

THE
LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL:
OR,
A MESSAGE FOR YOU.

**“A word
spoken in due season,
how good is it!”**

PROV. XV. 23.

LONDON:
THE GOSPEL TRACT DEPOT,
20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

1895.

Books uniform with this Volume, entitled,

“CHRIST FOR ME!”

“TIDINGS OF SALVATION!”

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THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL.

WHEN you look in the morning at the eastern sky, you may sometimes see the sunlight penetrating the clouds like a streak of gold. Then as the sun rises higher the clouds may begin to disappear, until it reaches the meridian, when perhaps all the clouds are gone.

Now the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ when it shines into the heart in the same way dispels all the dark clouds of doubt and fear which have gathered round it. For in this light of the gospel we are given to see that God has, for the believer in Jesus, blotted out his sins¹—"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins."²

As the flowers turn up to the sun for refreshment, so we now turn our faces to the Lord Jesus Christ for comfort and blessing—"For Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he

might bring us to God."³ We keep our hearts open like a flower which lets in the sun's rays. There is no hindrance to the sun's rays shining into the flower if the bud be open. All cloud as to our sin has gone.⁴ Our souls are set at rest in the cloudless favour of God, and we love the light of the gospel.⁵

We love the gospel, because it has come from God, and is more lasting than the sun, for the sun and other things will pass away,⁶ but the truth of the gospel will never pass away.⁷

"Dark unbelief alone can shroud
A Sun that sets no more ;
And when Thy grace removes the cloud,
We see Thee as before."

¹ 1 John ii. 12.

² Isa. xliv. 22.

³ 1 Pet. iii. 18.

⁴ 2 Cor. iv. 6.

⁷ Matt. xxiv. 35.

⁵ 1 Thess. v. 5.

⁶ Rev. xxi. i. 5.

"LIGHTS IN THE WORLD."

GOD has His witnesses down here upon earth responsible as lights in the midst of darkness, shedding forth the

light they have received. Believers in the Lord Jesus should be a body of light—“Ye are the light of the world.”¹

In quietness, too, in the retirement of our own house, our own home, we should each let our light shine, as the Lord Jesus says, as a light on a candlestick that it may give light to all who are in the house.² We should shine like a lamp in a sitting-room. Man does not light a candle to set it aside as useless; but there are two ways in which he could set it aside—one by putting it under a bushel,³ that would be designedly, and the other by putting it under a bed,⁴ that would be carelessness. But neither way would be for what the light is provided, or for what it is intended.

When God sets up anything He intends it to be seen—“Let your light so shine before men.”⁵ Lights have arisen in this dark world which cannot be extinguished, “Among whom ye shine as lights in the world.”⁶ We are lighted vessels to the Lord’s glory, and the light is radiating in the world.

“ Jesus bids us shine—
 Yes, for all around ;
 Oh ! what depths of darkness
 In the world are found.”

¹ Matt. v. 14.³ Luke xi. 33.² Matt. v. 16.² Matt. v. 15.⁴ Mark iv. 21.⁴ Phil. ii. 15.

THE SUFFERINGS OF GOD'S CREATURES.

WHEN you see the poor beasts suffering, you ought to say, it is the fruit of sin.¹ You find humane people endeavour to alleviate suffering, but very few of them see it to be the fruit of *sin*. The whole creation is suffering from the sin of *man*.²

We have all descended from the first man, who sinned and brought evil upon creation. But none realise the groaning of creation as the Christian, for he knows, too, that God is the “living God,”³ and has not made the world to forget it.

Scripture tells us the state of the world, and what God thinks of it.⁴ And “We know that the whole creation groaneth and

travaileth in pain together until now.”⁵ So there is a worm at the root of *every* pleasure! But we know that creation is waiting to be delivered from the bondage sin has put upon it, “Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”⁶

Some people are very *cruel* to God’s creatures. And I surely believe that wicked people who sin the most will get the largest measure of punishment.

¹ Rom. viii. 22.

³ 1 Tim. vi. 17.

⁶ Rom. viii. 22.

² Gen. iii. 17.

⁴ Rom. viii. 19-21.

⁵ Rom. viii. 21.

THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD.

IT is very interesting to trace in scripture the history of the world. There are distinct periods in the world’s history. These are not all mixed together, but each *separate*, and so the whole course of the world’s history has come out before God.

Man has been tried in innocence,¹ tried without law,² tried under law,³ and tried

under grace.⁴ Adam's morning began brightly, but ended in the flood.⁵ Noah's morning began brightly, but it ended in idolatry.⁶ Israel's morning began brightly, but ended in dispersion.⁷ Christendom's began brightly, but will end in being utterly rejected.⁸ The moment that sin entered into the world, man's case was hopeless. And the more he was *tested*, the more this was proved.

You see Israel passing through the wilderness, and there you see man tested, not that God did not know what man was, but that *man* himself had to learn it. Man is the same in all generations.

When God set up anything good in the world, the first thing man did was to spoil it, and man—try him, or favour him, or caress him as you will—will do evil to your face. I have failed, you have failed, man has failed.⁹ We are a failing lot amongst a failing people.

The epoch when Christ came was, in God's counsels, the "end" of the world,¹⁰ and the object Christ had in coming was to meet this failure in man by a perfect

surrender of Himself, and to put away—to put out of God's sight for ever—this failure of man. “In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.”¹¹ “Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. . . . So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin [that is, without raising the question of sin] unto salvation.”¹²

God was demonstrating to man for four thousand years that there is *no good in man*. And what man has always been trying to do, and is *still* trying to do, is to prove that there is good in him, and that God is mistaken. Thus he refuses the Saviour.

¹ Gen. ii. 15-25.³ Exod. xix.-xx.⁶ Josh. xxiv. 2.⁹ Rom. iii. 10-12.² Gen. iv.-l. ;⁴ John i. 17.⁷ Acts vii. 43.¹⁰ Heb. ix. 26.

Exod. i.-xix.

⁵ Gen. vii.⁸ Rev. iii. 16.¹¹ Heb. x. 6, 7.¹² Heb. ix. 26-28.

WORLDLY PLEASURES.

IT is no use saying there are no pleasures in the world, because there are, there are “the pleasures of sin for a season.”¹ But you will never find *joy* in the world, you may find pleasure, but will not find joy; the world can never give joy to you; and as to pleasure, the only One who has a right to please Himself is God.

Man talks of enjoying life, as men call it! the “pleasures of this life;”² the natural animal life—that is, the power of man’s mind to enjoy life. But all these pleasures make to themselves wings and fly away! And what are they all worth when you come to face death?

“Oh! see how soon
The flow’rs of life decay,
How soon terrestrial pleasures
Fade away.”

¹ Heb. xi. 25.

² Luke viii. 14.

THE DEATH OF THE UNCONVERTED MAN OF BUSINESS.

THE prosperous man of business sometimes thinks the world cannot do without him. But this is all a mistake.¹ When he becomes sick and helpless, business goes on as before, and most people do not know that he is lying ill. His death will be nothing to the world, though everything to him, because his life cannot be lived over again, it has gone, and it is impossible to be renewed in this world. The sun will rise in the morning, and he will not see it. The crowd will be in the city, and he will not be there. And in a week or two, or a month or two, he will be forgotten by most who knew him, though he may perhaps last in the memory of a few.

If death were to summon you, my reader, if you were now called aside to die, what would all you have do for you? And what would the world care for you? The world could do nothing for you. Therefore the Lord Jesus Christ says, "What shall it

profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."²

¹ Eccles. i. 2, 3.² Mark viii. 36-38.

HOW WE "HAVE PEACE" WITH GOD.

THERE are millions of people *trying* to make their peace with God. But they will never succeed! Not all their efforts put together can ever do it.¹ And such people are living in constant fear, and scripture tells us that "fear hath torment."²

How, then, must we answer any one anxious to know how to have peace with God? We must point such an one to Christ.³ Until the Lord Jesus Christ's work of atonement for sin on the cross be known, such an one can never know peace.⁴

For people to be attempting to make their own peace is an entirely *different* thing to Christ—"Having made peace through the blood of his cross."⁵

No sinner ever has, or ever can, make his peace with God. "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."⁶ Who "made peace through the blood of his cross." Peace with God is not based upon our own feelings and experiences.

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

¹ { Rom. iii. 12. ² 1 John iv. 18. ⁴ 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. ⁶ Rom. v. 1.
 { Prov. xiv. 12. ³ John i. 29. ⁵ Col. i. 20.

THE WONDERFUL WORKS OF THE LORD JESUS.

WHEN the Lord Jesus was here His work was amongst the poor, the needy, the sorrowing, and suffering.¹ The poorest of the poor and the most needy were welcomed by Him. A blind beggar²—a woman of the city³—a poor

leper⁴—all were welcomed by Him, and He cared for them all.⁵ He called a Lazarus from the grave,⁶ a young man from the bier,⁷ and a young woman from her deathbed,⁸ as living monuments of the power of God. When the Lord was here upon earth, He was robbing death of its power. He met Satan and robbed him of his power!⁹ He spoke peace to the stormy wind and the troubled sea.¹⁰ He was the exponent of His own doctrines — “I am from above I am not of this world.”¹¹

Oh! how the Lord Jesus commands our affections, and how He deserves them. But how did the world receive Him? He loved—He loved! He worked—He worked! And man rejected Him.¹²

“Th’ accursèd tree was the reward
Which this sad world did give
To Him who gave His precious life
That this lost world might live.

“And has this world a charm for us,
Where Jesus suffer’d thus?
No; we have died to all its charms
Through Jesus’ wondrous cross.”

¹ Matt. xiv. 35, 36. ⁴ Matt. viii. 1, 2. ⁷ Luke vii. 14, 15. ¹⁰ Matt. viii. 24-27.
² Mark x. 46-52. ⁵ Matt. xii. 15. ⁸ Luke viii. 41-56. ¹¹ John viii. 23.
³ John iv. 7-29. ⁶ John xi. 40-44. ⁹ Luke x. 18. ¹² John xix. 15-18.

A MISTAKE IN THE GUIDE BOOK.

A GENTLEMAN, who was travelling from Scotland to London, broke his journey for a day with friends at an intermediate place. On returning to the station at night to resume his journey, he found to his annoyance that his train had just departed and left him behind. This arose from an error in the most acknowledged authentic railway guide book in the kingdom, the latest issue of which our friend carried in his bag.

Unfortunately this was the last train that night, and as a relative was to meet him on arrival at his destination, he had to telegraph and remain overnight.

Well was it for him that there was a train next day; well, too, will it be, dear reader, for you if you make sure of the train for glory before it departs and leaves you behind. It is filling fast, and the time of departure will soon be up. Once *miss*

it and you miss it for ever. Let *that* train leave you behind and you are left behind for all eternity. No use thinking of telegraphing to friends or relatives in glory. No "*to-morrow-trains*" for eternity. They are all "*to-day* trains;" for all who are left behind there awaits an awful night of misery in blackness and darkness for ever. "The wages of sin is death;" and "all have sinned."

God's guide book for eternity may always be relied on with divine certainty. It is the perfect and unchangeable word of the God of all truth who cannot lie. Nothing in *that* book to mislead. It endureth for ever.

If our reader should happen to be one desirous of making sure that he is on his way to heaven we earnestly commend to your notice the following instructions from the only reliable guide out of heaven, namely, the word of the living God:—

1st. "*The heart* is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

2nd. "There is *none* righteous, *no, not one.*"

3rd. "Who [Christ] was delivered for *our* offences, and raised again for *our* justification."

4th. "When we were yet *without strength*, in due time Christ died for the *ungodly*."

5th. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet *sinner*s, Christ died for us."

6th. "The blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from *all sin*."

7th. "Being justified by faith, *we have* peace with God."

8th. "With the heart man *believeth* unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto *salvation*."

9th. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so *great salvation*?"

10th. "*How long* halt ye between two opinions?"

11th. "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation."

"'Yet there is room!' Still open stands the gate,
The gate of LOVE; it is not yet too late:

Room, room, still room!

Oh, enter, enter NOW!"

J N.

“HATH” EVERLASTING LIFE.

EVERY one who has believed the Lord Jesus has everlasting life. You are now in the present possession of everlasting life.¹ That is how God presents the gospel to you, you have this happy portion, “everlasting life,” if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word of God gives this most decided answer to the inquiry as to whether you *now* have everlasting life?—“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.”² And it also declares, “He that believeth not the Son shall not see life.”³

A person, who in simple faith and confidence, knowing the bitterness of his own heart, turns to Jesus, has at once everlasting life! Some people say that it is not so, but if you carefully look at the scriptures, you will see it is so, and it is shewn to be so in many places. If you turn to Galatians you read, “Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”⁴ Again you read in John’s Epistle, “He

that hath the Son hath life.”⁵ And the apostle Paul shews that the gospel has to be preached as God presents it, and that we must guard against any other gospel, “ Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we [the apostles] have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” And this he repeats twice to shew how important it is to preach God’s, and not man’s, gospel. So he says, “ As we have said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”⁶

Every one knowing God’s gospel submits to the fact, that he has the present possession of everlasting life, “ Is passed from death unto life.”⁷ “ We know that we have passed from death unto life ;”⁸ as the hymn says :—

“ In the refuge God provided,
 Though the world’s destruction lowers,
 We are safe, to Christ confided,
 Everlasting life is ours !”

¹ 1 John v. 1.
² John iii. 36.

{ ³ John iii. 36.
 Mark xiv. 16.

