

REPLY TO J. B., JR.

HEAVEN AND THE SAINTS.

MR. EDITOR:—The last sentence of J. B.'s strictures in the April number of the *Christian Banner*, if I understand it correctly, amounts to an announcement that he declines farther discussion on the subject of future punishment. Such being the case, I am perfectly willing to leave it, as it now stands, to the determination of your readers; satisfied that nothing which has been advanced by him, will have convinced any who entertained doubts as to the truth of a doctrine which is a libel alike upon the justice and the goodness of God. With your permission I will therefore proceed to notice his article on *Heaven and the Saints* which appeared in the January number.

The essay may be considered as consisting of two parts, the first treating of heaven as a definite locality, and the second of that locality as the future dwelling place of the saints. Since the scriptures teach that there is a place, the abode of "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen nor can see; to whom be honor and power everlasting, amen"—with the former part, but little fault can be found. But as the righteous are nowhere promised an entrance into that most holy place, the latter part of the article is more objectionable; and, as will presently be shown, completely fails to accomplish the design of the writer.

It commences with the insinuation that to believe this earth to be the future abode of the righteous is equivalent to believing that agriculture and pasturage will be their occupation. Now while it is true that the earth will be cultivated and yield abundantly in the coming age, the Bible does not teach that the immortalized saints will be the cultivators, neither is such a doctrine held by those, who, believing the sure word of prophecy, look forward with confidence to the time when "such as are blessed of God shall inherit the earth." It is not right, then, for J. B. to try to prejudice people's minds against the truth by compiling with it that which is false.

The first passage quoted to prove that heaven will be the future home of the righteous, is John 13. 36., and the question is asked, "where then was Jesus going?" Assuredly he was not going to heaven. He was going where the apostles could, in time, follow him. It could not be to the Father, for Jesus had a little before said they could not follow him there—verse 33; whither I go ye cannot come—and the passage from 1st Timothy, quoted above, distinctly says that "no man can approach unto him." In answer to the question, then, I would say, he was going forth to humiliation and death; and that while the events of that memorable night showed that at that time Peter could not follow him; the Lord's prediction recorded Jno. 21. 18, shows that