

are captives and Christ came to 'set at liberty the captives and to open the prison doors' of the grave,] of Sodom and Samaria, then will I bring thy captives in the midst of them." (These will be raised together.) In v. 55 this is called "a return to

#### THEIR FORMER ESTATE"

—restitution. But some one, who cannot imagine that God really could be so good or just, suggests God must be speaking ironically to the Jews, and saying He would just as soon bring back the Sodomites as them, but has no notion of either. Let us see. Read vs. 61-62. Nevertheless "I will remember my covenant with thee; I will establish it to thee." "Yes," says Paul, "this is God's covenant with them—they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and callings of God are without repentance." Rom. xi. 27-29. The 63d verse concludes the argument, showing that the promised restitution is not based on the merits of the Jews, Samaritans or Sodomites. "That thou mayest remember and be confounded and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." When God signs his name to a statement in this way I must believe it. "Saith the Lord God." And no wonder if they are confounded when "in the ages to come He shows forth the exceeding riches of His grace," (Eph. ii. 7), and many of God's children will be confounded and amazed also when they see how "God so loved the world." They will be ready to exclaim with brother Paul: "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

But some will inquire, How comes it that this has not been seen long ago? We answer, God gives light and knowledge to his people just as it is due. The world was left in almost entire ignorance of God's plan until the Gospel age, when Christ came, bringing life and immortality to LIGHT through the Gospel. The Jews up to that time supposed that all the promises of God were to and for them alone, but in *due time* God showed favor to the Gentiles also. Christians generally have supposed that God's blessings are to the church, but we begin to see that God is better than all our fears, and though he has given us the "exceeding great and precious promises," He has made some to the world also.

"The path of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more, until the perfect day," and the fact that it now shines so brightly, and that we are able to see more of the beauty and harmony of God's word, is strong presumptive evidence that we are in the dawn of that glorious millennial day, when "we shall know even as we are known."

But we promised to harmonize those doctrines of the Church generally supposed to be antipodes, viz., CALVINISM, or *Election, and ARMINIANISM, or Free Grace*. Perhaps you already see how they harmonize themselves by simply recognizing the order of the ages and applying each text to the place and time to which it belongs. Let me then point out to you

#### INCONSISTENCY OF EITHER CALVINISM OR ARMINIANISM

when separated from each other. In doing so I do not wish to reflect on those who hold these doctrines. I shall merely call your attention to features which their warmest advocates must confess to be *their weak points*.

First—Calvinism says: God is all-wise. He knew the end from the beginning, and, as "all his purposes shall be accomplished," He never could have intended to save any but a few—the true Church, the little flock. These He elected and predestined to be eternally saved; all others were equally predestined and elected to go to hell, for "known unto the Lord are all His works from the foundation of the world."

This has its good features. It shows, and properly, God's *Omniscience*. This would be our ideal of a GREAT God, were it not that three essential qualities of greatness, viz., MERCY, LOVE and JUSTICE, are lacking, for none of these qualities find place in bringing into the world one hundred and forty-two billions of creatures *damned* before they were born and mocked

by protestations of love. No, no. "God is love;" "God is just;" "God is merciful."

Second—Arminianism says: Yes, "God is love," and in bringing humanity into the world He meant them no harm, only good. But Satan succeeded in tempting Adam; thus "sin entered into the world and death by sin," and ever since, God has been doing all He can to deliver man from his enemy, even to the giving of His Son, and though now, six thousand years after, the gospel has only reached a very small portion of those creatures, yet, we do *hope and trust* that within six thousand years more, through the energy and liberality of the Church, God will have so far remedied the evil introduced by Satan, that all may at least know of His love, and knowledge of God be co-extensive with the knowledge of evil.

The commendable feature of this view is, that it accepts the statement that "God is love." But, while full of loving and benevolent designs for His creatures, He lacks *ability* and *fore-knowledge* adequate to the accomplishment of those designs.

While God was busy arranging and devising for the good of His newly created children, Satan slipped in, and by one stroke upset all God's plans, and in one moment brought sin and evil among men to such an extent that even by exhausting all His power, God must spend twelve thousand years to even reinstate righteousness to such a degree that man will have an opportunity to choose Good as *readily* as Evil, and the one hundred and forty-two billions of the past six thousand years, and as many more of the next, are *lost to all eternity*, in spite of God's love for them, because Satan interfered with His plans as God had not foreseen. Thus Satan, in spite of God, gets one hundred into hell to one God gets to glory. This view must exalt men's ideas of Satan, and lower their estimation of Him who "Spake, and it was done; commanded, and it stood fast."

