

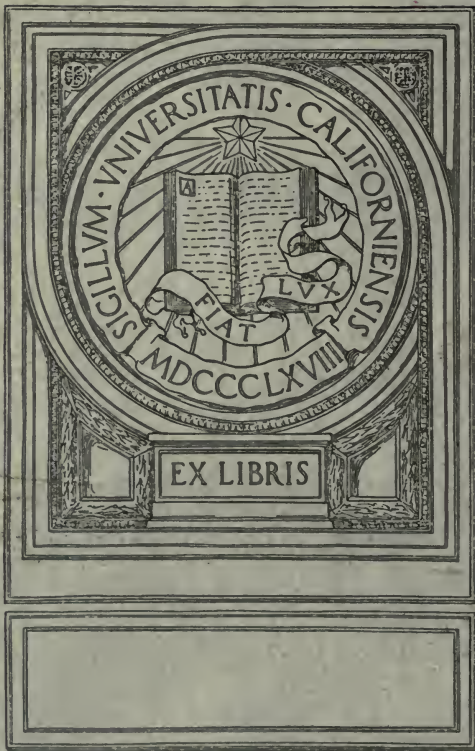
UC-NRLF



⌘B 483 070

SEEK AND FIND

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI



EX LIBRIS

Free Sub 61503

SEEK AND FIND

A DOUBLE SERIES OF SHORT STUDIES

OF THE

BENEDICITE.

BY

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

"Treasure hid in a field."—ST. MATTHEW xiii. 44.

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE TRACT COMMITTEE.

LONDON:

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, CHARING CROSS;

4, ROYAL EXCHANGE; AND 48, PICCADILLY.

New York: Pott, Young, & Co.

BV 4832
R6

TO VNU
ANNOUNCED

PREFATORY NOTE.

IN writing the following pages, when I have consulted a Harmony it has been that of the late Rev. Isaac Williams.

Any textual elucidations, as I know neither Hebrew nor Greek, are simply based upon some translation; many valuable alternative readings being found in the Margin of an ordinary Reference Bible.

C. G. R.

885154



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

THE BENEDICTE.

THE PRAISE-GIVERS ARE	GOD'S CREATURES,	CHRIST'S SERVANTS.
O all ye Works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord : praise Him, and magnify Him for ever.	God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good (Gen. i. 31).	The Word was God. All things were made by Him ; and without Him was not anything made that was made (St. John i. 1, 3).
O ye Angels of the Lord, &c.	Who maketh His angels spirits ; His ministers a flaming fire (Ps. civ. 4).	When He bringeth in the First-begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him (Heb. i. 6).
O ye Heavens, &c.	Thou, even Thou, art Lord alone ; Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host (Neh. ix. 6).	He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things (Eph. iv. 10).
O ye Waters that be above the Firmament, &c.	God divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament : and it was so (Gen. i. 7).	They which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. The Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters (Rev. vii. 14, 17).
O all ye Powers of the Lord, &c.	Whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers : all things were created by Him, and for Him (Col. i. 16).	Jesus Christ : Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God ; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him (1 St. Pet. iii. 21, 22).
O ye Sun, and Moon, &c.	O give thanks unto the Lord ; for He is good. To Him that made great lights : the sun to rule by day : the moon to rule by night : for His mercy endureth for ever (Ps. cxxxvi. 1-9).	The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people (Is. xxx. 26).

THE PRAISE-GIVERS ARE	GOD'S CREATURES,	CHRIST'S SERVANTS.
O ye Stars of Heaven, &c.	Praise Him, all ye stars of light. Let them praise the name of the Lord : for He commanded, and they were created (Ps. cxlviii. 3, 5).	When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him (St. Matt. ii. 1, 2).
O ye Showers, and Dew, &c.	The Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain (Zech. x. 1). By His knowledge the clouds drop down the dew (Prov. iii. 20).	When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straight-way ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is (St. Luke xii. 54). It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying, My head is filled with dew, and My locks with the drops of the night (Song of Sol. v. 2).
O ye Winds of God, &c.	Lo, He that createth the wind, The Lord, The God of hosts, is His name (Am. iv. 13).	He commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey Him (St. Luke viii. 25).
O ye Fire and Heat, &c.	Praise the Lord from the earth, fire (Ps. cxlviii. 7, 8). The Lord said in His heart, While the earth remaineth, cold and heat shall not cease (Gen. viii. 21, 22).	The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is (1 Cor. iii. 13). When ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass (St. Luke xii. 55).
O ye Winter and Summer, &c.	Thou hast made summer and winter (Ps. lxxiv. 17).	It was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch (St. John x. 22, 23). Now learn a parable of the fig-tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near (St. Mark xiii. 28).
O ye Dews, and Frosts, &c.	Saith the Lord of hosts. The heavens shall give their dew (Zech. viii. 11, 12). He scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes (Ps. cxlvii. 16).	In the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground (Ex. xvi. 13, 14).

THE PRAISE-GIVERS ARE	GOD'S CREATURES,	CHRIST'S SERVANTS.
O ye Frost and Cold, &c.	By the breath of God frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened (Job xxxvii. 10). Who can stand before His cold (Ps. cxlvii. 17)?	The Lord is my strength and song, and He is be- come my salvation. The floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea (Ex. xv. 2, 8). They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And the Lord God said unto the serpent, I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed (Gen. iii. 8-15).
O ye Ice and Snow, &c.	He casteth forth His ice like morsels (Ps. cxlvii. 17). He saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth (Job xxxvii. 6).	Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure founda- tion. And the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies (Is. xxviii. 16, 17). His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow (St. Mark ix. 3).
O ye Nights, and Days, &c.	Seek Him that turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: The Lord is His Name (Am. v. 8).	Behold, I cast out de- vils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be per- fected (St. Luke xiii. 32). He went immediately out: and it was night. Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glori- fied (St. John xiii. 30, 31).
O ye Light and Dark- ness, &c.	There is no God beside Me. I form the light, and create darkness (Is. xlv. 5, 7).	I am the Light of the world (St. John viii. 12). It was about the sixth hour, and there was dark- ness over all the earth until the ninth hour (St. Luke xxiii. 44).
O ye Lightnings, and Clouds, &c.	The Lord is the true God. He maketh light- nings with rain (Jer. x. 10, 13). Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of	As the lightning com- eth out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be (St. Matt. xxiv. 27).

THE PRAISE-GIVERS ARE	GOD'S CREATURES,	CHRIST'S SERVANTS.
O let the Earth bless the Lord : &c.	<p>Him which is perfect in knowledge (Job xxxvii. 16)?</p> <p>The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. For He hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods (Ps. xxiv. 1, 2).</p>	<p>Behold, He cometh with clouds (Rev. i. 7).</p> <p>We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (2 St. Pet. iii. 13).</p>
O ye Mountains, and Hills, bless ye the Lord : &c.	<p>Who hath weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counsellor hath taught Him (Is. xl. 12, 13)?</p>	<p>Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste (St. Luke i. 39).</p> <p>If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray (St. Matt. xviii. 12)?</p>
O all ye Green Things upon the Earth, &c.	<p>God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth : and it was so (Gen. i. 11).</p>	<p>Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand (St. John vi. 10).</p>
O ye Wells, &c.	<p>I the God of Israel. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys : I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water (Is. xli. 17, 18).</p>	<p>Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well (St. John iv. 6).</p>
O ye Seas, and Floods, &c.	<p>Worship Him that made the sea (Rev. xiv. 7).</p> <p>The Lord sitteth upon the flood ; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever (Ps. xxix. 10).</p>	<p>Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea (St. Matt. xiv. 25).</p> <p>The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary ; and the end thereof shall be with a flood (Dan. ix. 26).</p>
O ye Whales, and all that move in the Waters, &c.	<p>God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after</p>	<p>As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly ; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in</p>

THE PRAISE-GIVERS ARE	GOD'S CREATURES,	CHRIST'S SERVANTS.
O all ye Fowls of the Air, &c.	<p>their kind : and God saw that it was good (Gen. i. 21).</p> <p>I am God, even thy God. I know all the fowls of the mountains. The world is Mine, and the fulness thereof (Ps. l. 7-12).</p>	<p>the heart of the earth (St. Matt. xii. 40).</p> <p>He said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes (St. John xxi. 6).</p> <p>Behold the fowls of the air : for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them (St. Matt. vi. 26).</p>
O all ye Beasts, and Cattle, &c.	<p>God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing (Gen. i. 24).</p> <p>Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel ; I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground (Jer. xxvii. 4, 5).</p>	<p>The ox knoweth his Owner, and the ass his Master's crib (Is. i. 3).</p> <p>He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan ; and was with the wild beasts ; and the angels ministered unto Him (St. Mark i. 13).</p>
O ye Children of Men, &c.	<p>How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O God ! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings (Ps. xxxvi. 7).</p>	<p>Thou art fairer than the children of men (Ps. xlv. 2).</p>
O let Israel bless the Lord, &c.	<p>I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King (Is. xliii. 15).</p>	<p>Blessed be the Lord God of Israel ; for He hath visited and redeemed His people (St. Luke i. 68).</p>
O ye Priests of the Lord, bless ye the Lord : &c.	<p>The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth : for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts (Mal. ii. 7).</p>	<p>He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost : whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained (St. John xx. 22, 23).</p>
O ye Servants of the Lord, &c.	<p>No weapon that is formed against thee shall</p>	<p>If any man serve Me, let him follow Me ; and</p>

THE PRAISE-GIVERS ARE	GOD'S CREATURES,	CHRIST'S SERVANTS.
<p>O ye Spirits and Souls of the Righteous, &c.</p>	<p>prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord (Is. liv. 17).</p> <p>The way of the just is uprightness: Thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just. With my soul have I desired Thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early (Is. xxxvi. 7, 9).</p>	<p>where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour (St. John xii. 26).</p> <p>Ye are come unto mount Sion, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant (Heb. xii. 22-24).</p> <p>My soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation (Is. lxi. 10).</p>
<p>O ye holy and humble Men of heart, &c.</p>	<p>Ye shall be holy men unto Me (Ex. xxii. 31).</p> <p>Thus saith the high and lefty One, Whose Name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble (Is. lvii. 15).</p>	<p>Christ is all and in all. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, humbleness of mind (Col. iii. 11, 12).</p>
<p>O Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, &c.</p>	<p>Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, came forth of the midst of the fire (Dan. iii. 23, 26).</p>	<p>Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God (Dan. iii. 24, 25).</p>

THE FIRST SERIES:

CREATION.

ALL WORKS.

“ Whence then cometh wisdom ? and where is the place of understanding ? Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living. God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof. And unto man He said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom ; and to depart from evil is understanding.” JOB xxviii. 20-28.

[NOT to fathom the origin of evil, but to depart from evil, is man's understanding. Its origin is inscrutable by us : but depart from it we can. And if at the very outset we lack wisdom, St. James (i. 5) prescribes for us a remedy : “ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not ; and it shall be given him : ” Amen, through Jesus Christ our Lord. He helping us, let us bring love and faith to our study of the Benedicite.

“ God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good ” (Gen. i. 31). A work is less noble than its maker : he who makes a good thing is himself better than it : God excels the most excellent of His creatures. Matters of

everyday occurrence illustrate our point: an artist may paint a lifelike picture, but he cannot endow it with life like his own; he may carve an admirable statue, but can never compound a breathing fellow-man. Wise were those ancients who felt that all forms of beauty could be but partial expressions of beauty's very self: and who by clue of what they saw groped after Him they saw not. Beauty essential is the archetype of imparted beauty; Life essential, of imparted life; Goodness essential, of imparted goodness: but such objects, good, living, beautiful, as we now behold, are not that very Goodness, Life, Beauty, which (please God) we shall one day contemplate in beatific vision. Then shall fully come to pass that saying: "They that eat me shall yet be hungry, and they that drink me shall yet be thirsty" (Ecclus. xxiv. 21); only with a hunger and thirst which shall abide at once satisfied and insatiable. Then, not now: now let us turn to a spiritual signification the prayer of Agur: "Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me" (Prov. xxx. 8). If even St. Paul might have been exalted above measure through abundance of revelation (2 Cor. xii. 7),

let us thank God that we in our present frailty know not any more than His Wisdom reveals to us: not that man's safety resides in ignorance any more than in knowledge, but in conformity of the human to the divine will. See the Parable of the Talents, St. Luke xix. 12-26; where the sentence depends on the fidelity of the servants, rather than on the amount of the trust.

The divine bounty and mercy are good: the divine justice and chastisements are good also. The decree being good, that creature which fully and simply executes the decree is also good. Wherefore every obedient creature, whatever its particular act of obedience whether in judgment or in mercy, may by and for that act render praise to God.

As regards our own impressions, we often make mistakes between mercies and judgments, putting bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter (Is. v. 20). Saints and sinners alike are liable to fall into such errors. Jacob said, "All these things are against me" (Gen. xlii. 36), at the very moment when step by step his reunion with Joseph was drawing nigh. Balaam carried his point (Num. xxii. 34, 35), but what a death he died, and what an end was his! (Num. xxiii. 10: xxxi. 7, 8.)

ANGELS.

“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”

HEB. i. 14.

“SPIRITS;” therefore, in the scale of natural creation higher than man; for we see that Jesus Himself was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death (Heb. ii. 9): “ministering spirits;” and therefore in the kingdom of grace of exceeding dignity by virtue of Godlikeness, “For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister” (St. Mark x. 45). Nor is it except through the grave and gate of death that the redeemed shall attain to equality with the angels (St. Luke xx. 35, 36). Nevertheless, we see the first made last, and the last first; inasmuch as Christ took on Him not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham (Heb. ii. 16), and is not ashamed to call us brethren (v. 11), and has made us members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones (Eph. v. 30.)

Since we believe that even in this life we dwell among the invisible hosts of angels,—since

we hope in the life to come to rejoice and worship without end in their blessed company, let us collect what we already know of these our unseen fellows, that by considering what are their characteristics, we ourselves may be provoked unto love and to good works (Heb. x. 24).

They rejoice. When earth was created "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job xxxviii. 4-7). Their's is joy of a generous sort; contrary to envy, grudging, covetousness.

They are greater than man in power and might; but withal modest and gracious, for they bring not railing accusations (2 St. Peter ii. 9-11). This teaches us moderation, reverence.

They are of light, not of darkness (see 2 Cor. xi. 14): and we by faith must become children of light (St. John xii. 36). Thus we read of St. Stephen, how in the victory of his faith "all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel" (Acts vi. 15).

They are strong. St. John the Evangelist speaks of "a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice." And what proclaimed he? Virtually, the inferiority of all in heaven and in

earth and under the earth to the only Lord God Almighty, the Lamb of God, our Lord Jesus Christ (Rev. v. 2-7). In such a comparison even unfallen angels are chargeable with folly (Job iv. 18): what then must we be?

They justify God in his judgments. The same St. John, when in vision he beheld rivers and fountains turned to blood, "heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because Thou hast judged thus" (Rev. xvi. 4-7). Eliphaz the Temanite, also, when a spirit passed before his face, "heard a voice, saying, Shall mortal man be more just than God?" (Job iv. 12-19). And thus faithful Abraham, whose children we are if we be of the number of the faithful (Gen. xv. 6; Gal. iii. 6, 7), in faith not in doubt worded his appeal to God: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. xviii. 25).

To us, a younger and feebler generation, creatures of clay and ready to die (death being the wages of sin, Rom. vi. 23), the angelic aspect is not without terror. "His countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible," said Manoah's wife, while as yet she understood not fully of whom she spake: but the

fear thus inspired was a holy fear not contrary to holy courage, for the latter virtue shines in her subsequent words (Judges xiii. 6, 23).

Angels are superior to many natural laws which bind us: recognised or unrecognised they may appear as from empty space, they may vanish yet remain present. Till the angel summoned fire out of the Rock, Gideon divined not with whom he conversed (Judges vi. 21, 22): the angelic host encompassed Elisha before his servant's eyes were opened to discern it (2 Kings vi. 17). And Holy Scripture, as a tender nurse feeding babes with milk, draws from our very inferiority a rule and encouragement of righteousness: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb. xiii. 2). Their nobler essence is exempt from possibilities of damage which beset us: one angel ascends in a flame (Judges xiii. 20); one shuts the mouths of lions (Dan. vi. 22); one stands on earth and sea (Rev. x. 2).

Yet let us not think of them, any more than of ourselves, more highly than we ought to think (see Rom. xii. 3). He in Whose sight the heavens are not clean or the stars pure (Job xv. 15; xxv. 5), He Who has placed the sand for the

bound of the sea by a perpetual decree (Jer. v. 22), has appointed to His holy angels no less their sphere and their limits. Unto the angels God hath not put in subjection the world to come (Heb. ii. 5): angels desire to look into things which Evangelists were privileged to preach (1 St. Peter i. 12): it is by the Church that the manifold wisdom of God becomes known to principalities and powers in heavenly places (Eph. iii. 10). Thus we behold man in his turn ministering to angels. And even a distinction in man's favour has been traced as perhaps latent in Is. vi. 6, 7: for that seraph by whose agency God purged the sin of Isaiah, took with tongs the live coal which the prophet's bare lips endured to touch.

HEAVENS.

"Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is My Throne."
Is. lxvi. 1.

"I saw the Lord sitting on His Throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left." 1 KINGS xxii. 19.

"Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee." 1 KINGS viii. 27.

THE heaven and heaven of heavens contain not God: themselves are but an outcome of His mind and will. Before the heavens were, as

truly as before the brief day of Abraham, God was (Prov. viii. 27; St. John viii. 58). Before the host of heaven came into being at His word, God was, Almighty in power (Ps. xxxiii. 6, 9). Before heaven His throne was set up, God was, the Blessed and only Potentate (1 Tim. vi. 15). Blessed be God Eternal, Immortal, Invisible; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, One God, Blessed for ever. Amen.

Now we wait to know as we are known, to see face to face: yet already have there been vouchsafed to mankind many glimpses into the land that is very far off. Even under the elder dispensation of types and figures such glimpses were accorded to certain favoured prophets and righteous men.

Thus Jacob fleeing from his father's tents, lighted in a dream on the house of God and gate of heaven (Gen. xxviii. 10-17). Moses in setting up God's Tabernacle was admonished to copy the heavenly pattern shown to him in the mount (Ex. xxvi. 30): and already with more than threescore persons he had been admitted to contemplate a divine vision (xxiv. 9-11). Micaiah, before he faced wicked Ahab, beheld the celestial court and understood the divine

counsels (1 Kings xxii. 19-22). In the year that King Uzziah died, Isaiah gazed upon the Throne of God and the worshipping Seraphim (Is. vi. 1-4). To captive Ezekiel the heavens were opened, and he saw visions of God (Ezek. i., &c.). Daniel in visions upon his bed beheld the Session of the Ancient of Days, beheld the Judgment set and the Books opened; and saw One like the Son of Man come with the clouds of heaven (Dan. vii. 9-14).

Heaven is the habitation of God's house, and the place where His honour dwelleth. Heaven is the presence of God: the presence of God, then, is heaven. Is it heaven to us, this secret place of the Most High, wherein the saints dwell, this shadow of the Almighty under which His elect abide? (Ps. xci. 1). If it be not heaven to us, yet whither shall we flee from His presence? "If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there" (Ps. cxxxix. 7, 8). We may refuse to set foot on the ladder which leads from earth upwards, to mould ourselves as tabernacles of God after our divine pattern, to contemplate and adore our heavenly King, to receive and understand His counsels, to worship with Seraphim, to learn with

Prophets: yet, whither shall we flee from His presence? Not until the King Himself shall say, "Depart from Me" (St. Matt. xxv. 41), not until that most awful moment shall any of us be blotted out of His presence. "From Thy wrath, and from everlasting damnation, Good Lord, deliver us."

WATERS ABOVE THE FIRMAMENT.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork." PS. xix. 1.

SINCE many of the "Waters that be above the firmament" are named one by one further on in the Canticle, let us for the moment dwell on the firmament itself, "the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking glass" (Job xxxvii. 18).

To our eyes it appears blue, sometimes deepening towards purple, sometimes passing into pale green; purple, an earthly hue of mourning, and green our tint of hope. One colour seems to prophesy of that day when the sign of the Son of Man shall appear in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn (St. Matt. xxiv. 30): one, to symbolize that veil of separation beyond which

faith and love discern our ascended Lord, and whereinto hope as an anchor of the soul sure and stedfast entereth (Heb. vi. 19, 20). Remote from either extreme stretches the prevalent blue, pure and absolute: thus the sky and its azure become so at one in our associations, that all fair blue objects within our reach, stone or flower, sapphire or harebell, act as terrene mirrors, conveying to us an image of that which is above themselves, as "earthly pictures with heavenly meanings." And although the atmosphere is in reality full of currents and commotions, yet to our senses the sky appears to stand aloof as the very type of stability; overarching and embosoming not earth and sea only, but clouds and meteors, planets and stars. Beneath it and within it all moves, waxes, wanes, while itself changes not: setting before us as by a parable the little-loftiness of the loftiest things of time; "there be higher than they" (see Eccles. v. 8). Yet has the unchanging sky no final stability, but at its appointed hour it shall be rolled up as a scroll and shall pass away (Is. xxxiv. 4; Rev. vi. 14).

Thus while all the good creatures of God teach us some lesson concerning the unapproached perfections of their Creator, that which they

display is a glimpse, that which they cannot display is infinite. "They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure" (Ps. cii. 26).

POWERS.

"Do all to the glory of God." I COR. x. 31.

ONE order of elect spirits we designate Powers, but these have virtually been considered under the head of "Angels of the Lord." Perhaps under the head of "Powers" may not improperly be classed what are termed Forces.

And I think it will even answer our purpose if we here go no further than to recal a few familiar facts and agents which bring home unmistakably to our consciousness the existence of powers at work all around us, however these may oftentimes elude our senses: of powers which working in harmony bear witness to that "great First Cause" Who ordained and Who rules them. "Lo, He goeth by me, and I see Him not: He passeth on also, but I perceive Him not" (Job ix. 11).

Electricity: the dangerous element of the storm, announcing its awful passage by lightning flash and thunder-clap, yet in speed outstripping

both light and sound: electricity, of strength to rend trees, shatter rocks, and destroy life, has nevertheless become man's servant; available in the physician's hands for treatment of disease, and in the telegraph and telephone for communication of intelligence. "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands" (Ps. viii. 6).

Steam, that is, water: water, the very symbol of instability. "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel" (Gen xlix. 4), said dying Jacob, moved by the Spirit of prophecy: or if we study an alternative rendering of his words, "Bubbling up as water," we may still perhaps trace the same idea of instability, inasmuch as what is easily excited does very commonly as easily subside. Yet as man's servant, and in the form of steam, water acquires power not merely to upheave, but to wield and to apply with the utmost delicacy of touch, masses of enormous weight; and puts forth a sustained swiftness outspeeding the horse and his rider, though not the eagle or the carrier pigeon.

Light and heat, to our apprehension the great vivifiers of the material world, are in like manner brought into subjection by man: under whose regulations one effects a permanent record of

beauties which themselves consume away like a moth (Ps. xxxix. 11); while the other enables us to transfer tropical vegetation to temperate zones, and to make fruits ripen, and animals exist and even propagate in alien climates.

Or, to lift our thoughts above the sphere of man's dominion, — gravitation, attraction, repulsion: whereby the earth we dwell on and the celestial luminaries her companions occupy their assigned abodes and fulfil their prefixed courses: whereby the tide flows and ebbs in accordance with the moon's phases; whereby alone the planets escape not from their prescribed circuits and the apple falls.

Wonderful and awful are those forces which launch, arrest, guide, compact, dissolve, the members of the material universe. Yet more wonderful, more awful, are those intellectual faculties which shrined within mortal man, gauge height and depth, deduce cause from effect, and track out the invisible by clue of the visible: thus a certain master-mind by the aberration of one celestial body from the line of its independent orbit, argued the influential neighbourhood of a second luminary till then undiscerned.

In a more or less degree every one of us in-

herits this awful birthright of intellectual power. With Esau we may despise and squander our birthright (Gen. xxv. 29-34), with Reuben disgrace and forfeit it (1 Chron. v. 1); but ours it is: and so far as the tremendous responsibility originally involved in its possession is concerned, ours it must remain, though shorn of every privilege and bringing on us a curse and not a blessing.

Let each of us take heed that it bring on our own self a blessing and not a curse: for be our past what it may, by God's grace we may yet be trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And then shall this intellectual power entrusted to us become verily and indeed a "power of the Lord." Not all knowledge is good: as Isaiah declares to "delicate" Chaldea, "Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee" (Is. xlvii. 1, 10). Ignorantly with Eve we may learn shame (Gen. iii. 6, 7; 1 Tim. ii. 14); or deliberately with Solomon study wisdom, madness, and folly; but to increase knowledge which is not true wisdom, increaseth sorrow (Eccles. i. 17, 18). Let us to-day be content to remain ignorant of many things while we seek first the kingdom of God and His right-

eousness: to-morrow, if not to-day, knowledge and all other good things shall be added unto us (St. Matt. vi. 33; 1 Tim. iv. 7, 8; 1 Cor. xiii. 12). Let us not exercise ourselves in matters beyond our present powers of estimate, lest amid the shallows (not the depths) of science we make shipwreck of our faith. To-day is the day of small things (see Zech. iv. 10): let us to-day be content with the small things of to-day, knowing assuredly that all they who are Christ's are made one with Him Who is the heir of all things (St. John xvii. 21—23; Heb. i. 2). Thus shall our path be as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day (Prov. iv. 18), while we go from strength to strength until every one of us appear before God in Zion (Ps. lxxxiv. 7).

SUN AND MOON.

“God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night.” GEN. i. 16.

BOTH lights great: one exceeding the other: both good. Such a graduation of greater and less, both being acceptable to Him Who made them, pervades much if not the whole of the

world in which we live: sun and moon, man and woman; or to ascend to the supreme instance, Christ and His Church. I, being a woman, will copy St. Paul's example and "magnify mine office" (Rom. xi. 13). Probably there were in his day persons who rated the Apostle of the Gentiles, as such, far below the Apostle of the Jews (1 Cor. ix. 1-6; Gal. ii. 8), and one aspect of truth may have been honoured by such an estimate: yet was not the estimate exhaustive, for it was not one which embraced the entire field of God's Love towards His human family. What said God Himself when hundreds of years before He spake of Christ? "It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a Light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My Salvation unto the end of the earth" (Is. xlix. 6).

In many points the feminine lot copies very closely the voluntarily assumed position of our Lord and Pattern. Woman must obey: and Christ "learned obedience" (Gen. iii. 16; Heb. v. 8). She must be fruitful, but in sorrow: and He, symbolised by a corn of wheat, had not brought forth much fruit except He had died (Gen. iii.

16; St. John xii. 24). She by natural constitution is adapted not to assert herself, but to be subordinate: and He came not to be ministered unto but to minister; He was among His own "as he that serveth" (1 St. Peter iii. 7; 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12; St. Mark x. 45; St. Luke xxii. 27). Her office is to be man's helpmeet: and concerning Christ God saith, "I have laid help upon One that is mighty" (Gen. ii. 18, 21, 22; Ps. lxxxix. 19). And well may she glory, inasmuch as one of the tenderest of divine promises takes (so to say) the feminine form: "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you" (Is. lxvi. 13).

In the case of the twofold Law of Love, we are taught to call one Commandment "first and great," yet to esteem the second as "like unto it" (St. Matt. xxii. 37-39). The man is the head of the woman, the woman the glory of the man (1 Cor. xi. 3, 7). "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon" (xv. 41). It used to be popularly supposed that "the moon walking in brightness" (Job xxxi. 26) is no more than a mirror reflecting the sun's radiance: now careful observation leads towards the hypothesis that she also may exhibit inherent luminosity.

But if our proud waves will after all not be stayed, or at any rate not be allayed (for stayed they must be) by the limit of God's ordinance concerning our sex, one final consolation yet remains to careful and troubled hearts: in Christ there is neither male nor female, for we are all one (Gal. iii. 28).

In the Old Testament history two miracles are recorded as having suspended planetary law: one having been wrought during the Jewish conquest of the land of promise (Josh. x. 12-14); the other long afterwards, when Israel had ceased to be a kingdom and Judah was dwindling towards a penal captivity (2 Kings xx. 8-11). The first miracle concerned divers nations, the second an individual trembling saint; one asserted the Divine supremacy, the other exemplified the Divine compassion. If we learn from all such portents that the nations are before God as a drop of a bucket and as the small dust of the balance (Is. xl. 15), that He will by no means clear the guilty (Ex. xxxiv. 7), that He doth not willingly afflict the children of men (Lam. iii. 33), and, not least, that He far better than ourselves knows whether lengthened or shortened life be our best blessing, for on this point Hezekiah's

subsequent fall through pride makes a sad suggestion (2 Chron. xxxii. 24-26), we shall have learned enough; even if we never fathom the physical conditions of miracles. A miracle is a Divine suspension or reversal of natural law: and surely our conception of a natural law and of a miracle will be adequate when we come to realise them as Job (xl. 19) was instructed to estimate behemoth: "He that made him can make His sword to approach unto him."

If we be docile disciples of that Master Who judgeth not according to the sight of the eyes (Is. xi. 3), then by the defects as well as by the aptitude of our natural faculties He will instruct us. It is merely to our sight that the sun obliterates the stars, the sun being in truth of inconsiderable bulk when compared with many of them: yet by reason of its nearness to our eyes it fairly puts them all out, until only an act of recollection can during the daylight hours summon before our consciousness the ever-present, ever-luminous multitudinous lights of the sky. When the glare of this world dazzles the eyes of our soul, such an act of recollection is what we need; bringing home to our conscious love the presence of Him Who is ever present,

and Who is pledged to be our very present help in trouble (Ps. xlvi. 1). Moses "endured, as seeing Him Who is invisible" (Heb. xi. 27): yet the Law, his portion, was not glorious, as compared with the excelling glory of the Gospel which we have inherited (2 Cor. iii. 6-11). Shall we who possess more aim at less?

Faith accepts, love contemplates and is nourished by, every word, act, type, of God. The Sun, to our unaided senses the summit of His visible creation, is pre-eminently the symbol of God Himself: of God the giver, cherisher, cheerer of life; the luminary of all perceptive beings; the attractive centre of our system. The Sun, worshipped under many names and by divers nations, is truly no more than our fellow-creature in the worship and praise of our common Creator; yet as His symbol it none the less conveys to us a great assurance of hope. At the voice of one man it stood still, in the strait of another it retrograded: thus we see illustrated the prevalence of prayer, and the strong grasp of man's sore need upon the succouring strength of Him Who made him. Elias, at whose word rain was withheld or granted, stands not alone as our encouraging example (1 Kings xvii. 1; St. James v. 17, 18).

Abraham's entreaty prescribed the limit of Sodom's doom (Gen. xviii. 23-32). One said to Jacob, "Let Me go:" but Jacob denied Him except He blessed him, and prevailed (Gen. xxxii. 24-30). The Lord said to Moses, "Let me alone:" yet Moses let Him not alone, and Israel was saved (Exod. xxxii. 7-14).

"The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee" (Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 12).

STARS.

"Behold the height of the stars, how high they are!"

JOB xxii. 12.

THERE is something awe-striking, overwhelming, in contemplation of the stars. Their number, magnitudes, distances, orbits, we know not: any multitude our unaided eyes discern is but an instalment of that vaster multitude which the telescope reveals; and of this the heightened and yet again heightened power bringing to light more and more stars, opens before us a vista

unmeasured, incalculable. Knowledge runs apace: and our globe which once seemed large is now but a small planet among planets, while not one of our group of planets is large as compared with its central sun; and the sun itself may be no more than a sub-centre, it and all its system coursing but as satellites and sub-satellites around a general centre; and this again,—what of this? Is even this remote centre truly central, or is it no more than yet another sub-centre revolving around some point of overruling attraction, and swaying with it the harmonious encircling dance of its attendant worlds? Thus while knowledge runs apace, ignorance keeps ahead of knowledge: and all which the deepest students know proves to themselves, yet more convincingly than to others, that much more exists which still they know not. As saints in relation to spiritual wisdom, so sages in relation to intellectual wisdom, eating they yet hunger and drinking they yet thirst (Eccclus. xxiv. 21).

Deep only can call to deep: still, we who occupy comparative shallows of intelligence are not wholly debarred from the admiration and delights of noble contemplations. We can marvel over the many tints of the heavenly bodies, ruddy,

empurpled, golden, or by contrast pale; we can understand the conclusion, though we cannot follow the process by which analysis of a ray certifies various component elements as existing in the orb which emits it; we can realise mentally how galaxies, which by reason of remoteness present to our eyes a mere modification of sky-colour, are truly a host of distinct luminaries; we can long to know more of belts and atmospheres; we can ponder reverently over interstellar spaces so vast as to exhaust the attractive force of suns and more than suns.

And we can make of what we know and of what we know not stepping-stones towards heaven, adoring our Creator for all that He is and that His creatures are not; adoring Him also for what many of our fellows already are, and for what we ourselves are and may become. We shall not run to waste in idle curiosity if we bear in mind that "knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth" (1 Cor. viii. 1), and that whoso understood all mysteries and all knowledge, not having charity would be nothing (xiii. 2). The innumerable number of the stars will profit us while we bear in mind that, though we know not, God telleth their number and "calleth them

all by their names" (Ps. cxlvii. 4). Their material light will become to us light spiritual, if, because "they that turn many to righteousness" shall shine "as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. xii. 3), zeal burn within us not for our own righteousness only, but for our neighbour's also. The awful familiar heavens now by fixed laws exhibiting motions, influences, aspects, phenomena (now, but not for ever after this present temporal fashion), are even now night by night instructing pious souls who watch and pray and wait for their beloved Lord.

"Seek Him that maketh the seven stars and Orion" (Amos. v. 8).

SHOWERS AND DEW.

"He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass : as showers that water the earth." PS. lxxii. 6.

"My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew : because I will publish the Name of the Lord." DEUT. xxxii. 2, 3.

"Your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away." HOS. vi. 4.

"There shall be an overflowing shower in Mine anger." EZEK. xiii. 13.

"His favour is as dew upon the grass." PROV. xix. 12.

OF the two great cleansers, water and fire, water is eminent for its sweet refreshing virtue and its power to renew without destroying. It offers indeed occasional aspects of terror : but to us it more ordinarily comes as a gentle channel of comfort. Nor can any form of it be found gentler than dew, or much brighter than a sunny shower crested by a rainbow. The words "I do set My bow in the cloud" (Gen. ix. 13), sealed the hope of the world.

Showers and Dew in Holy Scripture are treated of in so many ways that they become connected with grace and works, promises and threats, duty and privilege, punishment and re-

ward: above all they appear before us as types of God the Holy Ghost in His relation towards men and His dealings with them. One mention of rain or of dew will oftentimes suggest a double meaning, the literal and the spiritual. Such points strike us in one or other of the texts already quoted: while numerous kindred texts remain to which I attempt no allusion, and a few more which I proceed to cite.

The blessing of the dew of heaven invoked alike on Jacob and on Esau (Gen. xxvii. 28, 39), may have received its accomplishment according to the measure of faith in him who was nourished by it (see Heb. iv. 2): and have brought down natural dew only on the natural man; but on the spiritual man dew both natural and spiritual, thus anticipating the Gospel promise, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (St. Matt. vi. 33).—In Gideon's fleece drenched with dew we may recognise the Jewish Church full of grace, and in the dry floor the Gentile world not yet admitted within the covenant: in the same fleece, dry amid the dew-moistened floor, we behold Israel cast off and the Universal Church adopted and sanctified (Judges vi. 36-40).—

Elijah, whose inspired word ruled the dew and rain (1 Kings xvii. 1), seems a figure of the Church with her awful delegated authority to bind and to loose (St. Matt. xvi. 19; see also Rev. xi. 6).—That wisdom of the Lord by Whose “knowledge the clouds drop down the dew” (Prov. iii. 19, 20) is that same Wisdom or Word of God (St. John i. 1) Who sends the Comforter to His Church (St. John xv. 26).—He Who hath the dew of His youth (Ps. cx. 3) is surely He Who by His Prophet Isaiah (xxvi. 19) proclaims, “Thy dead men shall live, together with My dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.” He is the same God to whom Jeremiah appeals for drought-wasted Jerusalem: “Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? art not Thou He, O Lord our God? therefore we will wait upon Thee: for Thou hast made all these things” (Jer xiv. 22). And perhaps with that sacred jealousy which thus claims the desired boon as exclusively God’s gift, not to be conferred by “vanities of the Gentiles,” or even by “heavens,” we may without presumption connect

a yet higher meaning: and remember that the outpouring of the Holy Ghost would not have been vouchsafed, except Christ our God had ascended up where He was before (St. John xvi. 7; Acts i. 4-9).

The things of God are "fair as the moon, clear as the sun," but are also "terrible as an army with banners" (Song of Solomon vi. 10): for to us they are matters of life and death, and we who once have heard can never again be as though we had not heard. If we must give account of each word idly spoken (St. Matt. xii. 36), surely so likewise of each word idly heard: our Lord Himself charges us, "Take heed how ye hear" (St. Luke viii. 18). No knowledge will make us wise, no gift will enrich us, no lavished grace even will avail us aught, if we ourselves bring not our own wills to co-operate with the Will of God for our salvation. "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned" (Heb. vi. 7, 8).

WINDS.

"He bringeth the wind out of His treasures."

Ps. cxxxv. 7.

WHAT God brings out of His treasury cannot but be a treasure : our treasure if He blesses it to us. Amen.

Precious and beneficent is wind in the material world. It stirs up, purifies, winnows, casts aside : it is antagonistic to stagnation, to corruption : it brings heat, and likewise cold ; it carries clouds, and dries up humidity. Invisible, intangible, audible, sensible, it has a breath so gentle as scarcely to bend a flower, and a blast stronger than the strength of the sea (Ex. xiv. 21), stronger than the strength of the solid earth (1 Kings xix. 11).

Throughout the Old Testament the wind is continually spoken of as an agent of the Almighty, working out His will and fulfilling His pleasure, whether by obedience to His general law or by accomplishment of His special mandate. Yet we also observe it quoted as a symbol of vanity and failure.

