

WRESTLING OR CLINGING,

AND

OTHER GOSPEL ADDRESSES.

BY ALGERNON J. POLLOCK.

Newcastle-on-Tyne :

GOSPEL TRACT DEPÔT, 62, BLACKETT STREET.

London :

A. S. ROUSE, 15 & 16, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.

Rochester, N.Y., U.S.A. :

BIBLE TRUTH DEPÔT, 432, EAST MAIN STREET.



PREFACE.

THIS volume consists of eight Gospel Addresses delivered in Baltimore, America.

They were taken down by a stenographer and have been carefully revised, and are now sent forth with the earnest prayer that as God has blessed the spoken Word, He may now use the printed page in blessing to very many souls.

Quotations from Scripture are throughout printed in italics.

A. J. P.

*Montego Bay, Jamaica,
West Indies,*

12th February, 1897.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
1. Wrestling or Clinging	I
2. Freedom for the Slave ; or the Year of Jubilee	21
3. Difference ; or Man's Condition and God's Interposition	41
4. Naaman ; or the Sinner and his Mistakes	59
5. Silence and Speech ; or Conviction and Confession	81
6. The Way of Salvation	99
7. The Sheep and the Sow ; or Reality and Profession	119
8. " Behold, the Bridegroom "	138

Wrestling or Clinging.

"And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."—(GEN. xxxii. 30).

JACOB—the sinner—had seen God, the One who cannot look upon iniquity, face to face, and yet his life was preserved. Jacob, however, is not the only person who must meet God. Every single one of my hearers must meet God one day sooner or later, and, should we go no further, we want to impress this solemn fact upon you; to ring this great cardinal truth in your ears, and may God make its echo reach right down to the depths of your souls.

YOU must meet God.

"I cannot die; I will not die," shrieked out a young lady, wrapping at the same time the blanket convulsively around her head, as she struggled in the embrace of death. But she *did* die, and passed on to the great interview she so much dreaded. Meet God she must. There was no alternative. Friend, you may not be called to enter eternity so soon as that young lady was; you may, perhaps, live a great many years; you may, indeed, live far past the allotted three score years and ten, but, at long last you must meet God, and *how* will you meet Him?

There are two times and two places in which you may meet God, and two results. *The two times are*

NOW, or by-and-bye, IN ETERNITY ; *the two places*—IN THIS WORLD, or in the day of judgment, BEFORE THE GREAT WHITE THRONE ; *the two results*—if you meet Him now, in time—SALVATION ; but, if you put it off until eternity, until

the great white throne

is set up—DAMNATION !

You know that terrible word—*damnation*—has gone out of fashion in this nineteenth century. Preachers don't use it so much as they once did, but the fact remains that, if you are not saved in this world by the precious blood of Jesus, you will be eternally lost—yes, damned—in the next. Meet God you must, but, how ? is the great burning question of all questions that we would ring in your ears, and our prayer is that God may ring it deep down in your souls.

It is interesting to trace how Jacob met God face to face, and how his life was preserved. Our chapter begins with these words—“ *And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.* ” Now, ever since Adam fell, men and women have been going on in their own way. I went on my own way once, and you, my unconverted hearer, are going on your own way. It is the broad road that leadeth to destruction.

It is a popular road

thronged by the drunkard, the gambler, the harlot ; aye, patronised by the merely religious and the moral, by the unconverted deacon, the unsaved Sunday-school teacher, and the unconverted baptised communicant. Unconverted hearer, again we repeat, you are going on your own way, and it leads to hell. But God wants to meet you in order to bless you and save you.

He has many ways of meeting souls. For instance :

you are laid on a bed of sickness, you don't care a bit about your soul, you hear of people being converted, but you don't believe that such a thing is true; the people who experience it you think are weaklings and children deceived by their emotions. Yet it was a great relief to you when the doctor came and told you that your case was not hopeless. You were laid on your back, and for once

you had time to think.

God was seeking to meet you, to speak to you about your soul, and your sins, and to make you *think* about eternity.

One day you were going down the street to business, and some one thrust a tract into your hand, and you didn't like it, yet God was seeking by that printed page to meet you again. A friend said to you, may-be this evening, "Will you go with me to hear the gospel preaching in Baltimore to-night by a preacher from England?" You were persuaded to go. Why? God wants to meet you. Ah! it is a wonderful thing when you find out for the first time that God desires your deepest, most lasting blessing for all eternity, and that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for sinners, that the blessed Saviour shed His precious blood, that cleanses from ALL sin, that having died He is risen and glorified at God's right hand—the proof that the work is done—and that He has sent from the glory the Holy Spirit into this world in order to reach, and win such as you for Christ.

A clergyman in England was returning from a flower-show. He said to a gentleman, who was in the railway compartment with him, "I have just been to a rose-show, and of all the miserable shows I have ever seen

this is about the worst. It was very poor, quite disappointing." The train stopped, the clergyman got out, but just before the whistle sounded, and the train moved out of the station, the gentleman put his head out of the carriage-window, and said, "Sir, do you know that you are

an object of the love of God?"

and the train was carried out of the station before he could reply. The clergyman walked a mile and a half up to his vicarage, and that sentence was revolving and revolving in his mind, "Do I know that I am an object of the love of God?" Praise God, that great and mighty truth got further than his brain, it got eighteen inches lower down—into his heart—and that man was converted.

He got up in his pulpit the next Sunday morning, and said to his congregation, "My friends, my parents sent me to college, I was taught Latin and Greek, taught theology, made a minister, and all the time I was unconverted, and since my ordination I have been discoursing morality to you, preaching ethics to you just to suit the natural tastes of my listeners. But I want to tell you

a grand secret

this morning. I have learnt that God loves me, and He has saved me through His Son." That was how God met this dear clergyman—has He met *you* yet? Did you ever think of that, God loves the sinner, and if you and God meet, it will be for your eternal salvation and blessing?

Let us trace the history of Jacob a little further. No sooner did the angels of God leave him than he makes up his mind to make friends with his brother Esau. He

had quarrelled with him long years before ; he had sinned against him, cheated him of his birthright ; now he thinks it is high time to make friends with him again. Just in the same way does the anxious sinner think that he must make friends with the God against whom he has sinned—his sins trouble him.

So Jacob thought of his sin committed long years before. It came

in ten-fold power

upon his conscience as he thought about his guilty past. It stung him to the quick. So he sends a message to Esau.

But there comes something to his ears that terrifies him. His brother is coming to meet him with four hundred armed men ; he is afraid now. That guilty, cringing Jacob has a vision before his eyes of his brother Esau filled with anger, and he hears in imagination the tramp of four hundred armed men marching with glittering spear and flashing sword. Every moment they draw nearer. "*Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed,*" we read.

Just in the same way you and your sins are going to meet one day ; you cannot get out of it. Each beat of your pulse, each throb of your heart, each fugitive hour, each rising and setting sun, all carry you on nearer and nearer to the moment when

you and your sins must meet.

Thank God, I hastened to meet mine ; I confessed my sins to God in the light of His holy presence, and now they are forgiven through simple faith in Christ. I have met God, and I can say in deepest gratitude to Him, not merely that my life is preserved, but that my soul is saved for ever. But if you put off salvation, if you

go on your way without heeding God's message, you and your sins must meet one day to your everlasting dismay and doom.

In the mouth of two or three witnesses evidence is established, is a well-known legal principle all over the world. Nay, God Himself communicated it. "*In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.*" (Matt. xviii. 16.) Soon you will stand before the great white throne, and your case will be gone into. *Who are the witnesses?* Look at the witness box; there is one of your sins ready to herald forth the story of your sin and guilt, nay, not one merely, nor two, nor twenty, nor two hundred, nor two thousand, nor two millions waiting to witness against you, but the *whole* of your guilty life, from beginning to end, must come out—sins of word, thought, and deed, sins of childhood, youth and riper years, sins of omission and sins of commission, secret sins and open sins, sins against conscience, sins against light, sins forgotten and sins remembered—

all will come out

in damning evidence against your soul. You must meet God.

When Jacob finds Esau advancing to meet him with four hundred men, what is the first thing he does? It is an apt illustration of what many an anxious sinner does. He begins to pray. Listen to him. "*O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, deliver me, I pray Thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.*" He was seeking to draw upon the piety of his father and grandfather. He thought the godly lives

of his forefathers would add weight to his prayer. What a profound mistake ! Every man must stand upon his individual responsibility before God, and your mother's prayers will not do you a bit of good, unconverted prodigal, unless you trust the Lord Jesus for yourself.

So Jacob begins to pray, and what do his prayers do for him ? Nothing, absolutely nothing. Neither will praying do you any good in the matter of your salvation, my hearer. Let me illustrate it. I was once preaching the gospel in a little village in the North of England. When the meeting was over a young lady stayed behind. The tears were rolling down her face, and she said to me, "I would like a little talk with you."

"Well," I asked, "What have you to say ?"

She replied, "I have been told in the village that you preach

some very strange doctrine."

"What is it ?" I enquired. "I should like to be put right in a matter of that kind."

"Well, I am told that you preach that we should not pray for salvation. Now," she said, and the tears rolled afresh down her face, "I have been praying for months and months for salvation, and do you mean to say that I have been wrong all this time ?"

I replied, "I will ask you a question. You have been praying for months. Have you got an answer ?"

She shook her head sadly, and replied, "No."

I proceeded, "You see this Bible in my hand, it was given me by a dear friend. When he offered it to me he said something like this : 'Here is a present for you. Will you accept it with my love ?' Now what would you think of me if I had said, 'O Mr. So-and-so, do give me that Bible, I know I don't deserve it, but

I will pray for it,

and work for it, do, pray, give me the Bible ;' and when he exclaimed in astonishment at my conduct, 'You have surely made a mistake. I offer it as *a gift*. Take it with my love, and keep it in remembrance of me,' I dropped on my knees, clasped my hands together, and bursting into tears still pleaded for the Bible, saying, 'I am sure I don't deserve it, but if you will only give it me I will try to deserve it.' Whatever would he think of me ?"

She replied, "He would think you were mad or bent on insulting him."

I said, "Exactly ! And does not the Bible say, 'THE GIFT OF GOD *is eternal life* ?' Does not God offer you as A GIFT, *salvation* ?"

She answered, "Yes."

"What have you been doing, then, when you have been praying for months and months and months for it ?"

She smiled through her tears, and said, "I see, I have been making a mistake ; I mustn't pray, I must take."

I replied, "Yes, as long as you pray you will never get it, but you must take it. Don't *pray* but *praise* instead, that is it." Thank God, that night she ceased *praying* and commenced *praising*.

Jesus has finished the work, it is all done, God is glorified by His Son, the Saviour is enthroned to-day in glory, and God now offers to whomsoever will salvation full and free as a gift, "*without money and without price*."

A certain bishop on his death-bed said, "I throw over all my good works, and all my bad works. I sail for glory on

the plank of free sovereign grace."

And, my friends, if ever you get to heaven, it will be by the work of Christ, not by anything you can do, or say, or think.

To proceed with Jacob's history. Does praying satisfy him? No; he gets a present together—he collects no less than 580 head of cattle, and puts them into droves, and gives them into the charge of his servants, and sends them on to appease Esau.

This is like the sinner. This is like you. What have you been doing? You want to be saved, don't you? What have *you* been doing? You have been turning over new leaves, giving your money to the heathen, supporting the church, going in for good works, and thus seeking to send on a present beforehand to God to appease Him. Will God save you for that? Never, dear friend. What does Scripture say?

“To him that WORKETH NOT,
but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” (Rom. iv. 5.)

There was once a gentleman staying at a watering place on the north coast of Wales. He happened one day to hear a fisherman preaching on the sands. After the service was over he went up to him and said, “I have listened with great pleasure to your discourse, but you have made one great mistake. You have told the people that they can get salvation without working for it. We have to work for it, we must do our best, and Christ will do the rest. That is the way we are to get to heaven.”

The fisherman pulled out his well-worn Bible, referring him to Romans iv. 5, and asked him to read the verse. He read it and replied, “I am sure that verse is not in *my* Bible. I will go and see.”

So he returned to his hotel, got out his valise, and after he had got past his pipes, and his novels, and his tennis-suit, and his clothes, right down at the bottom of his valise he took out a Bible his good old mother had put in. It was not thumbed like the fisherman's, it was nice and clean. We like to see

a clean house but a dirty Bible,

which looks as if it had been well used, thumbed and greasy, and marked by constant use, but this one was very clean. He turned to the passage, and read that glorious verse, "*To him that WORKETH NOT, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness,*" but he could not yet believe the greatness of God's heart—the declaration of salvation without works. So he went to four or five of his friends and borrowed their Bibles. He found, however, they all told out the same grand, glorious message, "*To him that WORKETH NOT, but believeth.*" Whether they were printed in London, Oxford, Cambridge, or New York, they all united in telling the same tale of grace.

It is an extremely difficult thing to knock out of the minds of people the idea that they have to work for salvation. Free grace is so foreign to the heart of man. We state the fact, at the risk of the charge of repetition, that *working*, WORKING, WORKING will not bring salvation, and the reason is twofold. We could never work out our salvation, because we are strengthless, and we *need* not do it because the work has all been done by Another. We are

1800 years too late,

for the blessed Saviour accomplished the work of atonement on Calvary's cross of shame.

What further? Jacob has prayed, he has also sent

on his present. Is he satisfied yet? No; he is afraid still to meet Esau. And I am quite sure, unconverted hearer, in spite of *your* prayers and presents, in spite of your courageous face, in spite of your bold manner, deep down in your heart you are ill at ease, nothing but a guilty coward. You may think preachers of the simple gospel are fools, and those who say positively they are saved no better, but when you are face to face with death, and when you stand naked and guilty before the great white throne, you will be a coward.

What expedient does Jacob resort to now? He has sent his *prayers* and *presents* on, now he sends his *property* on—his wives and children. I know very well how people do. They hang on to their property as long as they can, won't give a cent if they can possibly help it, whilst they are alive and well and strong. I have heard a lawyer say, that often when a man is

face to face with death

he sends for the family solicitor. He comes into the sick chamber, and something like this takes place. The dying sinner says, "Put a codicil to my will. Bequeath \$10,000 to the new Infirmary; \$5,000 to the Baltimore Dispensary; \$3,000 to the Vigilance Committee," and so on. What is he doing? He is sending on his property, when he cannot hold on to it any longer, and thinks that will appease God. It won't. Jacob sends on his property, thinking the sight of defenceless wives and innocent children will move his brother's heart. And now we come to the crucial point in Jacob's history. We read, "*And Jacob was left alone,*" left alone with his guilty conscience—left alone with remorseful memories—left alone with God.

My hearer, have *you* ever been in such a condition, that

you felt that you could not bear the very wife of your bosom to be beside you, your nearest and dearest friend to be near you, so tortured about your sins, so concerned about your soul that you wanted to be alone? There was a man in Manchester, England, not long ago, who was alone, yet there was a goodly company in the building where the preaching was. When the meeting was over, and the people had all gone out, and the preacher had left, still he sat

as if glued to his seat.

Some one happened to see him, went up to him, and asked him what he was waiting for. He burst into tears, this working man of forty years, and said, "The preacher must know me. He has been preaching at me the whole evening, as if there was not another person in the room." Needless to say he was an entire stranger to the preacher. But not so with the living God. God that night had met him. He was *alone* in God's presence, and converted that very night. You must, if you desire blessing to your soul, get into the presence of God. It is a grand thing to get there, and have it all out. Don't shirk it.

A young lady, anxious about her soul, went up to her bedroom. Some one went to a preacher living in the same house, and said to him, "Go up to my sister. She is in her room weeping about her sins. She is troubled about the future." He wisely replied, "Shut the door and leave her alone with God. I will not intrude."

Such are sacred scenes.

Oh! how God delights to bless.

Now, there comes another point in Jacob's history. "*There wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.*" We don't know what people say about

this in America, but in England a great deal is said in praise of "wrestling Jacob," but it was *the angel wrestling*. He came when Jacob was left alone, and threw his arms around him, like a well-trained wrestler, and wrestled with him. Jacob had been a double-minded, plotting, scheming man all his days. Now he is not to be outdone. He puts forth all his strength, and he and that mysterious visitor are locked in deadly combat. Every nerve and sinew is engaged in the unequal conflict. He sweats, and perspires, and strains all through the long night. It must have been a strange sight for the stars. At last the angel put forth a little more power, for he wrestled as man meets man, and crippled Jacob in the thigh. The thigh is a vulnerable point in the wrestler. When the thigh is out of joint, a man is not able to wrestle any more. The angel wrote

the sentence of death

upon the flesh of Jacob there and then. Jacob is completely *hors de combat*. What does he do now? Instead of *wrestling*, he takes perforce to *clinging*.

Now, sinner, that is a picture of you. God has been wrestling with you. You have experienced deep down in your soul what you would not tell your husband, your wife, father or mother. You have been haunted with the fear of death. Your sins have been growing heavier and heavier, until the load has been well-nigh intolerable. You have carried within your breast for long a guilty conscience. How has it all come about? For your eternal blessing. God has been wrestling with you.

Fancy God wrestling. God could have taken Jacob and crumpled him in His hands like a piece of silver

paper. In the same way He could have taken you, you stubborn self-willed sinner, and thrown you into the eternal burnings, but He does not. Why? Because He wants your blessing. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth. NOW *Jacob clings*. Have you ever felt

the helplessness of struggling with God?

Will you stop wrestling and take to clinging instead?

Speaking on this subject on Staten Island, New York State, a little while ago, we said to a man, who was anxious on the subject of his soul's salvation, "Are you wrestling or clinging?" He said, "I guess I have been wrestling far too long, I am going to try to cling." People speak with praise of wrestling Jacob, but *wrestling* Jacob never got a blessing any more than *praying* Jacob. When he was without strength he took to clinging, and if you would get God's blessing you must come to the point, when you can only cry out, "I have found out that I am a poor, worthless, strengthless sinner, I have failed to do a single thing that will do for God, I give up wrestling and take to clinging, I give up trying and take to trusting." The Gospel is in a nutshell. "*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*" asked the Philippian jailor. "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house,*" came the ready reply from the lips of Paul and Silas. "*For when we were yet*

WITHOUT STRENGTH,

in due time Christ died for the ungodly." (Rom. v. 6.)

To further illustrate the point. A few years ago we were preaching in Scotland, and a young lady became very anxious about her soul. Night after night we

spoke to her personally, but she could not take in the simple Gospel. It was too simple for her. It is so simple that people stumble over its very simplicity. One night we overheard a woman, only herself converted about three months, trying to help her. She said, in the beautiful Scotch tongue, so full of pathos, "Lassie, I was once like yourself, I was anxious about my soul. I went to kirk, I came to gospel-meetings, I prayed, I read my Bible, I did my very best, and things, instead of getting brighter, only grew darker. I struggled and strove to get salvation, but seemed farther off than ever. I remember one terrible night, the darkness seemed to settle right down on my soul, and, just as that happened, I turned to the Lord, and said, 'Lord, if I go to hell, I will go there trusting in Thy precious blood.' As soon as I made the resolve that I would *cling* to the Lord, it flashed into my soul that no sinner could go to the lake of fire who was trusting in the precious blood of Jesus. There and then the clouds rolled by, and

the sunshine came into my soul,
and I had peace with God." She had *wrestled* a long time, and then took at last to *clinging*, and found peace. The more you cling, the better you will get on.

Now when Jacob clings, God says to him, "*What is thy name?*" That was a very, very sore point with Jacob. The name, Jacob, means plunderer, cheat, double-dealer, intriguer, anything but what is canny and nice. A flush of shame, doubtless, spread over Jacob's face, as he made his confession. What did he say? One word, *only* one, "JACOB." It was enough. Scripture says, "*And He blessed him there.*" The place of *blessing* is the low place of *confession*. We

ask *you*, anxious sinner, what is *your* name? Let your confession come out of your lips. It must travel up from your heart to your mouth, and from your lips to us, or rather to the ear of God Himself. What is your name? It is SINNER. We know what some in this hall are saying—"Well, I own that I take a drop now and again, but I am not so bad as the drunkard, who pawns his clothes, and beats his wife, and starves his children." We turn to another, and ask: What is *your* name? He replies: "I do the best I can, I go to Church, I take the sacrament." My unsaved friend, if you died with

the wine of the sacrament

wet upon your lips, you would go straight to hell, because you are not converted to God. The Scripture says: "*He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*" (1 Cor. xi. 29). THAT IS SCRIPTURE. We ask a third: "What is *your* name?" The answer glibly comes to your lips: "I am a sinner. *All* are sinners; but, after all, I am not so bad as some. I stand as good a chance as most."

Your confessions are all a great deal too long. They are like some people's prayers. We heard a man praying the other day. It took him twenty-five minutes to get through. He prayed from Genesis to Revelation, and all around the globe, and back again, and was not a bit further on. You remember when Peter was sinking in the water, and felt his desperate need, his cry was, "*Lord, save me.*" Remember brevity and intensity go together.

If you are really broken down about your sins, you will not make a long story about it. You will say, "I

am a poor sinner without a single plea, I throw myself entirely upon Thy mercy." When you take

the low place of confession,

you will get to the spot where blessing is to be found. When Jacob confessed that his name was Jacob, the narrative says, "*And He blessed him there.*" And in blessing him his name was changed. "*Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but ISRAEL: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.*"

What a change! That old guilty history of his was for ever swept away. He should no more be known as the cheat, double-dealer, intriguer. The meaning of the name Israel is *a prince* with POWER with God and man. Yet that is the name linked up by the sovereignty of grace with that poor clinging cripple.

If you come, my friend, and trust in Christ to-night, and confess your sins, your name shall no more be called "*sinner,*" but "*saint.*"

"Why!" you say; "I thought saints were those holy persons who lived very good lives a few hundred years ago, and were canonized by the Church of Rome." The fact is,

a child six years of age,

who really trusts in the Lord, is as much a saint as the apostle Paul in glory. I know the world has sneered at the word *saint*, and connected it popularly with long-faced, psalm-singing, canting hypocrites; but it is in reality a precious title given by God to those who simply believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, as showing they are set apart for Himself—"called saints." You are either a sinner on the road to hell, or a saint on the road to glory. Which?

Now Jacob—*clinging* Jacob, not wrestling Jacob—is blessed. The angel had wrestled until the breaking of the day, the long night of unbelief had passed away, daylight had taken the place of darkness. We read further, "*And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel (that is, the face of God. See marginal reading): for I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved.*" And then immediately the Scriptures say, "*And as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him.*" What does that mean? Ah! if you come to Christ to-night the *darkness* in your soul will for ever pass away, and instead you will have

the SUNSHINE of God's love.

That is the meaning of it. We can say, "*The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*"

We were preaching the gospel in Yorkshire, England, a little while ago. One morning my fellow-labourer and I were sitting in our lodgings, at a farmhouse, when a young man was shown in, who wanted to see us. He sat down in an arm-chair, and put his head in his hands, and groaned aloud. We said, "What is the matter with you?"

He answered, "I was at your meeting last night, and I found out I was lost. I want to be saved."

We told him the way of salvation, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,*" and we showed him, that if he simply trusted Christ he would get what his soul longed for. But there he sat groaning, and would not even lift up his head, in too great anguish of spirit even to weep.

Feeling our weakness to help him, we said as gently as we could, "Go home, we have said all we

can to help you. Come and see us in the morning."

He got up and walked across the room like a man dazed. At the door he fell all in a heap on his knees. He seemed unable to go a single step further, until

the great soul-trouble

was settled. We spoke and prayed with him still further. At last he got up and took me by the hand, and looking up with the tears streaming down his cheeks, he said, "*I take Christ, and I take Him now.*" He put his hand out to my friend, and said, "*The love of God is in my soul.*" The sun had shone upon him. That farmhouse parlour was his Penue!.

You, too, my hearers, if you come to Christ to-night, will know what a deep joy it is to know God's love—to know Him is to love Him, and to love Him is to serve Him. The clouds will go, and the sunshine will come, and the love of God will be shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost.

Is there anyone within these four walls who will come just as they are, without turning over a new leaf, dropping all thought of merit in prayers and so-called good works, and, just as you are, trust that blessed Saviour? For, if you do, salvation is yours on the authority of God's Word.

Remember

your prayers, and presents, and property

won't gain salvation. You may pray till your knees are as hard as a camel's, you may toil at your good works till your present is of goodly size, you may give up husband, wife, father, mother, children, lover, friend, money, but all that cannot bring salvation. Remember, too, wrestling will never bring you happiness. Submit yourself to God's claims. Acknowledge yourself a

sinner, lost and hopeless. Cling to the blessed Saviour, who said, "*Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.*" "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.*" May God grant it for Christ's sake. Amen.



