

THE HOPE OF THE CHRISTIAN.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, to conceive what God hath prepared for those who love him; but God hath revealed it unto us through the Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God."

It is only in the gospel of Jesus Christ that man's true destiny is revealed. "Jesus Christ abolished death," says an Apostle, "and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." No system of mythology, or religion of any nation, from the creation of the world to the advent of Christ, and the establishment of his kingdom, was ever able to develope and establish the sublime and soul-cheering doctrine of eternal felicity in heaven. The highest point in this splendid reality to which the unaided mind of man could ever arrive, was a mere vague and uncertain conjecture that they were destined to enjoy without interruption a continuation of earthly and sensual pleasures in this imaginary Elyseum. They could conceive no higher state of enjoyment than that which constituted their greatest pleasures here. The most eminent sages of antiquity (though some of them did not deny the doctrine of the immortality of the soul) had no ground of hope on which to rest with any degree of certainty, but were driven from one absurd theory to another, and left like the foundering barque in the midst of the fluctuating element without anchor, helm, or compass, to be at length wrecked on the shoals and quicksands of their own absurd speculations. Cicero, that splendid orator and statesman, the thunder of whose eloquence once shook the frame of Rome, after enunciating some of the opinions of the best philosophers in support of his theory of immortality, seems all at once to yield up his mind to that prevalent doubt that obscured the dim rays of philosophy, and exclaim in hopeless despair, "some God must tell us which of these is right." The Aborigines of the American forest, though they worshipped the Great Spirit and the genius of storms and darkness, and paid homage to the rising king of day and bowed to his parting beams as he sank in his golden bed behind the western mountains, could fancy no other enjoyment in another state of existence than their favourite sport of the chase. They fancied that the great spirit would allot to them some favoured spot beyond the western mountains, some happy island in the watery waste abounding with game, where they might pursue the wild deer or fan through verdent fields, strewn with flowers and watered with murmuring fountains. But the Bible that God has given us to be a lamp to our feet and a light to our paths, does not leave us thus to grope our way in darkness and uncertainty, and build the airy castle of vague conjecture as delusive as the misty phantom of philosophy. Ah no! but it developes to us a source of hope on which we can hang our everlasting all! for time and eternity. "I am come," says our Saviour, "a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness but should have the light of life." Had it not been for the glorious manifestations of the Son of God and the introduction of the living oracle, the soul-cheering doctrine of immortality beyond this state of existence never would have entered to