

THE MORNING STAR.

(Lines suggested by a morning ride to I. H. R'y Station, Canada.)

NARRATIVE.

'Twas early morn, the snow shone white,
 Glittering beneath the moon's pale light,
 For high in heaven she held her way
 And hours must elapse ere break of day ;
 But travel we must if we hope to gain
 The rail in time for the morning train.
 So we started, and heard as the sleigh sped fleet
 No sound but the tread of the horse's feet ;
 The world was sleeping and all was still,
 For silence rested on vale and hill.
 'Twas well we were muffled in furs, I ween,
 For the frosty air bit sharp and keen ;
 And little was said as we slipt along,
 For frozen alike seemed tale and song.
 Our hearts were discouraged because of the way,
 And sorely we longed for the dawning of day ;
 Yet pleasant the thoughts, and still they abide,
 Which came to me during that long cold ride,
 For the harbinger bright of coming day
 Did ever before us its light display ;
 The silvery rays of the *Morning Star* (Rev. ii, 28),
 Above the horizon shone afar,

And as I sat gazing, sweet thoughts arose
 In my mind, which in measure resembled those.

JESUS, THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR.

I thought of Him who died for sin,
 That He eternal life might win
 For those who did in heart abhor Him.
 Who, though the Father's sole delight,
 Willingly left the glory bright
 With death and suffering before Him.

Of Him who render'd up His breath,
 Bowing beneath the stroke of death,
 Triumphant over death by dying,
 And who, though dead, yet strong to save,
 Arose victorious o'er the grave,
 Its dread and loathsome power defying.

I thought of Him in courts above,
 The object of the Father's love,
 By radiant angel hosts attended,
 Dwelling in glory's brightest blaze,
 The theme of heaven's exhaustless praise,
 His sufferings forever ended.

But though on high, He's still the same
 As when upon the cross of shame
 He prayed in love for them that slew Him.
 Though dwelling in the courts above
 He still retains His name of Love
 And welcomes all that still come to Him.

How great the love He bears His own !
 Its height or depth can ne'er be known,
 In His warm heart 'tis ever glowing ,
 And soon He'll come to claim His bride
 That she may e'er with Him abide,
 Glory divine on her bestowing.

Hearken ! He speaks from heaven afar,
 I am *The Bright and Morning Star* (Rev. xxii. 16),
 Midnight is past, 'tis early morning,
 Rise from among the dead—awake—
 Be watchful, slumber from thee shake,
 For soon I come the heavens adorning.

NARRATIVE.

But now, as slowly waned the night,
 The frost seemed sharper still to bite ;
 Stung by the cold, we thought the sleigh,
 As it slipt along, made little way ;
 But though this might our comfort mar,
 It made no change on *the Morning Star*.
 In beauty and brightness still it shone
 Like a silver plate in the sky alone.
 To our impatience it seemed to say,
 " Wait for a little, 'twill soon be day ;
 Be patient, this trial will soon be past,
 And your journey's end you'll reach at last."
 And again sweet thoughts in the mind would rise
 As I gazed on the *Star* that illumed the skies.

THE RISING OF THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR.

When the trav'ler weary,
 Bending 'neath a load,

Through the darkness dreary
 Toils along the road
 In his worn-out sandal,
 Hoping rest to win,
 Sweet the shining candle
 Of the welcome inn.

When the storm is pouring
 O'er the midnight sea,
 And the surge is roaring
 'Neath the vessel's lee ;
 To the awe-struck seaman
 Rapturous is the sight,
 When through darkness gleaming
 Shines the Beacon Light.

When the Church contending,
 Weary, sad, forlorn,
 Yet on God depending,
 Watcheth for the morn,
 Then what joy and gladness
 When from heaven afar,
 Ending all her sadness,
 Shines the *Morning Star*.

Jesus ! Lord of Glory,
 Lord of life and peace,
 Theme of angel's story,
 Bid our wanderings cease.
 See our bark is riven
 By the tempest's jar,

Shine, oh shine, from heaven,
Bright and Morning Star.

NARRATIVE.