Freedom for the Slave; or the Year of Jubilee.

"And thou shalt number seven Sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years."

"Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land."

"And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family."—(LEV. XXV. 8-10).

A GREAT case has been made against anti-slavery people of the fact that slaves were permitted by God in connection with His ancient people, the Jews; but I would like to point out that those who have produced arguments in favour of slavery from the Old Testament Scriptures have done so with **a very superficial knowledge** of what God does really say in His Word.

A great many people read the Scriptures to their own destruction. We find the apostle Peter, speaking of the deep things that his beloved brother Paul writes about, says, the "*unlearned and unstable wrest (them),*

as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

Some years ago, in England, the late Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, in the city in which I lived, had a public debate with a clergyman of the Church of England. Mr. Bradlaugh was a man of colossal size, great intellectual attainments, and very wonderful powers of speech. The clergyman was comparatively a small man, and, unfortunately, did not know his Bible as well as the infidel. Mr. Bradlaugh turned over the leaves of his Bible with the ease of familiarity, opened it at chapter and verse, and simply knocked the clergyman about just as he liked; whereas, if that clergyman had simply known the Scriptures he could have floored Mr. Bradlaugh, and a hundred others like him.

What the Scripture says about slavery simply means this: They allowed a man, who had come to misfortune,

to lease his services *

to his richer brother, and great pains are taken in the Scripture to make enactments by which the richer shall not oppress his poorer brother. *"Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour; but shalt fear thy God."* If a Hebrew man or woman were sold and served for six years, in the seventh he or she were to go out free, and that not empty-handed, but furnished liberally out of the flock, and floor, and winepress. For want of time we recommend all cavillers to study Scripture on the point for themselves. Furthermore, once every fifty

* Since revising these addresses for the press this point has been most unexpectedly confirmed. Travelling by train in Jamaica a day or two ago a coloured man pointed to a coolie, a native of India. Making a few remarks about him, he alluded to the man as a slave. In astonishment I replied, "Surely not; there are no slaves now." "Oh, yes," he replied, "they are slaves for five years. They sign a bond to serve a certain employer for that period." I was greatly struck by the illustration of the custom obtaining in another land so many hundred of years ago.

years, in the passage we are specially examining, God proclaimed liberty to every slave in the land of Israel, and they were all free men again, save slaves bought from neighbouring nations, or captives taken in war. In the ways of God it was often to a man's eventual blessing to serve a Hebrew master. They were brought into an outward place of privilege, where they were treated kindly, where *God* was known, and where the awful practices of the heathen were sternly rebuked. Many a captive will thank God in eternity that ever he was taken captive. Slavery, such as is depicted in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," was unknown amongst the Jews. So much for the caviller. We now take the Scripture as an illustration of the gospel. We don't know whether you think slavery is abolished in the United States yet, but it still exists. Perhaps you thought the year 1864 saw the last of it. No such thing. I am perfectly sure some slaves are sitting in these seats before me to-night. We could go out at the midnight hour, and in your streets point you out the slaves of drink. Bleared, blotched, bloated drunkards, going to a drunkard's hell. Is there a secret drinker here to-night? Poor, miserable dupe of the devil. May God have mercy upon you. But some young lady may say, "I am no drunkard." Very likely not, but you may nevertheless be a slave—a poor slave of fashion; you would not like to tell how many hours you spend gazing into the looking-glass, and what a burning there is in your heart when preparing for the ball, with

its fleeting triumphs.

God knows all about it. Said a young lady to a trained nurse the other day, "Nurse, I would die if I had to give up the theatre." Yes, there are slaves of fashion,

butterflies of this life, fluttering around the flame of pleasure, and, what is more questionable, of lust. No wonder their wings are singed at last, and too late they find out they have lost their souls for a few paltry pleasures.

Again, business has many slaves. In death they often keep the eyes closed by weighting the eyelids with pennies ; the devil does it in life with dollars.

A large business man, a successful merchant, feeling not very well one day, went to his doctor, a very skilful physician, and asked him to look into the state of his health, and give him his advice. After a careful examination the doctor said, "You have had such a tremendous strain upon your system in the way of business for many years that you *must* take a prolonged holiday."

Said the poor slave of business, "I *can't*, the business could not go on without me," and, with his shattered nerves and body, continued grovelling for the dollars. A few weeks rolled by, and he was laid on a bed of sickness. In a few short hours he had passed into eternity, a poor slave of business—rich in this world, a pauper in the next. Business had to go on without him.

Drink, pleasure, business, money, enslave multitudes, and in many instances a Christless religion—its professors enslaved by the music, mimicry, and millinery of ritualism. From the cushioned pew, such are slipping into hell. But who is

the great slave-master ?

It is the Devil himself, who has you bound hand and foot, and you dare not be a Christian—you are a poor slave, a miserable dupe of Satan. Now liberty is proclaimed to such, and, thank God, a Stronger than

Satan has been in this world. The strong man had power to keep his goods in peace, until that Stronger One, the Lord Jesus Christ, came to despoil the strong. How did He do it ?

“ By weakness and defeat
He won the meed and crown,
Trod all our foes beneath His feet
By being trodden down.”

He won the mighty victory at Calvary's cross. To the eyes of the world His life was blighted, His reputation gone. He died on that central cross a malefactor's death in ignominy and shame ; but this *apparent* defeat was in reality

the mightiest victory of God,

by which He can now proclaim liberty to the captives of sin and Satan, and offer them release.

Now there are several important points in connection with this subject, which I want to bring before you. When was this year of jubilee ushered in ? Mark it well. *On the day of atonement*. There is a profoundly deep significance in that phrase. What does it mean ? Says many a drunkard, “ I will sign the pledge, don the blue ribbon, and be free from the power of drink.” Can he do it ? Nay, friends, he cannot, and you know it right well. He *may* keep sober, and this is a question when once the drink gets hold of the system, but can he wipe out the sins of the past and be sinless in the future ? We read in this scripture, the year of jubilee began *on the day of atonement*, which teaches us that there is no liberty for Satan's captives apart from the precious blood of Jesus. Is the blue ribbon the precious blood ? Nay ! I like to see men sober, but sober men are not necessarily converted men, nor free from Satan's captivity. Nowadays we are told that people can be

refined, and educated, and reared up in such a way that their evil propensities are kept back, and their good ones brought to the front, and in the process of a few generations by means of evolution we will arrive at a sinless race. Nay, friends, that is a lie of the devil.

Flesh is flesh,

whether it be sober flesh or drunken flesh, educated flesh or vulgar flesh. Until you have made the acquaintance of Christ, and know the value of His precious blood, there is no liberty for you.

But you don't think you are slaves ! The following incident aptly illustrates your case. There was once a slave-ship crossing from the coast of Africa to the shores of this continent, America—a slave-dhow as it was called. As they were proceeding on their journey they noticed a British man-of-war in hot pursuit. The slave-dhow put all sails to the wind, but it was of no avail. The British man-of-war was overhauling her. When the captain felt that escape was impossible, he got out some kegs of brandy and gave these poor negroes plentiful supplies of drink. He next brought out two or three large boxes of trinkets—rings, chains, ear-rings, ankle-rings, and the like, and began to adorn these poor, drunken slaves. After getting these poor children of nature into good humour, he called them to him, and said, “The captain of yonder vessel will offer you liberty, and try to get you on board his ship, but don't go. He will shoot you from the cannon's mouth ; he only means to ruin you.”

The captain of the English man-of-war hove to, boarded the dhow, called the slaves around him, and said, “Yonder is an English man-of-war. The moment you step on board that vessel you are free men.

The English flag only flies over free men." They **laughed him to scorn,** they would not believe it.

That is like you, sinner; the devil has given you intoxicants, and you are drunk with pleasure, and nonsense, and folly, and sin, or it may be lulled to a false peace by a Christless religion. He has trinkets to please all kinds of people. The man of the world wants his dogs and guns, his clubs and newspapers; the man of sin wants lust and uncleanness; the man of brain wants intellectual treats, scientific hobbies, and what not; the frivolous young lady wants fine flowers, and splendid dresses, and nice cosmetics. He will try and suit you, and will do a great deal for you, but it is in order that your soul may be damned for ever in the flames of hell. What does God offer you to-night? Everlasting salvation, liberty, forgiveness of your sins, freedom from the power of sin and Satan.

Now, it is *on the day of atonement* liberty is offered, and there are two things in connection with it we read of in the 23rd chapter. "*For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people. And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people.*" (Verses 29, 30). Now, we will imagine that it is six months from the year of jubilee. Think of how those slaves are looking forward to

the time of their release.

The time draws nearer—it is only six weeks off. They count the days. Now it is only six days; and, finally, at last the very night comes, and the morrow ushers in the year of jubilee, and, with it, the day of atonement.

Very likely not one of those poor slaves would go to sleep that night for very joy ; they would sit up and watch for the first streak of light tipping the eastern horizon, and hail it with delight, because it spelled to them that blessed word—liberty. But, before liberty is theirs, as we just now read, two things have to take place with them : they must afflict their souls, and they must do no manner of work. Now, friends, if you want liberty, if you want salvation, these two things must likewise be true of you. What are they ?

Firstly, you must afflict your soul. To translate that sentence into one New Testament word is simple. It means *repentance*, for you will never get salvation until you repent. What is repentance ? Does repentance earn salvation ? Does it win it ? Is it a work ? It isn't a work, because we read that they had to afflict their souls, and do no manner of work. To neglect to do the one, or essay to do the other brought death upon them. Repentance, therefore, is not a work. What is it, then ? It is this. You find deep down in your soul that you are a guilty sinner, only fit for hell. Yet God, in His love, offers you salvation, and you get this wondrous thought, "God is good and I am bad," and that is repentance. In short, you get right thoughts of God and yourself.

Repentance is something like sickness. For instance, I did not feel very well two or three days ago, and sent for the doctor. Now my feeling ill did not make me well, but my feeling ill made me send for a doctor. Now, if you repent, that is, if you get

a severe attack of soul-sickness,

it will make you anxious to see the great Physician. It won't make you better, but you will want the

services of the great Physician, and *HE can cure you*. What would you think of me if, when feeling ill and getting worse, I had said to my friends, I will not have a doctor until I feel better? They would think I was off my head. That is the way you do. You put off going to Christ until you turn over a new leaf, say your prayers, etc.—until you feel better. What nonsense! The worse the case, the greater need for the great Physician. You want to get better before you seek the services of Jesus, the great Healer of soul-diseases.

But repentance won't save you, though you cannot be saved without it; and if you go on carelessly, easily, indifferently to eternity you will never be saved. No. You must find out your condition, you will find it out one day. I need not be a prophet to inform you of that fact. If you don't discover it in this world, you will in the next. You may go along this life's journey very easily, you may carry your increasing years easily and gracefully, you may at last die quietly in your bed; but take my warning, when you wake up in eternity, you will be deeply concerned about your sins then. But it won't be *repentance*, it will be *remorse*. The hot, scorching, blinding tears of endless remorse will roll down your cheeks through the eternal ages. Take care.

Now is the time for repentance.

God "*now commandeth all men everywhere to REPENT: because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.*"

On the other hand, you must do no manner of work. You want to be saved; how should you set about it?

Let me tell you. Sit still, put your hands down, and don't try to work. If you try to move a single finger towards the work of your salvation, you are robbing God of His sovereign prerogative, and yourself of the blessing, until that finger is put down again. You must do no manner of work.

You have all heard of Martin Luther, that noble monk of Germany in the dark middle ages, and how he made a pilgrimage to Rome. When he saw that city with its magnificent ecclesiastical buildings, the place where the Holy Father had his seat, he thought he was near the very gate of heaven. When he arrived at St. Peter's, he began as a penitent to crawl up the Vatican steps on his knees. He had crawled up about half way, when there came a message from God ringing down into his soul—

“Justification by faith.”

How was he seeking it? By *works*; but justification is by *faith*. There and then he got up, walked down those steps a justified man, and thundered away at the gates of Rome until the very Pope trembled in his shoes. See him bravely nailing up his theses on the door of the University of Wittenberg; see him undaunted before Charles V. of Germany and Spain—that cruel and crafty monarch; before the kings and potentates of the German States; before papal legate and popish prelates, ringing out the key-note of the Reformation—
“JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.”

Yet, nowadays, we are told not to attack evil, because it is entrenched in high places. It might hurt the feelings of many. Forsooth! Shall souls perish whilst we hold our breath? Nay, we will proclaim the truth. Pope and priest may tell us to-day that justification is of

works. It is a damnable lie. It is of faith, of God's free, sovereign grace. Little wonder if Martin Luther should turn in his grave, as the universities of his native land are turning out men, trained in infidelity, to take charge of churches and the souls of men. The enemy is busy. Tares are being sown in the field of the world. Oh ! what shall the harvest be ? Yes, those who preach salvation by works are doing the devil's work, and earning the most terrible condemnation on their own heads.

On the day of atonement two things were necessary—they must afflict their souls, and do no manner of work. Let us suppose the day has arrived. The ceremony of the day of atonement has been gone through. The people have been afflicting their souls in the way commanded, and they have refrained from doing any work, even the lighting of their fires. What next ? The priests are commanded to take the silver trumpets, and blow a message of liberty from Dan to Beersheba, so that every poor captive may hear the grateful news that liberty is come to their very doors. What does the word *jubilee* mean ? The margin of our Bibles says,

Loud of sound.

Some people think that preachers should be very quiet, that they ought to talk something like automatic talking machines, that they ought not to raise their voices, or lower them at all, but talk in a quiet, easy-going, take-it-or-leave-it manner. The trumpet of jubilee must be loud of sound. See ! The priests fill their lungs with air, and blow a mighty blast that rings right across Jerusalem, that city of ceremonies. It is taken up. Blast after blast rings forth till, from Dan to Beersheba,

from north to south, from east to west, over hill and valley, the glad news sound forth, aye, until every captive has heard the gladdening sound, that liberty is theirs, and they step forth *free*.

Now, let me tell you, *we* have a trumpet of jubilee to put to our lips to-night.

"Blow ye the trumpet, blow,
The gladly solemn sound;
Let all the nations know
To earth's remotest bound,
The year of jubilee is come;
Return, ye ransomed sinners, home."

Thank God, it has been sounding for well-nigh nineteen centuries. God's grace lingers still.

Why did the Lord when on earth take the book from the master of the synagogue, and open it at the prophecy of Isaiah, and read about the Spirit of the Lord God anointing Him "*to preach the gospel to the poor . . . to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord?*" Then we read, "*He closed the book.*" Why at that particular point? Because in the Old Testament we find that after the expiration of the acceptable *year* of our Lord, it goes on to speak of

"the DAY of vengeance
of our God." Think of God's grace; He speaks of the acceptable *year* of grace. His love lingers, as it were, three hundred and sixty-five long days over this guilty world, but at last He takes up the ram's horn of judgment, and blows one terrible blast, and compresses His strange work of judgment into one brief *day* of twenty-four hours. *But now is the YEAR of Jubilee.* Jesus closes the book at that point, and has not opened it yet. .

When He does, as we see in Revelation, it will be on the day of vengeance of our God.

The Lord Jesus Christ has been upon the cross. Those three mysterious hours of anguish, and suffering, unparalleled, have been endured by the Holy Saviour. God has forsaken Jesus. The storm of judgment has rolled over His blessed head. He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost, and died. But ere He died, He cried, "*It is finished*," and as these three soul-thrilling words rang from His blessed lips, God's finger rent that veil from the top to the bottom, from His side to our side, in order that *He* might come out in all His character as a Saviour-God.

We read in John's first Epistle, "*If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.*" That shed blood enables the blessed God to reveal Himself in all His attributes as a God of love and a God of light, blessing the vilest sinner who comes pleading the precious name of Jesus. The Lord Jesus Christ—and the believer through grace is in the light of that revelation—was put into the borrowed grave. Now the Sabbath was ordained to be God's resting day, yet His blessed Son lay dead in the tomb **all that passover-Sabbath.**

But on the first day of the week Jesus arose from the dead. Before He ascended into glory He gathered His disciples around Him—they had been through no theological college, had received no tonsure, boasted no man-given credentials, nor had bishops hands been laid on their heads, they were but plain fishermen from Galilee's shores. Listen ! as He speaks to His chosen few. The risen Saviour puts the jubilee trumpet to His

lips, and blows a mighty blast. "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.*" That is grand, is it not? "*Go ye into all the world.*" And the gospel spread from that little circle of disciples, gathered round the risen Lord that day, right through Judæa, to the learned Greeks and the martial Romans, winning its peaceful conquests in the palace of the Cæsars themselves, reaching thence to the shores of Britain long centuries ago, and in more recent years carried across the Atlantic, in the "*Mayflower*," to the shores of this great continent. Still the good news spreads till the glad tidings is carried to the heathen Chinese, the millions of India, the dusky native of Africa, and the far-off islands of the seas, encircling the whole globe. How many refuse the gospel; yet God offers salvation to all. He has no favourite tribe or nation. The gospel is to be proclaimed equally to every creature under the sun, to Jew and Gentile alike. "*Go ye into ALL the world, and preach the gospel*

to every creature."

You may say, "I am too wicked to receive the gospel." It is proclaimed to *every* creature, that includes you. "I have sinned away my day of grace," says another. We can preach it to *every* creature. "I have been a hard-hearted, hoary-headed infidel," cries a third, in tones of despair. We can preach it to *every* creature. Thank God, yes, to *every* creature. None are outside the pale of His Grace—His precious blood can cleanse the vilest.

What is the blast the blessed Saviour blows on the gospel trumpet? "*He that believeth, and is baptized,*

shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Mark you, my friend, though the jubilee trumpet sounds aloud its sweet, gracious note, yet at the same time there is an undertone of warning, of coming judgment—"He that believeth not, shall be damned." Take heed to the warning note.

Let us take the verse in detail. "*He that believeth.*" The first thing is to believe on the blessed Lord Jesus Christ. "*And is baptized.*" That is equivalent to confession. What next? "*Shall be saved.*" Thank God, how simple! It was a most terrible ordeal for a Jew to be baptized, for thereby he cut himself off from all the privileges of Israel, and openly confessed that he took sides with an earth-rejected, but heaven-accepted Jesus. It is the old story of Romans x. 9—belief in the heart and confession with the lips. Baptism is a most radical confession, for it is *with the whole body* you acknowledge Jesus as Lord—baptized to His death.

"*He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.*" People say, "I don't like preachers to use that word '*damned*'; it is not loving, or gracious." Let me ask you a question. From whose lips did that terrible word fall? From the lips of the Son of God. From Him, who travelled from those peerless heights of splendour. From Him, who laid aside all His glory, and came into this world as the carpenter's son. From Him, who died on Calvary's cross, and

who loves your soul

as none else beside. He could describe His portion in this world in these pathetic words, "*Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.*" There is not a person in

Baltimore so poor, but that he has a pillow of some kind. It may be only stuffed with straw, but he has a pillow ; whereas the blessed Saviour had not where to lay His head. The disciples could go to their homes, but "*Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives.*" He had in one sense a good place to lay His head upon—the Father's bosom ; but He loved your soul and mine, and travelled on to die upon the cross, to be

forsaken by God.

In the supreme moment of His agony God hid His face from that holy Sufferer, because *sin* was marked upon Him. "*He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace was upon Him ; and with His stripes we are healed.*" To the very full, He proved His undying love for the souls of men. He died that you might never be damned in the eternal burnings. Whose lips used that word "*damned ?*" The lips of Jesus. Love incarnate utters the truth, however terrible it may be. "*He that believeth not, shall be damned.*" You may have been baptized, but if you don't believe in Christ you will be damned. You may be a sacrament-taker, but if you don't believe in God's Son you will be damned. That is God's truth. You may quarrel with it. It does not alter the stern and awful fact, that hell and damnation form the portion of all who die in their sins. 'Tis not my words you quarrel with, but God's.

Let us go on to another passage. After the Lord Jesus Christ had gone into heaven, the apostle Paul—the great apostle of the Gentiles, and we can call him *our* apostle—was one day speaking in the synagogue at Antioch. He put his lips to the jubilee trumpet, and what a lovely note he blew upon it *

"BE IT KNOWN unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." Now you know many people begin this way—"If you will turn over a new leaf, do the best you can, say your prayers, put a good contribution upon the collection plate, do what the Church tells you to do, and trust in Christ of course, *perhaps* God will have mercy upon you at the last." That does not sound so clear or distinct as the notes sounded forth by the apostle Paul. How does he begin? "Be it *hoped*?" No.

"Be it KNOWN unto you *that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.*"

Allow me to use an illustration. In the year 1887 Her Gracious Majesty, Queen Victoria, celebrated her jubilee, and, in honour of that great event, she proclaimed free pardon to all deserters from the army. If they came to the colonel of their depôt, and reported themselves, it didn't matter how flagrant their desertion was, they were forgiven, receiving from Her Gracious Majesty a free pardon, signed and sealed. There were put on the walls of the police stations proclamations to this effect. How did they begin? "Be it *known* unto whomsoever it may concern." That was a good start. If a poor deserter came to his colonel, and asked for a pardon, and it was not given him, but, instead, he was seized and thrown into prison, the character of the Queen of England would have been disgraced, and dragged in the dust.

So with God. Look at these three words from God's word, "BE IT KNOWN." When He says, "*Be it known unto you that through this Man is preached*

unto you the forgiveness of sins," He means it. If you come in simple faith to Christ, and don't receive the forgiveness of your sins, the very character of God would be disgraced. To-night God offers you the forgiveness of your sins. Will you put out the hand of faith, and take it? Oh! it is a great thing to be simple in your faith.

More than fifty years ago the Government of England paid twenty million pounds—that is nearly one hundred million dollars—to obtain the emancipation of her slaves in the West Indies. The day of emancipation was fixed for the 31st of July, 1838. You may be sure it was a very memorable one in the history of the inhabitants of Jamaica. No less than fourteen thousand adult slaves and five thousand children were assembled together in one particular place waiting for the midnight hour to sound. That was the night which was to end their slavery, and begin their liberty. In anticipation of the event, some of the slaves, who were carpenters, had made

a large mahogany coffin,

into which they crowded whips, branding irons, torture irons, handcuffs, fragments of the treadmill, and other relics of their slavery. They dug a deep grave and placed the coffin alongside. When the midnight hour came, in the midst of intense excitement, they lowered the coffin, and William Knibb, one of their leaders, as twelve o'clock chimed, cried out, "The monster is dying! The monster is dying!" and, as the last stroke sounded, he exclaimed in triumph: "He is dead, let us bury him out of our sight for ever," and they lowered the coffin, and filled in the grave. Then this great throng of nearly twenty thousand souls lifted

up their voices and sang the Doxology, with all their heart, and praised God aloud for their liberty.

Ah ! God offers you emancipation from a bondage far more cruel than ever the Jamaican slaves experienced—a slavery that will land you in hell for ever. Liberty is proclaimed to Satan's slaves. May the trumpet of jubilee to-night sound in your ear, and right down to the very depths of your soul, and you will go out of this meeting with the knowledge that you are freed for ever. Will you receive God's love, and accept His proffered grace ? Will that blessed invitation that comes pealing down through the ages—*"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,"* fall on deaf ears to night, or will you with simplicity and faith trust that Saviour ? The hymn says :—

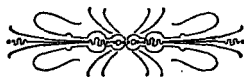
"Faith is a simple thing ;
But little understood."

There was a rich Sunday school teacher in America. One day, wishing to teach his boys a lesson on faith, he took out his gold watch and chain, and offered it to the biggest boy in the class. The boy looked at it with surprise, and I suppose he said in his heart, "Teacher is not going to take me in like this ; I don't think he means it." And so the watch and chain went by the biggest boy, and was offered to the next biggest lad in the class. He wanted to be as big a man as the first, and he acted just in the same way. The offer of the watch went round the class, but the boys would not believe it ; they thought it too good to be true. At last it came to little five-year-old Harry, and the teacher said, "Harry, here is a gold watch and chain for you." His eyes sparkled, and he put out his little chubby hand

and took the watch and chain, and they were his. He was not old enough to be cynical as to the ways of the world ; he had the simplicity of faith that we wish you anxious sinners had. When he got it the big boys exclaimed in a chorus, "Oh, teacher, we didn't believe that you meant it."

He replied, "You should have known that I meant it. You should be like little Harry. He believed me, and now he has got the watch and chain."