The first mention of the wind (in our Authorized Version, for a previous instance occurs among the literal marginal readings, Gen. iii. 8) brings consolation: "God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged" (Gen. viii. 1). This initiatory step towards a renewed gift of life seems to connect itself with the primeval call of order and life out of chaos: "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. i. 2): and shows us the wind as a symbol of God the Holy Ghost; a symbol authorised by our Lord's subsequent words: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (St. John iii. 8). Perhaps it is not mere fancifulness which seeks to trace such sacred symbolism in the prophecy of Elisha, "Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts" (2 Kings iii. 9-22). The natural water which then quenched thirst and preserved life, recalls to our minds that "living water" concerning which we are assured that whosoever drinketh thereof shall never thirst, but it "shall be in him a well of water springing

up into everlasting life:" while even the enumeration of "cattle" and "beasts" as among those that should drink, by reminding us how Jacob, his children, "and his cattle," drank from the well of Sychar (St. John iv. 5-14), helps to quicken our attention to the main subject of either narrative. As in Holy Baptism the "inward and spiritual grace" while revealed to faith remains hidden from sense, so in Elisha's day the mysteriously supplied water seems to have been ushered in neither by sight nor by sound: and surely its noiseless coming "by the way of Edom," and its blood-red aspect, turn the eyes of our grateful love to Him Whom a later Prophet beheld coming from Edom, red in His apparel, mighty to save (Is. lxiii. 1, 2); the same Who neither strove, nor cried, nor made His voice heard in the street (Is. xlii. 1, 2; St. Matt, xii. 15-19), and out of Whose Side flowed for us both Blood and Water (St. John xix. 34).

In the Song of Songs (iv. 16) the Bride invokes the winds to aid her in preparing delights for the Bridegroom: "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out." I once met with a very beautiful comment on this concurrence of the

north and south winds to elicit spices from the one garden: both the chastisements and the indulgences of our Divine Father are alike vouchsafed to us for the one purpose of rendering our hearts fragrant with love of Him. Thus elsewhere we read: "Whom the Lord loveth He correcteth" (Prov. iii. 12); "Behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her" (Hos. ii. 14). Well may the Song of the Beloved touching His Vineyard make appeal to man himself: "What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it?" (Is. v. 1-4.)

In Ezekiel's (xxxvii. 1-14) Valley of Vision the wind plays its awful part, quickening the reconstructed men of the "exceeding great army." To him a revival of hope for fleshly Israel, that "sinful nation" (Is. i. 4) which yet once more would reject God and be rejected of Him: to us a type of hope concerning the immortal elect Israel, a picture of the resurrection of the just in the day of the restitution of all things; "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. viii. 11).

On the other hand, vanity, failure, even destruction, stand connected with the wind: and perhaps we may trace a clue to some portion of this latter connexion in the fact that wind possesses no independent existence, but is a variable condition of the atmosphere, a transitory state of a permanently existing element. That air which becomes wind when with a terrible blast it dashes as a storm against the wall (Is. xxv. 4) is no longer wind when at rest: we can no more fill our coffers with wind (see Prov. xxx. 4) than satiate our hearts with idols (Is. xli. 29). Wind is commotion, disturbance: it is not anything which of its own nature can abide. Job likens his desperate speeches (vi. 26) and his dwindling life (vii. 7) to wind; and complains in the bitterness of his soul, "Thou liftest me up to the wind; Thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance" (xxx. 22). To Solomon the circuits of the wind were vanity (Eccles. i. 2, 6): he compares profitless work to labour for the wind (v. 16): he points his exhortation to active faith by the admonition, "He that observeth the wind shall not sow" (xi. 4). Isaiah makes confession, "Our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Is. lxiv. 6). Jeremiah announces "A dry

wind, not to fan, nor to cleanse" (Jer. iv. 11, 12); and a wind to eat up all the pastors of the doomed nation (xxii. 22). Israel who sowed the wind must reap the whirlwind (Hos. viii. 7). Ephraim feeding on wind and following after the east wind, increaseth lies and desolation (xii. 1).

Thus He who made the weight for the winds holds them as it were in the balance before our eyes, to teach us alike by good and by evil that fear of the Lord which is wisdom (Job xxviii. 23-28). Wherefore we remembering how "mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (St. James ii. 13), thank God and take courage, strengthening our good hope by one final text of consolation. For Isaiah describing the Church under the figure of a cherished vineyard, "a vineyard of red wine," promises that she shall take root, blossom, bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit; and tenderly adds, "In measure, when it shooteth forth, Thou wilt debate with it: He stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind" (Is. xxvii. 2-8).

FIRE AND HEAT.

“*The fire that saith not, It is enough.*” PROV. xxx. 16.

“*The burden and heat of the day.*” ST. MATT. xx. 12.

WE are all familiar with certain opposite effects of heat, how at one time it develops and fosters life, at another precipitates decay; and of fire, how it softens some substances but hardens others. For my immediate purpose fire and heat need not be discussed separately, but may, as in fact they must, be viewed as oftentimes involved in each other. Nor need we at present concern ourselves with any question touching self-existent fire.

Fire is that one amongst the so-called four elements which feeds on food foreign to itself. Fire feeds not on fire. Springs run into rivers, and all rivers into the sea, which yet is not full: in both cases a larger body of water is thus replenished by water, not by aught other than water. Not so with fire, at least under its familiar aspects: fire exists by feeding upon combustible matter; when nothing alien remains for it to consume, it of its own nature expires. “Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out” (Prov. xxvi. 20).

Fire seems to our apprehension more noble than water: water cleanses the surface indeed, but fire purges the very substance. A corpse may lie slowly corrupting in water; fire makes a speedy clearance of it and its corruption: the Deluge once purified the world for a period only; fire will purify it once more and that for ever. (Gen. vi. 5-7; 2 St. Peter iii. 5-13.)

Choice substances are they which withstand and wax more precious by the action of fire: "gold, silver," not "wood, hay, stubble." The application of heat alters and is thought to improve the tint of some stones (1 Cor. iii. 12, 13).

God Almighty is, we are told, "a consuming fire, even a jealous God" (Deut. iv. 24). And we read in the Song of Songs (viii. 6): "Jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame." While the Psalmist says: "How long, Lord? wilt Thou be angry for ever? shall Thy jealousy burn like fire?" (lxxix. 5). Now to give the answer to this momentous question appertains to ourselves, not to any other creature in heaven or on earth: we, our very selves, may either make the pile for fire great, or may withdraw fuel from that flame. God hath deigned to invite each one of

us: "My son, give Me thine heart" (Prov. xxiii. 26): the heart offered as a whole burnt-offering to Him becomes fuel not to His consuming jealousy but to His undying love: "God is love" (1 St. John iv. 8), "He is like a refiner's fire" (Mal. iii. 2). Hearts only which are thrones of idols are the fuel of His holy jealousy: "Man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; . . . The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and His jealousy shall smoke against that man" (Deut. xxix. 18, 20). "They have moved Me to jealousy with that which is not God. . . . A fire is kindled in Mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell" (xxxii. 21, 22).

If then in that day when God will utterly abolish all idols (Is. ii. 18) we would not ourselves as foul temples of idols be also abolished, we must now search our own hearts lest in truth they be shrines not of God but of some idol. That which we prefer to God is our idol: be it our friend or ourself, a false shame or a false fear or a false heroism, whatsoever it be, our idol it is if we obey it rather than God (see Acts iv. 19; v. 29).

And if we entertain any, even ever so faint a wish to cleanse our hearts, the extreme stress of the difficulty shows itself here: for how can we sacrifice to that which we love not or love less, that which only or supremely we love? We cannot, except God bestow grace: but by His grace we can do all things (Phil. iv. 13). Let us take Him at His word: "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. xii. 9), "Ask, and ye shall receive" (St. John xvi. 24). No saint but has had the choice to make, and many a saint has made it in an agony beyond that of loss of hand or foot or eye: but now they are comforted (St. Mark ix. 43-48).

Nor does our sole comfort in this matter stand over till that day when all tears shall be wiped away, and there shall be no more sorrow or pain (Rev. xxi. 4). We must tolerate indeed neither truce nor compromise with our idols, be they what they may: yet are some idols of their own nature noble, although others are base. Idolatry of self, or of money, or of a bosom sin, is simply base, and must simply be extirpated: to idolize a friend is but to love disproportionately one whom Christ Himself loves far more. In such a case we may pray not to love our friend less, but rather to love our God more. We *are* to love

one another as Christ loved us (St. John xiii. 34), and that was with self-sacrifice even unto death (1 St. John iii. 16): it is enough, yea, it is the very mind of Christ (see 1 Cor. ii. 16), if while we thus love our neighbour we can truly cry out to God: "There is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee" (Ps. lxxiii. 25). Then will our obedience attain to a heavenly harmony, while we fulfil the Great Commandment, and that Second also which is like unto it (St. Matt. xxii. 37-39): then all which we deny ourself or another will be not lost but laid up: then if nothing remains which we may lawfully give, at least our prayers can ascend on behalf of the friend who is as our own soul (1 Thess. v. 23; Deut. xiii. 6). And assuredly the second place in a Christian's heart is warmer and nobler than is the first in an idolater's: "Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abi-ezer?" (Judges viii. 2.)

Concerning idolaters we read that they "shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. xxi. 8): and one whose writings are honoured throughout Christendom has said, "What shall the infernal fire find to feed upon but thy sins?"

When our spirit recoils and fails before “the fire that never shall be quenched” (St. Mark ix. 43-48), let us not (God sustaining our feeble endeavour),—let us not lose ourselves in “mist of darkness” (see 2 St. Peter ii. 17), in doubt or in despair: but rather let us then and there by faith, by supplication, by doing with our might whatsoever our hand findeth to do (Eccles. ix. 10), cast out of our hearts the infernal fuel.

He Who walked with His three faithful servants in the literal furnace of fire, and the fire had no power upon their bodies (Dan. iii. 19-27), is the same Who saith to His Church: “When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee” (Is. xliii. 2). To each of His redeemed He is abundantly ready to make good this His promise; yea, even when the earth shall be burned up, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat (2 St. Peter iii. 10).

“Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than He?” (1 Cor. x. 22.)

WINTER AND SUMMER.

“Lo, the winter is past.” SONG OF SOLOMON ii. 11.

“The summer is ended.” JER. viii. 20.

WINTER and summer are unlike at a thousand points. Winter has bareness, cold, the aspects and circumstances which produce and result from these: summer has exuberance, heat, and all their delightful train. In one thing they are alike: both “pass,” both “end.” Their likeness is absolute, their unlikeness is a matter of degree merely. For the bareness of winter is yet not without many a leaf, and its coldness is warmed and brightened by many a sunbeam: the exuberance of summer brings not forth the treasures of other seasons, nor does its heat preclude the blast of chilly winds. Both pass, both end. Winter by comparison lifeless, leads up to spring, the birthday of visible nature: summer, instinct with vitality, ripens to the harvest and decay of autumn. Winter at its bitterest will pass: summer at its sweetest must end. It is emphatically “while the earth remaineth” that summer and winter shall not cease (Gen. viii. 22): in the better

world which is to come we find no trace of either; not of cold, and expressly not of heat (Rev. vii. 16); and though leaves and fruit appear (xxii. 2), no mention is made of flowers, so characteristic of the summer we love. Just because we love it and revel in it, summer is steeped for us in sadness: at the longest its days shorten, at the fairest its flowers fade; next after summer comes autumn, and autumn means decay. Winter even while we shrink from it abounds in hope; or ever its short days are at the coldest they lengthen and wax more sunny. Winter is the threshold of spring, and spring resuscitates and reawakens the world. Winter which nips can also brace: summer which fosters may also enervate. There is a time for all things (Eccles iii. 1), all things are double against each other (Ecclus. xlii. 24), and God hath made all things good (Gen. i. 31), for all are His servants (Ps. cxix. 91).

The seasons of the waxing and waning year have an obvious parallel in the periods of our mortal life; a parallel so obvious that it need not be drawn out in detail, for to speak of one series is to describe the other. Also the privilege and, so to say, the duty of both are the same: "all are

His servants." Alas, with which of us has it fully been so, or even now is it so to the full, be it the spring or summer, the autumn or winter of our course?

"If it bear fruit, well" (St. Luke xiii. 9).

DEWS AND FROSTS.

"The rod and reproof give wisdom." PROV. xxix. 15.

DEWS have already been considered in company with showers. Frosts coupled with dews naturally recal to our minds such brief nightly frosts as usher in and wind up the true winter; and most of all they suggest that exquisite form of frost, hoar frost.

Hoar frost seems to me to be one of those things which emphatically bring out before our eyes God's love displayed in the lavish beauty of creation, and in the relish which accompanies a bracing discipline. The charm appears, in a sense, gratuitous: one can imagine all necessary operations of the visible world conducted to a flawless issue, without that world suddenly assuming a crust of silver which converts each

veined leaf and spider's web into a noticeable wonder of intricate beauty, and which clothes the bare season with its own exclusive robe of honour. Independently of a keen temperature this special form of beauty is not vouchsafed: and thus even beauty hints to us the bright side of salutary pain, the much comfort of ennobling discipline. Moreover, this choice aspect invests the outset of the day as well as its decline; it cheers us under the first assault of rigour: should the weather turn to mildness and by its mildness solace us, with the advancing hours this particular bloom of beauty vanishes.

The agents whereby God administers remedial discipline are oftentimes the same whereby He inflicts the penalty of sin: as in the two following instances:—

“In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night” (Gen. xxxi. 40).

“Cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost” (Jer. xxxvi. 30).

The discipline of Jacob, the doom of Jehoiakim; the living man and the corpse enforce jointly one solemn lesson. That which lives, however faulty it be, may be amended: that which is dead is done with for good or for evil. Drought and

frost, wronged affection (Gen. xxix. 25), disappointment (xlviii. 7; xxxvii. 35), all the ills his flesh was heir to during the "few and evil" days of Jacob's pilgrimage (xlvii. 9), sufficed by God's grace to transform him stage by stage from a man unbrotherly even amongst mere men (xxv. 29-34), into a prince of God mighty to prevail (xxxii. 28), into a saint worshipping upon his death-bed (xlvii. 31; Heb. xi. 21), and bequeathing a blessing to his children (Gen. xlix. 1-28). Neither the Roll of the Book, nor the added words (Jer. xxxvi. 20-32), nor the foresight of a refuse burial in heat and frost and without lamentation (xxii. 18, 19), availed anything (so far as we are informed) towards the conversion of Jehoiakim's guilty soul; and therefore the doom which overtook his desecrated body makes us afraid.

Our Lord the Wisdom of God hath said: "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you Whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him" (St. Luke xii. 4, 5).

FROST AND COLD.

“ Out of the south cometh the whirlwind : and cold out of the north.” JOB xxxvii. 9.

“ The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen.” JOB xxxviii. 30.

ON the whole we may, I think, consider cold as representing to us defect, inferiority. Brief are its praises in the Bible, although the Bible is written with all the instinctive imagery and sentiment born of the glowing south and sun-brightened east, of parched uplands and thirsty deserts. A few texts, however, can be cited in favour of cold.

Cold is enumerated amongst other boons in the indemnifying charter granted to our globe after the Deluge (Gen. viii. 21, 22). Solomon likens faithfulness to the cold of snow, and good news to a draught of cold water (Prov. xxv. 13, 25): while to the value of “a cup of cold water” bestowed in faith, we have the testimony of “a Greater than Solomon” (St. Matt. x. 42 ; xii. 42). And according to our Authorized Version (for a different reading appears in the

margin) a lapse from God to idols is compared by Jeremiah with the folly of a man who should forsake the snow of Lebanon or the cold flowing waters of another source (Jer. xviii. 13-15).

In the adverse sense, Job (xxiv. 7, 8) pities the poor bare and houseless in the cold: the Psalmist and the wise king alike allude to its severity (Ps. cxlvii. 17; Prov. xx. 4; xxv. 20): the Prophet Nahum points a simile by help of its rigour (Nah. iii. 17): St. Paul specifies it in the catalogue of his afflictions (2 Cor. xi. 27), and his historian speaks of it as augmenting their distress in the island of Melita (Acts xxviii. 2). Passing on to figurative applications, we find in our Lord's own words "The love of many shall wax cold" (St. Matt. xxiv. 12): while His awful message to the lukewarm Church of Laodicea, "Thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot" (Rev. iii. 14-19), leaves us in no doubt of its drift.

In the physical world life and heat go together, death and cold; the day and heat, the night and cold; light and heat, darkness and cold.

Seas and rivers, salt water and fresh, teem with life; not so ice itself. In the polar seas creatures sport either upon or else under the

frozen surface; not within its actual substance. Extreme cold dwarfs the human race, and comparatively few are the fruits and flowers which flourish in strongholds of perpetual ice.

Yet frost and cold, no less than fire and heat, are invoked to render blessing, praise and magnification to the Lord their Ordainer. And thus we light upon a truth humbling to pride, but a very crown of rejoicing to humility. He Who is good (St. Mark x. 18) hath done all of His free good will (Ps. cxv. 3): His creatures' lot, be it what it may, cannot but be the outcome of His love, and therefore the least and last of us may confidently affirm "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage" (Ps. xvi. 6). To be inferior is not necessarily to be evil; nor does man's estimate fix the intrinsic value of any object. Silver was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon, all whose drinking vessels were of gold (1 Kings x. 21): yet, "The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, saith the Lord of hosts" (Hag. ii. 8), putting no difference between them. In the Parable of the Sower we find "thirtyfold" accounted a goodly increase, though sixtyfold is a better, and though a hundredfold excels both (St. Mark iv. 8, 20).

The poor widow indeed cast into the Temple treasury more than all, yet did many that were rich cast in much (xii. 41-44).

Again: to be inferior once is not of necessity to be inferior always or finally: "Many that are first shall be last; and the last first" (St. Mark x. 31). The prior blessing devolved on Shem, father of the first Israel; yet now Japheth, earthly stock of the second Israel, dwells in the other's tents (see Gen. ix. 26, 27). Reuben was firstborn, Judah became chief (1 Chron. v. 1, 2). Leah was hated, Rachel beloved (Gen. xxix. 18, 30, 31); yet Jacob made his grave with Leah (xlix. 29-31). Joshua was but Moses' minister (Ex. xxiv. 13); yet Joshua, not Moses, entered the promised land (Deut. i. 37, 38). Ruth (ii. 13) was not so much as like one of the handmaidens of Boaz; nevertheless she was exalted over them to become his wife (iv. 13). Instances may be multiplied from Sacred History, from profane, from experience gathered in our own circle, in our own home. "I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong" (Eccles. ix. 11).

Be it, however, as seems indeed indisputable, that certain things are and must remain posi-

tively and permanently inferior: it may still transcend our present faculties to decide authoritatively which is which. Our Master says expressly: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (St. John vii. 24); and taught of God St. Paul bids us "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come" (1 Cor. iv. 5). Much stands over until His coming, and all our decisions and previsions will not bias the verdict of that day.

"Thou knowest not the works of God Who maketh all" (Eccles. xi. 5).

ICE AND SNOW.

*"Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?
or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail?"* JOB
xxxviii. 22.

THE beauty of snow needs no proof. Perfect in whiteness, feathery in lightness, it often floats down with hesitation as if it belonged to air rather than to earth: yet once resting on that ground it seemed loath to touch, it silently and surely accomplishes its allotted task; it fills up chasms, levels inequalities, cloaks imperfections, arrests the evaporation of heat, nurses vegetation;

it prepares floods for arid water-courses, and abundant moisture for roots and seeds. Snow, as we are familiar with it, is uncertain in its arrival and brief in its stay; having done its work it vanishes utterly, becoming as though it had never been. Not so in northern regions and on mountain-ranges where it occupies a permanent habitation: there it wraps itself in mist or overlooks the clouds, and thence not in silence but in thunder it rushes down upon the valleys. The beauties of snow are not exhausted when we have watched it afloat in air, or heaped in dazzling whiteness on the earth, or even when we have beheld it on mountain-heights flushed with pure rosiness at the fall of day: the microscope is required to reveal to us the exquisite symmetry of its crystals, starry, foliated, mimicking with minute perfection features of the firmament and of the flower-bed.

In symbolic analogies we find snow suggestive both of guilt and of cleansing. The whiteness of leprosy, that loathsome type of more loathsome sin, is "as snow" (Ex. iv. 6; Num. xii. 10; 2 Kings v. 27): while in the other sense Psalmist and Prophet bring forward material snow as a standard of spiritual purification; David saying,

“Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (Ps. li. 7), and Isaiah, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Is. i. 18). Job also in one of his passionate appeals cries out from instinctive feeling if not from close reasoning, “If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean.” (Job ix. 30); thus attributing to “*snow* water” an exceptional purifying virtue.

Ice, viewed as hail, seems exclusively, or almost exclusively, in the inspired Text, to be or to represent a weapon of God’s wrath and righteous vengeance; and this is its aspect whether we study prophets or historians, the Old Testament or the New. Following a scheme of chronology which makes Job a contemporary of Moses, we hear about thirty years before the Exodus this purpose of the hail indicated to Job by Almighty God Himself: “Hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?” (Job xxxviii. 22, 23); and the earliest hailstorm recorded in Holy Scripture is that which scourged Egypt with its seventh plague, “The Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt” (Ex. ix. 23), and to which passages in the Psalms

refer (lxxviii. 47, 48; cv. 32, 33). So also in the wars of Joshua the hail fought on God's side, and slew more of the army of the Amorites than did the sword of the children of Israel (Josh. x. 11). David, again, celebrating his deliverance from his enemies, and especially from Saul, describes his troubles under figure of a flood ready to engulf him, and his rescue as achieved by a manifestation of the Divine Presence, amid mighty convulsions of nature, "hail stones and coals of fire" (Ps. xviii. 4-17). Isaiah (xxviii. 2, 17; xxx. 30; and presumably xxxii. 19), and Ezekiel (xiii. 10-14; xxxviii. 22), name hail in their prophecies of vengeance: Haggai mentions it among the agents of an unavailing Divine discipline (Hag. ii. 17): St. John thrice beholds it in awful vision (Rev. viii. 7; xi. 19; xvi. 21).

If the weapon be mighty, mightier is He Who wields it: nevertheless, if it be good to tremble before God's judgments, it is yet better to confide in His mercy and love. Let us, not neglecting the performance of either duty, add to both humility; and carry our heads as it were low, in memory of that wheat and rye which not being grown up escaped unscathed, while the forwarder flax and barley were smitten.

“Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His Majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day” (Is. ii. 10, 11).

NIGHTS AND DAYS.

“The evening and the morning were the first day.”

GEN. i. 5.

THERE is something full of hope, noble and very consolatory in this sequence of evening and morning, night ending in day, not day in night; night introducing to the opportunities and capabilities of day, not day hastening downwards to the recess and obliteration of night: we behold, as in a lovely figure, the death-stricken life which we lead in this world's twilight, passing out of itself into the immortal life of heaven's noon; that noon attained, our probationary course is fulfilled and finished. In the literal order of creation, first darkness was: then “God said, Let there be light: and there was light” (Gen. i. 3). “The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Prov. iv. 18).

Nevertheless, because this world is fraught with the confusion and ruin, with the disjointedness (so to say), the disproportion, the reversals of blessings into curses and life into death brought about by the Fall, it is no marvel that while "evening and morning" compose the entire day of our hopes, morning and evening make up the recurrent days of our duty; labour before repose, watchful effort before sleep. "There will be eternity to rest in," one answered to whom a friend suggested relaxation on this side of the grave. Still, although we must do with our might whatsoever our hand findeth to do, because we are hastening to that grave where there is neither work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom (Eccles. ix. 10), there is yet a certain fretting anxiety which may beset us in our daily round of duty, but which has no promise of a blessing. To be "careful and troubled about many things" is not "needful" (see St. Luke x. 38-42): "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so He giveth His beloved sleep" (Ps. cxxvii. 2): or as some read: "For he giveth to His beloved (what others labour hard for) even in sleep."

In matters spiritual as well as natural night wears a genuine glory, though one different from the glory of day. There are many nights, besides that great night of the Passover and the Exodus, no less than there are many days, "to be much observed unto the Lord" (Ex. xii. 21-42. "The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light." Ex. xiii. 21).—A night began, a day completed, Lot's deliverance (Gen. xix. 1-3, 23. "Just Lot." 2 St. Peter 2-7).—Jacob wrestled by night, and triumphed about daybreak (Gen. xxxii. 22-31. "I held Him, and would not let Him go." Song of Sol. iii. 4).—On the prefixed day when Jericho should fall, Israel rose about dawn to compass the city seven times (Josh. vi. 15, 16, 20. "Take away her battlements; for they are not the Lord's." Jer. v. 10).—On one day which had not its like before it or after it, five kings of the Amorites were subdued (Josh. x. 6-16. "Kings of armies did flee apace." Ps. lxxviii. 12).—Gideon won a victory for Israel before the sun was up (Judges viii. 11-13. "Joy cometh in the morning." Ps. xxx. 5).—Samson arose at midnight and dismantled Gaza (Judges xvi. 3. "Except the Lord

keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." Ps. cxxvii. 1).—By night Samuel received his first revelation, and not until the morning did he deliver his first prophecy (1 Sam. iii. 2-18. "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make Myself known unto him in a vision." Num. xii. 6).—The idol Dagon, degraded during the night, was discovered in its abjection in the morning (1 Sam. v. 2-4. "To whom will ye liken Me, and make Me equal, and compare Me, that we may be like?" Is. xlvi. 5).—By night Solomon made his patriotic choice and received the promise of a threefold blessing (1 Kings iii. 5-14. "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour." Prov. iii. 13, 16).—About the time of the evening sacrifice Elijah reasserted the Sovereignty of God (1 Kings xviii. 36-40. "Thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation." Is. xvii. 10).—By night Dothan was encompassed by a hostile host, and on the morrow a vision of horses and chariots of fire strengthened a trembling faith (2 Kings vi. 13-17. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him." Ps. xxxiv. 7).—Towards twilight Syria

was routed by the bodiless sound of a great host (2 Kings vii. 6, 7. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth." Prov. xxviii. 1).—By night the destroying angel smote the army of Sennacherib (2 Kings xix. 35. "Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the Living God" Is. xxvii. 17).—From morning until midday Ezra and his assistants taught the Law to the children of the restored captivity (Neh. viii. 2-8. "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God." Hos. xiv. 1).—One sleepless night of King Ahasuerus opened a door of hope to downcast Israel (Esth. vi. 1-13. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will." Prov. xxi. 1).—Daniel's one night in the den of lions glorified God and edified man (Dan. vi. 16-27. "The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions, are broken." Job iv. 10). In a night vision Daniel beheld the Judgment, the end of wickedness and establishment of Christ's kingdom (Dan. vii. 2, 9-27. "In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then He openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction." Job xxxiii. 15, 16). About the time

of the evening oblation the Archangel Gabriel preached Christ unto him (Dan. ix. 21-27. "The word spoken by angels was stedfast." Heb. ii. 2). —The sun was risen when Jonah, deploring his withered gourd, received a revelation of God's inexhaustible mercy (Jonah iv. 7-11. "The Lord is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works." Ps. cxlv. 9).

Truly "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge" (Ps. xix. 2).

LIGHT AND DARKNESS.

"The darkness and the light are both alike to Thee."

PS. cxxxix. 12.

WE are so habituated to think of light and darkness in reference to sacred symbolism or our own personal convenience and profit, that perhaps the last aspect under which they are likely to present themselves to our mental eye is as "both alike." Yet thus and not otherwise David defines them as appearing in the sight of God: thus therefore must they in very truth be, at least within the limits of the import of this passage.

"Both alike:" both His ordinance; both, as

concerns His purpose, talents alternately and equally committed to us for use, and not for abuse or for neglect. So long as time is with us, light or darkness and the opportunities and responsibilities attached to either must be with us too: we cannot set down our load even for a moment and recover our strength, though God in His mercy may spare us not a little (see Prayer Book, Ps. xxxix. 15) and tenderly lighten our burden by infusing into us His own all-sufficient energy (Is. xli. 10).

The sensation of pleasure is associated with light and with darkness: each in its turn brings what we need, and prepares us for the coming boon to be brought round by the other. Yet, as regards the instinctive sensation of pleasure, there seems a broad line of demarcation to be drawn between the two pleasure-sources. Light cheers healthy bodies and souls which go forth as bridegrooms, and as giants rejoice to run their course, responding unhesitatingly to the words of Solomon, "Truly the light is sweet" (Eccles. xi. 7), and desiring no more darkness than is subservient to the renewal and conservation of vigour. On the contrary, in sickness or in sorrow we sometimes trace a craving for darkness, of which pos-

sibly Hezekiah's turning his face to the wall may furnish an instance (Is. xxxviii. 2). Violence (Judges xvi. 21), disease (perhaps Lev. xxvi. 16. and Deut. xxviii. 65), old age (Gen. xxvii. 1), blinding the eyes, have power to bring about irremovable darkness but not irremovable light. While, in extreme misery, both light and darkness lose their charm: "In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning!" (Deut. xxviii. 67.)

Darkness no less than light is named as the abode of God. He dwelleth "in the light which no man can approach unto" (1 Tim. vi. 16): "He made darkness pavilions round about Him" (2 Sam. xxii. 12). The cloudy pillar of His presence appeared both as darkness and as light (Ex. xiii. 21; xiv. 20). "Darkness, clouds, and thick darkness" invested Mount Sinai, when the Lord gave Israel His Covenant, speaking out of the midst of fire (Deut. iv. 11-13): then the people stood afar off, while Moses alone "drew near unto the thick darkness where God was" (Ex. xx. 21). On the contrary, when in company with a chosen few, the representatives of the chosen nation, Moses was summoned before the

Divine Presence, then they all beheld "as it were the body of heaven in his clearness" (Ex. xxiv. 1, 9, 10). We read in a Psalm (civ. 2) that the Lord covereth Himself "with light as with a garment." To Moses He said, "I will appear in the cloud upon the Mercy Seat" (Lev. xvi. 2): and when at the dedication of the first temple Solomon witnessed how the overwhelming cloud of His Presence filled the sacred house, he spake, saying, "The Lord said that He would dwell in the thick darkness" (1 Kings viii. 10-12): in accordance with which intimation it has been pointed out that the Mercy Seat within the Veil must have inhabited unbroken darkness save on the single annually recurrent Day of Atonement.

As regards the human race, mercies and judgments alike have been accompanied by light and by darkness; faithful mercies (Lam. iii. 22, 23) and righteous judgments (Ps. xcvi. 2). "An horror of great darkness" fell upon Abram when he received a direct revelation concerning his posterity (Gen. xv. 12-17). The plague of darkness which paralysed Egypt was simultaneous with the light vouchsafed in the land of Goshen (Ex. x. 21-23). The return of daylight revealed to trembling Judah that by night the strength of

Sennacherib had vanished as a dream of the darkness (Is. xxxvii. 36.)

The Prophet Micah (ii. 1) in a single verse denounces a misuse both of darkness and of light: "Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand." Job also (xxiv. 14-16) speaking in general of those who know not the Almighty, says of some: "The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief. The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me: and disguiseth his face. In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the daytime: they know not the light."

But the moment we pass from the region of plain fact into that of symbolism, all is changed: light stands for good, and darkness for evil. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 St. John i. 5). "The Lord is my light and my salvation" (Ps. xxvii. 1). "In Thy light shall we see light" (xxxvi. 9). "Light is sown for the righteous" (xcvii. 11). "Thy word is . . . a light unto my path" (cxix. 105). "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light"

(Is. ix. 2), which light was Christ (St. Matt. iv. 12-16). "A light to the Gentiles" (Is. xlix. 6), none but Christ (St. Luke ii. 32): Whose Church ever builds on the promise, "The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light" (Is. lx. 19; St. John i. 1-4).

When we turn from Light Divine to that darkness which is its opposite, the great unbridged gulf seems to open at our feet. Fallen angels are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness (St. Jude vi). The Christian soldier wrestles against the rulers of the darkness of this world (Eph. vi. 12). Certain sinners are as "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever (St. Jude xiii). The kingdom of the beast is prophesied of as becoming full of darkness (Rev. xvi. 10). The land of the shadow of death, not then lit up by the radiance of Christ's resurrection, was even in the eyes of saintly Job (x. 20-22) "a land of darkness, as darkness itself; . . . and where the light is as darkness." The "outer darkness" of condemnation resounds with weeping and gnashing of teeth (St. Matt. xxv. 30).

Besides kindling of hope and quickening of fear, we may I think gather one other blessing from such a study of light and darkness,—a holy

prudence which not exercising itself in matters too high for us (Ps. cxxxi. 1) rejoices to recognise the best aspect of such influences as surround us, and never loses sight of the revealed truth that all things work together for good to them that love God (Rom. viii. 28). Cherishing such a spirit we shall learn neither to trust in any creature nor to despair of any soul, but doing what lieth in us to leave the result to that Master to Whom each servant standeth or falleth (Rom. xiv. 4); we shall "in every thing give thanks" (1 Thess. v. 18), and shall intercede all the more earnestly for our dear brethren because we know that some who were darkness have been made light (Eph. v. 8). And indeed wherein differ we from them? if by God's grace so great a mercy is true of us as that we be children of light and not of darkness (1 Thess. v. 5). St. Augustine has illustrated a kindred lesson: One prayed, Lord, take away the ungodly man: and God answered him, Which?

"Blessed be the Name of God for ever and ever: He revealeth the deep and secret things: He knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him" (Dan. ii. 20, 22).

LIGHTNINGS AND CLOUDS.

"He said, O my Lord, send, I pray Thee, by the hand of him whom Thou wilt send." EX. iv. 13.

GOD does truly "send" by whomsoever and by whatsoever He will; nor is there aught great or small, conscious or unconscious, righteous or wicked, that can say Him nay. Hesitating Moses was overborne (Ex. iv. 1-17), hardened Pharaoh wrought out the purpose for which he was raised up (ix. 16), fugitive Jonah was arrested and brought back to deliver his message (Jonah i. 1-4; iii. 1-3); a dove and olive leaf conveyed news to Noah (Gen. viii. 11), ravens fed Elijah (1 Kings xvii. 6), an arrow shot at a venture fulfilled Ahab's doom (xxii. 34). At the divine behest clouds amass or disperse their abundant waters, and lightnings answer, Here we are (Job xxxviii. 34, 35).

Clouds were a creation of the Second Day, the day of division, that only day of which individually it is not recorded that God saw its work to be good: "God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters" (Gen. i. 6-8. For a

general approval of the work of the second day, see *v.* 31). Nevertheless, when this division was, as it were, for the moment withdrawn, and the fountains of the great deep being broken up and the windows of heaven opened all waters from every source converged, it was for the destruction of all living creatures that drew breath and moved upon the earth, except of those few individuals whom God had shut into the ark (Gen. vii. 11-24). May not this suggest that while unity and concord are according to the Divine Mind (see Rom. xv. 5, 6; 1 Cor. xiv. 33), yet for us to aim at unity by disregarding barriers of divine appointment would produce not union but confusion? The Church does well to lengthen her cords and strengthen her stakes (Is. liv. 2), but for the sole purpose of nursing at her side faithful sons and daughters who come to her (lx. 4): she could not, if she would, do so for the sake of spreading the skirt of her protection over those who have neither part nor lot in the unchangeable Truth. Her laxity might destroy herself; but could not blot out or modify one jot or tittle of the Faith, could not save even one person whose name shall not be found written in the Book of Life (Rev. xx. 12, 15). Though

Coniah had been the signet upon the Lord's right hand, yet God would have plucked him thence (Jer. xxii. 24). A sacred chamber was prepared by Eliashib the Priest for Tobiah the Ammonite: yet by a zeal according to knowledge that chamber was cleansed, and all trace of the alien obliterated (Neh. xiii. 4-9).

To ancient Israel a cloud veiled and indicated the Presence of God, and led their Exodus (Ex. xiii. 21). It interposed an impenetrable shield between them and their pursuers (xiv. 19, 20). It regulated their journeyings in the wilderness (Num. ix. 15-22). It hallowed the tabernacle (Ex. xl. 34) and the first temple (1 Kings viii. 10): speaking of it, St. Paul tells us that all the Jewish Fathers were under the cloud, and were baptized unto Moses in the cloud (1 Cor. x. 1, 2). Great, high, availing, was the succour to them of this blessed outward Presence: more great, more high, more availing, is the succour conveyed to ourselves by the Church's two Sacraments of general necessity; for by their due reception that same Blessed Presence which was and which remained outward to the Jews, to faithful Christians becomes inward, entering and fortifying the stronghold of heart and will. "As ye have therefore

received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him" (Col. ii. 6).

In Holy Scripture clouds are often referred to both as to their natural aspects and their figurative analogies. The Book of Job abounds in such passages. Job himself alludes to the gloom of clouds (iii. 5), their evanescence (vii. 9), their capacity, consistence, impenetrability (xxvi. 8, 9), their transitory habit (xxx. 15): his friends refer to their loftiness (xx. 6; xxxv. 5), their density (xxii. 13, 14), their copious overflow, extension and thunder, office of obscuration (xxxvi. 27-33), their exhaustible and variable nature, commencement and fashioning, gravitation (xxxvii. 11-16). Even in the all-silencing answer from the whirlwind clouds are summoned to bear tremendous witness (xxxvii 8, 9, 37).

Two quotations from the Prophet Hosea (vi. 4; xiii. 3) embody an awful lesson. "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? . . . for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.—They" [the idolaters of Ephraim] "shall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away." Though it is for the heinous sin of idolatry that sentence is pronounced, yet this strict sequence of beginning

and end, the end adjusted to and reproducing in some sort the beginning, while it redoubles hope to all who remember from whence they are fallen and repent and do the first works (Rev. ii. 5), renders doubly hopeless the prospect of any who make no effort to redeem a wasted past. Christ once died to save us: but who now shall, who now can save us if we will not save ourselves? "How often would I . . . and ye would not" (St. Matt. xxiii. 37): these are our Lord's own words. Consider also the words of David, "As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him" (Ps. cix. 17): of Solomon, "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself" (Prov. xiv. 14): and the prophecy of Ezekiel (xxxv. 6), "Sith thou hast not hated blood, even blood shall pursue thee," comparing with it the witness of the angel of the waters, "They have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink" (Rev. xvi. 6).

Two natural clouds appear in the historical portion of the Bible, and both are connected with signal Divine mercies. The first introduces the rainbow with its time-long promise (Gen. ix.

12-16): the second at Elijah's prayer revived hope in drought-worn languishing Israel (1 Kings xviii. 41-45).

Of lightning we read comparatively little in the Inspired Text, unless we may venture to connect with it that "Fire" which was on various occasions sent on some direct celestial errand. The creation of lightning is twice alluded to in Job (xxviii. 26; xxxviii. 25), where also it is spoken of as combined with thunder (xxxvii. 2-5); elsewhere, with rain (Ps. cxxxv. 7; Jer. x. 13, repeated at li. 16). Thunders and lightnings attended the promulgation of the Mosaic law (Ex. xix. 16; xx. 18). The living creatures of Ezekiel's vision (i. 13, 14,) resembled lightning both in splendour and in speed: and Daniel (x. 5, 6) by the river Hiddekel beheld "a certain Man" whose face was "as the appearance of lightning."

