

RECORDS OF GRACE

by W.T.P. Wolston

Wolston's collection of conversion testimonies and spiritual experiences demonstrating God's grace in the lives of believers, with narratives designed to glorify Christ and encourage faith through themes of atonement, redemption, and God's mercy toward the lost.

15 Chapters

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01. Saul's Javelins

Saul's Javelins

"If God does not give me peace, I shall go mad," and so saying, the speaker rose, and excitedly paced the room, while the clock intimated the hour — just two A.M. — one Saturday in 1871. He was a tall, powerfully built man, in the prime of life, with a piercing dark eye, and a countenance that bespoke more than the ordinary amount of intelligence and force of character. All his natural boldness had, however, disappeared for the nonce, and he trembled visibly under the touch of the hand of God, now really laid upon him. Our introduction was remarkable. On the previous Thursday a number of the Lord's people had gathered in Edinburgh to study His Word, and seek to edify each other. Called into Fifeshire early in the day, I only got back in time for the evening meeting, and was then led to speak a little on the history of Jonathan. We saw that in 1 Samuel 16:1-23 David is brought into view. Type, as he is, of the blessed Lord Jesus, little wonder that his person is described as "withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to" (5: 12). In 1 Samuel 17:1-58 we saw his antagonist, Goliath of Gath, the "champion" of Israel's foes, a striking type of man's enemy, Satan. His voice is soon heard, "Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. . . . I defy the armies of Israel this day: give me a man that we may fight together" (vv. 8, 10). The effect of this challenge was obvious. "When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid" (5: 11), and for "forty days" (5: 16) — the time of perfect probation — this testing went on, and yet no man dared face the foe. How could he? Certain defeat could only have been the result. No, my reader, neither you nor I are a match for Satan. It is good when we learn it.

Then was foreshadowed the lovely statement, "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John 4:14), and David comes on the scene, bidden of his father, to "look how thy brethren fare" (5: 18). They were faring badly enough, but, like sinners since, were too proud to own their nothingness. "Why camest thou down, hither?" says his eldest brother (5: 28), reminding one of the words "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11), and then goes on to say, "I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle" (5: 28). The battle forsooth! There was none. No man dared meet the giant. Not even boastful Eliab. This David knew, and simply rejoins, "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" This is perfect grace. Nothing chilled the love of Jesus, and nothing arrested the purpose of David. Thy servant will go, and fight with this Philistine (5: 32), is followed by action, for "David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling, and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David; therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith!" (vv. 50, 51).

What a picture is this of the victory of Jesus! Coming into this poor sin-stained world, He found man the servant of sin, the vassal of Satan, and consequently under the power of death, with its after-consequence — judgment. Satan had, and could wield, the power of death over man's

conscience. But what do we read of Jesus? "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15). Wondrous fact for men to hear! We die because we are men — sinful men. He became a man — a sinless man — that He might die, and deliver us. Blessed Saviour! What a deliverer and what a deliverance! Death is our portion. Christ, on whom it had no claim, took it. See this, and you get free. Goliath's head was cut off with his own sword. The chain of torture Satan can hold a sinner by — death, as the wages of sin — is snapped the moment you see Christ "made sin" — that "he died for our sins according to the Scriptures," yea more, that He "died for sinners." His death breaks Satan's power, puts away my sins, glorifies God about sin, and sets me free. The giant's head off, his army "fled," and all Israel had to do was to "spoil their tents" (5: 53). So with us, we have only to enjoy the spoil of Jesus' victory. He has done all. We enjoy all. Proof of David's victory is seen as "Abner took him, and brought him before Saul, with the Philistine's head in his hand" (5: 57); and the evidence of Christ's victory stands in the fact that He is now alive before God, having "led captivity captive," and the Holy Ghost says, "Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power". (Colossians 2:10). Yes, far, far above the angels who never sinned, there sits now a Man who was once in death for sinners. In that Man every believer is complete.

Thus came out the gospel, and then its proper effect on the one who hears, or sees, and believes it. "And it came to pass when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David; and Jonathan loved him as his own soul, . . . and Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow and to his girdle" (1 Samuel 18:1; 1 Samuel 18:4). This was, indeed, a fine result — typically, a grand conversion. David had done all; Jonathan gets all the fruit; and, as a right outcome, his heart is all for David. When David came into the camp, Jonathan was "trembling"; as David advances toward the foe, he would be Jonathan "hopeful"; as he sees the giant fall, his head roll off, and his army flee, he is Jonathan "delivered"; the sharer of all the spoil, he is Jonathan "enriched"; and now, lovely climax, he is Jonathan "devoted." Yes, all is surrendered to the deliverer. What a lovely, picture of a young convert yielding all to Jesus!

Reader, do you know aught of this? If not, may you know it. Follow Christ fully. What will be the result? "javelins." If Christ be made much of, Satan must need oppose. Hence we read (1 Samuel 18:10-11, 1 Samuel 19:9-10), that thrice did Saul cast a javelin at David. But Jonathan "delighted much in David" (1 Samuel 19:2), and began to "speak good" of him, saying to Saul, "His works to theeward have been very good, for he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine" (1 Samuel 19:4-5). Yes, David risked his life, but Jesus laid down His for us. Well may we "speak good" of Him. But if we do, what then? Look out for javelins. Satan cannot touch Christ, but he will touch you if he can; and so we read that David being off the scene altogether, Jonathan afresh witnesses to his worth, and therefore "Saul cast a javelin at him, to smite him" (1 Samuel 20:33). Jonathan is now the target for his darts. Blessed would it have been for him if he had from that moment fully associated himself with David in utter rejection. Alas! hindered, like too many, by home influences, he fails in fully following the rejected king, and therefore misses honourable mention in David's kingdom (see 2 Samuel 23:1-39), where his name is conspicuous by its absence. This last lesson from his history is pregnant with importance to every lover of the Lord

Jesus. The foregoing, in brief, was what fell from my lips, and among my listeners was a stranger, whose appearance, and unconcealed interest in the ministry of the Word, attracted my attention. As the meeting broke up, an old friend, and fellow-Christian, a lady from a distant part of Scotland, greeted me, and at the same time introduced the stranger as her friend, Mr C-. Circumstances prevented any conversation, and he passed out. During that night, and all next day, a great desire possessed me to again meet, and have converse with this stranger, but, as I knew nothing of his whereabouts, nor of my lady friend's, I had no means of reaching him. The Lord, however, had His eye upon him, and to my joy, in the afternoon I casually met the lady. Making inquiry as to her foreign-looking friend, she said he was unconverted, a thorough man of the world in every sense of the word, but had a believing, prayerful wife, and she thought that now, for the first time in his life, he was beginning to take real interest in divine things.

"I have an immense desire to see that man again, and have a talk with him," said I.

"And that is just why I got him to go early to the meeting last evening," she replied, "only you were not there. Now, I fear it is impossible for you to meet."

"Why?"

"Because he leaves for the West Indies at ten tomorrow morning, and I know he is engaged to dine out, and thus will be occupied all this evening."

Learning where he was lodging in A- Street, I said, "I shall be preaching at Leith tonight, and will call on him at ten o'clock as I come up." To this offer she gladly acceded, and, at the appointed hour, I called, to learn that the object of my visit had been in, and gone out again. I told the servant I would call again at eleven. I did so. He had not come in. "I will return at twelve," I said to the doorkeeper, as I gave her my name to give Mr C- when he did come in. As the clock struck I was on the doorstep. He had got home five minutes before me, and received me most courteously, as I at once offered an apology for so untimely a visit. Make no apology, sir, I am truly glad to see you and had I but known you were coming would most surely have waited in for you."

Without further delay I told him simply why I had called, viz., an irrepressible desire for his soul's salvation. The spring was immediately touched, as he replied, he had longed for a conversation the night before. "I am a miserable sinner, a perfect wretch. I have had no peace for a week. I went to that same Hall last Sunday night expecting to hear you. I heard instead a little man with a terrible double squint, who worried me awfully with his 'two whosoever's'."

Inquiring what that might mean, I learned that the preacher had dwelt on "whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15); and "Let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

"These 'two whosoever's' have thoroughly upset me," he went on. "I don't think my name is in the book of life, and I'm sure if ever man deserved the lake of fire for his sins I do. I have scarcely slept since Sunday, and then you made matters worse last night, for you did nothing but fling 'javelins' at me all the evening. I could scarcely sit the meeting out." At this confession, I need not say I was deeply rejoiced, for I saw a spirit-wounded man — an anxious soul. I wonder, my reader, if you have ever known anything of this sort in your soul's history. It is high time you did, be certain.

Anxious about his soul's salvation, as he evidently now was, I did not feel led to comfort him all at once, so asked him if he had ever seen his full-length portrait as a sinner, as taken by God Himself.

"No! where is it?" he replied.

We drew in our chairs to the table, and, each getting hold of a copy of the Word of God, turned together, and read, "There is NONE righteous, NO, not one: there is NONE that understandeth, there is NONE that seeketh after God. They are ALL gone out of the way, they are TOGETHER become unprofitable; there is NONE that doeth good, NO, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become GUILTY before God" (Romans 3:10-19). The effect of God's Word on that man's soul I shall never forget. Some scenes on one's life leave an indelible impression. This was one. He blanched and trembled visibly as he said, "True, true to life. Every line of it. Yes, that's me. That is my likeness. I could sign my name to it. I am indeed 'guilty before God.'" Thereafter, he opened up a little of his history as a sinner, — his careless, godless, Christless life, — a life surrounded by God's mercies and goodnesses, which he had taken thanklessly, scorning the love that had so blessed him. His awful sin now loomed hideously before his awakened soul, and after a good deal of conversation, in which I vainly endeavoured to show him the grace of God, in giving His Son even to death for sinners, such as he and I were, his anxiety reached its climax, and he pushed back his chair exclaiming, "If God does not give me peace I shall go mad!" and then paced the room with a face betokening agony and despair.

I thought the Holy Ghost's divine and omnipotent javelins of conviction had done their work well, saw that no words of mine could avail to quell the storm that raged in his bosom, and knew that alone in face-to-face confession to God could he get deliverance; so after a few moments of silence said, "Get down on your knees, man, before God, and have it out with him. 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity' (1 John 1:7). David shows us the way when he says, 'When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long: for day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I NOT HID. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and THOU FORGAVEST the iniquity of my sin' (Psalms 32:3-5). Do just what he did, and you will get what he got — forgiveness, and the knowledge of it."