Be simple ; God offers you salvation to-night. Put out the hand of faith, lay hold of the blessing, and it is yours. "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*" • Our illustration just hits you off. You think the gospel we have been preaching is too good to be true. You are just like those elder boys—one following the other like a flock of senseless sheep. May God give you faith in His word, and child-like simplicity, for His name's sake. Amen.



Difference; or Man's condition and God's interposition.

"For there is NO DIFFERENCE: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."—(ROMANS iii. 22-23.)

"And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more."

"But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the Lord doth put A DIFFERENCE between the Egyptians and Israel."—(EXODUS xi. 6-7.)

THE Psalmist of old said, *"The entrance of Thy Word giveth light."* No sinner will get any light from God unless he gets it from the Scriptures, and receives God's testimony as to his state.

The first Scripture we read, speaks of *"no difference;"* the second, of *"a difference."* Now it is a very great matter when God speaks, for man to put his hand upon his mouth and listen. Let me here warn you of what the devil seeks to do to-day. When God preaches *"A difference,"*

the devil preaches

"NO difference," and when God preaches *"NO difference,"* the devil preaches *"A difference."*

Let me explain further. When God says, "*There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,*" the devil whispers into the ear of that young man, who does not get drunk, and who regularly attends a place of worship, and is what we call respectable, "Don't you believe that. There is *a very great difference* between you and the drunkard; there is *a very great difference* between you and the man of unclean life;" and that young man believes the devil's lie, because it is more pleasing to the carnal mind, and fosters his wretched pride.

Then again he goes to that young lady, and says, "There is *a great difference* between you and the painted harlot; there is *a great difference* between you and that gay butterfly of the world. Why, you go to church, and say your prayers night and morning, and you certainly try to be a good daughter to your mother, and kind to your relatives;" and the young lady gets angry that she has heard God's truth. People don't know very much about the grace of God until they arrive at this fact—they believe themselves to be so bad, that there is no good in them, and that all they deserve is

the lake of fire for ever.

We wonder whether every one of you Christians believe that. You may not, perhaps, deny it; but it is a great matter when the soul embraces God's truth heartily, and recognises the sovereignty of God's grace in saving us at all. The best of us deserve hell for ever. There is a difference between man and man, but before God there is absolutely none. Do you believe that? "*There is NO DIFFERENCE; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*"

Now, in the 11th chapter of Exodus, it speaks of •

"*A difference,*" and how does this difference come about? *It is through the blood.*

God puts a great difference between those that are blood-washed and those that are blood-guilty.

But see what the devil does. Look at yonder Church. It is filled with so-called worshippers. There is a sprinkling of true believers in Christ, but the great mass who go to that church are mere professors. Listen to the sermon that falls upon their ears. The devil inspires it. It proclaims that all alike are going to heaven. From the way some modern preachers talk you would think that very few are on the broad road, just the besotted drunkard, the gamester, the blasphemer, the painted harlot, real out-and-out sinners; whilst the pretty decent and respectable, the baptized and sacrament-taking are all on the narrow road; and they would fain make you believe that the narrow road is crowded. There is many a sermon preached with the result that the mere professor believes that there is *no difference* between himself and that real true child of God sitting beside him, but

there is a mighty difference.

Don't listen to the devil. It is far wiser to listen to what God says to-day. If you won't listen to what God says in this—the day of His grace, He will burn these tremendous facts into your soul throughout eternity in the lake of fire. Take this question of no difference. The lake of fire is a tremendously solemn reality, and it lies at the end of the road travelled by every unconverted man or woman. And, methinks, in the lake of fire there will not only be the besotted drunkard, that low woman, who earns her morsel of

bread by sin at the midnight hour, but there will be also the psalm-singing, baptized, sacrament-taking professor, that model, upright, respectable sinner *that never trusted Christ*—they will all be found in the same lake of fire, and God's heavy judgment will

write upon their inmost souls

for eternity that "*there is NO difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*"

People now-a-days smile at gospel meetings, and think that what the preacher says is rather too strong, that he goes too far, that he is too plain-spoken, and they laugh it off; but, my hearers, let me tell you this, that the laugh of the careless sinner will give way to the wail of the lost in hell. Take care. Take care how you treat the gospel. This very night may be your last chance of hearing God's message of salvation—it may be your last opportunity of receiving salvation, and you may lose it for ever.

But we want particularly to speak to you about the way God can bless you. Let us look at this eleventh chapter of Exodus and the beginning of the twelfth. There are the Israelites, slaves under the oppressor in the land of Egypt, and God, in the sovereignty of His grace, is about to deliver them with a high hand from beneath the oppressor's very eye, and take them to the promised land of Canaan. How is He going to do it? For

God is absolutely righteous

in all His dealings. God is as righteous in filling heaven with repentant sinners as He is in casting the unrepentant into the lake of fire; and He must be as righteous in His dealings with the Israelites as with their oppressors.

God is love, and in this chapter of redemption intends

to take this nation of slaves away from the land of Egypt, and place them in the promised land. He wants to bless them. If He is love, and He wants to bless the sinner, how must He do it? There must be righteousness, there must be holiness. The plan of redemption must be worthy of God. He must be just in His mercy. His everlasting throne is founded upon righteousness. How, then, can God do it?

The Israelites are as much sinners as the Egyptians, and, if God is going to take the Israelites out, there must be a plan of redemption. Listen! He instructs them by the lips of Moses to take a lamb, a male of the first year, without blemish, kill it, put the blood in a basin, take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood, and therewith sprinkle the upper door-post and the two side posts of the houses where they were, and God said,

“**When I see the blood,**
I will pass over you.”

Now the Bible is a remarkable book. The trouble is, people read it so very superficially. Atonement runs right through the book from Genesis to Revelation, and here is an instance of it. The book hangs together. They say that cordage belonging to the British Government is known by a red line or cord running through its entire length. So the Bible has a red line running through it, the line of atonement, the line of blood. From the first day man became a sinner, right through the book, God has made plain by type, and shadow, and illustration, the absolute necessity of the death of Jesus, the absolute necessity of blood being shed, a sacrifice being offered, before He could forgive the sinner and shield him from the judgment.

Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden sinned. God

clothed them in the skins of beasts. How could that covering be procured? By sacrifice. For the very first time in the history of the world BLOOD was shed in order that the skins might be procured to form a covering for Adam and Eve. Again, when Abel and Cain approached God, Cain brought of the fruits of the ground—he was the first Unitarian the world ever saw. It is said that Unitarianism originated in this country, in Boston, Massachusetts, but it began just outside the Garden of Eden in the early stages of the history of this world, and Cain was its first exponent. Since that day this world has been divided into two great camps—

Abelites and Cainites.

Abel brought the firstling of the flock, emblematic of the fact that *blood* must be shed. A sacrifice must be made before God can be approached.

Here we find the same truth again in these eleventh and twelfth chapters of Exodus. God told the children of Israel to take a lamb without blemish, a male of the first year. A type of Jesus, GOD'S LAMB. Century after century *blood* flows from Jewish altars, passover after passover is celebrated, God emphasises the fact that "*without shedding of blood is no remission,*" all along the centuries, till the time arrived when God provided Himself a lamb. When John the Baptist saw Jesus coming to him, he exclaimed, "*Behold THE LAMB OF GOD, which taketh away the sin of the world.*" All the types, and figures, and shadows pointed on with unerring finger to the Lamb of God, that blessed Saviour, the Son of God, who did the mighty work of atonement; and to-night we point you to Jesus, the One who died upon the cross, the One who shed His precious blood, that cleanseth from all sin, and the

repentant sinner, trusting in that Saviour, receives the forgiveness of his sins.

To return to our chapter. What character of sacrifice will do for God? "*Your lamb shall be without blemish.*" You know some people say, you must do the best you can, etc., and then you will get to heaven. God requires

nothing short of absolute perfection

in the sacrifice that will meet your case. It is not a question of your being satisfied, but it is a question of GOD being satisfied, and He says *your* lamb must be without blemish.

They say that when the Shah of Persia came to England he visited a large publishing establishment. They intended to present him with a very fine book. It was to be velvet covered, set with pearls, with golden clasps. Before presenting it to him they carefully examined the gift, and found one small error, a trifling imperfection, and that costly book was thrown aside as imperfect, unfit to be given to such a great potentate as the Shah of Persia; and yet people think God will receive their best, though it be imperfect and blotted with sin. Impossible!

If you want to approach God, you must have something perfect to offer God as a perfect satisfaction for all your guilty life. How will you find it? If you try to do it by turning over new leaves, you will discover that your whole moral being is poisoned at its very springs, and that *you* can do nothing by which to merit God's favour. Listen to the story. God has Himself provided a Lamb—even His own Son, the Lamb of God. If He has Himself provided a Lamb, surely that Lamb is spotless, and holy, and without blemish. I can say

to-night, with a full heart, that my Lamb is without blemish, even Jesus, God's Son, whose precious blood speaks richer things than the blood of bulls and of goats. Thank God, we can tell you of a work that will satisfy God, and that God now delights in virtue of it to bless the believing sinner.

What further? The blood was to be put into a basin. We understand by that, that the blood is what we call get-at-able, it is in

the place of appropriation.

So the blood of Jesus Christ affords God a basis whereby He can offer salvation to *all*, and whereby *all* can approach God. The precious blood is in the basin. We can appropriate it. Then they had to take a bunch of hyssop, and sprinkle the lintel and door-posts of the houses where they were. Hyssop signifies repentance. Solomon described the glories of creation, and spoke of the cedar of Lebanon with its stately branches, down to the hyssop, that springeth out of the wall. The cedar is typical of man in his greatness and glory—the hyssop in his lowness, and meanness, and vileness; and it is only when the sinner finds out his sinfulness and vileness, in short, when he repents, that he can know the value of the precious blood of Jesus. He learns God's holiness, God's love, the absolute necessity of a sacrifice, his own utter inability to meet God, and his vileness in His holy presence.

One man said very flippantly, "Before I die I shall have time to say, 'Lord save me.'"

A flippant, careless appeal

to God's mercy never reaches His ear. Mark, salvation is not so simple as that. Salvation will cost you nothing, that is true, but you will never be saved until

you repent. And let me tell you there is no saving value in repentance, but it is *that condition of soul* which is necessary before the sinner is ready to appropriate the precious blood of Christ to himself or herself. We have told you before, that repentance is something like a man who gets ill. The feeling ill does not make him well, but it makes him send for a doctor; and so repentance of soul is the finding out by a sinner that he is a lost, hell-bound rebel, vile, and worthless, and strengthless, that he cannot move hand nor foot for himself. He learns that God is good, and that he is vile, and sinful, and lost, and that none can save but Christ. That is it. The soul is spiritually ill, and wretched, and sends for the Great Physician, who never loses a patient, and never charges a fee—salvation is without money and without price. “Have I repented enough?” is the sorrowful question of many an anxious sinner. You need just enough repentance to lead you to Christ. Do you feel your need of Him? That is enough.

Let us suppose the night of judgment has come. Imagine a long row of huts, in which the Israelites live. See! the destroying angel has drawn from its sheath

the sword of judgment,

and is about to go through the land of Egypt to execute God's sentence. In thought let us follow him. In house, number one, we know there is a very wicked man living. He has been a terrible drunkard. He has often beaten his wife black and blue in his drunken frenzy. His children are half-starved. Surely the destroying angel will go into that drunkard's wretched abode and execute judgment! But he passes by. Why?

Ponder the answer well. Because *the blood* has been sprinkled upon the lintel and the door-posts. He stops not to enquire the character of the dweller within. The blood is enough. Nay, he dare not cross the blood-stained threshold, for God has said, "*When I see the blood, I will pass over you.*" Jehovah has pledged His word.

Again we see the destroying angel halt. We exclaim, "Surely he will pass by that house. One of the most religious Israelites in the whole country lives there; he is always reading the Scriptures, always praying and singing psalms; in fact, he is a very religious man." As we look at his dwelling we see something that attracts our curiosity. There is a long piece of white paper nailed to the door. We go up in the moonlight and examine it. It is a long list of his virtues—he reads his Bible, says his prayers, does the best he can, gives any money he can spare to the poor, etc. He has enumerated a long list of his many virtues, in the hope that his character may persuade the destroying angel to pass by his dwelling, but he does not even glance at the paper. We see the destroying angel pass across that threshold, and the sword of judgment falls upon the house, the first-born is slain. Why is this? Mark well the answer.

The blood was not there.

Oh! sinner, to-night, let me ask you: "Are you sheltered by the precious blood of Jesus?" For, if you are not, God's wrath is hanging over your head this very moment, and woe be to your hapless soul if that cloud of judgment burst, and sweep you into a lost eternity. 'Tis the blood, the blood alone, that can satisfy God.

Then again, to show you the difference between safety and assurance let me borrow an illustration. Suppose we enter one of these cottages, and find the head of the house eating of the roast lamb inside with his family. They seem to have a bright light in their eyes, and a joy about their whole deportment. We say, "What is it that makes you so happy to-night? Don't you know that this is the solemn night when God passes through the land in judgment?"

"Yes," they reply, "we know it, but *the blood* is sprinkled—our first-born is safe."

We answer, "Would it not become you better, until the midnight hour of judgment is over, until the destroying angel has passed, to be a little more modest, not so presumptuous about it, not so sure, not so certain?"

The head of the house looks at us, and says, "We have *two* things, we have the *sprinkled blood*, and more, we have the *sure word* of Jehovah; not only has *the blood* of the lamb without blemish been sprinkled upon the lintel and door-posts, but

God Himself has said,

'*When I see the blood I will pass over you,*' and" he adds, looking us in the face, "I know God will be righteous and true to His word, and that my dwelling is as safe as if the midnight hour had passed and the sun of another day shone upon us."

We leave him and go in next door. The head of this house and his family are pale, trembling with fear, and distressed beyond measure. We try to comfort them, and ask, "Why all this perturbation and disquietude?"

The father replies, "Don't you know this is the night of the judgment of the first-born?"

"Yes, we do know it ; but haven't you sprinkled the blood on the lintel and the door-posts ? "

"Yes."

"Very well then, are you not safe ? "

He says, "No ; I wouldn't like to be so bold as to say that, I am hoping for the best and waiting until the midnight hour is gone, and when I find my first-born is safe, and the midnight hour is past, I will then begin to breathe more freely."

We reason with him gently, thus, "Why, you have not only got *the sprinkled blood*, but also *the sure word of God*," but we cannot get him past his doubts and fears. And why ? Because he has not full confidence in the *word of Jehovah*.

Now, dear friends, let me ask you a question. Which of these two houses is the safer, that wherein dwells the family which is in calm peace resting on the word of Jehovah, or that in which they are possessed with fear, and troubled with doubts ? You answer, "The house wherein they are calmly resting on the word of Jehovah." Nay, you are wrong. They are

both equally safe,

because they are BOTH marked with the sprinkled blood. Which is the happier house ? That is another question. Why, house number one, where they listen in calm assurance to the spoken word of God. There may be two persons here to-night trusting in the blood of Jesus, one full of confidence and assurance, the other trembling, and doubting, and fearing, hoping for the best. Which is the safer ? Both alike are safe. Why ? *Because their safety does not depend upon their FEELINGS, but upon the PRECIOUS BLOOD.* I ask my hearers to-night, "Do you trust in the precious blood of Jesus ? "

You reply, "Yes, I do." That being the case, are you *sure* about your salvation? You may be if you put your trust in God's word. What does it say? "*When I see the blood, I will pass over you.*"

The blood is for God's eye,
not for the sinner's. The blood is underneath God's eye, it has answered every claim of His holiness, and God is able to shelter the soul that trusts in the sprinkled blood, and is righteous in so doing.

A young fellow, going through college, preparing for the ministry, went to see a dying Christian woman. *She* too had been to college, but a different kind to his. She had not studied the dead languages, nor a dry theology. Her college consisted of a sick bed. There she had learned many wonderful things of God. She was indeed a doctor of divinity in the school of affliction. The visitor bent over her, and said, "Mother, I suppose you are trusting, at a moment like this, in the mercy of God?"

"No, young man," she replied, "it's not His *mercy* I am trusting in, it's His *justice*."

"You have surely made a mistake," he answered, "at a moment like this, in the hour of death, that solemn moment when the soul leaves the body and returns to the God who gave it, it surely must be God's *mercy* that you are trusting in." "No, young man," she said with a firm voice, "it is His *justice*."

The young man thought she was wandering, and so she was—wandering in all the greatness of the gospel of God, up and down the length, and breadth, and height, and depth of God's wondrous gospel. She turned, and read him a right, good lecture on divinity. "If I were to die, and pass down to hell, I should lose

my soul, and that would be a great loss to me, but

God would lose His character, and that would be a greater loss for Him, for He has pledged salvation to the believing sinner. If God were to lose His character, the whole world would crumble into dust, and there would be no God at all."

Ah ! she had got the pith of it. We love to think of it, that we shall go to heaven *righteously*, as righteously as God's judgment would condemn us, if unsaved, to an everlasting hell for our many sins. *God is "just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."* Yes ; the believer goes to heaven righteously. Thank God.

Another word or two. Besides the sprinkled blood *outside*, what are they doing *inside* ? Eating of the roast lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. It is midnight ; and yet they have their staves in their hands, their shoes on their feet, and their loins girded, and they are eating it in haste. We inquire the meaning of this midnight meal and preparedness for travel, and are told that they are going on a journey. They need strength, and they are preparing for it.

When God shelters the soul by the precious blood, that is

only the first step

of the gospel of God. With outstretched hand He was about to take His people from underneath the powerful hand of the oppressor. A little later He was about to cleave a path for them through the Red Sea, and carry them to the other side out of reach of the oppressor's power, and on till they reached the land flowing with milk and honey. Canaan was God's purpose for them.

If you trust the precious blood to-night, that is only step number one. God, too, will free you from the

devil's power, and the dominion of sin and death. He will endue you with His own mighty power, even the power of the Holy Spirit, and there will be a journey for you to take. You will leave this world one day, and be landed in God's Canaan. Even now you are morally called to make that journey in your soul, to be separate from this world, and find your spirit's home above, where Jesus is. You are destined to form part of the bride of Christ, for *His* satisfaction and God's glory. *This is the purpose of God.*

Within that cottage they are eating the lamb, *roast with fire*. For you, who are trusting in that precious blood shed at Calvary's cross, there is a solemn thought typified in the eating of the lamb, roast with fire. Jesus has been exposed for God's glory and the putting away of your sins, to all the fire of God's judgment against sin. Mark ! they eat it, too, with bitter herbs, typical of the work of repentance deepening in the soul. I believe people repent more after salvation than before—I know I did. I found this eating of the roast lamb a solemn thing in my soul. The Unitarian wants to eat of it raw, to take all

the fire of God's judgment

from the cross altogether. They say that Christ lived a perfect life, and died a martyr's death to afford an example to men, to stimulate them to follow in His footsteps. They eat it *raw*. God will not have it. Unitarianism leads to hell. None pass to glory but those who eat of it *roast with fire*.

Then there is the kind that would have it sodden with water, that is, they weaken the thought of God's judgment upon sin. They talk a sickly, sentimental, mawkish nonsense about Jesus dying, of His crown of

thorns, the blood trickling from His brow, His hands, and feet, and side, of His dying agonies, how men jeered and mocked Him in His sufferings in a sort of human, sentimental way ; but let me tell you, dear friends, when that thick darkness gathered round the cross, when man had done his worst, led on by sin, there was a solemn issue between God and Christ.

Jesus, the Lamb of God, took the sinner's place, bared His breast to the storm, and God, who measured the distance between Himself and the sinner, put upon the head of Jesus all the full weight of sin, as it affected Him. There that blessed, holy Sufferer endured the storm, drinking the cup of bitterness to the last dark dreg, satisfied forever the claims of justice, and glorified God to the full. The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom by the hand of God Himself, when Jesus exclaimed,

"It is finished."

It is this that makes salvation such a real thing. And it is the entering into this that answers to eating the lamb roast with fire.

What next ? They eat the roast lamb, with bitter herbs and *unleavened bread*. What does unleavened bread signify ? Leaven is *always* in scripture a type of evil working. The action of the leaven in the bread is stopped by the *fire* of the oven. Eating unleavened bread, then, signifies that evil is put away from the believer practically, that he harbours no iniquity in his ways. It is very common nowadays for people to get a kind of *mental* salvation. They reason it out, like a problem at school, that, if Christ died for sinners, then He died for them, and therefore they are saved. Many are thus deceiving themselves. They lose it just as

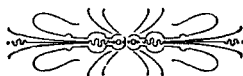
quickly and readily as they receive it. It makes no difference in their lives, for they have never been converted.

When the soul really enters into all that is meant by the death of Christ, it makes a mighty difference in the life. You eat of the roast lamb *with unleavened bread*, that is to say, the sinner—who knows what sin cost his blessed Saviour in His agonies on the cross, in the hiding of God's face from Him—and his sin part company, there is a desire in his heart for righteousness, there is a turning from his wicked ways. If he were a drunkard before conversion, he will turn sober, there will be no unleavened bread in his mouth, there will be no more drinking—there will be no more tippling, or secret drinking. There is that young lady who used to read novels at the midnight hour, she will say good-bye to them. That pleasure-loving girl, when she is converted, will bid adieu to her parties and balls. That godless young man, now converted, will say good-bye to the football-field, will say good-bye to its swearing, gambling, godless crew. There will be a turning round. The eating of the roast lamb *with unleavened bread* will show itself in a practical way. Conversion is a real thing, a turning right-about, a turning to God from idols, a serving of the living and true God. That makes up the history of the true Christian, turning, serving, waiting—turning to God, serving the living and true God, waiting for His Son from heaven. Oh! it will make a mighty difference in your life.

Now for our last point. They have shoes on their feet, staves in their hands, their loins are girded, and they are eating it in haste. It is the Lord's passover. Why this midnight meal and this preparation, not for

bed, but for a journey ? Ah ! they are off. They are about to say good-bye to the oppressor. They are God's redeemed people.

If you were converted to-night it would make a mighty difference in you ; instead of drifting with the world and its pleasures, and its ways, you would find yourself taking a different course altogether. You wouldn't be in Satan's grip any longer, you would learn how by the death of Jesus all your mighty foes are slain, and that you are now one of God's people, delivered from the powers of sin and Satan, the dominion of death, and that now that blessed journey lies before you, as guided by the Spirit, which ends in the glory of God, in the accomplishment of His purpose for you. May God grant His blessing to His word. Amen.



Naaman; or the Sinner and his Mistakes.

"And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean."—(II KINGS V. 10)

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."—(ACTS xvi. 31.)

IT is my purpose to-night to have a quiet, homely talk with you on the way in which a sinner can obtain salvation; and to point out to you several rocks upon which anxious souls, when they are seeking salvation, often make shipwreck, so that you may be able to avoid them.

Now you know people have a very poor idea of what the Bible really is. Lots of people read these beautiful stories in the Old Testament and think they are only stories, true stories, perhaps, and I dare say pretty stories, but we want to show you to-night that God has **a very deep meaning in them.**

In II Kings v.—the chapter we have referred to—we have the interesting and instructive story of the cleansing of a leper.

We find many chapters in the Bible devoted to the subject of leprosy. It is throughout the Scriptures a type of SIN. Leprosy cannot be cured by any earthly

doctor, and sin cannot be eradicated by education, nor doctored by reformation; nothing but the mighty power of God can cure the desperate disease of sin; and, mark this, it is not only the drunkard with the blotches of drink upon his face who is the sinner; it is not only the painted harlot, who is to be seen under the midnight lamp, who is a sinner; but YOU, my unconverted hearer, are a sinner. Now don't get rid of that fact. YOU, as you sit upon your seat, are a sinner in God's sight.

Let us take up this story, which we have here, in detail. The subject of it is Naaman, the Syrian general. Studying the narrative carefully we learn several things about him. He was a courageous soldier, a successful general, an honourable man, a prime favourite with the king, his master, and, in the eyes of his fellow-countrymen, a hero. Further, we can gather from the sacred record that he was of a very amiable disposition, a loving husband, a kind, courteous master: but, in spite of all these characteristics, there is a certain sentence which spoils the whole thing.

"But he was a leper."

He might be reviewing his troops, sitting astride his Arab steed, he might have his general's uniform upon him, with his breast decorated with stars and medals and honours conferred upon him by the king and a grateful country, the loud huzzas might rend the sky, but underneath all this fair and glittering exterior and show there was a cruel, loathsome disease at work upon that man, and he knew it. He was a poor doomed leper, dying inch by inch.