But how refreshing it is for us to turn from these fragments of truth, as separately considered, and

#### SEE HOW HARMONIOUS

and beautiful they are when united. How, during the present and past ages God is *electing* or gathering, by the preaching of His word, the Gospel church. How He wisely permitted evil to come into the world, in order that He might develop His church, which, thus "being made perfect through suffering," might be prepared for her glorious work in the future; and how the *mass* of mankind, though not now on probation, are nevertheless getting a knowledge and experience by contact with sin which He foresaw they would be the better for; and, furthermore, how he took occasion, in connection with this, His plan, to show us His great love, by so arranging that the death of Christ was necessary to our recovery from sin, and then freely giving Him "to be a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the *whole world*," and then in the next dispensation—"The new heavens and earth" (Rev. xxi. 1-9-10 and xxii. 17)—when "the Spirit and the Bride say come, and whosoever will may come and take of the water of life freely." He will show us His "Free Grace" in fullest measure.

Is not this the teaching of God's Word? Men never would have thought of such a *glorious plan* of salvation. Truly God has said: "My ways are not your ways, nor my thoughts your thoughts." Hereafter when we address Him "Our Father," may it call to our mind that His love and compassion are far greater than the pity of our earthly parents, and while we study His Word more and more, and seek to "grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of God," let us ever remember that

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan His work in vain.  
God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain."

Having seen how much of the great plan of God waits the coming of Christ for its accomplishment, and having, we trust, found *why* Christ comes, can we help loving His appearing? In our next we hope to examine with you what the Bible teaches of *How Christ Comes*.

## "WHAT IS TRUTH?"

This question is one which every sincere Christian should ask and seek to answer. We should learn to love and value truth for its own sake; to respect and honor it by owning and acknowledging it wherever we find it and by whomsoever presented. A *truth* presented by Satan himself is just as true as a *truth* stated by God.

Perhaps no class of people are more apt to overlook this fact than the Christian. How often do they in controversy overlook and ignore *truth* presented by their opponents. This is particularly the case when arguing with an *infidel*. They

feel at perfect liberty to dispute everything he says on religious subjects. This is not the correct principle. Many infidels are *honest*—as anxious to speak and believe the truth as are Christians—and if in converse with them we ignore truths which they may advance, we not only fail to convince them of our *truths*, but put an end to all hope of reaching them; for our failure to admit the evident truth which they advance begets in them contempt for the one who is not honest enough to admit one truth because he does not see how it can be reconciled to another. Accept truth wherever you find it, no matter

what it contradicts, and rely for ability to afterwards harmonize it with others upon "the Spirit of truth, which shall guide you into all truth," as Jesus promised.

Truth, like a modest little flower in the wilderness of life, is surrounded and almost choked by the luxuriant growth of the weeds of error. If you would find it you must be ever on the lookout. If you would see its beauty you must brush aside the weeds of error and the brambles of bigotry. If you would possess it you must stoop to get it.

Be not content with *one* flower of truth. Had one been sufficient there would have been no more. Gather ever, seek for more.

Weave them together as a garland—"Bind them on thee as a bride doeth." "Bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart; so shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man." Prov. iii. 3.

C. T. R.

## HE SEATS HER ON HIS THRONE

"Leaning upon her Beloved."—*Songs of Solomon*, viii. 5

Upon her loved One leaning;  
For thus the Bride appears,  
The wilderness behind her,  
With all its sighs and fears.

For Him in hope she waited  
And loving tears she wept,  
E'en in the darksome shadows,  
She watched while others slept.

She knew He would be faithful,  
And in His Word she read,  
That He was coming quickly,  
She trusted what He said.

Ofttimes His precious promise  
She told to those around,  
To some it seemed good tidings,  
To others empty sound.

Now, as the King of Glory,  
He claims her as His own;  
With hand for her once pierced,  
He seats her on His throne.