He fell in a moment on his knees before the Lord, and burst out weeping, as though his heart would break. When the violence of his hitherto pent-up, but now — in quiet confession to God — relieved feelings was a little spent, I prayed with him, simply confessing what utter sinners we had both been, but telling the Lord that the grace that had saved me could surely save him. On his knees, in His own blessed tender grace the Lord spoke to him, and gave him perfect peace, for he rose, and gripping my hand as in a vice, said, "I can trust Him now. I see it all. Oh, what grace! what mercy! and to such a sinner as I have been!" The storm was over, the clouds were gone, and

genuine God-given peace and joy shone in his manly face, and he seemed to be filled with the Holy Ghost as we stood, and I quoted some scriptures to him. He had known somehow the letter of Scripture. Now he knew its spirit and power, and forcibly illustrated the apostle's wish, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Romans 15:13). He got on the spot the conscious knowledge of forgiveness, and realised that he was justified by faith in Jesus; rejoiced in the present possession of eternal life, as the gift of God, and, being born of God, took joyfully the place of a child who had received the Father's kiss of welcome (Luke 15:1-32). Rarely, if ever, have I seen such a complete transformation, under the power of the truth.

It was near day-dawn ere we parted, and at ten A.M. I saw him off, rejoicing in Christ, as the train sped south, and he went to his far-off home. Since then I have heard of his welfare and steadfastness in Christ, and that his lips often proclaim the Saviour's love and grace to others. This simple narrative of God's grace, dear unsaved reader, I have told just as it happened, with the hope and prayer that you may be led to the same blessed Saviour. As this paper falls into your hands, surely you may well ask yourself, Have I been all my days slighting the God whose goodness each year attests and each day proves? If you too have to plead "Guilty before God," let this be the last moment of unbelief. Let there be a thorough and full surrender of yourself to the Lord Jesus — imitate Jonathan thus — and may you be a devoted follower of His all your days, and at the end hear His blessed voice saying to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

02. The Blood of Atonement.

The Blood of Atonement.

"And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood. And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof; and cover it with dust. For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof; whosoever eateth it shall be cut off. And every soul that eateth that which died of itself, or that which was torn with beasts, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger, he shall both wash his clothes, and bathe himself with water, and be unclean until the even; then shall he be clean." — Leviticus 17:10-15.

IT is very striking to observe the marked contrast between the teaching of the New Testament and that which we get here with regard to the blood. Here it was not to be touched; it belonged to God, and the man who ate it should die. The reason is clear; man's life was forfeited, man was a sinner under sentence of death, and God would ever keep that before His mind. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; FOR IT IS THE BLOOD THAT MAKETH AN ATONEMENT FOR THE SOUL." I do not suppose that the Israelites would grasp the meaning of this fully; but with all the light that the New Testament has given us, it should have the deepest meaning for our hearts.

What tidings for a man that is a sinner, and knows that he is at a distance from God, with the judgment of God hanging over him, to hear this verse! You see, my reader, we have sinned, and God must take notice of that sin, for "the wages of sin is death." No effort of yours or mine could put away that sin. Distance has come in between the soul and God, and nothing we could do avails to bridge over that distance.

What can atone for my sins? Can my tears? my prayers? my works? Nay, nay, who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? If all the penitential tears that ever flowed, and all the prayers that ever went up from the lips of pious men, and all the good works that ever were done, could be put to your credit, you would be thereafter, my reader, if still without faith in Jesus, just what you are this minute — an unwashed, an uncleansed, an unpardoned sinner. On the other hand, if your eye only rested for one moment, in faith, on the blood upon the altar, though you were being hurled from this earth for your wickedness, like the dying thief, who was too bad to be let live any longer, you would get to know that the blood had made atonement for your soul, and as that thief went to glory that day with Jesus, because of the blood upon the altar, so also would you. If you get hold,

my reader, of the answer in the New Testament to this striking verse in the Old, you will get peace in your soul — peace with God.

You must get God's claims met, — God's claims in righteousness on man. How can those claims be met? The blood on the altar is given by God as the answer. Let us see what the Spirit of God has written about that blood. Read John 19:28-37. Here you have the altar and the blood. What the brazen altar was in Old Testament times, with the smoking victim thereon, and the blood poured out for atonement, the cross of Christ is in our day. But in the Old Testament the fire consumes the victim, while in the New Testament the wonderful thing is this — it is not the fire of the altar that consumes the Victim, but the Victim that consumes the fire. And what is the fire? Always in Scripture the type of the unsparing judgment of God. There comes out blood and water from the side of the dead Christ, — the blood that makes atonement, and the water that purifies and cleanses. This was no mere man, though He was a man, but the Holy One of God, the Lamb without spot or blemish. In the Old Testament the fire consumed the victims, and they were gone, and were seen no more but here the Victim rises from the dead, the judgment has been endured, the claims of God in righteousness have been taken up, and all met and settled by Christ on the cross, and now there is a living Saviour for you in glory, my reader. A living Christ on earth could only, convict me, because He is sinless and I am guilty, because He is accepted of God and I am rejected, because He is holy and I am a sinner. It is a dead Christ that is my ground of salvation.

Christ incarnate convicts man of being utterly unlike Him. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." But He died. He gave Himself for us. Death lay on us, and judgment hereafter. He takes the two consequences of sin — death and judgment. God forsakes Him because then He was standing in the sinner's room and stead "He took the guilty culprit's place He suffered in his stead, For man, O miracle of grace, For man the Saviour bled." And what is the result? From the side of the dead Saviour comes the blood that makes atonement towards God.

There is a threefold testimony to the fulness of redemption — "the Spirit, and the water, and the blood" (see 1 John 5:1-21). The Spirit tells who Jesus is, the water tells of purifying, and the blood makes atonement. In the Gospel narrative first comes out the blood that makes atonement, that is Godward; then the water which flows over my soul and gives the sense of cleansing, that is manward. When the history is told it takes up God's side first; but when John's epistle takes it up, it takes it up from man's point of view first, and gives "the water and the blood," telling of the cleansing of the soul before it speaks of the atonement which is God's side. In the Gospel of Matthew, "Pilate took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it. Then answered all the people and said, His blood be on us and on our children," 1:e., they say, "Let the gravity of His murder lie on us. We cannot bear Him, we do not want Him, we will not have Him;" and Pilate says, "I wash my hands of it all." Poor pusillanimous Pilate, he could not get clear of the blood of Christ in that way. And let me tell you, my reader, if the blood of Christ does not lift you into glory, it will weigh you down into the lake of fire, for solemn and grave as is your condition as a sinner, it is intensified by this, that you have heard of the blood that can cleanse you, and have not availed yourself of it, and therefore you put yourself with those who cry, "His blood be on us." Oh, I beseech you, do not put yourself among that company. In Romans 3:25 we get God's testimony to the blood of Christ. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." What does God call for from you now? "Faith in

his blood;" and what is faith? It is not what I do or am, but my receiving God's testimony to the blood of Christ. The Spirit of God gives the definition of faith in John 3:33, "He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." Faith does this. God speaks, and faith puts down its seal, and says, "That is true." From the side of the dead Saviour came out blood and water. Faith says, "That is true." That blood has met the claims of God, has been sprinkled on the very throne of God. It is a blood-sprinkled pathway right up to that throne, and the Holy Ghost would encourage you to have faith in His blood, only in His blood.

I ask you, Can you rest your soul for eternity, only and entirely on His blood? If you cannot, you do not know His Person, and you do not know His work, and you do not know His worth. In Romans 5:9 you will find the effect of the blood of Christ on a guilty man (and Romans 3:1-31 has shown me I am guilty), "Being now justified by his blood," is there any wrath for me? Impossible! Because the wrath has been taken by Christ, He has died for me. His blood has so completely answered for my guilt before God that God declares me justified.

There are three ways in which I am declared justified in Romans — "justified by his grace," that is the spring of it; "justified by his blood," that is the righteous basis of it; and "justified by faith," that is the way in which I get it; faith is the hand that is stretched out to lay hold of it. It is God that justifies, and whom does He justify? The soul that believes on Jesus. But I have wronged God by my sin. Now what can God do to a man who has wronged Him, taken his own way? Ephesians 1:7 gives the answer: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." God forgives the man who has offended Him. On what ground? The blood! He forgives me in the grace and love of His heart, not at the expense of righteousness. Grace reigns through righteousness. God forgives me through the blood.

I am justified then by Christ's blood, forgiven through His blood; and if I say, Yes, but I feel defiled by sin, moral defilement is on my soul, what then? Look at 1 John 1:7 : "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." I am cleansed by the blood. It is the blood of Jesus that cleanses me from every sin. Guilty, the blood justifies me. Having offended God, the blood pardons me. Being defiled, I am cleansed by that precious blood. Do you say, reader, "But my conscience is often troubled"? Look at Hebrews 9:14 : "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." The effect of the blood of Christ is to purge my conscience, and then the next thing is, I want to get to the spot whence all this blessing comes. But you say, Have I right to go into His presence? Hebrews 10:19 answers that: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." What right have I to go into the holiest, the presence of God? The blood of Jesus gives me the right. I have liberty now to go in. The veil is rent. God rent it, and the Holy Ghost says we have "boldness to enter into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus." God has rent the veil, and the great sin of many of the teachers of the present day is that they have taken needle and thread, so to speak, and stitched the two sides of the veil together, 1:e., they tell people they cannot go in now to God, whereas Scripture assures us we may.

There was no liberty to go to God till that blood had been shed, and just as sin had put me at a moral distance from God, the second of Ephesians tells me where the blood of Christ puts me, and leaves me too. Notice it:" But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh

by the blood of Christ." I am as nigh to God as the blood of Christ can bring me. As a sinner I was in Adam, far off; as a believer, I am in Christ made nigh.

Then Colossians 1:20 tells me He has "made peace through the blood of his cross." I have peace with God through that blood.

Look then, my reader, at what that precious blood does for the soul that is under its shelter, the blood that is upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls. Guilty, the blood justifies me. Having offended God, the blood secures my pardon. Being defiled, it cleanses me. Having a troubled conscience, it purges me. Being outside, it gives me boldness to go into the holiest. At a moral distance from God, it brings me nigh, and then sets my heart at peace and rest in His presence, and the Spirit of God lets me know it will never vary. I am brought in through the rent veil and made nigh through the blood of Christ once and for ever. Well then may we sing with the beloved apostle John, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

03. "That which was Lost."

"That which was Lost." THE burning rays of an August sun were falling in meridian power on the level and fully ripe corn-fields of Somersetshire, as, over a quarter of a century ago, I wended my way from a village, where I had overnight preached the gospel, to another where I was announced to hold a meeting that evening. Pushing along at a good pace I saw before me, and eventually overtook, a little donkey-cart containing two women, evidently of a humble station in life. Offering them each a gospel tract, the elder, who held the reins, stopped her conveyance and thanked me courteously for the gift. A moment or two of conversation soon revealed that she was a simple and happy believer in the Lord Jesus, and knew her sins were forgiven through faith in His name.