⁴ Gal. iv. 7.
⁵ 1 John v. 12.

⁶ Gal. i. 8, 9.
⁷ John v. 24.

⁸ 1 John iii. 14.

CHRISTIANITY.

CHRISTIANITY is not a system of religion. It has to do with a Person, and that Person is the Lord Jesus Christ, "the Son of the living God."¹ To be a Christian is to be united to Christ by the Holy Ghost, who seals those who believe in God's testimony to the work and Person of Jesus, His beloved Son.² God's testimony is that "Jesus was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification,"³ and that "if we believe on God who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead," we shall be reckoned righteous before Him.⁴ And so, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."⁵

This constitutes our standing before the Holy God, and can never change, because "Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."⁶—"As he is, so are we in this world."⁷ "And shall never come into judgment, but have passed out of death into life."⁸ It may however be asked, what comes to pass if I sin? The

answer is, "If any one sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins."⁹

If a Christian sins, he has no excuse for doing so, and it should lead him at once to confess his sin to his Father—that sin which caused Jesus to be under the judgment of God on the cross, a thought which makes a Christian's sin so terrible; but you will note that he is told to confess it to *the Father* (for that is the character or relationship in which God is presented in John's epistle).

The blood of Jesus Christ has settled everything between the believer and God *as God*, and His advocacy is with God *as Father* when we sin. The relationship, you see, is never touched, any more than that of an earthly child to his father when he misconducts himself; but happy communion is interrupted, and this is restored by confession and the Father's forgiveness.

¹ Matt. xvi. 16.

² Eph. i. 13.

³ Rom. iv. 25.

⁴ Rom. iv. 24.

⁵ Rom. v. 1.

⁶ Heb. xiii. 8.

⁷ 1 John iv. 17.

⁸ John v. 24.

⁹ 1 John ii. 1, 2.

THE WORLD IN DARKNESS.

WHEN the Lord Jesus came, the world was in darkness, and they did not know who He was, and did not understand Him. He came into this dark world as the light, but the darkness was so great it could not comprehend Him, "The light shineth in darkness ; and the darkness comprehended it not."¹

He was the light of the world.² He was the centre of light ; but the darkness of the world was so great, it was like Egyptian darkness, it could be felt, so thick was the moral darkness caused by sin. And there the Lord Jesus stood alone in the world, quite alone as the light. And as the world was then, so is it now, in darkness, and comprehendeth not the light.

The whole world is wrapped up in darkness as though wrapped up in the night, and man is under the power, the authority, of darkness.³ Can he get himself out of it? He cannot. And he might as well look down into a coal pit to find light, as look

down into his heart.⁴ Where do you find light in men of the world?

People are clothed in darkness, sitting in it—"The people which sat in darkness saw great light." That light was the Lord Jesus Christ! It is only those whose eyes are opened to see Him see light. It is only Christ who can get people out of darkness, it must be a divine Person to do it, and He is the One. A Christian is a person who has been brought out of darkness into His marvellous light,⁹ "The darkness has passed and the true light now shineth."⁷

"Light divine surrounds thy going,
 God Himself shall mark thy way;
 Secret blessings, richly flowing,
 Lead to everlasting day."

¹ John i. 5.³ Col. i. 13.⁵ Matt. iv. 16.⁷ 1 John ii. 8.² John viii. 12.⁴ Jer. xvii. 9.⁶ 1 Pet. ii. 9; 1 Thess. v. 5.

SCIENCE.

I DO not wish to detract from the value of science, and would give all science its full weight: but it does not take

long to find out, there is nothing in the world which lasts!

Man's knowledge, if you will, has no limit, so long as he lives. There are many things a man of science may learn, but they can only take him to a certain point; his knowledge extends to death, but there it ends.

All your cleverness, and all your intelligence, will cease in the grave. In the grave is darkness.¹ Darkness rolls on for ages and ages,² and never a light to brighten the eye.

¹ Job x. 21, 22.

² Matt. xxv. 30; 2 Pet. ii. 4; Jude 3-6.

THE EFFECT OF LIGHT.

WHAT a beautiful effect it has when the sun shines. When you go through a dark tunnel and come out into the light, how beautiful is the sunlight! How sweet is the sense of it—"Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun."¹

And such is the effect of the gospel.

The truth of the gospel has burst in upon our souls—"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."²

The light of God has shone in! We who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are already light in the Lord—"Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord."³

And there is nothing between us and Him. You and I may be short-sighted or long-sighted, but we are all in the light if we believe in Jesus. You are in the light and I am in the light, and the consequence is—"We have fellowship one with another."⁴

It is a simple fact that all real believers are in the light. And each one has the same light,⁵ the same Holy Spirit's power,⁶ the same interests for the Lord,⁷ and the same fellowship one with another,⁸ "Because the darkness is passed, and the true light now shineth."⁹ Nothing can add to the light. We are in it. But—"He that saith he is

in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now."¹⁰

We are in the light, and that is where we must walk—"Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness."¹¹

We are in the light on the ground of the precious blood of Christ, "Shed for many for the remission of sins."¹² "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but 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."¹³

"Boundless glory, Lord, be Thine:
Thou hast made the light to shine,
Thou hast sent a cheering ray,
Thou hast turn'd our night to day."

¹ Eccles. xi. 7.

⁴ 1 John i. 7.

⁷ 1 Cor. i. 10.

¹⁰ 1 John ii. 9.

² 2 Cor. iv. 6.

⁵ 1 John i. 5.

⁸ 1 John i. 7.

¹¹ 1 Thess. v. 5.

³ Eph. v. 8.

⁶ Eph. iv. 3, 4.

⁹ 1 John ii. 8.

¹² Matt. xxvi. 28.

¹³ 1 John i. 5-7.

A WRECK ON THE CORNISH COAST.

A FEW years ago a ship went down with her crew on the Cornish coast, within sight of land. The lifeboat was ready, and rocket apparatus at hand, but the ship was too far off, and the wind and tide made it impossible to reach her. And though the brave men on shore were willing to risk their lives in the attempt to save the perishing crew, they were not able to go against the wind and tide and raging sea.

So the vessel sank with those on board, and the Lord only knows how many of them will be amongst the joyful number, who will awake at the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God.¹ Some of the men may be amongst those who will not rise at all when the Lord Jesus so comes for His own,² but will rise afterwards to stand before the great white throne, when the wicked dead arise to be judged according to "their" works.³ Because scripture tells us of two separate

resurrections, having a thousand years between them.⁴

In speaking of those saved by Christ, it says these are they which have part in the "first" resurrection, "This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power."⁵ But the wicked dead are not raised until a thousand years afterwards, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished,"⁶ and that not to go into Paradise, but to be judged and condemned before the great white throne, "And they were judged every man according to their works. . . . And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."⁷ "And all liars shall have their part in the lake of fire. . . . which is the second death."⁸

"Calm sleeps the sea when storms are o'er,
With bosom silent and serene;
And but the plank upon the shore,
Reveals where wrecks have been."

¹ 1 Thess. iv. 16.

³ Rev. xx. 13.

⁵ Rev. xx. 5, 6.

⁷ Rev. xx. 11-15.

² John xiv. 3.

⁴ Rev. xx. 5.

⁶ Rev. xx. 5.

⁸ Rev. xxi. 8.

TWO DISTINCT RESURRECTIONS.

GOD has taken care that man shall not run away with the false idea that believers and unbelievers shall be mixed together in resurrection. There is the resurrection of the just, and the resurrection of the unjust; the resurrection of life, and the resurrection of damnation—“And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”¹

The first embraces all who belong to Christ—“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the *first* resurrection.”² The *second* embraces all who do not belong to Christ—“The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”³ There is a thousand years between these two resurrections. It is of great importance to know this.

People talk of a general resurrection, a general judgment, but this you do *not* find in the scriptures. The common notion,

however general, has no place at all in scripture. Millions of people hold with a general resurrection! but it is a delusion, and a very dangerous delusion too—"The dead in Christ shall rise first."⁴ You find that no *unbelievers* are included in this resurrection, and the Lord does not come to the earth on *this* occasion.⁵

If people would only study the scriptures, their own views would be clearer on these important subjects.⁶

The wicked dead are left in the graveyards and cemeteries, and in the sea; they are left, and for what? It is an awful scene! All who die in their sins will be called out of the dust of the earth and out of the sea for judgment before the great white throne!⁷—that is the place *they* will be brought up to and judged.

Christ says that "If ye believe not that I am [he], ye shall die in your sins;"⁸ you go down to your grave a guilty sinner, wrapped up, robed, dressed in your sins. If you die in your sins, you will rise up covered in your sins, to be judged in them, You are brought forth by divine power to

stand before God as your Judge. Now there is no safety but to be "accepted in" Christ." How can you escape if you neglect this great salvation? It will be too late if you die "in your sins," as you will then have to be raised for judgment and to stand before the great white throne!¹⁰

¹ { Luke xiv. 14.

{ John v. 29.

² Rev. xx. 6.

³ Eph. i. 6.

³ Rev. xx. 5.

⁴ 1 Thess. iv. 16-18.

⁵ 1 Thess. iv. 17.

¹⁰ Rev. xx. 11-15.

⁶ 2 Tim. iii. 15.

⁷ Rev. xx. 11-13.

⁸ John viii. 24.

RELIGIOUS BOOKS.

RELIGIOUS books, if of any value, are but sign-posts, to point us to that living fountain, the word of God.

THE BIBLE SUPERIOR TO ALL OTHER BOOKS.

THE Bible is a different book from all other books.¹ If you read other books a few times they become dry and stale, but you may read the Bible through any number of times, and it is

always fresh and new, because it exercises the heart,² and therefore is always new and superior to other books. There is no book in the whole world like the word of God! We call it the Bible, but it is the word of God,³ and there is no other book like it.

If you read a story in an ordinary book it has passed and you have nothing to do with it, but this cannot be said of what is written in the Bible. That which is written concerns all who read it, just as what was said of Abraham is true of all who have faith—"Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification."⁴ Again, "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."⁵

In the Bible you go back to the beginning, and it gives us a clear view of things; and of people and the circumstances sur-

rounding them, and very long before any of *man's* historical books.

It is very important to keep scripture before us, because it is a *revelation from God*.⁶ It is the truth of God.⁷ I would rather believe a few words of scripture than all the words of men however fair, for men often, by "good" words and "fair" speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.⁸ And far beyond all these records, you have the statement from God Himself of the terms upon which He can be with man, and man with Him.⁹

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 15-17.

² Heb. iv. 12.

³ Rom. x. 17.

⁴ 2 Cor. ii. 17; iv. 2.

⁵ Rom. iv. 23.

⁶ John xx. 31.

⁷ Isa. lv. 11.

⁸ Deut. viii. 3.

⁹ Ps. lxxviii. 11.

¹ John xvii. 17.

² Rom. xvi. 18.

³ Lev. xvii. 11.

⁴ 1 John i. 5-7.

CHRIST, THE "IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD."

IT is natural to us all to draw a distinction between the Lord Jesus Christ and God; but when you know the Lord Jesus Christ you know God.¹ Christ is the Word of God,² and the express image of God—"The express image of his per-

son."³ The Lord Jesus Christ was the most wonderful Man that the eye of faith ever beheld!—the greatest One upon earth—"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."⁴ He is the same Person that Paul speaks of, John speaks of, Matthew, Mark, and Luke speak of, and all the prophets speak of.⁵ All testify that Christ was God, and Christ was Man. The glory of the Lord's Person, the dignity of His Person, is explained throughout the scriptures.

Christ was like man, He was made in the "likeness"⁶ of sinful flesh, not sinful flesh; He came into this world a perfect Man,⁷ to seek and to save the lost.⁸

But there is a difference between a likeness and an image, an "image" is the express representation—He is "the image of the invisible God"⁹—"The express image of his person."¹⁰ Christ is actually God's express Image—the Image of the invisible God!

It is wonderful, as we meditate upon Him, how His glories shine out. His object was to bring the knowledge of

God down into our souls, and not merely into our heads ; and His name, the name of Jesus, will never lose its savour, or its power.¹¹

If you want to see the *invisible God*, and meet Him, and know Him, you can only see, meet, and know Him in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ—the way in which it has pleased God to *reveal* Himself.¹² Christ is the Word of God,¹³ the great Creator,¹⁴ the great Redeemer,¹⁵ and He is the brightness of God's glory!¹⁶

Consider, then, what a great Person the Lord Jesus Christ was and is :¹⁷ "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."¹⁸

"Thou wast the Image, in man's lowly guise,
Of the Invisible to mortal eyes ;
Come from His bosom, from the heavens above,
We see in Thee incarnate—'God is love.'"

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

² John i. 14.

³ Heb. i. 3.

⁴ John xiv. 9.

Luke xxiv. 27.

⁶ Rom. viii. 3.

⁷ Matt. i. 20, 23.

⁸ Luke xix. 10.

⁹ Col. i. 15.

¹⁰ Heb. i. 3.

¹¹ Phil. ii. 6-11.

¹² { 1 Tim. iii. 16.

{ 2 Cor. iv. 4.

¹⁴ Rev. xix. 13.

¹⁵ Col. i. 16.

¹³ Rev. v. 9-14.

¹⁶ Heb. i. 3.

¹⁷ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

¹⁸ John i. 12.

THE LOVE AND HOLINESS OF GOD.