But now at last, to end my story,
 Rose the bright sun in a blaze of glory,
 Bidding the slumbering world arise,
 Soaring triumphant through the skies.
 The darkness fled before its beams,
 'Neath his bright rays the landscape gleams,
 Had it been summer, songs of love
 Had warbled forth from every grove,
 Had warbled forth from every grove,
 Clothed in bright green, the stately trees
 Had waved their branches in the breeze,
 While verdant grass and floweret gay
 Had basked beneath the living ray ;
 But now, although the dazzling glow
 Shone over fields of cold white snow,
 The scene was pleasant to the sight
 And fair to view in th' morning light ;
 So when—our journey nearly done—
 In glory and splendour rose the sun,
 I thought of the time when with banners unfurl'd,
 The Lord will revisit this suffering world
 (After, as *Morning Star*, He has come
 And taken His bride to His own bright home),
 And when, as *the Sun of Righteousness*,
 He rises in glory bright to bless
 His earthly people, forsaken long,
 Filling their hearts with joy and song.
 Israel ! on whose devoted head

Has rested for centuries curses dread ;
 And as I thought of these coming days,
 My heart burst forth in songs of praise.

CHRIST, THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

When we speak of Israel's wand'rings,
 Mournful is the dirge and low ;
 Nought of joy relieves our pond'rings,
 Only thoughts of grief and woe.

But still deeper grows the sadness,
 And still louder Israel's moan,
 Unrelieved by aught of gladness
 When the Church to heaven is gone.

Hated for their name and nation,
 Round them storms and tempests low'r ;
 Crushed 'neath dreadful tribulation,
 Wielded by resistless power.

But when trembling for the morrow,
 Groaning in their deep distress,
 Then, while in their deepest sorrow,
 Soars *the Sun of Righteousness* (Mal. iv. 2).

Rising in a cloud of glory,
 Light and healing on His wings,
 Ends glad Israel's mournful story,
 And their hearts with rapture sing—

HALLELUJAH !

Hail ! all hail that cloudless morning,
 Hail that bright millennial day

When, the heavens and earth adorning,
Christ will all His power display.

Then shall Israel's praise ascending
To the great Anointed One,
With the Church's anthems blending,
Reach Jehovah's glorious throne.

Then, while shouts thro' heaven are ringing,
Ransomed earth with loud acclaim
Shall with rapturous joy and singing
Praise Messiah's glorious Name.



"THE MORNING STAR."

It has been truly said by some one that the Old Testament Scriptures end with the hope of the coming of the "Sun of Righteousness;" and the New, with that of the "Morning Star." Sweetly beautiful is this! The godly remnant of Israel who feared the Lord, and spake often one to another (Mal. iii.), had the precious consolation before them of the coming of the "Sun of Righteousness . . . with healing in His wings" (Mal. iv). And we find them in Luke ii., the Simeons, and Annas, and "all them that looked for redemption in Israel" (vs. 25-38), rejoicing in the advent of the "Sun of Righteousness," the "consolation of Israel." But, alas, his beams fell coldly on the hearts of his nation—they had no heart for Him! Men were

morally unfit to have God amongst them ; and so He was obliged to hide His beams of blessing in the darkened scene that surrounded His cross, and to reserve the day of blessing for a future season. Meanwhile *our* calling was revealed, and *our* hope presented to us ; not as the " Sun of Righteousness," but as the " Morning Star !"

The more we contemplate the fitness of this symbol of our hope, the more does its divine origin appear. It is the watchman during the long night, who sees the morning star for a few moments, while the darkness is rolling itself away from off the face of the earth, and before the beams of the sun enliven the earth with their rays. And so with the Christian's hope ; he watches during the moral darkness of the world, till dawn ; and just as the darkness is deepest, and is about to roll itself away before the beams of the " Sun of Righteousness," *his* hope is rewarded in seeing the " Morning Star" (Rev. xxii. 16), in his earliest brightness, coming to take up His people to Himself, that they may shine forth with Him, as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matt. xiii. 43), when He reveals Himself to the millennial earth, as the " Sun of Righteousness."

" I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and Morning Star. . . . He which testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Amen."

FORGIVENESS, DELIVERANCE, ACCEPTANCE.

(Continued from page 47.)

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Lev. iv.
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DELIVERANCE.

There is, however, another point and a most important one, and that is *deliverance*, or, as it is generally called, salvation. I prefer the former word, as bringing out more clearly what is meant. How often, dear souls, in whom there has been a work of God, have doubts and fears; sometimes going so far as to question if they have ever been converted. It is because they have not really got deliverance; for God's way of deliverance being once known is never lost; though there may not be the joy flowing therefrom if the individual is not going on with God.