Belonging to the other and more mysterious class, we read of fire consuming the sacrifice upon the altar of the tabernacle (Lev. ix. 24), and centuries later upon the altar of Solomon's temple (2 Chron. vii. 1); devouring Nadab and Abihu in their presumption (Lev. x. 1, 2); breaking out in the camp at Taberah (Num. xi. 1-3); destroying the unconsecrated offerers of incense (xvi.

35); certifying the acceptance of David's offerings in the threshingfloor of Ornan (1 Chron. xxi. 26); descending upon Elijah's sacrifice (1 Kings xviii. 38), and once and again at his word slaying the opponents of God (2 Kings i. 10, 12).

"By these, my son, be admonished" (Eccles. xii. 12).

EARTH.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void."
GEN. i. 1, 2.

IT has been suggested by a deep and reverent thinker of the present day that a period of undefined duration, undefined but vast, intervenes between the statements of these two verses. In this period one creation perished: the "earth" of the first verse became the "earth without form and void" of the second. Under such a supposition our actual earth is wholly or in part a reconstruction of wrecked and ruined material already existing; and those traces of organisms which science recognises and which seem imperatively to demand a far longer period of formation, existence, decay, than the inspired Mosaic record appears to contemplate, are accounted for.

Nor perhaps need this explanation of obvious phenomena exclude that second theory which interprets the days of creation not as days of twenty-four hours each, but as lapses of time by us unmeasured and immeasurable: lapses which like the ascending notes of the musical scale step upward by harmonious gradation from depth to height, from height to height yet higher, each successive phase of creation based upon but excelling that which preceded it. Only how, in accordance with this scheme, are we to dispose of the Seventh, the Sabbath Day? For man was created on the sixth day (Gen. i. 26-31): where then did he pass the first Sabbath? if, that is, we regard that seventh day as equalling in duration the preceding six, and as having begun and finished as it were in the verse (Gen. ii. 2) that names it. Adam and Eve did surely not spend it in the Garden of Eden, for then must we imagine an aeon of innocent obedience to have preceded the Fall: neither can they have reached its close in the thorny and thistly world of the curse, for even Adam's nine hundred and thirty years of life (Gen. v. 5) would bear no proportion whatever to the associated periods.

A third alternative seems required. And

though unrevealed truth may possibly, and if so may safely continue unrevealed to our apprehension until all time dwindle to a mere eye-wink because the eternity which ends it itself ends not, yet to study such data as are vouchsafed us ought, by exercising our intelligence even if not by enlarging our knowledge, to invigorate our faith.

As to each of the six days of Creation we are told that "the evening and the morning" made it up (Gen. i. 5, &c.): no such clause defines the seventh day, of which we simply read that it was the day of God's own rest from His ended work, and as such was blessed and sanctified by Him (Gen. ii. 2, 3). Thus we are assured of its commencement and character, while of its completion and termination no hint is afforded: wherefore of its completion and termination we necessarily know nothing. And why should our knowledge break off short at that particular moment? Diffidently and reverently we may still fairly suggest that we for the present know nothing, perhaps because there is as yet nothing to be known.

We are unavoidably in the region of supposition, not of assertion, the Bible not having pronounced explicitly on the matter in hand.

Suppose, for an instant, the great first Sabbath

to have ended ages ago: what followed? what second week opened?

Or pursuing an opposite conjecture: is it impossible that this current period of mankind's probation, this in which we now are all living and dying, is that very primeval Sabbath still in progress, still incomplete? but in the foreknowledge of Almighty God and in fulness of time to be completed.

There certainly seems to be a sense in which God does for the present stand aside and, as it were, keep in the background, while man plays his part according to his own inherent free will. Not that with "fools" we must conceive of God as neither seeing nor regarding (Ps. xciv. 7, 8): rather must we ever bear in mind His revelation to the Prophet Isaiah (xviii. 4), "I will take My rest, and I will consider in My dwelling place."

I think that such a train of thought, so far as it may lawfully be indulged, augments instead of abating our sense of the sinfulness of sin. Each sin thus stands out as a distinct sacrilege, for it desecrates the hallowed day of God's own Sabbath: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy (Ex. xx. 8): "Thou hast despised Mine holy

things, and hast profaned My Sabbaths" (Ezek. xxii. 8). All the earth becomes holy ground (see Ex. iii. 5) on which none but a very dove's foot is meet to rest: "My dove, My undefiled," says the Beloved tenderly extolling the Bride (Song of Solomon vi. 9): Be ye . . . harmless as doves," says to us the Beloved of our souls (St. Matt. x. 16).

"Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven" (Gen. xxviii. 16, 17).

MOUNTAINS AND HILLS.

"Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth." PROV. viii. 25.

THESE are words of that uncreated Wisdom (Prov. viii. 22, 23) which crieth unto the sons of men, "O ye simple, understand wisdom" (vv. 4, 5), and without Whose aid our study of heights and depths will remain barren as the literal mountain tops. "I will lift up mine eyes

unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth" (Ps. cxxi. 1, 2).

On the whole, though with allowance for exceptions, we may say that mountains stand connected both in the Inspired Word, by our natural instinct, and in simple fact, with much that is noble, beneficent, even holy. The mountaineer is characteristically hardy, abstemious, fearless, indomitable, a lover of freedom, a patriot: liberty overwhelmed in the valleys flees as a bird unto the hills, makes her nest in a rock, and maintains herself impregnable. We need not look so far off as to Bethulia in the days of Nabuchodonosor and Judith (Judith iv. 6-8): our own Welsh mountains held out of old against world-subduing Rome.

Mountains bestow, valleys receive: snowy heights form a water-shed for the low-lying fertility which engarlands their base. Moreover they bestow necessities not in mere naked sufficiency, but in forms which make hill-streams and waterfalls rank among the beauty-spots of this beautiful world: such streams descend with murmur, tumult and thunder, in crystal expanses, in ripples, leaps and eddies, in darkness and

light, in clearness and whiteness, and foam and foam-bow.

Mountain ranges and rocks abound in mineral wealth, in metal, precious ore, marble. They produce also gems and choice stones, though not indeed abundantly: were these abundant, they would forfeit their conventional value and be estimated according to their mere utility or beauty; as we now estimate wheat and vine, a daisy or a bluebell.

One of our holiest writers has warned us: "Not all that is high is holy:" but this form of statement argues that such a connexion is usual, while both the historical narrative and symbolic drift of the Bible tend to establish its validity.

So numerous in the sacred text are the allusions to hills and mountains that a very scanty selection from them must here suffice. Those mentioned by name have in many cases, and as regards our own associations, a distinct personality almost amounting to individual character.

The solidity of Ararat underlying the Ark suggested hope to the bereaved human family, many weeks before the tops of the mountains were discernible by their eyes (Gen. viii. 4, 5).—Mount Moriah beheld the obedience of faithful

Abraham (xxii. 2, 9, 10), the acceptance of penitent David (1 Chron. xxi. 26), and the exceeding magnificent structure of the first Temple (2 Chron. iii. 1).—Mount Seir blessed as the inheritance of Esau with merely a secondary blessing (Gen. xxvii. 39), and at length falling under the awful denunciation, "When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate" (Ezek. xxxv. 14), is nevertheless mentioned by Moses (Deut. xxxiii. 2) and by Deborah (Judges v. 4) in close connexion with the Divine Presence.—At Mount Horeb Moses was ordained "a ruler and a deliverer" (Ex. iii. 1, 10; Acts vii. 35): from the smitten Rock in Horeb water welled forth for thirsty Israel (Ex. xvii. 6): to "Horeb the Mount of God" Elijah journeyed in his despondency, and there girt up his loins afresh to run the race set before him and finish his course with joy (1 Kings xix. 8-19).—On "the top of the hill" the uplifted hands of Moses prevailed against the host of Amalek (Ex. xvii. 9-13).—From Mount Sinai the law was given (xix. 18-20; xx. 1, &c.).—The grave, that only landed inheritance which fell to the lot of Levi (see Numb. xviii. 20-24; Josh. xiii. 14, 33), the grave of Aaron was on Mount Hor (Numb. xx. 25—

28).—Balaam, veritable Prophet though rebellious sinner, came forth “from Aram, out of the mountains of the east” (xxiii. 7).—Moses, who had implored a sight of “that goodly mountain, and Lebanon” (Deut. iii. 25), was permitted from the top of Pisgah to gaze upon the Promised Land (xxxiv. 1-4).—In the days of Joshua Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal bore witness to the blessedness of obedience and the curse on disobedience (xi. 26-29; xxvii. 11-26; Josh. viii. 30-35).—Mount Ephraim stands connected with the palm-tree of Deborah (Judges iv. 5), and with a consolatory promise to the restored captivity (Jer. l. 19).—From Mount Tabor destruction swooped down upon Sisera and the host of Jabin (Judges iv. 14-16).—Jephthah’s most noble daughter poured forth her lamentation on mountain heights lofty and pure like herself (xi. 37, 38).—In Mount Gilboa Saul reaped as he had sown (1 Sam. xxxi. 6-10): yet would David’s charity have covered there the multitude of his sins (2 Sam. i. 21).—Cast down but not destroyed, David wept and prayed acceptably as he climbed Mount Olivet: Shimei cursing along the hill’s side obtained indeed a curse, but one that lighted upon his own head

(xv. 30, 31; xvi. 13; 1 Kings ii. 44, 46).—Rizpah on her rock showed forth love strong as death (2 Sam. xxi. 8-10). Mount Carmel witnessed the overthrow of Baal worship (1 Kings xviii. 17-40).—Hermon and Mount Gilead rejoice in fatness (Ps. cxxxiii. 3; Song of Solomon iv. 1): fruitful Lebanon stands crowned with dignity and beauty (2 Kings xix. 23; Jer. xxii. 6; Hos. xiv. 5-7): yet Zion shines with a more glorious grace (Ps. lxxxvii. 2; cxxxii. 13).

Now since vain it is and worse than vain to seek beauty in the Bible, apart from sanctification, let us wind up with one more text, but that a practical one: and if by God's grace we form ourselves upon its pattern, then shall we be delivered from the extreme terrors of that day when the clefts of the rocks and the tops of the ragged rocks shall afford no shelter (Isa. ii. 20, 21).

“Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation (Ps. xxiv. 3-5).

GREEN THINGS.

“He spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall.” I KINGS iv. 33.

THIS master-student was King Solomon the Wise. But it needs no Solomon to enter into the inexhaustible cheerfulness of “all green things,” an expression which we may fairly interpret as including the whole vegetable creation; a little child can delight in a flower, a speechless baby can notice one. Fancy what this world would be were it prevalently clay-coloured or slate-coloured! Fancy what it would become if it went on supplying all that is necessary, but not our necessities in their actual familiar garb of beauty! Suppose we no longer had cornfields and orchards, but a magazine of “constituents,” gluten, starch, saccharine matter, what not: no longer leafy branches for shade and leafless branches for fuel, but fogs and clouds for the one, and combustible gases for the other! While as the case stands our study of “all green things”

may fitly become a study of beauty and pleasure, an exercise of thankfulness.

Spring and autumn are distinctively the seasons of foliage. True, foliage superabounds in summer: yet spring is its birthday, when the cramped and torpid world wakes and expands to renewed delight; in autumn it falls and vanishes in a marvellous glory of tints which for a moment take the place of perished flowers. Thus spring and autumn are, as it were, the sunrise and sunset of foliage; summer is its comparatively monotonous noon; winter its night, soberly bestudded with evergreens.

The first vegetable production mentioned in the Bible is grass: "God said, Let the earth bring forth grass" (Gen. i. 11): and once more thousands of years afterwards we find it particularised as His gift in answer to prayer, "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field" (Zech. x. 1). Between these two texts it is many times alluded to; often as emblematic of the vanity of man's brief life, or of his liability to destruction (Numb. xxii. 4; 2 Kings xix. 26; Ps. xc. 5, 6; cxxix. 6, 7; Isa. xl. 6, 7; li. 12), some-

times as representing a flourishing human fertility indicative of spiritual vitality (Job v. 25; Ps. lxxii. 16; Isa. xlv. 3, 4).

“Every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food” (Gen. ii. 9), grew in the Garden of Eden: but one only of those still accessible to us is named, and this one, the fig tree, connects itself not with man’s innocence, but with his fall (iii. 7). Subsequently however the same tree appears and reappears associated with plenty (Numb. xiii. 23), sweetness (Judges ix. 10, 11), security (1 Kings iv. 25), hospitality (1 Chron. xii. 40), reward (Prov. xxvii. 18), revival (Song of Sol. ii. 13), healing (Isa. xxxviii. 21); more frequently than with destruction or discriminative judgment (Isa. xxxiv. 4; Jer. xxiv; Hos. ii. 12; Nah. iii. 12).

We may doubt whether “thorns and thistles” grew at all within the precincts of Eden: at any rate they characterise the outer world of the curse (Gen. iii. 17, 18), and congruous with this circumstance are the after mentions of them (as Judges ix. 14, 15; Job xxxi. 40; Song of Sol. ii. 2; Isa. lv. 13; Jer. xii. 13; Hos. x. 8). Yet Hosea shows us that our heavenly Father most willingly turns our curse into a blessing,

making of thorns not our scourge but our safeguard (Hos. ii. 6, 7): or if our scourge still much more our safeguard, as in a figure was specially the case with St. Paul (2 Cor. xii. 7).

The olive tree, which the ancient and modern world have agreed in adopting as an emblem of peace, appears first in the Sacred Text in the shape of a leaf plucked off and borne by a dove in token of peace renewed (Gen. viii. 11): thus uniting an eminent symbol of God the Holy Ghost (St. Luke iii. 22), that Divine Spirit Whose fruit is "love, joy, peace" (Gal. v. 22), with a figure of the blessed peace which is His gift.

Noah's vineyard (Gen. ix. 20) and next in succession Abraham's grove (xxi. 33), are the earliest Scriptural examples of trees planted by men. Not (as we may devoutly believe) by man, but by God Himself was that "thicket" planted which caught and held fast the vicarious ram of Abraham's accepted sacrifice (xxii. 13).

Isaac dwelling in Gerar sowed, and that same year by the Divine blessing reaped a hundredfold (xxvi. 6, 12). Sooner or later it may be, yet always surely, all God's faithful children will celebrate their harvest home: "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall

doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Ps. cxxvi. 6): but those only will be accounted faithful who have themselves been as good ground responding to the good seed, and bringing forth in due season a hundredfold, or sixtyfold, or thirtyfold (St. Matt. xiii. 23).

"Plenty of corn and wine" formed merely a portion of that birthright-blessing (Gen xxvii. 27-29) which Esau, little realising what he did, bartered for a few lentiles (xxv. 29-34). Lentiles reappear to refresh David and his followers after their flight from Absalom (2 Sam. xvii. 27-29), to witness the heroism of Shammah (xxiii. 11, 12), and to supply one ingredient to the famine-ration of Ezekiel (Ezek. iv. 9): remaining thus permanently associated with urgent want or mortal risk.

A humble beloved Deborah had her "oak of weeping" (Gen. xxxv. 8, margin), a nobler Deborah her palm-tree of shelter (Judges iv. 5). The oak of Jabesh (1 Chron. x. 12), and of Absalom (2 Sam. xviii. 9-15) alike recall death: whilst the living righteous on earth assimilate (Ps. xcii. 12), and in heaven have to do (Rev. vii. 9), with palms. If we compare the oaks of Holy Scripture with the palm trees, I think the

former seem on the whole rather of the earth earthy, the latter heavenly: yet precisely hence may we draw a lesson against pressing symbolism and our own guesses too far, for Jericho the accursed (Josh. vi. 1, 17, 26) was the City of Palm Trees (Deut. xxxiv. 3).

To pursue our subject throughout the Sacred Canon would demand not one section, but a volume: a few more points must suffice us. I think the fragility of flowers is dwelt upon more conspicuously than their loveliness (Ps. ciii. 15, 16; Isa. xxviii. 1). The fading habit of a leaf is often adverted to (Isa. lxiv. 6; Jer. viii. 13), and that even when unfading prosperity is promised (Ps. i. 3; Isa. vi. 13). The joyful aspect of vegetation pervades the Song of Songs: while a tree's pathetic tenacity of life deepens the sadness of man's mortality (Job xiv. 1-12).

Various plants or portions of plants assume an important part in the Sacred History. Such are the burning bush at Horeb (Ex. iii. 2), the tree of Marah (xv. 23-25), the grapes of Eshcol (Numb. xiii. 23), the quickened almond rod of Aaron (xvii. 8), the pole of the brazen serpent (xxi. 8, 9), the flax stalks of Rahab (Josh. ii. 6), the oracular mulberry trees (2 Sam. v. 22-25),

king David's house of cedar (vii. 2), and much more the cedar of Solomon's Temple (I Kings v. 5-10), the queen's spices, being a sort of first-fruits brought from Gentile Sheba (x. 1, 2, 10), the meal and oil of the widow at Zarephath (xvii. 12-16), the drenched wood of Elijah's sacrifice (xviii. 33, 34), the pulse of Daniel and his fellows (Dan. i. 11-16), and the gourd of Jonah (Jonah iv. 6-11).

This last, the gourd, turns our eyes inward upon our own selves, our own brief life, our own inevitable death. The gourd born in a night perished in a night, and became as though it had never been. Even so, and yet not so, we: born and cut off in time, we must none the less fulfil our eternity; once loaded with the responsibility of life we can never shift it off, never repudiate our identity, never force our way back into the nothingness whence we emerged. This present temporal stage of our existence is a stage of possibilities, alternatives, hope, fear: that word "never" belongs to our next eternal stage, and ringing the knell of fear rings impartially the knell of hope likewise. Flesh and blood shrink from a final irreversible "never." Christ carry us scatheless through that last day when the tree

must lie as it has fallen (Eccles. xi. 3), and all souls shall be weighed in just balances.

“ Thus saith the Lord ; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh ; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green ; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit ” (Jer. xvii. 5-8).

WELLS.

“ Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee ; in whose heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well ; the rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.” Ps. lxxxiv. 5-7.

IN the foregoing passage particular words may appear obscure, but as to the drift of the whole

we are not left in any doubt: we behold the Jewish pilgrim on his road to the Tabernacle, that Tabernacle where sparrows and swallows found a cheerful home; how much rather he, a son well beloved. He might or might not be one who had already seen the Divine sanctuary with his actual eyes; but to the eyes of his heart it could not but be familiar, to his heart of hearts an object of longing desire, of craving love: "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord." To such an one so love-possessed and love-absorbed, the Vale of Baca, whether a vale of "mulberry trees" or of "misery" (compare margin of Authorised Version with Prayer Book translation) would be a convenient road; for the water of its well would suffice for his wants, and it would lead him straight home. What more could he require, or what more would it be worth his while to desire? (Ps. lxxxiv.)

At one period of time such as these were the simple facts in the history of thousands of devout Jews. To all time and to all Christendom they remain as a parable. Each Christian is now that pilgrim: this world is his Vale of Baca, to one man a place mainly of sweet fruits, and to another more markedly a stony tract of suffering; to both

alike the king's highway leading straight home to heaven, and furnished with at the least a sufficiency of necessaries—"bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure" (Is. xxxiii. 16). He starts from a well, the blessed water of Baptism: refreshment as of water goes along with him, the copious dews and showers of grace: his own tears for sorrow and (alas!) for sin help to fill the pools: Christ the spiritual rock follows him, of Whom he drinks (1 Cor. x. 4), and while drinking he yet is thirsty: sometimes the loving Lord leads him beside still waters (Ps. xxiii. 2: "waters of comfort" in Prayer Book translation), sometimes through deep waters which yet cannot drown him (Isa. xliii. 2); yea, he rejoices amid their roar and swelling, for he is a citizen of that city which shall not be moved (Ps. xlvi. 1-5). And thus he goes home.

Without adverting to spiritual analogies, a mere natural well has about it something religious if we make it a "memoria technica" recalling to our minds many a merciful providence of olden times. How God cared for Hagar and Ishmael ready to perish (Gen. xxi. 19),—answered the prayer of faithful Eliezer (xxiv. 10-27),—cheered the children of Israel in their Exodus

(Ex. xv. 27),—provided water for His people (Numb. xxi. 16–18),—baffled the schemes of Absalom (2 Sam. xvii. 17–20),—accepted the libation of David (xxiii. 15–17). We may go a step further, and thanking Him may take courage in extremity (because of Hagar), resort to Him in perplexity (Eliezer), trust Him in enterprise (Elim), sing to Him in prosperity (Beer), look to Him in danger (the trusty messengers), offer our desire to Him in temptation (the water of Bethlehem). He was an apt scholar in the school of Christ who has left us this saying: “There is no creature so small but it may represent to thee the love of God.”

“Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it” (Prov. xvi. 22).

SEAS AND FLOODS.

“When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” I COR. xiii. 10.

THESE words in which St. Paul treats of partial knowledge, incomplete revelation, imperfect sight; childhood (I Cor. xiii. 9–12), though each of those is good and not evil in its allotted sphere and during its assigned period,—seem in

some sort applicable to the sea also, according to St. John's vision of the final consummation of all things: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea (Rev. xxi. 1). Equally, the sun and moon appear then to be, if not obliterated, at the least superseded: "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (v. 23).

At first reading "there was no more sea," our heart sinks at foresight of the familiar sea expunged from earth and heaven; that sea to us so long and so inexhaustibly a field of wonder and delight. "Was Thy wrath against the sea . . . ? The overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high" (Hab. iii. 8, 10).

Whatever mystery may attach to this subject, various plain points are, I think, open to our consideration. The Inspired Volume seems written rather for our instruction as regards ourselves, and consequently as regards the visible creation in reference to ourselves, than from a more general purpose of enlarging our know-

ledge touching matters wholly extraneous; and many a subject too wide or too deep for our grasp may yet teach us an unmistakable lesson.

“No more sea” does not exclude from the presence of the Throne “a sea of glass like unto crystal” (Rev. iv. 6); or, be it the same sea or not, “as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire” whereon the victorious redeemed take their stand (xv. 2). Thus we shall not lose the translucent purity of ocean, nor yet a glory as of its myriad waves tipped by sunshine; no, nor even the volume of its voice, when all God’s servants uplift their praises “as the voice of many waters” (xix. 5, 6). What shall we lose? Not our friends, for the sea shall give up its dead (xx. 13), when earth also shall no more hide her blood or cover her slain (Is. xxvi. 21). What shall we lose? A barrier of separation: for the exultant children of the resurrection find firm footing and stand together upon their heavenly sea,—bitterness and barrenness: for the pure River of Water of Life flows between banks crowned with fertility, and even now its refreshment is for whoso thirsteth and whosoever will drink (Rev. xxii. 1, 2, 17). Troubled restless waters we shall lose with all their defilement (Is. lvii. 20), and with waves that

toss and break themselves against a boundary they cannot overpass (Jer. v. 22), and with the moan of a still-recurrent ebb, "The sea is not full" (Eccles. i. 7). We feel at once that the sea as we know it, a very embodiment of unrest, of spurning at limits, of advance only to recede, that such a sea teaches us nothing concerning that rest which remaineth to the people of God (Heb. iv. 9); who having pressed toward the mark and obtained the prize (Phil. iii. 14) enjoy their final felicity in a heaven which can be no heaven at all except to persons whose wills and whose affections are at one with the will and love of God. "There was war in heaven" (Rev. xii. 7) would be repeated to all eternity, could we conceive it otherwise.

Floods, whether defined as rain-born or snow-born torrents, noisy and destructive in their day but dwindling to nothing as time goes on, or as any river or other body of running water especially in its moments of turbulence or of overflow (as we read how "Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest," Josh. iii. 15: see also the imagery of Is. viii. 6, 8; Jer. xlvi. 7, 8; xlvii. 2), in either case some of the associations which invest the sea attach equally to floods.

“He bindeth the floods from overflowing; and the thing that is hid bringeth He forth to light. Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?” (Job xxviii. 11; xxxviii. 16).

WHALES AND ALL THAT MOVE IN THE WATERS.

“Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.” JOB xii. 7, 8.

WE may, even without travelling inland or skywards, meet with specimens of all these our instructors (the earth, of course, only excepted) on the surface or under the surface of the waters. For, to instance merely a few readily remembered animals, icy seas abound in “sea monsters” that “draw out the breast” (Lam. iv. 3), whales, walruses, seals; aquatic birds, such as swans and gulls, are at the least as truly at home on or immediately above the water, as in the higher regions of air or on land; fishes, even so-called flying fishes and those exceptional individuals which we are

certified traverse fields and mount trees, have still their head-quarters in the liquid element; while a myriad of inferior animated creatures wriggle in wet mud, burrow in wet sand, or take up their station between high and low water-mark. I think however we may hold it as true for the most part that such breathing beings as inhabit two or even three elements show at their best rather in the water than on the land: seals, for instance, are awkward on land, at ease in the water; so in a degree are swans, ducks, geese; but when from earth we turn to air we notice that seagulls, if not all the aquatic fowl, are magnificent flyers as well as good swimmers. As to a crocodile, I will not pretend to decide in which habitat he shows to most advantage.

What then is the lesson which these creatures of many aspects and many grades are to teach us? Perhaps a study of that whole twelfth chapter of Job from which my initial-text is taken may lead us to answer not incorrectly: they protest that God Almighty is, in the ultimate tracking backwards and upwards of all secondary causes, the One only Maker and Doer. When once we recognise this truth, not as a prison wall to be kicked against, but as an immovable foundation to

be built upon, foes may continue to harass us from without, but the battle of life within is already half won, the rebel within being subdued, and the traitor within silenced ; for not that which cometh from without defileth a man, but that which proceedeth from within. (See St. Mark vii. 14-23.)

The Old Testament has its one prominent historic fish, the "great fish" of Jonah (i. 17 ; ii. 10 ; St. Matt. xii. 40). In those Books which our Church, adhering exclusively to the Hebrew Canon, segregates under the designation of Apocrypha, there appears a second noteworthy fish, and this like the former overruled to effect purposes of mercy, the medicinal fish of Tobias (Tobit vi. 1-8, 16, 17 ; viii. 1-3 ; xi. 7-13). We read that the fish of the Nile perished in the first plague of Egypt (Ex. vii. 19-21). How popular amongst the Jews were fish as food we may infer from certain murmurs of emancipated Israel in the wilderness, and perhaps from a consequent speech of Moses (Num. xi. 4, 5, 22 : see also Song of Solomon vii. 4) : long afterwards we notice fish among the goods brought on the Sabbath Day to the Jerusalem market by men of Tyre, and prohibited by Nehemiah (xiii. 16-21). The Nile and some if not all of its live tenants having

been idolised in Egypt, we discern a special appropriateness in that clause of the Second Commandment which forbids to the chosen nation all images of aquatic creatures (Ex. xx. 4; Deut. iv. 15-18): nor did Israel at the Exodus leave behind all temptation to fish-worship; in the Holy Land they encountered it once more on their own borders, the Philistine idol Dagon, on which in the days of the Judges a summary divine vengeance fell, bearing the semblance of a fish-man (1 Sam. v. 1-4).

Fishes proper are, I think, as a class and to human instinct among the least sympathetic of living creatures. Their surface is comparatively cold and hard; their eye corresponds. Which of us, even supposing such a chance to occur,—which of us would feel drawn to fondle a scaly slippery person? Beholding fishes so cold, so clean, so compact, one might fancy them destitute not of souls only but of hearts also. Yet have they an abundance of good gifts whereby to honour God and cheer man. Gold or silver or a humming-bird does not surpass the vivid lustre and delicacy of their changeable tints; their motions are replete with strength and grace; their swiftness is a sort of beauty; their outlines present unnum-

bered curves and angles of harmony or quaintness; their bulks varying between the vast and the minute are all alike fashioned according to individual capabilities and requirements. If, descending below fishes, we contemplate certain minor marine organisms, the opulence of beauty and defect of sympathy strikes us anew. Sea anemones are perfect sensitive-flowers to the eye, but clammy and uncomfortable to the touch: shells may on the surface rival roseleaves and rainbows, but many times they ensconce only an uncomely tenant without features, without intelligible expression. If on the contrary we make fish our starting-point along the upward instead of the downward scale, immediately much becomes different: and among the sea mammals we recognise an ugliness more beautiful than insipid beauty; clumsy contours ennobled by an expression which seeming to proceed straight from their hearts certainly comes straight to ours.

Little do we know of the scope or the future of our brute fellow-creatures: nay, what do we know so as to fathom it even of their actual present? Familiarity with what they are and what they do proves to us that they exert memory, intelligence, affection: but we do not ourselves possess facul-

ties whereby to define the limits of all they are and all they are not. One thing however is absolutely clear: they are entrusted to man's sovereignty for use, not for abuse. If land may cry out and furrows complain against a tyrannical owner (Job xxxi. 38, 39), if the Holy Land emptied of inhabitants enjoyed a compensation for those Sabbaths whereof lawlessness had deprived her (Lev. xxvi. 34, 35; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 20, 21), much more may not life wantonly destroyed and nerves without pity agonised enter a prevalent appeal against men who do such things or take pleasure in them? (See Rom. i. 28-32: "inventors of evil things, . . . unmerciful.") God weighed the claims of the "much cattle" of Nineveh, as well as of the human infants (Jonah iv. xi.): if we honestly weigh the claims of all our sentient fellow-creatures, I think we shall forbear to adopt some pretty fashions in dress, and to follow up some scientific problems. Ours is indeed the law of liberty, nevertheless a law it is and we shall be judged thereby (St. James ii. 12): it is at our own peril that we make it an occasion to the flesh (Gal. v. 13), or a cloak of maliciousness (1 St. Pet. ii. 16). At first sight actions may appear transient, done and done with; but accumulating

experience bears a contrary witness. We have seen that a fiery destruction perpetuated instead of obliterating many details of Pompeian social life; and we are now assured that sounds can not only be registered, but also stored up and reproduced. Alas for us, if when the fashion of this world passes away (1 Cor. vii. 31) and partial knowledge is done away (xiii. 9, 10), the groans of a harmless race sacrificed to our vanity or our curiosity should rise up in the judgment with us and condemn us.

“O Lord, Thou preservest man and beast”
(Ps. xxxvi. 6).

FOWLS OF THE AIR.

“Oh that I had wings like a dove!” Ps. lv. 6.

HAPPY was King David in this his aspiration, more happy it may be than he at the moment realised, for dove's wings are the very wings accessible to faithful souls, and this in a higher sense than he seems here to have contemplated where he longs for the wicked to cease from troubling him and where being weary he longs for rest (Ps. lv. 1-8). Not in his day had the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove

and lighted upon the Divine Head of our race (St. Luke iii. 22); nor indeed were the special privileges of Christians open even to David, the man after God's own heart (1 Sam. xiii. 14). Now all things are ours, if we are Christ's (1 Cor. iii. 21-23). We who in Holy Baptism have been made temples of the Holy Ghost (St. John i. 33; 1 Cor. vi. 19) need not fall short of one dove-like grace. Our souls on wings of prayer and praise may soar into heaven and converse with our ascended Lord (Phil. iii. 20), the eyes of our heart may become meek and modest (Song of Sol. iv. 1), the voice of our inmost spirit pouring forth supplication may be all desire and purity, mourning, tenderness, and trust (Song of Sol. ii. 14; Ezek. vii. 16). If our treasure be in heaven, there will our heart be also (St. Matt. vi. 21): and the whole Communion of Saints Militant, upborne on wings of the Spirit, do in will truly fly home thither as doves to their windows (see Is. lx. 8). Not one dove-like saint, not the feeblest, need despond as to reaching his journey's end: the flood which had drowned a world proved impotent to cut off one literal dove from a window of refuge or an olive leaf of encouragement (Gen. viii. 8-11).

Earth has its winged population, and heaven likewise (Is. vi. 2; Ezek. i. 5, 6; see Dan. ix. 21). "The wings of the wind" (Ps. civ. 3), "the wings of the morning" (cxxxix. 9) alluding possibly to fresh breezes upspringing at dawn, are phrases full of noble beauty. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles" (Is. xl. 31) is a promise within reach of us all. Solomon has instructed us both in earthly prudence and in heavenly wisdom by help of wings (Prov. xxiii. 5; Eccles. x. 20). Wings are even employed in Sacred Writ to convey to our apprehension instances of Divine perfection and condescension (Ex. xix. 4; Deut. xxxii. 11, 12; Ruth ii. 12; Ps. xvii. 8). Above all these last texts, but in varying degrees this whole body of texts and facts taken together might, I think, predispose us to imagine that in the kingdom of irrational animated nature, birds, not beasts, would occupy the higher place; birds, as winged, corresponding with angels; beasts, as wingless, with men: yet we find the direct contrary to be the case. Perhaps without presumption we may in this discern a homage to the Son of God's veritable humanity, a sort of parable of two most blessed texts: "He took not on Him

the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham" (Heb. ii. 16): "Christ Jesus: Who . . . was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. ii. 5, 7).

Bible birds, like angels, appear to be divided into agents sometimes of God's mercy, sometimes of His wrath; at other times they even seem to represent emissaries of evil. Thus there are the raven and dove of Noah (Gen. viii. 6-12): the turtle-dove and young pigeon, with the molesting fowls, of Abram's sacrifice (xv. 9-11): the birds of the chief baker's dream, and of its fulfilment (xl. 16-22): the unblest quails (Num. xi. 31-33): the birds of prey baffled by Rizpah's maternal love (2 Sam. xxi. 10): the ravens commissioned to feed Elijah (1 Kings xvii. 2-6).

Long before the mission of Moses we find the distinction between clean and unclean birds known to, and observed by, Noah (Gen. viii. 20). By the Levitical Law some fowls were appointed for sacrifice (Lev. i. 14-17; v. 7-10; xii. 6-8), while others, as unclean, were prohibited even for food (xi. 13-19, 46, 47; Deut. xiv. 11-20 contains an almost identical list). Birds were appropriated to the ceremonial cleansing of lepers (Lev. xiv. 4-31), and of leprous houses (*vv.* 49-53),

as well as to other purifications, as in the case of a Nazarite's involuntary defilement (Num. vi. 9-11). The blood of fowls, as of beasts, is stringently forbidden for human aliment (Lev. xvii. 13, 14). The Divine injunction, with its dependent promise, touching a sitting mother-bird (Deut. xxii. 6, 7) is framed so strikingly on the model of "the first commandment with promise" (Ex. xx. 12; Eph. vi. 2, 3), that while it quickens our perception of the honour due in all cases to the parental character, it surely also authorises and invites, sanctifies and blesses human tenderness towards the dumb creation. Portions of the book of Job, of the Psalms, of the Song of Songs, of the Prophets, with indeed many other parts of the Bible, ought to be studied before we can hope to grasp our subject in its breadth and length: any attempt to exhaust it here being precluded by copiousness of text.

"Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air. God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof. . . . God my Maker, Who giveth songs in the night; Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth,

and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven (Job xxviii. 20-23; xxxv. 10, 11).

BEASTS AND CATTLE.

“Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee.”

JOB xl. 15.

WHICHEVER animal behemoth may be (for different theories have been propounded as to his identity) one thing, if I mistake not, is clearly conveyed to us by that vivid figure of speech, “he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not”; and that thing is the power, competence, ease, of his existence: he meets and provides for his necessities without strain of effort; he is even serenely conscious of inherent resource adequate to the supply of all his contingent wants, and “trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.”

Let us take behemoth, made with us and “chief of the ways of God,” as head and type of the whole brute family: and, in the entire passage which describes his endowments and habits (Job xl. 15-24), there can, I think, be traced that instinctive and faultless mastery of all that irrational creatures can be called upon

either to be or to do, which contrasts obviously and utterly with the birthright of fallen man; who has to undo and do, unmake, make, and become, in the very teeth (so to say) of flesh and blood and human possibility. Not so, doubtless, with Adam in his primeval righteousness; but with each one of us his children, and most of all now under the Gospel Dispensation, thus it is: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force" (St. Matt. xi. 12). To resist unto blood, striving against sin, seems mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews (xii. 4), as no portent, but as the matter of course lot of many a Christian. To endure unto the end is simply the qualification for salvation (St. Matt. xxiv. 13). To overcome must precede enthronement (Rev. iii. 21). The innumerable white-robed palm-bearing multitude whom St. John beheld in vision "came out of great tribulation (vii. 9, 14). Reason and free will, those exalted gifts, may and must be a ladder leading from earth either heavenwards or hellwards; a ladder inaccessible to the beasts that perish (Ps. xlix. 20; Eccles. iii. 21), but inevitable by man; at the outset of life man's foot is planted midway upon that ladder; and up or

down it he must go, for here we have no abiding place (1 Chron. xxix. 15). How imminent our danger, how vast our alternatives, how critical, how momentous our position, words cannot exaggerate for they cannot even express: involuntarily we are standing in a poised balance, involuntarily we are made like a wheel (see Ps. lxxxiii. 13), never continuing in one stay.

It shames us to observe how very much nearer the whole tribe of irresponsible beasts comes to the Apostolic summary of King David's career, who served his own generation by the Will of God and fell on sleep (Acts xiii. 36), than do a multitude of our responsible selves. We shall do wisely to study Agur's portrait of ants and conies, locusts and a spider (Prov. xxx. 24-28): and when we have reformed our conduct by theirs,—though truly we may find it a lifelong business to acquire the prudence, industry, and temperance of ants; the harmonious unity of locusts; the self-help and self-elevation of spiders; not to speak of the provident master-building of conies (compare St. Matt. vii. 24, 25),—when by these we have remodelled our doings, then we who as Christians are a nation of kings and priests (1 Pet. 2-9; Rev. i. 6), may go on to add grace and dignity to

our demeanour by considering lion, greyhound, and he-goat (Prov. xxx. 29-31).

Beasts and cattle correspond with our wild and domesticated animals. The duty of kindness towards either class is enjoined in Holy Scripture not only by merciful enactments in the Mosaic Law (Ex. xx. 10; Deut. xxv. 4), and by Solomon in his surpassing wisdom (Prov. xii. 10), but most persuasively of all by examples of Divine Providence such as we gather from the Books of Job (xxxviii. 39-41; xxxix), and of Psalms (lxxxiv. 3; civ. 10-31; cxlvii. 9). Before the seventh plague "destroyed" Egypt a warning was vouchsafed which ensured the safety of cattle as well as of men (Ex. ix. 19; x. 7). The Prophet Joel (i. 18-20; ii. 21-22) noticing the poor beasts in their misery, encourages them by a promise of plenty.

