

A FEW REMARKS
ON THE
BOOK OF REVELATION.

“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this Prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.”

THERE is something peculiarly sweet in this portion of the Divine Word. I know not any part of God's Truth which has so oft refreshed my own soul, as the Book of Revelation. The very character of the Book—the “revelation of things to come”—when realized, so takes one up into the counsels and plans of God, that the soul that values communion with God cannot help feeling the force of those precious words, “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of *this prophecy*.”

Oh! what a portion is ours, beloved. The enjoyment of entire forgiveness of sins, through the blood of the Lord Jesus,—calling God “our Father” by the Spirit which dwelleth in us,—knowing ourselves *one* with Jesus in all His glory,—and having the revealed counsel of God about “things to come;” so that even now, though in the wilderness, we might by faith through the indwelling Spirit's power, take our range amid all the glory for which we hope and for which we wait.

It is the first of these (the Discerner) which is taken up in the Book of Revelation.

His identity with "the Ancient of days" is seen by a comparison of v. 14 with Daniel vii. 9. His "feet like unto fine brass" would shew that He could judge evil and not be defiled by it. His voice "as the sound of many waters" could not be drowned, but must be heard. The sharp two-edged sword out of His mouth would denote the piercing power of His word. His countenance shining as the sun would denote His glory, as in the Transfiguration,—“His face did shine as the sun.” (Matt. xvii. 2.) And His right hand holding “the seven stars,” which are “the angels of the seven churches” would shew that Jesus holds in His hand all the ministering power in the churches.

This is the One “with whom we have to do.” When John, the beloved disciple, saw Him thus he “fell at His feet as dead.” Immediately sweet words of *grace* flow from the lips of the Blessed One, “Fear not,” He says, “I am the first and the last : I am he that liveth and was dead ; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen ; and have the keys of Hades and of Death. Write the things which thou hast seen, &c.”

PART II.—THE THINGS WHICH ARE.

These things are contained in the second and third chapters, where the churches, as gatherings on the earth, having been tried, are admonished or exhorted as occasion requires. It is under this part of the Book of Revelation that we find ourselves now ; hence, the importance to us of these Epistles. The Church, until the Lord comes, is (if I may use the expression) under Epistle. In one sense, “*all* Scripture” is ours, inasmuch as every part of Scripture reveals GOD to us, and *that*

I conceive, is its *great* use ; and it is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.) But a great part of Scripture is God’s gracious instruction to us about *others*. He treats us thus as His *friends* (John xv. 15, Gen. xviii. 17). But the Epistles are God’s letters to *ourselves*. And that reasoning which would do away with the seven epistles contained in these two chapters, would surely do away also with the other Epistles, Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, &c. The instruction in the Epistles is, I believe, intended for the Church till the Lord comes, without confinedness to the town or city where the saints then were. Certain things were peculiar to the place and time :—the Cretans bore a certain character (Titus i. 12, 13); the Church at Corinth possessed certain gifts which are not now visible ; at Thyatira there was a certain woman named Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess, and with whom adultery was committed ;—but all these Epistles are, nevertheless, for our “edification, exhortation, and comfort.” Beloved, let us take heed to that seven times repeated exhortation, “He that hath an ear, let *him* hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.” There is, then, we see, individual responsibility resting on all those who can hear the voice of the Spirit ; none but quickened ones can do this. It is well to observe here that the messages to the churches are uttered by Christ Himself, yet we find ourselves called upon to hear what “*the Spirit* saith to the churches.” Is not this in happy harmony with John xvi. 13 ?—“Whatsoever He (the Spirit of Truth) shall *hear*, that shall He *speak*.” Oh, that there were more subjection of heart in us to His teaching and guidance !

The Church is left till the Lord returns under the

care of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus was on earth He gathered disciples round Himself, quickening them by the Spirit ; but it was not till He had taken His place in the heavens (having died for sin and rose again) that He sent down the Holy Ghost to dwell in the Church. It is this which makes the Church peculiar. Saints in all dispensations from Abel downwards, were undoubtedly quickened by the Holy Ghost : "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." But till Christ had died and rose again, they were not "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Till Christ had died and rose again, the Spirit was not known as the indwelling Comforter, the "Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

It is important that we see our proper position as saints now. As believers, we stand through God's grace in conscious acceptance, knowing that our sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus, worshipping God in the power of the indwelling Spirit as our *Father*, and looking for Jesus to "come again" to take us to Himself according to His promise. It is thus, as saints, we meet together "on the first day of the week" to "break bread," as did the early disciples, (Acts xx. 7), acknowledging this blessed truth, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink of this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death *till he come*." (1 Cor. xi. 26.) And knowing that we were once "dead in trespasses and sins," and were "by nature the children of wrath even as others," our place in the world as those who have "tasted that the Lord is gracious" is to "*shine as lights. . . holding forth the word of life*."