GOD is not only love,¹ but He is light² also—"He is holy,³ just,⁴ and good."⁵

God is infinitely pure, infinitely just, and infinitely holy, and unvarying in His holiness. An unholy God would be impossible. I am referring to His character, that He must of necessity judge sin. God is "holy" as well as gracious, and holiness must condemn sin. God must condemn sinners—"Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?"⁶

In man's things unless you give every one his rights⁷ you have no rest, you cannot have a quiet, even, peaceful rest of mind, the result of having done right. The sceptic says, If God is love, how can He punish the wicked? But He explains in scripture His way of shewing His love, that He "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."⁸ And

this is the *explanation* of the matter. If a man will not see it, he does not see what *sin* is to God. God never forfeits His holiness, justice, or goodness, this would be impossible, a thousand times impossible. He always acts upon the basis of the maintenance of His own character.

God moves in this scene of sin, in order to move your conscience and heart, and if you refuse to be moved, do you think God will be chargeable by-and-by for your condemnation? It will not be so.⁹ "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."¹⁰

¹ 1 John iv. 8.

² 1 John i. 5.

³ { Isa. vi. 3.
1 Pet. i. 16.

⁴ Deut. xxxii. 4.

⁵ Matt. xix. 17.

⁶ 1 Sam. vi. 20.

⁷ Rom. xiii. 7.

⁸ John iii. 16.

⁹ Rom. iii. 4-6.

¹⁰ John iii. 17, 18.

GOD RICH IN MERCY.

GOD is not only great in power, rich in wisdom, excellent in skill,¹ but rich in mercy.² And if God be rich in mercy, He also delights in dispensing it.³ His mercy is boundless. And we must all know our need of mercy, and the fact that "God is rich in mercy," proves that we all deeply *need* it. The grandee in his chariot, and the beggar in his rags, must all travel to heaven, if they go there, by the road of *mercy*, and by no other road.⁴ I do not believe we should have the slightest doubt as to what would become of any one of us, if God were to deal with us as we deserve.⁵

"God in mercy sent His Son
To a world by sin undone ;
Jesus Christ was crucified—
'Twas for sinners Jesus died.
Oh the glory of the grace
Shining in the Saviour's face !
'Telling sinners from above—
'God is light,' and 'God is love.'"

¹ Jer. x. 12.³ Titus iii. 4-7.⁵ Ps. cxxx. 3.² Eph. ii. 4-9.⁴ Prov. xiv. 12.

DEATH OF AN AUSTRALIAN EXPLORER.

SOME years ago, Coulthard, an explorer of the Australian continent, was found dead on the spot where, through want of water, he had dropped down in utter prostration ; and, while the party who discovered him were standing over his body, they noticed these words scratched by him on his canteen, as death drew near.

“ The last thing I remember is pulling the saddle off my horse and letting him go ; my tongue is sticking to my mouth, I know it is the last time I shall express my feelings. Lost for want of water ! my eye dazzles ; my tongue burns ! I can say no more. God help me.”

Reader, what think you ? had you been there to offer this poor sufferer a draught of water, would he have made any scruples about drinking it ; would he have found any difficulties as to appropriating the

cooling draught to allay his burning thirst? Ah, no! he *wanted water*, he *knew it*, and he perished for want of it. Do you thirst? I do not mean for this poor hollow world's so-called pleasures. Doubtless you have tasted them and found that they satisfy not, they leave an aching void within.

You may write on every fountain of this world's vanities and shams, "He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again."

But do you know anything of soul thirst? Do you thirst for salvation, for forgiveness, for Christ? Behold, then a fountain near; Jesus, who once hung a victim on the cross of Calvary, the sinner's substitute, is alive again, and now in the glory on high; and now "the Spirit and the bride say . . . let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

"The river of God's grace,
Through righteousness supplied,
Is flowing o'er the barren place
Where Jesus died."

Some one has caused to be placed over one of the drinking fountains in a large town this inscription, "Pro bono publico"

(for the public good). Who that passes by questions the truth of it? And is not the good news of salvation "unto all"? (Rom. iii. 22.) Did not Jesus die, the *just* for the *unjust*? Did He not die for the *ungodly*, for *sinner*s, for those *without strength*? Remember, if *you* perish it is not because there is no water, but you perish a willing rejecter of the living water now offered you freely, without money and without price.

W. R. H.

NO REST IN THIS WORLD.

THE world has been filled with corruption and violence ever since Adam's fall. There is no oasis—no green spot—there is neither nook nor corner, where we can get away from trouble!¹ as John's Epistle tells us—"The whole world lieth in wickedness;"² and everything must naturally be at sixes and sevens, because innocence has fled, and death is stamped upon everything and everybody.³

Even in man's *historic* age what a sad story he tells! What wars have deluged the earth with blood!⁴ What oppression! the strong triumphing over the weak.⁵ What unrighteousness and *rebellion* against those in authority.⁶

Well, but you say, the past is over, and we look for better and more restful times, and surely there will be peace in the future? No! It is not to be so, for—"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."⁷

The true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ can say, "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an un-

derstanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."⁸

“How many a gaily-painted vest
 And robe of costly pride,
 Is worn upon an aching breast,
 Its inward woe to hide!
 How many a song of revelry
 Sounds bravely on the ear,
 From those whose couch of misery
 Is wet with many a tear!”

1 { 2 Tim. iii. 12.
 Rom. xii. 19.

2 1 John v. 19.

3 { Rom. viii. 22.
 Rom. v. 12.

4 Rom. iii. 15.

5 Rom. iii. 10-17.

6 { Rom. xiii. 2.
 Tit. iii. 1, 2.
 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14.
 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.

7 2 Tim. iii. 1-5.

8 1 John v. 19, 20.

S I N.

PEOPLE are but too familiar with sin, and they say in a general way, We are *all* sinners! But the very confession involves this question, Is any man fit for God? Man must be made fit, and if so, how? As Job says, “How should man be just with God?”¹ Sin is such a dreadful thing, that the Lord of life and glory had

to come down to bear the judgment of sin, by taking the sinner's place—"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree;"² and if God had not Himself provided the ransom³ for man, it would have been awful.

Every one of us sins, and if any one says that he has not sinned, when *God* says "All have sinned;"⁴ "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one,"⁵ he makes out that God is a liar;⁶ but the *man* who says it is a liar, and not God. If a person says that he has not sinned for so many years, or has no sin in him I at *once* stand in doubt of such a man; for "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."⁷ Such people do not know what sin is. You sin whenever you do your *own* will and not God's.

"Now while I tell to sinners round,
How great the Saviour I have found;
I point to His redeeming blood,
And say, 'Behold the Lamb of God!'"

¹ Job ix. 2, 3.³ Job. xxxiii. 24.⁵ Rom. iii. 10.⁷ 1 John i. 8.² 1 Pet. ii. 24.⁴ Rom. iii. 23.⁶ 1 John v. 10-12.

THE GREATNESS OF JESUS.

WE want to know something more than the fact that Jesus went about doing good.¹ We want to know something of the glory of His Person!² What strengthens and confirms the faith of those who believe in Jesus, is that they can trace this blessed One throughout the *whole* of the holy scriptures.³

In Proverbs viii. we see that He was with God before ever the world was, "As one brought up with him, and was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him"—the one was the delight of the other⁴—a mystery which faith lays hold of.

In the scriptures the Lord Jesus Christ is spoken of in various ways,⁵ and with many titles.⁶ In John i. He is spoken of as the Word, "the Word was with God," "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," and it was then when the Word was made flesh, that the Word was called "JESUS."⁷

If we consider who the Lord Jesus is,⁸ that He came down from heaven, superior

to everything and to all persons ever before Him, that He was the Word that was with God, there in eternity, as One brought up with Him, "always before him," and before ever the world was made⁹ and there were any sinners to be saved, you will find that we cannot have thoughts of Him too high and exalted! and that the greater they are the better they are.¹⁰

The Word was the One who dwelt in a sphere of absolute peace and harmony with the mind of God, and who came down into this world where everything is the *opposite* to that!¹¹ "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."¹² The very One we read of in Proverbs viii. was made flesh, the eternal Son of God came down here for the express purpose of saving sinners. He became a Man, "Son of man,"¹³ because His "delights were with the sons of men."¹⁴

1 { Acts x. 38.
John ii. 11.

2 John i. 14.

3 { John v. 39.
Luke xxiv. 27.

4 { Prov. viii. 30.
Matt. iii. 17.

{ Matt. xvii. 5.
Heb. x. 7.

5 { 1 Pet. i. 11.

{ Luke xxiv. 25-27.

6 Isa. ix. 6.

7 Matt. i. 27.

8 { Matt. xxii. 41-45.

{ Heb. iii. 1.

9 Prov. viii. 22-30.

10 { John i. 1-4. 14.

{ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

11 { 1 John v. 19, 20.

{ John viii. 42-45.

{ Rom. viii. 22, 23.

12 John i. 14.

13 Luke xix. 10.

14 Prov. viii. 31.

THE NECESSITY FOR TROUBLE.

ALL believers, as well as other people, have their troubles. Every-day life has its trials and difficulties. We are not exempt, and each meets with difficulties on the road; we are in a world where difficulties never end, as the Lord says, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."¹

We need trials by the way, and therefore the apostle, too, adds these blessed little words for our comfort, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."²

Happy is my reader if God has not let you alone!³ You will praise Him in the glory, not only for His mercies, but also for the troubles and trials that would not let you rest, and caused your eyes to be

opened to see the desperate state you were in.⁴ Perplexities are a needed preparation for making us like clay in the hands of the Potter.⁵ But we are so often occupied with our wants and needs, that we fail to learn the proper lesson, and do not always act in the circumstances as we ought to do, for the glory of Christ.

“But trouble’s far a greater gift to man,
Than all the pleasures that the mind could
scan !”

¹ John xvi. 33.
² 1 Cor. x. 13.

³ Hos. iv. 17.
⁴ Rev. vii. 14.

⁵ { 1 Thess. iii. 3, 4.
 { Rom. v. 1-6.

REST.

WHAT unspeakable delight it is for the poor weary troubled soul to find himself at home in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. You may condemn me, others may condemn me, and I may condemn myself, but I am at home with the Lord Jesus Christ! And I find the truth of what He said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”¹

I hardly know which of these assuring words to lay the most emphasis upon. We who have come to Jesus have found this rest. And what is this rest? Why we rest in the very One in whom God is well pleased. In the very One who said to us, "I will give you rest." And here is another rest the Lord Jesus tells us of, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."²

When you have got the first rest you are prepared to enjoy the second, and what is this second rest spoken of? Why the yoke of obedience to the Father under which the blessed Lord always walked, and He says take this upon you, and instead of a galling burden you will find rest as I have done.

There is another rest, too, spoken of, and this is one hereafter, and one to which we look forward, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God,"³ and we which have believed do enter into this rest,⁴ that is, we are the people who are entitled to enjoy it when it comes, for it is

future—God's rest when all is according to His mind.

“ I heard the voice of Jesus say,
‘ Come unto Me and rest ;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
Thy head upon My breast.’
I came to Jesus, as I was,
Weary, and worn, and sad,
I found in Him a resting-place,
And He has made me glad.”

¹ Matt. xi. 28.

² Matt. xi. 29, 30.

³ Heb. iv. 9.

⁴ Heb. iv. 3.

A COLLISION AT SEA.

A SERVANT of God, who was passenger on board a fine vessel homeward bound, felt much pressed with the thought of the many precious undying souls on that floating world ; so much so, that setting aside the fear that naturally rose in the heart at the thought of laying such a request before a godless man, he, looking to God for strength, summoned up courage to accost the captain and ask of him the needed permission to speak of Christ to the crew.

The request was met with scorn, and the question, "What do you want to tell them?" "Of Christ's way of saving sinners," was the reply. "Oh! nonsense; tell them rather to do their duty, that will be of more use." In vain did this servant of God plead that the knowledge of Christ as their Saviour must lead to a more faithful fulfilment of their duty; that to serve man best, we must serve God first. The request was denied.

Unable to press this further upon the-

captain, he sought to awaken in him some sense of his need, some confession of his lost condition, but all in vain. God was "an unknown God," His word a fable, and his own conscience seared "as with a hot iron." Failing to draw forth any response, he went on to say: "But are you not afraid to die—within a few minutes we might all be in a watery grave; what then?"

"Why, I would die like a man."

Ah! my reader, only God knows whether these words, soon forgotten, it may be, in the bustle and hurry of life, arose again in his soul, when three months after, on the next voyage home, near that same spot where they were uttered, those very waters were engulfing him in death. Summoned from his sleep by the awful shock of a collision, to find that it had done its deadly work, he had less than one short half-hour to save the lives of his passengers. And his own? Ere he had time to leave the vessel she sank with him on board. Surely God foresaw this moment when in grace He sent that warning voice.

“SO HE DROVE OUT THE
MAN.”¹

MAN forgets he has lost his first estate, and he walks about the world as though he were to live for ever! The fact is, we are turned out of Paradise, and we are in anything but Paradise; and the natural order of things in the world is unrighteousness, sin, and iniquity, because innocence has fled.

