

PEACE WITH GOD.

Oh ! the peace forever flowing
 From God's thoughts of His own **Son**,
 Oh ! the peace of simply knowing,
 On the cross that all was done.

Peace with God, the blood in heaven
 Speaks of pardon now to me ;
 Peace with God ! the Lord is risen !
 Righteousness now counts me **free**.

Peace with God—is Christ in glory,
 God is just and God is love ;
 Jesus died to tell the story,
 Foes to bring to God above.

Now free access to the Father,
 Through the Christ of God, **we have** ;
 By the Spirit here abiding,
 Promise of the Father's love.

Jesus, Saviour, we adore Thee !
 Christ of God, — Anointed Son ;
 We confess Thee, Lord of glory,
 Fruits of vict'ry Thou hast won !



In the sacrifices in the beginning of *Leviticus*, we have, in type : Christ in His devotedness unto death, *burnt-offering* ; Christ in the perfection of His life of consecration to God, *meat-offering* ; Christ the basis of the communion of the people with God, who feeds, as it were, at the same table with them, *peace-offering* ; and finally, Christ made sin for those who stood in need of it, and bearing their sins in His own body on the tree, *sin-offering*.

FORGIVENESS, DELIVERANCE, ACCEPTANCE.

READ LEV. I. AND IV.

How the New Testament helps us in understanding the Old, throwing light upon the types there ; and, in so doing, oftentimes bringing out the truth more vividly than a mere doctrinal statement of the same !

In these two chapters, we have the work of Christ on the cross brought before us in two aspects. In the 1st (the burnt offering), what Christ was in His death for God ; in the 4th (the sin offering), what He was in His death for the sinner. God of course begins with that aspect of it which is for Himself, and afterwards comes to that which is for the sinner. We, on the contrary, have to begin with what Christ was in His death for us, and so will look first at chap. iv.

“If a soul shall sin through ignorance, etc.” (ver. 2). How strikingly this brings out the holiness of God ! How ready we are to make excuses, and, if a thing is done in ignorance, to think but little of it. But, dear reader, in having to do with God, we must remember that His thoughts are not our thoughts, neither His ways our ways and that as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways higher than our ways, and His thoughts than our thoughts (Is. lv. 8, 9). God, in His grace, has made provision for the guiltiest, if they will but hearken to Him, but

He will pass by nothing, not even if "a soul shall sin through ignorance,"—for, "GOD IS LIGHT" (1 John, i. 5). What then is to be done? On our part we can do absolutely nothing to cancel the guilt, for "without shedding of blood is *no* remission" (Heb. ix. 22). Then the victim for the sacrifice, whether bullock, or kid of the goats (male or female, vs. 23, 28) or a lamb, must be one "*without blemish.*" Where was such an one to be found? Could man produce such? God waited for hundreds of years, but such an one could not be found among the sons of Adam. God then must do one of two things—either visit judgment upon all, or provide the one necessary Himself. Which did He do? "He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16), thereby proving that "GOD IS LOVE" (1 John iv. 8). Jesus, His beloved Son, becomes a man, and John the Baptist gazing on Him once exclaims, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29). Then we have the life on earth of the blessed Lord looked at in four different aspects, in the four gospels. But though He humbled Himself and became man, His people remember that He was never less than The One who did humble Himself—even "Christ . . . who is over all, God blessed for ever," Amen. (Rom. ix. 5). As He walked this earth God saw, for the first time, a man that answered in everything to the desires of His heart—*ever* and

only doing His will, thereby proving Himself the Lamb *without spot*. But there was the question of sin to be settled before God, and so "Christ through the eternal Spirit offered Himself *without spot* to God" to purge our consciences from dead works to serve the living God (Heb. ix. 14).

The 4th verse of our chapter tells us that the animal (which was really a type of Christ) was brought to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord, and the sinning Jew was to "lay his hand upon the bullock's head." Laying the hand on the victim's head expresses identification, as much as saying, "That's me—that animal takes my place." And so when I look at Jesus on Calvary's cross bearing sin's heavy load, faith enables me to say, "That's me—He took my place"—surely in grace—but still He took it. Well, if He took it, He must bear all the consequences of taking it, and so He did. Judgment and death were hanging over my head, for "the wages of sin is *death*" (Rom. vi. 23); and "It is appointed unto men once to *die*, but after this the *judgment*" (Heb. ix. 27). All that God was against sin Jesus bore on Calvary's cross. Harken to that cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Ps. xxii. 1; Matt. xxvii. 46); and "He yielded up the Ghost" (Matt. xxvii. 50), having said, "*It is finished*" (John xix. 30). How those words of the Lord Jesus bring before us the contrast with every sacrifice in Old Testament times! If it was the great day of atonement as

