

SERMONS OF W.T.P. WOLSTON

by W.T.P. Wolston

Wolston's comprehensive exploration of Christ's nature, the believer's position in Christ, and Christian practice, examining what it means to have faith in Christ and belong to God's kingdom.

16 Chapters

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01. Barabbas or Jesus?

Barabbas or Jesus?

Luke 23:1-56.

W. T. P. Wolston. The Spirit of God has said elsewhere that "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18). "But," you ask, "how am I to be saved?" By believing on the Son of God. Salvation is yours through what He has done; through nothing that you could ever do. What could man do? What did man do? Listen to God's tale of what he did. Scripture faithfully tells what man is — man's state — what man has become when he can treat the Son of God thus:

"The whole multitude of them arose, and led Him [Jesus] to Pilate." They accuse Him, they set Him at nought, they mock Him, they array Him in a gorgeous robe, they rail on Him, they crucify Him. Pilate could find no fault in Jesus, but they cry, "Crucify him! crucify him!" and they take Him to Calvary, the place of a skull, and Scripture says, "There they crucified him." Whom? Him, the Son of God. The world thought the only treatment Jesus was worthy of was to be crucified in a graveyard between two malefactors! That tells what man is; and it tells what God is also. Could He have delivered Himself? Certainly. Would He deliver Himself? No. What did He do? Did He accuse them? No; no upbraiding, no accusing word is heard. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted; yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." That cross which tells the bitter hatred and enmity of man to God, is the only means whereby God can save man. Yes, it needed that slain Lamb, it needed that spotless Victim on the cross, ere God in righteousness could save man. But let us turn to Scripture, and see there what man did to the One who had "done nothing amiss." I say it solemnly, the world lies before God this day charged with the murder, the cruel murder, of His Son. I grant there was love in His heart, but that does not excuse man. Scripture brings out plainly what man does, what man is. His thoughts and his treatment of the blessed Son of God show what he is. You cannot deny it, you cannot get out of it, you cannot escape it; man would burn the Bible if he could, because it is the record of what he has done. You say, "Oh! that is not us, we did not live in those days, we did not cry, 'Crucify him.'" You blush for your forefathers? Nay, rather blush for yourselves, ye who are not Christ's; for they who are not for Him are against Him. If you are not Christ's, you side with those who cried, "Crucify him!" Oh, what a blot on the world's history — they slew the Son of God!

What think you is the moral and spiritual state of that world which can refuse the threefold testimony then given to Jesus, the Man of Sorrows? Pilate says, "I find no fault in him;" the thief says, "This man has done nothing amiss;" the centurion says, "Certainly this was a righteous man." But He is crucified!

What is the effect of reading this? Is it not thoroughly to persuade you that the world treated Christ shamefully? But I ask you the question, Have you sided with the world or not? Are you still in the

world and of it? or are you among those who are His? There are only the two classes — those who have fled to Jesus, and those who have not. Are you for Him or against Him? Do you side with Him, or are you of those who cry, "Crucify him!" I ask you again, are you His? Does the world take cognisance of you that you are a Christian? Have you confessed Christ? Does your classmate or your fellow-worker know you are Christ's?

"But," you ask, "what is it to be a Christian?" A Christian is one who knows and loves Christ; who follows Him and owns Him as Lord. You say, "I profess to be a Christian." Ah, that won't do, there is nothing so despicable as mere profession. Beloved reader! eternity will bring everything into full light, and if there is a thing that will ensure eternal damnation, it is the empty lip-profession without the possession of Christ now.

I appeal to you — Have you been converted? By conversion, I mean converted to, something and from something: converted to Christ and from the world. He who is converted changes ground, changes states; he is off the ground and state of condemnation. Are you a Christian? The day of the Lord will bring out who are on the Lord's side and who are not; the veil will be drawn down, and you will be discovered, you who are mere empty professors. I beseech of you, shun unreality; let there be real, genuine work; go down before God and own your sin, your unworthiness, your weakness, and He will save you — save you this very moment.

You are either for or against Christ. Are you for Him? One thing is certain, if you are for Him, you must take your stand for the despised, the rejected, the world-hated, the thong-bound Saviour. Are you for Him, or do you side with the world? Where are you? Can you say, Christ for me? Thank God, I can say it, Christ for me. Can you say, I have seen Him in all His beauty, His perfection, His lowly grace, His gentleness and love? Can you say that, to you, Bethlehem, Calvary, and Bethany are sacred spots? Bethlehem, where He was born; Calvary, where He suffered for me and in my stead; and Bethany, whence He ascended, are dear, but dearer far than they is Christ Himself. What think you of Christ? Do you love Him? Is He your Saviour? Is He the object of your heart's desire and love?

They crucified Him! You weep as you hear of His sufferings and His sorrow; but I would have you rather weep for the sins that caused His suffering; I like when the ploughshare of conviction goes deep down in a soul, and when it gets broken down and is in tears for its sin. Whitfield used to put this question to awakened souls, "If God cast you into hell for ever, would He be right in so doing?" If they answered Yes, he was satisfied they had a right sense of sin, and God's judgment thereof. The perfection of Christ is brought out in His sufferings; as the sugar-cane has to be bruised before we can have its sweetness, and the fragrant plant rudely shaken ere it yields its perfume, so the more we see Christ subjected to, all the more strongly His perfection is manifest; the more He passes through, the more is His intrinsic worth fully known. He was bound, blindfolded, set at nought, and mocked. He is asked, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" He answers, "Thou sayest it." Pilate finds no fault in Him, but "they were the more fierce." Pilate wishes to be quit of Him, he has heard of all He has done, how He had healed the sick, raised the dead, made the blind to see, the lame to walk, the dumb to speak, and he does not wish to be responsible for this Man's death, so he sends Him to Herod. This strange Person is brought to Herod, and the cry is, "He is a King." Herod was glad to see Jesus: "He was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him." He wished to

see the One who could raise the dead, cleanse the leper, and give sight to, the blind; but there was no sense of need in Herod's soul, he knew not that it was better far to see the Saviour Himself, than to see any miracle performed by Him. He sees Jesus, he questions Him, but mark the dignity of the Lord: He answers the usurper nothing. Jesus answered Pilate, because in him He recognised the deputed power of God, even though that power was misused. And now mark what follows: "Herod, with his men of war, set him at nought." Have you? Tell me, have you not? Herod made light of Christ, and, dear soul, have you not made light of Him, too? If you have never come to Him and believed in Him, you and Herod are the same, you have both equally "set him at nought." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Did Herod believe on the Son of God? No. Do you? If you do not, you are on the same ground as Herod. In verse 12 we read: "And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together." That day they were made friends over the determined slaughter of the Son of God! Dreadful thought! Pilate is glad to make friends with the king; but, oh! what an unholy compact. Those two newly made friends will find themselves side by side through a long, endless eternity. And where? Oh, soul! Spend not your eternity with those who murdered the Son of God. You will if you do not believe on Him: if you are not brought to Him you will surely spend your eternity with His foes. A long dark eternity without the Lord! — is that your choice?

"I find no fault in him." Oh, why did Pilate not act on this? We are told he tries to release Him, but the cry of the multitude is no! Pilate wishes to set Him free, but he does not wish to lose the world's favour. And you, are you not afraid of this, too? Afraid of losing the world's favour! Beware, rather, that you lose not your own soul. Pilate, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them, but they cried, "Crucify him! crucify him!"

Barabbas or Jesus? becomes now the question. They cried out all at once, "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas!" Pilate is defeated; they choose Barabbas. In a moment "they were instant with loud voices requiring he might be crucified." And mark what follows: "And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed."

Jesus or Barabbas? This was the question which divided them. Surely some will be found for Jesus. Not one! I fancy I hear you say, "I would, had I been there." Well, show yourself on His side now. Side with Jesus, and let the world know, too, that you have done so. The cross that should have been for Barabbas was used for Jesus! There was plenty of wood to have made Jesus a cross, but He who had done nothing amiss was crucified on that cross which should have been for Barabbas, the murderer! Plenty of wood to make a cross! Ah, yes; the fear of that made poor Peter deny his Lord. And does not the fear of the cross, the ridicule, and the taunt of the world, make you deny Jesus too?

Barabbas' friends must side with him, and Jesus' friends must side with Jesus; but there was not one for Jesus. Yes, it was really so; not one for Jesus, the Son of God. In a moment they cry, "Crucify him! Release Barabbas!" They have indeed divided — divided to a man, and all, all are for Barabbas, the murderer, and not one for the Man in whom they could find no fault. Do you assent to this? No! Then let there be this day from you the confession that you are Christ's, that you are on the Lord's side. The world may do what it likes with Jesus, He is "delivered to their will;" man does what he will with the Son of God; Christ allows man to do his worst to Him: they scourge Him

and crown Him with thorns. He says, "Do your utmost, do your worst, I shall not complain; and when you have done your worst to, me, then I shall do my best for you." When they had nailed Him to the cross, He dies for them. He died in their stead, He dies as a victim to meet the claims of a righteous God. He bears the judgment that ought to have been theirs. He drinks the bitter cup of wrath, that they might not have to drink it. He says, "Father, forgive them." Oh, what love! No love like His. I would that you knew Jesus, my Jesus. Oh! confide in Him, trust Him, love Him.

"Unmoved by Satan's subtle wiles, Or suffering, shame, and loss, His path, uncheered by earthly smiles, Led only to the cross." In verses 27-31 we are told that "there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children; for, behold, the days are coming in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us; for if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" Do tears fall from your eyes for Him? Weep for yourselves. What does He mean? He means there will come a day when there will be the world's prayer-meeting! "Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us!" They are in sore need, but what is it they want? It is a place of refuge, of security, a shelter. "The great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Revelation 6:15-17.) The world is frightened, and betakes itself to prayer, but it is too late. Oh, beloved one, you can find a shelter from that wrath now in the bosom of Jesus; not in the mountains and the hills, but in Jesus — Jesus who died on Calvary. The last the world saw of Jesus was with a crown of thorns upon His head; the next it shall see of Him will be when He is crowned in glory with many crowns.

But, "if they do these things in a green tree, what shall he done in the dry?" Christ was the green tree; the unsaved soul is the lifeless, leaf. less, fruitless, dry tree. I saw a man the other day with an axe in his hand laid at the root of a tree. It was winter-time, and the tree looked much like the others around: they were all leafless, and there was nothing outwardly to denote any difference, nor to make the passer-by doubt that when spring-time came it would, like the others, burst forth into leaf; but it had been tapped, and found hollow; a cumberer of the ground it was cut down ready for the burning! Are you this tree?

Christ was the green tree in all His dependence on God, in all His beauty and perfection. He was a green tree going to judgment, going to be cut down in the midst of beauty and verdure. What, then, will overtake you, you unsaved soul, you who are a dry tree? "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" Cannot you see your own case? You have not forgiveness, you have not pardon. Oh, what shall be done in the dry? See it cast into the fire. Look at the rich man of whom we read in Luke 16:1-31. In a moment cut down, and being in a torment, he lifts up his eyes and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom, and he cries, "Have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame." A dry tree ready for the burning! But, thanks be to God, because the green tree suffered, many a dry one will escape.

If man has done these things to the Son of God, if He gets this treatment from man's hand, what, think you, will the treatment be that man will receive from God's hand in a day of righteous retribution? If you are among the doomed, you will remember that you once heard of a way of

escape, but you would not receive it. Oh, unsaved soul, come to Jesus, come now!

We go to the cross, and see Jesus forsaken and in darkness, but the darkness is only from the sixth hour to the ninth; it passes away from Him; but oh, unsaved, lost soul, there will be no ninth hour for you; no passing away of the darkness for you, it will be for ever.

"Away with him!" was the world's prayer; His was, "Father, forgive them." They revile Him and say, "Come down from the cross; if thou be King of the Jews, save thyself." He says, No; I will not come down, I will not save Myself, I will die for you. Oh, what love! Is not this love indeed? He dies, but He does more than that: when He is risen He tells His disciples to begin at Jerusalem, the place where He had been put to death, and to the very people who had cried, "Crucify him! crucify him!" He bids them preach the forgiveness of sins through Him — Jesus. And now I write as an ambassador from Him to proclaim to you the forgiveness of your sins, and salvation through the finished work of Jesus on the cross. Will you believe in Him? Will you accept salvation? As you drop this paper, are you on the world's side, or Christ's? Barabbas or Jesus?

02. Christ and Christianity

Christ and Christianity Colossians 1:1-29.

W. T. P. Wolston.

There are three points in this chapter which I want to bring simply before you; not in the order, however, in which they occur in the passage, because I am not going to instruct advanced Christians, but seek to meet the need of souls who are not fully established in the grace of God.

First, we have Christ, then Christian position, and thirdly, Christian practice. You must begin with Christ. Paul gives thanks when he hears of their faith in Christ Jesus: "We give thanks unto God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints" (ver. 3, 4). Whenever a person really has faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, it comes out in love to the people of the Lord. Have you faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? May I give thanks to God for you because you have faith in the Lord Jesus? The moment Paul learned that these Colossians had faith in Jesus, he began to give God thanks for them.

Lower down in the chapter you will find the Christ in whom they had faith fully brought out; but here Paul was filled with rejoicing when he learned that there had really been faith in Christ Jesus — that they had turned round from themselves — that they had gone outside themselves entirely, to cling to the blessed One whom God had presented to the sinner as the object of his faith and trust.

What does God want? If there is a person not yet saved, what does God contemplate for that soul? What does He command? To turn to His Son — to receive His Son. For He has sworn by Himself that every knee shall bow to His Son — "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." Angels, men, and demons, all must bow to Christ. But it is not a question here merely of bowing to Christ, but of the soul of a sinner, conscious of his condition and state as a sinner, turning round to the Lord Jesus Christ, and truly and simply trusting Him as a Saviour. These Colossians, though they had been heathen, unbelievers, and ungodly, got tidings about God's beloved Son. He is presented to them, and they trust Him. This is the first thing that God looks for. It is what He sends out the gospel to produce: "Faith cometh by hearing, and bearing by the word of God." What God wants is to produce a link of confidence between your soul as a sinner and His Son as a Saviour. Now what will produce that? A sight of Himself.

First of all, I would like to find out whom it is that I am called upon to trust. If I want to cross a bridge, I should wish to be sure that it is trustworthy; and if I am to trust a person, I must know him to be trustworthy. You will say to me, You want me to renounce myself thoroughly; to turn from self in every shape and form, and to trust myself simply and solely to Christ. just so; that is what I want — that is what God wants. But then I must first of all see who it is I am to trust.

1. — CHRIST.

Now if you will come down to the middle of the chapter, you will find the One whom God bids you trust. In verse 15 you will find brought out the Person of the One whom God says you are to trust, "who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." Here I get the glory of the Person of the Lord Jesus. He was a real, true, living man; but He, who is this, is the image of the invisible God — God whom you never saw and never will see. Many people think that they will see God by-and-by when they get to heaven. They are mistaken. "No man hath seen God at any time." He dwells in "light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, or can see:" and yet by-and-by, when I get up into the glory, I shall see and know this blessed living God. But how? In the Person of His own dear Son. Get hold of this clearly — "He is the image of the invisible God."

You remember that passage in Job 9:1-35 where poor Job, when his friends were tormenting him, asks, "How can a man be just with God?" If God were a man, he says. I would go to Him, I would speak with Him; but "He is not a man as I am," and therefore I am in hopeless darkness because He is not a man, and I cannot understand Him, nor reach up to Him. Job was in bewilderment; what he wanted was something tangible. He says, "Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both." What the sinner requires is one that can reach up to the lofty heights of the claims of God in holiness and righteousness, and come down to the profound depths of man's ruined and sinful state. This is just what we have in Jesus. "He is the image of the invisible God."

What is an image? It is not a likeness. An image might be no likeness whatever. Look at the stamp. It has the Queen's head upon it; it is not a bit like her, but it represents her. An image is that which represents and stands for one who is not in the scene; it gives the idea of representation. "The image of the invisible God" is One who stands for and represents God. The Lord Jesus is the One who comes down to represent God — He is God; and if I want to know the living God, where do I go? I gaze into the face of Jesus; I look at Him in the three-and-thirty years of His wondrous history in this sorrow-stricken and sin-stained world, where He was the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and I say, There is the One who is the image of the invisible God! Do you want to know God? Gaze on Jesus. In connection with this, will you look at the First Epistle of John — "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:20-21). What were these idols? The old Highland minister said they were little idols with white dresses and gaily coloured cloaks. Nay, it is not a question of an idol down here at all, but of having a thought of God that has not its perfect counterpart in Christ. Where is the true God seen? In the Man Christ Jesus. There are plenty of people who have idols — that is, who have not right thoughts of God. They have notions and thoughts about God for which there is no counterpart in Christ, and such have idols. Christ is the image of the invisible God, and whatever represents God falsely has no counterpart in Christ, and is therefore an idol. This is a point of great importance; for there are many who, if asked, would say, I am afraid of God. If I were to ask them, "Are you afraid of Jesus?" they would answer, "No; somehow I feel I could trust Jesus — I should not be afraid if the Lord were upon earth — I could go to Him without fear, and I could weep at His feet, as the poor woman did at the Pharisee's house, and I should love to lean upon His bosom, as John did, but I could not draw near to God." A young convert came to me one night when I had been drawing

attention to this matter, and said, "I cannot thank you enough for that word. I have been converted and trusting in the Lord for many months, but I had an undefined fear of God. I loved the Lord, and could trust Jesus anywhere; but I had an idea that God was a little different from Christ, and thus I could not feel the same confidence in Him, but I see it now. I have got hold of Christ as the image of the invisible God, and it has made all happy." Do you want to know God? Let me, take you to the Gospel of Luke (Luke 7:1-50), and let us look for a moment at that poor woman who was about to bury her only son, and she, too, a widow — a pitiable sight any day, but how much more pitiable now that her only son is to be buried. The Lord says, "Stop." He tells her not to weep. He says to the young man, "Arise;" and the dead man arose, and He delivered him to his mother. Now you will say, That was a very tender-hearted, gracious, compassionate man, who felt for the poor widow in her sorrow; and so indeed it was, but it was much more. That tender, compassionate man was a blessed, perfect expression of what God is in the very springs of His nature. You have a wrong thought of God if Jesus in His life and death does not fully portray Him to your soul. He is the image of God; and if I can trust Jesus, I can trust God. Who was it that wept at the grave of Lazarus? A tender, compassionate man, who was the expression of God's own heart. Did He not weep in sympathy with the sisters at that grave? Most surely! He sighed in communion with God as He viewed the ravages sin had wrought, and wept in sympathy with the sorrowing sisters. Blessed Jesus! Such a heart as He had! "Never man spake like this man," said the officers of the Pharisees; and while fully endorsing this, we can surely exclaim, "Never man loved like this man!" I go to Him as a man, and I read in Him the very nature of God.

There is in Christ, so to speak, this double life, perfection of manhood before God, and all that God is in the grace of His heart, and in His holiness too, revealed before man. All that God is in the very essence of His nature is expressed in the words, the sighs, the tears, in every movement of the Man Christ Jesus. Therefore when Amos says, "Prepare to meet thy God," I reply, "I shall be delighted to do so. I shall meet Him, I shall see Him in the form of Him who is the sinner's Friend — the sinner's Saviour." Would you be afraid to trust Him? Though covered with the guilt of ten thousand souls, there is love enough in Him to meet it all, and value enough in His blood to put it all away. But let us look at our chapter a little further. Not only is Jesus "the image of the invisible God," but He is the "firstborn of all creation." How is He the firstborn? "For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (ver. 16, 17). It is perfectly clear He was not second then. People are disposed to say that He must be inferior to God because He became man. But no: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Go back to the beginning, to creation, and there He was. There was the One who began, and by whom all was made.

People often speak about God the Father as the Creator, but in Scripture creation is always referred to Christ. But why is He called the firstborn of all creation? Because if He came into the scene of creation He must have the first place there. He is the firstborn: not as to time, but as to rank, and station, and dignity. He must have the first place. Won't you give it Him? If I look towards heaven, He made it; towards earth, He made it. He is the Creator, and more than that, He is the Redeemer. The One who undertakes my redemption is the Creator of heaven and earth. Who is the Man that comes down to redeem? The Creator: He who made all things. He humbles Himself

and comes down into the scene He made, that He might glorify God, put away sin, abolish death, burst open the grave, defeat Satan, and bring man back to God. "He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." But He is a man who has come down to die. I never can say that God died; but that He who died was God, and that He became a man that He might die. But if He becomes a man He must take the place of the firstborn. The firstborn of a family gets the title and property of the family. He is the one on whom the dignity and the glory of the family rest, and it is in this sense that Christ is said to be firstborn. I get Him as a man in this scene, perfectly representing God, and meeting man. Can you trust Him? Have you faith in Him?

Further. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." And in Colossians 2:1-23 it is said, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." What a wonderful Being! In the Person of that blessed Man dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. I have God thus manifested in human form, at the same time that I get the perfect expression of what a man ought to be for God. If you trace Him from Bethlehem, where He came in, on to Bethany where He went out, what strikes one? If you look at His life, you will see that it is one sweet savour to God from His birth to His death; and one beautiful, shining stream of perfection, and grace, and beauty towards man, so that God was obliged from time to time to open the heavens and to say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." When your heart delights in your child, you delight to speak about it, even to others. The Lord Jesus was One whose whole heart was towards God. He sets His face as a flint. "Lo, I come," He says, "to do Thy will, O God." and again in John 4:1-54, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." And in John 17:1-26, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do;" and in John 19:1-42, on the cross He says, "It is finished," that we may hear it, and that we may know that the work has been done which sets our souls free before God. Is He not worthy of your confidence? Is He not the One on whom your soul can repose in the greatest gladness? Oh to be loved by this wondrous Being, this God-man — this man who is the expression of all that God is — God manifest in human form, and One who has glorified God even unto death! This is the love I rejoice in, the love of this precious One. If you have been a halting, hesitating sinner up to this point, do you not think that you can perfectly trust the Lord Jesus now? I see that it is God revealed in a real living man that I am to trust. But not only is He "the firstborn of all creation," He is also "the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." And now He has gone up to God's right hand as One who can never die. Every one I love down here — those whom most I love — may die; death shoots its arrows relentlessly at those whom most I love, making a target for its shafts of the nearest and the dearest. How sweet and blessed, then, it is to hear the Apostle John say, "He laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of death and of hades" (Revelation 1:17-18). What then can I say? I may let the tendrils of my heart go out and twine around Him now, because there is no fear of those gentle cords being rudely snapped. Jesus is One who can never die now; He is alive for evermore. Here is One you may love without a bit of suspicion, without a bit of fear of your heart ever being wounded by His being taken from you. You can never be taken from Him, nor can He ever be taken from you.