Now, dear friend, we are not going to accuse you of being a very great sinner to-night. You may be a very

kind husband, or a loving wife, or a dutiful child,—you may be most exemplary in your conduct in business and in the home circle; all this may be perfectly true. But, mark this well, be you

the very fairest of Adam's race,

it is still true that you are a sinner, and as a sinner you cannot enter God's presence, unless your sins are cleansed away. You are a spiritual leper.

We were shown through a medical museum in Washington the other day. The guide took us aside and said, "I will show you a wax fac-simile of the hands of a leper, modelled by a celebrated Paris physician." There in a glass case lay the model of a pair of hands in wax, the exact copy of the poor leper's loathsome hands. We looked at them with a great deal of interest. Hideous, putrid, loathsome hands, with the running sores of the terrible disease upon the knuckles, with the nails black and dropping off. What a terrible illustration that is of sin! What an awful picture of you! Unfit for God's presence, rotten to the core!

My unconverted hearer, you don't like it, but the fact remains, you are a poor, loathsome leper in God's sight. You don't believe it; that does not alter the fact. From the crown of your head to the soles of your feet there is not one sound spot about you; there is nothing but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. Man is

a loathsome, corrupt leper

in God's sight, and nothing can save him from a lost eternity but the precious blood, which can wash the vilest sinner clean.

A traveller, journeying in an eastern country, was

shown a large, roomy cage, in which were confined a few lepers; some of these poor, wretched creatures were in such a condition that their nails were dropping off, their hair falling out, their teeth gone, their eyes sunken,—poor, excoriated lepers. As he looked, he saw a young lady among them, who was well-proportioned and handsome. The flush of health seemingly was on her cheek, and her eyes were bright. The traveller turned round in astonishment and disgust, and said, "Why have you put that handsome young lady among the loathsome lepers?" The reply was made, "Look at her hand!" There was no mistake about it; there was

one tell-tale spot.

She was a poor, doomed leper. So you may not be a flagrant sinner, covered openly with the leprosy of sin, there may be upon you as it were, only *ONE tell-tale* spot, but the fact remains, you are a spiritual leper, and need cleansing by God before heaven with its joys can be yours. "*THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*"

If we have sought to tell you the truth, and it has aroused you to a sense of your awful condition, it is because we love your soul. For illustration: a man knocks at a doctor's door. He is shown into the consulting room. Presently the doctor and patient are face to face, and the patient says, "Doctor, a little while ago I began to lose my appetite, I cannot sleep at nights, business seems to press very heavily upon me, and I want you to be kind enough to

tell me the truth,

however terrible it may be."

The doctor examines him, and tests him, and at last says, with a grave face, "I have examined you and find that you have been the subject of a deadly disease for the last twelve years, and nothing can cure you." The man says, with a look of despair in his eyes, "Thank you, doctor, for telling me the truth. I only knew I was ill the last few months, and to think the disease has been working in my system all these years!"

So, friends, the disease is working in your system, and you may not know it. It is carrying you to the portals of eternity, it is hurrying you on as fast as time can carry you, on to eternity; but, oh! where will you spend that eternity? So our words need to be plain and pointed on a subject of such profound importance, the more so as there is no case so bad as to be beyond the healing virtues of the precious blood.

A great many persons are not aware of this terrible disease of sin, but sometimes we do come across people who have been aroused to the fact that they are sinners, and they come to us and say, often with tears running down their faces, "Preacher, I am afraid I am too bad to be saved." Thank God, there never could be a case too bad for the Great Physician. His words are:—"*I him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.*" Another says, "I feel the burden of my sins, but I am too black a sinner to come to Christ." It is our deepest joy to tell such that "*the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from ALL SIN,*" and to cry out at the top of our voice, "There never was a case too bad for the Saviour, too dark and desperate for Him to cure." This very night

He can save you
as you sit upon your seat in this hall.

Naaman knew he was a leper, and somebody else knew it. In one of his campaigns he had taken captive a little maid, and she waited upon his wife. This little maid turned to her mistress one day, as her heart went out in commiseration at the condition of her kind master, and said to her: "*Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.*" The little maid's message was carried to Naaman's ear, and thence it was conveyed to the ears of the king, and the king determined to send his honoured and beloved servant down to the land of Samaria in order to get cured. Naaman was alive to the fact of his awful condition, and was anxious to get cured, so off he starts on his long journey to Samaria. YOU are a spiritual leper. May God in His great mercy give you to know it deep down in your heart, and may you, too, be anxious to be cured this very night.

However, Naaman made

four great mistakes

before he got the blessing, and these are the *four rocks* of which we spoke at the beginning, and against which we are going to warn you. First of all he got a letter written by the king himself. Armed with this, he went to the king of Israel, and here he made his first mistake—he went to

the wrong person.

He went to the *king* instead of the *prophet*—to the one who swayed *earthly* power instead of one with *spiritual* power—the servant of Jehovah. Many an anxious soul makes a similar mistake. Many a man goes to the *wrong person* to-day.

Riding by train between the towns of Worcester and

Malvern, in England, a short time ago, I saw a woman in widow's weeds sitting in the compartment. Her eyes were closed, her lips were moving as if in silent prayer, and underneath her crape veil her fingers moved—she was counting her beads. When she had finished, I leaned forward to her, and said, "Would you kindly let me look at your beads?" She at once put them into my hands, and explained how to begin, with a sort of introductory prayer at the beginning of the circle, and then go around and around the beads with the "Hail Marys" as long as you please.

I said to her, "When you read your Bible do you ever learn of any poor sinner being repulsed by Jesus when on earth?"

She answered, "No."

I went on, "Does it not tell you that every poor sinner who came to the blessed Son of God was received, and that none was repulsed?"

She replied, "It is so, I never read of a case in which one was turned away."

I further enquired, "Did you ever read in the four gospels of *one* who went to the Virgin Mary? She was a blessed woman, chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus, most blessed amongst women, but she is not my Saviour, and

she never died for me.

Is there any incident in which a sinner was sent to the Virgin Mary, rather than to her blessed Son?"

She said, "Not one."

"Is there not a verse in the Bible which says, '*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever?*'"

"Yes," was the reply.

I went on, "If it be true that the blessed Son of God

never repulsed a sinner when upon earth, and that He is '*the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,*' is His affection changed towards sinners, is His love for sinners diminished now He is in the glory? More than that, is there not a verse in the Bible which says, there is '*ONE MEDIATOR between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus ?*' "

She replied, "Yes, that is true."

I said, "That being the case, *why don't you go DIRECT to Jesus ?*" She was making Naaman's mistake—going to *the wrong person*.

My friends, we are not here to throw stones at pope, or priest, or preacher; we are here to unfold the truth of God's Word, and to tell you that you will not get blessing to your souls unless you go *yourselves* to the feet of the Saviour, and trust Him. You will never receive salvation until you go to the *right person*.

Have you been to Jesus yet?

Long years ago there was a famine in Egypt, and the whole land rang with three words, as the granary doors were thrown wide open, within which the golden grain was stored, "**GO TO JOSEPH.**" Since Jesus has died on the cross; since He uttered that shout of victory, "*It is finished*"; since He has ascended into glory, the very universe of God rings with these three words—"GO TO JESUS."

A gentleman was one day crossing London Bridge. A blind man, who was reading the Bible in raised letters, had lost his place, and was stumbling along, trying to regain it. He was repeating over and over again these words, "*There is none other name, there is none other name, there is none other name.*" At last he

regained his place, and the whole of that lovely verse rang out,—“*There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*” The verse was used to the gentleman’s conversion. And what name is that? Need we reply? ’Tis Jesus. *Jesus!* JESUS!! JESUS!!! See to it that you go to the *right* Person.

The preacher is something like a guide-post. When you go to a place where the roads fork, and you are not sure which is the right one, you look for the guide-post. Presently you see a finger pointing a certain way, and you read, “This way to So-and-So.” You go on your way quite certain which is the right road. What does the post do for you? It points out the right road. It doesn’t take you along the road does it? No, you have to go yourself. Suppose you stopped

and embraced the post,

and spent the remainder of your days clinging to the guide-post, and admiring the plainness of its directions, would you ever get to your destination? Never! A great many people sit under a preacher, we put emphasis on the word *under*, but never go to the preacher’s Christ; they hang upon his words, they think him eloquent, admire his prayers, and rest satisfied with religion, but they never get to Christ.

John, the Baptist,—the forerunner of Christ—was a very good guide-post. Looking upon Jesus as He walked, he exclaimed in deepest worship, “*Behold the Lamb of God!*” and the two disciples, who heard him, left John and followed Jesus. He pointed them the road, and they went to the Saviour. They left the Baptist to follow his Master. John, the Baptist, was the right kind of guide-post. Many of the

guide-posts of to-day don't point the right way; on many of them the sign is well nigh obliterated, and many of them point to the way of good works, baptism, sacrament-taking, alms-giving, the way of Christian-endeavouring, and that sort of thing. Is that the way to Christ? Oh! no; John, the Baptist, said,

"Behold the Lamb of God!"

and the two disciples turned and followed that heavenly Stranger, the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners. John, the Baptist, said, "*He must increase, but I must decrease.*" He was a very brilliant star on the dark night of Judaism's sky just before the break of day, but when the sun burst upon the scene, the star paled, and was lost sight of, and Jesus—the Light of the World—filled the vision of those who had eyes to see His moral beauty. Like another Scripture, where Moses and Elias were caught away, "*they saw no man, save JESUS ONLY.*"

Let us proceed with our narrative. Naaman finds out his mistake, and leaves the kingly palace, and goes down to the prophet's humble cottage. Elisha had sent a message to the king, "*Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.*" Watch that chariot as it goes from the palace of the king down to the cottage of the prophet—it travels but slowly, and the wheels leave a deep impression in the sandy soil. Why so? We look into it, and see ten talents of silver, six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. Why all this wealth? Naaman has made his second great mistake. To the Eastern mind the golden key was well-nigh omnipotent; it could fit into the rudest and rustiest lock, and turn it.

Money was everything to an Oriental mind ; and so Naaman made his second great mistake, he tried

the wrong power—

the power of the golden key. He thought of buying the blessing. I believe this is the very biggest doctor's fee upon record. That would be worth in America, to-day, not less than \$750,000. Is his money received ? Nay ; God will not sell His blessings.

Anxious sinner, are you making this very mistake ? When you want to be saved you begin to spoil yourself right off. The Scriptures tell you to come just as you are, in all your rags, sin, and pollution, without turning over a new leaf. Yet, when you become anxious about your soul's salvation, you begin to go in for good works, turning over new leaves, going to church and chapel, doing the best you can, giving your money freely to religious causes, thinking God is going to bless you for it. You make a profound mistake ; if ever you get salvation it will be through the gospel—

God's power unto salvation.

You won't merit it, you will get it freely, "*without money and without price,*" on the ground of pure, sovereign grace.

Now, Naaman arrives at the door of the prophet. His servant knocks at the door, the prophet's servant answers it, and the message is given, doubtless in words something like these :—"Go in and tell your master the great general, Naaman, has come, that valiant soldier. He has brought with him ten talents of silver, six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. My noble master has brought a letter from the King of Syria, and desires to be recovered of his leprosy." It would be no wonder if the servant should feel flattered

in receiving such a very great patient as that. It would be like a humble doctor being waited upon by the President of the United States, or the Queen of England. No wonder if he were flattered. However, he goes in to the prophet, and delivers the message. Was the prophet flattered? No; for he is *God's* servant.

How does he respond to the message? He sends out this simple answer, "*Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.*" It is given to Naaman. The servant re-enters the little cottage, closes the door, and the interview is over. The Syrian general had travelled hundreds of miles, and came prepared to pay down a vast sum of money as the price of his cleansing, and now he simply gets the message, "*Go and wash in Jordan seven times,*" without ceremony or palaver. The door is closed, and the interview over. He is left boiling with rage, exclaiming hotly in his pride, "*Behold, I THOUGHT, He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.*" He makes his *third* mistake—he thinks of
the wrong plan.

He imagined God Almighty was going to make a fuss over the poor leper because he happened to be a general. God won't do it. And if YOU want to be saved, it must be in the same way as the dying thief, like Mary Magdalene, out of whom were cast seven devils, like blaspheming, persecuting Saul of Tarsus; there is

no royal road to salvation,

there is only one path to it. 'Tis the blood-stained way of Calvary. If you receive salvation it must be *in God's way.*

What is the plain, simple message sent to Naaman ?
"Go and wash in Jordan . . . and thou shalt be clean."
 And what is the message as plain and simple to you ?
"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." You may have been trying to get salvation for a great number of years. The preacher may have often dinned into your ears the simple way of salvation, and it is too much for your pride to stand. People when they come to gospel preachings ought to leave three things at home ; their money, God doesn't want it. I think the chink of dimes and nickels upon the collection plates in gospel meetings is enough to make God Almighty smite the collector dead. God doesn't want your money. Next leave your brains behind, they will not help you in this matter. Naaman said, *"Behold I THOUGHT."* His brain was busy, and it only interposed his thoughts before God's, and in the end, if persevered in, would have cheated him of the blessing. It is

not mighty intellect, but simple faith
 that God wants. Lastly, leave your pride at home. The way to salvation, while blessedly simple, is humbling to the pride of man. It makes nothing of him, and everything of God and His grace—everything of the atoning work of Jesus. Naaman's pride hindered him. Oh ! sinner, come empty-handed, take the low place of nothingness before God, and accept this full salvation at His gracious hands. Learn the wonderful story of God's love in giving Jesus to die for your sins—the story of the atonement.

Some people, something like Naaman, say, "When I am converted I am going to be converted under a very eloquent preacher ;" others, "I am going to have

a very wonderful dream, I shall have a most wonderful experience, all my doubts and fears will go, and my soul will be filled with light, and joy, and peace, and happiness." Don't be deceived. Don't come with

your pre-conceived thoughts

to God. He won't make a fuss of you. Faith is simple, and takes God at His word.

If you come here with some plan by which you are going to get salvation, dismiss it by simply listening to what God says—"*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*" Believe and be saved. How simple !

Now Naaman makes his *fourth* and last mistake—he thinks of

the wrong place.

He exclaims derisively : "*Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel ? May I not wash in them, and be clean ? So he turned and went away in a rage.*" His thoughts and his pride travel back to his native land. In imagination he feasts his eyes upon those broad, stately streams, Abana and Pharpar, which flowed from Lebanon's mountains through the fertile plains of Syria and Damascus, Abana flowing right through the proud city of Damascus, its pride and delight. He indignantly demands : "*May I not wash in them, and be clean ?*" He does not even condescend to call the Jordan a river. He compares his own *rivers* with all the *waters* of Israel. Like the sinner, he thought of *the wrong place*.

What shall the rivers be illustrative of ? Let them be types of *religion* and *morality*. There are untold thousands scrubbing themselves with

the flesh-brush of a Christless religion

from the time they were baptized, or old enough to be religious, and will go on till the time they take extreme unction. Yet, by so doing, they cannot get rid of one blot of the leprosy of sin. *Religion* cannot save the soul. We have a heavy indictment to make against religion. *Religion* crucified the Lord of Glory. *Religion* lit the fagots which have sent the martyrs in a chariot of fire to their homes in glory. *Religion* professed, without the reality possessed, damns more than all the drink saloons in America.

But, you say, "Is not there such a thing as pure religion and undefiled?" Yes; we sincerely wish there were more of it in this world. In the words of Scripture a man is exhorted to practise it, "*to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*" A spurious, bastard religion and the world go hand in hand. *True* religion keeps itself unspotted from the world. The devotees of mere religion, with the one hand, endeavour to take the pierced hand of the Lord Jesus Christ, and, with the other, the hand of the world, stained red with the murder of the Son of God. It is impossible, it cannot be done, it must be

Christ or the world,

one thing or the other. Don't be satisfied with a mere Christless religion—empty forms and unmeaning ritual, but see to it that you have Christ.

Then, what about the stream called morality. Many a proud infidel, who would not go to church, rests satisfied in a strict morality. For instance; Colonel Robert Ingersol sneers at the Bible, and talks about the mistakes of Moses. He denies that Christian virtues are Christian virtues. He claims Christian virtues in the

name of infidelity, and preaches a gospel of morality, proclaiming on the house-tops that a man ought to be strictly moral, upright, kind, and philanthropic—that he ought to do the best he can to help mankind, and, that being the case, he will lead a happy life, and die an easy death. What will a moral life do for the sinner? It may bear the fruits of respectability in this life, but it cannot atone for sin. It can do absolutely nothing for the guilty sinner, when he stands before the bar of the Judge of all the earth. Morality, be it ever of such a profound and exalted nature, cannot, any more than religion, remove one blot of the leprosy of sin.

Naaman went away in his rage with his leprosy, and you may leave this room vexed with my plain talking, but, mark you, with your sins clinging to you, and you yourself bound straight for the pit of hell. Naaman's servants, however, gathered round him. They are very affectionate in their entreaties, and use the most splendid logic to convict that poor leper of his crass folly. They say, "*My father, if the prophet had bid thee do*

some great thing,

wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, 'Wash, and be clean?'" There was the point that wounded his pride. If the prophet had bid him do **SOME GREAT THING**, how gladly would the enfeebled leper have attempted even impossibilities. For instance, to borrow an illustration, if he had said, "On that height there lies entrenched a band of our enemies. For a number of years we have tried to dispossess them of that mountain. General Naaman, take a few of your picked men, scale those heights, and deliver us from the presence of our foes." See how his

eyes flash with pride, how his hand quickly grasps the jewelled hilt of his sword, and hear him triumphantly call for volunteers. Now, see him going up that mountain with pointed sword,

the leader of that forlorn hope,

determined to succeed or die in the rash attempt. If the prophet had asked him all that, and more, he would have gladly attempted it. With what beautiful logic the servants say, "*How much rather then, when he saith to thee, 'Wash, and be clean?'*"

Now, my friend, how do YOU think you are going to be saved? You reply, "If I do the best I can, if I pray, give my money liberally to the poor and the church, do all that I possibly can do towards my salvation, I shall surely attain it." We would gladly borrow the logic of these Syrian servants, and reason with you thus:—"How much rather then, when God says to you, '*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved?*'" Like Naaman, you want to do *some great thing*, that will suit your pride of heart. However, Naaman listens to the sound advice of his servants. Wise man! He goes DOWN to the river, Jordan, flings off his general's mantle, lays aside his decorations and medals, and steps out, revealing his true condition, a poor, naked, loathsome, vile leper. He wades into Jordan's waters, and methinks if the doctors of his own country had stood on the banks, how they would have laughed in derision at him, and said, "Has our brave general lost his senses altogether, to have left his own country, and,

at the bidding of a strange prophet,

dip himself seven times in a muddy stream like this?"

It is something like this when we preach the simple

gospel. We say, "*Believe and be saved*," and a man in the back seat says, "The idea! It is too simple for a man of *my* mind. Besides, it is too cheap." Too cheap!!! It cost the Lord Jesus His blessed stainless life; it cost Him His life's blood; the forsaking of the face of God; all the punishment due to sin; more than words can tell or thought can think. Nay, call it not cheap. Salvation costs us nothing, but it was gained at an infinite cost.

However, Naaman dips himself *seven* times, and when he came up the seventh time he was cleansed, his flesh came again like that of a little child. How did he get the blessing? By "*the obedience of faith*." Oh! sinner, in like manner, if you will simply trust in the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, you will be saved from the leprosy of sin, you will be clean every whit.

Seven times—what does that mean? Seven is a number which indicates perfection in Scripture. It means, in type, that the leper went down with all his moral being. It was

no mere perfunctory performance,

no lifeless, listless obedience to the prophet's command, he obeyed with *all* his heart; in short, it was "*the obedience of faith*." In like manner, if YOU want salvation, you must with all your soul acknowledge that you are a poor, undone sinner, without a single hope in yourself, and take Christ as your own personal Saviour; and, in receiving Him, you will receive all—salvation, pardon, cleansing, justification, the indwelling of the Spirit, eternal life.

To return to our narrative. Naaman comes up from the seventh dip perfectly cleansed. A mighty miracle has been wrought. The loathsome leper is, as it were,

created anew. The flush of health once more appears upon his face, the light returns to his eye, and hope once more makes his heart light and his step buoyant. He returns to the door of the prophet's cottage. He alters his tune. Gratefully he exclaims, "*Behold, now I KNOW that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel.*" Now he says,

"Behold I know."

Just a little previously he had proudly and wrathfully said, "*Behold, I THOUGHT.*" His brain was busy—his mind active. Now he has gone through the experience of cleansing, he gratefully exclaims, "*Behold, now I KNOW.*" 'Tis not the utterance of the head but of the heart—eighteen inches lower down. Assurance is his—he *knows*.

People nowadays ask, "Can anybody *know* that they are saved?" Naaman knew he was cured; and, just as he knew he was cured, *we know we are saved*. He had the assurance of the blessing, and, if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you will have the assurance of salvation.

I was talking the other day with an old gentleman, who was born the very self-same day as the famous Mr. Gladstone. Sitting beside him, and speaking to him about his soul, I said, "Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?"

He replied unhesitatingly, "Yes; I trust in the Lord Jesus."

"Are you saved, then?" I further enquired.

"No, I would not like to be so presumptuous as that, I would not like to be so bold as to say that."

I replied, "I *know* that I am saved, and thousands know it, simply through faith in Christ." I pressed

home again the question, "Do *you* really and truly believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?"

"Yes," was the ready reply.

"Well, what does the verse say?" I argued, repeating it in his ear, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*" "You are

cutting the verse in two.

What *God* says He means, and He means what He says. If the *first* half of the verse—'*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*'—be true of you, then the latter half—'*Thou shalt be saved*'—is equally true of you. It says, '*Thou shalt BE saved,*' not '*Thou shalt FEEL saved.*'" People are so slow to take God simply at His word.

Some years ago in England we gave what we called a "gospel tea." A man and his wife, who used to come pretty regularly to the meetings, on the night of the tea did not turn up, and I went to see what was the matter.

"Are you not coming to the tea?" I enquired.

They replied, "Well, we should like to come, but we should like to pay."

"That is your trouble, is it?" I said. "We invited you *freely*, and want you to come without paying; it is

like the gospel—

free."

They said, "Won't you let us pay sixpence each?"

I said, "No."

"We would really like to come, but we don't like to come without paying. Would you let us pay three-pence each?" they argued.

I said, "No." The affair was something like a Dutch auction. The auctioneer begins at a high figure,

and gradually comes down lower and lower, and the first bidder gets the article. Yet it was sad. Pride stood in their way. It showed how legality blinded them, and the freeness of grace was little understood. Would you believe it, that man's pride was so great, and yet his desire to be present was so strong, that he haggled, "Won't you let us pay a penny each?"

I said decidedly, "No, not even a penny. If we allowed you to pay a single farthing it would spoil the character of the tea."

At last they swallowed their pride, and came without paying. And so, sinner, if you were allowed to contribute to your salvation one iota, it would spoil it all. It is "*without money and without price.*" Oh! take this free salvation. The offer of it travels down from glory, from

the very heart of the blessed God,
and greets the ear of the very vilest of the vile.

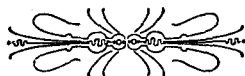
In conclusion, I caution you against this poor leper's *four* mistakes. Let me repeat them. He went to the *wrong person*; see to it that *you* do not make that mistake, but in the Lord Jesus Christ—the *only* Saviour of sinners—find salvation, pardon, and cleansing.

Nor like Naaman, try the *wrong power*. Think not the money of good works and ordinances pass current with God, who offers salvation "*without money and without price*"—freely, all of grace from first to last—"not of works, lest any man should boast." The gospel is

"the POWER of God unto salvation,
to every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16).

And see to it that you cherish no *wrong plan*, but submit to God's plan—"BELIEVE on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Lastly, think not of

the *wrong place*. No penitents' form, or as you call it in America, "the mourners' bench," no building however sacred, no ordinance however divine, carries with it saving value—the streams of Religion and Morality form not the *place* of blessing. Like the harlot of Luke vii., hie away to the feet of Jesus, that is the *place* of blessing—get into His blessed presence—trust Him and Him alone, the One who finished the work to God's eternal satisfaction and glory. Then you will be able to go out of this building saved, cleansed, pardoned, forgiven, and able to exclaim with joyful assurance, "Behold, *now I KNOW* that my soul is saved for all eternity." May God grant it for His name's sake ! Amen.



Silence and Speech; or Con- viction and Confession.

