say "Depart."

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. VII. 21-3) our Lord speaks these solemn words: "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; *depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.*"

Oh, the sorrow with which these words will be uttered! Oh, the tender pleading of the voice now—the voice which broke in tears over old Jerusalem. “Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings! *And ye would not.*”

Give not the loving heart of Christ the pain of speaking that final word to you, “Depart.” Accept God’s invitation now. Come, now, and that soul-petrifying word of dismissal will never be sounded in your ears. E. C—P.

HAVE FAITH IN GOD.

IN the early spring of 1907, while waiting for a conveyance, I picked up a piece of waste paper. It proved to be a page of a magazine containing a short record of Christian experience. The writer told how he had been arrested by the words, “HAVE FAITH IN GOD” (Mark XI. 22). He was so deeply impressed, and so greatly blessed through these few words, that he wrote them on every page of his Bible, so that whenever he read the Scriptures he might be reminded of this great truth and the important lesson he had been taught.

Before this, in his service for Christ, he had been unduly influenced by atmosphere, numbers, music, antecedents, and other things which appealed to the senses; but henceforth he became more steadfast, more independent of outward appearances, and more persistently earnest in seeking the glory of God in Jesus Christ alone.

The incident, and the words especially, deeply

impressed me. I had often been helped by them, but they came home to my heart at that time as a special message from God, and, as subsequent events have proved, a most timely message also. Since then I have often had them ringing in my mind, making music in my heart, leading me to look to God alone, and to endure as seeing Him Who is invisible. It is difficult to express in words the thoughts that have been helpful in spiritual life, yet I will try and state very briefly the reflections that have been, through the Holy Spirit, so very helpful to me.

Have faith in God alone. God only is; and there is none beside Him. All others owe their existence to Him, and are dependent upon His will. Men and methods, institutions and organizations, gifts and callings are nothing, only as He is above all, in all, and through all. On this ground He alone claims our confidence. "My soul, wait thou only upon God." *Have faith in God at all times.* In seasons of loneliness, trial, affliction, loss and bereavement; when all things dark appear; when cisterns are broken and creatures all fail; in every condition and under all circumstances, Jesus bids you "Have faith in God." He remaineth; His lovingkindness changeth not; His word liveth and abideth for ever. Therefore, like Abraham, believe in hope even against hope.

Have faith in God now. I have often been helped by the present tense of the familiar words, God *is* love. He loves this moment, every moment, eternal love includes all time and all times. For present need in service or suffering, in worship, for present claims and responsibilities, count upon a faithful God. Believe that

He is with you always, caring for you and keeping you every moment.

Have faith in God absolutely. Trust Him utterly. Trust Him with all and for all. God in Jesus Christ gives Himself to you without reserve. He rejoices over you to do you good with His whole heart. He is worthy of your whole-hearted confidence. Faith honours Him and is well-pleasing to Him. Let there be no reserve in your confidence, so will you come into full harmony with Him, and be kept in perfect peace.

O. T.

TWO MYSTERIOUS DISCOVERIES.

No. 2.

GOD has a perfect knowledge of us. From the very start He knew all about us; nay, *before* the start of our short natural history He knew all that we should be to the end. And before the beginning of our spiritual history He knew all that we should discover in ourselves. When we first came to Christ we wondered exceedingly at the grace and kindness we found in Him; but we knew very little of the vileness in ourselves naturally. This we have all to learn experimentally; and this Joseph's history strikingly illustrates.

Fresh favours had been shown to his brethren. They had been privileged to dine with Joseph, and there was one peculiar circumstance that caused them to marvel even then, for they were placed at the dinner-table in "birthright" order—from "firstborn" to "youngest"! But with all these favours there was the profession and the considered proof of their integrity.

They had started with the dawn on their second homeward journey. But not far had they gone outside the city when Joseph's steward overtook them. That steward and Joseph himself were in a secret of which they had no present knowledge. It had to be discovered to them. A silver cup belonging to Joseph was in one of their sacks! In their ignorance they protested against any slur on their innocence, and boldly volunteered to pronounce sentence upon the guilty party if the charge could be proved, and upon themselves also as associated with him if the missing cup could be discovered in their possession. Hear what they say. "Let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen" (Gen. XLIV. 9).

How their own words respecting Joseph, years before, were coming back to them! First they had said, "Let us *slay* him"; then, "Let us *sell* him"! (Gen. XXXVII. 20, 27).

Search was made, and the cup was actually found—and found where it was least expected, "in *Benjamin's* sack"!

"What shall we say? How shall we clear ourselves?" "God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants." This told the tale of their dilemma. Their consternation must have been overwhelming.

But a like experience has caused very genuine alarm in the minds of thousands of God's saints since Pentecost. After starting for the "Heavenly Land" they have made the unexpected and very unwelcome discovery that an evil principle still exists within them. "How can we clear ourselves?" is the absorbing question. Joseph's brethren might have considered

the discovered money in the sack as "*an oversight.*" But what of this "silver cup" brought to light by the steward's strict search!

The fact was that Joseph knew two things, of which they had been in complete ignorance. He knew both what was in *his own heart* and in *their sacks*. What is so truly interesting is that the discovery of the latter was the means of coming to a fuller knowledge of the former.

So with us. If Jesus loved us, it was in the full knowledge of all that we should afterwards discover our own hearts to be capable of. "He needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man" (John II. 25). But if He had found out man's iniquity, He had found out a righteous way of meeting it at His own great cost. *We* usually find it out by degrees: He knew all from the beginning. His precious death as truly covers what He knew there was *in* us as the sinful things which, in word and action, would come out of us.

As with the brethren of Joseph when the steward brought them back into his presence, to hear his gracious words, and feel his tears and kisses on their once stiff necks, so every fresh discovery of evil in ourselves is only a new occasion for the Spirit to bring us into the Lord's presence to learn *Himself* in a new way.

It is thus that we learn to abhor ourselves, and joyfully to adore His blessed saving Name.

Speaking of the inward exercises depicted in the seventh of Romans, another has said: "Three immensely important lessons are learned, under Divine teaching, in the conflict connected with this state.

"First, in me—that is, in my flesh—dwells no

good thing. This is not the guilt of having sinned, but the knowledge of what we *are*—that is, as flesh.

“Next, I learn that it is not *I*; for, being renewed, I hate it. The true *I* hates it. It is then sin in me, not *I*—a very important lesson to learn.

“Thirdly, if it is not *I*, it is too strong for me. The will is present with me: but how to perform that which is good I find not.”

The discovery of nothing but worthlessness and weakness in ourselves is the way which the true Steward (the Spirit of God) takes to discover to us that all blessedness and all strength are in Christ, and all ours *in Him*. GEO. C.

“WHO IS GOD?”

“**W**HO is God?” said an educated Oriental gentleman as he stood in the surgery of a Christian man.

“Amongst us the lower orders have their images, which they worship; whilst the educated people adore our great men, but here in England ‘God’ is worshipped. Who is God?”

The Christian to whom he was speaking replied: “God is that Divine Being Who created everything that you can see.”

“But how can you prove that?” again he questioned.

For answer the other took out his watch, which happened to be very cleverly made, and after showing it he said: “Who made that?”

“A man—and a clever man,” was the reply.

“Just so, and therefore, when I look up at the sparkling firmament, where all those great and

beautiful globes keep more perfect time than the cleverest clock-work, I recognize and adore the One Who made them, and Who keeps them in motion, the God of Whom I read in the Bible."

Very much interested, the gentleman desired to see a Bible, so, opening a drawer in his writing-table, the Christian gave him one, showing him where to find the inspired account of the Creation.

And also the records of how God the Creator sought to make Himself known intimately to the people He had created, and did Himself take a lowly form and walk upon His own earth, a Man amongst men, living and dying in their sight that He might endear them to Himself.

The gentleman took the Book with many thanks, promising to read it, and went on his way.

There had been three other patients waiting, and each in turn remarked upon the Eastern appearance of the foreigner.

"Yes, but what do you think he asked me?" was the question put to one after the other of these people, who lived in the full light of Christianity. "He asked me 'Who is God?' Now what would you have said?"

One replied, "Well, that is a question that needs thinking over."

Another, "I should have told him to read the Prayer Book."

The other, "I should not have known what to say to him."

But it is such an important question, reader, that we put it before you, in case you have not seen and understood clearly something definite about that God to Whom individuals, both in England and the ends of the earth, must bow.

It is possible to be so settled in mind about this knowledge that you feel you can live and die by it, and that, whatever else you have to part with, you could never lose the sense of Divine love in your heart.

How are we to approach God, so that we can learn about Him?

He has graciously sent His Holy Spirit to lead our thoughts prayerfully to heaven, and has also given us the Scriptures to read. We learn that He "will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth, for there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. II. 4).

We also learn where that Man now is, for we read in Luke XXIV. 50-3 that He ascended to heaven from the midst of His disciples.

Again, in Acts VII. 56, Stephen beholds Him standing on the right hand of God.

Then the Apostle Paul tells us in Hebrews I. 3, "He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

And then we learn that He is not too high or great to care about the desires of His creatures below. A sigh, a prayer, a groan reaches His ear and His heart, for He is still "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever" (Heb. XIII. 8).

Who, then, is God? Surely the Origin of all good, the Hope of every living thing; and happy are they who can sing:—

"I looked to Jesus, and I found
In Him my star, my sun;
And in that light of life I'll walk
Till trav'ling days are done."

L. J. M.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

WORDS OF PEACE FOR THE SIN-DISTRESSED.

A ROMAN Catholic was going along a road one day, when a gentleman overtook him and heard him say, "Whenever shall I get enough?"

"What is the matter?" inquired the kind-hearted fellow-traveller. And the poor man explained that the priest had told him that he had to find so much money before he could be free from the penalty of his sins.

The gentleman then told him that he had something in his pocket which would soon settle that matter. Pulling out his Bible, he read, "THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST HIS SON CLEANSETH US FROM ALL SIN" (1 John I. 7), and told him that in the blood of Jesus Christ, God's eternal Son, he might see the complete discharge of all his sins. "WITHOUT SHEDDING OF BLOOD IS NO REMISSION."

A man dying from thirst could not have drunk in refreshing water more eagerly than this poor man drank in these words of life. As the light from heaven shone into this sin-distressed soul he said, "Let us get to the other side of the hedge and kneel down and thank Him."

Oh! the deep heart-misery of trying to be what we can never be, trying to do what we can

never do, and even trying to feel what we can never feel.

Thousands of sincere souls besides Romanists are making this serious mistake. They think they must be something, or do something, or feel something to make themselves more fit for God to accept them.

How very satisfied they would be if they only thought that *in themselves* they were more fit for God—fit to stand in His holy presence.

Many, because they cannot attain to what they would like to be, fall into the awful quagmire of fatalism and consequent despair.

Little is known of the deep heart-burnings and heart-breakings and misery that many are passing through, even at this moment, as the result of *wrong thoughts of God*.

Such would like to be better than they feel themselves to be. But every effort to attain their ideal only breaks down, to their great grief and utter disappointment.

Besides, sin having blinded man with regard to God, it has made him utterly powerless to meet his own state.

ACQUAINTANCE WITH GOD.

It was said to Job years ago, "Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee" (Job XXII. 21). This was wise advice, but Job was slow to take it. He was in the dark about God and suffered misery untold in his spirit in consequence.

Moral darkness is blindness as to God. Blindness as to God is the blindness in which man is naturally. Job, in the end, got out of the darkness into the light of the blessed God.

As the happy result to himself, he justified God in all His ways with him and condemned himself.

It is not what I am, or what I can be for God, that is the basis of my peace. It is the knowledge of what God is always toward me in Christ. God has come out to me in Christ in the fullest grace. The knowledge of this gives me the fullest and happiest assurance.

All is right on God's side. When I learn this it makes all right on my side as regards my present enjoyment. All the distance that sin has brought in between the creature and God has been removed in the death of Christ. The vail of the Temple was rent in twain from top to bottom, by the unseen hand of God Himself, when Jesus cried, "IT IS FINISHED."

The distance is gone ; and death, which is man's enemy and Satan's power, is broken. God having been propitiated has now come forth in the riches of His grace to bless man. There is nothing now but blessing in His heart for the creature that turned against Him. This is grace. Grace imputes nothing. If it did it would not be grace. "Grace that hath conditions, and grace that is fettered with precautions, is no grace."

If God has not made all right on His own side, I cannot. Even with His help I could not make all my past right. How could I blot out all my guilty past and give myself a standing—a righteous standing in the presence of a pure and righteous God ?

The fact that God is acting in grace toward men shows man's incapacity of meeting his own state or the claims of God upon him. It is now

the reign of grace, else God would have to deal unsparingly with men about their sins. That day will come, but it is not yet, thank God!

The reign of grace is through a risen Christ Who died for the sins of men. He glorified God in His death for sin. God has now put Him in the highest place in heaven in consequence. The death of Christ makes it now possible for God to act thus toward all classes and conditions of men. Grace is no respecter of persons.

How infinite in value the sacrifice must be! It was an Infinite Person who sacrificed Himself in love to us. He was "GOD over all, blessed for ever." He was as truly man made of a woman. Infinite love was behind it all, working for man's richest, everlasting blessing.

No one but God could or even would act thus! But He has not only acted thus for *our* blessing, but for the display of *Himself* in all that He is morally. Love is displayed to me the sinner. Righteousness is displayed against my hateful sins.

The death of Jesus is the bringing of both love and justice into perfect harmony.

I am not blessed at the expense of righteousness, but on the ground of justice being perfectly vindicated.

PEACE IS MADE FOR ME—perfect peace. But peace is made by the blood of the cross of Jesus. "Having made peace by the blood of His cross." He gave up His sacred life to God in atonement to make my peace. The claims of the throne against me are all settled by the suffering and death of Another for me.

This is where the love of God shines out in all its depth and greatness towards me. God

“spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.” “Who was delivered for our [MY] offences, and was raised again for our [MY] justification.”

Thus I get acquainted with God. I learn His heart, I see His attitude toward me. I learn in the cross of His beloved Son all His mind and disposition towards me. He cannot be against me when He gave His own Son up to death for me. *He must be my Best Friend.*

The reason of all the unrest around us to-day is that men are in utter darkness—ignorance of God. What will dispel this darkness? Light—the light of God that has been shown out to me in the death of Christ. What will dispel the ignorance? Knowledge—the knowledge through God’s holy word of His unchanging attitude towards me *in Christ.*

THOUGHTS OF PEACE.

He said to Israel, whose conduct had not been good, “I know the thoughts that I think toward you, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end” (Jer. xxix. 11). He calls Himself THE GOD OF PEACE. Judgment is His strange work. If He must judge men because they ignore His claims and reject His grace in Christ, He will not find pleasure in it.

Oh! that men would banish hard thoughts of God out of their minds by letting the thoughts of His love into them. What a mighty revolution these thoughts make in the minds of all who allow them a place!

He is now proclaiming peace by Jesus Christ. He now assumes a peaceful attitude towards all men. *As I learn this I enter into peace for present*

enjoyment. Job was told to "BE AT PEACE." Not peace with himself, but peace with God. As I enter into the knowledge of all that has been done for me on the cross, where my sins were all put away, my peace for ever made with God, I become thoroughly happy.

If I am anxious and distressed about my unfitness for God and trying to remedy my own state and only learn my weakness and sinfulness thereby, if I turn to Him in my failure, He points me to Christ in Whom is no failure, Who is all perfection.

HE IS OUR PEACE.

It is by Jesus that God has made Himself known to men. It is by Him He offers to be on terms of peace with men. All who receive Him and rest on His finished atoning work are at peace with God. He is the Mediator between God and men. God has come near to men in His Son, as Man. Through His Son, as Man, we draw near to God.

As I look at Christ now in heaven at God's right hand, I learn God's estimate of His blessed Son. I learn also His estimate of His accomplished work. I see in that work, and in the One Who did the work, what God has found for Himself. The place of supreme power in which Christ now sits is the declaration, before men, angels and devils, of God's value of the work of Christ.

As I learn that, I cease to be concerned about my own unfitness and look at Christ's perfect fitness. HE IS FIT for the expression of the brightest glory of God. As Man He lives in all the holy love of God. The glory of God is

the outshining of His nature, which is holy love. Christ's fitness for the place He fills is my fitness to be there.

"God is not satisfied with *you*," I said to a person once. She was in deep distress and could not understand me. She had been for a long time on the line of trying to make herself fit for God. Her soul anxiety was very real, I could see.

After waiting sometime I said again to her, "God is satisfied with *another Person*, not with you—with Jesus. I have been in the enjoyment of peace for a number of years, and all my enjoyment flows from knowing God's perfect satisfaction with Jesus instead of me." Her eyes were opened and peace filled her heart.

I may change, but there never is any change in Jesus. He made my peace and is my peace. There never is any change in God's estimation of Him or of the work He did which made my peace. I find my happiness in resting where God rests.

"That which can shake the cross
May shake the peace it made."