Alas ! how little is this the case with us ! When the Lord looks upon us, and searches us, oh ! how little has He to commend, how much to reprove !

He looks upon us, and He says, "I come." Do our

hearts respond "Even so, *come* Lord Jesus?" Oh, *that* we knew more of the power of these words "I COME."

"Every man that hath this Hope in Him, purifieth himself even as He is pure." (1 John iii. 3.)

Note.—The different promises held forth "to him that overcometh" are happily noticed in a Tract entitled "*Heaven and Earth.*" Sold at No. 1, Warwick Square.

PART III.—THE THINGS WHICH SHALL BE HEREAFTER.

This third part commences at chap. iv., "Come up hither, and I will shew thee *things which must be hereafter.*"

The Throne of God is seen ; also thrones round about it.

There are those on the thrones who take part in God's counsels, (what grace !) but they sing the song of Redemption, as those who have been redeemed by blood and *made*, by the Lamb, "kings and priests" to God. This corresponds blessedly with the Church's song on earth in the first chapter, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto His God and Father ; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Here, then, (in chap. iv.) we have the Church, no longer on earth waiting for Jesus, but taken up to Heaven.

I believe that "the Elders" all through the Book of Revelation represent the Church.

These chapters, the fourth and fifth, give us much light as to the whole Book. The whole of chap. iv. to chap. v. 11, should be read together. The eleventh verse of chap. v. to the end of the chapter comes in apparently as a parenthesis. And chap. vi. it is clear, connects itself with verse 8 of the previous chapter.

Observe this : in chap. v. 8, the Lamb takes the book out of the right hand of Him who sat upon the throne : when he takes the book they sing a new song, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to *open* the seals thereof;" and chap. vi. begins thus—"I saw *when* the Lamb *opened* one of the seals." If, then, the Church is in heaven singing "Thou art worthy," when the Lamb *takes* the sealed book, there she must be when the Lamb *opens* it.

From chap. vi., therefore, I believe, we have unfolded to us events which will happen on the earth after the Church has been taken away, but before the Lord brings her back again, as in chap. xix. When He comes to judge, it is "*with* His saints." (Jude 14, 15.)

Desiring merely to make "a few remarks," we will not now attempt to enter into the details of the middle chapters of this book : we may do so, if it please God, at some other time. I would merely remark that there are other companies redeemed for heavenly glory besides the Church, and after the Church has been "caught up." (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.) The "great multitude" spoken of in chap. vii. 9—17, are quite distinct from the enthroned and crowned Elders,—see verses 11—13. Also the "hundred-forty-and-four-thousand" on Mount Sion, who are called "Virgins" in chap. xiv. 1—5.....they sing their song "before the throne, and before the four living ones, *and the Elders.*" There are also those, in chap. xv., "that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name....and they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb."

Jerusalem and the Temple rebuilt by the Jews in unbelief, (chap. xii.) they being "holpen with a little help, many cleaving to them with flatteries." (Dan.

xi. 34.) Babylon also rebuilt "the glory of kingdoms," and overthrown like Sodom, with the destruction of Antichrist,—see Isaiah xiii. xiv.—these, among other subjects, (noticing especially the preparative as well as final judgment upon the evil, both ecclesiastical and civil,) these form the chief contents of the middle chapters.

In chapter xix. we have the Lord Jesus coming forth from heaven to execute judgment upon the ripened evil. His saints come with Him, clothed in "fine linen, white and clean." (Compare verse 14 with verse 8.) He comes as "the King of kings, and Lord of lords," treading the "winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." See Isaiah lxiii.

"The beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies" are gathered together against him, — (see Psalm ii.) and the results of His coming are thus expressed,—"the Beast (Antichrist) was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that had worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone; and the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

Then follow the events of chapter xx. Satan is bound for a thousand years, during which period Christ and all those who have "part in the first resurrection" reign. This "first resurrection" includes, not only the Church, but all the faithful ones from the beginning; those who had not bowed to Antichrist or his image, &c.,—see verse 4.*

* The 1000 years' reign has not that full character of blessing

When the thousand years are expired Satan is loosed, he goes forth to deceive the nations and gathers them together to battle : they go up and compass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city (i. e. the earthly Jerusalem) ; fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them. The devil is then cast into the lake of fire and brimstone to be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

The Great White Throne is then set, and the dead, small and great, are judged. Death and Hades are cast into the lake of fire, and whosoever are not found written in the Book of Life. This is the second death.

All evil being now cleared away, God introduces the eternal state, in which He finds His Rest.