"And do you know this blessed Saviour also?" I inquired of the younger, who was her daughter. A sad shake of the head, accompanied by a deepening of the settled melancholy of her face was the only response she made, but her mother put in, "No, she does not yet know the Saviour. She is in great sorrow, and cannot rise above it."

I had noticed that each was draped in mourning, and now learned that the younger had several months previously lost her only child, a babe of tender years. "She has never looked up since," now added the mother, "and refuses to be comforted."

Expressing my sympathy with the bereaved mother, I said, "But it surely ought to be a comfort to you to know that your dear babe is with Christ."

"Oh!" she cried, "if I were only sure of that, I would not care what became of me."

"Sure of that," said I, "why, how can you doubt it? "

"That is the cause of her sorrow," put in her mother again. "She thinks her child is lost for ever, and she is indifferent as to what happens to herself." How deep and real is a mother's love, I thought, but turning again to the stricken woman I simply said, "Have you never read what the Lord Jesus says about the 'little ones,' in Matthew 18:1-35?"

"What does He say?" was the sad reply.

Taking out a little Testament, I read, "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. . . . Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. For the Son of Man is COME TO SAVE that which was lost. . . . It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish" (Matthew 18:1-3; Matthew 18:11; Matthew 18:14). The sorrow-stricken one was arrested by the blessed Lord's statements as to His interest in the "little ones," and she listened with the deepest attention as I read on. At verse 11, I pointed out that the expression "that which was lost" applied, simply and directly to the "little ones." They are not, because young in years, therefore "innocent," as men

foolishly say, but being children of Adam, are "lost" as such, and therefore the Son of Man has come "to save" them. His work on the cross avails for them, and as they do not refuse it, He applies its efficacy for them — and His heart is gratified in saving them.

"Observe," I added, "that in Luke 19:10, where the Lord is dealing with and addressing Himself to 'a man' who was old enough to have become a 'chief' and 'rich,' He says, 'The Son of Man is come to SEEK and to SAVE that which is lost.' He has to seek us big grown-up folk, for 'like silly foolish sheep, we have all run away from Him when we had strength and age to do so. Not so the 'little ones,' yet nevertheless are they 'lost,' too. Them He saves outright. Us He has first to seek. The 'little ones' — your dear babe, for instance — never ran away from Him, so He had not to seek it, but being the child of a sinful parent, it was 'lost,' and He died to save it, and I believe He has it safely now in His blessed arms. Don't you believe it too, now?" The surcharged heart found relief in a copious shower of tears, as the truth of the eternal safety of her child burst upon her, and then "Thank God, thank God for that," fell from her lips. "Yes, I believe that," she added, "and oh, what a comfort to know my babe is safe with Jesus. I don't care what happens to me now that I know he is safe."

"But would not you like to be saved, too? Will you not let the blessed Saviour that has already saved your dear child, save you? "

"If He will have me," she softly answered.

"Oh, He will have you, without doubt. just trust Him simply. You see He has been seeking you for a long time, and perhaps He saw the only way to get at your heart — so full of earth and its ties — was to take away your darling child, thus giving you a link with heaven, and now He is calling upon you to surrender yourself fully to Him. Will you not do it?"

"He has saved my child, I will let Him save me too. Yes, I will trust Him, for He came to save 'that which was lost,' and I know I am lost, and He died to save me too. I see it all now clearly. Thank God, thank God."

I needed to say no more. The cloud had departed from her face, the load from her heart, the weight of sin from her conscience, and in the conscious sense of the favour of the Lord she rejoiced in His goodness to herself and to her child.

It is said that the Eastern shepherd, if he will take his flock over a brook, easily effects it. He does not drive his sheep, he leads them, and when he would have them cross the water — which they like not — he simply takes a lamb under each arm, goes over and deposits them on the other side. The anxious dam follows its offspring without hesitation, and the flock, following suit, is soon over.

Thus is it too with us oftentimes. God takes from our side here some tenderly loved one to scenes of rest and glory on high. The hearts of others left behind them get awakened, and the matter ends in solid conversion to God.

Reader, how is it with you? Are you still among them that are lost"? Why is this? Perhaps you say you cannot tell. Let me then point out the reason to you in the words of the Holy Ghost. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world (Satan) hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Corinthians 4:3-4). Yes, the devil brings in the things of time

and sense to block out of your vision what is eternal and divine. If you are wise you will decline to be any longer duped. Birds are wiser than men. Of them Scripture says, "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird" (Proverbs 1:17). But Satan sets his net for careless sinners, and in they walk to their eternal ruin. Friend, be wise in time!

04. "Haud on, Dearie, He'll no' Shak' ye aff."

"Haud on, Dearie, He'll no' Shak' ye aff."

"And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, when she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment: for she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up - and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." — Mark 5:25-34.

I WAS travelling in a third-class carriage on the Caledonian Railway some years ago, starting for an evangelistic tour, when, at a small station in the country, a middle-aged woman of grave and serious demeanour, and evidently of the humblest class of society, got into my compartment. Giving her a gospel tract, she read it, and then made some comment which led me to judge she was a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, an impression which further conversation quite confirmed, — in fact, she was a child of God, and happy in the sense of His love to her. Presently she volunteered that she was going to her home, but with rather a sad heart, as she had been at the death and burial of one who had been her most intimate friend from the days of childhood. On my inquiring if her friend had died in the Lord, she replied, —

"Ou, ay. I believe she was a guid womun."

"What grounds have you for such a statement?" I asked.

"Weel, sir, she was a guid-livin' womun, for I've kenn'd her frae I was a bairn, but jist afore she dee'd I spier't (inquired) at her what her hope for eternity really was."

"And what did she say?"

"She answered me, 'I canna say that I ha'e that peace, an' that assurance I've heerd some folk tell o', but I can truly say I'm like yon puir womun in the Gospels, wi' the issue o' bluid, who, when she heerd o' Jesus, cam' an' touchit the hem o' His garmint; and tho' I canna say I feel as I wad like tae, an' my faith is weak, I'm jist clingin' tae Him.'"

"That was good," said I; "and what comfort did you seek to give her?"

"Weel, weel, sir, I jist said, 'Haud (hold) on, dearie, He'll no' shak' ye aff!'" The train stopped; my friend got out. I have never seen her since, and I never expect to again till I see her in glory, but her last words have remained firmly engraved on my memory; and though many thousands have

doubtless heard this simple narrative in the preaching-rooms where I may have related it, I put it on paper and send it forth in an enduring form, with the hope and prayer that it may cheer some timid, doubting, yet withal believing soul.

"Haud on, dearie, He'll no' shak' ye aff!" It was a fine word for a dying soul, that clung to the Saviour, to hear. It is in such moments that Satan gathers up all his powers, arrays all his hosts, marshals all his forces, and shoots all his poisoned arrows to distress and distract the physically enfeebled one. What comfort in such a condition must it have been to this dying one, to hear such a sweet testimony to the blessed Lord as this, "He'll no' shak' ye aff!"

Let no one suppose that in narrating this incident I am pleading for an uncertain state of soul. Quite the contrary. If my reader has been hitherto in uncertainty as to his, or her relationship to God, my deep desire is that the apprehension of what God's grace really is may for ever dispel all the gloomy clouds which have hindered the enjoyment of the sunshine of His favour. Do not tell me about yourself, and what you are, or are not; what you have done, or have not done. Peace, and the assurance of salvation, are not found in anything that springs from us, but in what God is and has been for us, as seen in the life and death of His blessed Son, the Lord Jesus. You must then keep your eye on Christ, and your ear attentively open to what He says, if you are to have peace.

Look at the touching tale which heads this paper, and to which the dying woman referred. What was the state of matters? Twelve years ill, she had "suffered many things," had "spent all," was "nothing bettered," but "rather grew worse." Twelve is the number that speaks of completeness in matters of human administration. Here it was complete misery. Every human resource had been found to be a source of vexatious disappointment, not of healing. Complete poverty was the result, for she had "spent all." This is just the case for Jesus; and if you, my reader, have found out that you are a poor weak sinner, needing salvation, and unable to save yourself, — spite of all the remedies which incompetent spiritual physicians prescribe, in the shape of good resolutions, amendment of life, almsgiving, attendance on the means of grace, observance of ordinances, prayers, tears, penitential impostures, and perhaps even bodily flagellation, — you cannot do better than follow her footsteps. Her faith was beautifully simple. She had heard of Jesus, and what she had heard had begotten in her heart the full conviction that to get into contact with Him, even remotely, meant sure and certain blessing. So convinced, her course is simple; may yours be the same. She "heard," she "came," she "touched," and "straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up," and, as a very simple consequence, she "felt" that "she was healed."

Now this is always the way the soul comes to Jesus, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." It is what you hear of Him in God's Word that leads you to cast yourself simply on Him. The moment faith does that, the blessing is sure, and present too. Faith always secures the blessing, because it has Christ for its object, and not "self" in any shape or form. There was no virtue in her touch; all the virtue was in Him whom she touched, though it flowed forth bounteously in response to that touch of faith. But there is a point of immense importance here. Not only is she sure she has touched Him, though it were only the hem of His garment, the sense of healing being "straightway" communicated, but He knew He had been touched, and by whom. Yes, Jesus knows if you have come to Him in simple faith or not. He is not an inobservant witness of the heavings and throbbings of the weary restless heart, that scarce knows what it needs, yet finds all that need

met in Himself. Here "Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him. . . . said, Who touched my clothes?" In vain do the disciples speak of the throng. The multitude had thronged but not "touched" Him; faith alone did that. Yet did He not know who it was? Clearly, for "he looked round about to see her that had done this thing." Why these queries, then? Because the Lord loves to confirm faith wherever He finds it. The woman, healed thus perfectly, was about to retire without any confession of Him whose grace she had tasted. So now is it with many souls. They have trusted Jesus, got a sense of relief, perhaps even the half hope that they are forgiven, but they have never got full peace or assurance. Why? Because they have never simply and fully confessed Christ, and hence never got to the point where they were free to listen simply to what He has to say to them. Till this moment is reached, two words describe the condition of such souls, viz., "fearing" and "trembling," which is just what we read: "But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth." This is unreserved committal of one's self to Jesus, and what is the result? What I am wont to call the finest "confirmation service" in all Scripture. Had the Lord allowed her to go off without what now follows, she never would have had peace; for Satan would have followed her, and whispered, "Oh, yes, it's quite true you are better just now, but your trouble will be sure to break out again; you are relieved, not cured;" and the fear of the impending plague would have corroded the joy which she rightly had. How gracious is the Lord! He does not like any soul that has trusted Him to be duped, deceived, and distressed any longer by the devil; so he speaks words which for ever calm the troubled heart, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." Not only is she made whole, but peace is to fill her heart if she thinks of the future; for "be whole of thy plague" are His last words to the one with whom He owns relationship by the exquisite epithet "daughter."

