

**SOME REMARKS ON THE WORK OF THE LORD
JESUS, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE
WORLD IN WHICH WE NOW LIVE.**

The following remarks having been circulated in private for some time past, and been found profitable to many, it has been thought desirable to print them. Copies may be obtained of J. H. B., 37, Tressillian Road, St. John's, Near London, S.E.—Price 1*d.* each.

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”—ROMANS v. 12.

To Adam it was said, “The day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die,” and death has been the common lot of all from that day to this.

In the garden, there was no barrier between God and man, till sin came in; after it, there was no way of approach or return to God but through death. This is the way God has been teaching all His servants through the scriptures. Adam is clothed with skins, and Abel brings the lamb, and Noah, Abraham, and Moses, all had to learn the same truth.

What means the Paschal Lamb? and what means the elaborate Jewish ritual? but that if God is to have a redeemed people on a cursed earth, it must be on the ground of death; that if God is to have any dealings with sinful man, so as to bring him into outward relationship with Himself, it could only be through the slain Lamb, a type of the “Lamb of God which taketh away

the sin of the world." True, little was known of the import of all these things. The "better thing" has been reserved for us; and in the light of the glorious gospel all becomes plain.

It is written (Heb. xi. 13), "These all died in faith," &c.; and in 2 Corinthians i. 20, "All the promises of God," &c. Thus the Lord Jesus Christ is seen to be, on man's side, the object of faith; and on God's side, the only ground upon which He could have dealings with sinners. He, being the holy God, must of necessity witness against me; and, from the past to the present moment, he who comes to God must come in God's way. "How shall man be just with God?" "If one died for all, then were all dead." "In thy sight shall no man living be justified." At the flood God had said, "The end of all flesh is come before me;" and there was no alternative but judgment. Still man himself was not set aside, which took place on the cross. Noah comes forth from the ark, and upon the ground of his sacrifice, God blessed him, and made a covenant with him, and all that came forth from the ark.

Afterwards the law is given, and man in the flesh is put upon trial. How miserably he failed we need not here examine, but pass on to that which seals the doom of all men, whether Jews or Gentiles. The blessed Son of God appears, the Light shining in darkness; the Life, where all was death; the Truth, exposing all that was not of it. He is rejected by His own, the Jews; they

deliver Him over to the Gentiles, by whom He is condemned to death; and that cross, set up on Calvary, becomes the central point of human history. Then and there sin—alias “the flesh,” or first man—with all that belonged to him, was judged by God, and for ever set aside.

This blessed truth, accomplished by One on whom God had His eye from all eternity, is unfolded to us in His word. There we learn that it is in the death of His Son, God has been glorified about sin: “For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin,” &c. (2 Cor. v. 21.) When the Lord Jesus came forth from the grave, whither He had gone for sin, He says to His own, “I ascend to my Father,” &c. (John xx.); the result of His death and resurrection, in anticipation of the glorious work yet to be accomplished. Then the message goes forth into the world, “He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved,” &c. Jesus is preached as the One risen from the dead, having “annulled him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” He had tasted death for every man, and henceforth becomes the Head of every man. The first man is for ever judicially set aside; his trial is over, his judgment is passed: “Now is the judgment of this world,” &c. (John xii.) These solemn words were spoken by our blessed Lord in view of His death, and if there is to be blessing for any soul of man, it must be through Him, the risen One from among the dead. This is the

solemn but glorious testimony that God is now presenting to sinners: that Jesus passed through death, and is exalted to heaven's highest place; that He has borne all the judgment that was due to sin, having taken upon Himself every responsibility in which it was possible for man to come and to fail in; that upon His devoted Head met all the wrath of God against sin. In brief, that the first man, sin, the flesh, has been perfectly judged in the death of Christ, for ever set aside and put out of sight. Baptism is the expression of the acceptance of this judgment; the renunciation before God of the first man; the confession that if I had my due as a man, that if God is to deal with me on the ground of what I am, death is my portion; for this was the portion of Christ, the second Man, who in grace died for me. So it is written, "The publicans justified God, being baptised with the baptism of John." Now to justify God is to condemn myself; but "the Pharisees rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptised of him." A Jew, in baptism, gave up all hope of blessing as such; acknowledged the failure of his nation; renounced all the claims he ever had, confessing his hopes of blessing to be in the One then announced by John, "He that cometh after me," &c. The Pharisees, on the other hand, were righteous; did not justify God; did not condemn themselves; *did* reject the counsel of God; refused to be baptised. I adduce this simply to illustrate what baptism means (that is, the acceptance

