

" ONLY IN THE LORD ;"

OR

SCRIPTURE MARRIAGE.

MY VERY DEAR ----,

After the encouragement which your letter, received last night, gives, I lose not another day in writing. The reasons which have kept me hitherto from doing so are various ; but the reason which weighed heaviest with me was a fear of making you unhappy, without being of any use. But now you give me liberty to say what I think, and as I think much on it, I fear my letter will not be very short. It was truth you spoke when you said, I should not have encouraged it, had I known all the circumstances. I was indeed astonished at your reasoning, and much more at ----'s, but not the least astonished at the engagement of your affections, for this, I often told you, I expected ; but I am not going to laugh at you. No, dear ----, I feel most sincerely for you. It is the fashion to laugh and ridicule *love* ; but when disappointed, I do think it among the most painful of the Lord's dispensations to sinners, to be the means of crushing one who loves you ; for the happiness or misery of one dear to you to hang upon your yes or no, and have to pronounce no, and thus leave an impression of ingratitude and

unkindness ; to know there is *one* in this wilderness whose every thought is yours, miserable on your account, and yet not able even to attempt to administer comfort—it is very painful, especially when to this is added a long *never*. I am a very hard-hearted creature ; but there are some cases in which I can in some degree understand the command, “ Weep with those who weep,” and your case borders too much on my own not to sympathise with you—I mean when I speak of your giving it up ; therefore do not think what I may say unkind. I am not ignorant what it is to give up an object tenderly beloved, but I can only say I am not ignorant of the peace which follows when the lacerated soul is at length able to surrender itself, with a subdued and unruffled heart, into the arms of everlasting love, saying, “ Undertake for me.” This I say, believing what you have declared ; for few have much affection. But however painful the struggle, it is short and light compared with what you, in the other case, will be entailing on yourself and him. Is it happiness to disappoint the high expectations he has built upon in his union with you ? or do you expect to be more amiable than the Lord Jesus, and think you will succeed in walking consistently, and yet pleasing the world ? or is the carnal mind to be expected to endure it better ? Do not be angry at my speaking of him as an unbeliever ; for if not now a believer, it is presumption in you to build upon his seeming anxiety on the “ one thing needful.” If the Bible is true,

there is a rooted enemy within, and though he may admire the religion of Jesus at a distance, he cannot love to come in contact with it in every turn of life, to have it the subject of conversation, the end to which every thought, word, and action tends. I say not only this from seeing it around, but the word of God has said it; and truly I can say from what I see, dear —, love-conversions are not to be trusted. I do not say it is hypocrisy in Mr. —, or in many others I could name, but love for the individual really deceives them into love of what is dear to that individual. It was not hypocrisy, I say, in — to admire — because she did not join in the dance, which, joined with his being so *well inclined*, induced her to see no harm in following the desires of her own heart. *Has he helped her on?* When such uneven weights are put into the scale of the affections, one must ascend just in proportion as the other descends. It was not hypocrisy in another in my eye to drive with his now wife's relations constantly to town, on purpose to talk of those subjects, to come to this house, and show such anxiety as to sit up nights with dear —, enquiring into the truth. Alas! you could hardly now distinguish if she is a Christian or not, after holding out against the reproach of it for many years. I could mention one who spoke at all the Dublin meetings, so zealous was he for the truth; yet when the prize was obtained he opposed and put a stop to her visiting the poor, or having schools—put an extinguisher

over the Lord's bright light. I could mention another, whose prayers deceived even the very elect, now contending for balls, plays, reading novels. Passing over many others, I could come nearer home ; and remember letters full of the one subject by one who never meant to deceive or could bend to deceive in his life, the glory of whose character is and was openness to an extreme. It was not hypocrisy ; he really admired and joined in it, and continued long to join in every way religious society, church going, reading with and arguing with his wife, even attending the catechising the poor ; and though his kindness, and love, and affection are as devoted as ever, is it happiness not to be able to speak of your Beloved, who occupies, or should occupy, your every thought, without exciting the strongest expressions of disapprobation ? Is it happiness to have no communion with one always with you—he despising your pursuits, you not relishing his ? Is it happiness, while rejoicing in the glorious promises yourself, to feel your very joy your greatest grief, in being reminded that he who is dearer to you than your own soul has no part or lot in the matter, fearful every time he goes out, knowing he is without God, and consequently without hope in such a world ? Is this a highly-coloured picture ? Alas ! no. How far short of what most endure ! How often is it persecution ! how often separation from every means of grace, every exertion, a drawing and quartering of affection—duties