She had therefore the divinely given certainty, that she could never relapse into that state out of which the virtue which flowed from Jesus had drawn her. Similarly, the one who trusts Him now is entitled to know that forgiveness and eternal life are present possessions, and never can be lost; for what He gives in grace, He does not recall.

Scripture testimony is abundant on this point; e.g., "To him give all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive the remission of sins" (Acts 10:43). "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7). Again, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake" (1 John 2:12). Thus we see on what ground God forgives. Christ's work, and faith in His name. But not only does He forgive, which takes up my past history, pardoning my sins, — He gives something that I am to enjoy now and for ever. Thus my present and my future are met by what He gives, viz., "eternal life."

How is this obtained? Hear His own word, and doubt no more. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (John 6:47). "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:27-28). What certainty! It is a confirmation of the simple saying, "He'll no' shak' ye aff." And not only does He give eternal life, but the one who believes Him is to know that he has it, for "These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31); and, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may

know that ye have eternal life" (1 John 5:13).

If you trust the blessed Son of God, ever so simply and feebly, present and eternal blessing is yours, and you ought to know and rejoice in it. Not only is it yours, but you can never lose it, for it is "in Christ," and therefore secure. Do you think sometimes He will give you up, because even since you trusted Him you have failed to rightly respond to His grace? Such a thought is entirely a suggestion of Satan contrary to the Spirit of Christ and the teaching of Scripture; for it is written, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37); and, "Jesus . . . having loved his own which were in the world, loved them unto the end" (John 13:1). These things being so, of all who trust the Saviour, this also is true: "We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth; whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14). Therefore, my believing reader, I will only add a closing word, "Haud on, dearie, He'll no' shak' ye aff."

05. How am I Justified?

How am I Justified?

Acts 13:26-52.

THERE are three points in this passage which are of great interest to the soul, viz., how I can get forgiveness, justification, and eternal life. They all three come out distinctly in this scripture, and are proclaimed by Paul to an audience which he had never seen before. Do you happily know, my reader, that your sins are all forgiven, that you are justified from all things, so that there can never be a charge laid against you — nay, more — that you are the possessor of eternal life? Do you ask, Can any one know this here? Yes, thank God, one can, and many also do, and two things follow, joy and the possession of the Holy Ghost — as in the last verse of our chapter. The apostle came to Antioch in Pisidia, and they gave him a hearing, and he spoke to them of Jesus, of a Saviour. What we all need God provides, and that is a Saviour; and, my friend, if you are not saved now, it is your own fault, it is because you have not availed yourself of what God has provided — viz., a Saviour. The Jew refused this Saviour, trampled Him under foot, and then God turned to the Gentile. "I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth," is God's precious statement; and if you are a poor sinner unsaved, there is salvation for you. God has done all He can do. He has done His part. He has sent the Saviour, now it is for you to accept Him. Who is a Saviour suited to? Lost people. Only lost sinners need Him. Are you saved? Perhaps you reply, I could not say that. Well, are you lost? Oh! you answer, I should not like to say that. That is the reason, then, that you do not know that you are saved, for the Saviour only came for the lost. Until you take your place among the lost you will never have the joy of knowing Jesus as your Saviour. You have heard the name of Jesus very often, — from a child, I doubt not, — but, tell me, is He yours, are you saved? The apostle first unfolds the character of the One of whom he was speaking, and indicates His mission — "A Saviour, Jesus." He unfolds His name — the sweetest name that ever fell on mortal ears — Jesus. He then (ver. 26) goes on to say, "Whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent." Are you a God-fearing person who, though without the knowledge of forgiveness and salvation, is still looking towards God? "To you is the word of this salvation sent." Do you say, I could not take up that ground? But have you never feared God yet? Then you will fear Him — fear Him in a day when it will be too late to taste His grace. Your days of carelessness and heedlessness will soon be over, and then you must meet God. The fear of God is a blessed thing. When I have the fear of God upon me I am in my right place, feeling my own nothingness, and His greatness. Right fear is the doorway of blessing. Are you fearing the Lord? Then, "to you is the word of this salvation sent."

How does God save men? Is it by the law? No; for "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight" (Romans 3:20). Is it by our works? No; for "to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Romans 4:5). If it is "the word of this salvation," then the only thing the sinner has to do is to listen. The gospel is similarly preached to Cornelius, "Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter,

who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:13-14). You may be saved by "words," by "works" never. What does God mean by words? It is the tale of the work of another, the love and goodness of another, the life and death of another, and how God has raised Him from the dead, and put Him into glory; and you hear, and believe, and are saved before you know it.

There never was a simple look of faith to Christ, as a soul heard the story of His love, but that soul got salvation at once, though it might not know it.

Let me implore you to get into right relationship with God now. There is a breach between the world and God now. What is the breach? The grave of His Son. You may argue that He gave Himself. Yes, but this world demanded His death, they clamoured for His blood. Hatred put Him on the cross. Love took Him down, love buried Him, and love rolled a stone over His beloved body in the tomb. But who scaled Him in that tomb? Fear. Hatred killed Him, love buried Him, and fear scaled Him in, and set a watch over the grave, and then the world went away, and hoped it had got rid of Him for ever. But they have not, and they have yet to meet Him, for "God raised him from the dead," I need not say, without breaking the seal. No stone or seal could hold the Saviour in. "God raised him from the dead," and then there was an earthquake, and an angel came and rolled away the stone — not to let the Saviour out, He was out already — but to let you look in and see an empty tomb. Oh! then, I say, my Saviour is risen, my sins must be gone. When man had done his worst against God, then it was that God did His best for man. As a martyr, Jesus died for the truth of God; as a victim, He died for the sin of man. On the cross He took the cup due to man, but He took it from the hand of God. He had looked into it, fathomed it, and He took it, and drank it to the very dregs, and He holds out to you and me the cup of salvation which we have just to take and drink, and then bless His holy name for ever and ever. Precious Saviour! In the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, we have more than the display of the love of God; we have the unfolding of His righteousness too, and there is the basis on which the gospel rests. Oh, what a love is the love of God! Let it penetrate your heart if it never has before. Christ's incarnation is the proof of His interest in man. His death is the sure proof of — more than interest, yea, of — His deep love; and now that God has raised Him from the dead in righteousness, and seated Him at His own right hand, God can offer to you the forgiveness of your sins, if you turn round to Him. The tide of human affection may at times rise so high as to cover for a moment the tablet on which are recorded your offences; but as the tide recedes, on that tablet of memory still remains the unerased list, but with God the tide is ever at the flood. "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more," He says. I look back to the cross and see my blessed Saviour dying, and faith lays hold of the work of the cross. I never can estimate its value, but God estimates it at its full value. I cannot measure the love of Christ, but I can enjoy it. The law can only convict and condemn you, but Jesus can save you, and He will if you look to Him.

What a charming unfolding of grace is here! "Be it known unto you . . . that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." Is it conditional? No. It is unconditional, as free as the very air you are breathing as you read this paper. "And by him all who believe are justified from all things." Another scripture says, "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). Then we read in Romans 5:1, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;" and again in 5: 9, "Much more, then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." There is only one way of

justification, "through this man." There are not three ways, but there are three parties to my justification. God is a party to my justification; Christ is a party to my justification; and I, most necessarily, am a party to my justification. God by His grace, Christ by His blood, and I by faith. The spring is grace, the basis is blood, the principle of it is faith. Faith is the hand that goes out, and takes the gift of God.

It is God that justifies. God is on your side now. I am justified from offences by the grace of God, the blood of Christ, and by my own faith; and then I am not only justified from offences, but I get a life in Christ that cannot offend. A believer in Christ has "justification of life" (Romans 5:18). Is Christ alive? God raised Him from the dead. There was a man who deserved to die, and Jesus died for him; and now there lives a Man on the throne of God, and I live in Him. I have "justification of life." Yea, more, it is "eternal life," and all I have to do is to go on my way rejoicing in Him who is my life, and make much of Him till I see Him face to face.

Reader, shall He not be yours henceforth?

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

06. "He is my Saviour."

"He is my Saviour."

WHILE on my way to a little gospel meeting in the village of C-, I was asked by a Christian lady to visit a young woman who was evidently dying, and whose state of soul she was anxious to assure herself of.

Following her directions I mounted an outside stair, and entered a small attic room, where the signs of deepest poverty were manifest in every direction. The only occupants of the room were a middle-aged woman, on whose face care and toil had left indelible traces, and her daughter, a girl of twenty summers. It was just sunset, and the little window facing in that direction permitted a full stream of golden light to enter the apartment, which only made more visible the squalor and dirt which reigned supreme. The evening rays fell full on the recess containing the bed whereon lay the one whom I sought. She had evidently been a tall and handsome girl, but now the fell destroyer, consumption, had left nothing but skin and bones. Her hair, jet black, lay in tangled quantities scattered over the pillow, in striking contrast with the pallid pinched face which was turned towards me, the brow covered with a cold clew, while the lips and eyelids were firmly closed. I saw at a glance that death was near at hand, which a touch of the pulseless wrist confirmed.

Having addressed a few inquiries as to her illness to the mother, who seemed pleased to see me, I turned to the dying one, and said, "Are you in pain?" Receiving no reply, I repeated my query in a louder tone. Again there was no response, and then the mother put in, "I don't think she can hear you, sir, she's too far gone now to hear." It almost seemed so, but I determined to try, again, so bending over her I said, "Do you know Jesus?"

Oh, the power of that Name on the heart that knows its meaning! Immediately the departing spirit seemed to be called back from the border land, the eyelids lifted to permit a lustrous pair of eyes to fix themselves a moment on the stranger who put this simple query, the lips parted, a smile of unutterable sweetness lit up the dying countenance, and then faintly and with an effort she whispered, "He is my Saviour."

"Thank God," I rejoined; "and how long have you known Him as your Saviour?" Her eyes filled with tears at the remembrance of His mercy as she replied, "Not long, only since I lay down. I have been a terrible sinner, but Jesus loved me, and died for me, and I know He has washed all my sins away in His precious blood."

"And are you quite ready and happy to go?"

"Quite ready," was her answer, while the smile of joy again brightened up her moistened cheek, and then, her strength exhausted, she relapsed into the soporous state from which the mention of the Name of Jesus alone could recall her.

I left, and she passed away a few hours after.

Rarely have I seen a more touching instance of the power of the Name of Jesus. "Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins." To the believer's ear that Name is fragrant beyond description. Reader, may I ask, has it any fragrance for your heart? Do you know Jesus? Can you say, "He is my Saviour?"

Rest not merely in saying, He is a Saviour. The devils know that. You are not right till you can say, "He is my Saviour."

