

THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE.

The christian, he who bows to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, and walks in obedience to His commandments and ordinances blamelessly, has a hope that is worth more to him than all the gold of Ophir, or the cedars of Lebanon. And they who possess this hope shine brighter than the richest diamond that ever glistened in christendom, for she is ever brightening their paths with her effulgent beams that leads to the shores of immortality.

Oh! hope, celestial visitant! buoying us up in the hour of tribulation, disease and death. Truly, she is an anchor to the soul, ever illuminating our labyrinthic march to the city of Zion—the new Jerusalem—the city of our God. And when the mighty waves of the sea of Gallilee rush upon us and threaten to engulf us and dash our little barks upon the towering billows, she still points us onward to the haven of sweet repose.

But ere we arrive there, great trials have we to undergo, as it is through great tribulations we enter the everlasting Kingdom of Almighty God. Yet notwithstanding, these are all for our good, that we through patience and tribulation might have hope. St. Paul says:—"Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given us." And the Apostle John adds:—"Beloved, now are we the sons of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is; and every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as he is pure."

Even earthly hopes—the hopes of better days—the hopes of meeting friends are dear to the soul, but the *hope of immortality* is an angelic friend, ever consoling us with her balmy breezes onward to the climes above. We are constantly looking forward beyond the shores of Time to a home which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Oh! how cheering is this hope, brightening with her smiles our fleeting moments, and pointing to a home beyond. Oh! yes; just beyond the tide.

The Patriarchs possessed this noble attribute, and died in the glorious prospect of a blissful eternity. And in the Jewish Dispensation

Daniel's piercing glance beheld the Ancient of Days, while Job caught a vision of His sacred person amid the glories of the latter day. Job asked the question:—"If a man die shall he live again." No question would be more natural to ask than this one, for our eternal felicity hinges here, and we rejoice in the prospect of a grand inheritance, "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary be at rest." Where we shall strike a harp of gold, and all the broad arches of Heaven ring with praises to the Lord.

Oh! how unlike all earthly hopes. The dearest ties of human affection are severed in an hour. The most precious flower soon withers, and all the glory of earth quickly vanishes away. How oft have we gazed upon the forest as the leaves burst forth from their narrow couch, rejoicing in the light of the sun and the warbling song of the summer birds; but when we looked again they had fallen and we saw them not. With what delight have we viewed the lonely flowers as they opened their leaves with a smile on their brow, wafting their fragrance on every gentle breeze; yet the fairest of them withered before we looked again. Again, we still have seen the worm as it burst the bonds of death pleased with a new life—time fled, and it mouldered to dust. What pleasure and joy unspeakable have we experienced as we saw the blooming youth with rosy cheeks, strong and athletic, in the vigor of manhood. But oh! alas! sorrow was soon marked upon his brow, the flush had vanished from his cheek, and with palsied limbs and silvery locks he was tottering upon the brink of the grave. Thus shall it be with you O children of mortality! your days are few and full of trouble.

"How vain are all things here below,
How false and yet how fair;
Each pleasure hath its poison too,
And every sweet a snare."

"Our fathers, where are they with all they called their own?" They have passed off the stage of action and

"Left us weeping on the shore
To which they will return no more."

And we will soon follow them, for the grave is the mother of us all. Ere long we shall be its inmates. But shall we fall to rise no more? Oh! who would cherish the withering reflection that there is no home for us in Heaven! Shall the beautiful plains and the clods of the vale