We have thus seen the One whom God bids us trust; and again I repeat my query, Have you faith in Him? Surely He is worthy of your trust. Perhaps you fear He will not have you. So thought a young man to whom I was speaking after a meeting in London. I inquired, "Are you the Lord's

tonight?" "I should like to be." "Can you trust Him?" "I think I could." "Are you willing to be Christ's?" "I am." "And is the Lord willing to have you?" "I don't know; I am not quite sure of that." "Oh," I replied. "Christ is thoroughly willing to have you; and if He is willing to have you, and you are willing to have Him, I call that a settled matter. You are in business?" "Yes." "Well, suppose I come to your warehouse and choose some goods. You fix the prices, and I am willing to buy. I name the quantity and the quality, and you name the figure. The whole thing is settled. What is that?" "I call it mutual agreement." "And is the bargain settled?" "Oh, yes, I have agreed to sell, and you have agreed to buy. It is mutual agreement." "Just so," I went on, "is the way a soul comes to Christ. Christ has agreed to have you and you to have Christ. That is mutual agreement. When the deciding point comes, there is mutual agreement between the Saviour and the sinner. The Saviour agrees to save, and the sinner agrees to be saved." "I think I see it clearly now," he responded, and left me with a bright smile of joy on his face.

If you have never done so hitherto, you must do what the child did. She called her father — "Father!" "Yes, my child." From the top of the house to the bottom she was calling, "Father, where are you?" She could not see him, as he was in a dark cellar, the only entrance to which was a trap-door in the floor, which she had never seen before. Standing over its edge, she said. "Father, I want to come to you." "Well, my child, come." "But there is no ladder, how am I to come?" "Jump, and I'll catch you." "Oh, but, father, I don't see you." "But I see you, my child." Her faith was tried; she hesitated; could she trust him? In a moment more down she goes. Did she fall on the cold cellar floor? Oh, no, but on the bosom that loved her most on earth, and received the warmest kiss and the most tender embrace she had ever had, because she trusted him. Well, now, you have to trust the One you don't see. Cannot you trust Him now? There He is in. all His beauty at God's right hand, and all you have to do is to trust Him.

"Abraham believed God;" he took God at His word, and "it was counted to him for righteousness." Faith is taking God at His word. An old lady who was supposed to be dying sent for the one she had been long accustomed to hear preach the Word, and as he considered that she was dying, he thought it but right to ask, "What is your hope for eternity?" She answered through her feeble asthmatic breathing, "Sir — I - have — taken - God — at — His — word."

It was a grand answer: "I have taken God at His word." It is no question of how I feel, or what I have experienced or passed through. Many young converts try to decide their standing before God by their feelings and experiences, and hence never have settled peace. Such souls are like children to whom I give a handful of beans. The child sows them, and next morning goes to see whether the beans have sprung up and become scarlet runners. Not seeing them, she begins to wonder if they are there at all, and to rake and hoe the surface of the earth in order to make sure of it. "Leave them alone, silly child," I say, "and they will begin to grow in time." You say you trust Christ; but tomorrow, perhaps, you will begin to rake your heart to see whether you have received Christ, and whether you have the right kind of faith. The seed is the Word, and the soil in which it is sown is the heart of man. "Leave it alone," God says. "The kingdom of God is as if a man should cast seed into the ground." Leave it alone. It gets the dew by night, and the sun by day. And what comes? "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." Don't be looking at the surface of your heart and at your feelings, but take God at His word. I took God at His word fifteen years ago, and He is as true today as He was then. You may ask me, "Have you not been a poor, feeble, faltering child since then?" "Yes, alas! I have." "Has not God been disappointed in you?"

"No." "How is that?" "Because He knew I was good for no. thing when He took me up." The question of worthiness was settled on the spot. Who was the worthy one? Christ. Am I then to give thanks to God for you today that you really trust Christ? If you really do trust Him, if your soul is settled, we can look a little at 2. — CHRISTIAN POSITION

Let me show, you what it is to be a Christian. Look at verse 12 — "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." The moment you have faith in God's Son, you are fit to be with Him. The work of Christ alone makes us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. And who are the saints? Are you a saint? "Oh, no, sir." Why not? "Why, a saint is a very holy person." A saint is one who has been set apart to God by the work of Christ and the action of the Holy Ghost. But, you will say, there must be sanctification. What does being sanctified mean? Separated to God. There is nothing so simple as sanctification as it is given us in Scripture. If you call practical holiness sanctification, it follows justification. But there is a sanctification which comes before it — "Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." So that really, viewed in one aspect, a man is sanctified before he is justified.

Some will be saying, "This is not right doctrine." But look at 2 Thessalonians 2:13 — "We are bound to give thanks to God always 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." This is the divine and human side of the effect — namely, of God's having chosen you to salvation. It is not a question of you "brethren, who love the Lord," but of "brethren beloved of the Lord." "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." Now you will say, "There is election coming in — that dreadful thing election. You don't believe that Christ died for all?" Indeed I do, because God says so. "Then what is election?" It is a family secret, and you must be in the family of God to understand it.

Suppose I were going up to a gate, and I find written upon the gate, "Whosoever will may enter in." I say "That's free enough; I'll go inside." "But how do you know that it means you?" It says "whosoever;" that means me, and anybody. I touch the door, it flies open; I enter, the door closes, and on the inside of it I see written there, "Whosoever gets inside this door never gets out." Now, election secures this. God takes good care that the soul who believes His word never shall be lost. "God hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." The two things, sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, are inseparable; where one is the other must be. Look at God's Word. "He has chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit — AND belief of the truth."

Supposing, three weeks ago, a sinner — we will say some young woman — has been awakened by the preaching of the Word and has gone back to her home. She has no longer any taste for the world. She is miserable. Her friends can't understand the change, nor can she, for she has no joy or peace: only the sense of sin and longings Godward. The Spirit of God quickened her three weeks ago, and separated her to God. Perhaps, through reading Scripture, she gets hold of the truth, believes in Jesus, and the truth sets her free. The Spirit works, the soul is quickened, sanctified, believes, so that of it it can be said, "God hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." To illustrate it, let us imagine we have got upon the table a dead man. He is unconscious; you can touch him; he feels nothing. I take 100lb. weight

and lay it upon his chest. He is quite unconscious of it. But supposing that I by any means infuse life into the man, he wakes up to consciousness, and the first thing that he does is to give a deep groan, and exclaim, "Oh, this burden, this weight!" just so it is not till the sinner is quickened by the Spirit of God that he feels his sin, and begins to groan, and to desire to find salvation. What can he do then? He is compelled to let somebody else come and take the weight off him. That is what Christ did when He died upon the cross. That was the work which put my sins away. Christ comes and does the work, and the Holy Ghost leads me to see the work that put away my sins. Our meetness for glory is the work that Christ has done for us, and which fits us for the presence of God. Hence it is written in Hebrews 2:11 — "Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." (In passing, let me say that I earnestly hope that every one of you would be thoroughly ashamed to call Him "Brother." Never call the Lord Jesus an "Elder Brother." It is most irreverent, though He may in His grace call us brethren.) He has finished redemption completely. He has done the work that puts our sin away, and He says, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." He tells Mary Magdalene, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father." She comes to Thomas and says to him, "The Lord bids me come and say that you are his brother." Thomas says, "I don't believe it." But afterwards he does believe it, and the moment he finds himself in the presence of Jesus, what does he do? He bows down and says, "My Lord and my God!" Ah, Thomas, you are right, and we all may learn from you. in this respect.

God has set us in His own presence, and "made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." But there are the two sides of sanctification. There is the doctrinal side; but there is also the progressive or the practical side. When a soul has received the Lord Jesus Christ, there ought to be progress practically; but first of all I get my position, and I must regulate my behaviour by the relationship in which I stand. For instance, I don't behave to you as your child would. Why? Simply because I am not your child. I must know that I am a child of God before I can walk like a child of God.

Now, then, having received Christ, you are fit for glory. What next? "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (ver. 13). We used to be Satan's slaves, kept in the dark, but now we are translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. We are in the place where Christ rules and reigns, delivered out of Satan's kingdom altogether. I am entitled to know that I have a new place before God, delivered from darkness, and brought into His light. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (verse 14). We know that we are redeemed, and we know that we are forgiven. There is no doubt about it at all. Mark these five points: We are "made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" — for the light in which God dwells. Secondly, we are delivered from the power of darkness. Thirdly, we are in the kingdom of the Son of His love. Fourthly, we are redeemed through His blood. Fifthly, we have the forgiveness of sins.

Perhaps you will say next Sunday, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." In the forgiveness of whose sins? Not of everybody's, for that would not be true. In the forgiveness of Paul's or Peter's sins? That would not do any good. Do you believe your sins are forgiven? "No, I could not be sure of that." It comes to this, then: you believe in "the possibility of the forgiveness of sins." But I believe that my sins are forgiven. That is what faith does. I believe I am forgiven through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. At this point Paul stops, and says, as it were, I cannot tell you more about

the blessing. But I must tell you about the Person who has brought the blessing in. You are redeemed out of bondage, and now I should like you to know more about the Person of the One who has redeemed you. He is the image of the invisible God. All fulness was pleased in Him to dwell. You are made meet for heaven. You are delivered from darkness. You are translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. You are redeemed, you are forgiven. Yet there is even more than this. Peace is made through the blood of His cross. What is peace? It is the complete settlement of every question between the soul and God through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only have I committed sins, but I have a sinful nature. It too has been condemned in the cross of Christ. He has made peace by the blood of His cross.

Sixthly, then, you have peace with God; and seventhly, you are reconciled. "You that were some time alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight" (ver. 21, 22). That is how it all comes - through the death of Jesus clearing away my sins, and I may say, myself too; and He is going to present us holy and unblameable and unreprouable in His sight. But now comes a terrible word. "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled." I ask you, Do you mean to continue in the faith, or do you mean to give Christ up and go back to the world? "Of course not," you will say. I do get "ifs" and "buts" sometimes in Scripture, and they are wholesome landmarks. If I see a man going on with the world, I say, That ends in death; and if I walk after the flesh I shall die. God's Word is very plain about this. "If ye walk after the flesh ye shall die;" and I take that in its strongest meaning — ye shall be eternally lost — not spiritual death, nor death of the body, but that death is the end of walking in the flesh; 1:e., the end of that road is the lake of fire; and the end of the other road is the presence of God. "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye have heard," He presents you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in His sight.

What a new place to be set in! How has it come in? Through death. Christian position means a man being in Christ. It is the butterfly-state, if I may be allowed the expression. What was the caterpillar-state? Is it the state that man was in, in the flesh? What then does the chrysalis-state set forth? Death. I accept the sentence of death that lies upon me, and the truth that I am dead with Christ. But what now? The warmth of summer comes; the chrysalis breaks its shell, and out comes the butterfly. That is Christianity. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." You could not tell in looking at the butterfly and the caterpillar that they are the same being. The caterpillar was a grovelling creature, a constant marauder; the butterfly has a different life, a different nature altogether. "You that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works." There is the caterpillar. There is man in the flesh; an enemy to God by wicked works.

There are three kinds of works spoken of in Scripture, "wicked works" (ver. 21), "dead works" (Hebrews 9:14), and "good works" (ver. 10). Wicked works are those of the lost, careless man. But supposing he turns away from wicked works to do religious works, these are what are called in Scripture "dead works." Which do you think the better? I know that "dead works" or religious works are better in man's sight, but neither are the fruit of the Spirit, nor have they any connection with Christ. The believer's instruction is, "that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works." For my own part, I don't believe in a person's Christianity unless there is, after conversion, a great change in his life.

3. — CHRISTIAN PRACTICE.

We get the new practice of a Christian if we go back now to verse 9. "That ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." As a believer, it is your privilege to know and to do the will of God. Christ Himself came to do the will of God, and you are filled with the knowledge of all that He desires. "Filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual under. standing." You have a sense of what suits the Lord. You have His mind. You have learned the meaning of Ecclesiastes 10:9-10. "He that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby. If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength; but wisdom is profitable to direct." Or you are like the two hundred men of Issachar. Of them we read, "And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chronicles 12:32). You get the mind of the Lord, and you have to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing — pleasing the One who has delivered you. The new nature delights in this. I confess that I do like to do what I like. How is this? Because I like to do what the Lord wants me to do. The new creature delights in the will of God. But perhaps you will say, "You will put him under law, won't you?" No; for the old man was regulated or bound by no law, and the new man requires no law to bind him, because he is a divinely regulated being, a new creature in Christ Jesus. People are fond of being under the law, because it speaks of themselves, and occupies them with themselves. The gospel is all about Christ from first to last. The Christian life is the reproduction of Christ down here, but you must begin at God's end. It makes all the difference which end of a telescope you look through. If you look in at the big end of a telescope, do you think you will see anything there? I know what you will see - yourself. And if people look at their own experience and feelings, it will do them no good; but if they looked at Christ, they would bring forth fruit to Him. "Being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (ver. 10); day by day your soul enlarging in its capacity to enjoy God. I don't understand a Christian not full of joy, but going about with his head bowed down like a bulrush. There may be false professors, and they ought to be miserable, but this only proves what I say.

Supposing we get a bad bank-note, it is but the witness that there are a great many good notes. If you by grace have turned to the Lord, be the real thing, "walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." Now I want to give you a golden rule. You often want to know whether you can go here or there. A friend asks you to go with him somewhere. You are not sure whether it would be right. Whatever you do, don't go and ask a good person if he would go, but go and ask the Lord if He would go. Would you not like to please the one you love best? And whom do you love best now? Jesus. Then the answer is very simple. Will it please Him? If it won't please Him, it won't please me.

"Strengthened with all might according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness" (ver. 11). God will strengthen us. poor, weak, feeble ones as we are, to all patience; and that is what we all need. We are oftentimes weary, the road seems long, and we need patience. You are never to be impatient. You may say, I have a bad temper, and can't help it. The Lord is the great One, the only One to cure bad tempers. Christ never had one, and the Christian is to live Christ, to follow Christ. Some. times, instead of being strengthened to long-suffering with joyfulness, we are apt to be short-suffering with grumbling. Amid all the trials of earth, a Christian should be like the lark, or like the cock-robin in a storm. Many Christians are like the hen in a storm; and we all know what a hen in a storm is. She is overwhelmed by it. We are not

to be like a duck, indifferent to the storm; nor like the hen, alarmed and upset by it; but like the robin, who feels it keenly, but sings his sweet song in the midst of it.

What, then, is the position of the Christian? Meet for glory, delivered from the power of darkness, translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love, redeemed, forgiven, at peace with God, reconciled, and about shortly to be presented before Him. If you knew that you were going to be presented at court, you would say, "I should like to be all fit and ready." And you cannot tell the moment when you are going to be presented, not at an earthly court, but into the very presence of the King of glory in the courts of heaven.

Meanwhile you will be strengthened by His might to all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness. Thus we shall be above the trials of the way. There will be many pin-pricks — domestic, business, and ecclesiastical ones. You may get many pin-pricks from your brethren, and even from the sisters too, but Christ's power sustains the soul above all. We have to live where the Lord sets us down, and to suffer there, and to go through it all the expression of joy in Himself. May the Lord strengthen us, by His Spirit which dwells in us, to live a little like Him here, till caught up to be fully like Him there!

03. Earth, Heaven, and Hell.

Earth, Heaven, and Hell.

Luke 14:15-25, Luke 15:11-32, Luke 16:19-31.

W. T. P. Wolston.

Extracted from "From the Far Country to the Father's House"

- "Grace and Truth" Gospel Series.

Publisher: Morrish. CBA8836. In this discourse the Lord Jesus brings before us earth, heaven, and hell — earth with its hindrances, heaven with its happiness, hell with its horrors; and all divinely real. The hindrances are real, and you yourself, my dear unsaved reader, are the very witness that they are so; otherwise, you would have been converted before now. You cannot say you have not been called, sought, and invited. "Oh," you say, "I have been hindered." Take my advice then: take a flying leap over the hindrances of earth, and taste the joys of heaven, lest eternity find you in the horrors of hell. In the fourteenth chapter we have the invitation, in the fifteenth, the man who accepted the invitation, and how he was welcomed, and in the sixteenth, the man who would not accept it, and from whose eternal future the Lord draws aside the veil. And who was this last? I believe he was the elder brother of Luke 15:1-32, the one who would not go in, though the Father came out and entreated him. Why would he not go in? Because he was too good; he would not go in with such company — he refuses to have to do with the younger brother — whom grace had saved, and the brothers are sundered for all eternity.

He who will not go in when called by grace must taste the terrible truth of the sixteenth chapter — find himself outside for ever: and let me tell you this, my unsaved reader, you cannot find yourself in hell without having passed the open door of heaven to reach there. How terrible! To pass heaven's open door, with its joy and its gladness and its love, to spend eternity in the lake of fire. In the fourteenth chapter the Lord gives us the paltry excuses of the heart of man; in the fifteenth the irrepressible love of the heart of God; in the sixteenth, the eternal misery of the one who made the excuses. He shows us earth and its madness, heaven and its merriment, hell and its misery. You are on earth now: where will you spend eternity? "In heaven, I hope," you say. Make sure of it, my reader, make sure of it. Have I put a false colouring, on these chapters, or what do they teach? Is it not madness to refuse God's grace, and slight God's mercy, though the "excuse" of chapter 14 be polite? Does not chapter 15 show a scene of divine gladness — the joy of God over the sinner's salvation, and the sinner called to share that joy for evermore? And is not chapter 16 the scene of man's misery — utter, eternal misery — as he is seen to fall from the lap of luxury to the pit of hell? The Lord presents here the piteous condition of the lost soul — its cry for help, its wail. Look! What is all it dares oven appeal for? There is given here the circumscribed extent of the prayer of a lost soul in hell. One drop of water! One drop; and it is denied. Why? — Because the guilt of the sinner has landed him in a spot where the mercy of God cannot reach him. Do you ask, "Is my guilt so great that it cannot be pardoned?" Not now! Now there is no blessing God does not

offer you freely; now, but not then; then there is only left for you one thing, to mourn throughout an endless eternity your own terrible folly in rejecting the offer of God's salvation.

Now it is all mercy and no judgment; then it will be all judgment and no mercy. Now Christ offers you everything His love can give; then He can only judge you. If you refuse His love you must taste His power; if you pass by the open door of heaven, and make light of the voice that bids you come in, there is nothing left but the terrible future of which Luke 16:1-31 is the picture. The rich man dies, and, I dare say, everything that could make a death-bed easy and painless surrounded his — every luxury his money could buy; but he dies — money cannot keep off death. When death comes in, that cold, pale, grim monster, what terror will seize your soul, you that are Christless, unsaved, unpardoned, unblest. Do not think that you are going to have a long time to prepare. You may be swept off in a moment, having no time for anything. Mark the rapidity of this scene. He dies and is buried, and in hell he lifts up his eyes. Look at the transition. Life, death, burial, hell, torments! This is the Lord's own solemn picture of the end of an unconverted man. Do you tell me it is but a picture? True; but if the picture is so terrible, what, oh what will the reality be? Can you brave it? Dare you risk this awful future, this terrible hell?

There is thirst in hell, but there is no water; now, if any man thirst, there are rivers of living water wherewith to slake his thirst — now, but not then. Oh, will you not drink now and live? Will you be there, and find even one drop denied you?

"Son, remember!" Yes, memory will go down with you there. You must leave your money, leave your pleasures, leave everything you have prized and valued on earth behind you; but you will carry two things down with you - your sins and your memory! You may try to stifle convictions now, to cover up your sins now, to hush the voice of conscience, and it is quite possible you may succeed. It is quite possible you, who have neglected the gospel, may come to a death-bed, and conscience give you no warning word; for the wicked have "no bands in their death, but their strength is firm." Yes, you may come to a death-bed, and have no fear to die, and yet you are Christless, unsaved. Why is this? Because your conscience has been stifled so long, till at last it gives you no warning cry, and mourning friends dry their eyes and say, "He died like a lamb, died like a lamb!" Alas! died and was damned! "Son, remember!" remember amid the flames of hell, remember those gospel preachings when you wished the preacher would have done, when you thought him mad because he would seek to warn you, seek to draw you into a place of safety.

"Son, remember" how you despised the love of God; when the portals of heaven stood wide open to receive you, how you refused to go in.

Think of reviewing a lifetime in which you did your best to damn your immortal soul, and to know you had succeeded! Is this true? Is it a reality? Is it a fact, that by-and-by, in eternity, you must cast your eye back over your history, and, as the long dark night of eternity rolls on, you must remember that you refused to let God save you? Yes, it is but too true of every gospel-neglector, or gospel-rejector. Are you such, my reader? Can you bear to picture yourself in that scene of ceaseless woe, with all your joys gone, all your pleasures gone, all your friends gone, and you having waked up to find yourself a sinner in your sins? Memory reigns supreme there. Memory brings back all your past life, your wasted opportunities, and you say, Will it go on? Will it never end? Yes, it goes on, it goes on, it will never end. The Lord tells here the past, the present, and the future of a soul in hell. "Remember" - how that word fills up the past! "Tormented" - that is the

terrible, the everlasting present. "Now thou art tormented." "But," you say, "is there no escape?" Listen: "Fixed" — there is the future. "a great gulf fixed." What does that mean? That God Himself cannot then bridge it over; He then has, I may say, no power to show you mercy. Your portion is settled for ever: memory crushing you with all the scenes of your lifetime, which is for ever past, beyond recall; torment, sorrow unspeakable in the present; and for the future a "great gulf fixed" between you and those eternal scenes of joy and gladness in which you too might have been, had you not refused to share them.

But, thank God, now there is pardon, now there is room, now there is a welcome in the Father's house for you, now God's invitation is going out to call you to his great supper of salvation.

God's feast is a feast of joy, a feast of salvation. He Himself provides the feast; He spreads on the table that which divinely meets the needs of the guests. But besides meeting your need as a sinner, God has a deeper motive. He wants to gratify His own heart by having you as a guest.

What a grand thing it is to know that God wants me for His guest! He wants company. In Luke 14:1-35 the great thought of the heart of God is, He wants to have you, wants to have you for His own. Though man has sinned and gone away from Him, His love remains the same; He comes out in the energy of His grace, and entreats you to come to Him, to be His guest. I find the kind of company, too, who accept the invitation, the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind, i.e., those who could bring nothing to the feast.

It is on earth the invitation comes. Earth is the waiting-room, in which the fate of the soul is decided, either on the one hand for glory or on the other for the dark, the bitter gloom of the lake of fire. Who shall decide? With you, my reader, lies the responsibility.

Perhaps you are saying, "I must wait a more convenient season." Take care, lest it never come. Take care, lest, like Felix, your faith may be in a convenient season which never comes. He trembled once, and you may have trembled once in your history. There are moments when God puts the gospel before a soul in such a way that it is almost constrained, almost persuaded to believe; but the soul puts it from him, does not decide, and the moment never recurs again.