It is really a most blessed thing to be able to truly say those words. And who can say them? Every poor guilty sinner who trusts in Jesus' precious Name. He likes to hear the sinner say, "MY Saviour." All the world will sooner or later own that He is a Saviour; but what He prizes, is the simple confidence of the heart that simply yet boldly says, "He is my Saviour." Would you not like to be able to say it? Well, then, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved."

07. "That's Delightful."

"That's Delightful."

Two servants of the Lord had been together proclaiming the sweet tidings of grace, and the audience had mostly scattered, when our attention was drawn to a middle-aged person, evidently deeply affected by the "good news" she had been hearing. Taking a seat by her side, I said, "Well, is it all settled?"

"No, I can't say that; I wish I could."

"What is the difficulty?"

"I don't see things clearly. You know I have been a kirk-member all my days, but that goes for nothing, I see, and I don't feel as I should like to."

"It is not what you feel that is important, but what you believe. Are you anxious to be saved?"

"Indeed I am most anxious."

"And when do you wish to get salvation?"

"Oh, at once. Tonight, surely, if I can," was her eager reply, as she burst into tears.

"Well, you can have it now, if you like too. Listen to the Word of God, — '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' (Romans 10:8-9). Do you understand that? Do you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead? "

"I do indeed."

"What do you believe? For whom did He die?"

"For all."

"Tell me one for whom He died."

"He died for me."

"You believe that?"

"Indeed I do."

"And did He die for your sins?"

"I believe He did."

"And has He done all that was necessary for your salvation?"

"I believe He has."

"Yes, and God has raised Him from the dead, because all is done. Do you believe that also?"

"I do. I really believe in Him."

"And are you prepared to confess, — yea, do you confess, the Lord Jesus with your mouth?"

"Yes, I gladly do."

"Good; then God says, 'Thou shalt be saved!' Will you be saved, do you think?"

"I should like to be."

"Listen to what God says: 'Thou shalt be saved.'"

"That's delightful!" she exclaimed, with a fresh flow of tears.

"Yes, indeed it is; but if any one asked you, 'Are you saved?' what would you say?"

"I don't feel sure that I could say that I am."

"The point is not what you feel, but what does God say about the one who believes and confesses with the mouth. He says to such, 'Thou shalt be saved;' and if He says, 'Thou shalt be saved,' is not that tantamount to saying, 'Thou art saved'?" She did not quite see through this, so I went on, — "Would you rather have a £1 note, or a sovereign?"

"They are both alike in value."

"True, but one is gold, and the other is only 'I promise to pay one pound.' Now God's note is, 'Thou shalt be saved,' whereas the gold might stand for 'Thou art saved.' This is just what Ephesians 2:8 says, 'For by grace are ye saved, through faith.' Again in Luke 7:1-50, the Lord gave a weeping woman, like you, the knowledge of pardon, salvation, and peace, in twelve words. It was a short sermon, but what a full one! 'Thy sins are forgiven. Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace' (verses 48-50). What wondrous words, 'Thy sins are forgiven!' Are you the woman He is speaking to now?"

"I am. I believe He forgives me."

"Go on. What next does He say?"

"'Thy faith hath saved thee.' I believe it. I see it clearly. I see it distinctly. It is so plain. - I am saved. Thank God." And the tears of joy fell faster than ever.

"How did you come into this hall tonight — in peace?"

"Oh, no; unhappy, unsaved."

"And, now, how will you go?"

"He says 'Go in peace.' I shall go home forgiven, saved, and at peace."

"Yes, you have a living, glorified Saviour, and all that is left you to do, is to bless and praise Him. He has saved you, and you have just to live for Him, who died for you. Do you think He will let you

drop?"

"I think not; I'm sure not if -"

"If what? "

"If I continue faithful and hold on to Him."

"Stop, I'll give you a text with no 'if' in it. 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any (angel, man, or devil) pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one' (John 10:27-30). Now, with that before you, do you think He will let you drop?"

"No, never, I am sure He will not. It all depends on Him;" and she entered into rest, and we bowed the knee, and thanked God together.

Reader, cannot you similarly thank God?

08. "He's not Put them Back on me."

"He's not Put them Back on me."

"HE'S above seventy, and unsaved, and getting feeble, and I've got him to come through from Glasgow to stay a day or two, and I'm going to bring him to the gospel meeting tomorrow night, and I'm real anxious about his salvation, and you will pray for him, won't you?" The speaker was a real earnest Christian woman, and the subject of her fervent wishes her uncle. How natural that we should wish our loved ones to be blessed of God! And how right, too!

Many years have rolled by, but I well remember seeing the prayerful niece and the aged relative sitting side by side where I was preaching the gospel the next evening. The subject before us that night was found in Hebrews 9:27-28, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many: and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation."

There passed before us the two solemn appointments that the unsaved man has before him, viz., death and judgment, which simply mean death and damnation, for no one can rise out of judgment. Well did David know this, and hence his cry, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Psalms 143:2). To die and be damned is the sure and certain lot of the sinner as such. He cannot evade these appointments. They are all divinely fixed. Sin has its sure penalties. These are they. "The wages of sin is death." But "all have sinned," hence death and judgment claim all rightly. Then will all be lost? No! Why? Our verses told us this too. The "as" and the "so" were examined.

"As" — "so" "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." How wondrous! how divine! "As" to die and be judged was once the lot of man, because of sin, "so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." In love He went to the cross, "bare our sins in his own body on the tree," bared His bosom to the stroke of Divine and righteous judgment. Yes, He who "knew no sin," "appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Wondrous sacrifice! magnificent grace! Did sin entail death and judgment on the sinner? He "who did no sin," "was made sin," endured the judgment of sin, and died the death that was sin's wage. He made atonement for sin. "As" — "so." "As" death and judgment belonged to me, "so" Christ tasted and endured them both, and I am free. He took our place in death and judgment, that we, who believe, might get His place in life and glory. Never was love like this. In the days of His flesh they said, "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46). We can surely say, Never man loved like this Man. The face of my aged listener betokened much interest, and ere long the tell-tale tears coursed quickly down the wrinkled cheeks as his heart was softened by the tale of the Saviour's dying love. The meeting closed with Bonar's lovely hymn —

"I rest in Christ the Son of God, Who took the servant's form, By faith I flee to Jesus' cross, My covert from the storm.

Jesus put all my sins away When bruised to make me whole; Who shall accuse, or who condemn,
My blameless, ransomed soul?"

Inviting any anxious inquirers to speak with me in the sideroom, I was soon joined by the old man,
still weeping profusely.

"Well, my friend," said I, "what is the matter?"

"I don't know exactly what it is, but I never felt as I do tonight," was his reply.

"Never mind your feelings the great point is, Have you believed the gospel?"

"Yes, sir, I do believe it. Of course, I have always believed it, in a certain sense, but I believe it
tonight as I never did before, and I certainly do feel as I never felt before," and as he spoke he
stroked his broad chest with his brawny toilmarked hand. "It was just when we were singing that
hymn, it seemed to get all clear to me."

"What part of the hymn?"

"Oh, that bit where it says —

'Jesus put all my sins away When bruised to make me whole!'"

"And do you now believe that Jesus has put all your sins away?"

"Indeed I do tonight, though I never believed this way before."

"You believe that Jesus bare your sins in His own body on the tree?"

"I believe that now."

"How many of your sins did He bare?"

"All of them."

"And where are all your sins now? A pause of some moments followed, while the old man
pondered this query, and then slowly replied, "I don't feel quite sure as to that."

"Has He taken them to heaven with Him, do you think?"

"No, no; there's no sin in heaven, I'm sure of that."

"Well, then, what has Jesus done with them? You are sure He bore them all on the cross?"

"Yes, I feel sure of that tonight."

"And you are sure He has not taken them with Him into heaven?"

"Yes, I am certain about that too."

"Well, then, what has He done with them?"

"That's just the bit that I'd like to be clear about, but I'm sure He's not put them back on me."

"Quite right; that is true. But if He did once bear them all on the cross, and He has not taken them
into heaven, nor put them back on you, what must He have done with them?" With a deep sigh of

relief, as the truth flashed on his soul, and a fresh burst of tears, the old man replied, with deepest emphasis, "Why, He must have put them away for ever."

"Exactly so. That is just what Scripture so blessedly states, and what I have been preaching, and the hymn sweetly corroborates —

'Jesus put all my sins away When bruised to make me whole.'

If ever your sins could be found they must be found on Jesus, since He once bore them; and if they can't be found on Him, they are gone for ever from God's sight."

Peace, deep and real, entered his soul, and he left for home next day, rejoicing in his newly found Saviour.

Reader, are you yet able to truthfully say —

"Jesus put all my sins away When bruised to make me whole"?

09. "I am Going Home."

"I am Going Home."

IT is a wonderful thing to find that God's salvation is - "Salvation without money, Salvation without price, Salvation without labour, Believing doth suffice."

More, it is salvation now — this moment; yes, reader, you may have it now. I would have it, were I in your place, without any further delay, and be recorded in God's book as saved. Just look at your watch a moment. Do you note the time? Well, NOW means just this identical moment, so you can have no difficulty in grasping the meaning of that precious word, "Behold, NOW is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). There is no folly like that of putting off the salvation of the soul. But if it, then, be true that by believing in Jesus, there is for you —

"Salvation now — this moment Then why, oh! why delay?

You may not see tomorrow;

Now is salvation's day."

No! you may not see tomorrow — tomorrow may be too late! As I was about to finish my day's work one Saturday, not long ago, I rang the bell of a house where one had long been ill. The door was opened by a relative whom I scarcely recognised, as it was nearly dark. I said, "How is A-?"

"Oh! have you not heard? she is gone."

"What, dead?"

"Yes, dead!"

Gone! she was gone from earth for ever. Was she old? No. Middle-aged? No. Young? Yes; not quite twenty-one years of age. I had seen her three days before, and I expected to have seen her again in life; but I did not.

Perhaps, my reader, you would like to know how she died? It was a long illness; consumption the fatal malady that cut short her days.

She knew perfectly well that she could not recover, but thought some little time would elapse ere the "golden cord" would be loosed. That morning, however, as her watchful relative was giving her some needed assistance, which brought her to the bedside of the feeble girl, there happened that which had not been before. Without any warning a large blood-vessel in the lung gave way, and the life-blood poured forth. Lifting her eyes towards heaven, she said very calmly, "Auntie, I am going home? I am going HOME!" and passed away to be with Jesus.

Reader, could you die like that? Her whole face brightened up; no fear was pictured thereon. She could say, quietly, calmly, "I am going home;" and the next moment found herself there. Sinner, you could not say that. You, who are on the broad road, could you call hell a home? Describe not

the eternal abode of the lost, that region of speechless woe, by such a charming, sacred name. Oh, unsaved man! unsaved woman! have salvation! have it now! Flee to Jesus as you read this, for "now is salvation's day!" and He has said He will not cast you out if you come to Him.

