

(Box 68.) OPELIKA, ALA., }
March 16th, 1870. }

MR. E. A. BRALEY: DEAR FRIEND:—Yours of the 12th inst. is at hand, and I have perused its contents with much interest. I truly sympathise with you and your wife in your bereavements. But the "Judge of all the earth will do right." "How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out." Rom. 11:33. However dark and mysterious the providences of God may be to us, all are right and will in the end redound to the glory of God and the good of all his people. It is but the voice of prophecy to assert that "all God's people shall be taught of the Lord." Isa. 54:13.

We should remember, however, that the Lord has his own method of teaching. If it be his pleasure to teach by the rod of affliction, his purpose will be accomplished. We need not expect always to sail on a smooth sea. Storms will arise to furnish an opportunity for a more full manifestation of the power and goodness of God in our protection and deliverance, as well as to teach us more and more of the frailty and nothingness of all creature help. "In my distress (says David) I cried unto the Lord; he heard my voice out of his holy temple." Psa. 18:6.—Then surely it is for the good of God's people to be brought into distress, else they would never know the goodness of God in deliverance from it.

But we are very short sighted creatures and often look at the distress alone and not at those blessed things which are to result from it.—We look too much at the things that are seen by the natural understanding, and not at the things that are not thus seen.

But as you and your lady both ask if the saints will know one another in the heavenly glory as they know each other here, I will say a few words on that subject. The general tendency of most of the religious teaching of the present day is, to early impress the youthful mind that the heavenly state is simply a change of location, with some little improvement for the better, instead of a complete change of nature. To all such it might with great propriety be said, as Christ said to the Sadducees, "ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." Mat. 22:29. If these fleshly ties and relations of

husband and wife, parents and children, masters and servants, kings and subjects, are to remain in the heavenly world of unsullied glory as they once existed here, then the problem submitted by the Sadducees to Christ remains unanswered to this day.—Seven brothers, in succession, had one woman for a wife; as one would die the next brother would marry his widow, and last of all the woman died. "Whose wife shall she be?" Will any of the modern Theological teachers who teach that these fleshly relations and recognitions remain, in the heavenly state, please answer this question? "Whose wife shall she be of the seven?" Mat. 22:28. If these earthly relations remain, each of these seven brothers has equal claims to the same woman for his wife. What a squabble and confusion would ensue. The whole of this very popular and absurd theory proceeds from the source that is stated by our blessed Lord. "Not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God." If popular religious teachers were not ignorant of the Scriptures and of the power of God, to change this vile body and fashion it like the glorious body of a crucified and risen Saviour they would not so greatly err in teaching the absurd doctrine of fleshly recognition and fleshly affections and relations remaining in the heavenly and resurrected state. Phil. 3:20. Do they not know that "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God?" Do they not know that "corruption cannot inherit incorruption?" 1 Cor. 15:50. This corrupt fleshly nature is the greatest enemy that the Christian has to contend with even in this life. It cannot come into the kingdom of Christ even in his gospel Church state upon earth much less into the glorified state of the saints above. The old man with his deeds must be put off, and the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him is put on in the kingdom of Christ, "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all, and in all."—Col. 3:10:11. If "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts," how can they expect these fleshly affections to exist in their triumphant state in the world of glory? Gal. 5:24. Even in the gospel Church state in this world we cannot observe the law of

Christ if we know "any man after the flesh." "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." 2 Cor. 5:16:17.—A man's wife or child is no nearer related to him in the kingdom of Christ than any other subject of grace. These fleshly relations and affections cling about the saints in this world, but cannot enter that "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Dear friends, I might say much upon this subject, but must desist for the present. You also ask in substance, "What is required of a man here on earth that he may see God in peace hereafter?" This is very much like the enquiring of the man who said "What good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Mat. 19. It is a great and awful mistake of sinful men to suppose that their eternal Salvation can be obtained by works of righteousness which they are able to do. If you hope for Salvation and heavenly peace with God on the ground of your own works, you will certainly be mistaken.

I would ask, however, are you really concerned about eternal Salvation? Have either you or your wife felt at any time that you were great sinners before God? and did you then feel or do you now feel that the justice of God requires your banishment and eternal condemnation? Does this sense of guilt press you down like a heavy load of sin by day and by night? Does all your prayers and all your works seem to partake of the nature of your own sinful self? Now if I was to tell you "what is required of a man here on earth to see God's face in peace," I should tell you that this very sense of wretchedness, this loathing and abhorring of yourself is necessary.—You must lose all confidence in your own works, feel that you are a lost sinner before you can truly feel your need of the Saviour of sinners. For all who thus feel their need, there is help at hand. Christ is the Saviour of sinners. If you feel that you have a stock of righteousness of your own, you cannot claim the promise of Salvation to sinners.

Do you not know that the "wages of sin is death." That is the wages or pay for sin, "But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." We see at once that Salvation is not obtained as a reward for our works, we cannot buy it nor

get it as wages for which we have labored. It is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ. "By grace you are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works lest any man should boast." Eph. 2:8. If then you ask "what you can do to insure your eternal Salvation?" I must answer, nothing, absolutely nothing.—Now if you can feel assured of this and yet feel that something must be done for you speedily, else you sink forever, let me say to you that something has already been done for you else you would not feel your need.—"Cast your burden upon the Lord, he will sustain you." Look to Jesus alone for Salvation. "He is able to save to the uttermost those that come to God by him." But remember that when we come to God by him, we do not come in our own name, nor in our own works, but we come by his atonement, we come by his righteousness and grace which he sheds abundantly on us. Do you mourn for sin? do you repent, do you hunger and thirst after righteousness? do you desire a new heart and a new Spirit? Then let me tell you these very things are evidences that you have a new heart already and as a consequence you have new views of the character of God, and of your own character. Your mourning, repenting, hungering and thirsting are the effects, and not the cause of life. It is the living that see, feel, mourn and repent.

But I have perhaps said enough upon this point. You say that your wife has never made any religious profession, but seems to be much concerned about her condition. Now let me say for her consolation, if that concern is produced by the Spirit of God giving her eternal life she will assuredly be brought experimentally to know Jesus in the forgiveness of sins.—He is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and no man cometh unto the Father but by him. "He is exalted to be a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel." Repentance is therefore the gift of God as well as everything else necessary to Salvation.

Suffer now a few concluding remarks from one who feels that his labor on earth is nearly done. Let me say to you and your lady, Search the Scriptures carefully, notice particularly who is address-