

For, as of old, by calling Himself the *God of Abraham*, He wished by this title to be distinguished from all false gods; so after that He has been made manifest in His Son, He will have Himself known only in and through Him. Therefore those who form ideas of the naked majesty of God—of God out of Christ—like the Jews and Mahomedans, have an idol instead of God. Whoever, then, sincerely desires to know the true God, must clothe Him in this attribute of the *Father of Christ*. For unless Christ appear to our mind as often as we seek after God, it will wander on in uncertainty till it utterly fail in its efforts. At the same time also, Peter would point out in *what way* God is so liberal and kind toward us. For unless Christ stood between the Father and us, His goodness can never be really appreciated by us.

Who hath begotten us. He means that spiritual life is a supernatural gift, because we are born children of wrath. For if, after the flesh, we were begotten to the hope of life, it were superfluous for us to be again begotten by God. Peter teaches, therefore, that we, who by nature were doomed to eternal death, have been, through the mercy of God, restored to life. But this is, as it were, a second creation, according to what is said of it in the first chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians.

A lively hope is taken for a hope of life; although there seems a tacit antithesis between the hope which is fixed on the incorruptible kingdom of God, and the transient and evanescent hopes of men.

According to his abundant mercy. He first lays down the efficient cause, then he specifies the means of this lively hope. He teaches that God was impelled by no merits of ours to beget us again unto a lively hope, for he ascribes the whole of this to *His mercy*. And in order the more effectually to exclude the merit of our works, he calls it *His abundant mercy*. All confess, indeed, that God alone is the author of our salvation; but some afterwards devise causes foreign to Him, which only detract so much from His mercy. But Peter praises His mercy only, though he forthwith adds the means, namely, *the resurrection of Christ*. For neither elsewhere, nor otherwise, does God unfold his mercy towards us; therefore it is always to this object that the Scripture directs us.—But because, the death of Christ being past, he mentions only his resurrection, there is therein nothing absurd. The former, indeed, is included in the latter, for perfection is not without its beginning; but he has thus rather brought forward his resurrection because he was treating of the new life.

4. To an inheritance. The three epithets which follow are employed to amplify the grace of God. For Peter labours (as I formerly said) that he may well and thoroughly impress its excellence upon our minds.—Moreover, these two clauses—*to an inheritance incorruptible, and unto salvation ready to be revealed*—I read in apposition to one another, that the exposition of the former may succeed the latter, for in them he but expresses the same thing in two ways. Each of the following words carries with it its own weight. The inheritance is said to be *reserved in heaven*, that we may know that it is out of danger. For unless it were in the hand of God, it would be exposed to infinite perils. If, indeed, it were laid up in this world, how could we be certain of it in such various tendencies? Therefore, in order that he may free us from all alarm, he declares that our salvation is laid up in safety beyond the assaults of Satan. But because the certainty of salvation would bring us little consolation, unless each of us knew that it belonged to himself, Peter adds, *for you*. For on this our conscience, repose in peace, when the Lord proclaims, as it were, out of heaven, Behold, your salvation is in my hand, and is kept for you! But because salvation belongs not to all indiscriminately, he refers us to faith, that those who are endued with it may distinguish themselves from the rest, and not doubt themselves to be the true and lawful heirs of the kingdom of God. For as faith enters into heaven, it also appropriates to us those good things which are in heaven.

5. Who are kept by the power of God. We must mark the bearing of the statement—that we are safely kept in the world, just as our inheritance is kept in heaven. If we failed to do so, the thought would soon creep into our minds,—What avails it that salvation is laid up for us in heaven, when we are tossed about in the world as on a tempestuous sea? What avails it, that our salvation is anchored in the peaceful harbour, when we ourselves are dashed about among a thousand wrecks? The Apostle anticipates, therefore, such objections as this, when he teaches that, even in the world, in the midst of disasters, we are protected by faith; and that, though death is near us, we are yet in perfect safety under the guardianship of faith. But because faith itself, through the weakness of humanity, is often ready to fail, we would ever be in a state of anxiety concerning the future, unless here also the Lord should assist us. And we see that in the Papacy the diabolical opinion has obtained credence, that the final perseverance of the saints is doubtful, because we are uncertain whether we shall stand to-morrow in the same *grace* that upholds us to-day. But Peter does not so leave us in doubt; for, lest any uncertainty, arising from the consciousness of our own weakness, should assail us, he affirms that we stand by the power of God. Therefore, as we are kept by faith, so faith itself has its stability in the power of God. Wherefore, not for the present only but also for the future, there is security.