“ A new heaven and a new earth,” the former having passed away when the Great White Throne was set, (v. 11) are now seen. Observe, “ a new *earth*”—“ there was no more *sea*.”

The “ holy city, New Jerusalem,” now descends as the abode of the heavenly family, and *the nations* of them that are saved, walk in the light of it. There is

in which God can *rest*. Satan is then bound it is true, but the *flesh* is unchanged. And thus, directly Satan is loosed again, hundreds and thousands of those on the earth are deceived by him, and put themselves in array against God. In the 1000 years, Christ as “ Head of the heathen” has “ feigned obedience” rendered unto Him by many. (Psalm xviii. 43, 44, margin.) “ He must reign till he hath put all *enemies* under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death.” [This is done when the Great White Throne is set. Rev. xx. 14. In the “ new earth,” it is said, “ There shall be no more death.” Rev. xxi. 4.] And when all things shall be subdued unto Him; then shall the Son also himself be subject unto Him that put all thing under Him, that God (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) may be ALL IN ALL. 1 Cor. xv. 25., &c.

“no more death,”—“no more curse,”—“the former things are passed away.” God has made “all things *new*.”

The perpetuity of Israel's blessings in the “new earth” is most distinctly stated in Scripture, as I judge, though I know many differ from me in this. I would only refer now to a few passages as proving that “the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth even *for ever*.” (Micah iv. 7.)

Isaiah xlv. 17. “Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an *everlasting* salvation : ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded *world without end*.”

Chapter lx. 19. “The sun shall be no more thy light by day ; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee : but the Lord shall be unto thee an *everlasting* light, and thy God thy glory.”

Jeremiah vii. 7. “Then will I cause you to *dwell* in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers *for ever and ever*.” Also chap. xxv. 5.

Compare these passages with Genesis xiii. 15. “All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed *for ever*.” See also chap. xvii. 8.

Ezekiel xxxvii. 25—28. “They shall *dwell* in the land that I have given unto Jacob, my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt ; and they shall *dwell* therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children *for ever* : and my servant *David* shall be their Prince *for ever*. (See Luke i. 32, 33, observing the words “for ever” and “no end.”) Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them ; it shall be an *everlasting* covenant with them ; and I will place them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them *for evermore*. *My tabernacle also shall be with them ; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people*. And the heathen shall know that I the

LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them *for evermore.*"*

Compare this with Rev. xxi. "I saw a new heaven and a new earth....and I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God....and I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying—*Behold the tabernacle of God is WITH MEN, and He will dwell WITH THEM, and they shall be His people and God Himself shall be with them, their God.*"

This last passage, and the following one from Isaiah, are Scriptures on which I would especially rest.

"*As the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.*" (Isaiah lxvi. 22.)

Here, then, we have the events of "the Lord's Day,"—"in the which" so many things happen. (2 Peter, iii. 10-14.)

We wait, beloved, for our "Morning Star;" and oh! it is sweet to hear that "the night is far spent." "A little while," and we shall be "for ever with the Lord."

We have in one sense found "Rest." In another sense we are "going towards rest." This new creation (of which we now form a part through grace, 2 Cor. v. 17)

* "When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory." (Ps. cii. 16.) This, it seems to me, will take place in the "thousand years." And though after that period, as we have seen, all else will be changed, and created anew, Jerusalem "shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down, any more for ever." (Jer. xxxi. 40.) "Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted His people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem." (Isa. lii.) "The Lord hath chosen Zion: He hath desired it for His habitation. This is My Rest (not for a thousand years only, but) "for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it." (Ps. cxxxii.)

is what the new creature in us longs for. And it is never-ending blessedness, for it is God's own Rest.

"They shall reign FOR EVER AND EVER." (Rev. xxii. 5.)

Here the Book closes. Some important words are added as to its truth, and the sin of adding to or taking from it is declared. The Lord three times announces "I COME QUICKLY." And the Church takes her place with the response—"Even so, *come*, Lord Jesus." Till then, as having the Gospel of *eternal life* committed to her, she stands in the world with the gracious invitation, "Let him that is athirst come : and whosoever will, let him take the water of life *freely*".... "without money and without price."

May we more and more realize the blessedness of our position, beloved.

"The *grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

* * NOTE.—When this Tract was first written, (now some years ago,) the writer held, in common with many others, that the Babylon of Revelation was the *literal city Babylon*: but he has renounced that opinion; and wishes to state, that he believes "*Babylon*" to mean the *corrupt professing church*, "the Great Whore,"—in contrast with the true church, Christ's "*Bride*." And, further, that the "four living creatures" are the "*seraphim*" of Isa. vi. See "Food for Christ's Flock," Vol. i.

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