Of the many animals which play their part in the Old Testament history some few at least must not here be overlooked. The ram caught in a thicket by his horns, in connexion with which occurs the first mention of a lamb (Gen. xxii. 7, 8, 13). The camels which knelt while Eliezer prayed (xxiv. 11, 12). Balaam's ass (Num. xxii. 21-33). The young lion roaring against Samson

(Judges xiv. 5, 6). The milch kine that drew the Ark and lowed as they went (1 Sam. vi. 7-12). The lion and bear of David's first memorable victory (xvii. 34-37). The oxen of Perez-uzzah (2 Sam. vi. 6). Absalom's mule (xviii. 9). The lion which slew the disobedient Prophet, but spared the ass (1 Kings xiii. 23-29). The dogs executing judgment upon Ahab (xxii. 38), and upon Jezebel (2 Kings ix. 35, 36). The two she bears that avenged Elisha's insulted sanctity (ii. 23, 24). The lions devastating Samaria (xvii. 24, 25.) The horse of Mordecai's opening triumph (Esth. vi. 7-11). Job's riches first and last (Job i. 3; xlii. 12). The lions powerless against Daniel but mighty against his accusers (Dan. vi. 19-24). The fasting beasts in the great national repentance of Nineveh (Jonah iii. 7-8).

Every one of these creatures has a lesson for us, and divers of them set us an example. But vain it is and worse than vain to con a lesson yet not learn it, to relish an example yet not follow it. Now this is a danger to which students of the Bible are eminently exposed. The Word of God is so full of charm, so deep, so wide, so inexhaustibly suggestive, that for the mere delight's

sake one may imbue oneself with its letter and sharpen ingenuity to display subtilty in its application, without a vestige of love in the heart or of grace in the soul. A thing ever so good and in itself permanently good may be wrested by men to their own ruin: the sun ceased not to shine, or the moon to walk on in her appointed brightness, despite the incense of their votaries (Job xxxi. 26-28; 2 Kings xxiii. 5); St. Paul, a very emporium of superhuman gifts, and speaking with tongues more than the whole Corinthian Church (1 Cor. xiv. 18), yet avowed the necessity of standing ever on his guard lest having preached to others he himself should be a castaway (ix. 27). If we be Bible students we must not deem ourselves too safe to need watchful prayer against the temper of Ezekiel's hearers: "Lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not" (Ezek. xxxiii. 32).

CHILDREN OF MEN.

“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice.”

I SAM. xv. 22.

AT length we quit the company of all creatures higher or lower than Man, and come upon our own flesh and blood, our own capabilities and duties. We must now cease to look for symbol or analogy: we must study plain examples and plain warnings. And yet not altogether so: for still many times we may discern the lower person or event prefiguring a something transcending itself; of which one instance is pointed out to us in the Epistle to the Galatians (iv. 21-31).

Mankind is so classified in the Benedicite as to assist us in dividing and referring to those “things new and old” which are stored up for our behoof in the Treasury of Truth (St. Matt. xiii. 52). I think that as “Children of Men” are distinguished from “Israel,” we may fairly under the present head regard man in his merely natural relations to God; not having the Law, but being many times a law unto himself, and occasionally exhibiting a righteousness which

rebukes those who both have and break a more explicit law (Rom. ii. 14, 15, 26, 27). Thus considered, a multitude of texts seem either directly or by suggestion to bear upon his case whether of vice or virtue.

“I made a covenant with mine eyes” (Job xxxi. 1). God Himself attested Abimelech’s integrity in a matter in which both Abraham and Sarah needed excuse (Gen. xx. 1–16): while the first Pharaoh mentioned in Holy Writ, and (presumably) a second Abimelech, evinced a like rectitude under very similar circumstances (xii. 14–20; xxvi. 6–11).—“We are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things” (Rom. ii. 2). Laban, outside the Divine covenant, when he substituted Leah for Rachel (Gen. xxix. 20–26), acted not otherwise than elect Jacob had done when he simulated Esau (xxvii. 1, 15–27): in one case the darkness of a father’s blindness, in the other the darkness of night, covered the deception.—“Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (Rom. xiii. 10). On the occasion of their long deferred reconciliation, if Jacob equals “profane” Esau, he does not to our perception excel him (Gen. xxxiii.

1-16; Heb. xii. 16).—"That ye may put difference between holy and unholy" (Lev. x. 10). The Pharaoh of Joseph's day respected sacred persons and property (Gen. xlvii. 22: unless the marginal alternative reading of "princes" for "priests" affects the sense): "If I did despise the cause of my manservant; . . . what then shall I do when God riseth up?" (Job xxxi. 13, 14): and deferred to Joseph's oath and filial piety (Gen. l. 6)—"Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers" (Is. xlix. 23). Pharaoh's daughter adopting Moses in her womanly compassion, was exalted unawares to be nursing mother of the Church (Ex. ii. 5-10)—"I will speak of Thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed" (Ps. cxix. 46). The magicians of Egypt confessed the finger of God, and that openly, to their hard-hearted terrible monarch (Ex. viii. 19)—"The Lord is good, a strong-hold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him" (Nahum i. 7). Among the servants of Pharaoh some feared the Lord's Word, though others regarded it not (Ex. ix. 20, 21)—"Ye did run well; who did hinder you . . .?" (Gal. v. 7). A mixed multitude went up with Israel out of Egypt: but afterwards they

both together fell a lusting in the wilderness (Ex. xii. 38 : Num. xi. 4-6)—“The spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord” (Is. xi. 2). Jethro the Midianite was moved to give wise counsel to Moses, wholly in subordination to God’s Will (Ex. xviii. 17-23) : “We will go with you : for we have heard that God is with you” (Zech. viii. 23) : and Hobab enjoyed the option to be “instead of eyes” to journeying Israel (Num. x. 29-32) ; an option of which he seems to have availed himself (see Judges iv. 11)—“As he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him” (Ps. cix. 17). Balaam rich in gifts but scant of grace became like sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal (Num. xxii. -xxiv. ; xxxi. 8-16 ; Mic. vi. 5-8 ; 1 Cor. xiii. 1) —“If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps. xi. 3). Rahab’s faith preserved her and her’s in the downfall of Jericho (Josh. ii. 1-21 ; vi. 22-25 ; Heb. xi. 30-31).—“Put them in fear, O Lord : that the nations may know themselves to be but men” (Ps. ix. 20). The inhabitants of doomed Gibeon, moved by fear, snatched themselves from imminent death : “I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wicked-

ness" (Ps. lxxxiv. 10): and their policy was at the least so far blessed to them that an irrevocable sentence kept them and their descendants within hearing of the truth (Josh. ix. 3-27). "Thus saith the Lord God; As I live, surely Mine oath that he hath despised, and My covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompense upon his own head" (Ezek. xvii. 19). Moreover a breach of the league once for all contracted with them was avenged by a three years' famine in the reign of David, and was not atoned for except by seven deaths (2 Sam. xxi. 1-9)—"The froward is abomination to the Lord: but His secret is with the righteous" (Prov. iii. 32). One luminous flash of knowledge makes one hope for other unrecorded excellences in that Midianitish (or allied) soldier who interpreted his fellow's dream (Judges vii. 13, 14)—"Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise" (Eph. vi. 2). Ruth's filial self-devotion proved the stepping-stone to her adoption into the line of our Lord's ancestry (Ruth i. 16, 17; iv. 13-17; St. Matt. i. 1, 5, 16)—"Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it" (Micah vi. 9). The Philistine priests and diviners gave sound advice to their stricken countrymen (1 Sam. vi.

1-9)—“Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality” (Rom. xii. 13). The King of Moab extended hospitality to Jesse and his wife, while David was but a persecuted fugitive and captain of malcontents (1 Sam. xxii. 1-4)—“If a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him” (Lev. xix. 33). Achish evinced national impartiality in acknowledging the supposed adherence of David (1 Sam. xxix. 3-10): to whom Nahash, king of the children of Ammon, likewise showed kindness (Referred to 2 Sam. x. 2)—“A lover of good men” (Titus i. 8). Hiram king of Tyre “was ever a lover of David:” he blessed God for the wise devotion of Solomon, and was privileged to co-operate in building the first temple (1 Kings v.)—“Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding” (Prov. iv. 7). The Queen of Sheba came from afar to hear the wisdom of Solomon; as also did a vast concourse of strangers (1 Kings x. 1-10, 24)—“The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me” (Job xxix. 13). Pharaoh’s kindly generosity afforded a home to Hadad the fallen prince of Edom (1 Kings xi. 14-22)—“He that receiveth a prophet in the

name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward" (St. Mat. x. 41). The widow of Zarephath sustained Elijah during the famine, and received her son raised to life again (1 Kings xvii. 8-24)—"He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went" (St. Mat. xxi. 29). Even thus did Naaman the Syrian, a mighty man of valour, great with the king his master, and honourable (conjectured to be the "certain man" of 1 Kings xxii. 34), but a leper. Truly God waited to be gracious Who left him room for repentance, and after he had calmed down from his rage cleansed him. In him a natural lovableness seems to have prepared his heart to respond to the Divine love: but for the "little maid's" fervent good will (and she a captive and a foreigner) he had never been directed to a healing prophet; but for his servants' remonstrance he had returned to his Abana and Pharpar loathsome as he started thence (2 Kings v. 1-23)—"No man can serve two masters" (St. Mat. vi. 24). Yet such was the sacrilegious service rendered by that mingled population which the King of Assyria transplanted into the Holy Land: of which "service" the very truth has recorded, "They feared the Lord, and served

their own gods. . . . They fear not the Lord" (2 Kings xvii. 24-41)—"Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully" (Jer. xlvi. 10). Pharaoh-necho King of Egypt made haste on an errand of God (2 Chron. xxxv. 20-22)—"By me kings reign, and princes decree justice" (Prov. viii. 15). Cyrus King of Persia, of whom God Himself said "he is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure" (Is. xlv. 28), decreed the rebuilding of the temple (2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23): Darius completed the work (Ezra vi. 1-15): Artaxerxes endowed and protected it (vii. 11-26). Additional instances of royal good deeds or virtue we find in the king's kindness to his cupbearer (Neh. ii. 1-8): in the gratitude of Ahasuerus (Esth. vi. 1-11), and perhaps in his readiness to neutralize his own arbitrary act of tyranny (viii. 8: for the original act, see iii. 8-11): in Nebuchadnezzar's confession of faith and promotion of the three children (Dan. iii. 28-30), and in the self-abasement whereby he glorified God (iv.): even, we may hope, in Belshazzar's last recorded act in fulfilment of his plighted word (v. 7, 29, 30): to these I scarcely dare add, yet dare I not omit, the degree of sympathy with goodness and of faith evinced

so haltingly by Darius (vi. 14-28). Daniel, indeed, seems to have had a special gift of winning hearts; witness his early influence over Ashpenaz and Melzar (i. 8-16)—Our concluding examples shall be of repentance. “Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further” (Job xl. 5). These words of Job himself show us the final disposition of his three friends (xlii. 7-9): while, “Is not this the fast that I have chosen?” (Is. lviii. 6) brings up into our ears the mighty prevailing cry of Gentile Nineveh (Jonah iii. 5-10).

“That be far from Thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from Thee: shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Gen. xviii. 25).

ISRAEL.

“The Holy Seed shall be the substance thereof.”

Is. vi. 13.

THIS holy seed and substance of the Church is truly her first and last, her beginning and end, her root and fruit. This and only this is the clue

to God's inexhaustible mercy set against and exceeding man's unexhausted sinfulness: mercy, rejoicing against judgment (St. James ii. 13), rejoices as a giant to run its course.

The Church of old was indestructible because it was fore-ordained in fulness of time to bear Christ: the same Church of this last time (1 St. John ii. 18) abides indestructible because it is the body of an ever-living Head (Ephes. i. 22, 23). Though fruitless branch after fruitless branch be broken off, though graft after graft prove barren, yet these bear not the root but the root these: wherefore the True Vine ceases not to flourish, even if sometimes it be as a root out of a dry ground (see Rom. xi. 17-24; St. John xv. 1-8; Is. liii. 2). Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the words of God the Word pass not away (St. Matt. xxiv. 35): God the Word Who Himself endureth for ever in heaven (St. John i. 1; Ps. cxix. 89, Prayer Book translation), endureth no less for ever in His Church (St. Matt. xxviii. 20), which thus becomes immortal with His personal immortality.

Therefore all depends on Christ, nothing on anything except Christ. The firstfruit being holy, the lump also is holy; the root being holy, so are

the branches (Rom. xi. 16); we are accepted in the beloved (Eph. i. 3-6).

Whilst we are bound to receive all truths and (so far as our endowments of nature and of grace will carry us) to understand and rejoice in them, those truths themselves (thank God) abide wholly independent of our feelings, conceptions, misconceptions. They are no more affected by our views concerning them, than are the objects of sight by our gaze. The Bible itself records how various saints and sinners alike have formed erroneous judgments on matters of fact. Thus Eve appears to have hailed the birth of Cain as the birth of the promised champion: yet was even her younger son Seth no more than the forefather of Christ, and that at a distance of more than seventy generations (Gen. iv. 1, 25; St. Luke iii. 23-38).—Eight persons at the utmost seem to have credited the announcement of the flood, until it came and took all the rest away (Gen. vi. 5, 8; vii. 5-23; St. Matt. xxiv. 37-39; 1 St. Pet. iii. 19, 20).—The builders of Babel counted on consummating a city and a tower, and on the contrary they themselves dropped asunder like bricks cemented by untempered mortar (Gen. xi. 1-9; see Ezek. xiii.

10-14).—"Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him," said Samuel, commissioned to anoint David, but looking at Eliab (1 Sam. xvi. 6, 7).—"I, even I only," reiterated Elijah, while yet there were left seven thousand in Israel (1 Kings xix. 10, 14, 18).

Blessed, awful, is this gift of indestructibility inherent in the Church: it ensures to the whole body corporate the issue of beatitude, but it assures not to any one individual soul the attainment of that issue. Some must attain: each might: we, by God's help, will.

If we do truly will with that indomitable will which takes the kingdom of heaven by force (St. Matt. xi. 12); then when thus we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, the promise stands sure to ourselves that all needful things shall be added unto us (vi. 31-33). Only the standard of what is needful depends not on our judgment, but on God's: many things will never be allotted to us; many will be withdrawn from us; of many we shall have to strip ourselves; as did the Israelites of their ornaments by Mount Horeb (Ex. xxxiii. 4-6). There are so many things which are, as we know, incompatible with the better life and land. We who brought

nothing into the world, cannot either carry anything out of it (1 Tim. vi. 7): all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, being of the world, with the world and its lust and its fashion pass away (1 St. John ii. 16, 17; 1 Cor. vii. 31); and though the gates of New Jerusalem shall not be shut at all, yet shall nothing that defileth or worketh abomination or maketh a lie in any wise enter in (Rev. xxi. 25, 27). Much moreover that is not sinful, but is merely transitory, familiar, endeared to us, ends with this life: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. xv. 50); the children of the resurrection neither marry nor are given in marriage (St. Luke xx. 34-36); prophecies will fail, tongues cease, knowledge vanish away, for we know in part and prophesy in part, and that which is in part shall be done away (1 Cor. xiii. 8-10). What else? Tears, death, sorrow, crying, pain: these also pass away (Rev. xxi. 4). Let us thank God and take courage.

“ Israel shall do valiantly ” (Num. xxiv. 18).

PRIESTS.

"Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness."

Ps. cxxxii. 9.

CIRCLE within circle, height above height, horizon beyond horizon: whichever illustration we resort to, such is the lesson taught us by revelation and by experience, from without and from within. While an indefinite if not an infinite number of difficulties besets any attempt to classify all creatures in an accurately graduated scale, at the same time trenchantly discriminating class from class, yet the broad distinctions between inorganic and organic, lifeless and living, irrational and rational, assert themselves at once and for ever. Some denizens of, so to say, the border lands of these several kingdoms may puzzle a philosopher by equivocal features and inexplicable resources; but the bulk of each population remains distinctively and unmistakably defined.

And thus far nature and grace work alike: neither endowments of nature nor gifts of grace are bestowed equally upon all individuals, of whom every one is responsible up to but not beyond the limit of personal capacity. The particular talents,

be they few or many, entrusted to each creature are the sole talents in reference to which that same creature will be called to give account. "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (St. Luke xii. 48): "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (2 Cor. viii. 12).

The visible creation culminates in man (Gen. i. 1-28). The race of man, refounded by Noah, is bound up in the persons of his three sons; of whom one, Shem, receives the first privilege (ix. 18, 19, 26). From his progeny Abram and his descendants are singled out for an exceptional blessing (xii. 1-3): yet this, passing by Ishmael, lights upon Isaac only (xvii. 15-21); and again, disregarding Esau who aforesaid had despised and forfeited his birthright (xxv. 29-34), is confirmed exclusively to Jacob (xxvii. 27-29, 33; xxviii. 3, 4; Rom. ix. 10-13). With Jacob a new order commences: all his sons become heads of tribes, and thus heads of the one only sacred nation (Gen. xlix. 1-28); yet are they not all on an equality: Levi is sanctified for the ceremonial service of God, and has God for his sole inheritance (Deut. x. 8, 9); amongst the Levites one

family is consecrated to the priesthood (Ex. xxviii. 1); amongst the priests one individual is exalted to be high-priest (Lev. viii. 12; xxi. 10).

That law of duty which demands that we should be with all our might whatever God makes us, has its counterpart in the law which forbids our constituting ourselves other than He is pleased to make us.

This negative law Eve broke when she postponed obedience to knowledge (Gen. iii. 1-6),—the company of Korah, when they burnt incense (Num. xvi. 1-11, 35-40),—Saul, when he offered sacrifice (1 Sam. xiii. 8-14),—Uzzah, when he put forth his hand to touch the ark (2 Sam. vi. 6, 7; see Num. iv. 15),—king Uzziah, when he essayed to minister in the sanctuary (2 Chron. xxvi. 16-21).

That other law was infringed by Eli the high-priest and judge, when he honoured his sons above God (1 Sam. ii. 27-30; iv. 18).

The stringency of these laws, the penalties by which over and over again their breach has been avenged, bring home to our hearts no less than to our consciences the awful guilt of obstructing or seducing or intimidating any person in the discharge of his duty. "What is Aaron, that

ye murmur against him?" asked Moses remonstrating with Korah. Not his who at his own peril carried out the law, but His who imposed the law was the majesty assailed: "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Ps. ii. 3. See also the history of the disobedient prophet, 1 Kings xiii. 8-30).

Many points of the mosaic law indicate how absolute and venerable an authority was vested in the Jewish priesthood, and how pure a sanctity was demanded of its consecrated members. Passage after passage shows us the priest offering sacrifices and oblations for the congregation (Lev. i. ii. iii. &c.): discerning and cleansing from leprosy (xiii. xiv.): making atonement not for himself only, but for all the people (xvi.): restricted in personal mournings (xxi. 1-5): conducting the ordeal for jealousy (Num. v. 12-31): partaking with the altar; receiving the first-fruits and other hallowed offerings, with the tithe of the tithe (xviii. 8-19, 25-29): pronouncing sentence between litigants (Deut. xvii. 8-13): guaranteeing victory (xx. 2-4): constituted guardian and promulgator of the law (xxxii. 9-13).

Who is sufficient for such things? Even the

high-priest of that dispensation was bound to offer for sins, not for the people only, but for himself also (Heb. v. 1-4). Nor could those typical sacrifices ever take away sins, of which a memorial had to be made again year by year continually (x. 1-4, 11). All creation groaning and travailing in pain together waited then for the beginning of redemption, as we ourselves and all creatures are now waiting in hope for its consummation (Rom. viii. 18-23).

“ Now therefore arise, O Lord God, into Thy resting place, Thou, and the ark of Thy strength : let Thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let Thy saints rejoice in goodness ” (2 Chron. vi. 41).

SERVANTS OF THE LORD.

“ Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress ; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that He have mercy upon us. ” Ps. cxxiii. 2.

WATCHING, waiting, looking forward and upward, in such an attitude did the saints of the elder dispensation serve God. Prophets and

kings desired to see things they saw not, and to hear things they heard not (St. Luke x. 24): their eye was not satisfied with seeing, nor their ear filled with hearing (Eccles. i. 8). Those who were persuaded of the promises received them not then and there (Heb. xi. 13), but received only some representation or at the utmost some foretaste of them (see St. John viii. 56): many entered the Holy Land and feasted on its milk and honey, who hungering and thirsting with a hunger and thirst which no earthly dainties could appease, still desired a better country, that is, a heavenly (Heb. xi. 16), still craved for the wine and milk which are priceless (Is. lv. 1). If no trumpet from without, yet ever and anon an alarm from within, renewed the summons, "Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest" (Mic. ii. 10). Solomon, beyond any who arose before or after him, seems to have inherited and exhausted the temporal blessedness of his race: yet surely, though it was his sin alone which cursed his blessings (see Mal. ii. 2), it is nevertheless of the very essence of all temporal boons that what they are illustrates what they are not, and can never be. Even had his heart been perfect with God as was David's (see 1 Kings xv. 3) it

would no more, it would then far less, have been satiated by a world summed up as "vanity of vanities" (Eccles. i. 2). It was not the wise king, himself a freeman of the sacred commonwealth, it was the wisdom-craving Queen of Sheba, who standing without and gazing as an alien upon the beloved nation became overwhelmed by the glories and felicities of their lot (1 Kings x. 1-9).

We ourselves (only not, thank God, as aliens, but as members of the sacred household) contemplating the state of God's family may take up her very words and repeat, "Happy are these Thy servants." But wherein does our happiness consist? Not in riches, not in pleasures; these may be given as part of any lot happy or unhappy, and equally may be withheld: man's happiness consists now as of yore in choosing, doing, suffering, God's will. Our elder brethren, "Israelites indeed" (see St. John i. 47), waited with a great patience and a great longing for the first Advent (Is. lxiv. 1, 2; Mal. iii. 1; Acts xxvi. 6, 7): even so we if we be "Jews inwardly" (Rom. ii. 29) wait for the second (2 Tim. iv. 8). We must set our faces to go up to Jerusalem, which is above and free and the mother of us all (Gal. iv. 26):

and following in the steps of that Divine Son Who for our sakes, took upon Him the form of a servant (Phil. ii. 7), we likewise may sometimes have to set our faces as flint amid scorn and hatred (Is. l. 7; St. Luke ix. 51), while we make haste forward to keep our eternal Pentecost in the Holy Jerusalem (see Acts xx. 16). "Behold, we count them happy which endure," says St. James (v. 11): and such is the happiness that consists with the exile, absence, pilgrimage, of this our day of small things. Let us not despise this day and its burden, lest to-day despising our birthright we to-morrow miss our blessing. "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart" (Ps. xcv. 7, 8).

When as samples of Old Testament servants of God we select some (since we cannot discuss all), who evidently and eminently have prefigured Christ, at the least in some point of their career, we shall many times find them characterised by that very uncompletedness (if I may term it so: for I mean a different thing from the defect named incompleteness) which we have been considering. Abel prematurely slain by his brother (Gen. iv. 8): Isaac, whose self-oblation was perfect in will but not in deed (xxii. 9-12):

Jacob, whose prevailing power with God was purchased by a bodily blemish (xxxii. 24-28, 31, 32): freeborn Joseph sold into bondage and permanently made servant to Pharaoh, before he could become the pillar of his father's house (xxxvii. 28, 36; xli. 33-41): Moses arrested on the threshold of Palestine, yet pre-eminently that prophet like unto the Prophet greater than he (Num. xx. 12; Deut. xxxiv. 1-5; xviii. 15-19): Barak a deliverer of his nation, yet not obtaining the honour of his act (Judges iv. 9): Jephthah also, brought very low in the flush of triumph (xi. 35): and Samson a blind slave at the hour of his victorious death (xvi. 28-30): David forbidden to build the Temple (1 Chron. xxii. 7, 8): Josiah, like unto whom was there no king before him, neither after him arose there any like him, taken away in his prime from the evil to come (2 Kings xxii. 18-20; xxiii. 25, 29).

Notwithstanding that for some of these straitnesses we may discern a secondary cause in the sin or infirmity of the suffering saint; yet do they all serve to illustrate the universal law of shortcoming here, to be made up for elsewhere. "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" (Gen. xviii.

14). Eternity will show. Even time has already sufficed to confer on "righteous Abel," and that by the lips of the Omniscient Judge, a name better than of sons and of daughters (St. Matt. xxiii. 35): to reveal Isaac invested with an unique glory of Christ-likeness (Heb. xi. 17-19): to endear to his spiritual posterity Jacob's example of self-sacrificing persistence (Hos. xii. 3-6): to emancipate Joseph who passed ages ago through the gate of death (Gen. l. 22-26; Exod. xiii. 19; Josh. xxiv. 32): to open the promised land to Moses (St. Luke ix. 30, 31): to attest the dignity of Barak, of Jephthah, of Samson (Heb. xi. 32): to record the name of David not on any Temple made with hands, but on that one Temple made without hands Whose Builder and Maker was God; "I Jesus I am the root and the offspring of David;" "Hosanna to the Son of David" (Rev. xxii. 16; St. Matt. xxi. 9; see also St. John ii. 21): to publish the Holy Spirit's own witness to the Divine acceptance of Josiah (Jer. xxii. 15, 16).

What then has eternity yet to show?—

"Since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He

hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him” (Is. lxiv. 4).

SPIRITS AND SOULS OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

“Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?”
JOB xxxviii. 17.

TO us Christians the land of the shadow of death is no longer the dominion of the king of terrors, but rather a tiring-closet for the bride of the King of kings. There having put off the corruptible and the mortal she prepares to put on incorruption and immortality (1 Cor. xv. 52, 53), meanwhile making melody in her heart to the Lord. We seem to hear her singing a psalm of thanksgiving, the very psalm of her risen Saviour: “The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places. My heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell. Thou wilt shew me the path of life” (Ps. xvi. 6, 9-11; Acts ii. 22-28).

We may still reverently ask, “I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on?” (Song of Sol.

v. 3); but it must be with the enquiring mind of faith, not with the cavilling mind of doubt. We may search what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ testifies beforehand touching the Resurrection, but it must be with the joyful confidence of Abraham, when he also heard of life as it were from the dead : alike in laughter, he and Sarah were unlike in the motive of their laughter (Gen. xvii. 17 ; xviii. 12-15 ; Rom. iv. 18-21).

} Mankind, though still no further advanced than to see through a glass darkly (1 Cor. xiii. 12), may, on comparing its later with its earlier generations, say thankfully, "Whereas I was blind, now I see" (see St. John ix. 25). Perhaps the tone of the Old Testament is nowhere more startling at first sight, than in a few passages on the subject of death : for that here and there a text does baffle interpretation and challenge faith, cannot be denied : though love even then never fails to find a clue by its own intuition of the love of God, resting and rejoicing now in what it shall know hereafter. Thus does deep respond to deep at the noise of the waterspouts, for "many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it" (Ps. xlii. 7 ; Song of Sol. viii. 7). If an ordinary believer trembling

on the brink of the grave were now to lament as saintly Hezekiah of old lamented (Is. xxxviii. 10—20) it would at the least surprise us.

But we (thank God) can never be called upon to realize what it was to precede, not to follow, Christ into the valley of the shadow of death. Once for all our Good Shepherd has gone before His own sheep: whenever now He puts them forth it is only to go home to Him along the very path which He has already trodden (see St. John x. 4). Of old it was far otherwise. Think what it may have been for Abel to pass (as it seems) first of the whole human family into the veiled world; and after him went forth each soul in individual loneliness, much as Abraham who knew not whither he went (Heb. xi. 8): it needed a David, and him under inspiration, in such a transit to "fear no evil" (Ps. xxiii. 4). True it is that Moses showed at the bush that the dead rise (St. Luke xx. 37, 38): but if some in Israel were slow of heart to interpret that text, what are the mass of ourselves in comprehending many another? To be alone was never indeed at any period the lot of a faithful soul; but to feel alone has been, and is, one besetting trial of man: how keen is this trial and in a sense how unsuited

to our constitution we may deduce both from a Divine sentence true of Adam even in his original innocence (Gen. ii. 18), and also from a Messianic psalm (lxxxviii. 8, 18), from a Messianic prophetic vision (Is. lxiii. 3-5), and from words uttered by our Lord Himself in foresight (St. John xvi. 32) and in the crisis (St. Mark xv. 34) of His atoning passion.

Of actual glimpses into the realm of departed souls the Old Testament affords us very few. Once and once only do we behold a saint reappear from his grave: "An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel. . . . And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?" (1 Sam. xxviii. 14, 15). From these words we gather, yet at most by implication, that the elect soul was dwelling in a quiet abode and cared not to be disquieted. Thus Job (iii. 17-22) also spoke when he thought to rejoice exceedingly and be glad if only he could find a grave: "There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest." A second utterance of disembodied Samuel shows him, as in the days of his mortality, so then once again moved by the spirit of prophecy (1 Sam. xxviii.

19). The dead, however, are as a rule they who characteristically "go down into silence" (Ps. cxv. 17): not any of themselves, but Isaiah xiv. 9—11) and Ezekiel (xxxii. 21) only, acquaint us with that mighty stir in the underworld which greeted the fallen king of Babylon, and that voice out of the midst of Hades which spake to overthrown Egypt.

But when from the intermediate state we turn faithful eyes towards the final beatitude, all becomes flooded no longer with mist but with radiance: that which baffles our vision is not darkness but light,—light not dubious though partly undefined. Thus has it been with the Church of God from Abel downwards (Heb. xi. 4—14, &c.): thus will it be to the end of time (1 Cor. xv. 51—54). Full quotations become impossible by reason of abundance: but over and over again we recognise the one glorious hope of immortality persisting in patriarchs, singing in psalmists, rejoicing in prophets (e.g. Job xix. 25—27; Ps. xlix. 15; Is. xxvi. 19; Hos. xiii. 14). We know that this mortal life is the sufficient period of our probation, we know that the life immortal is the sufficing period—if we may call eternity a period—of our reward: let us not

fret our hearts by a too anxious curiosity as to that intermediate state which hides for the moment so many whom we love and whom we hope to rejoin, for even now we know that "the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them" (Wisdom iii. 1).

HOLY AND HUMBLE MEN OF HEART.

"This commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off." DEUT. xxx. 11.

THANK God that in the way of holiness way-faring men, though fools, shall not err (Is. xxxv. 8). The ground of praise we must now consider is simplicity itself, is within the reach of all, is an union of "things lovely" endeared to noble hearts (see Phil. iv. 8), is an indisputable point of likeness to our heavenly Father ("Be ye holy; for I am holy;" 1 St. Pet. i. 16; Lev. xix. 2); and to our Divine Brother ("I am meek and lowly in heart;" St. Matt. xi. 29), is the key of contentment here and of exaltation hereafter.

By the word holiness we understand two things :

one involuntary, the other voluntary; one accidental (so to say), the other inherent; one a privilege, the other a grace. This grace is what God requires: without it, all else which has been granted us of office, privilege, gift, will but increase our condemnation. Under the Jewish dispensation the inferior sort of holiness was lavished on the chosen race: but the higher holiness consisted then as it remains now, as it has been and will be ever, in the voluntary harmony of each human will with the Divine Will, in (if we dare say so) the personal likeness of each human character to the Divine Character.

In the loftier sense it does not seem that even a single personage of the Old Testament is throughout the historical record pronounced holy: at least, I can recal no such instance as occurring in the Authorized Version. Of course all I mean is that the particular expletive is not used concerning individuals: for the fact of their holiness is often "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners" (see Song of Sol. vi. 10). But the first man we find verbally designated as "holy" was that last of Jewish saints, John Baptist (St. Mark vi. 20): and in him the more than prophet (St. Luke vii. 26) ter-

minated the goodly fellowship of those prophets whose privilege was restricted to standing without while they listened for the bridegroom's voice, or as in the holy Baptist's unparalleled case heard it (see St. John iii. 29). Noah, Ruth, Job, were just, virtuous, perfect, and upright (Gen. vi. 9; Ruth iii. 11; Job i. 1); but of none of them is the word "holy" used; no, nor yet of Lot, whom we know as "just Lot . . . that righteous man" (2 St. Pet. ii. 7, 8). Of all such terms "holy" seems the highest, the most spiritual; the rest appear to be lower steps of the same ascent: these certify the conduct, the other vouches for the heart. Perhaps without rashness we may quote Lot himself as exemplifying the inferiority of righteousness as compared with holiness. He in his own person was a good man, with so genuine a love of right and loathing of wrong, that his residence among sinners was a source of unceasing vexation to his soul: but no zeal of God's sanctity consumed him; he remained while he loathed: and when rescued with a high hand from imminent destruction his enthusiasm for his own salvation carried him no further than "little" Zoar, itself all but included within the penal fire, instead of winging his feet up the

appointed mountain of safety (Gen. xix. 12-23). But for the verdict of an inspired apostle I think we might have doubted whether in very truth Lot was even so much as righteous.

For holiness we must rather look to Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah; yet not for unflawed holiness even to them: to David perhaps least of all, yet was he the man after God's own heart (1 Sam. xiii. 14), and God alone could slake the thirst of his soul (Ps. lxiii. 1; cxliii. 6). Enoch stands solitary in the glory of his acceptance (Gen. v. 24; Heb. xi. 5), Melchizedek in the mystery of his august individuality (Gen. xiv. 18-20; Heb. vii. 1-4); of these twain we know nothing amiss; nor yet of Daniel, but for his own self-accusation (Dan. ix. 20). Still, Solomon avers that "there is no man that sinneth not" (1 Kings viii. 46), and centuries later St. John instructs us how "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" (1 St. John i. 8): One, and One alone, there is "Who did no sin" (1 St. Pet. ii. 22).

All that is spiritual within us, that is noble, that is aspiring, yearns after holiness even while we offend seven times, yea, seventy times seven. What is the dissatisfying element in all we have?

Whence derives that recoil of pleasure which deals a pang, that influence of beauty which steepens us in sorrow? Each of these becomes on occasion a weapon sharper than any two-edged sword (see Heb. iv. 12): and we might almost adjure our misery in the words of Jeremiah (xlvii. 6, 7), "O thou sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest, and be still;" but, "how can it be quiet, seeing the Lord hath given it a charge?" We only can quiet it (and that at God's time, not at man's) by first yielding ourselves to the legitimate influence of each good creature, and learning from it the lesson they all are framed to teach. Their beauty from without rebukes us until from within ourselves there responds to it that beauty which returns after penitence as a clear shining after rain (see 2 Sam. xxiii. 4), "beauty for ashes" (Is. lxi. 3). All creation begins by enforcing a negative lesson: "The depth saith, It is not in me:" nevertheless in that negative is latent an affirmative: Not in me, then elsewhere. While we praise God because "He setteth an end to darkness," let us confidently crave His Spirit in searching out all perfection (Job xxviii. 3, 14).

If humility is before honour (Prov. xv. 33), no less inevitably does it underlie holiness. And here we find an accessible vantage ground on the road heavenwards. Holiness overawes while it attracts. He Who is "glorious in holiness" is likewise "fearful in praises" (Ex. xv. 11): and Joshua protested even to the chosen race newly settled in the land of promise, "Ye cannot serve the Lord: for He is an holy God; He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins" (Josh. xxiv. 19). Humility on the other hand is all attraction: it is one ground of our Saviour's claim to our confidence: "Come unto Me, . . . learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart," He says and draws us to Himself (St. Matt. xi. 28, 29). If we cannot at once be holy, let us at once be humble: if we cannot at once be humble, let us at once aim at becoming humble. To be humble is delightful, for it is to be at peace and full of contentment: to become humble is far from delightful, but it is necessary and it is possible. If we sincerely, persistently, prayerfully, desire this good estate, humility will not be denied us; it may even be lavished upon us: but perhaps in the whole range of graces there is not one likely to be

vouchsafed us by a more trying process. When we ask to be humbled we must not recoil from being humiliated: when we ask God to humble us we must not wince if His instrument of discipline be some individual no better than ourselves. Humility, like all other graces, was not fully exemplified till He assumed it Who is "the Chiefest among ten thousand" (Song of Sol. v. 10), and for whose dearest sake no height or depth ought to seem to us unattainable. Even before His Advent His saints, like dulled mirrors, shone here and there with an image of some of His virtues: thus we discern humility combined with unselfishness in Abram (Gen. xiii. 8, 9), with magnanimity in Moses (Num. xi. 27-29), with filial piety in Ruth (iii. 5, 6), with friendship in Jonathan (1 Sam. xxiii. 16, 17), with meekness in David (2 Sam. xvi. 5-13). This blessed humility is a grace specially open and adapted to us sinners: by it aged Eli, who was our warning, became also our example (1 Sam. iii. 18); by it Hezekiah, having come to a better mind, refused not to be comforted under the foreseen consequences of his own folly (2 Kings xx. 12-19; 2 Chron. xxxii. 24-26, 31).

"Thus saith the high and lofty One that in-

habiteth eternity, whose Name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Is. lvii. 15).

ANANIAS, AZARIAS, AND MISAEEL.

"When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."
Is. xliii. 2.

ONCE and again God has made "a new thing" (see Num. xvi. 28-30) to vindicate His outraged majesty, it may be by the overthrow of a sinner, it may be by the deliverance of a saint. The prophetic promise of Isaiah becomes history through the faith of the three children.

Yet their faith foresaw not whether so great a promise was about to be fulfilled to them: God's ability to rescue them they asserted, but His will concerning them was not at once revealed. Only their own will was made up: on that the fiery furnace already had no power (Dan. iii. 16-18; and see v. 27). Like David's

“three mightiest” (1 Chron. xi. 19) they went in jeopardy of their lives: and in the same spirit and the same steps a weak woman also walked when Queen Esther summed up all, saying, “And if I perish, I perish” (Esth. iv. 16).

The history of Ananias, Azarias, and Misael is recorded for us authoritatively in the Canonical Book of Daniel (i. 3-20; ii. 17, 18, 49; iii. 1, &c.): and receives edifying and devotional additions, including the “Benedicite,” from the Apocryphal “Song of the Three Holy Children.” Studying this narrative, we shall, I think, find that the three heroic saints we are now at last contemplating did in their own persons in some sort represent every class of those fellow men whom in the Canticle they invoke to render a tribute of praise to God.