It is a dark world in which we live, and we may see its unfruitful “works of darkness,”² if we choose to open our eyes. But none of us realise the depths of wickedness which are in the world, and we are inclined to look at everything as very fair. But the world is rotten to the core—it must be so, for “The whole world lies in the wicked one.”³

The tendency of the teaching of the day is to make out that *man* is better than he is,⁴ so very learned, so very scientific, so very philosophical! But we must look deeper than the surface of things. We

must look at what is going on in the "whole" world! The infidel will say, there is all that is beautiful, and that we say, That God is going to destroy the world.⁵ But people in the world are *wicked*, and "their feet are swift to shed blood : destruction and misery are in their ways!"⁶

We say, that we surely cannot be the same as the sample man, when he came from the hands of the Creator? "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him."⁷ It would be absurd to argue that the creature came out of the hand of God as it now is, with its cries of anguish, groans, sorrow and strife—striving indefinitely!—because you would not *then* have a *good* God. God to be good must have something come out of His hands better than what we see, good as it may be. So you are brought back to revelation, that man was created upright, and put in a place of responsibility, and lost his first estate.⁸ What is to be done, if the world can only be kept in order by *restraint* upon man,

such as police, assizes and soldiers, and all that?⁹ And what does God do now that order has broken down? And why does not God interfere? For the reason, that when He does interfere, He must do so in *judgment*.¹⁰

There is nothing like going to the root of the matter, because it is God who is speaking to us in scripture; and giving us an account of what we see around us, and accounting for the condition man is in, and for the *necessity* of the gospel—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.”¹¹

It is your last chance,¹² I do not say it is your last chance of hearing the gospel, because the gospel is God’s message to man, and wings its way over the world, and you may hear it somewhere else.

¹ Gen. iii. 24.

⁵ 2 Pet. iii. 7-13.

^{*} 1 Tim. ii. 2-6; Tit. iii. 1-7.

² Eph. v. 3-14.

⁶ Rom. iii. 10-18.

¹⁰ 2 Pet. iii. 9.

³ 1 John v. 19.

⁷ Gen. i. 27.

¹¹ John iii. 16.

⁴ Rom. xvi. 18.

⁸ Eccles. vii. 29.

¹² 2 Cor. vi. 2.

A FAMINE OF THE WORD OF THE LORD.

“**B**EHOLD, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.” (Amos viii. 11, 12.)

THE SAVIOUR'S MIGHTY WORKS.

WHEN the Lord Jesus was here passing through this scene, He was not only shewing His love but His *power*. He came to the leper,¹ the palsied man,² the woman with the fever,³ and to others suffering, and cured them all,⁴ and He raised the dead.⁵ There was not a single pressure upon the human family but what

He could remove it all—diseases, sicknesses, sorrows, sins,⁶ death—and devils He cast out,⁷ and met every effect of sin. It is wonderful when you think of His power—“Go thy way; thy son liveth.”⁸ He had only to speak the word, and the disease left the sick, it did not matter whether the sick were a mile away from Him or a thousand miles! There never was a man upon earth who could do such wonderful things before, and therefore He tells us, “I have the keys of hell and of death.”⁹ Every expression of the grace of God was shewn in His Person.

And the people bare witness of Him, and marvelled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth.¹⁰ They were amazed at His eloquence, not that it was eloquent speaking, but the things that He said were so wonderful, they heard His wonderful sermons, all the magnificence of the gospel.¹¹ And the people said, “He hath done all things well.”¹²

He was God's own servant, and did God's will *perfectly*. “Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of

me,) to do thy will, O God."¹³ And it would be a good thing for us, if we meditated more on what He did do—“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him,”¹⁴ and then we, too, would more heartily respond to the fact that He hath done “all” things well.

“Who is He that stands and weeps,
At the grave where Laz’rus sleeps?
'Tis the Lord, O wondrous story!
'Tis the Lord, the King of glory!
At His feet we humbly fall,
Crown Him, crown Him, Lord of all!”

¹ Matt. viii. 3.² Mark ii. 10, 11.³ Matt. viii. 14, 15.⁴ Matt. iv. 24.⁵ Matt. xi. 5.⁶ Matt. ix. 2.⁷ Mark i. 34.⁸ John iv. 46-54.⁹ Rev. i. 1-18.¹⁰ Luke iv. 22.¹¹ { Luke v. 3; Matt. iv. 23.

John iii. 14-18; vi. 37, 40.

¹² Mark vii. 37.¹³ Heb. x. 7.¹⁴ Acts x. 38.

THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH.

THIS passage of scripture brings before us the eternal state, the end of all present things, “I saw a new heaven

and a new earth ; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away ; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain ; for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write : for these words are true and faithful.”¹ This points to the period beyond the millennium, and after the judgment of the great white throne, to the final eternal state. The previous chapter² has dealt with the first resurrection, which takes place at the commencement of the millennium ; and of which it says, “ Blessed

and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power."³ And in the same chapter you find the *second* resurrection, or resurrection of judgment, when the dead are raised to appear before the great white throne, which takes place at the end of the millennium.⁴ Now, as to the new creation—for there is to be a new heaven and a new earth—it is no satisfaction to you to know there will be a new creation by-and-by, where there will be no sin, and no trail of the serpent seen, and all will be joy and blessing, and nothing whatever to mar it, if you have no hope of being there?⁵ It will be all joy in heaven because God is there. There is such a thing as reaching the tree of life, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."⁶ This is to the overcomers without any exception whatever. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."⁷ The accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before God day and night,

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.”⁸ There are the *overcomers* of Satan. And scripture plainly tells us the way they overcame, is “BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB”!

¹ Rev. xxi. 1-6.² Rev. xx.³ Rev. xx. 6.⁴ Rev. xx. 5.⁵ } Eph. ii. 12, 13.

} Rev. xxi. 8.

⁶ Rev. ii. 7.⁷ Rev. xxi. 7.⁸ Rev. xii. 10, 11 ; xx. 10.

PEACE WITH GOD.

IF you were to ask a soldier when he is fighting, if it be peace, he would answer, No! It is not peace until the enemy be silenced. Christ has silenced all our enemies, and that is peace.¹ “How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”²

But some people deny these plain and positive declarations of scripture, and make themselves and others miserable, when God would have them rest upon Christ's work of redemption,³ and be happy. If they are looking to be judged for their sins, instead

of seeing that Christ bore the judgment instead of them, they certainly cannot enjoy peace with God!

The scripture proclamation is, "peace by Jesus Christ." And what does this proclamation shew? It shews that there was war before. But God is now "preaching peace by Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)." "Having made peace through the blood of his cross."⁵ "We have peace with God," the apostle says, not restlessness, doubts or fears, but "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."⁶

"Oh, the peace for ever flowing
From God's thoughts of His own Son!
Oh, the peace of simply knowing
On the cross that all was done!"

¹ { Col. ii. 13-15. ² Rom. x. 15. ⁴ Acts. x. 36. ⁶ Rom. v. 1.
 { Col. i. 13, 14. ³ 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. ⁵ Col. i. 20. 13, 14.

SAFETY IN THE LIFEBOAT.

WHEN the lifeboat picks up a drowning man, his life is saved by the lifeboat. The more the man felt the terror of his position, the more will he prize the lifeboat. And he will say that he owes his safety to it; that it landed him safely. I have heard many persons praise the lifeboat.

The lifeboat is provided by man to save people from drowning, and God has also provided His way for saving immortal souls. Now, what the Lord Jesus has undertaken to do, is not only to pick you up, but also to land you *safely*.¹

Christ is our refuge, and God has provided no other refuge for man.² If a man be struggling in the sea far from land, so that he cannot possibly reach the shore, yet if he fancies he can do it, will he care much for the lifeboat? Or suppose a man falls from a ship into the

sea, and a lifebuoy is thrown to him, and he resolutely refuses to lay hold of it and so he gets drowned, will you not say, that *he* is the author of his own destruction?³ And so the Lord Jesus says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."⁴

"Safe in Christ, the weakest child
 Stands in all God's favour ;
 All in Christ are reconciled
 Through that only Saviour."

¹ John x. 28. ² Acts iv. 12. ³ John v. 40. ⁴ John vi. 37.

MAN'S REASONS FOR REFUSING THE GREAT SUPPER.

SEE why the invitation to the great supper was refused.¹ One man was occupied with a piece of ground, another with five yoke of oxen, and a third with being married. And these *legitimate* things were used as excuses for keeping away from God.² It seems incredible that such excuses should have been made, but the parable shews that

some people have made such excuses. So "None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."³ This especially refers to the Jews. The Gentiles are compelled to come in. It is not the things themselves which men possess which keep them away from the great supper, but the treachery of their own hearts.

Here it is shewn that excuses are made on account of the very *blessings* they receive from God, which God would have them use as an inducement to come, and not to keep away. The conditions are simple. "Come; for all things are now ready."⁴ "Him that 'cometh' to me I will in no wise cast out."⁵

If you are shut out of heaven, it will not be because you have not had the invitation to come to Christ. And it is not that you cannot come, but that your heart is so bad that you "will" not—"Ye 'will not' come to me, that ye might have life."⁶

¹ Luke xiv. 18-20.

³ Luke xiv. 24.

⁵ John vi. 37.

² Luke xiv. 15.

⁴ Luke xiv. 17.

⁶ John v. 40.

RELIGIOUS MAN.

A MAN professing a religion of any kind professes one thing, that there is One above him he wants to approach. We need not enter upon the question whether he be a little sinner or a great sinner, his religion shews *where* he is. It shews he is away from God, or he would not want a religion to bring him near to Him. And the evidence of the state of things around us shews that man is not reconciled to God.¹ He was driven out of the garden of Eden, the earthly Paradise,² because he was not fit for it; and now he turns round and tries in his own strength to obtain the heavenly Paradise, the Paradise of God. But there is not a single person, put him on what pinnacle you please, well pleasing to God.³ Man has been tried under law, and proved to be without strength—"When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."⁴ But

the difficulty is to convince man of his helplessness.

What is wanted to-day is God's own truth about man. Scripture expresses his state as strongly as it can be expressed, and this is the sentence passed upon all, though some people will not have it—"dead in trespasses and sins,"⁵ and "without strength."⁶ "For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him."⁷ All this is perfectly simple, and perfectly true.

The consequence is, that man has come to the end of his tether. And unless God had devised means to save man, no one could possibly have been saved! "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever BELIEVETH in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."⁸

¹ Rom. iii. 10-18.

³ Rom. iii. 23.

⁵ Eph. ii. 1.

⁷ 2 Sam. xiv. 14.

² Gen. iii. 24.

¹ Rom. v. 6.

⁶ Rom. v. 6.

⁸ John iii. 16.

GOD'S MERCIES TO MAN.

IT is a great thing to have a right appreciation of God's mercies, but a much greater thing to give God *His* right place. "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation."¹ But we find some people acknowledge in a general way that God is good, and has hitherto kept them, but who think much more of His mercies than they do of God Himself!

If they merely acknowledge God's goodness by what they receive from Him, the tables may turn and things go away from them; and *then* they will become discouraged. God bestows His mercies upon all,² though some take them and forget Him as the Giver; and others even use the mercies He gives, against Him. God's providential mercies are quite another thing

to the gospel." The Lord Jesus shews us this, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."⁴ These words are written over all the streams and wells of the earth. The believer has in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 'Behold, I freely give
 The living water---thirsty one,
 Stoop down, and drink, and live.'
 I came to Jesus, and I drank
 Of that life-giving stream;
 My thirst was quench'd, my soul revived,
 And now I live in Him."

¹ Habk. iii. 17, 18. ² Matt. v. 45. ³ Rom. i. 16. ⁴ John iv. 13, 14.

A TEXT WORTH LEARNING.

WE must after all come back to this simple statement—"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting

life.” Those are wonderful words! If any one wants to learn a simple text—and there are many who cannot read much who do want to learn a simple text—here is one of only nine words. (John iii. 36.)

“HELL.”

THE word “hell” is a dreadful word to have to use, but it is a word that is found in the word of God.¹ And it is no use softening words, because the truth will stand whether we believe it or no. God has made hell known in one way and another in the scriptures,² so that we can read about it, and know about it for ourselves—not as a matter of our experience, but as a matter of *revelation* to us.

We read in the scriptures the truth about God,³ the truth about man,⁴ the truth as to time,⁵ the truth about heaven⁶ and the truth about hell.⁷ The Lord Jesus draws, as it were, the curtain of time on one side, and we read of the realities of the damned

in hell, and if the whole world were to stand up and deny the torments of hell, scripture is sufficient to outweigh all its reasonings.

Some people say, if others like that religion let them have it. And again, others say, what have they to do with other people's souls? If a man chooses to go to hell, let him go. That is the way *wicked* people talk in our days. But God will be God! and in judgment He will send the rejecters of His Son to hell.⁸

They may cavil now, but that will not alter either God or His truth, for God will always be God. “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”⁹ In hell they will believe it all! but it will be too late then.¹⁰ They will be in a place where hope never comes, if they reject the Saviour now.

¹ Luke xvi. 23-31.

² { Matt. xxiii. 33.

² { Matt. viii. 12.

{ Matt. xxii. 13.

³ Rom. ii. 16.

⁴ Rom. iii. 10-18.

⁵ 2 Cor. vi. 2.

{ John xiv. 2, 3.

{ 1 Thess. iv. 16-18.

^c { Rev. v.

{ Rev. xxi. 4.

⁷ Rev. xx. 14, 15.

⁸ 2 Thess. i. 7-10.

⁹ Matt. x. 28.

¹⁰ 2 Thess. i. 9.

THE SON OF GOD, AND SON OF MAN.

WE cannot fall in love with a mere doctrine. We must have a real and living Person to love, and that Person the One whom scripture presents to us¹—the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Son of man.