Scripture makes a distinction between "sins" (the naughty things done, the bad fruit produced) and "sin" (the nature, the tree that produces the bad fruit). Now, *forgiveness* has to do with the former, *deliverance* with the latter. Where there is a condition of spiritual slothfulness and a lack of exercise in the soul, God may withhold the knowledge of deliverance. Again, where there is not a bowing to God's verdict of what we *are* (not what we've *done*), deliverance cannot be known. The poet may write (and men applaud),

"O, wad some power the giftie gie us,
To see oursels as ithers see us."

There is something however immeasurably beyond that, viz.: To see ourselves as God sees us.

Dear reader, has the word of God ever come home with such power to your conscience as to bring you really into the presence of God? There can be but one result, if such has been the case. Now, Job was not a bad man by any means, and he could talk quite eloquently about God, and knew a great many things about Him, and yet had not seen himself as God saw him. In Job xlii. 5 he says: "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but *now* mine eye *seeth* Thee." What was the result? "Wherefore I *abhor myself*;" not abhor what I *have done*, but "*myself*." Dear reader, has there ever been a moment in your history when you have thus stood face to face with God? Nothing betokens moral distance from God like good opinion of self. When we stand at the judgment of Christ, will any of us have a good opinion of self? Surely not! Then why so now? How many earnest souls go on trying to improve themselves! How many societies and associations (and religious ones, and with the name of "Christian" attached to them, too) there are for the improvement of man, as such! It may be ignorantly so, but all this is a denial of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. The rejection of Jesus—God manifest in the flesh—proved that there was nothing in the heart of man that answered to anything in the heart of God; for the deepest and fullest expression of love on God's

part only brought out the terrible state of the heart of man. The cross of Jesus, on man's side, proved not only was man a sinner, and a law breaker, but a God-hater, and as Rom. viii. 7 says "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God" (margin).

Now let us turn to our chapter and see how the truth comes out in it, and let us remember that the animal there was a type of Christ on the cross, when He who knew no sin was made *sin* (not only "bear our *sins*") for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God *in Him* (2 Cor. v. 21). And, as Rom. viii. 3 tells us, "What the law could not do God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for *sin*, condemned *sin in the flesh*." If you read verses 11 and 12 you will see how the truth comes out in type,—most vividly. Ver. 11 takes up the different parts of the animal, and remember this is the body of the animal itself—not the blood, as previously. "And the skin of the bullock." The skin stands for the external beauty of the animal. In 1 Sam. xvi, 6, 7, when the eldest son of Jesse came in, Samuel seeing a fine, tall, handsome young man said, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him." What was the Lord's answer? "Look not on his countenance nor on the height of his stature, for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on *the outward appearance*, but the Lord looketh on *the heart*." Read Mark x. 17-22 in the same connection. There, a young ruler

comes to Jesus with everything *outwardly* lovely—but when God's one test was put: "What think ye of Christ?"—he turned his back on the Lord and went away. There was nothing there for God. And so in the type, the skin was carried forth without the camp and burnt on the wood with fire. In other words it was fit only for the judgment of God. "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. xii. 29). Jesus on Calvary's cross bore the judgment for every one who believes the record that God has given of His Son (1 John v. 10-12; John iii. 36), but for all others "the second death, the lake of fire" (Rev. xx. 15) is their portion, however nice they may appear in the eyes of men.

Next comes "his flesh." There we get below the surface, but the same result—nothing for God, and so taken outside the camp and burnt.

Now let us go to the end of the verse and work backwards. "His dung" (the offal). Of course everyone would agree as to that—there was nothing there for God.

"His inwards," the seat of the affections. Well, the rejection of Jesus, the deepest expression of God's love to man, proved there was nothing, as we have seen (p. 70).

"His legs" represent his walk, his general life. Look what Paul says of himself, Acts xx. iii. 1: "I have lived before God in all good conscience to this day." And yet before he was converted he was murdering the Lord's people, thinking he was doing God service (see John xvi. 2). No, there is

nothing really for God in the natural man, such is the awful havoc that sin has made.