presented in Lev. xvi., it must be repeated every year, for the redemption then accomplished only held good for that length of time ; if it was an individual who had sinned, a *fresh sacrifice* must be brought. Consequently there never could be at that time "perfection as pertaining to the conscience" as mentioned in Heb. ix. Perfection, or otherwise, of the conscience depends upon the character of the sacrifice presented. When the offending one coming to God brought a bullock or a goat—the sacrifice not being perfect, the conscience could not be perfect. But now if a sinner comes to God—just as a sinner and nothing else or he would not be "doing truth" (John iii. 21)—on the ground of the sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary's cross, and rests upon that, and *that only*, the sacrifice being a perfect one, the conscience of him who believes the record "God has given of His Son," is perfect. The redemption that resulted from the atonement made on the cross was an eternal one (see Heb. ix. 12). The blood that was there shed did not merely cancel an individual act of sin, for "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all (more accurately '*every*') sin" (1 John i. 7). We get that truth brought out, in type, in our chapter in ver. 6, in the blood being sprinkled "*seven* times before the Lord"—"seven" standing for perfection in spiritual things.

Dear reader, have you come to God, just as a poor sinner and nothing else, and are you resting,

and resting *only*, on the precious blood of Christ? If so, that blood cleanseth from every sin; God—the God you have sinned against—says so, and so forgiveness flows from it. But the resurrection of Christ is another proof of the question of sin being settled before God—because if Jesus was bearing my sins on Calvary's cross (see Is. liii. 6) how could God righteously raise Him from the dead, if every sin was not fully atoned for? But, blessed be God! if He "was delivered for our offences," He "was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have *peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. iv. 25, v. 1). Remember then that it is a work done outside of us, even the work on Calvary's cross, that is the ground of our peace, and not the work of the Holy Spirit in us. There is never such a thing as a soul resting on the work of Christ, outside of him, that there is not a work of the Holy Spirit inside him—still it is the former and not the latter which is the ground of peace, and it is important not to confound them. They go together, still they are distinct from each other.

It is important also to remember that He who bore our sins on Calvary's Cross is not there now; for, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. xv. 17). In Acts xiii., Paul, having given a short outline of God's dealings with Israel, refers to the Lord Jesus as the One in whom the promises found their fulfilment. He speaks of His death *and resurrection*.

Then, pointing to Him as the risen, glorified Man at God's right hand, he says, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins ; and by Him all that believe *are* (not '*will be*') *justified from all things*, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

The Holy Ghost, in Rom. iv. 7, says : "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered."

DEAR READER, IS THAT BLESSEDNESS YOURS ?

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

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

The resurrection and glory of the Lord Jesus is a great fact. Whether we will hear, or whether we will forbear there it is, and cannot be gainsayed. And further, we have to do with it, and cannot escape from the application of it to ourselves. It is set above us, and before us ; as at creation, the sun was set in the heavens, and the creation of God had to do with it.

It is thus treated in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. It is there dealt with as a fact, from the application of which to themselves none could escape. It has its different virtue, its two-fold force and meaning ; and men are to know how it addresses itself to each of them. But there it is and no one can elude it.

Who could pluck the sun out of the heavens ?

The glory seated itself in the cloud, and Israel *must* know it there, and have to do with it there. It may conduct them cheerfully, or rebuke them and judge them ; but there it is in their company, in their midst, and the camp in its different conditions must have to do with it.

Prophets from God came among the people. There they are, whether the people will hear, or whether they will forbear ; they have to know—they *must* know - that a prophet has been among them. They cannot gainsay the fact, or escape its application to themselves in judgment or blessing.

The budding rod I might have noticed in this connection. It is brought out from the sanctuary to the camp, and the camp *must* accept its presence. That it is there is a fact, and none can deny it, whether they will use that fact obediently, and taste the fruit of the service of God's Anointed One ; or whether they will still rebel to their own destruction, is another thing. But the budding rod that speaks both of judgment and of mercy is in the midst of them.

The Lord in the garden of Eden was the same at the beginning. It was a fact. Adam could not displace Him. He was there—as the sun at that moment was in the heavens.

Adam *must* have to do with Him. If he be in innocency, as in ch. ii., that fact will be his joy. If he be in guilt, as in ch. iii., that fact will be his doom. But he cannot elude the force of it ; nor withdraw himself from the application of it.