No one could save us, and bring us to glory, unless He were “Son of God,”² nor have atoned for our sins, unless He were also “Son of man.”³ The Lord Jesus Christ was God’s eternal Son,⁴ and He came down from God into this world, and was found in fashion as a man.⁵ We must never forget His divinity on the one hand,⁶ nor His humanity on the other.⁷ Scripture always *insists* on both the divinity and humanity of the blessed Lord. Again and again, in the four gospels, are we shewn His perfect divinity,⁸ and perfect humanity⁹—that He was as truly the Son of God,¹⁰ as He was as truly the Son of man.¹¹ The Lord Jesus was the holy, harmless, and

undefiled One, separate from *sinner*s,¹²—and this must never be forgotten. He was the great One pointed out by the finger of prophecy, as the Messiah!¹³ He was in this world Son of God and Son of man and came to die for the ungodly.¹⁴ Otherwise, we could have had no Saviour—no salvation!¹⁵ The two—Son of God and perfect Man—must be in One, or there could have been no atonement for sin!¹⁶

These two divine facts are the *basis* of the christian faith, and without them you have *no* Christianity. Our faith rests on the fact, that Jesus was the Son of the living God,¹⁷ and was perfect Man, too!¹⁸

“As Son of man it was,
 Jesus, the Lord!
 Thou gav’st Thy life for us,
 Jesus, our Lord!
 Great was indeed Thy love,
 All other loves above,
 Love Thou did’st dearly prove,
 Jesus, our Lord!”

¹² 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

¹³ John iii. 16.

¹⁴ Matt. xvii. 22, 23.

¹⁵ Prov. viii. 22-31.

¹⁶ Phil. ii. 8.

¹⁷ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

¹⁸ 1 Pet. i. 18-21.

¹⁹ John i. 1-14.

²⁰ Matt. i. 21.

²¹ Matt. xxvii. 54.

²² Matt. xii. 40.

²³ Heb. vii. 25.

²⁴ John i. 41.

²⁵ Rom. v. 6.

²⁶ Matt. xx. 28.

²⁷ Acts. iv. 12.

²⁸ Heb. x. 7-12.

²⁹ Matt. xvi. 16.

³⁰ 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

THE CERTAINTY OF SALVATION.

ON the authority of Christ Himself we have the certainty of salvation,¹ that is, the christian state; and no other suits the Christian. It is the only real christian state which the word of God owns. The condition of the Christian is the effect of the work of Christ.²

It is not that there is no conflict, but that Another has taken my responsibility. My place before God is not the effect of what I have done, but of what Christ has done.³ Christ is the ground on which I stand before God, if it be so, what has He done for us? He died for our sins;⁴ then they must be put away.⁵ He is the Judge,⁶ but He cannot judge what He has put away. That we might walk with God in peace,⁷ He has sent the One who is to be the Judge first to be the Saviour.⁸

“Saved by Christ, we’re free for ever,
This the word of God declares!
Death, nor life, nor aught can sever
Jesus from the chosen heirs.”

¹ John v. 24. ² 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. ³ Heb. ix. 16. ⁴ Rom. v. 1.
⁵ Col. i. 13, 14. ⁶ 1 Cor. xv. 3. ⁷ 2 Tim. iv. 1. ⁸ Matt. i. 21.

THE GOSPEL—THE GOOD NEWS.

THERE is no good news about man—
all is bad news. The first man was a sinner, and there is no good news about him, and his race.¹ The good news is about the Saviour—the Lord Jesus Christ, the last Adam! God has no good news to say about us, all the good news is about Christ.² God has no good news to tell you about yourself, the gospel is altogether about another Person—a different Person from you and me; the gospel is about God's own Son—"Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."³ That is who the gospel is about! The glad tidings are from God.⁴ The good news which Paul declared wherever he went, was for the sinner's good; he says, "We declare unto you glad tidings."⁵ And what are those glad tidings? "That through this man"—Jesus Christ, not through your experience or feelings, but—"Through this man is preached unto you the 'forgiveness'

of sins: and by him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."⁶ Is not this good news? Of course it is good! So scripture says, "As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country."⁷

"Saw ye not the cloud arise,
Little as a human hand?
Now it spreads along the skies,
Hangs o'er all the thirsty land."

¹ Rom. iii. 23.

² Luke ii. 10, 11.

³ Rom. i. 1-3.

{ Luke i. 26-31.

{ John iii. 15.

⁴ Acts xiii. 32.

⁵ Acts xiii. 38, 39.

⁷ Prov. xxv. 25.

WHAT WAS THE TEXT?

WHEN you come home from the preaching your friends want to know the text, and they ask you, What was the text? It is a very common question—What was the text? Well, you probably say, I do not know. Then they ask you, What was the sermon about? And you answer, That you do not know either the one, or the other! But ought you not to know?

Was it not about—The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ?

I do not care what the sermon was about so long as the light of the glory of God—in the face of Jesus Christ—enters your heart! Let the gospel light shine *in* your heart! It is the light of the glory of God that has to shine in your heart—that is what the gospel does.

“If our gospel [the *Apostle's* gospel¹] be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.”²

Mark well, that word “lost!” If the word of God did not say it, I would not dare to say it! But you must take the word of God as it stands. And this is what it says of *believers*, that—We “rejoice in hope of the glory of God!”³ Is not that better than your fears?

¹ Gal. i. 8. 9.

² 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

³ Rom. v. 1, 2.

THE TWO DEBTORS.

THE smaller the sum I owe, the more ashamed I ought to be if I cannot pay it. I might owe only “fifty pence,” but if I had nothing wherewith to pay, I

should be in the same position as a man who owed "five hundred,"—namely, a *debtor*; but neither being able to pay anything, which would be in the most humiliating position? There is really more to humble the one who cannot pay the smaller debt. The one who owes the *least*, and cannot pay, ought to be the most ashamed; for if he cannot pay a small sum, how can he pay a large one?

Now, there were "two debtors": the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty;¹ but the one who was forgiven fifty loved the least, though in a certain sense he was in the most humiliating position. Is there anybody who can say, "I have not sinned fifty times?" Have you only spoken fifty idle words? Then you have the same inability to atone for them, as the man who has spoken five hundred. "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment."²

For any one to turn round and with self-complacency say, "I have not sinned so much as *other* people," is but to take the

place of the one who owes a little, and cannot even pay the least debt!

We are all debtors to God—every one of us - there is no difference as to the fact of our being *debtors*; though some have more to account for than others. We are all in debt by nature and practice, and need forgiveness—"for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."³

¹ Luke vii. 41.

Matt. xii. 36.

³ Rom. iii. 23.

THE RICH MAN IN HELL.

THERE is a man we read of in the Bible, who went down from the lap of luxury down into hell, and it is an awful thought. But the Lord Jesus tells us all about it.¹ He draws the curtain on one side and gives us a view of the unseen world, so that we may know some of its facts. He shews us Lazarus in heaven for ever, and the rich man in hell for ever, with a gulf "fixed" between them.

The word beggar does not mean beggar

as we understand it, but a poor man. The rich man you would have thought was more cared for by God than Lazarus, because he had every good thing, and Lazarus was so poor it seemed as though God did not care for him; but God was looking after Lazarus. The Lord gives us this picture to teach us that things which we see are not as they appear before God. So we read that the poor man died—there is no record of his burial, but he is the first in God's thoughts; he was carried by the angels; so we see that heaven was interested in the death of this poor man! But the rich man, when he died, "was buried." There was all the pomp of a grand funeral, but he went down earthward and hellward.

The lesson taught us is, that the things that are seen by us do not tell us the truth of how they appear before God. The rich man was, no doubt, a kind man, very considerate and regular in his ways "every day;" but the point is, he enjoyed the blessings given him here without regard to God. That was the whole principle

of the rich man's life, why should I not enjoy what I have?—"he fared sumptuously every day." But we are told where he has *gone*; "he died," he was "buried," and "in hell." His mansion was not strong enough to shut out death! He had to leave his gilded halls, his clothing of purple and fine linen, and his sumptuous fare, and go into the unseen world, and we see that the place he went to is called "hell."

What we learn from scripture is, that there is the *respectable* side of the road, as well as the drunkard's and thieves' side of the road, and both sides lead down to hell, and neither of them to the Paradise of God.

¹ Luke xvi. 19-31; John iii. 16.

JESUS, THE SAVIOUR.

WHEN the Lord Jesus was here He went about doing good.¹ He came into the world with His hands full of blessing, and the people exclaimed:

“He hath done all things well”!² He could do nothing but what was infinitely wise and infinitely good.³ He was the true Minister of blessing to man;⁴ and His ear was ever open to the cry of the needy.⁵

John in writing of what Jesus did, instead of saying, I have exhausted the subject, says: “And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.”⁶ In other words, he would want another world in addition to this one, to contain all the books.

But it is not only what Jesus said and did that John and the other evangelists and other inspired writers of the scriptures insist on, but who the Lord Himself was.⁷ When you think of what Jesus did, it is not so much the scene you are looking at, as at Christ in the scene. It is not so much the parable He spoke, or the miracle He did, which is really the most wonderful, but Christ Himself,⁸ Son of

man⁹ and Son of God,¹⁰ standing out before you in the scene.

If you know your own weakness, that you cannot save your own soul,¹¹ you will gladly avail yourself of the power and love of this mighty One.¹²

“ Jesus, mighty Son of God !
Wondrous gift on man bestow'd !
Many crowns are on Thy head,
Glorious First-born from the dead.”

¹ Acts x. 38.

² Mark vii. 37.

³ Heb. x. 7.

⁴ { Luke xix. 10.

{ Matt. xi. 5.

⁵ { Luke xvii. 12-17.

{ Mark x. 46-52.

{ Matt. iv. 23, 24.

⁶ John xxi. 25.

⁷ { John i. 1-14.

{ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

{ Prov. viii. 22-31.

⁸ Matt. xxii. 42-44.

⁹ Matt. xviii. 11.

¹⁰ John i. 49.

¹¹ Rom. v. 6.

¹² Heb. vii. 25.

THE LIFEBOAT.

GOD is shewing His mercy now by giving people the way of escape from death and judgment. But a man who does not feel his need or know his danger does not want the way of escape. It is only people who know their need, and feel themselves to be in real danger, who want a refuge.

Suppose a man to be drowning, he grasps the lifebuoy thrown to save him. Or suppose a man in a ship in distress, and the ship is sinking, there is no deliverance in the ship. But the lifeboat is alongside, and there is deliverance in the lifeboat.

Would the man in such peril waste his time in debates, and hesitate about getting into it? He would say to any one who opposed him, Get out of my way, I see myself as a drowning man.

All that you find bad in yourself and surroundings are but so many reasons for trusting yourself wholly to Christ. He is the Saviour for all who find themselves in peril and need salvation. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.)

"Not one object of His care
Ever suffer'd shipwreck there!"

ETERNAL LIFE.

ALL believers ought to know that they now have eternal life: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life."¹ They ought also to know that they cannot lose eternal life: "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish."² And the Lord then adds, as if to make these assurances doubly sure: "Neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."³

Eternal life is a life that can never be lost as Adam's was: "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."⁴

¹ 1 John v. 13.

² John x. 28.

³ John x. 28.

⁴ 1 John v. 12.

ISRAEL'S SONG OF DELIVERANCE.

WE never read in the Bible of any one "singing" until we come to Exodus xv. And thus the Israelites are the first people we read of as "singing." And when Israel sang, what

did they sing about? They sang about the LORD—"He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he cast into the sea." They knew that they would never again go back into the hands of Pharaoh. There was no song in Egypt, with its toils, its brickfields, and its oppressions.

So with the Christian; we are delivered from the hands of Satan, and brought to God, and can sing: "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously"! Observe, it is not "*we*" who have "triumphed," but the Lord. We have done with Egypt, with its brickfields and its taskmasters, and shall never go back there again; every link which connected us with Egypt has been broken by the Lord, "The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." The horse is the power, and the rider is the enemy.

Now, do you think that *unsaved* people can sing God's praises? They cannot do so. Such are still in Egypt, and groaning under the tasks and taskmasters.

THE CREATION OF THE WORLD.

THE creation of the world is a subject of immense interest! You may, in the first of Genesis, go right back to the beginning—back to the time when God created the world, and afterwards put it in order to put man upon it. We see that *creating*, is God's own work His own sovereign power absolutely independent of us.¹ All that we see around us, comes from God to us. It matters not how clever we are, creation is all God's own doing and it did not rise up at our command! It is a great thing to know what God has done (and what God is,² and what He is going to do).³ He created out of chaos a beautiful scene, a beautiful world!⁴ And in the early part of Genesis we have the wonderful unfolding of God's ways in doing it. And if any man be inclined to be scientific, he may see that geology has its proper place, and

may learn how creation came about, as much as he likes.

“The lofty cedars shew
 His greatness and His skill ;
 But every little flower that grows,
 And scents the summer breeze that blows,
 Tells of His goodness still.”

¹ Gen. i. ² { : John i. 5. ³ { Heb. i. 10-12. ⁴ Gen. i. 31.
 { 1 John iv. 8. { Rev. xxi. 1-5.

GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY.