“ But now we come to “his head.” Oh ! how different is man’s verdict from God’s on this point. The great panacea now-a-days is education. If we turn to the word of God, what does He say ? Corinth was one of the chief cities of Greece, the leading country at the time for literature and the arts and sciences, and of course learning, etc., was much thought of there. In the first epistle to the church at that place, the Holy Ghost says : “ I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise ? where is the scribe (the educated man of the day) ? where is the disputer of this world ? hath not *God made foolish the wisdom of this world ?*” And again : “ The world by wisdom knew not God,” and “ God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.” In the Epistle to the Romans, chap. i., when the Holy Ghost is referring to man’s having got away from God after the flood, He says : “ Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (ver. 22). And is not history repeating itself in this very end of this self-lauding nineteenth century ? Who are the leaders in giving up the Bible—turning their backs on the word of God—with fine sounding words of “ higher criticism,” etc. ? “ Professing themselves to be wise,” they are really “ blind leaders of the blind.” No, there is nothing more *for God* in man’s head than the other

parts, and, with the offal, is only fit for the judgment of God.

But some one may say, "It will not do to be so very particular in details—take man as a whole there is some good in him." Ver. 12, answers that. Ver. 11 looks at man in detail, but ver. 12 looks at him as a whole, "Even the whole bullock," but with just the same verdict—to be carried forth without the camp and burnt; it was only fit for judgment—God's judgment against sin.

Turn now to Romans vii., where we get one who has learnt his lesson and bowed to God's verdict; for the expression, "when we were in the flesh" (ver. 5), shews that he was not there when he wrote. The law is the measure of man's responsibility as a *child of Adam*, and so we find the one in that chapter, doing his very best to meet its claims. What was the result?

In ver. 14, he has found out that he is a slave, "*sold* under sin."

In ver. 18, he has learnt two lessons: 1st, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth *no good thing*." He has now learnt experimentally in his own soul what came out at the cross, and which we have just seen, in type, in Lev. iv. 11, 12.

But there is a second lesson in Rom. vii. 18, viz, that he has no strength, "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." He is lost. Now one is lost when the strength is all gone and the person is utterly unable to extricate himself from the position he is in.

But that is not saying another person may not pull him out. Now in vs. 7-24 (Rom. vii.) "I," "My," "Me" occur between forty and fifty times, i. e., he is looking at *himself* striving to extricate *himself*. In the last named verse he gives up the struggle, just ready to despair, "O wretched man that I am! (not "who shall *forgive* me" but) "who shall *deliver me* from the body of this death." He is just where God's Deliverer meets him.

In ver. 25 he looks outside of himself, for the first time, and sees it (with the eye of faith) all done by another, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

DEAR READER, HAVE YOU GOT THAT FAR?

(*To be continued, D.V.*)



MEDITATIONS ON THE BOOK OF RUTH.

(Concluded from page 58.)

Chapter IV.

Naomi spake truly. Boaz could not give himself rest, until he had accomplished the work which his goodness and energy had undertaken. He wished that the one he loved might find rest and that it might be well with her (iii. 1), and he knew that she could be only so with him. Thus it is with the Lord as to ourselves. His life here below was a life of toil for us, culminating in the unutterable travail of His soul upon the cross. He has in this

manner accomplished this promise: "I will give you rest." We already possess rest of conscience in the knowledge of His work; rest of heart in the knowledge of His adorable person. But the Lord is still working, in order that we may enter into a future rest "which remaineth for the people of God," the rest of satisfied love where everything will answer eternally to the thoughts of His own heart.

Boaz also undertook to give rest to his beloved because she had wrought and suffered with the people of God. In the same way the Holy Spirit says to us: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven" (2 Thess. i. 7). "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward this name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (Heb. vi. 10).

This book of Ruth is full of *labour* and of *rest*; labour and rest of service, labour and rest of faith, labour and rest of grace. The reapers labour and rest; so also does the master of the harvest; so also does Ruth, the bride of his choice. O, how she rests at the feet of Boaz during the hours of the night! How she still rests until the travail of the redeemer prepares for her the rest of which our chapter speaks

According to the custom of Israel, he ought to revive the name of the dead, and to re-establish it in his inheritance. This duty devolved upon the

next of kin. Now there was a man who possessed rights over the inheritance of Elimelech before Boaz. Boaz addressed himself to him in the presence of a number of witnesses. This man would have been very glad of the heritage, but knowing that the seed would not be his, he would not consent to take Ruth also. If he did so, he would impoverish himself and mar his own inheritance, for the property of Ruth's children would not revert to him nor to his family.