As “children of men,” they exhibited the noble, natural endowments of beauty and intelligence, probably of constitutional temperance and courage. As “Israelites,” they eschewed unclean meats and abhorred idols. As “Priests,” being, though not of the Levitical stock, yet of a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Ex. xix. 6), and springing moreover from that tribe of Judah whence arose the “Priest for ever after the Order of Mel-

chisedec" (Heb. v. 6; vii. 14),—as priests they offered their own bodies to God as an acceptable whole burnt-sacrifice. As "servants" they kept their Lord's commandment (Ex. xx. 5), and zealously maintained His honour. We may surely even think that like unto "spirits and souls of the righteous," so far as an act of self-devotion would carry them, they did, though not in deed, yet in will disembody themselves, and in the fiery furnace chant not discordantly among the heavenly choirs: having first by "humble" confession given God the glory, and by "holy" confidence laid hold upon His unfailing strength.

Their light shines before the Church for ever: as candles set upon a candlestick they give light to all that are in the house; as a city set upon a hill they cannot be hid (St. Matt. v. 14-16). Heroic among heroes, and saintly among saints, upon them has descended the blessing of their great forefather: "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise" (Gen. xlix. 8).

"Let us now praise famous men" (Ecclus. xliv. 1): yet while we praise God with them and for them, let us take the more earnest heed that in will at least we labour to be made like unto them; for those only who resemble them are

worthy to praise them; and any who have praised and not emulated — the “almost persuaded” heroes and saints (see Acts xxvi. 28)—must one day be condemned out of their own mouths.

“Glorify ye the Lord in the fires, even the Name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea” (Is. xxiv. 15).

THE SECOND SERIES.

R E D E M P T I O N .

ALL WORKS.

“ Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” Ex. iii. 5.

To go on from Creation to Redemption is to penetrate as it were out of the Holy Place into the Holy of Holies. Contemplation takes precedence of discussion, thanksgiving of enquiry: many things continue to be expedient, but the one thing needful is to love (see St. Luke x. 41, 42).

First and last all has depended and will ever depend upon Christ “ the First, and with the last ” (Is. xli. 4). “ All things were made by Him. . . . The world was made by Him ” (St. John i. 3, 10). “ All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord,” sings David (Ps. cxlv. 10); but this prophecy, still indeed unaccomplished, did least of all come to pass in the mortal day of Jesus Christ: “ He came unto His own, and His own received Him not ” (St. John i. 11).

As we now for the second time follow the series of inorganic creation or of irrational creatures enumerated in the Benedicite we shall

indeed discern our Lord's absolute mastery over them ; but we shall sometimes observe that the parable whereby they teach is one of warning rather than of example ; their subjection appearing to be of constraint and not willing. Not merely all the inhabitants thereof, but the earth itself is dissolved ; and Christ alone bears up the pillars of it (Ps. lxxv. 3). In judgment upon man, or in sympathy with him, all is disjointed, unstrung, enfeebled ; all faints, fails, groans, travails in pain together (Rom. viii. 22) : " Cursed is the ground for thy sake " (Gen. iii. 17), gives us the key to much of that mystery of misery which environs us on our right hand and on our left.

And Christ, on Whose sinless head our sins were made to converge, willed also that on Himself should centre the shortcoming, failure, disappointment, which balk us at every turn. He Who in life chose to have " not where to lay His head " (St. Matt. viii. 20), chose in His life-procuring Passion to be rejected or left alone, voluntarily or involuntarily, by His whole creation. For when the Lord Himself came out of His place to rebuke Satan (see Is. xxvi. 21 ; Zech. iii. 2), Michael the Archangel, with all his hosts, kept silence before Him (see St. Matt. xxvi.

53, 54); light vanished, the sun became blotted out (St. Luke xxiii. 44, 45); lover and friend were put away, and acquaintance hidden out of sight (Ps. lxxxviii. 18); the heaven above His head became as brass (Deut. xxviii. 23; St. Mark xv. 34), and the earth under Him as iron incapable of fecundity; for rather than give rest to the sole of His foot she sent up a lifeless tree whereon He should hang between earth and heaven, one like the awful tree of St. Jude's (*v.* 12) prophetic Epistle: "Without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots."

His self-humiliation is the measure of His exaltation, His self-emptying of His replenishment (Phil. ii. 5-11). What should be the measure of our gift to Him? His to us: self for Self, all for all.

"We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 St. John iv. 19).

ANGELS.

"Bless the Lord, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word." Ps. ciii. 20.

As all lovely tints engarland the sun at his rising, come to light while he runs his course,

turn the rain in his path to a glory, and rally around him when he sets, so the blessed host of heaven waiting on their Lord appeared and vanished, stooped to earth and returned into heaven. The times we behold them thus employed convince us of the many more times, or rather of the unbroken continuity of time during which their service of love went on, and their care was exercised for Him, Who being their Creator deigned to become their Fellow Creature.

Thus from the presence of God came forth the Archangel Gabriel to predict the birth of the great Precursor (St. Luke i. 11-20), and of that greater One Who should come after (26-38). An Angel was God's messenger to reassure and guide our Lord's putative father (St. Matt. i. 20, 21). One Angel announced Christ's birth to certain shepherds, when suddenly a multitude of the heavenly host visibly and audibly praised God (St. Luke ii. 8-14). At the word of an Angel the holy family fled into Egypt, and afterwards returned to the land of Israel (St. Matt. ii. 13, 14, 19-21). Angels ministered to our Lord in the wilderness (St. Mark i. 13); and are honoured in our remembrance each time His lips full of grace made mention of their order (St. Matt. xiii. 37-50;

xvi. 27; xviii. 10; xxiv. 31, 36; xxv. 31; xxvi. 53: St. Luke xii. 8, 9; xv. 10; xvi. 22; xx. 36: St. John i. 51: Rev. iii. 5). At the pool of Bethesda the Great Physician supplemented the ministry of His servant (St. John v. 2-8). In the Garden of Gethsemane the Creator was strengthened by His creature (St. Luke xxii. 43). Angels overwhelmed sinners, and encouraged saints, at the empty sepulchre (St. Matt. xxviii. 2-7; St. John xx. 11-13; St. Luke xxiv. 4-7): bore prophetic witness to the truth on the Mount of Ascension (Acts i. 10, 11: presumably, the speakers being evidently of exceptional character): ministered to the Church at sundry times and in divers manners (Acts v. 19, 20; viii. 26; x. 3-7; xii. 7-11; xxvii. 23, 24: the Book of Revelation moreover abounds with their sacred words and deeds); and will attend the Second Advent when their Lord and ours returns to judge the world (1 Thess. iv. 16; 2 Thess. i. 7). How terrific is their delegated power to punish, mankind has already seen in the case of Herod (Acts xii. 21-23): what their celestial aspect is, those rebels beheld who set themselves against St. Stephen (vi. 15).

Angels neither sin, nor mourn, nor die. We

who sin and mourn and must die, how much shall we love that dear Lord Who wedded to Himself not their nature but ours? (Heb. ii. 16; Eph. v. 22-32). They to whom little is forgiven may perhaps plead somewhat in excuse if they love only a little: but we? The manifold sinner is forgiven much and loves much: "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much" (St. Luke vii. 40-47).

HEAVENS.

"Jesus Christ, . . . Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things." ACTS iii. 20, 21.

HEAVEN and earth alike, God and man alike, await that which is not yet but shall be hereafter. The heaven and earth of to-day await a fire, after which there shall be new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness (2 St. Pet. iii. 7, 13). Christ waits to come again and receive us unto Himself, that where He is there we may be also (St. John xiv. 3). We, what are we waiting for? Some of us avowedly and honestly are waiting for heaven; yet even thus the heaven which some of us are waiting for may, alas! scarcely be that very heaven promised and prepared for us by our loving Lord (*v.* 2).

Reverently be it spoken. Our Lord's notion of heaven seems in great part to be that He and we should at last and for ever be together. "With us" is still that which with desire He desires (see St. Luke xxii. 15). His "sheep" and His "other sheep" shall have eternal life and shall not be plucked out of His hand (St. John x. 14, 16, 28). Face to face with death thus He spake out of the abundance of His heart: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am" (xvii. 24). And surely to Himself no less than to His saint is that faithful promise made: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne" (Rev. iii. 21). As the life is more than meat and the body than raiment (St. Luke xii. 23), so is this ineffable union more than all the glories, beauties, pleasures, which attend it.

Other, if not alien, is one widely popular scheme of heaven. Made wise by experience we start with negatives: earth has, heaven will not have, tears, pain, sorrow, reverses, death, sin (Rev. iii. 12; xxi. 4, 27); assuredly not sin, which entails the bitterest of all misery, breeding fear and self-loathing. War is banished; doubt also and antipathy; weariness, with both sleep

and sleeplessness. "No more sea" (xxi. 1) puzzles us: but we bridge over our non-sequence by exclaiming, "No more separation." We who have lacked friends count on sympathetic intercourse; we who have lost friends, on reunion: we shall regain and never more lose those beloved ones who for the present are buried out of our sight. All this we realize, we grasp, we yearn after: much of this we have already enjoyed, and may then again enjoy securely.

Yet all this analyzed, what does it all amount to? It is heaven without God: for in such a conception God is not first and foremost; peer or second He will not be, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me" (Ex. xx. 3). If this by itself would satisfy us, it needs but a step further to avow that could Adam and Eve after the one fall have remained harmoniously together in their garden of Eden, cut off from God, but eating and living for ever (see Gen. iii. 22), their lot would have been after all not amiss. As inevitable as the truth, that where our treasure is there our hearts will be also (St. Matt. vi. 21), so inevitable is it that wherever our hearts are there must in truth be abiding our treasure.

If we would reinstate God, our jealous God

(Ex. xx. 5), as our All in all in heaven, we must begin by making Him our All in all on earth. To which end no road can be surer than a contemplation of Christ our Way (St. John xiv. 6), Who in very truth is God Almighty brought home, made clear, endeared to man (2 Cor. iv. 6; Col. ii. 9; 1 St. John iv. 15, 16; see *v.* 20): such as the Divine Son is not, that the Divine Father is not (St. John xiv. 9-11, so also in the Athanasian Creed: "Such as the Father is, such is the Son: and such is the Holy Ghost"); terrors should not overwhelm or distract even the feeblest disciple. If the contemplation of God's glory is able to change us into the same Image from glory to glory (2 Cor. iii. 18), well may the contemplation of His love so change us from love to love (1 St. John iv. 19).

It may help us to long for the heaven that shall be if with a special reference to our Lord's present Ministry of Mercy we take pains to consider the heaven that now is. In the act of ascending He blessed His own, thus and not otherwise was He parted from them (St. Luke xxiv. 50, 51); which last sound of blessing struck audibly to man's ear the key-note of that prevalent mediation, that unflagging intercession,

which appearing in the Presence of God for us Christ now and ever exercises (Heb. vii. 25; ix. 11, 12, 15-24). We are His care, we His object: though of God Omniscient we dare not say, "His engrossing care, His absorbing object," yet even such words in the degree that we could apprehend them would still fail to convey to us the breadth, length, depth, height, of His heart towards each one of us (Eph. iii. 17-19). An individual who claimed in some sort of vision to have beheld Him, described Him as looking at every one with love: wherein we find a parable for our instruction. Shall He so look at us, while we look with love at all things lovely that are in heaven and earth except at Him? "But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" (see 2 Kings viii. 13).

Of old some saw in Him no beauty that they should desire Him, and hid as it were their faces from Him (Is. liii. 2, 3). Not so St. Stephen who saw Him and was transfigured into the divine likeness (St. Luke xxiii. 34; Acts vii. 55, 56, 60); or St. Paul who saw Him and received not grace in vain (1 Cor. xv. 8-10); or St. John who saw Him and having first fallen at his feet as dead, at last answered, "Even so,

come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. i. 17; xxii. 20). We who have to walk by faith and not by sight, and by so walking may obtain all the greater blessing (St. John xx. 29), must gaze on Him steadfastly if darkly until the day of seeing face to face (1 Cor. xiii. 12). St. Peter is addressing not an exceptional group of saints but a vast multitude of Christians when he writes :—

"Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love" (1 St. Peter i. 7, 8).

WATERS ABOVE THE FIRMAMENT.

"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." ROM. viii. 28.

AS in the former series of studies, so now again I reserve instances of "waters" for subsequent sections, and here take the "firmament" as our text.

In one very solemn passage Christ Himself took it in some sort for a text. The Pharisees desired of Him a sign from heaven: and "He answered and said unto them, When it is even-

ing, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, it will be foul weather to-day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" (St. Matt. xvi. 1-3).

Thus we learn that to exercise natural perception becomes a reproach to us, if along with it we exercise not spiritual perception. Objects of sight may and should quicken us to apprehend objects of faith, things temporal suggesting things eternal. Our just and tender Lord Who accepts good will without regard to ability (see 2 Cor. viii. 12), stands ready to sanctify and utilize every sense and faculty we possess (see Rev. iii. 20). Natural gifts are laid as stepping-stones to supernatural: the nobler any man is by birth-right, if keen of insight, lofty of instinctive aim, wide of grasp, deep of penetration, the more is he able and is he bound to discern in the visible universe tokens of the love and presence and foreshadowings of the will of God. It is good for us to enjoy all good things which fall to our temporal lot, so long as such enjoyment kindles and feeds the desire of better things reserved for our eternal inheritance. The younger

fairer than the elder (Judges xv. 2), the best wine last (St. John ii. 10), these are symbols calculated to set us while on earth hankering, longing, straining, after heaven.

If inherent in all beauty is a subtle influence whereby it may sadden in the very act of delighting us, this influence resides certainly not least efficaciously in beauties of the sky. We watch the ever-varying heaven overhead, and all its changes still leave it essentially unchanged and unchangeable: it seems to kiss earth and ocean at the horizon, but we know that for ever it cannot be touched, nor can the foot of the world-spanning rainbow be found amongst us. Not these, or such as these, are our real heaven, or even our bridge to reach heaven: "there is a path" but no fowl knoweth it, nor hath the vulture's eye seen it (Job xxviii. 7).

Yet it is no lesson of "vanity of vanities," of barren dreaming or desire (see Eccles. i. 2, 14) which our Divine Master draws from the sky. The Pharisees whom He is addressing made a practical use of their sky-study, and for this they are not blamed: on the contrary, they had but to take an onward and upward step, to pass from the region of sight into the region of faith, and

they then would have discerned that such "a sign from heaven" as they challenged had actually been vouchsafed to them, "He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven" (St. John iii. 13).

What they missed we may appropriate.

"From all blindness of heart, Good Lord, deliver us."

POWERS.

"The devil, taking Him up into an high mountain, shewed unto Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto Him, All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me." ST. LUKE iv. 5, 6.

AROUND the Almighty Creator we behold the universe come into existence in obedience, harmony, perfection (Gen. i.; Neh. ix. 6; Rev. iv. 11). Around the Almighty Redeemer earth and its inhabitants though weak (Ps. lxxv. 4, Prayer-Book version) rage in impotent rebellion (Ps. ii. 1; xlv. 1-3, 6). One stronger than they holds them as slaves, plies them as tools, wields them as weapons against their Maker and Master: all the foundations of the earth are out of course

(lxxxii. 5); and not man alone, but the blind forces of nature also seem to surge and swell against Him to Whom the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and Who taketh up the isles as a very little thing (Is. xl. 15).

As God saw fit to curse the passive ground for Adam's sake (Gen. iii. 17), so it pleased our Divine Saviour to suffer many things not from sinners only, but from inanimate or irrational nature also : though ever and anon He vanquished her opposition or enriched her niggardliness, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further" (see Job xxxviii. 11).

Christ, we are taught, was born in the winter, a season impoverished of leaves, flowers, fruit, sunshine, when the voice of birds is silent (see Song of Sol. ii. 11-13). The inn which housed other Israelites housed not Him (St. Luke ii. 7). Desert places which for His precursor brought forth locusts and wild honey, spread no table for Him (St. Matt. iii. 1-4 ; iv. 1, 2). The water of Jacob's well remained, at least for a while, inaccessible to Him : and He, whose first miracle supplied wine to His friends, Himself sat patiently athirst (St. John ii. 1-11 ; iv. 6-11). A village where Samaritans dwelt at home shut its doors

against Him: and He who of old had avenged His insulted prophet by fire, Himself journeyed meekly elsewhere in search of hospitality (St. Luke ix. 51-56; 2 Kings i. 9-12). Earth which furnished holes and nests for foxes and birds, provided no resting-place for Him (St. Luke ix. 58). The barren fig-tree mocked His hunger with leaves only (St. Matt. xxi. 18, 19). On all these occasions irresponsible nature, involved in the curse of man's guilt and sometimes directed by his will, hid as it were her face from her Maker: while in one instance alone did He pronounce upon her a sentence of immediate punishment. But other occasions there were when contrariwise He vouchsafed to assert His absolute dominion over His creatures; "Thou hast scattered Thine enemies with Thy strong arm. The heavens are Thine, the earth also is Thine" (Ps. lxxxix. 10, 11). Thus He stilled the tempest (St. Mark iv. 35-39), He raised the dead (St. Luke vii. 11-15; viii. 49-55; St. John xi. 38-44), by His word He cast out devils and assigned to them their habitation (St. Mark v. 2-15).

"God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God" (Ps. lxii. 11). Great, unfathomable is the mystery of

powers set in array against God." "Shall the ax boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood" (Is. x. 15). St. Paul tells us of principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, spiritual wickedness, which wrestle with God's elect (Eph. vi. 12) whom whoso toucheth, toucheth as it were the apple of the eye (Zech. ii. 8; see Deut. xxxii. 10). Yet more awful are our Lord's own words at the moment of His arrest: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness" (St. Luke xxii. 53).

"He that is not with Me is against me:" "He that is not against us is on our part" (St. Matt. xii. 30; St. Mark ix. 40). Neutrality is impossible; and were it possible, woe to that man who there took up his position: "I would," says Christ to lukewarm Laodicea,—“I would thou wert cold or hot” (Rev. iii. 15); neutral Meroz brought upon itself a curse and not a blessing (Judges v. 23). All created powers great or small, visible or invisible,—every man's powers,—my own,—must run their course, must attain the end towards which in very truth they are directed, must con-

sciously or unconsciously effect the purposes of God (see 2 Cor. vi. 1; Acts iv. 27, 28). Free will, that one power which God Himself refuses to coerce, free will it is that renders possible our self-destruction; and that on the other hand furnishes us with the one solitary thing which as a king we can give unto our all-giving beloved King (see 2 Sam. xxiv. 23, 24). Creatures devoid of free-will abide safe and blessed within the will of God; but they cannot withhold, and therefore they cannot genuinely give. Would we, if we could, choose by once for all foregoing choice to offer for ever after unto the Lord our God of that which doth cost us nothing? This were to love mistrustfully, if to love at all: Christ help us to trust entirely because we love much.

Jesus said: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth" (St. Matt. xxviii. 18).

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (St. Jude 24, 25).

SUN AND MOON.

“Joseph dreamed a dream, . . . and he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.”
GEN. xxxvii. 5, 9.

IN the Patriarch Joseph we recognise, first, the best-loved son of Jacob, secondly, an eminent type of Christ: to him, therefore, under both these aspects, his prophetic dream had to be fulfilled. Its fulfilment to himself, in his own natural person, can be clearly traced through the course of his subsequent history, when the actual sustenance of his father and his brethren having lapsed into his hands to be granted or withheld, Jacob who had rebuked him for his words, and his brethren in whose hearts they had rankled (Gen. xxxvii. 10, 19, 20), were reduced to exert their utmost endeavours to remove his supposed suspicions and conciliate his favour. Rachel indeed had then passed out of this familiar sphere of hunger and thirst (xxxv. 19), but such was already the case when Jacob expressly included her in his protest: perhaps we may consider that her

humiliation was virtually involved in that of her husband, or of her younger son (long supposed to be her sole surviving offspring) Benjamin.

More however does it import us to grasp and revere the type than to account for the narrative. When Joseph stands before us as a figure of Jesus Christ, the mystery of the dream and its interpretation shifts its ground, the mysterious element ascending to a higher level. It is no marvel to behold moon and stars, His mother and His brethren, do obeisance unto Him: but the sun does obeisance also; hereby the Incarnation appears dimly intimated, the Godhead abasing itself to the Manhood, the Creator clothing Himself with the creature, and subjecting Himself to the laws which rule creation; yea, in fulness of time the divine Father delegating to that Only-begotten Son, Who for ever abides Very Man no less than Very God, the sovereignty and administration of the universe (St. Matt. xxv. 31-33; xxviii. 18; St. John v. 26, 27; Heb. ii. 8).

Amongst our Lord's recorded sayings we find the sun mentioned as an agent of God's bounty (St. Matt. v. 45): a symbol of persecution (xiii. 6, 21): a similitude of the consummated glory of the

righteous (*v.* 43): an exhibitor of signs in the latter days (St. Luke xxi. 25). Of the moon, if I am not mistaken, His sacred lips make no mention except as of a sign-giver, and then always in conjunction with the sun: perhaps without over-fancifulness we may deduce hence that because the moon in its earthward aspect appears as the very embodiment of change and exercises as two of its main functions the ruling of tides and the occasional eclipse of the sun, therefore its spiritual lesson for ourselves is one of warning rather than of example. Its very changeableness bids us lay hold on that which is unchangeable: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, . . . while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened" (Eccles. xii. 1, 2). "They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure" (Ps. cii. 26).

Sun and moon were alike privileged to do homage to their Maker at His Crucifixion: for the darkness which hid the one brought not to light the other (Amos viii. 9; St. Luke xxiii. 44, 45). Besides this phrase, "The sun was darkened," there is, I believe, only one other mention of either luminary in the Gospel narrative of the events of our Lord's life, St. Mark (i. 32-34) and

St. Luke (iv. 40, 41) both speaking of a certain memorable sunset at which Christ healed the sick and the possessed. But in St. Matthew's account (xvii. 1, 2) of the Transfiguration, the sun is invested with a double glory by the effulgence of our Lord's face being likened to it: so also the Psalmist (lxxxiv. 11) spake of the Lord God as a sun and shield, and the prophet Malachi (iv. 2) was inspired to style Christ the Sun of Righteousness. Moreover, under such an aspect the beloved disciple, "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day," beheld once again that very Alpha and Omega, Son of Man (Rev. i. 10, 11, 13, 16), and Word of Life whom his hands had handled (1 St. John i. 1) and on whose bosom he once had leaned (St. John xiii. 23).

In the first Book of the Old Testament a prophetic dream brings into association sun, moon, and stars; in the last Book of the New, "a great wonder in heaven" shews us the same association: "A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (Rev. xii. 1). Here the sun and stars no longer bow down, but confer dignity and majesty. And what of the moon? Subordinate as she seems, yet is she the very

foundation on which all stands; her characteristic instability reappears transmuted into a characteristic stability. Perhaps, while we keep silence before the loftier personifications which this passage suggests, we may at the same time not irreverently draw from it a comforting lesson of hope: foreseeing the day when every faithful soul shall reappear clothed in the glorious righteousness of Christ (Gal. iii. 27; Phil. iii. 8, 9) "above the brightness of the sun" (see Acts xxvi. 13); when in the full Communion of Saints all stars of all magnitudes shall shine and sing together (see Job xxxviii. 7), the splendour of each being the common splendour of all (1 Cor. xv. 41, 42), Christ the Saint of saints, the true all-enlightening Light, glowing in all, over all, beyond all (Heb. iv. 14, 15; St. John i. 9; 2 Thess. i. 10; Rev. iii. 12); when even the very moon of our probation, its imperfections, changes, eclipses, shall be seen to underlie and to uphold the perfected and stable structure of our salvation.

"Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the Lord, the First, and with the last; I am He" (Is. xli. 4).

STARS.

"One star differeth from another star in glory."

I COR. xv. 41.

THE starry host, like ever-wakeful eyes, more aptly, perhaps, than any other member of the visible creation, represents to our apprehension the Divine Omnipresence and Omniscience. All who dwell upon earth are not in appearance only, but in fact shut out alternately, periodically, by the invariable revolutions of our globe, from the sun's aspect. In like manner, as regards earth's many faces, the moon's proper rotation hides and reveals her alternately. On the contrary, from all stars simultaneously no man is ever excluded, except by such merely apparent exclusion as may be brought about by daylight or by mist: be our hemisphere and our zone which it may, be the stars at a given moment discernible or indiscernible by our vision, yet seen or unseen a multitude of their celestial host abides ever above every horizon; our planet poised as a very small thing amid their magnitudes, as a very obscure thing amid their splendours.

Viewed thus, the sun and moon by a sort of parable connect themselves with one chosen race, the stars with the world-wide brotherhood of man; those with an exclusive Church, these with the Church Catholic. He was a prophet not of the Jews, but of the Gentiles, who foretold the star that should come out of Jacob (Num. xxiv. 17) and they whom a star guided to our Lord's infant presence were Gentile worshippers (St. Matt. ii. 1-11); with whom, though we possess not boxes of sweet odours to break at Christ's sacred feet, let us who also are of Gentile origin bring hearts full of more fragrant love as our offering; thanking Him that He calls not Himself a sun (though divers moved by the Holy Ghost have so designated Him by a figure, or compared Him as with a similitude: Mal. iv. 2; St. Matt. xvii. 2; Rev. i. 16), but that He hath said: "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star" (xxii. 16).

At the proclamation of which divine title well may all morning stars sing together, and all sons of God shout for joy (see Job xxxviii. 4-7): for Christ being chiefest abideth among His ten thousand (Song of Sol. v. 10), according to His own most gracious word, "Father, I will that

they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am ; that they may behold My glory ” (St. John xvii. 24). The number of the true Israel shall be as the number of the stars, by man numberless (Gen. xv. 5 ; Rev. vii. 9). They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever (Dan. xii. 3). To him that overcometh and keepeth Christ’s works unto the end will the Lord the Righteous Judge give the morning star (Rev. ii. 26, 28 ; see 2 Tim. iv. 8). Thus He deigneth to gather us around Him if as servants yet also as friends (St. John xv. 14, 15 ; Rev. xxii. 3, 4) ; thus He is not ashamed to call us brethren (Heb. ii. 11, 12) : for thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour (St. Matt. xxv. 34 ; see Esth. vi. 11).

Stars are lit as beacons everywhere in sight of the whole world : a beacon betokens danger as well as safety ; height involves depth. “ Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall,” St. Paul writes to his Corinthian converts (1 Cor. x. 12) ; and elsewhere we read, “ Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall ” (Prov. xvi. 18). In Holy Scripture the stars and pride, and the downfall of pride, appear connected together in two awful texts (Is. xiv.

12-15; Ob. 3, 4), and St. Jude (*v.* 13) denounces certain sinners under the figure of "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." The Prophet Amos (*v.* 8, 26) names two constellations in exhorting his hearers to seek God, and alludes to an idol-star in summing up their defection: and the second of these texts is quoted by St. Stephen in that first tremendous oration—the first on record after the woes and condemnations uttered by our Lord Himself — which thundering against apostate Israel, won for its speaker the Christian Protomartyr's crown (*Acts vii.* 42, 43, 51-60).

How evident is the manifestation of God's goodness and glory in the starry host of His creation, is twice expressed or implied in the Book of Job (*ix.* 7, 9; *xxxviii.* 31, 32). He the very eternal Deity Who alone can bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion, is that very Christ, Who holding seven stars in His right hand, once revealed Himself to St. John's adoring contemplation (*Rev. i.* 13, 16, 20). And in that strong right hand not "angels" alone (bishops of churches) are clasped: each sheep also and each lamb of His flock nestles in safety there, whence no man shall ever pluck it

(St. John x. 27-30). As in the future glory, so in the present grace, stars are of unequal magnitudes and lustres; but the least is no less than a star precious to Him Who made it, and the greatest is no more than a star whose splendour is His free gift. We indeed can,—but no other strength on earth or in heaven or in hell can dislodge us from His hold: and unless we ourselves wrest our exclusive power to our own destruction, the very justice of God against our sins will be powerless when set against the dues of Christ's atonement (see Is. liii. 10, 11; Zech. ix. 11; Rom. viii. 31-34). Only because the infatuated king of Judah by refusing to hear, and persisting in disobedience, had already wrenched himself out of the divine safeguard, did God at length swear concerning him: "Though Coniah . . . were the signet upon My right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence" (Jer. xxii. 21-24).

Let us watch and pray and take heed to our most sure word of prophecy, until the day dawn and the day star arise in our hearts (2 St. Peter i. 19). Let us not be as vain stargazers who can neither deliver others nor themselves (Is. xlvii. 13-15).

"Anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Rev. iii. 18).

SHOWERS AND DEW.

"If any man have ears to hear, let him hear."

ST. MARK iv. 23.

LEAVING dew to be considered further on, where it reappears combined with frost, I will for the present confine myself to a few remarks connected with showers.

He Who spake as never man spake (St. John vii. 46) deigned many times to take for His text or illustration some common every-day object, making thereof the key to unlock a mystery or the goad to urge His hearers to a duty (see Eccles. xii. 11). Thus, concerning "the face of the sky and of the earth," we find Christ appealing to an experience which men admit and act upon as convicting them of sin in remaining ignorant of matters more momentous: the shower which they foretell rebukes them for those signs of the times which they discern not (St. Luke xii. 54-56).

This nineteenth century of ours seems beyond all previous centuries to be a period of running to and fro, and of increased knowledge (see Dan.

xii. 4). Now therefore presumably, in at any rate no less a degree than heretofore, must men be liable to the risk of at once knowing and not knowing: knowing many things, while ignoring the one thing needful (see St. Luke x. 41, 42); adding knowledge to knowledge, but not as St. Peter bids us adding^o it to virtue, and least of all adding it through virtue to underlying faith (2 St. Pet. i. 5). And whilst the high and deep men of to-day abide pre-eminently exposed to so great a peril; lesser persons, including many nimble-witted individuals of our lesser sex, run their parallel and proportionate risk by adding flowers of superficial knowledge to a rooted ignorance, the play of a fanciful luminous iridescence to the crest of a dense mental mist.

Yet since charity always edifieth, although knowledge oftentimes puffeth up (1 Cor. viii 1), neither the least instructed person nor the most learned need miss his own appointed "showers of blessing" (Ezek. xxxiv. 26): for while knowledge is and must remain exceptional, charity lies ever accessible to us all. Our loving Master desires to add true wisdom, be it to man's knowledge or to his ignorance: whichever of the twain is ours we have but to carry it to Him; and He Whose

first-called Apostles were unlearned and ignorant men (Acts iv. 13), but Who afterwards elected to the same apostleship the erudite and eloquent St. Paul,—He only and He amply is both able and willing to make us wise unto salvation. And along with heavenly wisdom all else shall in good time be added to us: that which He doeth and we know not now, we shall, please God, know hereafter (see St. John xiii. 7). It may never indeed in this world be His pleasure to grant us previsions of seers and forecastings of prophets: but He will assuredly vouchsafe us so much foresight and illumination as should suffice to keep us on the watch with loins girded and lamps burning; not with hearts meanwhile failing us for fear as we look for those things that are coming upon the earth, but with uplifted eyes and uplifted heads, because as they come to pass our redemption draweth nigh (St. Luke xii. 35-38; xxi. 25-28).

A cloud and a shower, then, become mementoes to stir us up to spiritual alertness and discernment. Familiar objects continually set afresh before us, and once for all through association Divinely commended to our notice, they incite us not merely to study signs of yet weightier import,

but also to observe modesty and accuracy in all our investigations, whether of matters momentous or trivial: for we notice how not every cloud is the cloud in question, nay, nor even every cloud in the west; it must be a rising as well as a western cloud to be the precise cloud of our Lord's discourse. And if two characteristics must tally to establish so unimportant an identity, many prayers and careful pondering, a loving fear as well as a reverent love, will do well to regulate our investigation of matters spiritual, future, eternal (consider Job xxxii. 6, 7; Ps. cxxxii; Prov. xxx. 5, 6; St. John xxi. 23; Rom. xii. 3).

“If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know” (I Cor. viii. 2).

WINDS.

“Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.”

SONG OF SOL. iv. 16.

EVERY wind from every quarter fosters growth, so long as it be simply of God's sending, and be met according to His Will: a north wind

braces, a south wind matures; both conducive towards the final overflow of spices. So Solomon by the wisdom of his inspiration tells us. Experience reads us a modified and enlarged lesson; how man may neutralise or actually reverse his allotted blessings, whether of discipline or of indulgence: thus we see that St. Paul's fellow-travellers adhering to their own opinion rather than to his admonition, were misled by the softly-blowing south wind, and maltreated by the tempestuous north-eastern Euroclydon (Acts xxvii. 9-21). Our Divine Teacher has Himself deigned in His parable of the Two Foundations (St. Matt. vii. 24-27) to draw for us a spiritual lesson from certain natural facts, showing us that our outward circumstances become good or evil not of their own essence, but in strict accordance with whatever good or evil responds to them from within ourselves: while His simile of "A reed shaken with the wind" (xi. 7), and the words of His forerunner who spake of Him as of One "Whose fan is in His hand" (iii. 12), equally with the parable point to the testing, sifting office of wind.

Throughout our Lord's personal history the

winds never, I think, appear except in opposition to Himself or to His disciples. Thus on one occasion "a great storm of wind" put in jeopardy the boat wherein He slept (St. Mark iv. 35-39): and during a portion of a second voyage the wind rendered toilsome the Apostles' rowing (vi. 45-48), and for a moment beat down the faith of St. Peter (St. Matt. xiv. 28-32). Yet "the wind" is that sacred figure whereby Christ instructed Nicodemus in the mystery of regeneration (St. John iii. 8); in harmony with which gracious intimation "a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind" announced the descent of God the Holy Ghost upon the infant Church (Acts ii. 1-4). Unlike indeed and empty, nevertheless by its emptiness suggestive of a future fulness, was that "great and strong wind" of Elijah, wherein "the Lord was not" (1 Kings xix. 11): or at the least it becomes thus suggestive to ourselves when we read, though in a different divine context, "For the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (St. John vii. 37-39).

Three Apostles instruct and edify the Church by help of an illustrative wind. St. Paul exhorts to unity and steadfastness of faith leading up to

perfection in Christ (Ephes. iv. 13-15): St. James (i. 5, 6; iii. 2-5) to confidence in prayer, and government of the tongue: while St. Jude (*vv.* 10-13) unveils to the faithful the actual state and overhanging doom of certain arrogant sinners.

Ezekiel (xxxvii. 1-10) in the valley of vision was commanded to summon breath from the four winds, after which with mortal eyes he looked upon a resurrection. St. John the Evangelist "in the Spirit" beheld how at the opening of the sixth seal "the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind" (Rev. i. 10; vi. 12, 13). Our Blessed Saviour connecting indissolubly in our memories the wind, the fig tree, and the end of all things, promises that His elect shall be gathered together "from the four winds," and to this promise appends a parable drawn from the fig tree (St. Mark xiii. 24-29). Thus common things continually at hand, wind or windfall or budding bough, acquire a sacred association, and cross our path under aspects at once familiar and transfigured, and preach to our spirits while they serve our bodies: till not prophets alone and sons of prophets, but each

creature of time bears witness to things which concern eternity, and without speech or language makes its voice heard: "I have an errand to thee Unto which of all us? . . . To thee" (see 2 Kings ix. 5).

FIRE AND HEAT.

"Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward."

JOB v. 7.

IF any ordinary person had been called upon to express the inevitableness of human suffering, I suppose there are many other similes he would have been at the least as likely to select as this one which, although proposed by Eliphaz the Temanite, we may reverently surmise to be according to "the mind of the Spirit" (see Rom. viii. 27). Such a person might, for instance, have said: "Man is born to trouble, as water flows downward." Either form would have conveyed a truth. But this of our own framing would dwell upon the depressed side of misery: that other, recorded by inspiration, takes into account the elevating energy which, by God's mercy, constitutes earthly suffering a lever heavenwards: and therefore we thankfully and con-

fidently accept these words of Eliphaz, as written that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope (xv. 4). Christ's mortal life, beyond all other human lives, exemplifies our text.

The natural element of fire appears once only in our Lord's history; and that once, on the night of His passion, connecting itself with (surely) one of the keenest pangs dealt to His loving human heart. For that night being cold the servants of the high-priest and the officers kindled a fire, and as they clustered around its kindly heat St. Peter stood among them: and anon the great and strong blast of temptation brake in pieces the very "rock" in the presence of the Lord (St. John i. 41, 42; St. Matt. xvi. 18; see 1 Kings xix. 11): "Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of His disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not" (St. John xviii. 15-27). "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of Mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow" (Isa. l. 11). These words of Isaiah which with their context our

Church appoints as the Epistle for Tuesday in Holy Week, when taken along with that most sacred context, seem to prophesy the moment, circumstances, consequences of the denial. "The Lord turned, and looked upon Peter And Peter went out, and wept bitterly" (St. Luke xxii. 61. 62).

Fire is one of the chief symbols of the Divine Presence, and especially of God the Holy Ghost: the Apostles being "all with one accord in one place There appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts ii. 1-4). Such an emblematic connexion underlies many mysterious acts and events, no less than many words Divine or inspired. As fire was prepared in Abraham's hand for Isaac's sacrifice (Gen. xxii. 6), so was it through the eternal Spirit that Jesus Christ offered Himself without spot to God (Heb. ix. 14). Moses beheld a bush burning with fire and not consumed (Ex. iii. 2); which type hastened to its fulfilment when the mystery of the Incarnation was revealed to blessed St. Mary in the words, "The Holy Ghost shall

come upon thee" (St. Luke i. 35). Israel's Exodus and ensuing journeys were guided by the Lord in a pillar of a cloud and of fire (Ex. xiii. 21, 22; Numb. ix. 15-22); and centuries afterwards are thus alluded to by the Prophet Isaiah (lxiii. 14), "As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest." When the Lord descended upon Mount Sinai to institute the Law, He descended in fire (Ex. xix. 18). The fire which consecrated the initiatory sacrifice in the Mosaic Tabernacle (Lev. ix. 24), in the threshingfloor of Ornan (1 Chron. xxi. 26), and in Solomon's Temple (2 Chron. vii. 1), was God's gift to man, not man's gift to God; and before ever it was kindled upon the first legal altar of burnt offering, Aaron was commanded never to suffer it to become extinct (Lev. vi. 13): in correspondence with which law of the perpetual fire, we Christians have St. Paul's injunction, "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thess. v. 19), as upon the altar of our own hearts. Fire from heaven reasserted to apostate Israel the exclusive divinity of God (1 Kings xviii. 36-39); speaking as it were to every man in his own tongue wherein he was born, for all men alike could understand its language (see Acts ii. 3-8).