spiritual drawing one way, duties earthly the other, till from necessarily opposing the will of Him who expects to be obeyed, the affections of the idol loosen, and all the etc. etc. miseries ensue ! If this were to be from an enemy you might bear it ; but how will you from your companion, your guide, your own familiar friend, with whom you hoped to have taken sweet counsel ? Is it fair of you, knowing this, thus to deceive and ruin the happiness of Mr. — ? Is it not better to cut it in a vein that can be healed ? You will say, " Oh, you do not know Mr. — or you would not so speak ; he could not deceive, he is so natural ! " I believe it, and remember I said it was not hypocrisy. From what I have heard I believe he is thoroughly amiable, and, I dare say, *well inclined*. But if you have waited for an earthly father's consent, why not for a heavenly Father's ? Why not till his good inclination end in conversion, till his seeking end in belief ? Because you are sure it is God's *intention* to bring him to Himself, and that by your means ?

Really, my dear —, what has become of your reasoning faculties ? Have you been let into God's counsels ? and even if you have, are you to disobey His will in order to bring them to pass ? Do you remember whose work conversion is ? and does He require you to do evil that He may do good ? Were you to have given yourself to Mr. — before you knew the Lord, and then expect that He would hear your prayer for him, it would

be expecting abounding grace ; but is it less than presumption, with open eyes to unite yourself to him now, and then expect that, since you have not fitted yourself to God, He will fit Himself to you ? I should fear you were leaving yourself without an argument to plead with Him. Would it be excusable to run away with Mr. —, and marry him at Gretna Green, because you feel so certain your father intends to give his consent ?

But perhaps you will say, "The Lord has not forbidden it." I have again considered 1 Cor. vii. I am still of opinion that it is exactly in point. Keep in mind there is no middle state. Read Romans viii., and see that those who are in the flesh are not in the Spirit ; those in the Spirit are not in the flesh. If the evidences given of those in the Spirit, to whom alone the promises belong, are not seen in him, he is in the flesh, and he is to be considered by the Christian in the same light as an infidel, as to "*evil communications corrupting good manners.*" Surely if the Israelites are so repeatedly urged not to mingle with the heathen lest they learn their works, and are so often chastened for this sin, are we in no danger in taking such as guide, companion, counsellor, the repository of our every care, joy and sorrow, the one we vow to obey ? Believe me, a man will not learn from his wife. Why are the Lord's people kept so separate—a peculiar people—throughout the Bible ? and what was the effect of their intermarriages ? See both Ezra x. 2, 3, and Nehemiah xiii. 23-27.

Did Solomon (1 Kings xi. 4), with all his wisdom, lead his ungodly wives the good way? or did they lead him the bad? Is human nature changed? Why did David so repeatedly say he would not know, or even have to dwell in his house—one that is not the Lord's, that he looks upon such as his enemy, and even that his companions shall be those who fear the Lord? Is not still the path of the just a shining light? Is the way of the ungodly less darkness? Have light and darkness more communion than they had? Why does St. Paul bid us to marry *only in the Lord*? (1 Corinthians vii. 39.) Is it that you shall have more advantages than at home? The Lord has settled the *one*, and can glorify Himself in you, who are His property, bought, paid for. He has forbid the *other*. I do not expect you in the least to mind what I say, and I fear all this will be seen some day by Mr. —; but I have said nothing against him, except that he is not now one of God's children, which I gather from yourself. I deny not but some day he may turn out a brilliant light; but whether or not, I must think it the greatest presumption for you, in his present state, to marry him. As for his being afflicted, do you mean to say that none are afflicted except the Lord's children? I wish I could think the same, and that all I have seen under stripe upon stripe, or even those who have been at the time softened by it, consequently must be safe: Alas! alas! no.

When I found writing was useless I prayed

often ; but your reasoning on this also is strange. You determine, if you can, to walk into the fire, yet you tell me to pray that you may not be burned. Would you think it reasonable for me were I to yield myself to the dissipations of the world, and tell you to pray that I should not be led into temptation ? As to God making it out by His providences, I have answered to —. If I were asked what I saw in His providences, I should be inclined to answer, “ He is emphatically asking, ‘ Lovest thou Me more than these ? ’ ” You answer in words—

“ Give what Thou canst, without Thee I am poor ;
With Thee rich, take what Thou wilt away.”