This near kinsman is a striking type of the law; for, like this man, the law, which had prior rights over Israel, exacts, takes, and gives nothing. It would no longer be the law, if it were able to undertake the work of grace; nevertheless its inability is not because of itself, but because of those to whom it is addressed. The law looks for something from man, and man manifests himself as incapable of pleasing God. It promises life on condition of obedience; but, man being a sinner and disobedient, it can only condemn him. It is a ministry of death, and cannot give life to the dead. Barren, it would never have posterity nor be able to bring forth sons in the divine lineage of the Messiah.

Grace alone is able to undertake these things. Declaring man to be lost, it expects nothing of him, imposes no conditions upon him, makes him no promises, but gives him liberally, increasingly, eternally. It begets by an incorruptible seed and communicates life, places man in relationship with

God, produces in him fruit which God can accept, and introduces him into the glory.

Thus the law declares itself powerless in presence of the "second husband" who comes after it, our Boaz, in whom is strength. He will raise up His people Israel and "shall see His seed," as saith Isaiah, but only, as we know, after having poured out His soul unto death (Is. liii.). In the interval, all the result of His work at the cross is applicable to us, Christians. As to our souls, we are already risen with Him; as to our bodies, we shall be, as surely as he is Himself. Boaz is, for us, the type of a risen Christ.

The near kinsman takes off his shoe—the law cedes its rights to Christ, rights acknowledged by the witnesses with whom he had surrounded himself for this purpose. Boaz redeems the inheritance in order to possess Ruth, for he has more interest in the happiness of this stranger than in all that belongs to her. For the church Christ has done much more. He *gave up* all He had, to acquire us. The poor remnant of Israel will also acknowledge Him with joy when it sees its heretofore rejected Messiah coming in glory.

Witnesses of this scene, *the people and the elders*, applaud and biess the powerful Boaz; for such goodness is worthy of all praise. The Holy Spirit puts in their mouth these prophetic words: "Jehovah make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel!" The history of the

people will recommence, so to speak, with the poor Moabitess. It will begin anew on the ground of grace. It is not Leah, it is Rachel, the wife beloved, the wife of Jacob's free choice and for whom he had served so long, who is here first presented. In everything the book of Ruth gives precedence to grace. "And do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem." These cities, witnesses of grace, will also be of the power of Boaz : "And let thy house be like the house of Pharez whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which Jehovah shall give thee of this young woman !" That his posterity may be established like that of Pharez according to the election of grace !

"And *Jehovah gave* her conception." In the presence of this heir that grace has given, the *women* take up again the course of the prophetic thoughts of the people : "And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be Jehovah, which has not left thee this day without a kinsman." They transfer to the head of the son of Boaz the right to redeem which Boaz has exercised, and foresee a future redemption accomplished by this man who is born of Ruth. In him, they add, the old age of the people will find a nourisher, its feebleness a restorer, and his name will be associated with that of Ruth, the poor remnant, having her heart drawn out to Naomi, the afflicted people of God, and who are worth more to her than the perfect number of sons (ver. 15).

Naomi nourishes Obed in her bosom ; he goes forth, like the Messiah, from a barren people. The *neighbours* then strike up their prophetic notes of praise : "There is a son born to Naomi !" The sphere becomes closer and with it the measure of intelligence. The nearer we are to the people of God, the more we appreciate Christ and His grace. If we are satisfied with the nearness which "the people and the elders" possess, we shall not be able to get beyond their level of spiritual intelligence ; whilst the heart bound to the church will have a more intimate and personal knowledge of the Lord. "A son is born to Naomi !" It is thus that the future Israel will rejoice before him as the joy of harvest as they are transported with joy who divide the spoil, and they will say : "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given ; and the government shall be upon His shoulder ; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace"

"And they called his name Obed." Obed, "He who serves ;" above all His marvellous titles, behold His title of glory ! It is the Servant who is the Heir and from whom David springs, the Bearer of royal grace. All our hearts beat with joy when we call Him by this name ; for He, the Counsellor, the mighty God, has served, He still serves, and will remain a Servant forever for those whom He loves ! His devotedness to God and His love for us, His entire work even to the laying down of His life, the grace which leads Him to stoop to wash our feet, His eternal servitude of love when we shall be with Him in the glory of the Father's house—all these, our greatest blessings, are connected with this title of Servant !