

then is ever fresh and living. Having it we have the living Jesus ever with us.

Another deduction from His immutability is:—

Thirdly: *That his friends are eternally blessed.* Real, holy friendship is the greatest blessing on earth. But the best often fails a man here, and leaves his heart bleeding. It fails sometimes in wisdom, kindness, fidelity, power to help. It always fails in death. Our friends die. But Christ's friendship will never fail in any point. There will never come an alteration in His feelings, never a bereavement. He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Rejoice then my brother in the unchangeableness of thy friend.

DIVINE PLANS OF ACTION UNALTERABLE.

"Thus saith the Lord; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant."—Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21.

Immense jargon and sometimes worse have been written and spoken about "The Covenants." There are certain technical theologians who know all about the covenants. All I presume that is meant by the word is *plan of action*. The text suggests three general remarks:—

First: *That the Almighty both in the material and spiritual departments of His universe acts from plan.* The text speaks of a "covenant" with material nature as well as with David. The Infinite One acts evermore from plan. (1) *A priori* reasoning would suggest this. (2) The constitution of the creation shews this. The laws of nature about which philosophers talk, are only parts of His plan which they have discovered. (3) The Bible teaches this. It speaks of Him appointing everything in nature—the heavenly orbs, the rolling ocean, the changing seasons. Gen. i. viii. 21, 22; Isaiah iv. 10, 11; 104th Psalm, &c.

Secondly: *That the plan on which God conducts the material universe is manifestly beyond the power of His creatures to alter.* "If ye can break my covenant," &c., implying that the thing is impossible. What mortal can arrest one orb in its course, turn back the ocean, change the winds, or make seasons pause an instant in their march? (1) This is a blessing to all. If men could alter the order of nature what would become of us! (2) This is an argument for the Divinity of miracles, if miracles are changes in the order of nature.

Thirdly: *The unalterableness of His plan in material nature illustrates the unalterableness of His plan in the spiritual department of action.* "If ye can break my covenant of the day and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant." The idea may be generally expressed thus:—that it is as impossible for any change to be effected in God's moral method of action with His people as it is for frail man to alter the institutions of nature. Indeed it seems to us far more likely that God will alter His plan of conduct in the material system,

than that He will do so in the moral. It is not impossible for God to reverse the order of nature, but it is impossible for God to act contrary to those principles of absolute truth and justice which He has revealed in His words:—"The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed," &c. "Heaven and earth shall pass away," &c.

THE DESTINY OF THE GOOD

"I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."—Psa. xvii. 15.

The words suggest:—

First: *That the death of the good is an awaking from sleep.* The best of men are scarcely awake here. The apostle felt this when he said: "It is high time to awake out of sleep." He was speaking to Christians. (1) There is much spiritual torpor even in the best. Where is that earnest activity which we feel is the right thing for us?—the activity which Christ had when He said: "I must work," &c. What Paul had who said: "I count not my life dear," &c. "I press towards the mark," &c. (2) There is much spiritual dreaming in the best. Our views of divine things are often only as the incoherent visions of a dream. At death the soul wakes up. It is a morning to it;—a bright, joyous, stirring morning. Do not be afraid of death, then, my brethren.

Secondly: *In this awaking at death there will be the complete assimilation of the soul to God.* "When I awake with thy likeness." What is this likeness? Not a resemblance to His wisdom, power or sovereignty, but a resemblance to His governing disposition:—LOVE. Moral likeness to a being consists in a likeness to His ruling disposition. Variety in material objects and mental characteristics, is the glory of the creation. But similarity in moral disposition is what Heaven demands as the essence of virtue and the condition of bliss. All can love, and to love is to be like God. At death, this in the good becomes perfect. Our sympathies will then flow entirely with His; our wills will then go entirely within the circle of His.

Thirdly: *In this assimilation will consist the everlasting satisfaction of our nature.* "I shall be satisfied." There is no satisfaction without this. (1) The spiritual powers will not work harmoniously under the dominion of any other disposition. (2) The conscience will frown upon any other state of mind. (3) The Great One will not bless with His friendship any other state of mind in His creatures. Likeness to God is likeness to His controlling disposition; His controlling disposition is *disinterested love* and this disinterested love, is that "well which springs up to everlasting life."

THE CONDITION OF SINNERS.

"Prisoners of hope"—Zech. ix. 12.

First: *All sinners are prisoners.* A prisoner implies (1) *Criminality*. (2) *Deprivation*. Society, light, &c. (3) *Bondage*. A sinner is a slave. His soul himself is enslaved, death cannot free him. Some of the prisoners have:

Secondly: *Hope.* Some, not all. None in hell. But some on earth. (1) Provision has been made for their deliverance. (2) The vilest of men have obtained deliverance. (3) Deliverance is freely offered to all.