

4. God's promises are encouraging. To the weak, afflicted, troubled, unfortunate; yea, to the erring and sinful.

III. THE CONFIRMATION. "Saith the Lord."

1. The authority. "The Lord."
2. The confidence it inspires.
3. The action it should prompt.

ALPHA.*

The Dividing Line.

I will put a division between my people and thy people.—Ex. viii:23.

THIS is a particular application of a general truth. God always has a dividing line between the true Israel and the ungodly. Consider.

I. ITS NATURE.

1. Not geographical. 2. Not ethnological, as in the case of ancient Israel. 3. Not denominational. 4. Not social or political. 5. Not material but spiritual, running through States, classes, churches, homes. 6. A difference of kind, not degree. No gradual shading off, no border land, but a line as distinct and broad and real as the impassable "gulf." 7. We have a divine rule by which to trace its course, "by their fruits," etc.; but owing to human infirmity we can only approximate the truth.

II. THE BASIS OF THE DIVISION.

In the example before us it was the blood of the Paschal lamb on their door-posts. The Hebrew is "I will set a redemption." "Christ our Passover is slain for us." "Justified by faith in his blood" is the essential fact which distinguishes the saved from the unsaved.

III. THE OBJECTS SIMILAR.

1. Safety in a day of wrath. 2. See 1 Peter i: 3-6.

IV. THIS LINE WILL ONE DAY BE DRAWN LOCALLY, VISIBLY, IRREVOCABLY.

1. Death a great divider. Luke xvi: 26. 2. Day of judgment. Mat. xxv: 31-46. You are entreated to step over the line now to Jesus.

RUSTICUS.*

Funeral Service.

Life, Death, and Eternity.

I am now ready to be offered, . . . I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, . . . Henceforth there is laid up for me, etc.—2 Tim. iv: 6-8.

PAUL had a good opportunity of understanding and knowing life well. Every phase of life in turn was experienced by him. Forsaken by Demas, deceived and opposed by Alexander, hated and put to death by his avowed enemies, yet loved, honored, and faithfully served by Luke, Mark, and Timothy. In these circumstances he looked upon the past, examined the present, and anticipated the future with the calmness of a purpose unalterably fixed. This Scripture gives us:

I. A POPULAR ESTIMATE OF LIFE.

1. It is a battle. A moral contest. "A good fight."

2. It is a race: "I have finished my course."

3. It is a trust: "I have kept the faith."

II. A RIGHT VIEW OF DEATH.

1. It is properly described as a "departure."

2. The time is divinely appointed, the period, the means, and manner considered.

3. For the change Paul was prepared: "I am now ready."

III. THE ENCOURAGING OUTLOOK FOR ETERNITY.

1. A grand reward: "A crown of righteousness."

2. By whom given: "The Lord, the righteous Judge."

3. The august occasion: "At that day."

4. The spirit that animated the pious expectation: "And not to me only." ALPHA.*

The Christian's Hope.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, etc.—1 Peter i: 3-5.

I. THE SOURCE WHENCE THIS HOPE SPRINGS.