I might say that Christ in the world that Satan had usurped through subtlety, was also a kindred fact. None could, in that day, deny it, or rid themselves of the force of it. Satan himself shall know it, and men shall have their blessing brought to them by it; or their guilt and judgment enhanced through it. The kingdom of God had come, and they must accept it as a fact.

Just thus, just after this manner, is the present great fact of the resurrection. Jesus is risen and exalted—He is ascended and glorified. We might as well pluck the sun from the heavens as try to escape the application of this fact to our condition, whether of repentance or of unbelief.

The great characteristic teaching of the apostles, in the book of Acts, is *interpretation of this fact to the conscience of sinners.*

This makes apostolic ministry among men very simple; and blessed it is from its simplicity.

Peter, who opens that ministry, at once takes the resurrection of the Lord as his text. He exhibits that great fact in its *judicial*, and its *saving* power. He preaches from it the glories of the Lord Himself; and he derives from it the blessings of all believing sinners. It is the object constantly before him. He gives it different characters, or invests it with different virtues; but it is the object constantly before him, and the fact which he declares again and again—his fullest interpretation of it being found at the very close of his ministry, in the house of Cornelius, when he preaches that

the risen Jesus is set of God both for judgment and for salvation. (See ch. x, 42, 43.)

The risen Jesus may be *boldly resisted*, as in Saul's case (Acts ix.). But it is equally death for the soul to despise it (ch. xiii. 41). It is not so shocking to the moral sense of man, but it is equally death in the judgment of God.

Paul in his ministry, as constantly uses the same great fact of the resurrection of Christ, interpreting it, like Peter, to the heart and conscience.

In his first preaching at Antioch we see this. In the synagogue there, he conducts the story of God's ways with Israel from the day of the call of Abraham to the resurrection of Christ; and then upon the resurrection, preaches the forgiveness of sins. But he adds, that the despising of that great fact, the being careless about it, with a carnal mind indifferent to it, will as surely be followed by judgment, as the generation which the prophet addressed was visited by the judgment of God through the Chaldees.

At Athens, where his next great preaching was, he has still the same great fact as his theme. But he gives it its solemn meaning. He invests it with its terrors; for he found this Gentile people full of idolatry, though in the pride of their sects of learning, and in the carnal busy desire of anything new in the earth or among men. He tells them of this great mystery, which was a fact in heaven, registered there, and he gives it its meaning for them. Referring to their besotted wor-

ship, he says to them, "the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent, because He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead." (Acts xvii. 30, 31.)

And after his ministry had formally terminated, and he becomes the prisoner rather than the servant of Jesus, still before his judges it is of the resurrection he speaks. (See Acts xxvi.)

The moral that we draw is, the *sweet positive application of this great fact to each one of us*. We have, each one of us, individually to do with it—or rather it has to do with us.

The resurrection speaks of judgment to man as man—for it is the witness of a solemn collision between God and man. *God is on the side of man's Victim*. God has glorified the One, whom man denied and crucified. Here is collision—and the result of that is judgment; for God is stronger than man. Man must be overthrown in such conflict. Judgment *must* fall on him that is opposed to God. The "pricks" cannot be "kicked against." Saul of Tarsus persecuting Jesus, shall be found in a work of self-destruction.

The resurrection speaks of salvation to the broken, confessing sinner. Because the resurrection witnesses *God's satisfaction in that atonement for sin which Jesus offered*; and if God is satisfied,

who can condemn? If God witnesses that such has been put away for all that will trust and plead the death of Christ—who shall lay anything to the charge of such? what tongue can prevail against them?

The resurrection thus speaks of "mercy" or of "judgment," as we either look to the cross of Christ, with the interest of convicted believing hearts; or as we despise and slight it. It has a voice in the ear of all. It speaks to us, whether we will hear or whether we will forbear. To enjoy it as the salvation of God, we must personally, and livingly by faith, be brought into connection with it—but if we slight it all our days, it will at the end *bring itself in connection with us*, as it were, whether we will or not. In this way it brings to mind the Lord Jesus in Mark v.—In spite of Satan, Jesus puts Himself in connection with him in the person of the Gadarene, in order to judge him and destroy his work. But He does not put Himself in connection with the poor diseased woman in the crowd, till she by faith had put herself, and the necessity she carried, in connection with Him. Surely her faith was given to her of God. It was no notion of her own, but the fruit of the drawing of the Father in the power of the Spirit. But still so it was; that the virtue in Jesus did not visit her, till her faith had visited Him.

