

FAITHFUL WORDS FOR OLD AND YOUNG VOLUME 17

by H.F. Witherby

A collection of articles and writings by H.F. Witherby from Faithful Words for Old and Young Volume 17, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

127 Chapters

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Faithful Words for Old and Young Volume 17

How God Built a Bridge

YOU see that lighthouse yonder, flashing in the darkness? One, two, three white flashes. It is a bull point, and shines over the Morte Rock, a Norman name, signifying “Death-rock,” and a death-rock indeed it has proved to many; but there is a bright story attached to it, which I will tell to you as it was told to me.

On October 21st, 1878, a Norwegian brig, the “Odin,” was passing the rock, bound for Llanelly. She was laden with timber, and commanded by a Christian captain, who read his Bible and prayed every day. In the dead of the night the ship ran upon the Slipper rock. There was no lighthouse there then, so the disaster was not to be wondered at. What shall we say of those who run upon the rocks of sin in the clear rays of God’s lighthouse? Such wrecks are willful, not accidental.

The doom of the “Odin” seemed certain, as she lay alone and unseen upon the rocks. Some of the crew were for taking to the boats, but in that fearful sea it was impossible for a boat to live. Signals for human aid were useless, but they could signal to the Lord, who holds the sea in the hollow of His hand, and has said, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.” (Psa. 50:15.)

It was a time of trouble indeed, no help was near, and so the captain said, “Let us pray unto the good Lord; He can do great things.” All knelt down as best they could, with the exception of an Englishman, who appeared to think prayer was useless. Like many a man in spiritual matters, he thought they had better do something toward their own salvation; but all their efforts to save themselves had proved powerless, and the captain was right in praying in his simple language to One who was able to do what they could not do.

“What next?” “We will wait and see,” was the only order from the captain’s lips. Soon their peril became greater than ever—a heavy sea broke upon the vessel, and split her in two! Was God trying their faith? or was prayer but in vain? The crew kept together as much as was possible, and “What now, captain?” was their question, and still the same answer was given—“We will wait and see.” Would to God we could always have such patient trust in distress; it would be rewarded, as was theirs.

Through the rent, made in their vessel by the last heavy sea that had struck her asunder, the logs of timber stored within her began to wash out. One by one they floated out, and were tossed upon the rocks. Presently a watchful eye began to observe what was taking place. The waves were building the logs into a wooden bridge from the wreck—rock to rock—to the shore! “Captain, I believe we can cross to land!” one exclaimed. Was this to be their way of deliverance? Not of man—not of themselves not by any plan they could have devised—was their salvation to come. Such proved their experience, and such may be yours. Who would have thought of God’s way of salvation from the wreck of sin? Not of man’s work, not of angel’s aid, but all of His own wisdom, and by His own strong arm. A wonderful bridge spans the waters of death, even Jesus, “the new and living Way,” and “no man cometh unto the Father, but by Him.” (John 14:6.) Wrecked one,

here is your hope.

At the sailor's words the captain looked upon what was being wrought by the waves. "Not yet, my men; wait a little longer," were his orders. Again they prayed. Light was dawning, and they could see that there was just one space between the rocks, which they could not pass, but, guided by the Divine hand, another wave swept out some fresh logs, and laid them exactly where they were needed. The bridge was now complete—a God-built bridge—and over it the drenched sailors scrambled, and by God's preserving care reached the bay, and climbed a little path to the fields above.

Those who ought to have been on the lookout seemed to have neglected their duty, for there were none to give the shipwrecked men any help, but the Lord led them over the fields into the high road. "It leads somewhere," said they; "let us follow it." They did so, and came into the little village of Morthoe, and to the inn, where the proprietor soon understood that refreshment would be acceptable. But the first thing the good captain did was to assemble the men in the parlor to praise God. They had cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He had brought them out of their distresses. They were glad because they were quiet, and they knelt down and gave thanks to God, their Deliverer. "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" (Psa. 107:31.)

This story is every word true. I had it from the lady in whose house the captain stayed until the wreck was sold. His Bible was washed ashore a few days after the storm, as if to remind all of them of the faithful word of Him who was the Source of their deliverance.

Three flashes of light again! Since that light has shone no wrecks have taken place upon that rock.
W. L.

Be of Good Cheer

IT has been my somewhat painful privilege, during the last few years, to witness the home—nearing of many of God's children, and to see their joyous and triumphant victory, through grace, over the enemy death. Pleasant indeed it is to stand by the bedside of a dying Christian, and to see how calmly and peacefully he waits and watches for the word of release from a body of sin and pain to the happy, welcome home to paradise. True, indeed, the end of the Christian's toil and suffering is peace!

The Lord Jesus, when speaking on one occasion to His disciples, foretold them of His departure to the Father, and of the trials and sorrows which they would experience after He had left them. This somewhat astonished and perplexed them, and sorrow filled their hearts. When the Lord saw their distress, He was touched with compassion, and gave expression to sweet, tender words of sympathy. Yet He did not tell them all, for He said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." Ah! we none of us like saying good-bye and parting with loved ones, and though it is an oft-recurring experience in human life, still it always causes sorrow. And so the thought of parting with their dear, loving Master, whose words and company had ever filled their hearts with joy and delight, was to the disciples an inexpressible sorrow. Beautiful are the words of comfort Jesus addresses to them and to us. It was expedient for them that He should go away; He would not leave them comfortless. He would send one, the Comforter, who should abide with them forever. "Be of good cheer," says He; "in the world ye shall have tribulation, but in Me ye shall have peace."

Now I will narrate the comfort and joy these words, "Be of good cheer," can give to one in the time of sickness and death, as recently witnessed.

William W., by occupation a gardener, was called upon, amid the bloom and vigor of youth, at the age of twenty-two, to resign his spirit to the God who gave it. William had been smitten with a wasting disease, and his season of suffering was borne with exemplary Christian fortitude and patience, which made it a real pleasure to wait upon and visit him. He would listen with joy to the reading and exposition of the Scriptures, and grasp their sweet truths with all the simplicity of a child. Through all his illness never a murmur escaped his lips, and, though old hopes would at times revive, yet, conscious of the inevitable issue of his illness, he looked forward with hope and joy to that time when he should enter into the rest which remains for the people of God.

Surely of a truth Christ is a firm foundation to build and to rest upon, and a blessed reality is His love, which enables the young to rejoice in and cheerfully to submit to the will of God.

On one occasion, when visiting him, William was seized with a violent fit of coughing, and having been during that day in great pain, he was exceedingly prostrate. As soon as he regained his strength sufficiently to speak, he said, with a sweet smile, "Be of good cheer! Ah! those words have been a great joy and comfort to me many times lately, especially when I have felt at all sad and lonely. I have seemed to hear them spoken afresh to me by Jesus Himself, and I have felt His

presence very near, and it has been so sweet and precious to me.”

So time passed on. William grew gradually weaker, until at last he was confined to the house, unable to move about without help: still he never murmured nor complained. He employed himself as strength would permit, and has left behind him, as a memorial of his declining days, some beautiful carved woodwork.

All that a fond father and mother could do, combined with the skill of a kind and clever physician, was done to alleviate the young man’s sufferings and smooth his passage to the end. The Lord, however, was daily drawing him nearer to Himself, and very soon it became obvious William would be at rest.

On the occasion of my last visit, which was on the Sunday previous to his death, he was very ill, and his breathing had become very heavy. I spoke to him about the “many mansions,” when he, in broken accents, said, “God is a good Father: Jesus is coming for me very soon.” Then I repeated his favorite words, “Be of good cheer.” He lifted his eyes heavenward, a radiant smile passed over his face, and he answered, cheerfully, “Yes.”

I bade him good-bye, and we parted to meet no more until we meet in the Father’s house above. On calling the next evening I found he was gone. He had said to his mother, “Isn’t it strange I should feel so sleepy?” He then closed his eyes, and soon afterward sweetly fell asleep in Jesus. His last words were ■ “Peace, peace!” Yes, he was gone from sin and suffering to the home of life and peace, where there is no sickness nor sorrow. In the bright and beautiful home of God, after a few more trials, tears, and partings, all the loved ones of the Lord shall be safely gathered in, to go no more out forever.

Now I think from Willie’s short life, and triumphant death, we may learn this one all-important lesson one which needs to be specially enforced among the young people of today, namely, that Christ is the only One who can truly fit and prepare us either for a short or a long life. Faith in Him is the only thing that can give true peace and lasting joy, and make the dying bed feel soft as downy pillows. The love of Christ in the heart makes childhood blessed, ennobles youth, elevates manhood, and makes old age bright and beautiful. Childhood and youth form essentially the best time to ensure the great reward by serving the Lord, for life is uncertain, and quickly vanishes away. I would say to all young people who may read this simple story, “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.” W.C.

Is There a Hell?

JOHN D. and Benjamin S., two young men of Manchester, were close companions. They were of good moral character, but they lived only for self, and scoffed at religion, as beneath the notice of reasonable men.

One day, as Benjamin was passing along a street, he heard a preacher utter these words of a hymn: "There is a dreadful hell, and everlasting pains." He heard no more, but as he hurried on to keep his appointment with his friend, John, the words kept ringing in his ears. He felt ill at ease all the evening and, as the two were separating, he remarked, "What if there should be a hell after all?"

"Nonsense, Ben, are you such a baby as to be frightened by that old woman's tale?" replied John, with a scornful laugh. "When I die I will come back and tell you if there is a hell, I promise you that."

They parted, Ben feeling ashamed of his fears, and not liking to be laughed at.

The following day, while John was at work, he met with an accident, and when next Benjamin saw him it was to gaze upon his lifeless corpse. The awful promise his friend had made flashed across Ben's mind, and he wondered whether John D. was really "done with," or if a future state, after all; did exist.

During that night, as Benjamin slept, a figure appeared by his bedside. It was none other than that of John, who, opening his breast, revealed flames of fire as he uttered these words, "See, Ben, THIS IS HELL!"

Benjamin awoke, trembling. Convinced of the reality of eternal things, he resolved to flee from the wrath to come; but how to do so was now the question. He dared not pray to the God he had so long neglected and despised, saying to himself, "If I tried to begin to serve Him now, what would God say to me concerning the past?" The more he thought of his sins, and the more terrible the future grew before his mind, the worse did matters seem to become, until he was in despair. "I have willfully neglected and insulted God, and now I am lost; I cannot help myself," was his desponding conclusion.

As soon as he was convinced that he could do nothing to save himself, God showed him the way of life. He entered a chapel, as men would say by hap, and just as he did so the minister read out the text: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." The words seemed written on purpose for Benjamin, and before he went home that night he had found Jesus as his Saviour, and rejoiced in the knowledge of forgiven sins.

Ben at once set to work to endeavor to undo some of the mischief which he had done. He became as earnest in bringing others to Jesus as he had before been eager in keeping them away from Him. He became a zealous Christian worker, and his efforts were crowned with much blessing.

May all who read these words take warning, and come to the Saviour while yet there is opportunity, for though the sneer and scoff are to be heard daily, yet what the Bible tells us of a future state, and of the hell that is prepared, is true. Undoubtedly, hell is prepared for the devil and his angels, but if sinful men will refuse God's salvation, that awful doom will be their portion. Will you force an entrance into outer darkness by trampling underfoot the blood of the loving Saviour, who died to save the chief of sinners, and whose word even to you is this, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out"? (John 6:37) R. B. Y.

Peace

ON the evening of the first day of the week, Jesus, risen from the dead, said to His disciples, "Peace unto you." He spoke that day as the mighty Conqueror, as well as the loving Saviour. He Himself alone had borne the weight of His people's sins upon the cross. He had been wounded for their transgressions, and had endured the wrath of God against sin. He had died, but through death He had deprived the devil of the power of death. He had been buried, but He had broken the bars of the tomb. Peace—perfect peace—everlasting peace the Conqueror had won. Henceforth and forever the fruit of His atoning work is peace.

Having spoken peace to His disciples, the Lord showed them His hands and His side, and in those wounds we see, by faith, that His work on the cross is finished and complete, and, by looking upon Him, risen to die no more, joy and peace in believing fill the heart.

Having spoken peace to their hearts, Jesus said to them again, "Peace unto you." Why should He speak peace a second time? The hearts of the disciples were glad at the sight of Him— He was their assurance and their joy. Then why did He say to them again, "Peace"?

The first time He spoke peace to them for themselves—the second, for the sake of others. Filled with peace, Jesus would have them go forth laden with His love, and with the sense of the value of His great work to the weary, sin-stricken world. "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you," He said. His Father had sent Him from His own heart to the children of men, and the return for that love was the crown of thorns, the nails, the spear of Calvary; but now Jesus was risen from the dead, and from the far side of the grave He sends His messengers to speak peace to the very world of sinners that crucified Him. Yes, from His very heart He sends forth His disciples, and from the resurrection shore commissions them to proclaim His victory and His love in this world of sin and death.

Fellow disciple, have you the joy in your heart of knowing that, in and through the Lord, yours is peace? Then let your steps be swift: the Lord sends you forth from His heart with the word of peace. Go forth at the beginning of the new year, the messenger from the heart of your Saviour to the souls of men—the messenger of peace.

To the Seeker After God

MAN naturally shrinks from getting into close quarters with God; and oftentimes the seeker after God, through waiting to find within his heart a ground for assurance that he may come to God, remains at a distance from Him. We are not entitled to come to God because we may have a sense within our hearts that we are willing to come, or because we feel graciously inclined; our only ground and title for coming to God is His invitation in His word. And He invites us to Himself just as we are.

God's Wonderful Ways With Man

WE purpose this year occasionally devoting a few of our pages to the consideration of God's ways with man from the beginning to the end of time. Our object will be rather to lead the mind to ponder over the dealings of God with man, and man's ways toward God, than to show the length of the periods that are past or to come into which the history of man in relation to God may be divided.

It has pleased God to reveal Himself to our race in varied ways, and God has tried or tested man under different conditions, until this present day, when He is revealing Himself in the face of Jesus Christ, His Son, risen from the dead, and in glory above.

The accompanying diagram will enable the eye to take in at a glance the great eras or ages in man's history which are to occupy us. They are as follows:—

Eternity.

We live in the sixth of these eras. How long this age will continue we know not, but we do know that Christ, who shall come, will come, and will not tarry. The latter part of the world's history is reached, and the end is near.

MAN INNOCENT.

The record of the day of man's innocence is short. We learn of his wisdom, and his relation to God, and how he fell from his first estate; we learn, too, the purpose of God in man's creation, which great end God maintains in view, be man's failure and sin what they may, and this purpose will be fulfilled in divine abundance in Christ.

God made man in His image, and after His likeness. In the glory, God's children shall bear the image of the heavenly, and be forever like Christ. Such is the destiny of the people of God, and in view thereof, even the history of this world and the development of fallen man's history seem but as little things.

FALLEN, AND WITHOUT LAW.

Fallen from his original state, a sinner, and subject to death, man's history begins with a long period, during which he was without law. From Adam to Moses he was without law, and was left by God, to a considerable extent, to work out his own will. In those times man allied himself with Satan in a verb definite manner; his wickedness increased exceedingly, and at length God sent the flood, and swept the human race from the face of the earth, with the exception of eight souls. As God has His great end in the creation of man, so has Satan his object in marring that purpose, and in attracting man to himself. Satan has from the first, to this hour, sought the sway over human beings. As he gained an alliance with man at the beginning, so will he at the end; and, as that beginning concluded in the judgment of God; so will the end terminate in divine judgment, for, in the day that is at hand, Satan will once more gain direct power over man, and he will set up his kingdom on the earth, which God will overthrow by fire, and in judgment. Therefore, in a certain

sense, the dark scene: of the days of the flood will be repeated on the earth.

The union agreed upon among men in order to work out a common end, as is seen in the story of Babel, will also in effect be repeated when spiritual Babylon rears up itself, as we read in the book of the Revelation. For human combination to affect a common end, and surrender to Satan, are principles belonging to the fallen state of man.

We may ask, "If the history of man, as told in those centuries, when, without law, he was left to himself, be so dark and terrible, what light does the Scripture throw upon the lives of those who walked with God, and God's ways with them, in those early times?" This record is simple. What works these men of faith wrought on the earth we are not told—we read merely that they lived so many years, and died. Their character of stranger-ship in the world, which had cast off God, is thus clearly marked, and thus do those holy men of old become an example and a witness to ourselves.

Enoch's walking with God is recounted, and his end— "he was not, for God took him"; and in Enoch we behold a type of the Christian, whose path on earth is walking with God, and whom God will take away out of the earth, before His judgment falls upon it. In Noah, who built an ark to the saving of his house, we see another type of the Christian, whose life and testimony have the effect, through grace, of bringing his household to Christ for safety, and of warning those around him of the judgment that is about to fall upon the earth. Stranger-ship, walking with God, and testimony to coming judgment, are the excellent things we see in the lives of the saints of the early days, and which we, in these latter times, should earnestly desire to have fulfilled in our own lives.

THE SUBJECT OF PROMISE.

The judgment of the flood being passed, man essayed to establish himself with a name that could not be destroyed, and to form a great union for himself upon the earth; to carry out this purpose, he began to build Babel, afterward Babylon. Then God scattered the human race by dividing their language, and, according to the dialects and tongues forced upon them, arose the tribes and nations which now people the earth.

Very shortly after the flood, the human race lapsed into idolatry, which is the outward form of demon-worship, and one of Satan's great means of bringing man into subjection to himself.

Then it was that God called out from the mass of men one man to follow Him, and to him, "the father of the faithful," God gave promises. While Satan held men in thrall, worshipping and serving demons and idols, God gave Abraham His word that He would be his shield and his exceeding great reward. God promised that the Seed should come, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed. And thus the human race, under the misery and terror of demon worship, were to be peaceful and happy through the Seed. Abraham, up to old age a childless man, was assured that his offspring should be as the sand of the sea shore, and as the stars of heaven in multitude. He, through the Seed, which is Christ, was to be the progenitor of the race that should overcome, and that should possess earth and heaven. As time went on, for some hundreds of years, the subjects of divine promise walked with God in the expectation of its fulfillment, and their lives are characterized by their faith and hope in God's word.

Now, as we consider these holy men separated from idolatry, dwelling in tents and shunning the organized world-systems of their day, we can but see in them what Christians should be in this our own time. For to us are given exceeding great and precious promises. Our future rests solely upon God's faithful word, and according to our faith in His word are our lives those of pilgrims on earth seeking a better country, even an heavenly. Our hope is in God, and in the coming of His Son, whose reign has not yet commenced on the earth. Promise creates expectation, and hope in God is one of the greatest powers within the heart of man for true godly living, and for disregarding the glory and honor of the hour in which we live upon the earth.

UNDER THE LAW.

After the promise, God gave the law, and we see herein God's different ways of dealing with man. The children of Abraham had risen to be a nation, and God had called this nation to be His peculiar people. He gave Israel His law, and Israel accepted its responsibilities, and thus God and man entered into covenant. So long as Israel obeyed God's law, blessings were theirs, but upon disobedience, the curses attached to their disobedience fell upon them.

Unlike promise which is made in grace, the law imposed solemn responsibility upon man to carry out its commands. "It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come, to whom the promise was made."

For some hundreds of years man, as represented by God's nation, Israel, lived under the law. Left to himself, without law, man had utterly rejected God, and had instead allied himself with Satan; now, with the holy law of God to show him right and wrong, what would he do? Either disobey the commands of God and serve his own will—as did Israel, whom God drove out from their land because of their transgressions—or, retaining the words of the commands, use the letter of the law and his religiousness to exalt self and to reject the Seed, Jesus the Messiah, as did the Jews to whom Christ came!

Thus some four thousand years of the history of man passed by, and God records the history in His word, not to teach us of the rise and fall of nations, nor to explain to us the growth of science, nor the loss of wisdom on the earth, but to teach us concerning Himself, and to show us what man really is.

When we consider in some detail the record the Bible gives of man in the distant ages to which we have referred, we shall find profit to our souls in the present day, and obtain principles to assist our faith in this nineteenth century. In the next number we shall speak of the last three periods we have indicated.

A Child's Faith

LITTLE Rose was one of the youngest, members of a Bible-class, which could boast among its numbers, not only of young women, but also of many who were married. We fear the sight of middle-aged women, taking lessons among scholars of only half their age, and humbly and reverently receiving instruction from the lips of a youthful teacher, is almost a vision of the past. Many a time it was after a tremendous battle with natural timidity, that the trembling teacher attempted a task for which she felt herself so utterly unworthy, but encouraged by the conviction that the Lord had distinctly called her to it.

The parents of Rose were at one time in easy circumstances, but money owing to her father had not been paid, and at the time of our story food was very dear; so it happened that at times the children were in want, and yet were remarkable for their blooming appearance. There was too much dignity of character about the parents to make their privations public, and, as the mother had a skillful hand, the children were always neatly attired.

Little did Rosie's teacher, or indeed any of her companions, guess that the child often came hungry to the Sunday-school, or with no other dinner than that which the swedes and turnips in their little garden afforded.

One Sunday, as the family were at dinner, Rosie, who was the eldest, noticed that there was but a small piece of bread left for tea, so when her mother offered her a little of it, she refused it. On retiring to her bedroom the child began to speak to herself after this fashion: "My father and my mother are Christians, and Jesus is my Saviour. He loves me I know, and I love Him, for I am His. Does He not care that I am hungry?" She had closed the door, and falling upon her knees, with the tears streaming down her cheeks, she said: "Oh, my Father in heaven, who loved me so much as to send Jesus, Thy dear Son, to die for me, wilt Thou not let the people pay my father what they owe him, so that we may have plenty to eat? The Bible says to those that belong to Thee■and I belong to Thee■ 'Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure.' Oh, God, Thou knowest we have not bread enough for all of us! Thou knowest my father will not allow us to go in debt for anything. Oh, God, do help us according as Thou hast promised, for the sake of the Lord Jesus."

After this prayer Rosie went to school. "Perhaps," thought she, "some of my schoolfellows will invite me to take tea with them; if so, I will go."

The Bible lesson was a cheering one that afternoon, and the heart of the child was lifted above the things of time to the things of eternity. After an affectionate farewell to her teacher, Rosie was met at the door of the school by one of the elder girls of the class, who said, rather confusedly, "I hope you will not be offended, Rose, but yesterday, while I was helping my mother to bake, the thought kept coming in my head, to make a cake for you; and here it is," added she, tugging at something under her shawl, and producing a currant cake sufficiently large to provide tea for a whole family.

Seeing Rosie's stare of blank astonishment, the girl continued, "Once, when you were at our house, I heard you say you liked our plain currant cake, so that was why I made you this one. My mother said you would be offended, but I knew you better than that. So here it is, and leaving the parcel in Rosie's hands." Bessie Green ran away as if half ashamed of her kindness.

For one minute little Rosie stood at the door of the schoolhouse, with the paper-parcel in her hand, and then she hurried home, to fall upon her knees and to give thanks to her Father in heaven, who, even before she called, had been answering.

Rosie could but wonder why Bessie should think of doing such an unusual thing as to bring a cake to the Sunday-school! But the good Lord leads people to do strange things in order to be His messengers, in caring for those who put their trust in Him.

On the morrow one of her father's debtors called and paid him some money, and in this she saw an additional answer to her prayer, but the quick response to that Sunday afternoon's appeal has never been forgotten, and is still most sweet to her.

Rosie lived to grow up to be a woman, and during all the many years that have passed since that day she never recollects again being in so sore a need for bread.

Years after the occurrence of the incident, she confided these details to her teacher.

Well would it be for us all if we would thus learn, with the faith of a little child, to cast our care upon the Lord, for He careth for us. R. C. C.

My Banner Is White

ALLIE was a bright little girl of about eight years of age, whose parents, though very kind to her, did not know Jesus as their own personal Saviour. But Allie had learned to trust in Him, how, I do not know. It may have been at the Sunday-school, or it may have been through reading of the conversion of other little children.

Allie was taken ill, and, while lying upon her bed, she would oftentimes speak of seeing a beautiful man, who, I suppose, was Jesus.

Sometimes she would ask her mother to pray, and her mother would kneel down by her bedside, and the little girl would pray, and her mother would follow her words.

One day, during her illness, she waved her hand out over the bed, and said, "Get away, Satan; get behind me. No hell for me■heaven for me."

A day or two before she left this world, she called her father and mother to her bedside, and asked them what their banner was, for, said she, "My banner is white, and I am going to be with Jesus." And then she said only those with the white banner could go where she was going.

Through little Allie's end the mother was brought to the Lord Jesus, and now her banner, too, is white, and she will join Allie in you bright world of light.

My dear young readers, it is so sweet to be prepared to meet God while young. Jesus is willing to be your Saviour, and He will be your Friend. Tell Him all your joys and little troubles; He will listen to you, for He loves children. When a friend loves us he wishes us to put confidence in him. Trust in the Lord while you are young, and, by and by, you shall join little Allie in the happy land.

K. H.

1. Early Christianity in China, and Evangelizing Work There Today

THE question as to how far the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has yet been preached in all the world for a witness, is one of considerable interest, and it is not improbable that as we grow in knowledge, and take increased interest in the past and present condition of peoples, nations, and tongues in every quarter of the globe, we shall be astonished to find to what a wide extent of the earth its sound has already gone forth.

The Acts of the Apostles record some of the labors of two or three of the apostles, but little is said of the rest of the twelve. Is it not possible that some of these labored among the Gentiles in parts of the world far removed from the direct influence of the Jews, or even of the Roman empire? The Malabar Christians have a tradition that the Apostle Thomas went to India, and there died a martyr's death. To this day his tomb is pointed out at a place near Madras, where, in 1547, an ancient stone was found bearing the following inscription: ■ "Whoever believes in the Messiah, and in God above and also in the Holy Ghost, is in the grace of Him who bore the pain of the cross." The Chaldean breviary of the Malabar Church, in its office of Thomas, contains such passages as the following:■"By Thomas were the Chinese and the Ethiopians converted to the truth"; and in an anthem, "The Hindoo's, the Chinese, the Persians, and all the people of the isles of the sea■they who dwell in Syria and Armenia, in Javan and Romania■call Thomas to remembrance, and adore Thy Name, O Thou our Redeemer!"

The Indian branch of the Syrian, or Nestorian, Church, which still exists in Travancore and Cochin China, numbering more than 100,000 souls, appears to have descended from a Syrian colony, which arrived in India at a later date than the first introduction of Christianity into that country, and may have been the first to send the gospel to China.

The historian Gibbon says, "In their progress by sea and land the Nestorians entered China by the port of Canton and the northern residence of Si-ngan." Beyond this, next to nothing was known of an early introduction of Christianity into China till the discovery of the famous Nestorian monument dug up in the capital of the Shensi province, in 1625. We are, therefore, dependent upon the inscription graven on this stone, for all our present knowledge of early missionary efforts in China, and strange to say it is the only known remaining relic of former Christianity in all Central Asia.

Although the exact date at which the first messengers of the gospel found their way into China is not known, there is reason to believe that as early as the year 505 the gospel was preached there. One hundred and thirty years later, the stone tells us, "the Scriptures had been translated by Imperial request, churches had been erected in every province, and every city was full of churches."

Reference is made to the tablet by a large number of Chinese writers, and by no one native authority is its authenticity called in question.

Si-ngan Fu, the city in which the stone was found, is the capital of the Shensi Province of North China, 600 miles south-west of Peking. It is the capital of the first Emperor of China of the Tsin

dynasty (whence probably the name of the country, Tsinim or Sinim, mentioned in Isa. 49:12), and of some of the most powerful dynasties of the empire.

It was the royal city of the Tang dynasty (A.D. 618-913), and has been probably the most celebrated city in Chinese history.

It is said to have been established as early as the twelfth century before Christ; since which time it has been built and rebuilt, taken and retaken, and today remains one of China's greatest cities.

It has been the writer's privilege twice to visit and preach the gospel to this city: and, next to Peking, he has no doubt it is the largest city in North China, with a population said to be one million, but without a resident Protestant missionary.

Its wall is strong, and flanked every few hundred yards with strong buttresses, and surmounted with guard-houses and towers affording a fine view of the surrounding country.

It is one of the finest of the 1200 walled cities of China, with wide streets fairly well paved, and ornamented with fine avenues and numerous triumphal arches of stone and wood. The houses are built generally of burnt bricks, the shops are large, and well stocked with every commodity, even to goods from England. The inns are large, and generally well filled with travelers. As in all northern cities, the traffic in the streets is carried on by means of mules and donkeys.

This, then, is the city in which the famous Nestorian inscription was discovered, and according to a Chinese work entitled, "Inquiry into the Illustrious Religion," "In the time of the Emperor Wan-leih, when some people at Chang-an (Sing-an) were excavating the ground, they found a tablet of the Illustrious Religion, dated A.D. 781, of the Tang dynasty," and, adds the historian, "the scholars and great statesmen who had become disciples of the Western teaching, congratulated each other on the fact of their religion having been propagated in China so early as the Tang dynasty; but, if they were asked what the Illustrious Religion really was, they could not tell."

The writer saw the tablet in 1881-2. It is of stone, about 10 feet high by 4 wide, and 9 inches thick, and was standing erect upon a heap of ruins. He made a rubbing of the inscription, which is in Syriac and in Chinese. A full translation would occupy several pages, and would not probably be very interesting to the majority of our readers.

It begins by stating that the Great Creator of the universe ■ "Our Eternal true Lord God" ■ is the source of all that is honorable. After creating the worlds and day and night, He made the first man pure, and ordained him ruler of all created things. But Satan introduced the seeds of falsehood.

It declares that Messiah appeared in the world as a man, and the angelic powers promulgated the glad tidings. A virgin gave birth to the Holy One in Syria, a bright star announcing the event. Persians came to present tribute.

It refers to both Old and New Testaments, and speaking of the later, says twenty-seven sacred books have been left which unfold the Original transforming principles. Describing the followers of the Illustrious Religion, the tablet informs us, "By the rule of admission it is the custom to apply the water of baptism. They do not keep slaves, but put the noble and the mean on an equality. They do not amass wealth, but cast all their property into the common stock."

The Scriptures were translated in the imperial library, and the emperor investigated the subject in his private apartments, and became so deeply impressed with the truth of the religion, that in the seventh month of the year 638 he put out a proclamation, commanding its dissemination. Later emperors also supported the Nestorians, who were persecuted by the followers of Buddhism.

It must be borne in mind that the tablet was erected as late as A.D. 781, so that what is written there cannot be taken as an example of the teaching of the first preachers of the gospel in China, nearly three hundred years earlier.

The Nestorians appear gradually to have wandered from the simplicity of the gospel, and for a truly spiritual worship to have substituted that of pictures and idols, the saying of prayers for the dead, and a thousand other errors which crowd in upon a church, or an individual, the moment a departure is made from the simplicity and obedience of the word of God. Governments might rebuild their places of worship, and officers of the state might defend their persons, but they lacked the very element of growth and prosperity— trust in God, and the moment the broken reed of imperial favor upon which they were leaning was turned into a rod for their backs they quickly succumbed, and became well-nigh extinct. With the exception of the monument itself, there is today no known trace whatever of their existence in China.

The edict of Wu-Tsung, in the year 845, sought to crush the “Illustrious Religion,” but as late as the twelfth century, when Marco Polo traveled so extensively in China, many churches existed. This remarkable man was for three years governor of the city of Yangchow, and he speaks of two Nestorian churches in that neighborhood. The writer, who lived for eighteen months in that city of three hundred and sixty thousand people (the only Protestant missionary there), never found any trace of former Christianity in the neighborhood.

Whatever may have been the opportunities afforded to the Chinese in the past of accepting the gospel, the solemn fact remains that today more than a thousand walled cities, and many thousands of large market towns and villages, and some three hundred millions of people in this one country are without the gospel. However, it is matter for much praise, that of late years so many men and women from this country and from America have gone forth, and are spending their lives in the service of the Lord in China.

The following instance illustrates the freedom which the missionary has to preach Christ in China in this present day. A few years ago, during the time of the great famine, we were traveling through the province of He-nan on our way up into the famine district, preaching and distributing Christian tracts and the Scriptures as we went.

One day we stayed at a town called Tsaitien-tsai. It was wet, and our rooms in the inn were far too small to admit one-tenth of the people who crowded round to see us, and to hear what the foreigners had to say. Some of the people suggested that we should go to the village temple, the largest public building in the place, and address them. The priests had either perished in the famine, or, for fear of doing so, had fled, leaving their idols to take care of themselves. We proceeded to the temple with an armful of tracts and books, followed eagerly by the wondering people, for rarely did a foreigner pass that way, and still more rare was the presence of a preacher of eternal life.

The interior of the building was covered with idols of Buddha, the god of acting, the Madonna and Child, and many others, all of which were made of wood, or straw and clay. The floor was filthy. The idols had not been dusted for months, and the ashes of incense were scattered about everywhere, while incense jars and candlesticks, which had not been destroyed, remained standing before the images, though seldom called into use. Occasionally, however, some poor creatures would come and present a few sticks of incense to these dumb idols which looked, some grimly, others smilingly upon them.

We lost no time in surveying our situation, and, pushing aside the jar of burning incense and the candles, at once mounted the altar. From this most excellent position we proclaimed the glorious gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Nor was there need to go far for a text. Never before had we had such a practical one, and one more easily understood by the people, for on our right was a man, with ragged clothes and half-bare feet, uncombed hair and unshaven head— a very picture of misery. He was crouching at the side of the wall, unable either to sit down or to stand up, for one end of a short chain was round his neck, and the other end fastened into the wall. He was a captured robber.

We made him our text, and described men bound hand and foot by the power of sin, and with no power on earth able to loosen them and let them free, except Christ, the Son of God; for is it not written, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord”? Never did the priests of Buddha preach such things, nor had their words ever loosed one from his sins, or given one soul rest.

It is remarkable that the effect of the famine had led many to inquire, “What are these idols? When we most need their help they desert us. We pray to them—we do them the greatest honor we can—scores of times have we carried them in sedan chairs through the streets, chanting their praises in the ears of all the people—but what are we the better? Are these things, after all, mere wood and stone, and the work of our own hands only?” and to conclude, “We will no more worship them; we will worship heaven and earth from this time forth.”

This is a true picture of the condition of large masses of the people in China. They find no satisfaction in Buddha; they are hungering and thirsting after something—they know not what; but we, being taught by the Holy Spirit, know what they want is Christ, not Buddha—life, not darkness, superstition, and death; and, as our future chapters will show, the preaching of Christ has led many to turn to God from idols to serve the living and the true God. P.

1. From Malachi to Matthew

THE period which elapsed between the last of the Old Testament writings and the events recorded in the beginning of Matthew's Gospel, was one of at least 400 years—no insignificant period, even in the life of a nation whose history extends over so vast a time as that of the children of Israel. It is a period roughly corresponding to that which, in the history of our own land, has passed since the murder of the two princes in the Tower and the reign of Richard III.

The changes which time ever brings with it, were not absent in Israel's history, though in those days, and among an Eastern people, there was not the impetuous rush of events which is so marked a characteristic of our own times. Yet they were momentous days for Israel, as we shall see. But as to what happened during those centuries, the inspired records give hardly any intimation. Prophecy, indeed, ■ “the history of events before they come to pass” ■ had briefly and exactly sketched part of the period, but the Evangelists take up their record without any “introductory chapter.” Their object, we need hardly say, was not to connect their times with the Old Testament days, or to write mere history. It was to present a fourfold witness to the Christ.

Familiar as most of us have been with our Bibles from childhood, there is a possibility of our overlooking the great historical gap between the two Testaments, and the many new features presented by the New; just as one familiar from his boyhood with some striking scene is not so impressed with its features as a stranger would be. Hence many are barely conscious of the chasm in the history of that people which God calls His people, and the land which is His land. Yet there is much to awaken our attention: very frequently the Gospels present something which is new, or which is different from the order mentioned in the close of the Old Testament, or that is otherwise so striking that it might well excite interest. To mention only one or two examples of this: ■ We find on reading the Gospels that though “the people” are in the land, they are there in a subject condition. Everywhere we meet with tokens of Roman authority, for the eagle, and not Judah's lion, is the symbol of the ruling power. The current money bears the image and superscription of Cesar; Roman legions garrison the cities; Roman publicani collect the odious and extortionate imposts; an Edomite ■ under Rome's control ■ holds his debased court where David's Son should have reigned ■ that Son working as a carpenter in a humble village. We meet at every turn with party names new to us ■ Pharisees and Sadducees, Zealots and Herodians. Very little information, it will be remembered, is given in the New Testament concerning these; the writers refer to them as to names well known.

It is designed in these papers briefly to sketch the history of Israel from the days of Israel's last prophet to the New Testament history; that is from the close of the Old Testament canon to the appearing of that Saviour, concerning whom the ancient scriptures bore so exact a witness.

The precise date of the exercise by Malachi of his prophetic office is not known; but it can be pretty well gathered by a comparison of his prophecy with the latest historical book the of Old Testament— Nehemiah. It will be seen that Malachi rebukes the people for the very corruptions which Nehemiah found upon his sojourn a second time in Jerusalem. It is plain that the Temple

had been rebuilt (which calls for a later date than Haggai; and it is painfully plain, too, that (as is the case with so many movements which have been really from the Spirit of God) there was speedily a grave falling away from the zeal and devotedness which marked those who had gone back to the land of their fathers. Both Malachi and Nehemiah are called upon to contend against the withholding of tithes, the neglect of the sanctuary, and intermarriage with forbidden races. This seems to point to their being contemporaneous, and gives the date of about B.C. 420.

At the time, then, of the close of the Old Testament, the state of things was briefly this: "The Remnant" was settled in the land, under mild Persian control, ruled by a faithful and generous governor in Nehemiah, and with equal faithfulness warned by the Lord's prophet. He, with stern denunciations of much evil which was rife, spake precious words to such as "feared the Lord and thought upon His Name" of the Sun of Righteousness who should arise—the Messenger of the Lord who suddenly should come.

Malachi (of whom nothing whatever is certainly known) died, the last of the prophets—the "Seal," as the Rabbis called him—and the voice of prophecy ceased. Many years passed in quiet subjection to the Medo-Persian power, the immediate administration of affairs being entrusted to the Jewish high priest. For a long period (i.e., from the death of Nehemiah till the reign of Alexander—nearly 100 years) the history of the people is a blank. Only one event, and that because of its shocking character, stands out prominently during that time. When Eliashib, the high priest died, he was succeeded by his son Judah, and he by his son John. Bagothra, the Persian governor, had promised to procure the office for Joshua, the brother of John. Relying upon his support, Joshua quarreled with John in the holy precincts, and the rupture ended in the murder of the former, whereby John not only became a murderer, but also a profaner of the Temple. In revenge, Bagothra came up to Jerusalem, entered the Temple, thus, as a Gentile, further polluting it, and imposed a fine of fifty drachmas upon every lamb offered in sacrifice, amounting altogether to about 1720 per annum. This tribute was levied for seven years, and seems to have ceased with a change of governors.

John held the priesthood for thirty-two years, and was succeeded by Jaddua, who is the latest person mentioned (chronologically) in the Old Testament. It was in the days of the latter that the Macedonian power was gaining its ascendancy, and the Persian falling before it. Alexander (afterward called "the Great"), the "mighty king" of Daniel's prophecy, came into Syria (B.C. 331), took Damascus and Sidon, and while besieging Tyre, sent a letter to the Jewish high priest, demanding that he should send him auxiliaries and provisions. He ordered that the tokens of submission formerly sent to Darius should be sent to him, and that the high priest should choose the friendship of the Macedonians or Greeks. Loyally (according to Josephus) did Jaddua reply that he had sworn never to bear arms against Darius, and that he would not do so while that prince was living. Incensed at the answer, Alexander sent reply that he would teach all men to whom they should keep their oaths, and upon the fall of Tyre, he marched to Jerusalem.

With much fear, Jaddua commanded supplications and sacrifices to be made, if, indeed, God would be merciful to His people, and deliver them from their perils. Warned in a dream, Jaddua adorned the city upon the approach of Alexander, and threw open its gates, attired himself in his glorious robes of purple and scarlet, set upon his head the miter and golden petal having the sacred name of Jehovah, and accompanied by a great throng of white-robed priests and people,

he went out as far as to Sapha, to meet the conqueror. To the immense astonishment of Alexander's followers, who were eager for the command to sack and plunder and torture, the conqueror went forward alone, and did reverence before the high priest. Certain kings of Syria who were with him thought, perhaps naturally, that he was mad! Why, asked one, should he, whom all adored, adore the high priest of the Jews? Alexander answered, "I did not adore him, but the God who path honored him with his high-priesthood. I saw this very person, in this very habit, when I was at Dios in Macedonia, who, when I was considering with myself how I might obtain the dominion of Asia, exhorted me to make no delay, but boldly to pass over the sea thither, for that he would conduct my army and give me the dominion over the Persians."

Alexander gave the priest his right hand, accompanied him into the city, offered sacrifice at the Temple, and treated the priests kindly. On their part the priests showed to him the book of Daniel, with its predictions that a Greek should destroy the Persian empire, and Alexander at once concluded that it was he who was therein marked out. Possessing a kind of superstitious natural religion, it is quite possible that those circumstances helped to confirm him in the belief he himself expressed as to his "divine mission." With great joy he bade the people ask what they would, and readily granted to them that they might observe their own laws, and be exempt from tribute every seventh year. On these conditions many of the Jews enlisted in his army, and Jerusalem and the Jews passed out of the second (the Medo-Persian) into the third great world empire—the Grecian.

Forgiven Much and Loving Much

A WELL-KNOWN figure in one of the suburbs of London on Sunday mornings was R., as he went his rounds selling Sunday newspapers; nor has the form of the tall, thin, old man, with his high hat and stick, yet faded out of memory, for it is but twelve months since he was to be seen at his Sunday-morning work. Never had old R.'s shadow darkened the threshold of a place of worship, neither had the thought of eternity crossed his soul, for he lived utterly careless of God, and without a thought of the future.

Last autumn he was led to listen to the singing of some hymns out of doors, and was finally prevailed upon to enter the hall, M. here gospel services were being held. Night after night did the old man attend these meetings, and very much impressed he was by them.

One evening he was personally addressed by the preacher, and these words in Isaiah 53:6 were shown to him ■ "All have gone astray."

"It is true," was R.'s answer; "it is true. I have lived seventy-eight years in sin; but will God forgive an old sinner like me?"

"Yes," was the answer. And, seeing that the old man was truly awakened to the realization of his lost state, he was directed to the conclusion of this text, "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Here, then, was an anxious soul, with the burden of seventy-eight years of sins weighing him down, and God's precious word declaring how that He has laid the sins of all who trust Him on another. What could the old man say?

"I believe, but I am not saved."

It seemed too good to be true, too wonderful to believe, though he said he did believe.

Opening the Bible in the New Testament, the speaker turned to the Gospel of John, where it is written, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life" (John 5:21), and said, "Well, R., will you believe if God shows it to you from His own word?"

"Indeed, I will," replied the old man; whereon the verse we have quoted was slowly read, and a pause made at these words "hath everlasting life."

"Is that true? is that what God says?" was R.'s anxious inquiry.

"Yes; it is God's word," was the answer.

"Then I am saved," said he, with a trembling voice. "Read the verse again: 'He that believeth HATH,' 'HATH everlasting life;'" and with tears he added, "I am saved ■ God's Word tells me so;" and his face beamed, as he left his friend, rejoicing in a sin-pardoning God.

From that time old R.'s great delight was to tell of the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, which cleanseth us from all sin. That wonderful word all was, with his seventy-eight years of a godless life, unutterably sweet to him, and on every hand he would relate what God had done for his soul, in saving him, and in making him a monument and a witness of His mercy.

"How is it with you?" said one to him, and this was his answer: "I am all right; I am saved, because God tells me so in the fifth chapter of John, and the twenty-fourth verse; and I must not doubt Him. It was made all right for me at the mission services."

R. found sweet communion with his Saviour, for a Saviour indeed was Jesus to him. He was his all in all. The neighbors and friends saw the change, and it became a matter of conversation among them how that old R. was a new man.

After his conversion those who had been used to this gracious end left the neighborhood for some months, carrying the gospel elsewhere. It was only a few weeks ago the neighbors told old R. that the same preacher was about to return for some days' mission work in the neighborhood.

"Aye! it can't be true that I'm going to hear him again," said R. "Yes, it is," his friend answered him, and, holding out his hand, he added, "See, here are some of the announcements of his coming."

R. hastened home, and wrote a letter to his Christian friends, begging them to be earnest in prayer to God, that even as He had saved him, so now others might be saved by the preaching of His servant who was coming once more to the neighborhood, adding in his letter, "I am afraid I shall not hear him again."

The next morning old R.'s familiar form, with his tall hat and stick, was to be seen hastening about his neighborhood, calling at the houses where he had been wont in former times on Sunday mornings to sell his newspapers. But his hand was now full of messages of mercy, and, as he knocked at house after house, he begged the people to come and hear words whereby they might be saved. It was a great joy to him to go from door to door, for Christ was dwelling in his heart by faith, and his hopes were high for the prosperity of the mission. Thus some hours passed by, till old R. grew weary. At length he came to a house where his efforts to make the people hear were in vain, though he rapped often enough at their door with his stick. But he was not to be denied entrance, if entrance were possible. So he hustled round the back way, and in so doing fell over a piece of wire, and in the fall broke his ribs.

When the people picked him up he said "I thought I should not hear him again;" and as he was being carried away he smiled, saying, "My name is Enoch. Tell them that Enoch walked with God." And then, faint as he was, he sang as best he could some lines of a favorite hymn.

"My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine;

For Thee all the pleasures of sin I resign" ■

and added, "Oh, how glad I am my sins were all laid on Him!"

Dear old R.'s hours were fast coming to their end. Though he suffered greatly, he spent his last moments telling all who were around him that his place was prepared in the home above, and that he was going to be put to sleep by Jesus. He had one desire—he wished to see the man whom

God had used to the salvation of his soul before he passed away. But he was not yet in the place, as the services were not to be held for some few days, so that the hope seemed vain. However, unknown to him, a telegram was sent to the evangelist, who immediately set out to see him. Thus they met, not only to bid each other farewell, but to unite in yet one song of thanksgiving, for dear old R. would sing once more with his feeble, dying voice the hymn he loved so well.

"I will love Thee in life, I'll love Thee in death,

And praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath;

And say when the death-dew lies cold on my brow■

If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now!"

R. H. H.

A Solemn Warning

HE stood amid the crowd while the message of salvation was being delivered. What his thoughts were who knows? It was not the first time that the gospel had been preached at the end of that bridge, and it was not the first time that he of whom we write had heard the story of redeeming love at that spot. Would it be the last? who knows?

The following morning there was a stir in the village; women gathered in groups around the doorways of their houses, and talked with seriousness of what had happened. They looked distressed. Evidently something very painful had taken place in the little world of that village. Yes, indeed, there had. But what was it? Our friend, who had formed one of the crowd at the bridge end on the previous night, had met with a severe accident, and had been brought home bruised and mangled from his work. Sorrowful yet loving hearts had helped him to his home, to lay him upon his bed to die. What happened in the chambers of his soul during the eight days that he lay upon his bed, we know not. The Lord searches the heart and ponders the ways of men.

It had so happened that a holiday trip had been arranged, in which our friend was to have been one of the party, and indeed he it was who had hired the conveyance for it. But when the day fixed for the trip came, the very money which he had paid for the carriage was employed in the hire of a hearse to carry his corpse to the grave.

Life is uncertain. We may be called hence at a moment's notice. Reader, are you ready? E. C.

The Father Sent His Son

IT had been a terrible gale in the Atlantic, as one ship at least testified. All her three masts had been carried away, and there she rolled helpless and unmanageable in the trough of the sea. And now another terror was added, for she had sprung a leak, and the carpenter announced nine feet of water in the hold. At this last evil news the stoutest heart failed, and the gloom of despair settled on the crew. Just at the moment when all hope seemed to have fled, a vessel was descried in the distance, and instantly all were in an agony of suspense. Mastless, signalless, and almost waterlogged, would she be seen by the approaching vessel? This was the question, for each one well knew that his life depended upon the answer which a few minutes would give. Nearer and nearer drew the ship, until at last a cheer goes up from every parched throat; for see! she alters her course and bears down upon the wreck and backs her yards, and before many moments have passed, her lifeboat is launched and British hands and British hearts speed her upon her errand of mercy, and, returning once and again, conveys the whole ship-wrecked crew to the good ship Edinburgh.

Talking next day to some of those he had so gallantly rescued, "Yours," said the captain of the Edinburgh, "was not the only wreck with which we had to do. We sighted another vessel flying signals of distress, bore down on her, and sent off our life-boat to her in charge of the first mate, my son. But by the time the life-boat reached her, the captain had persuaded the crew to stick to the vessel, so, after all his risk and trouble, my son had to return as he went. Well, we hoisted up the boat, and squared away out yards and laid the ship on her course, but a presentiment of what was coming kept me looking through my glasses at the doomed ship, and presently she took a great plunge and down she went with every soul on board! Well, I could do no more, I had done my best; I had sent my own son."

Reader, you who can admire the father's heart in sending his son on such a perilous mission, and can feel your heart warm towards the gallant son, who so readily jeopardized his life for perfect strangers, and can wonder at the mad folly of those who refused to be saved when salvation was lovingly offered them, did it ever strike you that the Father sent the Son, the Saviour? That just because you were lost and helpless, with the lake of fire beneath your feet, and you about to take your final plunge, God sent His Son—that, in infinite compassion, Jesus came and took the guilty sinner's place, and died beneath the wrath of a righteous and sin-hating God, and that, now that God's claims have been fully met by Christ's sacrifice, God is righteously offering salvation to you? Will you be mad enough to reject the proffered Saviour, preferring to trust the poor old shattered sinking wreck of self? Beware! How will you escape if you neglect so great salvation? Escape there is none. God has done His best, and He can do no more. "Through this Man (the risen and ascended Christ) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins," not through yourself, your prayers, your goodness, your frames, your feelings, but through a Christ who died and is risen again. Yes, through a vacant cross, and an empty tomb, and a throne with its blessed Occupant, whose presence there proves that the believer's sins are forever gone. "By Him (this risen Man) all that believe are justified from all things." (Acts 13:38, 39.)

Oh! the blessed rest in the perfect love of God, manifested in the gift of His Son— a perfect love, which has cast out all fear! and, oh! the blessed confidence of those who hold God's living receipt for all their sins, beholding by the eye of faith the One who was delivered for their offenses, and raised again for their justification, and seated, in token that His work is done, at God's right hand. "Every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God." (Heb. 10:11,12.)

J. F.

A Young Man's Story

ONE fine autumn day, the inviting weather drew two young men to engage in their favorite pastime— a row up the river. After rowing for a considerable distance, they came to a bridge, where they stopped, and, being hot, they agreed to have a bathe. After swimming for some time, they began to vie with each other, when one of them climbed one of the posts supporting the foundation of a part of the bridge, which was under repair, and into the river he dived. Little did the young man know what he had done! HE had plunged in amongst the woodwork below the surface of the water, and there he was fixed, and could not stir! He gave himself up for lost, and in a moment all the darkest events of his life crowded into hi! mind, and he felt he must perish forever.

God was gracious, however. His friend succeeded in pulling him out of his perilous position, and he was saved just in time.

A few weeks passed away, and there was no turning to God or true thankfulness in the young man's heart. Once more he was on the river in a racing boat, when, through inexperience, he was upset. He just managed to clutch hold of the overturned boat, and to hang on, as the stream carried him away with it. Presently a boat put off from the shore, and he was rescued, and, strange to say, on the very spot where he had seen a man drowned.

This second deliverance made him really afraid. How would it be with him, he felt, should God cut him off? When the following Sunday came, the weight of his guilt hung heavily upon him, yet he did not ask God for forgiveness, but continued in misery for weeks.

A young man of his acquaintance at this time called upon him, with the greeting, "Well, old fellow, how are you?" and they added, in a tone of deep earnestness, "And how is it with you and the Lord Jesus?" To this question no answer was returned, but they both started at once for a Bible-class for young men, which was followed by a short prayer meeting, at the close of which this same God-fearing fellow invited those who did not know the Lord Jesus to hold up their hands. Some did so; others had not the courage, and amongst these was he of whom our story tells. Again, such of the young men as did know the Lord were asked to hold up their hands, but still from A. came no response.

That evening, on his return home, A. prayed God to forgive him his sins, and to accept him as a servant of His, and this, such is God's grace, we are sure He did there and then.

When the young men's Bible class next assembled, what we have recounted here was told by A. Now, to the question, "Who is on the Lord's side?" he is glad, indeed, to answer, "I am!" Young men— it is a young man who addresses you—do not hold back, as did A. at the first, if you really desire salvation. You will never regret a bold front for Christ. Christ will keep you, and He will stand by you, and through Him you shall overcome. Whatever our temptations are, the Lord will keep us, and one thing is certain—the joy He gives, and the pleasure of serving Him, is better than everything else. J.

Be Opened

THERE was once brought to the Lord Jesus a man who “was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech.” The case of this man seems to resemble that of many who fail to declare plainly that the Lord is indeed their Saviour. Such a one we met with the other day—a man who dared not say he was the Lord’s, yet who believed on Him in the heart. Now in the healing wrought by Jesus we read, He “saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, ‘Be opened.’ And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.” Thus, in the order of the miracle, first the ear was opened, and then the speech followed.

“Can you not own the Lord as your Saviour?” we inquired of our friend.

“It is of no use saying so,” said he, “if it be but from the head; it must come from the heart.”

“Well, J.,” said we, “when the Lord was here He made both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak, and, by your conversation, we are assured you belong to Him: one word from Him, and your lips shall be opened.”

“I know He is the Saviour, but I cannot say He has saved me,” was the reply.

“He is saying more than he has before,” broke in a friend of J.’s; “his mouth is being opened.”

“Is He not the Saviour, and did He not die to save?” responded J., with warmth. “None can save but He, and I know He is my Saviour.” And, as he spoke of the worth and love of the Lord, J.’s face shone again. Unknown to himself, he was confessing with his mouth the faith that was in his heart—his tongue was loosed.

As Many as Touched

“AS many as touched Him were made whole.” (Mark 6:56.) But they did touch, and it was as many as touched, that received the healing blessing. Some looked on, some heard, some reasoned, but those who touched were healed.

There is a lesson herein for the seeking soul, which teaches him to get close to Christ. Personal contact with Him is the necessity. It suffices not for the sick man to look at the healing medicine, he must take it, if he would be benefited thereby. You must come to Christ, not come but a little way towards Him, if you would be healed. The sinner must needs meet the Saviour, his soul must come into contact with Him, and when this is the case, lo, the sinner is “made whole.”

There was no virtue in the touch of these sick persons! Think we, that the finger of a paralyzed man had power in it? Or, that in the hand of the leper there was cleansing? Nor is there in us any virtue, or any good thing; the virtue dwells in Jesus, and through the touch, the blessing was received. The touch was the evidence of faith, faith led to the touch. It was also the sign that the sick needed the healing of the Good Physician. On the one hand, in Jesus there is stored the fullness of grace, and pardon, and cleansing; on the other, in us is the absolute need, and faith puts the empty sinner into communication with the abounding's that there are in Christ.

Many a soul carries its burden to this hour, because there has not been the coming close to Jesus in simple faith. Some are content to hear of His gracious works, others satisfy themselves by looking at Him, as it were from afar off, but the healed people, the saved people, have been content with nothing short of getting close to Christ, each one for himself and herself.

“As many as touched Him were made whole!” We do not wonder at this; there is no room for surprise, the only surprise is that so few go to Him. Does it astonish us that we read of a dying thief being saved, or of a blasphemous man, a persecutor and injurious being made a follower of the meek and lowly Lord? Or that we hear, in our own day, of the vilest and worst being “made whole,” and living no more the life of sin, but living instead the life of faith? Do we lift up our eyes with amazement and say, “How can these things be?” By no means, for Jesus is so wonderful, and His salvation is so complete, and the cleansing efficacy of His once shed blood is so perfect, that we know He can and does heal as many as come to Him.

“Whithersoever He entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought Him that they might touch, if it were but the border of His garment.” What a sight of power and of pity, of grace and misery! The Son of God, who had come from heaven, surrounded with every type of human woe, and as He walks on, His heart moved in tenderness towards all, hundreds of weak hands stretch out, as it were to touch the very skirts of His garment? And if our eyes could but see, we should behold in this our gospel day the selfsame Jesus, the Son of God, moving amongst the longing and perishing children of men, and we should see weak and helpless hands outstretched to touch Him, and “As many as touched Him were made whole.”

Before the night closes in, and the Lord has passed by to return in mercy no more, oh! stretch out the hand of faith and touch Him.

God's Wonderful Ways With Man.

IN our last number we cast a rapid glance at the first four ages into which this world's history may be divided. We will now look at the last three.

THE SON OF GOD ON THE EARTH IN HUMILIATION.

Some four thousand years having elapsed since God had declared to the Serpent that the Seed of the woman should appear, and the time having arrived for the fulfillment of the promise to His people, "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law." (Gal. 4:4.) The eternal Son of God became the Son of Man—Jesus was born! His advent, though heralded in the sky with glory, was on earth in weakness. He was a stranger in the world from His birth—unrecognized by its imperial might, unwelcomed by the nation of Jehovah. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came— unto His own, and His own received Him not." (John 1:10, 11.)

But the fact of the Son of God being upon the earth, the divine messenger and spokesman, the express image of God's essential being, evidenced an altered character of God's ways with men. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," (John 1:17.) "This do, and thou shalt live" (Luke 10:28), was the voice of the law; "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16), is that of the gospel. God had commanded man to obey His Law, and He had smitten the disobedient, but in the result, man had become more and more rebellious. Now, through the words and ways of, His Son, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." (2 Cor. 5:19.)

There was even more than this display of divine grace in the Lord's ministry on earth. He declared God as the Father; as such God had never before been revealed to men. As the Creator, the Almighty, and as Jehovah, God had made Himself known, but not until His Son came to this earth did He reveal Himself as the Father.

We know, alas! too well, the bitter sequel to this display of divine love— man, true to himself and to his enmity against God, pursued the course of his antagonism to the end. Thus, after years of kindness, after miracles and mercies, both Jews and Gentiles combined to cast Jesus out from the earth, and the loud cries of the heavenly host, who at His advent had filled the sky with gladness, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14), were answered by shouts of men on the earth, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him." (John 19:15.) Thus closed the age of the witness of perfect love upon this earth.

The age of human innocence had ended in alliance with Satan; the age of the law had ended in rebellion against Jehovah; and now the age of the witness of God's friendship and love to man, in the very person of His Son, closed in the unutterable darkness of man crucifying Jesus.

THE HOLY GHOST ON THE EARTH.

If a new age—a new way of God’s dealing with man—should open, of what character could it be? All hope of human reform, or of fallen man rising up, contrary to his nature, to good, was buried in the grave of the Son of God’s love; all hope of the world being moved towards Him was dead; but on God’s side there could be mercy and grace, and He is love, hence He could not bury His love to man even in the grave of His Son.

From the cross and from the empty grave of Jesus do the most wonderful of God’s ways of grace with man arise. With the resurrection of the Lord, and His ascension to heaven, a new way of God in dealing with man opens. The Holy Ghost has been sent to the earth to testify of the rejected Son of God, and to unite all who believe on His Name to Him.

For the world, as a system, there is no hope of recovery, no prospect of peace or safety: the cross of Christ calls for its judgment. “From henceforth,” Jesus said, “the world seeth Me no more” (John 14:19), and when He comes again to the earth, it will be in judgment, and then all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. (Rev. 1:7.) Come again He will, even as He said to the high priest, “I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Matt. 26:64); but there will be no millennium, no glory of Jehovah filling the earth, until judgment has been executed upon it. How near that day of His coming is, no man knows, but none who believe God’s Word can doubt that, “yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” (Heb. 10:37.)

THE SON OF GOD ON THE EARTH IN GLORY.

The last age of the world’s history will be introduced by the advent of Christ to the earth for judgment. He will come forth out of heaven, the King of kings (Rev. 19), in His glory, and having overthrown the powers of human evil, and having cast out Satan from the earth, He will reign here for one thousand years. After that period the roll of time will be laid aside, the great day of judgment will arise, and then in eternity alone will be man’s portion.

While in future numbers we propose to enlarge upon these seven periods, let time and eternity now have their true place in our souls. Will our reader look once more upon the little diagram that heads this paper, and allow it to suggest a lesson? Our lives are but a roll of time! Our years are already numbered upon the roll; we live so long, but no longer than God pleases. Before our time began was eternity, after it the judgment seat and eternity. How will it be with us when the roll of our lifetime is completed?

A Good Conscience

“HAVING a good conscience,” says the Apostle— one of the best things of his own that a Christian can have. Let the world say what it will of him, his good conversation in Christ shall shame his accusers in time, if he have but a good conscience.