But you as plainly deny it in action. He says, “ If you love Me keep My commandments.” It is painful to flesh and blood to cut off a right hand, to pluck out a right eye ; yet it is expected, and those are not worthy of Him who are not willing to give up all, “ take up their cross and follow Him.” Abraham’s was a painful trial of faith when called to offer up his Isaac. Would it have proved his love if he had said, “ I cannot do that ; but if the Lord takes him from me I shall be resigned ? ” The trial of your faith must be more precious than gold, must be tried in fire, and will prove itself by giving up the idol ; not in being resigned should it be denied by your Father ; not by determining, if you can, to do evil that good may come. As to saying you have consented, that I consider as the world’s snare. You made a pro-

mise you had no right to make, and therefore you have no right to keep. The Lord says, "Give *Me* thine heart." Mr. — says, "Give *me* thine heart." The Lord says, "If you give Me all—time talents, everything, without the heart, they will be nothing." Mr. — says the same. You answer, "I will give it to both." But stop and remember who it is says, "How can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos iii. 3.) Remember who says, He will not divide the heart with Belial (2 Cor. vi. 15). Choose then whom you will serve. Oh, may you be able to answer in action, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee."

Oh, well He knew our frame, who appointed that our heaven should consist of love! It is a dangerous feeling to be trifled with; there is something so sweet in loving and being loved. All in Christ Jesus shall drink together of the draught of everlasting love, when at length we reach that ocean of love without bottom or shore, when He shall Himself show us, in the map of time, the line of love which has traced out our every step through this dark, howling wilderness. There we shall wonder at ourselves for ever hesitating, whether He that spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for us, will not with Him give us all good things. (Rom. viii. 32).

"Above the rest this note shall swell,
My Jesus hath done all things well."

Hoping and praying for your eternal good,

whatever may happen, that the evil as well as the good may work for it,

I am, dear —, as ever

Your very sincerely affectionate,

T. A. P.



CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.—The courage, patience, firmness and zeal of a Christian are a perfectly distinct order of character from the courage, firmness, patience and zeal of a natural man—self-confidence, self-glory, self-preservation, self-exaltation, are the essential principles of one ; confidence in God, self-renunciation, subjection to God, glory to God, abasement of self, being essential principles of the other. So that the essential principles that formed the character of Paul as a natural man were destroyed through the cross, in order that his soul should imbibe the life of Christ, which was the principle that formed his character as a Christian, “I am crucified with Christ ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” Though Christ was a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered. In any instance that we give up our own will, without sacrificing conscience, we are gainers. If but my dog exercises my patience, and makes me yield my will, he is a blessing to me. Christ never willed anything but what was good and holy ; yet how often was His will thwarted, how often hindered in designs of good !

THE FRIENDSHIP OF THE WORLD.

“The friendship of the world is enmity with God ; whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” Powerful testimony ! which judges the walk and searches the heart. The world’s true character has now been manifested, because it has rejected and crucified the Son of God. Man had been already tried without law, and under law ; but after he had shown himself to be wholly evil without law, and had broken the law when he had received it, then God Himself came in grace ; He became man in order to bring the love of God home to the heart of man, having taken his nature. It was the final test of man’s heart. He came not to impute sin to them, but to reconcile the world to Himself. But the world would not receive Him ; and it has shown that it is under the power of Satan and of darkness. It has seen and hated both Him and His Father.

The world is ever the same world : Satan is its prince, and all that is in it, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world. The heart of man, the flesh, has since the fall been always enmity against God. It is often thought and said, that since the death of Christ, Satan is no longer the prince of this world ; but it was precisely then that he declared himself as its prince, leading on all men, whether Jews or Gentiles, to crucify the Saviour. And although men now bear the name

of Christ, the opposition of the world to His authority remains the same.

Only observe and see if the name of Christ is not dishonoured. Man may indeed be taught to honour it ; but it is none the less true that where he finds his enjoyment, where his will is free, he shuts out Christ, lest He should come in and spoil his pleasures. If left alone he does not think of Him, he does not like to be spoken to of the Saviour ; he sees no beauty in Him that he should desire Him. Man likes to do his own will, and he does not want the Lord to come and oppose it ; he prefers vanity and pleasures.

We have the true history of the world and its practical principles in Cain. He had slain his brother, and was cast out of the presence of God, despairing of grace, and refusing to humble himself. By the judgment of God he was made a vagabond on the earth ; but such a condition did not suit him. He settled down where God had made him a vagabond, and he called the city after the name of his son, to perpetuate the greatness of his family. That his city should be deprived of all the delights of life would have been unbearable ; therefore he multiplied riches for his son. Then another member of the family invented instruments of music ; another was the instructor of artificers in brass and iron. The world being cast out from God, sought to make its position pleasant without God, to content itself at a distance from Him. By the coming of Christ, the state of man's heart was

manifested, not only as seeking the pleasures of the flesh, but as being enmity against God. However great His goodness, it would not be disturbed in the enjoyment of the pleasures of the world, nor submit itself to the authority of another ; it would have the world for itself, fighting to obtain it, and snatching it from the hands of those who possessed it. Now, it is evident that the friendship of this world is enmity with God. As far as in them lay, they cast God out of the world, and drove Him away. Man desires to be great in this world ; we know that the world has crucified the Son of God, that it saw no beauty in the One in whom God finds all His delight.