Nothing *can* shake the work of the cross, therefore my peace and the peace of every believer is for ever secure.

A WORD TO DOUBTERS.

Anxious reader, if you really desired at any time to be thoroughly miserable, you would only have to look long and deeply into your own heart. If you wanted to be continually distracted, you would only have to look at everybody around you for your desired satisfaction. But

if you would be filled with peace and inexpressible gladness without the smallest admixture of disappointment, you have only to look up to heaven in the faith of your soul and see Jesus there as the very delight of the heart of God. He now appears "in the presence of God *for us*." His place in heaven declares that He is triumphant. The victory is won and never can be lost. We triumph in *His* triumphs.

There is abundant proof of evil within. *The flesh is there in all its unchanged and unchangeable character.* Cease your efforts to mend it. You never will.

Fickleness and feebleness are all around you. Therefore "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isa. II. 22). In Christ there is the most considerate love. In Him there is greatness of strength, and willingness to help. In Him are inexhaustible resources. In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Prove it for yourself. Why not? "O taste and see that the Lord is good. . . . There is no want to them that fear Him" (Ps. xxxiv. 8, 9). "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Ps. II. 12).

P. W.

FROM PERPLEXITY TO PRAISE.

LUKE XXIV.

HOW many souls there are who know what it is to be perplexed. It is nothing new, as we see from the chapter before us, as well as many other parts of Scripture. Perhaps the reader is one of these. However, it is blessed to

know God would have us praising instead. But there is a great secret between these two conditions. The reader may well desire to get out of the former into the latter—out of perplexity into praise. Now we do not *try* to be perplexed; it is not the result of an effort on our part. Our effort is rather to find a way out of it. On the other hand, we do not *try* to praise, we do so because by God's grace we have been let into the great secret.

The reader may ask, "What do you mean by the great secret?" Look at the sixth verse; you can read it for yourself: "He is not here, but is *risen*." Jesus, the One they were looking for amongst the dead, was not there, hence their perplexity. But when that Blessed Person was before their eyes as the *Risen One*, perplexity ended, praise began—began never again to end. What thus delivers us from the one and brings us to the other, is the *Person*. Instead of having death before us, we have a Risen Saviour before our souls. Death is behind us, Christ risen before us.

He, their Centre of gathering, their Spring of gladness, thus becomes the great attraction of our souls, the spring of our joy; He becomes known as the One Who sings praise to God in the assembly. May both reader and writer be led more and more to appreciate that Blessed Living Person, giving joy to Him by seeking more constantly His company, for He loves to have us near Him. May we yield ourselves to the constraining power of His love increasingly, till we see Him and are like Him, for His great Name's sake.

H. E. M.

COMFORT FOR THE CAST-DOWN.

IT is quite true that to *you* this alarm and depression have a *spiritual* significance, but in reality it may not be anything of the kind. We are at present in unredeemed bodies (Rom. VIII. 23), and the state of our bodies sometimes intrudes upon the enjoyment of our Christian privileges. For example: My mind may be too weary some night to read a chapter in the Bible with pleasure. Physical drowsiness or an attack of neuralgia may spoil a prayer-meeting for me, or a bad sick-headache interfere with my communion with other Christians.

The real test for all of us is the value we put on CHRIST; whether at the bottom of our hearts we have, or have not, a real appreciation of Him. And does not the very trouble you are now passing through declare beyond any contradiction your genuine conviction of His worth? You could not *happily* do without Him. Therefore, be of good cheer.

If I heard that you had lost something on the road, and that you had merely turned back a few paces, looked for it hastily, and then said to those with you, who began to be anxious on your account, "Oh, never mind! Don't trouble! It does not matter much!" I should very naturally conclude that the thing in question was of little consequence to you. But if I knew you had been searching for it every day for weeks, and often continuing the search by artificial light far into the night; if I knew that you were greatly concerned because you could not find it, and almost crushed by the fear of having *finally* lost it, I should say without the smallest hesitation,

even if I did not know *what* you had lost, that it was something you set great store upon, something very precious to you; that in heart you really believed in its value.

"To you therefore that believe," writes the Apostle Peter, "He is precious." The great moral proof of their believing on Him was the *value* they put upon Him. They realized His "preciousness" (1 Peter II. 7).

On the other hand, the Jewish "builders" rejected Him. *They* saw no beauty in Him! *They* did not "desire Him." They "set at nought" that "Chief Corner Stone," though He was "chosen of God and precious."

There is surely a distinctly marked contrast between His being so *precious* as to be diligently, anxiously sought after, and being "*set at nought*" as worthless (compare Acts IV. 11).

You sometimes fear that He has given you up because of the amount of bad, or the deplorable lack of good, in yourself. But what if you were so good in yourself that you could afford to give *Him* up, seeing you no longer needed Him as a Saviour! Ah, that would truly be an alarming symptom. But is it so? Who is more certain than you are that in your case it is *not*?

Our sense of badness, and shortcoming, and general unworthiness, only makes Him the more indispensable. Oh, think not of yourself or of your faith, or even of your own love. Think of His sufferings at Calvary. Think of the love *He* expressed there.

"This is the love that sought us;
This is the love that brought us
To gladdest day from saddest night,
From deepest shame to glory bright,
From darkness to the joy of light."

GEO. C.

"THE WAY OF GOD."

AS soon as sin entered into this world by Adam's transgression, God showed the only right way for men to take.

The first man who was born did not approve of God's way, so he chose a way of his own, called "the way of Cain" (Jude 11).

Now every person who has been born into this world has to pass through it in natural life: no one is permitted to remain in it, because death has power to make every person *move on*, and *MOVE OFF*. Some may have to move off quicker than others, because none can resist this unseen power; thus every one must *pass out of this world* because not allowed of God to remain in it.

Those who, like Abel, have taken God's way, find moving off becomes positive gain (see Phil. i. 21); while those who have taken Cain's way find positive loss (see Luke xvi. 23).

The Gospel is preached to acquaint men with God's way, and here is one proof of the intrinsic value of the Holy Scriptures. They contain a faithful record of God's way, and how any person can get into it. It was spoken of by the prophets of old in various ways, but not till the Holy Spirit came down at Pentecost could it be perfectly known. It has been called:

"The way of holiness" (Isaiah xxxv. 8).

"The way of understanding" (Isaiah xl. 14).

"The way of peace" (Isaiah lix. 8).

"The good way" (Jeremiah vi. 16).

"The way of God" (Acts xviii. 26).

There are many other such-like expressions, but these will suffice for our present purpose.

No man ever found the right way by himself,

as the prophet wrote: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. x. 23).

Naturally every man chooses the way of Cain, because it seems right to him, but the end thereof are the ways of death (see Prov. XIV. 12). God causes His voice to be heard, as we read, "Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isa. xxx. 21). Those who heed the call of God find that, "The ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace" (Prov. III. 17).

Let us look at the five quotations:

"The way of holiness."—Holiness implies separation from all that which is evil. None can travel on this way unless they have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus. Till this has been effected every person in God's sight is unclean. The prophet stated: "The unclean shall not pass over it." What a plain and emphatic statement!

But more, "No lion is there." The great enemy of our souls has been called a lion; and mark, he cannot go on that way, so it is a safe way, truly the way of salvation from every form of evil.

"The way of understanding."—Understanding implies an acquaintance with God, both as to the *past*, the *present*, and the *future*.

Thus it is the privilege of God's people to know His ways so well, that they can speak freely of them to those around them.

"The way of peace."—Peace implies confidence in God to finish the good work which He has begun in each one of His believers, and bring each one into the fulness of that blessing which

He has in store for them, which will be fully realized when the Lord comes the "second time."

"*The good way.*"—This implies that God's people can walk in company with each other, and provoke one another unto love and good works. The prophets, in using these expressions, were addressing Israel, but we are looking at them with the additional light of Christianity shining on them.

"*The way of God.*"—This implies that the way is divine; it was made known from the beginning to every man of faith, and as time went on God was pleased to give further instruction. Thus we read of a man named Apollos who was mighty in the Scriptures, but he had no knowledge beyond the time of John the Baptist, so he needed to be taught the way of God *more perfectly*. See Acts XVIII. 24-26. The new system, Christianity, had been revealed to the Apostles after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, with the subsequent descent of the Holy Spirit.

Thus the Christian assembly had been formed on earth, and had taken the place of Judaism. Apollos needed instruction in this further development of the way of God, because his testimony was defective till he had learned more perfectly. Every care has been taken by God to approach men suitably in order to bless them; but such is man's nature he seeks to keep away from God, because he thinks his own way is better.

However, "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life," and many are proving the reality of this.

The Holy Spirit is just as active as on the day

of Pentecost, but at that time the blessing was centred in *Jerusalem*; while now it is spread over many countries, and faithful men are daily making the Gospel known in many parts of the world.

Should any person desire to get into this "way of God," it is still through the door of repentance and faith (see Acts xx. 21).

Repentance refers to the anxious person, who is willing to judge himself by taking a low place, so that God may exalt him in due time. No one likes to acknowledge that God's estimate of him is true, so the *first step* is the hardest.

The *second step* is easier, that is, the faith which believes God's witness concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus. This faith God counts for righteousness (Rom. iv. 3, 24).

Thus we are brought to the vital question, *Which way shall it be?* The hesitation is only on man's side; for God is "rich unto all that call upon Him" (Rom. x. 12).

What a moment of opportunity the present day of salvation is!

G. W. Gy.

The Wreck and the Refuge.—"In a shipwreck, only two courses of action are open—either to abide by the fortunes of the sinking ship, or take refuge in the lifeboat—no other. Either course must be selected. The Christ of God, having entered into this sin-wrecked world, and there finished the work given Him to do, and gone up on high, the word remains—'Come unto Me.' All are under responsibility to accept or reject Him."

CONCENTRATED AFFECTIONS.

“IT is a great thing to have developed affections. Some are much more demonstrative than others, but it is not merely this, but the development of the affections themselves within, by what is in the *object* of them. Still, it comes to my mind that it is a great thing to have concentrated affections. Christ forming them, so that in having Him in our hearts we may know what is in His, and what a blessing that is. Concentrated means practically, personal, so that I get at His heart, and know what is there, and that there is that personal affection there. As regards this, there is the sense that we belong to Him, but then there is development, the sense of what the exercise of that affection toward us is; interest in our circumstances; thoughtfulness for us; bearing our sins and drinking that dreadful cup; even making us part of His own happiness in glory; summed up in knowing Him in what His affections are, but then how infinite in this case this development is. And after all He loves us *personally*; but He loves us perfectly in this, that whatever He enjoys He brings us into the enjoyment of. . . . We must know Him to know what His love is, and it will suffice for ever. But this joy in His love, which is to us known to be unchangeable, is by the Holy Ghost, and we are dependent on grace for it, so that it will be connected with all our life here.” J. N. D.

“We love Thee for the glorious worth
Which in Thyself we see :
We love Thee for that shameful cross,
Endured so patiently.”

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

FRIENDLESS FOR EVER!

WHO could endure the thought? To be in this world without one known friend is bad enough. What must it be to enter the next without one?

Friendless for ever! If anything could darken the gloom of such a thought, the remembrance of having repeatedly *refused* the gracious overtures of Jesus would do it—His outstretched hand disregarded, His love ignored, His call refused, Himself, and His work of suffering, set at naught! What an unbearable subject for contemplation in that place of outer darkness which Jesus speaks of as the destination of the eternally lost!

Timely warning is one marked feature of God's faithful kindness to sinful men. Even when He records the exodus of a man from this world *without a friend*, there is, depend upon it, for those left behind, a gracious purpose in that record, a kindly hint that it is still possible for some one else to be found in the same deplorable plight. May it never be the reader's lot!

Let us look at just one such beacon on the sacred page of past history—the end of Saul the king. Listen to his despairing lament to Samuel (1 Sam. XXVIII. 15): “*I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams.*”

In that hour of unbearable bitterness he could only think of one true friend, and he already departed! No doubt Samuel had been a very real friend to him. God's word to Samuel twenty years before made that apparent: "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?" (1 Sam. xvi. 1). All was over for Saul's kingdom after that. Yet how patiently he was borne with! On the eve of that fatal day on Mount Gilboa, at the desire of Saul, God even permitted the departed spirit of His servant to return and to speak *for the last time* to the poor doomed man! But alas, Samuel had no message for him but one of rebuke—another reminder of the saddening past! What a solemn indication was this, that the wilfulness and disobedience of years before had never been truly repented of. In vain had space for repentance been granted him; and as God's thought of Saul's sin was unchanged, there was nothing for him now but to be held to the righteous consequences of it! Terrible thought!

Has this no voice for wilful ones to-day? When *God's will* is known, *self-will*, that opposes it, is the very essence of sin, even though it be connected with religious service, as with Saul (1 Sam. xv. 21–23). As surely as Saul was under God's eye then, we are now. Consider it!

Would you have a real Friend when all else is slipping from you and passing away? Come, then, to Jesus. Seek Him *now*. Then will you be able to unite with the thousands on earth to-day who can truly sing:

"We have found a Friend in Jesus,
O, how He loves!"

GEO. C.

"THE LIONS' DEN" AND ITS LESSONS.

IN the reign of Darius the Persian, Daniel, a captive Jew, was raised to be the first of three presidents. He was preferred before all the other satraps because of his excellent spirit. These sought in their jealousy to find occasion against him concerning the kingdom, but completely failed. He was a faithful man, and neither error nor fault could be found in him. But determined not to be baffled, they next sought to find occasion against him concerning the law of his God (Dan. vi. 1-5). To this end they induced the King to sign a decree, unalterable according to the law of the Medes and Persians, that if any man made a petition to any other god or man than the King during thirty days, he should be cast into the den of lions (*vv.* 6-9).

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he prayed in accordance with the words of Solomon (2 Chron. vi. 38, 39), at his open window three times a day, looking towards Jerusalem. And the satraps, having assembled to behold him, came and witnessed against him before the King (*vv.* 12, 13). Immediately the King was sorely displeased that he had allowed himself to be thus ensnared, and laboured hard to deliver him. But Daniel's wicked and wily foes insisted on the unalterable character of the law, and the King, greatly against his desire, was obliged to consign him to the lions' den, saying as he did so, "Thy God whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee" (*vv.* 14-16). And a stone was brought and laid upon the den, and

sealed, that the purpose concerning him might not be changed.

We find in all this a striking figure of Christ and that which befell Him when He came into this world of sin. Jesus, God's Son, was a perfect, holy Man, of excellent spirit, surrounded with jealous foes seeking His destruction, but utterly failing to find error or fault in the faithful and true Witness. He was the Lamb of God without blemish and without spot. Not only so, but the holy law of God was within His heart, and the utmost that His enemies could witness against Him was His faithfulness and devotedness to God. Bent upon His destruction, they succeeded in delivering Him over to death. But beyond all this there was the unalterable and inscrutable counsel of God. Hence we read, "Who being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts II. 23). Man is responsible for the death of Christ, and has filled his cup of iniquity to the brim thereby in God's sight. But over it all is the infallible purpose of God, overruling man's consummate wickedness, and making Christ's death the basis for the display of His grace and lovingkindness towards man.

Now, after a sleepless night, Darius came to the mouth of the den and said, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God whom thou servest continually able to deliver thee from the lions?" "O King," replied Daniel, "live for ever. My God has sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths . . . forasmuch as innocency was found in me," etc. (*vv.* 18-22). Then was the King exceeding glad, and had him taken out.

But his accusers and their families were consigned to the den and destroyed instantly by the lions (*vv.* 23, 24).

All the power of the roaring lion, Satan, was brought to bear against Jesus, a greater than Daniel, at the cross. But when the Son of God went voluntarily into death and the grave for the glory of God, He met and overcame him who had the power of death. Declared innocent by His judge, He suffered and died in love to the guilty and the lost. It was not possible that God's Holy One should see corruption. Divine power raised Him from death and the grave. He was raised from among the dead ones by "*the glory of the Father*" (Rom. vi. 4). The mouth of the lion, Satan the great accuser, was stopped. Jesus had supplicated Him that was able to save Him out of death, and "He was heard in that He feared" (or "for His piety") (Heb. v. 7).

When Daniel was delivered from the den King Darius wrote unto all nations, "Peace be multiplied unto you." And he made a decree, that all men should tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for, said he, "He is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and He worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who delivereth Daniel from the power of the lions" (Dan. vi. 26, 27).

And now that Jesus is raised and glorified, God, having made peace by the blood of His cross, proclaims *peace to all men far and wide*. It is multiplied towards us on the ground of the death and resurrection of Christ. "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His Name,

whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). And again, to all such who believe on God, He assures us that Christ "was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. Therefore, being justified by faith, *we have peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. iv. 25, v. 1). Moreover, by Him we have "access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. v. 2). Dear reader, are you one of this happy company?