The Notice Board

MOST schoolboys will have some sympathy with my companions and myself in the feelings with which we, in our schooldays, regarded the announcement, written in large letters upon a board, in a field that had many birds' nests in it, "Trespassers will be prosecuted!" It ever excited in us the desire to commit the very trespass it warned us against; indeed, at length we determined to get rid of the board altogether, as my story shall tell.

Our way to school lay through a lane of about a mile in length—a pleasant country lane, with no houses, and rarely having a policeman to be seen in it. We had the lane all to ourselves on our way to school, and our annoyance can readily be imagined as we viewed the words of warning referred to; indeed, we made it our rule to pelt the board with stones, and to cover it with mud, until the objectionable words were hardly visible. We were like hundreds of others, who dislike the warnings of the Bible, and who do their best to obliterate them from view.

One morning the farmer who owned the fields had set up a new board. This roused our indignation, and, not content with defacing it by pelting it from the road, we climbed over the hedge, rooted it up, post and all, and, dragging it into the lane, ran off as fast as our feet would carry us. But our exultation was speedily turned to consternation, for a man appeared, and gave chase. As he was nowhere in a race of more than a mile with us, we were beginning to feel a little easier; but our hope proved to be vain, for some of our number wore the cap which distinguished our school. Our pursuer, having recognized us by this sign, made his way to the head master, and we soon learned that we had been discovered.

What the punishment was I need not explain, but I would point out the folly of pelting the board, and the injury that resulted from pulling it down. Boys have sense enough to see that upsetting a notice board will not overthrow the law, nor stop the punishment of breaking the law from coming upon the offender; but there are men silly enough to teach boys that the Bible may be overthrown with impunity, and that those who hate it can get rid of its truths by making light of them. Now, I do not wish you, boys, to find yourselves brought up to the terrible judgment throne of God, and to have to answer to Him not only for your sins, but also for the crime of making light of and insulting His holy word.

We ran for a mile, and were at last found out and punished, and men may go on for fifty years, or more, running away from the God they have wronged, but in the end they will be punished for their sins.

Just as we discovered, to our cost, that pulling down the notice board did not alter the laws of the land for the protection of property, so those who treat God's word with contempt will learn that "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" (Num. 23:19.) O.

Little Ruth

ONE afternoon, as little Ruth was playing in the streets, on her way home from school, she was accidentally tripped up by another child, and the effect of this fall kept her a prisoner to the house, and led to a serious illness.

Ruth's parents were poor, and as they had a large family to provide for, Ruth had very few pleasures, but all who visited her were struck by her gentleness and patience. She was a little child, and only four years old, and could therefore not read herself, but was very fond of hearing others do so, and as she had a remarkably good memory, she could repeat almost any hymn she had heard twice.

Ruth never complained, and her sweet smile made visitors think she could not be so ill as she really was. Thus two months passed by; then she grew worse, and for four months she was unable to move.

When the other children were impatient on a wet day, because they could not go out, Ruth would say gently to them, "Look at me, how I have to sit here. I cannot go out at all."

Pain, I am sorry to say, often kept my little Ruth awake during the latter part of the night. When she tried to move, and her mother asked her if she needed anything, Ruth would answer, "No, mother, I am only tired, and cannot find a resting-place." Sometimes she would say, "I do not want my toys; they are of no use to me. I want to go to Jesus. I do wish Jesus would come and fetch me."

One morning, about a month before Ruth died, she told her mother that in a dream she had seen two angels, in white robes and golden girdles, who had come for her. They said, "Ruth, will you go?" and she answered them, very simply, "How can I, for I have only my nightdress on?" However, in her dream, she went with them to a beautiful place.

Shortly before her death, her mother was reminded of Ruth's dream by the child unfastening her nightdress with one hand, and stretching out the other, as if to take what someone she saw was waiting to give her. So she went away to the happy land where there are sweet pleasures, and all that makes children glad.

During her last three days she could not sleep. Just a few hours before her death, seeing her mother cry, she whispered, "Do not cry, mother, I am going to Jesus."

"You are sorry to leave me, Ruthie, are you not?" asked her mother. "Yes, mother," she replied; "but we cannot all go at one time."

Then she stretched out her little hand and smiled. Her mother asked if she needed anything, but she shook her head at each thing mentioned. At last she said, "Do you want to kiss me, darling?" The child nodded, and smiled again, and, as she kissed her mother, the latter said, "That is the last kiss, my darling. You are going to Jesus, Ruthie."

2. The Living God, Who Hears and Answers Prayer

THE effect of idolatry is seen in every phase of Chinese life, socially and morally; indeed so far have the people wandered from the true God that they appear to see no connection between religion and morality.

A man who faithfully worships his idols, burns incense before his ancestors, and, by a fair amount of good works, seeks his soul's salvation, is considered a religious man, irrespective of his morality; and if he abstain from eating meat, and be careful not to destroy the life of any creature, he may cheat, and lie, and be guilty of many sins which could not be mentioned here. The position of the woman is that of a slave; she is purchased when a child for so much silver, and seldom sees her husband before the day of their marriage. Children are always desired, but the arrival of a little girl is looked upon as a misfortune, and thousands are destroyed in infancy. A father is at liberty, if he chooses, to kill his child, provided he can satisfy the magistrates that the child was unmanageable, and that it was therefore for the good of the State and of society that he had destroyed him.

What I have here said will, I think, be sufficient to show, that the marks of the conversion of a Chinaman to Christ are very different from what we see in a country where the gospel has been preached for generations past. In the case of the idolater, he is suddenly brought out of the deepest darkness into the clear noonday of God's grace. His whole course of life has to be changed, and very often his occupation. Persecution is generally the first test of his faith. His friends forsake him, and oftentimes his wife and children desert or deny him. His property, if he have any, is frequently forfeited because he cannot now worship his ancestors as heretofore. He is beaten by his neighbors, and has frequently to flee from his native village, and to suffer others to take possession of his fields and to reap his harvests. Such severe persecution does not, however, always meet the young convert.

The following account of the conversion of Mr. Sang yü-lin will give an idea of the sort of results which follow the preaching of the gospel in China.

In the winter of 1883 and 1884 there were great floods in the eastern part of North China, owing to the bursting of the banks of the Yellow River—a circumstance of no very rare occurrence. Hundreds of thousands of poor people were flooded out of their houses and homes, and compelled to flee for their lives into other districts. So great was this sudden inundation that eight counties were desolated, and for several months the people were unable to till their fields, or return to their homes. Thirty thousand of these poor creatures came down to the city of Yangchou, where I was then living, and camped outside the city walls. They had no food, and were but thinly clad. Numbers of them died every day from sickness, or starvation. The government tried to meet the emergency by giving away daily a small quantity of rice to each family, but this barely sufficed to keep the people alive. Their condition was, indeed, deplorable. They built themselves little huts, or they dug holes in the ground, over which they placed straw mats to keep out the cold east winds, and many of them had not so much as a handful of straw to lie upon. After a short time

small-pox began to rage among them, and many were carried off.

These refugees came from a part of China where the gospel has not been preached, and the people were, therefore, utterly ignorant of our teaching or manner of life. Two native brethren, with myself, were able to go among them occasionally, and to preach to them; but when we did this, so many thousands crowded around to hear us that the soldiers, who were charged to keep the refugees in their compounds, according to the respective counties from whence they had come, drove them back with long sticks. We were able, however, to scatter large numbers of tracts among them, and also to invite them to come to our preaching station inside the city, there to learn more of the glad tidings we proclaimed.

A few days after our first visit to them, a man named Sang, which means “mulberry tree,” came to our house and knocked at the gate for admission. The gatekeeper for a long time refused to admit him, thinking that his object was to beg. The poor man’s importunity finally prevailed, and he was allowed to come in.

“My son is sick,” said he, “and I am afraid he will die; hearing that you can heal diseases, I have brought him to see you.”

I assured Sang that I was not a doctor, and was afraid I could not do much for the boy, but, said I, “My God is a living God, and One who hears prayer,” and added, that if he desired me to do so, I would pray for his son. Then seeing how sick the poor boy was, I said, “You will have to leave your child here with me, for he needs careful nursing and proper food.”

To this the man readily agreed, but not so the little sufferer, who was of some thirteen years of age, and had never seen a foreigner before. An invitation for the father to stay with him settled the matter at once, and we rigged them up a bed in our dining room, and made them as comfortable as we could. Mr. Sang presented himself regularly at our public preaching every afternoon, and soon manifested an interest in the gospel.

A day or two after his arrival, we had our usual native prayer-meeting, into which, to our surprise, came Mr. Sang. He had never been present before where Christians prayed, and was astonished to see men kneeling down and speaking to a God they could not see. I could but observe him looking round the little room, and mark his astonished look. There were no idols, nor lighted tapers, nor was any incense burning—things inseparably associated with his heathen worship.

It was to him a novel procedure, but he evidently had some sort of faith in its efficacy. So, watching for an opportunity, at a slight pause in our meeting, lo! Sang, the heathen, began to pray. He commenced thus: ■

“I don’t know who You are!” for he knew not our God’s name, and he proceeded to tell God that, though he did not know who He was, he understood from others that He was a God who heard prayer, and he would therefore venture to ask that his boy might be healed, and, said he, “If You will heal my boy, then, when I return to my home, I and my family will no longer worship the goddess of mercy, but will worship You instead.”

Sang suddenly stopped, and, after a pause, we all said “Amen!” believing the man had prayed from his heart.

He came regularly to our meetings for prayer, and a fortnight later prayed again, but this time in a very different manner. He commenced by thanking God for having sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to die for his sins. He also thanked God for the improvement in his child's health, and finished by declaring that if men refused to believe His word and accept His Christ, they deserved to be lost. Another silence told us when to say "Amen."

Mr. Sang is a simple-minded man, but very intelligent; he is able to read and write fairly well. The following little incident shows the simplicity of his faith. For some time I had noticed that his clothing was not well adapted to the very cold weather we were having, and at the close of one of the evening prayer meetings, I asked him to remain behind a few minutes, as I wished to speak to him. Presently I returned with a heavy, wadded Chinese gown, which I thought would be of more real use to him than to myself, and asked him to accept it as from the Lord.

He quietly took it from my hands, placed it upon a table close by, but said not a word. He walked over to the further corner of the room and knelt down before a chair for about five seconds; he then got up, and coming over to me, made the usual salutation of pulling the sleeves over the hands, and putting the hands together, lifting them up to the head, and bowing, and then thanked me for the gift.

"Why did you go over to the other side of the room?" said I.

"To thank God for His grace," replied he; "and now I thank you."

In the course of two or three months Mr. Sang returned to his native village a changed man, joyfully expecting, like many another young convert, that he should be able to persuade large numbers of his neighbors to cast away their false gods, and join him in the service of the true and living God. He carried back with him two small boxes of scriptures and tracts, to sell during his proposed missionary tours in the numerous villages surrounding his own. These were heavy, and occupied one side of his barrow during his return journey, whilst his wife and a baby occupied the other. His boy, who was sound and well, walked with him, and thus they traveled back.

Several other men, among the refugees from the same part of the country, came under the influence of the gospel at this time, and, we had good reason to believe, also returned to their homes with changed views of spiritual things, if not with hearts really turned to God by His Spirit.

Six months after this, a missionary to whom I had given the history of our friend, took a journey in the north of the Kiang-su province, and made a point of looking up Mr. Sang. On arriving at the village of Cha-miao he found the cottage in which the Sang family lived, but, to his disappointment, Sang was not at home. The next day was the Lord's day; he had just gone off on one of his missionary tours, and was not expected back for some little time. I should say that he and his family kept the Lord's day, and that he devoted it greatly to His work.

As the missionary earnestly wished to see our friend, he called together some half dozen Christians, who had been converted in the village through the instrumentality of Sang y■-lin, and they asked God to send him back at once. The next morning, to their great joy, Sang was seen walking into the village! He had been seized with the conviction that he was needed at home for something, he knew not what; instead of continuing his journey, he had returned with all speed, and upon his arrival he understood that the leading had been of the Lord.

Mr. Sang is a farmer, and spends all the time he can in evangelizing his neighborhood. The Lord Jesus Christ has become to him a living reality, and he greatly desires that his friends and neighbors should likewise find rest and joy in his Saviour. He gets his fields cultivated as early as possible, and then, instead of idling away the winter months, as he did in former days, he spends his time in preaching the gospel, and putting into circulation the books and tracts with which Christian friends in England have enabled me to supply him.

One of the six Christians the missionary found in the village was Mr. Sang's boy, whom we had treated in my house. He had been long ago restored to health, and had followed the example of his father, in giving his young heart to the Lord, and he had learned to pray to a God who could hear, and to the living One who answers prayer. The evident devotion of this lad, of fourteen years of age, greatly cheered the missionary's heart.

Perhaps among our readers there are some who, by God's mercy, have been raised from a bed of sickness. Have they, like my young Chinese friend, shown their gratitude by giving an attentive ear to the yearning love of the Lord Jesus Christ, and resolved that from henceforth He alone should sit as King upon the throne of their hearts to reign there. A. G. P.

Building and Fighting

IN Nehemiah's days "the wall of Jerusalem was broken down, and the gates thereof (were) burned with fire" (Neh. 1:3), when he, stirred up to the work by the Lord, appealed to his brethren, "Come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem." (ch. 2:17) Not only was the city in ruins, and around it were numerous enemies, but, far more dangerous, within it were sympathizers with the enemy, for "there were many in Judah sworn unto" (ch. 6:17, 18) them.

Thus the work to which God had called Nehemiah was one requiring peculiar patience and courage, and that strong spirit which refuses to temporize with God's enemies, wherever and wherever they may be. Patience was needed for the building of the wall, which went on slowly at first. The wall was the protection of Jerusalem, and the sight of it filled the enemy with both scorn and anger. "What do these feeble Jews?" they cried, "Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?" "And when a true-hearted Christian sets to work to speak up for the truth of God he brings ridicule down upon his head—therefore the work needs patience.

But when the enemies heard that the walls were made up, "then they were very wroth, and conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it." Then Nehemiah and his co-workers made their prayer to God, and set a watch, and thus they built; "everyone with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon."

Now this is the attitude which should characterize the true Christian in this our day, when the walls of the Church of God are in ruins, and when "there is much rubbish" hindering the work of God being carried on. He must be a builder-up of the souls of men in the truth, an untiring servant in positive good, but he must have his weapon in his hand also, for the enemies of God press on from every side.

But Nehemiah's worst foes were the Jews who sympathized with Jehovah's enemies; and in our day it is the professing Christian who makes light of the authority of God's word, that is the most to be dreaded foe of the Christian faith. And that the number of these is increasing none can doubt, and it is these of all others who weaken the hands of the true builder for God. Let the earnest Christian reader read very earnestly the book of Nehemiah, and let him hold his weapon in one hand as his other is engaged in building, and let him never compromise his God's glory by an alliance with God's enemies. We need a more robust character of practical Christianity, more firmness for God, and decision of heart not to ally ourselves with any who make light of God's word.

2. From Malachi to Matthew

IT was about B.C. 323 that Alexander died from drunkenness, or poison, or both. Immediately there arose great disputing among his followers with regard to the succession to the empire. He was indeed a “mighty king,” but the prophetic word had said, “his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity,” This literally came to pass. Nominally, the succession passed to Aridoeus, Alexander’s idiot brother; actually, the government passed into the hands of the chief commanders of his army, Antigonus, Seleucus, Lysimachus, Cassander, and Ptolemy. With reference to Judaea, it was first of all held by one Laomedon. From him it was seized by Ptolemy, the son of Lagus, called also “Soter,” Saviour. A settlement was only arrived at after continual wars— of course, to the intense suffering of the countries sought for— so that Josephus pathetically remarks about Palestine, that it “underwent the reverse of that denomination of Saviour which he (Ptolemy) had.” By an act of treachery (pretending that he entered Jerusalem on the Sabbath to offer sacrifice, which the Jews religiously allowed) Ptolemy, without trouble, captured the city. He did not, however, follow the too common custom of cruel massacre, though he transported a vast number (more than a hundred thousand, it is said,) of Jews to Egypt, and, knowing their fidelity to their oaths, he gave them equal privileges with the Macedonians. Indeed, his liberality enticed many of the Jews of their own accord to make their home in Egypt (especially in Alexandria), and so there sprang up that large settlement of Egyptian Greek-speaking Jews (“Hellenists”), whose dialect is embodied in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, which in its turn exercised great an influence over the language and diction of the New.

But Ptolemy was not to retain his hold a Palestine unmolested. Antigonus, a courageous and ambitious general under the late Alexander, wrested Syria, Phnicia, and Palestine from Ptolemy. A reverse placed Palestine in Ptolemy’s hands, but yet again did Antigonus seize it. Thus for five years he waves of war rolled over desolate Israel, ill about B.C. 301, when a fierce and decisive battle at Ipsus, in Phrygia, ended the strife; Antigonus, with his son, Demetrius, was pitched against Ptolemy, who was confederate with Seleucus, Lysimachus, and Cassander. Victory was on the side of the confederates; Antigonus was slain, and some years after Demetrius fell into the hands of Seleucus, and died a captive.

Ptolemy and his allies had so far beer only “governors.” Antigonus, elated by success, had, some years before his fall at Ipsus adopted the title of “king,” and about this time, by common league, his opponents followed his example. A final subdivision of the Macedonian empire now took place, and each king possessed his newly-apportioned dominions independent of all others. The one “great horn” of Daniel’s vision had become broken, and was succeeded by the four horns which stood up for it, but not in the power of the first. Very exactly had the “Scripture of truth” received its fulfillment Ptolemy was the first king of Egypt of that name; his court was at Alexandria. Seleucus was king of Syria, with Antioch as his capital. Both these kingdoms (as also the other two) were Macedonian, or Grecian, in Language and habits. There was but one world-empire, in the prophetic view, though sub-divided. It is with the two kingdoms here particularly mentioned, that

the history of the Jews is for some time to come entirely connected.

In the meantime, Jaddua, the high priest had died, and was succeeded by Onias, the first, high priest of that name. The latter died the year after the battle of Ipsus (B.C. 300), and was succeeded by his son, the famous Simon, surnamed "the Just," "because of his piety towards God, and his kind disposition to those of his own nation." The Jewish mind dwelt affectionately upon his memory. A very elaborate eulogium in his honor will be found in the fiftieth chapter of Ecclesiasticus. He repaired the house of God, and fortified the city and the temple. According to tradition, he was president of the Sanhedrin, and the first of the Rabbis whose teaching afterwards constituted the Mishna, or oral law. Many portents of sorrow happened, it is said, when he died. "The sacrifices, which were always favorably accepted during his life, at his death became uncertain or unfavorable. The scapegoat which used to be thrown from a rock, and to be dashed immediately to pieces, escaped (a fearful omen) into the desert. The great west light of the golden chandelier no longer burned with a steady flame: sometimes it was extinguished. The sacrificial fire languished; the sacrificial bread failed, so as not to suffice, as formerly, for the whole priesthood."

Simon is reported to have completed the work which Ezra began—the canon of the Old Testament. He edited and added the latest of the sacred books, namely, those written by Ezra, or since his time, as the books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Malachi.

Upon the death (B.C. 291) of Simon the Just, whose infant son was incapable of exercising the priestly office, Eleazar, his brother, took the position. He held office till his death, a period of about fifteen years. Comparative quiet, politically, was the portion of the Jews during his priesthood. This is all the more noteworthy, because the position of that nation, "a weak province, placed between two great conflicting monarchies," was one which might well have led, as at other times, to uninterrupted distress. But God's hand was over His people, for His they still were. Their borders were preserved from war, and under the government of the first three Ptolemies peace and plenty abounded.

At the end of a prosperous reign of twenty years, Ptolemy Soter died, and was succeeded (B.C. 284) by his son, Ptolemy II., called Philadelphus.

An event of exceeding importance happened during his reign and the administration of Eleazar—the translation of the Scriptures, or, at least, of the Pentateuch, into the Greek tongue, being the first translation ever made of the sacred books. B.C. 277 is the approximate date. It is generally supposed to be called "the Septuagint" (seventy) from a tradition that it was the work of seventy (really, seventy-two) translators, six from each tribe being sent to Egypt for the purpose; or (what seems more probable) it may have been so called because, "in the popular idea, the number of the Gentile nations, of which the Greek (Japheth) was regarded as typical, was seventy." One of the most far-fetched of the stories concerning this version (that given by Justin Martyr, a Christian writer of the second century) is to the effect that the translators were sent to the Island of Pharos, just off Alexandria, where a number of little cells were built, corresponding to the number of translators. In one of these cells, each man made a version of the Scriptures. No conference together was allowed. Upon comparison afterward, it was found that in all the seventy versions so made, there was not one divergent word! The king was "surprised with admiration," says Justin. And he exclaims, "These things, O Greeks, are not fables and feigned stories!"

The truth of the matter, as far as it can be ascertained, appears to be this. The first three Ptolemies possessed marked literary tastes, and Ptolemy Soter projected a very fine museum and library in Alexandria. His son inherited his tastes and his scheme, and carried on the work of collection, becoming "literally book-mad." It is probable that he would wish to enrich his library with those sacred books, which were held in such esteem by his large and prosperous colony of Jews, as well, perhaps, as to serve them by placing the Mosaic law in a more accessible form than in its ancient (and already obsolete) Hebrew tongue. Under his direction the work was carried out, and was the occasion of much rejoicing, the Jews of Alexandria afterward keeping the day of its completion a solemn anniversary. It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of the work, ■ "the first apostle to the Gentiles," as a modern Jewish writer aptly calls it. The version soon gained a very extensive circulation and acceptance, because Greek was the language of the day, and Hebrew was then, as now, a "learned tongue." There is little doubt that it was the Bible of Christ and His apostles, as it was the Bible of the early Christian Church, to which all appeal was made, both in the ministry of the word, as well as in controversy with the Jews. That certain eloquent Jew of Alexandria, (the birth-place of the version) named Apollos, who was "mighty in the Scriptures," was beyond doubt, familiar with those Scriptures in their Greek dress. The translation is often quoted in the New Testament, even when it does not exactly represent the Hebrew, as is well known. It was the "Authorized Version" of that day. The Christian fathers, as well as the early Jews, held that, as a translation, it was fully inspired. Thus Irenæus, for example, says expressly that it was made "by the inspiration of God;" while Philo, a famous Jewish writer of Alexandria, says: "We look upon the persons who made this version, not merely as translators, but as persons chosen and set apart by Divine appointment, to whom it was given to comprehend and express the sense and meaning of Moses in the fullest and clearest manner.

Of course, these views cannot be sustained. Excellent as the translation of the Pentateuch is admitted to be, there are yet many errors or intentional deviations from the Hebrew text. But it was, as we have mentioned, the authority to which appeal was made by both Jews and Christians, and so hardly did the Jews find themselves pressed in controversy by Messianic passages, fairly translated by "the Seventy," that at length another version was made by one Aquila, a proselyte, which it was hoped would better serve the purpose of defending Judaism against the new faith. The later Rabbis declared that the making of the Septuagint was as great a calamity as the making of the golden calf, and that its completion was followed by the terrible omen of an eclipse which lasted three days. Jr.

A Story of Three Members of an Infidel Club

“DO you know that S., the artist, has, through drink and gambling, fallen into great poverty, and is now dying of consumption in your district?” said a fellow tract-distributor to me one day, in one of our large seaport towns in the south of England. “He may, perhaps, see you. Do call on him, and try to get in a word with him about Christ. Hitherto he has allowed no one entrance, and he keeps a large dog to prevent people coming in. When the clergyman called, S. would only argue, and would not allow him to read or pray, and when the meek, godly town missionary visited him, he literally terrified him with dreadful language. His temper is so irritable that his children (one a boy of fourteen, the other a girl of twelve years of age) have to be kept out of his way, while his poor wife endures all, praying God to give her husband time for repentance.”

Here was a description of the state of a dying man! I had heard of S., and of his attending a meeting of Atheists, which is held regularly in our town each Lord’s day, and also occasionally on other nights. It seemed that I was called to see the poor man: so the next day I set out to visit him. It was about six o’clock, and a lovely May evening, so I took a branch of hawthorn in my hand in full bloom. On seeing me at the door, his wife fled in haste, without saying a word, but I saw from the room I had entered that she had called the dog away with her. This room had no fireplace, and its only furniture consisted of a small bed and two chairs. Upon the floor a handsome brass-bound writing case was lying—a relic of better days. Upon the bed was stretched poor S., wasted with disease, and reading a medical book on his own case. He at once entered into conversation with me about it, offering to lend it to me. I placed in the dying hand of S., the artist and the skeptic, the hawthorn bough, which, with its sweet white blossoms, by its beauty, proclaimed the Creator’s skill.

After some conversation, I said to him, Now, S., you are an intellectual man, and you must see how near death is to you. Have you ever realized how good it is of God to provide salvation for the lost? It is written, ‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ I saw he was listening, and added, “Have you ever thought what it must be to perish— to be utterly lost— to be shut out from God forever?”

To my joy, S. gave me permission to read a few passages from God’s word to him, so read— “God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against Him? for He giveth not account of any of His matters. For 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." (Job 33:12-24) Then I told him that Jesus, God's Son, was the ransom God had found for our redemption, and added, "God is love, and full of compassion─yes, to you, just as you are─in your pain and misery, and at death's door."

"All my freethinking has profited me nothing," said S. And he asked me to mark the chapter, saying he would read it again, for it just met his case.

"I will now read some beautiful verses," said I, and proceeded with these words: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. 5:1-5 and 20, 21.)

On hearing these wonderful wordy of God, S. wept bitterly. He confessed God's goodness to him in sparing his life, and, on my praying and giving God thanks, he joined in. Thanking me for coming to see him, he invited me to come again, and I left.

The next day a Christian friend called, to whom S. said that God had saved him, and had made him a new man, and that he was now resting on the finished work of Christ. Daily the change was manifested. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ." Instead of his former swearing, and his constant outbursts of temper, he became loving and gentle with his family, and was grateful for every little kindness shown him.

I offered to sit up with him at night, but he would not allow it, saying it would inconvenience me too much. His delight was in the word of God and prayer.

I should add that he had kept the hawthorn bough in his fevered hand all the time of my first visit, and when his wife came in, after my departure, he said to her, "Wife, look at this beautiful flower! How could I ever doubt that there was an Almighty God?"

She replied, with tears, "Oh! how often have I prayed Him to give you time for repentance! All praise to Him! In grace and mercy He has heard me."

S. lingered for a few days, giving testimony to all around that there is salvation for the vilest through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Satan had lost one of the skeptics in our town, and there was joy in the presence of the angels over a sinner who had repented, and there was joy in our hearts, too, who had prayed for poor S.'s soul. God had delivered him from the pit; God had found the ransom. To Him be the glory!

Two other men, members of that infidel club, died the same week as S.; but they died in their infidelity.

G. T. was the son of a godly mother, who had prayed for him for sixty years, but he imbibed infidel principles, and attended the meetings of these Atheists constantly. He was sixty-seven years of age when he was taken ill, and lingered a fortnight. He was watched day and night by neighbors, who kindly took it in turns, for such was his agony that he wanted to put an end to his life. He died without confessing or acknowledging God. It is written, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

On the day that G. T. died, a companion of his in infidelity returned to his home to supper, and, while in the act of stooping to take off his boots, was seized with a fit of apoplexy. The town missionary, already mentioned, lived next door, and he, together with his wife, hastened to poor T.'s assistance, and, having rendered him the necessary help, prayed God to have mercy on his soul, and repeated passages of Scripture, so long as T. seemed to be conscious.

The cries and groans of the poor man were so awful that the neighbors did not go to bed, and early in the morning his spirit departed. Not one word did he utter.

In that small town three members of the Atheist club lay in their coffins at one time, a solemn lesson to all who despise the revelation of God contained in the Bible. It is a vain thing for man to try to forget that he has a soul which must live forever, either in joy unspeakable, or in woe unutterable. Infidelity ceases forever with the grave; but in this life only can a man find salvation. I pray you consider while yet there is hope, lest, my dear readers, you should be suddenly cut off, and find yourself in that awful place where there is no hope. Now the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, and that precious blood is God's own provision for cleansing ruined and sinful man from his sins.

J. McC.

Must I Believe Before I Feel?

SOME years ago, as I was leaving my home, a woman requested me to visit her aged mother. As we entered the room, the old lady said, "I know you will tell me the truth; I want to know what I must do to be saved."

"We will look into the word of God," I said, "for there we shall find a true answer to the question," adding, "an account is given there of a man who once asked the selfsame question, 'What must I do to be saved?' and if we could find out by what means he was saved, then you could surely rest on that foundation."

We turned to Acts 16, and read the story of the jailor at Philippi, how he asked this question, and the answer which was given him: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

"But must I believe before I feel?" my aged friend inquired.

"Yes," was the answer. "God never speaks in His word about our feelings as affecting our salvation, for they are not the same for a day together. He says, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' 'He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life.'"

After speaking to the old woman for a little longer on the importance of trusting simply to the word of God, and not to our thoughts or feelings, I left her, praying that the Lord would bless her soul.

The next time I visited her, she put up her feeble hands as I entered the room, and said, "I am very weak, but oh! I am so happy, for I am trusting in Jesus."

Soon afterward she passed away, to be forever with the Saviour, in whose finished work she had trusted.

Dear reader, can you say her Saviour is your Saviour too? If not, trust in Jesus now. The Lord may not allow you to remain for a long time on a sick bed, as He did this aged one, and if called away suddenly to meet the Lord, how precious to be able to say, "It is well with my soul, for I am going to meet the One who died for me."

J. Sp■n.

The Old Sailor

ONE bitterly cold January evening I observed a man standing in a corner of the street, sheltering himself from the biting wind and sleet. I knew him by sight to be a respectable vendor of small wares, I had passed on, but seemed impelled to turn back and speak to him, begging him to come that night to our little mission room. I cannot say that the invitation was graciously accepted; however, at last he consented to come, with the observation, that it would be better than standing about in the wet.

A young man addressed the audience, and said that he had come into the very same room about two months before, a scoffer, and quite regardless of eternity. But God had spoken to his soul on that occasion, and had showed him his need of a Saviour, and, added he, "I am now rejoicing in Him." Then, with the love of Christ flooding his soul and filling him with peace and joy unspeakable, he told the audience of that wondrous love to perishing men.

The power of the Spirit of God was manifested as he spoke; the prayers of months were answered, for many were deeply convicted of sin, and strong men were weighed down under the sense of their need, and of their lost state before God. Amongst the latter was the man who had merely chosen to enter the room in preference to standing about in the wet. He had spent the greater part of his life in the navy, and had been in numbers of scenes of active service; he had faced many dangers, and death itself in some of its most terrible forms. Latterly he had been discharged, disabled by the loss of an arm; yet, through all his marvelous deliverances and hair-breadth escapes, he had never once thought of the goodness or the love of God. But on hearing the young man speak of his own salvation, the sailor's heart was touched, and melted by the sense of the mercy and long-suffering of the Lord to him. He had come to the meeting full of rebellious thoughts, angry with his lot, and feeling that God had dealt badly with him, but now the amazing love of God to him in Christ, filled his heart. He blessed God for preserving him through so many dangers, and for leading him at length to think of His only begotten Son, whom He had sent to die to save sinners.

He saw at once his great need, and his place as a sinner, guilty before God, and he was received by the sinners' Saviour, who says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

In his future course much grace was given him to confess Christ before his ungodly companions; and his testimony may be thus given—they "took knowledge that he had been with Jesus."

Reader, perhaps you may not think yourself half so bad as this poor old sailor, but you need the Saviour, even as he; for all have sinned, and Christ came to save the lost. Have you classed yourself among the lost? If not, there is no Saviour for you until you take your true place as guilty before God.

K. R.

Philosophy or Jesus

THE name of Richard Jefferies is well known. His writings are widely honored for their grace. He found endless stores of delight in the simple beauties of nature, and what his observant mind rejoiced in, he had the art of making a joy to others. But neither elegance of idea, nor keenness of mental eye, can open to the soul the glories of the kingdom of God. Nay, too often, the natural powers of a man become to him but giants holding the entrance of the way that leads to God; for that entrance is the childlike spirit.

For some long time the Bible was an unread book by Mr. Jefferies, he held it in no reverence, but when in much suffering, during the later months of his life, a lady induced him to read the Holy Scriptures, and by them his eyes, so familiar with the beauties of nature, were opened to the revelations and the glories of the kingdom of God. The story of the life of the Lord Jesus had great attractions for him, and upon his dying bed he found great peace in hearing of the ways of Jesus to men, when He was here upon earth.

On one occasion when his end was near, he begged his faithful wife to read to him in Luke's Gospel, chapter 8:22 to 56; that bright cluster of stories telling of the mighty power of Jesus in hushing the stormy wind and in stilling the tempest; in casting out the demons from the distracted and despairing man of Gadara, and in leading him by the power of His love to sit at His feet; in healing the sickness and calming the fears of the trembling woman; and in raising the daughter of Jairus to life, and giving her back to her parents.

It was towards the close of his life that he thus spoke, "I have done wrong, and thought wrong, it was my intellectual vanity!" But more solemn than his regret, was his testimony respecting the Lord, used on one occasion when listening to the Scriptures, "These are the words of Jesus; they are true, and all philosophy is hollow."

This witness we commend to our readers. A volume of truth lies in them, and coming as they did from the heart and lips of one so well known in the literary world, and so beloved by the many who read his books, the testimony has additional weight. When this short life comes to its end, would that the wise as well as the unlearned, who have in their hands the gospel records of the words of Jesus, might say from their hearts, "These are the words of Jesus; they are true."

The Balances

“LET me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity,” said one of old (Job 31:6); and what that one of old said, many more say today. It is the language of self-righteous people— of those who compare themselves with their neighbors. They use their own balances, which they think are even, and so form a good opinion of themselves as compared with others. How different it is when God weighs us in His balances! God’s scales are exact; His weights are just. He Himself is the standard measure. It is easy to say in one’s ignorance, “Let me be weighed in an even balance,” but how startling when the soul finds itself in God’s scales, and “lighter than vanity.”

“Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting,” was God’s word to one of earth’s greatest ones (Dan. 5:27); and that very night the man found himself in eternity. What an awful awakening! In the midst of revelry at night, impiously profaning God’s holy vessels, in outer darkness ‘ere morning, found wanting— lost forever.

Reader, God has poised the balances, and put all into His scales. “Found wanting,” is the verdict. “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:23.) There is no escape from this conclusion for any, be he high or low, rich or poor, educated or ignorant, king or peasant, religious or profane; “All have sinned”; all have been weighed; all are found wanting. Can you gainsay it? Men may refuse to believe, may murmur and rebel against the verdict, but there it stands. The even balance has been used, the just weights have been put in the scale, and man has been found wanting. What a terrible truth! What is to be done?

God laid help on One that is “mighty to save”; One who could take all our guilt, and endure its penalty—Jesus, the Son of His love. Blessed be His name! He has done all—borne our sins, endured the judgment; met the claims of God fully—and now every believing soul goes free. Yes, God saves the believer, and every believer is “complete in Him” —in Christ. (Col. 2:10.) In this way alone can any be saved.

Reader, have you acknowledged your guilt, and trusted the Saviour? for thus it is God saves the soul. W. E.

God's Wonderful Ways With Man. The First Age

THE age of innocence, as far as we can tell, was but a short one. Of its exact duration the Scripture does not inform us, but, from the inspired history of the human race, the opinion has been formed that man failed at once, and that the first age came to an end on the first Sabbath day. Be its length what it may, the rest of the Creator was soon broken by man's sin, and from that day until now, these words of the Lord Jesus, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5:17), hold good; for sin and misery have called forth from the day of the fall, continued activity in mercy and grace from the God of love. But though the Sabbath of the Creator was broken into "There remaineth... a rest to the people of God." (Heb. 4:9.) It is the divine purpose, that there shall be a rest, into which man, redeemed from sin, shall be brought. As God could look upon His created works after the six days occupied in creation, and say of what He had wrought, "It is very good," so shall He look upon His work of redeeming love in the new creation, and shall rest in His love, and all His people shall enter into that rest.

When God made man, He made him in His own images and after His own likeness. Man was God's representative, and had His character stamped upon him. Now, through the entrance of sin into the world, man has fallen far from this high representative character; he is debased and degraded; the likeness is, we may say, almost lost, though in such qualities of human nature as are noble and excellent, we may still trace the fair remains of that which sin has not utterly obliterated.

In some parts of the earth, man has sunk down almost to the level of the beasts that perish—he has fallen from his first estate to one of ignorance and savagedom. In other parts where paganism prevails, and where his intellectual powers remain in full vigor, man's morality is of the lowest kind. The history of man upon the earth relates the steady decline from his first estate. Where man is left to himself, to work out his own will, usually he falls lower and lower into shame and degradation. Our readers, having reverence for holiness and righteousness, do not esteem the increase of scientific knowledge without true morality as progress. It is mere folly to speak of man continually rising up to a higher standard of morality from an original semi-savage condition; man's history denies this, and in Christian nations, with the spread of infidelity, there is a spread of iniquity, there is the sinking back of which we speak.

When God made man in His own image and likeness, man, as the creature of God's handiwork, was at his highest elevation; but, though man has fallen, God has not altered His purpose regarding him. We find in the New Testament the words "likeness" and "image" occurring again, and in the grew future all God's redeemed people shall beat the image of His Son and be like Him. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:49); "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body" (Phil. 3:20, 21); "We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him" (1 John 3:2).

The Lord God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and so he became a living soul. He gave life to the brute creation, and a soul to the beasts that perish, but man's life was breathed into him by Jehovah, and so he was created an immortal being. The body formed out of the dust of the earth might return to the dust, but the living soul could never die. Modern science makes but a poor show of progress, when it announces man's origin to be no higher than the jelly fish, and his end no greater than a dog's!

Man, as made by God, was notable for wisdom. He was fashioned by his Creator to hold communion with Him, as to which our present-day-science knows absolutely nothing. In our own time man boasts much of knowledge, but wisdom is greater than knowledge. Knowledge is the result of learning, wisdom springs out of the soul intuitively. After the Lord God had made all the varied creatures on the earth, He brought them to Adam to see what he would call them, and "whatsoever Adam called every living creature that was the name thereof." (Gen. 2:19.) He named them out of the spring of his wisdom (a very different thing from results arrived at from the labors of science), and what he named them, that God received as the suited description of them.

In the New Testament we read of "the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24.), for God is unchangeable; His purpose is that out of the family of man there shall be those created in Christ after Himself. "New creature" (Gal. 6:15) is the characteristic of true Christians, and as Adam was the head of the first race, so Christ is the head of the latter race.

God placed man in the rest of His Sabbath in paradise. In those early days work was not connected with the sweat of the brow, with fatigue or hardship, as is the case since the fall; but when the day of glory dawns for the redeemed, they shall rest in the rest of God, and there will be for each and all, work for God and for the Lamb ■ "His servants shall serve Him." (Rev. 22:3.)

Thus, the purposes of God, respecting men, are found at the end as well as at the beginning of the Bible, and indeed the great principles that are recorded in the early chapters of the book of Genesis, are those which we see rising up again in the full revelation of the New Testament.

We have observed that God made man wise at the first, and that when he fell he did so willingly and with open eyes. "Adam was not deceived." (1 Tim. 2:4). The serpent, in his subtlety, addressed himself to Eve, tempting and deceiving her. He found entrance into her heart through the gates of her senses: "The woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes." Her taste and sight yearned after the forbidden tree. Satan appealed to her with the insinuation "Hath God said?" and, giving, ear thereto, the fatal seed of infidelity was sown in her heart. She transferred her homage of the Creator to the voice of a creature, and listened to his word. Her mind followed her sight; she esteemed it as a "tree to be desired to make one wise." That it would make one wise she knew before her temptation, but the desire to be made wise by it, in defiance of God's command, was her sin.

"Hath God said?" has echoed in the soul of every transgressor against God's word, from that day till now; it is ever the beginning of departure from Him. In our own day, christendom's infidelity develops from this germ ■ "Hath God said?" to grow and increase till it shall ripen into "God hath not said," and the apostasy foretold shall be present.

Then Eve “took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.” (Gen. 3:6.) Here we see the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, which “is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:16) so well known, and so characteristic of the fallen human race. By hearing man fell, by hearing he is saved; by eating he died, by eating he lives. (John 6)

Thus it was that man fell from his first estate, and the springs of his being became polluted by sin. He had a conscience, received the knowledge of good and evil, but no power to rise above the evil.

One of the first consequences of the fatal change that had come over man, was his terror at the voice of God. Maybe, it was the evening, as we have hinted, of the first Sabbath, and the Lord God was walking in the garden in the cool of the day. He made voice heard, but that sound was no longer to man the sweetest music. The Lord was calling for Adam and his wife, and they, in their terror, had hidden themselves among the trees of paradise.

Receiving no response, hearing no hastening steps, the Lord God called to Adam, “Where art thou?” and he, unable to refuse the call, said, “I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.”

Sinful fear of God and hopeless efforts to hide himself from God, have marked man’s history ever since that day.

Upon being obliged to confess his sins to God, man sought to throw upon Him the burden of his sin ■ “The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat” (Gen. 3:12), and this first ungenerous impulse of fallen human nature, still pervades each heart which refuses to confess its own deep-seated evil.

The judgment of God fell upon the transgressors of His command. To both Adam and Eve sorrow was apportioned; but, even in the hour when the sentence was passed upon man, God gave forth a word of deliverance ■ true it was addressed to the enemy, but the sure word of promise gave birth within man’s heart to a new power ■ even hope; and hope in God has ever been the strength of the children of faith in this sinful world. The sure word of God, faith in God, and hope in His word sustain the soul.

Before the Lord sent man forth from Eden, He clothed him with the beauty of the victims that had suffered death in their stead. No doubt these robes, made by Jehovah, were, as are all His works, beautiful. Could garments which typify the very perfection of the great Victim be otherwise? Habit has degraded the notion of these robes in our minds, for, from very childhood, pictures have been before our eyes of our first parents fleeing from paradise with ill-considered skins half hung over their shoulders. Thus, before man faced death in himself, he was robed, through death, in garments which the Lord had made. And then, lest Adam should take of the tree of life, and live forever in his alien state, subject to the sorrows his sin had brought upon him, the Lord God drove him out of paradise, and effectually barred his way back.

So the earth’s fair paradise was lost to man forever, and was never to be regained. The cherubim ■ God’s servants to carry out His purposes of judgment ■ and the flaming sword, which turns every way, kept the way if the tree of life.

Little Bessie's Prayer, and How It Was Answered

FAST fell the snow, the green hillsides were covered up from sight,
And bleak the wind that whistled shrill through all the cloudy night;
A humble dwelling 'midst those hills bare shelter could afford,
With poor mud walls, and half-thatched roof, and many a gaping board.
The humble folk, who lived within, had struggles sharp and sore
To meet the wolf, we Hunger call, and drive him from the door;
And when stern Winter's days arrived, with all their chilling gloom,
They often feared the way was short betwixt them and the tomb.
Within the house a widow lived, whose only comfort lay
In a little girl of five years old, for whom she toiled each day.
She worked from gray of early morn, she toiled till late at night,
But could not earn enough for clothes, work for her as she might.
So little Bessie had to go with scanty garments clad;
Her little feet must bear the cold, which made the mother sad;
But Bessie's whole concern for clothes ■ 'tis passing strange to say ■
Was that she might to chapel go, and there sing "Happy Day."
One day Bess to her mother came, and asked with earnestness:
"Does Jesus know I've got no hat, I've got no shoes, no dress?"
"Oh, yes, my dear!" the mother said, "Jesus knows everything."
"Why then," asked Bess, "don't He send clothes, so's I may go an' sing?"
"Perhaps you haven't asked Him yet," the mother answered Bess.
"Well, if I ask," returned the child, "will Jesus send a dress,
An' shoes, an' hat, an' all I've want?"
"Oh, yes," the mother cried,
"Jesus has said, 'Ask what you will,' and He'll your need provide."
Bess thought awhile, then hurrying up into the loft above,

She knelt upon the boards, and prayed unto the Lord of love:
“Dear Jesus, up in Heaven so high, you once was little too,”
I’s e got no hat, no shoes, no dress, an’ so I’s e come to you.
“I’s e want to go to chapel so, an’ Happy Day’ to sing;
“Dear Jesus, do please send a dress, an’ shoes, an’ everything.
“You will, dear Jesus, won’t you now?” her eyes began to fill;
But in simplicity of faith, she cried, “I know you will.”
Bess rose, and now with beaming face, she hastened down below,
“Mother,” said she, “I’s e told Him all; He’ll send the clothes, I know.”
The mother scarce could answer make, for tears had dimmed her eyes,
“O God!” she cried, “Thou teachest babes what’s hidden from the wise.”

* * * * *

Late that same night, a knock was heard upon the outer door;
She listened, all was quiet again, except the wind’s fierce roar■
But hark! there is the knock again, and then a hasty shout,
“Come, my good woman, stir yourself; ’tis very cold— without.”
The widow hastened to the door, wond’ring who there could be,
A liveried servant stood without, a parcel large had he;
“Be quick, good woman, you are long, I have no time to stay,”
My lady at the Hall sent this.” With that he went away.
All was so sudden, that surprise had filled the widow’s breast;
Her little girl, some hours before, had gone to take her rest;
So quietly she closed the door, and laid the parcel down,
And from its folds she soon drew forth a child’s HAT, SHOES and GOWN.
Then she recalled what Bess had told her earlier in the day;
Would it be right to wake her up, for she so peaceful lay?
No! she would place the garments near the little one’s bedside,
And in a place where, when she waked, the clothes would be espied.
As early dawn peeped through her room, with faint and glimmering light,

Bess spied the clothes, then rubbed her eyes to see if she were right;
Then woke her mother up to show how Jesus answered prayer,
For when she went to bed last night, she knew they were not there.
Then on her knees the child fell down, and faltered out her praise
To Him who hears our feeblest cry, who knoweth all our ways;
Who marks the eagles in their flight; the spar rows in their fall,
And counts the hairs of every head, for Jesus loveth all.

W. H. R.

The Experiences of a Missionary in China.

3. A Boat Journey

WHATEVER may be the disadvantages which the traveler in China has to put up with, owing to the absence of railways, there is one thing in his favor, calculated to help to break the monotony of an inland journey, and that is the great variety of modes of travel at his disposal. He can, if he choose, begin with a pack mule at Peking, or a Peking cart in Chih-li-a wheel-barrow, or a sail-barrow—that is, a wheel-barrow drawn by a donkey, pushed by a man, and, provided the wind be favorable, assisted by a sail of bamboo and canvas. Further south he has the choice of a sedan chair, a pony, and an endless variety of boats— house boats, cargo boats, foot boats, and I know not how many others.

I am about to recount the experiences of a boat journey, in the Cheh-kiang province, taken a few years ago in company with one of the earliest and most devoted missionaries in China.

We were on a journey of visitation to some of the mission stations in that province. There is a certain Chinese Christian named Kyü-yiao, supported by a lady in England, who gives all his time to evangelizing work in a given district. Our purpose being to pay this brother a flying visit, we engaged passages on a regular passenger boat traveling between Ningpo and Fung-hwa. It was a night journey, in what might be called an open boat, but for the fact that a straw mat was bent over our heads. We judiciously engaged room for four passengers, so as thereby to have sufficient space to roll up ourselves in our quilts, and thus to sleep: for a single fare sitting room only is provided, and a dozen men and two women found such in the remainder of the boat. After sunset the anchor was drawn, and a start was made. We were safely landed next morning in the beautiful neighborhood of Fung-hwa, and spent the day with the native Christians of the place. It was here I saw a native Christian funeral for the first time. Of heathen funerals I had seen no end. A native Christian had recently died, and Mr. T. was asked to conduct a funeral service, at the house in which lay the remains of the deceased. It was a solemn assembly, and has made an indelible impression on my mind. A square table and a few chairs were placed in the partly-covered courtyard. There was no burning incense before the coffin, or chanting of prayers for the dead, and beating of gongs, as is usual in heathen funeral rites; but from twenty-five to thirty men and women stood around us, and listened to the reading and preaching of God's word. It was a dark and cold night, and two solitary candles, burning on the table, only seemed to make the darkness visible, and to add to the solemnity of the scene.

From Fung-hwa, we traveled in the hills in a sedan chair, to the mission station of our friend Kyü-yiao, starting at four in the morning, so as to be able to spend a few hours with the Christians. Our arrival was a cause of such joy, and the invitations to spend the night there so pressing, that we were not able to resist, and, before we had given a decided reply, Mr. K-y had bargained with the chair-bearers to carry us to our destination next day.

Before I relate the experiences of the particular boat journey, to which I have referred, I must explain that there are numerous canals and rivers in the neighborhood of Ning-po, Hang-chow and Shao-hing, the cities themselves often being traversed in every direction by them; in which case

there are usually good wide footpaths on either bank, to admit of passengers and wheelbarrow traffic, and numerous bridges, some of stone and some of wood, thrown across, as means of communication between the houses and shops on the two sides of the street.

Our journey from Ning-po to the inland city of Shao-hing was along one of these canals. It was Friday morning when we started, and we were particularly desirous to reach our destination on Saturday, so as to be able to meet all the Christians on the Sunday. There was barely time to accomplish the journey with ordinary fair weather, but the boatman guaranteed to row us there before midnight on Saturday for a certain sum of money.

Our boat was a long and very narrow one—about a foot and a half deep, and very tight. The middle part of the boat was covered over with a straw mat, supported on bamboo arches, and a mat at either end. This covered us in entirely, and just admitted of a sitting position inside, or if we chose to lie down, we could do so, but needed to be very careful in our movements lest we should upset the boat.

The boatman sat at the helm, outside the mat-covered portion, and, by means of an oar in one hand, the rudder in the other, and of a second oar worked by one of his feet, he made us proceed on our voyage at a fairly rapid rate. All that day, and most of the night, our man worked well, but the poor fellow began to get sleepy, and often the splashing of the oars became slower and slower, till they gradually ceased, only to revive again for a few moments.

It is no unusual thing for these foot-boatmen to work two days and a night without sleep, and this our man readily enough agreed to do, but he had over-estimated his powers of endurance, and we felt bound to let him take two hours rest.

On the Saturday afternoon, we were a long way from our destination, and a strong head wind made it impossible for us to reach it that day. With all the boatman's remaining strength, he could barely keep the boat from being blown back. This adversity so distressed him that he began to give way to despair, and grumbled a good deal, declaring that it was absolutely impossible to reach Shao-hing before next day, Sunday.

We ourselves could see little prospect of accomplishing the journey that night, unless the wind changed in our favor, and as the wind often sets in one direction for many days together, we could only hope in God. Mr. T., who spoke the local dialect of the district fluently, put his head outside the mat that covered us in, and told the man that we quite agreed with him that there was little prospect of our reaching Shao-hing by the time arranged, and that, therefore, we were going to ask our God to change the wind, so that we might worship with the Christians next day. Further, that if he watched, he would see that our God was one who heard prayer. This was a bold thing to say, but it was done in faith. The boatman made reply that his gods could not change the wind. Then we said our God is the living God, and can do as He pleases.

We prayed that the Lord would graciously hear our petition, and cause the wind to change in our favor, so that we might be able to reach Shao-hing that night, and thus be able to meet the native Christians, and our English fellow-workers next day.

On my left there was a little window in the matting, which enabled me to see the wind blowing the reeds and shrubs on the bank of the canal. For a quarter of an hour I kept an eager look out, watch

in hand, to note how long the answer was in coming. Presently, to my great joy, I noticed that the tops of the reeds suddenly swerved round, and began blowing in the opposite direction. A few moments after I heard the boatman hoisting his sail, and, a few minutes later, we began to move along with some speed. Mr. T. had been so confident of the answer coming, that he had actually fallen asleep in the meantime, and it was necessary for me to wake him up before the boatman's attention could be directed to the answer our gracious God had given us, as I was unable to speak the particular dialect of Ning-po, of which place our boatman was a native.

At eleven o'clock that night we arrived at the city gates, and presently passed in. It was very dark, and rain was falling. The boatman had never been in the city before, and did not know the particular bridge we had mentioned as being the nearest point to the Mission House. The whole city appeared to be a network of canals, which made it difficult for a stranger, even in the daylight, to find his way, how much more then, in a dark and wet night! There were no people about— we could not even hear the city watchman's gong, and our man again became very dissatisfied, complained of being wet and tired, and declared he could never find his way in the dark. Here, we thought, was another matter for prayer, and so we asked our heavenly Father to quiet the boatman, and to guide him to the bridge. In a moment the man ceased grumbling, and all we heard for half an hour was the splashing of the oars in the water, and the pattering of the rain on the roof of our boat.

Again and again the boat turned up this canal and down that one and into another, as if the man had grown utterly careless, and was going anywhere. Presently he heard steps coming along the street, so we stopped to inquire the way to the said bridge. "Why," replied the stranger, "you are just by the side of it," as he passed on.

The Lord had thus guided us to the very spot where we wished to land. In a few minutes all our effects were handed out, and carried up to the mission station. The boatman received his money, and took his departure, apparently well pleased with the extra cash we gave him. By midnight we were comfortably housed with the English Missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Meadows, who for many years have labored in this city, and who have been the means of bringing large numbers of the Chinese to Christ.

Just as we were retiring for the night, we discovered that our medicine chest was missing. Search was at once made, but without finding it. We went up and down the side of the canal, in the hope of discovering our boatman anchored for the night. We called him by name as loud as we could, but received no answer, and were at last compelled to give up the search.

However, previous experience of God's faithfulness encouraged us to believe it would be brought back in answer to our petition. Special prayer was therefore made that it might be found. And in the morning the first thing which caught our eye was the identical medicine chest standing on the window sill in the verandah. Upon inquiry we learned that the boatman had brought it early that morning, stating that it had been left in the boat the previous night.

The honesty of this boatman in bringing back our missing property under such circumstances was, I think, more remarkable than the answers to prayer about the wind, for his first thought would be that it contained silver, but, unlike the majority of men of his station and nation, he was honest.

What kind of impression had been made upon his mind by the striking evidence he had received of the power of our God, in changing the course of the wind in our favor, we could not tell, but this fact probably had something to do with the speedy delivery of the missing medicine chest.

Some of our young readers may feel specially interested in the above account of a short journey in a Chinese foot-boat, when we state that it was taken in that part of China where exists today the view which is represented on our familiar willow-pattern crockery, so frequently used in former years for blue plates and dishes, the view being the scene of the tragedy which is represented on the "willow pattern."

A. G. P.

3. From Malachi to Matthew

ELEAZAR, the high priest, died in the year 276 B.C., and was succeeded by Manasseh, his brother. Upon the latter's death (after an uneventful term of office), in the thirty-fourth year of Ptolemy Philadelphus (B.C. 251), the priesthood fell to Onias II., the son of Simon the Just, and nephew of the late priests, Eleazar and Manasseh. Four years later (B.C. 247) the king of Egypt died, and was succeeded by Ptolemy III. (Euergetes).

Towards the end of this king's reign, the misconduct of Onias well-nigh brought the people into great danger. All secular as well as religious matters fell within the jurisdiction of the high priest. This dignitary, Onias, a man "of a little soul, neglected to pay the tribute of twenty talents of silver the amount annually due to the Egyptian king. The arrears having become very high, Euergetes sent one Athenion to demand the amount owing, with threats that soldier: should be immediately sent to dispossess the Jews. All Jerusalem was put into great consternation. At this juncture a young man named Joseph, a nephew of the high priest and son of Tobias, showed great discretion in the management of the difficulty. Taking the Egyptian ambassador to his house, he entertained him in so sumptuous a manner that Athenion returned to Egypt with a glowing account of the young man's behavior. Joseph followed Athenion to present himself to the king on behalf of his aged uncle, and, happening to travel in a caravan of Coele Syrians and Phoenicians, he discovered that they intended to purchase from the king the right of farming his revenues in Coele-Syria, Phœnicia, Judaea, and Samaria. This was the ordinary custom: the king took from the purchaser a stated amount, the latter extorted what he could. Joseph learned that his fellow travelers intended to offer eight thousand talents for the right, though it appeared that the revenues were worth double that sum. On the set day Joseph bid sixteen thousand talents, and secured the privilege. Two thousand men were placed at his disposal to assist him in carrying out his office. At Askalon he was rudely resisted; he executed twenty persons, and confiscated their property, and with the same rigor he overcame opposition at Scythopolis. These stern measures struck fear into all others; no further opposition was made, and for twenty-two years Joseph held this rich and important position. It seems to have ceased for a time, upon Antiochus recovering the provinces, to be afterward re-held by Joseph until his death, when an old man.

Although, during the then recent years, the land of Israel had been free from wars and tumults, it was not so with the neighboring countries. "The tide of war was ebbing, flowing, from north to south, and from south to north." Between the rival powers, Egypt and Syria, there had been almost incessant strife, notwithstanding that (in Syria especially) several deaths had occurred in the kingly line. Seleucus Nicator, the first of his dynasty, had been succeeded, after thirty-three years' reign, by Antiochus Soter; he, after nineteen, by Antiochus Theos; and he in turn by Seleucus Callinicus. The year after Onias sent Joseph into Egypt (B.C. 226). Callinicus was killed by a fall from a horse, and his son, another Seleucus, ascended the Syrian throne. He— a poor, weak prince— adopted the surname "Ceraunus" ■ Tunderer. He was poisoned by two of his commanders, who held him in contempt, and the succession passed to his brother, Antiochus, then a minor, who was afterward called "the Great." This was in B.C. 223.

Two years later, the third of the Ptolemies (Euergetes) died. His son, Ptolemy II., was suspected of having poisoned his father, and from this circumstance, it is said, he received in irony the name "Philopater" Lover of his father. It is at any rate certain that soon after his succession he murdered his mother and brother. He was in every way a vile person, giving himself up to the grossest profligacy, while the administration of his affairs was neglected. Taking advantage of this, Antiochus of Syria, who asserted that under the original treaty for the partition of Alexander's empire, Cle-Syria, Phnicia, Samaria, and Judea were allotted to his predecessor Seleucus Nicator, attempted the recovery; of these lands. His arms were partly successful, but various circumstances hindered him for some years from pursuing the advantages gained, and in the spring of 217, both sides took the field, each being thoroughly well equipped for the war. At Raphia, neap Gaza, a severe battle was fought; Antiochus was completely routed with a loss of 10,000 men and 4000 prisoners. Hereupon the cities of Cle-Syria which had been captured by Antiochus, eagerly submitted themselves to their old masters the Egyptians, under whose benign rule they had so long been, while their submission to the Syro-Macedonian power had been only at the edge of the sword.

Ptolemy made a sort of triumphal procession through the cities, and visited Jerusalem Here he gave many gifts to the Temple, and offered many sacrifices and oblations. Not content, however, with entering the outer court, he was bent upon going into the Holy of holies. In vain did priest and people protest against it, and deprecate so great a profanation of the sacred house; the king pressed forward, but was smitten (it is said) with such a terror and paralysis in the very act, that he was carried out half dead. And so he left Judçā, with a fearful hatred against the Jewish people in consequence of this rebuff.

Later on, Antiochus proposed of terms of peace to Ptolemy, and the latter readily entertained them. The fact is, both were sick of the strife; Antiochus found his authority diminished by his severe defeat at Raphia, and Ptolemy loved his pleasures better than the hardships of "the tented field." Accordingly Cle-Syria and Palestine were declared to be Egyptian possessions, and peace was confirmed. Josephus well describes the sufferings of the Jews and Cle-Syrians during these and the subsequent struggles: "It fell out that these nations were equally sufferers, both when Antiochus was beaten and when he beat the others; so that they were very like to a ship in a storm, which is tossed by the waves on both sides."

For a few years at least the land had rest, but it was not so with the unfortunate Jews of Alexandria. The persecutions they suffered are detailed at length in the third book of Maccabees, but it is difficult to ascertain how far that is a trustworthy record. It has the appearance of being highly embellished. According to this book, the hateful Philopater published a decree forbidding all access to himself by those who did not worship the gods which he worshipped. This was a side-blow at the Jews. It was an effectual means of debarring them from all justice and protection. A second decree debased all Jews from the first rank of citizenship (granted to them by Ptolemy Soter to the third. A re-enrollment was commanded to be made, at the time of which all of the third rank were to have an ivy-leaf— the badge of the god Bacchus— branded upon them. To refuse was to draw down sentence of death. On the other hand, the king granted to all who would sacrifice to his gods the right of retaining their position in the first rank. Only about 300 forsook the God of their fathers; the rest stood firm, and refused all intercourse with the apostates. This was represented to the king as a revolt from his authority. He therefore commanded that the Jews

should be brought to the Hippodrome at Alexandria, there to be destroyed by elephants, as a spectacle for his people. They were brought, and their deliverance was a remarkable one, if our authority may be trusted. The time came for the display, but a deep sleep following the previous night's carousal, prevented the presence of the king. The next day, absolute forgetfulness of his plans marvelously possessed him! So that day passed. Meanwhile the imprisoned Jews earnestly besought God's delivering mercy. The third day came: the king was present; the elephants, made drunk and furious with wine and frankincense, were let loose upon the Jews; but an angelic vision appeared, and, to the terror of all, the beasts turned upon their attendants, destroying many! Philopater's wrath was turned to pity; he at once rescinded his decrees, restored to the Jews their original estate, and gave them many favors, with permission to put all the apostates to death, which was done. So runs the story, but it is undoubtedly elaborated, in order (it is thought) to put the Alexandrian Jews on a level with the Palestinian, with respect to persecutions and miraculous deliverances. The account is a marked contrast to the sober narrative of the book of Esther, wherein another deliverance is recorded, and "the words of inspiration stand ennobled by the presence of their later counterpart.