BIGOTRY AND FAITHFULNESS.

These are days when things are breaking up. Infidelity is rising like a surging flood on every hand, and that which is affecting the world is affecting the Church. Old landmarks are being rapidly swept away, and those of yesterday are not those of to-day. The plenary inspiration of Scripture, the doctrine of the atonement, the divinity of Christ's person, eternity of punishment, are all held by many as exploded theories of an unenlightened past.

Young Christians are more or less influenced by all this, and if they stand up boldly and faithfully for the very words and authority of the Scriptures, they are often dubbed "*bigots*" for their pains.

No, dear young Christians, do not allow terms such as these to close your mouths for Christ, but pray God to give you strength to be faithful to Him and His word.

Paul knew that after his departure grievous wolves would enter in among the saints, not sparing the flock, and from among themselves should men arise speaking perverse things, drawing disciples after them. But what does the front-rank man of Christianity do? Does he give them some well-worded creed to stand by, or some powerful arguments of his to meet the evil teachers with? No; he commends them to God, and to the word of His grace (Acts xx. 29-32). Our strength lies in dependence upon God, and cleaving closely to His word. We may not understand it all, but we can exercise faith in God and His word, and we shall thus be led on. For instance, how many doubt the first chapter of Genesis, and tell us what science has brought to bear on the question, and how the earth has only evolved after almost interminable ages into its present condition. But what saith the Scriptures. "Through FAITH we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." (Heb. xi. 3.) Faith in the word of God leads us triumphantly through no end of difficulties. Then these enlightened (?) individuals turn round and call us bigots. Bigotry is *blindly* adhering to a creed. Bigotry leads to illogical positions, to a hard, dry, unfeeling line of action. But faithfulness to God does just the

opposite. However, faith is outside the province of these doubters. The joy of the Holy Ghost is unknown by them. The power of conversion has not affected them or their lives. The outgoings of hearts to our brethren in Christ form no part of their experience.

They may admire, as they do, the terse, forcible language of the Scriptures, its poetry, its history, its moral grandeur, but they know not its power when applied to the heart and conscience by the Spirit of God. All these facts and experiences are foreign, and unknown to them.

We asked a young man, converted a few weeks ago, "if he understood the Bible better since he was converted." He answered in the affirmative, and agreed that before he was saved it was like a dead man coming to a living Book, and now (through the grace of God) it was a living man coming to a living Book, and a stream of blessing passing from it to him. Those who are seeking to undermine the authority of the Scriptures, and the wondrous truths of Christianity, have no conception of their own utter badness and God's inflexible righteousness. They have never got into His presence, and so they can talk, talk, talk.

The young men in 1 John ii, 14 are strong, because the word of God abideth in them. What a secret of power! May we be kept thus proof against all the assaults of the enemy, whether as a roaring lion or clothed as an angel of light.

May unflinching faithfulness in these last and

perilous days be ours. May the hope of the Lord's near coming keep us from growing weary or our feet from lagging. The sight of His face—never to be withdrawn—will soon gladden our eyes, and fill our hearts with untold joy.

“ A little while ”—'twill soon be past,
 Why should we shun the promis'd cross ?
 O let us in His footsteps haste,
 Counting for Him all else but loss :
 For how will recompense His smile,
 The suff'rings of this “ little while ! ”

FORGIVENESS, DELIVERANCE, ACCEPTANCE.

(Concluded from page 100.)

Lev. i.

ACCEPTANCE.

We now come to *Acceptance*. What we have had hitherto has been, in a certain sense, *negative*—though, of course, very real as far as it goes. To be forgiven is very real, but is of a negative character. Let me give an illustration. Suppose a young man has behaved badly, left his home, squandered what he had and got over head and ears in debt. If he returned to his father and confessed what he had done, and his father forgave him and paid all his debts, it would be very kind indeed on the father's part, and would be very real as far as it went ; but, if nothing more was done, how would the young man get on ? What would he live upon ? Suppose, however, that the father

was a very wealthy person and head of a very large and very prosperous firm, and took the young man into partnership. He is now a member of the firm and might be heard talking of *our* firm, *our* business, etc. That would be a great deal more than being forgiven and his debts paid. So it is with the believer. It is not only that his sins are forgiven and that he is delivered from all that was against him, and that there is no condemnation for him, as we have seen, but he is a child of God, yea even more than that, "if children then *heirs*; *heirs* of God, and *joint* (or *co*) *heirs* with Christ" (Rom. viii. 17).