It was not possible that Christ should be holden of death. When the stone and the seal were there (Matt. xxvii. 66) the Son of God rose. A mighty angel rolled the stone away, that His own might see that He was risen. He sits to-day in glory, and prospers at God's right hand, soon coming forth to rule over all. Daniel prospered in two reigns of earthly kings (v. 28). Jesus shall reign and prosper over all the realms of this world, seated upon His heavenly throne, till time is no more. Do you believe on Him? Is He your Saviour? Has He rescued and delivered you? "By Him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39).

E. H. C.

THE DESTINY OF THE EARTH.

THIS absorbing topic is frequently made a subject of conjecture and theory, while on the pages of His open Word God has plainly revealed that which will assuredly come to pass in the transition of the ages.

While theories of a final, overwhelming crisis

are being mooted, it is fitting to refer to Divinely recorded statements as to the ultimate destiny of this globe. Nor let the fact that a human hand has written them lessen the weight of their eternal value, since it has pleased God to speak to man by men, choosing whomsoever He will.

In second Peter, third chapter, tenth verse, we read: "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

Thus, at a time foreknown, will this earth cease to rotate and revolve, when "the Unchangeable One" (God the Son) (Heb. i. 11) shall fold up the heavens as a garment used and worn out, and change them for new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Other scriptures may be mentioned, such as Revelation, twentieth chapter, eleventh verse, and twenty-first chapter, first verse, telling of the finish of the day of the Lord, when, according to Acts, seventeenth chapter, thirty-first verse, He, the ordained Man, will judge the world in righteousness; and also, as the Unchangeable One, whose power caused worlds to come into existence, and who now upholds them, will cause heaven and earth to pass away and make all things new.

Were our purpose to develop prophetic incidents we might dwell on this subject, but as these scriptures show that, by no *chance*, does calamity happen to this sphere, we would consider briefly another development in the ways of God concerning this earth.

Ere the moment of its transition arrives, from old to new, a day is coming called "the day of the

Lord." We understand this simply to mean a day in which the Lord has everything His own way. And a day with Him is as a thousand years, and this exact time is mentioned in Revelation, twentieth chapter, fourth verse, as the length of the time in which He reigns. By "the *Lord*" we understand "the Lord Jesus Christ," who shall reign over all.

Space forbids it, and our purpose does not require it, but numerous passages of Scripture show plainly the character of things during that reign, and that it will be a reign of unparalleled earthly blessing. We therefore only mention two scriptures to our point. Hebrews, eighth chapter, eleventh verse, is a direct quotation from Jeremiah, thirty-first chapter, and speaks of "days that come," in which "all shall know *Me*, saith the Lord."

Now it must be apparent to all that we are not living in those days. They are yet to come. And no celestial phenomenon will prevent those days coming.

Also Isaiah, eleventh chapter, ninth verse, states that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

And may we ask you, dear reader, "Do you know Him? Is the Lord Jesus Christ known to *you*?"

We live in a day of much learning, much knowledge, Biblical, scientific and otherwise; but does your knowledge compass a knowledge of God? "Because you cannot know God without Christ; nor know the Father without the Son" (John XIV. 6). That knowledge is linked up with, "Their sins and their iniquities will *I* remember no more" (Heb. VIII. 12).

The microscope has enabled us to fathom many otherwise inscrutable wonders, and the telescope has enabled us to observe overwhelming power, but is the Person behind all this splendour still unknown to *you*?

Yet God has determined to have a day to Himself, when He will be known by all on the earth; but, before that day comes, severe judgments will sweep this earth, for it is "when God's judgments are in the earth the people shall learn righteousness" (Isaiah xxvi. 9.) And ere that day come the Gospel, as at present preached, shall cease, and the Man (Christ Jesus) who is now presented as a Saviour for perishing sinners (as are all, for all have sinned) shall rise up and close the door of mercy. Then will He take the sceptre; then will He reign over this world, and subject all to the will of God.

Beloved reader, "*Now* is the *day* of *salvation*, *now* is the accepted time," or the time when you may be accepted through the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ shed to atone for sin! Depend upon it, the first, most vital, most important knowledge to possess is that your condition is sinful before a sin-hating God, causing you to own it to the Lord Jesus Christ (the Sole Mediator between God and Men), and to receive pardon and eternal life.

"For God *so loved* the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The One who created so wisely can *love* even you and me.

L. O. L.

THE STOLEN GARMENTS.

'T WAS a bitter night, with the thermometer registering about forty degrees. Sad, disconsolate and sin-burdened, she made her way to the Gospel meeting held at Viborgski Prospect. Unforgiven sin had long weighed on her conscience, and those interested in her could not understand why relief had not come, nor the haven of rest been reached. Attendance at the Gospel meetings brought no comfort, nor did prayer smooth her sleepless pillow. She sobbed that night as the glad tidings of forgiving love were pronounced, and of God's willingness to pardon every repentant sinner. The meeting closed. Some had the joy of thanking God for blessing received that night, and returned home with glad hearts. Our friend remained still longer, weeping. I sought to point out as simply as possible to her God's way of salvation, our incompetency to wash away one sin stain, even if we wept oceans of tears and piled up our good deeds as high as heaven. I spoke of the all-sufficiency of the precious blood of Christ to remove every stain of guilt, and the power of God to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. Words seemed to bring no relief; so commending her to the Lord in prayer we returned home.

During the revolutionary upheavals in St. Petersburg, when much distress and poverty was felt, the good Madame —— had thrown open a large room attached to her house. Into this she had invited the poor women of the neighbourhood. Having bought cloth and different materials, she would engage these poor women to work and sew garments, and afterwards sell

them. In this way many poor widows and mothers were temporarily relieved. On one occasion, taking mean advantage of the grace and kindness shown by this good lady, the subject of our paper hid two garments under her cloak and passed out of the workroom unnoticed—at least, by man. The Lord, however, saw this, and turned the ill-gotten gains into a barbed arrow that pierced her conscience and plagued her for two long weary years. Like David in Psalm xxxii. 3, she experienced: “*When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long; for day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me.*” In the same room from which she stole the garments had she sat, time after time, and listened to the Gospel, and no peace came. What was to be done? Her burden became intolerable, and confession was the only way of relief. Ah, the confession of sin is a very humbling one, but an absolutely necessary one. “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso *confesseth* and *forsaketh* them shall have mercy” (Prov. xxviii. 13).

To confess my sin is to own the depravity of my heart that commits it; and this is humiliating, unless previously humbled by the goodness of God. But if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The next morning she went to Madame ——’s house, and, taking money with her, confessed with sorrow her theft and paid for the stolen garments. It was not long before she was assured of dear Madame ——’s forgiveness. But what was still more blessed, when the confession was made to God, the sense of Divine forgiveness

came into her heart, and she was assured that God for Christ's sake had forgiven her (Eph. iv. 32). Now could she say, as David in Psalm xxxii. 5: "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, . . . and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Blessed words, "*Thou forgavest.*"

Maybe these lines will fall under the eyes of some one who longs after Divine forgiveness. May I then ask you, my dear friend, if you have been to God, and with an upright heart confessed your guilt and sin. "Is there any secret thing with thee?" Is there anything your eyes wink at? Is there some hidden guilt, some unconfessed sin, that you are not prepared to forsake? If so, how can you expect words of forgiveness to reach your ear, if your words of confession do not reach His ear? Go, then, to Him. Unbosom your "secrets." You can really hide nothing from God, nor tell Him anything He is unacquainted with; and be assured none will deal so mercifully with you. The man who judges himself God will not judge; but him who does not God will judge. When the prodigal said: "Father, I have sinned against thee," he found himself in the father's arms.

May you, my dear reader, receive the word of forgiveness preached through a crucified, risen, and exalted Christ.

"Dark though thy guilt appear,
And deep its crimson dye,
There's boundless mercy here,
Do not from mercy fly;
Oh, do not doubt His word;
There's pardon full and free;
For justice smote the Lord
And sheathes her sword for thee.
Come, come, come."

J. H. L.

POSSESSION AND PROFESSION.

THE two properly go together. We can only truly make profession of that which we possess. There may be some of whom it could be said, that theirs is an empty or untrue profession. I speak of a religious profession, a mere form of piety, but the power thereof denied. Again, there are those who say that they make no profession, they would not be hypocrites. To such I would say, Why don't you profess? *Ought you not* to profess the Lord Jesus Christ? Has He not said, "Whosoever shall *confess* [practically the same as *profess*] Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven"? And, remember, there is no middle ground between confession and denial (Matt. x. 32, 33). Why do you not confess Him? Surely He is worthy.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we have this word "profession," and twice those addressed are exhorted *to hold it fast*. Jesus Christ is there said to be the Apostle and High Priest of "our profession," as Moses and Aaron were the apostle and the high priest of Israel's profession. Now a profession that was not based upon realities would be a mere sham; but let us take the history of Israel; it has been recorded for our learning. Let us hear their own profession as they sang with Moses on the shores of the Red Sea—"Jehovah is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation." What a profession! Was it not true? Yes, to the letter. Had He not sheltered them from the consequences of their own sins under a blood-sprinkled lintel, and made the waves and waters of the Red Sea a way of salvation from the power of the enemy? They were

then in possession of the *salvation of Jehovah*. They were not in possession of Canaan yet, but they possessed the faithfulness of Jehovah, and the stability of all that He had promised. They might well utter their profession in a song of praise. There was more still; they possessed the unwearied care of Jehovah as morning by morning for forty years the manna fell for them and sustained them; they drank, too, of the rock that followed them; their garments waxed not old, nor did their foot swell. They might well profess; but, alas! Israel "forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation."

In New Testament times, also, Paul spoke of the advantage of the Jew as possessing the "oracles of God" (see Rom. III. 1, 2, and IX. 4): "To whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen." For three and a half years Jesus the Son of God went about doing good in the midst of Israel. Reader! I want to show you what that nation had in their possession; and their profession of such blessings, did they continue to make it, would have been well founded, but with many FAITH *never made those various blessings their very own*, and profession died upon their lips, and murmuring and complaining took its place, and likewise rejection of Christ, in whom all their promises were Yea and Amen.

Now listen while the same apostle details some of our possessions as Gentiles who have been brought into the goodness of God. We were

not born in heathen lands, nor among the guilty and unbelieving nation of Israel. We were born where the illumination of God and of His Gospel has shone, where the oracles of God—the good and gracious Word of God, not the book of the law or the tables of stone—are our birthright. We were born after the Lord Jesus Christ had finished His service on earth and taken His place on high, and consequently to us God's giving is not *upon earth* now, but it is heavenly giving; and the Holy Ghost having a dwelling-place upon earth, professed Christians have come into companionship of the blessed Spirit of God; His powerful witness is more or less felt and owned. He is the witness of a perfect and accomplished salvation subsisting in Him who has *sat down* at the right hand of God, and of righteousness perfect and complete in the presence of God. He is the witness, too, in the Gospel of the grace of God of the heavenly grace presented to men in Jesus the Son of God. Look at the Spirit's testimony in Scripture, and see how Jesus was always desirous that faith should appropriate His fulness.

Better never to have been born than that the light which through the Holy Spirit's witness shines *around* you should be darkness *in* you. Faith in a Christian does not profess anything *about himself*; he has nothing to confess save his own guilty and lost condition by nature; he professes Jesus and His salvation—all there is reality.

“The ground of our profession
Is Jesus and His blood;
He gives us the possession
Of everlasting good.”

The claim of faith to the accomplished and preached salvation which is in Jesus is never disallowed. Claim it, dear reader, and profess what your faith takes into its own possession. Look diligently lest you fail of the grace of God when the light of it shines for you in the Son of God.

T. H. R.

DEEP WATERS.

"PILOT," said a poor, nervous, timid passenger, as the steamer was making her way up a rather dangerous river, "do you know where all the hidden rocks, quicksands, and dangerous places are in the river?" "No," was his hasty reply, "I do not. But I know where deep water is." What comforting words to the timid one: "I know where deep water is." How often the Lord's dear people are pressed down beyond measure because they are occupied with dangerous rocks and difficulties, to-day's needs and to-morrow's cares. What will happen? How shall I get through? I am afraid to meet to-morrow, and such-like, are the oft-repeated words. Beloved fellow-Christian, leave the dangerous places and think of the deep waters. What are they, you say? "Keep yourselves in the love of God." Keep in its warm and blessed rays. Let it permeate your whole spiritual being. Those depths are truly "waters to swim in; waters that cannot be passed over" (Ezek. XLVII. 5). There is no danger there. There the heart is kept in perfect peace. The Lord give us the needed grace to "keep ourselves in the love of God" (Jude 21).

J. H. L.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

OBJECTS OF INTEREST.

“SIR,” said a gentleman, who was seated in a railway carriage, to one who entered in a state of perturbation, believing that he had just been cheated, “have you made the wonderful discovery that you are an object of interest to the heart of God?” A quiet moment had arrived; at the hearer’s request the question was repeated; more conversation followed.

On the next Sunday a clergyman, on entering his pulpit, began his address by saying that since he last stood there he had realized a marvellous truth, had learned that he, personally, was an object of interest to the heart of God.

Are you, my reader, familiar with this blessed fact? Let me remind you of five proofs of the interest and love of the heart of God, which is independent of yourself, and of what you are, personally.

He gave His Son.

He bruised His Son.

He raised His Son.

He sent His Spirit.

He recorded His love in the Scriptures.

Let us consider God’s object in calling attention to Himself. His object is blessing.

Suppose a stranger accosted you with the question: “Do you owe anything in this town?”

You would not understand the object of his enquiry; you would almost certainly feel affronted, and I think that you would reply, "What is that to you?"

Suppose that the stranger goes on, "I conclude from what you say that you have no debts." Perhaps you would return, "I did not say that; why do you wish to know?"

"I wish to know in order that I may pay your debts," says the stranger. And now you understand the motive of the questions put to you, and you regard them in a different light.

In the eighth chapter of the Book of Acts, four conditions of men are mentioned, and we find that different servants of God are equipped and sent to meet those conditions. In verse 4 we read that the Church at Jerusalem having been scattered because of persecution, "they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." The good news, in its wide aspect, was proclaimed, according to the counsel of God that the Gospel should be preached to every creature under heaven.

In verse 5 we are told of Philip, a true evangelist subject to God, and therefore guided by God; he goes down to Samaria, and there preaches Christ. Now the Samaritans had already been made acquainted with Jesus, as the Messiah for whom they looked. The woman to whom our Lord had spoken at Jacob's well had bidden the men of the city, "Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did." Many complied with the request; and after Christ had tarried with

them two days, they “believed because of His own word; and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.” (John iv. 41, 42).

But no doubt the Samaritans had heard that He whom they had learned to regard as their deliverer had been crucified at Jerusalem. Their hopes must have been dashed to the ground, and they needed to learn that the same Jesus who was crucified had now been exalted to the right hand of God, as a Prince and a Saviour. No wonder, then, that there was “great joy in that city,” when Philip went down and preached the risen Christ.

There was more still for the Samaritans to be taught, and the needed vessel for their instruction must be prepared of God. So Peter goes down and preaches to them the word of *the Lord* (ver. 25).

These Samaritans, who had known and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, were objects of interest to God. And thus it was that He sent, first Philip, to tell them of the risen and exalted Christ, and then Peter, to reveal that Jesus was also *Lord*—One to whom they owed allegiance, and in whose Divine hands all power was placed in heaven and in earth. To the Samaritans Christ was presented under His full title as the *Lord Jesus Christ*, and the truth preached to them is much needed to-day. Christ, as Saviour, is received by many; Christ, as Lord, is less often acknowledged.

In the same chapter (Acts viii.) we see God's interest shown in the poor Ethiopian eunuch, who, feeling an unsatisfied need in his soul, takes the long journey to the house of Jehovah in Jerusalem—the house at the dedication of which Solomon had prayed (2 Chron. vi. 32, 33): “Concerning the stranger which is not of Thy people Israel, but is come from a far country, for Thy great name's sake . . . if they come and pray in this house, then hear Thou in heaven, Thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to Thee for.” This “stranger” had come to the house of God, but he had come *too late*; already the doom had been pronounced, “Behold your house is left unto you desolate.” But God will never allow a seeking soul to go away unblessed. And so Philip is taken away from the scene of blessing in Samaria; and as a subject servant, without questioning why, he goes into the desert, there to meet one who is an object of interest to the heart of God. He finds the eunuch reading the word of God, not ashamed to do so before others, as so many seem to be in the present day. Directed by the Holy Spirit, Philip interrupts the reading man at the very word which is suitable. Had the eunuch gone on to the next sentence, his thoughts would have been diverted to other channels. At this point God spoke to him; at this point Philip *preached unto him Jesus*. Jesus as sin-bearer, Jesus who meets the sinner's need, was the Saviour whom he needed; and the effect upon the Ethiopian, when he learned of Him “whose life was taken from the earth,” was instantaneous. His desire

was to follow the Saviour into death, and this, by figure, he did in baptism. Now, the eunuch begins to learn something of a new and risen life; now he finds himself not only saved from sin, but the possessor of a Friend in the central glory of God, and he "went on his way rejoicing."