Unto salvation. Because we are by nature impatient of delay, and soon grow tired; he therefore reminds us, that our salvation is not delayed because it is not yet prepared, but because the proper time for its revelation has not yet arrived; and this doctrine tends to cherish and support our hope. Moreover, he calls the day of judgment *the last time*, because not before then is the renovation of all things to be hoped for;

indeed, the intermediate time is, as yet, in progress. But elsewhere (2 Peter, iii. 3) he calls the whole time, from the coming of Christ onward, *the last time*, when he views it in comparison with the ages that preceded it, but Peter in that passage has reference to whole course of the world. J. St. C.

(To be continued.)

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KRUMMACHER'S PARABLES.

1. THE PARSEE, THE JEW, AND THE CHRISTIAN.

A Jew went into a Parsee temple, and saw the sacred fire itself. He said to the priest, "Why do you pray to the fire?" "Not to the fire," answered the priest, "it is to us a sensible image of the sun, and his warming light." The Jew then asked, "Do you, then, worship the sun as your Deity? Do ye not know that this is but a creation of the Almighty?" "That we know," replied the priest, "but sensuous man required a sensible image to enable him to comprehend the Highest. And is not the sun the image of the invisible, incomprehensible, Original Light, that preserves and blesses everything?"

The Israelite thereupon answered, "Do your people then distinguish the image from the original image? Now God calls the sun his own, and he who again falls from this to an inferior image, bows down before the earthly flame. It charms his external and completely dazzles his internal eye, and while it represents to him the earthly light, it withdraws him from the heavenly. Thou shalt make to thee no image, nor any likeness of anything."

"How, then, do you designate the highest nature?" asked the Parsee. The Jew answered, "We call him Jehovah Adonai; that is, the Lord who is, who was, and who shall be."

"Your word is great and glorious," said the Parsee, "but it is dreadful."

A Christian thereupon entered and said—"We call him, Abba, Father."

The heathen and the Jew then looked upon one another with astonishment, and said, "Your word is the nearest and the highest. But who gives you the courage to call him also the Eternal?"

"Who else," said the Christian, "but he, the Father himself!" Thereupon he announced to both the mystery of the revelation of the Father in the Son, and the word of reconciliation.

And when they perceived this they believed, and raised their countenance towards heaven, and said, full of fervour and spirit, "Father, be-loved Father."

And now all the three stretched forth their hands, and called themselves brethren.

2. ASAPH AND HEMAN.

Asaph, one of the holy singers of Zion, sat, towards evening, on the battlement of his house, and looked on the setting sun, and his countenance brightened with red in his beams. Then came Heman to him, also one of the singers of the sanctuary, and saluted Asaph. But Heman at once smiled and said, "See, thy countenance shines like Moses, the man of God, when he came down from Sinai. It is well for thee, Asaph; for thy outer appears like thine inner man."

Then Asaph looked on his friend and said, "What dost thou mean, Heman?"

And Heman answered and said, "Art thou not always serene and joyful, and does not thy countenance continually remain the same, clear as the countenance of heaven, although thou sufferest so much. O teach me this art, Asaph."

Then Asaph answered and said, "See, Heman, I have a friend who loves my soul. Though he seems afar off, yet he is always near me, and fills my soul. To him I communicate every thought and every feeling of my heart. I perceive him in the dawn of the morning, and in the dusk of the evening; yea, I see him in every flower of the field, and trace his praise in the sighing of the wind."

"But," said Heman, "when trouble approaches?"

And Asaph answered and said, "O, Heman, I hold fast to my friend; he is my consolation, and his love elevates my soul. See! thou how the setting sun gilds on the other side the black, rugged clouds!"

3. PATIENCE.

The wise Hillel discoursed to his scholars on patience. Then they said to him, "Master, give us now an image and a parallel, as thou wast accustomed to do."

Hillel answered and said, "I compare it to the most valuable precious stone which the earth produces. Among sand and broken rocks it reposes in the dark bosom of the earth. Though no trace of light approaches it, yet it shines in unfading splendour. A child of the heavenly light, which it indeed preserves in itself; yet its lustre also remains in the depth of night; but delivered from the dark dungeon, and brought out to day, it forms, in union with gold, the emblems and the ornaments of glory—the ring, sceptre, and throne."

"To the greatest earthly ornament dost thou compare the most concealed and calmest of virtues!" said the disciples.

"To their consummation," said Hillel, "it is the correction of life."