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven . . . a time to keep silence, and a time to speak."—(ECCLESIASTES iii. 1 and 7).

THERE is one class of people in this world with whom silence is criminal. They are Christians, whose feet are upon the straight and narrow road heavenward, who have become the participators of eternal life; and yet they are silent, as they think of the awful doom of the unsaved.

There was, long centuries ago, a siege. Samaria was hemmed in by the Syrian hosts. Four starving lepers decided to cast themselves upon

the mercy of the foe.

When they advanced to the enemy's camp they found that God had fought for His people. The Syrians had fled in precipitate haste. The lepers entered into the deserted tents, ate and drank, gathered together gold, silver, and raiment—more food than they could eat, and more valuables than they could carry away. They went from tent to tent, burying what they could not carry, till at last 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." In imagination see these four joyous lepers ; they are in the midst of plenty. In the city things are at famine prices, and they are starving. They are right. They tell the good news of plenty to the starving city. Thousands flock out, and the city is saved. It was not well for them to hold their peace.

Ten thousand times more so it is not well that the Christian should hold his peace, when he has salvation, the forgiveness of his sins, eternal life, and the knowledge of God's love. Knowing all this, he is passing up and down amongst a world of sinners travelling to eternal doom. The Christian knows a greater deliverance than ever 'the Samaritan lepers did, and is in the presence of need more terribly pressing than ever befel a besieged city.

I think it was the Rev. John Berridge, in the time of John Wesley, who was summoned to appear before his bishop for preaching at irregular times, and out of his own parish. The bishop remonstrated with him for these *awful* (?) irregularities.

At last Mr. Berridge replied, "My lord, I promise you that I shall only speak on two occasions in future." The bishop smiled, and, rubbing his hands, as if with invisible soap, he said, "That is something like common sense. Name your times, Mr. Berridge."

Berridge replied that by the grace of God he was going to be "*instant*

in season, out of season."

See II Timothy, iv. 2.

These are the two times you are called upon, my Christian hearer, to speak—in season and out of season. The fields are white already to harvest. Souls are perishing. Men and women on every hand are dying. Your opportunities are real. Seize them, and let not your silence be criminal.

People think that Sunday morning in church is the time to hear these things, and when a gospel meeting is held in a dancing academy on a week evening, they think it is out of place. It is no such thing. If you were stretched upon your deathbed this moment, and had only twenty-four hours to live, would you wait until Sunday for the clergyman to come to speak to you? Your need, unsaved sinner, is urgent to-night.

Let me speak to you to-night about *the Saviour's* time to keep silence, and His time to speak; *the sinner's* time to keep silence, and his time to speak. The Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, is the Creator of this world in which we live; "*He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast;*" He said, "*Let there be light: and there was light.*" By the mere fiat of His word this world of ours was sent rolling upon its appointed course. He *spake*; but there was a time when the blessed Son of God had to keep *silence*.

Let your thoughts wander down the ages, let your mind travel to Judea, and look outside Jerusalem's walls upon those three crosses. See upon the central one, Jesus, the Saviour of sinners, uplifted. But a little while before in the garden of Gethsemane, Judas Iscariot, the traitor, came to Him, and betrayed Him with a traitor's kiss; He was seized by cruel men and beaten; bandied about from judgment hall to prison, and from

prison to Calvary's hill ; the soldiers in mockery knelt before Him—they put a reed in His hand, and a crown of thorns upon His blessed brow, and said, "*Hail, King of the Jews !*" But

He kept silence.

Not a word did He utter. Why was this ? Answer me that. When those puny creatures of His hand insulted their Creator, He might have hurled them out of existence with a single word. Why did He then keep silence ? Isaiah prophesied this of Jesus long centuries before He was born into this world. "*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.*"—(ISAIAH LIII. 7.) Here it is fulfilled. The love of His heart for sinners brought Him to this.

Let me borrow an illustration. A mother says to her boy, "John, I have put into this basket a couple of chickens, two or three loaves of bread, and a few vegetables, and I want you to take it across to widow Smith. Her two sons are out of work, and she does not know where to get the next meal from. Take it with my kind love." John sets off willingly on his errand. The hours roll by, and the time is long past when he should have reached home, but no John returns.

The mother grows anxious.

Night is beginning to fall. She goes to the door of her little house, and longingly, anxiously peers down the dark road to see if her boy is coming back. Well nigh distracted with fear and fright, she is about to set off in search of him, when Johnny stumbles into the doorway,

and falls down insensible on the floor, all covered with wounds, and blood from head to feet. His anxious mother puts him to bed, and for days watches over him whilst the fever runs its course, and in his delirium his mother gets bit by bit the story of his ill-treatment. At last he recovers, and the mother says to him, "My boy whatever is the meaning of all this?"

"Well," says John, "I took that basket with your love to Mrs. Smith; and, just as I gave it to her, she set her two sons upon me. They threw stones at me, knocked me down, and ill-treated me, and I was just able to crawl home." The mother hotly replies: "Johnny, if I had known the way in which they were going to treat you, I would never have sent you." And so would every mother in this hall say, and who would blame her?

Now, friends, we ask it reverently: Did the blessed God know how this world was going to treat the Lord Jesus, His Son? He knew the end from the beginning. God knew that men with wicked hands would seize hold of Jesus, heap indignities upon Him, put Him on the cross, and jeer at His dying agonies; yet, knowing all this, His love was so great, so deep, that He sent His Son to die for you and me. Do you believe

the story of His love?

And the Lord Jesus Christ, when the moment of His suffering comes, is *silent*. He is put upon the cross, the sun has risen high in the heavens, it is twelve o'clock noon, and, suddenly, for three hours a pall of darkness settles over the scene. Moment of all moments! God forsakes His Son, because upon the Person of Jesus falls all the weight of His judgment against sin. He is the sinner's Substitute, making

atonement by the blood of the cross. Awful mystery ! God forsakes His Son, and Jesus for three hours bears the penalty due to sin. We stand as it were with the shoes from off our feet for the ground is holy. Does any word of complaint escape His lips ? Nay, with head erect, amidst the darkness on that central cross, He bears in deepest love all the judgment which was due to sin, in order that God might open the very flood-gates of His love, and invite the vilest to His heart and home ; in order that God might let loose

the prodigality of His love

in a world that hated His Son, and cried, "*Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him.*" For three hours the holy Sufferer does not speak.

But the time comes when He does speak. Three thrilling words escape His lips. With a loud voice He exclaims, "*IT IS FINISHED!*" Oh ! ponder those words. If they had never been uttered, your salvation and mine would have been an utter impossibility. In the question of suffering for sin, the only person in the whole universe of God, who could have uttered those three words, was the Person of God's Son.

For one moment let us go down to the portals of hell. Look ! See the lost, doomed souls there. Will they ever be able to say, "*It is finished*" ? As the waves of God's righteous judgment roll over those lost souls, as age succeeds age in eternity, will they ever be able to look forward and see one little gleam of hope in the far-off future ? Nay ; they will never be able to say, "*It is finished,*" but Jesus said it. May God save *you* from such an eternity of unmeasured woe.

And now His time to speak has come. What says He ? In virtue of His work upon Calvary's cross, the

blessed Saviour of sinners can utter one sweet, gracious word. 'Tis

"Come!"

And does He say, "*Come*," merely to the respectable and the religious? Nay; He says, "*Come*," to the wide world. That word, "*Come*," can be echoed and re-echoed by gospel preachers amidst the millions of London, in the thronged streets of New York, under the palm trees of Central Africa, upon the parched plains of India, in the far-off islands of the sea, in short wherever man is found. The preacher, constrained by the spirit of his Master, can say to the vilest and the most wicked, "*Come*."

The Lord Jesus Christ sits yonder in glory, and says, "*Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*" It is a restless world we are in. Jesus is the only One who can give rest. There is no rest for the wicked, and there is no rest in hell. But now this glorious invitation goes forth to you. When you receive an invitation, you have to decide whether you will accept it or not. An invitation comes to you to-night—an invitation from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the soul, the Friend of sinners. In His name we extend it to you at this very hour, "*Come; for all things are now ready.*" What will you say to this grand invitation? You must accept it, or refuse it. Which? *Which?* You are bound to do one or the other—there is no neutral ground in the things of God.

For the last eighteen hundred years that blessed Saviour has been seated on the throne in glory, and from His lips has sounded that one, sweet, gracious, persuasive word, "*Come*." He lingers still, but one day

the last invitation

will be given—one day the last message of love will come—the last moment of long-suffering grace will be reached, and then no more gospel preachings—no more offers of salvation. The church of God will be caught up to glory—the redeemed will be with Christ for ever, the door will be shut in your face, and shut for ever, shut against the unrepentant, the drunkard, the harlot, against the mere church-goer, the unconverted sacrament-taker, all those who are out of Christ and in their sins. My hearer, on which side of the shut door would you be, if Christ were to come this very moment ?

The Lord Jesus Christ will speak yet again. You are about to hear Him. If you close your ears to that gracious invitation, "*Come,*" be prepared to hear the stern command, "*Depart !*" You must hear the one or the other. "*Every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him : and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him*" says the apostle John in the opening of the Revelation. Mark you, *your* eye shall see the Son of God, and *your* ears shall hear the sound of His voice, but will you listen to Him now, whilst He says, "*Come,*" or wait until the day of judgment, when His eyes shall be like flames of fire; and His voice like the sound of many waters, and

your ears shall tingle

to all eternity with that hope-withering, soul-crushing word, "*Depart.*" You will go, then, like the lightning's flash from the great white throne to the everlasting burnings, there to weep and gnash your teeth throughout the dreary ages of eternity, with the awful thought in your soul, "I have seen the face of Jesus, I shall never see it again. O God, let me forget the sight ! I am in a place where mercy can

never come." Eternity will not suffice to efface from your memory that scene. Memory is the worm that never dies.

Now what about the sinner's time to keep silence? When is that? *NOW*. God means that every tongue shall be dumb in His presence, every mouth stopped, and no excuses offered. Why was the law given? People are very fond of going in for law-keeping, and doing their best, and trying to get to heaven on the ground of so doing. Again, we repeat the question, Why was the law given? Let Scripture give the answer. "*That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*" Before ever you receive blessing to your soul

your mouth must be stopped,

you must bring no excuse into God's presence, or measure yourself by your neighbour, or even by the requirement of the law. You must find out that you are a poor, lost, vile sinner in God's presence.

How was Job's mouth stopped? Through long chapters in his book he argues out his own righteousness. He boasted that he was eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, a father to the poor, that he caused the widow's heart to sing, and put on righteousness as a garment, judgment as a crown. And it was no idle boast. At last he comes into God's presence and says, "*Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.*" In God's presence his mouth is stopped.

Take the case of the prophet Isaiah. He is something like a man in a chamber with six windows. He looks out of one window and sees the monopolist, the greedy, avaricious man, who joins house to house, and field to

field till all others are elbowed out. He cries woe to him. Then he looks out of another window and sees the drunkard in his cups, and cries woe to him. He next marks the out-and-out sinners, those who draw sin as it were with a cart-rope—the harlot, the gambler, the swearer, and pronounces woe unto them. Next he sees the hypocrites that call “*evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter*”—and upon the head of the hypocrite he cries woe. Next he marks those “*that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight,*” and cries woe to them. God cannot stand self-satisfied people, who think their thoughts are good enough for Him. Lastly, he calls woe upon the men of the world, pleasure-lovers, men without conscience, “*which justify the wicked for reward*”—

corrupt, political jobbers.

There are plenty of them in America.

But now it is as if these six windows were all closed, and a window at the top were opened, and the very light of God streams down, revealing to the prophet his own awful condition, and he now cries: “*WOE IS ME! for I am undone;*” his mouth, too, is stopped.

Now, look at Saul of Tarsus, who, from a religious standpoint, towers head and shoulders above his fellows. He says of himself, “*Touching the righteousness which is in the law, BLAMELESS.*” Yet one day whilst journeying on the Damascene road in hot haste to persecute God’s people, he was stricken down with a light above the brightness of the sun, in its mid-day strength; and, blinded by that light, he neither ate nor drank for three days, learning the terrible truth that in his flesh there dwelt no good thing. His estimate of

himself is changed. His mouth, too, is stopped, and his testimony to God's grace is written down: "*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;*

of whom I am chief."

Oh! my hearer, your mouth, too, *must* be shut. Before blessing reaches your soul, you must find out that you are a poor, lost sinner, without excuse in God's presence. You could not compare favourably with a Job, an Isaiah, a Saul of Tarsus. *Their* mouths were stopped when once they got into God's holy presence. Have you ever been there? That is the place where the shutting-up process takes place.

But there are *two times* when a sinner must speak—once to confess *his sins*, and, then, to confess *his Saviour*. Have you ever confessed *your* sins yet in the presence of God? It is a serious thing to get into God's presence. If you get there, you must acknowledge that you are a poor sinner, only worthy of the deepest hell. You will confess your sins in the spirit of the Psalmist. He says, "*When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.*" He got no relief as long as he kept silence about his sins, the burden of them lay heavy on his conscience, but at last he opened his lips, and confessed to God: "*I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid.*" Then he had to add, "*And Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.*"

Forgiveness is consequent on confession.

And so, my hearer, if you will confess, in humble contrition of soul your sins to God, you will find He

will abundantly pardon, because His blessed Son shed His precious blood upon Calvary's cross. Upon confession of sin, you will find a Saviour offered to you. Then comes confession of Jesus as Lord with the lips.

What does it say in the 10th chapter of Romans?—*"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."* We quote this to show that confession of the Lord Jesus Christ is necessary for salvation—indeed, there are two things necessary—*confession* with the lips, and *belief* of the heart. Until you believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, and until you confess that same Jesus as Lord, you cannot say that you are saved. Have you confessed Jesus as your Saviour, yet?

We sometimes think that the devil likes to have four parts of our body, whilst the blessed Lord claims two. The devil says—"I want your hands and feet—your hands to *work* and your feet to *walk*; I want you to be doing, *doing*, DOING." What does God say, as it were? "I want your heart, and your lips—your heart to *believe* that I have raised Jesus from the dead, and your lips to *confess* Him Lord." Look at the poor, dying thief crucified on the cross, hands and feet nailed to the gibbet. He can

neither walk nor work,

he can do nothing for his salvation.

It would be an easy matter to preach the gospel to a lot of crucified people, who wouldn't talk about turning over new leaves, and working. The thief with hands and feet nailed to a cross can neither walk nor work. What, then, can he do? Why, he has his heart and his lips, and he turns to that blessed

Saviour beside him dying in such agonies, and he sees something more than a mere man dying there—'tis the Saviour of sinners—the long promised Messiah. He believes in his heart in that brief moment, and turning to Him opens his lips, and says, "*Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.*" He acknowledges Him Lord. What does the Saviour say to him in reply? "*To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.*" But that morning he trod the floor of the condemned cell, a poor thief, his hands stained with guilt (it may have been with human blood); at night, whiter than the driven snow,

treading the golden streets

in the heavenly Jerusalem. What a change! He got far more than the privilege he asked for. He said, "*Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.*" He as much as said, "The time is coming when Thou shalt reign over this world, and Thou, the Son of God and Son of David, the Messiah, shalt sit upon the throne of David. When the flags shall be flying, and the drums beating, and glad hallelujahs rend the sky, Lord think of the poor, dying thief by Thy side." And the Lord so sweetly responded, "*Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be WITH ME in paradise.*"

As you sit upon your seat, if you acknowledge Jesus Lord, and in your heart trust Him, as the One raised by God to glory, and if your lips confess Him, salvation is yours.

What did the world do? Crucified the Saviour, cast Him out. They said, "*We will not have this Man to reign over us.*" On the contrary, the believer, when he confesses the Lord Jesus, says, "I will have this Man to reign over me;" in other words, he reverses the

world's verdict. He joins issue with the world—goes straight in the teeth of its choice—like the live fish he swims against the stream. The world voted Jesus to the cross; the Christian says, "This Man shall reign over me," that is where confession comes in.

And then, further, why does it say, "*If thou shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead?*" Why did God raise Jesus from the dead? Because He had really finished the work, He had glorified God to the full—He had made atonement for sin, and had covered the throne of God with a fresh glory, and the very fact of the Father raising that blessed Saviour from the dead proves that God is eternally satisfied. For GOD raised Him.

A sailor lad was anxious about his soul. The preacher spoke to him again and again, and the youth replied, "But, sir, I am not satisfied with what you say on the point." The preacher retorted, "It little matters whether *you* are satisfied or not, the question is,

Is God satisfied?"

And he showed him how in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, God has proved His deep and eternal satisfaction in the work that Christ has done by raising Him and placing Him at His own right hand in glory. He grasped the fact that God was satisfied, and the sailor there and then was cleared of his doubts. If God is satisfied, it is a very small thing whether you are satisfied; and if the Lord Jesus did all the work on Calvary's cross, it is a simple thing for those for whom He died to confess Him Lord.

Once a Roman emperor called a very famous architect into his presence and said, "I want you to build a coliseum—a structure that will hand my name down to

posterity, and be the glory of the Roman empire. I will give you money, and men, and time—as much money as you like, as many men as you need, and as long a time as you want; only build a structure which shall be the most magnificent possible.” The emperor further promised that on the opening day he would proclaim a national holiday in honour of the event, open the coliseum with some magnificent and costly games, and that the architect should sit by his own side, a laurel wreath encircling his brow—

the hero of the moment.

The architect set to work, and erected a most magnificent building. The opening day arrived, the games were proclaimed, the holiday announced. Crowds—thousands upon thousands—flocked into the coliseum. There was the emperor, and, true to his promise, beside him the architect, with the laurel wreath upon his brow. The gladiators fought, there was a display of prowess, and skill, and courage. At last a wild cry arose, “Throw the Christians to the lions!” The roars of the famished lions could be plainly heard in their cells, as they champed the chains that bound them! The white-robed Christians were brought out, and stood in the midst of the arena. Every eye was fixed upon them, but, with hands folded and eyes closed, and heads uplifted, they were engaged in silent prayer, or chanting softly some hymn of praise. Presently, the gratings were lifted, and the hungry lions rushed forward to their prey. With one stroke of their terrible paws, the happy spirits of those martyrs were at home in the presence of Jesus.

Cheer after cheer rent the sky. That blood-thirsty, Christ-hating, heathen throng yelled, and yelled, and

yelled at the sight. Moved deeply by the sight the architect stood up, as if to speak. He had thrown aside his laurel chaplet, and waited patiently until silence was restored. With pale face, yet in tones of ringing triumph, he cried aloud :

"I, too, would be a Christian,"

and there, and then, and thus confessed his Lord. In another instant they threw him amidst the wild beasts, but he had confessed his Lord. It was a noble deed. But Jesus was worthy. Better far be torn limb from limb, until the ransomed spirit be freed for its flight to glory, than sit in heathen state with laurel-encircled brow.

During the reign of Licinius, who employed the Thundering Legion in suppressing Christianity in Armenia, forty Christians at Sebaste were doomed to stand upon a frozen lake all night. Beside the lake a cottage was erected ; inside was a large fire, and plenty of warm clothing, and food and drink for any of them, who would recant and give up Christianity. All they had to do was to leave the lake, pass into the cottage, and enjoy the fire, the warm clothing, the food and drink.

The biting wind swept from the snow-clad heights of Mount Caucasus, but these Christians stood in prayer upon the cold ice. They prayed, "O Lord, forty wrestlers have come forth to fight for Thee, grant that forty wrestlers may receive the crown of victory." An hour or two passed by, when one of their number, benumbed by the cold, recanted and went into the cottage. Such an act might gain life in this world, but what about the soul? "*He that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal.*"

But what of the prayer of those forty Christians ? Was it going to be answered ? It was. The centurion of the soldiers—Sempronius—moved with admiration at the sight of these Christians, sealing by their death the testimony of their lives, stepped forward, and stood upon the ice, and in dying thus confessed his faith. When the morning's sun burst upon that scene, there were

forty, faithful martyrs,

witnesses to the name of the Lord Jesus.

We don't live in such days as those, when Christians were butchered to make a Roman holiday ; yet, it is strange how backward people are to confess Christ. There may be a lady here who dares not confess her Saviour because she is afraid of the curl of her husband's lip, or a man who fears the sneer on his wife's face, or the jeer of his companion in the office or the workshop. Take care ! you may be laughed into hell, but you will never be laughed out. It would be better far to stand up on your two feet, to-day, and say, " Christ for me," than go to a coward's hell. *" The fearful (cowardly), and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all theirs, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone : which is the second death."*

When you do confess, you will get

the joy of confession

in your soul. God will support you in it, and you will be happy in the sense of His love. Oh ! it is a grand thing to be a Christian.

Again we repeat, the sinner's time to keep silence is *now*. If you will persist in talking, and excusing yourself, there is a time coming when you will say no more than that man to whom the king said, "*Friend, how*

camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment ?" We read, "*And he was speechless,*" and the king said, "*Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*" That man was silenced at last—you, too, will be silenced ; either in time for blessing, or in eternity for judgment. A servant of my mother's used to boast, "Plenty of people go to hell, there will be plenty of society there." She went to the preaching, and one sentence she heard rivetted her to her seat, "There will be plenty of company in hell, but

no society."

Ah ! if unconverted, yours will be a speechless woe. Bound hand and foot in outer darkness, you will for ever weep over your mad folly in refusing the Saviour. You will be silent in eternity, save to wail out your woe, while those, who have confessed the Lord Jesus Christ, will be singing the everlasting hallelujah-chorus of heaven—the mighty anthem of the redeemed.

Cease excusing yourself now, confess your sins, and confess too Jesus, as Lord, and remember that the three shalt go together, "*If thou SHALT confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and SHALT believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou SHALT be saved.*" These three shalt go together—if thou shalt confess, and shalt believe, thou shalt be saved. We have God's word for it. May He bless the word for His name's sake. Amen.

The Way of Salvation.

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

"For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness . . . have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

"For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

"But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above :)

"Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

"But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."—(ROMANS X. 1-9.)

WE propose to take these verses which we have read together, one by one, and seek by the Spirit's help to press home their plain, searching truths upon each one present. Now let us look at verse No. 1. We read:—"Brethren, my

heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." Now see, the apostle Paul—the writer of these words—is bending his knee, and praying for his own nation. He prays for something definite—their salvation. When he prays that they may be *saved*, is it not a proof that they are *lost*? Of course it must be. It is only lost people who need salvation. Was he praying then for a nation of cut-throats, drunkards, and reprobates? No; he was praying for a nation of *religionists*. They were religious in the extreme, but they were not saved. Think of that! We learn very plainly, then, from this first verse—

religion cannot save the soul.

Only Christ can do it. Some people are sound asleep in a religious cradle, and the devil, well-pleased, rocks them to and fro.

I said to a lady in this building last night, "Are you saved?"

She replied, "I have been confirmed."

I said, "I don't ask if you are confirmed, but are you saved? Lots of confirmed people are lost."

"But I belong to the Lutheran Church," she said, with a self-satisfied air, as if that settled the question beyond all doubt.

I replied, "You may belong to a hundred Lutheran Churches, and still go to hell."

Do you belong to Christ?

Nothing short of that will do for the sinner." Oh! it is a great thing to get people to understand that they are lost. Are you lost, or saved? There is no middle ground—*only* two classes of people in God's sight—those, who are lost in their sins, on the broad road going straight to hell; and those, who are saved by the precious

blood of Jesus, on the narrow road that leadeth to heaven. We press home the question, Are you lost or saved? Many people think they are only lost when they get to hell, but every sinner out of Christ and in his sins is lost this moment—not lost for ever, thank God, but still lost. He may be religious, but lost. A church-member, but lost. A choir-singer, but lost. A preacher, but lost. When a man finds out he is lost, it is a great step in the history of his soul. For when he discovers that he is lost, he is then deeply anxious to be saved. But be honest with yourself, and confess the truth.

Look at the Philippian jailer. He took the apostle Paul, and his companion, Silas, and thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks; he probably took a good supper, and went sound asleep; he didn't care how he had treated God's servants. At midnight he was

awakened by an earthquake,

the prison-walls rocked to and fro, and the doors were opened. It was death, under the Roman law, to allow a prisoner to escape; he knew that death stared him in the face. He was just about to plunge his hapless soul into eternity by committing suicide, when Paul cried with a loud voice, "*Do thyself no harm; for we are all here.*" These words saved him from bodily death, yet the jailer had now a far deeper question agitating his breast. With the drawn sword in his hand he had stood upon the very verge of eternity—his slumbering soul had awakened to its desperate need. A question not of Roman law, but of God's favour or frown was demanding an immediate answer. He cried out as, trembling, he fell before the feet of his

erstwhile prisoners : “ *Sirs, what must I do to be saved ?* ”

We would to God that some of you here were awakened to your awful condition, rendered still more awful because you are not aware of it. Some of you need an earthquake to awaken you.