I ask you, my reader, do you accept or do you decline God's invitation? Either you must accept it and go in, on the ground of being a lost, ruined sinner, or you must refuse, like the elder brother, who did not like this ground.

Earth has its ranks and stages, but there all are gone. If I asked Nicodemus, the moral man, How came you here in heavenly glory with Christ? "Oh," he would say, "it was the blood of Jesus!" Woman of the city, how came you here? "It was the blood of Jesus!" she replies. Paul, the blasphemer, the persecutor, how came you here? "The blood of Jesus" is again the answer that thrills through heaven; "that blessed, precious blood of Jesus!"

If I look, too, on the terribly dark side which Luke 16:1-31 speaks to us of, it is all the same. What took the rich man to hell? His sin. Look at the category, in Revelation 21:1-27, of those who find themselves in the lake of fire for eternity. "The fearful, the unbelieving, abominable murderers," etc., etc. What brought each one there? His sin. All rank, all difference is gone then. Sin consigns the unbelieving sinner to hell, and blood brings the believing soul to glory; all else is set aside.

Where, then, will you be found for eternity? Will you be found among the number of those who tread that golden city with Jesus? Do you accept or refuse his invitation?

We have looked at the man who would not go in — turn now and look at the man who did go in. He says, "I will arise and go to my Father." That is decision. There comes a moment when the soul decides. Do not suppose you have to fit yourself before you come. Christ meets you where you are and as you are. Christ knows — all about you, and He knows too He is the only One who can meet your need, and so He asks you to come to Him. The prodigal said, "I will go;" there was decision, and, oh, how the Lord yearns to meet a returning soul, how He loves to greet that soul, to bid it welcome, to show out all His love to you!

You may be returning with a weary heart, with a slow footstep; but I read, "the Father ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him." What does that kiss tell? It tells of unchanged affection. The heart of God has never changed towards you. And what did the Father say? Why, he did not speak a word. With reverence, I might say the Father's joy was too deep for utterance.

There is no reproach, no word about the past. If you go to hell you must remember the past through eternity; there it is, "Son, remember." If you come to God now, the past is all forgiven, all blotted out, no memory of it remaining, and not a word to remind you of it; for God delights to say, "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more" (Hebrews 10:17).

True the prodigal was not worthy, but why did he get the kiss? Because he was worthy? Not at all, but because the Father loved him! The prodigal does not say, when he comes to his Father, "Make me a servant;" and very rightly, for if he had made a bad son, I do not think he would have made a very good servant; and another thing, if you come back to God, you have no business to tell Him what He shall say to you, and how He shall treat you, and what He shall make of you. No, no! you have just to leave Him to do as He likes; and what does He do? He folds you to His heart in the tenderest embrace of love! The Lord sees the first returning thought of the prodigal's heart, the very first; and why? Because, I believe from the very day the prodigal left his Father's house, the Father never left His post, as it were, of watching the road for his son's return. And oh, how He welcomes him, all unwashed as he was, in all his rags!

"Bring forth the best robe," He says to the servants; and that is my province. That is the Evangelist's work, 1:e., to tell you of Christ, to seek to display His attractions before you, to tell you that you have nothing to do, but that Christ has done it all for you. Christ Himself is the best robe. There is the best robe for the worst sinner.

"Put shoes on his feet," too. The law said, "Take off the sandal." Grace says, "Put shoes on," 1:e., "I will provide him with fitness to tread those courts above." The law says, "Take your shoes off, you are not fit." Grace says, "I will make you fit." And then there is the merriment, the joys of heaven, and oh! who would be fool enough to put aside this, and risk what the sixteenth chapter gives? Will you not come to Jesus, hear Him say all is forgiven (and the all, you know, is a great deal in your case), and taste the gladness of heaven

"They began to be merry." And we never hear that they left off; there was no end. We begin down here, but it goes on and on and on through the countless ages of eternity.

Only come to Jesus, and then you will taste the sweetness and truth of these lines - "Every sin shall be forgiven, Thou through grace a child shalt be Child of God, and heir of heaven, Yes, a mansion waits for thee, Even thee, even thee, Yes, a mansion waits for thee."

W. T. P. W.

04. "I Have a Message from God unto Thee."

"I Have a Message from God unto Thee."

W. T. P. Wolston.

Extracted from "From the Far Country to the Father's House"

- "Grace and Truth" Gospel Series.

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Such, Reader were the words of Ehud to Eglon (Judges 3:20). It was a message of DEATH. Mine to you is a message of LIFE! Do you care to hear it? Stop! Don't fling it away; you may never have another. Pause a moment!

"I can't today; I have not time for these things."

Indeed, why?

"Oh! I am too busy today; I wish to settle a few little matters of interest, and some of greater importance, connected with my occupation in life. These religious matters must be left for Sunday."

Then the object of your interest, that which commands you for this day at least, is not anything which relates to eternity; it has only to say to time. What a solemn thought! You, a sinner, determining to spend this day — and that perhaps your last on earth — in business or pleasure, while the salvation of your immortal soul is neglected.

"But we must live, and I want to be free to enjoy myself at Christmas-time."

Indeed? What do you mean by "Christmastime"?

"Oh, Christmas is the time of the year when they say Christ was born, and we all try to be very merry at that time."

Quite so; and may I ask, Where is Christ now? Is He still here?

"No, certainly not; He died."

How did He die? I thought He was the Lord of Life.

"Well, to tell the truth, He was killed — men put Him on a cross, and there He died, between two thieves."

Then, in plain language, men murdered Him?

"Yes; I suppose it amounts to this."

Well, then, is it not a serious thing to be holiday-making in connection with this murdered man? Most surely. Nothing could be more solemn. But I have a message from God to you about this rejected One. He is alive. The men the world prizes and does homage to are dead and buried. The only man God counts worthy of honour and glory is alive in heaven. His message to you today is about Him, the blessed Son of His love, the Lord Jesus Christ. He. was dead once, for Him men "slew and hanged on a tree" (Acts 5:30), "but God raised Him from the dead" (Acts 13:30). Of Him, Paul spake in ancient Athens, "wholly given to idolatry," and seemed "a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection" (Acts 17:18). He could say, and, sinner, you must remember, that then, "ignorance God winked at; but NOW commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because He has appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31).

Friend, have you repented? Have you ever yet truly bowed to the name of Jesus? Not yet? Then do not delay. God's APPOINTED DAY draws near — how near you know not. Suppose IT dawned today. What a terrible state you would be in! Unrepentant, unforgiven, unprepared, uncleansed, Christless, LOST! O, dear soul, do not "mock" or say, like some in old Athens, "we will hear thee again of this matter" (Acts 17:32). The mockers and the halters of that day were alike left to their own vanity and unbelief; for "Paul departed from among them" (Acts 17:33), and you, if you halt, or hesitate to receive the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, can count on nothing but this coming judgment; for He said, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24), and, Scripture adds, "after this the judgment," saying, "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" (Hebrews 9:27-28). Your portion is "death" and "judgment." "It is appointed unto men." Do you fear these two terrible consequences of sin? I have good news, "a message from God unto thee" — a message of grace. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18). God thus opens a door of escape for thee, dear soul, whoever thou art. None are too vile, or too far off, for Christ's precious blood to meet. It cleanseth from all sin. He is alive. "He is risen" (Matthew 28:6). "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3), and "was raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:25). His resurrection is the clear proof of the value of His blood, which was shed in atonement for sins. "Raised up from the dead," "alive," "glorified," He sits at God's right hand, the exalted Christ and Lord. All things are His. All must soon own Him — every knee bow to, and every tongue confess Him. Do not wait for dire and awful, yea eternal judgment, to force from your lips a confession of His worth. Bow to Him now. Believe Him now, and the "salvation of God" is yours. To delay even for a day is folly, and may cause your eternal ruin. Procrastination is the thief of souls, as well as of time. Besides, this Lord may return. "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him" (Matthew 25:6). Do you say, "Where is the promise of His coming?" I reply, in God's everlasting word, which further adds, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night!" (2 Peter 3:4.) Can you meet Him? Dare you, then, face Him as you now are, in your sins? No, sinner! no thou canst not. Turn, then, to Jesus, now. Yes, this very day. "Now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). "Hear, and your soul shall live." The Lord Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto

you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live" (John 5:24-25).

What a blessed thing it would be if you were at once to come to Him. If you have reached so near the end of the year without His blessing, oh, I beseech you, do not let it close and leave you still unsaved. Let the closing hours of 1877 find you fully decided for Jesus. You have nothing to do but simply to trust Him. God bless thee, my dear reader! "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," and for eternity thou wilt remember with joy this "MESSAGE FROM GOD UNTO THEE."

W. T. P. W.

"Grace and Truth" Gospel Series. Publisher: Morrish.

1. Beacon Lights along the Shores of Life.
2. From the Far Country to the Father's House CBA8836
3. Believe and Live
4. Whither Bound?
5. Building on the Rock
6. The Great Invitation.
7. Wrecked but Rescued.
8. Far above Rubies.
9. The Captive Freed.
10. Saved and Satisfied.
11. The Valley of Blessing, and how many enter it.
12. Life Streams from the Riven Rock.

05. "Go to Joseph"

"Go to Joseph"

W.T.P. Wolston.

Joseph is a most beautiful and complete type of the Lord Jesus in the days of His humiliation and in the days of His exaltation. The day is not come yet when God will compel men to give Jesus as due; because God has, what Pharaoh had not, long patience, and the long-suffering of the Lord is salvation.

Joseph, you will remember, went out in the guilelessness and love of his heart to meet his brethren (Genesis 37:1-36). They plotted against him to slay him, and at length he was sold to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver, the price of the meanest slave. And I need not remind you of Another, who came from His Father's house to see how His brethren fared, and met with precisely the same treatment — "His own received Him not" — and at length for thirty pieces of silver He was betrayed, and sold, and then cast out of this world; not into a dungeon, but into a grave.

It is true loving hands took Him down from the cross, and placed Him in a sepulchre; but wicked hands sealed Him there, and the world hoped never to see Him again; "but God raised Him from the dead." The One whom men slew God raised up.

He came in all the love of His heart; but man had no love for Him. I ask you, my reader, Have you any love in your heart for Him? - Does He look in and see in your heart affection for Him. self? If not, do not you be the one to judge those who cast Him out in the day of His lowliness and humiliation. As Pharaoh placed Joseph by his own side in his day, and they cried "Bow the knee" before him (Genesis 41:40; Genesis 41:43), so God has placed Jesus at His right hand today, and commands men everywhere to bow to Him. Every knee shall bow to Jesus; but God would have you bow your knee — and more, bow your heart — to Jesus now. Have you gone down in His presence, delighted to own His value now, delighted to call Him Lord? If not, the sooner you do, the better will it be for you. The humiliation of Jesus gave Him a moral claim on God for exaltation, and He has exalted Him, and "given Him a name which is above every name." There is no name like the name of Jesus. God has declared that all shall own Him Lord — angels, men, and demons — and you may be sure all includes you. The demons never owned Him Lord when He was on earth, but the day will come when God will compel them to own Him Lord. And for you, my reader, when is to be your day of owning Him Lord? now, when He is waiting on you in long-suffering grace, or in the day of His power, when you must bow? "Bow the knee" is God's word to you now.

Doubtless to many a proud Egyptian noble there was great humiliation in having to bow to this Hebrew servant; but the day of famine came, and neither their pride nor their parentage would meet the pangs of famine. Then they cried to Pharaoh and Pharaoh's word was, "Go to Joseph." And many a soul in trouble cries to God. What is God's answer, as it were? "Go to Jesus." Have you, my reader, the sense of soul hunger? God's word is, "Go to Jesus." Do you say, I know what

soul hunger is; I would like to be saved, if I knew how to go to Jesus? Look and see, in this interesting narrative, how they came to Joseph.

He was, according to the meaning of his name Zaphnath-Paaneah, "a revealer of secrets," and "the saviour of the age." And is not this what Jesus is?

Look at Him in the fourth of John, when that poor woman meets Him at the well. Does He not show Himself to her as the revealer of secrets, when He said to her, "Thou hast had five husbands"? Ah! Christ knows all about you; Christ knows every sin, and for those who believe in Him, He has pardoned every one. Knowing all about us, He loved us; and loving us, He came down to save us. When the woman found He knew all about her, does she fly? No, she stays and talks with Him, and one moment she is a convicted sinner, and the next Christ reveals Himself to her, and she leaves her water pot and goes into the city, and says, "Come, see a Man which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" Instead of being afraid of Him, she calls to all to come and know Him too; and they come and find He is not only the Revealer of Secrets, but the Saviour of the age — the true Joseph.

Let us look at how Joseph received his brethren when they came to him in their need.

"Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt; get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die. And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt" (Genesis 42:1-3). They heard that there was corn in Egypt. They heard that there was deliverance to be had if they could only get it, and they were perishing. They heard there was salvation, and they felt their need, and felt they would like to be saved, but they could not get salvation without going to the saviour. They could not get deliverance apart from the deliverer; they could not get food in their hunger save from Joseph — Joseph the despised one, the one they had hated, the one they had cast out and sold, but the one whom God had raised up to have every resource in his power, and every thing that could meet their need. And you, my reader, do you feel you are in need of salvation? Have you heard of a deliverance which you would like to be yours? Is your soul hungry, and have you heard of "bread enough and to spare"? Have you heard of salvation that others have known, and would you know it too? Then you must come into living contact with the Saviour. It is from the Saviour only you can get salvation. Jesus is that Saviour, and He waits and longs to save you.

Joseph's brethren are in need now, and they come to Joseph; and you must do just the same — come to Jesus.

"And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land; and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth" (ver. 6).

They come and bow themselves down to Joseph; and it is a blessed thing when you are compelled, even by your need, to bow to Jesus, for He is the only One who can meet that need.

"And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food. And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. . . . And Joseph

said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies. Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. . . . And he put them all together into ward three days" (vv. 7-17). His brethren did not know Joseph, but he knew them. He spake roughly to them. They thought he was a hard man. Do you think Christ is an "austere Man"? He will tell you what you are; tell you that you are a sinner full of enmity to God, that there is no good thing in you. People do not like that. They do not like to be shown what is in their hearts.

Joseph deals with his brethren as God does with the sinner, for God must get at our consciences, and must make us feel and know what we have been and are. So Joseph's dealings with his brethren arouse conscience, for they say, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us" (ver. 21).

It is a wonderful thing when the soul is brought to this point, to own itself a guilty sinner before God. God must have reality. Have you, my reader, ever seen yourself thus in the light of God's presence? Has your conscience ever been awakened to cry, I am undone; I am verily guilty?

"And Joseph turned himself about from them and wept." And did not Another greater than Joseph weep over guilty Jerusalem; and not only weep, but shed His precious blood because of the love of His heart to guilty man?

"Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack" (ver. 25). What is the lesson of the money in the sack? That if you are to get salvation, you cannot buy it. You are too poor to buy it, and God is too rich to sell it. Salvation must be God's free gift, and you must have it as a gift, or not have it at all.

Joseph's brethren come back, and tell their father all that Joseph had said; and Jacob refuses to let Benjamin go down with them, for he says, "His brother is dead, and he is left alone; if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave." But the famine increases. Their need increases; food they must have or die. Judah offers to be surety for his brother, and Jacob is constrained to let the lad go; but he says, "Do this: take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present. . . . And take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight. Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man: and God Almighty give you mercy before the man" (Genesis 43:11-14). This is man's way of getting salvation. People think they are going to be saved by propitiating God. They will work and give alms, and what not. But it will not do. No money will buy salvation, and God does not want appeasing. He is waiting to be gracious, waiting for the moment when He can display what is in His heart, which is only love.

Joseph's brethren came down again to him, and when he saw Benjamin he gave commandment that they should be brought into his house. "And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house." Yes, the soul wakes up to learn it is guilty, and then it fears the presence of God. But Joseph spake comfortably to them to win their hearts, and they sat at meat with him. "And the men marvelled one at another. And he took and sent messes unto them from before him; but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry

with him."

Then in Genesis 44 they have to confess their sins. Judah says, "God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants" (ver. 16). This is the point God would bring us to. Not only conscience making us see our state, but also there is the owning of that state. "I acknowledged 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." So said David in Psalms 32:1-11, and so must every soul that really turns to God. In Genesis 45:1-28 the wonderful climax is reached. Joseph reveals himself to them. "I am Joseph." The Joseph they had sold as a slave stood before them as a ruler over all the land, but meeting them in all the grace of his heart. He caused every one else to go out, and the guilty were left alone in the presence of the saviour. What a lovely picture of divine grace follows: "And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt" (Genesis 45:4). When the work in the conscience is done, then the Lord can come near and reveal Himself. He never comes and reveals Himself till the sinner takes his true place — is angry with himself.

"Be not grieved nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither," he says: "for God did send me before you to preserve life." You have been guilty, Joseph says, but God had a purpose in it. And man was guilty of nailing the Saviour to the cross: but God had His own thoughts, His own meaning in it all, and that very death, on the cross, of the Saviour, becomes the basis and groundwork, through atonement, of the great deliverance Christ accomplishes for the sinner; salvation for him is the fruit of the sufferings of the Saviour there. But after all this display of the heart of Joseph to his brethren, and after seventeen years of caring for them, and giving them the best of everything, and rewarding them only love for their hatred, the last chapter of Genesis shows they still did not fully know Joseph.

"When Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him" (Genesis 50:15-17).

All this is like some doubting, fearing, unhappy Christians, who tell me they believe on the Lord, and yet they have not peace. They are full of fears; they are not sure He has received them and forgiven them: they do not know His heart; and another thing, they have never had all out with Him. Have no reserves, my reader. Have it all out with Jesus, and do not you be the one to make our Joseph weep; for the heart of the Lord Jesus feels today your lack of trust in Him, after all He has done for you, all the kindness and the love He has shown to you. Wound not then His loving heart by any lack of confidence in Him.

"And Joseph said unto them, Fear not." That is just the way the Lord Jesus loves to comfort the soul. To get the confidence of the heart, He says to the trembling one, "Fear not: I am Jesus."

Joseph says again, "Fear ye not: I will nourish you and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them." And that is what Jesus says; for we are not only sheltered by His blood, but saved by His life. He will nourish and care for each one of us all the way along. Oh, my reader,

believe Him simply, and never wound His heart again by one single doubt.

06. "JACOB'S WELL WAS THERE"

"JACOB'S WELL WAS THERE SWEET was the hour, O Lord, to Thee At Sychar's lonely well,
When a poor outcast heard Thee there Thy great salvation tell.

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

Lord! 'twas Thy power unseen that drew The stray one to that place, In solitude to learn from Thee
The secrets of Thy grace.

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

And, Lord, to us, as vile as she, Thy gracious lips have told That mystery of love revealed At
Jacob's well of old. In spirit, Lord, we've sat with Thee Beside the springing well Of life and peace,
and heard Thee there. Its healing virtues tell.

Dead to the world, we dream no more Of earthly pleasures now; Our deep, divine, unfailing spring
Of grace and glory Thou! No hope of rest in aught beside, No beauty, Lord, we see;

And, like Samaria's daughter, seek, And find our all in Thee.

07. "Remember Lot's Wife"

"Remember Lot's Wife"

Luke 17:32.

W. T. P. Wolston. The 32nd verse of Luke 17:1-37 "Remember Lot's wife," is the Lord's solemn comment on Genesis 19:1-38; and there is something weirdly strange about this word of the Lord.

"Remember Lot's wife." What about Lot's wife? She stands the everlasting witness of the folly of not obeying the word of the Lord, the folly of a sort of middle path, when God's word has declared what is coming on the scene. Lot's wife is the picture of many souls: they would like to be saved, but they have not reached the point of safety, have not reached the spot where there is safety. The Lord says to such, "Remember Lot's wife." Did she not want to be saved? Yes. Did she not wish to escape destruction? Yes. Did she not make a show of escaping it? Yes. Did she escape it? No! "Remember Lot's wife." She might have been saved, but she was not saved, and yet she was not overtaken by the judgment of the cities; not one drop of that liquid fire fell on Lot's wife: no, she was cut off, but not by the judgment which fell on the cities.

There are two points, I believe, come out about Lot's wife: she was unbelieving and she was disobedient; and, dear unsaved reader, is not this what you are? Have you believed God? Have you obeyed the Gospel? You know you have not! "Remember Lot's wife."

Because of her indifference, because of her coldheartedness, she was turned into a pillar of salt. She was a hypocrite, she appeared to leave the city, she appeared to be going to the mountain, but her heart was in the city; she did not really believe in the judgment coming; she said in her heart, "I see no sign of judgment coming; I will look back and see if what those men said is true:" she looks back, and is turned into a pillar of salt. Did the judgment come? Yes! Lot's sons and the cities of the plain were all destroyed. God is not mocked! And the Lord says that "As it was in the days of Lot, so shall it be when the Son of Man is revealed." This is not the Lord's coming into the air for His people, but His coming with them to the earth for the premillennial judgments. The last act of the world towards Christ was to nail Him on a cross between two malefactors. The last the world saw of Christ was dead between two thieves! Did they not see Him when He rose from the dead? No! Did they not see Him in resurrection? No! Have they seen Him in glory? No,! Faith has; but the world saw Him last on the cross, to which, with wicked hands, they had nailed Him; it will see Him next, in the day of which Luke 17:1-37 speaks, when He comes again in judgment, when He puts His hand to His strange work of judgment. Do you know, my friend, there is judgment coming? The world is like a murderer between the passing of his sentence and the execution of it; and what is that? A condemned felon, only waiting the moment when, on the scaffold, that red-handed murderer shall expiate his crime. The world is like that. Its condition is fixed. But what comes in between the sentence and its execution? A way of escape! You who have not taken that way of escape, "Remember Lot's wife." She was one who knew there was a way of escape and did not take it! The angels dragged her even out of Sodom, but that did not save her from the

judgment of God. She was dragged out of Sodom, but she never reached the mountain. Half-way will not do; there is no safety halfway, either for Lot's wife or for you.

We bring the message of judgment, judgment coming, but before it falls there is a way of escape for you, if you will take it; for judgment is coming, surely coming.

You may say, "I do not think I shall live to see the world judged." Very likely not, because the Lord may do with you as He did with Lot's wife, cut you down, before the judgment comes. The Lord does not say, "Remember Sodom," but "Remember Lot's wife," the woman who might have been saved but for her own awful folly, and was very nearly being saved, but — she was not saved! Cut down by God's hand in judgment, because she did not believe the message. How solemn is the word, "Remember Lot's wife." Did she not hope to be saved? Yes! Did she not expect to reach a happy place with her husband and daughters? Yes! Did she reach it? No! She was cut down, because there was no faith, either in the judgment coming, or in the way of escape.