In Lev. iv., we had what Christ was in His death for the sinner, but in chap. i. we have what He was in His death for God. And whilst the word "burn" in connection with the sin offering means to consume (as expressive of the judgment of God against sin), "burn" in connection with the burnt offering means "to rise up a sweet savour," being quite a different word. Apart from the question of our salvation, fellow-believer, infinite was the glory brought to God by the cross. In the very scene where His glory had been, as it were, trampled under foot, *this world*—as to the very thing so dishonouring to God, *sin*—in the very nature that had been the enemy's willing agent in all this, *man's*—Jesus glorified God: "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do" (John xvii. 4). Was not all that precious beyond measure to the

heart of God? Let the judgment of God search Him in the most minute way (the skin removed and "cut into his pieces" ver. 6) there was nothing but perfection to be found, and all was for God, and rose up a sweet savour ("burn" in ver. 9) to Him. The words, "of His own voluntary will" in ver. 3, should be "for His acceptance." In the next verse we have: "And He shall put His hand upon the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for Him, etc." We have seen (pp. 44 and 97), that putting the hand on the head of the animal was expressive of identification. But how different the identification now; as to the sin offering, faith can look at the cross and say, "That's me—He measured my distance from God and bore all the consequences—but God has raised from the dead the One who hung on Calvary's cross and given Him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God (1 Pet. i.), so faith can look right up to where Christ is now and say, "He who once measured my distance from God is now the measure of my acceptance and of my nearness, for: "as He is so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17); and we are "accepted in the beloved" (Ephes. i. 6). The reader will notice that it does not say, "accepted in Christ." No question but it means Christ. But, dear fellow-believer, God would show you and me not only how *near* we are, but how *dear* we are, to Him. So further on the same epistle, it says: "Be ye followers (or rather 'imitators') of God as *dear* children. How the

Lord Jesus pressed home on the hearts of His disciples (slow to believe—as alas ! ours also are), “The Father Himself loveth you” (John xvi. 27) ; and, “That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them” (John xvii. 26), which the world will know by and bye (John xvii. 23).

But what became of the skin which we are told in Lev. i. 6 was removed from the burnt offering ? If we turn to Lev. vii., where we get the regulations in connection with the offerings, we find in ver. 6, that “the priest who offereth any man’s burnt offering, even the priest, shall have to himself the skin of the burnt offering which he hath offered.” Now, whilst not wishing to dogmatize as to the interpretation, it seems to me that the lesson taught is this. The priest is the type of the child of God as a worshipper. Of old, the priest had access only into the holy place. Now, the veil is rent and it is into

The holiest we enter
 In perfect peace with God ;
 Through whom we found our centre,
 In Jesus and His blood,
 Though great may be our dulness
 In thought, and word, and deed,
 We glory in the fulness
 Of Him that meets our need.

But when I do enter, I do so, not only as a forgiven sinner (though, through grace, I am that), but as a child of God and with all the value of the work of Christ resting upon me. And it is well to remember that it is God’s estimate of the value of

His work, not mine. Who is it who alone estimates sin aright? God. You and I, fellow believer, may hate sin, and the nearer we are to God, as to the state of our souls, the more we will do so. Still I could not say (nor could any believer) that I have as correct an estimate of sin as God. So also of the work of Christ. It is written, "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself *for us* an offering and a sacrifice *to God* for a *sweet smelling savour*" (Ephes. v. 2). The "*sweet smelling savour rose up to God.*" So in the burnt offering in Lev. i. The 9th verse tells us that (the skin having been removed) all of it was burnt on the altar. Dr. Young's literal translation brings out the force of that verse with much beauty: "The priest hath made perfume with the whole on the altar, a burnt offering, a fire-offering of sweet fragrance to Jehovah." Who smelt the sweet fragrance that arose and put a true value on it? God, for that was all for Him. So I (once a poor, guilty, lost, hell-deserving sinner) now, through grace, stand before God (as does every one resting only on the work of the Lord Jesus for acceptance) according to the value that God puts on the work of the Lord Jesus Christ! What matchless grace!! Well may the Holy Spirit speak of "the EXCEEDING RICHES of His grace," which, "in the ages to come," God is going to show!!! (Ephes. ii.)

Again I ask, dear reader: "HAVE YOU SO LEARNT CHRIST!"