A very eloquent preacher in England was preaching one evening, when all of a sudden he lost the thread of his discourse. He couldn't gather himself together, and for a whole minute he stood looking at his audience. It seemed like an age to him. Finally he recovered himself, regained the thread of his discourse, and finished his preaching. When he left the place that night he was greatly distressed as he thought of how he had broken down. A year or two afterwards, a lady came up to him, and said, “Do you remember preaching some time ago, and making an awful pause ? ”

He replied, “Yes, I well remember it—it was a terrible experience to me.”

“Well,” she said, “I remember it, too. When you paused you looked straight at me, and I felt as if the seat underneath me were giving way, and I was dropping right into hell. That pause was used to my conversion.”

If *your* seat were to give way underneath you to-night, and you dropped into eternity, where would *your* soul be ?

The first verse of our chapter tells us, then, that *religion* cannot save. The very hardest people to reach with the gospel are not the drunkards, or the harlots, but those self-satisfied professors, who are encased in

the triple steel armour of a Christless religion, who are wrapped up in forms and ceremonies, and ritual and church-going. You cannot get at them. Nothing but the mighty power of God can reach them.

A celebrated English evangelist some years ago was going to preach to some hundreds of prisoners in a gaol. Just as he advanced to the platform a friend of his came up, and whispered in his ear, "Harry"—(*Henry Moorhouse was his name*)—"shake them over hell."

Moorhouse replied, "No, I won't—they have all lost their character. Gaol-birds have no self-righteousness, they are not religious, they have no character to lose. I will preach to them *the love of God*."

If we had this room filled with the out-and-out sinners of Baltimore, drunkards, harlots, and the like, it would be our great delight to preach to them of the love of God, which can reach the very vilest, and save them from their sins. But we have to talk straight, and speak plainly, and say hard things to you self-satisfied religionists. We have never read of the blessed Lord saying hard things to the publicans and sinners, but how scathingly He often addressed the Scribes and Pharisees. There fell, for instance, from the lips of

the Lover of men's souls

such withering words as these: "*Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers! how can ye escape the damnation of hell?*" At a preaching, a few months ago in England, a young lady came up one night with the tears rolling down her face. She had a lovely voice. We had noticed her singing the hymns at the meetings. She said, "What must I do? I have been a regular chapel-attender, have been the leading choir-singer for a long time, have passed as a Christian for eleven years, and thought I was one, and all that time I have been without Christ. I have never been converted, I have never been saved. What must I do?" She had discovered that

she was unsaved, and very soon that religious young lady was saved.

Another in the same village came up, and said, "It is a terrible thing, but since you have come to this village I have found out that though I am religious, I have been deceiving myself, I am not a Christian." She, too, got peace to her troubled soul.

Religious sinner, I would we had a thousand of you here to tell you the truth. Verse 1 of our chapter plainly tells us that religion cannot save the soul. Don't forget that. What does it matter how correct your creed is, how many sacraments you have taken, how gorgeous your ritual is, how magnificent your places of worship are, if you are without Christ? You are on your way to hell, and lost as you sit there upon your seat. May God open your eyes!

Look at verse No. 2.—"*For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*" Now the apostle Paul adds that these *religious* people were *sincere* people, really sincere, in earnest, and yet they were not saved. Verse 1 tells us plainly that *religion* cannot save; verse 2 tells us as plainly that

sincerity cannot save the soul.

People commonly say—"You've got your religion, and I've got mine, and so long as we are both *sincere*, we will both get to heaven at last." That language is of the devil, it simply deceives people. Suppose two friends want to walk to Washington. One determines to go south, and the other north, and they say on parting, "Well, it doesn't matter whether we go south or north, as long as we are sincere; we both want to go to Washington, and we shall both land there." Wouldn't you think the men, who talked in such a

manner, lunatics ? and yet people talk like that when it is a question of heaven, with its eternal song and light, or hell with its everlasting anguish and darkness. What profound folly !

Look at that captain ! It is a black night. There is a fearful storm at sea. He has lost his reckonings. The sky is beclouded, and there is not even a solitary star to shed its friendly ray amid the darkness. He does not know which way to steer. He is at his wits' end. He must do something. He is steering most *sincerely* straight for the jagged rocks on that treacherous coast. Will his sincerity save his vessel from being broken like matchwood on that rock-bound coast ?

Take another case. Your child is ill. You send for a doctor. The case is very serious. Most *sincerely* he administers the wrong remedy. Will your child live ? Will the doctor's sincerity save it ?

We don't care whether the speaker be preacher or priest, if he tells you that you can get to heaven by being religious, or being sincere, he tells you

an abominable lie.

He does ! He does !

On the broad road there may be magnificent choirs, and organs, and priests in robes and what not, but, mark you, hell is at the end of it—*only Christ can save*. Don't misunderstand me. We are not running down what is of God, God forbid, but we are running down, and will continue to do so by the grace of God, that kind of preaching that puts religion in place of Christ, creed in place of the Saviour, ordinances in place of the atoning blood. There is many an earnest preacher to-day who preaches the good old gospel. Would there

were ten thousand more of them ! But those men who tickle people's ears, and tell them the broad road leads to heaven, and that religion will do instead of Christ, and the waters of baptism instead of the blood of Jesus, are like the blind leaders of the blind, deceived themselves, and deceiving others. We implore you not to be deceived by them.

Now if verse 1 tells us that religion cannot save, and verse 2 tells us that sincerity cannot save, verse 3 as plainly tells us that

good works cannot save.

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." It is hard to knock the idea out of people's heads that good works can save the soul—people will cling to this mistaken thought. The turning over of new leaves, the saying of prayers, the doing of penance and good works, their churches and their chapels ; they think these will save their precious souls. They cannot. Why, one of the Old Testament prophets knew better than that, and said, *"All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."* Suppose you were to clothe yourself with filthy rags, and visit a dear friend of yours, wouldn't he think you were insulting him ? Of course he would. Yet that is just what you are doing when you are bringing your good works to God. There are people *going about* to establish their own righteousness. *Going about !* How busy they are with so-called good works ! Our verse says, they *"have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."* They have not bowed to Christ. What is the righteousness of God ?

Verse 4 says, "*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*" If you want righteousness, you must have it in the Lord Jesus Christ. Christianity does not consist of well-formulated creeds and philanthropic doctrines, but of the living Person of the Son of God—the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the righteousness of every one that believeth. On Calvary's cross He did the mighty work of atonement ; and the sinner, trusting in that once crucified, but now glorified Saviour, is

accounted righteous

in God's sight—a righteousness different in quality, and exceeding any that the law demanded—a righteousness only measured by the Person and work of the Lord Jesus.

Let me give you an illustration. Two men are charged with the crime of theft. They are brought up before a petty court, their case is gone into, and it is clearly proved that one man is guilty, and the other innocent. We will suppose, further, that the judge discovers that the guilty man is the son of a personal friend, and he determines, out of respect to his friend, to pay the fine, and forgive the guilty man. But in the case of the innocent man, what can he do for him ? Forgive him ? No, because there is nothing to be forgiven. He is innocent. What is the righteous course, then, for the judge to take in his case ? He cannot forgive him, for there is nothing to forgive. The judge must clear him in the court where the charge has been made against him, clear his character, and justify him before the eyes of all.

Let me repeat : What can the judge do ? *Forgive THE GUILTY—justify THE INNOCENT.* Another

question : can he justify the guilty man ? No. Why ? Because he has *lost* his character.

Now for our point. Fellow-believer, how can God justify you and me, for we were *guilty* ? He can, blessed be His holy name, He does *forgive* us,

guilty as we were,

because of the atoning merit of the death of the Lord Jesus. But can He justify us ? That is the question. Illustrations on this point all fail. We are guilty, yet if we believe on the Lord Jesus, God, by virtue of the finished work of Calvary, freely forgives. But more, God *imputes* righteousness to us—*divine righteousness*—His own righteousness; we stand before God with a new character, we are justified by God. It is not that we regain our character, for we never had one to lose, not even the character of Adam *innocent*, for it was *after* the fall that Adam became the head of his race, and hence we were never yet, *representatively*, in Adam *innocent*.

God imputes righteousness to us,

because of the work of the Lord Jesus, which gains infinitely in value by what He is, and the resurrection proves all this. But it is through Christ's *death* that all this comes to us, not by His *life* on earth. His life could only have thrown into the shade of a deeper condemnation, our position as sinners before God. It is through His death and resurrection all these blessings accrue to the believer.

I ask you, believers, to-night, do you know what it is to be justified by faith ? Do you know what justification means ? To know it, you must have *faith*. There are a couple of verses which put the whole thing into a nutshell. Speaking of the Lord Jesus we read, "*Who*

was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. iv. 25 v. 1.) You cannot know justification, and consequently enjoy peace with God, unless you know Christ risen, and what His resurrection involves. He died for our offences—in other words He met at the cross in His own blessed Person the liabilities of the guilty sinner, who believes. But, further, He was raised for our justification. It has been well remarked lately, that He died *representatively*, and rose *representatively*—that is, as I understand it, the believer can see in faith the blessed Saviour dying as his representative—in his room and stead, and he stands or falls with Christ. The Saviour glorified God about his (the believer's) sins to the full, and Jesus is raised by

the glory of the Father,

and the believer sees Christ risen as his representative, and thus faith appropriates the meaning of the resurrection. The believer knows he is as clear before God, as Christ risen. This received in faith in the soul gives me, not merely the assurance that clinging to the written word gives, blessed as that is, but **PEACE WITH GOD**; I know how I stand before Him on the ground of righteousness, even as Christ stands. Before God, therefore, can bring one single charge against the believer, He must banish Christ from the place He is in at this moment, and

replace Him in the grave.

Has not Christ glorified God on the cross? Has He not done a mighty work? Has not that blessed Jesus come out of that terrible ordeal a triumphant, risen Saviour? It is a question of the deepest moment for each one,

How does He stand with God? In cloudless favour, and absolute righteousness. And God imputes to the believing sinner's account, righteousness—righteousness only measured by Christ in glory, known there as the One, "*who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Christ is the measure of my acceptance, and before my acceptance before God can alter, Christ must alter.

*"My love is oftentimes low,
My joy still ebbs and flows;
But peace with Him remains the same,
No change Jehovah knows."*

What does the 5th verse say? "*For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.*" Some people talk about the law, and say they are going to keep it. They put the ten commandments up on their walls, and are trying to get to heaven by making it the rule of life. Mark you, if you don't keep the law thoroughly, fully and completely in every particular,

it can only curse you.

The law falls into two sections: Your duty *Godward*, and your duty *manward*. It demands that you should not merely conform to it in the outward observance of morality and uprightness, etc., but it demands that you should love God with ALL your heart, soul, strength, and mind. (Luke x. 27.) Now you don't do it. No, you don't do it.

You are something like a little Scotch lad, who said, "I don't think I should like to go to heaven. The Sabbath is a very dull day with the psalm-

singing, praying, and long sermons. Heaven will be one long, dreary Sabbath, I don't think I should like heaven." This is like you, you don't love God with ALL your heart. If you did, the idea of always being in God's presence in glory would be a most welcome thought to your soul. If you love God with all your heart, would you rather go to a preaching like this, or to the theatre? Which now? If you would not most decidedly rather come here, it is proof that you don't keep the law, because you should love God with all your heart. People like to love Him on Sunday, and themselves the other six days of the week. Now you must love Him with

all your heart.

But, what about your duty—*manward*? Listen! The law says, "*Love your neighbour as yourself.*" You don't do that. The face, you see in the looking-glass every morning, is the one you love best. You don't need any proof of this. Selfishness is an ingrained quality in the human heart. The law curses it. No one, save the Lord Jesus Christ, has ever fulfilled the lofty requirements of the law. Moses, David, Elijah, nay, the most exalted of the human family have all come short. You are no exception to the truth of this. The terrible indictment is true of all. To keep the law is an impossibility. Why, then, was it given? To convict man of sin and helplessness—"that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful"—"that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

Moreover the law was never given in order that men might gain heaven. It distinctly says, "*That the man which doeth those things shall LIVE by them.*" If you

can keep the law all your days, you will never die. All must die, from the Queen of England on her throne and the President of the United States in the White House, down to the meanest of mankind, all must die, a proof that *all* are sinners, and that all have failed to keep the law. What you need is a salvation outside of yourself altogether, for your case is hopeless. You are shut up to God. He is willing to bless. Thank God the next two or three verses prove to us that salvation, as far as the sinner is concerned, is the simplest thing in the world. Verses 6 and 7 plainly mean this—It is not required of a sinner, who wants salvation, to pray to God to send the Lord Jesus Christ into this world. There is no need for anyone to go up to heaven to bring Christ down.

*“ His errand to the earth was love,
To wretches such as we !
To pluck us from the jaws of death,
Nailed to th’ accursed tree.”*

He came of His own accord. No one prayed that He might come. Man would never have known that

“ God so loved the world,
that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” were it not a fact, that Christ came into the world to save sinners—what a blessed errand!—to be nailed to the cross, and to die in His deep love for those who were His enemies, to shed His precious atoning blood and to be put into the grave ! Oh ! we don’t need to pray for Him to come. Nor do we need to pray that He may be raised, to ask the question, *“ Who shall descend into the deep ? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) ”* No, the work is all

complete. The death and resurrection of Jesus are accomplished facts. We had no hand in them, though the blessings of both are all for us, and faith appropriates them, and both are necessary for us.

For instance; the boards of the tabernacle in the wilderness were each supported in place by *two* silver sockets—illustrative of redemption—the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. There are lots of Christians to-day, as it were, with but one socket, and they are

shaking backward and forward.

When death comes, they are often full of doubts and fears, not knowing whether they are going to heaven or not. There is little soul-stability about them. They know to some extent the meaning of the death of Jesus, but know nothing of the resurrection, save as an historical fact. They have never got beyond the cross. They don't know Christ risen. Just as the board needed the *two* sockets for stability, so the believer requires the *two* facts of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus; he needs to know their meaning in God's sight. We, believers, have all got as far as the cross, but what is the meaning of the resurrection?

Let me seek to illustrate it. In England, years ago, people were thrown into prison for debt. The Fleet Street prison in London had a world-wide notoriety as a debtors' prison. Suppose you are a man with a large family, and heavy business responsibilities, and unfortunate enough to get hopelessly into debt, and about to be thrown into prison. A friend of yours comes forward and says, "I will go into prison instead of you," and away he goes. This is like the Lord Jesus Christ coming down from heaven. We owed a mighty debt to God,

and nothing but the prison-house of hell lay before us. The blessed Saviour came as our substitute, taking upon Himself all our liabilities to God. On the cross He died, shedding His precious blood which cleanseth from all sin, to pay the mighty debt. He went to prison, the prison-house of the grave, the door was locked, the sepulchre was sealed, and a Roman watch guarded it. But the grave could not hold Him. He rose triumphant on the third day, the mighty Victor over sin, the Despoiler of Satan—"that great Shepherd of the sheep." What does the resurrection prove? For in truth it is the very

keystone of the gospel.

The apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians, "*If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.*"

Let us return to our illustration. One day while walking down Fleet Street you see your friend on the opposite side of the street. You are greatly surprised, and exclaim, "Why, the debt is paid!" How do you know that? Because your friend is out of prison. Now the Lord Jesus Christ is out of the grave. He is risen. How do we know that our debt to God is paid, that all our sins are for ever gone? Because He is out of the grave, risen from the tomb.

But, still further, as you are about to go up to your friend, to congratulate him that he is out of prison, you see your creditor coming along the road. You begin to tremble as you see him approaching your friend, and ask yourself the question, "Will he hail the nearest policeman, and send my friend back to prison again?" Whilst you are wondering, he comes up to your friend, and greets him with a smile. You exclaim in blank

astonishment, "Wonders will never cease." Then you see him grasp his hand, and give it a hearty shake, and the two enter into friendly conversation. Now you are doubly sure that the debt is paid. *First*, your friend is out of prison; *second*, he is friends with the creditor.

To complete the illustration: the Lord Jesus Christ is out of the grave; we are sure our sins are put away. First, because He has risen from the dead; and, secondly, He has gone to glory. Forty days after He rose from the dead, "*He led them (His disciples) out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up to heaven.*" The eye of faith can follow Him. With His hands outstretched in blessing, they see Him leave this earth, and pass upward to heaven. He passes through yon gates, the angels fall back, and worship their Creator, as they see Him, a real Man, with the marks of His sufferings upon His holy person. He comes to the eternal throne, effulgent with supernal light, sits down upon it, and

God crowns Him with glory.

He is received in honour by the Creditor, even God. Yes, God is *satisfied* with what Jesus has done, and the believer can look up through the open heaven and say, There is my peace with God. "*He is our peace.*" We are doubly sure that the debt is paid, that God is satisfied, because Christ is risen from the dead, and is received up into glory. And He is there as our Representative—we are accepted before God in Christ.

Now let us read verse number 8: "*But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.*"

Salvation is so near to you that you don't need to rise from your seat to get it; it is in your heart, and in your mouth, that is it is not dependent upon works, or prayers, or tears, but simple belief in the heart, and confession with the mouth.

For, listen to verse number 9 : "*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*" There it is—it comes right down to you. If your mouth will confess Jesus, that earth-rejected but glory-crowned, heaven-accepted Saviour, as Lord, and your heart believes that God hath raised Him from the dead,

GOD SAYS clearly and distinctly, "*thou shalt be saved.*" Now it comes very close to you, it could not come closer. Without moving an eyelash, without rising from your seat, you can be saved. In this blessed gospel verse there are three *shalts* which go together—if thou *shalt* confess with thy mouth, and *shalt* believe in thine heart, thou *shalt* be saved. An old lady in England, who had been saved for fifty years and more, said to me the other night—"Thank God, Mr. Pollock, for those three *shalts*." That dear, aged saint, just waiting at any moment to go home, found her joy and comfort in those three immutable *shalts*. God has linked them together—a three-fold cord, which cannot easily be broken. Again let me repeat the golden text. "*If thou SHALT confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and SHALT believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou SHALT be saved.*" God grant some here the simplicity of faith, to believe, to confess, and to rejoice on the authority of God's word in a known salvation.

Now some may think we have been running down good works to-night. We will tell you where they come in, in case a wrong impression is left on your minds. A good many years ago a handsome slave was put up for auction in the neighbouring State of Virginia. An Englishman, who happened to see her, was filled with pity, and determined to buy her. The buyers came and eyed her up and down, and presently the auctioneer got behind his desk, and the bidding began very briskly, for this poor woman was a valuable piece of property. This gentleman continued bidding, until he had nearly reached the end of his money. At last he secured her. When he went to claim her, she turned upon him in fierce anger. Her indignation knew no bounds that an Englishman, of all people, should buy a slave. But in one minute her hatred turned to the very deepest love. He said to her, "I have bought you to set you free. Here are your papers." She dropped down at his feet, and said, "Sir, I am
your slave for ever."

One of his friends, who came to his beautiful home in Virginia, said to him, "Wherever did you get that slave? She is most attentive. I never saw anybody like that; she seems to anticipate your every want, her whole soul seems wrapped up in your welfare."

The gentleman replied, "She is not my slave; I bought her, and set her free, and since that day she has been the most faithful servant I ever had."

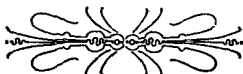
That is it, she didn't serve to *get* her liberty, nor to *keep* her liberty, but because she had *received* her liberty. As Christians, it is our privilege to go in for good works out of love to the One who has saved us. We don't go in for good works to *get* saved, nor to *keep*

saved, but because we *are* saved. And the Christian, who is not filled with good works, is simply an advertisement for the devil. "*This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.*" "*Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people,*

zealous of good works."

Every follower of the Lord Jesus should be filled with good works.

But never forget that salvation is *free*, on the ground of pure sovereign grace. Religion, sincerity, good works cannot save. Only Christ can. May God give some sinner here to believe with his heart, confess with his lips, and go out of this building with the knowledge of salvation. May He grant it for His name's sake. Amen.



The Sheep and the Sow; or Reality and Profession.

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me:

"And I give them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.

"My Father which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand.

"I and My Father are one.

"Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him."—
(JOHN X. 27-31.)

"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

"For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them

"But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire."—(II PETER II. 20-22.)

IT has been my privilege to address you in this hall for several nights. We have sought to preach the free sovereign grace of God in blessing the repentant sinner apart from any merit that he may think he has. Now the gospel we have preached has aroused some little animosity in the hearts of people.

Last Sunday night, when we told you that

baptism cannot save your soul,

and that sacrament-taking cannot do a sinner any good in the sight of God, a lady in the second seat here threw her hymn-book down, and said, "I never heard anybody speak so insultingly in my life," and she said to her neighbour, "Come, let us clear out of this." But her friend wouldn't go, and she was obliged to listen to a plain talk about empty profession. She wouldn't look at the preacher, but looked at the pictures on the walls, and pretended to be tremendously indifferent to what was said.

Then, again, someone took one of these hymn-books the other night, and wrote upon it these words: "You *must* work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." It would have been far more courageous if he had come and spoken to us face to face about it, and told us he disagreed with us; and, after all, common politeness should have prompted him to write his anonymous communication upon a piece of paper, and not disfigure the hymn-book. But we are glad when people are aroused like this. It shows that God is working when the devil begins to roar.

There are three kinds of interested people in a gospel meeting—those who get *mad*, they don't like the gospel, they hate grace, they have

legal blood in their veins,

and are like the poor, graceless Pharisees, who scorned the grace of the Saviour, because He gave forgiveness to a poor harlot of the city. Then there are those who are *sad*—the gospel comes with power to them, they feel what it says to be true, they feel troubled about their souls, anxious about the future, and they are *sad*, with

such the tear of contrition often falls down the cheek. Then, there is the third kind, and of these a good many are here to-night, thank God. They are those who have been made eternally *glad*. The gospel has come, with all its glad, gracious fulness, bringing news of salvation and eternal life. They have tasted of its sweetness, they have believed the gospel, and gladness fills the breast, where once only sadness reigned. *Mad, sad, glad*, which are you ?

Now when this little indication of opposition manifested itself we determined to take for our subject to-night—The “sheep” and the “sow”—with the view of addressing these self-satisfied people.

Who are the sheep ? They are those who have heard the voice of the good Shepherd, and follow Him. Every blood-bought believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is one of His sheep, and He says, “*I know them and they follow Me : and I give unto them eternal life ; and*

they shall never perish.”

When the Lord Jesus Christ told the proud, empty religionists of His day that He gave His sheep eternal life, and that they should never perish, we read, “*Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.*” Their frigid legality did not like grace. When the Saviour of sinners proclaimed the *everlasting* blessing of those, who accepted His grace, they stooped down, and took up stones to stone the Saviour of sinners. Fancy that ! But the human heart is the same to-day. There are those who do the same thing even now. They won’t take up literal stones, but they oppose the very gospel of God. If we preach “once saved, saved for ever,” they will persecute us, and say we hold dangerous doctrine, and quote a few verses out of their connection

to prove that what we say is false. "*They shall never perish*," is what the Saviour said, and what we will continue to say by the grace of God. For how long, then, are those who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ saved? For ever. We don't believe in those people, who say they are in Christ to-day, and out of Him to-morrow; those who are saved to-day, and lost to-morrow. The Scriptures know nothing of such a gospel as this. When God picks up a sinner to bless, He saves him eternally. We want no hook-and-eye Christians, those that can be hooked on to-day and hooked off to-morrow. Jesus has become "*the Author of eternal salvation*." Here is a grand text for you,

"KEPT by the power of God."

That is it, friend; when God saves, God keeps, and not one of those who are washed in the precious blood of Jesus will ever perish. We once said to a Christian, who believed in the falling-away doctrine (this doctrine is very prevalent in England), "Do you believe that a man can be a Christian for sixty-eight years, and fall away, and die when he is seventy, and be compelled to go to hell for two years' sins?"

He said, "I do."

"Well," we replied, "that is a most disgraceful doctrine to believe—it dishonours God—throws a slight upon the atoning blood—is a libel against the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, whereby the believer is "*sealed unto the day of redemption*."