“**F**EAR NOT,” said the angel to the shepherds, “for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”¹ *Fear not* is the beginning of these good tidings. And then we are told, that “Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

What was all this joy about? The

Saviour had come into the world! And this blessed report of Christ the Lord having been born in Bethlehem, brought from heaven by the angel, had come from God Himself. What is my reader's thought, when you read the good tidings of great joy, of the Saviour being born, and the multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest? We have recorded for us the *sort* of welcome He received at the hands of man! There was no room in the inn.² And the best rooms in the inn are always reserved for those who have most money. What harmony do you find between the praises of the multitude of the heavenly host, and man's reception of the Saviour? They do not harmonise at all. There was no room in the inn to begin with—and no room in the world to end with.³ All that the world gave the Saviour was the cross and the grave. And man's heart is the same to-day.⁴ But in heaven all is harmony in respect of that Holy One. As we read in Revelation, "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book,

and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."⁵

“ ‘Glory to God on high!
Peace upon earth and joy,
Good will to man.’
We who God’s blessing prove,
His name all names above,
Sing now the Saviour’s love,
‘Too vast to scan.’”

¹ Luke ii. 7-14.
² Luke ii.

³ { Matt. xxvii. 17-54.
 { Mt. xxviii. 1-7.

⁴ Jer. xvii. 9.
⁵ Rev. v. 9-14.

MAN CAN CARRY NOTHING OUT OF THE WORLD.

NO man can take anything out of the world. If a man be honest he will say that he has nothing he can take away with him, as scripture says—He shall “go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand.”¹ “For we brought nothing into

this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out."² There is nothing in the world a man can grasp and keep for ever!

Some people too, are all their lifetime like men grasping at shadows and losing them. When a man comes to die he cannot take out of the world a single groat nor any worldly reputation whatever. And this is why a man is not satisfied with what he gets in this world, he must leave all behind. The prince and the beggar, when the hand of Death touches them, are exactly the same. They may be clothed differently, and escorted to the grave differently, but beyond that no further. But having to leave everything behind is not what makes death terrible. What makes it terrible to the unconverted is, that they have to come up for judgment before the "Great White Throne."³

Death is not terrible to believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. And *they* will never come into judgment before the Great White Throne—"He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, HATH everlasting life, and shall NOT come

into condemnation (i.e. judgment); but is PASSED from death unto life."⁵

¹ Eccl. v. 15.

² 1 Tim. vi. 7.

³ Rev. xx. 11-15.

⁴ Phil i. 21.

⁵ John ii. 12.

⁶ John v. 24.

THE RICH MAN'S THIRST IN HELL.¹

THE rich man became so poor that he could not get even a drop of cold water, "And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." He called for a drop of water to cool his tongue, but what was the answer? "Son, remember!" He had his memory then. If you refuse to remember now, you will then, like the rich man who thirsted, again and again, and went down to hell to thirst for ever. There are no earthly wells of water in hell—no earthly cup of refreshment there. There is only one thing which will satisfy man's thirst, and that is the water of life, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I

shall give him shall never thirst ; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”² Then the rich man said, “ I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house : for I have five brethren ; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.” But the answer was, “ They have Moses and the prophets ; let them hear them.”

We may pray now,³ but the time is coming when there will be no more prayer ; in heaven there will be no need of prayer, and in hell the smallest request will remain unanswered. To this day, that desire for a drop of water to cool the tongue, remains unanswered. Better to be Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, than the rich man in hell craving for a drop of water that none but God could supply ! Ah, he was thirsting for ever. His condition was worse than that of one of old who said, “ My punishment is greater than I can bear.”⁴ How perturbed his conscience ! How disturbed his mind ! He sought for a mercy,

but there is no mercy in hell. The time for mercy was gone. It is a picture of hopeless misery and despair—the certain portion of every one dying without Christ.⁵

¹ Luke xvi. 19-31.

² John iv. 14.

³ 2 Cor. vi. 2.

⁴ Gen. iv. 13.

⁵ { John viii. 24.

{ John iii. 16.

IN THE "BEGINNING."

THE gospel of John begins historically before either of the other three gospels. You are taken back *before* the creation of the world to the Word that was with God and was God—the "Word," which is the perfect expression of God.¹

In the gospel of John there is no genealogy, and no ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. It begins, so to say, without any beginning, and ends without any ending. Because in this gospel He is more especially brought before us as the Son of God—the Word here upon earth. He was "in the beginning" "with God"—that was the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.² You go right back to "the beginning." Your mind may go back to your father or your grand-

father, and back and back to your forefathers, and so on back to Adam. You may go back beyond creation, and back and back, but however far you go God was there before you. And the Word was there with Him, "and the Word was with God."

Christianity takes you back to the beginning. In John's Epistle it says, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life."³ "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father."⁴ The highest attainment for the Christian is to know HIM⁵ who is from the "beginning." When you know the Lord Jesus Christ—the "Word" who is from the beginning—you have a theme which fills you with wonder and admiration!

"Lord of glory, we adore Thee!

Christ of God, ascended high!

Heart and soul we bow before Thee,
 Glorious now beyond the sky :
 Thee we worship,
 Thee we praise,
 Excellent in all Thy ways."

¹ John i. 1-3.
² John i. 14.

³ 1 John i. 1.
⁴ 1 John ii. 24.

⁵ 1 John ii. 13, 14.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF PRESENT SALVATION.

THERE is nothing special or peculiar in a Christian knowing that he is already saved.¹ I do not say that every Christian knows it. Many do not. The greater number by far do not know it. There are thousands and thousands of Christians who know nothing of present salvation! but that ignorance is not proper to Christianity. It is not the *Gospel* that puts a man in that state. A great many Christians think that they cannot know it in this life, but that is where they are misled. Scripture says, in the most positive and absolute way, that "We know," and to "know" is the natural condition of

the Christian—the normal condition of the ordinary Christian. He knows that Jesus is his Saviour,² and God is his Father.³ And he has no doubt about it. Now, look at the following verse, We “know that we have passed from death unto life.”⁴ And this confidence rightly belongs to every Christian, and is the confidence with which every Christian ought to think and speak. It is assurance and certainty, and no sort of doubt about it. We “know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”⁵

The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is God's gospel, and in the gospel of God it is ours to know that our sins are now forgiven, for Christ's sake. “I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.”⁶ “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall

tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”⁷

The certain future for the believer, is to be with Christ in the glory for ever, for the God of all grace has called us to His eternal glory.⁸ So the Apostle Paul says, “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.”⁹

“Peace! perfect peace! in this dark world of sin?
The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.”

¹ 2. Tim. i. 9.

² Titus iii. 4-7.

³ 2 Pet. iii. 18.

⁴ 1 Peter i. 14-19.

⁵ 1. John iii. 14.

⁶ John v. 24.

⁷ 2 Cor. v. 1.

⁸ 1 John ii. 12.

Rom. viii. 34-39.

⁹ John xvii. 24.

¹⁰ 1 Pet. v. 10, 11.

¹¹ Rom. xv. 13.

SUDDEN DEATH OF A SAILOR.

IT is a lovely morning, the sea bright and beautiful as the summer sunshine can make it; a full-rigged man-of-war ship is sailing along, there is no sign of a storm, and nothing seems to threaten danger of any kind; who could believe that that noble ship is soon to be the scene of death? That those on board are this very day to witness the committal to the deep of one of their number? and that one now full of life and energy. But so it is.

Now everything is in ship-shape trim, every hand on board under order and discipline. The officer of the watch is just giving some orders, when he hears a sound. What are they all moving to do? Why do they look so scared? All is apparently right. But above, one of the sailors has slipped, and even now is falling. But, stop! there is a rope; will he fall near enough to lay hold of it? Yes, he has got

onc, but, oh, horrible sight, *he has got the wrong one*--one that is not fastened to anything secure ; it gives, it pulls, it comes with the poor man, and grasping it he falls to the deck, from whence he is lifted in fearful agonies, only to die in a few minutes.

O, my beloved reader, bear with me if I ask you one plain question. Have *you* made sure of your rope? or if you should fall at this moment, would you be trusting to anything short of that rope which is as secure as the foundation of God's eternal throne? God is offering it to you, He has dropped it at your very feet, you have not to seek for it; oh, let me implore you, as you value your immortal soul, do not wait to lay hold of it until you feel yourself falling. Satan will say, does say, "Time enough, no need to think of such things now." But there *is* need.

As that young sailor ran up the rigging that morning, full of health and strength, would he not have laughed had he been told of what was before him? But if he had believed he would fall do you not

think he would have made sure that he had a good stout rope ready? And I am quite sure that he would have seen it well secured, but, you see, like every one who has not laid hold of Christ, he was totally unprepared to meet death, grasped at one of the loose ropes hanging near, and what was the consequence? You may go on well enough as you are until death knocks at your door, then the devil will have plenty of loose ropes ready for you to catch, but he will take good care not to throw you the only one that is secure. God is shewing it to you *now*, He is offering it to you *now*, and oh, my reader, are you refusing it? Stay! You may never have another chance, you had better accept at once.

ETERNITY: WHAT IS IT?

THAT little word eternity, which so easily rolls over the tongue, is but little understood. Can you measure that period, if period it can be called? Can

you number the years that make up eternity? You are travelling to eternity, toward which we are *all* marching with unceasing step. Eternity is alike the heritage of the good and bad, and belongs to us all!

What will eternity be to you, with all its unnumbered years, the end of which you will never find? Have you looked it in the face? When you come to think of it, what a solemn thing is eternity. We know by long experience, that by one step you may be in eternity. One stroke, or fall, and you may be there ;¹ our life is but a moment when compared to it. It is only like a drop of water, a solitary grain of sand, and then you pass within the folds of that curtain which hides the other world from this, and you are launched forth on the shoreless sea of eternity, then eternity, with all its untold and untellable years, has begun, and you are in it!

Take the greatest, the best, and most enjoyable thing on this earth, a little bit of pleasure, or a little bit of money,² what are these in all the light of eternity?

That awful time is coming! And every hour is bringing it nearer, and how near you are to it you cannot tell. You may be standing near to its brink at this moment.³ If the reality of eternity were to come before you, you could get no rest until the question of *sin* were settled. The terrible future opens up before you, and you do not know how to meet it! Are you content to go into eternity as you are, or will you not bow to Christ as your *Saviour*?⁴

Oh, dear reader, see that you are on the Lord's side. Christ is the Saviour of the world, will you not fly to that Saviour,⁵ who is the only way of escape from judgment? "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."⁶

¹ Prov. xxix. 1.
² { Heb. xi. 25.
 { Jas. iv. 13-14; v. 1-5.

³ Prov. xxvii. 1.
⁴ Heb. vii. 25.

⁵ John vi. 37.
⁶ Acts iv. 12.

HEAVENLY NEWS WORTH HEARING.

NICODEMUS had a mere human conviction of Christ; he knew that He was a teacher come from God.¹ When they saw His miracles many believed on Him.² How many Christians are like that now, giving a mere human assent to who He is. It is not insincerity or dishonesty, but they do not know Him. There is no want created in the heart.

The Son of God is here :³ is that enough for you? You do not care to know what He is here for,⁴ or whether you have any part with Him.⁵ You do not trouble yourselves further, or care to listen to one word He says; not an anxiety as to what He has said concerning you, or interest as to one thought or feeling He might have.

Could you be *quiet* if you thought you were *lost*? You could not. You are *lost*,⁶ and there is no greater proof of the utter ruin of man than that Christ does not attract his heart, speaking and testifying of

divine things. Any bit of news will occupy you—a bit of family interest, a newspaper, a thing passing in the street; and here is news from heaven, news from God, and you do not care!⁷ nor for all the love in His coming down from heaven⁸ to tell it to you!

¹ John iii. 2-3.

² John ii. 23.

³ John i. 49.

⁴ Matt. xviii. 11.

⁵ John xiii. 8.

⁶ Luke xix. 10.

⁷ { ¹ John iv. 5, 6.

{ John iii. 9-18.

⁸ John iii. 31-36.

THE LIGHT OF GOD'S WORD.

THERE is a light in this dark world besides the light of the sun, and we get it from the word of God, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."¹ The Bible is a spring of light, a fountain of light! It shines like the sun in the midst of darkness, and cheers our hearts,² a light that enlightens and brightens our pathway here.³

The Holy Ghost of God illumines the pages of scripture that light may dawn in our heart, fresh light come into the soul. And if there be reality in us, we invite its

rays to shine in. Light makes manifest what we were, and where we are.⁴ The word shews me all the evil in my heart,⁵ and all the goodness of God.⁶ No one having the light of God's word shining in his heart thinks lightly of sin,⁷ or of the Saviour of sinners.⁸ The more knowledge of God's word we have, the more light we have. The word shines brighter than the sun—"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."⁹ "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven."¹⁰

"His word a light before us spreads,
By which our path we see ;
His love, a banner o'er our heads,
From harm preserves us free."

¹ Ps. cxix. 130.

² Rom. xv. 4.

³ Ps. cxix. 105.

⁴ Eph. v. 8-14.

⁵ Jer. xvii. 9.

⁶ Ps. cxix. 68.

⁷ Rom. iii. 10-23.

⁸ Rev. i. 5-8.

⁹ Ps. cxix. 105.

¹⁰ Ps. cxix. 89.

THE FOUR GOSPELS.

