

a better handle for doing this, to introduce upon the scene the woman and the seven claimants all at once, who are no sooner raised than they engage in contests about their property in her. But this is no reason why we should not interpret our Lord's words and the words of the historian, relating to the opinions of the sect, in all the latitude which the nature of the subject and the context evidently show to belong to them.

(To be continued.)

### IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD THERE IS FULNESS OF JOY.

Even in this world, where there is *much* of God, how sweet to the Christian is the sense of His presence, and friendship, and love! What will it be in that world, where it is *all* of God? The foretaste is blessed—what must be the *fruition*! The rays of the Divine glory are gladdening—what must be the full blaze of that sun itself!

My soul! dost thou often delight to pause in thy journey?—does faith love to ascend its Pisgah-Mount and get a prospect of this Land of Promise? What is the grand feature and element which swallows up all the circumstances in thy future bliss? Let Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles answer—It is "*Thy Presence*." "In my flesh, I shall see *God*!" says one. "I shall be satisfied, says another, "when I awake, with *Thy likeness*." "They shall see His face," says a third. Amid all the glowing visions of a coming Heaven vouchsafed to John in Patmos, there is One all-glorious object that has ever a peerless and odd distinctive pre-eminence—God himself. There is no candle—Why? "For the *Lord God* giveth them light!" There is no temple—Why? "For the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple thereof!" The Saints dwell in holy brotherhood; but what is the mighty bond of their union—their "chiefest joy?"—"He that sitteth on the Throne dwells among them!" They have no longer the intervention of ordinances and means—Why? Because "the Lamb that is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them, and lead them to living fountains of water." They no longer draw on the storehouse of the Promises—And why? Because "God himself shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." "No napkin," says a holy man, "but His own immediate hand, shall wipe my sinful face!"

My soul! here is the true "*Peniel*"—where you will "see God face to face!" Here is the

true "*Mahanaim*"—where "the Angels of God meet you!" Here is the true Communion of Saints—"The glorious fellowship of the Prophets—the goodly fellowship of the Apostles—the noble army of Martyrs!" Yet all these latter will be subservient and subordinate to the first—the vision and fruition of *God*! Even the recognition of the death-divided (that sweet element in the Believer's prospect of bliss) will pale in comparison into a taper-light before this "Glory that excelleth!"

Reader! art thou among these "pure in heart," who are to "see God"? Remember the Bible's solemn interdict—"Without holiness no man shall see the Lord!" Remember its solemn admonition—"And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as He is pure!" To "see God!" Oh! what preparation needed for so august a contemplation! Infinite unworthiness and nothingness to stand in the presence of Infinite Majesty, Purity, and Glory!

Can I wonder at the much discipline required ere I can be thus "presented *faultless* before the presence of *His glory*"? How will these needed furnace fires be dimmed into nothing when viewed from the Sapphire throne!—*Macduff*.

### THE INFIDEL'S RETORT.

A preacher perceiving, on one occasion, among his hearers, an individual who was known in the neighbourhood as a ringleader of infidelity, was induced to hope that some alteration had taken place in his views.

To ascertain whether such was the fact, he called upon him the next day, and told him how happy he had been to see him at the preaching the previous evening, the more so, as he had been given to understand that he did not believe the gospel.

"Nor you either," said the unceremonious sceptic.

"What!" he exclaimed, "do you mean sir, to call me a hypocrite?"

"I call you no ill names, sir," he coolly replied, "but what I mean to say is this, you have known of my infidelity for years, and though I have lived all the while within a short distance of your dwelling, you have never before attempted to enlighten me as to these matters, a thing which, to do you justice, I must believe you would have done, had you thought them as important as your creed would make them; indeed, I can hardly fancy that you would see me going to hell, and never try to save my soul."