People say, "According to this doctrine, if I am saved and saved for ever, and cannot be lost, then I can go and do as I like." Many honest people think that such a doctrine, as that preached to-day, is a doctrine

that will lead to Antinomianism, that is to people doing as they like, sinning with a high hand, throwing aside all restraint whatever. People who talk like that

don't know what grace means.

Someone has illustrated it something like this. Suppose a man in a village in England is out of work. He has a wife and six little children. He has been hoping and hoping to get work, and in the meantime has run up a tremendous bill at the general grocery store. At last the grocer says to him, "I cannot allow you to have another single article at my store until you have paid what you owe me : the amount is too large to go on any longer. I must protect myself." The poor fellow goes home and tells the sad news. His wife, with a white face (she has been fasting to give her children food), with the tears running down her cheeks, says, "John, it is a dark outlook for us now," and the poor man, overcome, strong man as he is, sits down upon a chair, and buries his head in his hands, and weeps for very sorrow. Just at that moment a knock comes at the door. With slow step, and gloomy face, John opens it, and in steps the squire, his landlord. With a cheery voice he says, "John you have been out of work for a very long time, and I hear you have no prospect of getting any. I have just been over to the grocery store, and have settled your bill, and brought you the receipt." And, so saying, he puts the receipt into John's hand. John's tears of sorrow are

turned to joy.

He thanks the squire gratefully, and the cottage is a scene of rejoicing now, the clouds have rolled away.

That is something like you when you first trusted the Lord Jesus Christ. You sang,

" Oh ! happy day that fixed my choice

On Thee my Saviour and my God.

Well may this glowing heart rejoice,

And tell its raptures all abroad.

Happy day ! Happy day !

When Jesus washed my sins away."

And then you thought your future would be all straight sailing—no more losing your temper, or getting ruffled.

A few minutes roll by, and John, to the astonishment of his wife, begins to groan again, and the wife says, " Whatever is the matter, John ? "

" Well," he replies, " the debt is paid off, but what about the *future* ? The debt is certainly paid, and I am very grateful for that, but we have no bread in the house. The debt of the *past* is paid, but what about the *future* ? We shall have to start and get into debt again. We have no more prospect of paying now than we had before. Whatever shall we do ? "

Just as John ceases speaking another knock comes to the door, and in walks the squire again, who says quickly, " John, I forgot to tell you that, after settling your bill, I told the grocer that you have the privilege of getting all that you want, and everything is to be put to my account. You are not to be charged with anything more until you get work again." And so saying the squire disappears, before John has time to thank him.

John is filled with delight, and he says, excitedly, " Wife, did you hear what the squire said ? We have to get what we *want*. We won't get what we *want*.

We might *want* green peas in the depth of winter, we'll just get along with what we *need*, wife, and we won't trespass upon the squire's goodness a single farthing more than we can possibly help." *John is in the sense of the grace of the squire.* That is something like your case ; when God saves

He saves for ever.

The offer of grace reads on this wise, "*The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from ALL SIN.*" How many ? *All sin.* How many of your sins were committed when Jesus died ? None. They were all future, and therefore you cannot divide them into past sins and future sins. Your life was all spread out before God, when Jesus died, and we can say of Him, "*Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.*" The Scriptures do not contemplate a believer sinning, though gracious provision is made when he falls into sin, that *communion* may be restored. But the question of eternal salvation is never raised again. The *past* is all settled, and nothing more is to be put to your account in the *future*. Why, David exclaimed, "*Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.*" The atoning death of Jesus covers the liabilities of the believer's whole history. Once and for ever his history as a child of Adam has been closed. Such is the atoning efficacy of the blood that for the believer there is no more imputation of sin. The books have been closed once and for ever. We have eternal forgiveness.

But if we are really trusting in Christ, we are not going to sin as we like. Fellow-believers, we can say with grateful hearts, "God has saved us with such a salvation, that it is our joy and privilege to walk by the power of the Holy Spirit, in a way honouring to

His holy name." And, more, if a Christian *carelessly* sins, God will take him in hand and deal with him. God is jealous about His people. The relationship existing before you were converted, between you, a guilty, hell-bound sinner, and God, the righteous Judge, has been

closed for ever.

It was closed when you came to Christ, and now a new relationship is established between you, the relationship of a child to a father. You know those that are parents here to-night, don't allow their children to do as they like.

Suppose one day your child and servant have together been guilty of some terrible piece of wickedness, so much so that you have to take instant and stern measures about it. What do you do? Give your servant a month's notice, and, rather than tolerate her presence another month in the house, pay her her wages, and send her about her business. Do you give your child a month's notice? No. Why? Because of the *relationship* existing between you. What do you do then? You take that child upstairs, shut the bedroom door, and do what you could not with the servant. You lay your hands upon that child, and chastise it soundly for its wickedness. That is what God does with us. If a believer goes on in carelessness of walk or sin, what does God do? He takes that child in hand, and chastises him in order that he might not be condemned with the world, even so far as sometimes causing him to fall asleep, to die, and pass away to glory. See 1 Cor. xi. 26—32. He is

fitted for heaven

by the finished work of Christ, but *unfitted for earth*

by his own wicked ways.* Nothing can add to his fitness for glory, for that is based upon the work of Christ, not on his walk and ways down here. The blessed Lord says of His sheep, "*I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.*"

Then He speaks further, about no one plucking them out of His hand, nor out of His Father's hand. "*Neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one.*" Their united interest and purpose is to care for, and keep the sheep.

It is something like this. You see a little child of five summers walking down the street. On either side a parent has hold of its hand. Presently you see that child tumble down into the mud, and you say, "How careless that father and mother are!" Upon every believer there is

the double grip of divine love.

He is in the Son's hand and in the Father's hand. Will They ~~carelessly~~ let that double grip go, and allow the believer to perish? *Never! NEVER!! NEVER!!!* "*They shall never perish.*" We may fall from *grace*, as did the Galatian Christians, by putting ourselves under *law*, but we can never fall from *life*, we shall never fall *away*—never, for we are in the powerful hand of the Son, and the powerful hand of the Father, and His word is pledged that His sheep shall never perish. Fellow-believer, has your heart

* There are at least six weighty reasons why a believer cannot do as he likes, and should not fall into sin. (1) Gratitude. (2) The New Nature which seeks holiness. (3) The indwelling of the Holy Spirit. (4) The ceaseless representation and succour of Him, who is our great high Priest in heaven. (5) God's governmental dealings with us, as His children. (6) The Lord's near return. "*Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.*"

ever drunk in the truth that you are in the hand of the Son, and of the Father, that the double grip of divine love is upon you, that no man is able to pluck you out of Their hand? Blessed truth! When the Saviour spoke thus in the hearing of the Pharisees, we read, "*Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.*" They didn't believe in this doctrine; it didn't suit the proud legality that held them in its terrible bondage; the grace of the Son of God was an enigma to them; the heart of God was utterly unknown by them. Christian, do *you* believe in the very depths of your heart that you are blessed with everlasting life, that life in common with the Father and the Son, blessed with the eternal forgiveness of your sins, and that the double grip of divine assurance is yours?

But what about the sow that the apostle Peter refers to? There is a great deal of difference between a sheep and a sow. You may wash a sow with

the scrubbing-brush of religion, until it is superficially clean, and put around her neck the blue ribbon of temperance, if you please, but you will leave it a sow still. Religion cannot alter *the nature*. That is the kind of people we have been running down all through these meetings; they are those mere professors of whom we spoke, sows still, washed sows, but only sows. And such take the exhortations in the Bible, spoken to the sheep, believers, and apply them to themselves in a legal way, and either misery or self-satisfaction is the result.

Such is the sentence written upon the cover of the hymn-book, "*You must work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*" There are one or two points in connection with that sentence to which I would like

to call your attention. Let us give you the *whole* sentence as it stands in Scripture. "*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.*" First: it is only addressed to *Christians*, and

the unbeliever has no right

to the exhortation at all. Mark that. It isn't meant for him, it is only spoken to those who are already Christians. You will never find throughout the whole of the Scriptures, one line addressed to a sinner, in which he is told to work out his own salvation. They do say, "*To him THAT WORKETH NOT, but believeth.*" "*NOT OF WORKS, lest any man should boast.*" "*NOT BY WORKS of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.*" The Scriptures are very plain and explicit on this point.

In the North of England a dear old Christian was working by the side of one who did not believe in the doctrine of free grace, and who sneered at his fellow-workman, and said, "Adam, don't be too sure of getting to heaven, you must work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

Adam smiled back, and quietly retorted, "Why, man, you must be blind. Don't you see that you must have salvation before you can work it out?" That is exactly it. You must have your salvation before you can work it out. It says, "*Work out your OWN salvation.*" You don't work to *get* salvation, you don't work to *keep* it, but you work

because you have got it;

that is to say, if you are saved, you will seek to walk

through this world glorifying God every day. *As Christians* we have to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. Your prayer every morning will be, "Lord, I am about to enter upon another day. I have never before travelled the road which lies just before me. I shall have difficulties to contend with ; there are pits, and snares, and traps laid for me by the enemy of my soul. It is an untrodden and unknown road that lies before me. I pray that Thy grace may keep me and guard me, that I may glorify Thee. So keep me till I reach the rest above." That is working out your salvation, because at long last you will get to the end of your journey, you will reach the glory. Salvation is a God-given thing. But you must have it, before you can work it out.

In Scripture, salvation may be described as in three sections—the salvation of the soul, which you get the moment you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and which you can never lose—salvation of the pathway, that you get day by day, just as you need it, grace for the moment. It is as if I were to put a large ball of worsted into your hands, and say, "Work that out, and make a pair of stockings out of it." Day by day you work at it, and at last the stockings are finished ; you have reached the end of the ball, and your work is done. If the end of the believer's journey comes before Christ returns, he falls asleep, and

departs to be with Him,

which is far better. But, when the Bridegroom of his soul returns, he gets his body of glory, and then the work of salvation is a complete thing. On the day that Christ comes, He will change this poor frail body into a body like His own. He, who has saved

our souls, and preserved us all along the pathway of this life, is going to save our bodies, and then we shall be *fully* saved. The three sections, so to speak, of salvation will be true, then ! Salvation of the soul—of the pathway—of the body. Salvation will then be a completed thing ; we shall be saved from our sins, Satan's power, and sin's presence, at home with the blessed Lord for ever. But in receiving the salvation of the soul, all else is secured to us, and therefore it is with fear and trembling we seek to work out our salvation on the road to glory. For, remember, if our privilege is to *work out* our salvation, God's part is to *work in* both the willing and the doing of His good pleasure. He gives us the *desire* and the *power*, "*both to will and to do of His good pleasure.*" He *works in*, and we *work out*—that is it. How simple and blessed !

What is a sow ? A mere professor. An empty religionist. Religion, so-called—empty-hearted, loud-tongued profession—is manufacturing more infidels to-day than all the Ingersols on the platforms of infidelity. The most contemptible methods are being resorted to for the raising of money in so-called Christian churches, not only in America, but also in England, which are enough to make a Christian blush with shame. Bazaars, private theatricals, raffles, the most unblushing worldliness are resorted to in order to raise funds.

The prostitution of all that is godly is making it easy for professors to go on with the world, whilst making a profession of religion. *Listen !* There are sows feeding on the sacrament—washed sows taking the bread and wine, but they are *only* sows. Christless professor, if you died with the wine of the sacrament wet upon your lips, you would go straight to hell.

A lady in Florida told me the other day that a man could practice drunkenness, immorality, anything in short he liked, if only he belonged to a church. That white-washes him. But, remember, to whitewash is not to wash white. The sepulchres of the dead were white-washed, and so they are to-day in a moral sense, but only the blood of Jesus washes white—aye, whiter than snow. The solemn naked truth is, that there is many a washed sow in the pulpit to-day, with the white tie on, and with Latin and Greek in his head, talking platitudes about morality and ethics, and going straight to hell, and, alas ! taking his audience with him. That is the plain truth of God.

You may wash the sow, but her nature is unchanged. It would have been better to have done nothing at all, for, as our verse says, "*The dog is turned to his own vomit again ; and*

the sow that was washed,
to her wallowing in the mire."

Let me borrow an illustration used by a friend of mine. Suppose we visit a farm one day, and we notice that all is excitement ; we see the farmer in his best clothes, and we enquire what is the matter.

"Oh ! we are having an agricultural fair in the next town, and I am going to enter some exhibits ; come and see them," says the farmer, and he takes us through the yard, and shows us some beautiful sheep, and a fine sow washed clean, with a blue ribbon around its neck. Presently they start for the show, and as they go along the road the sow sees a ditch full of mud and slush. The sheep is between the sow and the ditch. The sow gives a deep grunt of satisfaction, and rushes headlong into the mud, and in her haste knocks the sheep in too.

The sow is at home, she is delighted, pleased beyond measure—just as the mere professor likes

the mud-pool of sin.

But the sheep is in distress. Why? Because it has a different nature from the sow. That is exactly the difference between the Christian and the unbeliever. Are you one of the sheep of the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you heard His voice, have you trusted in Him, and do you know that your precious soul is saved? Or are you after all, only the baptized, sacrament-taking, church-going, and loud-mouthed professor? Are you just like the sow, washed clean, but after all, your nature unchanged, and with all your religion, going down the broad road to the everlasting burnings? Take care! Take care! We want you to be real to-night.

Some have thought that during these meetings we have been running down baptism and sacrament-taking, but that is not the case. We have been condemning those unconverted people who do these things to the dishonour of God. Why, perhaps a drunken father and a dissolute mother take their miserable offspring, and ask a clergyman to baptize it in the font. It is simply making

a pantomime of a solemn Christian ordinance.

To be baptized is a solemn thing. It means, if we enter intelligently into it, that we acknowledge our separatedness from this world that crucified Christ, taking sides with Him, and owning Him Lord. Baptism would not be so fashionable, if people understood its deep, real meaning. It is a most radical ordinance, going to the very root of things.

Then what about sacrament-taking? It is the privilege of every true believer, who is not walking in sin,

to take the sacrament Is there a child of God here, who doesn't remember the Lord in the eating of the bread and the drinking of the wine? Is there one here so careless, or so backward, as not to remember the Saviour in partaking of the supper, which speaks of His death for us, and

His deep, undying love?

I trust not. Cold, indeed, must be the heart that fails to remember the One, who remembered us so touchingly at the cross—that is so unresponsive to His last expressed desire.

But it is too solemn an ordinance for the giddy butterflies of fashion, for men with their pockets heavy with ill-gotten gains to engage in. Unconverted men and women, it is too solemn for *you* to partake of the Lord's Supper. You have no title to it, or part in it. It is only for Christians—a blessed privilege.

Now, friends, understand us; we don't run down good works, but we declare to you that we solemnly believe that good works cannot be presented by the sinner to God in order to obtain His favour, because as sinners "*all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,*" and if you want salvation you must come as a poor, undone sinner upon the ground of free sovereign grace.

Speaking about the sheep, and its eternal security, we will conclude with an illustration. Suppose a man and his wife happened to have been married on Christmas day. They have weathered storms together, they have summered and wintered life together, and have brought up a large family of sons and daughters, and these are married and scattered here and there. The old couple are creeping fast down the hill of life. They reach at length the fiftieth anniversary of their

marriage day, their golden wedding. They resolve to have

a large family gathering,

especially as the anniversary of their wedding falls on Christmas day. They send in good time an invitation to their married sons and daughters to come, and bring their families, to celebrate the eventful occasion. The whole family shall be together under the parental roof once more, more than probably for the last time. The sons and daughters are very fond of their father and mother, and make a great effort to come, so that *all* the members of the family shall be there. The time draws near. It is just a week before the anniversary comes, and the father says to the mother, "Wife, I am glad that John's ship is coming in," speaking of their sailor-son, "he is due three days before Christmas, it is grand to think he will just be in time, and the whole thing will be complete."

Three days before Christmas comes, and no John; the next day, and no John; the very day before Christmas, and no John. Christmas day at last comes, and all the sons, and daughters, and grandchildren have gathered, and they only want John to complete the circle. To the great distress of the old father and mother, Christmas day arrives and no John. They are restless, they cannot sit down at the table, and enjoy the good things. They are constantly going to the door to look for John, and they don't give up hopes of his coming until twelve o'clock at night. Twelve o'clock comes, Christmas day is over, the golden wedding has been celebrated (they will never have another), and no John.

Now listen! The very fact that the gathering was

so large and representative, the fact that all their beloved children had come, and of the time being so joyful, and bright, and auspicious, only rendered their grief deeper that John should have missed it. How did he miss it? His ship was coming up the Irish Channel when a great storm set in, and contrary winds kept her back a week, and John arrived too late for the family gathering.

Now for the application. God is going to have

a great family gathering.

Every blood-bought child of His He is going to have in heaven. From the north, east, south, and west they will come, from the old, hoary-headed father, down to the latest-born babe of God's great family, all are going to be in glory. Will the loving heart of God our Father be content if one John is missing? Let me tell you, if but one feeble child be missing, there will be an eternal blank in the heart of the blessed God. Can it be so? Let me ask you a further question. Will any storm, or wind, or wave keep back any wayfaring Christian? Nay, friends, it won't. God's storms *always* drive us nearer home.

The other day we were on board a steamer on the west coast of Scotland, and there sprang up a tremendous head-wind. We said to one of the sailors, "Will this wind make us late?"

He replied, "No, sir, a strong head wind only makes the boilers draw all the more, and we get up more steam. We shall be in Glasgow punctually to the tick of the clock." That is just like the Christian.

The Old Testament believer was like a sailing vessel, depending on the wind and sails,

an outside power,

to drive it along ; but in this, the day of the Holy Ghost, the New Testament believer is like a steamer, depending on

an inside power,

the mighty power of the Spirit of God, and contrary winds and storms are only used by God for making a Christian bright and vigorous in his pathway. Many of you may have heard of dear, old Samuel Rutherford. He was something like a good, old steamer, when he said :—

"I've wrestled on towards heaven

'Gainst wind and tide and storm."

Christian, rest assured, there is nothing which shall come between you and that bright glory of God, and the welcome of the Father's heart. If you are one of the Lord's own sheep, you are His for ever. He knows you, and you hear His voice, and you follow Him, and you shall never perish. May God give you to "*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*" Remember, God *works in*, you *work out*. And if there should be a washed sow here to-night, may God give him to acknowledge that he is an empty sham, a miserable formalist, and may he take the low place of confession, and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*" May God grant it, for His name's sake. Amen.



“Behold, the Bridegroom.”

“BEHOLD the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”—(JOHN i. 29).

“And at midnight there was a cry made, BEHOLD, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.”—(MATT. xxv. 6).

“BEHOLD, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.”—(REV. i. 7).

THE subject to-night is that of the second coming of our Lord. There is a great deal of discredit being thrown upon it by foolish men, professing to be

wiser than the Scriptures.

There are certain people who are constantly fixing a date for the Lord's return. Time has again and again proved them wrong; yet, all undaunted by their false guesses, they still assume the rôle of prophets.

Now, whilst we would be the last to discredit their sincerity and Christian character, we believe they are helping on the devil's work by throwing discredit upon the important subject of the Lord's return, the personal coming of Christ to catch His people up to be for ever with Himself. Such false prophets are

the laughing-stock of the infidel,

and the grief of all sober-minded Christian men and women. Let us turn to Scripture, and, deaf to the voices of men, learn what God says about this subject. There are twenty-seven books in the New Testament.

In all but five of them there are very important allusions to the second return of our Lord Jesus Christ. A recent author has pointed out very clearly the reason of these exceptions. There are three, short, personal epistles in which we do not naturally look for the unfolding of much doctrine, and in them we do not find the second coming of the Lord Jesus mentioned at all. These exceptions are the apostle Paul's short epistle to Philemon about Onesimus—a runaway slave; the second Epistle of John, addressed to a lady, and consisting of a very few verses; the third Epistle of John, written to Gaius, who had exercised hospitality towards the apostle, equally as brief as his second epistle.

There are two other exceptions—the Epistle to the Ephesians, and the Epistle to the Galatians. The former takes up a very large scope of truth, leading the Christian through the very length and breadth of God's purposes, detailing

the immutable counsels of His glory,
viewing him as seated "*in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*" Seeing that Christians are looked at as raised up and seated together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, one is quite prepared that no allusion should be made to the Lord's second coming.

Again, it is not mentioned in the Epistle to the Galatians. Why? The reason is very evident. The Galatian Christians were not right about the Lord's *first* coming, and what is the good of talking to people about His *second* coming, when they were not right as to the *first*? It would not be surprising at all to find a considerable number in this audience, who are not right about the Lord's *first* coming. What has the

Lord's first coming done for YOU ? Would it have made any difference in your life, if He had never come ?

True, you might not have been baptized, but what has that done for you ? As far as the salvation of your soul is concerned, absolutely nothing. Baptism communicates nothing *vital*. The prayer-book of the Church of England talks about an infant being made a child of God by the waters of baptism. The *Prayer-Book* says it, but

the Bible does not.

Which is right ? It is the precious blood of Christ *alone* that can cleanse from sin ; those only who have *faith* in Christ Jesus are the children of God.

Neither might you have taken the Sacrament. It would have been just as well if you never had, because you are unconverted. Oh ! my unconverted friend, if you should die with the bread of the Sacrament in your mouth, and with your lips wet with the wine, you would go straight to hell. The Sacrament won't save you ; none but Christ can do it.

Let me ask you, before speaking about the *second* coming of the Lord, Are you right about the *first* ? What did He come to do ? He came to save sinners, in love to die upon the cross. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, looking upon Him as He walked, exclaimed,

" Behold the Lamb of God,
which taketh away the sin of the world." Have you yet beheld the Lamb of God ? You have *read* the mere words, but have you *beheld* by faith, the Person of the Son of God.

People commonly read the Bible in the way that

they read history-books. You read that Julius Cæsar, many years ago, arrived upon the shores of Britain and conquered that country ; that later on Christopher Columbus came across the wide Atlantic, and discovered America, and you believe it, but what has this knowledge done for you ? It is historical, it is interesting, it has a result upon the page of history, but has it affected your happiness for eternity ? Has it made a straw of difference to your life ? You would sleep as soundly if you didn't know about it. There are thousands of people who read the Bible in the self-same way, and it doesn't do them a bit of good ; nay, it only adds to

the weight of their condemnation.

When they discover that they are poor, lost, hell-bound sinners, when they find out that Christ came into the world to save such, it is then they have a deep interest in the facts of Scripture, and long to have a real, *personal* interest in Christ, and to know that He is *their* Saviour.

I remember once visiting a poor woman in England in deep distress. She occupied a small room, for which she paid a shilling per week. Some straw in one corner and a dirty blanket, a beer-bottle with a candle stuck in it—this was

her whole stock of furniture.

A thin alpaca dress, little or no underclothing, a worn-out old bonnet, boots far too big, no stockings—that is how she stood before me.

We got work for her. She was a thrifty Scotch woman (the Scotch people are very *canny*), and soon the house looked quite home-like. A chair or two, a table, some matting, a piece of oil-cloth, a fender,

some cheerful almanacks from the grocer near by, gave the place quite a home-like appearance. She had been going on like this for some months, supporting herself and her only child. One day I found her sitting by the fire weeping.

"Whatever is the matter?" I enquired.

She answered, "Well, I have not been feeling well lately. I have had a nasty cough, and had no strength or heart for my work, and so at last I was forced to go to the parish-doctor; he sounded me, and told me that both of my lungs were diseased, and that I had

not long to live.

I wouldn't mind for myself, but when I think of leaving my child to the care of a cold world like this, I dread it," and the tears ran afresh down her cheeks.

I turned to her, and said, "Well, Mrs. G——, it is a solemn moment when the doctor puts the death-warrant into your hands. You are a dying woman, tell me what are your hopes for eternity based on? Remember when you come to die, sandy foundations won't do; what are you trusting to?"

With the tears rolling down her cheeks, yet smiling through her sorrow, she said, "Christ died for sinners; I'm a poor sinner; *therefore*

He died for me."

Ah! my friends, *there* was a deep personal interest in the Saviour, she was right about the *first* coming of Christ, and she was ready for death, and, better still, prepared for the Lord's *second* coming.

"Oh, joy! Oh, delight! should we go without dying,
No sickness, no sadness, no dread, and no crying,
Caught up through the clouds with our Lord into glory,
When Jesus receives 'His own.'"

By way of illustration, let me suppose that I am reading a newspaper, and notice a bold heading, reading thus—

"Large Windfall to a Baltimore Man!"