We read in Genesis 19:12, "And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? Son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place." Are you the only one of your family? Have you any still unsaved? "Bring them out," says God; "get them out of the world, break the fatal spell that binds them to the world of the dead, loose the chain that holds them, bring them out to Jesus." He wants your faith to pierce the clouds, wing its way to the very throne of God, and there leave your loved ones at the feet of Jesus. The evangelist's desire is to drag you out of the world to Christ.

"Out of the world?" you say. Yes, right out, for if your heart is out of the world you are morally outside the scene. A Christian brought to know Christ, having the joy of the Lord's love in the heart, is entirely outside the present scene, or if occupied with it, is only so in order to get souls out of it.

How do I get my heart out of the world? I get a glimpse of Christ, I see Him, before the day of the execution of the coming judgment, doing a work for me, whereby I can escape from the coming judgment, and then going back to the glory; my heart gets attracted to Him there, where He is, and drawn completely away from the world. Home, then, is the place where He is who has won my heart, and this scene becomes a wilderness to me, because He is not in it.

Before God judges He always warns; and have not you, my friend, had many a warning note falling on your ear? Look at the grace of God in this chapter. The angels find their way to Sodom, they are, if I may so speak, evangelists to the house of Lot, and while declaring what is coming on the scene, they point out a place of safety. And what has God done! Before the day of judgment falls on the world, His own Son has stepped in, and done a work on the cross, where, by the sinner may escape.

There is a way of escape, and God works, and the Holy Ghost works, and His servants work, to try to get you on the road that leads to a place of safety. The very fact of God's sending a Saviour is the irrefragable proof that man needed salvation, and how shall we escape if we make light of Christ, if we "neglect so great salvation?" Have you not heard the message often, and yet you are unconverted? I would fain, like the angels, lay "hold upon your hand," and bring you forth, for you are, like Lot, a lingerer still. You do not deny that judgment is coming, and yet you linger. What has seized you, to be any longer careless about your soul? Put the Bible in the fire, and I could

understand your conduct; but tell me you read the word of God, tell me you believe Scripture — believe the tale of the blood-shedding and death of the Son of God — tell me you believe the tale of the day of judgment coming, and I cannot understand you. Oh, wake up, wake up, be no longer careless! If you merely say you believe Scripture, you are in the world and of the world, depend upon it the world knows very well who belongs to it, and God knows. God knew that Lot did not belong to that defiled scene — Sodom, and "delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked." The angels said to Lot, "Up, get you out;" and to you, unsaved soul, I say, "Up, get you out." Men talk of the progress of the world. Where is the progress? "Oh," you say, "look at science." Yes, I grant it. "And look at the inventions, the improvements." I grant it, but are children more dutiful? Are servants more faithful? Are masters and mistresses more considerate and careful? Are husbands more tender? Are wives more prudent? No! no! The world is making great progress, but to what? I will tell you. To judgment! To judgment! Did not Sodom progress? Yes! and all of a sudden it was judged; and "As it was in the days of Lot, thus shall it be in the day that the Son of Man is revealed." Then, in fancied security, they reared their heads proudly aloft, and defied God, and so they do now. But the judgment came then, and it will surely come on this scene in which you are. But that judgment is not what I press so now. Lot's wife never saw the judgment; she was cut off, but not by Sodom's judgment; and you, halting, unbelieving sinner, "Remember Lot's wife."

Lot's sons-in-law did not believe the word about coming judgment; they seemed to say, "If you are going to leave the city — give up the world — we are not;" and they remained, and tasted the judgment they courted.

"Up, get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city," says Lot. But what thought the sons-in-law? They thought he was a fool, and was playing the fool for their amusement: he seemed to them as one that mocked. It was not they who mocked him, but "he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law." The very idea of their city being overthrown was ridiculous, for Sodom had never been more busy, never more prosperous; the sun was shining, and there was no sign of coming judgment. They refused the message that told them of the way of escape, and perished in its overthrow. It was sheer unbelief, and many a time has not the preacher seemed to you as one that mocked? But search the Scriptures, and see if these things are true or no.

I am not mocking you, I am warning you, delivering my own soul too, and if you sink into the lake of fire — you will, if you do not come to Christ — you can never say in its depths that you were not warned. Oh, flee to Jesus, flee to the mountain, "escape for thy life!"

Perhaps you say, "I would rather stay where I am." Very well, but you can never say you were not warned. Do you say, "Christians are not consistent"? I own it; but are God's words true? It will be no consolation to you by and by, that you did not believe because Christians were not consistent.

Arise! flee for thy life, flee to the Lord now, lest thou mayest never have another opportunity.

"Oh, but," you say, "you do not expect the Lord so soon, do you?" I do expect Him every moment, and I will tell you what, if He comes tonight, tomorrow you will believe. "Believe what?" Believe the devil's gospel, for the devil has a gospel. Oh, yes, you may yet be a believer, but you will believe a lie. "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (2 Thessalonians 2:1-17).

I have no doubt part of the devil's gospel to you will be, "You are all right." Satan will say, "You are getting on all right now you have got rid of these troublers." The troublers are taken up to meet Christ, and the world will go on just as before, but no more troubled by these preachers. Sons and daughters no more troubled by converted parents, brothers no more troubled by converted sisters. No! the troublers are gone, the fools, the madmen in your eyes, are all gone; and you are left to enjoy a Satanic, balmy calm, untroubled by anything about your soul - till, till one day the bubble of fancied security bursts, and swift destruction falls, and there is no escape.

Oh, arise! flee now! now while you may. Have you lingered long? Delay no longer. The Lord would lay His hand on you and bring you forth. Can you linger still? You that have hesitated — have not decided — have not been in earnest about your soul hitherto, oh hesitate not, linger not, lest you taste judgment, before the day of judgment. "Remember Lot's wife," lest the mercy of God be too long disregarded, and He show no longer mercy but judgment.

Thank God you are still in life, still here where the gospel is preached; if you had died yesterday you would have been in hell! You that are undecided, impressed about the truth, half-decided, but not quite, oh, "Remember Lot's wife." Will you refuse the Lord's hand, that would touch you, and drag you now to Jesus?

Look! the angels drag them outside the city, but outside the city is not safety, out of the world is not safety, to have broken with old habits is not safety, to make good resolutions is not safety; you must get to the mountain, — get to Christ. The mountain, I take it, is the same place where Abraham had communion with God; the mountain, I believe, typifies Christ, — Christ the only place of safety, Christ God's salvation, Christ risen from the dead, Christ the sinner's friend. Hear God's exhortation to you, O soul — "Escape for thy life." Hear also God's warning word to the unsaved soul, "Remember Lot's wife." Who bids thee be warned by her — take warning by her solemn end? The Lord! They are His own words.

She started on the road, but she never reached the mountain. Nothing can save your soul but Christ; anxiety will not save you, desire to be saved will not save you. She got out of the city, but she never got salvation. She turned round to see if there was any truth in what she had heard, and if she might not yet get back to Sodom, and she stands the witness of the righteous judgment of God on a soul that was not real, was not true, did not with her heart believe the message; and tell me, shall it be with you, Christ and the mountain-top, and safety, or judgment on the plain, eternal judgment? Do, you say, "I will think about it, I will think over what you say"? Then to you I again say, "Remember Lot's wife," one that turned aside when God said, "Escape to the mountain."

Reach Christ you must; it is not how near have you got, but have you got to Him? I do, not know how near she was to Zoar; she might have been just outside the gates, and her husband going in, but she never went in; never, never. And I do not know where you are: you may be but two inches from Christ, but let me tell you, if you are but one hair's-breadth from Christ, that hair's-breadth will ensure your eternal damnation; you and Lot's wife will be in the same case, eternal monuments of the righteous judgment of God on your own outrageous folly — you might have tasted salvation; but you did not.

God lingers over you, calls you, would drag you forth, points you to the mountain top, points you to Christ; "Stay not," He says, "do not halt or hesitate, there is no place of safety, peace, or

security, till you have got to that spot, the risen Christ in glory."

You say, "Did not Lot get to Zoar?" Yes, and he got safety there, but he did not get tranquillity; he had security, but he had not peace, he had doubts and fears in Zoar, so, soon, he went to the mountain.

Going into Zoar is like people who desire to be saved, but who want a little bit of the world too. "Is it not a little one?" says Lot, 1:e., he is half-hearted. Must I make a clean cut? he says.

It is a sorrowful thing to be in Zoar. Zoar is a kind of ditch, into which the devil likes people to fall, who really are converted. He likes them to take a bit of the world with them. "It does not do," he tells them, "to be too true, too out-and-out for Christ."

O, my friend, escape for thy life and flee to the mountain; never rest till you reach Christ. Look not behind, "Remember Lot's wife." Smoking corpses, a burning city, and ashes throughout all the plain, were the only things that remained to speak of the utter folly of disbelieving the warning of God. I said the only things, but there was yet another. Had a traveller drawn near to Sodom that day, a strange sight would have met his eye — a pillar of salt! Charred? No! Blackened? No! No sign of that fiery judgment had touched the Pillar of Salt. No! It stood the witness of the folly of going halfway, of being half persuaded, almost decided, but only almost. "Remember Lot's wife."

What turned her back? Love of the city she had left. Oh, whoever you are, decide for Christ now! Supposing the Lord were to shut the door tonight, where would you be? You, who think you would like to be a Christian some day, think it is a good thing to be a Christian, — mean to be one some day, — to you, I say, "Remember Lot's wife."

Ye halters, ye undecided, ye who know the claims of the world, think of her, on her way to salvation but never reaching it — having her back for a moment turned on the world, but turning round again. Let me beseech you, decide now: the way is open, the Lord calls thee, the evangelist beseeches thee, God urges thee, the Church would welcome thee; turn round, own your sin, confess your guilt, acknowledge your danger. Come to Jesus!

He will receive you, pardon you, you shall know now His salvation, know security and tranquillity likewise. There remains but one thing for you to do, get to Christ, reach Christ, believe on Christ.

How couldst thou bear, through the long, the morningless night of eternity, to be the counter. part of Lot's wife? And what is that? A person who was lost within sight of salvation, who went down to the pit passing by the open door of heaven on the road. Oh, do not risk such a fate! Come now — turn now! May this lead you who are unsaved, so to remember Lot's wife, that you shall never be like her. If I remember her I will take good care never to be like her. The Lord give you to hear God's word to you, and to believe on His Son. And for us who are Christians, if there is but one day more before the return of our Lord, may we know what it is to do as these angels, to seek to drag those whom we know out of the world, and to draw them to Christ.

Unsaved reader, wouldst thou "remember Lot's wife"?

"Then linger not in all the plain, Flee for thy life, the mountain gain!

Look not behind, make no delay!

Oh! speed thee, speed thee on thy way!

Haste, traveller, haste!"

If thou slightest the warning of that Pillar of Salt thy future is thus solemnly pictured:- "'Almost persuaded,' harvest is past!

'Almost persuaded,' doom comes at last!

'Almost' cannot avail; 'Almost' is but to fail;

Sad, sad, that bitter wail — 'Almost,' but lost!"

08. A Man in Christ; and A Man of God.

A Man in Christ; and A Man of God.

Address by W. T. P. Wolston.

Thursday Evening, August 6th, 1891 (From Notes of Addresses and Readings at Newcastle-upon-Tyne.) 2 Corinthians 12:1-21; 1 Timothy 6:6-12; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Timothy 4:1-8.

You will observe, beloved friends, in these scriptures, the occurrence of two remarkable titles, "A man in Christ" and "A man of God." Of them I would speak for a few moments. A remarkable difference exists between the two.

Although every Christian be a man in Christ, it does not follow that he is, practically, what Paul calls a man of God. One gives us position, the other practice.

What a wonderful expression Paul opens with. "I know a man in Christ above fourteen years ago . . . caught up to the third heaven."

Observe the effect of this on Paul. He kept it quiet for a long time. I rather think if some of us had such a revelation as he had, our brethren would have known about it very soon.

Now, what is a man in Christ? I tremble, lest I fail to convey the truth concerning it; but I will say what I trust may help the youngest soul here. If you are born of God, and possessing the Holy Ghost, you are "a man in Christ." The history of the first man is very sad. Where does that history end? It only ends in sin, shame, and death, in the scene through which we are passing. What Paul learns is this, that there has come into this scene One who, Himself God, has become a man, that He might travel over the pathway of man in this world, and one loves to think there is no possible position that a saint could be in that we do not find the Lord taking up. I see two things in the history of that blessed Man 1:1. The beautiful and perfect revelation of what God is. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." (John 1:18.) If I would know God I must gaze upon the person of Jesus. 2. We have the perfect exhibition of the pathway of man, as he should be for God; not only that He comes to make known God to us, but to take up all the responsibilities of man; and once and again He is met by a voice that says, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." At His baptism the heavens are opened for the first time, and the Father's voice is heard saying, "Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased." (Luke 3:22.) He does not say at the baptism, "Hear Him;" that goes without saying, as if every one would be sure to hear Him. Then again, on the mount of transfiguration, the end of the pathway is drawing nigh, and there Peter suggests the thought of making three tabernacles — "one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." (Luke 9:33.) But the Father could not brook such an indignity as bringing Him on the level with the law-giver and the reformer. Their day has gone by, hence the word is, "This is My beloved Son: hear Him." (5: 35.)

Though He might have gone up to glory from that mount, and none would have challenged His right, He turns, and comes down, and goes down into death, because if He had not died the corn of wheat must have abode alone. But on the cross He took up the whole question of man's sin, and guilt, and state before God. Not only did He bear our sins, but He was made sin. He bridged the entire distance between God and man. He closed up in His own death on the cross — where in grace He died vicariously — the history of man in the flesh, so that when Jesus was dead on the cross, one universal scene of death was the only thing before the eye of God; every other man was dead in sins, and Christ was then dead for sin. But what follows? Resurrection! The annuler of death rises from the grave, and meets Mary at its door. Her heart was full of affection for the Lord. She goes to His tomb, and is detained there. She was a woman who had now no home here, because He was absent, and therefore she remained weeping. He rises from the dead to meet the heart that was broken, and bleeding, in sympathy with, and love for Him. I wish we men had half the affection that that woman had. She had seen angels, but turned her back on them. Which of us would not have been detained by angels? Then she turns her back on man — the gardener, as she supposed; but she hears a voice, and turns round and sees Jesus Himself, and He reveals the truth. A most blessed revelation indeed was it; viz., that He was going to a new place. He said, "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father." Mary, I doubt not, felt thus: "Lord, I lost you, but now I have got you. Am I to lose you again?" How sweetly He calms such a thought in her heart as He goes on, and gives Mary her eternally unequalled commission, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father, and to My God, and your God." (John 20:17.)

There is a man gone up into the glory on the ground of divine righteousness. Man in Christ has gone into glory. The first man went into death as the end of a pathway of self-will, disobedience, and sin; and God let him stay there; and now there has come in this second man, this last Adam, who only reached death as the end of a pathway of subjection, will-lessness, and obedience, and God takes him out of death and gives Him glory; but He does not go up to that glory until He has stopped by the way, to tell this loving woman, and commissioned her to tell others, that His Father was their Father, and His God their God. He links and associates us with Himself in the place where He is gone — that is what I understand to be a man in Christ. He brought Godhead to earth, and now He has taken humanity into heaven, and there you have got a home. The Lord goes up, and the Holy Ghost comes down. Stephen sees Jesus in the glory. The devil cannot bear that, so he batters his head with stones, and silences Christ's witness in death, in reality doing Stephen a favour, by sending him by that more quickly to be with His Saviour, for Satan ever defeats himself. Saul of Tarsus was standing by, and Christ takes up this man who had heard Stephen's testimony to Himself as man in glory, and, converting him, in the midst of his murderous work, makes him the "chosen vessel" and channel of conveying these glorious tidings to the Gentiles.

Stephen, who had seen Jesus in glory, dies in the likeness of His master; and then the Lord, as it were, says, "I will pick up that man that has heard I am alive in glory, let him see Me where I am, and then I will cause that man to live, and testify for Me on earth where I am not."

2 Corinthians 12:1-21 coincides, apparently, with the time chronologically when Paul came to Lystra, (See Acts 14:6-20.) God gave him this marvellous revelation: "Caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." (2 Corinthians 12:4.) So far as we can judge just at a moment when, for Christ's sake, his life was despaired of by others on

earth — for the rabble "having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead" (Acts 14:19) - it was the fitting moment to let a man, who had apparently done with earth, see what heaven was like. Thus in the wonderful wisdom of God He lets this blessed man, in this particular part of his earthly pathway, see and hear Jesus there; and then he comes back to earth, to the scene whence Christ was cast out, and there he freshly learns the sufficiency of the grace of Christ.

Everything that we possess is up there. All the springs and resources of the soul are in heaven. When Paul came down what a dingy, murky scene must this world have seemed to him, after the unsullied glories of the scene he had been caught up to! What difficulties he came back to — all the dull duties of life!

Paul gets this wonderful revelation, and then he gets the "thorn in the flesh"; and just as Paul got the "thorn in the flesh" — so the Lord sees good to let us have one — and we cannot get on without the grace of Christ. "My grace is sufficient for thee" is a lovely word for our souls at all times.

If you have a very difficult pathway, is not the grace of Christ enough? the arm of Christ enough? Ah! yes. The more we learn that He is our life, and we are just set here, and to be here for Him, the more deeply we feel we cannot get on a single inch without Him. We hear Him say, "My grace is sufficient for thee." The Lord does not usually take away the difficulty, but gives strength to go through it. Paul is an illustration in his own pathway of this truth.

Christianity is the reproduction of the life of Christ in the life of the Christian. As "a man in Christ" I see the place grace gives me in glory, and am to taste the grace that flows from that glory for every exigency of the pathway here.

Now let us briefly look at the "man of God" in 1 Timothy 6:1-21. The same man writes to Timothy - a fellow-servant young in years. He had a great desire for him, and he writes exceedingly plainly on the subject of godliness. Some suppose "that gain is godliness." The injunction is, "From such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain." Gain is not godliness, "but godliness with contentment is great gain." This is an immense thing, but how is it to be attained? Lot wanted a little bit more than he had got. He had not then this godliness. He was tested and failed. I believe the same test comes often across our path. If I am determined to get on in the world God may let me, and then I shall find the word true, "He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul." "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out" is a good word to remember.

People say sometimes, "He died worth so and so." This is a great mistake. A man never dies worth what he leaves behind, but what he has sent on before. Do you want to be rich? You will fall into a pit. This is the point. "They that WILL [they want to] be rich fall into temptation and a snare." It is not that there is any harm in money, but in the love of it.

I believe it is often proved to be with us, as you get it stated of Israel in Haggai's day. They were dwelling in ceiled houses, and the house of God lying waste. Self was uppermost, but God was watchful of His people. His hand was on them, hence we read, "He that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes." How did the holes get there? I believe the Lord cut them.

Having warned Timothy thus, the apostle now exhorts and addresses him by a most lovely title. "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." He, as it were, says, You are here where man has cast God's man out, and here you are to be in the place of Christ. It is a wonderful favour to be God's man in a dark world. The Shunamite could say, regarding Elisha, "I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually." (2 Kings 4:9.)

What a nice thing that others can perceive the features of the man of God. In 2 Timothy 3:1-17 Paul points the way to you and me to be such. He says here, however, "Flee these things," which he has named; and then adds, "Follow these things"; viz., "righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness."

"Lay hold of eternal life" is a remarkable word. You say, "I think I have got it." Are you quite sure of that? It is evidently something that he had to reach out and grasp; for was he not told to lay hold of it? It is what belongs to the man in Christ, but he is to lay hold of what really belongs to him, therefore he adds, "Fight the good fight of faith." In one aspect eternal life is ours now, as being the gift of God received by faith; in another, it is a future thing — "the end everlasting life." That is the goal — the end of the Christian's pathway.

Now turn to the next epistle. What Paul presses here is open to every saint of God. "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Timothy 3:14-17.)

Scripture is that which our souls are turned back upon, and which really fits the man of God - whoever he may be — for his work. Then in 2 Timothy 4:5 we read, "Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." Do the work of the evangelist. People ask me, "Are you an evangelist?" "I don't know," I reply. I do not know or care whether I am one or not, if I can only do the work of one. The work of the evangelist is to bring Christ before souls, and bring souls to Christ. In the day when everything is out of gear, the servant of Christ is to be "man of all work." When an establishment is in full working order there may be the tablemaid, the housemaid, and the cook, but when things are diminished, and retrenchment is the order of the day, then there comes as a necessity the "maid of all work"; and so the servant of Christ may have to do a little bit of gospel work, a little bit of teaching, a little bit of pastoral work. Any service for Christ is sweet.

How beautiful to find this dear old servant of Christ now saying, "I have fought a good fight;" a lovely close to a grand history. He has spoken in these two epistles about some making shipwreck of faith (1 Timothy 1:19) some departing from the faith" (1 Timothy 4:1) some "denying the faith" (1 Timothy 5:8); some "being seduced from the faith" (1 Timothy 6:10); some "erring concerning the faith" (1 Timothy 6:21); others "overthrowing the faith of some" (2 Timothy 2:18); others were reprobate concerning the faith." (2 Timothy 3:8.) But the truth that God had given him he had kept,

hence he could say triumphantly, "I have kept the faith." (2 Timothy 4:7.) The devil wants us, dear friends, to give up that which God has given us. These epistles shows us the value of holding it fast. What joy it is to be a Christian, a possessor of eternal life, passing through this scene of trials, but linked with heaven before we get there. It is very sweet to hear Paul now add, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing. Faint not then, fellow-believers, fellow-soldiers, for you will get a crown also, for it is for "all that love His appearing." The Lord keep us in His infinite grace, knowing that we are men in Christ, and seeking to be truly men of God, going on simply, quietly, fervently, till we see His blessed face; and what an answer to all the exercises of the way will it be, when we see Him and are like Him, and with Him, for ever in glory.

09. A Mediator and a Ransom.

A Mediator and a Ransom.

Notes of an address on Job 33:1-33 and 1 Timothy 2:3-7.