That rejoicing may be yours, reader, if you turn to the Saviour whom God has provided for sin. Only believe the wondrous truth that the heart of the Eternal is deeply interested in your welfare. God desires you to know *Jesus* as sin-bearer, to know *Christ* as the exalted One, and to know *the Lord* as Him to whom your allegiance is due. Never forget the touching truth that God is interested in you personally, that He knows all about you and desires to bless you.

E. C—P.

THE TWO DIVERS.

WHEN the torpedo boat No. — sank in deep water, not far from where I am now writing, great efforts were made by the Admiralty to raise the wreck.

Divers were employed to fix cables to the hull, and pursued their hazardous work far down beneath the surface of the sea.

While one of these men was thus engaged, five-and-twenty fathoms deep, his comrade above heard him signalling for assistance. Faint and helpless, far from human aid, the poor fellow could only send up his cry of distress through the telephone attached to his helmet. But it was heard,

and his faithful fellow-diver in the boat above replied, "I will come down and help you."

Reader, has such a cry ever gone up from your heart and lips to the throne of God as to the need of your soul? Is it possible that during the years you have spent on earth, in any moment of which you might have been called away, the danger of that soul of yours being eternally lost has not once brought you on your knees to cry for mercy? Wake up to your peril now, then! Let your cry go up, and it will be heard (Rom. x. 13).

Down went the brave fellow-diver, and soon stood beside his fainting comrade. He found that the "life-tube" had become entangled owing to the strong current, and that consequently he was being slowly but surely suffocated.

They could not speak to each other, but grasping his hand to let his fainting comrade know that help had come, he set to work to release him from his entanglement, and, having done so, bore him to the surface.

Deep down in death, ruined by sin, entangled in Satan's chains, lay man, when God, in boundless love, gave His only begotten Son to be the Saviour. Willingly Jesus came from heaven to earth to save the lost. Upon the cross He took upon Himself the burden of man's guilt, and bore all the weight of God's righteous judgment against the sinner.

He finished the work which He came to do, and God the Father gave testimony to the efficacy of that work by raising Christ from the dead.

Now He sits on high, the Living One, able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by Him;

and He will receive you, dear reader, this very hour, if you come to Him. Oh ! trust Him *now*.

With sadness we have to relate how the diver, rescued from the deep, succumbed through the shock, and died soon after reaching the surface. But oh ! with what joy can we testify of the power of Christ to save and hold in life every one of His own for ever.

Listen to His precious words : " I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." " My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all ; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one " (John x. 28-30).

We have not now to say, " Who shall ascend into heaven ? " (that is, to bring Christ down from above) ? or, " Who shall descend into the deep ? " (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). God's message of salvation is : " The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart : . . . that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved " (Rom. x. 8, 9).

Christ is so precious to God the Father, and His work upon the cross has so perfectly met all the righteous claims of God's throne, that our acceptance is, and can be, on that ground alone. To seek another is to neglect God's great salvation ; and the end of this is eternal death. W. H. B.

THE RIVER OF LIFE.

THE view from the summit of the Great Pyramid reveals a long narrow strip of verdure—green trees, grass and crops,—while a sharply-defined line on either side marks where this ends and the bare sand begins. It is the course of the great river Nile, and that line marks the precise limit of irrigation, and furnishes a striking illustration of the inspired statement, “Everything shall live whither the river cometh.”

There is surpassing interest in taking a comprehensive view of the course of the great river of the grace of God, as it is now winding its way through this thirsty scene, so that it can be said :—

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

Frequent mention is made of “the river” in Scripture. It was seen flowing out of the Garden of Eden. The great host of Israel when crossing the burning desert under Jehovah’s protection was followed by the life-sustaining stream, miraculously supplied from the smitten rock. The sweet Psalmist of Israel sings of “a river, the streams whereof make glad the City of God.” The Prophet Ezekiel sees the vision of a mighty stream issuing out of God’s House. These are but figures of the true.

Once on Sychar’s well there sat One, Jesus the Son of the Living God, Who spoke of Himself as the Giver of living water. He had come that the river of God’s grace might freely flow to poor lost

man. He found His joy in dispensing living water, and that poor outcast, the Samaritan sinner, drank that day of the life-giving stream to her eternal blessing and joy.

But if God was to be revealed as "the God of all grace;" if that living stream was to flow freely to thirsty souls, the great work of atonement must be done—"the Son of Man *must* be lifted up."

The marks of Calvary, seen now upon the glorified Saviour at God's right hand, tell that He has been to the cross; His presence there tells that God is perfectly satisfied with His work; while the presence of the Holy Spirit of God on earth, and the preaching of the "glad tidings of the Blessed God," tell that the great floodgates have been lifted up, and that God—the Living God—has approached man in grace.

Before we follow the river further, may we ask, dear reader: Do *you* know the grace of God? Have you the assurance of the forgiveness of *your* sins? Do *you* know that in the death of Jesus every question *between God and you* has been perfectly met, and that, as a righteous consequence, it is your happy lot to have "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"? If not, be assured that God would have it so, and He is seeking to bless you freely through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The day of God's grace will soon be over. The river will cease to flow over this scene. The happy throng of the redeemed will be "caught up" to be "for ever with the Lord," and then "he that is unjust will be unjust still."

Meantime this scene is a "dry and thirsty land, where no water is." Nothing abides; nothing here is capable of producing lasting satisfaction. All is under death. Still "living water" is offered, and the invitation is given to you, "Who-soever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17).

If only thirsty souls would "stoop down and drink and live," they would find a spring of eternal satisfaction and joy.

The source of this river cannot be found here. It is found in the heart of the blessed God. "The waters issued out of the sanctuary" (Ezek. xlvii.); "The river of water of life proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. xxii. 1). God desires your blessing, dear reader, and it is nothing *in you* that calls forth His great grace. He is the Source of it. God is "the fountain of living waters" (Jer. ii. 13).

The course of this river is no ordinary one. The prophet Ezekiel saw that the waters "came down at the south side of the altar." Thus it must be. That altar is the cross of Calvary. The grace of God could never reach us but by way of the death of Christ. The Lamb of God has been here; His precious blood has been shed; the atoning work is finished, and from thence has flowed the grace of God.

The river widened grandly on the day of Pentecost, when three thousand souls "gladly received the word." Wider still it became as the apostles proceeded to fulfil their injunction "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Still onwards and outwards has it flowed, until at last it has reached—YOU! It is flowing at your very feet. Are you thirsting? “Let him that is athirst, COME!” Do you linger, thinking you are not thirsty enough? Delay not, for *whosoever will*, let him take the water of life freely.

Some may only have begun to appreciate the grace of God, and thus stand only ankle deep in the river: with others the waters may be to the knees. A deeper apprehension is the portion of some, but thrice happy are those who know the grace of God as “waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over” (Ezek. xlvii. 5).

It will be thus for all eternity—those ages to come when He will “show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

But a word of warning must be given. Beware lest you despise this grace. That the Gospel has been heard by you, and that this river is within your reach, is a cause for profound thankfulness to those who love your soul; but if, after all, you treat the overtures of God in grace with indifference, you cannot do so with impunity. It will be at the peril of your soul. Terrible will be the portion of those who refuse it. “Behold, ye despisers,—and wonder—and perish!”

May it be yours to drink deeply of “that life-giving stream” for God’s glory and your eternal blessing.

F. S. M.

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters” (Isa. lv. 1).

THE GLORIES OF THE COMING KING.

PSALM xlv.

IT is important to notice that when the "*King's*" wife is spoken of in Scripture, it is the earthly Jerusalem; when the "*Lamb's*" wife, the heavenly Jerusalem.

In this Psalm it is *Israel's* admiration of her King that is before us, and the praise she counts Him worthy of. But this is none the less grateful to us to-day. Do we not value what others have to say, though only from their own standpoint, in praise of the One we love? An officer's courageous conduct on the battlefield is not what makes him so dear to the loving hearts in his own home. But they are none the less glad to hear his praises in the lips of others, though of an entirely different character to their own.

In such a spirit we enter on the enjoyment of a psalm like this. We listen to the bubbling up and boiling over of a heart that delights in Him, till ours overflow also. "My heart," the psalm begins, "is the bubbling up of a good matter" (margin). Its theme is "the King."

Then follows a detailed description of Him:

What He is to look upon—"Fairer than the children of men" (verse 2).

What He is to listen to—"Grace is poured into Thy lips" (verse 2).

What God thinks of Him—"God hath blessed Thee for ever" (verse 2).

What He is as a Warrior-King—"Meek" but "mighty" (compare Zech. ix. 9; Matt. xxi. 5). There is glory in His majesty. He rides on to

certain victory. His "sword" and "arrows" are sharp and terrible for those who oppose Him. [Here contrast the *praises* in the heart of His friends (verse 1) and the "arrows" in the heart of His foes (verse 5).]

The character of the King ; His throne and His kingdom.—He is "anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows." His throne is "for ever," and His sceptre a "right sceptre." He loves righteousness and hates wickedness. Therefore has He been "anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows" (verse 7). Compare the anointing of David, "in the midst of his brethren" (1 Sam. xvi. 6-13).

His personal graces—"All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia" (verse 8).

His associates—"King's daughters" are among His "honourable women." "The queen," in vesture of gold, stands at His right hand. The daughter of Tyre is there with a gift, and the rich among the people intreat His favour—they take the beggar's place, and, wealthy as they may be, own their dependence on Him. "In His favour is life" (Ps. xxx. 5).

Last, we have a description of the "*daughter*." She cannot count on her *natural* standing as of the stock of Israel after the flesh. She is to "forget" her "own people" and her "father's house"; and an inward work of grace can alone bring this about. But this is just what characterises her; she is "all glorious *within*," and this is clearly witnessed by what is *without*. "Her clothing is of *wrought gold*," and with it there is *practical suitability* for the King's presence. She stands in

His presence in "raiment of needlework," the outcome of a patient stitch after stitch "endeavour to be agreeable to Him" (2 Cor. v. 9.) By no mere self-assumption does she come there. She is "*brought* unto the King," and He who "*brought*" her counts her worthy. He who once brought her from Egypt's cruel bondage, to see in due time "Great David" as her King, and sing the praises of God's anointed Deliverer, shall bring her once more from still more terrible "tribulation" into the gladness, and rejoicing, and overflowing blessing of Zion's hill, there to see the "King in His beauty," and to praise His name "for ever and ever."

And it would be all of grace. The "daughter" could not look back on the "fathers" for any valid claim to kingdom gladness and blessing, nor rest in the fact that the "Messiah" sprang from her. She was only "the King's *daughter*." She owed her all to Him, and knows no other ground of blessing save as entirely on the ground of grace through Him (Matt. iii. 9).

This principle of blessing is just the same for us. The old Adam-generation would never do for God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and "they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (John iii. 6; Rom. viii. 8). There must be an entirely new generation, such as could be associated with Him in resurrection—"His fellows" (verse 7 of Ps. xlv. and Heb. i. 9). "Sanctifier and sanctified all of one" (Heb. ii. 11). All must be new creation, where "old things are passed away," where "all things are become new, and all things are of God" (2 Cor. v. 17, 18).

Oh, what must the Kingdom be when *such* a King reigns supreme, and such a people are His happy subjects—a people that shall praise Him for ever and ever! But what will it be for the bride the Lamb's wife, to see Him, who "loved the Church and gave Himself for it," so honoured, and honoured in the very place where both Israel and the Church so shamefully dishonoured Him! What will it be to share the same glory with Him and be the admired expression of His beauty to a wondering world! (2 Thess i. 10).

"Lord, haste that day," may well be our prayer; and well may all that love Him say, AMEN.

"A ransomed earth breaks forth in song,
Her sin-stained ages overpast,
Her yearning, "Lord, how long, how long!"
Exchanged for joy at last, at last!
Angels carry the royal commands,
Peace beams forth throughout all lands,
The trees of the fields shall clap their hands,
Thus will it be when the King comes."

"Now Zion's Hill, with glory crowned,
Uplifts her head with joy once more;
And Zion's King, once scorned, disowned,
Extends His rule from shore to shore.
Sing, for the land her Lord regains!
Sing, for the Son of David reigns!
And living streams o'erflow her plains.
Thus will it be when the King comes!"

"His Name shall endure for ever: His Name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed. . . . Let the whole earth be filled with His glory; Amen, and Amen" (Ps. lxxii. 17, 19).

THE PATHWAY AND ITS END.

LORD, a pathway lies before us,
And for this we seek Thy strength;
Keep, and by Thy grace restore us,
Till we reach Thy home at length.

Mercy that will lead us onward,
Step by step along the way,
Just the needed grace from Thee, Lord,
All-sufficient night or day.

If the night be dark and stormy,
Thou canst light and shelter be,
And the way, though rough and stony,
Leads us on and home to Thee.

When we reach the glorious mansion
In the Father's house above,
There to view the whole expansion
Of the vast domain of love.

Then with joyful hearts before Thee,
We shall praise for trials here,
While unnumbered hosts adore Thee,
Blest employ for ever there.

Until then Thy grace abounding
Cheers us as we press along.
Goodness, mercy, still surrounding,
Moves our hearts to raise a song.

T. W. P.

“Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness that He might humble thee, and that He might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end” (Deu. viii. 2, 16).

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

A GENTILE SEEKER.

CORNELIUS was, as we read in the 10th chapter of The Acts, "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway."

"What a lovely character!" I hear a humanitarian of to-day say. "What a Christian, and what an example to Christians!" And yet this man was divinely bidden in a vision, to "send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter, who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts xi. 13, 14). Cornelius walked faithfully according to the light which he had; he put all that he knew into daily practice; and God ordained that further light—full light—should be brought him.

Peter, to whom Christ had given the keys of the kingdom of heaven, to open the door to Jew and Gentile, was at Joppa. And there he learns in a vision that he, the exclusive Jew, may no longer call common or unclean that which God has cleansed. Three times the vision came to him, that he might be fully assured of the mind of God in the matter. And then, being willing to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, Peter had no

hesitation concerning his clear duty, when he heard that three men sought him, who had come from the Gentile centurion of Cæsarea, Cornelius.

On the morrow Peter took certain brethren with him, and went down to Cæsarea. There he found the kinsfolk and near friends of Cornelius gathered together, in order that they might share in the blessing which God was ready to bestow by the hands of His servant Peter.

What a sight for heaven !—a vessel prepared to impart the blessing, and vessels prepared to receive it. “We are all here,” said Cornelius (verse 33) “present, before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.” A blessed time, indeed, was granted to the preacher. How easy it was for him, out of his full heart, to tell the message with which he was entrusted !

What was that message ? To whom did it relate ? Did the divinely-commissioned Apostle announce to Cornelius that his devotedness had saved him, that his almsgiving and prayers had gained him a place among the redeemed, that no more could be required of him, or of any other man, than to live up to the light which he possessed ? Such doctrines may, or may not, be preached to-day, but they do not comprise the message which God sent His servant to deliver to Cornelius and his household.

No ; the message contained no reference to Cornelius personally. It was the Gospel, good news, and God has no good news to tell about man ; it is the Gospel “*of God*, concerning His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord ” (Rom. i. 1-3).

To Cornelius and the little company whom he had gathered together, Peter told seven things about the Lord Jesus, His work and place.

1. God sent the word to the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ.

2. Jesus was anointed by the Holy Ghost, and went about doing good.

3. Jesus was slain and hanged on a tree.

4. God raised Jesus the third day, and showed Him openly.

5. Jesus was shown not to all the people, but unto witnesses, chosen before of God, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead.

6. The witnesses were to testify of Jesus, that God had ordained Him to be the Judge of quick and dead.

7. *Whosoever* (the word is here used for the first time in the Apostolic preaching) believeth in Jesus shall receive remission of sins.

Here was good news indeed. It was news which Cornelius and his friends could never have obtained under the old order of things through any work or effort of their own ; but it was now freely proclaimed, and “ *whosoever* ” expressed its scope.

Mark the result of gathering together to hear God speak—not to listen to the Reverend Somebody, or the great Dr. Someone else—but to receive the Word of God, delivered by His servant, “ While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word ” (Acts xi. 44). The word “ heard ” here denotes “ believed,” or “ heard believingly.”

The message delivered by Peter was from God ; it was received in all its fullness, and the effect had

been cleansing by the precious blood applied by the Divine Word to the souls of the hearers. The Holy Ghost had come to take up His abode in the sanctified bodies of the believers, to give them new power, and to be answerable for their safe conduct through this scene of contrariety and conflict, till the heavenly home was reached. Light and joy unspeakable were to fill their souls, and they were "saved," indeed.

Baptism follows for the converts—a true figure of death to earth and sin; it pointed to the fact that the converts belonged no longer to earth, but had their part with Christ in heaven. They go out of sight under the water, as those who have no title to a place here, and then rise to take their resurrection place; they own Christ, not only as Saviour, but also as Lord.

Thus we see that the Roman centurion, a seeker after light, becomes a Christian, for he has heard of, and believed in, the Lord Jesus Christ.

