

BIBLE CLASS QUESTIONS.

(Continued from last Number.)

PSALM I. 5, CONSIDERED.

Will not God's redeemed be all finally gathered home to him? Prove it. Matt. xxiv. 31. Will not this event owe its very being to the merits of the one great sacrifice of the cross? And will not all God's children be found to have entered into covenant with Him? Does this passage encourage any other but such as have made covenant by sacrifice to be gathered to Him? Do we not find, that from the fall, God approved of worshipping him by sacrifice? See Gen. iv. 4. And was it not the custom in patriarchal times, to ratify the sacred covenant by sacrifice? See Gen. xv. 9-10. Can there be any doubt, then, that the words of the fiftieth Psalm, now under consideration, refer to the typical as well as to the antitypical sacrifice? So then sacrifice was a prominent part of ancient and patriarchal covenanting? Is not God himself the speaker in this fifth verse of the fiftieth Psalm? Does he not assert the final gathering to himself of all, who, in the true spirit and design of literal sacrificing, have entered into covenant with Him? Is it compatible with the character of God, to enstamp, with such importence and approbation, any institution of so sacred a nature, had it proceeded originally from the superstition or invention of fallen and degraded humanity? Does not the claim put forth by God in this verse harmonize with the claim asserted by Christ? John xvii. 24? Here, then, do we not find,

1st. That by the united testimony of these two passages, all the children of God shall be gathered home to him at last?

2d. That this gathering together of the people of God will be by the merits of the one great sacrifice of the cross?

3d. That those thus gathered recognised the nature and design of those merits, by literal sacrifice, down till the death of the antitype super-added the farther use of the sacrificial type?—And,

4th. That this typical reference to the merits of the antitypical sacrifice, to meet the divine approbation, must have been by divine appointment?

The distinguished parties to whom God gave the promise of Christ in Patriarchal times.

To whom was the promise of the Saviour first made? Was it not immediately after the fall that this promise was made to Adam? Did all the posterity of Adam, till its next renewal, make the proper use of this promise? By which of Adam's sons and his posterity was it abused? Did Cain and his posterity give away to the wicked one? See 1 John iii. 12. Did not wickedness spread and abound in the world, through the apostasy of Cain and his descendants? Did not the intermarriages of the sons of God, that is, the descendants of Seth, with the daughters of men, that is, the descendants of Cain, contribute much to the spread of wickedness? Gen. vi. 1, 2, 3, &c. Was God provoked to destroy the whole race of man with the exception of one family? By what did he destroy the world? In what age of the world was this? Whom did he save?

Ans. Noah and his sons.

What became of the promise to Adam, when the world was destroyed? Prove that the promise was renewed to Noah. Gen. vi. 18. Who spake these words to Noah? But whether God the Father, Son or Holy Ghost? Was not Christ the contracting party for the elect, in the covenant, of grace? Could he not, therefore, with the utmost propriety, say of this covenant, It is my covenant? Was not Noah one of the sacred line? See Luke iii. 36. And to him did not God renew the promise given to Adam? Can you state the sacred line, that is the descent of the promised seed, from Adam till Noah?

Was Seth the next to Adam after the death of Abel? Was Enos next? Prove it. Gen. v. 9. Was Mahalaleel next? Ver. 12. Was Jared next? Ver. 15. Was Enoch next. Ver. 18. Was Methuselah next? Ver. 21. Was Lamech next? Ver. 25. And was not Noah the next? Ver. 29. Now who was Noah's father?—Lamech's father? Methuselah's father? Enoch's father? Jared's father? Mahalaleel's father? Cainan's father? Enos's father? Seth's father? Adam's father? How many heads of families have you named? And did these ten form the main links in the lineal chain of the promised seed from Adam till the flood? Is it not through these families that we are to trace the history of the church, and the development of the covenant of grace, during the first sixteen centuries of the world's existence? Did the destruction of the world by water, make any breach upon this descending line of the promise, given first to Adam? But was not such a universal calamity as the destruction of the world by water, well calculated to induce the fear of some such breach? Was not, therefore, the renewal of the promise to Noah, both necessary and reasonable? And for these reasons viz., the necessariness and seasonableness of the renewal of the promise, were not the wisdom, faithfulness and goodness of God, strikingly displayed in renewing the promise in the face of such discouragements? And thus, do we not find, that God condescends to accommodate the administrations of his grace to the present wants and circumstances of the church?

MATTHEW WILKES.