WE have the four gospels, and why have we four. Because four are sufficient. Why were there not three gospels? Because four were necessary. Five were not needful for us, we have

every variety and sufficiency in the four. Some people think a good deal of harmonising the gospels, but we should not look for harmony but for contrast. We ought to learn from each gospel (and also from each part of the word of God) exactly what God intends to teach us,¹ as the sure way of missing His mind is by mixing up things which differ.²

It is a great help to see the separate purpose of each of the four gospels; they present the Lord Jesus Christ in four different aspects. Matthew presents Him as the Messiah who came to be King upon earth—"Where is he that is born King of the Jews?"³ Mark presents Him as the perfect Servant, "straightway" doing the Master's service.⁴ Luke presents Him as the Son of man, the One who came after the sheep—Jew or Gentile—therefore you see Him as "Son of man," a title embracing the whole human family.⁵ And John presents Him as the Son of God, who came down from heaven.⁶

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

² 2 Tim. ii. 15.

³ Matt. ii. 2.

⁴ Mark i. 20-42.

⁵ Luke xiv. 10.

⁶ John i. 1-49.

“WHOSOEVER” BELIEVETH.

DO each of our readers know the meaning of the word “whosoever”? That word means anybody and everybody; as a little boy once said, “It means you and me and every one else.” It includes every person. We all know the meaning of “whosoever,” when we are out walking and see a notice, that “Whosoever is found trespassing will be prosecuted.” So the gospel is addressed to every one, and you cannot refuse its application to any one, or to yourself; it is not merely addressed to this person or that, but to you. Your name is included in the word “whosoever,” and you take your place in it! “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,” and for this purpose, “that whosoever”—rich or poor, old or young, great or small, learned or ignorant, white or black, the Patagonian of the south, the red man of the forest, or the black man of the heart of Africa—“believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

It is a blessed thing that it does say “Whosoever!” because it embraces *all* mankind, and thus God is speaking in scripture to each of our readers, and telling you that you may have everlasting life by believing in His only begotten Son. (John iii. 16-18.)

“PEACE” BY JESUS CHRIST.

I DO not know what my reader's history may be, whether a long or short one, but do you belong to one of the nations of this earth? Yes. And is your history a good or a bad one? Bad.¹ And you are much wishing to understand the gospel? Perhaps you may say, Yes. Then the word of the gospel is peace—“Preaching peace by Jesus Christ.”² There is nothing else will meet man's need but the gospel, nothing but what it announces will put you right with God.”

There is, of course, the *basis* for the proclamation of peace with God. But you

receive peace "by Jesus Christ," and learn from the scriptures the basis upon which peace has been made, that Christ "made peace through the blood of his cross,"⁴ that is the foundation of it, that is how the Saviour made peace. Some people will tell you that you have to make your own peace, but such an effort would be an attempt to set aside the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Scripture tells us plainly He has already made it. We are told that He Himself "made peace by the blood of his cross." *You* cannot make it. We who believe in the Lord Jesus ("He is Lord of all"⁵) thank God for the gospel *bringing us* this message of "peace!"

¹ Ps. xiv. 2, 3.

² Rom. iii. 23.

³ Acts x. 36.

⁴ Rom. v. 10.

⁵ Col. i. 20.

⁶ Acts x. 36.



A LIGHT ON THE STARBOARD BOW.

I HAD been standing at the bow of the vessel which was carrying us over the wild Atlantic, and was endeavouring to pierce the darkness of the night, and trace an outline of the shore. The rain drizzled and the wind blew cold and frosty over the Arctic current, and over icebergs which floated in the vicinity. The rolling ocean beneath and around was black as ink, and no sound could be heard but the howling of wind. I was meditating on the love of Him whose hand had brought us in safety over so many miles of trackless and stormy sea, and was comparing the voyage to the life of man—the sailing out of port, full of hope—the plunging forward in each day's life, not knowing the events of the next—the adventures—the dangers—the ups—the

downs—the expectations—the prospects—the desire of the haven beyond—when my reverie was broken by the cry of the man on the look-out, “A light on the starboard, sir!” and the answer from the officer on the bridge, “Aye, aye.”

The light that was seen declared the presence of land. It was from a lighthouse. The voyage was therefore at an end, and with it all the suffering and sickness, the rolling and tossing; and the quiet waters of the harbour were near at hand. The announcement of the light was welcome in proportion to the discomfort that had been experienced. How fair were the rays of light that fell from the lighthouse over the dreary waste of waters, and how cheerful the shout that told us of the longed-for end!

But another light is shining and casting its fairer rays over another dreary waste, and another cry proclaims the haven of rest.

Mariner on the ocean of life! thou art outward bound, but whither? Thou hast sailed from port and hast discovered a

trackless waste around thee. It may be thou art uncertain as to thy future. All dark around, all black within, no guiding landmark, only the dismal howl of disappointed hopes and broken resolutions; and thou art alone. It may be thy soul has proved the world to be but an empty void, and that sin has spoiled and tarnished what God's hand had made so "very good." Yea, that life itself is but a vapour, and that time is carrying thee swiftly onward to the appointed doom of "death and judgment."

But stay! A light is shining. Its rays are clear and unfaltering. It guides securely. That light in the midst of darkness is Jesus. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John viii. 12.)

Lost one, look to Jesus! Salvation for thee is in Him. He says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved." (Isa. xlv. 22.)

Anxious one, look to Jesus! Relief for thee from all thy burden of sin is in Him. He says, "Come unto me, all ye that

labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi. 28.)

Struggling one, look to Jesus! He fought the fight of faith and won the day. "Looking unto Jesus who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. xii. 2.)

Every one! "See Jesus crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. ii. 9), sitting on the Father's throne, the mighty work of salvation finished, and through Him proclaimed, light for the blind, pardon for the guilty, salvation for the lost.

Reader! there is a light in heaven for thee.

THE GOSPEL OF "PEACE."

THE gospel is called, "The Gospel of Peace."¹ Because God is preaching PEACE—"The word which God sent preaching peace by Jesus Christ."²

The gospel is the *proclamation* of peace! because the world belongs to God, and is peopled by His enemies,³ and *they* are at war with Him.

God sent His prophets and servants, one after the other, and they killed them,⁴ and at last He sent His only begotten Son, and they said: "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance."⁵

The whole world is at war with God, and He will soon send His angels, taking vengeance on them who know Him not, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁶ In the meantime *God* proclaims "Peace"—"Peace by Jesus Christ: he is Lord of all."⁷

But some people will not lay down their arms against Him. Lay down your arms, dear readers! All you have to do is to throw down your arms, and come and submit to Him who "is Lord of ALL"—"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."⁸ "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool."⁹

“ Lord of the worlds above,
 How pleasant and how fair
 The dwellings of Thy love,
 The heavenly mansions are ! ”

¹ Eph. vi. 15.

² Acts x. 36.

³ Rom. i. 30.

⁴ Acts vii. 52.

⁵ Matt. xxi. 35-39.

⁶ 2 Thess. i. 8.

⁷ Acts x. 36.

⁸ John vi. 37.

⁹ Acts ii. 34-36.

THE SCRIPTURES AND SCIENTIFIC INFIDELS.

NOTHING can be more miserable than to hear scientific infidels talking about scripture. It always reminds us of a blacksmith approaching, with his tongs and hammer, a watch ; or of a butcher attempting, with cleaver and saw, the anatomy of the human eye. You must always draw a broad line of distinction between the facts of science and the conclusions of so-called scientific men. Facts are facts, wherever you meet them, in the heavens above, in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth ; nor is there one solitary fact throughout nature's vast domain, which will be found in collision with holy scripture. The reasonings of scientific men are

continually running counter to the statements of the word of God; and hence, we utterly reject the reasonings while we respect the facts. It seems to us as if the grand object of many scientific men were to pick holes in the word of God. Terrible object! May God have mercy upon them, and open their eyes that they may see!

GOD'S WORD ADDRESSES EVERY ONE.

GOD by His word addresses man in all the ignorance in which he is, and where he is,¹ and does not ask man to understand as though submitting to his reason, but tells him *what to believe*.² The word of God is worth listening to!³ It addresses all sorts of sinners, at all sorts of times. It is God *Himself* who speaks, and therefore, let every man listen! God speaks, and you must respond to His word — “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.”⁴ “To this man will I look,

even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.”⁵ The scriptures come from God, and even a “child” may know them—“From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures.”⁶ And they meet the religious,⁷ and the irreligious man,⁸ and are so clear, they never leave us in the dark about anything. And this is the reason why some people are so opposed to your reading your Bible —“It giveth understanding unto the simple,”⁹ and they want to keep you ignorant, and we get from the Bible certain and solid rest as to salvation.¹⁰—

“In its pages we behold
 Truths more precious than fine gold ;
 And the ruby can’t compare
 With the glorious things found there.”

¹ Prov. i. 22.⁴ Psal. cxix. 9.⁷ 2 Cor. ii. 17.¹⁰ 2 Tim. i. 9.² John iii. 16.⁶ Isa. lxvi. 2.⁸ Rom. iii. 10-18.¹⁰ 1 John ii. 12.³ Prov. i. 24-29.⁹ 2 Tim. iii. 15.⁹ Psal. cxix. 130.¹⁰ 1 Col. ii. 10.

THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST.

SEE the exceeding love and tenderness of our God as shewn to us in the great high priest!—“Seeing then that

we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God."¹ But we not only have the greatness of Jesus in the great High Priest, but we have in Him tender pity, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."² Is there not supreme suitability in the mercy and faithfulness³ of the great High Priest, tempted as He was in all points like as we are, yet without sin? We have the tender pity of Jesus, the mercy of Jesus! Oh, the magnitude and magnificence of the great High Priest! Do you know all the value of Jesus, all the greatness of Jesus the Son of God? He is great as God is great—"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."⁴ Oh, the fitness of Jesus for us! tempted as He was He knows exactly our troubles and He never forgets them—"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."⁵ And He is not only able to

save but willing to save "all" that come unto God by Him. Oh, the greatness of Jesus! Oh, the compassion of Jesus! "Let us therefore" —Come—Come— "Come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."⁶

"Great Prophet of our God!

Our tongues must bless Thy name,
By whom the joyful news
Of free salvation came;
The joyful news of sins forgiven,
Of hell subdued, of peace with heaven."

¹ Heb. iv. 14.

² Heb. iv. 15.

³ Heb. ii. 17.

⁴ Col. ii. 9.

⁵ Heb. vii. 25.

⁶ Heb. iv. 16.

THE PRODIGAL SON AND THE FATHER'S KISS.

THE prodigal son was all wrong in his own idea of what he was to receive at his father's hands. He thought he would be put under law, and did not know that he was to receive GRACE! When he comes to his father, he never says at all what he had meant to say—"Make me as one of thy hired servants." It was not knowing what was in his father's heart made him

think of saying this ; and the father does not give him time to say it, but he is beforehand with him and runs to meet him, and stops him saying it. His father had no thought of making him a “servant !” and he does not even enter his father’s house without first having the best robe put upon him. I entreat you to consider the parable. Not simply as to what the prodigal was and wanted to be, but what the father did. The father ran—he ran—and fell on his son’s neck and kissed him ! That is what God does—that is what God the Father does—He loves the returning prodigal. He loves you and runs to meet you, and falls on your neck and kisses you !

“Once as prodigals we wandered,
 In our folly, far from Thee ;
 But Thy grace, o’er sin abounding,
 Rescued us from misery.”

Luke xv. 20.

“ACCEPTED” IN THE BELOVED.

THE Holy Ghost is come down here, because Christ is in the glory ;¹ there-

fore we do not leave people in dimness and darkness. We speak boldly ; we tell you plainly if you are believers, that you are "accepted in the beloved,"² righteous as He is righteous,³ and the glory is your portion.⁴ We speak thus very boldly about it ; "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God : but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."⁵ The difference in the subject of ministration⁶ gives this greater boldness. It is not a certain working of the soul to get up to Christ ; but when Christ is thus really and truly revealed to the heart, it is inwrought by the Spirit of God in the soul, and graven and written on the "fleshy tables of the heart."⁷ The soul will be exercised upon receiving this glory, not to be satisfied in knowing merely as a fact there is this righteousness, but to have it wrought in the heart. We should be not only thinking about Christ sometimes, but wholly occupied with Christ Himself.⁸

1 { John xiv. 16, 17.
 Acts ii. 2-33.
 2 Eph. i. 6.

3 1 Cor. i. 30.
 4 John xvii. 22.
 5 2 Cor. ii. 17.

6 1 Pet. i. 10-12.
 7 2 Cor. iii. 3.
 8 Phil. i. 21.

THIRSTY SAILORS.

A VESSEL had been sailing near the north-east coast of South America, when, owing to some accident, and also some miscalculation as to where they were, the ship's crew had become short of water. Day after day they had drifted on under the scorching rays of a tropical sun, until at last the exhausted seamen lay scattered on the deck, totally unable to guide the vessel. Just as hope had died out of every breast, a sail hove in sight. It was espied by one of the sailors, who, staggering to his feet, feebly gasped through a speaking trumpet the cry of "Water, water, give us water, we are dying of thirst." Quickly and distinctly came back the answer, "Dip it up." How was this? It must have seemed strange to the seamen, but nevertheless they did not hesitate, but obeyed. The water was fresh. They had been drifting for days about the mouth of the Amazon, just where the tide affects

the fresh water. They had been dying of thirst, and yet surrounded with water on every side.

And now, perhaps, this little anecdote will meet the eye of one who is thirsting for the water of life : to such God's word is, " Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters ; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." (Isa. lv. 1.) Freely, fully, that water of life is offered. For many years the writer of this was blindly seeking for it, not knowing that God was offering it freely, as He does now to you, dear reader, if as yet you have not accepted Him. Oh, take Him at His word ! Believe, and be saved. Rest solely in what He has done, and I promise you that you will have such peace and happiness as you have never before enjoyed. " And the Spirit and the bride say, Come ; and let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.)