Jeremiah (xx. 7-9), discouraged and heartsick, resolved to keep silence: but the Divine afflatus was "as a burning fire shut up" within him, and he could not forbear. In the visions of Zechariah (ii. 4, 5) it was revealed to him that the Lord will be to Jerusalem "a wall of fire round about," and "the glory in the midst of her." Malachi (iii. 1, 2) closing the Canon of the Old Testament, uses "a refiner's fire" as a similitude of Christ. Then like a flaming torch caught from hand to hand of those who "run all" (see 1 Cor. ix. 24), "the voice of one crying in the wilderness" takes up the word after some four centuries of silence, and St. John Baptist proclaims Christ now ready to be revealed, as One Who shall baptize "with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (St. Matt. iii. 3, 11; Is. xl. 3). Finally and supremely and in apparent correspondence with the words of His forerunner, we have our Lord's own utterances "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (St. Luke xii. 49, 50).

When the two "sons of thunder" (St. Mark iii. 17) proposed to call down fire from heaven to

consume certain Samaritans, their Teacher (and ours) rebuked them, saying, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of" (St. Luke ix. 51-56). In which pregnant words of merciful reproof we may perhaps reverently discern a latent suggestion that there is indeed a "spirit" whereby we may lawfully invoke "fire" on our opponents: for if the Holy Spirit burn and shine within ourselves, deep cannot but call to deep (see Ps. xlii. 7), our love cannot but appeal to the answering Divine love, and we shall pray for those who "despitefully use us" (St. Matt. v. 43-48) that on them as on us God's Spirit may descend like fire to purge away all evil and ripen all good. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head" (Rom. xii. 20).

Blessed is the burning fiery furnace of our trial, though heated one seven times more than its wont, if so be that the Son of God walk therein with us, and we with Him (see Dan. iii. 19-25; 1 St. Pet. iv. 12, 13). Blessed is a lifelong wilderness of drought, of fiery serpents and scorpions, if so be we go up from such a wilderness leaning upon our Beloved (see Deut. viii. 15; Song of Sol. viii. 5). Blessed are the

burden and heat of this day of our probation (St. Matt. xx. 12), if only we accomplish the day's work in its day; "the night cometh, when no man can work" (see St. John ix. 4): but to all who "sleep in Jesus" (1 Thess. iv. 14) it will be no more than a night whose shadows flee away at daybreak (Song of Sol. ii. 16, 17). And when once that day of days, that supreme birthday has set in, we know how it will fare with such as have worked faithfully and borne faithfully: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. vii. 16, 17).

WINTER AND SUMMER.

"In summer and in winter shall it be." ZECH. xiv. 8.

IN the passage (vv. 4-11) which includes the foregoing sentence, the Prophet Zechariah is understood to speak of Christ's Kingdom: one, universal, indestructible, quickened with an inexhaustible life. And because the seasons are essentially fugitive, for were they not fugitive

they would not be seasons,—their flight enhances, so to say, the permanence around which they ceaselessly circle: just as our Lord's inherent stability is brought home to us rather by His walking on the sea than on the land.

Christ's gracious lips have mentioned both summer and winter; and although concerning each an intermediate secondary reference can be traced, the paramount connexion as regards both appears to be with a future many centuries remote from those to whom He spake: "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter" (St. Mark xiii. 18): "Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand" (St. Luke xxi. 29-31). In these two passages summer wears an aspect of beauty, hope, promise; winter one which forebodes aggravated affliction, straitness, trial; each season maintains its natural character whether of severity or of indulgence, while both equally have to do with the perfecting of God's elect: equally, yet not equally, for while hope is developed without let or stint, fear becomes limited and soothed by

the enjoined protection of prayer: and hence we gather that we may lawfully deprecate the extremity of suffering even under God's own chastening hand, so long as we do so after Christ's pattern of ultimate and absolute submission: "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My Will, but Thine, be done" (St. Luke xxii. 42). In old times Baruch appears to have aimed, or at least to have desired amiss, by hankering after private prosperity in the day of his nation's downfall (Jer. xlv.): on the other hand, the ardent aspiration of Jabez though emphatically of a personal drift found acceptance (1 Chron. iv. 9, 10).

Concerning one event only of our Saviour's life does the Gospel in definite terms state the season at which it occurred: "It was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch." Then follows one of those awful passages in which the gainsaying Jews think to proceed to extremity against Him Who spake as never man spake; after which we read: "They sought again to take Him: but He escaped out of their hand, and went away again beyond Jordan" (St. John x. 22-40). Christ therefore

in His own sacred Person knew what it was to flee in the winter, and hence we learn how in this point, as in all points, sin excepted, He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities (see Heb. iv. 15). In the order of the Church year, moreover, the memorial of His flight into Egypt occurs in the winter, on the Feast of the Holy Innocents, December 28 (Gospel for the Day). "In all their affliction He was afflicted" (Is. lxiii. 9).

Of those Festivals which are at once personal to Christ and of the first magnitude, Christmas Day is celebrated in the heart of winter, Ascension Day being movable may or may not fall in summer. But regarding Ascension Day for the moment as a summer feast, we behold as in a parable how Grace reverses the decrees of Nature; for we see winter bestow, and summer take away. Thus, at a first glance; a second penetrating deeper discerns that in the Kingdom of Grace all alike is grace, all alike is gift; the gift is eternal, its withdrawal is merely temporary and partial.

"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (St. Matt. xxviii. 20).

"I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again,

and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (St. John xiv. 2, 3).

DEWS AND FROSTS.

"Who hath begotton the drops of dew? . . . And the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?" JOB xxxviii. 28, 29.

DEW and hoar frost thus once associated in the Divine challenge to human reason, reappear in some sort of association when God's gift of "the corn of heaven" (Ps. lxxviii. 24) to His hungry people appealed to their faith: for we read how the manna, itself as small as the hoar frost, was accompanied by a fall of dew (Ex. xvi. 13, 14): and again, though in a different sense, we find manna connected with iciness in the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon (xix. 21) where we are told that the flames melted not "the icy kind of heavenly meat, that was of nature apt to melt." Now as that ancient "bread from heaven" typified our "True Bread from heaven" (St. John vi. 31-35) it is no marvel to behold it surrounded by auxiliary types of divers kinds. That dew which ushered in the manna prefigures Baptism

paving the way to Holy Communion (see also St. Mark xiv. 13, 14, where a similar significance has been traced), the gift of the Spirit leading to and effecting our union with Christ (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13); whilst the manna falling upon the dew (for so Num. xi. 9 may apparently be understood) indicates how it is in such hearts as are temples of the Holy Ghost that Christ vouchsafes to dwell (see 1 St. John iv. 13). Corn, wine, and dew (that is, water), elements of the two great Christian Sacraments, are united by Moses in prophesying the secure blessedness of Israel (Deut. xxxiii. 28); and in the words, "Let there be no dew" David invokes utter barrenness upon the mountains of Gilboa (2 Sam. i. 21).

In the Song of Songs (v. 2) the listening Bride hears the voice of the Beloved, saying: "Open to Me, My sister, My love, My dove, My undefiled: for My head is filled with dew, and My locks with the drops of the night." This verse by its tone of exclusion and privation recalls to our loving memory His life Who had not where to lay His head (St. Matt. viii. 20); and Who when others went home to their own houses, Himself resorted, for a night's rest apparently, to the Mount of Olives (St. John vii. 53; viii. 1, 2),—His death

Who lay in the grave, and even that last bed was not His own (St. Matt. xxvii. 57-60), through more hours of night's dewy stillness than of day's splendour,—His resurrection Who when at evening He came to His Apostles found them not awaiting Him with open arms and in trembling hope, but congregated together with doors shut for fear of the Jews (St. John xx. 19). Truly our Redeemer bought with a great price His right to re-quicken us: "I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. . . . They shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon" (Hos. xiv. 5, 7). And what He has thus done for us lays on us a charge, yea, rather confers on us the possibility and the privilege that we should in some sort and from the depth of our unworthiness love as He loved, and sacrifice ourselves as He sacrificed Himself (St. John xiii. 34; 1 St. John iii. 16). Whoso hath freely received must freely give (St. Matt. x. 8). Christ holds up before our mental eyes Himself in all the loveliness of His perfect beneficence: and when He has charmed our heart through our eyes He rests not satisfied with our idle admiration or inoperative love; but says to

each one of us, "Go, and do thou likewise" (St. Luke x. 37). He Who is as dew to us may justly exact that we may in some small measure make ourselves as dew to our brethren.

"And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men" (Micah v. 7).

FROST AND COLD.

"The children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left." Ex. xiv. 22.

WHEN Moses celebrates the Jewish Exodus in a glorious song of triumph and uses the expression "the depths were congealed" (Ex. xv. 8), I suppose that we must construe his words not literally but figuratively; that we must not imagine the Red Sea momentarily ice-bound, but rather upheld and withheld in all its liquid volume. In either case the Will of God ruled the raging of the sea according to the Divine good pleasure, and worked in contradiction of the established law of

nature. That which achieved salvation for the elect race was a miracle: but here, let us observe, the miracle ended: the destruction of Egypt was wrought simply by the withdrawal of a special providential guard, which withdrawal left nature, so to say, free to produce her own inevitable result. Thus the natural rule, destroyed; the supernatural exception, saved: and as in the types we are contemplating, so also does it appear in the yet vaster transactions of which those are typical. The first man Adam had freely and fully, so far as in him lay, consummated the ruin of his posterity (see 1 Tim. ii. 14); when God Almighty made a new thing (St. Luke i. 35), sending the Last Adam, the Second Man, the Lord from heaven, to redeem the human race (Rom. v. 12, 18, 19; 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22, 45-49). Divine justice had pronounced the incontrovertible death-doom (Gen. iii. 17-19; Ezek. xviii. 4), when Divine mercy rejoicing against judgment annulled that doom by one meritorious and plenary fulfilment (Is. liii. 4-12; St. John xix. 28-30; 1 St. Peter ii. 21-24). And though the root and existence of evil remain to our present faculties involved in impenetrable mystery, yet its growth and aftercourse exhibit many times a sadly

intelligible sequence of cause and effect : drunkenness ends naturally in physical and mental wreck, selfishness in isolation : no miracle is needed here, or is wrought. Moreover sin of its own nature not only like the upas tree emits a poisonous influence ; like the gourd (see Jonah iv. 10) it puts forth rapidity of growth ; it is like the letting out of water (Prov. xvii. 14), or the first spark of a conflagration (St. James iii. 5, 6). In every sinner there resides the power of self-destruction : God alone possesses and reserves to Himself (Is. xlv. 20-25) the power to save even one solitary sinner. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself ; but in Me is thine help" (Hos. xiii. 9). "God be merciful to me a sinner" (St. Luke xviii. 13).

Once only in our Saviour's history is any mention made of either heat or cold,—on that cold night (St. John xviii. 18) of His most comfortless Passion when all creation appearing for the moment leagued together against Him, the apostolick "rock" shifted like sand (St. Matt. vii. 26, 27 ; xvi. 18 ; xxvi. 69-74) : the sons of thunder with all their companions feared and fled (St. Mark iii. 17 ; St. Matt. xxvi. 56) : more than twelve legions of angels held back (see *v.* 53) :

yet a few hours, and the sacred nation repudiated Him (xxvii. 20-25): the imperial nation condemned Him (St. Luke xxiii. 24): His power challenged by blasphemy forbore to be stirred up (St. Matt. xxvii. 39, 40; see Num. xxiv. 9): His royalty scoffed at by malice remained unvindicated (St. Matt. xxvii. 41-44): and then, even then beyond all precedent did He assert Himself as the Strength of Israel Who doth neither lie nor repent (1 Sam. xv. 29), as the One that sweareth to His neighbour and disappointeth him not though it be to His own hindrance (Ps. xv. 5 Prayer Book version); for then He fulfilled God's promise made "in the cool of the day" to lost man in a lost paradise, and with His own bruised heel bruised the serpent's head (Gen. iii. 8, 15).

"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own Blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. i. 5, 6).

ICE AND SNOW.

“My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks that pass away; which are blackish by reason of the ice, and wherein the snow is hid: what time they wax warm, they vanish.” JOB vi. 15-17.

THESE words of Job, spoken in his desolation, befit a desolation yet more utter and more patient than his, even the desolation of our Lord Jesus Christ when in the Garden of the Agony all His disciples forsook Him and fled. As the troops of Tema looked and found nothing (Job vi. 18, 19), as David looked on his right hand and beheld, but there was no man that would know him (Ps. cxlii. 4), so the sinless Son of David, every man being scattered to his own, was left alone (St. John xvi. 32; St. Mark xiv. 50-52). And just as ice and snow promise to thirst an intensity of refreshment beyond the refreshing virtue of mere water, so they may remind us in particular of St. Peter's protestations: “Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. . . . If I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee in any wise” (*vv.* 29, 31): pro-

testations which at first falsified attained nevertheless at last to fulfilment: "Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards" (St. John xiii. 36): and again after the three denials and threefold renewal of the Apostolick commission: "This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God" (xxi. 18, 19).

Ice and snow are figures to us of evanescence, of that which passes away. If aught which endures or which is eternal be likened to snow, it is on occasion of its brief revelation to mortal eyes: thus on the Mount of Transfiguration three Apostles beheld the effulgent raiment of Christ "exceeding white as snow" (St. Mark ix. 3); thus in the Isle called Patmos St. John "in the Spirit" fell as dead at the feet of Him Whose head and Whose hairs "were white like wool, as white as snow" (Rev. i. 9-17; see also Dan. vii. 9); thus moreover (to descend to an inferior connexion) the Roman guard and the faithful women when gathered around the empty sepulchre in Joseph's garden encountered an angel whose raiment was white as snow (St. Matt. xxviii. 1-5). That celestial sea which St. John beheld before the Throne of God, that solid sea

whereon the victorious host of the elect took their stand, was "of glass like unto crystal," was "as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire" (Rev. iv. 6; xv. 2), but was not of ice.

Symbols, parables, analogies, inferences, may be fascinating, must be barren, unless we make them to ourselves words of the wise which are as goads (Eccles. xii. 11). Let us imitate the practical example of that virtuous woman who "is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet" (Prov. xxxi. 10-31): and copying her we shall become trustworthy, loving, prudent, diligent; we shall go in advance of those whom we require to labour with us (consider much more the example of the Good Shepherd Himself: St. John x. 4, 11); we shall demean ourselves charitably, decorously according to our station; we shall reflect honour on those from whom we derive honour; out of the abundance of our heart our mouth will speak wisdom; kindness will govern our tongue, and justice our enactments;—thus shall it be with us even now, and much more in the supreme day of rising up, the Day of Resurrection, then our nearest and dearest who never cease to love us shall bless and praise us; we shall still have somewhat in our

hands, because our works have followed us (Rev. xiv. 13; see Acts ix. 39); and being ready we shall enter with praise through the door before it be shut (St. Matt. xxv. 10; 1 Cor. 4, 5).

Yet so long as each of us gives all diligence to make her own personal calling and election sure (2 St. Peter i. 10), it will do us no harm to recognise in this saintly spouse a figure of the Church: that great Mother and Mistress (Gal. iv. 26) who because her whole family is washed and beautified in the Blood of Christ (Rev. vii. 13, 14) has no need to fear any transitory creature; who through the burden of her day of probation looks forward to the day of praise; who even now amid many sins and many shortcomings, knows that less for her love's sake than for His own the Heart of her Divine Husband safely trusts in her and accounts that she doth Him good and not evil all the days of her life (see 2 Cor. xii. 9; Rev. iii. 7-13).

“As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man” (Prov. xxvii. 19).

NIGHTS AND DAYS.

*“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day,
and for ever.”* HEB. xiii. 8.

WHEN it pleased God the Son Who inhabiteth eternity (Is. lvii. 15), Who changeth not (Mal. iii. 6), with Whom, because He is One with the Father (St. John x. 30), we know that there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning (St. James i. 17), Who is that Wisdom which was before creation (Prov. viii. 1, 22), that Word which in the beginning was with God and was God (St. John i. 1), when it pleased the Son of God to become no less truly the Son of man, then the Infinite restricted Himself within limits, the Unchangeable assumed growth, the Eternal was born in the fulness of time (Gal. iv. 4).

Being made man the Divine Son claimed no exemption from the conditions and lot of His brethren (Heb. ii. 9-18). He dwelt as we dwell in this actual familiar world of fluctuations, on this sphere of alternate light and darkness, amid the recurrence of our seasons, the ebb and flow of our tides, the commotion of our winds; a rising

and setting sun, a waxing and waning moon, ruled over His days and nights as over ours (see Gen. i. 16).

In reference to our Blessed Lord we may divide the subject of nights and days into two series of instances: the literal nights and days of His earthly career; the night or day, symbolic or otherwise, whereby He from time to time illustrated a lesson.

His nativity took place in the night. An ancient pious tradition connects with that event Isaiah's words (i. 3), "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib," and supposes that the dumb animals, housed along with their Creator in the wintry stable, found ways of evincing their love and doing homage to Him Who had made Himself smaller and weaker and more helpless than themselves. On the same sacred night one angel announcing Christ's birth to certain shepherds, a multitude of the heavenly host proclaimed the glory of God and blessedness of man (St. Luke ii. 8-14). We may conjecture the adoration of the Magi also to have taken place by night, as a star guided them (St. Matt. ii. 9-11): at any rate, the flight of the holy family into Egypt commenced by night (*v.* 14).—Our Lord's fast in

the wilderness was prolonged throughout forty days and forty nights (iv. 2).—At even many sick and possessed persons were brought to Christ that He might heal them; and in the morning a great while before day He betook Himself to solitude and prayer (St. Mark i. 32–35): so also St. Luke (vi. 12, 13) informs us how Jesus passed a whole night in prayer; then when it was day He summoned the disciples, and from amongst them ordained His twelve Apostles.—By night Nicodemus, a smouldering spark of faith and love warming his heart, resorted 'to the Great Teacher (St. John iii. 1, 2): it needed another and yet more critical moment not of night but of dying day to fan that spark into a conflagration (xix. 39–42).—In the night Christ walked upon the sea, and embarking with His Apostles “immediately the ship was at the land whither they went” (vi. 16–21).—Certain nights towards the close of His blessed ministry He passed not in Jerusalem but on the Mount of Olives (St. Luke xxi. 37): and of these the last and greatest was that night of His most sacred Passion begun indeed and ended within the city, but fulfilling its hour of darkness in the Garden of Gethsemane (St. Mark xiv. 26, 32–42): in the course of which

same night our loving Lord washed His disciples' feet (St. John xiii. 1-13); instituted the Blessed Sacrament of His own Body and Blood (1 Cor. xi. 23-25); was betrayed by Judas (St. John xiii. 21-30); then after the Agony and Bloody Sweat of His solitary thrice-repeated prayer in the Garden (St. Luke xxii. 39-44), He was led back a prisoner to Jerusalem (St. John xviii. 12, 13); was thrice denied (St. Luke xxii. 54-60); was blasphemed (St. Matt. xxvi. 59-68); was mocked (St. Luke xxii. 63-65).

When we have no indication to the contrary we may fairly assume most of the recorded events of our Lord's history to have taken place by day. I will pass by "all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among" men (Acts i. 21), until we come to the day (a literal day) of His death. St. Luke (xxii. 66-71) certifies us how "as soon as it was day" the Jewish Elders, Chief Priests, and Scribes, convened in supreme council, rejected their Messiah (Acts ii. 36). St. John (xviii. 28-30) notes that it was still "early" when they bowed their stiff necks at a Gentile tribunal rather than suffer Him Who saved others to live. Nevertheless, in will though not in deed their awful crime had been consummated or ever dawn

broke upon the world : and at noon before the eyes of that assembled world, represented by men of divers languages and antagonistic races, the light of that day "by a kind of harmony" (see Wisdom xix. 18) became darkness (St. Luke xxiii. 44, 45); while God shewed respect unto His covenant, and habitations of cruelty filled the dark places of the earth (Ps. lxxiv. 20; see Gen. iii. 15; xvii. 1-8; xxii. 15-18; 2 Sam. vii. 16, 17; Jer. xxxiii. 15-26). And because the light within the once holy nation had become darkness, how great a darkness! (St. Matt. vi. 23) that day which types had foreshown (Gen. xxii. 13, 14; Lev. xvi. 2-34), which prophecies had announced (Dan. ix. 26; Amos. viii. 9, 10), to which all time had led up, upon which eternity hung in suspense,—that day brought to them of all men no spiritual enlightenment, but rather accorded with the passionate imprecation of Job (iii. 4), "Let that day be darkness." And though God's mercy afterwards moved many individuals to repentance and conversion, yet as a nation the Jews have ever since their one awful national choice changed place with the Gentiles and seated themselves in darkness (see Is. xlvi. 4, 5; Jer. xiii. 15-17). As regards the Gentiles the case was reversed: to

them who were in darkness the decree was even then ready to go forth, "Shew yourselves" (Is. xlix. 5-9; Acts x. 9-16; xi. 18); for the casting away of Israel was the reconciling of the world (Rom. xi. 15).

From such thoughts we turn naturally to spiritual applications. Our Lord many times refers to day and night whether in addressing His disciples or the multitude; and draws attention to one or other not only as regulating our ability to fulfil an appointed task, but also as standing for certain marked and momentous periods in man's career. More or less in such a form we have an encouragement to childlike trust (St. Matt. vi. 28-34),—a sign and prophecy of Christ's resurrection (xii. 39, 40),—the parable of the labourers in the vineyard (xx. 1-16),—an exhortation to watchfulness lest the Second Advent overtake us unawares (xxiv. 36-51; xxv. 1-13),—a parable of spiritual growth (St. Mark iv. 26-29),—a prophecy of unparalleled affliction (xiii. 19, 20),—a model of prayer (St. Luke xi. 3),—the parable of the rich fool (xii. 15-21),—an intimation of Christ's all-dominant will (xiii. 31-33),—the rich man's self-indulgence our warning (xvi. 19-26),—a precept of inexhaustible forgiveness

(xvii. 3, 4),—a prophecy of the Church's unappeased desire (*v.* 22),—a revelation of the incessant prevalent appeal of God's elect (xviii. 7, 8),—a lamentation over lost Jerusalem (xix. 41-44),—an example of diligence (St. John ix. 4),—a counsel of prudence (xi. 9, 10).

A few memorable nights and days in the career of certain New Testament Saints must not be omitted in our study. Starting from Good Friday we commence at the very Cross; and while our Lord hangs thereon bleeding and dying for love, we hear Him bid His first Christian guest meet Him in Paradise "to-day" (St. Luke xxiii. 43).—"When the even was come" Joseph of Arimathæa exchanged secrecy of fear for boldness of love: and if behind him yet scarcely behind him stood forth Nicodemus (St. Mark xv. 42, 43; St. John xix. 38-42).—Because obedience is better than sacrifice (see 1 Sam. xv. 22; Eccles. v. 1), the holy women stemmed the tide of their craving desire "and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment" (St. Luke xxiii. 55, 56).—On the first day of the week while it was yet dark St. Mary Magdalene sought the sepulchre, and out-lingered all other lovers of Jesus save angels only;

with whom she held high converse, being as it were the very bride of the Song of Songs (v. 9, 10): "What is thy Beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? . . . My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand." And none but she out of whom went seven devils was the first to behold our risen Saviour (St. John xx. 1-18; St. Mark xvi. 9).—In the course of the great forty days of Christ's life upon earth after His resurrection, St. Peter's night of fruitless toil on the Sea of Tiberias was followed by a morrow of miraculous supply: when also the Good Physician Himself probed and healed His servant's thrice-wounded soul (St. John xxi. 1-6, 15-19). By night it pleased God by the intervention of an angel to release St. Peter from Herod's prison: on the other hand, that same King Herod on the "set day" of his worldly glory was smitten by an angel, and brought down to a loathsome grave (Acts xii. 1, 5-11, 21-23).—St. Paul being at midday turned from darkness to light, continued fasting and sightless during three days (ix. 1-18; xxvi. 13). By night his fellow Christians in Damascus saved him from the exasperated Jews (ix. 22-25; 2 Cor. xi. 32, 33). At midnight

in a Macédonian prison he prayed and praised God: when suddenly an earthquake shook the foundations and opened the doors (Acts xvi. 25, 26). By night the Lord stood by him and cheered him in durance at Jerusalem (xxiii. 11). In the long list of his Apostolick labours and sufferings St. Paul includes a night and a day passed in the deep (2 Cor. xi. 25); and out of the fulness of his grateful heart proceeds one supreme prayer for his beloved Onesiphorus: "The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day" (2 Tim. i. 18). To all of us moreover he has left an exhortation: "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (Rom. xiii. 12); he has set an example: "I die daily" (1 Cor. xv. 31); he has bequeathed a warning: "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (1 Thess. v. 2).

But why should we be as those who turn aside by the flocks of Christ's companions? (see Song of Sol. i. 7). Let us turn again from all saints to gaze once more upon the Saint of saints, and so doing to draw from our study of nights and days one last lesson. On the first Easter Day not Apostles only were visited by their Saviour:

but He walked with two less conspicuous disciples, He preached to them by themselves apart from the world-wide human family, He broke bread and revealed Himself to them (St. Luke xxiv. 13-35). Eight days later He revived the individual faith of St. Thomas (St. John xx. 24-29). One blessed morning He stood upon the familiar shore of the Sea of Tiberias, and communed with a chosen few (xxi. 1-22). During forty days He showed Himself to the Apostles; at the end of which period He conversed with them, He led them out as far as to Bethany, He blessed them, and in their sight ascended up to heaven (Acts i. 1-11; St. Luke xxiv. 50, 51). Verily this is the "same Jesus:" the same in immortal as in mortal life, the same in fulness as in emptiness, the same in royalty as in ministry. And because He is unalterably the same, therefore to Him we also continue the same, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, brethren of one blood with Himself (Eph. v. 30; Heb. ii. 11-16). His Church Militant abides subject to the laws of time, of space: He therefore for her sake conforms to times (Heb. x. 37; 2 St. Peter iii. 8, 9), deposes ambassadors (2 Cor. v. 20), secretes Himself in Sacraments (Gal. iii. 27; 1 Cor. x. 16), perfects His strength

in our weakness (see 2 Cor. xii. 9). Now, for even this present time is the time of love (see Ezek. xvi. 8), now and during yet a little while He conforms Himself to her conditions: but ere long He will conform her to His own (1 St. John iii. 2), and receive her to Himself where there shall be time no longer and no night (Rev. x. 6; xxii. 5).

“Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (v. 20).

LIGHT AND DARKNESS.

“Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus?” ROM ix. 20.

IT is not our least comfort that however evil in the abstract may be utterly beyond our power to command or to dominate, yet all that particular evil with which we come in contact we can, God helping our endeavour, turn into good so far as its influence over our own individual self is concerned. Not that the nature of evil is ever altered by any view taken of it; but that evil is capable of being utilised by man as his starting-point, often as his stepping-stone, whip, spur, towards perfection. Evil exists beyond all

question: and therefore we know that it must be included among those "all things" which work together for good to them that love God (Rom. viii. 28). And the more unflinchingly we abide by this truth, the keener will our spiritual faculty become to discriminate good where at first we seemed to discern unmixed evil. From the simple avowal, "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept Thy word;" it needs no great advance to testify, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes" (Ps. cxix. 67, 71). Three of the beatitudes are indeed beatific, yet are so on the very ground that their first stage is transitory; eternize that first stage and it would become penal: those who mourn, who hunger and thirst, who undergo persecution, are blessed in their sufferings but are not beatified until they have ceased to suffer (St. Matt. v. 4, 6, 10). Our Divine Pattern Himself "endured the cross, despising the shame," for the joy's sake that was set before Him (Heb. xii. 2).

As to light and darkness, light seems absolutely, universally, eternally good; darkness, at the utmost, good only for a while and within limitations. "I am the Light of the world," says

the Very Truth speaking of Himself (St. John viii. 12): and our Blessed Master's discourses are so full of lessons drawn from light and darkness named either separately or together, light standing for good, darkness for evil, that here to quote His sacred words at length becomes impossible. Two passages will suffice to illustrate this point of our subject: "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (St. Matt. vi. 22, 23): "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd" (St. John iii. 19, 20).

On the other hand, Christ's injunction to His Apostles, "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light," (St. Matt. x. 27) seems to use darkness as a figure expressing the secrecy which He for a period saw fit to observe: here therefore no hint of blame attaches to it; while yet it maintains a character rather of preparation and temporary

discipline, than of positive advantage. Night and darkness appear to have this in common; neither is good, except as an antecedent or as a veil: "blackness of darkness for ever" is penal, not sanative; "there shall be no night" in the New Jerusalem (St. Jude 13; Rev. xxii. 5). Nevertheless, during our term of probation both are expedient: what remains to us of this far-spent night (Rom. xiii. 12) is our only time for walking by faith and not by sight (Is. xlii. 16; l. 10; 2 Cor. v. 7), for laying claim to the treasures of darkness, for even darkness has its treasures (see Is. xlv. 3), for recovering lost ground (Micah vii. 8, 9), for eschewing and re-proving all shameful things (Eph. v. 11, 12); while works of love will make our light rise in obscurity, and our present darkness to be as the noon day (Is. lviii. 10). The Jews had a custom that their men thanked God Who had created them men and not women, while their women thanked Him that He had created them as it pleased Him: thus testifying that good as are His gifts, His Will is better for each of us than any gift. There are indeed "best gifts" for some; yet is there open to all "a more excellent way" (1 Cor. xii. 31): nothing, be it great or small,

temporary or everlasting, is contemptible, so long as it conforms to the will of Him Who made or Who ordained it.

Light and darkness alike did homage to our Lord at His Nativity, darkness of night giving place to "the glory of the Lord" and the aspect of jubilant auspicious angels (St. Luke ii. 8-14). At the Transfiguration light appears by itself as a similitude of Christ's dazzling raiment (St. Matt. xvii. 2). Darkness beheld the forlorn disciples alone upon a tumultuous sea, yet even then the eye of their loving Master was upon them (St. John vi. 16-18; St. Mark vi. 47, 48). As at the Nativity darkness yielded to light, so at the Crucifixion light yielded to darkness (St. Luke xiii. 44, 45). It was within the period of darkness (albeit from so supreme a dayspring the shadows may haply have fled away) that Christ rose victorious from the grave: for we read how "it was yet dark" when St. Mary Magdalene arrived at the empty sepulchre (St. John xx. 1). Thus light and darkness by turns were privileged to wait upon Him Who bids them alternate.

Light and darkness environ the Church Militant: light only may dwell with the Church Triumphant. St. John in vision gazed upon the

Bride "and her light was like unto a stone most precious:" he beheld her as that New Jerusalem which the glory of God lightened, "and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it," and "the Lord God giveth them light" (Rev. xxi. 2, 11, 23, 24; xxii. 5).

"Lighten our darkness, we beseech Thee, O Lord; for the love of Thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen."

LIGHTNINGS AND CLOUDS.

"The word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little." IS. xxviii. 13.

IT seems impossible so to arrange the different subjects of the Benedicite as to confine each to itself. At every turn one, as it were, overlaps the other: thus day trenches upon the sun and light, night upon the moon and darkness; to elaborate a study of one is oftentimes to allude to or to illustrate the others. Such is the case with heat and summer, with cold and winter; while the several forms of water, and again of frost,

enumerated by Ananias and his fellows, tend towards producing a similar result. Under this condition of reiteration, therefore, we must seek and work out our lesson: and when (in accordance with the words of the son of Sirach) the memorial of wisdom has become sweeter to us than honey (Ecclus. xxiv. 20), we may, I think, venture to trace the same truth as latent in the parable of a Wiser than he: "No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better" (St. Luke v. 39).

Our Lord employs lightning as a similitude of two direct opposites. "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven," He says, in connexion with the wonder-working mission of the Seventy (x. 17, 18): while He predicts His own Second Advent in the words, "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be" (St. Matt. xxiv. 27; see also St. Luke xvii. 24). This double application of the one figure invites us to exercise a jealous circumspection in our study of the symbolism of Holy Scripture. We must make ourselves certain that we seize the point, it may be the solitary point of resemblance;

all else, possibly, being discrepant or even antagonistic (see the parable of the Unjust Judge, St. Luke xviii. 1-8). Nor is such a guard over thought and feeling uncalled for in meditation upon numerous and widely differing portions of the inspired text : it is to the pure alone that all things are pure (Titus i. 15), and we may even slay ourselves by the letter of that revelation whereof the spirit gives and nourishes life (2 Cor. iii. 6 ; 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17).

If "sons of thunder" may be interpreted as equivalent to "lightning," then "Boanerges" the Divinely conferred surname of the two sons of Zebedee (St. Mark iii. 17) reminds us not only of their maturity in grace when they had learned to speak as "oracles of God" (see 1 St. Peter iv. 11 ; Job xxxvii. 2-5), but no less pointedly of their original need to grow in grace ; for that early ebullition of zeal which was ready to invoke fire from heaven after the example of Elias, incurred a rebuke : "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of" (St. Luke ix. 54, 55).

Of old it pleased God to constitute a cloud one visible expression of His invisible presence. Thus at the Transfiguration "a Bright Cloud," whence "a Voice" proceeded, and which over-

shadowed "the Man Christ Jesus," gave token of the presence of the All-Holy Trinity (St. Matt. xvii. 1-5; 1 Tim. ii. 5); even as the Manhood, the Dove, and the Voice, had already done at our Saviour's Baptism (St. Luke iii. 21, 22). And as the Cloud at the Transfiguration was a receptive cloud (ix. 34-36), so at the Ascension appeared (whether natural or supernatural) a receptive cloud (Acts i. 9): and as that former cloud severed not Jesus from His faithful though fearful disciples, so when "this same Jesus" (11) shall return "with clouds" (Rev. i. 7; see also St. Matt. xxiv. 30; St. Mark xiv. 62), it will be to unite Himself for ever with all who "love His appearing" (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17; 2 Tim. iv. 8). And then, and it may be not till then, will perfect love cast out fear (1 St. John iv. 18).

Four times in the book of Revelation lightnings, thunderings, and voices are mentioned together: in connexion with the Throne of God (iv. 5), or with a celestial altar of His worship (viii. 5), or with His temple in heaven (xi. 19), or with the judgment of great Babylon (xvi. 18). And besides a passage already referred to (and one other: xiv. 14-16), we find in the same book two mentions of clouds: a mighty Angel

descended from heaven "clothed with a cloud : and a rainbow was upon his head" (x. 1): but perhaps it even more imports to us that the two unburied witnesses being raised to life again "ascended up to heaven in a cloud" (xi. 11, 12). For herein appears our loving Lord's condescension towards men : He maketh the clouds His own chariot (Ps. civ. 3), a cloud received Himself on His way up to heaven, and at His word His two faithful saints follow in like guise along the same path.

All the world over, visible things typify things invisible. In other climes than ours men dwell among vines, or behold the morning star at its brightest, or constrained by excess of most noble sunshine come to account wells and palm trees an inestimable treasure. We ourselves inherit clouds: and our "cloudy and dark day" (see Ezek. xxxiv. 12), will be blessed to us if it serves to remind us of the great cloud of witnesses which compasses us about (Heb. xii. 1), and of that second Advent for which we look, for which we ought to long.

"Thy kingdom come" (St. Matt. vi. 10).

EARTH.

“Thy Will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”

ST. MATT. vi. 10.

IN this petition of the perfect prayer we are taught the object with which Earth was created, and for the sake of attaining which it has ever since the fall been tolerated. “Lo, I come to do Thy Will, O God” (Heb. x. 9), sums up the purpose of the Incarnation: and our own kinship to Christ is established by our individual obedience, “Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, and My sister, and mother” (St. Mark iii. 35). In the Levitical law appointing the altar of burnt sacrifice, that first named is “an altar of earth” presumably untouched and unpolluted by human workmanship or addition (Ex. xx. 24, 25): and while we bow to God’s will which for a period consecrated one nation among all the families of mankind, and hedged in one land of promise from the broad expanse of our globe, may we not reverently hope that in right of this primitive altar of earth the whole earth was tacitly even then claimed for God?—in accord-

ance with a fundamental truth long afterwards stated by "an Hebrew of the Hebrews" (Phil. iii. 5): "If the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy" (Rom. xi. 16).

Small indeed by comparison was that portion of earth's surface which was trodden by Him "Who went about doing good" (Acts x. 38): yet was not Judaea exclusively privileged; for Egypt entertained Christ as a sojourner (St. Matt. ii. 13-15), and the coasts of Tyre and Sidon were brought for a moment within the outskirts of His mercy (St. Mark vii. 24-31). But as regards universality of dominion and benefaction, it pleased the Lord of lords for a while to endure straitness (see St. Luke xii. 50; St. John vii. 39): not until He was "lifted up from the earth" would He draw all men unto Him (xii. 32); and or ever He ascended up where He was before to claim the heathen for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession (Ps. ii. 8), He abode hidden "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (St. Matt. xii. 40). No marvel that the earth was veiled by darkness and "did quake" (xxvii. 45, 51) before the coming of so great a guest (see also Jer. iv. 23-28).

Our gracious Master's speech distilling as the

dew (see Deut. xxxii. 1, 2) made the earth bring forth spiritual food for our nourishment: that so the human kingdom of God might, according to the parable, grow, fructify and ripen to harvest (St. Mark iv. 26-29). Christians are constituted "the salt of the earth" (St. Matt. v. 13)—We must not swear even by the earth, for that is God's footstool (*vv.* 34, 35)—Heaven, not earth, must be our treasure-house (vi. 19-21)—The Divine Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (ix. 6): which power (thanks be to God) He transmitted to His Church through St. Peter (xvi. 18, 19) and all the Apostles (xviii. 18; St. John xx. 21-23)—There is a peace which Christ came not to send upon earth, and therefore for us such peace would be no peace (see Jer. vi. 14): better are the sword, fire, division, He foretells; better they must be for us, because they are the instruments of God's will (St. Matt. x. 34, 35; St. Luke xii. 49, 51), "by the which will we are sanctified" (Heb. x. 10)—Two on earth who pray in concord obtain their petition (St. Matt. xviii. 19, 20)—Our supreme Father is in heaven, not on earth (xxiii. 9)—All righteous blood shed upon the earth will have to be accounted for (*v.* 35; see also Is. xxvi. 21)—Earthquakes and

other calamities "are the beginning of sorrows." Men's hearts shall fail them "for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth" in the latter days; days of decay, concerning which we have our Lord's own awful words: "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" Howbeit at His coming the elect shall be safely gathered together "from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven" (St. Matt. xxiv. 7, 8; St. Luke xxi. 26; xviii. 8; St. Mark xiii. 27).