I am rather interested in this, as I happen to be staying in Baltimore. Reading the paragraph down, I find to my astonishment that this fortune is left to someone who happens to be residing in Carey Street. Well, it is a pretty long street, but still I am more interested, because, as I happen to be staying in Carey Street, it is coming nearer home. I read a little further, and I find it is bequeathed to someone living in No. 1322, North Carey Street; this happens to be the very house in which I am staying. This great fortune, two millions of money, is left to someone living under the same roof as I am, and I become still more interested. Is it my host, or one of his three sons? I read on a little further, and, strange to say, I find it has been left to *me*.

How will the news affect me? It will make a tremendous influence on my life. Suppose, further, I am in a very hard situation, toiling early and late for three or four dollars a week. On receipt of the news of my fortune, with a light spirit I should hand in my notice to my master. I should bid good-bye to toil and poverty. I should hold up my head, and be independent—it would make a mighty difference in my life.

If *you* read the Bible like that, if you read that the Lord Jesus Christ died upon the cross, shed His precious atoning blood, and that God offers *you*

the greatest possible fortune

that He possibly could, even the gift of eternal life, it would make a mighty difference to you. If you knew that the forgiveness of all your sins, salvation, peace

with God were yours, what would you do on receipt of the blessed news? Why, you would hand in your notice to the devil—that hard task-master. You would say good-bye to a life of sin and misery, aye, to an empty, Christless religion pretty quickly. It would make a mighty difference to you, if you had a deep personal interest in the Lord's *first* coming, and knew that you were everlastingly enriched.

Once a missionary visiting the East End of London stumbled into a damp, dark, noisome cellar. There, in one corner, he found a poor young woman dying of consumption. Evidently she had been once very pretty, but consumption had made sad ravages in her appearance. Her long, black hair was lying dishevelled on her pillow, her eyes closed in the very last stage of the weakness of consumption. She had no friend beside her, no mother, no husband, no child, no friend. She had just a little glass of water by her side.

Accustomed as the missionary was to scenes of wretchedness and poverty, this pitiable spectacle moved his heart in deepest pity. He exclaimed, involuntarily, "Poor soul!" She opened her black, lustrous eyes, and a smile of heaven itself played on her face as she said to him, "*Don't call me POOR, I have Christ, what want I more?*"

Ah! friends, she was right. I have stood beside the magnificent tomb of the great Vanderbilt, who in life was reputedly the richest man in the world, in the Moravian cemetery of Van Dort, Staten Island, and repeated that question once asked by

the great Lover of souls,

"*What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*" By the side of that rich

man, if he died Christless, this poor woman was a heavenly millionaire, as she joyfully exclaimed, "*I have Christ, what want I more ?*"

But, now, what about the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ ? When may it take place ? It may occur before the clock strikes twelve to-night, before this meeting ends. I am not here to fix the day ; if I did so, I should profess to be wiser than Holy Scripture. The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. "*Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.*" (Mark xiii. 32.) I am no fanatic, but waiting and watching for my Lord's return at any moment, through grace. When may the Lord return for His people ? This very night. How will it affect YOU ?

The parable of the ten virgins will illustrate it. Why does it say "*Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins ?*" Why does it say, "Then ?" In the previous chapter to this, we find a divine account of

the terrible tribulations

about to pass over this guilty world. It is in view of that moment that the kingdom of heaven is said to be likened unto ten virgins. The reason is obvious. Before God visits this guilty world with judgment, the Lord is coming to pluck out of it every blood-bought believer—not one will be left behind. Before the hour of God's judgment arrives, the five wise virgins, in other words every true Christian, will be caught up to be for ever with the Lord.

Let us look at the parable in detail. We read, "*Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto*

ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him."

Suppose we could have the ten virgins here to-night, and call in a photographer, and have their photographs taken, could you tell which were the wise, and which the foolish? They all dress alike, carry the same kind of lamp, and are

outwardly indistinguishable;

but, mark you, there is a tremendous and mighty and profound difference between the five and five.

What is the difference? Five have oil and five have none. What is the oil a figure of? It is a picture of the Holy Ghost, of reality. How do people get the Holy Ghost? When you really accept Christ as your Saviour, and believe "*the gospel of your salvation*," when you receive from the soul-assuring words of Scripture a knowledge that your sins are forgiven, God gives you His holy Spirit—believers form the temple of the Holy Ghost. What is the result of having the Holy Ghost? The lamp burns brightly, in other words you are enabled by the Spirit's power to be a *real* testimony to Christ during the night of His absence, and when He comes, your privilege is to be found waiting and watching, ready for His return.

But we read, five of the virgins had oil, and five

had none. Five were *real possessors*, and five were **sham professors** ;

five were *true* and five were *false* ; five had *Christ* and five were *merely religious*. Which are you ? If He were to come to-night, would it spoil your Christmas pleasures ? Oh ! if He were to come to-night, we Christians would have a grand triumph. We can joyfully sing :—

"I'm waiting for Thee, Lord,

Thy beauty to see, Lord,

I'm waiting for Thee—for Thy coming again.

I'm waiting for Thee, Lord,

Thy beauty to see, Lord,

No TRIUMPH for me, like Thy coming again."

It would be the very brightest thing for Christians to be in the presence of Jesus ; but what about you worldlings, you baptized, sacrament-taking, pleasure-loving professors ? What about you oil-less lamp-holders ? What about YOU, if the Lord were to come this very night ?

Now listen !

"At midnight

there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh." These few verses in Matthew xxv. give us an epitome of church history. The church was set up by Christ on this earth. From the glory He Himself established and endowed it. The Holy Spirit descended from an earth-rejected but glory-crowned Saviour to keep the lamp of hope burning brightly in His absence. At first the church kept her first love. She walked separate from the world, that had crucified her Lord. But, alas ! soon the enemy was at work. What could not be

accomplished by the angry roar of the lion, was encompassed by the wiles of the serpent. *Corruption* got into the church; empty forms, ceremonies and rituals abounded. Where hope, faith, and love had held their gentle sway, spiritual wickedness soon reigned supreme. Instead of the church being in the world, the world was in the church. The waters of baptism were made to take the place of the precious blood of Jesus. What was the result? "*While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept*"—the profession of Christianity was almost smothered by

the foul breath of Jezebel,

and all down the long ages of Popery you do not find any mention of the Lord's return; nay, even in the time of Luther, or John Wesley, or George Whitefield, you find no direct unfolding of the truth of the Lord's personal return for His people. But thank God, He is faithful. In His mercy He has recovered within the last sixty or seventy years this blessed truth—the hope of the church. Jesus has glorified God, and in faithfulness to Him, He will see to it that when the hour of His triumph comes, there will be a response on the part of His church. "*The Spirit and the Bride say, COME.*"

On all sides, and in every quarter of Christendom a mighty cry has been heard,

"Behold the Bridegroom

cometh; go ye out to meet Him." The Lord is coming quickly. Are you ready?

To give you a borrowed illustration, suppose we are sitting in an old country farm-house in England. It has been a splendid summer, and it is now early autumn. One night, as we are about to go to bed,

we notice thousands of swallows sitting upon the trees and farm-buildings, chirruping and chattering, and making quite a commotion. We wonder what it is all about. Next morning we get up, and look about for the swallows, but they are gone—they have all taken their flight. Ah ! if you could have listened to the bird-language of the night before, you would have heard the old ones saying to the young ones, "My children, we must leave this land. The summer is over, the nights are getting cool, there is frost in the air, winter is coming with its ice and snow, its fierce storms and

its wild, wintry blasts.

We must spread our wings early on the morrow, and fly to the sunny south, to the balmy shores of the Mediterranean, to Africa's golden coast, where there are no storms, no frost, no snow, no wintry blast," and away in the early morning they go. Oh ! sinner, that will be like the Christians one day soon. They will spread their wings for flight. The cry has gone forth, thrilling many an expectant heart, "*Go ye out to meet HIM.*" And what do we find ? That Christians are holding their conferences in England, and their conventions in America, they are getting together here and there, to study from the Scriptures the subject of the Lord's second coming—the swallows are chattering and chirping and twittering from end to end of this world, and one day you will get up in the morning and there will not be a single Christian left—it may be to-morrow—they will have all gone to glory.

The summer of God's grace has rolled on its golden way for 1800 years and more. God is sending forth His reapers—the preachers of the gospel—

with sharpened sickles, and the harvest is being quickly gathered in. Ah! one after another are being saved, and yet

you are unreached and unsaved.

Take care. Very soon the last golden grain will be gathered in, and the granary of heaven will be full—the Christians gone to glory, and what will be the bitter wail of untold thousands? Listen! "*The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.*"—(Jer. viii. 20.)

I have heard it pictured something like this. I don't know how it is in America, but in Scotland, at the close of autumn, you can see the cornfield reaped, the white stubble close cropped to the ground, the mists rolling down the heather-clad hillside, and a cold, chilly, frosty feeling makes you shiver, and as you gather your cloak around you, you feel that cold, biting winter is riding on the blast. It will be like that—"*The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.*" In thought look up and far away. Can you see the heavenly city all glowing with light? Can you catch

the gladsome strains of the heavenly music?

Mark, the door will be for ever closed, the Christians will be inside, the swallows will have taken their rapid flight to the shores of eternal glory, where is no chill of winter, no death, no separation, but where Jesus is all and all, and you, the child of Christian parents—you, over whom a Christian mother has wept—you, for whom a Christian father has prayed, will be left behind to the blast of God's judgment, and the winter of His wrath. Take care!

When the cry went forth, "*Behold the Bridegroom : go ye out to meet Him,*" we read, "*Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps, and the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil ; for our lamps are going out.*"—(N.T.) The time is hurrying on when profession will be tested, and you will see whether the waters of baptism, and sacrament-taking, and the ostentatious turning-over of new leaves, and the doing the best you can, and giving your money to the poor and to the church, will suffice to keep your lamp burning. Nay, friend, it will go out unless it is fed by oil—unless you have Christ and the Holy Ghost. It will go out and

leave you in darkness,
for ever to wail over your folly.

How do the wise virgins respond ? They say, "*Not so ; lest there be not enough for us and you : but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.*" If the Lord were to come to-night the oil in your mother's lamp would not take you to glory, neither would that of the Christian minister ; you must have it for yourselves. Now, mark, these five foolish ones, so nicely dressed, with such splendid up-to-date lamps so well polished, looking so trim and nice, have gone to buy the oil. See ! They have hurried to the store, where they think they can get it. They are in earnest now. Listen ! "*While they went to buy, the Bridegroom came ; and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage : and the door was shut.*" They were too late.

Those words—*too late*—are awful words connected with your soul, and eternity. You may be too late to catch the last train to-night for Washington, but you

may catch the first to-morrow ; you may be too late to do many a thing in this life, but you can probably obtain another chance ; but, if you are

too late for eternity,

you are too late for ever and for ever ; in the lake of fire from the very depths of your anguished spirit will escape these two awful words, "*Too late ! TOO LATE ! TOO LATE FOR EVER !*" Your lamp of profession will have gone out into the blackness of darkness for all eternity.

When the Lord comes, people will wake up. It will be something like this. A drummer (we call them in England "commercial travellers") had occasion to make journeys into South Wales in the prosecution of his business. One of the places he visited was a small town, whose whole industry consisted of some large iron works. The first time he went there he transacted his business, secured his bed in an hotel, and retired to rest, but he could not sleep. Why ? The heavy Nasmyth's hammers were working all through the night, making the very ground tremble with their thud, thud, thud : sleep he could not. The next time he came upon his rounds, being warned by his former experience, after transacting his business he took train to an adjacent town, where, away from the distracting noise, he slept very well.

But what about the inhabitants of the little town ? Did they sleep ? Oh, yes ! They were

accustomed to the noise of the hammers.

For instance : a little babe is born in the town, and its first experience is listening to the din of the noisy hammers. Its sweet innocent slumber is, however, not even disturbed by the sound ; it sleeps on peacefully. So

it grows up to childhood ; childhood gives place to the prime of life. Time rolls on till the head is hoary, and the back is bent and the eye grows dim, and yet the constant din does not distract the sleeper. He is so accustomed to it.

But one day an accident happened to these works. The machinery was stopped—the hammers ceased—a strange and unwonted silence reigned supreme. When the people went to bed that night, did they sleep? No. The whole town lay awake. Old men and young children, matrons and maidens alike could not sleep. Why? Because of the unusual stillness in the place. Child of Christian parents, that will be just like you, when the Lord comes. Listen! The gospel hammers have been sounding in your ears ever since you can remember. As a child you heard of Jesus, from

the lips of that best of preachers—

a Christian mother. Your father took you by the hand to Sunday School. As you grew older you went to the gospel meetings, and at last you tried to break loose from the restraint of home. Yes, you have heard the hammering of the old gospel time and again until "gospel-hardened" describes your awful position, and you are about the most hopeless person in this hall to-night. You have got it all in your head, and with the knowledge of the way of salvation, you are stumbling over your mother's tears and your father's prayers ; aye, over the very love of God and the blood of Jesus, right into the pit of hell where the hammering of gospel preaching will give place to the din of the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

And mark this! When the Lord comes, there will be plenty of preachers left to discourse to you moral

lectures in the pulpit ; but you will have no old-time gospel preached to you. In that respect there will be a strange, sad silence. You will find no Christian preachers standing at your street-corner—no tract thrust into your hand by the importunity of Christian zeal. Nothing but the chaff will be left. The true, real preacher of the gospel will have gone to glory—caught up by the Bridegroom. *Then* you will wake up.

It will be something like this. This book, the Bible, which the infidel dares to attempt to pick to pieces to-day—that keeps abreast of the times—that engages the interest of the most profound intellects of the age—that charms the poet, the essayist, the historian—this book, I say, that has been used by God to the salvation of untold thousands, feeding their souls in the darkest day, making the martyr, glad, and the timid, bold, and the weak, strong, and the dying, sing, will be *out-of-date* for you, when the Lord comes. You may then turn over its pages, and read such blessed words as these :—*"NOW is the accepted time ; behold, NOW is the day of salvation,"* and you will have to say, in the very bitterness of your soul, "That was true once, but

it is not true now ;

the Lord has come ; the Christians have gone ; the day of salvation is over, there is no more mercy for me."

Listen ! *"While they went to buy, the Bridegroom came ; and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage : AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT."* Afterward come the other virgins. They knock at the closed door, and their piercing wail of anguish rings through that closed door to the ears of the Master. He hears their earnest prayer :—*"LORD, LORD, open to us,"* but no ; the door to them is barred for ever. When

they might have been saved they laughed ; when they might have received the glad tidings of salvation, they turned a deaf ear ; but now it is too late for ever ; the door is shut in their faces, and there is no more mercy. "*I know you not,*" is the reply they get from the One, who after waiting in long-suffering patience, has at length risen up and shut the door. Unconverted hearer, "*Depart from Me, ye cursed unto everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,*" will be your awful doom. That word, "*Depart,*" will smite your ears like the sound of many waters. As you hear

that hope-withering, heart-crushing word pronounced by the Judge of all the earth, you will pass away into the blackness of outer darkness—damned for all eternity. Oh ! it is a solemn thing to listen to the gospel of God's grace. Ever since the Lord Jesus died, God has been preaching peace, and although you are wicked and rebellious, although you are stubborn and won't believe the gospel, God follows you in His love, still preaching peace, still pressing salvation upon your acceptance.

We read in the Scriptures, "*Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us ; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*" God follows you with His love. His ambassadors still proclaim pardon to the guilty. But it will not always be thus. Two or three hundred years ago, on the continent of Europe, it was the custom when one country went to war with another, before a single cannon was landed on foreign shores, before a single soldier was despatched on his deadly errand, to recall the ambassador home. For instance, suppose England were going to war with

France, before she would send a fleet across the Channel with her soldiers, her ambassador would be recalled from Paris. So long as the Parisians saw the English ambassador walking up and down their streets and boulevards, they would know there was still another chance for peace, diplomatic relations had not altogether ceased, war had not yet been finally decided upon, but as soon as he began to pack his portmanteaus and valises and prepared to depart; as soon as he demanded from the French Government his passport wherewith to leave the country, they would know that war had been determined upon. Listen friends, we Christians, whom you despise, are

ambassadors for Christ.

The English ambassador in Paris may live in state and magnificence, he may bear decorations and orders upon his breast, he may have diplomatic honours showered upon him. God's ambassadors, however, dress generally in a simple, homely way. Look at that old woman, shabbily dressed it may be, going down the street. She is one of God's daughters, but you would never know it by her dress. Yes; you may despise us Christians. *Outwardly* there may be nothing to attract, but we walk your streets as ambassadors for Christ, and as long as you see us here, you may be sure there is a chance for you to obtain salvation. One day, however, all the ambassadors will be called home; the Lord is coming quickly, and then we shall all be gone. What will that mean? God has been preaching peace to this world for the last eighteen hundred years, but when the ambassadors are called home, He will declare war. Step up you brazen-faced, stout-hearted sinner and tell me, are you willing to enter into the lists with God

Almighty? He will blast you from the cannon's mouth of His judgment into the eternal perdition of hell. "*Prepare to meet thy God.*" Meet Him you must, and face Him about your sins, and how you have treated the precious blood of Jesus and the mighty love of God. Ah! He is lingering over you, He cares for you, and yet you have never trusted Him. Take heed! If Christ were to come to-night, the door of salvation would be shut in your face for ever, and there would be

no more mercy for you.

When I was a boy at home my father and mother trained me up in the knowledge of the Scriptures, and I firmly believed them, although not a Christian. I remember how the truth of the Lord's coming laid hold of me, and how I used to wake up more than once in the middle of the night. Why should I thus wake at the midnight hour? I believe God wakened me to speak to my soul of eternity. On those occasions I used to peer into the darkness, perchance I should see something, and strain my ears in the silence, perchance I should hear something, and the agonizing question would almost overwhelm my heart, and stop its beating, "Has the Lord returned, has He caught up my father and mother and all the Christians, and am I left behind to be doomed for ever?" Well do I remember the despair I was in, and with what relief I found that my parents were still on earth, for I knew then that the day of salvation had not passed.

I praise God that the Lord did not return twenty years ago for *I* should have been left behind. Some of you in this hall may praise God that He did not return twelve months ago for *you* would have been left behind.

And, sinner, from the bottom of your heart, you may be glad that He has not yet returned, for if He had returned but yesterday, *you* would have been

left behind.

There will be no signs given you.

It will be just as in the days of Noah. The wicked did not avail themselves of the refuge offered to the antediluvian world. One day Noah gave his *last* message. I don't suppose there was anything to distinguish it from previous messages. For the very last time the careless passers-by heard his earnest words, warning of approaching judgment. For the last time they turned heedlessly and carelessly away. Then one of those most profoundly interesting events, which claim our deepest attention, happened. When God does anything great, sinner, He does it *quietly*; when man attempts anything great, he makes a great fuss. God said to Noah, "*Come thou and all thy house into the ark.*" See them quietly go in, and then God, unseen and unnoticed by the careless world, puts His mighty hand upon the door of the ark, and shuts *in* Noah and his family and

shuts out the unbelieving world

all around. It was done very quietly. The world outside laughed as usual, the bride went to the altar with the bridegroom, the builder went on building his house. We read, "*they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage,*

until the day

that Noe entered into the ark and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away."

GOD shuts Noah in, what next? He bids the clouds fall in torrents upon the earth, while with His

almighty hand He unlocks the great foundations of the deep, and lets loose the angry waters upon the godless, careless scene. The people flee to the hills and the mountains for refuge. Higher and higher the waters go, carrying upon their broad bosom the ark—the only place of safety—but alas ! the door is closed. It may have been that many a scoffer, like

a strong man in his dying agony,

even scratched with his finger nails the very keel of the ark, as he vainly attempted, when too late, to seek its refuge as it was borne past him, and from its very sides may have fallen into the depths of those terrible waters, crying, "I'm lost ! I'm lost !" We read : "*As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.*" Jesus returns quickly, Are YOU ready ?

What will make you ready ? Answer. Turning over new leaves ? Saying your prayers ? The tears of the penitent ? Your money chinking upon the collection plates ? Turning religious ? Nay, friend, the foolish virgins may have done all that, and yet they were left behind.

Mere profession won't do.

What then ? You must come as a poor, vile, hell-bound sinner, and trust the blessed Saviour of sinners, bowing to His claims, trusting in His precious blood, confessing Him as Lord, and you will go out of this meeting saved, ready for the Lord's coming, and if He were to come to-night you would be as ready as the oldest and ripest Christian in this hall, for it is the Saviour's work—and not our own work—that fits us for that bright home. Will you trust Him ?

Mark you, the closing moments of a meeting are the

most solemn. Ask yourself Pilate's question: "*What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?*" There must come a crisis in your history, when you must decide one way or the other. Will you decide for Christ to-night? If you do, as you sit upon your seat, joy will take possession of your soul, and the burden of your sins will roll away, and you will be saved for glory, and

saved for ever.

Nay, more, there will be joy in the great throbbing heart of the blessed God, for is there not "*joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth?*"

I recall an incident, which was related to me, when invited by a lady to dine at her house. She told me she had crossed the Atlantic during the year of the World's Fair, and after seeing the sights at Chicago, had journeyed out west to see her sons, who had settled in British Columbia. One day, as the train was travelling over the Rocky Mountains, the conductor came to her, and said, "Madam, I will show you something you won't see every day." She looked out of the window in a certain direction, and there upon the top of a lofty peak she saw a large iron sign—two large posts, and between them, borne aloft against the sky these three words—"THE GREAT DIVIDE."

"What does it mean?" she enquired of the conductor.

He answered, "This is the great water-shed of America, and that lofty point is the dividing line between the rivers that flow eastward and westward. A drop of rain which falls from yonder cloud on this side of the divide, will flow westward into the Pacific ;

another drop, a few feet away in the same cloud, may drop down on the other side of the divide, and flow eastward into the Mississippi, thence into the Gulf of Mexico, and on into the Atlantic—a distance of a few feet in falling from the cloud, resulting in the separation of these two drops of water by thousands and thousands of miles."

What an illustration of the gospel—

God's Great Divide !

There may be two sitting here to-night side by side. It may be that you are in the cloud of irresolution. Each may be saying to himself or herself, "Shall I decide for Christ or not?" One of you may say, "Christ for me." As it were, you come down from the cloud of irresolution, and you fall upon the heavenward side of the hill called Calvary; whilst the other says, "No, I shall not trust Him yet," and you fall upon the hell-ward side of the hill called Calvary. Remember, if such be the case with any two in this company to-night, each tick of the clock, each beat of your heart, each moment is carrying you further, and further, and further apart, until in eternity, one will be in glory with Jesus, and the other in the lake of fire with the devil, and the demons, and the damned. Take care, sinner! Take care! What is your decision to be to-night? Do you say, "Christ for me?" May God grant it!

A poet has drawn a very beautiful picture of a boy and a girl, hand in hand, walking upon either side of a little trickling stream. As they journey on, the little stream grows broader and broader. They are obliged to part hands, still on they go, and the stream grows still wider until it becomes a river. Tributary streams

and rivers flow into it, till at length it becomes a mighty surging torrent ; still on and on they go. They call to each other, but at long last, the distance is so great that their voices can no longer carry to each other. They pursue their journey—the distance has now become so great that they cannot even see each other ; and presently that mighty torrent rushes into the ocean, and these two are

separated for ever.

The word-picture is very beautifully painted. It is one sketched by a master-hand, but it is inexpressibly sad to me. For see, that boy and girl are just like many a brother and sister starting hand in hand upon the journey of life, one a Christian and the other not. As the years roll by, one goes to the prayer-meeting, and the other to the theatre. They don't hold hands any longer, the distance increases, grows wider and wider. At last they have grown into manhood and womanhood, and they are still getting farther and farther apart, and finally in eternity they are separated for ever. Sinner, take care ! The gospel is *God's Great Divide*, and if you want eternal blessing you must trust in Christ.

Again I repeat my three texts. If unsaved, "*BEHOLD the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*" Trust in the Lord, and learn in simple faith how *your* sins can be taken away.

If saved, "*BEHOLD, the Bridegroom cometh ; go ye out to meet Him.*" Be bright for your absent Lord. "*Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning ; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord.*"

If still indifferent, "*BEHOLD, He cometh with*

clouds ; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him : and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen."

Careless sinner, your carelessness and indifference will be but short-lived, for *your* eye will yet see Jesus—see Him, not as Saviour but as Judge—see Him to receive your awful sentence at His lips. Yes ;

*" You will see the Judge descending
At that great day."*

*" Oh ! flee, guilty sinner,
And escape eternal fire,
Or you must stand your trial
At that great day."*

This very night may you do so, for His name's sake.
Amen.