And this distinction has a deeply serious fact in it. If we by faith use not a risen Jesus now, and get the virtue that is in Him, He will visit us by

and by, and that, too, with the judgment that will then be in Him. No depreciation will then avail—no seeking now can but avail!

By the preaching of the resurrection in the Acts, we learn that God has taken out of man's hand the very weapon of his fullest enmity against Himself, and used it for man's everlasting blessing; but if man will despise such goodness, then he must answer for having taken that weapon into his hand. The sword that man was using in hostility to God, God has turned as into a plough-share, whereby to get for man the bread of everlasting life. Joseph of old was sold by his brethren—but Joseph sold became an instrument and channel of life to them who had sold him. Their very wickedness was turned of God to their blessing.



MEDITATIONS ON THE BOOK OF RUTH.

(Continued from page 40.)

CHAPTER III.

Naomi, we have said, presents not only an example of experience but of *intelligence*. She is happy that Ruth should have found such a guide. Naomi commands, but her commands are not grievous, being those of *love*. "My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?" What she enjoins is with a view to the happiness of Ruth, whom she loves; but likewise because she knows the heart of Boaz: "Is not Boaz of our kindred?" Ruth, the woman of faith,

obeys : " She did according to all that her mother-in-law bade her " (ver. 6). May we be able to obey in the same manner. Obedience is easy to those who know that God loves them, and that He only desires their rest and happiness, and that Christ loves them, and bears them continually upon His heart ; but it is difficult when the soul has as its object the pleasing of self, and the finding of happiness and rest apart from Christ.

Boaz is about concluding his labours ; the harvest over, he must winnow his crop on the threshing floor, after which he will gather it into his grain-aries. His heart was satisfied ; will he repulse the poor Moabitess ? Naomi is full of confidence, and knows how to point out to Ruth the path of blessing. " Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor ; but make not thyself known to the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking. And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down, and he will tell thee what thou shalt do." Ruth prepares herself for this meeting, lies down at his feet and awaits his word. This will be the character of the poor remnant of Israel, found faithful at the moment that the Messiah will manifest Himself after their long night of waiting. But is there not a much greater reason that these characteristics should be ours ? We have heard the voice which tells us to wash and anoint our-

selves, and to be prepared for Himself only. Have we forgotten Him? Where are we now? Have we gone in to pass the night on His threshing floor, or on that of strangers? Have we responded like Ruth, from the bottom of our hearts: "All that thou sayest unto me I will do"? Yes, He wishes that we may be practically worthy of Himself; that, lying at His feet, acknowledging His rights over us, we may wait patiently for His word during the hours of the night. Soon our Boaz will break the silence. Will it be to reprove us severely, or to express His approbation of our conduct?

In the middle of the night Boaz recognizes the one who had come to place herself under his protection, and blesses her. The book of Ruth, this history of grace, is full of the blessings of both of the giver and of the receiver. Every heart is full of joy, from the moment that Boaz appears on the scene. His presence awakens praise, for he dispenses about him all the blessings of grace. What infinite happiness to praise Him! But is it not also a happiness to receive, like Ruth, the testimony of His satisfaction with us? May we covet earnestly the approbation of Christ. How humbling to think how little we seek it! The praise of men puffs us up, but His never does. He commends us for what His infinite grace sees in us; He sees in us what His grace has produced, and what answers to His thoughts.

Boaz praises Ruth in that she has "shewed

more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning." At first her love had been in exercise towards her mother-in-law, who represented for her the people of God; now she was actuated by love for Boaz. She had not gone after young men whether poor or rich, nor sought companions according to natural affections, but had come to the one whose rights she acknowledged. He reassures her and promises to do for her all that she requires (ver. 11). What encouragement for faithfulness! All that we receive is of His grace, but He also gives us according to the measure of our obedience and of our spirit of sacrifice for Himself. "Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together and running over!" (Luke vi. 38). As soon as Ruth had come to know Boaz, she had done everything with respect to him; and now he does everything for her. He is not satisfied to remain debtor to us; He would grant all the desires of the faithful heart.

"All the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman." Ruth combined those qualities of which Peter speaks, which make the one who has them neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. She adds to her faith virtue (courage); to virtue knowledge; to knowledge temperance (self-control); to temperance patience; to patience godliness. To love for her own she adds love, and "shows more kindness in the latter end than at the begin-

ning." She receives likewise an abundant entrance into the kingdom. This faithfulness touches the heart of Boaz : " I will do to thee all that thou requirest ! " What an example for us ! May it be our earnest desire to receive a response like that. The church at Philadelphia received it. Having kept the word of His patience and walked in practical holiness like Ruth, Jesus says to her : I will do all for thee ! The Lord will also bless the poor Jewish remnant at the last according to the virtue, the holiness and the practical righteousness which they have manifested in their ways. He blesses us now in the same way : " Whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight " (1 John iii. 22).