Twelve years later (B.C. 204) Philopater died, worn out with his abominable excesses. His son, Ptolemy V. (Epiphanes), succeeded him, being at the time a child of only five years of age. Antiochus was still reigning in the rival kingdom of Syria, and, though by treaty Palestine and Cle-Syria had been ceded to the Egyptians, he had not lost his longing for them. Accordingly, he arranged with Philip, king of Macedon, that they should take advantage of the Egyptian king's infancy and divide his dominions between them. This plot was never carried out, owing to Roman intervention, but Antiochus managed to seize the provinces referred to in the years B.C. 203-2.

In the year 199, while Antiochus was engaged in war in other parts of his dominions, the Egyptians dispatched an army under one Scopas, an able general, to recover those two provinces, which he did, but in the next year Antiochus recaptured them, defeating Scopas with great slaughter. Several things (the attempt by Philopater to invade the Temple; the persecutions at Alexandria; the ravages of Scopas) had by this time conspired to make the Jews dissatisfied with the Egyptian rule, and the priests and people went in solemn procession to meet Antiochus, and to assist him in every way they could. He was very favorable to the Jews, and granted them many privileges. In order to prevent the Egyptians renewing the attack upon Palestine, he sent proposals that, when arrived at a fit age, his daughter, Cleopatra, should be given in marriage to the youthful Ptolemy, and that upon this event the provinces should be restored, with her, as dowry. The offer was accepted, and the marriage was accomplished a few years later, in the year B.C.193. The revenues were, however, shared between the two kingdoms.

Antiochus had now passed the zenith of his power. Undoubtedly possessing in his earlier days great valor, prudence, and administrative ability, he seems to have become vain, ambitious, and less careful than before, carried away with his successes. Jealous of the mighty Roman power which had grown up in the west (as that power, too, was jealous of him), he embarked in a war, which, after several reverses, ended most disastrously for him. A battle was fought at Magnesia, near Mount Sipylus. The Roman forces numbered only about thirty thousand; the Syrians were between eighty and ninety thousand. In vain did this large army attack the Roman legions; the latter were everywhere victorious, and Antiochus barely managed to escape with a mere handful of his troops.

Hereupon, in a kind of despair, he sued for peace, which was granted on crushing terms, part of which was that he bore all the expenses of the war. This placed him in great straits, and led him while at Elymais, in Persia (B.C.187), to pillage a temple devoted to Jupiter Belus, where great treasure was stored. This incensed the people, who rose up against him and slew him, and thus miserably did Antiochus the Great perish at last. "He stumbled and fell, and was not found."

Jr.

Maria, the Spanish Fortune Teller

SOME devoted servants of Christ, laboring for Him in Spain, thus write to us: ■We have had heavy falls of snow lately. The severe weather brought down fifteen wolves from the mountains, which chased some unwary peasants. They ran to the castle and jumped into the moat, thus escaping with their lives. Now it is warmer, and both snow and wolves have disappeared. The severe cold, however, laid down one of our number— dear old Maria, the fortune-teller — she being taken seriously ill during the snowstorm. Her relatives do not take sufficient care of her, and will not even give her the food, which we take her. Not being Christians themselves, they do not love or sympathize with Maria. At the same time, they will not let her come to our snug little hospital, where we would take such loving care of her.

Maria's conversion took place three years ago, and in the following manner: ■One Sunday afternoon, as she was passing along the street, she heard our school children singing, and, thinking it was a musical entertainment, she peeped in, entered, and stayed to the close. On leaving, she asked the colporteur, "When will there be another performance?" and at eight p.m. she was there again, and since that day for three years she has never been missing from our Sunday-school or our services.

At first the converts were strongly opposed to the old fortune-teller coming amongst us, and said, "She has only come to spy. She is very bad, and will be a Mrs. Judas amongst us." Then we answered, "How do we know that she will not turn out to be a 'Mrs. Peter' or a 'Mrs. John' instead, and be better than any of the rest?" And Math has certainly not disappointed our hopes!

The text which arrested Maria was this: "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Fully convinced of her sinfulness, and, with all the dark pass of her life before her, she wondered what she could do to be saved. She thought the pastor would surely tell her to go with bare feet up the steep mountain of the Virgin, or else bid her do some penance; and, oh, how great was her surprise and joy, when she heard that Jesus had done everything for her, so that she had but to receive the precious gift of God. Her joy in learning that the goodness of God tells us what His Son has done, and also how He is glorified by that work, was great indeed. Ever since that day she has given bright testimony to the grace of God being in her heart. A changed life is hers, and she seeks to live to the praise of Him, who by free grace has turned her "from darkness to His marvelous light."

It was suggested that, as our mission-hall was situated in the town, it would be well to have services a little distance from it, in order the better to reach the villagers.

Maria at once offered the use of her house, and this we thankfully accepted. On reaching it at the time appointed for the service, we found Maria standing in her doorway, earnestly asking the passers-by to enter: amongst them happened to be her former confessor, who said to her, "What is this■what is the meaning of so many people being about your house? You are going to have a dance, I suppose?"

“No, sir, not a dance,” said Maria; “but we are going to have the joy of hearing the word of God read to us, and a good man is to explain it to us. Welcome in to the house of your servant.”

Maria is seventy-eight years of age, and she works hard in the fields to earn her bread, getting about fivepence a day for her labor, but, though so poor, she loves to give out of her poverty to the Lord’s work. It was not long ago that, one winter’s day, she brought a dozen new laid eggs to the pastor, who was laid down with rheumatic fever, as a token of her love, and, it being winter time, she could have sold them for nearly a penny a piece, but she would not accept any return for them.

“It is very little that I can do,” said she, “to show my gratitude to the beloved pastor, who has shown to me the way of eternal life.”

On another occasion, she said, with tears, “Every day I thank my good Saviour for His kindness to me, and I pray for three things—patience to bear my trials, strength to do my daily work, and, at last, a quick road to the glory.”

In contrast with the bright faith of this aged woman may be mentioned the case of a young girl, Orenca, who has for a long time attended our meetings, and is “almost persuaded.” Her mother does all she can to hinder her from deciding for Christ. This year she has not, as formerly, joined in the carnival procession, nor in the dances, which is a great sacrifice for a Spanish girl, but she has not yet the courage to stand up against the persecution which falls here upon all who are true Christians. However, persecution has one great advantage— it tests the sincerity of the converts, and goes a great way to keep hypocrites out of the ranks. I often think that, were it the same in England as it is here in Spain, it would almost empty some churches and chapels. E. L. R.

You Are Frightening Me

ALAS for the children whose fathers and mothers bring them up with no good example before them, and who, although surrounded with churches and chapels and gospel meetings, have no desire that they should hear of Christ! Our cities teem with such; they eat, and drink, and marry, but there is no room for the Christ of God in their dwellings.

Not long since I was called to the bedside of a young man, whose parents were of the class I have just described. On reaching the house, and being introduced to the sick man, I knelt in prayer, and then opened my Bible and began at Romans 3:10 “There is none righteous, no, not one.” “The way of peace have they not known.” “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”■then I read of God’s gracious promises for guilty sinners, “Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” Then John tossed himself from one side of the bed to the other, exclaiming, “You are frightening me— you are frightening me!” I kept silent for a little while, and looked to God to direct me further. But never shall I forget the look of terror on poor John’s face.

“John,” said I, “it is not I who am troubling you, but the Holy Spirit of God, who is convicting you of your sins; you need to bow to the verdict of the just God against you. God delights in mercy, and forgives everyone who confesses from his heart that he is a sinner, and believes in Jesus, who has died to save sinners.

I was loth to prolong my stay, and left John, promising to call again; but, alas he departed this life before two o’clock the following morning, and I could not hear that he had given any indication of a change having taken place in his soul.

Oh! reader, think for a moment; are you unsaved, and without concern for your never-dying soul? Should God lay His hand upon you and require your soul of you at once, you have been warned of the end of the ungodly again and again; think you those solemn warnings of God’s word are made merely to frighten you? Think you that they are not all true?

Again, by this warning God beseeches you to come to Himself■this may be your last opportunity. Listen to the words of Jesus: “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.” (John 6:37.)

R. S. McF.

Not of Works Lest Any Man Should Boast

IN my early childhood the words, “Thou God seest me,” were strongly impressed upon my mind. This led me to dread doing wrong things, though I have to confess to much that was evil. When older, the desire to live a holy life increased, and at the age of twelve years I made a public profession of religion.

A few years afterward, amongst other things, I was taught to believe in fasting as a means to grace, and I have fasted to such a degree, that I have had scarcely strength to walk about. This brought upon me much ridicule from others. Frequently did I rise at five in the morning, in order to get forward with my duties, so that I might attend early religious service, and I also did all I could to help the poor and needy. In this way I continued for many years, endeavoring by good works to gain salvation.

I had hoped that by the help of religious ordinances, and by fasting, praying, and doing good works, all would be well should I be called to depart this life; but instead of finding peace by my efforts, despair seized me, for I found that all my righteousnesses were as filthy rags. I cannot describe my feelings—I seemed to see myself utterly cast off from God’s presence, and this almost broke my heart. For three weeks it seemed as if my reason must go. I dared not sleep, lest I should never wake again save among the lost. I was so worn out from having no rest, and from the terror which took hold upon me, that I could scarcely go about my daily duties, but “God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform.” He was showing me what a sinner I was, and He was doing this in order that He might prepare my heart to find Him as my Saviour God.

On going to my room one night, fearfully cast down, God caused His word, like a flash of lightning, to shine into my dark heart, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” (Acts 16:31.) Thereupon I saw Jesus as my Saviour, and I was enabled to receive the gift, which God in His great love offers to all. From my heart I could say■

“Just as I am, without one plea,

But that Thy blood was shed for me,

And that Thou bidd’st me come to Thee,

O Lamb of God, I come.”

Then I knew the Lord Jesus as “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,” and it was my loving delight to think of Him who Himself bore my sins in His own body on the tree. My joy now far exceeded the anguish and sorrow I had passed through— God had turned me indeed from darkness into light. Some of my friends thought a new delusion had overtaken me, but the love of Christ to me was a blessed reality, and is so still.

All this time, great as was the joy God gave me, I was still seeking to become righteous by keeping the law, until one night, when reading my Bible, this verse spoke to me, “Christ is the end of the

law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.” (Rom. 10:4.) The Holy Spirit brought home the word with such power, that I saw for the first time that in Christ alone was my righteousness. “But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” (1 Cor. 1:30, 31.)

What a precious Saviour I had found! He had not only pardoned my sins through His blood, but He is my life and my all■ “Jesus only.” He had loved me and given Himself for me■ He is my Lord, my life, and my all. He had been leading His poor sheep all the while it seemed that there was no hope, and His purpose was to bless with a fuller knowledge of Himself. “I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” (John 17:26.) Had anyone told me four years previously that I should have given up all my old thoughts of becoming good by works, and have had peace and joy ministered by God the Spirit, it would have seemed a fable.

And now, dear reader, how is it with you? “Ye must be born again.” Jesus says, “I am the door: by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved.” “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” (John 5:24.)

E. J.

The Father's Faithful Care

IT might be truly said of the one of whom I write that she was chosen in the furnace of affliction. For five long years, she had suffered the most acute bodily pain, and was almost as weak and helpless as a child; she was poor indeed as to this world's goods, but was rich in faith, living in simple dependence upon God to supply her daily need. Having no earthly relative, her days were mostly spent in loneliness, but never a murmur escaped her lips. Sometimes, when suffering much, she would say, "It is good to suffer from His hand," and would delight to think He was only polishing the stone which was by-and-by to adorn His temple above. She became increasingly helpless, and, having no earthly friend to attend to her wants, feared lest she might be taken to the workhouse; and this became a severe trial of faith.

A few months ago, she became powerless even to raise her head from the pillow. Never shall I forget what that time of darkness and conflict was to her. It was painful to see the look of sadness and almost of despair on the dear face, which, usually so bright with hope and love, bore a silent testimony for Jesus.

In the evening I had to leave her for my home, and the following day I once more turned my steps towards my sick friend. On entering her room I saw that her sorrowful countenance spoke of conflict within. I sat down by her bedside, and opened my Bible at the 23rd Psalm. On coming to the last verse, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever," I saw that the word had found its way into her heart. She realized that not only had God's mercy and goodness followed her until now, but that still would they abide with her, until she entered His presence above. Tears of joy filled her eyes, and she exclaimed, "Jesus, precious Jesus." He had not suffered her faith, though sorely tried, to fail.

Now He showed her what He would do for her in delivering mercy. A servant of God sent a nurse to sit up with her at night; a Christian friend, with myself, stayed with her during the day; others supplied every need during her illness, and she was made to rejoice afresh in the faithfulness of God, who has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

Dear tried ones, whom Jesus loves, take courage from this little incident. A. F.

God's Wonderful Ways With Man. The Second Age, Without Law

AS we open the roll of Time, the many centuries of the Age without Law first present themselves to us. From the fall of Adam to the promise given to Abram reckons some 2000 years. Long as is this period, it has a remarkable moral fact attached to it, which in one sense brings its events together within a small compass. Men lived long lives in those early days, and but three of these lives covered the whole of the 2000 years, so that Abram might have heard from Noah's lips, not only the story of the flood, but also what Noah had heard Methuselah recount of paradise and the fall, as he had heard it from Adam! Let the reader examine our diagram, and he will see how this fact clearly presents itself to the eye. No doubt the story of the past fails to stir man as does the prospect of the future, but none the less is our future greatly governed by our knowledge of the past. In our short lives it is not uncommon for four generations to assemble together, and for the little ones to hear the story of the past from their great-grand-parents' lips; and we may imagine with what wrapt and awe-struck hearts the believing children in the early days of this world's history would hear the stories of the tree of life and of the knowledge of good and evil from their grandparents.

We have placed in our diagram a figure of a tree and a sword upon the right-hand side of the roll of Time, and on the left of it, a figure of a city. The fiery sword of divine justice guarded on every side the tree of life, and that tree and that sword lifted up their witness to men for more than 1600 years. It is patent to all then, by the evidence of the ground that was cursed for their sakes, that paradise was not man's portion on earth; but, alas too few then, as now, would hearken to the witness, that life could not be reached by man through his own right or might. Jehovah had planted the tree of life for man, but man had turned to the Enemy, instead of, to his Almighty Friend, and had chosen the forbidden tree, and henceforth and forever, life for man could only be attained through death by the fiery sword of judgment.

Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and built him a city. He built and beautified, and he made merry, afar from the testimony that God had established on the earth. He chose him death, for he refused life through death. Abel received the lesson of life through death, and lived. He brought in faith, the victim as his offering to God, and was accepted. True, he died at Cain's jealous hands, who could not bear that Abel should have the favor which he so wantonly refused, but Abel, being dead, yet speaketh, And of the last days, it is written of the men who refuse the testimony of the sword and the tree, of the sacrificial blood, and by it, the approval of God; who choose religion, progress, science, and arts in the stead of life through the death of Jesus: "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain."

Woe unto them for they speak evil of the things they know not; they denounce the atoning blood of Jesus; they scorn the reality of life everlasting obtained through His death, which alone met all the requirements of the sword that turns every way ■ woe unto them, let them be as religious as was Cain, or as wise as was he and his sons. And wise men though they be, in what they know naturally ■ that is, apart from the revelation of God ■ in these things they lower themselves,

corrupting themselves by their science to deny man's high estate as the creature of God.

As we open the revealed record, and read the stories of the lives of the children of faith and of the children of the world, the former have but a brief account attached to their worthy names—they lived, and they died! They were strangers and sojourners on God's once beautiful earth, but scarred by sin, and tangled with thorns! Of one of them, Enoch, it is written. "He walked with God!" But what does this honor count with the world? Of another, who called his son Noah (Comfort or Rest), we read, "This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed." He who walked with God was called up to the paradise above, and the "Comfort" looked for, came in due season, but in God's way, through death; for out of the deep waters of the flood arose the earth, as in resurrection, and then it was that in the sweet savor of the sacrifice which went up to God, He said, "I will not again curse the earth for man's sake"!

As man began to multiply on the face of the earth, evil of the worst kind developed, for in the progress of wickedness the sons of God and the children of men entered into alliance. There were giants, or, "fallen ones," in the earth in those days, and beyond these fallen ones, there were also, by reason of the alliance, men of renown upon the earth. How the mystery of the alliance between the sons of God and the children of men was accomplished, we are not told, but the sons of God took the initiative—they courted the daughters of the children of men; and so it is now, Satan waits for man to lure him from God to destruction. There is no small significance in the joining of hearts with demons today in Christendom, as Spiritualism teaches, for this surrender of man to Satan is one great sign of the coming wrath of God upon the world. We may be sure as the times develop in unbelief, rejection of His word and determined departure from Him will proceed onwards to men becoming allied with Satan in some spiritual bond, for which Spiritualism is preparing the way.

Ah! how blind, how deaf, how dead, are men to the ways of God! Christendom begins to join hand in hand with the enemy, and, rejecting Christ's sacrifice, to call down upon it fire from heaven, as the men of the early earth, by their sins and alliance with Satan, called upon themselves the judgment of waters.

Before the flood swept away the ungodly, God took Enoch to Himself. "He was nor, for God took him." Even as it shall be, of them who walk with God, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," they shall be removed from the world, and be "forever with the Lord," before the foretold judgment falls on the world. Those who walk with God learn His secrets. He does not hide from the children of faith the thing He is about to do.

Methuselah's name, "He dies, is sent"—given to him by Enoch—shows that God had communicated to the prophet the things which were to come to pass in the early days, while Enoch's prophecy of coming judgment in the latter day, Jude records; and so it was that, in the year of Methuselah's death, the judgment came.

As "the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was a preparing" (1 Peter 3:20), so is the Lord now "longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9), for God is God, and changes not. Noah had heard from his father, Methuselah, of the call of Enoch, his grandfather, to the paradise above, just a few years after Adam's death, and "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, he walked

with God”■separate from the ungodly and the terrible union of man with demons. To him, in his father’s days, came the word from God of coming judgment■of the flood and the end of man, and during the one hundred and twenty years while the divine judgment waited, he built the ark for the saving of his house, and preached righteousness to sinners!

“As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man” (Luke 17:26), the Lord Himself declares, and His coming to the earth is near, and that coming will be by judgment and by fire from heaven. As the early age of this world’s history ended in judgment, so shall the latter age end. The faithful to Christ should stir themselves the more earnestly to follow the example of the patriarch Noah, who walked with God, built the ark, and preached righteousness.

Joe's Story

“WON'T you come and speak a bit at my little lads' meeting next Sunday evening?” I asked of Joe, one of the Christian youths of my Bible-class. “I don't mind if I do,” said he; so he came.

We had a good room full, and the little fellows, varying from seven to fourteen years of age, sang most heartily. The closing verse of our hymn:

“The wondrous story of the Lamb

Tell with that voice of thine,

'Till others, with the glad new song,

Go singing all the time,”

seemed to lead to the story, to which they now listened with deep attention, of a sculptor whose life was saved in a giddy fall from a scaffolding by alighting upon a lamb, which thus died instead of him.

The boys looked all eagerness to hear what a preacher but a little older than some of them would have to say. He began with reading a few verses from John 10, and spoke of the Good Shepherd who loves the lambs, and who laid down His life to save the poor wandering ones; “and,” added he, “should you like to hear how He came to find me? Oh, it's a grand thing to belong to Jesus, lads! And if He had found you, and saved you, you would like to speak of it; you would not be ashamed to show your colors any more than I am, wherever I be. Well, now, I'll tell you what I've not told a many, and that is what led to my seeking the Lord, and to the Lord finding me, and to my getting converted.

“It was about four years ago, when I worked down at the farm yonder, and I hadn't given a thought yet to my soul, though I was about thirteen years of age. Early one morning I was sent to fetch up the beasts from the far meadow. A lovely bright morning it was, and I loitered along the road, meaning certainly to fetch the beasts, but, meaning, too, to do a bit of destructive mischief by the way. So it wasn't very long before I spied a bird's nest, pretty high up in a tree hard by. I was right up after it in no time, but I can tell'ee I came down a good bit sharper than I went up, or than I had ever meant to. The bough I was on snapped, and before I knew where I was I had fallen heavily, and was lying under the tree on my back. How long I lay there unconscious I can't tell you, but I know when I came to I could not stir, and was in sore agony. What do you think my first thought was? and who do you think I cried out for? God, do you say? No, it wasn't. I cried out for my mother, but, bless you, lads, my mother was far enough away, and could not hear me. So there I lay alone, in terrible pain. Then I prayed to God to let me die, for I just felt I could bear it no longer, and that anything would be better than the suffering I was in.

“But God did not answer that mad prayer, and after a while it came to me what a mercy it was He did not, for what if I were to die? I was no more fit for death than nothing, and if I had died, there

was naught but hell for me. Well, I lay and thought about it for a nice bit, and made up my mind I mustn't go on no longer as I had been doing, or I should be lost forever.

"After a time I was able to get up and walk out, but, oh, dear, what pain it was! I made my way to the meadow as best I could, and fetched up the beasts. When I got back the missus saw how bad I was, and I told her I had fallen getting over that awkward stile that leads out of the lane, that I had come down on my back on the boulders. You see, I wasn't much converted yet, for I thought nothing of telling a lie. She gave me some oils to rub my back with, but I felt it for months, and can tell 'ee it did hurt me when I had to bend; it kept so that I could not forget the lesson I had learned under that tree.

"I began to 'turn over a new leaf,' as they say: I thought I would knock off swearing to start with, but as that was not easy I restricted myself to one oath a day. But, bless you, I mostly took out my oath so early in the morning, I had to have another before the day was done; so, you see, I did not make much way with my new leaf.

"Well, I was downright in earnest about my soul, so this sort of work didn't satisfy me. I may say I was just hungering after righteousness, and you know, lads, what God's promise is to such: He says 'they shall be filled.' But I didn't get filled just yet, because I didn't go the right way about it; I didn't go to the right Person. I was like the poor prodigal in the far country, you have heard tell of, in Luke 15, who, when 'he began to be in want, went and joined himself to a citizen of that country.' But he wasn't the one who had 'bread enough and to spare,' not he! Well, I thought if I became teetotal, I should surely be more pleasing to God. But, bless you, it ain't blue ribbons, nor red ribbons, nor no other ribbons as can make us fit for God. I had to find out that the best robe of heaven was what I wanted.

"It was in the December, following the summer that I had that fall I have been telling you of, that I joined the Blue Ribbon army, and I was very zealous for it for a good bit. It cost me a pretty penny to keep along with it; they were always wanting money for this or that entertainment. My mother used to say I spent as much on being teetotal as I ever should have done on the drink! I paid up the money, but I never went to none of their entertainments, for all along I felt they weren't what I was seeking for.

"About this time I left the farm, and took to the works at the iron foundry, where I am still. Now I was more free to attend chapels and meetings, and such like; and, as I wanted my soul to be saved, I went to all I could, but I didn't get it there. I don't quite know how it came about in the end; E. know I used to kneel by my bedside at night, and pray to God to save me. For some time I had been coming up regularly to the Sunday Bible-class here, whilst I was still at the farm, and the story of Christ's finished work, and His full salvation for sinners, somehow at last was getting a hold of me. At the meetings held here for young Christians it helped me wonderfully to see the joy there was in being really a believer. It seemed to settle me like on Christ, the Rock, and after a bit I just felt as the hymn says, 'like singing all the time, aye, and whistling, too, for I could not keep quiet with them sweet hymns running through my mind.

Now, you see, I worked at the foundry, where it wasn't altogether easy to be a Christian, and yet there was one here and there among the workmen who feared the Lord, but on the whole they are a rough lot and no mistake. Do you think now I told them I was a Christian? Well, no, I didn't, but

they very soon told me! There's a lot of cursing and swearing goes on there, and when I heard them taking God's name in vain I could not stand it, so I checked them; and then they called out, 'Oh, we've got another Christian among us, I suppose!' And I wasn't ashamed to say they had, for it's a blessed thing to know one belongs to Christ, and to confess His name before men. We've good times at the iron foundry now, I can tell you, the other Christians and me. We stand shoulder to shoulder for Christ, and the Lord gives us the joy now and again of seeing one and another of our fellow workmen give up his sneering and scoffing, and turn right round to be for Christ, along with us.

"Well, I think I've about got to the end of my story. I hope I've made it plain to you, lads, that God didn't want me to make myself good before I came to Him, because He is saving sinners, through Jesus Christ, who died for the lost. But after you are saved, through the finished work of the Saviour, and can say He's yours, then the Holy Spirit will make you good, and help you to give up all that's not fit for Christ— and oh, lads, He'll fill your hearts with gladness, and with deep longing to tell out everywhere the wondrous story of the Lamb. With His help, I'll never stop telling it so long as there's any breath in my body." D. & A. C,

4. From Malachi to Matthew

ANTIOCHUS the Great was succeeded (B.C. 187) by his son, Seleucus Philopater, The Syrian power was now at a very low ebb, for the “great tribute,” due to the Romans Is the result of the late disastrous war, consisted of a thousand talents a year, payable or twelve years, a term which expired at the death of Seleucus. All his exertions were called for to raise this heavy sum, and the prophetic description is most apt: “Then shall stand up in his (Antiochus’) estate a raiser of taxes.” Seleucus died by the treachery of Heliodorous, his treasurer, in 175.

Five years previously (180) the Egyptian monarch, P. Epiphanes, had purposed making war upon Seleucus, but his commanders, suspecting from his words that he intended to use their purses as well as their persons in the contest, resorted to the usual remedy of those days (a remedy which Epiphanes himself had caused to be applied to those who were obnoxious to him) they poisoned him. He was succeeded by his son, Ptolemy VI. (Philometer), under the guardianship of his mother, Cleopatra, who, it will be remembered, was the daughter of the late Antiochus, and upon whose marriage to P. Epiphanes it was agreed that Palestine and Cle-Syria should pass to Egypt by way of dower.

By circumstances which are not at all clear, Palestine had come into the possession of Seleucus before that ruler’s death. How it was that Egypt lost its hold is not known. This, however, was the state of affairs just previous to B.C.175: P. Philometer was on the Egyptian throne; the Syrian monarch was Seleucus Philopater, in whose possession Palestine and Cle-Syria then were. As to Jerusalem, we are told that “the holy city was inhabited with all peace, and the laws were kept very well, because of the godliness of Onias, the high priest, and his hatred of wickedness. The Onias here spoken of, is the third of that name.

The reader will have observed that so far we have only indirectly had any history of the Jewish nation. The people and land come into view merely as they are concerned in the affairs of the adjoining kingdoms. The fact is, Judah has no history of that time. Upon the people was still written the sentence, “Lo-Ammi” Not My people. Israel was set aside; the Gentile powers were running their course; around these history groups itself, and nearly all that we learn of God’s ancient people is the information that they were under the dominion of one of other of the great powers, oppressed or favored, as the case might be, by successive sovereigns.

We reach a period when they come more fully before us, but the history is a sad one. It concerns the afflictions which came upon the unhappy race and land (afflictions which well-nigh crushed out (as they were meant to do) both the Jewish people and the Jewish religion. We cannot doubt that these afflictions were God’s furnace to purify the faith of those who truly believed in Him. That the Jewish faith had reached a low ebb is undeniable. Of the twin dangers, violence and corruption, Satan’s two forms of attack from the beginning, the latter is far more insidious and dangerous than the first, and Judaism was in imminent danger of being “Hellenized” out of all recognition. Grecianism surrounded the Jews on every hand; Greek philosophy, Greek games, Greek religion, Greek vices (all were familiarized to the Jews by constant contact, and with familiarity came a

dulled perception of what was evil, and even a love of it. There were signs of a tendency towards Grecianism even in Jerusalem, the city of the great King, and among those who above all others might have been expected to rigidly maintain the position which God had given to Israel—we refer to the high priests. Onias H. was suspected of this; later priests threw all their efforts into the attempt. “Let us go and make a covenant with the heathen,” is the reported language of those days.

In addition to this there were dangers of a different kind from within. An “Egyptian party” and a “Syrian party” were forming among the Jews, while avarice and the love of power were working those internal dissensions which often prove more disastrous to a commonwealth than attacks from without. This we proceed to explain, and it will be seen that, religiously and politically, Judæa had happened upon evil days.

We must go back a little in date to trace the origin of the dissensions referred to. It will be remembered that in about the year B.C. 226, the right of farming the taxes in Palestine had been sold by P. Euergetes to Joseph, nephew of the high priest, Onias II. This important office, held for many years, gave to him and to his family a position rivaling even that of the high priest. The family was subsequently known as “the sons of Tobias.” Joseph had seven sons by one wife, and by another, a younger son, Hyrcanus, who was sent by the father to the Egyptian court, to congratulate the king and queen upon the birth of a son. While at Alexandria, Hyrcanus managed to obtain from Joseph’s agent an immense amount of money, with which he made handsome presents to the king and queen, and lavishly bribed the king’s officers. By these means he overreached his father, and obtained from the king the office of collector of revenues in the land beyond the Jordan. Joseph was enraged at the loss of his treasures, as were also his sons, who from the first envied Hyrcanus, and these conspired to way—lay and kill him. But in the attack they were repulsed, and two of the brothers were killed. Joseph soon died, but the feud lived.

It was no mere family dissension: the elders of the people took part against Hyrcanus, as did also the high priest Simon (the son and successor of Onias II.), and most of the people; others espoused the cause of the younger son. He retreated to beyond the Jordan, and after seven years committed suicide from fear of the then Syrian king Antiochus. Before his death, he seems to have recovered the favor of Onias III. (who B.C. 195 had succeeded Simon his father in the priesthood), for with his knowledge.

Hyrcanus’s treasure was deposited in the Temple, and he spoke of him as “a man of great dignity. This may have helped to bring about the breach which existed between the high priest and the governor of the Temple, Simon, a Benjamite, who is believed to have been the eldest brother of Hyrcanus. In the year 176 B.C. the enmity between these two—the governor and the priest—had become so bitter, that Simon, finding that he could not overcome Onias, went to Appollonius, governor of Cle-Syria and Phnicia, and told him of the immense treasure in the Temple. It was reported to the king, and the needy monarch (Seleucus) had as little compunction in robbing the Temple of Jehovah at Jerusalem, as his father had in plundering the Temple of Jupiter at Elymais. Heliodorous, the king’s treasurer, was sent to take possession of the money. He was hindered—(we lightly touch the marvelous story)—by a wonderful apparition:—a horse, upon which sat a terrible rider clothed in a panoply of gold, ran fiercely upon Heliodorous and smote at him with his fore-feet, while two young men, “notable in strength, excellent in beauty, and comely in apparel,”

stood on either side scourging him with many stripes. He fell speechless to the ground, was restored by the high priest's intercession, and returned to Seleucus, declaring that God's eye was upon the place, and attributing what had happened to the "God.

Not so Simon, who had betrayed the treasure. He was skeptical about the heavenly character of "the great apparition," and boldly suggested that Onias was at the bottom of it. The hatred increased; murder was committed; and Onias, seeing that as the mischief could only increase with time, went to the king. But before anything could be done, Seleucus died, and his brother came into power.

The new king, Antiochus, adopted the surname "Epiphanes," Illustrious. That was his own estimate of himself; a truer one— that of the prophetic Scriptures—designated him "a contemptible person"; his own people by a play on his title called him "Epimanes," Madman. It is, indeed, difficult to understand the behavior of his earlier life, or to know whether to account him madman or fool. But we are not so much concerned with his earlier acts, whether despicable, foolish, or sinful, as with his attitude towards God's people— an attitude which has earned for him the fearful name, "The Antichrist of the Old Testament." Not that persecution blazed forth at once after his accession. For a time the chief troubles of the people came from the disputes between those in authority, and those who sought for authority.

Upon the accession of the new king, he was offered by Joshua, the brother of the high priest, three hundred and sixty talents, and a further eighty talents from another source, if he would depose the then priest, Onias, and place him in the office. He further promised to set apart one hundred and fifty talents for the establishment of a gymnasium after the Greek fashion, and, further, that he would call the people of Jerusalem "Antiochians." The greedy king closed with the offer; Onias was deposed, the miter passed to Joshua, who to the full extent of his power did his best to Hellenize his people. He threw off his honored Hebrew name "Joshua" for the Greek "Jason"; he built the gymnasium, and in every possible way incited the young men to the adoption of "Greek fashions." A sad picture is drawn in the First and Second Books of Maccabees of the condition of things in those days—the people following the customs of the heathens, making themselves uncircumcised, sold to do mischief, and the priests neglecting the altar and its sacrifices, and hastening to the games of the Greeks! Jason even went so far as to send special messengers from Jerusalem to Tyre, bearing money for offerings to Melkarth, the Phoenician Hercules, on the occasion of the games in his honor.

The Shipwreck

IN the twenty-seventh chapter of the Acts we have the record of a shipwreck. The story is related towards the end of the book, and is full of significance. One point in the narrative we will dwell on—the courage of the Apostle Paul.

For some fourteen days the ship in which he was, had been driven by the storm, and when, at midnight, the sailors sounded, and found they were nearing shore, they feared falling on rocks. Then it was that the apostle, captive as he was, a prisoner among prisoners, on his way to trial before Cr sar, took the lead and controlled, not only the ship's crew, but the centurion and soldiers under whose charge the prisoners were. As, seemingly, death stared them all in the face, Paul so comforted their hearts that, when he took bread, they ate; and so fruitful was his courage, that the two hundred and seventy-six souls on board became of good cheer.

The secret of his calmness and courage was the word that had come to him at the angel's hand from heaven: "Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cr sar; and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." He believed God, and, with this assurance, neither storm nor darkness, neither soldier's counsel nor the danger of reaching land, occasioned him dismay. And, as the event proved, all that had sailed with Paul reached the shore safely, though the ship was lost.

Now in this day, when, like the ship in which Paul sailed, the Church of God seems to be "falling into a place where" the "two seas" of infidelity and superstition meet, let us hear the word of God, which says, "Fear not" for there shall not be lost one true believer in these tempestuous waters, but they shall come "all safe to land," though it be "on broken pieces of the ship."

The "land" is in view, the everlasting shore appears, and soon the trials and the tempests shall be over for all who are Christ's. And as that day is so near at hand, our privilege is to bid all who sail with us to be of good cheer, and to comfort their hearts, and to give them to eat. Most gracious occupation this in a day of distress! One followed by those who heed the voice of the word of God, so full of comfort and rest to the hearts of true believers. His word never changes, and He ever abides faithful, and while His word clearly shows what our own day so painfully illustrates, the falling of the professing church into terrible disbelief, it speaks in unvarying assurance to each faithful heart. Let us then be of good courage, and by a brave example stimulate those about us to rest on His word and to be strong in His grace.

The Experiences of a Missionary in China

4. Native Evangelist's Work

THE following account of the commencement and continuance of a very remarkable work of grace in a mountain village in the interior of China, illustrates beautifully the present power of the gospel among the heathen, and cannot fail to interest and encourage Christian workers everywhere; especially should it lead us to expect and look for great things to be done among the heathen in these last days.

We narrow our sympathies and cramp our faith very much if we confine our prayers to the mere handful of men and women who have gone forth into the great harvest fields of heathendom from our own European and American shores, and forget the tens of thousands of native Christians upon whom, humanly speaking, the evangelization of the great nations, still lost in the darkness of superstition and death, depends.

Ku-cheng Tsih is a small village of 300 families in the province of An-huai, 240 miles from Gan-king, and 60 miles west of Yang-chou Fu, in the province of Kiang-su, and about the same distance north or Nanking.

The work there commenced through the faithful testimony of a native of the village, named Chen Loh-tsuen. No missionary had ever been there, and upon Chen alone rests the honor of being the first man to preach the gospel to the people of that village and the district surrounding it for many, many miles. A few words respecting the conversion and early experiences of Chen will help the reader the better to understand and appreciate the subsequent labors of this devoted man and beloved brother.

More than twenty years ago, at the time of the Tai-ping rebellion, he was driven from his home, and compelled to serve in the rebel army. Whilst among the rebels he learned the name of Jesus, and, along with the whole army, used to bow down to the name of God the Father; for it will be remembered that the great leader of the Tai-ping rebellion (which Chinese Gordon assisted in suppressing) had obtained possession of a translation of the Old Testament, and imagining himself to be Joshua, and his army to be composed of the people of God, he went forward, conquering first the immediate neighborhood of his own village, and finally he almost overthrew the Tartar dynasty.

Chen learned from this cruel leader nothing of the spirit or the power of Christ, and was as ignorant of the gospel, probably, as any other idolater in the empire. In the north of the Kiang-suh province, after six years' service in the rebel army, Chen, along with many others, was taken prisoner by the Imperial army. Most of these were put to death, but Chen was providentially saved, and henceforth became a royalist, and was stationed at a city on the old bed of the Yellow River, called Su-chou. It was here that, some years after, Chen heard of the presence of a foreign missionary in the city, and, desiring to learn something of the new religion which the missionary was said to be propagating, paid him a visit at the inn, and was kindly received. He had long since become dissatisfied with his present condition, and for some time had entertained serious

thoughts of becoming a Buddhist priest, thinking that in such a capacity he might be able to acquire a sufficient stock of merit to gain admission into heaven when the time came for him to depart this life; he was therefore in a favorable state of mind to hear the good news of salvation in Christ: for who does not know that so long as the sinner is fairly satisfied with his own condition there is little probability of his coming to Christ for pardon?

Chen listened attentively to the words of the missionary, and left the inn with a copy of the New Testament and a hymn-book in the Chinese language. These he studied carefully, and soon became deeply interested in the teaching of the New Testament, so much so that he threw up his position in the army, and journeyed more than one hundred English miles south in search of a missionary or some native Christians who might help him to understand more clearly the doctrine of God's word.

Chen found pardon and peace in Christ, and then he returned to his native village of Ku-cheng; but almost as a stranger. He had been absent twenty years, and all who had known him thought of him as having long since perished in the rebellion. All his near relatives had died, but there were some in the place who remembered him, and to them he appeared as one risen from the dead. They were, however, still more astonished at his strange behavior. He had no feat of the idols, neither would he worship them; he spoke against the ancient custom of worshipping ancestors; he strongly condemned lying and cheating; indeed he appeared to have imbibed some strange notions during his long absence.

Soon Chen's faithful preaching and consistent life told effectually, and permanently, upon his neighbors, and one after another believed that what Chen taught was true; and they cast away their idols, and joined with him in worshipping the true God.

So the work commenced, and is now extending to other villages in the district.

Scores of men and women, and children, too, are repenting of their sins and receiving pardon and life in Christ through faith in Him. Among the first converts was one of the leading men in the village, named Hsiang. He was a doctor by profession, and kept a drug store. For thirty years this man had been an opium smoker, his wife also being addicted to the same habit. The poor fellow was a slave to the drug, and had often vainly sought to break away from it. He had tried both native and foreign medicines, but all alike left the old craving for the drug there still. Hsiang heard the preaching of Chen, and decided to become a Christian. One day when Chen went into his house to read the Scriptures with him he found his friend smoking his opium. "What!" said Chen, "Do you not know that you cannot be a Christian and smoke opium?"

"Is that so?" asked the convert; "does the Bible forbid it?"

He was told that, although not mentioned in the Scriptures, the passages condemning drunkenness of course condemned the far worse intoxication of opium. "What is to be done?" cried Hsiang. "Well, you had better gradually give it up; lessen the amount you smoke daily by a few grains until you can do without it altogether." "Ah!" replied the opium smoker, "I have tried that plan, but in vain."

Chen advised the gradual discontinuance of the use of the drug, lest his friend, by suddenly leaving it off, should die in the attempt—a not at all improbable issue.

Chen encouraged his friend by reminding him that at that time he had no Almighty Saviour to help him, but that Jesus was mighty to save from every form of sin. Upon this it appeared to Hsiang that it was sin, and, argued he, if it be sin to smoke three drachms of opium, it could be no less sin to smoke two drachms and nine-tenths. He dared not go on sinning for a long time while trying to give it up. "If it be sin it must be given up at once, and at any cost," cried Hsiang.

They prayed about the matter, and Hsiang, on rising from his knees, with a strength given him from above, at once took his pen and paper and wrote the following: "In obedience to the will of God, I prohibit myself from this time forth from either smoking opium or entering an opium den, or in any wise having any connection with opium." The paper was signed and dated, and pasted up in the most conspicuous place in his shop, so that all who came in might know his determination. It is needless to say that Hsiang, like many another man known personally to the writer, had grace given him to break off the habit. As his days so was his strength (Deut. 33:25), and he is now one of the most zealous workers in the district; his children are Christians, and probably a happier father could not be found in that part of China.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that a work of conversion to God from idolatry and sin could continue to prosper without persecution. But the Christians remained faithful to Christ; and we are happy to know that many of those who most reviled them for destroying their idols and worshipping a strange God are now Christians themselves. They could not but acknowledge that the remarkable conduct of the worshippers of the true God under persecution had convinced them more than anything else of the truth and the value of Christian profession.

The mother of one of the Christians was a most bitter persecutor. She was an old woman, seventy-eight years of age, and did all in her power to annoy the followers of the new religion. One of her sons, an opium smoker, joined with her in persecution, but sudden death silenced this wicked son, and the old woman herself was not far from death. Much prayer had been made that she might be saved. All had been done that could be done to win her for Christ, but hitherto she held to her idols and refused to lessen her hatred of the truths concerning the gospel. At last the old woman could hold her own no longer, and, calling for the Christians, she professed her desire that Christ should save her. Doubtless the consistent lives of the Christians around her, and their emphatic teaching about sin and salvation through the merits of another, had been gradually undermining her faith in the power of Buddha, or any of her other idols, to pardon her sins. During all those long years she had been fondly clinging to the hope that she would escape hell and go to heaven on the score of her own good works in having regularly worshipped her idols, and, on special occasions, chanted prayers and praises to them. She now requested to have the idols and paper gods pulled down from the walls of her cottage and destroyed, feeling that they were of no further use to her or to anyone else. This was quickly done, and her Christian neighbors gladly pointed her clearly to the one great sacrifice for sin. She soon confessed her faith in Christ, and there was great rejoicing.

In a few days the old lady sent again for her Christian son and his wife, and the others, and asked them to pray that she might be speedily taken home; she felt that her end was near, and she longed to be at rest. Prayer was made for her, and the friends dispersed, the daughter-in-law only remaining in the house. Presently, at a moment when her daughter had gone out, the old lady got off her bed, and, by partly resting herself on a chair, which she pushed before her, she feebly

dragged herself outside the house, and prayed under the open heavens that God would call her home to heaven. She returned in the same way to the house, and laid herself upon the bed again; and when her daughter came in she found that her mother had passed away.

Every Christian followed the corpse to the grave rejoicing in the victory over Satan.

Here was a gracious end of seventy-eight years of heathen darkness and sin. A.G.P.

I Don't Believe It

ANTHONY H. had been faithful to his country during a long service in the Marines. He had been all over the world, and had fought in many engagements, out of which he had come unscathed. Anthony was at the time of our acquaintance with him a pensioner, and had occupation as a night watchman. He had several hours during the day to himself, and much of his time was spent in skittle-playing, and in drinking. He was so given over to the service of sin and Satan, that his wife, who herself was unconverted, became anxious as to what would become of him. If she could induce him to attend a religious meeting he might be reformed, she thought, and through her he was induced to attend some gospel services. There the Spirit of God convicted him of his state as a lost sinner, and so wrought upon him, that both skittles and drink lost their charms, and his sin-burdened conscience almost drove him to despair; he saw no hope for himself—one of the worst of sinners—and felt that everlasting doom must be his end.

There was a late sergeant in the Royal Artillery living near Anthony, John Lawson, and he had learned that there was no peace to be found out of Christ. Having passed through the dangers and temptations of a soldier's life, Lawson loved to labor amongst soldiers, and was the means in God's hands of leading many of them to the Lord. Hearing of Anthony's condition, he called on him, and sought to point him to the Saviour. Anthony could not read, so John read to him. The old marine listened intently as his friend read out these wonderful words, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Again Lawson read, "God so loved the world" and, looking at Anthony, said, "This includes you" "that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever" and that means you amongst the rest—you, Anthony H—"believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Anthony was fairly astonished; he raised his brawny hand above his head, and brought it down on the table before him, saying at the same time, "I don't believe it."

Without argument, Lawson read again, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever—and that means you—"believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," when again, with a loud voice, Anthony shouted, "I don't believe it," as his strong fist came down once more with a crash upon the table.

A third time the words were repeated, but they seemed incredible to the old marine, who had never heard the story of God's love, and he exclaimed, with more warmth than ever, "I don't believe it."

Lawson, who was wise to win souls, seemingly changed the subject, and said, "How long were you in the army?"

"Twenty-one years and fourteen days," was Anthony's prompt reply.

At this the sergeant lifted his fist, and, bringing it down on the table, said, "I don't believe it."

“Do you think I would tell you a lie?” returned Anthony, angrily. “It was twenty-one years and fourteen days.”

“I don’t believe it,” returned Lawson, dryly.

“Wife,” cried Anthony, “bring me the parchment.” Lawson took the discharge from her hand, quietly asking the old marine if he had ever read it, and if he believed it. Anthony replied that others had read it to him, and that he believed what he had heard.

“How is it that you expect me,” said Lawson, “to place confidence in the word of man, while you yourself refuse to believe the word of God?” and then again opening his Bible, he once more read the same golden text.

Anthony’s eyes and heart were now opened, and he joyfully exclaimed, “I see it all! I believe it! I believe it I thank God.”

From that hour the words he had heard filled his soul with joy during his night watches■he became very anxious to read them for himself, and, instead of sleeping in the day, he would lie on his back, and learn to spell out John 3:16. His wife bought him a spelling book, but he cast it aside, saying he would learn to read out of no book but the Bible, and John 3:16 should be his first lesson. He at once began to preach to his wife, who through God’s mercy received the blessed truth, and now their great joy is to read together, and to tell others of the reality of God’s love, as told in their precious verse.

Friend, you may have read it many times.

Do you believe it? W. T.

Deciding for Christ

YOUR article on “Decision” brought to mind some pages in my early history, and, for the sake of your young readers, I now record them.

They will show how skillfully the enemy presents his “morsels of meat” to the soul that has caught but a sight, as it were, of its birthright. My girlhood was spent without God. I had grown up to eighteen years of age or rather more, in utter carelessness about my soul, loving much the pleasures of the world, dress, company, and amusements. My father would, from time to time, enter a feeble protest against these things, and he sought to win us from them, by books and serials of an interesting and evangelical character; while my mother was more lenient to our follies.

About this time my father’s last illness came upon him. For six weeks he sat in his chair, night and day, unable to take a recumbent position, his heart being in a critical state. I took my turn in watching by him, but though I could see he needed comfort, I was unable to give it. Good men came to visit him, and read and prayed with him. I heard his confession of being a “sinner saved by grace,” with a touching reference to “the white-robed multitude” in Revelation 7, but I knew not what it meant.

One night I was awakened from my sleep by the nurse, who suddenly said, “Your father is dying; come directly.” I was in his room in a moment; others were there before me. My dear father was sitting in his chair by the fire-side, his head resting on his hand, his elbow on the table. One glance at his face told me all was over; the nurse threw a handkerchief over his head, and I sank on my knees by the bed-side. Then and there the way of salvation through the crucified One passed before my eyes; in the very presence of death I saw life for the first time. I heeded not, and knew not what was going on around me, until roused by kind hands, I was told to dress and go down stairs with my mother. The sudden bereavement that brought loud weeping from others, brought none from me, at least not for a time. I was in a new world; peace filled my heart and mind, and I longed to know more of the mysterious treasure I felt I possessed. This the great enemy of souls perceived, I have no doubt, and laid his bait accordingly. I was ignorant of his devices, ignorant of everything. I may be said never to have heard a gospel sermon in my life, and thought not of turning to the Word, or I might possibly have been preserved.

The solemnity of the death-scene came back, and with it a sense of my bereavement and then almost immediately the orders for mourning and the funeral. I have ever since regarded the costumes and the parade common to these occasions as an especial wile of the devil to turn aside the soul from solemn thoughts, under the plea of proper respect for the dead. My old tastes revived in planning deep and handsome mourning, and many hours were spent in this way, while my sweet peace was leaking away, and I knew it not.

The funeral over, I awoke as from a dream. A voice within, gentle at first, then louder, seemed to say, “What have you lost?” Yes, I felt I had lost something. What was it? I could not say, but my conscience was guilty, and I went into the world to drown its voice; but this would not do. Then my

health gave way. I remember waking one night with the feeling that I was dropping into hell. It was forced upon me that I had surrendered Christ for the things of the world, for less than a mess of pottage to a fainting man—for dress, for vanity. I could well understand the dying lament of another, “I know where I missed it”; and this would also have been my lament for an eternity of darkness, but for His unspeakable love. “To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against Him.”

The faithful Shepherd rested not until He had brought His wandering sheep back to Himself, but it was a long and dreary way. I will retrace some of the steps in this path, and the reader will see how patiently the Saviour sought me.

I went sometimes to see a lady in the next village, who was very ill. I made the taking of some little delicacies for her the pretext for my visits, but my real object was to find out the secret of her peace, for she was spoken of as a Christian, ready to die, and willing to leave her husband and young family. I often studied her peaceful countenance, and the uniform gentleness of her manner. I saw she had what I had not. I longed and yet feared for her to speak to me: she passed away without doing so, as far as I can remember.

It was announced that her funeral sermon would be preached by the clergyman who had visited her, from words of her own choosing, because “she had proved them.” I went to hear, thinking I might get some clue as to recovering peace, my lost peace. I seated myself where I could see and hear to advantage. The text was “In the multitude of my thoughts within me Thy comforts delight my soul.” (Psa. 94:19.) The preacher began by saying that people in general neglected salvation, and I was convicted at once. I hung my head, regretting my prominent position, for I felt as if everybody looked at me, and knew what was passing within. Of course this was merely my guilty conscience, but I heard, or at least remembered, no more of the sermon.

Soon after this, change of air was considered desirable for my health, and I went on a visit to some friends at a distance, among a number of young people all gay and worldly. A year before this would have suited my tastes exactly, but now, I scarce knew why, all seemed empty and hollow, yet I affected enjoyment; the fact was, I was “in distress, discontented and in debt,” and I knew it, but knew not my Deliverer. One day a gentleman came to the house, and, strange to say, he spoke of Christ. I listened intently, and to my horror found he spoke of Him as man only; absolutely and boldly denied He was anything more. The blood rushed to my forehead; my heart had received a blow; but I had not a word to say; not a single scripture could I remember, and to my shame and sorrow he had it all his own way.

On speaking of it afterward to my friends, they said, “Oh, he is a Socinian—it is all a matter of opinion.” But it was not so to me; I felt if Jesus were not God, I must die in my sins. This showed the reality of the divine touch, the hand that had been laid on my shoulder, so to speak; but in the strong language of Scripture, I had “pulled away the shoulder, hardened my heart, and stiffened my neck.” Had the righteous God shut me up in unbelief, should I not have been like Bunyan’s man in the iron cage? I made up my mind to read the Bible, but I had not one with me, not even a Testament, and Bibles were not fashionable in the house, save on Sundays, and then only at church.

The time came for my return home, where I resolved to read the Bible. I could not say my Bible, for I had not one. As if the enemy knew and would defeat my purpose, one of my young friends offered to lend me Shakespeare's works in several volumes; these I gladly accepted. I knew Milton and some other poets well, having taste and leisure for reading; but Shakespeare was new to me, save in detached pieces. I soon began to read with avidity, and was charmed, delighted; still I did not forget the pledge I had made to myself. I read the Scriptures. "Isaiah's wild measure and John's simple page," engaged my attention, I may say admiration, yet "Jehovah Tsidkenu was nothing to me." The word of God at first but entranced and captivated my imagination. I well remember, though so many years have passed, a bright Sunday afternoon, in the height of summer, when I read for the first time in my life, 2 Cor. 5:18,19: "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ... God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." A light, brighter than the sun, seemed to shine upon the page; I was amazed.

God, the God I had feared, coming out of His place, reconciling, not imputing trespasses, beseeching sinners to be reconciled to Himself! My inmost soul bowed before Him. I said "Abba, Father," with a lightened heart, and called Jesus my Saviour. I had accepted the reconciliation, and all was peace.

Soon after this, the Lord, in His tender care, led me for awhile under the ministry of one of His most valued servants, where my heart became established in grace. I then parted company with my former companions. I no more suited them than they me. "God divided the light from the darkness." I became a Sunday-school teacher— an employment not so popular then as now; I read the Scriptures frequently among the poor, in felt ignorance indeed. When visiting the place, a few years after, I was surprised to find how God had blessed His word by my stammering tongue.

Now, I would say to my young friends in the words of another, "Next to losing your soul, fear losing your convictions." I would warn and entreat of you, by all that is blessed in time and eternity, to withstand the first temptation that would occupy the heart to the exclusion of Christ. Be firm, be simple, be prayerful, so shall you prevail.

"His word a light before us spreads,

By which our path we see;

His love, a banner o'er our heads,

From harm preserves us free."

K. G.

An Old Convict

SHE was one whom many dreaded, and from whom all shrank. She had put in her twice seven years of penal servitude, and it was pretty well known that she had deserved each sentence. An "old jail bird," some called her; no one would trust her, but yet she trusted her neighbors.

She kept a little shop, down a few steps, in a poor street in a northern city; and when a woman was badly off she could get bread there, and the half-starved children of the neighborhood often got an apple or a broken biscuit, and always a kind word, when they dared to go to her shop.

Girls, who had been in prison, found a friendship worth seeking in the ex-convict when their time was out; but some of the neighbors wondered if it were real kindness that the woman showed to them, or if she were still connected with thieves.

One night a man was murdered, and a message had to be carried to the wife of the imprisoned murderer. She was one of the first to offer to go, for the poor woman was weakly just then, and all had grave fears for her. When the trial came on, and the murderer was condemned, this outcast was there to comfort the unhappy wife. She nursed the woman's babe for three months, and when it died, her tears fell thick and fast, and she was chief mourner at the funeral.

"Surely, wretched and outcast as she is, this woman is not to be dreaded, and feared, and shrunk from?" so thought a Christian, one night, as she passed the old convict's door, on her way to a preaching. The good Lord put it into her heart to knock, and ask if she would not go with her to the service. The request was doubtless unexpected, but not unwelcome, for the old convict said, "Yes, I'll go," and she went, holding the arm and guiding the almost blind old woman who had invited her.

When they reached the room, where the service was held, they were late, and a hymn was being sung■

"We know there's a bright and a glorious home,

Away in the heavens high,

Where all the redeemed shall with Jesus dwell■

But will you be there and I?"

Years and years had passed since the old convict had given up all thoughts of ever being in the glorious home; it was no place for such as she had been. Jail birds, she fancied, could expect nothing but another long imprisonment■ how long she knew not. When she had heard her first sentence, she had swooned away■ her second sentence had made her shriek with horror■ and sometimes the fear of hearing a sentence to everlasting punishment made her blood run cold. But what could she do now? her life had been lived, and such a life! She would not wish her greatest enemy to live through what she had experienced!

The chorus of the hymn, with its oft repeated question, "Will you be there?" got a firm hold of the unmusical ear, and the question reached a heart long dead to such thoughts.

A gospel address followed, and the oh convict went home with one thought filling her heart— the great possibility of even such an one as she was being among Christ's redeemed, and sharing that home in glory. She knew all avoided and hated her; but now, could it be possible that God loves her—that Jesus had died for her?

Days and nights of mingled hopes and fears followed. She could not tell anyone what was passing in her mind: she hesitated to tell to anyone what her life had been. To whom could she go—she who had never found a friend on earth to sympathize with her? She felt increasingly that she was shut up to God, but she dared not approach Him. The sense of her guilt increased, as she thought of His holiness and righteousness; glimpses of His love came now and then as she remembered the meeting, and as she thought on the cross of Christ.

At last her burden became too heavy, and, with a broken heart, she threw herself, with all her sin at the feet of the Lord Jesus, to find, to her surprise, that He was both able and willing to save and bless her.

Full of joy and thankfulness, she felt she could not keep silent: she had found life and peace in Jesus, and tell it to someone she must. She again sought the room, where she had first heard of the love of Christ, and, taking the hands of the preacher, she told out what the Lord had done for her, and, referring to herself and her past life, she said "He took me from a fearful pit."

Years have passed, and in the good, gentle old Christian, ready for any act of kindness and love, one has almost ceased to see, even for a moment, the old convict; nor in the companion who sits beside her, saved mainly by her instrumentality, does one see the murderer's wife; for

"From every station of life they come,
To raise the anthem high,
Of 'Worthy the Lamb that once was slain!'
But will you be there and I?"

J. S.

God's Wonderful Ways With Man. The Third Age: Promise

AFTER the flood God gave promises to men, and made covenants. We remember that the first declaration of the final overthrow of Satan was announced to the serpent, and not to man; but on his going forth out of the ark Noah built his altar unto the Lord, and the sweet savor of the sacrifice arose to Him, and He said in His heart, He would not again curse the ground for man's sake. And after that, God blessed Noah and his sons, and established His covenant with them and with the creatures of the earth, to the effect that there should be no more a flood upon the earth to destroy it. The sign of this covenant between God and His creation was His bow in the cloud. It spans the heavens, and rests upon both sea and land; daily is this lovely token before our eyes, and when the storms of heaven roll darkly up over the earth the bow shines across their darkness. Man may forget its meaning, or be blind to its witness, but God never forgets, for He has said "the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth."

When God brings His storm-clouds up, and they darken the earth, He displays the varied beauties of His light upon the cloud. The rainbow is light divided, and we see the beauties of the colors that compose light nowhere more typically than in God's bow. And thus does God display the perfections of His mercies, even when His judgments are abroad upon the earth; surely at such seasons we may ever say, His bow is in the cloud. For 4,000 years and more has the promise spanned the storm, and however heavy have been the divine judgments upon this earth, however terrible the thunders and the lightnings of God's anger, hope has been inscribed upon the darkest cloud. And when the prophet saw the throne of God in heaven with lightning and thunders proceeding from it, with judgments issuing therefrom, to be poured out upon this rebellious earth, he saw, too, the token of mercy circling the throne, "there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald." (Rev. 4:3.) God's purpose must stand; the blessing of the earth is sure, and though it will come after judgment, we lift up our eyes, and lo! "the bow is in the cloud."

Man's early ways after the judgment of the flood, like his ways in these latter days, have one word stamped upon them— combination! They journeyed west till they came to the Plain of Shinar, where, with one consent, they erected their city and their tower, with the view of keeping the human race together. This was the greatest scheme for reaching to strength and power that the world has known. After Babel came great kingdoms, and great efforts to subdue all peoples to one crown; but in those days all the people themselves were united to hold themselves together by their city and their tower. Then the Lord came down, and looked upon these works, and He said, "Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do"! So He confounded their language, and scattered man over the face of the earth.

For a short season at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit of God, who came down to earth upon the ascension of Christ, gave power over divided tongues, and He has made all believers one in Christ, and in the glory.

There shall be but one language, and one city for all saints, but the glory thereof shall not be human greatness, but that of God and the Lamb.

So far as it is possible, men will combine and confederate in the latter days; great powers will become greater by their absorbing smaller, and the peoples of the earth will unite together, but even when Antichrist shall have his rule upon the earth, and spiritual Babylon shall arise in its power, there will exist opposition and conflict between men; for in God's ways with man man's purposes must eventually lead to confusion and to scattering, even as they have done since the time when with brick and slime men built their city, which, by God's action, received the name of Babel— Confusion.

After the scattering of men and the division of their interest, the sacred story lead: us to perceive man retrograded from God— spiritually, still journeying from the light from the east! How the world became idolatrous we are not told, but there is ever only a short step between man's glorifying himself and his servitude to the devil. Man gloried in himself and built Babel, and he betook himself to the worship of demons—put himself under their awful power. Idolatry has prevailed over the greater part of the earth for nearly 4000 years, and the living and the true God is in most parts unknown; and the tendency of the mind of man is to relapse into demon worship, even where the truth of God has been once known.

It was when men were sinking under the degrading influence of idolatry that the Lord called Abraham to get him out of country, kindred, and his father's house to a country that God would show him, and He promised Abraham that He would make of him a great nation, and bless him and make him a blessing; and that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed. Now all out of the various families or nations of the earth who believe are made one in Christ, and in the day to come, through Christ, the families themselves shall all be blessed by a covenant-keeping God. For the present, God allows man to develop his own purposes.