E. C—P.

DESTITUTION.

How dark the heart that never, never knew
The love and sunshine of a Saviour's face!
How poor the soul that never, never drew
From the rich storehouse of His boundless grace!

How blind the eye that never saw the need
Of flying to the Saviour's arms for rest;
That cannot, in His peerless merits, read
A full expression of the Father's "best!"

GEO. C.

GOD'S KINDNESS, MAN'S HARDNESS.

“Despisest thou the riches of His goodness [or kindness] and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness [or kindness] of God leadeth thee to repentance? But, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (Rom. ii. 4. 5).

WHAT a record of kindness on God's part, and of hardness on man's, has been the history of the human family.

The descendants of those who survived the Flood defied God by the Tower of Babel. Those rescued by God's wonder-working hand from slavery in Egypt rebelled against Him in the wilderness. After recounting God's great goodness and the multitude of His loving-kindnesses, His pity, His tender sympathy, and how He carried them all the days of old, *Isaiah* had to say, “But they rebelled and vexed His Holy Spirit” (Isa. lxxiii. 7-10).

After all God's deliverances by judges and kings, and all the warnings by His prophets, *Jeremiah* says, “They hearkened not, but hardened their neck” (chap. vii. 23-26). *Ezekiel* calls them “impudent children,” “stiff-hearted,” and “rebellious” (chap. ii. 3, 4).

Zechariah shows that they had “refused to hearken, and stopped their ears that they should not hear.” “Yea,” that “they made their hearts like adamant” (Zech. vii. 11, 12).

Lastly, *Malachi* speaks of their awful insensibility. After all that Jehovah had done for them, they even questioned the reality of His care for them. "Wherein hast Thou loved us?" is their hardened retort to Him (Mal. i. 2).

What will God do next? Well, it was as though He had said, I will answer that impertinent question of yours myself, in Person. Hence we find that Matthew i. announces a Saviour born. Jesus, "Emmanuel," "GOD WITH US," and "God with us" meant "God for us." "He shall save His people from their sins." When Jesus came into this world, this one great purpose was before Him. God in grace was to be fully made known to His revolted creature man. The lie of the adversary, that God was *against* man, must be *exposed* to the very bottom, and the real truth fully made known.

This was the mission of Jesus here. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth" (John i. 14). The only begotten Son, in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (verse 18).

What He said, what He did, what He was, all went to complete that blessed declaration. His life was spent in acts of kindness, and His death crowned all. As another has well expressed it, "He was surrounded by an atmosphere of blessing." So that where men liked, when men liked, and as often as they liked, they might avail themselves of it. Did He not *say* that God was "Kind to the unthankful and to the evil?" He did (Luke v. 35). But that was not all. He was Himself, in lowly grace, the perfect embodiment

of all the kind things He said and did. "*He did kind things so kindly*," for in Him the "kindness and love" of God Himself appeared in absolute perfection.

Wicked men opposed, but they could not draw forth anything from Him that was not perfectly delightful to the heart of God the Father. Peter heard Him reviled and saw Him insulted. How did He meet the affront? Hear the inspired record. "Who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, he threatened not" (1 Pet. ii. 23).

When a benefit was craved for from Him, He looked for no merit, He demanded no recompense. Though He did what no other on earth could do, He did not always get the common civility of grateful thanks for the blessing bestowed. Yet nothing stayed the flow of His gracious kindness. How amazing! How soul-refreshing! In David we get a charming type of this grace. After all that he had suffered of wrong and ingratitude from Saul, David, "the man after God's own heart," enquired, "*Is there not yet any of the house of Saul that I may show the kindness of God to him?*" (2 Sam. ix. 3).

But if his kindness was great to Saul's grandson, how deep his affection for Absalom. Yet his love was met by heartless, hardened hostility. Of Absalom's end—his sad, sad end—we have all heard, and the bitter tears of a father's slighted love too. Only a *little* of the "kindness of God" was found in the heart of David: it was *all* found in the bosom of Jesus. What, then, must the end be of one who coldly turns from Him, or daringly

despises His fervent longings. For no love like His! He wept over those who would *not* accept it, and went on to the cross to die for the sins of all who would,—yea, for all, to the end of time, who would find room in their hearts for His love and for Himself.

Has the reader's heart been won to trust Him yet? If not, beware of being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Did it ever occur to you why you can do things now without the least uneasiness, when once they would have alarmed your conscience greatly? Does it not speak loudly of the hardness of heart that is creeping over you, like the gradual effect of a petrifying well?

Perhaps at first your conscience was soothed by a sort of secret intention to *abandon* your sinful course. This held you; with such good intentions before you, you considered it safe to continue. Now, perhaps, you can go deeper into sin than ever you once considered yourself capable of, and this with no alarm whatever.

The writer was once speaking to a young man in his father's workshop. He was engaged in replacing some veneer that had been splintered from a piece of old furniture.

After applying the glue and putting the veneer in position, he drove a small tack into it. "What is that for?" the writer enquired. "It is to hold it till it is hard." "I suppose you can then take the tack away, and it will hold without it?"

"Yes, that is it."

Now, would you not be wise to take a hint from this as to what the enemy may be doing with you,

my reader? How often has some good intention for the future acted like a nail to hold the soul in a course of evil. And this may go on until the heart becomes hardened by it, and the conscience thoroughly seared and deadened. Beware! "Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief" (Prov. xxviii. 14). "He that, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Prov. xxix. 1).

If you are not willing to be "HARDENED," be willing to HEARKEN.

"To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not our heart."

Geo. C.

FORGIVENESS AND POWER.

IT is not what we can be in the way of fitting ourselves for God that is the secret of our blessing, but the knowledge of what He has revealed Himself to be for us.

God has made Himself known in Christ as seeking our blessing for His own sake. As we learn this, it lifts us beyond the thought of seeking to make ourselves fit for Him.

Legality sticks hard to us. It is that which is the slowest to die in the human mind. Some minds are peculiarly legal and always disposed to turn in upon themselves in some way, to look for that by which they may recommend themselves to God's favour.

Satan does not mind what he holds our souls in bondage by, provided he can keep us in darkness

and deprive us of the light and liberty of the Gospel, and hence of the enjoyment of grace.

The knowledge of grace alone can give liberty, and the *enjoyment* of it keep our souls in constant freedom. Grace is the attitude of God unchangingly toward us. He never changes. His attitude to us in Christ is not in the least affected by our weakness of apprehension even of His grace toward us.

Grace makes no demands. It supposes all the evil in us and looks for no good. It never imputes, but brings to us what our souls need. It is in the apprehension of this that we are enabled to appropriate the grace brought to us.

In Matthew ix. two things are brought before us :—

1. FORGIVENESS.
2. POWER.

“Thy sins be forgiven thee.” Every soul that is pressed with the sense of guilt must feel the *need* of forgiveness. No relief of conscience is possible unless the knowledge of forgiveness is *enjoyed*. There could be no liberty as the result of power received, unless the conscience is cleared from all imputation or charge.

Nothing is of such vital importance to an awakened soul. “Thy sins be forgiven thee” released the palsied man from all his past obligations toward God.

The knowledge of God’s eternal forgiveness of all our sins for Christ’s sake, apart from merit in ourselves, brings peace to the troubled mind and joy to the heart.

The death of Christ has obliterated our sins for ever. Because of this God will never call them up against us. "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." "I, even I, am He which blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."

Such simple words, if believed, would lift the burden from off us. These words let us know the mind of God about our sins. They enable the one who believes them to look up into the face of God and see His smile of love instead of what we expected—the frown of His wrath.

All is perfectly clear on *His* side. What makes this doubly sure is that the One who bore our sins in His own body on the tree is now in heaven, and lives before the holy face of God without them. God always looks at Him, and therefore never sees our sins.

POWER.

It is remarkable that Jesus met the palsied man's whole condition, and therefore He says to him, "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk." What an astonishing thing it must have been to the people to see a man who had been carried to Him on a bed in helplessness, now go from the presence of Jesus carrying his bed! What a testimony that was to the power of Jesus as a Divine Person!

In this connection it is remarkable that when Peter announced the glad message, "To Him give all the prophets witness that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins," that it immediately follows, "The Holy Ghost fell on *all* them which heard the word."

It is through the impartation of the Spirit that we receive power for walk and testimony. We have no power to carry that which carried us apart from the Spirit. He has been sent to dwell in all believers, that He might impart new life; and in the power of that new life we can live above what carried us away in the flesh.

"Ye shall receive *power* after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you," said the Lord Jesus to His disciples ere He ascended to heaven. Universal testimony was to be the result. "This spake He of the Spirit, that they which believe on Him should receive." Living water was to flow out from the assembly as the result of the new power.

When the power came on the day of Pentecost, what a marvellous effect it produced in those who received it, and also upon others through their testimony. How the disciples were lifted above the fear of a nation strong enough in power to crush them! How they were emboldened to charge home upon that nation the guilt of murder! This was a grave charge upon a religious people. But there was no power to rebut it; on the contrary, many went down under it, being convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The assembly was called out, formed, preserved, and comforted by the Holy Ghost. Stephen, the first martyr, was supported by the Spirit, and so raised above the rage and malice of man that in the greatest meekness He submits to all the suffering put on him, and in the spirit of his Master said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

P. W.

THE WORD IN POWER.

“ *Hear the voice of His mouth* ” (Acts xxii. 14).

THERE is an ancient legend, which tells how there once appeared in a certain church a mysterious stranger in the garb of a preaching friar. No one knew who he was. He preached with wonderful earnestness and natural power, and set forth the truth with marvellous clearness and fullness. The people listened with rapt attention, and were even enthusiastic in their admiration of the preacher's eloquence.

In the vestry the stranger revealed himself, and it was discovered that the preacher was none other than the Prince of Darkness himself. The monks and friars expostulated, and asked how he could preach the Gospel so faithfully, seeing that his own kingdom was endangered thereby. He answered, “ Well, but did you not perceive that whilst I preached the truth—and preached it earnestly—I preached it *without the Holy Ghost* ? ” The mere letter of the truth, without the Spirit's power, even though there be the force of human eloquence and enthusiasm, is powerless to accomplish the blessing of souls. There is no *living* voice in such preaching.

A little child said to its mother, as they came home from the meeting, “ They talk such a lot ; but they never seem to tell you *how* ! ”

The lack is solemnly apparent to-day, amid so much Gospel preaching. The doctrine is sound, and the form correct, the address elaborate and telling ; as in the case of the prophets of Baal (1 Kings xviii.), there is the altar, the bullock, and

everything as it should be outwardly, but verse 20 adds, "But there was *no voice*," no impression, nothing to make men and women feel there is a *living God* there. The voice of the living God is not heard in the souls of people. We have known what it was to come from a meeting, and report that God was there of a truth (1 Cor. xiv.). Nothing can be more solemn than the thought of the devil having gained the day; God has no satisfaction in a religious performance (Isa. i. 11-16).

How wearisome to all concerned if God be not in it; if His voice be not heard. You say, "You write as if you thought there was something wrong." I do. "*He could* do no mighty works there, because of their unbelief." There is no voice, in the sense that God, while omnipotent, is not working, not manifesting Himself in saving grace, owing to unbelief.

What need, then, to press to-day the Apostle's warning in Hebrews iii., "Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith), To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the day of provocation, etc." (verses 6-19). Yet, blessed to tell it, His living voice can still be heard to-day, and not without its own remarkable effect: "The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness." Unto you, O men, I call, and *my voice* is to the sons of men" (Prov. viii. 4). "The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof" (Ps. l.).

From the moment man fell in the garden, the voice was heard, "Where art thou?" and all along the line of ages has His living voice called man back to Himself. But, alas, as in Israel's case,

history repeats itself, so that when His voice proclaims His holiness and glory, as well as His mercy, the language of the human heart is, as Israel to Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear : but let not God speak with us, lest we die" (Exod. xx. 19).

You would have thought, to read the history of the first man and his fallen family, God will surely abandon him. But no. We find in Isaiah xl., the prophet describing the voice, and what it declares, "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together ; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry ? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field . . . the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our Lord shall stand for ever" (verses 3-8). In course of time that voice was heard distinctly in the wilderness, in John the Baptist (Luke iii.). He in turn passes off the scene ; but the living voice remains to speak yet more definitely. "God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake to the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken in His Son" (Heb. i. 1, 2). God Himself is now heard in the Person of His Son.

Will men hear His voice now ? Will you, my reader ? Listen. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, *and now is*, when the dead [morally dead] shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live" (John v. 25).

" We in death were lying,
Lost in hopeless gloom,
Jesus, by His dying,
Vanquished e'en the tomb ;

“ Burst its iron portal,
Rolled away the stone,
Rose in life immortal
To the Father's throne.”

He still speaks from heaven, “ See that *ye refuse* not Him that speaketh.” As the Good Shepherd He laid down His life ; as the Great Shepherd He has taken it again in resurrection glory ; and His sheep hear His voice (John x.).

John, banished to the Isle of Patmos for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ, heard *there* the “ great voice ;” but it was the voice of the same Person ; and when things have become so bad in Christendom that it is impossible for them to be worse, He still speaks, “ Behold I stand at the door and knock ; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me ” (Rev. iii. 20). Presently the ears of every believer will hear the assembling shout, as with an archangel's voice (as seen in 1 Thess. iv. 16 to end), and each be glorified.

That same blessed voice we heard so sweetly in grace, will then evermore be heard by us in heavenly glory. What grace began shall glory end ; Jesus is on the Father's throne, and in the triumph of His story we read the record of our own.

Oh what need, then, to listen to His voice, and harden not our hearts ! Let us, therefore, dear reader, not rest satisfied with mere form or eloquence if the voice of God is not in it. Both power and unction will be lacking. If God should choose you as He did His servant Paul, it will be that thou “ shouldest hear the voice of His mouth.”

W. N.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

“THEY CRIED,” “HE SAVED.”

“IN darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron.” Such is the inspired description in Psalm cvii. of man without God. In darkness, because at a distance from God, Who is Light; in terror, because the death sentence is passed upon him; and bound by a power stronger than himself—a captive to sin and Satan’s power.

But there is a reason given for this plight. “Because they rebelled against the Words of God and contemned the counsel of the Most High.” The Gospel with all its delivering power has sounded in the ears of many a slave to sin; the gracious counsel, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are *heavy laden*, and I will give you rest,” has been given to them, but they have rebelled; they have set at nought the counsel. The convictions that arose were “laughed off,” and the chains of sin tightened around them.

But God did not turn from them. In His unwearying grace and longsuffering He followed them. Their adverse circumstances were used of Him to bring them to a sense of their need of Him. “He brought down their heart with labour; they fell down and there was *none to help*.” They

reached their extremity; their friends had all failed; the darkness became intolerable; the fear of death made them tremble; they were in despair.

This was the turning point. "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble. He saved them out of their distresses." *They cried!—He saved!* Divinely linked together are these two expressions. Not a moment's delay. The cry was followed by the response. "But when He was yet a great way off his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him." This is the same grace told out in Luke xv. "He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death and brake their bands in sunder." God is doing this to-day, dear reader. Many who were once in darkness and the shadow of death are "giving thanks to the Father, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love."

Those who have "cried unto the Lord" and have been set free, delight to give Him thanks, and desire that others too should join in their song. "Oh! that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men; for He hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder."

In His death and resurrection, Christ has defeated every enemy. Sin in the flesh was condemned; He has annulled him that had the power of death, and robbed death of its sting; the world was judged; every question was settled for God and the believer to God's entire satisfaction, and the Victorious One has "gone into

heaven ; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him.”

Notwithstanding the way of deliverance is so simply set forth in the few verses quoted (Ps. cvii. 10-15), how many are still in bondage and darkness ?

The recent confession of the perpetrator of a daring bank robbery gives a striking instance of how terribly the god of this world grips his captives. And how truly it may be said of such victims, “They cry not when he bindeth them” (Job xxxvi. 13). He says :—

“I am still young (23), and this may explain my desire for excitement of some sort or other. The Great Tempter exploited my weakness, and from that moment almost that I had been apparently successful I was sorry for the deed. *I could not retrace my steps.* I once intended to do so by returning the remnant of the money obtained to the legitimate owners ; but subsequent considerations made me reverse my decision. I have been caught fairly and squarely, and can hardly express how painful it is to find myself treated as a real criminal.” No cry for deliverance is here !

“There is a way that seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Even in laughter their heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness.” How subtle is the bait of the tempter, and with what trifling allurements does he lead his victim to disaster and eventual destruction. A few moments’ excitement was sufficient to induce his dupe to take the first false step, and once in the power of the enemy he has to own—“*I could not retrace my steps.*” A

steep downward path is the "broad way that leadeth to destruction, and none can deliver but the Lord, Who is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him."

"To this end the Son of God has been manifested that He might undo the works of the devil." He it was Who said, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin"; but, he added, "If the Son therefore shall make you free ye shall be free indeed" !