Many a time this dying girl grasped my hand as I was leaving her after a medical visit, and said, "Doctor, will it be long?" I could not tell her how long; consumption is often a lingering disease. The last time I saw her before her death she said to me, as we parted, "Doctor, it will not be long, will it, before I am with Jesus?" These were her last words to me, full of peace and assurance of a present and eternal salvation. She longed to be with Jesus.

Dear unsaved one, open your heart to Him! just where you are, open your heart and let Jesus enter in! He will fill your heart. Be converted now. Decide for Christ, I pray you. Turn to the Lord while you may. "Now is salvation's day." just now — now. If you want to be saved, it must be now.

How shall I get salvation? Do I hear you ask this? You have nothing to do, and nothing to be, except to be and own what you are, an utterly lost sinner. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Come to Him in your 'Sins just where you are and as you are, this very moment, and Jesus will save you, What will He do? you may say.

Come and see!

Oh, but I am such a sinner; He must, He will put me from Him.

No! He will put your sins away, but you He will receive. The prodigal came as he was, and was kissed while in his want and misery. Then he got the best robe which fitted him for the father's house. just so the sinner must come to Jesus by faith, without seeking in the slightest degree to fit himself for Christ. Your fitness for Christ is that you are a lost sinner, and need a Saviour; and, on the other hand, He is a Saviour looking ever about for the sinner whose heart He can reach and touch, in order that He may save him. Come as you are to Him, and He will save you on the spot.

Always remember this, that Christ does not help sinners; He saves them. When I talk of some one helping me, I imply that I have a little strength; when I say another saved me, I mean that my own power was gone utterly, and I were lost without recovery but for the act of another. Now this is just the gospel in a nutshell. As says the apostle, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6). How simple and how blessed! When "without strength" (not trying to show I had a little, by good works and reforming my life) and "ungodly," 1:e., not having a single thing to commend me to God — then Christ died for me, and by His death I am cleansed from my sin and guilt, and made fit for the presence of God.

Reader, may God grant to you repentance unto life, faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ, a daily walk that tells louder than words that your heart is Christ's; and, should you be called to die suddenly, may you be able to say, "I am going home."

10. Mutual Agreement.

Mutual Agreement.

"WELL, is it all settled?"

"No, indeed; I wish with all my heart that it were," was the sad reply I got to my query. The speaker was a tall well-dressed young man, of some five and twenty years, who was coming out of the door of a large and crowded hall in the south of London, where I had been, one Monday evening some years ago, preaching the gospel, speaking of the Lord's second coming. His grave and intelligent face was marked by deep emotion, and denoted the soul-exercise he had passed through as he had been listening to the tale of grace which the Spirit of God had unfolded that night, followed by solemn appeals to the unconverted, in view of the possibility of the Lord's immediate return, and the certain eternal woe that must be the fate of the unprepared, and hence unsaved, soul.

Arrested by my question, he stood still, as if inviting further converse; so I went on, "But if you wish the matter settled, why is it not settled?"

"I really don't know; but I fancy I don't understand it."

"Tell me, now, do you take your place as a really lost sinner before God, and are you anxious to be saved? "

"Indeed I do. I am most anxious to be saved."

"Are you willing to receive Jesus as your Saviour, just where you stand?"

"I am most willing. I wish heartily I could say He were my Saviour. I am quite prepared to receive Him."

"Do you think He is willing to receive you?"

"Ah! that is just the question. If I were only sure of that, I should be at rest."

"Oh, my dear fellow, rest assured on that score; I can answer for Him as to that. Have you never read, 'This man receiveth sinners'?" was my rejoinder. More followed, but still he saw not the truth; so, fancying that he might be in business, and that an illustration might help him, I said, "Are you in business?"

"Yes."

"What line?"

"Woollen goods — wholesale," he replied, rather astonished at the sudden turn from things eternal to earthly matters.

"Suppose I turned up at your warehouse tomorrow, would you be prepared to do business with me?"

"Certainly."

"Well, suppose that I come wanting so many bales of cloth of a certain quality and price, you would be prepared to sell them?"

"Most decidedly."

"And when I have agreed to take and pay for, and you to sell and deliver these goods, what would you say about the matter?"

"I should called it settled."

"And settled, what by?"

"Mutual agreement," was the reply.

"Exactly so! I agree to take, and you to deliver. Now, see: here you stand and tell me you are willing to receive the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, and God's Word says He is willing to receive you, a 'sinner.' What do you call that?"

"I should call that mutual agreement also," was his slow but firm reply.

"Yes; Christ is agreed to receive you, and you are agreed to receive Him. Are you not at one in this matter? Are you not both of the same mind?"

"Dear me, how simple it is! I see it all clearly now, thank God. I just receive Christ simply by faith, and He receives me?"

"That is just it, and exactly as it is put in John 1:11-12, I He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' You believe on His name, don't you?"

"Yes, I most sincerely believe in the name of the Lord Jesus!"

"Then God says that is how you receive Him: and receiving Jesus, you become a child of God; for, again, it is written, 'Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:26). The moment you believe in Him really, you receive Him, and become a child of God." The cloud disappeared from his face, the anxiety departed, his eye was lit up with a new-born joy; and, seizing and "wringing my hand most warmly, he went on his way, saying, "Thank God. Thank you too. I see it all. It's so simple. It's mutual agreement. He receives me, I receive Him, and now I'm a child of God. Good-bye, and God bless you!"

Reader, can you say it is settled? If not, why not? It must be that you are not willing, because Jesus is. He said to some who listened to Him once, "Ye search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me, and ye will not come to me that ye might have life." (John 5:39-40).

11. "Yet there is Room."

"Yet there is Room."

Luke 14:22-23.

"YET there is room!" To an anxious seeker of salvation, what comfort is in these words! They tell that the door is yet open, that the voice of grace yet sounds, and that whoever comes will be made welcome! But where is it that "yet there is room"? In the Father's house, the Saviour's home, at the "great supper" which God has spread, and to which He has invited you, my reader.

God wants you to be His guest. He has spread His table with every bounty love could furnish, much less than our poor needy hearts could desire, and sent out His servants with the word, "Come; for all things are now ready." And what is the result of this loving call? All invited have "made excuse." Man does not want to be God's guest. God wants man's company, but man does not want God's, in such close proximity as a feast suggests, so he politely says, "I pray thee have me excused."

Alas! "a piece of ground," "five yoke of oxen," or, strangest of all, "a wife," sufficed to prevent the acceptance of God's call. There was no heart. Had there been, the one just married would have said, "Where I am wanted, my wife will be welcome too; I will take her with me."

It is a sad picture, dear unsaved reader, of your heart, is it not? But listen to me. God is in earnest. He will certainly have His house filled. If you will not fill a seat in His house, some one else will. Do not miss your opportunity, I beseech you. To you I now say again, "YET THERE IS ROOM." Oh, heed the call of God. Where will you spend eternity? It must be with him whose "guests are in the depths of hell;" or with God, who now again invites you to be His guest in heavenly glory. Again He calls; will you again refuse? Your life is wearing to a close. You began it a stranger to Jesus and His blessed salvation. Will you end it in the same dreadful state? God forbid! "Yet there is room." Come now to Jesus. All you have to do is to cast yourself simply on Him. He has died, and risen again. The work of atonement is accomplished. God's claims are all met. The question of sin has been forever settled on the cross. There He "who knew no sin, was made sin for us;" and the sins of all who trust in Jesus have been borne for ever away. Will you not trust Him? Had you anything to do, you might delay; but when all is "finished," and all "ready," the only thing left for you to do is to come, and appropriate in faith what love provides for your present and eternal blessing.

I assure you God is waiting to bless you. Nay, more, He is most anxious about you being His guest. He says, "Compel to come in." Are not these strange words? They show the reluctance on your side to come, and the earnestness on God's side to get you to come.

Oh, let me "compel" you to come ere you drop this paper. God loves you; why do you refuse Him? Christ has died for sinners; why do you not believe Him? You are going straight to hell; why do you not turn to the Lord? Have you no shrinking from the "wrath to come"? Do you not see the awful folly of your present path? Blinded by Satan, sin, and the delusions of this present world, you are

hurrying on to a scene of endless despair. Oh, sinner, you must wake up to your state. You are unwashed, unpardoned, unclean, and unjustified, and you will soon stand a self-condemned criminal at the bar of God. Countless are your sins indeed; but the crowning, damning one of all will be this, that you refused grace, despised mercy, rejected Christ, and "excused" yourself from being saved; and, consequently, ensured your eternal damnation.

Oh, my fellow-sinner, I call on thee. Awake, awake! arouse thee to thy danger; see thine impending doom. "Escape for thy life," I beseech thee. "Compel to come in," warrants me in calling on thee, with all the earnestness and affection I possess, to turn to the Lord. "Yet there is room," may assure thee that, if thou dost but come, thy salvation is certain. But thou must no longer delay. God's house is nearly full, I am sure. Some guest will be the last," has been well said and then the shut door will solemnly thunder to lazy, half-awakened sinners, — No room, no room, NO ROOM!

What crushing conviction will then possess the soul that finds itself too late! It will be willing, but too late; wishing, but too late; wanting, but too late; weeping, but too late; praying, but too late; pleading, but too late. Oh, how dreadful!

Reader, fancy yourself going down to hell with "yet there is room" resting on your memory, and "too late" ringing in your ears, and stamped in living characters of fire before your guilty, godless soul for ever. This must be the fate of a gospel-neglecting, a Christ-rejecting soul. Shall it be your fate? With you now lies the opportunity and the responsibility of accepting God's call.

Once more, "Yet there is room." Oh, my friend, be persuaded. Yield yourself just now to the Saviour. His words are sweet and true. "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Again, "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

Reader, farewell. May this appeal be used of the Lord to your coming to Him while "yet there is room."

12. "He Stole it away in the Meeting."

"He Stole it away in the Meeting." THIS title, dear reader, may seem a little strange, but if what it involves has not yet taken place in your history, I trust it may now come to pass. You will be an immense gainer by losing what the speaker, whose words I quote, referred to.

There are moments in the history of certain places, as well as souls, when God comes very nigh unto them. Such was the case in the town of L- some years ago, when a wave of gospel blessing rolled over the inhabitants thereof. God's Spirit was working blessedly, and in some streets there was scarce a house that grace did not visit and save some therein. In some cases whole households were blessed. The gospel meetings, held in large halls, were crowded with attentive listeners, anxious inquirers, or rejoicing believers, many of them but just converted. Truly they were blessed moments — "times of refreshing" — such as one longs and prays to see again.