In the ways of God, an entirely different character of His dealing with man from that which was His pleasure before the flood, is apparent. A man is called out from the rest of the world by God to Himself, and the path marked out is to trust God concerning His promise of an inheritance of future blessing. The rest of the world is left in its idolatry. One special locality, the land of Canaan, on the earth becomes in a peculiar way God's care, the rest of the earth is left under the covenant of the bow in the cloud. The offspring of the man of faith, and the promised land became henceforth for hundreds of years the solicitude of God.

The lives of the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the descent of their children into Egypt, fill up the greater part of the first book of God's word. What the kingdoms and dominions of the earth in those days were, are touched on incidentally, that is in so far as they may relate to God's chosen people.

God shows us that His mind is set upon His covenant with Abraham and His promise respecting the land of Canaan, and there His ways are marked and clear up to the advent of His Son upon the earth.

Eternity!

ETERNITY is beyond our finite minds to comprehend; we fail in our endeavor to realize it. Ever and ever■what a thought! but it is true, and substantial, and cannot be denied. Perpetually will the immortal spirit live. Think, think for one moment, and see if futurity does not concern you, if the salvation of your soul does not concern you! Eternity, eternity! May one and all through the merits of Christ and belief in Him, do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God, and finally inherit the realms of heaven for evermore! T. H.

How a Little Boy Found Salvation

W. was a bright little fellow of eight, living at the time when my story begins, in a large seaside town. His great delight was to go down to the beach with his nurse, and dig in the sand or throw stones into the sea. Sometimes his father would take him out for a row, and this he greatly enjoyed.

Now, although W. was quite a little boy, he was old enough to know that he had done a great deal that was wrong. Often would he lie awake at night in terror. He feared that he might die, and knew that only those whom God had cleansed might go to heaven. So anxious was he to have his sins forgiven that every night he used to repeat over and over again very earnestly, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

One evening his cousin took him on her knee and asked him if he was one of God's little lambs. But W. could only hang his head and answer, "No." That night he was more frightened than ever. He felt sure that he should die, and knew that he was not saved. The next day was Sunday, and W. went to church with his parents.

Suddenly, as he was coming home, he felt that his sins were forgiven. He could believe that Jesus had died even for him. Oh, what joy was his! With difficulty he restrained himself from calling out, and it was only shyness that prevented him from telling his parents what had happened. But as soon as home was reached he exclaimed to his nurse, "You know that happy feeling that comes over you when your sins are forgiven; well, I feel that now." Yes, W. was saved, and when he knelt by his bed that night, he could no longer ask God to wash him "whiter than snow," as he had already praised Him for so doing. But he could ask for help in his new life, and this he did. Years have gone by since that eventful Sunday and W. is no longer a little fellow, but he can never forget the joy of that day, the happiest in his life.

Little readers, do you know that your sins are forgiven, or are you, as was W., afraid to die? If so, remember what God has said in His word, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:36.)

T. C.

Little Beattie

PROBABLY very few of you, my young readers, have seen the famous Falls of Niagara, though most have heard of them. If you open your atlas at the map of North America, you will see “Niagara” marked near two of the five large lakes— Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. These waterfalls are indeed grand and wonderful. They are justly called the “thunder of waters,” for their sound is so great that they can be heard at the distance of many miles.

I want to tell you about a dear little boy, who lived very near these beautiful falls, known to a friend of mine, who spent some years in North America.

My friend used often to visit the infant school at Niagara, where about sixty or seventy little boys and girls were assembled daily. Some of these children were very unruly and disobedient, but there was one■ a little fellow of eight years old■who was always a marked contrast to the others, by his attention to what was being taught. His name was Beattie. Sometimes my friend gave the children a short and simple address, speaking to them in easy words, and trying to get them to listen to the “sweet story of old”■the love of God to this world in giving His Son to die for sinners; and, while SOME of the scholars “cared for none of these things,” little Beattie always sat with his large eyes fixed on the speaker, and a lovely expression on his face, as he that blessed One who died on the cross and rose again. Little Beattie really loved the Bible and it was a pleasure to him to learn verse! correctly, or to search for answers to the questions put by his teacher.

Dear child! it was God’s will that he should suffer pain. God was his Father■his loving, gracious Father, but He saw fit to make this little one pass through affliction. Those large and beautiful eyes of little Beattie’s, that had looked wonderingly on the mighty waterfall, and that had often read the Bible, were struck by a disease which soon deprived them of sight, and the dear little fellow became blind.

It was after this that the brightness of his character and the depth of his faith grew rapidly, affording another proof that “Out of the mouth of babes and suckling’s Thou hast perfected praise.” (Matt. 21:16.) Not only was he blind, but very ill, and it became plain, to all who saw him, that he would not live in this world much longer. Often when his father and mother sat in his room, he would make great efforts not to show the pain from which he was suffering, because he feared to distress their tender hearts, for his own heart was so loving that he could not bear to afflict them. “Do not cry, dear mammy,” he would say; “do not fret. Be happy. I am quite happy. I am going to my heavenly home, going to be with Jesus, and I don’t want you to fret about me. You must be happy, for I shall be so happy there.”

One day, shortly before little Beattie’s death, he heard his brother John quarreling with another brother. Now he loved John tenderly, and he knew that his love was returned, so he called him to his bedside, made him feel how much his conduct had grieved him, and told him that as he was considerably older than the other boy, he ought to set him a good example. Then he begged John to come to the Lord Jesus for the pardon of all his sins, and entreated him to become a follower of

Christ. My friend said he believed that John never forgot that lesson, and the gentle, pleading voice of his dear little dying brother; and there is reason to hope that he has since really come to Christ, and found Him as willing to receive him as He was to make little Beattie His own.

Little Beattie's sense of hearing became most acute as he lay on his sick-bed. He knew, by the step, all who came to the house before he heard their voices, and for everyone who spoke to him, he always had a sweet and loving word in reply. There was no fretfulness, no murmuring; but a constant sense of the Lord's presence with him, made him so full of joy that he seldom said a word about his pain and suffering, talking only of the love of God, and of the bright home to which he was going. My friend told me that he thought the sick chamber of that precious boy was, through God's mercy, as the very gate of heaven to more than one poor sinner. There they learned something of what the love of God is, and that He can give joy and peace in believing to the youngest as well as to the oldest of those who trust in Him.

At last, the dear little boy was released from all suffering. While those who loved him were watching by his bed, he gently passed away, and "absent from the body," was "present with the Lord." He is now with Him who made the waterfall, with Him who made earth, sea, and sky, with Him who loved him, and gave Himself for him. Far, far better is it now for little Beattie; and when you look again at your map of North America think of this dear child, and of his sweet and simple trust in Christ, and may you, like him, find your joy and delight in the love of God and in the finished work of Christ. H. L. T.

The Experiences of a Missionary in China.

5. A Visit to Native Christians

IT was my privilege, a short time before returning to England in the autumn of 1884, to pay a visit to the native Christians, of whom we were speaking in our last number. Our party consisted of a fellow-missionary and two native brethren, one of whom was Chen, the ex-soldier. When within sight of our destination Chen left us, in order to carry the news of our arrival, while the rest continued the journey. Just before arriving we were met by Hsiang, the doctor, who had made preparations to entertain us. After a few hours' pleasant chat with our host and some of his neighbors, Chen made his appearance, bringing with him about twenty men from the Christian hamlet of Ku-cheng, ■for such I must call it■to welcome us in their midst.

Chen, like a leader, marched his men into the yard, and then into the "reception hall"■a room set apart in every gentleman's house specially for the reception of visitors. He arranged them in a semi-circle around us, and then at a given signal they all made the usual salutation by bowing half-way down to the ground, we at the same time observing the same custom. Then all were invited to sit down: tea was brought in and presented to each man, and the conversation commenced.

One tall, old gentleman was very quiet, and remained most of the time with his eyes closed and his hands clasped raised nearly to his chin, as if in prayer. He was Hs■■ the chief or leading man of his clan■ of whose conversion we will speak presently.

In the afternoon we commenced the work of examination of twenty-six candidates for baptism. This pleasant duty lasted till late in the evening. It was particularly pleasing to notice how heartily these simple village people believed the gospel. It was a practical experience with them. They knew what they believed, and gave good reasons for believing what they did believe. They knew well what they had been before the glad tidings of salvation reached them, and they had now for themselves proved the power of the gospel in their own hearts. Their intelligence concerning the practical truths of the Gospel and faith in the presence of a personal Saviour was highly gratifying, and would serve as an example to many a young convert in the home countries.

On the Monday morning we called the little church together under a mulberry tree. Nineteen of the candidates for baptism had been accounted in our judgment satisfactory; of the others some did not seem sufficiently clear as to their conversion, and these were asked to stand over for the time. There were some women among the nineteen, one, an old lady of seventy-two years of age, the mother of Hsiang the family. Two of her sons were among the Christians, and some of her grandchildren.

A small mountain stream runs not far from these cottages, and thither we proceeded in a body to baptize the new believers. What we were about to do had been noised abroad. Several people from the neighboring farmhouses had come to witness the proceedings. The spectators stood at a respectful distance on one side of the brook, whilst we took possession of a spot on the other■a sort of natural platform, made, as it might appear, specially for the occasion. It was a lovely

day■the sun was shining brightly and the temperature probably ninety degrees in the shade. My brother missionary and I, by wearing large straw hats, such as are seen only in China, were well protected from the sun's rays, and there, with the birds sweetly singing around us, and a bright blue sky above our heads, we all knelt down, and several engaged in prayer, and offered praises to the one true and living God■the God of all the earth. We then led the old lady of seventy-two down into the water, and, with great joy, baptized her in the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The others followed in succession.

During all this time the native Christians were singing the Doxology, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow," and in a most extraordinary manner. They had never been taught to sing., and no two sang the same note together; indeed some were singing the second line when others were busy with the third, and others were finishing the fourth, whilst the quicker ones had begun again. But the words came from the heart, and each was making true melody in his heart to the Lord; and who shall say that it was not highly pleasing to Him whose Name they were so heartily praising?

The personal history of each one of those baptized would doubtless prove interesting to most of our readers, and, if space permitted, might be given with profit. The account of the conversion of Hsu is particularly interesting, and must not be omitted.

Hs■ Kung-yin (Dignity being the surname, and Confucian Correctness, what we should call the Christian name) was a well-to-do man whose home was situated two hundred miles south of Ku-cheng. However, he owned most of the farms and cottages tenanted by the Christians at Ku-cheng. He was the chief man of his clan, numbering some 10,000 people, and upon him devolved the duty of officiating at the yearly sacrifices in the ancestral hall on behalf of himself and the family he represented. When he learned that some of his tenants and relatives in Ku-cheng were departing from the religion of their fathers and serving what to him was a strange God■the God of the Western Barbarians— he became most indignant, and threatened, that unless they at once gave up this new religion he would turn them all out of his farms and cottages. Forthwith he persecuted them in every possible way. Chen, the soldier, was a relative of "Dignity," and because he refused to give up Christ and go back to Confucius he was deprived of a good deal of his property.

The old chief determined to enforce his threat, and when he again came round to collect his rents, the Christians were a little concerned to know how things would go with them. One thing, however, they saw clearly: they had found it commanded in the New Testament that they should love their enemies and pray for those who persecuted them. (Matt. 5:44.) They, therefore, prayed that their landlord might repent and believe the gospel. Having talked the matter over among themselves, they resolved to challenge "Dignity" to compare the writings of the New Testament with the writings of Confucius, and to judge honestly between the two before so strongly renouncing Christianity. They asked, "What are your reasons for objecting to the gospel? Have you examined the teaching of Jesus? You cling to Confucius. What does he teach of God, of life, or of the way of salvation? Come and make comparison."

Hs■ accepted the challenge, replying, "Very well; bring forth your New Testament, and I will bring, my classics. Let us compare them. I will soon show you your errors."

A meeting was arranged, and “Dignity of Confucian Correctness” brought with him his brother “Dignity Possessing Joy,” and as both the men were Chinese scholars, and could quote the writings of Confucius by the chapter, they had no doubt of being able very quickly to discomfit the humble cottagers, few of whom could be considered in any way learned in the classics. However, these simple men were far beyond Confucian learning, for they could give a good reason for the hope that was in them (1 Peter 3:15.), and knew with certainty the reality of the great hereafter, which to Confucius was a matter far beyond himself. For, on being asked by one of his disciples on one occasion what he had to teach about the life to come, he replied, “Since we knew too little about the mysteries of this present life, how can we possibly know anything of the future?”

The Christians brought their New Testament, and the inquiry commenced. One of the first things which the chief did not fail to notice was, that the Christians knew their book well, and were able to find statements in it to support every proposition they brought forward, and, at the same time, they were able from their book to confute his own line of things, that men's hearts are naturally good, and that so long as they obey the teaching of Confucius, honor their parents, and seek “not to do to others what you would not have others do to you,” they had no sin, and would, in virtue of their being Confucians, find future happiness.

The wealthy and learned Dignity soon began to find it less easy to show the Christians their errors than he had anticipated, and, before night came on, he confessed before them all, that he could see that the morality of the New Testament was superior to the morality of Confucius, and, added he, “I desire to be a Christian.”

He retired to search the Scriptures for himself, and the next day was found joining himself with those whom he had so recently persecuted, and became an earnest enquirer and a diligent student of the word of God.

Dignity's brother was not at all ready to give up his long cherished devotion to Confucian teaching, and he loudly protested against the conduct of his brother, and declared that he never would become a Christian.

Honest convictions, such as had changed the mind of his brother, had no weight with him. However, God can work as He pleases, and “Dignity Possessing Joy” dreamed a dream. The God of the Christians spoke to him, and told him that the Christians were right. Accordingly, the next morning he went to the Christians, and, relating to them his dream, requested to be taught the way of salvation.

These things were to the Christians a source of great joy. Prayer had been heard, and he who formerly had persecuted them now sought to further the cause of Christ. For some time past the brethren had been needing a building in which to meet. Every house in the village was too small to contain them, and he no sooner ascertained this fact than he gave them a piece of land, and built them a hall upon it— a building in keeping with the mud and reed cottages in the village.

I have said that Hs■ lived two hundred miles from Ku-cheng Tsih, and whilst he may have found it easy enough to confess Christ among his Christian tenants, it was a very different thing in his native place where everybody knew him and knew nothing whatever of Christianity, for they had not so much as heard the name of Christ. His friends accounted him mad; members of his own family refused even to speak to him, and at one time so severely was he persecuted that it was not

safe for him to leave his house. But he remained faithful to Christ, and soon had the joy of seeing his eldest son brought under the power of the gospel. His son was his first convert One who has since lived some time with this noble old man writes, "He has wonderfully grown in grace, and his daily walk and conversation are most exemplary. His earnest desire is the salvation of his family, and already (a year after his conversion) there are six enquirers— relatives and neighbors— several of whom give good evidence of a work of grace having begun in their hearts."

A. G. P.

5. From Malachi to Matthew

FOUR years after the accession of Antiochus (B.C. 172) Jason sent his brother Onias (not the former high priest) to Antioch to pay his tribute money to the king. And now he reaped what he had sown. Obtaining the priesthood by treachery and bribery, the same instruments were used to depose him. His faithless brother first of all flattered the king, and then offered three hundred talents more than Jason for the pontificate. His offer was accepted, and he returned to Jerusalem with the king's commission. The very powerful family, "the sons of Tobias," espoused his cause, but it met with a check from the Jason party, and the schemers were compelled to retire to Antioch. Here they promised the king that they would no longer observe their own laws, but would adopt the king's religion, and the worship of the Greeks. It was the promise of apostasy, pure and simple. It gained the king, and, strengthened by his support, they returned to Jerusalem, and Jason fled. Onias followed his brother's example, and adopted a Greek name—"Menelaus." Menelaus was rather lax in the payment of his tribute, and being called to account, he laid hands upon the golden vessels of the Temple, and sold them at Tyre and elsewhere. Onias, the ex-high priest, sternly reproved his successor, who, "having the fury of a cruel tyrant, and the rage of a savage beast," procured the murder of the faithful old man by treachery. The foul deed caused a great outcry; even the callous heart of Antiochus was touched by it, and he caused Andronicus, Menelaus's instrument, to be put to death, but the real author of the crime escaped.

Menelaus increased in his wickedness; he laid ruthless hands upon the holy vessels, and, at last, the common people rose against him, but were met by a body of three thousand men, who, however, were routed, and Lysimachus, his brother and lieutenant, was killed. Menelaus, too, was accused at Tyre before the king by a delegation from the Sanhedrin, but his money was more convincing than the arguments of his arraigners. Antiochus acquitted the high priest, and condemned his accusers to death—so manifest a wrong, that the Tyrians gave them honorable burial.

About B.C.171, Antiochus invaded Egypt, and while there the rumor spread that he had died. It was joyfully believed in Jerusalem. Jason, the deposed priest, seized what he conceived to be a favorable opportunity, and with a thousand men made an attack upon the city, carried the walls, and slew his opponents without mercy. Menelaus at first fled to the castle, but ultimately got the upper hand, and Jason retreated, perishing at last in a strange land, detested by all.

Meanwhile tidings of the affair, magnified into a revolt, reached the king, together with information as to the joyful reception of the news of his death. Greatly enraged, he came like a hurricane upon the land. Taking Jerusalem by force of arms, he dealt death and destruction on every side, no less than 40,000 persons perishing in three days, while as many more were seized as captives. He went into the holy place, polluting it by his presence, Menelaus, the high priest, being his guide. He seized the golden candlestick, the table, the censer of gold, the vial, and other treasures. Nor was that all; he erected an idol-altar upon the holy altar of burnt offering, caused a great sow to be sacrificed thereon, and with a broth made of part of its flesh, he sprinkled all the Temple.

Defilement could not further go. Then departing, he left in command one Philip, a Phrygian, a cruel man; but, worse still, Menelaus held his office.

In 169, Antiochus made another expedition to Egypt. His arms were very successful, but his triumphal progress was checked by a Roman embassy, which met him at Leusine, four miles from Alexandria. The delegates were charged with the message, first to Antiochus, and then to Ptolemy, that it was the desire of the Roman Senate that the two warring powers should cease their strife, and that that one who refused should no longer be considered the friend and ally of the Roman people. The decree of the Senate was handed to Antiochus, who said he would consult his friends about it, but one of the ambassadors, Popilius, drawing a circle in the sand round Antiochus, demanded that he should give his answer before quitting that circle. Startled and alarmed by this peremptory demand, Antiochus gave way, and withdrew from Egypt, intending to pour out his wrath upon the unoffending Jewish people.

Two years had passed since Antiochus took Jerusalem, and he now sent Apollonius, the chief collector of his tribute, with an army of 22,000 men, to destroy the Holy City. They came, pretending peace, and on the Sabbath day fell upon the people. Men were slain, women and children were taken captive, houses and walls were pulled down, the city was set on fire. A fort was built in the City of David, from which the soldiers could harass the people. Jerusalem had indeed happened upon evil days. "Her sanctuary was laid waste like a wilderness; her feasts were turned into mourning, her Sabbaths into reproach, her honor into contempt."

But this was not the full measure of Judç'a's woes. Antiochus passed an Act of Uniformity, compelling, on pain of death, all nations within his dominions to worship his gods and his alone. This was evidently directed against the Jews. To enforce his decree in Judea, he sent thither an old man, Athençus, who was charged to pollute the Temple, to re-consecrate it to Jupiter Olympius, to forbid the ritual and offerings, to set up altars and groves, to sacrifice swine's flesh and unclean beasts, to prohibit the circumcision of children, and to put to death all who disobeyed the king's commandment. Most rigorously did he carry out this abominable decree. Many of the Jews, weakened by the inroads of Grecianism, at once gave way, but for those who remained faithful the days were dark and evil. All that a godly Jew prized appeared to be lost—Temple, priesthood and sacrifices. In the Temple, instead of the chant of psalm and song of praise, were heard the orgies of vile men and women. Incense was burnt in the streets, idol altars bestrewed the land, the scriptures were mutilated and burnt, and the owners put to death. The Jews were compelled to eat of the unclean sacrifices, and to carry ivy in honor of the god Bacchus. Women who dared to circumcise their children were brought forth, made to openly parade the city with their babes at their breasts, and then were cast headlong from the city walls, Others who secretly attempted to keep the Sabbath were burnt. The story is preserved of an aged Scribe, Eleazar, who suffered torments before his death rather than eat swine's flesh; seven sons of one mother were taken, and by every possible means it was attempted to make these cast off faith and conscience; one was seized, his tongue cut out, and he was fried alive; the second was skinned, and so on with the rest, the survivors up to the seventh being made spectators of the torments of those who died before them, the mother being witness of all. The king addressed himself to the youngest son, assuring him with oaths that he would give him riches and happiness, and would make him his friend, if he would but turn from the laws of his forefathers. The mother turned to her son, "O my son, have pity on me.... Fear not this tormentor, but being worthy of thy brethren, take thy death,

that I may receive thee again in mercy with thy brethren!" The son made a spirited reply to the king, and was slain. "They were whipped with rods," says Josephus, speaking of the martyrs of that day, "and their bodies were torn to pieces, and were crucified while they were still alive and breathed." "They were tortured," says the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, speaking, we doubt not, of the same sufferers, "not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection." They were "destitute, afflicted, tormented."

Had God cast off His people? Were His mercies clean gone forever? Was there no residue of the faithful left? Were all either apostates from, or martyrs for, their faith? No wonder if such questions troubled the minds of those who still maintained their integrity. Yet neither had God forsaken them, nor had He left Himself without those who had not bowed the knee to Jupiter.

Above the water-floods still did Jehovah sit, a King forever. And, humanly speaking, nothing but such a persecution could have purified and preserved the faith once committed to the Jews. That faith was being sadly corrupted with heathen dross; the fires of persecution, kindled for the purpose of consuming, proved to be a refiner's fire; the dross was purged, and the precious ore was left brighter than it had been for years. That time of tribulation ended in a religious revival, the effects of which lasted till the coming of Christ.

But not only so, a patriotic spirit was infused into the minds of those who had for so long a time been subject to the nations: the blow was struck, and independence and liberty were once more the portion of Israel. At the time of the king's decree, there dwelt at Modin (a place now unidentified), a pious Jew of the priestly line, Mattathias, a descendant of Asmonçus (from whom the family were called Asmonçans), of the course of Joarib. He had five sons, Johanan Caddis, Simon Thassi, Judas Maccabeus, Eleazar Avaran, and Jonathan Apphus. With true piety, Mattathias and his sons bewailed the evil days which had fallen upon Judah. To Modin came Apelles, the king's commissioner, charged with carrying out the obnoxious decree of uniformity, and addressing Mattathias, he called upon him as a ruler' and an honorable and great man in the city, to submit to the king's commandment, so should he be numbered among the king's friends, and be greatly rewarded. Right bravely did the faithful priest reply that though all the nation should fall sway, yet would not he nor his sons. "God forbid that we should forsake the law and; he ordinances; we will not hearken to the king's words, to go from our religion, either on the right hand or the left." As he eased, a recreant Jew stepped forward to sacrifice upon the idolatrous altar. With the zeal of Phineas, Mattathias turned upon him and slew him, then dispatched Apelles, and pulled down the altar. It was the signal for revolt. "Whoever is zealous for the law, let him follow me," cried Mattathias. Jr.

The Wonderful Dealings of the Lord

IN the month of March, 1866, suffering severely in body, and with baffled and disappointed hopes, I returned to the Island of Kitts, my birthplace, after an absence of a little over four years, spent faraway from the restraining influences of home. An incident in connection with my return to the island ■ hardened in heart though I was ■ struck me at the time as strange and inexplicable.

Rejecting the advice to return home, given me by some among whom I had been, I obtained at Barbados a passage in a mail steamer to a distant and, personally, unknown land. Thus was I borne swiftly along to, seemingly, another series of miserable and humiliating experiences. The steamer only stopped long enough at the various island-ports on the route to land the mails. As the time drew near when the island, so well known to me, would be reached, I became unaccountably unsettled in mind. So incessant and overwhelming were my sensations, that, when we arrived at the roadstead during the night, and the mail bags were being passed over the side for conveyance ashore, I, timidly, and with pain, valise in hand, made my way to the boat along with some others, and, before quite realizing what I had almost involuntarily done, was set down on my native shore.

The remainder of the year was spent, for the most part, in solitude. To have come back at all in such a disastrous plight was galling to my proud spirit, and I would seldom be seen by anyone. The quiet and the good sustenance, so requisite in my enfeebled state, was once more, under my kind father's roof, partaken of, without a thought of the mercy of God, who was seeking to draw my heart from the pursuit of the delusive objects of this world to Himself.

Among the very few acquaintances, whom I saw at times, was Frederick T., a young fellow about my own age, living in the neighborhood. We had known each other in childhood, but for some time before I went abroad, intercourse had almost ceased between us. Evening talks with Frederick T. (who seemed quite ready to renew the intimacy of early days) soon revealed to me that I not only had in him a companion in "blighted hopes," as I called it, but one whose physical condition was distressing beyond comparison. A ruthless disease was slowly wasting his life away; and my loud complaints were sometimes hushed, when in the presence of an affliction greater than my own.

Astonishing, however, as it may seem to those who have not learned the wantonness and folly of the human heart, our time together was not always spent in mournful communing's. If my companion had obscene tales and local gossip to repeat, I regaled him with ribald songs and anecdotes picked up among sailors. After a time, when I was sufficiently recovered to venture to do it, we sought together a spot on the beach near at hand, or at the breezy old fort overlooking the harbor on the west. Here we often sat far into the night, occupied as before mentioned.

One day, near the close of the year, desiring something to relieve the monotony within doors, I took down from a shelf a dust-covered old volume. It proved to be a work on the immortality of the soul, consisting chiefly of prose and poetic extracts, from ancient and modern authors. With little interest I read a page or two, and then began to write marginal criticisms in pencil as I proceeded. In this way I occupied myself at intervals for some days, with feelings the while of mingled unbelief

and ridicule. Nevertheless, thoughts on this momentous subject would recur to my mind, as I lay awake at nights, and at times this question was suggested: "Suppose the soul does not become extinct at death—what then?" Up to this time so convinced had I been that the grave was the eternal and much to be desired end of one's troubles and sorrows, that, to reach this bourne quickly, I had often contemplated committing suicide.

It was at this point, I believe, that the God of all compassion, "who doth not willingly afflict the children of men," began His gracious work in my soul, and, shortly afterward in that of dear Frederick T.

From discussing the immortality of the soul with various members of the household, at first as a tentative subject, it at length displaced nearly every other consideration in my mind, and I took up the volume for a second and more careful perusal. Soon, it was like reading for my life! I had before passed over Scripture references; now I got a Bible, and turned to them with tremulous hand and feelings akin to dread. Conviction seized me. Not only was the soul seen to be distinct from the body—the immortal center of thought and being—but that the originator thereof was the eternal God, who would cast the wicked into hell! Extinction in the grave? No! Hell awaited me; and I seemed to see, with bodily eyes, its lurid flames darting up behind the horizon, and to hear the cries of the damned.

Ah! those agonizing days! Suddenly seeing myself to be the vilest one that breathed, I wondered how it was that He whom I had despised did not hurl me into the abyss! One fearful day of grief and despair, I had tasted little of anything—crying to God many times, prostrate on the floor, and the night found me faint and distressed. I sat at my bedside, now glancing through the window up into the sky, now at the flickering lamp slowly going out—afraid to lie down lest, as I thought, I should in my sleep fall into hell. But tired nature betrayed me; I did fall asleep, and—such a dream I had!

I was dying; faintly I prayed. Though I had a gleam of hope, it was amid much anxiety. Should I be received? would not I, unworthy as I was, be rejected? I was just passing away when, oh, joy! the angels...A stream of light encompassed me!... Such singing! Lovingly they beckoned me!

...I awoke; and whilst not yet knowing deliverance through the death of Christ, my soul could thenceforth, in a measure, look to the Saviour.

Nevertheless, assurance of salvation is only to be obtained through faith in that work which the Lord Jesus came into the world to accomplish, but this I did not as yet see. I tried a round of religious observances, but they only proved a weariness, and no cure to the corrupt tendencies within. Protracted and sorrowful were my secret struggles, until two gospel pamphlets came into my possession. In reading these I was led to see that not only were my sins atoned for, when Christ was made a sacrifice on the cross, but that my evil nature—the corrupt tree, like its fruit—was condemned, and, to faith, put to death there. "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." What solemn joy was now mine! for the God of all grace had given me to see His great salvation.

I now return to the days when, through sore exercise of heart, my communications with dear Frederick T. became blessedly changed. I can still recall the incredulous and searching glances he took at my countenance, as I poured out my fear of the just wrath of that God I at last knew to

exist. This sudden transition from the old ways was received by him coldly, and with perceptible disrelish. But the "word of God is quick and powerful"; and, as full of despondency during succeeding interviews I mentioned passages of the Bible that seemed to seal my own condemnation, and that of every sinner, Frederick T. grew manifestly uneasy, and presently acknowledged to have been all his life like one of those described as asleep on the brink of a precipice, regardless of the gulf beneath. The arrow of conviction had sunk into his heart! Our nightly occupation at the old fort was now new and strange. Side by side we would kneel on the green sward, our covering the sky, and with tears and uplifted hands, by turns pray to the God we had ignored so long.

It was at this juncture that, in the ways of God, Frederick T. and myself were once more separated. A few short extracts from two or three of his letters I received abroad shall conclude this narration of the dealings of the Lord with us. In his first, June, 1867, he said, ■

"O God, be praised! the cloud of darkness is clearing off, the light is breaking in. I am more able to resist the enemy to see my way more clearly to Jesus. When in great distress I applied to Mr. —, and he has been a great help to me.... Our favorite solitude is endeared by recollections. I like to be there, to meditate and pray for myself and you."

In another, a little later, he said, ■

"I bless God. His chastening rod has been sanctified to me. I have seen the necessity of it....

At another time he wrote thus: ■

"I have been thinking much lately of the wonderful dealings of the Lord towards us. What cause for thankfulness have we that He has turned us away from our doings and feelings for salvation, to rest wholly on the finished work of Christ!"

In August, 1870, Frederick T. fell asleep in Jesus. We never met again, but I look to meet him in the presence of the Lord, when He comes. Reader, will you, too, be there? J. R. C.

I Am Waiting for It to Come

COME with me into a scattered colliery district in the Midland counties, amongst the miners and weavers, where you will find rough manners, but warm hearts. Many a kindly greeting meets you as you go down the village road from the women, who are standing at their doors, either talking to their neighbors or watching such as are coming back from the adjoining country town, where the marketing is done, Presently we meet a collier sauntering along; he is "at play"■he has no work; having only made two days this week.

"Well, John, how are you? I have missed you lately from your seat on Sundays■you used to come so regularly to the services, and your wife, too■what has happened to keep you away?"

"Well, missus, you see I have not been lately, I know, but somehow I could not come."

"Why, John? Have you received no blessing all the many times you have been to hear the gospel?"

"Well, no, missus, I have not. I have come and come, and I've listened, but it hasn't come."

What did he mean by "it hasn't come?"

On talking further to him, you could see he expected some outward evidence, an extraordinary shock, or some strange thing to happen to make him receive Christ into his heart.

Poorman! the great enemy had duped him into this notion, and to this day, as far as I know, he has not received the truth as it is in Jesus.

Have you any feeling like this? You go week after week perhaps to the Sunday-school, or to the Bible-class, or to the preaching of the gospel, and you find your condition no different from what it always was. There is no sense of reality in what you hear. Are you, too, expecting some strange shock or some extraordinary feeling to make you a child of God? Take care how you let this go on■remember what we read in Luke 16:31: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

Let God's holy word enter into your heart, and by it His Spirit will do His quickening work.

How strange it would be thought if you sat inside your house, just at your door, and as knock after knock came, you never opened to let the person who knocked come in, but waited until some unseen hand forced you from your seat to undo the door! You have often acted in this way to the Saviour: you have listened, and listened, and listened to the story of His love, but have never opened your heart by faith for Him to enter to give you peace and rest of soul. He has knocked, oh! so many times, at the door of your heart, as you have listened to God's word, and yet you are "waiting for it to come"! L. R. P.

The Worship of God

THE delight which is experienced by Christians in the worship of God is indescribable. It cannot be conceived in the least degree by the irreligious. Could they only possess it, they would never wish to forfeit it for any treasure, however precious, this world could give. T. H.

You Need the Blood

A FRIEND of mine had been preaching in Glasgow, and, at the close of the meeting, was wishing good-bye to some of his audience. Among others, he shook hands with a young woman, just as she was going out of the door. She was one who had attended the meetings pretty regularly, but did not appear to have received blessing. Four words were all the evangelist uttered, as, taking her hand, he looked her full in the face: "You need the blood." The girl was half inclined to be offended, yet, as she wended her homeward way, over and over again the words rang in her ear, "You need the blood." "Well," soliloquized she, "many are worse than me, but that does not mend matters, and I am afraid to die. Did not the preacher say, All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"? I am sure I have sinned thousands of times, so that I really do need the blood." Then, quick as lightning, flashed into her mind the words she had lately heard, "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7); and again, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." (John 3:36.) There and then that young woman was led by the Spirit of God to apply to the blood for cleansing and for peace. She believed herself lost, and received Christ as her Saviour, and thus received the knowledge of redemption through His blood, and the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace, and went on her way rejoicing.

The father of this girl was a Romanist. He was ill, and had kept his bed for some time. Upon her return she went straight to his bed-side, and exclaimed, "Father, you need the blood." Much surprised at such a salutation, he requested an explanation, and she, with lips made eloquent by the Spirit of God, told how Christ had saved her soul; how that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16) how that "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. 5:21.)

She told her father that "as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." (John 1:12.) The poor, weary man believed the glad tidings, and, realizing the truth of the Saviour's words, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37), proved that "at even time it shall be light."

The following day the son, who was also a Romanist, paid a visit to his sick father, who, seizing hold of the young man's hand, exclaimed, in a broken voice, "Charlie, my lad, you need the blood!" Through God's great mercy, these words led Charlie also to see his lost condition, and to flee for refuge to the only Saviour. Thus, within a very short space of time, sister, brother, and father were all rejoicing in Christ Jesus! How true it is that the word of God is quick and powerful, and that the blood of Christ is still efficacious to atone for the sins of both young and old! We can find pardon and acceptance with God, the very moment we receive His salvation, as a free and utterly undeserved gift.

Oh! you, whose eyes are just now upon this paper, you need the blood, for you are a sinner, "and without shedding of blood there is no remission." Although man, in his arrogance and blindness, may dispute this fact, it is a fact still. If you have never yet proved "that the blood of Jesus Christ,

God's Son, cleanseth from all sin," prove it now, for "you need the blood," and only as justified by His blood can you be saved from wrath. R. C. C.

More Than Conqueror

THE following lines were written by E. P., who fell asleep in Christ some few days after the event to which she refers: ■

“Praise God, though in anticipation of a very serious operation, I can say, ‘For me to live is Christ, to die is gain.’ Jesus is my peace, I rest in Him, knowing that my times are in His hands, and He doeth all things well. He has promised in Isaiah 33:17, that mine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.’ I long to see my King, then why should I fear death, why mind Him fetching me? I do not, but I am willing to wait His time. If He spares me a little longer, I will thank Him, and in His strength, work on in His vineyard, till He calls. I did not always rest thus about going from earth, but I had not proved His wonderful love and faithfulness then, as I have since. He is love. He loves me. I love Him. I stand upon His merit, nothing in myself, no de-servings on my part. I am just resting upon, what Jesus did for me on Calvary’s cross Alleluia! and in the strength of this, I can say, Come, Lord Jesus.”

The Grotto of the Dog

THIS is the name of a cavern in the hills of Auvergne. These mountains and hills of Auvergne are a strange and beautiful region. The mountains were once, long long ago, active volcanoes. They rise suddenly from the great plain which lies between Paris and Auvergne, high, steep, conical mountains; their empty craters now grown over with grass, and the cows and goats feeding where once the flames and the lava rushed forth, sending fiery streams of the melted lava down the steep mountain sides into the wooded glens below. But though those ancient fires no longer blaze from the mountain tops, they seem to be imprisoned in the deep caverns under the mountain valleys. Here and there hot mineral waters burst forth, and many people go to bathe in them, and to drink them. In one place is a black stream of liquid pitch, and in another a petrifying spring, which covers all that it touches with a white coat of shining spar.

And amongst these hills so curious, and so beautiful, is the Grotto of the Dog. There is nothing beautiful or even remarkable to be seen in this long, dark cavern. But it is one of the strangest places of the mountain region. You enter it by a wooden door, and are warned by the doorkeeper to walk upright, neither to sit nor stoop. If you do so, you are suffocated. For the lower part of the cavern is filled with a suffocating and poisonous gas, which being heavier than the air, never rises above a certain level, about four feet. The air above is pure and sweet, but put down your head for a moment, and the foul gas stops your breath, your head seems to whirl round, and in a few seconds you would fall senseless and die. To prove this, a dog is sometimes allowed to run into the Grotto, and any who are cruel enough to wish to see the experiment, may watch his speedy end. For this reason it is called the Grotto of the Dog.

How wonderful are the parables which the Lord has woven in amongst the varied works of His hands, all around us! "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord."

For have we not been living all our lives in the Grotto of the Dog? Once we, who are God's children, lay dead and senseless in the stifling gas. But the voice of the Son of God awakened us from the sleep of death, and we stood upon our feet, and breathed the air of heaven. We were walking still upon the earth upon which the foul gas was resting, but we breathed it no more, death had no more dominion over us. We were above it, and it could not rise to the glorious place to which our God had brought us, for our life was hid with Christ in God. Is it not thus that we pass through this sad world of sin, and death, and condemnation? We dare not rest in it, but we move on amidst the dying and the dead, glad to stretch out a helping hand to those who are lying in the depths of the poisoned air, but we may not breathe it, or we too would fall senseless beside them. It is true that a believer in Jesus can never perish, neither can any pluck him out of His hand, But a child of God may fall and slumber; he may lose all sense of fellowship with God, all joy, all rest and peace of conscience. He may become cold, and deadened in heart and spirit. He may be carnal, and halfhearted, and useless, and powerless. And why is this? It is because he has not been abiding in Christ; he has not been breathing the blessed air of heaven, but the foul, stupefying air

of this present evil world. He has gone down to the level of the world, and walked as the world walks. It may be for the sake of gain. It may be for amusement, or for natural love of relations and friends, it may be from the love of the higher pleasures of art, or of intellect. It may be from carelessness that he has slipped, step by step, into the ways of the world. It may be under the pretext of doing good to worldly friends, or with a vain hope of gilding over the cross of Christ by conformity to the world in its ways. It may be from the fear of being hated, and separated from the company of friends, and reproached, and having his name cast out as evil. It is always because the heart has become cold to Christ. And once down in the poisoned air, all power for service is gone. The hand of Christ will rescue His own, as when Peter was sinking in the waves of the sea, but it may be through bitter sorrow and suffering that the soul is brought back to Him. Let us walk on in fellowship with Him, leaning on the Beloved, and abiding in Him, who is in heaven, and the foul air of the world below will never reach us. To ask how much we may have of the world, is the question of the heart grown cold to Christ. To ask how little can we have of it, is the constant question of the heart to whom He is precious. Thus shall we pass safely through the poisoned grotto, and have power to raise and rescue the perishing souls in the depths below. But it will be as one apart from and above the deadly level, as one breathing a pure fresh air into which the perishing may be raised, passing then from death to life, from the power of Satan unto God.

“But I go into the world,” you say, “to carry life to the perishing, and there to bear witness for Christ. I am in the world, but not of it, and I have many opportunities which people never have who shut themselves up over their Bible, and leave others to their fate.”

“Yes, in a ball room,” said one, “I can have communion with God, and bear witness for Him just as much in lace and jewels as in black serge and a shabby bonnet, and do much more good by mixing with all my neighbors than if I were one of a narrow-minded set who like to be something peculiar.”

A little story has just been told me, which comes as a word in season, another parable from the great book of pictures, which God has opened before us in the world which His hands have made. A lady had a canary, which sang so sweetly that she liked to have it always in her room, and she found a constant pleasure in it, so that when summer came, and she spent most of the day sitting out in her garden, she was in the habit of hanging the canary’s cage upon a tree that she might have it near her. But as she sat beneath the tree, she did not observe that the sparrows collected in numbers to watch the strange bird, and to eat the canary’s sugar, and pick up the seed that was scattered about. And as they sat on the cage, and in the branches around, they chirped to the canary, and the canary chirped in reply. And after a little while the lady remarked that the canary sang no more, but only chirped like the sparrows. She was grieved at this, and took the canary back to the house, and let him go out no more amongst the sparrows. But it was all in vain. The canary had lost his song, and thenceforward he chirped continually, and none of the sparrows had learned to sing.

“And so,” said my friend who told me this story, “I have known many a hundred of these chirping Christians, but I have never yet met with the sparrow that learned the song they lost.” F. B.

God's Wonderful Ways With Man. The Fourth Age: Law

GOD'S covenant of promise must stand in its integrity, and though it pleased Him to give to men a law, obedience to which should procure blessings, and disobedience to which should entail curses, yet His promise prior to His law is not changed in any way. "Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, "And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." (Gal. 3:15-17.)

How differently from the age of promise, does that of law open! It commences with a sight of the greatness and the terribleness of Jehovah, and the consequent trembling of men and mountains, as both Israel and Sinai quake at God's voice. Fire and blackness, darkness and tempest issue from and surround Sinai, whither God descends, and from the thick darkness and the devouring fire, the voice of words issues—a voice so awful that they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more—a sight so appalling that the law-giver said, "I exceedingly fear and quake."

God was about to test man, and to prove him—whether he would keep His laws or not. We know the sequel: man broke the law and came under its curse, and was proved to be rebellious. "It was added because of transgressions," saith the Scriptures. "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." (Gal. 3)

God, in His ways with man, would show to man that he is a transgressor, and the history of Israel is one great illustration of rebellion of the human heart against God. God took Israel out of the idolatry of Egypt, and, having separated them to Himself, He said, "Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." (Ex. 19:5, 6.) What condition could be more favorable to man's uprightness? But, in result, the age of law has but transgression graven on it, and, to this day, every true and honest heart that comes under law—that seeks to "Do this and live," must say of itself, by the light of the truth of the law, "The commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." (Rom. 7:10.)

(To be continued.)

Bosom Friends

ADA and Isabelle, when little girls, were what are called “bosom friends”■when one was to be seen, the other was never far off, and, what was more remarkable, they never had the least little quarrel; and yet, for all that, neither of them loved the Saviour■they lived their little lives without Him. But God in love was watching over these two children, and was about to reveal His Son to them before the evil days came.

It happened in this wise. A Sunday-school teacher, having failed to persuade them to attend the school in which he taught, thought that probably he might succeed in getting them to come to his Bible-class, and that thus two souls might be won for the Lord. They both came, and seemed very much interested, and soon became quite attached to their teacher, who always managed to bring in a little word for those who had not yet come to Christ.

One evening as he walked home with some of his scholars, he asked them, by the way, some questions concerning their soul’s salvation.

Turning to Isabelle, he said, “Can you say that you are now on the narrow path?”

“Oh yes, indeed I can,” was the prompt reply.

“Is it because you are a good girl?” asked he, wishing to make sure that she was not resting on any false hope.

“No, no,” she replied, almost crying at the thought. “If you only knew how miserable I have been because of my sins!”

“Then you have found out that you are a sinner?”

“Yes,” the child answered.

“Tell me how it came about.”

“Well,” said Isabelle, “for a whole week I had been so unhappy, and I kept saying to myself, ‘I wish I could say I am saved,’ but I was so afraid it would be telling a lie; and then, while you were speaking to us, the Lord seemed to say to me, Isabelle, you are wishing for something which I am offering you, and all you have to do is simply to take it.’ At once I saw it all clearly, and I did take it, and many thanks to the dear Lord Jesus, and I’m so happy now!”

So teacher and scholar rejoiced together.

But my young reader will wonder what became of our little friend Ada. Well, I must tell you how this good news affected her.

The evening Isabelle had spoken to him, the teacher was pouring out his heart in thankfulness to the Lord, who had seen fit to use him to turn a soul to righteousness, and at the same time his little scholar was in her room with a troubled look on her face. She was thinking of her dear friend, Ada,

who had not yet trusted the Saviour. In the midst of her sorrowful thoughts, a quiet voice seemed to say, "Pray for her; prayer will be answered; it was answered for you."

Was there ever a real prayer left unanswered yet Before Isabelle rose from her knees, Ada was tossing restlessly on her bed. Thoughts had come into her mind which had never been there before. Her friend, thought she, was heaven ward bound, but where was she bound. The little girl wished it were morning, so that she might run and tell Isabelle that she wanted to go with her to God's beautiful home. Her thoughts ran on, until at last she fell asleep and dreamed that Isabelle had gone to heaven, and that she herself was left outside the gate!

Ada took the earliest opportunity to seek her friend. Isabelle saw her coming, and ran quickly to meet her, and asked whether anything was wrong, and what it was that had brought her out so early.

"I cannot bear the thought of you going to heaven without me, Isabelle," said Ada.

"So you are willing to come, too, darling Ada?" "Yes, but how can I come?"

Then Isabelle pointed her friend to the Lord Jesus, who alone can save. After a while the light from above dawned upon her soul. And now these two friends are both heavenward-bound.

"When Jesus has found you, tell others the story, That your dear Saviour may be their Saviour too; Then pray that your Saviour may bring them to glory, And prayer will be answered; 't was answered for you."

I Am Going to Him

I LATELY visited a dear little girl, who was at the point of death, and was passing through great suffering. After speaking to her gently for a few moments, I asked her if she loved Jesus. She faintly smiled, and said, "Yes, I am going to Him." Though her body was racked with pain, she could just utter these few words; it gave me great joy to know that the dear child was simply trusting Jesus, and would soon be with Him.

Dear young readers, remember that this life is uncertain, and that many die early. Trust in the finished work of Jesus now, before sickness comes upon you, and then you will be able to say with this dear little girl, "I love Jesus, and I am going to Him."

J. S■n.

The Experiences of a Missionary in China

6. A Chinese Riot

MOST Christians have realized the greatest comfort in the thought that a Father's hand was guiding their affairs, making plain a path before them, and taking all responsibility for the consequences of a faithful walk and a fearless testimony. The writer experienced the truth of this once, in a somewhat remarkable way, in a Chinese riot. It was at the time of the great famine in North China, when with others he was engaged in the distribution of relief funds, contributed by friends in England, in a district in the interior, where no missionary work had been done, and where the people were in total darkness. The curse of opium-smoking had also gained a stronghold on the people, and there were many wealthy native opium merchants in the city. One of these offered his personal assistance in the work of distribution of relief to the famine sufferers, which, it need not be said, was politely refused. Wong Shu-pen, for that was his name, thereupon became our greatest enemy, and resolved to drive us from the city.

Our relief work was going on quietly and with good order. The poorest of the people in the city had been helped, but there were yet a hundred villages in the county needing assistance; our funds amounted to more than a thousand pounds. Suddenly, as by magic, everything changed. The people seemed afraid of us. We were called "Foreign Devil" at every corner of the streets. The house in which we lived was surrounded by noisy crowds.

One day, we noticed a great deal of whispering among the natives around us. Presently a great scuffle outside the gates on the main street arose, and in a moment our native evangelist, a strong, burly fellow, who, before his conversion, was a bargeman, was to be seen dragging an unfortunate man to the police-station by the pigtail. The culprit had been caught sticking a large bill on the outside wall of our house calling upon the people to drive out the foreign devils from the city.

Wong Shu-pen had written bills, and employed some bad fellows to stick them upon the city gates and in every available place inside it, to excite the populace against us. It was stated that we had come to the city only to deceive the people by giving away money which was really their own, for the "foreign devils" had been watched going early in the morning to the hills outside the city wall, and after praying to their gods, had been seen getting silver out of the earth. Our purpose in coming to the country, it was said, was only to buy up the hearts of the people with our money, to secure property, build foreign houses, to purchase young girls for wives, and then finally bring in a foreign army and take the country.

These and many other still more foolish things rapidly passed from mouth to mouth, and were gladly believed. Notices were posted on our very doors, telling us that the people had pledged themselves as one man to kill us if we did not immediately leave the city. Their city had always been noted for its loyalty in all past time, and they were determined not to tolerate the presence of a foreigner in their midst.

Our presence, it began to be believed, was a displeasure to heaven, hence no rain fell, and, it was said, so long as we remained, heaven would send no rain. Those who know anything of the Chinese character, and their great superstition about matters of this kind, will readily understand how effectually these rumors stirred up the people against us, and rendered our position both trying and dangerous. The district magistrate professed to be concerned for our safety, and doubtless he was. He instructed the elders of the city, and those of all the neighborhood to make diligent inquiry, and at once to send the ringleaders to the magistrate's office for judgment. It need hardly be said that the said leaders were never found, and we had good reason to believe that the mandarins desired to get rid of us just as much as the opium merchant did, with whom, it must be understood, they were fast friends.

Soldiers were told off to protect us, but they gave us as much trouble as the mob did, besides being perfectly useless. At last the excitement became universal; the whole city was up against us, and crowds thronged our house all day.

While the people were clamoring for our lives, we were kept in perfect peace, and had not the slightest fear that any evil would befall us. The calm and quiet that filled us in such circumstances made us feel very strongly the reality of God's presence.

The fact of our being kept in such peace intimidated the people, and, humanly speaking, went far to preserve our lives, although we know that the hand of our gracious God was behind it all, and it was by His power alone that the rage of the heathen against us was restrained. Experience of Chinese character and mode of thought has shown the truth of that well-known proverb, "HE that is slow to anger is better than the mighty and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." The Chinaman's idea of a virtuous man is a man who can rule his spirit and remain calm under great provocation.

After five days we deemed it advisable to leave the city and to proceed further west to Ping-yang Fu, a city five days' journey distant; but before doing so we greatly desired that, if it were consistent with the will of God, rain might fall, to vindicate our position against the lying rumors which were in circulation.

The day before we took our departure, God answered our prayer, and sent a great thunder storm with rain, snow and hail. This astonished the people, for it was not the season for snow, and they believed our God was a God who could and who did hear prayer, and this had the effect of opening the eyes a some of them, and they came over to our side. The morning of our departure was a time of great excitement and exultation, and at an early hour the house was surrounded by crowds of people waiting to see us start. Soldiers had guarded our house night and day during the disturbances, but their services had not been particularly required, and, true to Chinese character in cases of emergency, they were unequal to the position.

The day was now getting on, and we could not afford to make further delays. Our passage through the streets was a somewhat thronged one, but perfectly quiet. A few friends escorted us out of the city gates, and among them a lad of not more than nine years of age. His history was a sad one. He was the nephew of a man who had been chief mandarin in that city, but through the force of adverse circumstances, or more probably in consequence of misrule, was now thrown out of office, and no longer able to support the child. The little fellow was an orphan, and but for a sick

and dying brother in bed, had no one to care for him. We had noticed him frequently at our gate, and after having learned the facts of his case, gave him food as often as he came and wanted it. He was a handsome boy, but delicate, and of far too tender an age to fight single-handed the battles of life. When he realized that we were really going, and he would get no more daily food from us, his little heart failed him, and bursting into tears, he refused to be comforted by his neighbors.

We would gladly have adopted such a promising youth, and taken him away with us, but after what had taken place in the city, it was out of the question to attempt such an arrangement.

Driven from Tseh-chou Fu we proceeded to act upon the scripture injunction, that when persecuted in one city we should flee to the next. This we did, and after five days traveling over hills and through partly deserted and uninhabited villages, reached the city of Ping-yang Fu, where we hoped to find the people less hostile to our presence among them than their neighbors in the south-east of the province had been.

We were soon suitably housed in the heart of the city, and for a time all went well; but when it was realized that our intention was to settle down to direct missionary work, and not as heretofore to the distribution of famine relief, considerable opposition was manifested by the literati and a few of the common people, but this was finally lived down, and a permanent work was commenced in 1880, and has continued ever since, and today there is a work as interesting as any to be found in all the north of China.

From Ping-yang Fu the work has spread north, south, east, and west into neighboring cities, towns and villages—the one station opened in 1879 has increased to ten, in each of which there is a small church, and many Christians are scattered over the surrounding villages on either side of the Fen river, which courses down the center of this part of the province of Shansi.

There was a good deal of patient sowing and waiting before much result to the preaching of the gospel in the south of Shansi was seen.

A solid foundation was laid— every city, town and village was visited and the gospel preached, scriptures and tracts being circulated in them. The utmost care was taken that there should be abundant evidence of a thorough change of heart and life in the candidates for baptism before they were accepted and recognized as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were taught to look upon the Scriptures as the one rule of faith, and that the work was the Lord's and not man's.

From the first there has been much persecution of the native Christians. Many have been beaten, robbed, and deserted by their friends and neighbors, which, instead of stopping the work, has had the opposite effect. It has kept out of the church mere professors, and strengthened and confirmed those who are truly Christ's within it.

There are among the Christians two or three most excellent men, who seem specially gifted for oversight, and a good deal of the prosperity of the work is doubtless owing to the self-denying and disinterested efforts of these brethren who, in return for their labors, are satisfied with the thought that they please God and have the praise and love of all the Churches. The province contains at the lowest computations, seven-millions of people. Every city and large town has been visited and the gospel preached, and scriptures circulated in them by itinerant missionaries. A. G. P.

The Quails

HOW difficult it is for man really to trust God. When a sinner is awakened by the Holy Spirit to feel the burden of his sins, how slow is he to put his trust in God, to take God's word as He has spoken it, and to rest every hope for eternity on that word alone! Without faith it is impossible to please God. All the works, effort, prayers, and tears of a sinner seeking salvation are unavailing to procure the blessing; the grace comes from God alone, and is a free gift, and until we believe God we fail to discover that all He says is true. When a man becomes a believer, how hard it is really to trust God day by day. Many who rest their all on God's word, who are believers indeed, are very unbelieving in regard to the things of everyday life, and in no way does this unbelief express itself more distinctly than in a murmuring spirit.

Israel had been but a few days free from Egyptian slavery before they began to murmur. God led them out of Egypt, and through the Red Sea, and His wonderful work of salvation filled them with songs of deliverance; they triumphed over their enemies, who had sunk as lead in the mighty waters, and they rejoiced in the Lord whose right arm had gotten the victory. But God's plan of leading His people home was not to take them there in a moment, but to bring them through difficulties, through the wilderness, and thus to teach them to trust in Himself. God taught Israel as He teaches His people now, by testing them in hardship and in ease, in the waterless waste and in the sheltered groves.

There is a remarkable passage in Ex. 16, to which we do well to give heed: "Come near before the Lord: for He hath heard your murmurings. And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud" (verses 9 and 10). They looked toward the wilderness! ■toward the scene of their wanderings and murmurings■toward the barren places whither God would lead them■and there they saw the glory of Jehovah in the cloud! He was about to magnify His Name in the wilderness. He had gotten Him glory in the land of Egypt by delivering His people from their bonds, and in the Red Sea, where He had looked through the cloud, and where He had destroyed the enemy; and now, as His people were about to enter the wilderness, His glory appeared in the cloud which should guide them on their journey home.

God's people who know He has saved them can see His glory in the cross, and in the resurrection of His Son, and it is well to turn our eyes toward the wilderness and to behold His glory in leading us home. The safe conduct of God's people to heaven, their protection and their discipline on the way, all proclaim God's glory. He magnifies Himself in caring for the least and the weakest of His own. "The whole congregation" looked toward the wilderness, and beheld the glory of God in the cloud. It was for all to see— for the little child as well as for Moses. Well indeed it is for the pilgrim to heaven to turn his eye toward the wilderness, and to consider the glory of God in relation to the journey home. And what a word follows upon the sight Israel witnessed. The Lord said, "I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, 'At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your

God.”

“And it came to pass that at even the quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning the manna fell.” The resources of God are infinite. He who had made them, called up the flocks of birds in their multitudes for Israel’s food, and He gave them bread from heaven to eat! They had flesh in abundance for their evening meal, and in the morning there began a constant supply of daily food in the manna. The Lord put the two foods side by side in His words, but we hear no more of the quails being sent again until about a year afterward, when once more Israel murmured. And this time they murmured against the manna, and cried out for the flesh and food of Egypt.

Then “He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven: and by His power He brought in the south wind. He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea; and He let it fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations. So they did eat and were well filled: for He gave them their own desire.” (Psa. 78:26-29.) The quails were sent, and the gift showed the strength of God’s hand and the greatness of His resources; but the gift came to Israel in judgment, and they ate till they were stricken with sickness, and till they fell under God’s plague.

God at times answers a murmurer’s prayer by giving him what he desires. “He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul.” A most solemn answer to prayer is this, and a warning to the willful believer who murmurs against God and is not subject to His word.

6. From Malachi to Matthew

THE report of the revolt under Mattathias reached Jerusalem, and a great body of troops was dispatched against the insurgents. The mass of the fugitives in the wilderness (from whom Mattathias and his immediate followers seem to have been separated) were attacked on the Sabbath, and believing that self-defense would involve a breach of that law for which they were suffering, no blow was struck by them, and a thousand unhappy people were butchered. This catastrophe led to the decision that, for the future, Sabbath attacks should be resisted. A company of Asidæans or Chasidim (i.e., “the pious”), noted for their devout adherence to the law, joined themselves to Mattathias. Their numbers daily increased; they were men of valor, rendered desperate, too, by the circumstances of the case, for they could die only once, and it were better fighting to fall, than to be slaughtered like a flock of sheep. So this desperate band went about the country, victorious in all their skirmishes, pulling down idol-altars, and circumcising the uncircumcised children.

In about a year (B.C. 166) brave Mattathias died. In true patriarchal fashion, he gathered his sons about him before he died, charged them to carry on the work, and to be zealous for the law, encouraging them by the example and rewards of Abraham and Joseph, Phineas and Joshua, Caleb and David, Elijah and Daniel and others. He appointed Judas Maccabeus, “mighty and strong from his youth up,” to be their captain, while he directed that great attention should be paid to the counsel of Simon. So he died, and was buried at Modin, a great and true lamentation being made over him.

The national cause in no way flagged under the leadership of the son of Mattathias. Placing himself at the head of his band, Judas was everywhere victorious; his sudden and unexpected night attacks were irresistible, and it became apparent that nothing but an elaborate effort could overthrow him. Accordingly, Apollonius, the governor for Antiochus in Samaria, advanced against him with “a great host,” but was defeated, with heavy loss of men and spoil; moreover, Apollonius was himself slain, and with his sword Judas afterward fought all his life.

This attempt having ended so disastrously, Seron, commander of the army in Cœle-Syria, fondly thought to make his own name famous by the defeat of the valiant Jewish commander. When he had advanced as far as Bethoron, Judas went out with his army to meet him— a small company, rendered weak, too, by their enforced fasting all that day. At the sight of the Syrian host, fear began to chill the hearts of the Jews. “How shall we be able, being so few, to fight against so great a multitude, and so strong?” The answer of Judas recalls the pious spirit of Asa of former days: “With the God of heaven it is all one, to deliver with a great multitude, or a small company.” Encouraged by his words, his men aroused themselves for the attack, and, under the gallant leadership of Judas, completely defeated and dispersed the foe.

Antiochus was infuriated by the failure of these attempts to crush the rebellion, the reports of which, and the fame of whose leader, were spreading all through his dominions. He accordingly set about extensive preparations for a campaign which was to completely quell the Maccabean

rising, and determined to conduct the operations in person. The preparations were delayed by the unfortunate circumstance of his treasury being well-nigh exhausted. This had to be remedied, and he therefore journeyed into Persia to collect tribute, and in other ways to raise money. Having abandoned the scheme of personally leading his army, he committed the Judæan campaign into the hands of one Lysias, to whom he gave half of his force, and whom he charged to root out all Israel, to take away every memorial of their existence, and to divide the land among strangers. Subdividing the command between Ptolemy, Nicanor, and Gorgias, Lysias sent 40,000 foot and 7000 horsemen into Judæa. This army at least, he thought, should be sufficient for its task! So sure were the Syrians of victory, that it was made known that the Jews were to be sold as slaves, at the exceedingly low price of ninety Jews for a talent. By this means. Nicanor (whose scheme it was) hoped to raise at least 2000 talents—no mean sum—for his impoverished king. Accordingly, there flocked from the cities of the coast a swarm of merchants, ready with silver and gold to buy, and with servants to carry away, chose who were to fall so easy and so certain a prey. And thus the enemy came upon the land, and pitched near Emmaus.

On the other hand Judas possessed an army of only 6000 men. The command was divided between Judas and his brothers Simon, Joseph and Benjamin. Clothed in sackcloth, and with ashes upon their heads, the Jews assembled at Mizpeh for prayer and fasting. Eleazar, the brother of Judas, real from the scriptures, and the watchword was passed round: "The help of God." And so with encouraged hearts, they waited for the morrow.