W. T. P. Wolston.

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(CBA12,316) The truth of the gospel could scarcely be more beautifully expressed than it is in this passage in Timothy. It is a paragraph that contains a volume of truth in a very little space, and if a soul once gets the real meaning of it — lays hold of it for itself, it puts it into possession of peace with God. In Job 33:1-33 we have the very same thought illustrated by Elihu. Job was as busy as ever he could be, justifying himself, and goes the length of saying, "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go" (Job 27:6). He never made it out, however, for at the end of the story he is obliged to put his hand on his mouth and say, "Behold, I am vile" (Job 40:4). The Lord seems to say, "I will never let you go, Job, till you have given up those filthy rags, your own righteousness, then I will justify you, I will give you my righteousness." When you get into the presence of God, like Job, you must say, "I am vile." Job went a little further in Job 42:5-6, and said, "I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth THEE. Wherefore, I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." One of the strongest words in our language, "Abhor!" "I abhor myself!" Have you let go your own righteousness, now, Job? "Ah! dust and ashes!" he replies. A sight of God produces this. Only the presence of God can enable any to let go their own righteousness; not that they have got any to let go, really, only they think they have. It is like some young man building his hopes on some rich relative, and going on counting, and expecting, and acting as if it were all right, and certain; but by-and-bye he finds he is not in the will at all, his hopes are all dashed, and he is left worse than a beggar. But, when you have got to this place, to abhor yourself, then what a comfort it is to turn round and find God loves you, is it not? to find "God our Saviour" instead of our Judge. The common thought is that God is our Judge, and so He is; but who made Him a Judge? Who put God on the judgment seat? You did! I did! The sin and guilt of man have forced God into the place of judgment. God must judge sin, or else God and man would be both alike, neither of them thinking much about it, and there would be no righteousness; but, so far from His desiring to take the place of judgment, why, even here, to Job, He says, "I desire to justify thee (Job 33:32). This is an answer to a question put by Job in the ninth chapter, when Bildad was putting barbed arrows into him, insinuating that he was a hypocrite, and informing him that "the hypocrite's hope shall perish," and, further, that "God will not cast away a perfect man" (Job 8:13-20). In Job 9:2, Job replies, "How should man be just with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand" — much less the other 999 things. More, "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me." Job saw it was all of no use. Ah! Job knew very well, however much he might try to justify himself before his friends, yet in his heart of hearts he knew he could not stand before God. And, when he has learnt this thoroughly, the grace of God comes

in and shows him how he can be justified, how he can be saved, and that, beloved friends, is what I want to show you tonight. How you can be justified. How you can be saved, and how you can know it, too; and I would go farther and say, how you may be saved tonight, for God's salvation is a present salvation. Does the salvation of a sinner rest on what a sinner can do? No! On what Christ will do? No! but on what Christ has done. The sinner is utterly helpless, he can do nothing. Christ can do, nothing more, but Christ has done everything. "It is finished," is the dying Saviour's legacy to a lost, helpless, guilty sinner. How the grace of God pursues a man, seeking his soul; goes after him when he does not care a bit about it; seeks him that He may save him. He pursued Saul of Tarsus when he only hated Him. He is pursuing you, following you in grace tonight, though you do not care for Him and though you have come in here not caring even about the salvation of your own soul. You say, "Why do you single me out?" I'll tell you. Because I want you to be saved. Oh! let His grace, let His heart, who is thus pursuing you in love, win your heart for Him tonight.

There are five different ways Elihu speaks of here, in which God may go after a soul, and I have little doubt that almost every heart in this hall has been sought, in one or more of these ways, by God, and will silently range itself in one or other of these classes. You will know, in your own souls, if any or all of these ways have been true of you. But, first, he brings out the person of the Saviour. It is all very well for me to tell you to come to Jesus, to believe on Jesus, but you say you want to know who He is; what kind of a Saviour He is. In Job 9:33, Job had said, "Neither is there any Daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both." What Job calls a "Daysman," Paul calls a "Mediator." "There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." One who, in the dignity and majesty of His own person, can reach to all the glory of the throne of God; One who can meet the heart of God, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, One who can come down to all the degradation, and misery, and sin, and sorrow, and wretchedness of man. One who in the glory of His own person can lay one hand in righteousness on the very throne of God, and lay the other hand in tender love on the shoulder of the poor sinner. "But," you say, "do you know such an one?" I do! I do! His name is JESUS. Jesus, the man Christ Jesus. Elihu here presents himself as the type of Christ, and as Job had sighed for the Daysman, Umpire, or Mediator, he now steps in and fills up the gap between Job and God, saying, "Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead; I also am formed out of the clay." That is, I am a man! Such is Christ, a man, a real man; the One to whom, for whom, the heavens were opened more than once when He was on earth, and whom the Father's voice from heaven proclaimed to be His own beloved Son, yet laid in a manger. The reputed son of Joseph the carpenter, actually the son of Mary, and really in His nature the Son of God. The reputed son of Joseph He must be, in order to claim the throne of David; actually the son of the woman He must be, to redeem man; but really the Son of God He must be, if He is to meet the claims of God! Oh! to think of being loved by this One. Son of God! Son of man! If Son of God, what is there He has not power to do? if son of man, He can understand and meet the needs of my heart. Trace Him through His life. Was there ever such an One? Think of those unknown thirty years at Nazareth. We get glimpses of it that let us know that, spent as it was at home, it was a life of perfection. He was the only One who ever lived a life suited to God, perfectly pleasing God. When He emerges into public life, at His baptism, the heavens are opened for the Father's voice to be heard proclaiming His pleasure in Him. Jesus is One who in the dignity, and beauty, and glory of His own person delights the very heart of God, but One whose heart is so ineffably tender that there is not the poorest or most wretched sinner who could not go to Him and tell out to Him all his woe and all his sin. He bore my sorrows in His life,

that He might sympathise; He bore my sins in His death, that He might save. This is the "Daysman," the "Mediator," this is "the man Christ Jesus." This is the One that God presents for your acceptance this evening. Are you afraid of such an One? The hypocrite might be afraid of Him, the Pharisee, the Sadducee, might be afraid of Him, but was there ever a trembling sinner afraid of Christ? Never! Never! "My terror," he says (verse 7), "shall not make thee afraid." But ah! there is a day coming when the terror of the Lord shall make you afraid; there is an hour coming when, if you despise His love and mercy, you shall quake before Him. But now is the day of His grace, and "My terror shall not make thee afraid" is the soft and thrilling word of the Saviour to the chief of sinners now. Do you say "I am innocent"? That is a lie to begin with. Never was there one innocent since God put that pair in the Garden of Eden. If you are innocent you have no need of Christ, the Christ of Scripture, the only Christ I can present to you — the One who died because you are not innocent, died to make atonement for your guilt. Christ brings such boundless happiness to a soul, such wellsprings of joy unfathomable. There is nothing good, nothing really happy out of Christ. Have you everything this world can give you? its luxuries, its pleasures, its gaieties, its smiles? Soon you must leave them all behind, and pass away alone into eternity, and if you have not known Christ in time, will you ever know Him in eternity? No, never! If you have not slaked your thirst at the fountain of the water of life in time, think you, you will ever get one single draught thro' the endless ages of eternity? No, no! never! If you will not have Christ in time, you cannot have Him in eternity. If you enter eternity without Him, you must spend its long, its gloomy, its endless ages without Him; the word of God tells you so. It is now you must be His, if you would be His then. But Job says, "He findeth occasion against me, he counteth me for his enemy; he putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths" (5: 10, 11). Well, and do you not think it is a good thing for God to mark the paths of a man, when he is going farther and farther from Him to mark his paths, and arrest him? Elihu says I will tell you the truth about God, show you the injustice of your thoughts of Him. I would ask you tonight, has the fear of the Lord never made you tremble yet? "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Have you never felt it yet? If you are here tonight quarrelling with His goodness and grace, you are very far from having this wisdom. It is true there is ruin and wretchedness around, but who has made the ruin? It is man that has caused it, aided and abetted by Satan. It is not God who has caused it, but it is God who has come in to repair the breaches, to remedy what man has ruined; nay, more than this, man has ruined himself, and God brings in redemption, through Christ. If I come to the cross, what an answer to the thought that God is my enemy. Why, He has bruised His own Son that He might deliver me. So far from having a hard thought towards me, Elihu shows us here five ways God takes to seek to deliver me.

1st, "God speaketh once, yea twice" (verse 14). The voice of God has been heard by you. He has spoken and you have not heeded. Perhaps, twice this very day you have heard the voice of God through His Word. Tell me, are you converted yet? Have you come to Jesus yet? No, you have not! You are here tonight and still unsaved. You have heard the Word of God but you have not perceived it. You have let it go by you unheeded. Some of us who know the Lord can look back and remember how many times He spoke to us, and we did not listen. We were engulfed by the whirlpool of gaiety and pleasure, and His Word was nothing to us; His voice was not perceived. But has He given you up, given up His pursuit of your soul? No, and if the voice has passed till now, unheeded, uncared for, come to Jesus this evening, listen to His voice this evening, I beseech you. Though you may have fortune, favour, everything that the world can place at your

feet, you know that anything this world can give cannot fill your heart. Your heart is empty still if you have not Christ! You are unblessed still if you have not Christ! You are unsaved still if you have not Christ! You are lost, lost, if you have not Christ! You do not like the word "lost?" But it is true. Does it sound harsh? God says it. There is no middle ground, the word of God fixes you, either still among the lost, still among the dead, still among the unsaved, without Christ; or found, alive, saved, having Christ. "This my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found." Do not turn to your neighbour. It is you I am talking to. You. I want your soul tonight. You say, "Why are you so much in earnest, why are you so anxious?" I will tell you. I am persuaded of the reality of heaven and its blessedness; I am persuaded of the reality of hell and its torments; I am persuaded of the reality of the salvation of God, and can I be anything else but earnest, very much in earnest? I beg of you, awake! I entreat you by the terrors of a coming judgment-day. I entreat you by the light of an open heaven. I entreat you by the darkness of that gloomy scene the portals of hell disclose. I implore you where you sit just now, affectionately implore you, entreat you, — pause, consider, rush not headlong into that terrible abyss. Hear, hear the word of God, once, twice spoken to you! Will you turn your back on that love; will you turn a deaf ear to that voice, that voice that speaks as never man spake?

2ndly: But God has another way, "In a dream in a vision of the night," etc. (verse 15.) He will try again in the night, when the eyes are heavy with slumber. God goes to that slumbering one, and awakens his soul by a dream. I could tell you of many an one who thus has been met by God. It may be that some here can remember some terrible dream, something that caused them to awake trembling and affrighted. But, tell me, tell me, did you heed the warning voice; did you turn to God with the morning light, or are you still unheeding? Tell me, will you still go on despising, rejecting?

3rdly : There is another way God has of pursuing a soul, "He keepeth back his soul from the pit and his life from perishing by the sword" (verse 18), i.e., He preserves from sudden danger. Well do I remember when I was a boy of 16, a brother of mine fired at and shot a partridge. The bird, wounded mortally, flew awhile and then fell into the water. "Fetch it, he said, and I plunged into the sea. The bird was not worth sixpence, but I risked my life, risked my soul, to get it. Only the mercy of God brought me to shore, a few more yards and I must have sunk, for I was quite exhausted, the distance was long and the tide strong against me. But He spared me, that He might save me. He has saved me now. Perhaps, some of you can remember a time when He thus delivered you from some sudden peril. He spared your life to save your soul; but, tell me, is it saved? Not yet? Then see, He has another way of reaching your hardened and careless heart.

4thly : "He is chastened also with pain upon his bed," etc. This is a way God constantly takes to awaken a soul. One is laid upon a sick bed, perhaps a careful physician has done all that human skill can do, and tender relatives have watched around that couch, and lavished every loving care upon the sufferer, but the case seems hopeless, and the soul is trembling on the very threshold of eternity. God steps in. "I must have that soul," He says; "I will bless the means, I will bring back that one from the very gates of hell." Perhaps many of you can remember some such time in your history, when your life hung as by a thread, and perhaps you thought you were very peaceful then, quite calm in view of death, not afraid to meet it, and you say you do not feel that calm and peacefulness now. Ah! Satan knows well enough how to give a soothing draught to a dying soul. Perhaps he told you — you had never done anything in your life that was much amiss, that you were as good as your neighbours, and God was very merciful. But tell me, though, was your soul

washed then in the blood of Jesus? Was that the ground of your peace, that He had met death and Satan for you? Or were you just deluded by Satan? He knows how to administer an anodyne to a dying soul — how to make a death-bed easy. Think you his power is not exerted then? Ah! have you never heard that word of God the wicked have "no bands in their death"? Go down on your knees and thank God you did not die then! I can very well remember the time when I was thus laid low. Had I that peace, you ask? Had I that balmy feeling? No! Not!! I knew the truth too well. I knew I was lost! lost! I knew that if I died I should be lost for ever, and my cry was "Lord spare me, and I will serve thee." I doubt not many of you have thus been brought back from the brink of the grave, but has it brought you to Jesus? God delights to carry by the lips of some one the message of His love and grace to a soul thus on the very verge of eternity. "One among a thousand," perhaps, only, will speak the word of the Gospel of peace; nine hundred and ninety-nine will pass by your bed with never a word of Jesus; never a message from God for you; but one may bring you that message, "deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." Ah! this blessed Jesus has opened a doorway. God has found the ransom. God has estimated it. God has provided it, and He sends out that message, "deliver that man from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." CHRIST is the RANSOM; He is also the Mediator. "He gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Timothy 4:6). This is one of the most magnificent statements in all the word of God; I hardly know anything to equal it. "He gave himself a ransom for all." The moment your heart believes in Christ liberty is yours, peace is yours, salvation is yours, blessing is yours, everything is yours. This is the Glad Tidings that was "to be testified in due time." Thank God it is due time still. The due time still runs on, and Christ is still waiting to receive you; not now as a Judge but as a Saviour. The One who has met the claims of God is your Friend and Saviour. There He is, alive in heavenly glory for you to trust in, and the moment you trust in Him you get a present salvation. All God asks of you is to believe in Christ. "Will there not be works," you say? Of course there will be works. "Will there not be a change," you ask? Of course there will be a very mighty change! I have very little belief in conversion where there is not this mighty change; a perfect revolution. Instead of having self for a centre, you get Christ for a centre; instead of having self to think about, and self to be seeking to please, you have Christ to think about, and Christ to please, and Christ to serve; Christ, who has given Himself a ransom for you. With regard to works, they come in in their right place. When we know Christ we seek to please Him. We work for Him, not to get life, but because we have got it. We do not labour to work out our own righteousness, for "He will render unto man his righteousness" (verse 26). "You cannot justify yourself," God says, "but, now, I can justify you, because I have righteously condemned and dealt with your sins in the person of that blessed substitute on the cross," and the consequence is, when your soul is brought to God, the blood of Christ washes your sins away, you know you are saved, and your heart is left free to please, and serve, and follow Christ. But there is a 5th way God takes in dealing with a soul, which I can only say a few words on rapidly. "He looketh upon man and if any say I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not, He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light" (verses 27, 28), 1:e., if any soul honestly confesses his guilt. It is scarcely possible, but there might be one such case here tonight. A soul who had never heard the voice of God speaking before; never heard the word of God simply preached; never been aroused by a dream; never been preserved from sudden and imminent danger; never been brought back from sickness nigh unto death, from the brink of the grave. If there is such an one here, let me say, you have heard the word of God tonight; you have heard the

voice of God tonight; you have heard the gospel simply preached, and you are responsible now; responsible to take your place before God in simple and honest confession, owning your guilt. Then comes the precious word "He will deliver his soul from going down into the pit; and his life shall see the light," 1:e., the knowledge of a present and full salvation. If you are looking only to Christ, resting only on Christ, why, it is what His death has secured for you, that you should know the forgiveness of your sins; know what His death has done for you. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." There is nothing more to be done, nothing more to be waited for. Christ can do nothing more, and you can do nothing at all. When an anxious man asked "What must I do to be saved?" the answer was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." It is all God asks from you. Christ has gone up on high in all the perfection of His work for us, and God delights to say, as the fruit and consequence of His death and finished work, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom." If He says that in the Old Testament, He says in the New Testament "Who gave himself a ransom for all." Oh! what a Saviour! and God would "have all men to be saved." I would tell the whole world if I could gather them together to listen to me, that when man's efforts were utterly useless, when he could do nothing, Christ "gave himself," and ah! if there is one word that could touch a heart that has never been touched before it is this, He gave Himself! He gave Himself! and, if He gave Himself unsought, unasked, uncalled for, has He not a claim on your heart? Shall not your heart be Christ's from this moment? Has he not a claim upon it? I can only say, if I had been undecided up till this very moment, I would decide for Christ tonight. Oh! had I ten thousand hearts I would give them all to Christ tonight! And, do not be ashamed to own Him; do not be ashamed to confess Him; do not be ashamed to go home and make a stand for Christ. He was not ashamed to stand for you, and to be scorned, and derided, and spit upon; He was not ashamed to die between two malefactors for you, and do not you be ashamed to own Him. May God give you — each one — tonight to know rest and peace in Himself. W. T. P. W.

10. Christ's Three Appearings

Christ's Three Appearings W. T. P. Wolston.

"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." Hebrews 9:27-28.

"Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in this world" — 1 John 4:17. The verse in 1 John 4:1-21 brings out most distinctly and clearly what the new place is that the believer has before God. It is this: Christ's place. "As he is, so are we in this world." In the most marvellous way does the Holy Ghost condense the present position of the believer, to the joy of our hearts — we who are Christ's. But some may say, "Impossible! Does the gospel unfold to a poor guilty sinner on earth a standing before God in the perfection of Christ?" Yes. "How can this be?" The passage in Hebrews 9:1-28 tells you how; you have there the grand foundation on which this blessed truth is built — "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." The effect of the once-offered sacrifice of Himself to put away sin — the fruit of the corn of wheat which fell into the ground and died, so that it might not abide alone — is, that of the children of God it can be truly said: "As he is, so are we." And mark, it is not, "so we shall be," but, "so are we in this world." How wonderful is this word of the Holy Spirit! Truly man could never have penned it of himself.

Look at Christ in all His love and grace while here on earth. Look at Him in all His perfection now in glory, and then consider for a moment this most wonderful passage: "Herein is love with us (God's love, not ours) made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world." But let us look for a little at what was first required in order to bring about this grand result. In Hebrews 9:1-28 it is all beautifully unfolded. "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 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 are three periods in the history of Christ brought before us in these verses. In verse 24, He does appear; verse 26, "He has appeared;" and in verse 28, "He shall appear." I will take them up briefly in their chronological order; and may the Holy Spirit lead you, my beloved reader, to search more fully into these wondrous truths, the outlines of which I now present to you.

1. — HIS PAST APPEARING.

"Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

Why was this needed? The following verse tells us: "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." As it belonged to man to die and be judged, so Christ was offered up in death, and bore God's wrath and judgment in man's stead.

I can understand the "as" and "so" in John 4:17 when I have grasped the mercy of the "as" and "so" of Hebrews 9:27-28. As I was a ruined, guilty sinner, only fit to be judged and condemned to death, so Christ went down into death for me; He suffered that I might never suffer; He bore my judgment and the wrath of an offended God, which was my due; He completed the work of my salvation; He has done all that is needed to bring me to Himself in glory; and now the Holy Spirit can give out this grand truth to the believer, to say with joyful boldness, that in the sight of God, "As he (God's Son) is, so are we in this world."

Oh, beloved fellow-believer, what is this? What is the force of these words, "As he is, so are we"? It is not merely substitution, grand as that work is, but it is transmutation — the taking of us into identity and association with Himself.

"He has appeared" to do a work we never could have done. In all the counsels of God one thing alone was found that could save ruined man; and in His great love for us, the Lord Himself came down to perform the work. As we deserved, so He received; He bore the judgment of God upon sin, so that there is now no condemnation to them who believe. Now "we may have boldness in the day of judgment." Well may the Holy Spirit preface this wondrous truth with these words: "Herein is love with us made perfect." Yes, this indeed was love, perfect love on His part; love sufficiently perfect to cast out all our fear. "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear."

"No man of greater love can boast Than for his friend to die.

Thou for Thine enemies wast slain!

What love with Thine can vie?" This is the Friend the believer has — the Friend and Saviour, God wishes you to have. Will you not have Him? See what He has done for you. "He was once offered to bear the sins of many." You may be one of the many whom Christ died to save. God is now beseeching you to be one of the blessed number. Oh! refuse Him not; for if you will not have this Christ now, while He is willing and waiting to receive you, it will be this same Christ and Lord, to whom all judgment is given, who when this long day of grace is over, will say unto you: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." And you shall then be one of the many — ah! how many — to whom the words will apply: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." With which will you have to do, — God in grace, or God in judgment?

Jesus wants you to know Himself in grace, to know Him now. He is seeking you, yearning for you, waiting to receive you with outstretched arms, of welcome. Oh, come to His loving embrace. You must either come to those outstretched arms of love and mercy, or sink for ever beneath His uplifted arm of judgment. Can you for a moment delay in your decision? Which shall it be, God or Mammon? Is there aught on earth that can lure you from His arms? — aught that can blindly lure you on to death? Jesus is calling you to come to Him. "Come unto me" are His words to you. Oh, come and taste the blessedness of belonging to Him, of being loved by Him, of having Him as the "friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

2. — HIS PRESENT APPEARING. In Hebrews 9:24 we read, that Christ has gone into heaven, "Now to appear in the presence of God for us."

While telling you of the first blessed truth, "He has appeared," I made no restriction. I tell it to you, my reader; I would it were told to ALL. But now I have to confine myself to the BELIEVER when I say, "in, the presence of God for us." But my prayer is, that He may stand as the Representative of all who may read these pages, and of thousands more.

Believers in the Lord, Christ represents you in the presence of God, and soon there will be the lovely sequel which verse 28 gives: "Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." But again, I would turn to all, and say, Look at Jesus there in the glory of heaven itself; gaze on Him by faith at God's right hand, and remember that place may be yours. Earnestly I would entreat you not to let haunting memory have the task of echoing in your ear, through an endless eternity, "That place might have been yours." Who is the One who stands in the presence of God for us? It is Christ, the same Christ who was here on earth, and who died on Calvary's cross. He is the only one who can represent us there, and He does it. Michael the Archangel would fail to do it. Angels know not the extent of our need; but Christ is there. Dwell on the thought, REPRESENTATIVE OF His PEOPLE. Oh, how much it includes! Christ is there in the presence of His Father-God, not only to represent you, but also as your Advocate and High Priest. As Aaron the high priest bore the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on his shoulders and breast, so that they might be presented to the Lord Jehovah; so Christ bears our names on His bosom before His Father's throne — your name and mine graven on His heart! Amazing thought! Yes, our names indelibly carved there with the graving-tool of love. The love and power of Christ combined bear us before God continually.

What a place of security the believer in Jesus has! How could he have a doubt or fear as long as he looks at Christ in glory? and knows from God's Word that "as he is, so are we." Look at Christ and His finished work, and believe on Him, and the question of salvation and security is settled. I see in Him the One who has espoused my cause — the One who has so merged me in Himself, that God, while looking upon me, sees me in Jesus — He sees me in "Jesus only."

3. — HIS FUTURE APPEARING.

"Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." The first time Jesus appeared, it was to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He bared His bosom to Jehovah's wrath, and the uplifted sword of justice fell on Him. The storm-cloud of wrath burst upon His head; but the second time He shall appear, it shall be without sin unto salvation. The question of sin was all settled the first time; and now He has to do with salvation alone. Has not this a voice for you, O careless one? You who are not looking for Him; you to whom it would not be glad tidings were you told, "The Bridegroom cometh;" pause, I beseech you, and consider your situation. You, as an unbeliever, are going on to meet two things — DEATH AND JUDGMENT. The believer also is going to meet two things, but oh! how different are they — CHRIST and GLORY. Death and judgment are behind him, not before; he looks back to the cross, and knows that for him they were ended there. He is on the other side of judgment; and now the bright prospect before him, and for which he looks, is the time when the Lord shall again appear unto salvation, 1:e., the deliverance of the body from this evil world. The manner of His future appearing is two-fold - First, as the Bridegroom He will come into the air only, and catch up, His Bride, 1:e., those who are His own.

The 4th of 1st Thessalonians, and 15th of 1st Corinthians, describe this moment. "The dead in Christ" are raised, and those alive on earth changed, and both are caught up together to the Lord, and thus are with the Lord for ever. What a bright hope for the believer, instead of looking for death!

Later on the Lord will appear manifestly in glory to the world, as Son of Man. Then His saints will all be with Him. His second advent thus has the two stages. Into the air when His saints go to Him, and on to the Mount of Olives when His saints all come with Him. The first Adam brought death into this world by sin; but for the believer, the death of the last Adam has put away sin, and delivered him from death and judgment. To you who care not to look for Him, I would give this solemn warning: "If thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer. They shall seek me early, but they shall not find me. For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord." "When they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape." But unto you, who look for Him, are these blessed words written: "They shall see his face." Delight yourselves therefore in the Lord; be ye ever on the watchtowers looking for His appearing the second time without sin unto salvation. Wait patiently for Him though He should tarry. "He that shall come will come." Meanwhile, beloved Christians, let us rejoice in the blessed truth that "as he is, so are we in this world."

11. Three Great Facts, and Their Effects.

Three Great Facts, and Their Effects.

W. T. P. Wolston.

Extracted from "From the Far Country to the Father's House"

- "Grace and Truth" Gospel Series.

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"Then said he, Lo, I come TO DO THY WILL, O God BY THE WHICH WILL WE ARE SANCTIFIED, (2) THROUGH THE OFFERING OF THE BODY OF JESUS CHRIST once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God. . . . FOR BY ONE OFFERING HE HATH PERFECTED FOR EVER them that are sanctified, (3) WHEREOF THE HOLY GHOST ALSO IS A WITNESS TO US. . . . Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now, where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh. . . (1) LET US DRAW NEAR With a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. (2) LET US HOLD FAST the profession of our hope without wavering (for he is faithful that promised); and (3) LET US CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER to provoke unto love and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." — Hebrews 10:9-25.

There are three points in this Scripture which stand out prominently, and they are replete with blessing for the sinner, because flowing from what God in Himself is. God is here seen as wanting something. He had a will, a wish. There was something He desired. Man has rebelled, against God, but God, spite of this, wants to have us near Himself. This is the grand truth taught in Luke 14:1-35. The supper was spread, and God announced the desire of His heart. "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many." The guests were slow to heed the invitation given them, so the Master told His servants to compel them to come in, that His house might be filled. How wonderful! God wants the sinner to be near Him. Who does He want? You! a poor sinner! Yes; He wants you, but you cannot be near Him in your sins. Then how can you be there? This is, the wonderful truth which the Gospel brings out, that the blood of Christ, His Son, can cleanse you from all sin. Thus, and thus only, can you get rid of your sins.

Sin, if not blotted out by the blood of Jesus, must sweep every one to hell, the moral man and the immoral, the old and the young, the rich and the poor, every one whose iniquities are still upon him. Nothing but the blood of Jesus can save anyone from being lost for ever in the lake of fire. Sin consigns the unbelieving possessor thereof to everlasting judgment, and blood - the blood of

Jesus — lifts the feeblest believer therein to everlasting glory. But answer me this question, Are you in your sins, or where are they? You may have the best character in the world, and the devil will help you to make it better even than it is, for he takes a great interest in "the self-improvement society." This is a very old institution, founded in the garden of Eden, its first members having manufactured "aprons of fig leaves" in hope of remedying their state. It helps you to give up this bad habit and that wicked way, and all its members are devil — deluded into the idea that "dead works" are of some avail, and that by behaving better for the future the evil deeds of the past will somehow be erased. How this is to be effected the founder of this almost without exception universally patronized society is careful not to explain. "He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44). Yes, "the devil that deceived them" (Revelation 20:10) was the originator of this soul-destroying agency. Is it not strange that man should heed the suggestions of "a deceiver," "a liar," and "a murderer?" But, alas! so it is; and never stopping to inquire, how future amendment is to cancel past guilt in the sight of a God of infinite holiness, souls in crowds join the society, and — unless getting their eyes opened by grace to see that such a course is a huge Satanic delusion, a monstrous spiritual lie, a diabolical bubble, which they are only blowing to ensure their everlasting damnation — pass on, fascinated by dreams of self-improvement, till, hurled by death into eternity, they find that "improvement" is not Christ, and that the pit of hell is a terrible reality. My friend, if you are not under the shelter of the blood of Christ you are lost, and, improve as you will, you are only after all an improved sinner. You are still in your sins. "But," says some one, "how can you prove I am lost?" Hebrews 10:1-39 shows me. The work of the Lord Jesus there spoken of proves this, and the Gospel tells me, "The Son of Man came to save that which was lost" (Matthew 18:11). When did the shepherd in Luke 15:1-32 go after the sheep? Surely it was when the sheep was lost. Why did the woman carefully sweep the house? Because the bit of silver was lost. Ah! if you have not yet got the great fact that you are lost home to your conscience, I would not give much for your chance of salvation. It was the son which was lost that the father kissed and clothed; and it was to reach lost ones, to bridge the chasm that lay between the holy God and guilty sinners, that Christ said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God!" Do not imagine God views your sins and your guilty state by nature as lightly as you do. He says you are lost, and if He meet you as you are He must judge you for your sins. Righteousness keeps God apart from the sinner. This is why in the Old Testament we read blood was sprinkled on the mercy-seat. God's claims had to be met. Thus only could God permit the sinner to come near to Him. The will of God was to have the sinner near Himself. Christ did the work by which alone it could be so. He made atonement, and the throne of God was propitiated. Sin had to be swept away from before God. Jesus only could do that. He was the willing servant for that great work. "Lo, I come to do Thy will!" is the Son of God volunteering Himself for this wondrous service. And what do we further read was the blessed result of Christ's work? "By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ." Now we see what it is which separates the sinner to God. It is the work of Christ, that work which removed the great mountain of sin that intervened between the holy God and guilty man. This truth is beautifully set forth, in type, in God dealings with the children of Israel. Exodus 12:1-51 tells of the blood of the slain lamb sprinkled on the lintel and two sideposts of the door in the houses of the Israelites. That signified they were sheltered from the wrath of God. He was kept out, as a judge. Exodus 13:1-22 declares all are the Lord's because of the blood which had been shed; so now we see every

believer is separated to God by the work of Christ on the cross. In Exodus 14:1-31 we find Israel protected and "saved" by God — Jehovah, in the pillar of cloud and fire, placing Himself between Israel and the hosts of Pharaoh. And in Exodus 15:1-27 we see the Israelites thoroughly happy with God as they sang their song of triumph on resurrection ground. That is the gospel of the Old Testament, and of the New likewise. Sheltered from God, separated to God, saved by God, and happy with God.

Who, then, I ask, was it who wanted to have me? God! And who could bring me to God? His Son, and that only by death, His own death on the cross. What comfort for the anxious soul! God seeks to have you near Himself. His will is coupled up with your blessing. Do you think Satan wants to have you? Pharaoh sought to overtake the escaped Israelites, but how did he succeed? To reach them he must march against the bucklers of the Almighty. God was on the behalf of His people, and what happened to Pharaoh? Israel looked back from the sunny banks of resurrection, and saw Pharaoh and his hosts sunk in the waters of the Red Sea.

Well might Israel sing, "The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation" (Exodus 15:2). Great was their joy, and most blessed their song of praise; but it was not an endless song. Their confidence in God failed, and their song of triumph was succeeded by the murmurs of the wilderness. But what is said of the joy of the Father's house, that portion into which by grace we have been brought? Does the joy of that sphere ever fail? What does Luke 15:25 say? "And they began to be merry." There is no word of that song coming to an end. It is an endless song. Hebrews 10:1-39 shows why our song will be an endless one. It is because of the work of Christ. That work gives me title now to stand before God in righteousness, and it will be theme for endless song hereafter. In Israel's day, when the High Priest went into the holy place, he could not sit down. There was no seat there for the priest to rest on. Why was this? Because his work was never done. He was "offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which can never take away sins." The work which gives liberty in the presence of God was not then an accomplished fact. Now that work is done, and we have an High Priest seated, who ever abides within the veil. The blessed God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ, the one whom God sent to deliver man right out of Satan's power, is our great High Priest. He is seated on the very throne of God, because He has finished the work God gave Him to do. Before He died He, cried, "It is finished," and here we read, "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God."

Sinner, you will see the One who did that perfect work! "Every eye shall see Him." How will you meet Him? Will it be to be banished from His presence? It must be so if you do not now know Him, and come to be blessed by Him. If you now believe in Him and His perfect finished work, it will be all blessing — blessing now, and everlasting blessing when you see Him. But does some one ask, "How do you know His work was perfect?" Hebrews 10:1-39 tells me so. The Holy Ghost is the witness to the perfection of the work of Christ on the cross. What is His witness? Read verses 14, 15, and 17. "By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified, whereof the Holy Ghost is a witness to us . . . and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." People try to get a witness in themselves. They seek some feeling on which to rest for happiness, but this they cannot have.

Suppose you had a legacy left to you, and you received a letter from a lawyer telling you so, would you put this question to yourself, "Do I feel this fortune has been left to me?" Ah no, you would

never think of your feelings, but simply believe the letter the lawyer sent to you, and rejoice over the money which you believed was now yours. Thus is the witness of man valued, but how differently is the testimony of God treated. And the word of God cannot fail: His word is true. The Holy Ghost witnessed the return to heaven of the great Finisher of Redemption before He came to give His testimony. For ten days He saw the Lord Jesus at the right hand of God, and then came to earth to announce the glad tidings, that where there is simple trust in Christ and His work, sins and iniquities should no more be remembered by God. What a sacrifice, when such is the work it has accomplished. We would speak with reverence, but, so great is the value of the blood of Christ, that the very memory of God has been affected by it. He will remember no more the sins of the one who believes in the preciousness of the blood of Christ. That blood has blotted out from the memory of God the sins of everyone who believes; but if that blood be despised, what is said of the memory of the lost one in hell?

Ah! memory will have a great place in the regions of the damned. Its powers will deepen the misery of the lost. Read what is written of that scene in Luke 16:23 : "In hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments. And he cried, Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted and thou art tormented."

You may be a good-for-nothing sinner, but if you believe the word of God as to the value of the work of Christ, the witness of the Holy Ghost to you is, "Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more." God has seen the blood, and when the sinner trusts in the work of Christ, the Holy Ghost is a witness to him that God remembers his sins no more.

We see, therefore, that we have in Hebrews 10:1-39 these three great facts. (1) The will of God, which shows the Father's heart. He wished the salvation of the sinner, that he might take him as His child. (2) The work of the Son of God. That work secures the salvation which the heart of God desired for the sinner. This salvation is for everyone who will hear and obey the word of God; but we have also (3) the witness of the Spirit of God, which gives the assurance of salvation to the one who believes. The Holy Ghost witnesses to the sinner who has believed in the Lord Jesus Christ that his sins are for ever blotted out. What more does any one want? Only a heart to praise this triune God, who wills, works, and witnesses the present and eternal salvation of the feeblest believer in Jesus.

These three great, blessed, divine facts are the basis of the three beautiful effects which the Apostle now seeks to draw forth by the thrice repeated exhortation, "Let us." And he says, (1) "Let us draw near, with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." You must not doubt the Father's heart, nor the Son's work, nor the Spirit's witness. And what is a true heart? A heart that knows and believes it is in itself utterly untrue and not to be trusted. In Luke 8:15 we read of the "honest and good heart" — that is, one which believes what God says of the heart of man, that it is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9). it comes to God not seeking to screen itself. With such a heart, then, we must draw near to God, fully trusting God's revelation of Himself, and "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience," which is the blessed effect in my soul of the knowledge of the work of Christ for me. The value of the sacrifice of Christ I have bowed to.

Then the Apostle goes on to say, "Our bodies washed with pure water." What is that? An allusion to what we get in Leviticus 8:6, the washing of the priests at their consecration. And now what are the consecrated ones told by the Apostle to do? (2) "Let us hold fast the profession of our hope without wavering." How unlike this is to many a Christian now-a-days. I see souls who have what I call a "hook-and-eye" sort of faith. They are sure of their salvation today, and all at sea about it tomorrow. Surely this is the work of Satan in the soul. He accuses the brethren before God, and he fills the soul with doubts; but tell me what room there is for any one to doubt who believes in the ransom God has given for the sinner? God is the justifier of the one who believes. Satan cannot touch the blood of Christ, and in that blood the sinner who believes has been washed. The blood cleanses from all sin, and its efficacy is everlasting. Who can accuse you when God justifies you?

"But will not Christ condemn me?" asks the doubting one. How could that be when it was Christ who died for you? May your hearts lay hold of the wondrous security of the one who trusts God's word. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." And what else are the consecrated ones exhorted to? (3) "Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works." This is very important. You may be able to see very little of Christ in me, but you are told to provoke me to increased devotedness. How can you do this? You must lavish your love on me. How would you cure a pump if it were dry? By pouring into it a few buckets of water, and soon the sparkling water will flow forth in refreshing and continuous streams. Now this is how you are to deal with the sleepy, half-dead brother or sister. Let such an one see in you that which you long to find in him, and thus by your love you will provoke him to renewed energy in the Divine way.

Then how needful the next exhortation. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." Let us seize every opportunity of being together as God's people; then will there be occasion for this holy provocation. If you like best to be by yourself, I can only say it is a very poor thing, and a bad sign of your own condition. It is the sheep that is sick that straggles away from the flock. Let us keep together and care for one another. Let us answer to that for which God has created us in Christ Jesus: namely, love and "good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10). Let our energies, beloved fellow-believers, be all controlled by the blessed Spirit of God, so that we may be to the praise of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

W. T. P. W.

12. One Appeal More.

One Appeal More.

W. T. P. Wolston.

(CBA12,316)

Beloved Reader, yet unsaved! one appeal more would I make to thee, regarding the safety of thy most precious soul, ere the year rolls away. Oh! I beseech thee turn not a deaf ear to the pointed words I may address thee, for God only knows if another appeal, spoken, or written, shall be made to thee; and, if thou art cut off in the terrible state in which this finds thee, awful indeed must be thy future.

God indeed appeals to thee by my pen. Wilt thou heed His voice? When God was dealing with Pharaoh, the word was, "Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh" (Exodus 11:1). We know what it was. Death — stern, cold, relentless, irresistible in its bond-breaking force, — entered the scene and the proud king gave way. To thee, dear soul, He speaks in voice of greatest love and tenderness, and, knowing well as He does thy true state as a lost sinner, bids thee turn to Himself. This year came in and found thee a stranger to God, shall it depart and find thee so? God forbid. Awake, awake, O slumberer, on the very brink of eternal ruin! Not a few have heard the voice of God in the pages of "God's Glad Tidings," and, we rejoice to know, have been saved through believing. its simple testimony to God's beloved Son. The first article of the first number, "The Saved Soul;" or, "Christ Accepted," God graciously used for blessing to a poor dying man, who departed rejoicing, to be with Christ, a few days after. Many a number since then, has passed through thy hands belike, and, yet, sad truth, thou art still unsaved. Unmoved thou hast not been at times, but undecided thou still art. Soul! I call on thee, as thou valuest an eternity of bliss with Christ, and wouldst escape an eternity of woe without Him, decide! Thou need'st not wait one moment more — God knows thy guilt and sins, but He knows also the full value of that wondrous atonement for sins. that Jesus made on the cross.

"It is finished," is the Saviour's shout of victory in the moment of His death. The next moment the value of His atoning work is manifest. "The veil" is rent in twain from the top to the bottom, the throne of God is reached, vindicated, reconciled, and the way to it laid open on the one hand, and, on the other the opened graves proclaim how fully the need and case of man have been met — sin, death, and, Satan's power all overcome; and resurrection, both of Christ and those that, were His, the only fruit that could be expected to follow such a work, is seen in due time on the third day. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay," is the angel's call (an empty grave the proof of His perfect victory over all our foes), and "Peace unto you," the Saviour's sweet salutation when meeting His own at eve. Gone on high, seated at God's right hand, He has sent down the Holy Ghost to proclaim the joyful news of free and full salvation for all who will trust His name.

Now then, beloved reader, why wilt thou tarry a moment more? Cast thyself fully this moment on the Lord. Oh, come to Him! He will not cast thee out. Forgiveness of all the past thou shalt freely

have at His hands; all shall be cancelled and blotted out; thou wilt be justified before men and devils; no longer a stranger and an exile, thou shalt be a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus; the fear and misgivings of thy heart all cast out by His perfect love, thou wilt enjoy His precious grace on earth, and shortly pass to be with Him in eternal glory. Refuse Him — and what must follow? The blackness of darkness for ever, the depths of an eternal hell, the wrath of a sin-hating God, the stings of a once smothered but now all powerful conscience, the pangs of undying remorse the sense for eternity of being LOST through thine own folly and unbelief; and, worse than all ere thou goest down to thine eternal abode of woe, thou must see Jesus face to face at the throne, and then "depart," ever haunted by the memory of His face once seen to be seen no more, and consumed with unavailing sorrow that thou didst despise His love, thou must endure through the morningless night of eternity the most awful fruit of thy sin, the being forsaken of God.

Dearest soul, canst thou brave this future? Nay, turn now to Jesus, heeding His own blessed words, "And let him that is athirst COME, and whosoever will, let him take THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY."

W. T. P. Wolston.

13. The Two Alexanders;

The Two Alexanders; or, Delay and Decision. A Hospital Narrative.

W. T. P. Wolston.

Manchester Series. — No. 270

(CBA12,316) Chapter 1. — "I'LL THINK ABOUT IT, SIR." The work of the week was over, and the clock was just striking ten one Saturday night, during the session 1865-6, when, having seen the rest of the patients under my care in certain wards of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, I drew near to the bedside of Alexander S-. He lay in ward -, having been admitted four days previously with unmistakable evidences of consumption. This night I made a more careful examination of his chest than I had before done, and it was doubtless this that drew from him, the moment I had finished, the question "Well Doctor, what do you think of my case?"

He was a carpenter, a fine, manly fellow of 20, and his calm, intelligent face did not give much evidence of the disease which had wrought frightful ravages in the lungs; however, he had been ill for some time, and I judged was prepared to receive the truth in reply to his query.

"You are pretty bad, I am sorry to say, Alexander," I replied.

"I guessed that, sir; but do you think I shall get better?"

"In this cold climate, I fear there is not much prospect of recovery for you, the only chance appears to me to lie in your getting to some warmer region, such as Australia."

"Well, sir, there is no hope in that quarter," he replied, "for I have no means to take me there, and no friends who could pay my passage. I hope you will do what you can for me here."

"You may rest assured of that," I rejoined; "everything that skill and care can furnish you with here you shall have."

Thank you, sir," he quietly replied, in no wise perturbed by my communication, which I now saw he was evidently fully expecting. A pause of a moment or two followed, and then, turning the subject, I said, "Well, my dear fellow, now we have spoken about the poor, frail body, what about the soul? Are you saved, Alexander?"

"Oh! I could not say that, sir."

"But is it not time for you to be looking the things of eternity fully in the face? Why do you not come to Jesus, and then you would be saved?"

"I have thought of these things sometimes, sir, and I've read my Bible occasionally, and when I was well I went to church now and then. I know I'm not so good as I ought to be, but, I'm not so bad as a great many that I know of."

"All that may be quite true, Alexander, but it is beside the mark, and your not being so bad as some others will not help you before God, will it?"

"Oh, no, sir, that's quite true; but I have not lived a very bad life, and I hope to be saved."

"You need not 'hope to be saved,' you may know and have salvation where you lie this very night, if you will receive Christ; and perceiving that he was now somewhat interested I sat down on his bed and told him the gospel as simply and plainly as I could. He answered freely enough any question I put to him, and, as I pressed his own guilt upon his conscience, I saw he was convicted that he was a sinner, and, farther, a lost one, were he to die in his present state. Having unfolded the story of the cross, as God's only way of escape for a lost sinner, and assured him that God bade him do nothing but believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and rest simply on His finished work, I now pressed on him immediate acceptance of God's offered mercy and salvation. Quietly he listened to all till the clock struck eleven, when he said rather emphatically, "I'll think about it, sir."

"Stay," I argued; "why will you think about it, when God wants you to take Christ just where you lie, and be saved this night. The Philippian jailor heard of Jesus, believed on Him, and was saved immediately. Don't put off deciding, I beseech you."

"I promise you I'll think about it, sir. Good night."

Seeing he was determined only to "think about" and not to "receive" my message, I very reluctantly bade him "Good night." His bed was quite at the bottom of the long ward and opposite its foot was a door. I crossed the ward, opened the door and was partly out in the passage, closing the door behind me, when, ere my hand released its grasp of the handle, a voice seemed to say, "Go back and speak to him once more." I hesitated. Was it fancy, or the Lord lingering in grace over one who was refusing His mercy? "Go back" again seemed to sound in my ears.

I returned to his bed, and, bending over him, said, "Alexander, I cannot leave you tonight with that terribly uncertain word, 'I'll think about it.' Oh, do decide for Christ. You may never have another opportunity of receiving or believing the gospel. God's word says 'Behold now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.' I have come back just to beseech you not to 'think about' but to receive Christ." A shade of displeasure, I grieve to say, rose upon his brow, and again repeating "I'll think about it, sir, a second time, he said "good night," and sorrowful at heart, I scarcely knew why, I now finally left him.

Chapter 2. — A MORNING OF DEATH. The next morning, Lord's Day, at eight o'clock exactly, the nurse of the ward came hastily to my sitting-room, which was some distance off, begging that I would at once pay a visit to Alexander. Very speedily I was in the ward. A death-like stillness pervaded it. Several patients and the two nurses were round the bed I had sat on nine hours before, pressing Christ and salvation on the occupant thereof. As I drew near they scattered, giving me a view of Alexander's face. White as the sheet that came in contact with it, the truth was apparent, he was not faint, as some supposed, from loss of blood, but DEAD.

