

CHRISTIAN OBSERVER.

VOL. I.

TORONTO, DECEMBER, 1851.

No. 12.

Poetry.

I WILL COME TO JESUS!

Just as I am, without one plea,—
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidst me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am—poor, wretched, blind—
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am, though tossed about,
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings within and fears without
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am, thou wilt receive.
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,
Because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am, thy love unknown
Has broken every barrier down,
Now to be thine, yea, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Doctrine and Duty.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER.]

UNFULFILLED PROPHECY, No. VII.

THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH.

The world is spoken of in the word of God, under a threefold distinction: 1st, The state in which it was at first. 2nd, The state to which it was reduced after the fall of man. 3rd, The state in which it is to be hereafter. This is a very comprehensive statement, but it is sufficiently definite for our present purpose. When first created it was pronounced, with all that it contained, to be "very good,"—"God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good." (Gen. i. 31). But the fall of man introduced a melancholy change in its condition. When God looked upon the earth, "behold it was corrupt!" (Gen. vi. 12)

The material universe is cursed for man's sake. The curse lies as heavy on the earth under the New Testament dispensation, as it did under the Old. The state of things is not in the course of being changed into a better. The statement of the apostle, that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now," is as true now as when it was first made. But is this wretched state of things always to remain; shall the earth continue to groan and travail under this bondage, until, having served every purpose of its creation, it be annihilated at last? The future destiny of the world is known only to Him by whose fiat it was created. Let us then turn to his revealed will and examine this deeply interesting subject in the light of the Word.

This earth is the subject of promise and of believing expectation. The apostle Peter says: "Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Peter iii. 13). This leads us to look into the Old Testament prophecies for this promise; and we find this promise given and repeated by Isaiah: "Behold I create new heavens, and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind." (Is. lxi. 17). And again, "As the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain." (Is. lxvi. 22.)

Here then we have a new state of things, "new heavens," or a new atmosphere, "and a new earth." Is this to be brought about by the annihilation of the heavens and the earth which are now and by the creation of another system materially different from the present? We believe not. The creation of the new heavens and new earth is spoken of as "the regeneration;" and again it is spoken of as the restitution of all things." Both of these expressions indicate not the annihilation of existing things, but that they shall be so changed as to be fitted to be the abode of the redeemed and glorified saints. They imply too that they are to be restored to a state in which they formerly were. All things once were perfect, and to this state of perfection they are to be restored. How bright and glorious is this truth of a RESTORED earth, instead of a destroyed earth. In strict accordance with this view we are

told, that the now groaning creation is to be "delivered into the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Rom. viii. 2.)

It is true that "the heavens and the earth which are now are reserved unto fire," that they are to be "dissolved," yea, that they are "to perish." 2 Peter, iii. 7, 11; Heb. ii. 11. But these expressions do not signify their utter destruction. This very word "perish" is used by Peter when speaking of the effects of the flood; he tells us, that "the world that then was, being over-flowed with water perished;" so in regard to the storm of fire in which "the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up;" the present wretched and "cursed" state of things will perish, but the earth itself will not be essentially destroyed. The earth shall share in the deliverance of the children; the unconscious creation being purified by fire shall come forth freed from the curse, from dishonour, from bondage, and from corruption, a fit habitation for the risen and the glorified saints.

As to the period of the creation of the new heavens and the new earth, it is necessary on this point to compare the various passages of God's Word in which this event is spoken of. In the passages already quoted from Isaiah, the constitution of the new state of things is connected with Israel's restoration. It is also connected with Christ's Second Coming. Both of these events are pre-millennial, so that this new creation, this restitution of all things is to commence with the Millennium. But in Rev. xxi. 1, the declaration that the sea is no more is also connected with the new heaven and the new earth. Now, whether we regard the word sea as symbolical or as literal, it is obvious that there is a sea to the close of the Millennium. There is a literal sea; for just before the final judgment the sea is to give up the dead which are in it. (Rev. xx. 13.) And if we regard the sea as symbolical of agitation, revolt and war, then, we learn that there is to be emphatically such a state of things at the close of the thousand years, when Satan shall be loosed out of prison, and Gog and Magog shall gather themselves to battle. (Rev. xx. 7, 8.) This last passage then indicates the completion of the new heaven and new earth.

At the commencement of the Millennium great physical changes are to be wrought on the earth. The curse is to be in a great