THE FIRST GOSPEL SERMON PREACHED TO THE GENTILES.

HERE we have in the tenth of Acts, the first gospel sermon preached to the Gentiles. Not but what some of the Gentiles as individuals had heard the gospel before, but this chapter gives us definitely and distinctly the first gospel preached to the Gentiles as such. We see here the first Gentile company gathered together to hear the gospel from the apostle Peter, and this is a very interesting fact, because it shews us a distinct epoch in the world's history. God was about to shew that His heart was not limited to the Jews. And so we get the gospel sounded out for the first time in Gentile ears. But the apostle Peter had to be educated, taught of God as to what His purpose was—that the gospel must now go out to the Gentiles. And so we find that he received that remarkable vision of a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth : wherein were all manner of fourfooted

beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And when Peter was fully convinced of its meaning, he says, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons." The apostle had now learned, for the first time, that God is no respecter of persons. He had thought that the Lord Jesus had been sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.¹ So the vision from heaven had to be repeated *three* times to remove the prejudice of this godly Jew, and thus Peter learned that "Whosoever"—whether Jew or Gentile—believeth in Christ shall receive remission of sins. The Jews had many privileges, but now, since their rejection of the Lord, the kingdom of heaven is open to all, and here, Cornelius, a Roman soldier, a Gentile, learned from Peter's own lips God's way of salvation from the wrath to come. The lesson which the apostle Peter had learned and taught—that God is no respecter of persons!—is a hard lesson for some religious people to learn. It shews that the best man in the world needs salvation. That a pattern man—any man

you like to set up, put him on what pinnacle you please—needs salvation. “For God is no respecter of persons.” The apostle Peter says so, and says, too, that the gospel is for *Whomsoever*—“The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ (HE is Lord of all): to HIM give all the prophets witness, that through his name ‘WHOSOEVER’ believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.”

“All who in His name believe,
Everlasting life receive!”

¹ Matt. xv. 24-28.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORD OF GOD.

THE Bible is the blessed help God has given us, and we are conscious of it.¹

We need a light in such a world as this because of the darkness, and we get that light from the word of God, a bright light, a light above the light of the sun—“The entrance of thy words giveth light.”²
The Bible is the blessed resource God has

given us,³ and His object is not to leave us in the dark or in the twilight, but to bring us into the full light of it. When we come to the word of God we come to the light itself. The Holy Spirit inspired the pages of scripture⁴ and light from it comes into our heart, and so as we go on more light enters the soul. The word of God is such a wonderful light that it not only shews me the evil of my own heart,⁵ but all the goodness of God!⁶ It is brighter than the sun—"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."⁷ It cheers us and is of imperishable brightness—"For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven."⁸ The Bible is the spring of light—the fountain of light—the fountain of pure blessing—the food for our hearts—the manna for our souls—in this dark world!⁹

" 'Tis like the sun a heavenly light
That guides us all the day ;
And through the dangers of the night
A lamp to lead the way."

¹ Rom. xv. 4.

² Psa. cxix. 130.

³ 2 Tim. iii. 15-17.

⁴ 2 Tim. iii. 16.

⁵ Jer. xvii. 9.

⁶ John iii. 16.

⁷ Psa. cxix. 105.

⁸ Psa. cxix. 89.

⁹ Acts xx. 29-32.

THE TESTIMONY OF ANGELS.

I WANT to ask your attention to the fact of God's beloved Son coming into the world, as a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. Here is the very One who was the delight of God from all eternity,¹ now found here upon earth. It is His own beloved Son, who had made all things,² and who is well pleasing to God. When He came into the world, so good were the tidings that the angels announced them—"Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men."³ Here then, you have the angels evangelising! I think it is the first time

we get the word, evangelise. There had been countless millions of children born into the world before the Lord Jesus Christ came, but there had never yet been such an one as He born⁴—conceived of the Holy Ghost,⁵ and anointed by the Holy Ghost.⁶ The coming of such a wonderful Person into the world, was for some very *great* purpose.⁷ And this was why God sent the message to man by the angelic host. The Lord Jesus is the object of the delight of angels!⁸ The object of the delight of God the Father!⁹ And He is the object of delight of all who see the glories of the Son of God!¹⁰ and of all of us who have the faith to look upon Him!¹¹ When the Lord Jesus left the earth he was then again the testimony of angels!—“And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”¹²

“Who is He that stands and weeps
 At the grave, where Lazarus sleeps?
 'Tis the Lord, oh, wondrous story!
 'Tis the Lord, the King of glory!
 At His feet we humbly fall
 Crown Him, crown Him, Lord of all.”

¹ Prov. viii. 22-30. ⁴ Isa. ix. 6. ⁷ Eph. i. 17-23. ¹⁰ Rev. v. 8-14.

² John i. 3. ⁶ Matt. i. 18-20. ⁸ Rev. v. 11, 12. ¹¹ 2 Cor. iii. 18.

³ Luke ii. 10-14. ⁵ Mark i. 10, 11. ⁹ Matt. xvii. 5. ¹² Acts i. 10, 11.

JESUS, THE SINNER'S FRIEND.

THERE is no such thing in all the gospels as a poor, needy sinner coming to Jesus, and Jesus sending him away and saying, there is nothing I can do for you. Jesus is the sinner's friend where they feel their need: “A friend of publicans and sinners.”¹

If you want the forgiveness of sins, Jesus will forgive you.² If you want to be saved, Jesus will save you.³ If you want peace with God, Jesus will give you peace.⁴ Whatever you need, Jesus can supply it.⁵ And light comes into you as you are occupied with Jesus.⁶

As a man amongst men, how tender was He in dealing with a needy sinner! And what is Jesus doing to-day? He is bringing home to the heart of many a sinner⁷ the value of His own precious work of atonement for sin upon the cross,⁸ so that those who believe in Him may know for certain they have eternal life!⁹

The sinner who believes in Jesus can say, I am safe because He is safe—I live because He lives.¹⁰ And he knows that: "He that believeth on the Son HATH everlasting life."¹¹

"Everlasting life possessing,
Let us praise His glorious name;
Glory, honour, pow'r, and blessing
Be for ever to the Lamb."

¹ Matt. xi. 19.⁴ Acts x. 36-43.⁷ Heb. ii. 9, 10.¹⁰ John xiv. 19.² Luke vii. 48-50.⁵ Phil. iv. 19.⁸ 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.¹¹ John iii. 16, 36.³ Heb. vii. 25.⁶ Eph. v. 14.⁹ 1 John v. 11, 12.

THE PEACE "OF GOD,"

WHICH PASSETH ALL UNDERSTANDING.

YOU cannot understand anything so extensive, so vast, as the peace *of*

God, the imagination cannot comprehend it. The understanding cannot take it in: "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding."¹

God is the source of all peace,² and it only flows from Him, but your understanding cannot take in *God's* peace, because if it could do so, it could take in God too. Hence the apostle says, it passeth all understanding.

It is God's own peace here spoken of, which He gives to us who believe in Jesus. *This* peace is doubtless the result of attainment, and we have to hold on to it, and it will take up your whole being, your affections and intelligence. We who believe in Jesus already have salvation,³ and as to our standing, we are already in Christ.⁴ We are now "accepted in the beloved,"⁵ and if we have any idea what this means, we shall never think of trying to get beyond it.

As a matter of redemption, we are already redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, and we now know it: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not

redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ."⁶ And we are, as we have said, already in Christ,⁷ as to our position and acceptance; but as to our enjoyment of the "Peace of God," there is no such thing as standing still, we are either progressing in it, or going back. Attainment in the peace of God is here set before us: "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace 'of God,' which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."⁸

¹ Phil. iv. 7.³ Titus iii. 5.⁵ Eph. i. 6.⁷ Col. ii. 10.² 1 Thess. v. 23.⁴ Eph. i. 3, 4.⁶ 1 Pet. i. 18.⁸ Phil. iv. 4-7.

“WHOSOEVER” SHALL CALL
ON THE NAME OF THE LORD.

WE have recorded for us in Acts ii. the first gospel sermon of the grace of God preached, after the Lord's work of atonement for sin¹ and resurrection,² and the coming of the Holy Spirit.³ The first gospel sermon is here really, and distinctly, proclaimed!³ And we see in it the essence of every subsequent gospel sermon. “And it shall come to pass, that WHOSOEVER shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”⁴ That is a very clear, a beautifully clear, simple statement. Could you put into the English language, a clearer and more simple text than that? “That whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” The gospel may come from one text, or from another, but it always runs upon that line, every gospel sermon runs upon that line. The great line on which the gospel testimony

runs is, "that whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." The apostle Peter, who preached that sermon, was addressing a mixed congregation of devout men and scoffers, and he announces this great fact, that there is salvation for all who call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He individualises it, it is, "Whosoever." And this is very important, as it gives every preacher a lesson as to how to present the gospel, with certain result. So we must, after all, come down to the allowance of the word "whosoever."⁵ It is whosoever; that is, you must be converted *personally*.⁶ And therefore, if others be converted, and you are not, you will be lost for ever.⁷ This sermon, as all other gospel sermons, turns on man's treatment of the Lord Jesus Christ.⁸

"Oh! what amazing words of grace,
Are in the gospel found!
Suited to every sinner's case
Who hears the joyful sound."

¹ 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 14.

² 1 Pet. i. 12.

³ Acts ii. 14-36.

⁴ Acts ii. 21.

⁵ Acts x. 43.

⁶ 1 John v. 1.

⁷ Rev. xx. 14.

⁸ 2 Thess. i. 7-9.

THE DAY OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

A VERY important passage of scripture for so-called Christmas Day is the following, "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them : and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not : for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this 'day,' in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."¹ That is the day of the birth of the Lord Jesus, and a very important day it is.

But *the* day is not told us in scripture. The day in which Jesus was born is not recorded, and it cannot be found within the covers of the Bible. No man in the whole world knows the day ; but God knows it, and He has hidden it from man,² and only

made known to us the day of His *death*, and of His *resurrection*.³ For it is not because of His birth we are saved, it is not the birth of Christ that brings us into relationship with God, and we have to remember this, but His atonement on the cross,⁴ the blood that He shed for the remission of sins,⁵ the necessity of the full work being accomplished.⁶ Numbers of people believe that Jesus came to Bethlehem, that he was born of the Virgin Mary, that He came into the world to save them, but they do not at all know how He saves them!

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Object of the admiration and worship of the angels,⁷ and in Him was the Father well pleased,⁸ but His *birth* does not save man. And the word of God plainly tells us, that all the wonderful *labour* of the Lord Jesus Christ in this world, this garden of misery, has not turned it into a paradise for God, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for naught, and in vain."⁹

You have no foundation under your feet, no basis at all to rest upon, if you think to

Christ, are left down here in this world to shine as lights for that blessed One! The Lord Jesus has made us lights in the world—"Among whom ye shine as lights in the world."¹ That is what true Christians should do, we are down here to shine for Christ. "Ye are the light of the world,"² that is what we are made. God is Light,³ and we are His lights.⁴ When the Lord Jesus was here, *He* was the Light of the world.⁵ And since the world has rejected God's Son, God has had millions of sons upon earth! "All the children of the light, and the children of the day,"⁶ like grains of sand upon the sea shore innumerable.⁷ And His many sons will Christ bring to glory, "Bringing many sons unto glory,"⁸ like the stars of heaven for multitude.⁹ Think of the myriads of believers in Jesus who have peopled this earth, myriads of lights! The Lord Jesus is going to have us with Him in glory. He will have lights innumerable like all the stars of heaven.¹⁰

Every believer should shine down here for Jesus! The glass of a lamp may be

dirty, and obscure the brightness of the light, but our lights never go out, " Among whom ye shine as lights in the world ; holding forth the word of life."¹¹

" We for Christ our Master stand,
Lights in a benighted land :
We our living Lord confess,
We are Jesus' witnesses."

¹ Phil. ii. 15.⁴ Eph. v. 8.⁷ Heb. xi. 10.¹⁰ Rev. vii. 9, 10.² Matt. v. 14.³ John viii. 12.⁸ Heb. ii. 10.¹¹ Phil. ii. 15.³ 1 John i. 5.⁶ 1 Thess. v. 5.⁹ Heb. xi. 12.

WHOSOEVER !

WHAT an acceptable word is that word, Whosoever! It is a word that should command your confidence. How wide, so to say, it opens heaven's door. God Himself has chosen that word, " For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that ' whosoever ' believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."¹ I would rather see that word written in such a scripture than even my own name, because if my

name were written, I might think it meant some one else of the same name.

God gave His only begotten Son, that the chief of sinners, a Saul of Tarsus,² and a Mary Magdalene,³ and a dying thief,⁴ should believe in Him, and not perish, but have everlasting life!

That word, whosoever, opens heaven's door wide enough for "any" of our readers to enter in!⁵ That word embraces all, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name"—the name of Jesus—"whosoever"—man, woman, or child—"believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."⁶

" All my sins were laid upon Him,
 Jesus bore them on the tree ;
 God, who knew them, laid them on Him,
 And, believing, I am free."

¹ John iii. 16.

² 1 Tim. i. 15.

³ Luke viii. 2-3.

⁴ Luke xxiii. 39-43.

⁵ 2 Cor. v. 17.

⁶ Acts x. 43.