He had risen that morning as usual, was seated at the table eating his breakfast when, without the slightest warning, a torrent of blood flowed from his mouth (a large vessel in the lungs having given way, and, ere he could be placed in his bed, life ebbed away, and his pallid and lifeless corpse alone met my gaze, as, for the third time within nine hours, I stood by that bed at the foot of

the ward. That moment I shall never forget! Gone, and where? Into eternal night, I feared. To myself I said, "Ah! poor Alexander, you will have time enough now to 'think about it,' when, alas! it is too late to believe and receive it."

Oh, the horrors of a night without a morning! I fear, poor fellow, he entered it by the gaping doorway of procrastination.

Chapter 3. — "I'LL NOT SLEEP TILL IT'S SETTLED."

It was a cold, cheerless day in October, 1865, and "Auld Reekie," [Edinburgh] more than ordinarily enveloped, in mist for the time of the year, was, sullenly submitting to be drenched with rain, and pierced' by the cold east blasts that came fresh from the northern ocean. Without, all was wet, cold, and dirty; within, everything was as bright, tidy, and clean as the usual autumnal expenditure of soap, paint, and whitewash could render the ward, while a blazing fire at each end diffused a genial glow of warmth, all the more enjoyable from the contrast visible through the newly cleaned windows. A good many of the beds had each their occupant, but still there was room for more ere, the complement, of eighteen was attained. The hour was drawing near for the arrival of the visiting physician when, two young men entered the ward, and the elder, addressing me, said, "Would you be kind enough to prescribe for my friend, sir, he has a bad cold and cough?" Turning to see his companion, I beheld a youth of seventeen, whose face made a lasting impression on me, from its rare expression and almost feminine beauty. Fair as a woman, with a soft speaking, grey eye, a finely chiselled Grecian nose, and every other exquisite proportion, he seemed not a subject for hospital treatment, had not a delicate tell-tale blush in the centre of each cheek given a clue to mischief needing prompt attention. After a question or two and a cursory examination, I determined to induce him to remain in the infirmary, and accordingly urged him to do so. He hesitated, saying he had come from London for a little change and holiday, and to be in ward would be no holiday, and he did not think he was ill enough to necessitate this. There was some truth in this, but I was so interested in him that I alluded to the inclement weather as making it imprudent for him to go much out with his then symptoms, etc., So, after a little pressure, in which his friend joined, he consented to come in the next day at noon. On Saturday, Alexander U- entered the ward at, the appointed hour, and at the usual evening visit, having seen my other patients, I proceeded to make a careful examination of his chest. The apex of each lung gave the faintest indication, of that dire disease which, I suspected from his cheek — consumption. A question or two drew out the family history, His mother had died of consumption, and he had lost four brothers through the same fatal scourge, each of them having died, he said, within six weeks of taking ill, and then added, "I'm much afraid I'm going the same way, sir."

"Indeed, why should you think this?"

"Oh, they all began just like me, and somehow, I don't think I'll get better . . . Do you think so, Doctor?"

"Well, Alexander, your family history is certainly very bad, but, as your trouble has been detected thus early, I hope, with proper treatment, it may be arrested."

He looked incredulous but thankful, and, perceiving that he was beginning to have some confidence in me, I continued, "Supposing you don't get better, Alexander, what then? Are you ready to die?"

"Me ready? Oh, no, sir; I'm not ready. If I were to die just now, I know I should be lost for ever."

"Then you have thought about your soul sometimes, I should judge from what you say?"

"No, sir; I can't say I ever thought seriously, though I was well brought up. I had godly parents, and a praying mother, but she's dead long since and gone to heaven, I believe (and here the remembrance of a mother's faith and piety caused the tears to fill his eyes). I got good instruction when I was a boy, but I left my home some time since and went to London, where I have been a clerk."

"And what happened in London?"

"Well, sir, I'll tell the truth, I got amongst ungodly comrades, very soon I became dissipated and wild, and I believe it's my reckless life that has brought my illness on. It's all my own fault, I can blame no one but myself; I deserve punishment for my sins, and there's no chance for me to be saved, for I know I'm only a wicked sinner."

"But, would you not like to be saved?"

"Yes, indeed, sir; but there's no salvation for the like of me."

"There is where you are wrong. Did you never hear the word, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners?' You are the very one that Jesus wants and came for He is a Saviour, and you are a sinner. They are just suited to each other. The sinner needs a Saviour to save him, and the Saviour is on the look out for the sinner to save. More, He died for the sinner. The 8th verse of Romans 5:1-21 says, 'God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' Now, don't you believe that Jesus died for you?"

"I believe He died for you, sir, for you are a good man, but He could not have died for a wretch like me."

"Wrong again, Alexander. It was not for the good Jesus died, for 'none is good save One, that is God,' and 'there is none that doeth good, no, not one.' So you see I am not good, neither are you, and yet Jesus died for us. The reason why He died was that He loved us, as Paul said,

"Who loved me, and gave himself for me." Oh, think of His love, and trust Him. There is in Him, now a free, full salvation, if you will only receive Him. What say you, will you turn to Him now, and trust Him? He died for sinners, but, having completely finished the work of atonement, He rose the third day, in proof of the value of His work, and now, alive in glory, He is waiting to receive, bless, and save you, just as He saved the thief on the cross."

"Oh, Sir, it's all for the like of you, but not for me."

I shall never forget that night, nor Alexander's face, as I passed on to tell him more of the grace and love of Jesus. Lying flat on his back, with compressed lips, heaving nostril, and eyes bathed in tears fixed on me, he listened truly for life. Every word seemed to enter his soul, while the more he heard of the Lord's love, only, the more deep became the sense of his own guilt. I had no need to press decision on him, he was only too anxious to be decided. By this time it was getting late, and the lights in the ward had been lowered, so I was about to bid him good night and depart, when he

said, "Please, sir, won't you pray with me, before you go?" I am so much obliged to you for speaking with me, but I'd so like if you would pray." This I did, looking to the Lord that His blessing might fall that night on the awakened lad. Scarcely had I finished, ere he grasped my hand and exclaimed, "Thank you, sir. Good night. I'll not sleep till it's settled."

I bade him good night, and retired to my bed.

Chapter 4. — A MORNING OF LIFE. On the Lord's Day I usually visited the patients pretty early. So shortly after 9 a.m. I was again in the ward where Alexander was.

I had barely entered it when a sound, but rarely heard under similar circumstances, fell on my ear in the shape of a cheery but courteous "Good morning, sir." Looking up, I beheld my young friend dressed, and standing at the foot of his bed, which was the nearest to the door.

"Good morning, Alexander."

"It's all right sir."

"It's all right!' What do you mean?"

"Oh, what you were speaking of last night. I could not sleep after you left for thinking, of my sins, and what you told me about the Saviour, and His love in dying on the cross for sinners like me. I lay awake thinking till four o'clock, and then (pointing to a window across the ward, opposite his bed), I seemed to see the Saviour dying on the cross, extended there for me and bearing my sins, and I heard Him say. 'Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' So I just came to Him, and I have rest now, sir. I have found Jesus, and I am so happy." Had you seen his face at that moment, my reader, even you would not have doubted his statement. It was like the face of an angel, perfectly radiant with divine joy. There was no mistake about it. He had simply and unreservedly cast himself upon Christ (go thou, friend, and do likewise), and, as a consequence, was filled "with all joy and peace in believing." Alexander remained nearly a fortnight in the infirmary, during which time he gave every evidence of being a child of God, and grew rapidly in grace, while it was only too evident also that his bodily disease was taking the same rapid course as in his brothers. This being so, it was resolved to give him the chance of life which a voyage to, and residence in Australia afforded. A rich relation kindly paid his passage, so in November he returned to London to await the sailing of a vessel. While there I received two letters from him. One contained this expression: "I am very happy as regards my soul's salvation. I hope that you do always remember me at the throne of grace." The second, "I am thankful to be able to inform you that I am very much better indeed, and Dr. I- strongly recommends me to go to Australia at once. I am going, if spared, on the 30th of this month (December), in a ship called 'The London,' of London I hope you do not forget me in your prayers."

Chapter 5. — GOING HOME IN A STORM.

January, 1866, will long be remembered. During the first week there called at Plymouth for passengers and letters a magnificent, full-rigged iron ship of 2,000 tons. Her captain was a man of skill and experience, the officers and crew being picked men. On the 6th, "The London" sailed for Melbourne, with a cargo valued at £120,000, and having also a freight of living souls, of untold value, to the number of 239, amongst them being my young friend Alexander. Scarcely was the gallant ship out of sight of land than she experienced a succession of gales, which culminated on

the night of the 10th in a hurricane, which many will remember cast numerous vessels ashore in Torbay. Before the fury of this blast in the Bay of Biscay she succumbed. Tremendous seas at once stove in her stern ports, smashed her boats, carried away her engine-room hatches, extinguished the fires, and rapidly filled the hold with water. By vigorous pumping she was kept above water till daylight of the 11th. Then the brave captain called all into the saloon and plainly said there was no hope of escape. This intimation was quietly received, because expected. In the saloon the Rev. Mr. Draper prayed aloud, and exhorted the unhappy creatures by whom he was surrounded. Dismay was present to many hearts, disorder to none. Mothers were seen weeping sadly over the little ones, about, with them, to be engulfed, and the children, ignorant of their coming death, were pitifully enquiring the cause of so much woe. Friends were taking leave of friends, as if preparing for a long journey. Others, crouched down with Bibles in their hands, were endeavouring to snatch consolation from passages long known, or long neglected. At 2 p.m. a pinnace was got out, into which 16 of the crew and 3 passengers stepped, and scarcely was the boat clear of "The London" than, stern foremost, she sank, carrying to a watery grave 220 precious souls, amongst them my beloved young friend and brother in the Lord, Alexander U-. When this heart-rending tale reached me I was deeply grieved at having been the promoter of the Australian voyage, so, knowing his father and only sister were alive, I sat down and wrote to the old man a letter of comfort, telling of the Lord's grace to his son while in the infirmary, and the firm conviction I had that his son was now with the Lord. The first man from the place where he dwelt brought a beautiful letter in reply. It was full of sadness and resignation. I give the substance: "I have had six sons. Four died of consumption, the fifth I heard of six months ago as lying ill in a hospital in China, and I fear he is gone; and now Alexander, my youngest, is taken, but, 'the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.' I believe you have been the means of leading my boy to the Saviour. He wrote many times to his only sister, beseeching her to give her heart to the Lord, and when his vessel touched at Plymouth he would be so happy to receive a letter which she wrote him, saying, she too had sought and found the Saviour. So I am comforted, though it is hard to bear." The ways of God are wondrous, and in nothing more sweetly seen than in the channels of blessing He uses, and the way the, circle of blessing widens. The brother is converted in the infirmary, through his letters the sister is led to the Lord; he goes home to be with Christ in the way described (and what a blessing he may have been to many awakened souls on board that vessel God only knows, and, the day of the Lord alone will declare), while the sister holds on her way rejoicing for a brief year or two, and then joins her brother in the Lord's presence, as I have since learned from another source. And now, dear reader, I must have just one word with you as to the state of your own soul. Whereabouts are you? Have you received Christ yet? If not, don't delay a single day. Let the history above recorded be both a warning and an example. Could there be a greater similarity, and yet a greater contrast? Both had the same name, lay in the same ward, were suffering from the same disease, were nearly the same age, heard the same glad tidings, and each on a Saturday night. One delays, and within nine hours is in eternity, I fear without Christ; the other decides, and in less than nine hours is in the full possession of joy and peace, through simple faith in Christ. True, he too now is in eternity, but I am persuaded it is "with Christ;" and often as I picture to myself the stricken vessel, and her fated freight, methinks, high above the roar of the wind, the lash of the waves, and the wail of sorrow, I hear, soft and sweet, the words of the young believer, "I am very happy as regards my soul's salvation." Could you, beloved reader, say the same were: you in similar circumstances? Now, do be persuaded. If you

have halted till now, halt no longer. Begin this new year with Christ. Let those that have rolled by suffice for rejecting Him. Receive Him now, by faith in His name, and start "in Christ a new creature."

Let not Satan lure you into saying, "I'll think about it, lest you be like the first Alexander in his end; but, the rather, may your language truly be, "I'll not sleep till it's settled;" then, surely, whether living or dying, your testimony shall be as clear and distinct as that of the second, "It's all right," and "I am very happy as regards my soul's salvation."

W. T. P. W.

Edinburgh, Jan. 1, 1873.

14. Reciprocal Affection.

Reciprocal Affection.

Song of Solomon 4:1-16.

W.T.P. Wolston.

Christian Friend Vol. 5, p. 1.

It is a blessed thing to cultivate in our hearts, not only the sense of what God has done for us, but also what He in grace has made us to be for Himself. It is most blessed to get away from ourselves, and entering into the secret of God's presence, there to learn what those sentiments are which fill His heart. The Spirit of God makes those who believe in Christ to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; so the apostle Peter says in his first epistle. (1 Peter 1:8.) That is our side of this joy, but "It is meet that we should make merry and be glad," is His, for the Father has His joy as well, and it is boundless. He rejoices to have children near to Him — children who can enjoy God. "Christ suffered, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God;" and "we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation." (Romans 5:11.)

It is that we may enjoy Himself that we are made nigh by the precious blood of Christ. It is not merely what He gives us, but Himself, who is to be the portion of our souls, and this is the fruit of the new birth. Because born again, we enjoy God Himself. "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ." But what is this new birth? It is our getting a new nature, which has the capacity to enjoy and understand and know God. The soul gets this as the fruit of His grace. We are made to enjoy God; but then He has His side as well. His joy is to have His children near to Him, and we are to have the sense that there is nothing between our hearts and Himself. Thus we see there is the joy of the Father, and the children's joy likewise. In chap. 4 of the Song of Solomon we see Christ's part in this joy. The relationship here presented is not that of father and children. Of that the words of our hymn speak - "Thou the prodigal hast pardoned, Kissed us with a Father's love;

Killed the fatted calf, and called us E'er to dwell with Thee above.

"Clothed in garments of salvation, At Thy table is our place;

We rejoice, and Thou rejoicest, In the riches of Thy grace." In the fourth chapter of the Song it is the bridal relationship which comes out. It is the joy of the Bridegroom and of His bride.* We are prone to read this book so as to find Christ in it, and our hearts glow as we trace Him in its various scenes; but it is very sweet to turn for a moment and learn what the bride is to Christ. No language could be more lovely than that which we find He uses with regard to her. Listen to Him! "Behold, thou art all fair, my love" — all fair; "there is no spot in thee." Yet the more we know of Christ, the more we know of ourselves; and as we walk with God, as the years roll by, we take lower and lower estimates of ourselves. Each year we think less of ourselves than we did the year before. So much is this the case that the heart is apt to become legal. The exceeding worthlessness of what

we find within us is so apparent to us. How blessed then, notwithstanding all we see ourselves to be, that Christ says of us, "There is no spot in thee; thou art all fair, my love!"

*As our readers know, the bride in this book is the earthly one — Jerusalem. Still the heart of Christ is the same in all relationships, and we may therefore fairly make an application to the church. — E.D.

It is blessed to dwell upon the Lord's thoughts of His people; to think of the Lord's pity, and of His compassionate love, though that is not the love referred to in the Song. Here it is the love of complacency. He is rejoicing over His bride, and he speaks of her beauty and of her comeliness. But how can He find in us that which can delight Him? He does find that which is the joy and rejoicing of His heart, though not because of what we are in ourselves. It is all the result of what He Himself has invested us with. Jacob found in Rachel that which met the desires of his heart; and we find in Christ that which satisfies us; and Christ finds in His bride, the Church, that which delights His heart. "Ah!" you say, "it may be so when He will have presented us to Himself 'a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.' Then the Church will be holy, and without blemish. Then all that which is worthless shall have been dropped, and only that which is His own perfect workmanship will abide." But that is not the moment to which this chapter points. That day of glory and exceeding joy will come; but what we find here is something more wonderful than what will then be shown forth. Here we learn that even now, whilst we tread the sand of the desert, on our way to the glory that awaits the bride and Bridegroom, He finds in the Church that which delights His heart. He waits in heaven at the Father's right hand for the nuptial-day. Whilst then He is the portion of our hearts, He finds in us the portion of His heart. Look at what He says. As the Bridegroom speaks of His bride, the expressions of His love and appreciation deepen. He says to her, "Thou hast ravished," or taken away, "my heart; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes." Do we think of this? Do we believe it, beloved, that we are a joy to Him? We might well say of Him, that He has stolen away our hearts; but when He says we have ravished His heart, surely it is a wonderful thing. His delight is found in us; in the one He calls His bride.

It is not the individual believer, but the collective thing that is here spoken of. It is always the body of believers when the bridal affections of Christ are referred to; but in order that our souls, as a whole, may walk in the power of this wonderful truth, we must each individually be in the enjoyment of it. Each saint must dwell on that which Christ is seeking for in the assembly of His saints. It is through grace alone, I need not say, that any of us can enter into this — His joy concerning His own. But, I repeat, unless each one is individually enjoying it for himself and herself, we shall not, as a whole, answer to that which Christ is seeking us to be for Himself: There must be in your soul and in mine the sense of what we are to Christ. When this is known, and the heart has tasted it a little, we sigh to know it more deeply.

Look now at the response He gets from the bride. In Song of Solomon 1:1-17 she is heard to say, "Thy love is better than wine." She knows His love, and it is better to her than all beside; but His language exceeds hers. Hear what the Bridegroom says to her: "How much better is thy love than wine!" (Song of Solomon 4:10.) What grace in Christ to say this of such poor heartless ones as you and me! Yet this is the estimate Christ forms of any little love He now finds in our souls to Him. "Thy lips," He continues, "O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue." Every word that falls from the lip, all that is the fruit of grace in the soul, is to Him like the

droppings from the honeycomb. In Scripture honey indicates that which is food as well as refreshment. How such a scripture as this judges us! What has our conversation been? Has it been that which could feed as well as refresh the heart of the blessed Lord? "A garden enclosed," He says, "is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." All this means she is entirely for Him, only for the Bridegroom. Ah, beloved, it is blessed when the soul gets to this! All that I am, and all that I have, belong to Him, to Jesus only. I am to be for Him here, and He says I am His own. He wants me for Himself. Is not His desire enough to make each soul surrender fully to Him? "He died . . . that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." (2 Corinthians 5:15.) But the Bridegroom enlarges on what the bride is to Him. "Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard, spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon." Such is Christ's appreciation of "His own," and we should have the sense of all this in our souls, of what He sees His people to be. If we carried in our souls more the thought of what we are to Christ, He would be morn to us. The eye would then be more off ourselves, and off one another. Then would our gaze on Him be more steady, and the joy of our souls be more calm and holy. Then we should be more jealous of that which would cause any distance between our souls and Christ. We would watch with eagerness its approach, and be able to shun it. But He cares for His glory, and does preserve us for Himself; so we read, "Awake, O north wind." He sends His north wind, bearing its wave of trouble to rouse the careless one. We do not like this; but it is good and wholesome for the spices in His garden. It shakes them out. The wind gets through the branches, and the fragrance is poured forth. Trouble checks us. It casts us on God, and presses out that which is of Christ in us. Thus we learn what He would teach us. Then He can vary His dealings; the wind is changed. He says, "Come, thou south wind, and blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out." He gives deep enjoyment of Himself. He makes the sun of His presence to shine in upon our souls, and the heart turns to Him, and says, "Let my Beloved come into His garden." The joy of communion is then known and enjoyed. Then the heart says, "I am all for my Beloved. I am my Beloved's, and His desire is towards me. Let Him eat His pleasant fruits." The soul enters into His thought as to His bride. And how does He respond to her desire to have Him near her? "I am come," He says, "into my garden, my sister, my spouse." He appreciates that which is devoted to Him. He says, as it were, "It is all mine;" or, "I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten ray honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk." As the soul enters into communion, and is conscious that He draws near, the heart Goes out more and more to Him. "Drink, yea, drink abundantly; O beloved." But as we thus muse on this joy of communion between the Bridegroom and His bride, we may well bow our heads in humiliation, and say, How little have we known of it! How little can we have been the joy and rejoicing of His heart! True, very true; yet faith lays hold of God's estimate of things.

Turn for a moment to 2 Corinthians 11:2, and see how the apostle sums up this matter. "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."* The Song of Solomon does not go beyond the day of espousals, but Paul points to the nuptial day, when the espoused one will be presented as a chaste virgin to Christ. What does he mean by a chaste virgin? It is one who is true, about whom a breath of reproach could not have been; so he warns them: "I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." We need more of this simplicity, brethren

— the simplicity that is in Christ. Let our souls awake ! Let us say before Him, "He is everything to me, and I am everything to Him." W. T. P. W.

* See previous note. — E.D.

15. A Rent Veil, A Risen Saviour, A Redeemed Sinner

A Rent Veil, A Risen Saviour, A Redeemed Sinner Matthew 27:35-55; Matthew 28:1-11.

W. T. P. Wolston.

What the gospel does for a soul that receives it, is to bring it to God, not merely to bring a man to heaven when he dies, but to bring him to God now, to enjoy God now, before he gets to heaven. "Christ suffered for sins once, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Now that is the very last place where you who are unconverted would like to be brought. You do not want to be brought to God, and I will tell you why; because you are afraid of God. The unconverted man is always afraid of God; he does not want to get into His presence; and why? Because he knows very well that there are some questions God will raise with him, and he is not prepared to answer them. God must raise the question of sin with every soul. It is a question that has to be answered between every soul and God, and the man that does not know Christ cannot happily answer it in God's presence.

Now, there are three things that mark Christianity — a rent veil, a risen Saviour, and a redeemed sinner. In Hebrews 10:19-20, we read: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." Here the Spirit of God gives us what the veil was a type of. If we turn to the Old Testament we shall get what this veil was, and what it was used for. It had a twofold use, it shut man out, and it shut God in — man could not go in to God, and God could not come out to man.

If we look at the description of the tabernacle, we shall see it was an oblong tent divided into two parts, the holy place, and the most holy. The whole mass of the people might come no farther than the brazen altar in the court of the tabernacle, on which the sacrifices were offered — type of the death of Christ in atonement for sin. Beyond this the people dared not go. The priests, the sons of Aaron, might go farther, having first washed at the laver which stood betwixt the altar and the door of the tent. They went inside the first covering into the holy place, to perform the service of the tabernacle, but the veil shut them out from the most holy place. Within that veil they might never go; what was there, their eyes might never look upon.

Inside that veil was the ark of the covenant, containing the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant, and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat; each cherubim looking towards the mercy-seat. But besides this, what else was there? The presence of God! God dwelt there between the cherubims, and into that presence they could not go, and if He came out, it could only be in judgment. Oh, the solitariness of those long years wherein God dwelt alone! One only day, once in a year, might man approach God. Once in the year the high priest might go inside that veil, shrouded by the incense, and with the blood of atonement in his hand, and every other man was shut out.