Gorgias thought by an early attack to defeat the Jewish band. Accordingly, while it was still dark, he led forward 5000 foot and 600 horsemen, but when they arrived at the Jewish camp, they found it deserted. For Judas had heard of Gorgias' scheme, and met it by counter tactics. He had roused up his men betimes, and, taking another route than that by which Gorgias was marching, he was ready to attack the enemy's camp by the morning's light. Badly armed, badly fed, and badly disciplined, it seemed, indeed, "a forlorn hope." But the thought of home, their laws, their country, their desperate condition, and above all, their God, gave them an energy which their opponents lacked. "Fear ye not," was Judas's cry; there was the blast of trumpets, a vigorous assault, and the enemy was dispersed all through the plain. The Jews pursued the flying foe for some distance; 3000 men fell before them. In the meantime, Gorgias, ignorant of what was done, returned with his troops to the camp. "These fellows flee from us," said he. But when they reached a point of the hills from whence they could look down upon the plain, behold, the Jews were in possession, and the tents were on fire. Thoroughly disheartened, Gorgias and his men fled before the onslaught of the victors, who took much spoil, which after the rest of the following Sabbath, was divided among the people.

Lysias was much disconcerted at the turn events had taken, and in the following year, gathered together a still greater host of 60,000 foot and 5000 horsemen. He marched into Idumea, and was met by Judas with 10,000 men. Supplicating the help of "the Saviour of Israel," Judas was again victorious, and Lysias retreated to Antiochia.

Seeing that the Lord had granted them such success, Judas and his brethren went up to Jerusalem to cleanse and dedicate the sanctuary. The sight that met their eyes, made their hearts ache. The temple was desolate, the altar profaned, the gate burned, the courts were overgrown with shrubs like a forest, and the priests' chambers pulled down. The people rent their clothes, and

made great mourning. But the trumpet set them astir again, and while some held in check the alien garrison stationed in the fortress, others carried away the defiled stones from the courts. The altar of burnt-offerings, polluted as it had been by the idol of, and offerings to, Jupiter, they pulled down, and the stones they put in a convenient place, till a prophet should arise who could tell what should be done with them. A new altar was built; new holy vessels were made; the veil was set up; the Temple was ornamented with crowns of gold and with shields, and the gates were renewed. Pious priests were deputed for the holy service, and on the 25th Chisleu (B.C. 165), exactly three years from the day on which the first offering had been made to Jupiter, the flames were once more kindled on the altar of the living God, and the smoke of sacrifices rolled up to heaven. The Temple was re-dedicated, and for eight days a glad and solemn feast was kept. Once more the sound of praise, and the music of harps, cithers and cymbals, were heard as "the reproach of the heathen was rolled away," and the people rejoiced in their liberty and their God.

By a decree, this feast was put upon the annual register. ■ The Feast of Dedication, or of Lights. It is to this feast that the evangelist John refers, when he says: "It was the Feast of the Dedication, and it was winter." The month Chisleu corresponds to our December.

In the following year (B.C. 164) Antiochus died ■ a horrible death, in which mental anguish vied with bodily ill, and which has by common consent been regarded as the direct visitation of God. At the time, he was hastening back at full speed from Persia to Judea to avenge the defeat of his forces.

He had reigned eleven years. Jr.

Do You Think Well of the Lord Jesus?

WE will transport ourselves to a lovely road in Herefordshire. As we walk on, four or five cottages hide for a moment the view over valleys and hills of the distant Welsh mountains. The sun has set, and now the moon rises—a lesser light, to rule the more peaceful hours that succeed the day. We rap at the door of one of the humble homes, which a young woman opens.

“I have brought you good news;” and we offer a little paper about the Lord Jesus.

As the door opens, we have a peep into the interior of the cottage, and see an old man sitting in an easy chair. Seventy-eight winters have come and gone over him. On the table rests a Bible, the staff of his infirm days. The old man hears the name of Jesus wafted in by the evening air, as his cottage door is opened, and responds

“Come in; we like to hear about Him.”

The visitors gladly step inside, in answer to the hearty invitation, and hear the old man’s story, how that in his younger days he had trusted men who had “all failed” him, but how that Jesus never has “Once mine was a religion of fear,” says the old man, “but I read, He loved me, and gave Himself for me,’ and that there is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear.’ (Gal. 2:20; 1 John 4:18) And His love has cast out my fear”; and “now my last days are my best days.”

This great change, this wondrous knowledge given by God, had come to the aged pilgrim since he had passed his threescore years and ten! What a pity—does our reader say—he had not learned the lesson sooner! Have we learned it? Do we fear the Lord who loves, and who has proved His love by dying for sinners? Do we fear God, whose love is perfect, and who gave His Son to die, that “whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”?

“I have walked in the comfort of His love, ever since He made Himself known to me,” says the aged man, “alone with my Bible and my Lord.”

“And what about the daughter here?” “She is a seeker, sir, I trust.”

“Those that seek Me early shall find Me” (Prov. 8:17), said one of the visitors; and, after a little further conversation, they left.

Three years have passed by. We again find ourselves on the same country road, with a party of Christians, one lovely summer’s afternoon. An old man is coming down the road towards us, feeble, and leaning upon a stick. One of our number takes hold of his arm, and stops him with a friendly salutation. Then suddenly he says to the aged man. “Do you think well of the Lord Jesus?” His reply is, “I’d like to go to Him.”

We do not want to go to those we do not love. Love is a wonderful magnet, and the love of God had drawn the heart of this dear pilgrim upwards and heavenwards.

“If you think well of the Lord Jesus, you are right for the glory-land.”

My reader, if you stood at the very gate of eternity, what would your answer be to the question put to the aged man? Our feeble friend told us how that nearly all his life he had lived a sinner; how that the Spirit of God had made him feel his sins; how that for years he had looked for something, he hardly knew what; and how at last he had found Jesus ten years before.

Thus we recognized in the tottering old man, him whom we had met three years previously in the cottage.

Another year has passed, and two of the same Christian friends are again walking on that beautiful Herefordshire road. At the exact spot where they had met the aged pilgrim a year previously, they found a young man stone-breaking.

“Do you know anything of an old man who lived near here, and who loved the Lord Jesus?” one of them inquired.

“He was my father, sir.”

“And is he still on earth?”

“No, he died last January.”

“And was he happy?”

“Very.”

“Did he say anything you particularly remember before he died?”

“He pointed upward, and said Jesus was waiting for him.”

So he found the Heavenly Friend true to the last; men might fail, strength and life might fail, but Jesus, who had died for him, who had led him since He had brought him to Himself, was waiting for him to bring him home.

“And do you believe in your father’s God?”

“I do, sir,” responded the young, man; “he taught us all the way before he died.”

Truly his children were rising up and calling him blessed! After a little prayer with the young man, as they knelt at his stone heap, the strangers passed-on. During the afternoon, they met one of the old man’s daughters, who also was following in her father’s faith. W. L.

I've Given Mysen Clean up to Jesus

"OH, I am so glad you've come! I'm in a queer state, that I am."

"Why, my dear friend, what's the matter?"

"Well, sir, the doctor has just been, and he gives me no encouragement whatever. He has examined me thoroughly this morning, and although he did not say 'right out' that I should die, I am sure he thought so, by the look of his face. The fact is, sir, I may die at any moment, for aught I know, and my soul is not prepared to meet God. I've talked about death many a time when I was well, and saw nothing very dreadful in it; but, oh dear! it seems an awful thing to me now. It's a solemn thing to have it staring you straight in the face, and I know it's not a great way off me, for the water from this dropsy is not far from my heart. Oh, how I wish I knew Christ as my Saviour, as you do! It's not long since I sat on that chair, as well and as free from pain as you are now. As long as I was well, I lived on year after year caring nothing about my soul's salvation; and just look at me now! Whatever must I do about my soul?" And saying this, he sank back on his pillow in an agony of mind.

"My dear friend, I know death is an awful thing to have to face without Christ; but I am glad to be able to tell you that for all those who give their hearts to Jesus, the sting has been taken from death, and the victory from the grave. The message of Christ's gospel, when received in the heart, brings good tidings unto the meek; binds up the broken-hearted, proclaims liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. (Isa. 61:1.) And this blessed gospel is brought to you this morning. You know you are a guilty, lost sinner, but Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost.' He now bids you, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.' (Matt. 11:28-30.) Cast yourself on Him as your Saviour, for He says (John 5:24.), 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.'"

God's word, applied by the Holy Spirit, did its own blessed work. After calling upon our friend two or three times, and reading to him the third chapter of John, and other passages of God's word, I went one day and found a great change in him.

"Well, my friend, you seem happier looking today than before! Have you found peace?"

"Yes, thank God, I have!"

"And have you had all fear taken away from your mind?"

"Yes, I've given mysen clean up to Jesus, clean up, to do what He likes wi' me."

"You are then able to rest in Jesus, are you?"

“Yes, I’ve given myself clean up, altogether. If He likes to spare me, I’ll be a different man from what I’ve ever been before, but if He takes me, I’m not afraid to go, for I’ve given myself clean up, and I believe He has accepted me.”

Time and circumstances have since tested severely the man’s profession. Amidst a house full of sickness, with nothing but the scant allowance of the parish for the maintenance of himself and his sick family, as well as death staring him daily in the face, he has trusted through all, and by the power of the Spirit and presence of God he has been enabled to praise God in the midst of his bodily and mental affliction.

Does not this incident show forth the reality of Christ’s salvation? How it can administer peace and joy to God’s children, even where earthly circumstances would seem to suggest that “all these things are against me”? Are we not enabled, by trusting Jesus, to find in practical experience that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28)?

We ought, indeed, to thank God, dear reader, ought we not, for the wonderful worth of life-giving power, found in God’s book? How reasonable it seems, to expect that crowds of anxious enquirers would ever be found, asking the all-important question, “What must I do to be saved?” Yet such is not the case. Take a walk along the main streets of any of our large cities, speak to the crowds you meet, inquire what the great business and object of their lives is, and you will, with dismay and sorrow, find that the service of God is generally left out of the regular program of everyday work; it enters not into the thoughts, words, and deeds of the masses, but is put off till the sick-bed comes, till the heavy burden and sting of bereavement appears, till the face is wrinkled and the hairs are hoar with the frost of many winters.

Dear reader, beware, lest during the time of thy procrastination God may say unto thee, “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee,” and thou be found altogether unprepared to meet thy God. R. M.

Today If Ye Will Hear His Voice

TWO years ago, in a small village, a group of persons stood listening to a preacher of the gospel. The realities of eternity filled his soul as he pressed upon his hearers the necessity of coming to Christ in this day of grace. Speaking of the many offers of salvation which had been made to them, he said, "Perhaps this is the last time that some in this company will listen to a message from God, who has showed His great love in giving His Son to die, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to Himself." Then the preacher solemnly urged the people to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, that they might be saved, for he that believeth is not condemned, but hath everlasting life; while, on the other hand, he that believeth not, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.

The address being concluded, a woman came up to him, saying she had been waiting for him to speak to her; whereupon he begged her to accept Christ without delay, adding that if she delayed it might be too late.

This was the last time that woman heard of the Saviour's love. Two days after she died, and, so far as man can tell, neglecting God's offered mercy.

Dear reader, let this be a warning. Do not put off the weighty matter of your soul's salvation, for you are not sure of tomorrow; but come now to the Lord Jesus Christ, for "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." J. S —n

God Giveth the Increase

THE Sunday evening service was ended, and Henry, the young village preacher, wearily wended his homeward way, through the chilly autumnal twilight. The road ran for some distance along a gloomy valley, and, as the cold wind swept the damp air past him, a great depression fell on the young man's spirit. He felt, as he had never done, what a feeble instrument he was for the Lord's service, and began to question within himself whether he ought ever to have put his hand to this mighty work, for which he judged himself so little fitted. In his despondency, he doubted if any had received, or ever would receive, the least blessing through his poor efforts to tell the story of the Lamb of God.

As he neared the town where he lived, the intense melancholy seemed but to deepen, until his sad train of thoughts was interrupted abruptly by a young man, who, walking briskly towards him, asked, "Can you tell me if I am right for Trent Bridge?" "No," answered Henry, "you must go about a hundred yards back, then turn to your right, when you will easily find it," and he was passing on, but the stranger caught sight of his face, as they came under a lamp-post near the town, and exclaimed, "Surely I have seen you before"

"I have no recollection of you," replied Henry.

"Well, tell me, did you not preach some six weeks back in the village of ■?"

"Yes, I did," responded Henry, sadly, ready with renewed depression to wish he had not done so. "Were you present?"

"That I was," answered the young man warmly; "and many a time have I longed to meet you again, for the words you spoke that night led me to turn to the Lord. I have now found the Saviour of whom you spoke, and I have life in Him; I am a new creature in Christ Jesus. I see now why I have been allowed to lose time by going out of my road in this fashion. I hesitated yonder as to which turning I should take, and felt half put out when your words showed me I had taken the wrong one after all; now I see the Lord led me here that I might meet you. Oh, how good of Him to let me set eyes on you again!"

"Ah!" said Henry, as he heartily grasped the hand extended to him, "you know but half the story of the Lord's loving kindness in letting us thus meet. I must tell you my side of it." As they walked on together, with a full heart, the young evangelist told his companion of his sorrowful experiences of that evening, in the deep discouragement he had been laboring under as to his service for the Master, and how, in their unexpected meeting, he had had a fresh proof of his loving Master's tender thought for His faltering and faint-hearted servant, by giving him such a signal mark of His approval of his ministry.

They parted, and Henry, with a light step and glad heart, pursued his solitary path, resolving, by the grace of God, to be in labors more abundant, believing that these should not be in vain in the Lord, who "giveth the increase." D. & A. C.

There or Somewhere Else

ONE Sunday, in the year 1888 when staying in the town of A, near Glasgow, I was asked to visit a dying man, who lay in a little cottage nearby. This I gladly consented to do, and a few minutes' walk brought myself and a companion to the sick man's door. We do not naturally like to look upon death, or even to think of it, but in the school of Christ, who robbed it of its sting, we learn to take a deep interest in those who are going down into the valley of the shadow of death. I was anxious to learn what were the feelings of this dying man, and, if possible, to cheer him with the hope of a home beyond the grave. Entering the house, we found his wife weeping by the bedside; and it needed no special knowledge to see that the life of the sick man was fast ebbing away. Taking his thin, wasted hand into mine, and bending over the bed, I asked him as simply and affectionately as I could, what were his hopes as to the world beyond. Speaking as one who had experience of His power, I told him of Jesus, the Mighty to save, and said at parting, "Shall we meet again? I am going to heaven; shall we not meet there?"

Slowly raising his eyes to mine, he replied painfully, and with a sigh, "I'll be there— or somewhere else! very soon."

It was a solemn answer, solemnly given, and I could see that the poor sufferer, by the emphasis he laid on his last words, was uncertain as to where he was to spend the eternity into which he passed a short time afterward.

Consider carefully the dying man's reply, "In heaven— or somewhere else!"

Why are men so averse to using the word hell? Is it not that the very name of a place so terrible is terrible? And is it not, in the case of thousands, from a shuddering horror of what conscience whispers is the impending doom?

God's Wonderful Ways With Man. The Fourth Age Law

THE period during which man was under the Law is by no means so long as that which preceded it, when he was without law, nor as that wherein grace abounds, which has followed it. "From Adam to Moses" (Rom. 5:14.) covered some 2500 years, and since the resurrection of the Lord nearly 1900 years have elapsed; man was under the law for some 1500 years.

Only a few days of that 1500 years had elapsed before Israel openly and flagrantly broke the law. Even while the Lawgiver was yet in the mount with Jehovah, they cried, "Up, make us gods!" and even while the terrible sound of God's words— "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them" (Ex. 20:3-5) still rang in their ears, they "made them a molten calf," "worshipped it," and "sacrificed thereunto." (ch. 32:8.)

Nationally, the holy law of God was broken by the people to whom it was committed, while they dwelt at the very foot of Sinai, and before they took one day's journey in the wilderness, as under its covenant. Israel, the people chosen out of the nations by God, said all answering together "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do" (ch. 19; but the Lord declared of them, "They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them;.... I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people" (chs. 32:8, 9); and the Lawgiver, on coming down amongst them from the presence of Jehovah, as he viewed their rebellion, could but cast the tables of the law written by the finger of God though they were out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount (vs. 19).

Thus, with sin abounding, commences the age "under the Law," and unless God had mingled mercy with His judgments, He must have consumed Israel in His wrath. But the mediator lifted up his voice, and his plea was heard; Israel, though plagued for rebellion, was spared.

Idolatry had been set up in the very midst of Israel, and accordingly "Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp," and thenceforward "every one, which sought the Lord, went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp" (ch. 33:7). God retired from the midst of Israel, and attracted to Himself without the camp all who sought Him. The professing body of Israel had within it individuals true to Jehovah, but to find Him these had to go outside the camp. The faithful remnant within the nation—the true hearted among the many lip-servers—henceforth becomes, in the history of Israel, that company upon which God looks with pleasure, and which waits upon Him, even up to the time of the Messiah.

In God's ways with man, as seen in the history of Israel, the three great offices He has conferred upon man, in connection with Himself and His people become apparent. Prophet, Priest, and King are part and parcel of Israel's history. Enoch prophesied before the flood, Noah performed priestly service, the patriarchs offered their sacrifices and uttered inspired words, but in the circle of Israel we find most markedly the three-fold honors of Prophet, Priest, and King.

Moses was a prophet, and the first who communicated the mind of God to man, writing the inspired words for man to heed and to obey. Alas! he was rejected, as we have observed, even while within the clouds that encircled the abode of the Lord on Sinai. For century after century was the voice of the prophet heard, and as often refused. Malachi spoke, and then came a silence for over 400 years, and the message was heard no more until God spake by His Son. Him they would not hear, as the Holy Ghost by Stephen testified ■ “Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.” (Acts 7:52, 53)

The prophet communicate God’s mind to His people; the king is their representative. God raised up the royal line in Israel, which should both rule and represent the nation. But Solomon in all his glory worshipped idols. He forsook the living God, and idolatry was the ruin of the kingdom of Israel.

At Solomon’s death the kingdom was split in two, and after some years the crown departed first from Israel, and then from Judah, ruin and captivity being the bitter end of the once glorious throne God had set up on the earth for man to fill for His praise.

David shines for a short time in the honors and glories of the king of God’s appointment; while Solomon, being crowned before his father’s death, supplements the type, adding, as it were, to the sword and victory peace and abundance for the people, and a temple of praise for Jehovah. David, the king of God’s choice, typifies the Lord obtaining the throne after rejection. Solomon typifies the Lord reigning in glory and peace. When Jesus was born King of the Jews, “Herod the king was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.” (Matt. 2:3.) From His birth He was unwelcome: nor did the great and the wise of that day, rest, till they had cast out and crucified their King!

The prophet was rejected of the people, and the king cast off subjection to God; Jesus, the Prophet and the King, was set at naught: what shall be said of the priest, and of Him, the Priest?

The priest stands between God and man, and offers sacrifices and gifts. Aaron was called to this honor, and his sons were in the succession. As we look at our diagram we observe that the priestly office in Israel was of far longer duration than that of the king, and its service extended over a larger period than that of the prophet. Indeed; except during the years of the captivity, when there was no temple, and also on a few brief occasions, when there was no temple worship, the priests in Israel stood between the people and Jehovah, to offer up sacrifice to Him.

Man cannot come to God without a sacrifice, and a sacrifice requires an offerer. If man would approach God at all he must come owning that death is his desert as a sinner. So it was with the patriarchs, and with all the faithful among Israel, and so with every believing heart of the present day. Now God in His mercy allowed that the exercise of priestly service in Israel, should continue from Aaron to the Messiah, save with the breaks we have noted. Such were His wonderful ways of grace towards His ancient people.

Yet the priests of Israel, the very men whose service it was to sacrifice the victims, which spake of Jesus, the men whose whole existence as a class on earth related to Him, were His bitterest enemies! If any men in Israel might have been supposed to comprehend the meaning of the Passover we should say it would have been the priests. If any men might have been selected to

teach what the atonement signified we should have chosen the priests. But the high priests and the chief priests led on the people to cry to Pilate, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." The long line of the priesthood, the Aaronic succession, which commenced upon the call of God, closed its history as the exponent of sacrifice by the murder of God's Son.

The Lord was Prophet, King, and Priest. In Him these honors are all combined and made glorious. Man despised and rejected His words, scorned His title, King of the Jews, and nailed Him to the cross. But upon the cross Jesus our Lord offered Himself a sacrifice without spot to God. There the great priestly service in offering up the sacrifice was fulfilled, there the glories of the sacred work of the priest in relation to expiatory sacrifice are seen complete forever.

From that great day of atonement God has set forth that blood, that sacrifice, as expiatory for human sin; and whether they be priests of heathen gods or priests of Christendom, every other expiatory sacrifice offered up from that day is abomination with God. The present age has for one of its characteristics in God's dealings with man, the glory of Christ the Priest on high, and we may say that that class which professes to be a sacrificing priesthood in Christendom is, as were the Jewish priests that cried for Christ's death, His bitterest enemy on the earth. Christ now fills the heavens with glory, into which He has ascended; there He sits as High Priest, and awaits the glory of His crown and kingdom upon the earth. The believer rejoices in Him as Priest, who once for all sacrificed Himself, and who lives to make intercession for His people; and he looks for the fulfillment of the sure word of His prophecy when the Lord shall come to the earth again and reign.

The age of law begins with its broken tables, and ends with the dark story of the Prophet rejected and the King crucified. Israel's history as a nation commenced with the Passover slain in Egypt; it ends as a light bearer for God on the earth in the sacrifice of Christ, the Passover. True, God has great things in store for Israel, but they will never become theirs through law keeping, but through the Prophet, Priest, and King, who shall, in His own power, and by God's grace, establish and make good the promises of God.

Noble Courage

A SHIP was being beaten to pieces on the Goodwin Sands, and again and again the lifeboat was driven back by the sea, unable to reach the crew, who were clinging to the rigging. The shipwrecked men were Germans, and some of the poor fellows were in despair, fearing the lifeboat would give up the attempt, when one of their number called to his mates■ “They are Englishmen; they will save us or die!”

Would to God each one of our Christian readers would struggle in the face of all storms and opposition to save souls as did the lifeboat’s crew.

An Impossibility

“WITHOUT faith it is impossible to please God.” There is no real communication with God unless God be believed. However religious a man may be, without faith his religious life is in vain, for he does not have dealings with God.

A Contrite Heart

DEAR lads, no doubt you are all familiar with the text, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou will not despise”; but have you ever thought how often the Lord has to smite us, just to bring us to Himself, with a contrite and broken heart? Well, nearly nine years ago, on a cold, dreary Sunday in March, a loving mother was earnestly speaking to her boy of God’s love, and of the necessity of his coming to a decision to receive Jesus as his Saviour, so that he might have Him as his Friend through life, on the difficulties of which he was just starting. The lad, like many others, thought he would have to give up his pleasures, and, not being prepared for this, reasoned that religion was all very good for old people, but that young folks must enjoy their youth. So to evade his mother’s further entreaties he rose abruptly and left the room.

That dear mother had never again to speak to her boy of her Saviour, but God spoke to him with a loud voice. Just three days after, ongoing into his mother’s bedroom, this lad found his mother lying cold in death: she had been suddenly called to the home above. Ah! then he resolved to become religious; he resolved ■ yes, and tried, in all earnestness ■ to lead a good life. But it was uphill work: for a few days he would be getting on so well, and then some temptation would come, and down he would fall again.

This state of things continued for nearly a year, and he was just about to give up in despair, when one day he heard a minister speak on the words, “I am the Way.” After explaining how that Jesus was the only way to the Father, he turned in the direction of the lad, and, as if specially addressing, him, said, “Young man, have you been trying to get to heaven your own way? Oh! give it up, and take God’s way ■ simply trust in the merits and death of Jesus.” Sitting there, at that moment, the lad yielded himself at once to Him who had died to redeem him, and today, after eight years, he wishes to tell you, dear lads, that it is the best thing he ever did in his life, and to entreat you to come and share his joy in the same precious Saviour. M.D.J.

The Spanish Girl's Conversion

IN Spain, which is a Roman Catholic country, it is customary for parents to name their children after the particular saint-day or feast-day, on which they are born. The little girl of whom I write was born on Ascension Day, and her parents accordingly called her Ascencion.

When Ascencion was about twelve years of age, her parents sent her to an evangelical school, that is, not one of the ordinary Roman Catholic schools, but a school where the teachers, who had the true knowledge of Jesus, sought to implant the same in the hearts of their scholars. The Spanish teacher noticed Ascencion's attention to the word of God from the very first day, and how she used every opportunity of hearing it, not only at school but at other times. This desire to hear the scriptures led Ascencion to attend a class of girls, that was held in the house of a missionary every Saturday afternoon. Some of the girls of the class could repeat many texts from memory, and they knew a good deal about the Bible, but they were not attentive, and their teacher had to speak to them about their naughty ways. They seemed, however, to become more careless, and on one occasion the teacher said to them, as Ascencion sat among them, "If you knew how God looked on sin, you would not be so careless, but you would be concerned about your souls. I wish I could see you feeling your sins, then I would have hope of you."

Ascencion blushed and said; "Donna Maria, I do feel my sins."

The teacher replied, "If there is any girl here who really feels her sins, the Lord says, that 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (1 John 1:9).

He really does what He promises to do, so that we, with confidence, are able to say, 'Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His, own blood...be glory and dominion forever and ever.'" (Rev. 1:5, 6.)

Ascencion had a Bible of her own: she found the first text, and seriously considered it. She turned down the leaf to remember the place, looked at it again, and closed her book. She believed what she saw written in the book to be indeed the word of God. This appears to have been the time of her conversion. She heard it said that whether she loved the Lord or not would be manifested in her daily life; and therefore she began most carefully to help her mother. She rose early in the morning, helped her little brother and sister to dress; took the big basket and went to market for her mother; and her mother said she never kept a centimo (which is a small coin of the value of one-fifth of a halfpenny). This was saying a great deal, for children in Spain very soon learn to steal, and many of Ascencion's companions were not particular in small matters of centimos.

Ascencion did what she could in her home duty, but all before nine o'clock in the morning, for she would not be late at school if she could possibly help it.

Two years before what has just been related occurred, Ascencion was seriously injured through a fall. Soon after her conversion she had a very painful illness, resulting from the injury, and during

her illness her Spanish teacher and her class teacher, with others, were allowed to visit her. She suffered patiently for five months, during which time it was her great delight to have anyone read the word of God and pray with her; and then the Lord took her home.

Ascension's memory still lives among her schoolfellows, one of whom was so touched by her testimony that she wished to go to heaven too.

And now, dear children, if Ascension found Jesus, in a country where her opportunities and privileges were certainly not as great as yours, what excuse will you make to God if you remain still unsaved? Is not Jesus as able and willing to save you as He was to save Ascension? Do you not know what she appeared to believe the first time she heard it—that there was cleansing for her through the precious blood of Jesus? Oh, that the Lord may incline some of you, even now, whilst reading these lines, to come to Jesus, just as you are, without one plea, but that His blood was shed for thee, and that He bids thee come. He has borne the judgment due to sin, and if in your heart you accept Him as your Saviour, your sins shall be forgiven as Ascension's were.

W. W. H.

Have a High Aim

HE who has but a small aim before him in life will not rise to any greatness. Some Christians seem to remain on a low level all their lives; they may be divided into two classes—those who think more highly of themselves than they ought to think, and those who are content to be asleep.

If a Christian gets it into his head that he is better than others, and has attained to great things, he thinks more highly of himself than he ought to think; he is proud and puffed up, and is by no means with a high aim before him. Far from it; he thinks he has reached the summit, and such thoughts hinder his spiritual progress.

If the Christian be in a sleepy state of soul he has no high aim before him, he is satisfied to be a drowsy Christian; wide-awake, no doubt to the things of the world, to his success in life, but without a high aim for things that are everlasting.

Over and over again the Scriptures exhort us to truly great things. We are bidden to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, to set our affection on things above, to walk as Christ walked, and thus the really great things are presented to us as those which we should put before our souls as our aim.

Let the young believer put before himself the example of good and noble servants of God, and let him seek the company of such, lest he should think too highly of himself. Let him follow the faith of the examples God has placed before us in His word, and keep the word of exhortation before his soul. Let him visit—if he have the opportunity—the godly sick, and learn from them how to live as a Christian should do. Let him aim high in doing the little things of daily life, for if these be well done, things that men call great will not be difficult to perform. There is a greater thing than doing for Christ, and that is living Christ. Let this, the greatest work of all practical Christianity, be his aim. Have a high aim.

In Thy Youth

YES! in your youth, in the bright, fresh spring-time of your life, while all is sunny before you, and while you are strong, remember your Creator. Give God your early days, your best days. How many an one has lamented in middle life that he did not give himself up to God in his youth!

“I am brought to God,” said one to us not long since, “but I have one deep regret, I have lived till my hair has grown gray and my strength has failed without Him. Oh, that I had turned to God in my youth!”

A few months afterward this man told us he was unable to fulfill his little service in helping on the work of the gospel, as age was telling on him. His heart was sound, but his strength had failed.

“In thy youth— in thy youth.”

A MAN may make his conscience his director, and act up to it, but such a life is spent in vain, for that man does not please God, since he follows himself and not God.

The Experiences of a Missionary in China.

7. A Troublesome Journey, and What Came of It

IF immediate results were the only reward of true Christian service, there would be much in heathen lands to discourage the missionary. Often he has to toil on for months, and sometimes perhaps even years, without being permitted to see much result to his labors.

The missionary journey which I am about to describe, was one of great trial, there was much to dishearten and little to encourage; the seed was sown in tears, but the time of joyous reaping came, and the labor was not in vain in the Lord.

This happy result of our journey, which only came to our knowledge some years after our labor, corroborates the expectation of blessing which we had directly upon the end of the journey and return home, which we put on record in our diary, as follows:■ “There is reason to expect large results if God follow up with His blessing only a small part of the work done, and teach by His Holy Spirit those who read His printed word, which has been scattered all over the route we traveled. We rest on the faithfulness of God’s assurance that His word shall not return unto Him void; it shall accomplish that which He pleaseth, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto it was sent. (Isa. 55:11.) Eternity alone will reveal the wonderful achievements of God’s silent message, and the work of His messages in various parts of this great empire.”

The journey was into the cities and towns of the almost unknown regions of the Western hills of Shansi. The roads in this part of China are simply the beds of mountain streams, which in the rainy season fill with water, and at once stop all traveling. The water, however, soon disappears into the Great Yellow River, and then roads are again passable, ■rocks, stones and sand only remaining to try the patience of the traveler and to test the strength and power o; endurance of the beasts of burden. These make-shift roads, to a great extent, serve to cut off the inhabitants of the hills from those of the more populous plains.

The famine had carried off two-third: of the people of these hills, the town and villages were partly in ruins, and the terraced hillsides were uncultivated and overgrown with weeds. It was no easy thing to hire a guide and mules for a journey into the stricken region, but at length a mar owning two mules agreed to conduct out party, consisting of two Chinamen and myself, to our destination.

We started from the city of Ping-yang feeling conscious of carrying with us the Word of Life into a region of the greatest darkness and death, where hitherto the gospel had not been preached.

We expected to be able to accomplish the journey in less than three weeks, and so escape the rainy season. All went well for the first two days, when the two Chinese brethren■one an evangelist, and the other a servant■fell out with each other, and so great was the strife between them, that I was forced to allow the servant to return.

Rain now began to fall, and advance was both slow and difficult. Our road became covered with water, the stream grew deeper, and the constant crossing and re-crossing made it dangerous for the animals. The rain increased, and we began to fear that the rainy season had commenced.

We had stayed a few days in roadside inns and villages along the route hoping for better weather, but the waters increased so quickly that it was impossible to proceed. The stream had grown too rapid and deep for the laden mules to swim over.

This was our eleventh day on the road; we were too far from home to think of returning, so we looked around us for a resting-place for the night. Not far away were a few caves, and in them were living three families. After a little persuasion the occupier of one of the caves, a farmer named Chang, allowed us to sleep in a shed where he kept his grain and farming implements.

The next morning the guide refused to go any further along such roads, and unpacked our goods and returned home with the mules, the rain, the famine-stricken region, and the fear of robbers and wolves, having quite frightened him.

So I was left weather-bound in the cave with only one native companion, and the prospect of nearly a fortnight's weary waiting. For ten days we lived with the Chang family and were thankful for their kind hospitality, consisting of two meals of maize-bread in the twenty-four hours, together with a few vegetables and hot water to drink. Before the famine some twenty families had lived in the caves, all of whom had perished except three.

We had preached in the villages on our way, and were encouraged to find that one man in Pu Hsien showed an interest in the gospel. He afterward became a Christian, the first fruits of a Christian church now existing in the neighborhood.

Our host professed to believe our message, but there was little inclination to destroy the idols in his cave. The fearful scenes of starvation around him did not appear to have awakened any great concern about the future, but rather the reverse. We left with him some scriptures, which he began forthwith to study.

As soon as the weather improved we took short excursions into the surrounding hills and valleys. Few people were to be found, but we discovered the remains of men, women, and children in many of the caves just as they had fallen from hunger. The sights were awful. Now and again, while wandering over the silent hills, we would come across a solitary man, and, sitting down by the side of the mountain path, we would talk together of the famine and would then tell him of the salvation of God, which we had come to make known to the stricken people.

When the rain ceased we tried to obtain mules and proceed. We carried some copies of the scriptures over the mountains, along a difficult and dangerous mountain path, till we reached a place where the water in the river was not more than a few feet deep, and we crossed to the town of Wu-cheng, put up at an inn, and preached the gospel to as many as we could of the few people left.

It happened to be market day, and there was present, listening, a man named Chu from a neighboring village. We distributed copies of parts of the Bible, and to Chu we gave a Gospel of Mark. This he studied carefully, and he conceived it to be a book from heaven, for it taught a heavenly doctrine one different from what he had ever heard. So Chu began to worship the book. And for two years he worshipped this Gospel by Mark. At the end of that time he visited Wu-cheng again, and stayed in the inn where we had been, and there, to his great joy, he discovered a book, in the possession of the innkeeper, which appeared to be of the same kind as his own Gospel of

Mark. He bargained with the innkeeper and bought the new book, which was nothing less than a complete New Testament.

Chu returned home with his new treasure, and began to study it with great desire. There was a Buddhist priest in the village, and he, too, became deeply interested in the contents of these strange books, so much so that he and Chu used to meet every evening to read these Scriptures.

Three more years passed by, when Chu, who was a man of literature, had occasion to go to the city of Ping-yang Fu to pass Government examinations, and when there, he learned that a missionary lived in the city, and he took an early opportunity of paying him a visit.

The missionary asked him to spend a few days in his house, and thus Chu learned that God forgives sins, and that through faith in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, he might obtain the remission of his sins and the gift of eternal life. The end of the matter was, that Chu returned to his village a changed man. He immediately carried this good news of the forgiveness of sins to his friend the Buddhist priest, and, after pointing out clearly to him the way of salvation, he, too, accepted Christ and became a Christian.

Since his conversion, Chu has been the means in God's hands of leading more than fifty others to Christ, not only people in his own village, but also of the surrounding country. A. G. P.

7. From Malachi to Matthew

FOR two or three years the work of deliverance was vigorously carried on by Judas Maccabeus. Mount Zion was fortified, and a garrison set; the Idumeans and Ammonites were fought against and defeated; many cities were taken, much spoil was captured, and the dispersed of the people were gathered into their own land. In these exploits Judas and his brother Jonathan took command of the army which acted on the east side of the Jordan, while Simon led another force into Galilee. On one or two occasions disaster overtook sections of the Jewish troops, which were led by men with more zeal than discretion, but on the whole the Jews were successful, especially when led by the Maccabean brothers.

We need not follow Judas in all the excursions which he made, but we must refer to the fourth year of his leadership (B.C.163), when peril again threatened the people. Antiochus Epiphanes had been succeeded by his son Antiochus Eupater, a boy nine years of age, under the guardianship of Lysias, the old opponent of the Jews. Another attempt was made by Lysias to overthrow Judas, and when the armies met, the Jewish troops were far inferior in every way to the Syrian forces and were compelled to retreat on Jerusalem. In this fight, Eleazar, the brother of Judas, was slain. From the immense size and splendid trappings of an elephant in the Syrian ranks, he drew the mistaken inference that it was the king's beast, and thought to deliver his people and to win an immortal name for himself by accomplishing the death of the king. Cutting his way through the opposing ranks, he got under the elephant, and thrust his spear into its belly. The beast fell, and crushed Eleazar by its weight. But no good resulted from this self-sacrifice— it was a life thrown away; the effect of the loss of so valiant a man being rather to discourage the Jews.

As above mentioned, the Jews retreated to Jerusalem, and the king laid siege to the city. A famine threatened the besieged, but fortunately the attention of the besiegers was diverted by rumors from their own land, to the effect that Philip (a rival of Lysias, who had been appointed by the late Antiochus to the oversight of his dominions) had returned from Persia, and was endeavoring to gather the reins of government into his own hands. Thereupon a peace was concluded by the Syrians with the Jews, and was confirmed by the king's oath. But when, upon the basis of this truce, the king was admitted into the city, and saw the strength of the defenses, he, regardless of his oath, commanded the walls to be destroyed, which was done. The Syrian forces then returned to Antiochia, and the rebellion under Philip was put down.

The apostate high-priest, Menelaus, had accompanied this expedition, and upon its failure, Lysias represented to the king that he had been the cause of all the mischief, and at his instigation he was slain. The country was well rid of him; but unfortunately the high-priesthood was given to Alcimus, who was in every way as bad as the late priest.

In the following year (B.C. 162) Demetrius, the son of Seleucus Philopater and nephew of Antiochus Epiphanes, appeared upon the scene. He had been held a hostage at Rome, but having escaped from thence to Tripolis in Syria, he represented that he had been deputed by the Roman Senate to take possession of the Syrian kingdom, then reigned over by his cousin,

Antiochus Eupater. On the strength of this, many came over to him. The king and his minister Lysias, were both captured and put to death, and Demetrius ascended the throne, assuming the surname "Soter," Saviour. Alcimus, the Jewish high priest, approached him with a present of a crown of gold and other gifts, and was confirmed by the king in his priesthood. The slanders of this priest (an enemy to his own land) incensed the king against Judas, and command was given to Nicanor, the old foe of the Maccabees, to slay Judas and to scatter his followers. But Nicanor was familiar with the prowess and abilities of Judas, and seems to have respected him. He went so far against his instructions that, instead of attempting war, he settled articles of peace with Judas—a condition of things so repugnant to the desires of Alcimus that he accused Nicanor to the king, and in the result, urgent commands were sent that the original plans should be carried out. Judas discovered the turn which affairs had taken, and prepared for his part in the strife. The opposing forces pitched at Bethhoron and Adasa; they fought; Nicanor was slain, and his head was carried in triumph to Jerusalem, as Goliath's had been. The Syrian host was routed, and retired, and "thus," says the ancient chronicler, "the land of Judah was in rest a little while."

In the interval of peace Judas cast wistful eyes towards that great western power, the Roman, which was taking its place as mistress of the nations, and longed for an alliance with it. From a religious standpoint this was undoubtedly wrong. The faith of earlier years, which had counted on the living God, seemed to be ebbing—the faith in which the huge armies of Apollonius and Nicanor had been met and overcome. Even politically it was an error, for the tendency of such alliances is towards the absorption of the smaller contracting power into the larger. Nevertheless the negotiations were successful; a treaty of offense and defense was settled; but before letters from the Senate could be delivered to Demetrius, warning him against further injustice towards their "friends and confederates, the Jews," Judas had fallen! For when Dim of the defeat of his arms in Judaea, he had sent again under Bacchides and Alcimus a force of 22,000 men. As for the Jews, they numbered a feeble 3000! Somehow heart failed them: Judas himself was troubled; his men begged him to retreat, and upon his refusal the bulk of them deserted. The remaining handful of troops engaged in the conflict, but after a sore battle was defeated, and Judas was numbered with the slain.

So nobly passed away one of the most interesting figures in Jewish history. "He had been a man of valor and a great warrior," says the historian of the Jews; "and had undergone all difficulties, both in doing and suffering, for the liberty of his countrymen. He left behind him a glorious reputation and memorial, by gaining freedom for his nation, and delivering them from slavery under the Macedonians.

With the death of Judas (B.C. 161) other troubles began to afflict the Jews; the "Syrian party" among them made attempts to restore the Syrian sway; a great famine distressed the people, and in much perplexity many came to Jonathan, the brother of Judas, and besought him to take the leadership into his hands. He consented, and with marked ability took Judas' place. Seeing that active operations were impossible, he withdrew with his few forces into the wilderness of Tekoa, and succeeded by skillful maneuvering in wearying out Bacchides' troops, who sought in vain to take him.

Upon the death of Alcimus (B.C. 160), who wrought all the evil he could against his own people and land, another brief respite was granted to the Jews. At the end of two years, however,

Bacchides led a second fruitless expedition into Judaea. He was defeated by Jonathan, and terms of peace were ultimately settled between the opposing leaders.

A little later, circumstances arose which greatly favored the Jewish people. It will be remembered that Demetrius Soter obtained possession of the Syrian throne by falsely claiming the authority of the Roman Senate. His successful tactics found a successful imitator. In the year 153 B.C. another claimant appeared. A former favorite of Antiochus Epiphanes had, for his own ambitious ends, instructed a youth of mean birth, named Balas, to play the part of that king's son. The help of Rome was sought, and, though the Senate clearly saw through the imposture, it answered their purpose (especially as Demetrius had offended them) to sanction the claims of Balas, and they made a decree in his favor. Assuming the name, "Alexander," Balas raised forces, and sailed to Ptolemais, in Palestine, where numbers received him. Demetrius set himself upon his defense. It was important to both sides to secure, if possible, the alliance of Jonathan, and first of all Demetrius sent "loving words," to him begging his friendship, and returning certain prisoners of war held by him. When Alexander heard of this, he sought to win Jonathan to his side, and addressed to him a letter, constituting him high priest. With the letter was sent a present of the crown of gold and purple robe of an ethnarch, or independent prince. Not to be outdone, Demetrius made still further offers, granting freedom from taxes and tributes, and many other advantages. But Jonathan and the Jews had little faith in Demetrius's overtures, so they espoused the cause of Alexander, and, acting upon the latter's offer, Jonathan solemnly assumed the high priestly garments at the Feast of Tabernacles in the year 153.

The opposing armies of Alexander and Demetrius met and fought, success at first fluctuating between either side. Ultimately, Demetrius was defeated, and fled, but in the retreat his horse was entangled in a bog, and the hapless king became a mere target for the fatal darts of his pursuers. There was now no obstacle to the full recognition of Alexander as king of Syria, and as such he entered into an alliance with Ptolemy of Egypt, who gave his daughter to him as wife.

Jr.

Seeking Salvation

AT the age of fourteen, life opened very brightly before the young Janet, the petted, loved child of parents whose one desire was her happiness. But, sad to say, they sought it for her in a world which could never satisfy her soul. With their approval Janet joined heartily in all the gaieties of Gibraltar, where her parents resided, though her Christian governess vainly protested that so much dissipation unfitted her pupil for study.

Happily, amid the whirl of pleasure-seeking, there was one good counteracting influence for Janet, in the ministry, on Sundays, of the pious Dr. R., whose weekday classes for young ladies she also attended. This true servant of the Lord had suffered persecution for his Master's sake, having been driven from the Spanish dominions by the cruel queen of that country. Armed soldiers had been sent by her with orders to expel him at the point of the bayonet, while preaching in the church at Cadiz. However, through God's over-ruling mercy, they were restrained from any act of violence, and quietly waited until the conclusion of the service, when the preacher walked out unmolested. He found refuge and safety at Gibraltar, whither his numerous converts followed him later, being also banished from Spain.

Though Dr. R. sought to praise God in the trial, yet he could not but leave the scene of his labors with sorrow, and his heart as a father suffered an additional pang at the same time in the death of his youngest child, whom he had every reason to believe was poisoned. "Vengeance belongeth unto Me; I will recompense, saith the Lord." Dr. R. lived to see this persecuting queen herself turned out of Spain for her wickedness, by her irritated subjects, at the point of the bayonet!

As Janet heard of the sufferings of these persecuted Christians for the Lord's sake, she much wondered what unseen power could sustain them. Though they had endured the loss of all things, she saw that they had a joy of which she herself knew nothing, while surrounded by all that this world could give of comfort and pleasure. It was evident to her that these people had in inheritance beyond this passing scene; and, as she, longed to share their portion, she trembled, mowing that for her, after death, here was but the judgment.

One night a fearful storm broke over the Rock. When it was at its height, Janet's father came to her room, and tenderly soothed his frightened child. He covered her bamboo got round with a blanket, and nailed another in front of the window to prevent her seeing the vivid lightning. But no sleep came to the young girl's eyes that night. A stern view of the reality of eternity, contrasted with the hollowness of her present life, overpowered her, and filled her mind with far more terror than did the storm which raged without.

In the morning Janet's governess asked her whether she had been afraid during the storm. On receiving "Yes" for a reply, Miss C. put her hands together in the form of a cup, and said■

"Why should you fear? you were in the hollow of God's hand, and with His right hand He covered you■see how safe you were!"

But the poor girl, who felt her distance from God, only replied, "I was not there."

About this time Janet's young soldier-brother said to her, "I can never say that prayer in which we thank God for creating us; I consider it better not to have been born than not to be saved!"

Through God's tender mercy this young man was brought to the saving knowledge of His Son, during the revival of 1859. Being persuaded by his friends to attend a gospel meeting, held by a well-known evangelist, he very reluctantly followed the rest of the party into a carpenter's shed, where the service took place, and seated himself near the door. Janet feared he would leave as soon as the text was given out: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John 5:24.) He stayed, however, and listened with the deepest interest; and there and then, he passed from death unto life, and returned home rejoicing, repeating the glad tidings to a friend, who had not received the Saviour.

But to return to our story. The ruler of the darkness of this world, used often to suggest hard thoughts of God to Janet, and would ask her why it was that God required the suffering of Christ to reconcile Him to men. She knew not the scripture, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, nor did she know that God beseeches man to be reconciled to Himself (2 Cor. 5:19), nor that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16.) How frequently is it the case, that Satan works on our ignorance of the Bible to present thoughts to our minds, which are utterly opposed to the word of God!

With the closest scrutiny did Janet now watch the words and actions of her elders, and, not being satisfied with what she saw in several, she came to the conclusion that only her mother, her governess, and Dr. R. were really in the narrow path. The multitude around her, she felt sure, must be in the broad road to eternal ruin. Here again her own thoughts helped to shut her soul up in bitterness.

Having heard that there were several translations of the Bible, it struck her that, as her mother and Miss C. were so different from other people, their Bibles must be different too. So one day she slipped away with Miss C.'s Bible in her hand, determining to read it for herself, while the rest of the family were at luncheon.

Sitting upon the brick floor, on the top of the flat-roofed Spanish house, she began her search for truth. She opened the Book at Genesis, and read through chapter after chapter, and was deep in its perusal when the bell, calling her to her studies, rang, and the step of her governess was heard. At that very moment her eyes rested on a marked passage in Miss C.'s Bible. It happened to be the only one that was marked. It was this: "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." (1 John 5:19.)

Hastily shutting the Book, Janet returned it to its place, thinking within herself, "Yes, they are of God, and I am of the wicked one."

Yet, even by this bitter experience, new light had entered into her soul: she saw that there is a distinction between the saved and the unsaved.

That same week Dr. R. gave the young girls of his Monday class this subject for their study— “All are sinners;” and he told them to bring from the Bible some texts proving that such is the case. This much displeased Janet, for, notwithstanding her misery of mind, she did not think she came under the same condemnation as open and profligate sinners. She set to work to prove that she was not so very bad, after all, and hunted the Bible up and down to discover a text to sustain her. At last she lighted on 1 Tim. 4:4

“Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving.”

She had found many texts which declared that all have sinned, but she was not willing to produce one of them. When the afternoon class assembled, Dr. R. asked for her scriptures, as well as the rest: she replied that she could prove that all were good.

“Then we will keep your proof for the last,” said the doctor, kindly. When Janet gave in her misapplied text, which had nothing whatever to do with man’s goodness or badness, he said, “Surely you might find one text to prove we are sinners.” Feeling obliged to give him one, she selected this: “There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.” (Eccl. 7:20.)

During the time that Janet attended Dr. R.’s class, she learned by heart the epistles to the Galatians and to the Ephesians. Her teacher took some pains to instruct her as to the doctrine of the believer being sealed with the Spirit; but she felt that this truth was not for her, as she could not yet say that she was a child of God. Her great difficulty now was as to the forgiveness of present and future sins, even if she could grasp the thought that the past were pardoned.

Years fled away. Janet had grown to early womanhood, and was still trying to propitiate, by her works, the One whom she regarded as an angry God. She was ever turning to mar for light, and all the time the question before her was, “How shall my soul escape judgment?” Thus it continued with her until the year 1859, when she accompanied her widowed mother to the town of W■to welcome home her soldier-brother from African service. The Spirit of God was richly blessing the word in the town at that time. An earnest evangelist, who had just returned from scenes of remarkable blessing in Ireland, was preaching to the soldiers, in whose good he was warmly interested. The general in command encouraged every effort for the spiritual good of his men, and, as Janet was a soldier’s daughter, her interest in the men led her to attend these meetings. Very remarkable were they for the power of God’s Spirit accompanying the word. Many were saved, and amongst others Janet’s, brother, whose conversion has been already recorded. The Christians attending these meetings seemed very earnest in speaking to anxious souls, but no one gave Janet even a tract, or said one word to her about her salvation. How disappointed she was, night after night, at the apparent want of interest in her! But, though no one ever said a word to her, God spoke, for two texts, read during one of the services, never left her: first, “All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field” (Isa. 40:6); the other, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.” (Jer. 8:20.)

One day Janet heard an officer, who had a bundle of tracts in his hand, say he had divided them into two parcels, one for believers, and the other for unbelievers; she longed for one of each, but received none, though two of her brother’s men-servants who were present, did so. One of these went home rejoicing in the Saviour, saying, “Having Christ we have everything.” He had been brought up in a religion which looks for salvation by works, and had therefore never before

been taught that Jesus is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. Janet watched this man carry off his tracts to an attic, and longed to read them, so as to solve the difficulty which so painfully exercised her mind: the difference between a believer and an unbeliever.

Though without the knowledge of God's love to herself, all this time Janet was teaching others—teaching what she did not know! She had a large Sunday-class, at some little distance from her residence, and as she wended her way to the school, through the quiet lane, she would mark the hawthorn blooming in the hedges. Often on week days, when riding with her brother and the groom down the same sheltered road, they would pause and pick the pretty blossoms, and place them in their horses' head-straps. Then tears would fill poor Janet's eyes, for the remainder of the ride, as she thought the hawthorn had bloomed, and might fade away—the summer come and pass into winter—and yet she remain unsaved. The text she had heard at the soldiers' meeting would ring in her ears. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." "Not saved, not saved," would re-echo in her anguished heart.

The following winter, Janet attended three special evening prayer-meetings at her church; but still no blessing reached her. Her distress of soul but deepened as the months passed by; and often as she walked through the lanes she would weep bitterly, and then try to remove the marks of tears, and cool her fevered eyes with a handful of snow.

The returning spring brought flowers and sunshine, and Janet again could pluck the hawthorn blossoms as she walked to the Sunday-school; but the text kept still sadly re-echoing in her heart, "Not saved, not saved!"

One afternoon, while sorrowfully going home from the Sunday-class, a voice, as it were from heaven, suddenly said to her, "How do you know that you are your mother's child?"

She stood still, and answered, "Because she tells me so, and all her actions prove it."

Then the voice said again, "And do not Mine?"

At once, and aloud, Janet answered, "They do, Lord; Thou art my Father and my God."

Thus in the quiet country lane, where she had had so much sorrow of heart, God spoke rest to her; and that lane still seems to her a hallowed spot. Jehovah—Jesus, the Lord whose mighty arm had dried up the sea, had, in His tender love to a poor anxious soul, dried up her tears. The joy of her deliverance, after the years of bondage, was such, that she was enabled at once to make a stand for her loving Saviour.

Since that bright day on which God spoke peace to her soul, Janet's faith has not wavered, for she rests on the Saviour according to the authority of God's word. All who knew her soon saw the change in her; from having been intensely reserved and timid, she now came boldly out on the Lord's side. Her great delight was to tell to others what He had done for her—how that He had set her feet on a Rock, and put a new song in her mouth, even praise to her God.

Janet was strangely tempted, after her conversion, to give up her class of twenty-eight girls in the Sunday-school, but took courage from the words in Matt. 5:19, "Whosoever shall do and teach them the Lord's commandments, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." From that time she had much blessing among her girls, and was also much used of the Lord in visits to

the sick in the hospital. Soon after she had found peace, she had the joy of bringing two dying ones there to the Saviour.

Years have passed since Janet first rejoiced in the Lord's power to save, and she still proves His love and graciousness this day. She can add her testimony with that of other children of God, to His faithfulness in answering prayer.

Once she pleaded much with God for the life of a soldier, who was condemned to be executed in Winchester jail. Upon the text, "Unto God the Lord belong the issues from death" (Psa.48:20.), she rested, and her faith was rewarded by a reprieve being sent.

At the soldiers' prayer-meetings the supplication often went up to heaven from the men, "God, save our officers!" and Janet's heart-cry was, "And my brother among them," which prayer was graciously heard and answered. On another occasion Janet was much interested in the soul of a locksmith, who had been sent for to mend a lock. She noticed the man's difficulty in breathing, as he mounted the staircase, and followed him to press God's claims on him. He was most unwilling to listen, and continued hammering loudly to drown her voice, only pausing at intervals to inform her how respectable he was, and how well he had brought up his family.

A few days later, as Janet was walking alone, a voice seemed to say to her, "Go to see the locksmith, and this will be a happy day for you." On reaching his cottage the wife said how glad she was to see her, as her husband had met with an accident, and was dying, adding that nearly the whole of the last night he had spent on his knees, crying out for mercy, As Janet stood by the sick man's bed, she asked, "Are you calling for mercy now, my poor friend, when God has had mercy on sinners more than 1800 years ago? His Son suffered on the cross the penalty due for your sins: the debt was all paid by Jesus."

After some further conversation, the light burst upon the dying man's soul, and he broke out into praise and thanksgiving to God for such a sacrifice.

The last days of his life were bright ones, rejoicing in the Lord and in His finished salvation. He used to say of her whom God had blessed to his soul, "I shall know her again in heaven."

Dear reader, if you are yet out of Christ, Janet would invite you, at the end of this simple record, to accept God's blessed gift, that you may be set free from the bondage of sin and self, and be devoted body and soul to the service of Him, who paid such a price for your redemption, and who claims you wholly for Himself. J. McC.

I See It! I See It!

“OH! I am not saved yet,” was the reply given to us the other day by one who we were assured was the Lord’s, but who had not peace.

“Well,” said we, “we are bold to say that the reason is because you do not believe what God says to you.”

Our friend was annoyed at being thus spoken to, and assured us that she did believe what God said to her. We bade her then read these words of the Lord Jesus, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” (John 5:24.)

“Now mark, the Lord says, ‘hath’ ■not shall have■ ‘everlasting life.’ It is a present blessing, the portion of the believer now in this life, and at this moment. Is the Lord telling you the truth? ■for you say you believe His words.”

Oh! what joy broke over the doubting one’s face, as she saw that the words of Jesus were just what He declared, and that everlasting life was hers forever. “I see it! I see it!” she exclaimed, and gave God the glory for His wonderful grace. R. R. McF.

Self Complacency

Two texts, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31), and “The blood of Jesus Christ God’s Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7), hung upon a cottage wall. The eye of a poor woman, who had entered the cottage, fell upon them. She remarked, “If a big sinner came in here these texts might do him good.” This poor woman is but a type of a class of Bible readers, whose self-complacency is an indication of their being dead in trespasses and sins.

Although the Apostle Paul could say of himself, As touching the righteousness of the law, blameless, “he classed himself among those who were by nature dead in trespasses and sins,” saying, “Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”

Reader, you are either dead in trespasses and sins, or alive in Christ. Which is it?

God’s Wonderful Ways With Man.

AFTER some four thousand years of the world’s history had elapsed, the earth at large lay under the sway of the prince of the power of the air, for Satan had subjugated the mass of the Gentile nations to himself, and men, as a rule, were worshippers of demons, or of human passions deified, and recognized, in the form of images, as gods. The people of Jehovah, with whom were the divine oracles, were at that time, as to ten of their tribes, buried and lost among the Gentiles, whilst only a remnant of Judah, with a scant sprinkling of other tribes, occupied the holy land. Then it was, “through the tender mercy of our God... the dayspring from on high... visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.” (Luke 1:73, 79.) The triune God in infinite wisdom condescended that the Eternal Son should become a man. The Word was made flesh; the Son was born of a woman—a Babe upon this earth; “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.” (John 3:16.)

God no longer dwelt afar off from man, in the thick darkness, but in His Son, He came down amongst men. He had spoken to the fathers by the prophets, now He spake in His Son. He had uttered His terrors out of clouds and thunders at Sinai— now, in tenderest kindness, “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17.) The Light of the World shone amongst men, not merely to evidence the blackness of the human heart, but by the diffusion of its blest rays to express the heart of God. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” (2 Cor. 5:19). Forgiveness, not condemnation, flowed out from Jesus’ lips. Instead of the law thundering to men, “Do this, and thou shalt live,” the still, small voice of divine grace whispered, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life.” (John 5:24,)

The words of Jesus relative to the kingdom He preached were, like His works, altogether new. No one can read the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of Matthew’s Gospel without feeling that principles lie in those words unlike all principles before known by men. The beatitudes, which open

the teaching in question, found alone in Him their true expression, His life and His ways being the living witness of His teaching. Were the world governed or governable by such principles, it would be no longer this world, but the kingdom of heaven would be fulfilled on earth indeed, and man would be like unto Jesus. As were the Lord's words so were His works. No other man had done what He did. Sickness, disease, death fled from His touch, and demons, at his bidding, dared no longer enthrall men.

The Father, moreover, spake through the Son, and men heard and saw in Him the Father's love—that is, where there were eyes and ears to see and to hear, for then, as now men were, for the most part, deaf and blind to Jesus.

We are taught to expect a new and super-abounding way of divine revelation to man in and by the Son. As the Prophet and the Spokesman, we are only giving Him reverence in looking for utterances more wonderful from His lips than from those of His servants, whom God had sent previously to man. As King, we may with like reverence look for things relative to His kingdom or, earth—more gracious, even, than those of which Isaiah tells, when he declares the coming King and the peace of the kingdom. Let the reader compare the eleventh chapter of the prophet with those chapters of Matthew's Gospel already referred to, and he will surely say that, there is a greater blessing for man on the earth in the fulfillment of the beatitudes, than in the fulfillment of the promise as to the nature of the beasts being changed.

And as we seek to pursue the Lord's steps and to listen to His words, we can only lift up our hearts and prostrate our souls before God and the Father, for His wonderful ways it sending His Son to this earth. "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?" (Psa. 8:4)

We need to establish our souls in the face of modern infidelity, or infidelity revived in our modern times, by breathing the atmosphere of the four Gospels and by listening to the divine yet human words of Jesus. True, the great Gentile nations when Christ was on earth made nothing of the fact—they pursued their self-fame and their idolatries; and those of Israel, save a handful of disciples that dwelt in the land of promise, despised and rejected Him, but the deadness of man's heart to the great reality that the Son of God was among them in no way detracts from the marvel of the reality.

The four Gospels most plainly declare man's insensibility to His advent, and man's contempt and hatred of Him. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1:11, 12), are words inscribed upon the first page of the gospel, which declares His glory as the eternal Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, the life, and the light. "And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust Him out of the city, and led Him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong," are the words first recorded of the reception of Him, the Son of Man, who, in a house of Jehovah's worship, had just proclaimed His mission to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to give deliverance to the captives, sight to the blind, and liberty to the bruised—the year of the jubilee of God. (Luke 4:18.) The evangelist who treats of His kingly glory, presents Him to us as the Refused One, after detailing His words in relation to the coming kingdom, and His power and grace in healing lepers, casting out devils, recovering from the palsy, giving sight to the blind, and His

sending forth His heralds. (Matt. 11:17-24.) The blasphemy of Israel: "He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils, casteth He out devils," is the sequel to the story of His matchless service recorded by Mark.

From the first Jesus was unknown or rejected on the earth. From His infancy His life was sought, and His Father's works, done by His hand, were attributed to the devil. He lived in the affections of but a few, and they were despised. These followed Him for the brief years of His sacred ministry till they fled from Him at His cross, when alone, in the power of His love, and in the unutterable wonder of His grace, He laid down His life that sinners might live. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:11.) He was the propitiation, the sacrifice that alone could atone for our sins. The sin of idolatry, of rebellion against the word of God, and that deeper sin of rejecting Jesus, could be only expiated by one sacrifice, one propitiation, and Jesus the Son of God and Son of Man is that propitiation. In the progress of God's ways with man we perceive in the death of Christ the most wonderful of all His ways.