Put the question to yourself—Am I a slave or a free man ? And if you cannot answer it satisfactorily, direct your cry to the Lord, for "whosoever shall call upon the Lord shall be saved." The Gospel has been sent forth to men "to open their eyes that they may turn from darkness to light; and from the power of Satan unto God that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me (Christ Jesus)."

Think for a moment what God proposes in the Gospel. By virtue of the redemption work of Christ and the shedding of His precious blood, by His resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Majesty on high, God is now free to announce, in the name of the Lord Jesus, a free pardon, a marvellous reception, and an eternity of blessing for undone, unworthy sinners, slaves to sin and Satan's power.

There is nothing to be compared to the grace of God ! He would blot out your transgressions as a thick cloud : He would set your conscience at rest : He would give the knowledge of His great love : He would fill the heart with joy unspeak-

able : if you will but turn in "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Will you not surrender to Him and own Him as *your* Lord ? One word more. God delivers from bondage that believers may have liberty to approach Him. True liberty is expressed in the words, "Having, brethren, boldness (liberty) to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus"—thus to enjoy in the consciousness of God's favour the blessedness of His presence.

May you, dear reader, find this true and present liberty in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ !

F. S. M.

A FAREWELL MESSAGE.

(K. H. H., the writer of the following letter, was an invalid from her 15th year, and departed in her 22nd. Constrained by the love of Christ, she had a great longing for the blessing of others, and took pleasure in writing to invalids, getting addresses from various friends and sending tracts to many parts of the world—soldiers in India, woodmen in desolate parts of Australia, and acquaintances in South Africa. This letter, written only a few days before her death, is witness of the same earnest longing. It was sent to certain relatives and friends who seemed specially pressed upon her heart. It has been supplied by one whose loving interest in her spiritual advancement she gratefully appreciated.)

"MY dearest —,
This is a letter I am writing in case the Lord will soon take me to be with Himself, and also that when the time comes I may not be able to speak much or to express what is most important to me with regard to you.

"My one desire is to know and be sure that you, —, and the girls, —, have truly given your hearts to Jesus, for then we may be quite sure of meeting each other again in heaven. Jesus came into this world to seek and to save sinners. Every

soul born into this world is a sinner ; and the beginning of blessing in our lives is the day when we first begin to know and recognize ourselves as the vile sinners we are—quite unfit to meet God. It is when in this state of soul we feel our great need of a Saviour ; we long then to know Jesus as our personal Saviour. If, as yet, you have not felt your great need of Jesus, dear —, do pray earnestly and persistently that God may graciously give you to feel your great need of Jesus, and that He might fill you with His Holy Spirit. If you ask these requests from your heart God will surely grant you them. When I was quite a little girl I used to pray God to give me His Holy Spirit.

“ When we feel we want to know Jesus, all we have to do is to turn to Him confessing ourselves sinners, asking Him to save us, to wash away our sins, and make us whiter than snow through His precious blood which He shed for us on the Cross. He will surely do it. Once this request is asked sincerely, it is immediately granted ; for Jesus Himself said, “ Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out ” (John vi. 37).

“ “ 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). In John xiv. 6, Jesus says : ‘ I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life : no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.’

“ We can be saved in no other way but through Jesus Christ and the efficacy of His precious blood. Some people think if they live decently and do good works they will be saved ; but they are quite mistaken. After we are saved through the Blood

of Jesus alone, good works are right for us to do ; but good works without the blood first will not save us.

“ When saved we are expected to do good works—all to please Jesus ; and to refuse to do the things which please Satan. “ God says that no man can come unto Him but through His Son.

* * * * *

“ There are false teachers and preachers in the world, who preach there is no need of the Atonement—i.e., the Blood. But they are all wrong. The Bible is God’s Word to us, and what the Bible teaches is what God says. Listen to God’s word and not man’s. God warns us of these false teachers in 2 Peter ii. 1.

“ ‘ 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).

“ ‘ He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life ; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him.’

* * * * *

“ I would advise you to join a Bible Reading given by Mr. G—— on Thursday evenings at 7.30 p.m., at the old Court Room in the Municipal Buildings, Station-road. Then you will get help in the reading of your Bible, for they will always endeavour to make things quite clear to you. They have been the means of much help and blessing to me. Learn to read your Bible often, — dear, and take it as your guide through life, and you will be on the right track.

* * * * *

“ Well, dearie, I must now close. I am going out of pain and suffering into perfect joy and bliss. I am going to be with my dear Saviour, whom I love, and shall be happy when I see Him and am with Him.

“ Do not mourn for me ; think of me with Jesus. Decide for Christ without fail. Do not fear to confess Him. You will be happier for it. God bless and be with you till we meet again.”

K. H. H.

The following hymn she loved to quote :—

“ O Christ, in Thee my soul hath found,
And found in Thee alone,
The peace, the joy, I sought so long,
The bliss till now unknown.

“ I sighed for rest and happiness,
I yearned for them, not Thee ;
But while I passed my Saviour by,
His love laid hold of me.

“ I tried the broken cisterns, Lord,
But, ah ! the waters failed !
E'en as I stooped to drink they fled,
And mocked me as I wailed.

“ The pleasures lost I sadly mourned,
But never wept for Thee,
Till grace the sightless eyes received,
Thy loveliness to see.

“ Now none but Christ can satisfy,
None other name for me !
There's love, and life, and lasting joy,
Lord Jesus, found in Thee ! ”

DAVID, SOLOMON, AND AGRIPPA.

HERE are three kings, and which is the happiest ? Why David, to be sure. And why ? Because he says (Ps. xxxii. 5), " I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity I covered not. I said, I will confess my transgression to Jehovah ; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin " ; and this I take to be the way of real happiness for a sinner.

The king had made a clean breast of it before God, and therein lay the basis of his happiness. He had not, as with so many, asked forgiveness and never got the assurance of it. No. " If we *confess* our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

David had anticipated the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, and by the Spirit describes his own state in this Psalm. Guilt had been brought home to him by the Word of God through Nathan the prophet. He had said, " When I kept silence my bones waxed old through my groaning all the day long ; for day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me." He then finds a resource in the God against whom he had sinned,—as he says, " Against Thee, and Thee only, have I sinned ; " and God compassed the repentant king with songs of deliverance, until David himself began to sing, and to call others to join him. Psalm xxxiii. is his song of praise, as " he entered into the house of Jehovah, and worshipped." It is the expression of a conscience relieved and a heart unburdened.

Depend upon it, dear unconverted reader, that God will have it all out with you. Like a photographer, He has the plate of all your sins. Time will not efface them from the "book." It only needs the development of the great white throne to bring them all before you. (Rev. xx.).

There was once a mighty King of Babylon, Belshazzar by name, whose sinful condition was shown to him by a candle, which threw its light on God's written verdict of him, and who after hearing his own sentence was killed in his own capital. But to you God is waiting to be gracious. "He willeth not the death of sinners;" but He does will that you should turn and repent.

Now what is sorrowful as to the other two kings, is that there is no mention of anything as to confession of sin. In the history of King Solomon, the richest and the wisest, we read (Eccles. i. and ii.) that he strained every physical and intellectual power to reach happiness, yet had to exclaim at the end of his search, "Vanity, and the pursuit of the wind." Ah! he did not go the right way to get it, and what was so joyous to his father was unknown to him; for he sought mirth and gladness in the gratification of lusts and pleasures. He made trial of the world in every sense of the term, and bitter disappointment was the result. Listen to him as he says, "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing!" What a sad experience. And further on he adds, "Wherefore I praised the dead who are already dead, more than the living who are yet alive!"

What a verdict! What a sentence to pass on all

the greatness of man ! His heart was wrong, for it was turned away from God who had so blessed him with such wealth and such honour, and was turned to idolatry of the worst stamp, for he was a worshipper of Moloch, and possibly died as such.

Dear reader, are you a believer or an unbeliever ? You may hug the world, but it will tire of you and jilt you in your last moments ; and then what bitter remorse !

But for a moment listen to the voice of another, " But surely I count also all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all, and count them filth that I may win Christ." (Phil iii. 8. N.T.)

What a blessed conclusion at the end of one's days on earth. He had said, years before, " I counted ; " now, at the end of his course, " I count."

As we close the history of the son of David, another mighty monarch comes before us and presents another condition of soul. He has summoned before him " the certain man, left prisoner by Felix, whose testimony was concerning one Jesus, who was said to be dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive " (Acts xxv. and xxvi.). Indeed, this was the theme of the poor but happy prisoner. Now this king had had the testimony of both Old and New Testaments. As Paul affirmed, he believed the prophets, and these had testified of Christ, and being foster-brother of Manaen (chap. xiii.), who is found among the prophets and teachers in the assembly in Antioch ; and moreover this aged and bound prisoner boldly stated that the king was " a stranger to none of these things,"

—the Gospel and the truth of Christianity. And though we cannot tell what inward effect it had on him, he scoffingly replied to the Lord's beloved servant, "In a little thou persuadest me to become a Christian;" which brought forth the magnanimous reply from the aged Paul in bonds; an expression of his intense desire for the blessing of the king and all present with him. But from all accounts, after the evidence of Judaism and Christianity, and the voice of a living apostle whom he exonerated from the accusation made against him, he parried the thrust of the Word of God, and dismissed the faithful witness. Not so the word of God. This will bear testimony in the day of judgment.

Reader, consider these three kings, and receive the truth of God.

J. S. B.

WONDROUS BLESSING.

"OH! what blessing, what wondrous blessing, is brought home to the poor, aching, harassed, anxious soul, when it is given to see that that God whom it despised, that Jesus whom it crucified, that Spirit whom it resisted, are for it! Oh, what gladness to receive daily proofs that it is one upon whom God is looking in love, in pity, and that He is for it! As the Lord, speaking of the children of Israel, says, "I have seen the affliction of My people, and am come down to deliver them."

"Oh, what wondrous extent of love! Nor height, nor depth, can reach or fathom it!"

J. N. D.

THE MEETING IN PROSPECT.

“OUR GATHERING TOGETHER” AT HIS COMING.

WHEN aged Wilberforce lost his only surviving daughter, he wrote thus: “I have often heard that sailors on a voyage will drink, ‘Friends astern!’ till they are half way over; then ‘Friends ahead!’ With me it has been ‘Friends ahead!’ this long time!” He had evidently got God’s great gathering of glorified guests before his mind.

What will that meeting be which unites in one vast assembly *every* meeting of believers for past centuries; which finds gathered together by the power of the Spirit every saint from every corner of the earth, and gathered together to celebrate the amazing triumph of good over evil? “Vessels of mercy” they once were; “vessels of glory now”; and every one of them brimful and overflowing with God’s own delight in Him at whose personal cost Love’s great victory was won. How unspeakable the joy! And filled with glory!

To that blissful moment God’s called ones are moving. They are on their way to God, and soon shall gain His rest. How naturally an Alleluia bubbles up from the heart with such an end in view!

But how happy to view *every* saint we daily meet in that light; and, along with ourselves, to regard them as sharers in one all-embracing love, one overflowing joy, together with all who have already gone to be present at that blissful gathering.

• Are *you* assured of a place amongst them, my reader? Can you truly sing,

“We look to meet our brethren
From every distant shore;
Not one will seem a stranger,
Though never seen before;
With angel hosts attending,
In myriads through the sky;
Yet midst them all, Thou only,
O Lord, wilt fix the eye.”

Of course, you know that you are *invited* to the feast made in honour of the Son. Are you not equally well aware of the consequence of making light of it? Will you not prove your appreciation of the gracious proposal by coming to Christ at once? Then will both reader and writer be found at that blessed meeting, with all *His* “friends,” and ours.

“Mercy’s full power we then shall prove,
Loved with an everlasting love.”

GEO. C.

“THE JOY OF THY LORD.”

[IN Proverbs xxxi. we have the description of “a virtuous woman” (or, “a woman of worth”). *Her* doings are recorded, not those of her husband; yet those doings are to his credit. He is “known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.” The Spirit of God has given us a figure which is more than realized in Christianity.

The blessed Lord came here, “not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.” He has gone into heavenly glory, having finished the work given Him to do by His Father. On departing, He entrusted “His goods” to His own servants. He

gave to them according to their ability. Perhaps we may say that the most precious part of the “ goods ” He left in their hands was *the Gospel of the grace of God*. The grace of God is “ salvation-bringing to all men,” and it teaches saints. God by the Gospel is also known in love through our Lord Jesus Christ. By means, then, of His servants, the storehouse of the precious Saviour is being filled with treasure. He is not *personally* engaged in the work, though, without question, all effective service is by His direction, so that whatever is rightly done, is after all done *by Him*. He told His disciples, when leaving them, that they should do greater works than He had done ; and yet He adds, “ And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, *that will I do*, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” They pray as to their service, and what is done, the Lord does it.

But the Lord is not seen in the service down here ; it is apparently left entirely in the hands and responsibility of His own servants. “ After a long time ” the day of account comes. Whatever has been rightly and faithfully done, has been done *for Him*.

Leaving the parable for a moment, look with me at the holy city, Jerusalem on high ! It is the workmanship of God ; built up of saints, apostles, indeed of all the glorified church in heaven, yet the grace of God, which results in glory, was the means by which all was wrought out according to the righteousness and glory of God ; and that grace had been put by Christ into the hands of His own servants that they might proclaim it far and wide.

We may hardly hear the sound of the axe or the hammer in the field or in the quarry, yet silently and surely does the work go on; souls are converted, and then, as saints, educated in the knowledge of the blessed God of all grace. The Lord Jesus is the One in whom it is all told out, and for Him the joy of the marriage feast is prepared. The giving account by the good and faithful servants will be a happy thing, for it will be to their Master's joy. If we think of the thousands who have been blessed by the tale of grace, though often told with stammering lips, what joy awaits the Lord! Yet each will give in his account, and have his part in His Lord's joy.

There is "joy in heaven . . . joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth."

"It is meet that we should make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found."

"Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame."

So we sing:—

. "There love divine
Fills the bright courts with cloudless joy;
But 'tis the love that made us Thine
Fills all that house without alloy."

Dear reader! the day is coming, when the heralds of the Gospel, be it by preaching, by a Gospel tract, or by a letter, or by quiet and earnest conversation, will enter into the joy of their Lord. He and they will rejoice together, through infinite grace. May you know its joy in the reception of the Saviour's love, and then in telling some other needy one of the love you know. T. H. R.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

WHY DID HE COME ?

THE contrast between the splendour and cleanliness of a palace and the squalor and dirt of a hovel is easily realized ; but what mind can conceive the comparison between the pure, unsullied home of God and this earth, sin-stricken and defiled ? Yet to this world, in sovereign grace and mercy, the Son of God came.

Laying aside the magnificence proper to Him who was in the form "of God," and veiling His Godhead glory, He came to dwell here.

The evangelists speak reverently yet lovingly of His condescension in sitting and eating with sinners ; and He earned the scornful title of " Friend of publicans and sinners " (Matt. xi. 19). The finger of derision was pointed at Him ; the lip was curled in a sneer, as it was said that " This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them " (Luke xv. 2). Who knew better than He the moral filth of those He came to save ? His eye, keen with Divine insight, alone could see the unclean heart, and He alone knew the moral distance between them and Himself, the Holy One of God. Perfect in Divine and human sensibility, the foulness of man's state was all well known.

His was not a visit in patronising sympathy, but He dwelt and ate and drank with the vile. (For all have sinned.)

The visitor to the slums of a city would not care to live there; yet in an infinitely greater degree was the *moral* defilement discernible by Jesus. And on His way to die for sinners, He dwelt amongst them and loved them. There is a filth that can be removed by water and soap, but the sin-blots on the soul, who or what can remove, save His precious blood ?

It is this inward knowledge of indwelling sin that has driven men and women to all kinds of extravagant methods to remove it, but without success.

Let it, dear reader,—if you know the plague of a sin-defiled heart and soul,—let it drive you, under God's good hand, to the feet of Jesus, to One who came to call sinners to repentance, the Friend of such. He can remove it. For this He died.

The picture of a sinner is given in Lev. xiii. 42–46. Leprosy is a type of sin; the leper a type of a sinner. The sinner is unclean, unfit for the habitation of God, and, should he come into judgment, is perpetually to feel his isolation away from God (John iii. 36). Solemn picture! For ever alone and unclean!

But it was not only to live with or for sinners that the Son of God came; but to remove by His death all that would prevent them living eternally with Him. His power was a relief to those He healed, and His presence a blessing. But for salvation His holy life and example were of no avail to fallen man.

For the sinner to be saved from the eternal consequences of his sins, to have his moral filth removed, and be made fit for the holy presence of

God, Christ must die. His death alone could atone for sin, and cleanse from sin (1 John i. 7). As truly as it was necessary for the serpent of brass to be erected for the eager eye of the dying Israelite to gaze upon, so truly was it necessary for the Son of man to be lifted up (John iii. 14).

But God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son ; and the eye of faith may now perceive in the crucified Saviour a way to escape judgment.