In the parable of the Talents (St. Matt. xxv. 14-30) the servant who ruined himself by sloth lacked energy to trade with his one talent, yet found ample to contravene his Lord's purpose: he "dugged in the earth" in order to hide his Lord's money, as appears even on his own showing. Among the various lessons of warning or of encouragement conveyed by this plain-speaking parable, we may, I think, discern as at least latent one truth unsuspected by slothful but patent to diligent persons: that sloth with its vicious allies of unpunctuality, inexactness, delay, idleness, half measures, baseless taking for granted, guess-work, does sooner or later incur trouble wholly unproductive and far more burdensome

than would have sufficed for a faithful discharge of duty. The same broad principle applies to all sin: if we view it as self-preservation, it is on the contrary suicidal (St. John xii. 25); if as self-indulgence, it ends in desperate sorrow (Is. xvii. 10, 11). Solomon the wise king has unmasked for us the seductive sin of drunkenness (Prov. xxiii. 29-32): and well may we of this day and this country lay his words to heart.

The parable of the Sower (St. Mark iv. 3-20) turns mainly on the condition of the soil itself; one somewhat similar occurring in the Epistle to the Hebrews (vi. 7, 8); and another, by kindred imagery inculcating patience, in the Epistle of St. James (v. 7, 8):—that of the Grain of Mustard Seed brings forward the capabilities of the seed sown (St. Mark iv. 30-32):—that of the Wise and Foolish Builders, the instability of mere earth as a foundation (St. Luke vi. 47-49).

Of the entire human family, He alone Who is “fairer than the children of men” (Ps. xlv. 2) could lift up His eyes to heaven and say in the full meaning of the words, without any allowance to be made for human frailty or any abatement: “Father, . . . I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me

to do" (St. John xvii. 1, 4). Far otherwise did St. John Baptist bear true witness concerning himself; "He that is of the earth is earthly" (St. John iii. 31; see v. 33), and St. John the Apostle testify as regards himself and all men; "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" (1 St. John i. 8-10). Whoso hath borne the image of the earthy, may indeed attain to bear also the image of the heavenly (1 Cor. xv. 47-53): but in Christ's blessed person, before His mortal put on immortality, truth in its absolute integrity flourished out of the earth, with the same Divine plenitude as righteousness looked down from heaven (Ps. lxxxv. 11). "I must decrease," protested the holy Baptist (St. John iii. 30): and we also, each one of ourselves, must decrease. Day by day we dwindle: dust we are, and unto dust do we return (Gen. iii. 19). Yet as it is by God's appointment that we have our treasure in earthen vessels (2 Cor. iv. 7) we become sure that an earthen vessel is suited to the custody of a heavenly treasure: how should it not be, when it pleased God the Son to be partaker of flesh and blood? (Heb. ii. 14). Our vocation is arduous, but by His indwelling grace it becomes not impossible (see 1 Cor. xv. 10;

Heb. xii. 28, 29; St. James iv. 5-8): we must and therefore we can transfer our affection from things on earth to things above, and mortify our members which are upon the earth (Col. iii. 1-11).

And if thus by a daily death and an ever-renewed detachment we keep the word of Christ's patience, then have we hope that He will keep us from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth: the church of Philadelphia had "a little strength," but He loved her and that strength sufficed (see Rev. iii. 7-13). If our own strength at times seems mere weakness, let us simply lean on Him Who once for our sakes made Himself even as a man that hath no strength (Ps. lxxxviii. 4; St. Luke xxii. 43): Who also hath declared that His strength is made perfect in weakness (2 Cor. xii. 9). "Faint, yet pursuing" went Gideon and his chosen three hundred (Judges viii. 4): still pursuing even in our faintness, let us press toward the mark and the prize (Phil. iii. 14).

And our prize, what is it? In lieu of our present earthly tabernacle, it is an eternal house of God's building (2 Cor. v. 1). It is the new earth which shall abide, after this first earth shall have passed away: yea, rather, it is He Himself

from Whose face this same earth and this present heaven shall flee away (St. Matt. v. 5; Rev. xx. 11; xxi. 1). It is Himself beyond all His gifts (consider the parallel even in human love, Ruth iv. 15; 1 Sam. i. 8; 2 Cor. xii. 14): for they who shall reign on that new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness (2 St. Peter iii. 13; Rev. xxii. 5) were redeemed to God by the precious Blood of Christ (1 St. Pet. i. 18, 19; Rev. v. 8-10); and the "hundred forty and four thousand" of whom we read especially as "redeemed from the earth," have for their proper blessedness to "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth" (Rev. xiv. 1-4).

MOUNTAINS AND HILLS.

"I will get Me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense." SONG OF SOLOMON, iv. 6.

FRANKINCENSE and myrrh, Divine communion and Divine suffering: verily the Hills and Mountains of Christ's earthly life "smell as Lebanon" (Hos. xiv. 6).

While He was yet unborn the hill country of Judaea broke forth into singing before Him: an

unborn saint saluted Him, righteous Elisabeth was inspired to acknowledge and praise Him, Blessed Mary ascribed to God the glory (St. Luke i. 39-55; see Is. lv. 12). But this, in its exuberance of human love and unmixed joy, stands alone among Christ's high places. Bethlehem, seated on an acclivity, beheld Him born amid exceptional privation (St. Luke ii. 2-7). When at the Presentation He for the first time ascended the hill of the Lord, it was indeed to be received with rapture, but it was also to hear Himself prophesied of as a sign which should be spoken against (*vv.* 22-38; Ps. xxiv. 3-5). In Christ's threefold temptation the world's snare was spread on "an exceeding high mountain" (St. Matt. iv. 8, 9). At Nazareth, where He had been brought up, His fellow-townsmen taking offence at the very outset of His ministry "led Him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong" (St. Luke iv. 16, 28, 29). On a mountain he preached that great sermon which opens, indeed, with eight beatitudes, but winds up with a parable of most solemn warning (St. Matt. v. 1-10; vii. 24-27). On solitary heights His eyes prevented the night watches that He might be occupied in unbroken

prayer (St. Luke vi. 12; St. Matt. xiv. 23; see Ps. cxix. 148). A mountain witnessed His summons of those twelve Apostles of whom eleven, though devoted to their Master, were beset by more or less of human infirmity: while the twelfth was "a devil" (St. Mark iii. 13-15; St. John vi. 70, 71). Seated upon a mountain Christ saw that great company approach whom He fed by a miracle: but to whose consequent desire He would not condescend, and whom later He rebuked for carnality (St. John vi. 3-5, 15, 26). Perhaps it was up the same mountain that the crippled and afflicted were borne to Him for healing: and surely He Who can now be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, had then also a fellow-feeling which enabled and constrained Him by sympathy to share them (St. Matt. xv. 29, 30; see Heb. iv. 15). When other Jews went every man to his own house, "Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives" there, it would appear, to pass the night: "The Son of Man hath not where to lay his head" (St. John vii. 53; viii. 1, 2; St. Luke xxi. 37; ix. 58). On "the holy mount," supposed to be Mount Tabor, three chosen Apostles beheld His majesty when He received from God the Father honour and glory: yet even there Moses

and Elias spake with Him of His decease, which He should accomplish (St. Luke ix. 28-35; 2 St. Pet. i. 16-18). Descending the Mount of Olives amid the Hosannas and palm-branches of His momentary royal triumph, He beheld and wept over lost Jerusalem (St. Luke xix. 33-42; St. John xii. 12-15). Seated on the same Mount He disclosed to four Apostles how great troubles and afflictions should attend the destruction of Jerusalem, and should precede His own second Advent (St. Mark xiii. 1-27). There also in the garden of Gethsemane He endured the agony and bloody sweat of His saving passion; and praying with strong crying and tears, was heard in that He feared (xiv. 26, 32; St. Luke xxii. 39-44; St. John xviii. 1; Heb. v. 7). On Mount Calvary He was crucified and gave up the ghost (St. Luke xxiii. 33, 46). Even after His resurrection, among those who met Him on the appointed mountain in Galilee "some doubted" (St. Matt. xxviii. 16, 17); unless we may understand some unexpressed interval to separate the clauses of the text, making the latter portion of general import. It has been conjectured that this meeting on the mountain in Galilee may be identical with that mentioned by St. Paul when

“above five hundred brethren at once” beheld our risen Saviour (1 Cor. xv. 6). And though He Who is “perfect God and perfect man” is assuredly everywhere present: yet there is a sense in which “He was parted from” His own familiar friends when from hill-seated Bethany He went up to His throne of glory (St. Luke xxiv. 50, 51).

All heroism, all excellence, all love, shadow forth Christ. Who but He exhausts the meaning of David’s praise of Jonathan? “How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women” (2 Sam. i. 25, 26). It is indeed David himself who most often stands as type of his Son and Lord: yet Jonathan for this once enters to complete the type; for he sacrificed life itself in a last effort to save his house and people, even whilst he knew that the sceptre had passed out of his family (1 Sam. xxiii. 16, 17; xxxi. 1, 2), the first Divinely-appointed Jewish dynasty ending simultaneously with Jonathan’s life, and then and not till then the new and permanent royalty being established in the person of David. Not before Jonathan’s death was Saul’s utter rejection as pronounced by Samuel brought to

pass: "Thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel" (xv. 26): in like manner did it fare with the once consecrated nation, when at length they filled up the measure of their fathers by rejecting God the Word (St. Matt. xxiii. 29-39; xxvii. 17-25; Acts xiii. 45, 46; Rom. xi. 20). Blessed be the holy and loving Divine Spirit, who even in the least and humblest of true Christians produces Christ-likeness. Blessed be our loving Saviour, Who made Himself small like us, that so He might make each one of us great like Himself.

We Christians are that people to whom the mountains and the little hills bring peace by righteousness: for by them the King, the King's Son, has vouchsafed to instruct us (see Ps. lxxii. 1-3). The parable of the City set on a Hill brings before us the edification of all within reach of our influence not merely as a bounden duty, but as the inevitable result of genuine discipleship (St. Matt. v. 14-16).—Some persons (we are taught by an instance in point) complain of lack of power, who ought rather to confess lack or defect of faith: faith in its germ may remove a mountain; but only faith, so advanced as to work

by self-denying love, can expel certain devils (xvii. 18-21; see 1 Cor. xiii. 2).—The parable of the Lost Sheep sought on the mountains (St. Matt. xviii. 12, 13) brings home to our hearts that love of us which led our Master along weary ways to seek and save us. The levelled valleys and heights, the straightened crookednesses, the smoothed rough places of Isaiah's prophecy and St. John Baptist's mission (Isa. xl. 3, 4; St. Luke iii. 2-6), declare how God's prevenient grace rendered accessible the otherwise inaccessible heart and will of ruined man; but they neither foreshowed nor prepared earthly ease for that better David Who put His life in His hand when the Lord wrought a great salvation for Israel (see 1 Sam. xix. 5). True, our Redeemer's own path was straight: "As the doves to their windows" (see Isa. lx. 8), with unwavering intention, with inalienable affection, He came to seek and save that which was lost; but man to whom He came walked on frowardly in crooked paths (see Prov. ii. 12-15).—Comparing St. Matthew xxiv. 16 (read *vv.* 15-22) with St. Luke xxiii. 30 (*vv.* 28-31), and Revelation vi. 16 (*vv.* 12-17), let us elicit our last spiritual lesson from Mountains and Hills. In those "days of vengeance," when

destruction overtook the earthly Jerusalem (St. Luke xxi. 20-24), "the mountains" availed as a place of refuge, although that tribulation had known no parallel since the world began; but in the final day of God's wrath vain will it be for us to begin to say to mountains, "Fall on us," or to hills, "Cover us;" no miracle is promised then for man's salvation; and what earthly hiding place can avail when earth herself shall flee from the face of our Judge? (Rev. xx. 11). To-day, while it is called to-day (Heb. iii. 13), the case is different; "now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2), wherein we can yet "flee to the mountains:" for even yet we can put our trust in the Lord, the Rock of Ages (Isa. xxvi. 3, 4; see marginal reading), and "they that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever" (Ps. cxxv. 1).

GREEN THINGS.

"Behold the Man whose name is the Branch."

ZECH. vi. 12; see also iii. 8.

THREE prophets speaking by inspiration named God the Son under this sacred title or similitude (Isa. xi. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5; xxxiii. 15).

God Who hath made all things and hateth nothing that He hath made, is graciously pleased to show us by many and various illustrations how all the good which resides in any creature (be that creature great or small, lofty or lowly) is an outcome of Himself, and is in a more or less degree a resemblance of Himself. Nothing can be good without in some measure expressing its all-good Author. Thus not sun and star alone set Him forth: but the rock symbolises His unfailing strength (St. Matt. vii. 24, 25); and is all the more like Him when it yields refreshment (Ex. xvii. 5, 6; 1 Cor. x. 4), or sweetness (Ps. lxxxi. 16); when it destroys and supersedes the world (Dan. ii. 34, 35, 44); when it becomes the head stone of the corner (Ps. cxviii. 22; Acts iv. 10, 11). This last phase leads us to reverent contemplation of the Divine non-exclusiveness. It is man, it is you and I who are champions of "mine which is not thine, and thine which is not mine." He Who dwells in the amiable tabernacles (Ps. lxxxiv. 1), and is altogether lovely (Song of Sol. v. 16) delights in bestowing not merely what He hath, but even His very self on His beloved. He is Head of a Body: Christians collectively make up that Body, one by one they are its members

(1 Cor. xii. 27; Eph. iv. 11-16; Col. i. 18). By another figure His indwelling is that leaven which, pervading, transforming the three measures of meal, cannot by any subtlety of manipulation be separated from them (St. Matt. xiii. 33). Or if we interpret the same parable as foreshewing the action of the Church within and upon the world, then the leaven is the Church whose elevating virtue is Christ working within her and by her through the agency of His Spirit (see St. Mark xvi. 15-20; St. John xiv. 15-18; xvi. 7-15; Acts i. 6-8; Rom. viii. 9, 10; 1 Cor. i. 26-31; 2 Cor. x. 4, 5; Rev. xi. 15).

Under a form of most sweet beauty the multitudinous unity of a plant sets forth Christ and His members. "I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman I am the Vine, ye are the branches" (St. John xv. 1-8). Everything is held in common and (dare we say so?) for mutual solace and loveliness. Not, indeed, that we bear the Root, but the Root us (see Rom. xi. 18): yet it so bears us that it feeds its branches with its very life, and lives in them as truly as they live by it. Nor does it limit its gift to that of a bare existence; it clothes itself with them as with an added honour; it makes their leaves

comely by colour, and their tendrils a very grace by delicacy; it invests them with the fruit which cheereth God and man (see Judges ix. 12, 13). In the day of God's Judgment well may Jerusalem and Judah, may heaven and earth be appealed to (Ps. l. 4): "What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it?" (Is. v. 1-7). This Song of the Beloved touching His vineyard needs however to be studied by itself, as exhibiting the Church under a different aspect from that most blessed one expressed in the Divine parable of the Vine and its Branches. We glean additional points of warning and comfort from St. Paul's argument concerning the Jewish and Gentile Churches (Rom. xi. 16-24) couched under the kindred similitude of a wild and a good olive tree: blessed be God Who declares, regarding not Churches only, but as we may devoutly hope, believe, pray, regarding individual souls also: "The branches were broken off They also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again."

Our Lord is revealed to us under a variety of similitudes culled from the family of "green things." He is a Root of Jesse, the Root of David,

a Rod out of the stem of Jesse (Is. xi. 1, 10; Rev. v. 5; xxii. 16): He grew up as a tender plant, as a root out of a dry ground (Is. liii. 2): He is that Root of the righteous which shall not be moved, and which yieldeth fruit (Prov. xii. 3, 12): He is the Corn and Wine of type (Gen. xiv. 18), and Psalm (lxxii. 16; civ. 14, 15), and prophecy (Zech. ix. 16, 17): He, Rose of Sharon and Lily of the Valleys, is among the trees of the wood as the Apple Tree whose fruit is sweet (Song of Sol. ii. 1, 3): He is^e as that almond rod of Aaron which, being cut off budded, blossomed, and yielded fruit (Num. xvii. 8); as that corn of wheat which by dying becomes fruitful (St. John xii. 24).

The history and the teaching of Christ, including about twelve of His parables, bring before us many plants and vegetable substances. In His infancy He accepted the Magi's gift of frankincense and myrrh (St. Matt. ii. 11). His ministry was ushered in by St. John Baptist's parables of the axe laid to the root of the trees, and of the winnowing of the wheat (iii. 10-12). The Divine Master convinced Nathanael by the sign of the fig-tree (St. John i. 47-49). He illustrated the imminence of God's kingdom by fields white

betimes to harvest (iv. 35). In His Sermon on the Mount He bids us "consider the lilies of the field," and teaches us to estimate the tree by its fruit (St. Matt. vi. 28-30; vii. 16-20; see also xii. 33; St. Luke vi. 43, 44; xii. 27, 28). On a certain Sabbath He permitted His disciples to pluck and eat of the corn, rubbing it in their hands; and took thence occasion to lay down a general principle for the charitable and reasonable observance of God's hallowed day of rest (St. Matt. xii. 1-8; St. Luke vi. 1). His tenderness of mercy fulfilled Esaiás's prophecy, "A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench" (Is. xlii. 1-4; St. Matt. xii. 14-21). He employs "a reed shaken with the wind" apparently as an embodiment of unlikeness to St. John Baptist (xi. 7). Scrupulous tithes of mint and such like are no equivalent for loving obedience (St. Luke xi. 42; St. Matt. xxiii. 23). Moved by compassion our Saviour compared the multitude to an unreaped harvest (ix. 36-38; see also St. Luke x. 2). When He would recruit His exhausted hearers with an abundant feast, He chose "the green grass" for their resting-place (St. Mark vi. 34-44). By the similitude of an uprooted plant He declared the doom of men

who go counter to the truth (St. Matt. xv. 12-14). Faith, though it be but as a grain of mustard-seed, can work miracles (xvii. 20; see also xxi. 21). A sycamore-tree helped forward the salvation of Zacchæus (St. Luke xix. 2-9). Our gracious Lord accepted one loving woman's oblation of spikenard (St. Mark xiv. 3-9; St. John xii. 3). Palm branches and branches freshly cut from the wayside trees graced the Heavenly King's royal entry into His capital city (*vv.* 12-15; St. Mark xi. 8). Permanent barrenness is the doom of the barren fig-tree (*vv.* 12-14, 20). On the night of His Passion the Lord said, "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come" (St. Luke xxii. 18; see also St. Matt. xxvi. 29). For our sakes Jesus wore a crown of thorns and held a reed in His right hand (xxvii. 29, 30; St. John xix. 2-5). For us He bore His cross along the way of sorrows (*vv.* 16-18): where as He went, being not unmindful of their sympathy, He spake a last word of warning to the daughters of Jerusalem, "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" (St. Luke xxiii. 26-31). For us He tasted the bitterness while He declined the lulling virtue of a mingled cup (St. Matt. xxvii. 34; St. Mark xv.

23), and meekly received vinegar reached up to Him on a reed, or hyssop (St. Matt. xxvii. 46-49; St. Mark xv. 36; St. John xix. 28-30).

After this the end. Myrrh and aloes embalmed His sacred body (St. John xix. 39, 40), and yet more spices were prepared by love (St. Luke xxiii. 56) when already it was too late to offer them. Yet the love which would fain have offered, came not itself too late for acceptance; and whatever else we cannot, love we also can bring. Because of the savour of His good ointments Jesus' name is as ointment poured forth: therefore let us love Him (Song of Sol. i. 3). For love of us, all His garments have come to smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia (Ps. xlv. 8): for love of Him, let our prayers ascend as incense (cxli. 2; Mal. i. 11; Rev. viii. 3, 4), and let our hearts, bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22, 23; Eph. v. 9), be as His own inclosed garden (Song of Sol. iv. 12-16). The day cometh when to each faithful soul He will say: "The winter is past. . . . The flowers appear on the earth. . . . The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, My love, My fair one, and come away" (ii. 10-13).

WELLS.

"Behold, God is my salvation. . . . Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."

Is. xii. 2, 3.

THIS prophecy delivered about seven centuries before the commencement of its plenary fulfilment (St. Luke ii. 11) leads our thoughts to Christ seated on Jacob's Well, and out of all the millions of the human family making wise unto salvation one solitary sinful woman (St. John iv. 5-26). On a second occasion our Lord vouchsafed to declare to a larger audience what appears to be the same Theological mystery which He had once revealed to her singly; in sequence to which second utterance the recording Evangelist is inspired to add an interpretation of the mystery (vii. 37-39).

This Divine revelation, which concerns the Person and office of God the Holy Ghost, here invites us to prayer and thanksgiving rather (it may be) than to discussion; we having already in type and figure touched upon the same most sacred subject. For if because God is in heaven

and man upon earth, therefore man's words should be few, his mouth not rash, neither his heart hasty of utterance (Eccles. v. 2), most of all must the self-restraint of a reverential silence touching the deepest things of God befit one of that sex whom St. Paul suffers not to teach but commands to keep silence (1 Tim. ii. 11, 12): lest otherwise I and such as I should justly incur the rebuke once rashly administered by Zophar to patient Job (xi. 7, 8): "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?"

For the moment therefore fixing our attention not upon the discourse itself but upon its accessories, we behold our Lord exemplifying those words of His own which are rather a beatitude than a precept: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts xx. 35). To guide another to the "living water" refreshed His weariness beyond the power of any earthly food: He said to His wondering disciples, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of. . . . My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work" (St. John iv. 27, 31-34). Seated "thus"

on Jacob's Well He of whom Joseph presents a type became, according to the blessing of that patriarch, as "a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall" (Gen. xlix. 22): for Jesus' love, overrunning the partition which divided Jew from Samaritan, proffered "living water" to her who, even if she bestowed the common draught He craved, seems not to have presented it with gracious Oriental hospitality. Not so Syrian Rebekah drew water for Eliezer and his camels halting beside a well (xxiv. 10-20): not so God Almighty provided water for wayfaring Israel, who sang, "Spring up, O well" (Num. xxi. 16-18): neither fared it so with David for whose sake three men went in jeopardy of their lives to slake his thirst with water from the well of Bethlehem (2 Sam. xxiii. 15-17).

These contrasted instances help us to realize how in all things Christ hath the pre-eminence (see Col. i. 18): be it height of holiness, be it depth of anguish or humiliation, be it what it may, no creature stands upon His level. Thus Isaiah (lii. 14) foretells of Him, "His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men:" and Jeremiah

speaking as it were in His Divine person appeals even to our own judgment, "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow" (Lam. i. 12). In the course of Christ's mortal life exceptional if not unique hardships stamp Him as singled out of Adam's progeny to experience fully and to exhaust man's lot of suffering. At His birth we see Him crowded out of human habitation (St. Luke ii. 7). During at least some period of His ministry He is less secure of shelter than are foxes and birds (ix. 58). On the night of His agony, the last night of His life, anxiety and sorrow so often sleepless cannot keep awake to watch with Him one single apostle of the foremost three (xxii. 44, 45; St. Mark xiv. 33-41). On the morrow, rather than that He should live, a murderer escapes unscathed; Jewish priests claim heathen Cæsar as their sole king; Rome cedes a point to the clamour of her own slaves (St. Luke xxiii. 13-25; St. John xix. 15).

Jesus Christ Himself is the long-predicted Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness (Zech. xii. 9-14; xiii. 1; St. John xix. 33, 34; Rev. i. 5): He is that Alpha and Omega Who "will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (xxi. 6). And we

who have heard with our ears, and whom our fathers have told of this "Gift of God" (see Acts viii. 18-20), "how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (see Heb. ii. 1-4). A fearful moment is drawing nearer and nearer; a fearful doom: "He which is filthy, let him be filthy still" (Rev. xxii. 11): God grant that at the last moment we be not, despite the Blood shed and the Fountain opened,—God in mercy grant that then we be not found stained with the indelibility of Ethiopians or leopards (Jer. xiii. 23; see Eph. v. 25-27), and athirst with the unappeased craving of Dives (St. Luke xvi. 23-26).

"To day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart" (Ps. xciv. 7, 8).

"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17).

SEAS AND FLOODS.

"All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again." ECCLES. i. 7.

THESE words form one of the illustrations which Solomon gives of his proposition: "Vanity

of vanities; all is vanity" (*vv.* 1-11); and being written by inspiration, as such we are bound to accept them. In the passage before us consummate human wisdom and exhaustive worldly experience combine to certify us that all which begins only to end, and ends only to recommence is vanity: thus is it with man's generations, with the sun and with the wind. Shall we call such a beginning any true beginning, when we can by no means call such an ending any true ending? Growth and decay alternate, flux and reflux; the course run already must be run yet again; the goal is equally the starting-point: "the thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; . . . and there is no new thing under the sun."

"Vanity of vanities," as "Solomon in all his glory" (see St. Matt. vi. 29) states and restates it, amounts to so exquisite a dirge over dead hope and paralysed effort that we are almost ready to fall in love with our own desolation; and seeing that "man walketh in a vain shadow" (Ps. xxxix. 7, Prayer-Book version) to become vain as that shadow, and to drift through life without disquietude, because without either aim or aspiration.

Yet such a tendency in ourselves finds no per-

manent parallel in the Preacher's sermon. He gropes along dim paths, here and there we may even fail to follow each step taken, but at last he emerges into the broad unequivocal light of day: "Let us hear," says he, "the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His Commandments" (Eccles. xii. 13).

A Greater than Solomon is with us, and has deigned to instruct us by things new and old (St. Matt. xii. 42; see xiii. 52). By analogy of things visible He has shown us things invisible. Speaking as never man spake (St. John vii. 46) He has rekindled human hope and aspiration: has promised the wearied generations that an end shall come, "Heaven and earth shall pass away:" and with His own words which shall not pass away has charged one and all of us to "watch" (St. Mark xiii. 24-37).

This life is the prelude of the life to come, the vigil of a feast. If as yet our reiterated cry, "Watchman, what of the night?" elicit only the inconclusive answer "The morning cometh, and also the night" (Is. xxi. 11, 12), let us not account it slackness but long suffering (2 St. Pet. iii. 9). Let us fear lest any of us should after all come short of the long-promised rest: and while

on our mountain of division we watch for day to break and shadows to flee away, let us give the more earnest heed to all which we have heard (Heb. ii. 1 ; iv. 1 ; Song of Sol. ii. 17, marginal reading).

“The sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias” (St. John vi. 1), though a lake rather than a sea according to modern nomenclature, is the chief sea of our Saviour’s history. It He rebuked (St. Mat. viii. 26: “He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still,” Ps. cvii. 29). On it He walked (St. Mat. xiv. 24, 25: “I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King Which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters” Is. xliii. 15, 16). From its depths He twice summoned plenty (St. Luke v. 4-6; St. John xxi. 5, 6: “Blessings of the deep that lieth under” Gen. xlix. 25), and once brought up an individual fish to serve His purpose (St. Matt. xvii. 27: “Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places” Ps. cxxxv. 6).

In one only (if I am not mistaken) of our Divine Master’s parables does the sea appear, and then not actively but passively as a figure

of the inhabited world (St. Matt. xiii. 47-50). But for the most part His mentions of the sea are eminently emphatic. Thus there is an offender for whom it were better to be drowned in the depth of the sea (xviii. 6). Faith has power to pluck up a sycamine tree and plant it in the sea: or to cast thereinto a mountain (St. Luke xvii. 6; St. Matt. xxi. 21). In their zeal, but not for God's glory, the scribes and pharisees compassed sea and land to make one proselyte (xxiii. 15). In earth's latter days of distress and perplexity the sea and the waves shall roar (St. Luke xxi. 25). Even that simple word of command to St. Peter, "Launch out into the deep," is to our ears full of Divine energy about to break forth into a miracle (St. Luke v. 4).

As our Lord's history endears to us one lake, so does it also one "flood" or river: that sacred Jordan which cleansed not Him but was cleansed by Him; and thereby became the representative of the cleansing, healing, sanctifying waters of Baptism throughout the whole earth. Above it, as over the primeval waters, the Spirit of God moved (Gen. i. 2; St. Matt. iii. 13, 16); and as once "eight souls . . . saved by water" returning unscathed from the flood refounded the

human family (Gen. viii. 15, 16 ; ix. 18, 19 ; 1 St. Pet. iii. 20), so from the Jordan did He emerge Who had healed the thenceforward healing element, and in Whom the life of the whole race was bound up (see Ex. xv. 23-26 ; 2 Kings ii. 21). If afterwards stones would have cried out had disciples kept silence (St. Luke xix. 39, 40), we may reverently think that now the voiceless Jordan found a voice and, as it were, spake through the mouth of St. John Baptist: "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" (St. Matt. iii. 14).

"The waters saw Thee, O God, the waters saw Thee ; they were afraid : the depths also were troubled " (Ps. lxxvii. 16).

WHALES AND ALL THAT MOVE IN THE WATERS.

"The fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas." Ps. viii. 8.

BETWEEN the three great families endued with animal life, fishes might at a first glance appear the creatures least allied to man, or in any

way figurative of or congruous with him. The element essential for habitation to the one, is fatal to the other: and though a comparison of both skeletons reveals to us modifications of an identical structure, yet on the surface the two living organisms have scarcely or have not a limb in common. Nevertheless a study of the Sacred Text brings to light, I think, in many passages a close connexion which for our edification the Creator of both has been pleased to establish between the two.

Jonah's "whale," or "great fish," is a figure of that "heart of the earth" wherein the Son of Man abode three days and three nights; and this "sign of the Prophet Jonas" is the solitary sign granted by our Lord to the "evil and adulterous generation" of His mortal day (Jonah i. 17; ii. 10; St. Matt. xii. 38-40). And if it be a figure of that place whither Christ our Head was pleased to betake Himself; then must it equally be a figure of that unknown region whither all His members by turns resort, and whence as He returned they shall return. As the fish vomited out Jonah upon the dry land, so no less certainly because of the Resurrection of Christ shall the earth cast out the dead (Is. xxvi. 19).

Although beyond a doubt He Who fulfilled all righteousness in general (see St. Matt. iii. 15), and Who in particular came not to destroy but to fulfil the Law (v. 17-19), must each year have partaken of the Paschal Lamb (Ex. xii. 3-11, 14: see St. Luke ii. 41-43; xxii. 7-16); and although further there appears no reason to question that habitually as to meat and drink He fared as fared His countrymen (see vii. 34), while we know that on occasion He sat down to such feasts as grateful love spread for Him (see for instance v. 27-30; St. Matt. ix. 9-11); yet of animal food fishes only are specified as being amongst the resources of His chosen company (xiv. 17; xv. 34). When after His Resurrection He condescended by eating before them to convince His doubting disciples of His actual Bodily Presence, the food they gave Him was still "a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb" (St. Luke xxiv. 36-43). Moreover in one of His discourses, when urging upon His disciples the duty and privilege of prayer, He sets before us by the example of an earthly father the excelling love and bounty of our Heavenly Father, and enumerates "a fish" among other "good gifts" of this world (xi. 9-13).

By miracle and ensuing promise (v. 4-10), and by parable (St. Matt. xiii. 47-50), fishes are constituted representatives of men; and the one great recorded miracle wrought by Christ after His Resurrection brings them again before us in the same character (St. John xxi. 1-13); when moreover they furnish the twofold feast laid, as it would seem, by unearthly as well as by earthly hands.

Besides all these, there is the fish from whose mouth St. Peter was directed to take the sacred didrachma (St. Matt. xvii. 24-27); and in connexion with the fishy family, though produced by a member of a far lower group, we find pearls twice employed by our Lord as an emblem of heavenly treasures (vii. 6; xiii. 45, 46).

Truly are there pearls to covet and pearls to forego. If we be such women as adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but with good works (1 Tim. ii. 9, 10); then shall we at length attain to gaze upon the Bride in her beauty, the Lamb's wife, holy Jerusalem, whose twelve gates are twelve pearls (Rev. xxi. 9-12, 21.) And then?

“Blessed are they that do His Commandments,

that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (xxii. 14).

FOWLS OF THE AIR.

"The voice of the turtle is heard in our land."

SONG OF SOL. ii. 12.

CHRISTENDOM is that land wherein the true dove-voice speaks, the "still small voice" of God the Holy Ghost. Faith certifies the blessed fact. Meanwhile so overwhelmingly around the Church swells the world's tumult of loud voices, which whatever else they may profess to clamour for do in truth require Christ to be crucified (see St. Luke xxiii. 23; St. John vii. 19, 20, 25, 26; Heb. vi. 4-6), that many a loving soul genuinely weak and often to all appearance solitary, might but for that assurance of faith sink into despair; and not only in season, but equally out of season, might keep silence, yea, even from good words (see 2 Tim. iv. 2; Ps. xxxix. 3, Prayer Book). Now although speech and war have no less than silence and peace their appointed season (Eccles. iii. 1, 7, 8), and woe betide him who saith, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace (Jer. vi. 13-15),

yet silence and peace are and ought to be more prevalently characteristic of ordinary Christians; peace must seldom be discarded from the manner, and never from the heart (St. John xiv. 27; xvi. 33; Eph. iv. 1-3, 26). We recognise quiet blended with power in many of the Almighty dealings: when Elijah's energy flagged, not convulsed nature but "a still small voice" persuaded him (1 Kings. xix. 4-18). Our Divine Pattern was defined by prophecy as One who would not strive nor cry in preparing to bring forth judgment unto victory (Is. xlii. 1-4; St. Matt. xii. 14-21). Even a slight self-scrutiny discerns that many times the true intrepid strength is that which sits still (Is. xxx. 7, 15), while at all times it is that which obeys (consider the example of Joseph, Gen. xxxix. 9; the warning of Saul, 1 Sam. xiii. 7-13); it needs unflinching self-mastery to go forth as sheep among wolves, and cultivating a wisdom as of serpents never to overstep the harmlessness of doves (St. Matt. x. 16). The thought of any perfection, whether it flash forth into enterprise or shine steadily in suffering, leads us up to adoring contemplation of Christ.

In the Song of Songs (v. 12) the Bridegroom is celebrated as one whose "eyes are as the eyes

of doves by the rivers of waters;" and even after an expositor has proposed to alter our Authorised Version the "doves" remain, though as a symbol no longer of tender delicacy but of vivacious energy. Let us learn our lesson both ways and connect a text with each meaning: "O Lord my God, mine Holy One . . . Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Hab. i. 12, 13); "His eyes were as a flame of fire" (Rev. xix. 12).

No actual "fowls" appear in our Lord's history, except the "pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons" of His blessed mother's purification (St. Luke ii. 24); the doves of those two occasions when the Lord coming suddenly to His temple expelled its profaners (St. John ii. 13-17; St. Mark xi. 15-17); and the crowing cock of St. Peter's denial (xiv. 68, 72). But the allusions to birds from our Divine Teacher's lips are numerous.

In reference to His own sacred person He declares how shelterless was the Son of Man in comparison with "birds of the air" (St. Luke ix. 58): and by the simile of a hen with her brood expresses the exceeding tenderness with which He yearned over His rebellious people (xiii. 34).

—In His Sermon on the Mount, by example of the fowls which “sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns,” yet are fed by our Heavenly Father, He encourages us to trust God for our daily bread (St. Matt. vi. 25, 26; see also St. Luke xii. 24).—He upbuilds His apostles in an indomitable courage by consideration of the Divine individual care for sparrows (St. Matt. x. 29–31; see also St. Luke xii. 6, 7).—He bids us all watch for His second advent, whereof the hour is hidden from men and angels: it may occur “at the cockcrowing,” or at a different moment (St. Mark xiii. 32–37).—On a certain occasion He answered His disciples not directly but figuratively: “Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together” (St. Luke xvii. 37).—In two parables birds make their appearance. In that of the sower they represent the devil working the heedless hearer’s ruin (viii. 5, 12); in that of the grain of mustard-seed, they seem, though less markedly, to exhibit a character of good (St. Matt. xiii. 31, 32; St. Mark iv. 30–32).

In the Book of Revelation (xviii. 1, 2) we read of an angel who “cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen,

and is become . . . a cage of every unclean and hateful bird;" such birds being apparently not the same as the devils and foul spirits mentioned along with them. If Babylon be a figure of the world, then perhaps we may connect such abominable birds as tenant her in her final ruin with Solomon's statement: "Riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven" (Prov. xxiii. 5). Wings in any case they have, indicative of their transitoriness: but not wings as of the noble eagle unless we despatch them heavenward; a caged carrion-bird preying upon a corpse is like that corrupted treasure heaped together for the last days, which shall eat into the flesh as fire (St. James v. 3). To deliver us from such a doom our Saviour, our Judge that is to be, has left us a rule which if we obey, our possessions and our hearts together will unfold wings as "of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold" (Ps. lxxviii. 13), and will even now take flight to that place whither He is gone before:—

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth: . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven: . . . for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (St. Matt. vi. 19-21).

BEASTS AND CATTLE.

“Moses said before the Lord, Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?” EX. vi. 30.

THUS even Moses (Ex. iv. 1-17) so far as in him lay rejected an offered privilege and missed an opportunity. Other such examples, or rather warnings, are set before us in Holy Scripture. It appears open to conjecture that but for his own weak insistence the impending “honour” would have become Barak’s own, and no woman’s (Judges iv. 6-9). Joash King of Israel secured three victories and no more, when he might have compassed the final overthrow of his country’s enemy: and as we read that “the man of God was wroth with him,” we suspect him of lukewarm scepticism (2 Kings xiii. 14-19). Happier than these, Esther (ii. 20; iv. 6-17; v. 1, 2) who ceased not to do the commandment of Mordecai, did after hesitation go in to Ahasuerus and by her people’s rescue secure likewise her own safety. Instances more or less similar occur in the New Testament. Who can estimate the vantage ground irretrievably lost by St. Peter when our Lord said to him,

“O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” (St. Matt. xiv. 31): or again by the same apostle and by the two sons of Zebedee when they slept in the Garden of Gethsemane? (xxvi. 36-46). St. Thomas had within his reach but failed to grasp the blessing of those who not seeing believe (St. John xx. 24-29). St. Paul felt himself to be as “one born out of due time,” and permanently at a disadvantage because of yore he had persecuted the Church of God (I Cor. xv. 8, 9). Every moment brings its own opportunity, but no moment brings back a lost opportunity: a second chance may or may not be conceded, but the first is gone beyond recall. The Prophet Habakkuk (ii. 1) sets us an example of vigilance lest the critical moment should pass unimproved: “I will stand” (he says) “upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me.”

What we apprehend at once as true of the prominent turning points in a career, is no less true of each choice we make; is no less true of every action in every life. If some be momentous and others trivial, yet we ourselves cannot estimate which is which: and therefore prudence as well as obedience bids us do with our might whatso-

ever our hand findeth to do (see Eccles. ix. 10). A special solemnity invests both the first and the last step of any undertaking, be that undertaking great or small: this of "Beasts and Cattle" is the last of one series of subjects in the Benedicite; and this is my second and last time for dwelling upon it.