The crowning act of human rebellion against God is the cross of Christ, the sin that stains this earth beyond all power of purgation, save by the blood of Jesus, is the cross. Yet such is God, that from the cross, where His holy and adorable Son was nailed by the wicked hands of men, His deepest love flows forth to man. Man's unutterable hatred of God, and God's untold love to man both meet in the death of His Son.

The cross is now God's starting point in His dealings with man. Each child of Adam, not having the Son, is now either under the wrath of God, or is delivered from that wrath, by the Son who endured the judgment of God against sin on the cross. In one sense man's history closes at the cross of Christ, that is to say, so as far as hope for obtaining divine favor by human merit is concerned. The awful guilt of man in slaying the Son of God puts man in an everlastingly hopeless position before God, unless God's favor be obtained through Christ, who died and rose again.

Out of Christ, man lies under the sentence of death; to him no longer come the words, "Do this, and thou shalt live," but God has brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel.

The Two Buckets

ONCE upon a time there were two buckets which served a village well, the water of which all the villagers praised for its freshness and sweetness. One of these buckets was of a desponding turn of mind, the other was of a cheerful spirit; the former took the dark, the latter the bright side of things. "Alas! alas!" you would hear the desponding bucket sigh, as it went down empty to the cool waters below, "I am more than half my lifetime empty■just a vain thing, and here am I again going down as usual with nothing in me; how sad it is, how trying is my lot, how■" and here the poor bucket's speech was cut short, for splash it went into the water again!

"Happy, oh! so happy!" sang the cheerful bucket, as it came slowly up, full to the brim of sparkling water. "Here am I, nothing but a bucket, and an old one, too, but right full of water." And when it reached the top, and was set down upon the stone, it seemed to smile at everybody who came to get some of its bounty. Then having no more water left in it, the bucket cried out, "I shall be back again soon, full to the brim. Oh! how I enjoy going down into the well for the water!"

Christian reader, which of the two buckets are you?

It Is the Gospel of God

IN much of modern Christianity it seems to be almost forgotten that the gospel is the gospel of God. God sends to man His good news of His way of salvation for man. God's own nature, His truth, His holiness, His righteousness, is made known to man in His gospel.

God is light, God is love■such is His nature, and His light and His love are made manifest in the cross of His Son. God cannot pass by sin; were He to do so, He would not be the God of truth, and the cross of Christ is the great proof of His hatred of sin. His holiness could not tolerate sin in His presence, and a propitiation for all sin is made by the death of Christ. Now God declares His righteousness in His gospel concerning His Son. The question is, will man believe God and live, or die in unbelief and perish?

A Little Child Shall Lead Them

LAST Christmas morning, I had greatly enjoyed a walk with some friends in the crisp, frosty air, the clear sunshine brightening the faces of all whom we met; and gladdening our hearts. On reaching home, however, a sad message awaited me “A little boy has been here, whose mother is very ill, and she wants to see you,” so, leaving our friendly gathering, I at once hastened to her house.

When I saw the poor woman, I remembered having spoken to her about her soul, as she was leaving our little mission room, a few months before. She then had with her a bright-eyed little girl, a cripple, so afflicted that she could not stand or walk alone, or even raise her hands to her head. As I spoke to the mother, this little one had said, “I love Jesus, and, mother, do not cry, for Jesus loves you.” The mother said that she knew well that she was a sinner, and that Jesus died to save sinners; she hoped that He had died for her, but she thought it impossible for anyone to know it down here, and that it was not right of me to say that, through mercy, I knew that I was saved. She left, however, that night with the promise that she would accept God’s own word. “He that believeth hath everlasting life.”

For many years this poor woman had been living in her own way a religious life, and telling her little girl of Jesus and His love, yet she herself had never known the blessedness of sins forgiven. On this Christmas morning, Satan had tried to fill her soul with doubts and fears, but, praise the Lord, He soon took away all her doubts, for she at last said, “I am so weak and ill, I cannot do any more: I will just trust Him, and rest on Him. I am so weary; do pray with me, and for my husband, that he may meet me in heaven.” It was a touching sight; the husband, a tall and very powerfully—built man, holding in his arms feeble little Jessie, who was trying her best, in her artless way, to comfort him, as the big man’s tears fell fast on the child’s head. Cripple though she were, and helpless in her weakness, she was the strongest in that room. She said, “Don’t cry so, mother dear, for you are going to be with Jesus. You won’t have a lot of pain, nor nobody to scold you anymore, and don’t you know Jesus said, ‘Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.’ He said He would prepare a place for you, and He has; and now He is coming to take you to it. I should like to come with you, only Jesus wants me down here for a little while, to comfort poor father and my brothers. Father will take me to chapel, won’t you, father? Do promise mother you will, before she goes, father, will you?” So the promise was made beside the dying bed.

On the day of the funeral, little Jessie was carried to our house. Then, and always, when asked how she was, her answer was the same: “A little better, thank you, only a bad cough, and that will be better soon.” She said, “My little brother has been crying so, today, because they have gone to put poor mother in the grave, but I tell him not to cry, but to be brave, for you know our mother is not really in the coffin; only her body is there, she is with Jesus. She cannot come down here to us, but we can go up to her.” And so she tried in her childish way to comfort all around.

Yes, “A little child shall lead them.” Many eyes were wet with glad tears on the Lord’s day after the funeral, as we saw the father, for the first time, himself carrying motherless Jessie upstairs to the mission room she loved so well. Long years had passed since his unaccustomed feet had trodden

such a path, but the child had brought him.

Her favorite brother was only two years older than herself; they loved each other dearly, and, before the mother's illness, the three had spent many happy hours together, reading the Scriptures and singing hymns, Jessie being the preacher. The rest of the family were grown men, some of them very rough, and none caring for Jessie's Saviour. The little cripple girl did not only witness for Jesus in her uncongenial home, but in the summer, sitting propped up in her chair in the tiny garden, she would talk and sing to the neighbors. It did not matter to Jessie who her listeners were children or "grownups," as she called them. A neighbor said to me, one day, "That child cannot live long; she is always talking about Jesus and about heaven being her home."

Leaving the neighborhood soon afterward, we lost sight of Jessie, but our confidence is strong that the faith of the little child has been, or will be answered, and that, before she joins her mother in the glory, others in that family will have been brought to the feet of Jesus. E. B.

8. From Malachi to Matthew

A FEW years after the accession of Alexander Balas (B.C. 148), Demetrius, the son of the late Demetrius Soter, attempted to regain possession of his father's dominions. His first attack upon Jonathan as an upholder of the usurper Balas was unsuccessful. Ptolemy of Egypt came into Palestine to his son-in-law's, Alexander's, assistance. There he learned of a plot against his life, laid by one of Alexander's officers. As Alexander refused to deliver up the offender, Ptolemy concluded, (and rightly so) that the plot had his relative's sanction. So he made common cause with Demetrius against Alexander, and taking back his daughter from the latter, he betrothed her to the new claimant.

In a subsequent battle Alexander was defeated, and fled into Arabia, where he was slain, and his head was sent to Ptolemy. That prince died three days later, and (B.C. 146) Demetrius took undisputed succession to the Syrian throne. He assumed the surname of "Nicator," the Conqueror.

Although at the first some sort of friendship existed between Jonathan and Demetrius, it was of a very slender kind. Demetrius broke faith with Jonathan, and when, in 44, Antiochus, the son of Alexander Balas, came into Syria, claiming the kingdom as being his father's, Jonathan, as well as many of Demetrius's soldiers, espoused his cause. Demetrius was forced to retire before the new arrival, and Antiochus was crowned. The latter confirmed the priesthood to Jonathan, sent him golden vessels for his ministrations, and gave him leave to be clothed in purple, and to wear a golden buckle (the symbol of royal blood) as his father had done. Jonathan defeated the forces of Demetrius, and, in the exercise of the leadership of his own people, sent ambassadors to Rome, to renew the treaty of the time of Judas, and in other ways placed the Jews upon a satisfactory footing with the neighboring powers. Altogether, he played his part with great ability, and with honor to himself and his country.

Unfortunately, this able prince fell by the treachery of false allies. Trypho, one of the late Alexander's commanders, and the man who had been mainly instrumental in putting Antiochus upon the throne, now coveted the kingdom for himself. Jonathan by his fidelity to the king was an obstacle to the attainment by Trypho of his ambition. The latter shrank from the decision of a fairly-fought battle, but craftily prevailed upon Jonathan to enter Ptolemais when accompanied by a force of only about one thousand men. Jonathan was seized, and his men slain.

The tidings quickly spread; the surrounding nations hailed the news with joy, and prepared to attack the Jews now that their leader was lost to them. Trypho set out to invade the land, and the hearts of the people failed them, till Simon, Jonathan's brother, rallied them by rehearsing the deeds of the past, and they heartily appointed him as their leader. Trypho, hearing this, sent word to Simon that Jonathan was kept in prison on account of certain moneys owing to the king's treasury, and demanded a hundred talents of silver, and the surrender of two of Jonathan's sons as hostages. On these conditions alone should Jonathan be released. Although Simon had no faith in Trypho's word, he nevertheless complied with this demand, so as to remove all room for excuse on the part of the Syrians. But Trypho still held his captive, and, finding himself checked in

his operations against the Jews, he cruelly murdered Jonathan. This Maccabean prince had governed his people with much success for seventeen years, his death occurring B.C. 144). Simon afterward recovered his body, and buried it with great honors at Modin, the home of the Maccabees.

Trypho also secretly dispatched the youthful king, Antiochus, and seizing the crown, he reigned over Syria, and much distressed Israel. Demetrius Nicator, who had been compelled to flee before the forces of Antiochus, was still living, and had not abandoned his claim to the Syrian throne. Bad as he was, he seemed preferable to Trypho, and to him Simon sent a crown of gold and a scarlet robe, seeking an immunity from hostilities as between themselves. Demetrius, under his title of "King Demetrius," granted it, and forgave all oversights and faults committed, as well as taxes due, remission forever of all tribute, and a cession of all strongholds which the Jews had built. It was, in fact, a surrender of all hold upon Palestine; the land was thus freed from "the yoke of the heathen," and peace was confirmed between Israel and Syria. This event was celebrated by a yearly feast on the 27th Ijar, or Yiar. Israel had been for 170 years subject to the Syrian power. From this time (B.C. 143), as possessing an independent state, the Jews dated their documents "in such and such a year of Simon, the high priest, governor and leader of the Jews." The Romans also confirmed on tables of brass the league which had been made with Judas and Jonathan, and the Lacedemonians again avowed their friendship, so that peace and quiet existed in relation to other powers. At home, Simon had good success in putting down disaffection at Gaza and elsewhere. Better still, the tower in Jerusalem, which for many days had been a thorn in the side of the people, and a constant menace, was captured from its foreign garrison, and ceremonially cleansed. So great was this event considered, that it was celebrated by a special thanksgiving, and its anniversary on the 23rd Ijar was appointed to be kept. Jerusalem and other cities were fortified and victualed; the people dwelt in peace, and tilled their lands; every man sat under his vine and fig tree and there was none to fray them." So grateful were the people, that a general assembly was held in the third year of Simon (B.C. 141), and the priesthood and government which had been conferred upon Simon personally were confirmed to him forever (that is, it was made hereditary) by the will of the people. This decision was engraved in brass and affixed to pillars in Mount Zion.

In this same year (141) Demetrius Nicator (the nominal king of Syria, though Trypho was really in power) was captured by the king of Persia, and kept in captivity. Antiochus Pius, son of Demetrius Soter, and brother of the captive Demetrius, took upon himself the kingly title, and addressing Simon, sought and obtained permission to go through his lands on the way to recover his father's kingdom from Trypho. Still claiming some sort of sovereignty over the land of Israel, he nevertheless confirmed all the promises and gifts of former kings, and to these he added permission to Simon to coin money with his own stamp. Simon assisted Antiochus in his war against the usurper Trypho, and with much success, but the Syrian king becoming envious of Simon's prosperity and power, sent forces to invade Judaea, and to take the people captive. Simon (now an old man) bestirred himself with remarkable vigor, and putting his army under the command of his sons Judas and John, gave fight to the foe, who was defeated. Simon was slain at last, with two of his sons, at a banquet, by the treachery of his own son-in-law, Ptolemy.

The government and the high-priesthood were then (B.C. 135) placed in the hands of Simon's son, John Hyrcanus. The mother of John was held a captive by Ptolemy, and John's first operations

were an attempt to release her, but it was in vain—she was treacherously slain. Antiochus Pius invaded the land, and the war dragged itself along till the Feast of the Tabernacles, when a truce was concluded (though with rather hard terms to the Jews), and Antiochus sent “a magnificent sacrifice” to the Temple. Jr.

Under the Fig Tree

“HOME” is as sweet a word as exists in the English language. Our feelings are stirred with the thoughts of home, and, being at home, we are at rest. “There is no place like home,” is a good old sentiment, which all who value the best side of life most heartily rejoice in. But home is not merely a locality hallowed by pleasant memories and well-loved associations, it is the place where our most dearly loved dwell.

The love of home is strongly marked in the feelings which are expressed in the songs of Israel, the Psalms having in them many beautiful passages of delight in the heritage and in the fatherland. Israel’s true home-joy consisted in the Lord Himself. God made His dwelling on earth in Israel, and, so long as He was recognized and obeyed, both the land and the individual heritage prospered— peace prevailed, the enemy approached not Israel’s coasts; corn and wine, milk and honey, were in abundance, and the sons of Israel dwelt in comfort, “each under his own vine, and under his own fig tree,” which latter expression seems almost to correspond with our English word “home.”

When the Lord Jesus came to this earth there was no home for Him; He was from the first a stranger here. But the very gospel which most quickly records this sad fact is that one which most quickly shows us Jesus Himself making, by His own love and grace, a home in His presence for those who love Him. “Where dwellest Thou?” inquired Andrew and the other disciple of John, and Jesus said, “Come and see.” “So they came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day.”

The next day Jesus found Philip, and bade him follow Him, and thus he also became a disciple of the Lord.

Now Philip, having become a follower of Jesus, partook of His spirit, and sought for his friend, to bring him to the Lord. He found Nathanael. Nathanael was sitting at home, under the fig tree, when Philip came to him. He was a devout man, and by Philip’s mode of address, we may be sure he was one who studied the Scriptures. Indeed, we know that engaging in daily prayer and under the shady tree was approved by the Talmud. We may almost imagine Nathanael lifting up His eyes from the roll of the sacred writings he was reading, as he listened to Philip’s eager words, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and in the prophets did write.” Sure we are that as the pages of the sacred book are devoutly read Jesus is revealed by God to the reader. Yet Nathanael was not ready in one moment to accept Philip’s statement. “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” said he, for he had his doubts and difficulties. “Come and see,” replied Philip, and most charming answer it was, the echo of the Lord’s own “Come and see” of the preceding day; and as Philip led Nathanael to Jesus, with what burning words and eager steps he must have pursued his way.

Nathanael was an honest man, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile,” were Jesus’ words of greeting to him! Oh! That a like guileless spirit might be found in each of us! “When thou

wast under the fig tree I saw thee,” said the Lord to him. And Jesus observes our ways. He sees such as read the Scriptures alone at home! Does He see our young friends thus engaged? Possible having their doubts and their difficulties, but honest at heart! He will make Himself known to such, for He never fails those who are honest at heart, and faithfully search God’s word.

“Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel,” exclaimed Nathanael to the Lord, who told him of the coming day when this earth shall be home indeed, for Jesus shall be here in glory, and the angels of God shall ascend and descend upon the Son of Man.

Heaven is now the home of the children of God, because the Father and the Son are there, but our earthly homes are green spots indeed on earth when the Lord is recognized, honored and loved in them. There is a blessing in reading the Bible at home, in praying at home, in hearing of Jesus at home, and of having Christian friends come to us at home, who, like Philip, say to us of Jesus, “Come and see”; but better still will it be to hear Jesus say to us, “Come and see,” and to dwell with Him.

“I have a home above,

From sin and sorrow free;

A mansion which eternal love

Design’d and formed for me.

The Father’s gracious hand

Has built this blest abode;

From everlasting it was plann’d■

The dwelling-place of God.

The Comforter has come,

The earnest has been given;

He leads me onward to the home

Reserved for me in heaven.”

The Experiences of a Missionary in China.

8. The Possibilities of Faith

THE following instances of God's care, for those who cast their care upon Him, may help to encourage some of our readers, who may not yet have learned the joy of being able in faith to take everything to the Lord in prayer.

Ch'uen was a man of fifty years of age, at the time about which we write, and lived at Tsine-kiang, in the province of Kiangsu. He was a clerk in a magistrate's office, and although the salary he received was not very large, he was able to obtain money in various questionable ways. Like the large majority of his class, he was an opium smoker, and spent most of his money in satisfying his craving for the drug. He had smoked opium for thirty-years, and was a thorough slave to it.

For some time he had heard the gospel from a native Christian preacher, who lived in the city, and he professed to believe. Two years he had been an enquirer, and, but for the one sin of opium smoking, would probably long before have been baptized, and received into the church. He knew that the word of God condemned the practice which his own conscience also told him was sin. (1 Cor. 6:10.) What could he do? He had tried physic. He had tried to cure himself by gradually reducing the quantity smoked, but every attempt had failed.

Like nearly every other opium smoker known to or heard of by us, he had not the moral strength to resist and overcome the craving. At last he resolved upon another desperate attempt to break away from the habit, not as heretofore, in the strength of his own resolution, but he would trust Christ to deliver him. It is true that in former attempts he had prayed for help, but he had now lost all confidence in himself, and felt that if Christ did not save him from this one sin, which made his life a burden to him, and was shutting him out of the kingdom of God, he must perish.

He now threw away his pipe, and what opium he had in his possession, as well as his spirit lamp, and the other little instruments used in preparing the drug for smoking. He let his friends know that this time he was determined that Jesus Christ should save him, or he would die in the attempt.

For three days, Ch'uen told me, he was in the utmost agony of mind and body. He could find no rest day or night, and spent the time in pacing up and down his house, in the streets, or the fields outside. His neighbors thought he was mad, and he himself feared that he should lose his reason; but he was firmly resolved that Christ should have the utmost opportunity of conquering the sin, for he felt that if Christ could save him from this awful craving He could save him from anything.

Suddenly, Ch'uen went on to say, on the third day all the craving and all the bodily pain ceased. He knew that Christ had delivered him; and from that hour he has never once had a desire to go back to the pipe. He has often been tempted by his old companions, but his experience of Christ's love has enabled him always to give a decided "No," and to witness a good confession of his faith.

Ch'uen had now proved Christ's power to deliver the captive, and could with a good conscience meet with the Christians, of whom there were five or six in the place. Christ had pardoned his sins, and delivered him from the power of them, and the whole course of his life was changed.

He found much joy in studying the Scriptures, and I was a little astonished and greatly rejoiced to see what a thorough knowledge of the New Testament he had obtained.

There was now another matter causing him some anxiety. In his occupation, as mandarin's clerk, he was required to do many things which, to his mind, now that he had become a disciple of Jesus Christ, were not right, and he felt that he must at once quit the government service. But what could he do for a living? He had never learned a trade, and was fifty years of age, and had a wife and two children to support.

He could see no way open before him, but was quite clear that it was his duty to quit the magistrate's service. He would trust Christ to prosper him; so, having a sixpence, he purchased a few cakes and sweetmeats, and sold them to children in the streets. Soon after this he obtained money to the value of about seven shillings and sixpence, with which he enlarged his stock of wares. He had cast all his care upon the Lord, and was not disappointed. The Lord prospered his business; he turned his house into a little shop, and might be seen any morning in the streets, soon after sunrise with his cakes and hot drinks. This kind of business also afforded him many opportunities of making known the message of salvation, and left him free to act in all things according to the dictates of his now enlightened conscience.

The story of Mrs. Chang, who lives in the same city as Ch'uen, illustrates the possibilities of faith in God, concerning matters not purely spiritual. I had the joy of baptizing this woman in 1883, and received her story from her own lips, in the presence of others, who confirmed every word of it.

Mrs. Chang is a native of the Shantung province, and appears to have come into the neighboring province of Kiang-su at about the time of the great famine in North China. She married a Kiang-su man, who used to get his living by carrying goods about the city on his wheelbarrow.

One day, the native pastor ■ there was no European missionary in the place ■ was preaching in the little chapel, when a beggar woman, of over seventy years of age, looked in at the door, and listened to what the preacher was saying about the Person and the power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

She understood that the man was preaching some new God, who was alive, and had almighty power ■ one Jesus, who opened the eyes of the blind, and healed all manner of sickness when on earth, and did many great wonders.

Without saying a word to anyone, the old woman walked away, pondering in her heart over the strange things she had heard. She went straight home, and told a partially blind neighbor of hers ■ the Mrs. Chang of our story ■ what she had heard, and proposed that next day, when the chapel was again open, they should go together to the preacher and make further inquiry about the God he preached. Accordingly, the following day, the old beggar woman appeared at the chapel with her blind neighbor, and addressed the preacher very much as follows: ■

"Teacher, I heard you say yesterday that this Jesus, whom you preach, has almighty power, and can open the eyes of the blind.

Now I have brought this friend of mine, who has been totally blind with one eye for three years, and can see very little with the other, to ask if Jesus can do anything for her."

“Yes,” replied the preacher, a man of about fifty years of age, who was nearly blind himself, and who had been a good deal exercised about whether or not it were possible to obtain restored sight from the Lord in answer to prayer. “Yes, what I said is perfectly true. The Lord Jesus Christ, when He was on earth, opened the eyes of the blind, and cured all kinds of diseases, and He has just the same power today that He had then. I have no doubt that if you have faith He will grant your request.” Mr. Yao then showed them the teaching of the New Testament about prayer, and after prolonged conversation, the women replied, that they believed what he had said, as he could have no object in deceiving them.

They at once knelt down in the chapel, and prayed that Mrs. Chang’s sight might be restored, and agreed to continue praying till the answer came. The following day was Sunday, and Mrs. Chang came up with the Christians to the morning service, and reported that her eyes were improving.

By the following Sunday her sight was perfectly restored, and she desired all to join with her in praising God for what He had done. No medicines were used, nor any means taken.

But this bodily healing did not convert her soul. Like many of whom we read in the gospels, she knew Christ only as the Healer of her body, and had yet to learn, after severe trial and persecution, that there was something widely superior to physical blessing to be obtained from Christ. She attended regularly on Sundays at the chapel, but was in consequence severely and frequently beaten by her husband and neighbors, who had all turned against her for professing to believe the “Jesus’ religion.” Her neighbors, not content with persecuting her, persecuted her children also. At length the woman’s life became a burden to her, and she resolved to destroy herself, and thus to have her revenge upon her husband and her enemies in general. This, the reader must know, is deemed by the heathen in China a meritorious act. She did attempt to kill herself, but failed in the effort, and conceived that the Lord came to her, and said, “I have come to save you,” and that He rescued her from death.

The continued persecutions of her sister-in-law, and other neighbors, drove her once more to seek to destroy herself; but Mr. Yao, the native preacher, arrived at the house in time to prevent the accomplishment of this second deliberate attempt at suicide. The woman now began to think that it surely could not be the will of God that she should kill herself, since He had interposed twice to prevent her doing so.

During all this time she kept up her attendance at the chapel, and attentively listened to the gospel, and now it began to dawn upon her that there was something far more precious to be found in Christ than anything she had yet known. It is not a little strange that she should have heard it repeated dozens of times that the Lord Jesus Christ has power to forgive sins, and all the time had failed to see her own sin and need of such salvation. But in this respect she, poor heathen woman, was only too much like many professing Christians, who hear these things for years together, but never see their need of Christ as their Saviour. Mrs. Chang knew that the Lord had saved her from the death she sought for, and that He had restored her sight, but now the Holy Spirit enlightened her soul, and made her feel her need of pardon and eternal life. Coming to Christ as a guilty sinner, needing forgiveness and eternal life, she quickly began to see things in a different light. Instead of wanting to destroy her life, and so have revenge upon her enemies, she saw that, by patiently enduring persecution, she was pleasing her Lord, and magnifying His grace in her heart.

She said that if her husband beat her to death he could do no more, and she would the sooner see the Lord, who had done so much for her, and whom she was determined never to deny.

At the time of my visit to her city she was one of four candidates for baptism. One of the three persons baptized with Mrs. Chang was a blind man, who had heard of the Lord's goodness to her, and inquired at the chapel whether his sight, too, could not be restored. He became an earnest enquirer, and, although it had not pleased the Lord to open his eyes, the gospel had reached his heart, and he could now say, in a spiritual sense, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." His wife, too, had received the gospel, and made profession of her faith by baptism at the same time. Thus these two cases of conversion resulted from the experiences of Mrs. Chang. A. G. P.

What the Pilot Said

“THERE were many knocks at my heart’s door before it was opened.” So spake an open-faced pilot on the Suffolk coast, whose duty lay chiefly in bringing vessels over the bar of a river. “How often did I wish I was like my father, when I sat behind him in chapel, for he was a true Christian. He had the privilege in his time of entertaining many of God’s servants who preached to us, but he died before I was truly converted.

“I remember well on one occasion, after a service in the chapel, when my soul was deeply moved, coming home and crying till ‘rivers of water’ ran down my face. My wife presently entered the house■ she was a Christian. ‘What is the matter?’ said she. ‘Shall I send for father?’ ‘No,’ said I; but she sent for him; and in the old man came. I did not say a word, but he knew what was wrong. ‘My boy,’ said he, ‘let us pray’; and we went down on our knees together. But I did not find salvation then. However, God was continually warning me about my soul.

“When my father died I was much moved, and felt I must indeed seek the Lord, but somehow I did not find Him then, and so some years passed by. I think there are many now, as I was then, with whom the Spirit of God is striving, but who are not saved; many who in their inmost heart’s desire after God, but who seem to live without Him.

“One wild, rough day, as the punt lay in the river, I saw a lot of wild duck, so into the boat I jumped to get them. It takes two men properly to attend to one of these punts but I had my mind on the birds. Suddenly a big wave from over the bar struck the boat, turning her bottom upwards, and there I lay underneath.

“Two men on shore ran into the water and dragged out the punt, and I crept ashore myself. This narrow escape made me again think about my soul. It was another knock at my heart, and these words: “Seek, and ye shall find,” kept ringing in my ears for days together after my escape.

“After this I was sailing up the river, when a puff of wind came, and immediately the boat filled with water, and sank under me. I had presence of mind enough to settle what to do, and, having my coat and sea-boots on, I chose going with the wind and tide towards a bight of land rather than the shorter swim across the river. When reaching the shore I felt that this was another knock, and that I must turn and seek the Lord while He was to be found.

“Many a call have I had, and now, thank God, I know I am saved.

“But it is only the last few months that God has taught me not to be satisfied with the old fashioned ‘drag-along’ style of religion that is the custom with the Christians hereabouts, for I suppose they are true Christians, since they call themselves by the name. There are very few in this neighborhood, so far as I can tell, who really desire the salvation of their neighbors and friends, and who feel they are on this earth to be a blessing in their own place, and among their own people.

“There must be a clean break with the old things and the old ways. ‘Come out from among them, and be ye separate,’ says the book about the Christian, and there never will be prosperity until the Christian be out and out for God.

“Now this is how the change has come in me. My wife and I had heard of God’s work in different places, saving souls, and we had read of the power of His Spirit with His word, so we got talking to different Christians, living near, about it, in the hope that we all might seek for the Holy Spirit’s work in our villages. However, save two or three, none seemed interested in such work.

“It was about the time of which I am speaking that God sent a dear servant of His to pay a visit to this hamlet, and it was to my house this servant of His came! This made my eyes fill with tears, for here was I, entertaining one of God’s servants just as my father had done before me! That visit we shall never forget. We had grand meetings in and out of doors. Some of the roughest and the wildest men, and some of the worst drunkards in the village were seen upon their knees. They were convicted of sin, and now, many of them live to show by their changed lives what God has done for their souls. That visit has taught us men to go on our own selves looking to God to give the power and the blessing; it has taught us to trust in God to work His work; to look to Him by His Spirit to answer our prayers, humble as these prayers are. And now, we pilots, and former poachers, and drunkards, find that on our knees crying to God, and believing on Him, we may ■yes, and we do! ■receive His blessing.

“It is not that such a man as myself can preach a sermon: I don’t try, nor, so far as I know, do any of us; while as for getting a speech ready beforehand, that would be of no use for me, or them like me. What we do is this, we just ask God to fill us with His Spirit, and then we read a verse or chapter, and let it come out of the heart as God puts it in.

“And are we not full of joy? Christian life is all new to us now. Why, seeing God save your friends and neighbors must make you happy! Filling your heart with what Jesus has done for your soul must make you happy! And in the villages round, God has saved some of the roughest and the worst. Not that there are not plenty more rough ones, and plenty more drunkards to be saved yet, but we are looking to God to go on with His work. He is doing great things in our day by the simplest means, and we earnestly pray to be kept alive, and awake to the movements of His hand.”

The Entrance of God's Word

IT is some seven years since the Holy Spirit of God wrought upon me, convicting ME of sin. By way of making myself better, I joined a church choir. I was at that time serving in a public-house in Scotland, and was often made by the customers to feel how inconsistent was my position, for they would point me out, saying, "What a hypocrite! working in a whiskey shop, and on the Sabbath singing in the church choir!" After about six weeks, I could stand it no longer, and gave up the situation. A fortnight later, I was staying with my mother, whose house was near a public hall, where gospel meetings were being held. At her request I went off to hear, and was much struck by the earnestness of the speaker, who is now with the Lord.

One evening, when alone in the house, God met me. I was reading through the first three chapters of Romans, and repeating some of the verses again and again; and having done this I spoke to God, and owned with deep repentance that in His word there was the very record of my real state before Him. Then the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, brought to my mind these words, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." I was enabled to take God at His word, there and then, and, blessed be His name, He has proved to me that His word is from everlasting to everlasting unchangeable.

This happened some years ago, and God has enabled me to earn an honest living, and He has kept my soul in peace. R. S. McF.

Only One Way

I RECEIVED an urgent request, one day, to visit a woman, who was lying very seriously ill at a public-house in the village, the messenger adding, "If you do not mind going to such a place." I was only too thankful to go to see anyone, anywhere, whom I might have the joy of leading to the Saviour.

Poor Mrs. T., the wife of the publican, was in very great suffering; indeed, the doctor had plainly told the family that there was no hope of her recovery. She was exceedingly low, but her extreme pain was lulled, while happily her mind was quite clear, so that she was able to receive my visit, and to talk with me.

I sat down by the poor invalid, and gently led the conversation round to the things of God. I was deeply touched, and thankful to find that she was most anxious to be saved, and to know her sins forgiven. She listened with eager attention, but could only say that she did not feel her sins were pardoned.

Fearing to tire her, I did not remain long with her that afternoon, but went again the next day, and the following one, and each time spent a little while in reading the word of God to her, and praying with and for her. It was very touching to see her earnest eyes, fixed in such rapt attention upon my face, while I spoke to her of the Saviour's love. I longed to hear her confess all her fears gone, and to say that she could indeed rest in Christ, for the wasted form and hollow cheeks made me fear she must soon pass from this world into eternity. But, as with many others, the very simplicity of the gospel made her hesitate. The news was too good to be true, she said, too good for her, who was such a sinner; how could she dare rejoice in the finished work of another? I longed to see the look of peace replacing the agonized expression on her poor face.

A day or two after this, ongoing to see Mrs. T., to my great joy I found that she was at length resting on Christ and His finished work—a sweet smile played about her mouth, and her whole face spoke of joy unspeakable. She told me she had not been able to close her eyes all night, and that, as she tossed about upon her bed, "All at once, it came to me: there is only one way, and that way is Christ." And then she thought how she had been trying to save her own soul, imagining there was something that she must do. "But," she continued, "there is only one way—only one way. These words came home to me, and, ah, I see it now—it's so simple—faith in Christ! Only one way!"

"Then," I said, "I may leave you today feeling quite happy that you are trusting in the Saviour—that you have accepted Christ—that you are really trusting in Him, and in Him alone?"

"Oh! yes, indeed," she replied, "I am trusting in Him, for I know now there is no other way but that one way, and that way is Christ."

The heavy burden of soul-trouble being now removed from Mrs. T.'s heart, she began to rally, to the surprise of all who were watching round her sick bed. Gradually, through God's mercy, she

quite recovered her health, and lives now to praise Him who gave His beloved Son to die for her. With a glad heart, she is able to testify to others of the Christ, whom she knows to be the only way to God and to heaven. H. L. T.

Come Now, and Let Us Reason Together

SEVERAL years ago, I was induced by two young men to attend a gospel service on the evening of the Lord's day in a chapel, in Wiltshire. The preacher, on the occasion, was a devoted, soul-winning, intelligent local preacher. I sat in the front seat in the gallery exactly facing him. The text was that wonderful Scripture, Isaiah 1:18, "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." My attention was arrested by the passage itself, and also by the preacher's clear and forcible presentation of the gospel to my conscience and heart. His aim was to set forth the infinite condescension and love of God to sinners, in stooping to reason with man about his sins.

His presentation of God in Christ, as the God of grace and love to sinners, was the very reverse of my preconceived thought, and as the word was applied by the Spirit to my sinful heart, it broke me down into softness, weeping and repentance. "What!" thought I, "is this a true, intelligent, and scriptural aspect of God? Is He indeed, in in finite condescension and love, reasoning with me about my sins, scarlet though they be? Will He make int scarlet sins as white as snow, my crimson sins as wool?" I saw all my former views and ideas of God to be utterly unworthy and erroneous. I had thought God was a vindictive Being, waiting to hurl me into perdition for my sins, but the gospel to which I was listening, revealed the fact that God was then and there saying to me, as it were, "Come, young man, let us reason together about your sins. Your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow, your sins are like crimson, they shall be as wool!" My poor, repentant, enlightened heart said, then and there, "This God shall be my God forever and ever; He shall be my Guide even unto death."

At the close of the address a prayer meeting was held, and I was helped of God to go down from the gallery, and to walk up the aisle and bow down before the Lord, seeking mercy.

It was weeks before I was made conscious of peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, but this was presently, in a very clear manner, brought home to my heart by the Holy Ghost begetting in me love to God, because He first loved me.

This is now forty-four years ago! I have by God's grace been enabled as a preacher to travel many, many thousands of miles, taking the gospel of Christ to my fellow-men, and now, at the opening of 1888, I have just revisited the village where I was converted, to conduct there a gospel mission. The Lord has graciously blessed His own word to the salvation of many souls. To Him be all the glory. I am now nearly sixty-three years of age, and hope by God's grace, in street, lane or hall, in season and out of season. anywhere the Lord enables me, still to preach Christ, as the sinner's only Saviour from sin and hell. My prayer is embodied in Acts 4. "Grant unto Thy servant, that with al boldness he may speak Thy Word." Amen and amen. J.L.

Give Ye Them to Eat!

NAY, Lord, how can we do this, we have only five barley loaves and two small fishes only just enough for ourselves, and hardy that; how can we feed so great a multitude? Servant of the blessed Master, is this your experience? Well, if it be so, listen to what Jesus says, "Bring them to Me;" and, His disciples having obeyed His word, He makes them give the people to eat, whether they would or not! Mark, He does not give the bread to the people Himself■He blesses and He breaks it, and He gives to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitude "and they did all eat and were filled."

Oh, how precious is the grace that uses the earthen vessels! Oh, beloved servant of a beloved Master, think you, that you cannot accomplish His bidding? Question it no longer; if you have, as it were, only five barley loaves and two fishes, it is enough, bring them to Him, and say, "Here is all I have, Lord. Put it in His hands, and let Him break it up with His own blessing, and see how it will increase.

Enough, is there? Oh, yes, enough and to spare. Twelve basketsful left! You shall be the vessel, and His grace will accord to you the reward.

Gracious Master, let us ever listen to Thy voice, saying, 'Give ye them to eat, and as speedily obey, for Thy Name's sake.' Amen. E.T.

God's Wonderful Ways With Man. The Present Age

THE Son of God, having been rejected by men, and cast out from the world, a vast change in the ways of God with the human race follows of necessity. Man requited God in His highest love to the world, in the gift of His Son, by the most inveterate enmity, and, such being the case, we may well ask, "What, then, is God's answer to the ways of man?" It is twofold. To the world, as a system, it is judgment; to individuals, who repent and believe His message of reconciliation, it is grace. God will maintain His ways of judgment, and of grace, and make them evident to all, when, at the coming of His Son from heaven, this present age shall end.

We will touch upon God's ways of grace in the paper now before the reader; in the next we will speak of His ways of judgment.

In the first place we observe that the way of God, in His abounding grace toward man at this present time, finds its explanation in the exaltation and the glory of His Son on the throne of divine majesty, and His ways with man, in this age, will never be justly understood unless the exaltation of Christ be apprehended. Jesus has passed out of the world■He has gone to the Father■the world sees Him no more■but God, by His Spirit, makes good to such as believe, the things He declares in His word respecting His Son.

THE GOSPEL OF GOD IS NOW SENT TO ALL THE WORLD.

Neither family nor kingdom is called out from the world by God now, as was the case in other ages, but God speaks to man from heaven, irrespective of race, concerning His Son, once slain, but now exalted in heaven. In His grace God reveals to men, without distinction, how that, by the blood of Christ, He can justify the worst of sinners, and yet remain the just God. (Rom. 3:25, 26). All men are now alike welcome to the mercy-seat, whether Jew or Gentile, religious or prodigal, and whoever comes to God through Christ, receives pardon, and is justified; and such is God's love to man, that, by virtue of the atonement of Christ, He, as it were, beseeches men to be reconciled to Himself. (2 Cor. 5:21.)

"After He was risen" Jesus commanded His apostles, "Go ye into all the world" ■ not merely to Jewish confines, as was the case prior to His death■ "and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:14, 15.) Now that Christ is in heaven God reveals His Gospel as His power to salvation to everyone who believes. (Rom. 1:16.) Christ, who died for sinners, sits at the right hand of God, and in His honor, mercy is world-wide.

This abounding grace of God Satan makes his point of attack. For the eighteen hundred years of Christianity the truths of free grace have been assailed by the enemy■they have been clouded and hidden, denied and rejected, but God has made them to shine out before men, and to enlighten the souls of His people. In defense of these truths men have been persecuted and slain, cast to wild beasts, or burned at the stake. And in our own times the warfare proceeds, and so it will to the end. We have but to read the Epistle to the Galatian Churches to see how soon the enemy dogged the steps of God's servants and corrupted men's minds by another gospel.

THE HOLY GHOST NOW INDWELLS THE BELIEVER.

By His good news to man, God reveals more than pardon and justification through Christ's death and His resurrection. God bestows upon those who believe, the favor of the child's intimacy with the Father. Consequent upon the ascent of our Saviour to heaven, the Holy Ghost has come down to this earth (John 14:17, 25, 26), and He dwells in the children of God, enabling them to say, "Abba, Father." (Rom. 8:15.) Of this intimacy the world is ignorant—the natural eye could see the pillar of cloud and fire going before the host of Israel, and men saw the Son of Man on earth; but the world does not see, and, therefore, cannot receive, the Spirit of God. The present age has for its great characteristic, in the wonderful ways of God with man, the fact of the Holy Spirit of God being on the earth, dwelling in the children of God, and ministering to them of Christ by the Scriptures.

Yet how little is the reality of the presence of the Spirit of God on earth recognized, and how often are the children of God trying to evolve a spirituality out of themselves, instead of surrendering themselves to God the Spirit's guidance and teaching!

CHRIST EXALTED IN HEAVEN THE HIGH PRIEST.

The spiritual character of true Christian worship is also one of the special characteristics of real Christianity. It is one of God's ways with His people of this age, that their worship should not be of a kind that the mere natural eye or ear can enter into, and in the exaltation of Christ as High Priest in heaven we have one great reason for this fact. In the first place no merely outward form of worship finds pleasure in God's eyes. Christ solemnly rebuked exteriorism in the Pharisees. Beyond this, religious man nailed Christ to the cross, therefore in Christ's cross is the death-knell of all mere human religion. Now God has magnified Christ as the Priest on high, and through and by Him spiritual worship arises to the Father. By Christ the sacrifice, Christ the High Priest, all Christians have liberty or boldness to enter into the Holiest of All, and to worship God without a veil between (Heb. 10:21, 22), to be before Him in His holiness in joy and rest.

We need hardly observe how bitterly and successfully Satan has attacked the truth of spiritual worship, and the glory of Christ, the High Priest. The gospel of God concerning His Son, and the free grace to sinners it proclaims, through the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice being hidden from men's eyes, they fall an easy prey to the false belief that God values as acts of worship, reverence to angels and to saints, impressions received through paintings and music, and other simply natural, and non-spiritual, elements. Thus the eye is kept bent towards the earth, instead of being lifted to heaven, where Christ is. Over the chief part of Christendom the priest presents himself to the worshipper, to the hiding from the worshipper of Christ the High Priest in heaven. The priest teaches the worshipper to regard the sacrifice of the altar, and hides thereby from his faith the open Holiest of All, where Christ is, who died and rose again. And thus, the heavenly glories of the Lord as Priest, which are unfolded in the Epistle to the Hebrews, are utterly ignored, or unknown, by vast multitudes in Christendom, and these multitudes are Jewish in their religious notions, and, too often, idolatry is added to their Judaism.

There was remarkable freedom amongst the patriarchs in their dealings with God, when He came down to earth and spoke with them; in the age of the law that followed, God retreated into the thick darkness, and man could not approach Him; now that the world has slain His Son, God brings His

people, in spirit, to approach Him, and to be at liberty before Him, in His own dwelling-place in heaven, and to worship Him in spirit and in truth. The nearness existing between God and His people, is now greater than that of patriarchal days, being rather that of the child and the Father, than that of the friend with his friend. And here again we may exclaim, as sin hath abounded, so has grace much more abounded.

CHRIST IN HEAVEN, THE HEAD OF HIS CHURCH.

Again, in honor of Christ's ascension to glory as Man, the Holy Spirit unites all who believe, to Him, the Head of His body, the Church, and makes them members of Christ, and one of another. Thus, being children of one family, and members of one body, neither nationalities nor differences of an earthly kind pertain to them. (1 Cor. 12:13.)

Now Satan's object is the dishonor of Christ and the Scriptures of God, and thus, as in the age of law, he aimed his blows at the honor of God in the purity of Israel, His nation, so he now seeks to falsify in the Church, the practical expression of heavenly realities. The Church is allied with the world; it is impossible for the human eye to discover where the bright, heavenlike light of the Church begins, and where the deep darkness of the world ends. Further, the children of God are often at variance with each other, and the members of the one body are, alas, divided into a thousand fragments. Thus, as it was in ancient Israel, so there is in the Church captivity and idolatry. The one name of the Lord is too feebly recognized indeed, surveying Christianity as a whole, it is by no means supremely owned and honored. But neither Satan's power nor the saints' departure from the truth can hinder the purpose of God, and for these eighteen centuries He has pursued His wonderful work in pardoning and justifying sinners, and in putting His Spirit in His people, uniting them to Christ His Son in glory. In God's own time, even as His purposes and promises respecting Israel shall be made good on the earth, so shall His purposes regarding His Church be made good, for though not on earth, yet in resurrection, all the members of the body of Christ will be together displayed with Him in glory.

THE HEAVENLY HOPE OF GOD'S PEOPLE OF THIS PRESENT AGE.

The climax of God's grace to His people in this age will be the coming of His Son from heaven to take them into the Father's house. In His faithfulness and grace none will be left out. Each and every believer will be called home together, and the earth will be vacated by every saint; and more, the dust of all saints of all ages will remain in the world no more, for all shall awake, arise, and ascend to glory at the call of Jesus. When this great event occurs, the day of grace will have closed, and God will deal in judgment with the world for the rejection of His Son, for despising His Spirit, and for scorning His gospel.

Bobbie

HE was a merry, winning little fellow. His blue eyes were brimful of fun, and his laugh was a pleasure to hear; indeed, no one could hear Bobbie Barnes's laugh without wishing to join in it. Bobbie's everyday attire was a little red flannel gown, and he lay in his crib all day, as well as night; for he was a cripple.

When Bobbie was a very wee fellow, he had an attack of fever, which left him very weak, and as there was no one to look after him properly, the bones of his little legs became so twisted and deformed that they utterly refused to bear his weight, and, to use Bobbie's own expression, it seemed as if he had "nae banes" in his body.

Under these circumstances, Bobbie was left to battle with the world as best he might, and a sore battle he had for many a long day. His mother was out charing most days, and his father, alas, took to drinking. However, he was kind to Bobbie, who was his only child, and would sit and read to him scraps out of the newspapers, or sometimes a hymn, or a piece out of the Bible. These were gala days for Bobbie, but too often they were succeeded by darkness and misery, angry words being exchanged between father and mother, reproaches, threats, and sometimes blows.

Bobbie pondered on these things. He tried, poor little fellow, to make the best of it, and to keep father sober. His father loved him dearly, for he was not hopelessly intemperate and hardened. Undoubtedly Bobbie was the soft place in his parents' hearts, and for him they made many a sacrifice.

Bobbie was seven years old when he was brought to the Cottage Home for Infirm Children, and there he and I first became acquainted. His laugh at once attracted me— such a pleasant tinkle, among the little invalids and sufferers. Then I was amused to see how he hopped in and out of his bed; now to fetch something from the adjoining dormitory for one of the other boys, or again, as it seemed, merely for the pleasure of exercising his little crooked limbs by walking round the room, holding on by the cribs, as he went, for support.

Everything at the Home was novel to Bobbie; he seemed at first not to know very well whether he was sleeping or waking. The nice, large, airy room, the cheery fire burning in the grate, the walls hung round with pictures and texts, and the pretty toys, made him look around him wonderingly, from the room itself to the little occupants of the cribs. These, one and all, had experienced the same sense of bewilderment when first they had been brought into the Home, and a look of sympathy passed between them and Bobbie.

He had learned to read a little, and his Bible and hymn book were laid out upon the bed, and you might hear him crooning over to himself his latest hymn, or, with his finger carefully pressed against the line, spelling out a verse in the Bible.

Bobbie was very happy in the Home; there was only one thing that troubled him, and it was this; every fortnight, on Saturday afternoons, his father and mother came to visit him. Surely this would

be a joyous day for Bobbie, you say. Not altogether: for there was the parting again, and that was very hard.

Bobbie made great preparations on the day when he expected his father and mother. Sometimes they brought him a little painted toy, or some unwholesome looking sweets, or a picture book, and then Bobbie would read his verse, and sing his hymn in his little shrill, piping voice—the father and mother pleased the while that their boy was getting “learning.” And Bobbie was getting “learning” —the best learning, for he was learning to know the love of the Lord Jesus. Often on those Saturday afternoons, he would speak in his simple childlike way to his father and mother of his new-found joy—Jesus and His love; and tears would start to their eyes and course down their cheeks as they heard him.

But when the time to say “good-bye” came, it was then Bobbie broke down. He sobbed as if his heart would break, and for many a month the fortnightly visits were invariably concluded in tears.

Two years have passed away, and Bobbie is yet in the Home. His father and mother still come to see him, and he does not now cry at the “good-byes.” Not that he loves his parents less—indeed, the bonds between them have been knit much closer than ever before, during these two years. There is a talk, too, of Bobbie going back with them to his own home soon, as he is so much stronger and better every way. He has learned to read, and write, and count, and indeed is talking of beginning to learn a trade, where legs are not part of the business, for a cripple Bobbie will always be.

We shall miss his cheery little face and voice, and bright merry ways when he goes, but his crib will not remain empty for a single day. If each crib could hold three instead of one, they might still be kept full.

Do you know someone who has been ill a great deal, and who is often weak? You think it is very hard—do you not? Perhaps it is your mother. You wonder often, perhaps, when she is in such pain, that she should yet be so bright and gentle and patient. Dear children, we do not wish to suffer, for we do not like to be ill and to bear pain. It is one of those things which we cannot understand until it comes to ourselves, until we ourselves experience it.

Many of the little children, of whom I have been telling you, have sad pain and suffering; but when God has once spoken the words, “Peace be still,” in their hearts, then all they have to bear just acts on their hearts, like the are on the gold, and they become vessels, meet for the Master’s use.”

J. S. M.

The Way to Conquer

ANNIE B. had received the Lord Jesus as her Saviour, and was earnestly trying to serve Him, but time after time she grieved Him by giving way to a naturally hasty temper. This caused her much sorrow, and earnestly she prayed for strength to conquer it. Now Annie was obliged to associate every day with Mary E., who treated her unjustly and tried to make her lose her temper, and thus dishonor the Lord. She mourned over this in secret, and sought and obtained pardon, but this was not known to Mary.

One day, as usual, Mary charged Annie with making a false profession of religion, and instantly received a hasty and passionate reply. "So that's your religion is it?" said Mary tauntingly.

The tears sprang to Annie's eyes, and hastening to a place where she could be alone, she burst into a flood of tears and sobbed out her confession to the Lord Jesus. "Go and tell Mary you are sorry," a voice seemed to whisper within. "I cannot," Annie answered: "besides she had no right to say what she did." "Blessed are ye when men shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake," came at once to Annie's mind, and for some minutes the struggle lasted. Then Annie went to Mary, and frankly confessed her fault, and asked forgiveness.

Mary looked at her in astonishment; this was something she could not understand "I have nothing to forgive; it was all my fault," she stammered.

From this time Annie had perfect control over her temper given to her from the Lord and soon afterward Mary also gave her heats to Jesus, and thus the two girls became close friends. Mary dates her first serious impressions from the day when Annie asked her pardon.

The Lord Jesus will not only save but keep those who put their trust in Him, for He is able to keep us from falling. R. B. Y.

9. From Malachi to Matthew

IN the year B.C. 130 Antiochus was slain in battle with the Parthian forces, and the late captive, Demetrius his brother, succeeded him. He, too, was slain in 126.

Hyrchanus, at some loss to himself, made a raid upon Syrian cities, and reduced some, compelling the inhabitants to proselytize.

Following the example of his predecessors, he renewed the league with the Romans. But at home, matters went not so smoothly. The sects of Pharisees and Sadducees had been forming for years past, and to the former the Maccabean family belonged. But Hyrcanus seems to have been out of sympathy with the party, or to have had leanings towards Sadduceanism. However that may be, on one occasion at a feast, a leader of the advanced section of the Pharisees sailed upon Hyrcanus to lay down the priesthood, and to be content with the secular power. On inquiring the reason, he was told that it was because his mother had been a captive of war. This false story incensed Hyrcanus; nor was his anger in any way appeased when the party gave the “gentle sentence” that the calumniator was guilty Drily of bonds and stripes. To his mind so sparing a sentence proved complicity. It ended in his breaking from the Pharisees, abolishing the decrees which they had issued, and threatening to punish all who observed them. Then he joined the Sadducees. His acts offended the people, and begat strife between the multitude (which from early days sympathized with Phariseeism) and the ruling family. This was “the beginning of the decline of the Maccabees.”

Hyrchanus died in 107. According to Josephus, he had possessed beyond the dignities of the government and the priesthood, the gift of prophecy. He was succeeded by his eldest son Aristobulus, though Hyrcanus had left his wife “to be mistress of all.” The new ruler added dignity in name only to the office of ruler— he was the first of the family who assumed the diadem and adopted the title of “king.” But the record of his brief reign is stained with blood. He thrust his mother who disputed the government with him, into prison, and starved her to death; his brothers he imprisoned or slew. He died in 106.

Hereupon his wife Salome released his brothers from prison, and made the eldest, Alexander Janneus, king. “He settled the government in the manner that he judged best,” says Josephus, which means that he slew one brother, but suffered the other to live. He made some wars of conquest, Salome managing affairs in his absence. But at home the authority of the Pharisees was paramount, and when the king returned to Jerusalem he was greatly displeased by the arrogance of the leaders of that sect. Like his father, he joined the Sadducean party, and, to show his contempt for the Pharisees, he poured the water from the Pool of Siloam upon the ground instead of upon the altar (as prescribed by the ritual) during the festivities of the Feast of Tabernacles. Upon the uproar which ensued, Alexander called in his foreign troops, and six thousand persons were slain. Insurrection followed insurrection. No less than fifty thousand persons are said to have been slain in the strife, and so bitter was the enmity, that the people sent an invitation to their old enemies—the Syrians—to come and help them against the king. Alexander met them and fought,

was defeated and fled, and this defeat created a little sympathy in his favor. Alarmed at this, the Syrians retired, and in the civil fights which ensued Alexander was victorious, and took his revenge in a most barbarous manner, crucifying; and slaughtering men, women, and children. His cruelties earned for him the title, "the Thracian."

A period of military success followed, in which several cities were wrested from the neighboring nations, and their inhabitants were compelled to submit to circumcision or perish. But "a spirited foreign policy" could all compensate for the dissensions which existed at home, and when Alexander died (B.C. 79), after a reign of twenty-seven years, the expressed desire of the people, his death, came to pass. His wife Alexandra acted upon his dying advice, namely, that she should deliver his body to his enemies, the Pharisees, to be honored or dishonored, as they saw fit, and place the reins of government in their hands. The Pharisees were thoroughly pacified by this humble submission, and praised their dead opponent to such a degree, that the people mourned his death, and gave him a splendid funeral. Though the king had left two sons, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, he bequeathed the crown to the queen, Alexandra. The Jews, as a whole, were well-disposed to her, as it was believed that she had no sympathy with the policy of the late king. She appointed her elder son, Hyrcanus, to be high priest. He was of an indolent, inactive disposition; he had no taste for politics, and was perfectly willing for the Pharisees to be masters. Such, indeed, they were. Josephus remarks, rather drily: "She (Alexandra) had indeed the name of regent, but the Pharisees had the authority." The decrees of John Hyrcanus, abolishing their ordinances, were repealed by them. They put whom they would into authority; they banished, they "bound," they "loosed," and "differed in nothing from lords." Yet, to some extent, the queen retained her hold of the civil and military affairs; she strengthened and increased her army, and would have governed with success, and in peace, but for the Pharisees, who took summary means of getting rid of some of their former opponents, the partisans of the king; at their wish the queen slew others, and at last a number whose lives were in jeopardy obtained permission from Alexandra to leave Jerusalem, and to garrison fortresses all over the country. This placed them beyond the Pharisees' reach.

The sympathies of Aristobulus were with these men. As a fact, he was coveting the crown, and when the queen was seized by a dangerous illness he made a bold venture for it. He secretly fled, rapidly journeying from fortress to fortress, and had no difficulty in getting them into his power. In little more than fifteen days twenty-two strongholds were in his hands, and an army was at his command. Alarmed at the state of affairs, Hyrcanus and the elders went to the dying Alexandra for counsel, but she threw them away; she had small concern then, she said, when the strength of her body failed her, and before any steps could be taken with regard to Aristobulus, the queen died.

Aristobulus advanced (B.C. 70) with his men from Libanus and Trachonitis, and was met at Jericho by Hyrcanus, who, by reason of his seniority, was the priest-king. Many soldiers deserted the elder brother for the younger's ranks, with the result that Hyrcanus fled to Jerusalem. From thence he sent a message to his brother, containing the terms of a proposed peace. They were that Aristobulus should be king, and that Hyrcanus should retain the priest's office. They were accepted, and the treaty was confirmed with oaths and the customary symbols of agreement.

Thus the ambition of each was satisfied, and peace might have been again the portion of the land, but for the intrigues of others. Hyrcanus numbered among his friends a rich and very powerful

man, an Idumean, named Antipater. He was the father of one, Herod, who afterward was that "king of the Jews" to whom the opening pages of Matthew's Gospel introduce us. According to our historian Josephus, the father of Antipater had been appointed governor of Idumea by King Alexander and his wife, and in that position he had attained great power. His son, if not of official rank, was, at any rate, "one of the principal" of the Idumeans. He endeavored in every possible way to sow dissensions. Probably his hopes of promotion were blighted by the political downfall of Hyrcanus. He privately brought charges against both the government and the character of Aristobulus, and assured Hyrcanus that his life was in danger from the ambition of the king. At first the easy-going priest was not moved by all this, but, growing alarmed under the reiterated warnings of the crafty Idumean, he fled to Aretas, king of Arabia, who also was numbered among Antipater's friends. The latter then took up his pleading with the Arabian, and prevailed upon him, by promises to restore twelve cities which had been wrested from his territory, to furnish an army of 50,000 men, and to march against Aristobulus.

Against such an army Aristobulus could not stand; he fled to Jerusalem, and was besieged by the Arabian king. Jr.

One Thing I Know

“ONE thing I know,” replied the poor beggar to the scribes and the doctors, who sought to make him deny his faith. “One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.” (John 9:25.) Not all the learning of his judges could drive this knowledge out of him! Arguments, threats, persuasions, could not shake him out of the belief in the sight which he possessed, and, therefore, in Jesus, who had given him sight. And by his assurance Pharisees and Scribes were confounded. No one could gainsay the fact that the man had his sight, for he stood before the council with his eyes open, and the efforts made to disprove his ever having been blind were in vain; his testimony was his victory: “One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.”

It is ever a refreshment to read the story of this man’s simplicity, to note his wonder at the folly of the wise men, who examined him, and his amazement at their ill-speaking of Jesus, who had opened his eyes! Holiness, power, and grace, he was assured, dwelt in Jesus, for to none but One who did God’s will would God give such power; and since the world was, who before had had the power to give sight to one born blind; and who but One of perfect grace would have condescended to give sight to a blind beggar?

“I received sight,” “I... do see,” “I see,” “He hath opened mine eyes,” were the glad words of the man, which character of argument all advance who have had their eyes opened by the Lord. Each truly converted person can and does say: “One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see”; and saying this, he utters his faith in the mighty power and grace of Christ as wrought in himself.

Jesus is the light of life. and He opens our eyes to see the reality of our sinful state by nature. of God’s hatred against sin, and of the preciousness of the blood which cleanses us from all sin. It is most comforting to get back from the dust of the conflict, and the clamor of controversy, to this exultant point, “One thing I know!” “I” know. I, myself, for myself. for Jesus has done a great work in me, as well as for me. He bade me obey His word; I obeyed, and I see!

Such faith as this is not easily disturbed; modern infidelity has no more influence upon this simplicity, than an army of locusts upon an iron wall; weak and feeble reasonings may go down and perish before its advance, but no infidelity can disprove to a man who sees that he has his sight. Let our dear young! readers assure themselves that simple faith in Jesus is a stronghold for the soul. How often has the testimony of young and old to what Jesus has done for them broken up the ranks of sceptics! The poor man, of whom we speak, had his sight, and he rejoiced in it. True, the doctors of the law cast him out of the synagogue; but they were the blind. the spiritually blind. and this the man felt and saw; he had light. After he had been cast out, Jesus found him, and He said unto him, “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” Jesus ever finds and comforts such as suffer for His Name; He would not have it that the man should be the loser, for having lost his parents, and the advantages of the synagogue for His sake, and He revealed Himself to the man, who became a worshipper of Himself. To belong to the synagogue when Christ was outside it, was indeed but a poor honor; to belong to Christ, and to worship Him and the Father, is honor indeed.

The Experiences of a Missionary in China.

9. The Death of the Heathen, and a Christian's Victory Over Death

PROBABLY the greatest difficulty the missionary has to meet in presenting the Gospel to the Chinese, is the universal superstition regarding ancestral worship. The following instance of its power made a lasting impression on the writer's mind before he had been many months in the country. One afternoon in September—soon after the great famine in North China—we were taking our usual walk through the dusty streets of a city, to the open field! beyond its wall. Just before reaching the south gate, we noticed, on the side of the road, three or four women together, one of whom was kneeling upon an old grave and crying piteously. We looked earnestly at the troubled woman and her companions, but being unable to speak the language well enough to make ourselves understood, we made no inquiries, and judging by the composure of the women who stood by, took it for granted that nothing very serious had occurred. Outside the city wall we passed several men, at different times, carrying bundles of colored paper and crackers under their arms, and on re-entering the city we observed heaps of burnt paper before nearly every house. Men and boys were busily engaged in heaping up strings of colored paper, and a ring of incense ashes having been made around the heap, it was set alight, amid great excitement. In every direction, women were weeping and wailing—in houses, streets, and fields, as only the heathen can do. Indeed, nearly every woman in the city seemed suddenly overcome with grief.

We hastened through the streets to our home, to ascertain from our native friends the cause of this sudden outburst. Had the firstborn in every family been suddenly taken from their midst, as in the days of Pharaoh, or had some great slaughter of rebels, in some part of the empire, suddenly bereaved half the women of the city of a husband or a brother? We soon learned that nothing extraordinary had occurred. It was the feast of the eighth moon, on which occasion it is the duty of widows to bewail the death of their husbands, and to pray to their spirits, which are believed to be present, to hear and to give the desired help. On certain great feast days, so it is believed, the spirits of the dead visit the earth to receive the worship of their offspring.