of the testimony raised) without going into the difference between John's and christian baptism, save to note that there is a difference. The moment a sinner believes in Christ, he is accepted in Him, saved through faith in His name ; but since this is the scene in which God has been outraged ; the scene where sin has been reigning ; the scene where Christ was made sin (in which He died unto sin)—if I am to have part with Him *down here* I must in figure go through death. I am baptised unto His death in order to have part with Him *down here*, in whom alone is life. It is not that I first have part in His life, in order to have part in His death, but, as in reality so in type, I have part in His death, in order to have part in His life. Baptism never supposes life in the one baptised (though it may be there) but always supposes death. Thus Saul was in the condition that attached to him as a sinner, with sins on him, though himself safe. "Arise and be baptised, and wash away thy sins." His sins were not washed away ; that is to say, he was outwardly connected with the first man, until baptised to Christ ; and, as to himself, as a man on earth, was not in a christian state until after baptism. If life was implied in baptism would it not have been written, "Arise and be baptised, because your sins are washed away ?" Again it is said, "Repent and be baptised for the remission of sins ;" not because your sins are remitted, which is the ground taken by those who refuse

baptism for any but believers. "They that gladly received the word were baptised," and it was for the remission of sins; that is to say, they could not be acknowledged as outwardly free from sins until they had in type died in the waters of death—the waters of baptism—"wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water; the *like figure* whereunto even baptism doth also now save us." (1 Pet. iii. 20–22.)

Here are statements: first, that Noah was saved by water; he entered the ark before the flood, and God shut him in—and he was as safe as God could make him—but no one could say he was yet *saved*; and the word says he was saved by water, "the like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us." As the water was God's judgment by which the world was overwhelmed, Noah is saved through it. He enters the ark in the old world, goes through the water (the judgment) and comes out in the new world. He could not be saved except by going through the judgment: "the like figure whereunto baptism" (the waters of death, through which he who accepted God's judgment is called to pass) "doth now save us." Noah could not be saved except by going through the judgment. He could not be brought to stand in the new world except through the flood; neither can we be brought into outward connection with the new Man except we also go through Christ's death in figure. "The like figure" now saves us; we are not

saved externally without it. "Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh," &c. that is, not the outward washing which does make clean the outside of the cup; but that of which it is a type, and unto which I am baptised—Christ's death, which alone can give me a good conscience before God, knowing that He has borne the judgment of sin in His death. Noah was saved, through faith in God's testimony, in the ark, the type of Christ—but he could not stand on new ground except through the flood. The Christian is likewise saved through faith in the blood; but he cannot stand in this judged world in connection with the second Man, except he goes likewise through death in figure.

This was exactly the condition of Israel in Egypt. They were under the shelter of the blood, but they did not get out of Egypt till they had crossed the Red Sea—in type the death of Christ, and destruction of all enemies. They are safe, but not saved. It is the blood which shelters from judgment, but they have to pass through the waters of death before they are seen as a delivered people. In like manner faith in the blood shelters me, but I am not delivered from Egypt till I have been through the Red Sea.

True, I may be the Lord's, and may know that Christ has been into death for me; but this has to do with the position on earth, not the going to heaven. It is subjection to Christ, who is Lord

of all. We do not learn in it that we have died with Christ, and therefore ought to be buried (we *do* see that Christ has died for sin), but, on the contrary, I am baptised in order to die—and in type, die then. The first man has been judicially ended since the cross; and I *then* and *there* own that *truth*. As a type of death it separates me, as the Red Sea did Israel from Egypt, from all that to which Christ died (Rom. vi. 2, 3): “How shall we that are dead to sin,” &c. Here are saints delivered from sin turning again to it; sinning that grace may abound, “turning the grace of God into lasciviousness.” How does the Spirit of God meet them? If ye have been baptised to Christ, it was also to His death—and what was the death but the judgment of God against sin? In baptism they had acknowledged this, the righteousness of that judgment borne for sin; had been baptised unto it; and were henceforth to walk in “newness of life.” So also (Gal. iii. 27; Col. ii. 12) the death of Christ, to which they had been baptised, was that which separated them from all things—sin, the law, the flesh.

Believing then that the first man is entirely condemned and judicially ended in the death of Christ; that baptism is faith’s acceptance of this judgment; that God has given me children who are born, not in connection with the second Man, but in the nature of the first (“that which is born of the flesh is flesh”); believing that these

children, though thus born in sin, and in the nature of the first man (the ended man) are to be trained for God, brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (He who has attained that Lordship by death), it is the privilege of faith to reckon such as judicially ended, to start from the death of Christ, remembering what God thinks of that death, that it is either salvation or judgment; that in it is displayed the righteousness of God, which is *unto all*, but which is only *upon all* them who believe. "We are unto God a sweet savour," &c. (2 Cor. ii. 15.)

The cross of Christ has become that which accredits the holiness of God in the face of sin. Thus we, as believers, are bound before God to present the death of Christ for the acceptance of our children, as soon as they become responsible to receive it: but faith in me, at the earliest moment, lays hold of that death for my child, which is part of me, and for which I am responsible to God. When Israel passed through the Red Sea, a type of Christ's death (they having part in it on the principle of faith), those waters of death became a wall unto them on the right hand and on the left; and it was the same waters of death that overwhelmed the Egyptians who assayed to enter them without faith, and apart from Moses, the leader of Jehovah's people. In like manner faith sees that Christ—dead and risen—is preached to all, and is made the witness of God's

holiness in opposition to sin; the ground of acceptance for faith, the ground of condemnation, apart from faith in it.