Matthew Wilkes belonged to the same school of preachers with Rowland Hill; and yet there were some striking points of difference between them. They were unlike in their origin and education: Hill was of noble descent, and was a graduate of St. John's College, Cambridge; whereas Wilkes was of an obscure family, and had the most common advantages of education. Hill's manners were the manners of the Court: there was no society in which he could have been placed, so high, or so polished, but that his presence would have befitted and graced it; but Wilkes was exceedingly plain, not to say clownish and vulgar in his habits, and you might easily have mistaken him for a day-labourer in the street. Hill's mind was more highly cultivated; but Wilkes' intellect was probably stronger—certainly he was more sagacious and far-seeing. They laboured side by side—the one in Surrey chapel, the other alternately in Tottenham Court chapel and in the Tabernacle, for about half a century. Both were eminently blessed in their labours; both were highly gifted and eccentric men; both enjoyed, through a long life, an unsullied reputation; and the memories of both are still deeply embalmed in the affection and gratitude of thousands.

I am satisfied, however, that I did not at all get to the bottom of his character. I should have judged that he was capable of being somewhat blunt and unceremonious; but I saw nothing to indicate that terrible power of sarcasm which constituted, perhaps, his most striking characteristic. I heard a number of well-authenticated anecdotes in respect to him, two or three of which I will relate, as giving a better idea of one part of his character than I can convey in any other way. One or two of them, it must be acknowledged, seem hardly consistent with due reverence for the word of God.

There was nothing for which he had a more cordial abhorrence than any exhibition of dandyism in young ministers; and nothing of this kind ever came in contact with him without meeting a rebuke. On one occasion, a young minister, of a good deal of flourish and pretension, went from the country to London, and carried Mr. Wilkes a letter, which was designed to procure for him an invitation to preach. "Well, young man," said Matthew, with a nasal twang

that is perfectly indescribable, but which nobody who has heard it can ever forget, "Well, young man, you want to preach—you want to preach in London, don't you?" "I am going to pass a few days here, sir, and if it should suit Mr. Wilkes' convenience, I should be very happy to give his people a sermon, while I am here." "Well," replied Matthew, "you can preach—you can preach—come along next Wednesday morning to the Tabernacle, and I'll meet you there, and you can take my lecture for that morning." The young man agreed to do so, and was on the spot at the appointed hour. Matthew met him at the door, disgusted, as he had been before, with dandy airs, and addressed him thus—"Go along into the pulpit, young man, and I shall sit below and look at you, and hear every word you say." The young preacher darted through the aisle into the pulpit in a manner that seemed better to befit a ball-room than a place of worship. He performed the introductory service with an air of insufferable self complacency, and in due time opened the Bible and read his text, which was the last verse of the first chapter of the gospel by John, "Hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." He had written his sermon, and committed it all to memory, as he supposed, to a word; but unfortunately had left his manuscript behind him. When he had read his text, he found it impossible to recall the first sentence. He hesitated and hemmed, and began thus—You perceive, my brethren—you perceive—that the angels of God—aro here represented—as ascending—and descending." He then set up a good stout cough, in the hope that his memory might get to work in the mean time; but the cough was as unproductive as it was artificial, and he could do nothing but go right over again, with the absurd sentence with which he had started. He coughed again and again, but his memory was in too profound a slumber to be awakened by it. After three or four minutes, during which he was a spectacle to the congregation, and especially to Matthew, who was all the time watching and listening, according to his promise—he shut up his Bible in perfect consternation, and abruptly closed the service. Of course, he came out of the pulpit with a very different air from that with which he entered it. But the worst was yet to come—he had to meet Matthew, and hear his scathing comments. "Well, well" said he, "young man, you've preached—you've preached in London—ha'n't you? I've heard you; I've heard every word you've said—and I've only just one comment to make—if you had ascended as you descended, then you might have descended as you ascended." It is needless to say, that the young man was, by this time, cured of his ambition for preaching in the Tabernacle.

Another young minister, of a similar character, paid him a visit, and Matthew observed that he sported what he thought a very indecent number of watch-seals. He eyed them for some time, as if he were scrutinizing the material of which they were made, and then said, with a terribly sarcastic air, "It seems to me that you've a good many seals to your ministry, considering how young you are."

He was once preaching on some public occasion, when there were not less than fifty persons in the congregation who were taking notes of his sermon. At length he stopped suddenly for a minute, and the stenographers having nothing to do, all looked up, and were gazing at him with astonishment. "Behold," said he, "how I have confounded the scribe!"

On one occasion, as he was on his way to a meeting of ministers, he got caught in a shower, near the place called Billingsgate, where there was a large number of women dealing in fish, who were using the most vulgar and profane language. As he had stopped under a shed in the midst of them, he felt himself called upon at least to leave with them his testimony against