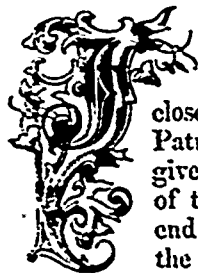


## Sabbath Readings.

## CHRIST OUR REDEEMER.

"Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."—*Rev. i. 5, 6.*



T appears that the apostle John had indited this Scripture towards the close of his life in the isle of Patmos. There was there given to him in a vision, a view of the course of things to the end of time. In this vision the Redeemer is represented in dignity and glory—clad in omnipotence, going forth conquering and to conquer, and "establishing that dominion which is to last for ever." It is then shown what the end will be; when sin is destroyed, and Satan stripped of his influence; when all the purposes of God in his dispensation of grace being answered, the gates of the celestial city will be closed, and Christ be all in all. The passage now before us, shows in a very distinct light, the obligations due to the Redeemer, and the praises ascribed to him by the redeemed.

"Unto Him that loved us"—this leading fact comprehends all that is important. "He hath loved us," and the properties of his love may challenge our admiration, as sovereign, boundless, everlasting.

And this love will be found still more wonderful if we take into account the character of those who were the objects of it. He has loved *us*! us who are nothing, and less than nothing! Let us take into account that we are guilty—that we have lifted up our arm in rebellion against the sovereign—that if the tremendous stroke of the justice we have provoked were to light upon us, it would be righteous and just on the part of God. To know that we have been loved notwithstanding all this—to reflect that our very sinfulness has drawn out the compassion of God—are we not lost in wonder?

And the more so if we consider the proofs he has given us of his love, the way he has shown it. He came down from the divine glory—he made himself of no reputation—he tabernacled in this world of sin and misery, he was a man of sorrows, and in due time by the sacrifice of himself, he made upon the cross an atonement for sin,

that we might be set free from the penalty due to it: "The chastisement of our peace was upon him; with his stripes we are healed."

But while Divine love is the source of mercy and grace to fallen man, we are reminded in this text that the atoning sacrifice of Christ has been necessary to procure our salvation. It is the custom with too many in our day to speak lightly of the doctrine of the atonement. But it is the central truth of the Christian faith! By it alone can there be harmony between the Divine mercy and justice; by it alone can God's ways be vindicated, and man's salvation be secured. Let us consider, therefore, the nature and the need of an atonement.

1. The term atonement implies a satisfaction made for the neglect of some known duty—or the commission of some known sin. The satisfaction may in certain cases be made by the offender himself; thus a servant may make amends for his neglect by such future labour as shall be equivalent to the extent of his neglect or to the injury done to his master. But what reparation can man make to divine justice? Sin is an offence against the government of God. All the services of sinners are owed to God for the time being; no future services are within his power to render, as a satisfaction for sins past. If an atonement be made in this case, it must be by a substitute; must be of sufficient value to repair the injury done, and must leave the divine government as firm and effective after the atonement is made, as it was before the crime was committed.

2. As to the necessity for an atonement. In order to understand this we must consider man as a sinner against God's law. But the language of the law was "The soul that sinneth shall die." Now if it was wise and right to enact this law, it was wise and right to maintain it. This being admitted, it follows that no sinner can be forgiven by God save on the ground of an atonement or satisfaction. If the law was originally just, and wise, and good, justice requires the execution of it upon every transgressor. But God, in pardoning the transgressor (where no change in circumstances has justified it), would declare that the law was not just, that the execution of