What the heart of man was capable of is told by the evangelists ; and we read that the Son of Man was " delivered into the hands of sinners " (Matt. xxvi. 45). After all His miracles, and His life of love and blessing, man in cruel hatred nailed Him to a Roman gibbet,—as a serpent, warmed and fed, turns to sting its benefactor.

But Christ Jesus came to save. Divine love, in its unchangeable devotion, is seen in Him.

Upon the cross, derided by His creatures, feeling pain and ridicule as only a perfectly human heart could, He remained steadfast, though He could have come down. But the unclean was away from God, and in His love and compassion He would go where the unclean was.

The physical darkness which shrouded the Saviour was manifest to all ; but the judicial darkness into which He went is only known and fathomed by Himself and God. Forsaken of God, in those three dark hours, Divine wrath against sin fell upon Him. He exhausted it.

None but a Divine Person could sustain it, or drink the measured cup in all its bitterness—measured only by the infinite.

But this was necessary ere Christ could save. In triumphant voice He cried, "It is finished," and took that very day into the Paradise of God a self-confessed sinner—a thief. Yet no longer a thief, no longer unclean, but spotless through his Redeemer's atonement, the first trophy of His saving power. He was justified freely by God's grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Can you say, dear reader, "The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me"? L. O. L.

"BETWEEN GOD AND MYSELF."

SAID a Christian mother to her sick child, on leaving her, "Tell me, Maggie, before I go, *Are you sure you are saved?*"

"No, mother dear, I am not. I have been very much troubled about it lately, and have so wished I could *feel sure*, as you always do."

Her mother replied, "I don't *feel* it, dear, I *know* it, because God says so. He tells me Jesus died for sinners; and I know I was a sinner, and I know He died for *me*, and His blood has washed away all my sins."

"Will you let me tell your uncle and aunt? They both are better able to help you than I."

After a pause, she slowly answered, "No, mother dear, thank you. No, *It must be between God and myself, then there will be no mistake!*"

What a wise decision! Nor was it in vain. She soon found in Christ, and in His work and word, all she needed.—*Extract.*

THE RIGHTEOUS KING AND THE
INDEPENDENT GUEST.

[The following was received from South Lincolnshire with this remark, "The enclosed letter has been so blessed to one of our dear village women." The sender suggests that in the pages of *Tidings* it might be of use to others. Feeling that God may graciously make it a further blessing, we herewith send it forth.—ED.]

I WAS reading this morning, in the 22nd of Matthew of a certain King, which made a marriage for His Son. He sent out his servants to invite guests to the wedding, but instead of accepting the invitation they each began to make light of it. Their own affairs were of far more importance than the invitation; while some of them even slew the servants that were sent to invite them.

The King was wroth, and said, "The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy."

He then ordered other servants to go into the highways, and to bring in as many as they could find. The servants did as they were told; and we read, they "gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests."

The King walks round to see the guests, when suddenly he stops. His eye is fixed on one, seated among the rest, who has come to the feast clothed in a garment of his own. *He had refused to put on the garment which the King had provided for all.*

By doing this he as good as said, I am fit for the eye of the King ; I shall not trouble to put on the garment that he has provided : mine is good enough.

But he found out *too late* that, to the eye of the King, his garments were but "filthy rags." "Friend," said the King, "How camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment ? *And he was speechless*" (ver. 11).

The order of the King then is, "Bind him hand foot, and take him away and cast him into outer darkness ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Now, I think we can see what Christ meant by this parable. I am born in sin, and cannot, however hard I may try, do away with one sin, or make myself fit to stand in the presence of a holy God.

Christ came to His own people, the Jews, but they refused to have Him. And then, as though God said, "Very well, I will proclaim forgiveness to *both Jew and Gentile*," that believe on My Son ; there shall be no difference, for "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23).

So in the death of His only begotten Son, God provided a garment, "a robe of righteousness," in which I may approach Him.

If I go to God and confess what a guilty sinner I am, and deserve only hell, but that I believe on, and desire to be clothed with Christ, I can count myself as forgiven. God will no longer view me according to what I am, but according to what *Christ* is. Christ, whose blood was shed, is my robe, my righteousness before His eye. A. D.

HAPPY WITHOUT RICHES; REJOICING WITHOUT LIBERTY.

A MAN of years once said, "I can scarcely understand why my life is spared so long, except it be to show that man can be as happy without a fortune as with one."

Paul, a *prisoner* at Rome, with neither liberty nor fortune, wrote: "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered, the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." He expressed it as his earnest desire and aim, "That Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die gain." "I have all and abound." "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice" (Phil. i. 20, 21, iii. 8, iv. 4, 18.)

BETWEEN "COME" AND "GONE."

THE uncertainty of man's life on earth has been compared to a man shut up in a fortress with only a concealed reservoir of water to draw from, whose supply is daily diminishing and can never be replenished. *When* it will be exhausted he knows not.

God only knows the exact compass of man's history here. "His days are determined, the number of his months is with Thee. Thou hast appointed his bounds which he cannot pass" (Job xiv. 5).

But if man cannot accurately measure his span of days on earth, he may be quite certain that he cannot remain. It has been said, with truth, that "the smallest pore in the body is a door large enough to let death in."

Jacob said to King Pharaoh, "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my pilgrimage" (Gen. xlvii. 9).

Job said, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not" (Job xiv. 1, 2).

David said, "Our days on earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding" (1 Chron. xxix. 15). "We spend our days as a tale that is told" (Ps. xc. 9). "My days are like a shadow that declineth" (Ps. cii. 11). Speaking of those who seek their portion in this world, he said, "Their inward thought is that their houses shall continue for ever. Nevertheless, man being in honour abideth not" (Ps. xlix. 11, 12).

Solomon said, "The misery of man is great upon him; for he knoweth not that which shall be; for who can tell him when it shall be? There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death; and there is no discharge in that war." And, again, "So I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done" (Eccles. viii. 6, 7, 8, 10).

"COME—GONE—BURIED—FORGOTTEN!"

What a summary! And as solemn as brief.

Who can question the truth of these divine comments on man's sojourn in this world ? All, with one consent, look us in the face, and tell us plainly, You have come ; but you are not staying ! Surely, it is our wisdom to consider such serious statements, and nothing but blind folly to blink them.

" Soon as from earth I go,
What will became of me ?
Eternal happiness or woe
Must then my portion be."

To the mind of a child what brilliant expectations are enfolded in the brief sentence, "*When I am a man !*" But how different the feeling when the hoary-headed gives expression to those oft-repeated words, "*When I was a child !*" Yet both speakers, in reality, only occupy different positions on the same road. Both stand somewhere between "*Come*" and "*Gone*" ! No matter who the reader may be, this is his position to-day. His all for eternity—and a tremendous stake it is—hangs upon what lies between these two points. They are fixed. We are moving. Every moment we are further from one and nearer to the other. As is written, "God hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts xvii. 26).

To be born into this world, and to awake to the fact that I cannot remain in it ; to find, moreover, that the living God holds me accountable to Him, and that I cannot possibly escape the fixed reckoning ; that my will has been opposed to His, my heart evil, my mind depraved, and my whole course crooked, is quite enough to fill me with the utmost

consternation. But this is not all. A bearer of amazing tidings waits upon me. He brings news which may well cause the very angels to marvel. It is to the effect that, on my behalf, Another Person—One of highest dignity and mightiest power; One full of tender pity and lowly grace, with kindness never before exceeded, and love beyond all human measure—has been into this world before me.

I wonder greatly as I hear that such a Person should show any care for *me*. I feel so utterly unworthy of any such consideration. But I am assured that, at a tremendous cost to Himself, His coming had secured innumerable benefits for my free acceptance; and that, before he left this world, He gave directions that a special message from Himself should be delivered to me (Mark xvi. 15, 16). He authorized His servants to state plainly what He Himself had stated, that "He came into the world to save sinners," not to help them to save themselves, and "not to call the righteous" (1 Tim. i. 15; Matt. ix. 13). He did not come here to *seek* goodness from man, but to show goodness to man—to express, in Himself personally, the kindness and love of God to those who could do nothing but honestly confess that they had ruined themselves.

But what of man's sin and God's holiness? Here the precious message only increases in wonder. To relieve the lashings of my guilty conscience, it makes known, that not only was His love expressed with the fullest knowledge of the sins of my whole lifetime, but that, in His suffering and death, full satisfaction for every one

of them had been offered to God and *accepted*; and that the One who had done it was no less a Person than Jesus the Son of the living God.

Then, lest I should consider my case too bad to be reached by His mercy, I am assured that it was the special desire of Jesus that the very city that planned and witnessed His betrayal and murder should be the first to hear the message which should proclaim repentance and remission of sins in His Name among all nations. "*Beginning at Jerusalem*" was the crowning of His gracious commands (Luke xxiv. 47).

But His grace would go further still. The worst sinner in that wicked city must be subdued, and won, and then used to the blessing of numbers of others. It should be said, even of Saul of Tarsus, "Behold, he prayeth!" while his supplications were reaching the ear of the One he had madly persecuted. Would any of His servants be inclined to evade, rather than approach, such a determined and violent opposer? Would they consider that such a hater of the Name they loved had gone beyond the possibility of blessing? Then He Himself would arrest him. From His own exalted position in heavenly glory He would speak personally to that "Chief of Sinners," and for all time would hold him up as a pattern of what His saving grace could do. Read 1 Tim. i. 11-16.

Oh, what grace! And "even unto *me*," that grace has reached, the writer can thankfully say. Has it reached the soul of the reader also?

Your heart can easily answer for you. Does it answer in the negative? Remember, then,

that you are between "COME" and "GONE," and should your indifference continue until the word "gone" becomes true of you, you will be for ever beyond the benefits of the message He has so graciously sent you. "There is a time to be born and a time to die" (Eccles. iii. 2).

But there is another matter for your consideration, and by no means less serious. It is written of the Lord Jesus Christ, that He is "gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him" (1 Pet. iii. 22). John xiv. 3 gives us His promise to those of His own still left in the world, "If I go away, I will come again and receive you unto Myself." If you are between "come" and "gone" on your own side, it is equally true that you are between "gone" and "come" on His side—between the "gone" of 1 Pet. iii. 22, and the "come" of John xiv. 3. Hence, the unconverted are exposed to a double danger: one connected with *their going*, the other *His coming*; and eternal destitution bound up with both. His own word leaves no uncertainty on that point. To those who should at last die in their sins, He said, "*Whither I go, ye cannot come*" (John viii. 21). To those saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us," outside the closed door, His answer will be, "*I know you not. Depart from Me*" (Luke xiii. 25, 27).

Before your "reservoir" of opportunity is exhausted, to use the figure, be entreated, dear reader, to seek the Lord; and so seek Him as to find Him. This may be your last chance, and the next thing—"GONE"! GEO. C.

“FOR HIS NAME’S SAKE.”

THERE are some expressions which are frequently upon our lips, and which always take a prominent place in our devotions, and yet when we come to examine them, we find that they have only a vague and indefinite meaning in our minds. How often do we finish our petitions to God with the words “for Thy Name’s sake” or “in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord” for very little other reason than that it is the recognized way of ending a prayer. Yet these words, or others very much like them, are of such frequent occurrence in Scripture that it cannot but be that some very precious and definite meaning is contained in them if only we can find it out. This is what it is proposed to try to do, in a simple way, in this short paper.

It is interesting to see that even in the Old Testament we find David anticipating blessing on very much the same ground. Thus in the 23rd Psalm he uses the words “He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.” It must be remembered that David did not know God in the blessed and intimate way in which Christians are privileged to know Him now. David knew God by the name Jehovah, a name which implies faithful and constant goodness towards the people whom He had chosen; as we see in Exodus xxxiv. 6 and 7, “And the Lord (Jehovah) passed by before him and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving

iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty, etc.” And knowing God by the name of Jehovah, David felt that he could rely on God being true to the Name He had revealed Himself by to minister the needed grace and blessing to his soul.

But Christians—and by Christians we mean all who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls—know a more blessed name than that of Jehovah. It is true that they have the blessing which is contained in that name; they too can rely on the faithfulness of God. But in their case, to the name of Jehovah is added that of Saviour, for the name Jesus signifies “Jehovah the Saviour.” How glorious was the pronouncement, fraught with hope and blessing for this world of sin and sorrow, “Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins.” As Gentiles we could never have claimed to be the chosen people of God under the old dispensation, but now that Christ has suffered and is risen from the dead, His name is preached for the obedience of faith among all nations.

And if God has revealed Himself in this wondrous way, it is in order that men might know Him and come into the blessing. Thus we read in Acts x. 43, “To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins,” and again in 1 John ii. 12, “I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His Name’s sake.” Alas, that so many of the Lord’s dear people should, week by week,

be praying for mercy on themselves, miserable sinners, when God has pledged Himself to grant forgiveness to the believer, not on the ground of anything that man can do, but solely on the ground of what Christ is, and of the great work of redemption that He has accomplished. In the death of Christ God has approached man as a Saviour-God, and this blessed fact must characterize all His dealings with man in this the day of grace.

Here we would pause to ask the reader, whether his or her heart vibrates at the sound of the Name of Jesus. Very solemn are those words of the Apostle Paul in the last chapter of 1 Corinthians. “ If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.” It is indeed a sad reflection that there are many people even in this favoured land who never take that beloved Name upon their lips unless it be in mockery. At the same time the Christian’s heart rejoices to think of the great company who, from the day of Christ’s coming into the world until now, have responded to the Saviour’s love and have put their trust in His saving Name: people of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. And we know that every one of those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity will be remembered by Him when His life-giving voice awakens the sleeping saints and calls the living to meet their Lord in the air. May it be the portion of every reader of these pages to be among that happy company.

To go back once more to the Old Testament for an illustration, we find David in 2 Sam. ix.

desiring to show kindness to any survivor there might be of the house of Saul for Jonathan's sake. And the only one he can find is Mephibosheth, who proves to be a helpless and spiritless man, and moreover lame on both his feet, a defect which might naturally have rendered him peculiarly repulsive to David (*see* 2 Sam. v. 8). But David dearly loved Jonathan, and for the sake of him whom he loved could overlook Mephibosheth's personal defects and show to him what is touchingly described as "the kindness of God."

May we not, then, say with all reverence, that the Lord Jesus in His blessed manhood has so delighted the heart of God the Father, and in death has so completely met all His righteous claims, that we, without a merit of our own, can approach God with the greatest confidence for Jesus' sake. And though like Mephibosheth we find nothing but failure and worthlessness in ourselves, yet we who have believed in Christ are so blessedly linked with our risen and glorified Saviour that we may expect every blessing for His Name's sake. We can discover no failure that has not been met in His death: while all that is in Him, beyond death, is ours for ever; and God Himself the Source and Spring of all. John iii. 16, Heb. ii. 9.

W. F. R.

FRAGMENT.—"*I weary?* Oh, no! I am unweary: it is the world all around me that is weary—not I." So said one. "*A weary one, indeed, I am,*" said another; "*but one in whose soul hope ever lives.*" One spirit, but two different experiences.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

ALMOST SAVED, BUT LOST.

'TWAS at the grey dawn of morning, after a very stormy crossing over the North Sea that we passed within the breakwater, which, at the Hook of Holland, on the Dutch coast, runs nearly a mile out to sea. On the end of the breakwater stands the lighthouse, true friend of the mariner, throwing out to sea its welcome beams, by which many a vessel has been safely piloted into calm waters. We, too, were glad to gain the harbour, for it brought to an end our stormy passage.

As I stood on deck I could see the remains of the wrecked *Berlin*, a few yards away from the lighthouse. A short time since the *Berlin* had crossed from Harwich to the Hook of Holland, on one of the most stormy nights on record. She had run in the teeth of that terrible gale all night, and was just about to enter the harbour. The poor terrified passengers, battered below, hailed the news with deep joy. A few more throbs of her pistons, a few more turns of her propellers, and all the dangers of that terrible night would be over. Safe in the harbour; storms would be past. But, alas, 'twas not so. Though she came so near to the harbour, it was never entered. She was almost

saved, but lost. Mighty seas caught her, broad-side on, as she entered, and drove her from the deep water channel, on to the shallow beach by the side of the breakwater, where I saw her, just under the kindly rays of the lighthouse. Once there, the furious sea soon battered her to pieces, and buried in its angry bosom some 140 precious lives.

As I stood and looked upon that sight, it preached a very powerful sermon to me. It portrayed to my mind another welcome light, shining out into the gross darkness of this world, pointing out the way of salvation. It told me of life's stormy voyage, upon which millions of mariners had embarked with their all. It told me of a harbour of rest, where men are eternally safe from dangers. But it also told me of the solemn possibility of being very *near the light*, near the harbour, near salvation, and yet becoming a total wreck outside; of the possibility of being almost persuaded to be a Christian, and yet for ever lost.