M. R. J., Princeton, N. J.

## "GOD IS LOVE"

This is the grand expression of the Bible—the keynote of Christianity. It is the foundation of the great plan of creation and redemption, and the underlying principle in the structure of the Word of God.

It is truth, *the* truth, as God is true, the embodiment of all other truths; so that whatever, rightly understood, is not in harmony with it must be false. "God is love," eternal and unchangeable. All that He has done or will do can but express His infinite fullness. All His attributes are moved and controlled by love.

"God is love." Many feel, as a result of education, that God hates them, but that Christ loves them; others believe that Christ purchased the Father's love. Both are answered by Christ's words: "God so loved the world that he gave his Son," &c. John iii. 16. Christ's work is not to purchase the Father's love, but to manifest it. *Practically*, if not as theologians teach, Christ's words are true: "I and my Father are one"—one in purpose and in work.

Christ prayed to the Father that the disciples might be one, "even as we are one." "As thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they may be one in us," &c. John xvii. 21. He could thus be called "Immanuel—God with us." "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh." 1 Tim. iii. 16. God gave his Son. The Son "gave himself for us." Truly they are in harmony. The love of the infinite God could neither be created nor purchased, but it could be *shown*. This is one part of the work of the Son of God—to reveal the Father. To reveal his love is to reveal himself, for "God is love." Without Christ or out of Christ God cannot be known. The Father does not reveal the Son, but the Son reveals the Father, "For no man knoweth who the Son is but the Father, and no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." No theologian need attempt an *explanation* of the Divine Sonship of our Lord. "But it pleased the Father that in Christ should all fullness dwell."—"All fullness of the Godhead bodily."—Col. i. 19, and ii. 9. He is the Word, the Truth, the personal embodiment of all that is good and true, and emphatically the Revelation of God. "The Word was with God and the Word was God." "The Word was made flesh." He took our nature, the "form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Phil. ii. 7. He of whom it was said, "Let all the angels of God worship him," [that must include Michael,] and "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever," (Heb. i. 6, 8), "left the glory he had with the Father before the foundation of the world;" "made himself of no reputation;" "was made a little lower than the angels;" "for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the *grace of God*, should taste death for every man." Heb. ii. 9.

Great condescension! Glorious love! Whose love? Both the Father's and the Son's, but primarily the Father's. "God so loved that he gave." The love *caused* the gift. "God commendeth his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom. v. 8. "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself, by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit: that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," &c. 2 Cor. vs. 18, 19. The hymn line, "My God is reconciled," has well been changed, "To God I'm reconciled." It is man that is out of order—away from home—and God is in Christ to win the wanderer back. God hates sin, but loves the man. One reason *why* He hates sin is because he loves the man, and sin destroys man's happiness and if persisted in will destroy the man himself. "Thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help found," saith the Lord. "The grace of God, that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared." Grace is love and favor. God in Christ brings salvation to all men absolutely, so far as relates to the recovery of what was lost in Adam. "Who will have all men to be saved." "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." Thus, "We trust in the *living God*, who is the Saviour of ALL MEN, specially of them that believe." 1 Tim. iv. 10.

He has not *only* redeemed man from what was lost in Adam, but has made higher attainments possible, brought salvation near, *within reach* of all men, and is the "author of *eternal* salvation to them that obey him." Heb. v. 9. He not only "gave Himself a ransom (to buy man back from death) for all," but it is "to be testified in due time." 1 Tim. ii. 6. He not only "will have all men to be saved" (from the Adamic penalty), but will also have them "come to the knowledge of the truth." Ver. 4. Thus, and in "due time" He is the "*true light* that *lighteth every man* that cometh into the world." John i. 9. All who have died without the true light, will be enlightened in future, and the words of the angel will be verified: "Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Luke ii. 10.

The salvation from death is secured to all by the *Ransom*: the salvation from sin is made possible to all by the *light*, and all this is the *Father's* arrangement, through the *Son*, who is constituted Redeemer, and also the "*Head*"—"Firstborn" of a new race. He restores the *old to all*, and imparts the *new* to as many as receive and obey the truth.

How true it is, that: "He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love." 1 John iv. 8. "Love is of God." Ver. 1. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him," (the Son.) (Ver. 9.) "Herein is love, . . . that He loved us," &c. (Ver. 10.) "We love