As we sat outside our door, in the cool of the evening, with the starry heavens and the serene rising moon above, offering a forcible contrast to the din of gongs and drums, the excited singing of the worshippers in the temples, and the noise of the actors in the out-of-door theaters about the streets, we could but wonder what must be the thoughts of the Great and Holy God, as He looked down upon the scene of confusion. Is it possible, thought we, that such a wilderness can ever be made to blossom as the rose? It is possible. With God all things are possible, and this thought alone was sufficient to stimulate us to increased zeal for the spread of the gospel among the heathen.

It has often been said, and with great truth, that China presents the aspect of one vast cemetery. Go where you will, on the plains, in the hills, or by the road-side, and in nearly every field, you find mounds representing the last resting-place of a father, a mother, or a child. There do not appear to be many public cemeteries; but, as a rule, each man buries his dead in his own field, just as Abraham desired to do, when he purchased the plot of ground from the children of Heth. Only the

very poorest of the people in the large cities, who have no land of their own, bury their dead in the waste places of the earth.

Everywhere, as we pass through the country, we see graves, and often, in the famine districts, unburied coffins. Large sums of money are frequently spent, at the suggestion of the Necromancer, in the vain hope of finding a suitable spot where the spirit of the departed man may rest in peace. It is no unusual thing to meet parties of men conveying a corpse to the very ends of the empire. When this is done the coffin is fixed between two long poles, and carried by two mules. A cock, with a string tied to one leg to prevent his escape, is attached to the coffin, and, when the body is at last interred, the cock is slain and his blood sprinkled on the coffin. These journeys are often long and expensive. Certain prepared paper is burnt at short stages along the road, with the idea that in some strange way the path of the spirit of the dead man may thus be illuminated. Prayers are chanted for the dead for days and weeks together; indeed the length of the period required to release the soul from its purgatory is often in proportion to the length of the purse of the family, by whom the priests are engaged. Purgatory is older than Rome.

Almost one of the first things we saw, upon entering the inland province of Ho-nan, was an early morning funeral.

We had started on our day's march at dawn. The surrounding country was flat and uninteresting, and the morning mist dismal and cold, the sun not having yet risen to dispel the darkness and to drive away the mists of early dawn. We had not travelled more than a mile into the open country, when strange sounds of weeping and wailing mingled with chanting of prayers, reached our ears. Everything seemed in keeping with the wailing of the mourners and the hopeless prayers of the priests, proceeding from a clump of Cyprus trees not far distant from our path. We could distinguish in the disappearing gloom, the forms of some dozen persons in deep mourning. They had a strip of white calico over their heads, and a long white sash of the same material round their waists, while one or two were clothed entirely in white, even to their shoes. All stood round a newly-dug grave. They had just lowered the remains of a relative to his last-resting place. A more dismal hour could not have been chosen for such a sad duty. The night had barely gone; day had not yet commenced as these mournful cries ascended to Heaven. There was no place for rejoicing among the mourners, that the departed had gone to be with Christ. The future of their absent one was darker than the gloom which now surrounded his grave. No Sun of Righteousness had risen upon his soul. He had died, as he had lived, without the knowledge of Christ's salvation. The darkness of death reigns in this vast province of fifteen million souls. The sound of the gospel is never heard there. No hope of eternal life lightens the path of those who die in this country.

The following account of the triumphant death of a young Christian girl, named Teh-sing, who had been brought up in a mission school at Shao-hing, is a remarkable contrast to what we have just said concerning the death of the heathen. I give the account as written by the lady under whose loving care the mission school prospers.

"During the last fortnight that she was with us, she was watched day and night; and many times during that period we all gathered round her bed, expecting that every breath would be her last. Still she rallied again, and suffered on as before, till Friday, the 30th September. Then a scene burst in upon us as wonderful as it was sudden and unlooked for; it seemed as if she had been borne on the crest of a wave to the very shores of glory, and was brought back in its receding flow,

not to tell us what she had seen, but to let us know how inexpressibly happy it had made her.

“A little after noon, on my way to her room, I was met by one of the school-girls coming to call me, as they thought her dying. In an instant I was by her side, and taking her cold hands, I asked her ‘How is it with you now, Teh-sing’? She fixed her beaming eyes on mine, and said, ‘Oh, I am so happy! Do not weep: you need not be troubled; you must not weep. I am going to heaven. I am inexpressibly happy. I have seen the Lord! I have seen heaven. It is so good; very, very good.’

“ ‘Have your sufferings ceased entirely, then?’ I asked. ‘Only my chest is sore, but that will soon be over. In heaven there will be no pain, no sorrow■no, not the least. Heaven is so good, inexpressibly good. You cannot even imagine how good it is. Oh, I am happy, happy!’”

“Looking round on us all, she thanked us repeatedly, saying several times, ‘We shall all meet in heaven. You need not weep; you must not weep. We shall meet in heaven. Good-bye! good-bye! Its door is very wide, so that whosoever will, may enter in if they will only trust in Jesus.’”

“Before this she had asked me to pray for her mother and exhort her. She now called her mother to her, and, taking her hand, said, ‘You must repent, and trust in Jesus; you must become a disciple, and meet me in heaven. Heaven is so good: I shall wait for you there.’”

“The hymn, ‘There is a happy land,’ was then softly sung. She was quiet till the last line, and then she began again to talk of its blessedness, saying ‘Yes, yes,’ as the singing ceased. I asked her if she would choose a hymn. She said, ‘Sing, Rock of Ages,’ and tried to sing herself. When the singing ceased she said, ‘It is wholly on account of Jesus’ merit that I am clean. I could do nothing to save myself■no, not the least thing.’ She then said, I shall soon see Z-tsia (a fellow school-girl, who had recently died), and, drawing me towards her, said, ‘You are coming, too?’ Then, looking earnestly and tenderly on me, she continued: ‘But, remember my words, there is nothing to fear■it is so easy.’ Holding her forefinger and thumb apart about two inches, she said, ‘The water is just about so deep. When faith is weak, the river is deeper.’”

“She then rested quietly, and most of those around her bed went away, wondering and amazed at what they had seen and heard. Truly pen cannot describe it, nor words convey any adequate idea of what the scene, which lasted about half-an-hour, was like. All was spoken in a whisper, for her voice had failed for some time.”

“Just then, not thinking that she was listening, I said to Z-ling, ‘Do you remember that verse, “O death, where is thy sting”?’ Before the child could reply, Teh-sing said, ‘It is in Corinthians. That is like me now; my name is Teh-sing (Victory),’ and putting her hand on her bosom and then pointing upwards, she implied she was then experiencing the victory.”

“About ten p.m. she said to me, ‘I want a text. I think it is in the twenty-sixth chapter of Matthew, but I am not sure.’ ‘Can you give me a word or two of it?’ I asked. I could only make out the words ‘king,’ and ‘servant.’ Kyng-me then put her ear to Teh-sing’ slips, and understood at once. She found for me Matt. 25, and began to read from the 34th verse. ‘Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father.’ She took no notice till she heard, ‘I was sick, and ye visited me.’ ‘That is what I want,’ she said. ‘I give it to you’■what a legacy! ■ ‘and to you all.’ We thanked her, but she waved her hand impatiently, saying, ‘Not so. Not so. These are not man’s words. Thank Jesus. He gives it to you.’”

“Early next morning she complained of pain and hunger. She said, ‘When the Lord calls me I have no pain; when He sends me pack, then I have pain. I am going now.’ In half-an-hour more she breathed her last. There was nothing to indicate the moment when her spirit took its flight... ‘And when the shining ones bore her away from us, we looked till we saw her no more, and when the gates were shut, after what we had seen, we wished ourselves among them.’”

“She was well named Victory.”

Such was the death-bed of a young girl, rescued from heathenism but a short time before she was called home. Some of those around her were still in heathen darkness. To her own mother the scene cannot have failed to be an assurance of the realities and abiding comfort of faith in Christ.
A.G.P.

Not Because I'm Good

"DON'T be frightened, Miss, when you go in; but you'll see a great change in Mrs. W."

"Indeed! Is she worse, then?"

"She were took ever so bad on Thursday, and the doctor says as she can't last long."

"I'm sorry to hear that. Do you think she will know me? is she conscious?"

"I don't know; she haven't spoken since this morning, and then she asked for you."

This conversation took place at the door of Mrs. W.'s cottage, on a Sunday afternoon in the month of July, 1876. Miss R., to whom the opening words were addressed, was a young disciple of the Lord Jesus, who had been in the habit of paying visits to Mrs. W., in order to read God's word to this aged widow, who was crippled with rheumatism, and unable to go out to hear the word preached.

The first time Miss R. entered this little cottage, she found its aged occupant not only in a sad state physically, but, alas! in great spiritual darkness.

The lonely woman had toiled long and hard during her life, and, like many others, had felt that with so much to do, she had no time to think about her soul. So year after year had passed, each day increasing the burden of her sins, which now, in old age, stood as a mighty barrier between her soul and God.

But she consoled herself with the thought, that she was not so bad as were many others; and she hoped, when her time came to die, that God in His mercy would take her to heaven. What a hopeless hope for a guilty sinner to rest on! And what a clever lie of Satan, by which he leads souls on to destruction!

For some weeks Mrs. W. assured her visitor that, since she was a fairly good sort of woman, she had no need to fear, but that it would be all right with her at last. However, Miss R. knew, that instead of it being all right, it was altogether wrong with her aged friend, who was "without Christ," and without hope.

After a time the old lady grew silent about herself, and would just sit, resting her chin on her hands, eagerly listening to the word of truth, which told of her guilt and condemnation out of Christ. She heard, too, that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," that He "died for the ungodly," and that His blood cleanseth from "all sin." But though she appeared to listen with fixed attention, she never made any remark that proved that she heard with the ear of faith.

It was therefore with great concern that Miss R. heard that she was so near her end. She quickly entered the room, where her aged friend lay apparently unconscious, with death stamped on the brow, and putting her lips close to the ear of the sufferer, she slowly repeated, ■ "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." At the sound of her

voice, Mrs. W. opened her eyes, and turned to give her visitor a smile of welcome.

“You are dying, dear Mrs. W.; do you know where you are going?”

“Yes. I’m going to heaven.” “Are you quite sure?”

“Yes. I know I’m going to heaven; not because I’m good, no not because I’m good, but—Jesus died for me.”

These words were spoken slowly and with difficulty, then her eyes closed, her mind became dim, and before the next sunrise she was in the presence of the Lord Jesus, of whom she had said, He “died for me.”

What gave such confident assurance to this dying woman? She had heard God’s word and believed “the record that God gave of His Son,” and therefore she knew that through His death she had everlasting life, quite apart from any merits of her own.

Dear reader, young or old, how is it with you? Have you the sins of your life still upon you? Are you trying to content yourself with the flimsy hope that God in His mercy will look over your sins, and that because you think you are not as bad as some people, you may expect to go to heaven when you die?

If you answer “Yes,” I must tell you that your answer is an undoubted proof of the fact that you are an unsaved sinner, living without hope; and, with affectionate earnestness, I beg you at once to consider the peril of your condition, and entreat you to believe “the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.” Then you will be able to take up the words of our aged friend, and say, “I know I’m going to heaven, not because I’m good, no not because I’m good, but Jesus died for me.” R.E.

Why Did I Not See It Before?

HOW simple is the way of salvation, and yet many anxious, seeking souls remain in doubt and perplexity because they do not enter into the meaning of the words, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"! They do not see that it is a simple trust in Christ, and in what He has done, that they require. Faith has no merit—it is like the empty hand, held out to receive the gift—and only through faith can we be saved. We must cast aside our own righteousnesses, which God declares to be as filthy rags, and take God's word as He says it: "By grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."

This condition of trusting partly to self and yet hoping partly in Christ, was that of a friend of mine, Mrs. B., a kind-hearted woman, honored and beloved by her children, and respected by her friends.

When on a visit to a daughter, Mrs. B. became acquainted with a blind girl, who was greatly afflicted, and who was given by God to rejoice in the furnace of affliction, Mrs. B. contrasted her own circumstances with those of this young woman; she considered the girl's peace of mind, and her own unrest and dissatisfaction, and was astonished. This peace of soul, she said, had the effect of thoroughly arousing her own anxiety; but, strange to say, instead of seeking the peace where the blind girl had found hers, Mrs. B. became the more eager in her good works.

Being asked one day if she did not know the Saviour as precious to her, Mrs. B. burst into tears, exclaiming, "Oh that I could feel He were mine!" She continued in this state of mind, until one day she read the pages of a gospel paper, setting forth the truth of the work of Christ upon the cross, and showing that by His blood our sins are washed away. The Spirit of God applied the message of truth, and so led her from her own doings to an implicit trust in the great atonement of Jesus, and she became a rejoicing and happy believer; indeed, the joy that filled her soul illumined her countenance, and gave a happy testimony to the power of saving grace. Often would she exclaim, "Why did I not see it before?"

A few months after she had been turned from self-trust, to trust in Jesus, she was laid aside with severe illness. For several weeks her sufferings were intense, but her Saviour was ever to her a living and bright reality. She loved to contemplate her association with Him in the glory, longing earnestly for the time when she would see Him as He is, and dwell with Him forever.

One day, during her illness one of the highest-born in our land, who is kind towards those in a lowly station of life, visited her, and was greatly struck with the calm and peaceful expression of her face. This lady, in gentle sympathy, remarked what a blessing it was that she was so lovingly cared for by her children, and on the dying believer expressing her gratitude for this favor, the Lady further remarked, that her love for them must intensify her sorrow in parting with them, never to meet again this side of eternity.

A bright smile lit up the face of our dear Friend, as she exclaimed, "But think of what I am going into■even to live with Christ forever!" Which testimony filled the gracious visitor with astonishment.

Thus, in the ways of God, the testimony of the blind girl led Mrs. B. to seek His salvation, and eventually the testimony to God's Christ reached one of the great and noble of the earth. Reader, whether the humblest or the highest on earth, all alike need Christ, for life or death, for time and eternity. P

Out of Darkness Into Light

I DO not think I shall ever forget the first day I saw poor Tom. It was the beginning of many visits, and it is my desire now to tell, God helping me, of his triumphant entry into paradise.

A terrible disease had seized him, and it was evident to all that he would never be a strong man again. He was quite young, and had a young wife and a little baby. My earnest desire was to lead him to the Good Shepherd, who had so loved him as to die for him; but I was not brave enough to speak to him, and, sad to say, he did not seem to care to hear anything about Jesus. So I only carried him little books, and used to try to say a word sometimes, but there was never the slightest response. More than once he had been angry when servants of God had called to see him to tell him of the love of Jesus.

For many months this state of things continued. Much suffering and pain were his, but he always clung to the hope of getting better. Poor dear Tom! He knew nothing then of the things that belonged to his peace (Luke 19:42), and his only desire was to live on in this world, without God and without Christ. But earnest prayers were going up for him to the God of love and mercy, who heard and answered, though it was His will to try our faith first.

I must say, I was getting discouraged, for nothing seemed to touch him, still God never let me give up praying for him.

In the beginning of the year, I heard an evangelist preach, who, as I was leaving the hall, held out his hand to me, saying, "Are you saved?" My reply came readily, "Oh yes! I am, but I know somebody who is not and he is very ill; will you go and see him?" And there and then it was arranged that the next day I should take him to see Tom. Accordingly we went together. The evangelist delivered the message faithfully, and on leaving he held his stick out over Tom's head and said, "Tom, believe me, the wrath of God is hanging over your head, just like my stick is. The Bible says it, and it must be true."

The visits were continued, and at last, after many months, there was a change.

Dear Tom was aroused, he now was always glad to hear the word of God. Still for many weeks the blessing lingered; many who were praying felt sure it was coming, yet he could not grasp the Saviour as his own. But, thanks be to God, the day did come when Tom could look up with a smile, and say, "Jesus is mine, and I am His. He loved me, and gave Himself for me."

Words cannot describe his joy, and that of his loving Christian friends, who had so long watched and wept for his soul. During the beautiful summer weather he was able to get out, and used often to go to the evangelist's house, and sit in his pleasant garden, learning from him more of the love of the Saviour, who was soon going to call him to that land where the inhabitants shall no more say, "I am sick."

The winter came on again, and slowly but very surely dear Tom got worse. He did not keep his bed, but sat propped up in his easy chair, so white and thin, and such a terrible cough he had; but

now he was always ready and longing to listen to a few words from the Bible. He suffered a great deal; it was wonderful how his poor wasted body could bear so much.

He several times broke a blood vessel, and more than once we thought he was dying, but he rallied again. His constant prayer was, "Dear Lord, take me home; but, oh! make me patient to wait Thy time." And the Good Shepherd tenderly carried him all those painful, weary days. His favorite hymn was, "Safe in the arms of Jesus," and many times I have sung it to him, with a full heart and trembling voice. He was indeed a bright witness to the power of the grace of God. On the 4th of March, 1887, he entered into the rest that remaineth for the people of God. Dear Tom had reached home at last to go no more out! His tired feet would never more tread the sin-stained floor of earth. And in that day when the Lord makes up His jewels (Mal. 3:16-17) he will shine in the glory.

My dear friend, will you come to the loving Saviour who saved Tom? He loves you; oh! do you love Him? He is not willing that any should perish. Now is the accepted time; today is the day of salvation; but there is another day coming, and coming quickly, a day of gloom and thick darkness (Amos 2:16), the day of the Lord's anger (Joel 2:1 and 2), and oh! in that day, where will you be? Where will you spend eternity? God loves you, and Jesus says, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28.) Is not this rest worth having? Do put you trust in the Lord Jesus, and then you will be able to sing■

"Jesus, my heart's dear Refuge,

Jesus has died for me;

Firm on the Rock of Ages

Ever my trust shall be."

A.B.

From a Sailor's Letter

"FOR many years I believe God's Holy Spirit has been striving with me, and urging me to decide for Christ. I have for the last six years associated with believers, especially since I have been on this ship.

"I have heard time after time that grand old story of how Jesus died for me: and I am a man who ever loved to hear that old, old story.

"I have been 'almost persuaded' more than once, but my heart was like a stone, and it seemed as if I could not decide for Christ."

"And so I remained still far away from Him, who is ever saying, Come unto Me, and I will give you rest."

"So time rolled on, and when Christmas came round again, everybody was wishing each other a merry Christmas and a happy time. Then I began to think seriously, and I said to myself, 'What is it that can make a happy Christmas?' Surely there can be nothing lasting in all this noise, hilarity, eating, drinking, and singing songs? However, Christmas passed away, and I was still undecided."

"Soon afterward I became uneasy in my mind, and just then I received a letter from my wife, who said in her letter, that the dying moments of the old year seemed to her just like the fire in the grate; both must die and go out, and come to an end. I was seriously impressed by this idea, and the thought struck me: there is a lesson to be learned even from the fire in the grate. We all must die; and suppose God were to call me hence, and require me to give up my soul, should I be ready? Could I say, in the words of the hymn, 'Take me as I am'? And the answer came, No, I could not say, 'Take me as I am.'

"The solemn moments of the year were fleeting fast away— my last, perhaps, on earth. And God was speaking to my soul, and saying, Behold, now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation.' I felt that I could no longer delay; I must decide one way or the other. And I did decide; I decided for Christ. I have 'found in Him a resting-place, and He has made me glad.'

"My conversion is not of long standing, but 'I am looking unto Jesus,' and trusting to Him to keep me walking in the light that has now dawned upon me; knowing that 'His grace is sufficient for me,' and that He will never leave nor forsake His people." M. V.

Exposed by the Light

A FEW weeks ago, while I was preaching the gospel in the open air, a poor old woman, who was listening very attentively, suddenly turned to one who was with her, exclaiming, "Who's been telling that man about me? for he knows all about me." She then anxiously inquired, if all that was being said as to the holiness of God were true; and on her companion assuring her that it was, the old woman cried out, "Then I am going straight to hell!" God's Holy Spirit was working in her heart, convincing her of her sins.

It is a mercy when any get to this old woman's state, and see their lost condition. Ask yourself solemnly where will your eternity be spent. The word of God does now expose us to ourselves, but remember, God has said there is a day coming when He shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to the gospel. J. S■n.

God's Wonderful Ways With Man.

10. Judgments Coming at the Close of This Age

WE looked, briefly, last month, at some of the ways of God in grace with man, since the rejection and death of His Son on earth, and His ascension to heaven, where He sits, the glorified Man, upon the throne of God. We now purpose glancing at some of God's ways in judgment with man, of which He has told us, with which man will be visited at the end of the present age of grace. God has said■

JUDGMENT MUST BEGIN AT THE HOUSE OF GOD. (1 Peter 4:17.)

Christendom now bears Christ's name. It is nominally the church and the house of God; for the time, the Jews are cast away as God's nation (Rom. 11:15); through their fall, salvation or is now come to the Gentiles. Heathendom retains its ground as it did prior to the church of God being established on the earth; for though the peoples which form Christendom were once part of Heathendom, still the greater portion of the world knows neither God nor Christ. Therefore, we must keep Christendom before the mind, with its responsibility towards God as His professing church entrusted with His truth. In Christ's sacrifice for sin, His ascension to heaven, and the descent of the Holy Ghost to earth, are the foundations of Christianity. The Jewish system of continual sacrifice ceased at the true Passover, and the true day of atonement. The divinely constituted order of sacrificing priests came to its end when Christ, risen from the dead, became God's and man's high priest in heaven. For men to sacrifice lambs and oxen to God after His Son had offered Himself, was open rejection of the Christ of God. The religion of sense gave place to that of faith, when God, the Holy Ghost, came to earth and dwelt in God's children. In such divine ways lies the origin of the Christian faith, and, consequently, of Christendom, which is that area upon the earth which bears Christ's name, and is thus distinguished from Heathendom and Judaism. Now, what do we find proceeding on the part of man in Christendom? From the earliest centuries there was departure from the faith once delivered to the saints, and, by degrees, a theory was set up by man, of a continual sacrifice to appease God, and also an order of sacrificing priests. This, in spirit, was returning to the unbelieving ground occupied by the Jews, who rejected Christ and His sacrifice of Himself, and was the beginning of a career leading to apostasy. Also a system of sensuous religion was produced. These things have developed, until in our times over a very large area of Christendom, the very idea of Christ's one and complete sacrifice for sins, and of His priesthood in heaven, does not so much as exist, while the sensuous nature of the religion that bears Christ's name, has so allied itself with heathenish ideas, that the Jews, who reject Christ, their Messiah, regard modern Christianity in many countries as idolatry!

The high priesthood of Christ is the outcome of His sacrifice. Christendom, at large, repudiates the Scripture truth of His sacrifice■that is to say, its real character■and offers to God in order to make expiation for sins. Thousands, who bear Christ's name, live and die in the faith, that God requires a continual sacrifice, instead of the faith of His word, that He has set forth Jesus Christ, a mercy-seat, "through faith in His blood, to declare... at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. 3:25, 26.)

It is impossible that man should continue to set aside God's purpose and counsel—yea, His glory in relation to the death and the ascension of His Son—with impunity. It is impossible that man should build up a system of religion bearing the name of Christ on the earth, which dishonors and discredits Christ, subverts God's truth, and falsifies His nature, without meeting the due reward of his doings. We read, indeed, of God's long-suffering, but we read also of its end. (2 Pet. 3:9, 10)

ANTICHRIST WILL ARISE OUT OF A CORRUPTED CHRISTENDOM.

The subverting of the good news of God concerning His Son, and the substitution in its place of the human and apostate priestly system, will end in the revelation of the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition. He will oppose, and will exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, and will eventually in the temple of God proclaim himself God. (See 2 Thess. 2)

The way is already paved for the Antichrist, the central authority in Christendom having exalted himself so far, as to proclaim his own infallibility. Such spiritual daring no rebellious Jew ever reached in olden days; it is out of that which bears Christ's name, Christ's greatest enemies arise.

THE PROFESSING CHURCH OF GOD WILL BECOME THE ENEMY OF GOD.

Yes, the most bitter and most determined foe to God and to Christ the earth has ever produced. (Rev. 17:5.) In as determined away as the nation of God cast off the Son of God, will the Church of God do the same. It is foretold that Christ will cast off Christendom (Rev. 3:16; Rom. 11:21-24), which now professes His name, and Satan will thus be left free to work among those who have rejected Christ, with "all power and signs and lying wonders." (2 Thess. 2:9.) Those who reject Christ's miracles will accept the devils. Men bearing Christ's name on them will be given over to believe a lie (ver. 11), even as God gave over the heathen nations of olden days who did not like to retain Him in their knowledge to a reprobate mind. (Rom. 1:20-28.) They had their science, they produced great thinkers, and they had their schools of thought, but their knowledge excluded God, and by God's judgment He excluded from their minds the true knowledge of Himself, so that, "professing themselves to be wise, they," by His hand, "became fools" (vs. 22).

The highway for the coming of the terrors of the last day is being built up. We see men's minds being prepared for open adhesion to Satan, as we observe the development of spiritualism, and its demon-intercourse, and the stretching out of the hand of professing Christians for a better faith to the heathen worship of Buddha. While in the weakening of the belief of the younger generation, in the authority of God's word, by their seniors, and in the preaching of Christian ministers in favor of skepticism, we observe the accumulation of so much storage of materials, for the rapid completion of the highway, when the decreed time shall have arrived.

God will in the most marked manner let loose His judgment on all the favored people in Christendom, who have heard, but refused the gospel. It may seem a light thing to men to scorn God's message of salvation, and of love, but

EVERLASTING JUDGMENT WILL FALL ON ALL WHO REJECT THE GOSPEL.

"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." (2. Thess. 1: 7-9.) No doubt this solemn statement is regarded as an old wives' tale by many, or as one of the

antiquated notions of the Apostle Paul, a notion only worthy of the credence of the age in which he lived, and quite unfitted to the science of this century! But God said, eighteen hundred years ago, "There shall come in the last days scoffers"■men "willingly ignorant" of the witness of the flood, and rejecters of the truth of God's almighty power, and the certainty of the fulfillment of His word. (2 Peter 3:2-7.)

HEARTS PREPARING FOR CHRIST.

True it is, that there are hundreds and thousands of noble, earnest Christians working for Christ, and living for Christ on the earth, but their spirit is becoming, year by year, more and more detached from the growing skepticism prevalent in the churches. Almost in every evangelical denomination individual Christians are awaking, and trimming their lamps, but almost every such denomination has its down-grade, and the gradients of the incline get steeper and steeper, and the downward pace grows quicker and quicker year by year. Progress there is, but the progress is on the line that has for its terminus, The Foretold Apostasy.

God is separating the hearts of His people from the aims and objects of Christendom, and this is, perhaps, one of the most suggestive signs of the times. It indicates His hand directing the true and the faithful in, but not of the spirit of Christendom, to Christ Himself. Some were ready when Noah entered the ark, some when Lot escaped from Sodom, some when Jericho was destroyed, and some will be ready when the Bridegroom comes. The Lord is faithful, and will keep from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth, the faithful to Himself. (Rev. 3:10.) He will deliver true Christians from the trial, as He delivered in olden days, Noah, Lot, and Rahab.

Consequences of Unbelief

GOD speaks to man, and upon man is thrown the responsibility to heed and believe God. If man persist in passing through life in unbelief, he does so at his everlasting peril, and if he dies in his unbelief, he dies in hopeless darkness. The consequences of unbelief lie at each unbeliever's door; it is so in human things, how much more so in the things of God.

At this present time, "God... commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." (Acts 17:30-31.) To refuse God's command is simply to brave His wrath. Such as persist in braving God's wrath may well lay to heart what their defiance of God will end in. There will be wrath, and no escape, no hope, but everlasting doom.

“Come.”

IT was a cold spring day, the sea was rough, and the wind boisterous, and as we were resting awhile beside a shelter on the beach, noticing an old boatman close by, we spoke to him as to the prospects of the weather. Presently, mentioning Plymouth, we found he had lived there long ago, and sat talking with him of the old days there.

“Forty years have I been here on this beach,” he said, “but I remember those days well. Ah! those were very different times; the fishermen and boatmen there were a rough set then, and though there was a little ‘Bethel’ there, the ‘Rag’ we called it, there were few places where us seafaring men could be spoken to, or could hear anything about Jesus.”

“Do you know Jesus?” we asked.

“Yes, thank God,” replied the old boatman, “I do.”

“Do you know Him as your Saviour?”

“Oh yes,” he answered, “I know I am saved. I knowed about Him then, in a way, and ever since I was a child. But I grew up rather wild, and always went out with my boat Sundays, as I’m sorry to say my son do now. I was a seven-day worker then, and when I came here, I did the same, though my conscience often used to trouble me.

But the Lord had to bring me right down low. I had taken a fish shop, but times became bad, and then a long illness overtook me, I got downright hard up, though I didn’t like to tell anybody, till at last it came about that our very last penny was spent. Just then, a lady heard how ill I was, and called to see me—a minister’s wife she was, and so my wife told her how I couldn’t get the strengthening food I needed, and her husband brought me a little help, bless him!”

Waving his hand towards his boats, and indicating a row of some dozen or more bathing machines at a little distance, he added, “All these are mine now, and they all sprang out of those few shillings. That was the turning point of my life in another way too, for the first Sunday I could get out I thought I would go and hear the minister preach, and the Lord sent the word straight home to my heart. I do remember the verse now. I went back to my bedside, and kneeling sown, there and then, asked God to save me, a poor lost sinner, and, praise His name, He forgave me. Since I’ve belonged to Jesus, I’ve been a six-day worker, and I do ask Him every morning to give me some opportunity that day to serve Him in my humble little way, whether by giving a penny to some poor man, or saying a word to some rich man, and He does give me such openings, it’s just wonderful!”

The old boatman’s happy, weather-beaten face told its own story of the joy of such service.

“I’m getting old now,” he continued, “and I don’t often go out with my boats, except sometimes with the visitors’ families, for I do love little children, and what do you think?” he added, with a bright smile, “I’m having a new boat built, you know, and I ask the children to guess the name I’m going to give her. Some say one name and some another, and they grow quite curious to know. ‘Well,’ I

say, 'I'm going to call her COME.' 'Oh!' they cry, 'what a strange name!' And then I tell them how Jesus, said 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me,' and that He wants them to come, and so I talk to them of Jesus and His love."

As we rose to leave, the old man said, "Good-bye; we will pray for each other. I have unsaved sons, you know, but I do believe they will be brought in yet."

"Faithful over a few things," may this dear old boatman see his heart's desire answered, and his sons be brought to know their father's Saviour, and may we, from his simple faithfulness in witnessing for Christ, be stirred up to occupy till He shall come. E. B.

May I Turn Over On My Knees to Pray

A DEAR little fellow, of ten, was brought to me very ill. He was unconscious for many days and nights, but in his delirium, he would speak so much about the Lord's things. Several times, when he came to himself, he asked me if he might turn over on his knees in bed to pray. When I told him that he was too ill, he looked sadly at me, and asked if he might have his Bible. I answered that he could not hold it; then he said, "May I have my hymn book?" His mind soon wandered again, and he thought he had his Bible, and was turning over the leaves, and he said the gospels were hard to understand. Then he rambled on, saying that God had promised to give Abraham a son, and that he kept His word and gave it to him. As the dear child was gazing upwards, he said, "If I had gone through there I should have gone straight to glory." It was a lovely sight to see this little boy's happy state during his severe sufferings. God has graciously restored him to health, and, doubtless, to live for His glory on the earth. F. T.

10. From Malachi to Matthew

DURING this siege, the priests only of all the Jews cast in their lot with Aristobulus. The contest dragged on, and was rendered noteworthy by more than one atrocious act. There was a man named Onias, who had great fame for “prevailing prayer.” Tradition says of him that, at a time of drought, he drew a circle round him in the sand and declared he would not move, and did not move, out of its limits until his prayer was heard and rain was given! From this circumstance he was called Onias Ham-meaggel, “the circle drawer.” The besiegers sought to turn his piety to account; they brought him to their camp that he might pray against the king and the priests. He refused. The multitude was clamorous; so at last Onias stood up and said, “O God, King of the whole world, since those that stand now with me are Thy people, and those that are besieged are Thy priests, I beseech Thee that Thou wilt neither hearken to the prayer of those against these, nor bring to effect what these pray against those.” It is said that he was instantly stoned to death.

The Passover drew on, and the city had no beasts for the sacrifice. The priests came to terms with the besiegers; the latter promised to supply the cattle, though they demanded the extortionate price of a thousand drachmas for every beast. The money was passed over the walls, but the beasts were impiously withheld.

The siege was raised in an unexpected way. Roman forces under Scourus and Gabinius had been sent by Pompey (then in the height of his military successes) into Syria, and when they came to Damascus, each section of the Jews sought help from the Romans against the other. Bribery and intrigue were resorted to in order to gain the required assistance; under Roman threats the Arabians retreated, and were pursued and defeated by Aristobulus. Then Pompey himself came to Damascus, and the Jews sent to him a present of a golden crown valued at goo talents. A little later (B.C. 63), Antipater went from Hyrcanus, and Nicodemus from Aristobulus, to plead the cause of the brothers with Pompey. The nation, too, was represented, and pleaded against both brothers as usurping authority which did not belong to them. The charges and counter—charges were heard, and Pompey deferred judgment till a later day. Throughout the proceedings Aristobulus carried himself rather insolently, and when he, suspecting the soundness of his cause, and that judgment would go against him, fled to Alexandrium, a stronghold, Pompey pursued him thither. The king hesitated about fighting, and at the Roman general’s command, submitted that and other fortresses to him. Nevertheless, failing back upon Jerusalem, he prepared for war. Pompey advanced upon the capital, but was met by the vacillating king, who offered to surrender, and to pay whatever indemnity was required. His offer was accepted, and he was detained by Pompey, while Gabinius was sent to enter the city, and to receive the sum agreed upon. But when the Roman forces reached the city, they found the walls manned for defense, and the soldiers refused to accede to the king’s agreement. Aristobulus was thereupon put in prison by Pompey. The Jews themselves were divided, some wishing to surrender, others to resist. In the end, part of the city surrendered, and that which held out—the Temple Hill—was put in a state of siege. Trenches were cast, banks were thrown up, battering-rams were put in position, and assaults were made. The Romans soon became aware of the Jewish rule to abstain from all offensive warfare on

the Sabbath; so, finding that they would be free from attack on all seventh days, they spent them in strengthening and improving their own position. Even under such circumstances, the citadel held out for three months. At last a battering ram brought down one of the greatest towers, and in its fall a breach was made. A body of Romans speedily entered, and the city was given up to slaughter. Twelve thousand persons perished by sword and fire. During all the horrors of the siege and capture, the Divine worship had been religiously carried on, so that many of the priests fell at their appointed stations.

Pompey entered the city and temple, profaning the sacred building by his presence. But he laid hands on none of the treasures; on the contrary, he commanded the temple to be sanctified and the offerings to continue. He restored the high priesthood to Hyrcanus, not deprived him of the kingly diadem; he cut off those who had been leaders in the war; dispossessed the Jews of those cities which they had captured from the neighboring countries and reduced Judea to its former limits. Moreover (and it meant the loss of independence) he imposed tribute upon Judea and Jerusalem. The brief period of independence and freedom had run its course; Judža was now only a province of Rome. The false step (as we must judge it) of Judas in entering into an alliance with Rome had led to its bitter end; the descendants of Judas had followed his example in seeking Rome's help, and now they were in subjection to its yoke.

Judža and Coele-Syria were put under the government of Scaurus, supported by two Roman legions. Pompey returned to Rome. A public triumph was decreed in his honor, and it was solemnized (B.C. 61) in the most splendid manner. Among the three hundred and twenty-four noble captives who were led before "Pompeius Magnus" were Aristobulus, the last of the Maccabean kings, and his son Antigonus. Alexander, a younger son, who should have graced that procession, had escaped on the way to Rome.

Some attempts were made to recover Judža from the Roman grasp. That they were utterly futile might be expected. First (B.C. 57), the escaped Alexander gathered together some thousands of men, but they were powerless before the legions led by Gabinius. The Jews were defeated, the fortresses surrendered, and in the subsequent disposing of affairs Gabinius divided the land into five parts, governed by as many councils, constituted on the model of the Sanhedrim, and meeting respectively at Jerusalem, Gadara, Amathus, Jericho, and Sepphoris. "So the Jews were freed from monarchic authority," say: Josephus, "and were governed by an aristocracy (or nobles). That is to say, Aristobulus (who reigned for only three and a half years) was the last of the kings of Jewish descent.

The people themselves did not mourn the loss of their kings. From the days of John Hyrcanus downwards, discontent had gathered in the minds of the people against their sovereigns, and they had even besought Pompey to free them from their power. It was a sad close to what had promised so well; the piety of Mattathias, the valor of Judas, and the capable administration of Jonathan and Simon, the first of the Maccabees, were clouded by the misrule and incompetency of subsequent members of that family, and it was with little regret that the Asmonean dynasty passed away. A few descendants lingered on, but without royal authority.

A further revolt was made by Aristobulus, who had escaped from Rome, but it ended in his re-capture and return to Rome in bonds. A second (B.C. 55) by Alexander ended with equal disaster; he was defeated at Mount Tabor. In all these events Antipater the Idumean bore an

active part; the friend of Hyrcanus, he was on that account, and as a matter of policy, the ally of the Romans; rich, powerful, and exceeding crafty, he greatly influenced Gabinius in the administration of affairs.

In the year B.C. 55, Crassus, being consul of Rome with Pompey, obtained from the Roman people a decree, which assigned to him for five years Syria and the adjoining countries. He journeyed into Syria the next year, and marched upon Jerusalem to seize the treasures deposited in the Temple, which had been sent by the faithful from all parts of the world. The custodian was a priest named Eleazar, and he sought to ransom the treasures by revealing the place where a very valuable ingot of gold was hidden away. Crassus declared upon his oath that he would be satisfied with this, but broke faith, and carried away to Rome all the treasure upon which he could lay his hands. It is estimated at ■2,000,000.

In 52, Crassus returned to Judea, and again forced Alexander, the son of Aristobulus, to terms of peace. In 50, Scipio was president of Syria. At Rome Cesar and Pompey were at swords drawn, and the former, in order to embarrass the latter, liberated Aristobulus, the captive king, and sent him with two legions of soldiers into Judaea. Alexander, in expectation of his father's arrival, also raised forces. Scipio, a partisan of Pompey, caught and beheaded Alexander at Antioch, and other of Pompey's friends poisoned Aristobulus on the way.

Antigonus, the elder son of Aristobulus, still lived, and Hyrcanus, brother of the latter, still filled the priesthood, with Anti-pater nominally his minister, but actually his master. Jr.

Emmaus

“And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus.” (Luke 24:13.) “That same day” on which Jesus arose from among the dead, and on which the foes, which stood in our way, were forever silenced, for when He arose death was overcome, the bars of the tomb were broken, and Satan, who had the power of death, was defeated. On that same day at even, two of the Lord’s disciples were walking from Jerusalem towards Emmaus. Their hearts were sad, and with their sadness wonder mingled, for the tidings had come to them, through certain women of their company, that a vision of angels had declared He was alive. And some of the men accordingly had repaired to His sepulcher, and had found the stone rolled away, but “Him they saw not.”

Now as these two disciples wended their mournful way to Emmaus, and as they ascended the familiar road towards the village, Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. He conversed with them, yes, in such a way as to make their hearts burn within them, but still they knew Him not. They spoke to Him about Himself, yet knew not that it was Jesus to whom they spake. “Their eyes were holden that they should not know Him.”

How near the Lord may be to His disciples, and yet how far off may He appear in their perceptions. He may be at our side, almost touching us, and yet there may be in us some unbelief, because of which our eyes are holden that we should not know Him. There may be a genuine heart for Him, and yet so much unbelief, that His gracious ministry becomes a gentle rebuke. These disciples could and did recount the great facts, which evidenced that He was risen, whilst the reality of His resurrection had not reached their souls. “but Him they saw not,” was the substance of their reasoning on the truths they had not only heard, but which they related to the risen Lord.

Now, how did Jesus deal with these His two loved disciples? Even as He had done from the first. He took them to the scriptures. He had been witness to their grief, He had heard them commune together and reason, and “He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.” Like a wise physician, He did not merely deal with the effects of their unbelief, but with the malady—their unbelief itself, whose effects were causing them the pain and the sadness they lamented to Him. Such was His gracious ministry, His loving service, on the eve of His resurrection day, and, at length, as the hill upon which Emmaus stands was gained, “He made as though He would have gone further.” But they, with eyes still holden, were shaking from their doubts and their reasonings, and were, they knew not why, leaning upon His strong arm and hoping in Him. “They constrained Him, saying, Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.”

Jesus was constrained: His love led Him into the chamber where they would rest, and as He sat with them at their meal, “He took bread, and blessed it, and brake and gave to them,” then in a moment, the sacred scene of His last supper arose before them, the vision of Himself before He died filled their hearts, “And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and He vanished out of their sight!”

Do not our hearts at times burn within us as an unrecognized voice recalls us to the scriptures? Jesus speaks! He is risen; He loves to bless His people; He walks by our side and comforts, though He appear in a guise unknown. Do we not hear His words, though we may not recognize the voice, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?"

The Experiences of a Missionary in China.

10. The Chinese New Year

IN no country in the world is so much made of the New Year as in China. It is kept as a universal holiday, and is the only one of the year, business going on from the beginning of the year to the end of it.

The New Year is the greatest of all China's national feast days. There are other great feasts, such as the feast of dragon-boats, the feast of lanterns, the feast of plowing, and the feast of spring, at each of which there is a large amount of excitement, both publicly, and in the homes of the people. At these feasts, idols are paraded about the streets, followed by hundreds of priests, representatives of numerous commercial and religious guilds, and by men and boys from the streets, who, for a meal, or the price of one, are ready enough to cover their rags and filthy limbs with the gay clothing provided for the occasion. There are also special feasts connected with birthdays, marriages, and funerals.

There are few things more remarkable in the round of Chinese social life than the universality of their customs. Every Chinaman shaves his head, and nearly every woman binds her feet. Every village turns out with gongs and tin kettles, whenever there is an eclipse of the sun or moon. Every family keeps the New Year, and very much in the same way, so that, when this festival has been seen in one part of the country, how it is observed everywhere else may be known pretty well. Some customs, however, are peculiar to certain districts. For instance, in Amoy, in the south of China, there is the custom of "surrounding the furnace," which is generally practiced thus: ■

On the New Year's eve, the family sits down to a substantial meal, with a pan of burning charcoal under the dinner table. This is supposed to preserve the house and family from fires during the coming year. After supper the wooden lamp-stands are brought out, and placed on the pavement in heaps of gold and silver paper, and then a volley of fire-crackers are set on fire to warn off any demons who may be near. The embers are afterward divided into twelve heaps, and their dying out is carefully watched, as in them is to be found a prognostic of the kind of weather to be expected in the ensuing year.

My first experience of the Chinese New Year was in a city in the North, where, so far as was known, the gospel had never been preached. It was my first missionary journey in China, and I was entirely alone, with the exception of a heathen servant, who, I discovered, after engaging him for the journey, was an opium smoker. In every respect I was made to feel the awful reality of being probably a lone witness for Christ, in the midst of a province of something like fifteen millions of souls! The depth of sin and ignorance of the city, in which I found myself, was of itself sufficient to impress me with the crying need these people have of Christ, who alone can raise human creatures from the lowest depths of degradation and misery, to God.

Three weeks before the New Year, preparations for the festival began. However dull business might have been previously, all were now actively engaged. Stalls were erected in the streets and temples, and goods of every description were exhibited. The women were busily engaged making

new clothes for their children, their husbands, and themselves, unless indeed they were wealthy enough to pay a tailor's heavy bill. It was the time for giving presents to friends, for which purpose shoes and caps were in great demand. The streets on the feast day were crowded with country people, and all were determined to give up themselves thoroughly to the enjoyment of the general holiday.

The people are less prepared to listen to our preaching during this festival than at ordinary times, but some in the city in which I was, did listen, and became so far interested as to buy a New Testament to give to their friends as a New Year's gift. Sometime after I had left the city, a man walked three days' journey in search of me to obtain a dozen more Testaments to circulate among his friends, so interested was he in the teaching of God's word.

The Chinese are great borrowers of money, and often pay large interest upon it. It would be difficult to find a Chinaman who is not in debt. There is, however, one good thing about Chinese debtors, in that they settle their accounts at the New Year. Where this is not done, articles of furniture and other property are seized. Now the last thing a debtor wishes to lose, at such a time of general festivity, is the door of his house, for, the door being gone, reasons he, evil spirits and every bad influence may come in, and annoy in ways that would never suggest themselves to men of our western countries.

The people not only settle their accounts with their neighbors at the New Year, but they also have a general settling with their gods. The gods in the temples, and those of the household, all share alike in this respect, and small dishes of delicate food are set before them, which they are invited to eat and drink, and to be generally merry. Large quantities of incense are also burnt before them, and men, women, and children come to them and prostrate themselves before them asking their deliverance from evil.

The kitchen god, I have been told, is often treated with great consideration a few days before the New Year, at which time he is supposed to go away, and render to his superiors the annual account of what has been going on in the kitchen over which he presides. This deity is very particular, and if there have been extravagance, if rice have been wasted, or allowed to fall upon the floor, and to be trodden under foot, he makes a note of it, for nothing escapes his eye. Because of this, and to make the best of a misfortune, the Chinaman does his utmost about New Year's Day to put himself on specially good terms with this kitchen god. He feeds him well on sweet food, and sometimes smears treacle over the mouth of the idol, with the wish that when he stands before his superiors, his lips may stick together, and prevent his telling unpleasant tales!

Christian people scarcely credit such absurdities, but they confirm the truth, that, "They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them." (Psa. 115:8.)

The houses, temples, and shops are largely decorated with colored lamps and paper scrolls at this festive season. Long slips of red paper, containing half a dozen or more large characters, are pasted upon the door posts, and paper gods are pasted upon the doors, to guard the house against evil spirits, and to invite happiness and joy to come in and abide there. On these slips are written such sentences as this: "May heaven send down happiness," or, by the side of a shop door, "May rich customers ever enter this door." A literary man will write upon his red scroll, "May I be so learned as to secrete in my mind three myriads of volumes! May I know the affairs of the

world for six thousand years!”

All classes of the people observe the New Year, and for three days every shop is closed, and hence a supply of food for these three days has to be secured before the holiday. Business generally is not resumed for ten days or a fortnight afterward.

The Chinese consider the New Year a sort of birthday of the nation, and a child born, say, a week before the New Year, is said to be in its second year a week after the New Year.

This feast is the occasion for general visiting. On the first day the magistrates, and all officials, receive the prostrations of their inferiors in rank; parents, the prostrations of their children, dressed in their new clothes; and teachers, the salutations of their pupils. On the second day, these calls are returned friends everywhere congratulate each other and Kung hsi, “I respectfully wish you joy,” is on every lip.

A great amount of formality is gone through; for example, two friends meet in a quiet street, and, contrary to custom at other times of the year, salute each other, and make an endeavor to prostrate themselves before each other, in which politeness they are always prevented, either by persuasion of main force, lest by so doing they should soil their new silk garments.

A great deal of the visiting is done by leaving cards at houses, which are strips of red paper, not quite so wide as a sheet of our note paper, having the person’s name in large characters down the center. The following words are written when the visit is to a personal friend, “Three happy wishes: ■ Children, Rank and Longevity.” A card, containing the name only, is sufficient for distant acquaintances, and customers; the visitor is carried round in his sedan chair, and leaves his card at a house, and thus the whole day is occupied.

After this, feasting and gambling begin. Dice, cards, dominoes are used, and the children and their mothers join in the games. Money is played for, and the voices of the gamblers may be heard crying out to the gods for good luck as the dice are thrown. Quarrels arise, and at times murder ends the games.

This is a lucrative season for the priests. Offerings in money are made to the gods, which reach the coffers of the priest in charge; the priests also make money by selling large quantities of incense to visitors, and by supplying them with tea and confectionery in the gardens and visiting halls of the temples.

During the feast, I went to several of the principal temples in the city, and preached to groups of people about the courts and in the streets. As I stood in a prominent position in the temple, and watched the people coming up in family groups, and prostrating themselves one after another, in the most humiliating manner, before blocks of wood and mud, my feelings of pity and shame cannot be described.

In one large temple, I passed through a succession of rooms, each of which was full of the most hideous images that the depraved mind of man could imagine. This was a representation of the Buddhist’s hell, and a more awfully cruel place could not have been depicted, unless indeed its equal is to be found in some of the pictures in Roman Catholic mortuaries on the Continent. There was one large idol, some eight feet high, seated on a throne in the center of each room, representing the governor, or prince of some special department of torture, and he was

surrounded by a number of hideous attendants, painted either red or black. In front of the presiding demon, kneeled a poor wretch, about to receive his punishment for his misdeeds in the old world, and for his having accumulated so little merit by good works, yet who, for some cause, was deemed worthy of escaping the worst of the tortures. Others were represented, tied to posts, and being sawn asunder by demons, who appeared highly delighted with their work. Another scene was that of a man thrust head first into a common mill for grinding corn, and being slowly ground to powder; red paint smeared over the millstones represented his blood. Again, were to be seen devils pushing unwilling miscreants into jars of boiling oil, and many other horrors relating to the infernal regions, too awful, and too revolting to narrate.

The children of heathen parents are taught to stand in mortal fear of these frightful images, and in company with their parents and friends are led to worship them. Is it a wonder that we find them slow to understand the nature of God's message of love and pardon? Love and pardon are unknown in the whole region of idolatry.

If the effect which these remarks have upon my readers, increases their sympathy, and stimulates prayer for these poor pleasure-seeking idolators of China, I shall feel that something has been done to extend the kingdom of Christ in heathendom. A.G.P.

What Must I Do to Get Pardon?

IN the county of Sussex, near to a straggling village, stands a little cottage built by the aged man who has lived in it some forty-five years. For many years past he has been paralyzed, and is therefore unable to earn his living, his speech also is defective, and growing years have made him very feeble. It was the writer's privilege to visit this old man and his partner in life, in the summer of 1884, at which time his years numbered fourscore and two. In the little cottage living with them was another old man, whose age was eighty-seven.

The two aged men used, in the evenings, to occupy a seat opposite each other in the old-fashioned chimney corner, and when the sun was warm, they would sit upon the bank that surrounded their little garden, shaded from its rays. On my arrival, if outside, they would come indoors, and draw into their respective corners, while I read to them, and expounded from the Book of Life the story of God's love to ruined man.

After my first few visits, the old lodger became very abrupt and testy. "I have never heard the likes of that before, and do not believe in that religion," he said, adding, "I mean to bide in what I was Leached when a boy, and I shall alleys keep in the same ruck." On another occasion he rose from his seat in the chimney corner in anger; saying, "I never did like religious people like you, and suppose I never shall."

I had been most careful to introduce no other name to him than the precious Name of Jesus, the Saviour, and to own no title save that of "sinner" for men. But he would have it, I was bringing him some new religion. Once, at the close of my reading, and expounding very simply, a chapter in one of the gospels, the old man declared, "That 'ere book you've got is a new one, and I do not believe in them 'ere new fashioned books." Having caught sight of a New Testament of large type, I asked if they would lend it me, and read again the same chapter, referring, as I proceeded, to the aged man and his wife to judge whether the words were the same in their Testament and mine. They replied to each reference, "They be just the same, be just the same." But the old man remained unconvinced, and as dark as ever.

While feeling hopeful about the aged pair I was very sorry for this poor man; he seemed determined, to refuse God's way of salvation; they seemed to be slowly taking it into their hearts. The last interview I had with the self-righteous man was on one evening, when he bolstered himself up with the vain consolation of having been in the habit of saying his prayers. I asked him as a favor if he would repeat a prayer for me, and very willingly he went through the old rhyme he had learned when a boy, "Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, bless the bed that I lay on." After listening to this ludicrous language, I asked him if this was all he said, for it was no prayer to God, "Do you not speak to God?" said I. His answer was, "No; sometimes I put a bit on myself, sometimes I say a long un', sometimes a short un'." This was our last meeting on earth.

A few days later, the poor old man was conveyed to the infirmary, where soon after he passed away from time to eternity. Where! oh, where, to spend eternity? Friend, you, too, must leave this

world and stand before God. Are you ready for that solemn event, or are you trusting to saying prayers, or to your good works? You may have smiled at the ignorance of the aged peasant, but his religion is in substance the same as that of the educated and the instructed, who reject God's way of salvation, and who trust in themselves.

At the close of this old man's conversation about his prayers, the other man cried out, "What must I do to get pardon?" He had been listening to the scriptures I had read, showing God's way of saving our guilty souls, and he felt the burden of fourscore years of a life spent without Christ. And in that humble cottage, God heard the cry of the broken spirit. Neither was God long in sending relief to the poor man's soul. What he so much needed he received, pardon of all his sins, and he entered into peace with God through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. A few more visits, and further explanation of the value of Christ's finished work on the cross, brought my friend into full liberty of soul, and for nearly three years he has been growing in the grace and knowledge of God.

At his conversion he could not read; now he not only reads for himself from the old Book once laid up in the drawer, but he is able to commit much of it to memory, and his delight is to mark passages that particularly strike him with little strips of paper, so that we may talk over them. He does not want any other book read to him now, he says, His dear old partner, too, always takes her seat in the chimney corner, for her share of the reading, and sometimes in the summer we have the little cottage full of their friends, singing praises to God. At the time I write, both man and wife are rejoicing in God, and are happy in awaiting the call to come up higher.

Dear unsaved reader, you, too, need pardon, but God never forgives a sinner apart from the precious blood of His own dear Son. When do you hope to be pardoned? As you hope to reach heaven, you must, before this life be passed, obtain pardon through Christ's precious blood, or you will be shut up with the lost in hell forever. R. C.

Rowland Taylor

ON the hill above Hadleigh, Suffolk, we passed an obelisk in the middle of a barley-field, and, as our curiosity was excited, we asked the first person we met what it marked.

“That’s where Doctor Taylor was burned.”

Then the truth flashed upon us that we had just been giving away in the town below, the very gospel for which this good man had suffered. Our privilege had been bought with his blood. Tears came to the eyes of some of our little party, as we thought of the scene that had taken place upon that very spot three hundred years ago, and, while thanking God, we gave three cheers for Dr. Rowland Taylor. Beside the obelisk, which is of recent date, was a rude stone, with this quaint inscription: ■

1535. D. Tayler in defending that was good at this plas left his blode.

But who was Dr. Taylor, and why was he persecuted? He was a great friend of Cranmer, and minister of Hadleigh. One day, while in his study, the church-bells began ringing at an unusual hour, and going to see what it was, he found a little ecclesiastical conspiracy on foot; for a neighboring priest, surrounded by armed men, was preparing to perform mass in his church. He protested, but only to be thrust out at the point of the sword. Shortly afterward, he received a summons to appear before the Lord Chancellor, the Bishop of Winchester, for stopping the Queen’s proceedings, and had to start for London to answer for himself. His friends, knowing the danger, tried to dissuade him, especially a faithful servant, who offered to accompany him anywhere, that he might save his life. Dr. Taylor answered, that his counsel was carnal, and that he could not desert his flock while it was in such peril; willing him to remember, that Christ not only fed, but died for His flock. “This,” said he, “is the pattern which, by God’s grace, I am determined to follow.”

The bishop received him in no very bishop-like manner, calling him “knave, traitor, heretic, villain” and other charitable names, to which the doctor replied, “My lord, I am neither traitor nor heretic, but a true subject and a faithful Christian, and am come, according to your commandment, to know the cause of your lordship sending for me.”

The answer he received was a little more rough language, and then two years in the King’s Bench Prison; after which, in company with other good men, he was sentenced to death, chiefly under these three heads: ■

1. For refusing his assent to the doctrine of transubstantiation.
2. For affirming the Pope to be Antichrist.
3. For defending the marriage of priests.

For these three points he was taken to the Compter, in the Poultry, and there confined until he could be removed to Hadleigh to die. During this time, the amiable Bishop Bonner visited him with

the rags of Rome. "I wish you would remember yourself, and turn to your holy mother church," said he. Dr. Taylor neatly replied, "I wish you and your fellows would turn to Christ." The bishop wanted him to put on the vestments he had brought, but the doctor stoutly said, "I will not."

"Wilt thou not; I shall make thee ere I go."

"You shall not, by the grace of God," said Taylor.

As he would not do it willingly, it was done for him against his will. Then, setting his hands to his sides he walked up and down, as if it were good sport, quaintly speaking "How say you, my lord, am I not a goodly fool? How say you, my masters; if I were in Cheapside, should I not have the boys to lane at these apish toys and trumpery?"

This so roused Bonner, that he was on the point of striking the saucy rector, but contented himself with a curse. "Though yet curse me, God doth bless me," said Taylor. Then came the last supper with his wife who, through the kindness of his keeper, was allowed to see him, with his faithful servant. Next morning at two o'clock the journey to Hadleigh began. When the Sheriff of London and his men took him forth, it was so dark that his wife, who was waiting in the cold February air, against St. Botolph's Church, could not see him; but the quick eye of his adopted daughter, Elizabeth, detected him, and she cried out, "Mother! mother! here is my father led away!" The company stayed while they knelt together. "Farewell, my dear wife, be of good comfort, for I am quiet in my conscience. God shall stir up a father for my children." He kissed his little family and passed on, "God be with thee, my dear Rowland," ringing in his ears.

And this was the man who was burned on the brow of the hill. I think nothing ever made martyrdom more real to our own hearts than that truly consecrated spot, but I trust we are sufficiently interested to wish to know the end of Dr. Rowland Taylor's journey.

Can you see the little crowd as they pass through the villages? The sheriff of the county leads the way; a few yeomen of the guard surround the captive; and hark! he is cheerfully talking to them of his hope; and now, in earnest tones, he tells them of Jesus, the sinner's Saviour, urging them to repent, until the hard-hearted men weep.

When two miles from Hadleigh, being asked how he did, "God be praised," said he, "I was never better in all my life, since now I am almost home and in sight of my Father's house."

What is now the barley-field was, on the morning of February 9th, 1535, a wild common. Let us take our stand here. People are gathered from far and near, though as yet the beloved pastor has not arrived. Yonder they come, over the bridge, through the old town, the crowd thickening as they move along. Little children look in wonder at the man, who, with a hood over his head, passes by. The old people, who remember his charity and love, weep to see him thus return to their midst; while the baser sort jeer and ridicule the servant of God. They climb the hill, and now they halt, and tell the martyr he has reached the place of death.

"Thanked be God, I am even at home," he cries.

Alighting from his horse, with both his hands he rends off the hood, revealing that his hair is knotted and clipped, as if to make sport for the rude ones among the multitude. Look at his long white beard. Now hark! As the people, who love their old pastor, gaze on him, they cry. "God save

thee, good Dr. Taylor; Jesus Christ strengthen thee! The Holy Ghost comfort thee.”

Then the aged man gives away all that he has, boots and clothes, and standing in his shirt, cries with a loud voice, “Good people, I have taught you nothing but God’s holy word, and those lessons that I have taken out of God’s blessed book, the Holy Bible, and I am come hither this day to seal it with my blood.” But a stroke upon the head from a yeoman, named Holmes, reminds him that he is not allowed to speak.

This is no fancy picture, but a real incident which really took place upon this very spot. Can we realize it?

Look again! the godly, venerable saint kneels. The crowd form a ring around him: some laugh, some weep; a woman steps into the circle and kneels at his side. The yeomen try to thrust her away, threaten to trample upon her with their horses, but she kneels in sympathy with her dear shepherd until he rises. He walks towards the stake and kisses it. A pitch barrel is brought, into which he calmly steps, and standing erect against the burning post, is there chained.

“Pile the fagots,” cries the sheriff to a butcher standing by, but the man does not. He is threatened with imprisonment, but still he refuses. The devil can always find servants for his dirty work; soon several of the roughs cast the fagots around, one of them contriving to hurl one, so as to strike the martyr’s face, drawing blood. Turning patiently, he says, “Ah! friend, I have hurt enough, what need of this?”

The fire is kindled, and from the hill-top the smoke ascends, and with the smoke, the prayer, “Merciful Father of Heaven, for Jesus Christ my Saviour’s sake, receive my soul into Thy hands.” He stands perfectly still, as if unconscious of pain, until one of the yeomen steps forward, and with a halberd, finishes the cruel work.

And on that spot today we find a field of waving grain! Is it not typical of the handful of corn then sown upon its summit? Sown in tears, it is reaped today in joy over the whole land, and shall yield its increase forever.

“The mountain dews shall nourish

A seed in weakness sown;

Whose fruit shall spread and flourish,

And shake like Lebanon.”