Maybe I am addressing my remarks to some young reader, who has for years listened to the story of the Saviour's love. You have, probably, Christian parents who yearn over your soul. You have been prayed for, preached to, and pleaded with. The heavenly beams have cast their light upon your heart, and showed you you are a sinner. You have sometimes trembled. Perhaps the Spirit of God has awakened desires in your heart to be saved. You have almost reached the harbour. Almost clear of the peril which ever attaches itself to a sinful life. *Almost. ALMOST!*

Oh, friend, I beseech you in the name of Christ, beware, lest you perish at *Almost Point* ; lest the words uttered by the weeping prophet Jeremiah break in upon your soul, " The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are (I am) not saved."

NOT SAVED ! Is this a " far-fetched " picture ? No, indeed. You are voyaging across the sea of life to eternity. As surely as every throb of the engines brought that boat to security or destruction, so surely is every throb of your heart hurrying you on to eternal weal or woe. You are carrying in your frail bark a full cargo of sins. You have a history to account for. You have God to meet. 'Tis inevitable. Yes, your very eyes shall see the Lord, but shall you see Him as your Saviour or your Judge ? What will you say to Him about your past ? You may say, I do not see any danger. But it is there. You may not feel your need. But felt or unfelt, it is there. Perhaps, with indifference you say, there is plenty of time to heed the warning voice, and flee by the light of the gospel to Christ. Maybe. But who is to tell you the exact date when the words shall fall upon your hapless ears, " This night shall thy soul be required of thee," so that you may hastily get ready ? (Luke xii. 20). Death, that merciless messenger, may even at this moment be by your side, to remove you from the world that fascinates your heart. Oh, I entreat you, my friend, don't play with your soul. It is all too serious.

Perhaps your plea is, God is merciful, and if I turn to Him at the eleventh hour, He will receive me. Yes, it may be so. That poor dying thief proved it. Within a hair's breadth of hell he

turned to Jesus, and Jesus saved him, and took him to paradise. But did it ever strike you, that on the other side hung a man within a hair's breadth of heaven, but who, unrepentant, went straight to hell. There are "eleventh hours" of salvation; but, solemn to relate, there are also "eleventh hours" followed by damnation.

Shall you, my friend, so conversant with the Bible, and God's way of salvation, allow yourself to fritter away your precious moments, trifling with your soul, and God's salvation? "He that being oft reproved, and hardeneth his neck, shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy."

Considering the seriousness of the matter, and the value of that soul of yours, as it lies in the balance, I beg you turn *now* to the Saviour. Bow your knee to Him, and own Him as your Lord. Tell out, in His gracious ear, your sinful past. Repent, as He commands you to. There is salvation at this moment for you. He died to save you. He died to open for you a clear passage to the Father's home of love. His welcome hand is stretched out to save you. If even now you feel you are perishing, He says, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." Do, I entreat you, decide for Christ at once. The matter lays in your hands to settle. All that infinite love and power could do, has been done for your everlasting blessing. God gave His Son for you. Jesus gave His life for you. The Holy Spirit has come to bring salvation to you. All the Persons in the Trinity are interested in you.

O, unsaved reader, close in with the precious gift of salvation. Perishing you are, and that in

your sin. But, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). If in simple faith you rest your soul on Him Who died for you, you shall be saved. God says so. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *thou shalt be saved.*"

May it not be your sad lot to be wrecked on the breakers of unbelief, and to cry through a Christless eternity, "*Not saved, NOT SAVED.*" May it rather be yours to join with that blood-bought throng, who even now, through grace, can sing—

"We have an anchor which keeps the soul,
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll,
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love."

J. H. L.

A TIMELY INTRODUCTION.

AMONG the many unemployed men who had sought to find work, again and again, only to be disappointed, there was one who was well known to an aged Christian; known to him too, as one who not only had real physical wants but moral and physical needs also, although the latter were not realized.

They met one day in the streets of their busy town, and the elder asked the younger if he had been to the different employers he mentioned, to see if they could give him work.

The man despairingly replied that he had been everywhere, but could neither hear of, nor find, anything to do.

"I know of One whom you have not yet asked," Mr. — said.

"Who is that?" questioned the man eagerly.

"Will you come with me, and we will ask Him?"

"Yes, that I will," was the emphatic reply. And so the two turned and walked up the streets until they came to the door of a building which was—as the man well knew—set apart for religious services.

"Who can we be going to see in here?" he thought to himself, but he still followed his aged guide into one of the rooms. And there the Christian turned to his companion and said, "You haven't asked *God* to give you work, have you? Now you agreed to come with me and ask One who could do so to help you, and so we will just kneel down here and ask Him for what you want."

Awed and impressed the man knelt, while the other implored God to look upon him in his need, and to graciously answer the requests for body and soul that were humbly laid before Him.

Two or three days afterwards Sir J. — sent for this man and took him into his employ, and ever since has given him work and good wages.

This circumstance set him thinking seriously. Who was this One that could answer prayer in so remarkable a way? And who was he amongst the many hundreds out of work that such good fortune should befall him? His heart was touched, and it was not long before he was again upon his knees, this time with a broken and a contrite heart, which God will not despise (Ps. li. 17).

It is some time ago now, and the aged Christian

has been suddenly called away to rest from his labours, but this effect of his simple faith in God remains in our midst to-day, and when we consider it, we feel that every bit of faith in God is of some help.

Like a bright light flashing in a dark place, the glow of his fervent faith made its impression on the heart of the other, in all its heaven-born reality and simplicity.

Well did the old Christian know upon what a Rock his feet were standing, and well could he recommend his God, who had been true to His Word throughout all the ages.

His eye sweeps the vast universe of heavenly and earthly spaces, yet notes the flutter of a sparrow in its fall. He controls the myriads of mighty angel hosts, yet His mercy finds pleasure in hovering around the sons of men. So close comes His comfort, so near His help.

Only we must be real and true in heart, honest and sincere in soul. For the great God cannot be trifled with. He does not trifle with us ; He does not ask us to hear what we cannot understand, nor trust that which can never come true.

He asks us to repent of our past neglect of Him, and to trust in His Son, Jesus Christ, the Lord. Then shall we find "all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God" (1 Cor. i. 20). "O taste and see that the Lord is good, blessed is the man that trusteth in Him" (Ps. xxxiv. 8).

L. J. M.

ASSURANCE.

WITH GOD'S BLESSING, AND WITHOUT IT.

IN relation of the soul with God, assurance may be looked at in three ways.

There is the assurance that rests on divine testimony; the assurance that comes from self-deception; and the assurance that comes too late. In other words,

“THE FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH.”

THE GROUNDLESS ASSURANCE OF UNBELIEF.

THE FIXED ASSURANCE OF DESPAIR.

A subject so full of seriousness may well command the reader's earnest attention. Let us consider each feature separately.

“*The full assurance of faith*” rests on a solid foundation, all divine.

Faith has nothing of its *own* to rest upon. The dove sent out by Noah could not rest on the vast expanse of waters beneath her. Only one reliable object presented itself. *There* must she find rest or perish. She had nothing in *herself* that could give her rest, and nothing outside the ark could do it. The more she used her rapid wing to find it elsewhere, the more weary would she become. In like manner, we repeat, faith has nothing of her *own* to rest upon. But has she then *no* solid foundation on which to place her foot with comfort? Verily she has. Faith's assurance rests on the revelation of what God is in His own unchangeable nature and character. What can shake that? What He is, He *is*. And all that He is has been perfectly set forth in Him who is “The Same yesterday, and to-day, and for

ever." Faith's assurance rests on a faithful testimony. It rests on the testimony of God Himself respecting that which His own honour is bound up with.

This testimony embraces what has already taken place, and what is yet to come also. And it speaks of the present glory of Him by Whom, and in Whom, all has been secured for God's good pleasure and the believer's full blessing.

In the case of Abraham, God's testimony was entirely one of *promise*. It related to what God *would do* in the future. He would bring about a day of universal blessing for man, and bring it about through Abraham's seed. To this end a son must be born. But here natural calculations and divine communications were in conflict. Had Abraham listened to the former he would never have had full assurance from the latter. But not so, "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; being *fully persuaded* that what He had promised, He was able also to perform" (Rom. iv. 20, 21).

This kind of calculation has been common to the family of faith in all ages. They were "persuaded" of the promises, and they confidently "embraced" them (Heb. xi. 13).

But the "full assurance of faith," spoken of in Heb. x. 22, looks back to what has already been accomplished by the Sacrifice of Christ for God's entire satisfaction and pleasure.

"My soul looks back to see
The burden Thou didst bear
When hanging on the accursed tree,
For *all* my guilt was *there*."

“ Believing, I rejoice
To see the curse remove;
And bless the Lamb with cheerful voice,
And sing redeeming love.”

The Holy Ghost has come down from heaven as Witness of God's full acceptance of that one precious sacrifice ; and this testimony is the stable foundation of “ the full assurance of faith.” It does not rest, therefore, on any mere fancy of man's mind, or on any fickle feeling of his heart, but on the solid ground of God's declared acceptance of the sacrifice of Christ on the sinner's behalf. That is, the *full assurance* on our side is the righteous answer to the *full acceptance* on God's. Faith puts the two together and firmly holds them there.

What heavenly comfort does this assurance bring to the heart and conscience of a poor repentant sinner believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, since it is the Heavenly Comforter Himself who bears witness to us of the precious value of the Saviour's work *for* us, according to God's own thought of it ! As it is written, “ Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us ” (Heb. x. 15). That work was on the Cross, and therefore entirely apart from any feeling of ours.

Then there is another thing of great importance. Behind all that Christ has done, and all that the Spirit has witnessed of its value, our attention is drawn in Heb. x. to what *God* is, as shown by the fact that it gives Him positive *pleasure* to put away our sins. The sacrifices, which did not and could not do it, gave Him “ *no pleasure* ” (see verses 6 and 11). God's “ *will* ” was in Christ coming here to do what nothing else could

do—remove our sins, dispel our fears, and give liberty of approach to God with holy boldness. That is, God's *heart* was in all this; and the Saviour's work for us, with the Spirit's witness to us, the blessed outcome. How assuring!

Let us now look at

The groundless assurance of unbelief.

A little child may make a garden of its own by sticking plucked flowers in some chosen plot of the sea-beach sand; but that pleasure is doomed. Her pretty flowers will surely die. The strongest assurance to the contrary could not keep them alive, or even leave them standing where her fancy placed them, for long. There is neither root for the soil, nor proper soil for the root. And the principle applies to the matter before us. For there is, in connection with Christian profession, not only the well-founded "assurance of faith," but the groundless assurance of ignorance and unbelief. And oh, what a vast difference between the assurance of an awakened heart and conscience, set at rest by the tidings of what God has done to satisfy Himself about the question of sin, and the mere feeling of assurance in the natural mind left to its own vain religious reasonings.

Take a notable instance, Saul of Tarsus. "I verily thought with myself," said the Apostle, "that I ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts xxvi. 9, 10). But "I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (1 Tim. i. 13). Here, then, was assurance; but assurance that rested on his own misguided feelings, sincere and religious though they were. "I verily thought

with myself ! ” How much that short sentence expresses ! “ *Verily thought* ” proved his sincerity ; while the word that begins the sentence and the one that ends it go to show the place which *self* had in his zeal against the Name he hated, and those drawn by the Father to Him. But all this had been foreseen. “ The time cometh,” said Jesus to His own, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service ” (John xvi. 2). *They “ will think,”* said Jesus. *I did think,* said Paul, “ *I verily thought.* ”

Had Saul’s hatred to Christ continued, notwithstanding all his religious thinking, what a terrible curse would have rested upon him ! Of this his own hand was brought to witness (1 Cor. xvi. 22). “ If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha ” (that is, “ *Let him be accursed at His Coming* ”). Who can measure the calamity ?

But the subject only increases in solemnity as we come to consider *the assurance that comes too late*. A simple incident may serve to illustrate. One afternoon, a few years since, a man in the Midlands was very desirous of going to a place some miles distant. In his own mind, he had no question whatever that a certain train, starting from the Main Junction, stopped, *every* day in the week, at the N. Road Station. He went in good time to join this train. But when he reached the station he found, to his great surprise, that the main gate was locked and the booking office closed ! A mistake somewhere ; and no other train that day would serve his purpose ! This was very unpalatable assurance.

While expressing his vexation to a friend, he got this answer. "*I could have told you that! The time-table makes it plain enough.*" All perfectly true. But how utterly devoid of comfort.

What the writer is anxious about in recording this, is that the reader should not make a worse mistake. For, without question, you have been running a terrible risk if you have been imagining that the good news of God's forgiveness, now proclaimed in the Name of Jesus, is sure to be continued *all* the days of your life. To that proclamation there will be an end, and that end *you* may live to see—the end of the present day of grace at the second coming of the Lord. How appalling to contemplate the assurance that such an event will fix upon you! Assurance that the "house" has been filled and the door shut; assurance that God has at last accepted your oft-repeated excuse and furnished the wedding with willing guests without you; assurance that you are for ever beyond the possibility of another invitation to the feast; assurance that "the harvest is past, the summer ended," and you are "NOT SAVED"—*the full assurance of despair!*

Look at those two words, "*When once,*" at the beginning of Luke xiii. 25, and, if you can bear it, read the whole verse, and we think you will not be surprised at our anxiety that such a position should never be yours—a position infinitely worse than that of despairing Esau, who, having despised the birthright, lost the blessing that went with it, and found no place of repentance, "though he sought it carefully with tears" (Heb. xii. 16, 17).

Thank God, the door is not yet closed, the blessing not yet beyond your reach. The full assurance of faith may yet be yours. Bestir yourself, lest you miss it for ever.

GEO. C.

“THOU SHALT CALL HIS NAME JESUS.”

JESUS! Name of comfort,
Name of endless love!
Lifting from earth's shadows
Into heaven above!

Name of rarest fragrance
(Precious unto God).

Wafted o'er the pathway
By the saints now trod.

Name of untold sweetness!
Here, O soul, take rest!
Taste the joys of heaven,
Though by earth oppressed!

Jesus! Name victorious
Over sob and tear—
To the broken-hearted
Who can tell how dear?

Jesus! crowned with glory,
Ages ne'er shall dim,
Thee with reverent gladness
Ever would we hymn!

J. B. S—E.

A DEPARTING SERVANT OF CHRIST.

"Thou hast given him his heart's desire ; Thou hast made him exceeding glad with Thy countenance " (Psalm xxi. 2, 6).

CLASPING his thin hands together, while tears flowed down his face, he said, "My precious Lord Jesus, Thou knowest how fully I can say with Paul, To depart and to be with Thee, which is far better !' Oh, how far better ! I do long for it.

"They come and talk to me of a crown of glory—I bid them cease ; of the glories of heaven—I bid them stop. I am not wanting crowns, I have Himself—Himself ! I am going to be with Himself ! Ah ! with the Man of Sychar ; with Him who stayed to call Zaccheus ; with the Man of John viii. ; John ix. and John x. Oh, the Man of John xi. ; I am going to see Him, to dwell with Him, to gaze into that face once marred for me. With the Man who hung upon the cross ; yes, with the Man who loved me and gave Himself for me. Oh, to be with Him so soon, before the glories, the crowns, or kingdoms appear ! It is wonderful ! wonderful ! With the Man of the gate of the city of Nain ; the Man of Sychar alone I shall see ; the Man who in Heaven my object will be ; and I am going to be with Him for ever ! Exchange this sad, sad scene which cast Him out, for His presence ! Oh, the Man of Sychar !" (John iv. ; Acts xx. 17-38 ; 2 Tim. iv. 1-8).

AN OLD EPITAPH.—"His Master loved him and he knew it. He loved his Master and he shewed it."

THE GOSPEL IN THEORY, AND IN POWER.

(FROM A LETTER WRITTEN ABOUT THE YEAR 1770.)

“PERHAPS the theory of the Gospel was never better understood since the apostle’s days than it is at present ; but many who preach it, or who profess it, seem to lay too much stress upon a systematic scheme of sentiments, and too little upon that life and power, that vital, experimental, and practical influence, which form the character and regulate the conduct of an established Christian. Though ‘ it is not good ’ for the soul to be ‘ without knowledge ’ (Prov. xix. 2) ; and though the doctrine of the Gospel is according to godliness (1 Tim. vi. 3) ; yet the true religion that cometh from above is seated rather in the *heart* than in the *head* ; and depends not so much upon a set of new opinions, as on a new birth and a new nature. Those who are born from above, who have felt the evil of sin, and the depravity of their hearts, and having therefore received a sentence of death in themselves, have been enabled to flee to Jesus, without any hope or plea but the warrant and command of God, to look to the Son of His love for salvation, as the wounded Israelites of old looked to the brazen serpent ; and have power given them to rely simply upon His Person, His blood, and His whole mediation ; these persons are surely justified by faith, and united to Christ their living Head. . . . The faith that saves has three properties attributed to it in Scripture ; it *purifies the heart, overcomes the world, and works by love.*”

J. N.

Grace Boswell

with loving wishes
for her soul's blessing.
from Geo. Cutting

Jan'y 1910 .