Among my auditors, one Lord's Day evening, I observed a young person very deeply affected as the preaching went on. The tale of the Lord's dying love, of the value of His blood, and of the interest of God in man's salvation, completely commanded her soul; and tears flowed freely as she eagerly heard the Word. An "after-meeting" being announced, I observed that she kept her seat, so at a fitting moment I drew near and got into conversation with her. She was still weeping profusely, but no look of anxiety was on her face. Inquiring of her why she so wept, she replied, "Oh! I can't help it, after what I have seen tonight."

"And what have you seen tonight — yourself a lost sinner, and Jesus a living, loving Saviour?"

"Yes, that's just it. I never saw things before as I see them tonight."

"Then the Spirit of God has shown you yourself tonight as an utterly lost, ungodly sinner in God's sight?"

"Yes, I see that most clearly. I've seen that I am utterly helpless and lost," and here the tears rolled faster than ever.

"And what else have you seen?"

"I have seen that Jesus loved me, when I was a poor wicked sinner; and that He gave Himself for me, and died for me on the cross, bearing my sins, and God's judgment of them."

"That is a blessed thing to have learnt. And now, tell me, how many of your sins did Jesus bear on the cross? "

"I believe He bore them all, every one of them," she replied.

"And how many of them did He blot out from God's sight, by His precious blood, when He so hung on the cross?"

"I believe He blotted them every one out," was her emphatic reply, "for it says, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'"

"Good. That is faith. And if He died for them all, and blotted them all out when He shed His precious blood for you on the tree, how many do you suppose He forgives you tonight, now that you believe in Him?"

"I believe He forgives them all, every one," she replied, with a fresh flood of tears, which had, however, the manifest appearance of tears of joy, as indeed they were.

"Quite right, my dear friend," I rejoined; "you have a Divine warrant for knowing that. To a poor sinner, weeping at His feet, the blessed Saviour once said, 'Thy sins are forgiven; thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace;' and He says the same now to you, depend upon it. Of all who trust in Him it is truly written, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace' (Ephesians 1:7). And, if I understand you aright, you are now, for the first time in your life, assured that your sins are all blotted out, and forgiven through the finished work and present grace of the Saviour?"

"Yes, thank God, I am quite sure about it now," she replied, and her face, radiant with joy, bespoke the inward sense of the Lord's forgiving love.

"That is an immense mercy, and now that the Lord Jesus has so greatly blessed you, may I ask how much of your heart are you going to give to Him?"

"I couldn't give Him any," was her sincere and simple, but, nevertheless, to me astounding answer.

"Couldn't give Him any?" I replied in amazement. "What can you mean? Here you sit and tell me that, for the first time in your life, you have learnt that Jesus has borne all your sins on the cross, sustained all the judgment due to them and you, blotted them all out, and forgiven them all this night, and then you add that you 'couldn't give Him any' of that heart of yours that should be His, entirely His, henceforth."

"I have none left to give," was her quiet reply, "HE STOLE IT AWAY IN THE MEETING."

"Ah! I see what you mean now. He won your love by the revelation of His own."

"Just so; while you were speaking tonight of Him, and His love in dying for such as me, before I knew it I was drawn to Him, and my heart is His, not mine, henceforth."

Reader, has your heart yet been stolen? You are just beginning a New Year. Most likely many a kindly voice has wished you a "Happy New Year." With all my heart I wish you the same. Would you have a certain receipt for it? Taste the love of His heart, — "the love of Christ that passeth knowledge," and let Him, in return, simply and unreservedly, have the love of yours, and this year and every other shall be truly happy. For "blessed are all they that put their trust in him," and each such one may add, "Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalms 16:11).

13. "I Know I'm all Wrong."

"I Know I'm all Wrong."

RETURNING from preaching the gospel in Glasgow a few nights ago, I found two young men the only occupants of the compartment of the train I was in. To each of them I gave a different little book, viz., "The Two Alexanders," and "The Young Doctor," but each narrating God's grace to a young man in the old Edinburgh Infirmary, now pulled down. They each read their respective book carefully, and at the first stopping-place one young man got out, first requesting that he might keep the little book, as he would like to read it again, a request I was only too glad to comply with.

Left alone with my other fellow-traveller, who had been reading "The Young Doctor," I said, "Well, could you die like that young doctor?"

"No, indeed, I couldn't; I wish I could though."

"God's grace it was that saved him: can it not save you also?"

"I'm sure I don't know. I wish it could. I know I'm not saved, and though I think about it sometimes I can never see through it; I can't get to the bit somehow."

"Then evidently you have sometimes thought seriously about your soul, and eternity, and that you have to meet God some day? "

"Yes, and I have had some solemn warnings too."

"What were they?"

"I work a steam crane, and twice I have fallen off a great height and been badly hurt; and during the summer, the rocks where we were working were struck by lightning. The smell of brimstone was awful, but I was not hurt."

"And did you not feel that God was speaking to you in all this?"

"Yes; and for a while — about three months — I did my best to be a Christian, but then the impression wore off, and I gave way to temptation, and I'm as bad as ever."

"That is sad! but I fear you were trying to be religious as many do, and that's a grand mistake."

"Perhaps I did; but, any way, I know I'm all wrong."

"That is the first step to getting right, my friend," I replied; and then putting the gospel simply before him, I trust he was led to see that Christ saves the lost out-and-out without any doings on their part, and was led to simply trust in Him. This young man is just a sample of thousands around us, — perhaps the counterpart of your history, my dear reader. Is it so? Have you not had warning after warning from God? How have you heeded them? Have you been endeavouring to turn over a new leaf and lead a better life, in the hope — oh, how vain! — of fitting yourself for God's

presence? No greater delusion could possibly possess your soul. It will be a great day in your history when you wake up to say, "I know I'm all wrong!" It was the moment of blessing for the prodigal when, in the far country, he said, "I perish with hunger." Friend, have you ever yet "come to yourself" with this appalling discovery, "I'm all wrong" - not partly wrong, but "all wrong"? When you discover this, you are at one with God's thoughts about you, for He has said, "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:1-31).

Let me beseech of you, if you have never yet judged yourself according to God's Word, so to do without one hour's delay. This year of God's grace is fast fleeting by, let it not go past you, and leave you as it found you, "all wrong." Oh, do come to Jesus. He is waiting to bless and save you. Only trust Him simply. He has done the work that can blot out all your many sins; all you need to do is to cast yourself simply on Him. "Acquaint now thyself with him and be at peace, thereby good shall come unto thee." To delay is folly of the deepest kind. Who can count on tomorrow? A lease of your house, your shop, your farm, you may have; but not of your life. So put not off until tomorrow what, if you are wise you will do today, viz., come as you are to the Saviour, and let Him save you. Own your guilt, your need, your misery, and then taste His grace, His love, His mercy. Think not to bring anything, all He wants is an empty heart, that He may fill it with His love, — a burdened conscience, that He may purge it with His blood. May you be enabled, dear reader, to simply trust Him, and then, truly tasting "that the Lord is gracious," pass on your way no longer "all wrong," but all right, happy in His love, and waiting for His coming! The Lord Himself fill you with the sense of His grace and love; and, in conclusion, with all my heart can I say, "Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. AMEN."

14. Do you Hope, or Know, that you have Eternal Life?

Do you Hope, or Know, that you have Eternal Life? THIS question, dear reader, is one of the deepest importance, and your answer will evidence either that you are, if hoping, still in uncertainty as to the salvation of your precious soul, and consequently without peace with God; or, if knowing, in the conscious enjoyment of God's grace toward you through the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom you believe.

Most of those to whom I put my query decidedly answer, "I hope," very frequently adding, "it is impossible to know." If you agree with such a reply, allow me to show you from Scripture that it is not only possible, but actually contemplated by God, that whoever believes in His Son should not only have eternal life, but know that it is possessed even now. To effect my object, I cannot do better than relate how one who, like you, "hoped," was led to "know."

I was preaching the gospel in the south of Ireland, having but one evening to devote to that particular place. In the afternoon a young believer informed me that her mother had promised to come to the gospel meeting at night. She was an elderly person, by no means opposed to the things of God, but had never given evidence of having simply received the truth of the gospel in its peace-giving power. Anxious as the daughter was for her mother's blessing, she was nevertheless importunate that I should not speak personally to her for fear of her being offended, and laid rather a strict embargo on my lips should I happen to come in contact with the old lady. At the close of the evening gospel meeting, as I was standing near the door, I saw Mrs H- (whom I recognised from the afternoon's conversation) passing slowly out. Offering her a little tract, and at the same time expressing a wish that she might receive no harm on her way home from the rain (which was falling in torrents), she replied that she did not think she would, and further, that she was glad she had come, for she had much enjoyed the meeting. As I had been speaking on the text, "Be it known, therefore, unto you that the SALVATION OF GOD is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it" (Acts 28:28), I added, "I trust you now know the salvation of God, and have eternal life."

"I hope so," was her reply, showing no desire to pass me.

"But why should you only 'hope,' my friend, when God wishes you to 'know' that, if believing in His Son, you have eternal life?"

"Well, sir, I believe in the Son of God, and all I can say, is I 'hope,' and I don't think any one can 'know' as long as they are in this world."

"If you will permit me," I answered, "I will show you just one little verse in the Word of God which will settle that matter definitely."

"You need not trouble yourself," said she, "I know the Word of God well. Ever since I was a child I have studied it, and I don't believe there is a verse you can show me that I don't know."

"Just one, Mrs H-."

"Well, where is it?" said she.

Taking her large-print Bible from her hands, I found and read to her, "These things have I WRITTEN unto you that BELIEVE in the name of the Son of God, that ye may KNOW that ye HAVE eternal life" (1 John 5:13). I read it a second time, and then said, "Do you believe in the name of the Son of God?"

"I do," was the emphatic reply.

"You really do own that you are a lost sinner needing salvation, and that nothing but the bloodshedding of the Son of God could avail to put away your sins."

"I do."

"You repudiate all thought of salvation by your own works, confess that you are an undone, guilty, lost sinner, and now simply believe in the name of the Son of God?"

"I do," was again the short and sincere answer I got.

"Well, then, granting all that, have you eternal life?"

"I hope so."

"Oh," was my reply, "I see it now; in the days when you went to school, which is, of course, a great while ago, they used to spell differently then from now."

"How so, sir?"

"Why, K-N-O-W used to spell HOPE in those days? "

"Not at all, sir."

"What did they spell?"

"Why, of course, they spelt KNOW the same then as now."

"There is a mistake somewhere," I replied, "there must be, for you say you believe in the name of the Son of God, and He says, 'These things have I written unto you that believe in the name of the Son of God, that ye may KNOW that ye have eternal life,' and you stand there and tell me that you only hope you have it."