Christ, as man, walked this wilderness path without sin, and that is what no other man ever did. In life, then, the life of Christ, there is no approach for a sinner to God. By His death only can you approach God.

Let us look for a moment at what that wondrous veil was made of. If you turn to Exodus 26:31, you have it: "And thou shalt make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work; with cherubims shall it be made."

Now what is the blue? The blue is the well-known symbol of what is heavenly. And was not Christ heavenly? Where did He come from? From heaven! He could say while walking this earth, "The Son of man which is in heaven." He is "the second man, the Lord from heaven." He came from heaven, down to this earth, and everything about Him was heavenly. There you get the blue the heavenly character of Christ, as the God-man, God manifest in the flesh.

What is the purple, then? Well, purple is the imperial colour, and what is He? King of kings, and Lord of lords. He whose right it is to reign shall yet be displayed in this character to the whole universe of God. In bitter mockery they clothed Him in purple in the day of His shame and agony, but He is King of kings and Lord of lords, and the wide universe of God will yet own His sway. There never has been an earthly king or potentate whose kingdom has not been taken away from him; death has come in and robbed him of all his glory, but this King, after a long and glorious reign over the wide earth during a thousand years gives up His kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all. Death comes and takes it from every other. This One goes through death first — wears no crown in life down here, but the crown of thorns they gave Him in cruel mockery — rises up out of earth, and there, by acquiring the right to be set as Son of man, God's King, over all creation.

Then there comes the scarlet. "Oh," you say, "scarlet means suffering." Not always. Scarlet is the Jewish royal colour, for not only is He to be king over the whole earth, but in very special manner He is "king of the Jews," and as purple was Gentile colour, so scarlet was the Jewish emblem of royalty. They put over His cross, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews," and they wrote it in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin, that all peoples and tongues might read the inscription. It really did describe who He was, and what their guilt was, for He was king of the Jews, and they had crucified, in scorn and hatred and unbelief, their king.

Next, you have the fine twined linen of cunning work, figurative, I believe, of His only nature as man; that which all could see and recognize and underneath the veiled Godhead. Perfectly righteous, perfectly holy, perfectly pure, as man, and with all the glory of the Godhead shining through. The cunning work is emblematic of the way God devised by which He was legally Joseph's son, and thus heir to the throne — the Jewish law esteeming Mary as Joseph's wife after espousal — really the son of Mary, as it is written, "a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son," while actually as to His nature the Son of God, — yea God Himself become a man. Amazing mystery of Divine wisdom and love!

"With cherubims shall it be made." Cherubims symbolize the governmental dealings of God; and is not "the government upon His shoulder?" Has not God committed all judgment to Him?

We first read of the cherubims in Genesis 3:24 : "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the

way of the tree of life." Here, as the executive of God in judgment, they appear looking outward toward man in his sin. Secondly, in Exodus 25:18-20, we get: "And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy-seat . . . of the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof . . . and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubims be."

Here, in type, they gaze inward on to the blood-stained mercy-seat, which we know from Romans 2:25 means Christ — having finished a work which enables God righteously to save guilty man. Thirdly, we have seen them in the veil, 1:e. connected with Christ personally. What does John 5:22 mean? "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Again (5:27), "and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." And again, God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). And, "who shall judge the quick (or living) and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom," but our Lord Jesus Christ? (2 Timothy 4:1).

It is, then, clear that Christ both judges and executes judgment on the ungodly. How then, sinner, can you escape it? The rent veil is the silent, the eloquent answer. He who is the judge, after your sin, but before the day of His judgment thereof, steps in and Himself sustains the judgment, that He may deliver you from it. What amazing love! The veil was to be hung upon four pillars of shittim wood. "What is the shittim wood?" you say. Well, I believe the shittim wood speaks of His humanity. He took a human form that He might be able to die. But the shittim wood was overlaid with gold. Gold, in Scripture, represents Divine righteousness. The hooks, likewise, were of gold, and the sockets were of silver, Now silver is typical of redemption. You will notice the sockets of the tabernacle were made of the half shekels of silver that were paid by the people as redemption money — "every man a ransom for his soul" (See Exodus 30:12; Exodus 38:25-28). Everything is based on redemption.

Since the fall, man cannot meet God save on the ground of redemption. But how is this redemption accomplished?

Jesus dies, and by His death opens the way of life for you, for me. Read carefully the tale the 27th of Matthew records. Look at it; look at the scorn, the enmity, the mockery, the hatred He passed through. "Oh," you say, "but did not God comfort Him in that terrible hour, did not God sustain His soul?" I believe from the third hour to the sixth hour, that is from nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified Him, until twelve o'clock, that God did stand by Him, did sustain His soul, did manifest to Him His perfect, infinite delight in Him. I believe that never was He so the delight of the Father's heart as in that hour, when, scorned by the world, and forsaken by His own, He hung there between heaven and earth. But see what happens! At the sixth hour — that is, twelve o'clock, noon — darkness, like a pall, falls over the whole land. What is it? What is this strange eclipse at noonday? Is it God in judgment coming forth to execute vengeance on men — on sinners for their treatment of this Holy One, His beloved Son? Is God about to pour forth His judgment on their guilty heads? Well might they think so. No doubt they did. Well might they believe it was swift and just retribution coming for their murder of Him, of whom even the thief dying by His side could say, "This man hath done nothing amiss;" whom Pilate declared to be a "just person," in whom he could find no fault; who even their own guilty hearts and consciences

must have known was unworthy thus to die. But was it God's judgment on a guilty world? No! It was something greater far, deeper far. It was not God dealing with sinful man, but God dealing with His own Son, God dealing with Christ, because of man's sin, that He had taken upon Him. In that terrible hour, when darkness veiled the land, there was another far greater eclipse, a perfect eclipse between God and that One who hung there, even, His own beloved Son, bearing sin. God hid His face from Him then. When all had forsaken Him, as He says, "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, then, at that very time, God forsook Him too! And those three hours of darkness, those three hours of total eclipse between God and the One on the cross, rolled on, and then at the ninth hour, three o'clock in the afternoon, comes that great, that terrible cry from Him, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Ah, He forsook Jesus in that hour, that He might never forsake you and me. There was darkness for Him that there might be only light for us. He bore the judgment that we might go free.

Once more, He cries with a loud voice, "It is finished," and gives up His spirit. "No man taketh it from me, I lay it down of myself." And at that same moment God rends the veil, cherubims and all. He who should execute judgment on man, has in grace sustained and borne it for man; the price has been paid, redemption has been accomplished, and God is able now to come out in grace to man, in spite of his guilt, because of what Christ has done, and man may go in to God through a "new and living way." Beautiful word, a living way. I like that word! How a living way? Because it is not a dead Saviour that I am presenting to you now, but a risen and a living Saviour. He "ever liveth to make intercession for us." He has gone into the grave and come up out of it, having abolished death, and destroyed him who had the power thereof. The third day the tomb was empty, the Saviour had risen. That open grave, that risen Saviour, are the proof that the sins for which He suffered are for ever gone. And what about the redeemed sinner? Well, I need not say much about him — Christ has everything to do with his redemption, He has brought him to God, as I said at the beginning, and the sinner, or rather he is the believer now, thus brought to God, has nothing to do but to "joy in God," and to wait quietly for the return of the Lord to take him to be with Himself, delighting in the meantime in every little bit of sweet service he can render Him while he stays here. As a redeemed sinner I have nothing to do but to rejoice in the One who has redeemed me. "But what about your sins?" you ask. Well, I will tell you: God has talked to Christ about my sins, that He might talk to me about Christ.

During those three hours of darkness God dealt with the Lord Jesus about my sins, that He might be able to speak to me only of Jesus.

"But what about the judgment-seat: are you not afraid of that?" No. If I were to stand there and hear every one of my sins brought up, I should only say, "Lord, remember — Lord, remember." Remember what? "Not me, but Christ. Remember He died for me. I am unworthy, but He died for me. His blood was shed for me." Have you ever noticed one thing lacking in the vessels of the tabernacle? There is no seat there found. And why, think you? I will tell you. Because the priest's work was never done. "Offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." There is no repetition of His offering, there can be none. Whatever your sins are, His offering, once offered, is a full discharge for all. "Offered one sacrifice for sins." For whose sins? For sins. But for whose? For sins. It does not say for whose, nor for how many, and if I had the whole sins of a nation on my shoulders this moment I should not care, with my eye on this word of

the living God, for the next moment I might know that I am without a single one, free to go in boldly into God's presence because He died for sins, and therefore He died for my sins. That veil was rent: rent, too, from the top to the bottom. Why from the top, to the bottom? Because man had no hand in it. If man had rent that veil, it would only have been to bring out swift destruction on himself. God Himself opened the way of access thus for the very vilest sinner into the holiest of all.

God will never enter into judgment with one who simply trusts in Christ. Those who believe on Him will be with Him, and like Him, before that judgment-seat is set. John 5:28 says, "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."

"And does not that all take place at once?" No; more than a thousand years roll between the first part of that verse and the second. The Lord takes two days to empty the graves and to raise the dead. Could He not do it all at once? No; impossible! He comes first to fetch His own. He Himself descends into the air, and there is the sound of the trumpet and the voice of words, His own voice, and part of the graves are emptied, the tombs are opened, and their occupants come forth. Where do they go? They go up with their Lord, to be for ever in His own bright presence. "They that have done good unto the resurrection of life," that is, of that eternal life which they possessed, because He gave it to them when they were still down here. That light that He lit in their hearts never went out, that life He gave never was extinguished, once lighted. God never intended that that light should go out. "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

"They that have done good," then, 1:e. all who have Christ, go up to be with Him, and the rest of the dead remain in their graves, and more than a thousand years roll by, and then there comes another opening of the graves, another resurrection of the dead, and they stand, small and great, before the great white throne; to be judged out of those things written in the books, according to their works. "They that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment." They stand there clothed in their sins, to be judged. Which of these two resurrections are you, my friend, going to have part in? Are you going to stand before Him in your sins then, or do you know what it is now to have boldness to enter into the holiest, through that new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh? Do you know what it is to "draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith?" And let me tell you "full assurance of faith" does not mean a very great amount of faith, but that which simply clings to Christ, and trusts in His atoning blood as its only ground of access there to worship within the veil.

"Where do you worship?" one asked me, some weeks since. "Oh," I answered, "I am very High Church; I worship inside the veil, in the holiest, and that is in heaven itself. I know of nowhere else where I can worship. If I worship the Lord Jesus, I must worship Him where He is." If you look on to Hebrews 13:1-25 : you will find something else combined with being "inside the veil," and that is, "outside the camp." Now, people oftentimes do not like this, they do not like the reproach outside the camp; but depend upon it, the two go very much together, and if I am not prepared for the reproach of being outside the camp with a rejected Christ, I shall not know much of the joy of being inside the veil. These two truths are like the two blades of a pair of scissors — one is very little use without the other — to have one blade alone is no good at all, but when you have both joined

together, how good and how useful. There is nothing so cutting as these two blades together — "inside the veil" and "outside the camp." People like to get inside the veil, but depend upon it they do not remain there long unless they know something of what it is to be outside the camp too. That is why one hears so often of loss of joy: loss of peace, too, oftentimes. People want to mix up being inside the veil with God and being in the world too, and they cannot; they want one blade of the scissors without the other. The Lord give us to hold fast the profession of our hope without wavering, provoking unto love and good works, that is, being so true to the Lord ourselves, that we may be helpers of each other till the day of His coming again!

"In the grave they could not find Him, He had told them so before:

Justice could no longer bind Him, Mourner, let your fears be o'er;

'He is risen!'

Jesus lives for evermore.

'Peace unto you!' this His greeting, Word of Him that cannot lie, From the heart that bore our judgment, Heart of love that cannot die.

'Peace unto you!'

Still He speaketh from on high.

'It is finished!' 'He is risen.'

Ye who these blest words receive, Peace in Him is now your portion, Peace eternal He will give, 'Peace unto you!'

All who on His name believe."

16. God's Salvation and the Scorners' Doom

God's Salvation and the Scorners' Doom

W.T.P.Wolston.

"Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the Lord; Thus saith the Lord, Tomorrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria. Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof. And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? If we say, we will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now, therefore, come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die. And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, there was no man there. For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us. Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life. And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it. Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now, therefore, come, that we may go and tell the king's household. So they came and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, there was no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they were. And he called the porters; and they told it to the king's house within. And the king arose in the night, and said unto his servants, I will now show you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we be hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city. And one of his servants answered and said, Let some take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city (behold, they are as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it: behold, I say, they are even as all the multitude of the Israelites that are consumed), and let us send and see. They took, therefore, two chariot horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, Go and see. And they went after them unto Jordan: and, lo, all the way was full of garments and vessels, which the Syrians had cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned, and told the king. And the people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the Lord. And the king appointed the lord on whose hand he leaned to have the charge of the gate: and the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died, as the man of God had said,

who spake when the king came down to him. And it came to pass as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, Two measures of barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall be tomorrow about this time in the gate of Samaria: and that lord answered the man of God, and said, Now, behold, if the Lord should make windows in heaven, might such a thing be? And he said, Behold thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof. And so it fell out unto him: for the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died." — 2 Kings 7:1-20.

"Salvation is of the Lord." This is a word uttered by Jonah before the hand of God delivered him from the belly of the great fish, but after Jonah had learned the lesson which the Lord meant to teach him. "Salvation is of the Lord," 1:e., it is entirely of God's grace. It may meet my need, and thanks be to God, it does meet it; but the condition I am in, whether rather higher or rather lower, in no way affects the grace of God; in fact the worse a man is, the fitter he is for salvation, for then he has nothing of his own to rest upon, and cannot deceive himself with the thought that he is better than his neighbours. The king, in this chapter, is a picture of man in his pride and his religion, and the lepers are a picture of man in his filthiness without religion, and God meets both cases. Elisha is a picture of Christ, full of grace and truth; the One who meets man in his guilt, however great that guilt may be.

Samaria — Israel — had departed from God, and as the result of that departure God had brought up the King of Syria and his armies against them, and they thoroughly beleaguered the city of Samaria till the state of famine and destitution passed all description. You can imagine nothing worse than a woman boiling her own son. When God draws a picture, He draws a true picture. Man likes to draw a bright picture and to throw a veil over the dark side; God describes faith. fully what man is. In the king we see a certain measure of looking to God — he wore sackcloth next to his flesh. Sackcloth is in Scripture a well-known symbol of repentance; too proud to let the people know he thought the finger of God was upon him, he put the sackcloth within, not without. He was like many an one now, who has a certain amount of seriousness, but would not like his neighbours to know. He did not like to own his sin, and would willingly have blamed God or His servant, for this state, which was the result of Israel's sin. Though there might have been religion and formalism, there was evidently no turning of heart to God, in the king, for had there been real repentance, the sackcloth, I believe, would have been worn outside, not in. Moreover, he blames the prophet, and is determined to wreak his vengeance upon him. Man has done worse than that, man has wreaked his vengeance on the One who came to bless, who went about doing good, who healed their sick and raised their dead; Him in their bitter hatred they crucified and slew.

Elisha was a type of Jesus in being a blesser of Israel, and the king in his pride would have taken the prophet's life, and man in his sin did take the life of Jesus. Did it ever strike you what part you have had in the death of Jesus? I own your voice did not swell those awful cries, "Away with Him, His blood be on us;" but you have a heart that is in sympathy with those who did thus cry; for if you are not yet a child of God you are an enemy of God, for there are but two classes, children of God, and enemies of God. Do you say, I am not an enemy? Are you a friend then? Are you a child? Have you been born again? Have you been quickened by the Spirit? Have you eternal life?

"Oh, no one can know," you reply. Pardon me, my friend, you are wrong in that, the believer is entitled to know with absolute certainty that he is a child of God: "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."

Another thing we know on divine authority. that the friendship of the world is enmity with God. It is impossible to be a friend of the world and a friend of God. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," John says. God declares we were His enemies, "when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." Do you own you have been an enemy? "No." Ah, you little know your own history; look back at it, have you loved Him? "Not as much as I ought." What an evasive answer! The fact is, people do not like to be brought to this point. For this very reason, BECAUSE we were enemies, the gospel is preached: it comes out as a message from God to those who are away from God; "we pray you," Paul says, "in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:20). The king, in this chapter, I have said is the picture of an unconverted religious man; there was the external religiousness, but within there was hatred, he wanted the life of Elisha, Elisha who had done only good to Israel, whom the moment before he had called "my father." Look on farther in man's history and see; one moment the people are hanging on the lips of Jesus, and the next they take Him to the brow of the hill to cast Him down, and why? Because He had made them know their state, and they could not bear it (Luke 4:1-44). People do not like their consciences reached. The king was angry, and I am not very sorry when I see people angry at the gospel preaching, it shows that conscience has been touched. But are you an enemy of Christ's, and do not know it? Has Satan given you some sweet lullaby, whereby you are lulled into false security? Oh! wake up, wake up; be roused in time; be warned of the terrible danger of remaining one night longer an enemy of God!

Look, I beseech you, at the grace of God. A messenger goes down to Elisha, and the king follows. Why was not the messenger dealt with? Because grace comes in. It is a picture of man in his sin, man in his guilt; man in his hatred, confronted by grace. Now that your evil has reached its full height, now that you have shown your religion is false, and your enmity at its height, now that your sin has reached its culminating point, now God will come in and save you. Grace comes in to meet the desperate need of man's utter ruin. Where are you if you are not a child of God? You are a sinner. You may be religious, so was the king, you are a religious sinner. You may be moral, you are a moral sinner. You may be educated, you are an educated sinner. God says to you, "There is nothing in your heart but enmity against me; I know what you are, now let me tell you what I am." Thus saith the Lord, "Tomorrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel and two measures of barley for a shekel in the gate of Samaria." Grace seizes the moment when hatred has done its very worst, and says, "Now this is the moment of Salvation." It was at the cross, when man had done his very worst in putting Jesus there, when man's sin and man's hatred had reached their height, that was the very moment God chose to reverse everything, God took that moment to reveal His love, and put away man's guilt. The cross was the place where good and evil, love and hatred, met in mortal combat, and love conquered - love gushes from His pierced side, love for God and His glory, love to the poor sinner in his sinful state, for nothing but His blood could meet. that sinful state and put away his guilt. There love triumphed over sin, and hatred, and all the dark enmity of man's heart.

"Tomorrow." Those words to the starving in. habitants of Samaria meant salvation, meant a thorough deliverance from their pitiable state. But unbelief always rejects the glad tidings of God. Dire, dark unbelief always throws cold water on the gospel of God; "if the Lord would make windows in heaven might this thing be?" says the nobleman. "Salvation tomorrow? I do not believe it," says the lord; "you tell me there is full deliverance coming tomorrow, it cannot be; if it were

rained down from heaven it might be, in no other way could it be "in the gate of Samaria." But that is just the point, the whole truth, salvation comes to the very place where you are. And, dear reader, I have better tidings for you than there were that day in Samaria. I preach, not salvation tomorrow, for a shekel of silver, but salvation today, this moment for you, where you now are, salvation without money and without price. "Be it known unto you, that through this man is preached unto you the remission of sins," for "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Salvation through Jesus' blood is proclaimed to you now, on the ground that you are a sinner and are lost. He knows your true state, and He offers you salvation now, without money and without price, salvation today, salvation TODAY. From the heart of God comes down the message to you as you are in your sins today, that the sin, the guilt, the debt, and the judgment due to man have been taken by another, paid by another — all the deep debt, and God the Holy Ghost is ready to take possession of the heart that believes God's message. But what about the unbeliever? "Behold thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof." These are close dealings, mark them well. Oh, careless, scoffing soul, you who do not know Christ, do not want Christ, do not want to be converted, you may laugh now, you will not laugh in hell, depend upon this there are no scoffers in the lake of fire. It is all very well for you to laugh and have your sport when the evangelist proclaims the gospel, but remember, "thou shalt see it with thine eyes," when too late for thee to accept of it. "Son, remember," oh remember, you, even you shall know it is all true, when you can never have it. Thou shalt hear those sounds of heavenly music inside the gates where thou mayest never enter: music that thou mightest have joined in, but now never may. Thou shalt behold afar of that scene of holy divine joy and bliss of the redeemed, thou shalt see every eye fixed with ineffable joy on Christ, "thou shalt see it," but afar off, thou thyself being cast out and degraded: cast out for ever, "thou shalt see it," yes, see it, but shall not taste thereof. What a withering sentence! what a terrible sentence!

He who said, "Tomorrow shall a measure of fine flour he sold for a shekel," 1:e., tomorrow shall salvation come to you, also said, "Thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof." Each word came true; as the first, so the second. And He who spake as never man spake says, "He that believeth on me shall never hunger," "He that believeth shall be saved," says also, "He that believeth not shall be damned."

I believe the fine flour is typical of Christ, the Bread of life, the Bread of heaven, given for man, Christ given for man's need. Oh, despise not His grace, slight not His love, risk not the unbeliever's doom. Oh, risk it not another day, another moment: go to Him, trust Him; let the lepers show you the way. They went out to throw themselves on unknown pity, you have only to throw yourself on the mercy of God, on the compassion of God; they came to the camp of the Syrians, and found everything they needed, and nothing to hinder their taking all they needed. And if you take the place of the lepers, of an empty one, and go to God, though you may have thought God your enemy (as they thought the Syrians their enemies, yet found all they needed, and found none to hinder their taking it too), you will find nothing to hinder your taking salvation and the ample provision God has supplied. You have nothing to do but to take it, and then to turn round and tell others, "there is plenty for you, too," enough and to spare; there is everything I need, and that others need too.

There is nothing that God keeps back from those who trust Him, from those who come forth to His dear Son. Oh, trust Him now, thou shalt find in Him a Saviour and a Friend, a helper and a

succourer, thou shalt find in Him thine all, for time and for eternity, thou shalt find with me that "salvation is of the Lord." But oh, if thou art lost through thine unbelief, thou shalt find it is all thine own folly, thou shalt have none to blame for it but thyself. "And so it fell out unto him, for the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died." He saw it, the food, the salvation for Samaria, but too late; there it was, the unmistakable evidence of the truth of the prophet's words, but not for him. And so with you, like the poor rich man in Luke 16:1-31, you shall be able to see afar off what you despised; I do not say how long or how often you shall see it, but once I say, you will have one long, one fixed look at the salvation of God, that might have been yours but for your own unbelief, "thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not taste thereof." Oh, my friend, you have despised mercy long enough, despise it no longer; you have turned from Christ long enough, turn to Him now, and receive from His hands the salvation He is so willing to bestow, that He may get the glory, and your soul eternal joy!

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