However, a near kinsman who had the right to redeem was before Boaz. Would he, or could he, exercise his right ? We shall see later. In the meantime Ruth has the privilege of lying at the feet of Boaz until the morning. This will be the part of the remnant, and it is ours also. We can rest at His feet while the night lasts. Is it not a most blessed place ? To be at His feet, having His approval of our walk, depositaries of His promises, fully assured that He has heard us, and that the labour of this wretched life will have a termination, and give place to the public manifestation of our association with Him, and to the possession of the glorious fruits of His work !

Now it is himself who has a care for Ruth's reputation, and justifies the holiness of the one whom he wishes to make his companion. But before openly espousing her cause, he fills her vail, giving her secretly the pledge of what he has in his mind to do for her. (Ver. 15.) He acts in the same way towards us. The dawn is near, but before we can see and meet Him, He has already given us the Holy Spirit of promise, and the earnest pledge of our future inheritance.

Ruth returned laden to her mother-in-law and "told her" (not what she had done for Boaz, but) "all that the man had done to her." Her heart is full of him, but she needs that her mother-in-law should enjoin *patience*. She will not have very long to wait, for the one who has taken her cause in hand, will not delay bringing it to a triumphant conclusion. "The man will not be in rest," says Naomi, "until he have finished the thing this day." Why? *Because he loves her.* Ah! this is the great, and the only reason of His work for us. Do we ourselves, brethren, speak like Naomi? Have we the happy consciousness of the love of Jesus for us? Are we waiting for Him as the One who will give Himself no rest until He has finished this day? The *this day* is, for us, the daily expectation of our Saviour. He wishes to have us with Himself. Yet a little patience, for, "Yet a little while and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

(To be continued, D. V.)

A FRAGMENT.

We may receive a benefit from a person, and be assured of a hearty welcome to it, and yet feel ourselves ill at ease in his presence. Nothing is more common than this. Gratitude is awakened in the heart very deeply, and yet reserve and uneasiness are felt. It calls for something beyond our assurance of his good will, and of our full welcome to his service, to make us at ease in the presence of a benefactor. And this something, I believe, is the discovery that we have an interest in *himself*, as well as in his *ability to serve us*.

This delineates, as I judge, the experience of the poor woman with the issue of blood (Mark v). She knew the Lord's ability to relieve her sorrow, and her hearty welcome to avail herself of it. She therefore comes and takes the virtue out of Him without reserve. But she comes *behind Him*. This expresses her state of mind. She knows her welcome to His service, but nothing more. But the Lord trains her heart for more. He lets her know that she is interested in *Himself*, as well as in His power to oblige her. He calls her "daughter." He owns kindred or relationship with her. This was the communication which alone was able to remove her fears and trembling. Her rich and mighty patron is her kinsman. This is what her heart needed to know. Without this in the spirit of her mind she would have been still "behind Him ;" but this gives her ease. "Go in peace,"

may then be said, as well as "be whole of thy plague." She need not be reserved. Christ does not deal with her as a patron or benefactor (Luke xxii. 25). She has an interest in Himself, as well as in His power to bless her.

And so as to the Canticles. It is the love which warrants personal intimacy (after the manner of the nearest and dearest relationships), that breathes in this lovely little book. The age of the union has not yet arrived. But it is the time of betrothment, and we are His delight. Nay, it was so ere worlds were. As another has said, "in the glass of His eternal decrees, the Father showed the Church to Christ, and Christ was so ravished with the sight that He gave up all for her."

Do we believe this? Does it make us happy? We are naturally suspicious of any offers to make us happy in God. Because our moral sense, our natural conscience tells of our having lost all right, even to His ordinary blessings. The mere moral sense, therefore, will be quick to stand against it and question all overtures of peace from heaven, and be ready to challenge their reality. But here comes the vigour of the spiritual mind, or the energy of faith. Faith gainsays these conclusions of nature. And in the revelation of God, faith reads our abundant title to be near Him, and be happy with Him; though natural conscience and our sense of the fitness of things, would have it otherwise. Faith feeds where the moral sensibilities of the natural mind would count it presuming even to tread.