W. L.

A Sad Story

IN the spring of 1886 I was returning to England from a trip to Australia, undertaken for the benefit of my health. There were about five hundred passengers on board the "Iberia," many of whom, after an absence of years, were about to re-visit the old country. Every Sunday forenoon after leaving Adelaide, we had a service in the first saloon, conducted by the captain, in the manner prescribed by the Church of England, and on the evening of the sacred day a service conducted by one of the passengers. After a fortnight's steaming from Adelaide one of the stewards fell seriously ill, and notwithstanding the doctor's attention he became gradually worse. The sick man was the son of honest and industrious parents, and some years previously he had had a great longing to travel and to see the world, and so left his father's roof. His father was in a small business in a village in one of the midland counties, and having a large family, found that with all the economy which he and his wife exercised, it was a hard struggle to pay his way.

John, his eldest child, saw the necessity of shifting for himself, and with his father's consent, at the age of eighteen, left his native village, and after some trouble obtained a situation on board the s.s. "Iberia" as assistant steward. Here we found him. During his illness, a Christian friend frequently pressed upon him the claims of God. He pointed out to him God's great goodness in not cutting him off suddenly, and in giving him time for repentance, but John paid no regard to the voice of the Christian. He was a young man of a type which is, alas, too common, brought up in a professing Christian Family, he had no personal interest in Christ. Being surrounded by careless companions on the ship, he got daily further away from God, for God was not in all his thoughts.

One day when the Christian man paid John a visit, he saw that he had not many hours to live, his strength was fast ebbing away, death was, as it were, staring him in the face. What was his spiritual state? Alas, there seemed no ray of light in the poor dark soul as he was going out of time into eternity. His reply to the invitation of mercy was in these sad, sad words: "The devil's got me."

The next morning John died, and on that afternoon his remains were consigned to the deep.

The case of this young man is an exceedingly solemn one. He had had his day of mercy and opportunity, yet he did not profit by it. You, my reader, are still on praying ground. God's attitude towards you is one of tender sollicitation. He says, "Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die?" Is the Lord saying to you, "Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life" R. R. F.

I Have Got Christ Tonight!

IN a little country village, lived one, who, for years, had been in trouble of mind concerning her eternal future. She was truly anxious to find peace with God, but was hindered by the false doctrine that some are born to be saved, others to be lost; yet she was unwilling to give up hope. She would frequently send for me, and ask me to pray for her, which I ever most readily did, taking the opportunity to earnestly plead with her to cast herself on Christ, and to fully trust Him. The answer would invariably be, "I can't; I wish I could; but don't give me up."

This distressed soul constantly attended the preaching of the word, and eagerly drank it in, but the only effect apparently, was to make her more miserable. This continued for about two years. I almost despaired of her conversion, but at length God's time came for answering prayer. One Sunday evening I was about to conduct a service in the village, and, on retiring beforehand for prayer, the burden of souls pressed so heavily upon me, and especially the case of this woman, that I said, "Lord, Thou are surely going to bless tonight; let Mrs. ■ be saved."

At the very moment that the preacher was thus alone with God about the woman, she was alone with the devil, who tempted her spirit, whispering these thoughts into her heart: "You are a fine hypocrite, going to hear the gospel preached, making people believe you want to be saved, and you know you never will be." "Well, after this night I will never go any more, but I will go this once," she said.

During the address this verse was quoted, "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 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. 10:8, 9.) As the people were leaving, a voice whispered to the preacher, "I have got Christ tonight!" and there stood before him the woman for whom he had prayed saying, "Lord, let her be saved" ■ the very woman, who had told the devil she would go to no more gospel meetings after that night.

"It was that verse that did it," said she; "how was it you never told me these things before? I could not help myself, but just said in my heart, I do confess Thee, Lord. I do believe from my heart that God hath raised His Son from the dead. So I am saved. I will tell them at once, I will confess Him with my mouth.' Then the devil whispered, 'Don't do it now, there's your neighbor behind you.' I was nearly yielding to the temptation, and felt a darkness coming over my soul, so I hastened to confess Him to you."

She did not rest with telling me; she went home and told her husband, and then her friends what great things the Lord had done for her. She still rejoices in the Lord. E. T.

God's Wonderful Ways With Man. The Age of Christ's Reign on the Earth

WE endeavored in our last paper to indicate some of the moral features of our own times, which will be found in full development at the coming of the Lord Jesus to this earth in judgment. Our object was rather to stir up the Christian reader in relation to the truth, than to explain prophetic scriptures. We will now briefly refer to a few things God tells us respecting His kingdom on earth at the time when His Son shall reign over it.

CHRIST WILL REIGN OVER THE EARTH.

This great truth is not to be spiritualized into the reign of Christ in the hearts of His own, nor into the subjugation by the gospel of the heathen. It is a reality, and will be established, as shall be all divine realities, actually and literally. The preaching of the apostles declared the kingdom, and at the conclusion of the record of their testimony lie these words, "Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 28:3.)

It is a misconception of God's ways with man, to count this age, when Christ, having been crucified as the king, is in heaven, as the time of His kingdom on earth. It is disregard of the character of the kingdom, and, we might add, of the King! Imagine a powerful king allowing sin and iniquity, unrighteousness and oppression, misery and poverty, full sway among his subjects; imagine him allowing his adversary such power that his own laws stood rejected, and his commands unknown over the greater part of his kingdom, while most of those over whom he reigned, repudiated, or were ignorant of, his name. What sort of character should we say would such a king possess? Yet on the earth at this time, evil is in full liberty, and notwithstanding this, Christ is spoken of as reigning here. No, when Christ reigns He will rule, He will be obeyed; He will not decree at the bidding of the people, but they will be subjects indeed; and what God has promised will be performed. The kingdom of which Christ will be King will be perfect.

HIS REIGN WILL BE UNIVERSAL.

When God set the first man on the earth He put earth's rule and dominion into his hands, and the second Man, Christ, must reign till all enemies be put under His feet (1 Cor. 15:25), and thus this first purpose of God will be established in Christ. Again, God set David upon the throne of Israel, and in Solomon, his son, the glory of Israel was at its height, but when Jesus, the Son of David, shall reign over God's nation, all the promises to the fathers, and all the prophecies of Israel's prophets respecting the king and the kingdom, shall be fulfilled. The temple will be built in Jerusalem, which city will be the center of the earth, and the twelve tribes of Israel, now scattered and buried, as it were, in the world, will then dwell in their own land, the greatest, the most glorious of the nations of the earth. Again, God gave into Nebuchadnezzar's hands a vaster dominion than that entrusted even to Solomon—one which embraced the whole world. (See Daniel 2:38.) The Gentile ruler was the "head of gold," and through him was the mightiest of earth's kingdoms. Since his day they have degenerated from the gold to silver, and from the silver to brass, and from the

brass to iron, until in our times the iron is mixed with clay, with which it never combines. Christ's will be universal rule; the kingdoms of the world will become His world-kingdom (Rev. 11:15-18), and under His scepter not only Israel, but all nations shall be one kingdom, giving God homage and worship, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters the sea. (Isa. 12:9.)

MAN, THE CREATURES, AND THE WHOLE EARTH WILL BE BLESSED.

There has been no peace of long duration in any kingdom on the earth, neither can there be until Christ comes, when not only will there be peace, but want and sickness will be unknown by all who obey Him. The Jews saw in Christ's miracle of His feeding the poor with bread, the fulfillment of one prophecy (Psa. 132:15) respecting their promised king, and so desired there and then to place Him by force upon the throne (see John 6:15); while in the Lord's healing all who were oppressed by the devil, and in His recovery of the sick, are witnesses of what His kingdom will be like. These "powers of the age to come," or the coming age (Heb. 6:5), appealed to the Jew in a way the Gentile mind does not readily conceive. The earth and earth's blessings were present to the heart of the devout Jew in connection with Jehovah's promises to His people (Deut. 28:58-61), whom the Lord said should not suffer from the sicknesses of the heathen so long as they obeyed Him. The coming age, or the millennial age-the period of Christ's reign over the earth will be one, in which the wonderful words of the Psalms and the prophets respecting an earth blessed by God, and man blessed upon it, will be fulfilled.

The New Testament refers to this age, but does not enlarge upon its blessings, for the New Testament teaches chiefly of heavenly things, and heaven rather than earth is the believer's anticipation. But, speaking of the coming day, when the liberty of the glory of the children of God shall be enjoyed, the apostle tells us of the whole creation—not merely man, but the inferior animals, being brought into blessing. He thus describes the present, "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now;" and thus declares of the future, "the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption." (Rom. 8:21, 22.) God has a purpose to bless the earth in some manner, as was the case in paradise. (See Isa. 12:6, 7, 8.) In this present day, as there is in the nations within Christendom, a general cry for what is called humanity, that is, for the exercise of the uncontrolled will of the masses of men, it is well to have what God purposes respecting the future of the world before the mind. God will rebuke the will of men, and bring to naught the plans which even now are being developed for human exaltation. But since judgment is ever His strange work, He will establish the peaceful rule and the glorious kingdom so long promised, by setting His King upon His holy hill of Zion. The Christian should neither forget that God's kingdom is at hand, nor fail to testify to the coming of the Lord to reign. Man is progressing towards he knows not what, but the Christian knows that it is to the bold, defiant repudiation of God and His Christ; and God is allowing man to shape out a state of things (of which He has spoken in ME word), and which He will overturn and judge when His Son comes again to the earth to take up the crown and the kingdom.

The Experiences of a Missionary in China.

11. Some Results of an Afternoon's Preaching in China

THE city about which we now write is called Yang-chou Fu. It is said to contain three hundred and sixty thousand inhabitants among whom, in 1883, only one missionary was laboring. It is one of the wealthiest cities in China, containing many retired government officers and merchants, and is of special interest to European readers as being the city over which the famous Venetian traveler Marco Polo, was governor.

Starting from the treaty port of Chin-Kiang we travel sixteen miles up the Grand Canal, and come upon the east side of Yang-chou Fu. It is square, and has several gates; we enter by the east gate, and proceed along the narrow and crowded streets. Soon we find ourselves in the heart of a busy city, where shops of every description attract the attention, but our desire is to find the Protestant chapel, called the Protestant Hall.

There is no difficulty in ascertaining our way, for everyone who is not a stranger in Yang-chou Fu knows where the missionary lives, and, since we are particular in asking for the Protestant hall, we are not sent to the other side of the city where the Roman Catholic chapel stands.

Presently we stand before the mission house and chapel. Opposite to the latter is a large temple, called the temple of three thousand Buddhas, because that number of images of Buddha are fixed to the inside of the roof of the building. More than a hundred priests live there, and may be heard at all hours of the day and night chanting prayers, tolling bells, and beating drums to secure Buddha's attention.

Behind the chapel is a small temple, partially built, for the man, who hoped to obtain a large stock of merit by erecting the edifice, died without finishing it. The priests and others concerned in putting up this unfinished temple, were particularly anxious to have it at least a few feet higher than the missionaries' chapel, for the Chinese have an extraordinary superstition, called fung-shui; they believe that the highest building in the neighborhood has the power of attracting to itself and its occupants, the largest share of the good influences and breezes of prosperity which are supposed to pass over the city.

At three o'clock in the afternoon the chapel doors are thrown open, and in a short time the place is fairly well filled— principally with men. Now and then a few women come in; they go straight to the right side of the building, where, it is generally known, seats are marked and reserved specially for them.

Men do not take off their hats— to do so is considered a mark of disrespect by the Chinese— and until the preachers come in a good deal of conversation goes on. We note two strangers enter; they know the building to be a place of worship, and inquire where the idols are; then they proceed to the platform, and read a large scroll, inscribed with the ten commandments, and immediately they pronounce the doctrine good. Just inside the main entrance, sits a native colporteur at a table, whose business is to supply scriptures and tracts to any who may wish for them. One and another buys a book, and then, taking a seat among the congregation, begins to read aloud. A

Chinaman does not often read except aloud. Men smoke their tobacco pipes all about the chapel, and continue to do so during the preaching.

Now a door opens by the side of the platform, and the missionary and his native helpers take their seats. The meeting does not commence with either singing or prayer, for nearly all present are idolaters.

The missionary is attired in Chinese costume, and speaks in Chinese. He tells the people that, although he is a foreigner, the doctrine which he preaches is not foreign, but from heaven, and is as much for China as for any other country. He tries to make the people understand that there is but one God, and not, as they suppose, many thousands, by reminding them, that they have but one Emperor for the Chinese Empire, and that there is but one God, who is in heaven. Then follows a brief account of the creationman's disobedience and rebellion—his utter ruin—God's mercy in providing a Saviour—the story of Christ's advent—His life—His death and resurrection—and, in conclusion, salvation through faith is taught. During the address interruptions in the way of questions are made, and the questions often lead the speaker to vary his subject. In preaching to the heathen the missionary adapts himself to the particular circumstances of the occasion, his object not being the delivery of a discourse upon some particular truth, but rather to help the people clearly to understand the gospel, and to make sure that they do so by putting questions, and receiving answers.

On the afternoon in question, whilst the preaching was going on, an old man of seventy-two years of age tottered into the chapel, with two large baskets on a pole suspended across his shoulder. He carefully placed his baskets in one corner, and then proceeded to the front and took a seat. He had been there before, and was becoming interested in the gospel. All his life he had been a Buddhist, and for years a vegetarian, as he hoped thereby to obtain a large stock of merit. Latterly he had forsaken the world and attached himself to a neighboring temple, where, in return for dusting the idols and collecting waste paper, he received his food.

I must here explain what is meant by collecting waste paper. The Chinese have great reverence for their own writing and printing, and it is considered a mark of the greatest disrespect to their ancient sages, who taught the arts of writing and printing, that even a scrap of paper containing a written or printed character upon it should remain on the ground, and be subject to be trodden upon. To pick up such bits of paper, whether they are found in houses or streets, is considered a work of merit, and little square holes are built in walls, and in the sides of houses, specially for the reception of scraps of paper. Certain men go round the city and collect the paper found in these numerous depositories, and carry them in large baskets to the temples, where they are burnt in brick furnaces built for the purpose. Now, this was the business of this old gentleman, and he was on one of his journeys when we saw him with his baskets in the chapel. The missionary, knowing this, took occasion to speak upon the subject of salvation by works—the one foundation of Buddhism, and drew attention to the old gentleman and his occupation—a mark of respect to the old man rather than otherwise!

The service being over, several men stayed behind for conversation and inquiry, and among them the old paper gatherer. He had been uneasy for some time, because the missionary had assured him that there was no merit in vegetarianism, and that nothing which he did or refrained from doing would merit him salvation.

A most interesting conversation followed, in which a dozen or more occasionally joined. The old man appeared ultimately to decide to abandon his own righteousness and to cast himself on Christ alone for salvation, but he could hardly believe that Christ would accept an old man like himself, who could not reasonably expect to live long enough to do Him much service. However, the priests, with whom he lived, got to know his thoughts, and intimidated him, so that he dared not come again to the chapel.

Two other enquirers of that afternoon afterward became Christians. One was named Yin, and a stranger in Yang-chou. He had come down from the north of the Anhui province, on a visit to a brother, and having heard that some new religion was taught at the Protestant chapel, he came out of curiosity to hear what it was like. He was a man of a fairly good education. He was anxious to obtain a copy of the Scriptures, and books calculated to help him better to understand the word of God. He was most reluctant to go away, and waited about till the chapel was empty and the doors were closed, and then coming to the missionary, he said in a whisper: "I believe this gospel, and I want you to tell me how I can become a disciple of Jesus." He seemed half frightened at his own confession, and was so often looking over to the door that I asked him what made him afraid. He said he thought someone might be peeping from the street through the key-hole. So we stuffed a piece of paper into the key-hole, and continued the conversation. He then knelt down with the missionary, and for the first time in his life prayed to God for the forgiveness of his sins and for the gift of eternal life in Christ.

Yin became a constant attendant at the chapel, and had long conversations with us during the remainder of his visit; and, on his return to his native place, gave evidence of being a changed man.

The second enquirer was one whom the Chinese regard as a religious man. He seemed to be living rather with a view to secure the salvation of his soul than for present gain. He had tried several of the numberless religious societies found in China, but could find satisfaction in none of them. There was a want of rest and peace in his heart, which nothing that he had yet found could satisfy. He had consulted many teachers and leaders of religious orders, and was a diligent student of Buddhism and Taoism. At last he came to the conclusion that the only way in which he could obtain salvation was to retire from the world and become a Buddhist priest. He had been led to this conclusion by the persuasions of some priests, whose supposed superior wisdom and virtue, he thought, qualified them to speak with authority upon such matters. He had, however, doubts about the powers of Buddhism, for he had long been a devoted Buddhist, and a vegetarian also.

The priests had given him some books to study and a large chart to worship.

It now occurred to Tsao that there was one other religion he had not tried. He had heard vaguely of the teaching of the missionaries, and he resolved, as a last resource, to hear what they had to say about the things which so long had troubled his mind. If he could find no satisfaction in the "Jesus religion," then, said he, he would straightway forsake his father and mother and his kindred, shave his head, change his name, and spend the rest of his days in serving the idols of Buddha.

In this condition of mind did Tsao enter the chapel, and what had been specially addressed to the old paper collector exactly suited him! He had heard, for the first time, that salvation is not of

works, but of grace. Such an idea had previously never occurred to him. There seemed a possible way of escape for him. If he could find one able and willing to save him, without demanding in return for it a righteousness which he felt he could never offer, all his difficulties would be immediately met.

Tsao became an earnest enquirer, and, in course of time, made confession of his faith, was baptized, and became a member of the little church in the great city of over three hundred thousand souls. He brought to the missionaries his heathen books and idols, and these have many times since been exhibited in missionary meetings in England.

What has been said about the reverence paid by the Chinese for paper having upon it their own printing or writing, suggests the readiness in which printed papers, containing the word of the truth of the Gospel would be received by them, and, we trust, the hint will not be lost upon our readers. Much may be done in the way of circulating Christian truth in that vast country.

I may have been able, in this paper, to give a faint idea of what our practical missionary work in China is like, but only those who have actually engaged in the work can fully realize the preciousness of these individual conversions. A. G. P.

The Two Lanterns

As I was walking to a gospel meeting, in a dense fog one winter's evening, I was not sorry to see a light coming towards me in the thickest part of the wood through which my path lay. As it drew nearer, I found it was from a lantern, carried by a little boy of eight years of age, whom I knew, on his way to a children's meeting.

"It's pleasant to meet a light this dark evening," I remarked; "is it your own, John?"

"No, ma'am," answered he; "it's my father's." And he hurried on, afraid of getting in late.

"That's a brave little fellow to come so far alone this dark night" thought I. But then, you see, his lantern gave such a bright light that it really was not darkness for him, though it was for me.

I walked on for about ten minutes, and, as I neared the village to which I was going, I met several more little lads, also on their way to the children's meeting, but it was too dark for me to make out clearly who they were. However, as I passed them, where the light from a distant gas-lamp fell across the figure of the boy who walked first (whom we will call Tom), I could see he was carrying a lantern, much the same as that which guided me through the wood, but this one had no light in it.

"Well," I thought to myself, "that boy's lantern is not a bit of good, either to himself or to his companions, and they have to go through the dark wood, too." They were late already, I knew, and, having no light, they could not hurry along when once they were beyond the reach of the village gas, as John had done.

What do you think made all the difference between these two lanterns, which looked alike? Why, the difference was this— John's lamp had oil in it, which burned brightly, and Tom's had none; the only thing that could make it of use was wanting, and he might just as well have left it at home, and saved himself the trouble of carrying it, to say nothing of the risk he ran of breaking the glass against the trees, while groping his way through them.

As I walked on, these two boys with their lanterns set me thinking of a parable, that the Lord Jesus told His followers when He was down here. I expect every little Sunday-school scholar guesses at once which one I mean: the parable of the ten virgins. John, with his bright light, reminded me of the five wise virgins, who had "oil in their vessels with their lamps," and Tom of the other five, who, though they took their lamps, "took no oil with them." I am sure you all think Tom was a very silly little boy, and so he was; but I expect he was not so silly as he looked, for no doubt he had lit his lantern before he left home, and did not find out that the wick only was burning, until it was too late to get the oil. Well, Jesus calls these last virgins "foolish," and when He calls any foolish we know they must be so indeed.

Perhaps all of you children do not know what is meant by the lamp in the parable, so I had better explain that it is the profession of Christianity, which every little boy or girl makes, more or less, who kneels in prayer to God, and who is under Christian teaching. The oil means the Spirit of God, which He gives to everyone who is washed in the precious blood of Jesus.

Now, dear children, you have each got a lamp, but the question I want to bring home to you very solemnly is this, 'Has your lamp got oil in it, and is it giving a bright light like John's, or is it dark and useless like Tom's?' There is a terrible danger nowadays (when there is so much gospel teaching being given) of people, big and little, getting satisfied with having the lamp of profession, and yet all the time having no oil in it—no life in their souls—and so be but going religiously to hell.

I think we may draw yet another lesson from John's answer—that the light he carried was not his own, but his father's. I hope some of my young readers have received "the gift of God," and so are light-bearers of the Father in heaven. How sweet it would be for you to be lighting your little friends along the way to the bright home above, not being blind leaders of the blind, as poor Tom was to his companions! Perhaps the foolish child with the dark lamp will get more followers than the wise child with the light one, for all naturally follow the bad example far more readily than the good; but never mind, even if alone, all will be brightness around you, if you are yourself walking in the light through this dark world.

We can picture the joy and gladness of those wise virgins as the Bridegroom (the Lord Jesus Christ) welcomes them to His marriage feast, and takes them in with Him, for they are "ready." Are you ready, dear child? Just think of those foolish virgins who, of course, came in long behind the wise, who had pressed forward quickly in the light of their lamps. You know these last had wasted their time in' trying to buy for themselves the oil that was not to be bought, many a bruise, and many a fall. One wonders why they ever went forth to meet the Bridegroom; for what was the good of their pretending to go as light-bearers, to welcome Him at His coming, with lamps that were not burning at all? When they got to the gate, ever so late, what did they find? "The door was shut"—shut against all the dark lanterns which their bearers now vainly held up, crying out, "Lord, Lord, open to us."

Now, children, I beg of you to take their sad story to heart. The Lord Jesus is coming very soon—it might be today—and unless you are bearing a lamp, bright with the Holy Spirit's light, you have nothing but an empty profession, which will only make your judgment the greater at His appearing.

It did not matter very much if Tom and his friends got late for their meeting that evening, as they stumbled against the trees in the dark wood; but think, dear children, how awful it would be if you were to arrive too late for the marriage supper of the Lamb! Are you only darkly groping your way towards another world, without any light given from above—already on earth treading that darksome path, which must end in the blackness of darkness forever? How terrible it would be if any little boy or girl, who reads this, were to get to heaven's gate to find it closed in his or her face, and were to hear those dreadful words said, "Verily, I say unto you, I know you not"! D.&A.C.

11. From Malachi to Matthew

IN B.C. 47, Julius Caesar came into Syria, and appointed his kinsman, Sextus Caesar, president of the province. He then proceeded into Pontus, overcame a rising there, settled affairs in Cappadocia and other parts of Asia Minor, and returned to Rome, where he was again chosen Dictator.

Antipater had been of the greatest service to Caesar in this expedition, and in return for this, and for his general management of the Judean province, he was made a citizen of Rome. Antigonus appealed to Caesar against Antipater and Hyrcanus, with the only result that Hyrcanus was confirmed in the priesthood, and Antipater was formally appointed Procurator of Judaea. Antipater constituted his eldest son, Phasaël appointed Procurator, governor of Jerusalem, and Herod governor of Galilee. Herod signaled himself by suppressing a horde of robbers (as Josephus calls them, but it was probably a “nationalist” rising) which infested part of Galilee, and having in his zeal put the leader to death without the consent of the Sanhedrim, that act was seized upon by some who were jealous of the influence of the Idumean family, and he was cited to appear before the Sanhedrim. Hyrcanus was in a difficult position; he was attached to Herod’s father, and probably to Herod himself, and he moreover received a threatening letter from Sextus, the president, charging him to clear Herod. On the other hand, there was the clamor of the envious Jews. Herod attended, clothed in purple, and with an armed escort and all the pomp of state, rather than as one on trial for a grave offense. The Sanhedrists were overawed by his bearing, and prepared to acquit him. Only one voice was heard in rebuke and warning. Same as, the president of the council, almost prophetically declared that this man whom they sought to absolve would one day punish them all. Moved by this, the judges were about to pronounce sentence of death, but the timid Hyrcanus adjourned the trial, and sent privately to Herod, urging him to flee. This he did, and soon proceeded to show his gratitude to Hyrcanus by marching with an army against him, and was only dissuaded by his father’s advice. Subsequently he slew the whole Sanhedrim, sparing only the faithful Sameas, and one Pollio.

In the year B.C. 44, Caesar gave permission to Antipater and Hyrcanus to repair the walls of Jerusalem, which had lain demolished since Pompey seized the city. In the same year Caesar was slain, and Roman matters were considerably embarrassed. In Judæa, too, great trouble followed in the imposition of heavy burdens, but Antipater skillfully managed to ward off all fatal consequences. But one Malichus, in whose hands Antipater had placed great authority, was covetous of all the power, and secretly poisoned the procurator. There was little doubt of his guilt, though he vehemently asserted his innocence. Herod would have taken quick and open revenge upon him, but at his brother’s advice he consented to act secretly. The feud ended in Malichus being slain by Herod’s agents.

But Malichus had his sympathizers at Jerusalem, and an attempt was made to avenge his death upon the sons of Antipater. Hyrcanus, too, was embroiled in this, and was reproached by the brothers for his treachery. But it appears that no extreme steps were taken against him—probably

because Herod was espoused to his beautiful but unfortunate granddaughter Mariamne.

More troubles arose. Antigonus secured partisans (B.C. 42), and made another attempt to regain his father's throne, but Herod had little difficulty in defeating him, and drove him out of Judaea. The vanquished claimant appealed to Mark Antony, the Roman general but without success, for Herod had ahead) ingratiated himself into Antony's favor by large bribes, and he and Phasael were appointed tetrarchs.

More successful were the tactics pursued by Antigonus the next year. In league with the Parthians, whose assistance he had obtained by the offer of one thousand talented and five hundred Jewish women, partly by fighting, and partly by treachery, he succeeded in capturing Jerusalem, and taking Phasael and Hyrcanus prisoners. The city was plundered and ravaged. The only chance of safety for Herod lay in flight, and this he did one night, with a handful of relatives and followers. During the flight he even drew his sword to kill himself, to so low a point was he brought.

The Parthians set Antigonus in authority, and he, fearful that Hyrcanus might be restored by the multitude, effectually hindered this by biting off his ears. As maimed, he could no longer fill the high priestly office. He was then handed over to the Parthians, who took him to their own land. He afterward fell a victim to Herod's jealousy. Phasael, knowing that death was certain at the hands of the Parthians, dashed his brains out against the wall of his prison.

Herod had intended to flee to Arabia, but was met by the request to begone! So he turned aside to Egypt, and from thence went to Rome, narrowly escaping shipwreck on the way. He laid his pitiful tale before Antony, who received him with great favor, as did also Cesar and the Senate, and he was declared king of Judaea. So quickly was this done, that in seven days he sailed out of Italy to Palestine. This was B.C.40.

But though solemnly appointed king, Herod had to fight for his kingdom. Landing at Ptolemais he relieved his mother, sister, his betrothed Mariamne, and others from Massada, where they were besieged by Antigonus, left them in safety at Samaria, subdued "robbers" (or a rising) in Galilee, and then pushed on to Jerusalem. The conflict was a severe one, and though the capital was first attacked in 39, it was not till 37 that it was taken, and that after some rebuffs on Herod's side. In 38, however, he found leisure to marry Mariamne, and hoped thereby to draw the people to himself. After six months' close siege, in which Herod was assisted by Sosius, the president of Syria, the city fell, when the Roman soldiers so fiercely gave vent, in plunder and slaughter, to their exasperation at the check their arms had received, that Herod had to beg of Sosius to restrain his men, unless he wished him to be king over a desert.

Antigonus surrendered to Sosius, falling at his feet for mercy. The stern Roman contemptuously called him "Antigona," the feminine form of the name, and sent him in bonds to Antony. Herod had no rest of mind while Antigonus lived, and at length his bribes to Antony secured his degrading death by the ax of the lictor.

Antigonus dead, Herod had not much to fear, but to more securely seat himself, he slew the friends of Antigonus recklessly. But though this might make his own position safe, it only estranged the people from himself. Josephus quotes Strabo to the effect that no torments could force the Jews to call Herod king. Feared for his power and cruelty he might be, but he was never loved.

As the nation would never have tolerated that he, an Idumean, should hold the priestly office, one of his earliest acts was to appoint Ananel, an obscure priest of Babylon, to the priesthood, to the exclusion of Aristobulus a young man of 17, his wife's brother. Aristobulus was an Asmonean by double descent. His mother, Alexandra, was the daughter of Hyrcanus, his father the son of Aristobulus, Hyrcanus's brother. Such Maccabean hopes as still survived centered in him. Alexandra was greatly incensed that her son's right was ignored, and she applied to the famous—or infamous—Cleopatra of Egypt to use her influence with Antony to secure the high-priesthood for Aristobulus. The intrigue succeeded, and the youth was inducted into the office. He was exceedingly handsome, and when, at the Feast of Tabernacles, attired in gorgeous pontificals, he officiated in the splendid service, he was greeted with acclamations by the people. That applause was fatal. Immediately after the festival, Aristobulus was drowned in the king's fishponds at Jericho.

Herod extravagantly mourned his death, and gave him a magnificent funeral; but the fact that it was a murder and nothing less, could not be concealed, least of all from the proud Maccabean mother. She again sought Cleopatra's help, and in result Herod was cited to appear before Antony. He obeyed, leaving his uncle Joseph procurator in his absence, and placing his beautiful wife Mariamne in his care. She was the only being that he loved, and that was in a mad way peculiarly his own. He gave secret instructions that, in the event of his death, she was to be killed immediately. Unfortunately, Joseph confided the secret to Mariamne, who, perhaps naturally, "did not take this to be an instance of Herod's strong affection"!

The report spread to Jerusalem that Herod had been tortured to death, and Alexandra made an attempt to seize the government.

As a fact, however, the crafty Herod had so plied Antony with bribes, that even Cleopatra's ill-will was powerless against him.

He feasted with Antony, and sat with him in judgment. Upon his return his jealousy was excited by his sister Salome, who accused Mariamne of unfaithfulness, and his suspicions were strengthened when, in an unguarded moment, Mariamne asked if he would have given that fatal order had he really loved her. Her knowledge of the secret seemed to certify her guilt. In his furious passion he was about to kill her at once, but he restrained himself. Yet he slew Joseph, and Alexandra was thrust into ignoble bonds.

Shortly afterward his jealousy flamed out again: he had gone to appear before Octavius Cesar, and repeated his former order about Mariamne. Again she discovered it, and upon his return, covered him with reproaches, and in his passion he had her slain (B.C. 29). After that, "all the passions which filled the stormy mind of Herod, were alike without bound; from violent love and violent resentment, he sank into as violent remorse and despair. Everywhere, by day and night, he was haunted by the image of the murdered Mariamne; he called upon her name; he perpetually burst into passionate tears. In vain he tried every diversion—banquets, revels, the excitement of society.

..... On pretense of hunting, he sought out the most melancholy solitude, till the disorder of his mind brought on disorder of body, and he was seized with violent inflammation and pains in the back of the head, which led to temporary derangement."

Alexandra, taking advantage of this sickness, plotted for the kingdom, and Herod aroused himself, and she paid the penalty with her life (B.C. 28). Jr.

A Birthday

IT was the birthday of a little servant girl, in a house where I was staying, and as several of the inmates had kindly given her presents, wishing her a happy day, and many happy returns of it. I purchased a Bible for her, and, in the afternoon, found an opportunity to present it. She was alone in the scullery, and giving her the book I wished her every happiness. She thanked me, and curtsied.

“How long is it since you were born?” I asked.

“Sixteen years today, sir,” she answered. “And how long since you were born again?” I continued.

The girl hung her head and gave no answer.

“You say it is sixteen years since you were born. Cannot you tell me how many have passed since you were born again?”

I could see her breast heaving, as she attempted to answer me, but words would not come, although she tried to speak; her feelings could not be restrained: she burst into loud convulsive sobs, which were followed by a flood of tears. Laying her head down on her arm upon the table, she gave full vent to her sorrow. When the girl had partly recovered from her emotion, I asked why she was so deeply affected by my question. In answer, she told me she was an orphan, that her father and mother had loved the Lord, and were now both in paradise, and that she was not born again, though she wished and had prayed to have her sins forgiven. She added, that since her mother died, no one had spoken to her about her soul.

“My child,” I said, “how glad I am that God has begun a good work in you.”

“Oh, sir, don’t imagine that, for I am very wicked, and seem to get worse.”

“But,” I asked, “did you not say that you longed to be born of God, and to be saved from sin?”

“Yes, indeed, I do,” she sobbed.

“And do you think Satan would give you that desire?”

“Oh no,” she answered, “I am sure he would not.”

“No,” I said; “neither would you yourself desire this, for the natural heart is enmity to God, and delights in sin. Depend upon it, God is graciously working in you by His Holy Spirit, convincing you of sin, and showing you your need of a Saviour, and now, I feel sure, you will be made heartily willing to accept Jesus, the Son of God, for your own Saviour.”

“I don’t know that,” she said, “but I do want to be saved.”

“Well,” I said, “may God help you to understand His way of salvation. I suppose you have been trying your own ways, in praying to be good, and to give up your sins, and in fighting against

Satan.”

“Yes, I have been trying to be better.”

“But,” I continued, “my child, God does not expect you to save yourself, for He has declared that you cannot take away one stain of your sins, but He has provided His beloved Son to be your Saviour, and He now declares that the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin.” “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Now, to make it simple to you, you know what a gift is; you have had several today, and you have been made happy by receiving them. I have just given you this Bible. When I held it out to you, you understood what I meant by saying, ‘This is a little birthday present,’ and you simply took it, and said, ‘Thank you, sir; it is very kind of you.’ You did not need to prepare yourself to take the gift, nor do you require to work for it, or to pay for it. You know that a gift means something for nothing—something given by one out of kindness, and that nothing is required from the person to whom it is given, but just to receive it. If there were anything more, it would not be a gift. Do you see?”

“Yes, I understand that.”

“Then,” I said, “God assures you that the salvation you desire, which includes the forgiveness of sins, eternal life, the new birth, and all spiritual blessings, is His gift through Jesus. If you desire these things, you must be willing to receive them from God, as a gift from a loving friend, for He will not sell them—they are too precious and have cost Him too much. You know He had to deliver to death His beloved Son in order that He might freely give us eternal life. Can you follow me in this?”

“Yes, I know it must be as you say. I cannot give Him anything; if I am to be saved, He must do it all.”

“But has He not done all? Yes, He has given His beloved Son for us, and Jesus has died, bearing our sins and their penalty. He has settled the whole question of sin and of our salvation; so that God can now offer to the poor, lost, undone, hell-deserving sinner life eternal as a gift, because of what Christ has done. I have gladly accepted His great gift myself, and received Jesus, as the Son of God and my Saviour, to my heart. And now, my dear child,” I said, “what say you to accepting Jesus, and eternal life, as a gift from God today—now—and making this a double birthday, for as many as receive Him become the children of God?”

“I am quite willing,” she answered.

“Yes, I believe you are, with all your heart, willing to receive Jesus. Suppose, now, you tell God what you have told me—that you are willing to receive His gift, or, better still, just tell Him you accept His gift, and thank Him for it.”

We knelt down together, and the little scullery maid thanked God for salvation through Jesus’ death and blood, accepting Him as her own Saviour.

I committed her to the Good Shepherd’s keeping, assured that He would not fail to take her as a new-found lamb on His almighty shoulders, and carry her home, where, with exceeding joy, He would present her as one of the trophies of His grace.

Some years after this, I was invited to preach to a large congregation of working people. On making inquiries as to why this door had been opened to me, I found that it was through a young woman's desire, who witnessed a good confession, and was a diligent worker for the Master. In speaking with her, I found her to be the servant-maid of my story. She referred to the conversation in the scullery on her sixteenth birthday, and rejoiced in the anniversary of her two births.

Reader, have you considered this■ "Born once, die twice; born twice, die once"?

Two things are absolutely necessary for your salvation■two "must be's"■the first is accomplished: "The Son of Man must be lifted up"; the second, "Ye must be born again"■is that also an accomplished fact? J. S.

A Contrast

A CHRISTIAN, who saw a woman of sixty-four years of age die, was describing the sadness of the scene. Shortly before her death, her friend had asked her where she would spend eternity, and she replied that she did not know. Her friend pleaded with her, telling her of the love of Jesus, and how He waited to grant her salvation; that God demanded no good works from her; indeed, that there was nothing to do, but only to believe on the Son of God, who died to save sinners from their sins. But the sufferer made no response, and soon after passed away, leaving no hope that she had received Jesus as her Saviour.

In striking contrast with the above, was the death-bed of one who lately fell asleep. When asked, if she knew Jesus, she replied, "Yes, I love Him so much."

"Why do you love the Lord?" I asked. "I love Him because He first loved me. I am trusting Jesus as my only Saviour."

She knew that peace had been made for her through the blood of the cross, and that the Lord had washed her from her sins in His own blood. The only burden on her heart was her anxiety about her unsaved husband and her children, and she often pleaded with her Lord for their salvation. She passed away, after much suffering, rejoicing in Christ, her Saviour.

Dear reader, if God saw fit to place you on a dying bed, are you ready to depart, knowing that it is far better to be with Christ, or would you, like the woman of whom I first told you, leave this world not knowing where you would spend the never-ending eternity? J. S■N.

Tell Me, Can My Sins Be Forgiven?

WAS asked to speak to a young man who I was in great distress about his soul's welfare, and, laying my hand upon his shoulder, I said, "Friend, what is your trouble?"

"I am anxious about my soul," he answered. "I have been to a Bible class time after time, and there I got troubled in my conscience. I gave up attending it, and my companions laughed away my impressions, but I could not keep away from seeking after God. I have been going on in this miserable way for some time. Now tonight, I believe the Spirit of God has said to me, 'This is your last chance, if you do not accept Christ tonight, you will never have another opportunity.' Oh, sir, tell me, can my sins be forgiven?"

I replied, "God has said, 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow,' The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' Let us get down on our knees, and do you confess your sins to God, and ask Him to forgive you." Together we knelt in prayer, and the young man, in broken, heart-felt words, poured out his soul to God, asking His forgiveness. Before he arose from his knees, the answer came, and he was able to thank God that his sins which were many, were all forgiven. He shook me by the hand as we parted, and said, "I came here a miserable man, I am going out a happy one in Christ."

J.H.

Because God Said It

A FEW months since I was reading a narrative under the above heading, sent me by a Christian friend. God made that narrative a blessing to my soul. My experience was almost a repetition of that of the poor man of whom I read. I was at that time laid on a bed of sickness. The Holy Spirit had previously shown me that I was a poor, lost sinner, drifting slowly but surely to hell. God, in His great mercy, brought light to my soul by this passage of scripture, John 3:16, "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," mentioned in the narrative. I was enabled to take God at His word, and to believe that I also was included in the "whosoever." I believed the record God gave of His Son, and, having done so, found peace in knowing my sins were forgiven.

Dear reader, have you found that peace? If not, let me entreat you to seek it now. Remember you are at God's mercy. You are depending upon Him for the very next breath you will take. Although God is a merciful and a loving God, remember that He is also a just God. Do you think He has sent His beloved Son into this world to be rejected by us, and treated with contempt? Do you ever seriously think Who it is you reject? Need anyone wonder that the alternative is heaven or hell for eternity? A. K.

Eternity Where Will You Spend It?

I WENT to seek out a friend the other day, I whom I had not seen for several years. On coming to the street, in which he used to live, I was surprised at the many alterations I saw, and my mind reverted to early days. I soon found myself at my friend's house, and knocked at the door, which was opened by an elderly person, whom I recognized as his wife. I asked whether I might see Mr. R. She looked sadly at me, and said, "It is only Mrs. R. now."

"Is he dead, then?" I inquired, in astonishment.

"Yes, it is three years ago this Christmas since he died," said she, and proceeded to tell me the sorrowful story.

"It was a few days before Christmas. We had been talking over our future plans, and he appeared quite well, and very cheerful. Towards evening he said, 'I think I'll get to bed early, as I feel a little tired.' So he had some refreshment, and went upstairs. I stayed up a little longer, waiting to see if the postman would bring us any letters. About an hour afterward, I, too, went to bed, and in coming into the room, I said to him, 'There is no letter for us tonight.' Receiving no answer I spoke a little louder, and as he did not reply, I touched him, and I found him to be quite cold. I put my ear to his mouth, but could not hear him breathe. The doctor was immediately sent for, but on arriving he pronounced that life was gone."

How solemnly the words struck me—dead, yes, dead. Oh, poor fellow, with no time for repentance! As I looked back on bygone days, I thought of the many times we had talked together, and recalled his good temper and amiability. But this awful thought I could not shake off—Where was his soul? What had he thought of Christ? Was he ready for eternity? As a man lives so shall he die, and as he dies so shall he be raised again. Oh, how terrible and how solemn!

Well, after his wife had told me all, I put the question to her—"Are you a Christian?"

"Oh, yes," she exclaimed, in almost a joyful tone.

"And how long has that been?" I inquired.

"Ever since I was a child," and she gave me quite a catalog of proofs—she had been brought up religiously, she had led a moral life, and had avoided such things as she thought God did not tolerate, yet she admitted she did not even attend church very often, but added that if she died, God would set right what she had done wrong, and so it would be all right in the end.

"But what about God's Son," I said, "who gave Himself to die on the cross for sinners? What about Christ, whose blood was shed to make atonement for our sins? We must realize our condition as ruined, lost, and hell-deserving sinners, or we shall not even value the free and full salvation God proclaims to all who desire His mercy."

Mrs. R. then confessed she was unprepared to meet eternity, but because she thought it would affect her enjoyment of the trifling pleasures she loved, she said, "I can't, I can't give my mind to it."

Oh, think of eternity, think of that never-ending existence, and ask yourself the question ■ Where shall I spend eternity? One unforgiven sin is enough to shut you out from heaven. God warns you that after death is the judgment. God will not set all right then. It will be too late, too late, forever. E. A. S.

God's Wonderful Ways With Man. The End

GOD's ways of government with men have an end. Over and over again the Scriptures refer to the time when the history of man upon the earth will come to its close. God set man upon the earth to live in paradise; man gave heed to Satan, and by the art of the enemy both sin and death entered the world. Evil grew, and it seemed as if the purpose of God in man's joy and blessing on the earth was frustrated, but God allowed man and Satan their course, in order that His ways might be developed and fulfilled, and that in the end He might bring into everlasting blessing in Christ, all who trust in Him.

Christ will come to this earth, and set up God's kingdom on it. Christ's reign will be the earth's sabbath of rest, and during His reign Satan will be bound and shut up in the bottomless pit, "that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled." (Rev. 20:2, 3.) Man will then be under the scepter of Christ, the King, directly responsible to obey Him, and without the influence of the Tempter to draw him into rebellion. Man will be, therefore, tested by God in a way different from any other way since the fall. What will be the result? Will men retain their allegiance to the King? "When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth," and he will succeed—men will give heed to the enemy, and will seek to overturn God's King! The end of this rebellion will be summary judgment "fire...from God out of heaven" will come down, and devour the multitudes of Satan's host.

The character of Satan, in his persistent efforts in deceiving men to rebel against God, and man's ingrained opposition to Christ, will be proved unchanged. The one thousand years' imprisonment in the bottomless pit will in no wise alter the nature of Satan. How marvelous it is that men, both in heathen and Christian lands, should teach that a period of future punishment will change and purify men, and make sinners fit for God in glory!

The Deceiver, the originator of the misery on the earth, he who has been the might: mover of men's minds towards idolatry, rebellion against God, and subjection to his own evil spirit, will be cast into the lake of fire—the place of everlasting punishment—not to be there, as pictured by the heathen the king of woe and the tormentor of men, but, shorn of his strength, himself "tormented day and night forever and ever."

The end of God's ways with men stretch beyond death and the grave. The faithful among men, from the days of Abel, will have their lot in the first resurrection, the resurrection to life (John 5:29). "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power." They passed from death unto life, upon their reception of Christ the Life, and life will be their everlasting portion.

But those who shall rise at the resurrection of judgment (John 5:29) —the rest of the dead, who live not again until the one thousand years are finished (Rev. 20:5) —will come into the judgment of the great white throne; small and great they will stand before God, and will be judged according to

their works (vv. 11, 12). Such as on earth were saved by grace through faith, will not be judged according to their works, but all who died without Christ will be judged according to their deserts. And the result of this terrible judgment of the just God can only be the everlasting punishment of the sinner. "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Life and death meet us in the last pages of the Book of God. That which was inscribed upon the early record of Genesis is to be read again in the Revelation. The Paradise of God—brighter and more blessed than that which Adam saw— will be the eternal portion of God's people; and from its— gates Satan will be eternally shut out. The tree of life, with its varied fruits for all to eat, will be there; and all will be made perfect in knowledge, being new creatures, formed like Christ, the ascended Son of Man, who is the beginning of the creation of God.

It has not been possible to do more than touch upon some of the more evident parts of the ways of God with men, in the papers which have appeared in our Magazine on the subject this year. We trust our readers, who have followed us, may be stirred up to search the Scriptures upon the important truth, and above all, we hope that we may all be found "in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God."

"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. 3:3).

God Is Faithful

AT the end of the year we naturally consider the fleeting character of life, and the nature of our transient stay on earth; and this is good and right, and well would it be if we never forgot these things, and did most earnestly pray to God, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." But our own brief life and its uncertainty addresses our thoughts also to God's ever abiding and unchangeable being: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." He changes not in the past, the present, and the future— yesterday, today, and forever, He is ever the same. Friends change, home changes, we ourselves change, but God is ever and at all times the faithful God.

What a rest and refuge is here for the soul of the believer! Weak and erring with the sense of many, many opportunities wasted, and much unfaithfulness during the year that is past, we can yet cast our very selves, just as we are, upon our abiding, unchanging, faithful God.

We look back at the mercies of the past, we recall its sorrows and its trials, but every memory only leads us the more and more to throw ourselves upon our God—our ever-faithful God.

The Experiences of a Missionary in China.

12. Providential Guidance

IN the course of my missionary travels in China, I have had many instances of God's providential dealings, some of which are sufficiently striking, I think, to justify my putting them on record, with an apology for referring so often to myself. In one of our missionary tours, in the province of Shan-si, I became separated from the rest of my party, ■two men and two mules, carrying scriptures and tracts■in a somewhat unusual manner. We had spent most of the day in preaching in a city called Hsiang-ning, and finding the city full of country people, eager to listen to the gospel, I felt slow to continue the journey to the next stage, as previously arranged. Late in the afternoon I sent off my party, giving them special instructions to go on to a village called Fan-ti, where I proposed we should spend the night, while I continued an hour or two later in the city, preaching to the people.

About two hours before night came on, I rode away, following, as well as I could learn it, the course of my companions. As I proceeded, however, I was informed by occasional passers-by that there were no less than three villages called Fan-ti, and not knowing which of them my party had decided upon, I found myself in a difficulty. The road was exceedingly difficult, being, except in a few places, the bed of a mountain stream, which occasionally became so narrow as to render a passage between the rocks almost impossible. I found myself in a gorge at sunset, at a time when other travelers had reached their various destinations. Being unable to inquire the way, I followed a small path up the side of a hill, and reaching the summit, found a few caves, occupied by nine families of coal miners.

I now learned that I was five miles from Fan-ti, and three miles from the main road to that village. To proceed further that night along dangerous paths, was impossible. After clearly stating my difficulty to two or three of the men, I asked if there was not someone in the place willing to give me a night's lodging. They inquired what was my "excellent" name, and where I had come from. I replied in true Chinese phraseology and sentiment, "My vile name is Pa, and I come from the city of Taiyuen Fu, the capital." After due deliberations, held at a little distance from me, one of them came forward and offered me a share of his cave. He would send his wife away to a neighbor's, and allow me to sleep with him and his children. My kind host led me round to the other side of the hill, and after finding a place and fodder for my horse, took me into his cave, and requested his wife to prepare me some food, which she quickly did.

Supper being over, all the neighbors came round to hear what news the stranger might have to communicate.

They all supposed I was a Chinaman, and I did not think the time had come to undeceive them. Our conversation soon turned upon the recent famine, and, taking advantage of this, I introduced the subject of the work of the missionaries in the distribution of famine relief, of which they had heard. They knew, however, nothing of the gospel, which the missionaries taught, nor had they ever met one of these foreigners. I told them that I had met many of them, and could tell them all about them, and about the wonderful doctrines of salvation which they preached. This greatly

interested the simple people, who for more than an hour sat around me listening intently. Now and again they would ask intelligent questions, which showed that they took in most of what I said, as I related to them the good news of salvation through the merits of Christ.

A more pleasing picture could not very easily be imagined. Not a gleam of the light of God's revelation had ever reached these poor men— they were in total darkness as to the way of salvation, although they knew their need of it, when suddenly a stranger appears in their midst, bringing to them the tidings of a free salvation, offered without money and without price.

As we thus sat in that dismal cave, with barely sufficient light from the oil lamp to enable us to distinguish each other, I could but feel it the greatest possible privilege, and honor, to be the medium, by God's grace to convey to these willing hearts the glad tidings of God's love. They appeared to believe the message and rejoiced in it. "But," said one of them, "can it be possible that this salvation was wrought for us eighteen hundred years ago, and we only now hear of it for the first time? Why is this?" Here is a question for the churches at home to answer. Fortunately I had some Scriptures with me in the Chinese language, and these they gladly accepted, and promised to study for further light.

It was with the greatest difficulty I convinced them that I was myself actually one of the dreadful barbarians from across the seas, of whom they had heard such horrible stories. They brought the dirty little oil lamp close to my eyes at my own invitation, and examined them, and then cried out, "His eyes are blue! his eyes are blue!" A Chinaman with other than brown eyes and black hair is scarcely to be found in the whole empire. My hair was then examined, which, being fair, somewhat puzzled them, but I was pronounced an old man, and my hair was said to have turned gray! Gradually it began to dawn upon them that perhaps, after all, I was a foreigner. But how I could possibly speak the Chinese language, and yet be a native of another country, where the language spoken is totally different from their own, was a problem too difficult for them to solve. They had never imagined a man speaking any other than his native tongue.

I left next morning, with the best wishes of these simple-hearted people, and received a warm invitation to come back again and see them, and tell them more about the "Heavenly Doctrine." Before mid-day, I reached the village of Fan-ti, and finally joined my party, who were fearing lest I had been devoured by wolves.

It was surely no mere accident which led me to those caves. So far as I know no missionary has since visited these people, and nothing is known to us of their present condition; I cannot, however, but hope that seed was sown upon good ground that night, which sprang up and is bearing fruit to the glory of God. A. G. P.

Reaping

AS we look upon the harvest field, thoughts of the year's labor arise in the mind, for in the golden sheaves lie the fruit of both plowman's and sower's toil, and the result of months of both heaven's sunshine and of its refreshing rain. Paul may plant, Apollos water, but God alone gives the increase. A man may spend a lifetime in sowing good seed, which another, who is a reaper, may garner in almost at once, but the harvest will be the joy— season, when both he that soweth and he that reapeth will rejoice together. God has so ordained in His field, that His several servants shall each do a part of His great work, the whole of which, complete and perfect, shall alone be seen in eternity. We are frequently too much occupied with our own little part of this work as if it were everything, and thus we forget the great end God has in view, and by such partial sight, we either magnify our special occupation into undue importance, or lose heart as if it had no blessing attached to it. We cannot in one day be both sower and reaper! Patient continuance in the work of the field necessarily precedes harvesting.

The young naturally are more impatient for reaping than their seniors, just because they have had less experience in the lapse of time required for the seed to grow up. "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days," said the Wise Man; and the Apostle tells us, "In due season we shall reap, if we faint not." We would encourage our young friends in their Christian work; do not be disheartened because you do not all at once see the seed grow up; and even when you see it grow up, do not expect that it will become ripe and fit for the sickle in a day. We have also to remember that in God's harvest field, not only has the work to be done which He has appointed, but that the workman has to be fitted for the work by the work. We learn while working; experience teaches; and the harvest field is frequently our school where we learn to trust in God alone, who gives the increase. At first, possibly we almost thought we could command the blessing and make the seed to grow; nay at first, we almost thought that we could so' the seed with the greatest ease, but experience taught us, that only by the power of God could we do this. The good seed of the kingdom is His word, and we have to study and to pray over it in order to know how to use it.

The golden harvest is ever a pleasing and a restful sight, speaking of work done and of the favor of God received. But it is also one of warning, for it declares to us the end—the end of the purpose of the plowing and the sowing, the end of the effect of the sunshine and the showers upon the field. The Lord tells us in His parable (Matt. 13) "the harvest is the end of the world" (or age); "and the reapers are the angels." There is a deep solemnity in these words—this age will have its close; it began with sowing, it will end with reaping. It began with the sowing of the seed of the kingdom, which is the word of God; it will end with the results, which the distribution of the word has affected in human hearts.

On some it falls lightly, and never enters; on some it is choked, and produces no fruit; on others it falls, and enters, and germinates, and produces the fruits of holiness and peace. And where this is the case there springs up an abundance. Oh, how precious is the value of one grain of the

incorruptible seed!

Think of the harvest and take courage. Look on to the day of glory over, our reward shall be to rejoice in our Lord's joy. He was the Sower■He will be the Reaper. He labored and He wept, He died for sinners, He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied, and every good and faithful servant of His shall receive His encouragement and His smile: "Well done... enter thou into the joy of Thy Lord."

12. From Malachi to Matthew

THE course of Herod's reign is stained with blood, now of enemies, now of friends. Neither wife nor child was safe at his hands. Not only had he killed his beloved Maccabean wife, but he had also been the cause of the death of her grandfather, father, mother, and uncle. He afterward added to these crimes, the strangulation of his and her sons, Alexander and Aristobulus. Herod had sent his sons to Rome to be educated, where they remained for six years, and, when they were taken home, they would have entered upon the honors rightly their due but for the jealousy of their aunt, Salome. She, who had compassed Mariamne's destruction, now plotted against her sons. She succeeded in poisoning the father's mind against them, and he put over their heads his crafty son Antipater, the son of a former Idumean wife, Doris, from whom he had been divorced on his marriage with Mariamne. Breach upon breach was affected. Herod accused (B.C. 11) his sons before Augustus C. war, who managed to bring about a reconciliation between them, but he publicly named Antipater as his successor to the kingdom. "Better be Herod's pig than Herod's son," is the saying attributed to Augustus.

Two years later, through the calumnies of Salome and Antipater, fresh trouble arose, and many persons were tortured in order to extort confessions from them, hurtful to the young princes. Alexander was cast into prison, and in sheer desperation confessed to plots which had never existed, and which implicated Salome and many of his father's friends. The aged king became nearly mad with rage and fear, and slaughtered till his palace was like a shambles.

In the year B.C. 6, Herod was again filled with suspicion against his sons, and, having obtained leave from the emperor to proceed against them, he so vehemently accused them before the Council that sentence of death was passed upon them, to be executed as their father saw fit, and he caused them to be strangled.

His son, Antipater, now plotted to poison him, but he was discovered, and executed by his father's command.

Notwithstanding these intrigues and plots, Herod carried out many great works. City upon city was built by him. Samaria, Cæsaria, Cypron, Antipatris, Phasaelis, were his handiwork, while he completely transformed Jerusalem. The Temple, gleaming with marble and gold, owed its beauty to him, and temples to heathen gods, theaters and towers arose by his hand. He showed splendid ability in war, and averted famine and pestilence, and remodeled and reduced the taxation. But his path lay over the dead bodies of such as might by some possibility imperil his ambitions. Little wonder that his suspicious were constantly aroused, that "those who frequented the presence of the sovereign were suspected of sinister designs; those who stood aloof were self-convicted of disloyalty." His "barbarous temper," as Josephus calls it, halted at no act, however wicked, which might stamp out the least danger to his own person or position.

It was, probably, in the very year that he strangled his sons, and while he was racked with fear for his own safety, that Zacharias, the priest of the order of Abia, saw a heavenly visitor standing on the right hand of the incense-altar. The tidings which he brought— the promise of Messiah's forerunner— are familiar to us all. Six months later, the same Gabriel appeared to Mary, a virgin of Nazareth, with still more glorious tidings.

"Thou shalt... bring forth a son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end."

A little later, a Roman decree set the whole world in motion; the tribes went up to their various cities to be enrolled, and thus were Mary and Joseph, her betrothed, brought to Bethlehem. A short time afterward, all Jerusalem was troubled by a startling report of strange visitors. Wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the East, and are come to worship Him." From what has been said of Herod's disposition, his alarm may be easily imagined! He "was troubled," is the simple language of the evangelist. With craftiness, thoroughly like that which comes out in other actions of his life, he pretended that he, too, would worship this "King." But "war was in his heart," and, foiled by the wise men, he issued his barbarous decree for the massacre of the children. Leaving out of sight the fact that this was a blow at "the Lord's Christ," this act was an insignificant cruelty compared with other deeds of Herod. The most careful computation puts down the number of children slain as under twenty, for Bethlehem was but a village.

We have now bridged over the four hundred years, and are at the beginning of Matthew's Gospel. The checkered a story those four centuries contain has been briefly indicated. At times the nation and the faith were almost crushed out of being; at others a condition of prosperity was reached, such as had been rarely surpassed in the nation's history. But every year, whether of weal or woe, brought nearer "the time" of which the prophets had spoken, and which they had strictly defined. With its coming, Messianic hopes rose; an eager "expectation" was created, and conceptions of the Messiah were formed, which, alas! were often little in accordance with the prophetic scriptures, or the true character of "the coming One."

At last the news of His birth was sounded abroad; then His messenger went before His face to prepare His way; and, still later, His own voice was heard proclaiming, "The time is fulfilled; the kingdom of God is at hand."

It is beyond our province to go further. The succeeding history is known to all our readers. Yet Jesus of Nazareth was not the Messiah of Jewish thought, and the Gospels which open with the record of His coming, in fulfillment of God's promise, His birth and His presentation to Israel, contain also the solemn story of His rejection—His cross and His death. Jr.

How Two Little Boys Came to Jesus

AS the children were leaving their Sunday school, one afternoon last July, the Superintendent gently placed his hand upon the shoulder of one little boy, saying, "Are you trusting in the Lord?"

"No, sir," was the reply.

"Would you like to trust Him?" asked the good man, tenderly.

"Yes," said the little fellow, and with such deep earnestness, that the kind superintendent was convinced Willie was really longing for the knowledge of salvation through Christ.

That same evening Willie was listening attentively to a preacher, reading a portion from John 20, who at the end of verse 27, at the words, "Be not faithless, but believing," paused and said, "Be not unbelieving, but believing."

These words were impressed upon Willie's young and tender heart.

At the close of the service, the boy, together with his brother, remained, by the wish of his superintendent, to speak with the preacher. Willie's whole frame quivered with emotion, as he owned how he had been long desirous of salvation. And then the four knelt down together.

"O Lord, save me!" prayed Willie, and he repeated after the preacher these well-known words

"Just as I am, without one plea,

But that Thy blood was shed for me,

And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee:

O Lamb of God, I come!"

Without a storm was raging, and the rain was descending in torrents, but within Willie's heart there was a storm scarcely less fierce.

"What hinders you from accepting Christ and obtaining salvation through Him Willie?"

"I want a sign to know that I am saved," he replied.

"If you had offended me, and I told yet. I forgave you, would you believe my words or would you ask me for a sign that I had forgiven you?"

"I would believe you without a sign," the boy answered.

"Can you not believe God?"

"Lord, may I not be faithless, but believing!" he sighed.

"Jesus says, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,'" was whispered to him.

“Lord, I come to Thee, and ask Thee to save me!” was his response.

“Jesus says, ‘No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.’ Just tell God that you come in the name of His Son.”

“O God, I come to Thee in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and ask Thee to save me!” said the little boy earnestly.

Above the fury of the storm was heard that simple petition, and the Lord spake peace to Willie’s soul.

“I am saved!” he said. “Lord, I thank Thee for having saved me! Lord, I pray Thee to keep me from evil, and to save my dear brothers!”

Now, Tommy, who had remained silent, began to pray aloud, too, and, with childlike simplicity, followed the prayer of his much-loved superintendent, repeating each sentence after him, word for word.

“Jesus is so loving, and gracious, and tender,” said this servant of Christ to the little boy; “cannot you trust Him?”

And Tommy told the Lord he could do so; and then all rose from their knees and stood, and praised the Lord.

“Glory, honor, praise, and power,

Be unto the Lamb forever!

Jesus Christ is our Redeemer

Hallelujah! Praise ye the Lord.”

While we thank God that Willie and Tommy are now happily conscious that they are safe for time and for eternity, beneath the shelter of the blood of Christ, let us ask you, dear young readers, at the close of this year, whether you have fled to Him for shelter, who is indeed a hiding-place from every storm? A. J.

“BEHOLD, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”

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