

that is at the time Peter wrote the sentence. The mode of speech regarding the condition of men who departed this life in a state of final impenitence is in harmony with Scripture usage. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the ungodly and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." Spirits in prison, is the description of their present state, not of their state at the time when he went and preached to them. The description of their past state and character follows, which sometime, that is to say, "who formerly were disobedient." Disobedient to what? is a question to which there seems but one answer, "to the preaching;" and it so, the next clause fixes the time and occasion of his preaching "When once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the Ark was a building;" then it was that, moved by the same pity that led Him to die the just for the unjust, He went and preached not personally, but by His Spirit to a race who were then disobedient and unbelieving, and who are now, as the consequence of their unbelief, spirits in prison reserved unto the day of judgment to be punished.

2. That mercy presided over that catastrophe is shewn by its results; "Wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by water;" they were saved in the Ark, but they were saved *by* water. According to a superficial view of this event, the only use of the water was to destroy the world; but according to the apostles' view of it, the use of the water was to save these few souls. Now the question arises from what were they saved? and the first answer that that will probably suggest itself, is "from the deluge; but on a moment's reflection, such an answer will appear absurd, to be saved by the water from the water; to send a flood to deliver them from itself, would be a salvation of which it is difficult to perceive the advantage. But when the condition of the world is remembered, "God looked upon it and beheld it was corrupt for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth;" that one family alone walked with God, alone struggled to hold the lamp of truth above the swelling tide of corruption and violence; then it is easy to perceive what was the salvation effected for this faithful few by the waters which prevailed exceedingly until every living substance was destroyed that was upon the face of the ground. There was a terrible destruction, but it was a destruction of evil for the safety of the good. There was a glorious salvation, but it was effected, as all salvation must be in such a world through suffering; so did the fires of heaven deliver righteous Lot; so did the waters of the Red Sea deliver the children of Israel from the pursuing foe.

II. That the plan of bringing salvation out of destruction, is that upon which God proceeds is shewn in the spiritual history of every believer. In the sequel of the passage in Peter, above cited, we have an illustration

of this also. It is plainly intimated that there is an analogy between the salvation of these eight persons by the flood, and the salvation of every believer symbolized in baptism. "The LIKE figure whereunto baptism doth now save us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Nothing could be more puerile than the controversy about the mode of baptism in connection with this passage; "The ark was rained upon," says one, "and that was a figure of the ordinance of sprinkling."— "Noah was buried in the Ark," says another, "and that was a figure of the ordinance of immersion."— "All flesh is grass," says the prophet;—"grass is green," says the commentator; "therefore all flesh is green." Should not the third be as judicious as either of the former?

The supposed obscurity of this passage may partly arise from an unhappy translation in the words "like figure." There is but one word in the Greek *Antitupos* which signifies "emblem." And the whole clause might be better rendered "just as the emblem immersion doth now save us;" in other words, just as our salvation is emblematically represented in our immersion. The view of salvation presented in Baptism is the burial of the old man and a resurrection to newness of life by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And this is the point of comparison and analogy in the passage. Life brought out of death; salvation effected by destruction.

The admirable view of this subject contained in Mr. Juke's letter in the third number of the *Observer* renders the farther illustration of it unnecessary.

As the great change in the commencement of the spiritual life is correctly represented in a symbolical burial and resurrection, so is the continued progress of that life spoken of in all its successive stages in this word as a continuation of the same process, the destruction of evil in and around the believer, the conquest of his enemies, mortification of appetites, and the crucifixion of the world. The whole scope and aim the providential government of this world, so far as relates to the believer and the church. It is a militant state in which there is a conflict which shall never cease till all things are put under the feet of our captain. It is a suffering state which shall continue until the glory shall be revealed.

The way to the crown is by the cross, and the key to the whole order of temporal things is, these present light afflictions "which are but for a moment work out for us, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." The world may dream as it pleases, but the believer in God's word cannot cherish the thought of a time coming within the compass of this world's day of grace, when troubles and trials will not be necessary. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth: if ye endure chastisement,

God dealeth with you as with sons, for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not; but if ye be without chastisement, wherof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons."

III. The same characteristic will mark the grand consummation of a work of grace. By death, or otherwise, the frail tabernacle will be dissolved in order to our being clothed upon with our house which is from heaven; "this mortal shall put on immortality;" life will once more and most gloriously be brought out of death. And so of the redeemed collectively, as the righteous remnant were saved by the flood; so will they be saved by the fire of judgment; when that wicked shall be consumed with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming; when all enemies shall be put under His feet; when death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed; when there shall be nothing left to hurt or annoy in all God's holy mountain.

We repeat, then, that destruction in order to deliverance; suffering in order to glory; death in order to life, has been, is, and ever must be the characteristics of God's order of procedure with His people in this world.

This throws light upon the page of history and solves much of the mystery of providence. This shews the true character of a work of grace in the soul, and may lead us to resignation under the afflictions and disappointments of life. This, too, may give direction to the expectations and the hopes of the church, and lead her away from the carnal, though specious lure, which a false philosophy has thrown in her way to a pure and animating hope of our high calling. It sets before her a Deliverer and Redeemer in his true character and in the greatness of his enterprise, and will lead believers with new earnestness and patience to look and long and wait for His coming. Even so come, Lord Jesus.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER.]

MAMMON.

(Concluded.)

Wealth, so much desired by thousands is, after all, a most undesirable boon; it is a weight which few souls can bear; and the very desire for riches which burns in some minds, is the embryo workings of a spirit which, if unsubdued, will carry the soul to the blackness of darkness for ever. When a man desires a competency of this world's goods, (and what more does any human being need for himself) we can at once comprehend the desire; but when his soul craves wealth, we are led at once to enquire, what is the origin of this craving? There is something to him peculiarly attractive in wealth which gives birth to the de-