"Let me see that verse myself," said the old lady, suiting her actions to her words by diving her hand into her pocket and taking out and adjusting her spectacles. Once and again she read slowly to herself, and then most emphatically out aloud, "These things have I written unto you that BELIEVE ON THE NAME OF THE SON OF GOD, that ye may KNOW that ye HAVE ETERNAL LIFE." The Spirit of God blessed her perusal of the sacred message, and filled her heart with peace as she believed it. "Hope" died on the spot, and faith and amazement mingled had full possession of her soul.

Looking up, she now added, "Well, is it not strange? For, often as I have read the Epistle of John, I never saw that verse yet. Of course I must have read it, for I am very fond of St John's writings, but I never saw it in the light I do now. I am very glad you spoke to me, sir, and showed me that verse."

Dear me, how dark I have been, and there it was all the time and so plain too; I wonder I never saw it before! "

"Well, thank God you see it now, and you believe it simply as it stands, don't you?"

"Oh, yes, there's no room left for 'hoping' or doubting now; I'm sure now, and I have to thank you for drawing my attention to the Lord's Word."

We had a little more conversation, and then, seeing that she was now resting simply on the Lord and His blessed written Word, I bade her "Good-night," closing our short and only possible earthly interview with this question, "And now, Mrs H-, if a friend meets you on your way home and asks, 'Have you eternal life?' what shall you say?" With a face now beaming with joy in the assurance of God's salvation, she replied, "I should tell them that I KNOW I HAVE IT because I believe in Jesus, and God has said, 'These things have I written unto you that believe in the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life.' Good-night, and good-bye, sir." To her it was truly a good night, and to me truly good-bye, for not many weeks after the dear old lady passed away to be for ever with the Lord, in the sweet enjoyment of the present possession of eternal life. And now, my dear reader, I trust you will be as simple as was the one of whom I have written. If you know that you are a ruined, lost sinner (and you must know it if you accept the testimony of the Word of God), just look away from yourself simply to Jesus. You will never get peace by looking to yourself, or trying to realise or feel assurance. This only is obtained by simply receiving God's testimony to you. You must receive His witness to you before there can be any witness in you. Nothing can be simpler. I must be in a relationship in order to enjoy its proper affections, or fulfil its duties. I must know that I am a son of God before I can feel like one; so must you. I must know (and I do know) from God's Word that I "have eternal life," before I can (and I do) feel that I have it; so must you.

15. "This Year thou shalt Die."

"This Year thou shalt Die."

GOD usually warns before He judges. So infinite is His mercy and grace that, perhaps, even one might not go beyond the truth in saying that He always does. Scripture abounds with instances. Sodom was visited by two heavenly messengers the day before the fire of God consumed it (Genesis 19:1-38). Pharaoh had warnings in abundance long before his final doom. His chariot wheels came off some hours before he "sank as lead in the mighty waters" (Exodus 14:1-31; Exodus 15:1-27). The impious Chaldean monarch had his warning written before his eyes by the "fingers of a man's hand," and from the lips of Daniel heard, "God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it," hours before the enemy gained ingress to the city, yet "in that night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain" (Daniel 5:1-31). Judas got his warning when the Lord said, "One of you shall betray me." He heeded it not, and went "to his own place" (John 13:1-38, Acts 1:1-26). Pilate was well and wisely warned, when, even on the judgment seat, he got the message from his wife, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man." Disregarding it, he signed the Lord's death-warrant, and who shall say not his own at the same moment of time?

How different might have been the end, for time and eternity, of all these men, had God's warning been heeded, His message believed, and His mercy besought; had repentance and self-judgment taken the place of unbelief and indifference. The five words which head this paper were God's warning message to another man. Hananiah was a false prophet. Unsent of God, he prophesied lies in His name. To him came the word of God, "Hear now, Hananiah, the Lord hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie. Therefore, thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth; this year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord. So Hananiah the prophet died the same year, in the seventh month" (Jeremiah 28:15-17).

It was in the fifth month of the year (see ver. 1) that Hananiah uttered his false prophecy and got his warning — "this year thou shalt die"; and "Hananiah the prophet died the same year, in the seventh month," is God's record of what took place. His word ever comes true.

Reader, have you ever thought that God may have spoken as to you, "This year thou shall die." May I ask, Are you ready to die? Are you converted? Are you prepared to meet God? Are your sins all washed away? If not, you have not much time left. A few more brief days and this year will be numbered in the past, and if "THIS YEAR THOU SHALT DIE" apply to you, it surely behoves you to be on the alert.

Very likely you will say — How do you know I shall die this year? I do not know it, nor affirm it, but God knows, and if your days on earth are numbered, where will you go when you die? Will you spend eternity in heaven or hell? There is no third place. Annihilation is a lure of the devil to get careless sinners to go on in sin till it be too late. Believe it not, my friend. Dear unsaved fellow-sinner, death is before you — two deaths.

"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." What is that? The second death, which Revelation 21:8 describes as "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." Surely, to die once is enough. Then you pass out of man's sight, but do not cease to exist. In the second death you pass out of God's sight, but, appalling thought, exist as long as He does. He is the eternal God, and yours will be eternal judgment.

Really, my friend, it is time you were alive to your future. You need not be a gross, scandalous sinner to ensure these two deaths. You have only to go on quietly as you are, in unbelief, and disregard of God's word (and He may be giving you your warning. by this paper, viz., "This year THOU shalt die"), to seal your eternal doom.

Quite possibly you may argue — The chances are greatly against my dying this year, it has nearly sped by, and I am young and hale. So may have retorted three young men, in the full possession of health and strength, as they, one week evening, heard a friend of mine preach from the words, "This year thou shalt die." The next evening the mangled corpses of all the three were found in a railway cutting. Crossing this, as a short way home from work, an express train overtook and slew them. As to their souls and eternity, nothing was known. They had never confessed Christ, but God had coupled the gospel with the warning they heard over-night.

Death has indeed been busy this year, and my unsaved reader may well heed the poet's words: —

"Both old and young the dart of death Lays level with the dust;

So, reader, whilst you still have breath Make Christ alone your trust." Your heart, sinner, is the target at which death relentlessly shoots his arrows, and possibly, even as you read this, the shaft is being put to the bow which shall fulfil the solemn words, "This year thou shalt die." For a man to continue in his sins, unrepentant, unforgiven, unwashed, unsaved, when grace is calling him to a Saviour, is folly of the deepest dye. Who can gainsay it? Do you, my reader? Let me tell you what has happened "this year" to others. I was holding some special gospel meetings in a country village, lasting over a month. The last night I spoke on Acts 17:1-34, where Paul at Athens "preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection," and then added, "God . . . now commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead" (vers. 30, 31). The effect on his hearers is thus given: "And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead some mocked; and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed" (vers. 32, 34). His audience was split into three classes — mockers, procrastinators, and believers. That night I pressed greatly the folly of procrastination. One man, noted for his godlessness and indifference, who was present, fell dead next day without one moment's warning. and with no confession of Christ on his lips. He had got his warning over-night, "This year thou shalt die," but I fear heeded it not.

Again, a Christian man I know, repeatedly brought an acquaintance to hear the gospel from my lips during the past summer. At the end of the meeting I, on two or three occasions, spoke with him. At first he treated the matter of his soul's salvation rather jocularly. The last time I saw him he was more sober, but unsaved, and undecided, and said, "I will hear you again." He did not, nor ever will. A few days later his friend heard him humming "I can believe, I do believe, That Jesus

died for me." Is that true?" said the Christian. "No," was the honest, but sad answer, "but I wish it were." Ten days later, he suddenly fell on the pavement, became unconscious, and in twelve hours passed into eternity, with no further testimony that is known. God had said, "THIS YEAR THOU SHALT DIE," and he had got his warning.

Depend upon it, my reader, you are getting yours. These solemn facts are true, and, if you are inclined to regard them as mere coincidences, which preacher and writer of the present day are wont to cite, let me affectionately urge on you to carefully peruse, yea, get off by heart, the following weighty words of one long since gone to his rest. Truly wrote Young: By nature's law, what may be, may be now;

There's no prerogative in human hours. In human hearts what bolder thought can rise, Than man's presumption on tomorrow's dawn? Where is tomorrow? In another world. For numbers this is certain; the reverse is sure to none; and yet on this perhaps, This peradventure, infamous for lies, As on a rock of adamant, we build Our mountain hopes; spin our eternal schemes, As we the fatal sisters could out-spin, And, big with life's futurities, expire. Not e'en Philander had bespoke his shroud: Nor had he cause; a warning was denied.

How many fall as sudden, not as safe? As sudden, though for years admonish'd home Of human ills the last extreme beware, Beware, Lorenzo! a slow, sudden death.

How dreadful that deliberate surprise Be wise today; 'tis madness to defer;

Next day the fatal precedent will plead;

Thus on, till wisdom is pushed out of life:

Procrastination is the thief of time;

Year after year it steals, till all are fled, And to the mercies of a moment leaves The vast concerns of an eternal scene, If not so frequent, would not this be strange? That 'tis so frequent, this is stranger still."

Such words should be graven on the heart of every procrastinator. Reader, are you such? Let me urge you to at once come to Jesus. You may well trust Him. Trusting Him, pardon, peace, and eternal life are yours. For the Christian there is nothing but glory with Christ ahead of him. He has a title without a flaw to that glory. It is his Saviour's blood. He has a prospect without a cloud. Every cloud is gone. The sin that was his has been borne by Jesus. The death and judgment, that sin demand, have been endured by Jesus, in his room and stead. Thus he has "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." For the believer death, should it come, is but the doorway into glory. I stood at the bedside of, an aged believer but a week since. Among her last words, as she quietly winged her way to glory, were these: - "So calm, so safe, so satisfied, The soul that clings to Thee."

Come, say, dear friend, will you not turn to Jesus now and believe on Him? Let me entreat you. All the work has been done by Jesus "It is finished," is the legacy, of the dying Saviour to the needy sinner. Receive this priceless heirloom, and then, should God's will be that "this year thou shall die," your happy portion will be "to depart and be with Christ, which is far better."

It is important to remember, that the believer is not looking for death, but for the Lord's second coming. Cheering indeed are the words, "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we watch or sleep we should live together with him" (1 Thessalonians 5:9-10). "To live together with him." There, dear fellow-believer, is our eternal destiny. "And they have no rest day nor night" (Revelation 14:1) solemnly describes the eternity of the lost soul. May God, in His infinite goodness, lead you, my reader, if hitherto undecided for Christ, this moment to decide for Him, for, again I repeat, concerning you the word may have gone out of His lips — a word of warning — which though unheeded will not be unremembered in hell — THIS YEAR THOU SHALT DIE."

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