The question then arises: In what relation do children stand with regard to God? and secondly, In what relation do christian parents stand with regard to God, and to the children He has given them? It is here that we recognise no standing for ourselves but in the second Man; the first standing has been swept away by the death of Christ; and it is equally true that our children's standing in the first man has been swept away also. As children they stand in virtue of Christ's death; "In heaven their angels do," &c.

Faith accepts this, and puts them in it in type, accepting it as God's righteousness, which shall be to them either salvation or judgment; but, blessed be God, it is not His will that any should perish. His word to the jailer was: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." His faith was to lay hold of the death of Christ, not only for himself, but also for all that belonged to him. God, in response to his faith in Christ, would apply the word to their conscience, and would give them to accept for themselves, what *his* faith had accepted for them: so they were baptised as his household.

This was an absolute statement of God, and, if words have meaning, warrants me to claim the salvation of my house in answer to my faith in

God. This too is His gift. (Eph. ii. 8.) But I remember the first man is judged; that Christ risen is displayed as the righteousness of God before a guilty world; that the world lies under the judgment of God for the death of His Son; that every mouth is stopped, that all are under sin—that baptism expresses nothing for myself as a believer, which my faith may not lay hold of for my child, who is part of me. When I remember that God warrants me to expect the salvation of my child; that by baptism one is brought out of the world which lieth under judgment into subjection to the faith of Christ—“the like figure whereunto even baptism doth now save us,” &c., brings into the church; that the death of Christ (and baptism, the figure of it) is either salvation or judgment to all those to whom Christ risen is displayed as the righteousness of God—then, I joyfully accept in figure, and by faith for my child (for whom I am responsible to God) Christ’s death for it. I own that if God dealt with it according to what it is (of the first man) there is no hope. I own that the death of Christ has ended the first man; that in that death this child, as part of the first man, was judged. I own that all hope is in the second Man. I submit it to Christ’s death, which shall be of necessity either its salvation or judgment; if rejected judgment; but, blessed be God, He encourages me to believe it shall not be judgment, but salvation. He is not willing that any

should perish. He has given me Christ for myself, and presents Christ for the acceptance of my children, not to be their condemnation. He tells me to bring them up for Him in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. He tells me to "train up a child," &c. (Prov. xxii. 6.) The little ones belong to Christ; He has redeemed them. He said, "Suffer little children," &c. In baptism I acknowledge the rights of Christ, which He has attained over it by death ("that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man," Heb. ii. 9); that it is not to be brought up in the world and as of it, trusting that God may at some future time claim it for Himself, but *trained for Him*.

Faith for it, does renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil; owns that all its education and training are to be as of one who belongs to Christ by virtue of His death. Faith reckons it to be dead to the world, therefore I cannot allow for my children in the world anything that I myself, as a christian, may not have. ("Who is sufficient for these things?") All their training should be to this end; that Christ has acquired a right over them. When they are irresponsible, I, as responsible for them, acknowledge that right.

This done in faith, will not God not only give them to know for themselves their need of a Saviour, will He not also most assuredly delight to give them Christ for their hearts? He who accepts Christ's death as the shelter from judg-

ment, whether for himself or for those God has given him, and then allows his children to grow up in the ways and pleasures of the world (because they are not converted, or is himself engrossed with them) is like what an Israelite would have been had he gone out of the door of the house until the morning. "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God."

We can never afford to forget that the blood is on the lintel. The world is under judgment; everything now is a question of faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." (Heb. xi. 6.) If the word of God had told us to baptise children, that would have been something that any one could have taken hold of *without faith*. The word of God is perfect; He who penned it knew what Christendom would be, hence we see the wisdom of God in withholding anything that nature could have appropriated—or it would have appeared to give countenance to that which now exists, a baptised Christendom, *without faith*. But if there is nothing about children being baptised, there is something (very much) about the baptism of households; not because they were believers (they may, or may not, have been), but because they were households.

There is a principle running through scripture, from beginning to end; and it is one we may do well to examine. You ask, How is it that these things are not known? that godly men refuse to baptise any but believers? that there is so much

darkness and confusion about that which concerns the simplest child of God ? The church, as the pillar and ground of the truth, has failed ; departed from single-eyed allegiance to Christ ; ceased to walk by faith ; fallen back upon nature, to walk by sight. We are in the last days ; the church of God is in ruins ; the truth has been hidden, covered over with the dust of centuries ; but God has been graciously removing the dust, leading the saints back to the word, and restoring to them the glorious truths therein. He has recovered to us the glorious truth of the Lord's coming, the heavenly calling of the saints, the new creation, the principles of the assembly, &c., &c. Still, the saints are trying to discover the truth about baptism, through the dust and the ruin, fettered by all that has been done and said about it. Fearful of regeneration, we have rushed to another extreme ; and knowing that it could never give life, have denied that it now saves. Beneath the dust, and apart from the ruin, the word of God is bright and luminous as ever. He reveals as we are able to bear it, and in its practical application. This is a subject pre-eminently for faith ; giving present deliverance for the Christian, and all that belongs to him ; therefore the enemy makes special efforts to keep it from the saints of God. "The just shall live by faith."