The glory of each creature resides in that aspect under which it best serves to mirror its Creator. The multiform family of living creatures which treads earth in man's company has its crown of dignity in that title of God the Son, "the Lamb of God." Under such a veil was the coming Saviour set before patriarchs (Gen. xxii. 7, 8); before all Israel at the Exodus, and again under the Law (Ex. xii. 3-13; xxix. 38-42); before prophets (Is. liii. 7; Ezek. xlv. 15). Thus, unveiled, St. John Baptist identified and announced Him (St. John i. 29, 36); the Ethiopian eunuch was moved to love Him (Acts viii. 32-39); St. Peter dwelt upon His unapproached preciousness and perfection (1 St. Pet. i. 18, 19); St. John (xiii. 23) the beloved disciple beheld Him in vision and wrote concerning Him (Rev. v. 6; xxi. 22, 23; xxii. 1-4). Before the wrath of that Name in the great day of His wrath shall the men of this world quake (vi. 15-17).

Next in majesty stands our Lord's title "the Lion of the tribe of Juda" (v. 5): next, because the "Lamb" is "of God," the "Lion" of a human stock. The Athanasian Creed defines such a point of the Christian Faith: "Equal to the Father, as touching His Godhead: and inferior to the Father, as touching His Manhood."

In our Lord's discourses we note the following allusions to "Beasts and Cattle." Dogs and swine represent profane persons (St. Matt. vii. 6). False teachers are as wolves in sheep's clothing (v. 15). Strayed Israelites are spoken of as "lost sheep:" while "dogs" denote the unreconciled Gentile races (x. 6; xv. 24, 26). The Twelve Apostles are sent forth as sheep in the midst of wolves (x. 16): and in like manner the Seventy Disciples as lambs (St. Luke x. 3). Sheep divided from goats stand for the righteous severed from the wicked (St. Matt. xxv. 31-34, 41). King Herod is "that fox" (St. Luke xiii. 31, 32): and foxes in their holes (but brought forward simply in the natural sense) are contrasted with the houseless Son of Man (ix. 58). On two occasions Christ rebuked pharisaical hypocrisy by quoting the humane conduct of any owner towards his ox or ass (xiii. 15; xiv. 5; see also on

the same subject St. Matt. xii. 11, 12): and once more He named cattle incidentally when instructing His Apostles on the unprofitableness of man's service (St. Luke xvii. 7-10). Twice He mentioned the camel: once to express an exceeding degree of difficulty, and once in denouncing a scrupulous hypocrisy (St. Matt. xix. 24, where however a different rendering would substitute "cable" for "camel": xxiii. 24).

But beyond all others of this class in frequency and in tenderness are the figurative allusions to sheep, lambs, a flock. Christ's graciousness makes good the lovely prophecy of Isaiah (xl. 11): "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." It needed men's weakness in combination with their Redeemer's strength to accomplish another prophecy quoted by His own sacred lips: "I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered" (St. Mark xiv. 27; Zech. xiii. 7). "I am the Good Shepherd," He reiterates elsewhere; and lavishes His love on the flock for whom He came to die (St. John x. 1-30): while both St. Matthew (xviii. 12, 13) and St. Luke (xv. 4-6), but in different contexts, record

a tender parable of a lost sheep. Even after His resurrection the Chief Shepherd (see I St. Peter v. 4) recurs to the same dear familiar images in giving a charge to St. Peter (St. John xxi. 15-17): in whose First Epistle (see besides two texts already referred to, ii. 25; v. 1-3) we marvel not to find a corresponding phraseology. Elsewhere in our Lord's parables animals are referred to, but nowhere so prominently as in those of the Lost Sheep and in others of the same class: see however the Parable of the Good Samaritan (St. Luke x. 30-35), the Great Supper (xiv. 16-24), the Prodigal Son (xv. 11-32), the Rich Man and Lazarus (if indeed this be not a narrative of facts: xvi. 19-31), the Marriage of the King's Son (St. Matt. xxii. 2-14).

In the course of the Gospel history, quadrupeds several times appear among the minor personages. First in order of time comes the flock of the wakeful shepherds on the night of the Nativity (St. Luke ii. 8). Wild beasts shared the wilderness with their Maker during the forty days of His fast (St. Mark i. 13). Towards the opening of our Lord's ministry, He purged His Father's house, driving out sheep and oxen with their owners (St. John ii. 13-17). In the country of

the Gadarenes He permitted the destruction of a herd of swine (St. Mark v. 11-13). In His one royal entry into Jerusalem He fulfilled a prophecy delivered some five centuries before: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zech. ix. 9; St. Matt. xxi. 1-7; St. Mark xi. 1-7).

And though it be far higher in significance and in dignity than any of these, shall we not here remember also the Paschal Lamb of each year of our Saviour's mortal life?—from that Passover which when He was twelve years old He celebrated with His virgin mother and reputed father, to that final supreme Passover which with desire He desired to eat with His apostles before He suffered (St. Luke ii. 41-43; xxii. 15).

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (St. John i. 29).

"O Lamb of God: grant us Thy peace, have mercy upon us."

CHILDREN OF MEN.

“What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.” ST. JOHN xiii. 7.

IT has been pointed out that, while marvellous are the miracles of mercy which Jesus wrought, still more marvellous are those which He wrought not. We comprehend at once that as a good tree naturally brings forth good fruit, and a sweet fountain sends forth sweet waters (St. Matt. vii. 16-18; St. James iii. 11, 12), so Very Love must beyond all question naturally perform works of love: therefore what again and again He did to relieve human suffering is miraculous not as the outcome of His good will, but simply as a suspension or contravention of established law; what He did not is mysterious. Mysteries lie deeper than miracles: they address and they tax a higher faculty in whoso would apprehend them. Many a miracle could in its own day be estimated and attested by the senses: all mysteries ever have been and at this day continue inappreciable except by faith and love.

The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: nevertheless so far as they are revealed

they belong unto us also (Deut. xxix. 29). They become as talents entrusted to us, and for which we shall have sooner or later to give account (see St. Matt. xviii. 23-25; St. Luke xii. 20; xvi. 1, 2; xix. 12, 13, 15).

Not least mysterious among mysteries appears to us that lifelong self-restriction in observance of which our Saviour ministered almost exclusively to those of His own nation: for thus undoubtedly in the main He did. True, He was as one who hideth the ointment of his right hand, which bewrayeth itself (see Prov. xxvii. 16); His love once and again coming out of its place (see Mic. i. 3) to bestow uncovenanted mercies, and to give unto the last even as unto the first (see St. Matt. xx. 14): but His so doing was the exception, not the rule. Wherefore? Our own hearts suffice to respond with more than St. Paul's emphasis of absolute conviction: Wherefore? because He loved us not? God knoweth! (see 2 Cor. xi. 11). Yet the question remains in great measure still unanswered, and must so remain. Man cannot reply to it fully, but God is able to instruct souls by their own ignorance no less efficiently than by any knowledge. When out of the whirlwind He answered Job (xxviii.

12, 28; xxxviii. 1; xl. 4; xlii. 2, 6), we cannot suppose that patriarch to have gleaned many scientific facts till then unknown to him, and the mysterious Providence which had so searchingly tried his faith and patience remained mysterious still: but none the less did he then and there find wisdom and the place of understanding, for he learned to say: "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer Thee?" and again, "I know that Thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from Thee I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." God's will respecting those who are outside the Church's pale has not been revealed to us who abide within: every duty of love, of intercession, of corporal or spiritual mercy, we can discharge towards them; but judge them (thank God) we may not and cannot; though not seldom their righteousness judges and shames our unrighteousness (see I Cor. v. 12, 13; Gal. vi. 10; Rom. ii. 13-15, 27-29).

The Gospels comfort us with most blessed instances of graces and gifts lavished in excess of any definite covenant. Vividness of faith and aptitude for love constrained the Magi to travel westward in search of the Object of their costly

worship (St. Matt. ii. 1-11). "Draw me," each seems to say, "we will run after Thee" (Song of Sol. i. 4): and of sweeter influence than the unbound Pleiades (see Job xxxviii. 31) "His star" drew them. The woman of Samaria, besides sharing the errors of her nation, appears to have become personally degraded: yet when to her Jesus said, "I that speak unto thee am He," she cavilled not at the word of truth; which thereupon kindled within her a flame of charity towards her own fellow-citizens; and this shining before men led some to glorify their heavenly Father (see St. Matt. v. 16) by believing on His Christ; other converts afterwards being added to the first (St. John iv. 16-42). That centurion who loved and succoured God's chosen people and by whom a slave was most tenderly cared for, became in matters spiritual as a Roman eagle gazing upon the unveiled sun; and attained to such a pitch of supernatural insight that Jesus " marvelled at him . . . and said . . . Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (St. Luke vii. 2-9; St. Matt. viii. 10-13). Ma-

ternal love wrought up one Syrophenician woman to such indomitable persistence, that she could bear a rebuff such as no second suppliant is recorded to have undergone: and thereby won from her Saviour not only her heart's desire and the request of her lips (see Ps. xxi. 2), but a word of approval which was in itself a beatification (St. Matt. xv. 21-28; St. Mark vii. 26). At that Feast of the Passover, to which all previous passovers had led up, and which was itself the greatest and the last of all, certain Greek pilgrims having come to worship with the sacred nation in their sacred city, craved to "see Jesus:" and though we are not informed whether at the moment they obtained their request, it gave occasion to the Divine discourse in which the Saviour of mankind distinctly pledged Himself to the whole human race: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me" (St. John xii. 20-33). Last of all we read of the centurion, who at the Crucifixion glorified God, saying, "Truly this man was the Son of God," "Certainly this was a righteous man." And they also that were with him feared, and confessed the Son of God (St. Mark xv. 39; St. Luke xxiii. 47; St. Matt. xxvii. 54).

The twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel consists of what is, to all appearance, one unbroken Divine discourse composed of three distinct portions. Of these the first, the parable of the Ten Virgins, addresses with special directness such persons as practise or at the least profess a devoted life, and urges them to a constant readiness of preparation: the second, the parable of the Talents, representing our probation under the figure of a trust used or abused, may be claimed by all alike who in any vocation are called to know and serve God, and certifies each one among us of the individual responsibility which all lie under and which none can evade. The third and concluding portion of the discourse, quitting the parabolical form, speaks plainly of the judgment which overhangs the whole world; proclaims a test, tried by which the arraigned will stand finally or fall finally; and first sets the Judge before us, if so by any means we may be prepared to be set before Him in that last awful day.

In this revelation, all turns upon what each man has done or has not done: motives are not sifted, knowledge and ignorance alike seem to be beside the question; at least, no such matters are

here on record as being gone into: "Ye have done it," "Ye did it not," sums up all. It has been noticed that the righteous and the wicked reply in the selfsame words: "Lord, when saw we Thee . . .?" neither class seeming to have formerly even suspected with Whom it was that in the charities of daily life they had to do. The duties alleged are moreover such as are incumbent not exclusively upon Christians as Christians, but upon all men as men: and hence it has been argued that by this portion of Holy Writ is revealed to believers God's perfect will towards those who have not shared their privileges.

This however we know not, neither can we yet know. For the present we have nothing to do with judging those that are without: only our own selves we do well to judge (see 1 Cor. xi. 31), and to judge trembling.

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 St. Pet. iv. 17, 18).

ISRAEL.

“Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!”

ST. JOHN i. 45-49.

I THINK we may understand these words of our gracious Master not merely as attesting the eminence of one particular virtue in one individual saint, but as directing our attention towards that same virtue as essential to the character of every saint. The Israelite, we learn, is guileless: the guileful man, then, is no genuine Israelite, though he count and prove his genealogy mounting in a straight line up from himself to Jacob.

Guilelessness appears merely negative: yet it does in fact nullify half the temptations which beset us, and invite, if it does not involve, all the graces we need. It accords with that “single” eye which fills the whole body with light (St. Luke xi. 34-36): as was the case with Nathanael, whom not even national prejudice could blind when the truth met him face to face. Very few facts concerning this early disciple are recorded, but those few furnish for us a treasury of instruc-

tion. The supposed stumbling-block, though not in reality lying in his path, was neither removed nor accounted for: where it had stood, there it continued apparently to stand: but it bore no proportion to the revelation vouchsafed, and so it practically vanished. Thus we see that guilelessness clears away exaggeration of feeling as well as exaggeration of speech, and false estimates as well as false aims. When all that is false is abolished, then all that is true bursts upon man in just proportion and flawless accuracy: he sees himself as he is, simply because he desires not to see himself otherwise than as he is: he sees others also as they are: most blessed of all, he begins not by searching (see Job xi. 7-9), but by affinity to find out God, according to the Divine promise, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God" (see St. John vii. 17); until even from man's remoteness apprehending Christ as He is "glorious in holiness," "altogether lovely" (Ex. xv. 11; Song of Sol. v. 16), each "Israelite indeed" recognises, hails, follows, the Son of God and King of Israel.

This word "Israelite indeed" strikes us in-

stantly as upbuilding, approving, truthful persons. A second glance detects in it hope and encouragement even for the untruthful, so long as they loathe themselves and grudge no pain or shame to put away lying and speak truth (Eph. iv. 25). The first Israelite, so to say, the one, that is, from whom all others derive their honourable cognomen, was Jacob himself: for on him the name of Israel was conferred not as a mere appellation, but as a definition. The typical Israelite, however many generations removed, we may fairly presume still to be congruous with the head of his house and source of his title: but how did that forefather start in life? He began by driving with his twin brother so mean a bargain, that we are almost tempted to brand it as overreaching (Gen. xxv. 29-34); and he went on to practise an elaborate deception upon his blind old father in order to complete the former transaction (xxvii. 6-29). Neither to Esau's profanity (Heb. xii. 16) nor to Rebekah's unscrupulousness may we condone Jacob's ill-doing. And as deception had been his sin, so in after-life was deception his retributive scourge: making him husband of Leah (Gen. xxix. 18-25), unwitting harbourer of idols (xxx. 26-37), un-

consoled mourner for Joseph (xxxvii. 31-35). But there arose a crisis in his career when (if indeed the good work had not long ago been consummated) mortal fear like hail swept away the refuge of lies: and he who once had hidden himself under falsehood (see Is. xxviii. 15-17), now in extremity felt that "Great is truth, and mighty above all things" (1 Esd. iv. 41). Conjugal and paternal affection purged and broke up his heart (see Hos. x. 12-14): he resorted not to subterfuges, but to honest, helpless prayer, pouring forth the horror of his predicament to Him Who heareth prayer (Ps. lxxv. 2). From that moment he who had seemed the least of patriarchs shot up into an unprecedented "Prince of God." Abraham had prefixed and observed a limit to his own urgent intercession (Gen. xviii. 23-32): Jacob grasped the spirit of God's will with such unflinching faith as even to set at nought the letter; "Let Me go, for the day breaketh. . . . I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me" (see 2 Cor. iii. 6). The last taint of duplicity has vanished from his conduct: he approaches his elder brother under cover of a present, expressive of the deference due according to the standard of his age and race, but he neither

suppresses nor distorts facts; for we have no right to suppose that the motive which later on he alleged for parting company with Esau was other than a sincere one (Gen. xxxii. 3-29: xxxiii. 1-16). And several years afterwards we notice a scrupulous rectitude in his dealings with Pharaoh's unknown minister (xliiii. 12).¹

With our Lord's love of guilelessness, we may surely connect His tender love of little children (St. Mark x. 13-16). At the worst, their faults lie for the most part on the surface. At the best, they themselves are almost as innocent as the "lambs" He calls them (for they seem included in St. John xxi. 15), and as the angels, than whom by birthright they are not much lower (Ps. viii. 5). That same gracious Master, Who bids us learn of Him because He is "meek and lowly in heart" (St. Matt. xi. 29), also invites us to emulate one little child's humility and "become as little children;" nor will He by any means suffer us to despise them (xviii. 2-6, 10). One may even doubt whether the holiest mature Christian approaches so near to the Divine Manhood, as

¹ The leading idea of the foregoing paragraph was suggested to me.

infants (though at an infinite distance) do to the Divine Infancy.

If the example of a patriarch or of a true Israelite, if the contemplation of a little child fail to stir us up in pursuit of this virtue of guilelessness, yet one all-excelling pattern remains to kindle and constrain us. Christ, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1 St. Pet. ii. 22), revealed Himself to St. Thomas as "the Truth" (St. John xiv. 5, 6), spake of Himself to the Jews as of a man who had told them the truth (viii. 40), and confronted His half-hearted judge with the awful declaration, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (xviii. 37).

"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (1 St. Pet. ii. 1-3).

PRIESTS.

"Ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." I COR. iv. 1.

"Ensamplers to the flock." I ST. PET. v. 3.

"WHATSOEVER the Lord pleased, that did He" (Ps. cxxxv. 6). It pleased Christ of His gracious mercy first in the course of His three years' ministry to associate with Himself apostles (St. Mark iii. 13-15; St. Luke vi. 13): then after all power had been given Him in heaven and in earth, to commit into their hands the administration of His own supernatural government (St. Matt. xxviii. 18-20): then by them to ordain and consecrate other men as their fellow-labourers and successors (as Acts xiv. 23): and finally (for that great day of Pentecost which followed the Ascension belongs to "the last days," Acts ii: 1-4, 14-18) by an unbroken chain of ordinations and consecrations to hand on to each successive generation the privileges and responsibilities conferred upon that which preceded it (as 2 Tim. ii. 2; Titus i. 5). Thus the Christian Church of our day has no more a cloke for (God forbid!) any sin of apostasy, than had the Jewish Church

of our Lord's own day (see St. Luke x. 16; St. John xv. 20-22; Rev. iii. 1-6).

The Epistle to the Hebrews (ch. vii.) shows us "Melchisedec, king of Salem, Priest of the Most High God," as pre-eminently the type of Christ as Priest. In the inspired narrative (Gen. xiv. 18-20) Melchisedec abruptly stands before us un-introduced, unaccounted for; his whole dynasty (so to say) initiated, bound up, terminating, in himself: as an individual man wrapped in obscurity; as a typical personage luminous. Reading of him we identify One greater than he. "Without father, without mother:" the Beginning without beginning, God Almighty, Christ Himself, sole Priest; "without descent:" Christ "consecrated for evermore," the Alpha and Omega (Rev. i. 8) of His own prevalent propitiation (1 St. John ii. 1, 2; iv. 9, 10), after Whom none need come nor can come (see Heb. x. 7, 10-14, 26-29). By representatives, by agents (see 2 Cor. v. 20, 21; vi. 1), He in heaven carries on His work upon earth: but the channel is in itself nothing; that which replenishes the channel is all in all; "Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (1 Cor. iii. 5-9). The Le-

vitical priesthood equals not this of Melchisedec, to which itself paid tithes after a sort. It was invested with no more than a temporary dignity (Heb. ix. 1-26), and occupied an intermediate or rather a simultaneous period in the midst of that "continual" priesthood, whereof the type preceded and the manifestation abrogated it; but whereof the essence "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (xiii. 8) infused into it as into a conducting medium a prefixed measure of grace.

Yet has the Aaronic priesthood, no less recognisably than the other, both a real and a typical majesty of its own. If all brotherly unity be like the precious ointment which bedewed not Aaron's head only but even the extremities of his raiment (Ps. cxxxiii. 1, 2), most of all like it is that transcendent brotherly unity in which Christ by His Holy Spirit joins men with Himself, and by special bonds joins with Himself those whom He sends to minister in His name. Thus we discern a second aspect under which we adore Christ as High Priest over and among a brotherhood of subordinate priests: the whole and sole overflow of grace derives from the Head; yet it descends not thence to the lay outskirt, except by inter-

mediaries contiguous to both. The very name of Levi (interpreted "joined") taken in connexion with those pathetic words of Leah which explained why she conferred this name and no other upon her third son (Gen. xxix. 34, with marginal reading), reminds us that God in Christ reconciles the world unto Himself (2 Cor. v. 18, 19); not that she should thenceforth abide afar off as a trembling slave (see Hos. ii. 16, with marginal reading), but that as a beloved bride she should sit down with Him in His Throne (Rev. iii. 21). So also spake Isaiah (liv. 5) by the Spirit of prophecy: "Thy Maker is thine Husband; the Lord of hosts is His Name."

Awful then and by us venerable is the dignity of each Christian priest (see St. Matt. x. 40; St. Luke x. 16; St. John xiii. 20). His exclusive prerogative it is to absolve (St. John xx. 22, 23), to excommunicate and restore (St. Matt. xviii. 15-18; 1 Cor. v. 3-5; 2 Cor. ii. 5-11), to consecrate the most Blessed Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood (1 Cor. x. 16; xi. 23-25). To him eminently, though not exclusively, it appertains to administer the Sacrament of Holy Baptism (St. Matt. xxviii. 19), to preach (2 Tim. iv. 1, 2), to act towards his charge as a disinterested provi-

dent father (2 Cor. xii. 14), to keep in advance of those he guides (the supreme example: St. John x. 4; see also 1 Cor. xi. 1; 1 Tim. iv. 12), to lay down life for the brethren (St. John x. 11; 1 St. John iii. 16).

St. Peter and St. Paul have left rules for men called to the heavenly office (see especially 1 St. Pet. v. 1-4; 1 Tim. iii. 1-7). Liable to such a standard, well may each priest re-echo St. Paul's own request, "Brethren, pray for us" (1 Thess. v. 25), and fall back upon that Divine assurance which he also needed and built upon, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. xii. 9).

If Christian priests be such as type and revelation declare, their claim upon ourselves and our substance becomes obvious; much more so when the same revelation enjoins our duties towards them of obedience (Heb. xiii. 17; see also Rom. xiii. 1, 2; 1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16), honour (1 Tim. v. 17), love (1 Thess. v. 12, 13), temporal maintenance (1 Cor. ix. 7-14). And this for our sakes rather than for theirs: for these are they who travail in birth until Christ be formed in their cherished "little children" (see Gal. iv. 19, 20); who feed the flock of God "not by con-

straint, but willingly ;” who watch for our souls “as they that must give account.”

God grant that in His own great day of reckoning “they may do it with joy, and not with grief.”

SERVANTS OF THE LORD.

“After a long time the Lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.” ST. MATT. xxv. 14-30.

THE parable of which these words form a part sets before us our own momentous inevitable responsibility, and the end whereunto we are hastening. Since by nature we and whatever may be in our hands dwindle, deteriorate, perish, the prospect would appear formidable were we bound to no more than the rendering back intact of whatsoever trust had been confided to us ; but (at a first glance) overwhelming does it appear as it actually stands ; for in His day of final account our Lord will demand His own “with usury.”

Yet when we consider that general if not universal law to which faith, reason, experience, bear united witness as ruling creation,—the law

whereby all ebbs or flows, waxes or wanes, around us; while we set in the midst of all do and must do likewise,—we discern that the only thing we could not achieve would be to give back neither less nor more than identically our original trust. To demand this at our hands would be to require stability of beings constituted unstable (see Job xiv. 1, 2; Ps. ciii. 13-16): it would be even to justify the very insinuation made by the “wicked and slothful servant,” “Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed.”

Now as regards what really is incumbent upon us, true it is that as in the parable so in that which the parable represents, the Lord in no case suffers loss; his “one talent” returns to him unblemished and available; but so far as the slothful servant is concerned it has been wasted, and has not prospered in that whereto it was sent (see Is. lv. 11); it has lain unproductive, whereas its nature was to produce; it becomes a lost talent, in the same sense that we speak of lost time and lost opportunities. Thus in reference to Judas himself, his became a lost ministry and apostleship: though in reference to the Church the com-

pensating fiat went forth, "His bishoprick let another take" (Acts i. 15-26).

He that shall judge us is very Love and all perfection (1 St. John iv. 8; St. Matt. v. 48; see St. John xiv. 9-11). Even in moments of keenest fear and utmost heart-sinking, which of us after all would dare to choose a fallible rather than an infallible judge? or would think to fare better in other hands than in those which were pierced to save us? "They that fear the Lord will prepare their hearts, and humble their souls in His sight, saying, We will fall into the hands of the Lord, and not into the hands of men: for as His majesty is, so is His mercy" (Ecclus. ii. 17, 18).

Nor in this anxious matter does our gracious Master leave us comfortless: He succours and befriends us at every turn.

His example helps us. He deigned to take on Himself "the form of a servant" (Phil. ii. 5-8): and not the form only but an obedience, toil, responsibility, more humbling and more straining to the whole man than ever He exacts from us. As a servant the inspired word of prophecy points Him out: "Behold My Servant, Whom I uphold" (Is. xlii. 1; St. Matt. xii. 17, 18): and so did He

delight to empty Himself of glory (see St. John xvii. 4, 5) that He, "Who thought it not robbery to be equal with God," made Himself not God's Servant only, but even a Servant of servants: saying indeed to His apostles, "Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am;" but elsewhere saying to them, "Whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth" (St. Luke xxii. 27), thus pressing home upon them the essential superiority of lowliness. Nor does He bid them wash one another's feet until He has first Himself washed them: nor does He in humbling humiliate them, for He rates them no lower than according to the standard, "The servant is not greater than his Lord" (St. John xiii. 12 - 17), that standard in truth being "a perfect man, . . . the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (see Eph. iv. 13).

Those whom one day He will judge as servants, He first spares no pains to educate as servants. From His blessed lips we learn how futile is the attempt to serve two masters (St. Matt. vi. 24). Again: "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching."

The faithful and wise steward shall be richly rewarded, but if he fall away he shall be taken at unawares and destroyed (St. Luke xii. 35-46). Punishment shall bear proportion to the knowledge sinned against (*vv.* 47, 48). Sinners are the servants of sin (S. John viii. 34-36; see also Rom. vi. 16-23). At best we are unprofitable servants to God (St. Luke xvii. 7-10): nevertheless great are the solace and glory which await Christ's steadfast servant and follower (St. John xii. 26). Nor does even that climax of honour: "Henceforth I call you not servants; . . . but I have called you friends" (xv. 14, 15) seem necessarily restricted to those to whom it was spoken: for the two qualifications on which it depends, obedience and knowledge, are not the prerogative of a few but the privilege of all (1 St. John v. 3; ii. 20).

In several of the Divine parables servants appear among the figurative personages. Five times they pointedly represent God's ministers, whether angels, prophets, or priests (St. Matt. xiii. 24-30; xxi. 33-41; xxii. 2-14; St. Mark xiii. 34-36; St. Luke xiv. 16-24): besides which we have the Steward who summons the Labourers in the Vineyard (St. Matt. xx. 1-16), and that Unjust Steward

from whose unsanctified prudence is elicited a lesson of holy prudence (St. Luke xvi. 1-9). The Parable of Forgiveness (St. Matt. xviii. 23-35), corresponding with the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer (vi. 12), establishes God's love and pity towards our helpless selves as the basis of all human charities and compassions,—that of the Prodigal Son (St. Luke xv. 11-32) sets vividly before us the joy, plenty, endearments, of the heavenly family and household; meanwhile warning us against an unsonlike, unsympathetic, grudging spirit in our service,—that of the Pounds (xix. 12-27; resembling that of the Talents already quoted from) treats of man's ability and accountability.

None but a liar and the father of lies (St. John viii. 44) was he who sneeringly asked, "Doth Job fear God for nought?" (Job i. 9): yet, as oftentimes has been the case, the particular slander struck root in a general truth: "To the righteous good shall be repayed" (Prov. xiii. 21). Our last view of "The Lord's freeman . . . Christ's servant" (see 1 Cor. vii. 22) is when he stands no longer in exile upon earth, but at home in heaven. Robed in white and holding in his hand a palm he rejoices before the Throne of God, Whom he

serves day and night in His temple (Rev. vii. 3, 9-17). His blood has been avenged: his avocation is to praise God and rejoice (xix. 2, 5-7). In "the holy city, new Jerusalem" (xxi. 2) shall be "the Throne of God and of the Lamb:" there "His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His Face; and His Name shall be in their foreheads. . . . The Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever (xxii. 3-5).

SPIRITS AND SOULS OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

"He said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shall thou be with Me in paradise." ST. LUKE xxiii. 42, 43.

"WITH Me" is a greater promise than "in paradise:" and for our comfort the greater word conveys to us a far more distinct idea than does the less. We may ponder and doubt what sort or what degree of boon is guaranteed by "in paradise:" that bound up in "with Christ" is evident and is enough. So, I suppose, it may

have been in the case of the Penitent Thief himself. That he already realized in some measure what it was to be with Christ, how ennobling, how absorbing, we are sure: that it kindled within him a desire of renewed communion, is beyond a doubt: yet how vividly or how vaguely he identified any feature of a local paradise, we can by no means ascertain.

But did anything depend on his conception, or rather does not all depend on the word of Christ? Even if, like Abraham, he went out not knowing whither he went (Heb. xi. 8), he may well have realized enough to say with David, "I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me" (Ps. xxiii. 4). And that much the most ignorant of ourselves can by God's grace realize: which holding fast, let us thank God and take courage.

This once only (I think) is it on record that our Lord spoke directly of the intermediate state, unless the awful narrative of what befell the Rich Man and Lazarus (St. Luke xvi. 19-31) be a history and not a parable. In either case that narrative proves to us that our own intermediate state will be blessed or penal in correspondence with the tenor of our previous lives: and surely "the vision" is written and made plain "that

he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." Thus prophesied Habakkuk (ii. 2-4), foreseeing the end of an arrogant people: and his next words equally accord with the characteristics of the two typical personages exhibited for our warning; "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith."

The widow of Nain's son (St. Luke vii. 11-15), Jairus's daughter (St. Mark v. 22-24, 35-43), Lazarus of Bethany (St. John xi. 1, 43, 44), restored to life by Christ's omnipotent word, left for us no message. They who return and they who return not maintain towards us an unbroken silence (see Ps. cxv. 17; Eccles. iii. 7): nor are we told whether those many bodies of sleeping saints which, after their Lord's rising again, also arose out of their graves and went into the holy city and appeared unto many (St. Matt. xxvii. 52, 53), were or were not empowered to speak.

Christ Himself, our resurrection and our life (St. John xi. 25), has not with His own lips

revealed to us aught concerning His three days' and three nights' abode in the heart of the earth (St. Matt. xii. 40). To us, nothing. How much He may or may not have deigned to reveal to disciples who conversed with Him, we know not: only from St. Peter we learn that He went and preached unto the spirits in prison, who in the days of Noah had been disobedient (1 St. Pet. iii. 18-20; see also iv. 6).

Here and there, however, in St. Paul's Epistles a gleam of light brings out some feature of the veiled land. Yet when St. Paul relates how once, whether in the body or out of the body even he himself knew not: but God knoweth,—how he once was “caught up to the third heaven into paradise;” he brings us no message thence, for he “heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter” (2 Cor. xii. 2-4). Elsewhere he writes: “To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain;” but he no further defines that gain than as the being “with Christ; which is far better” (Phil. i. 21, 23). The blessed dead he denominates “them which sleep in Jesus” (1 Thess. iv. 14): and still Jesus' presence is the whole and sole definition of Paradise.

From the Book of Revelation (vi. 9-11) we

learn somewhat regarding the abode, demeanour, dignity, rest, of the noble army of martyrs : while a second passage announces the blessedness of "the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth:" they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them (xiv. 13).

On these and other utterances of inspiration many and elaborate conjectures have been based as to the state of disembodied souls. But drawing our own humble lesson from what the sacred text here cited directly reveals or at the least seems to imply, we learn that the approach to paradise is by a way of labour, not of sloth: that if we would meet our work there, we must first have wrought it here: that there the saints rest: and most blessed of all, that there they abide with Christ; and because with Christ also together.

"Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee" (Ps. lxxiii. 25).

"Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him" (1 Thess. iv. 14).

HOLY AND HUMBLE MEN OF HEART.

"The Holy One and the Just." ACTS iii. 14.

"He humbled Himself." PHIL. ii. 8.

"COME unto Me," says our gracious Lord: "Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart" (St. Matt. xi. 28, 29). The injunction, "Learn of Me," implies the promise, "I will teach;" for God accepts us according to that we have, and not according to that we have not (see 2 Cor. viii. 12), and consequently demands no more than He is willing first to supply; but it does not define or limit the Divine mode of teaching, and experience attests that after divers manners does Christ instruct His disciples.

Taking humility as our subject: He taught His blessed Mother once and again by a check (St. John ii. 4; St. Mark iii. 31-35),—Nicodemus by his ignorance (St. John iii. 10),—the Woman of Samaria by her depravity (iv. 16-18),—the Sinful Woman by suffering her to be despised (St. Luke vii. 39);—shallow persons He taught by revealing the impartiality

and inevitableness of impending judgment (xiii. 1-5),—the Canaanitish Mother by delay, even by apparent denial and contempt (St. Matt. xv. 22-26),—the Apostles collectively by pattern of a little child (xviii. 1-4); and by His own habitual (St. Luke xxii. 24-27) and exceptional (St. John xiii. 12-17) example,—St. Peter individually by a patient prophetic warning (*vv.* 37, 38). He likewise in abasement of pride and exaltation of humility spake two Parables; that of the Highest Room (St. Luke xiv. 7-11), and that of the Pharisee and Publican (xviii. 9-14).

All these instances taken together illustrate not the necessity merely of our acquiring humility, but the painfulness of the process whereby it must be acquired. Yet surely necessity and pain fall into the background, giving place to aspiration and love, when our Master Himself first performs the task He is about to set us. As (according to a most poetical simile) a brimming cup overflows, whether a pebble or a pearl be cast into it, so does a heart full of love overflow not with pain, but with love, even if that which stirs its depths be not a pleasure but a pang.

Humility pervades the Apostolic Epistles. To

take one instance only; the First Epistle of St. Peter is a study of humility, submission, patience. If in defiance of nature St. Peter, the dominant Apostle, clothed himself with humility (see v. 5), which of us need despair? Not one of us who brings to the work a spark of that love which blazed in his heart. Love, the key of all perfection, is itself that perfection whereof it is the key. Love it is which fulfils the first and great commandment, and the second likewise (St. Matt. xxii. 37-40; Rom. xiii. 8-10); these two fulfilled, what room remains for transgression or defect? Yet some things, which for the present form part of our salutary discipline or our bounden duty, must at length be abolished in the triumph of love. "Let us fear," is our rule to-day (Heb. iv. 1); but the day approaches when "perfect love" shall cast out fear; "He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1 St. John iv. 18).

We learn from the Epistle to the Hebrews (xii. 9-11) how God chastens us for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness; and how such chastening, seeming for the present grievous, afterwards yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness. These declarations send us back to our

Lord's words of tender invitation: "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (St. Matt. xi. 29). Now if the promise of "peaceable fruit of righteousness," and of "rest unto our souls," suffice not to allure us, yet one more motive remains; for without holiness "no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. xii. 14). Shall we have travelled so far, to miss the goal at last? Shall we so often have gazed on Christ with the eye of intellectual knowledge, it may be even of intellectual faith, and never behold Him face to face with the eye of love? Every eye indeed shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him (Rev. i. 7); but they only who shall be like Him shall see Him as He is (1 St. John iii. 2).

"As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 St. Peter i. 15, 16).

ANANIAS, AZARIAS, AND MISAEL.

“We see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” HEB. ii. 9.

WHATSOEVER we contemplate, this is the true end of all contemplation: to “see Jesus:” “For God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. iv. 6). The undying glory which invests Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, is that obedience of faith which brought them into fellowship with the Son of God, making them fellow-workers with Him to edify the Church and convert the world: of which wide conversion they then and there reaped a sort of firstfruits; for we read how Nebuchadnezzar, who up to that hour had been an idolater and a persecutor, then “spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego . . . There is no other God that can deliver after this sort” (Dan. iii. 28, 29).

Nor will the contemplation of any creature, whether higher or lower than man in the scale of creation, avail us anything, unless by help of it according to its proper endowment and capacity we discern Jesus, in Whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9): "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. i. 20). Otherwise we shall be like Hagar familiar with the wilderness, but unaware of the well of water (Gen. xxi. 14-19); like Esau who appreciated lentils, but not his birthright (xxv. 29-34); like Jacob who made himself comfortable with stones, and awhile discerned not that he lay at the gate of heaven (xxviii. 10-17); like Pharaoh's chief baker whose guess was plausible, but fundamentally incorrect (xl. 16-19); or, yet more hopeless, we shall be like the delighted listeners to Ezekiel (xxxiii. 30-32) who flocked after the poet and ignored the prophet; like the hearers and not doers (see St. James i. 22-24) of St. John Baptist's mission, who, whatever eye they may have possessed for beauties of nature and refinements of breeding (see St. Luke vii. 24, 25), rejected

the counsel of God against themselves, not being baptized with the baptism of repentance (St. Matt. iii. 11; St. Luke vii. 30).

Christ, our Judge and our only Saviour, keep us from being numbered amongst those who, standing on the left hand at the bar of judgment, shall make answer, "Lord, when saw we Thee?" (St. Matt. xxv. 41, 44).

THE END.

CLARENDON PRESS, OXFORD.

FOR THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

[The text on this page is extremely faint and illegible. It appears to be a list or a series of entries, possibly a table of contents or a directory, but the specific details cannot be discerned.]



PUBLICATIONS

OF THE

Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.



ANCIENT HISTORY FROM THE MONUMENTS.

This Series of Books is chiefly intended to illustrate the Sacred Scriptures by the results of recent Monumental Researches in the East.

Fcap. 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. each.

- SINAI:** from the Fourth Egyptian Dynasty to the Present Day. By the late HENRY S. PALMER, Major R.E., F.R.A.S. A new edition, revised by the Rev. Professor SAYCE. With Map.
- BABYLONIA (THE HISTORY OF).** By the late GEORGE SMITH, Esq. Edited by the Rev. A. H. SAYCE, Assistant Professor of Comparative Philology, Oxford.
- ASSYRIA:** from the Earliest Times to the Fall of Nineveh. By the late GEORGE SMITH, Esq.
- EGYPT:** from the Earliest Times to B.C. 300. By the late S. BIRCH, LL.D., &c.
- PERSIA:** from the Earliest Period to the Arab Conquest. By the late W. S. W. VAUX, M.A., F.R.S.

CONVERSION OF THE WEST.

A Series of Volumes showing how the Conversion of the Chief Races of the West was brought about, and their condition before this occurred.

Fcap. 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. each.

THE CELTS. By the Rev. G. F. MACLEAR, D.D. With Two Maps.

THE ENGLISH. By the above author. With Two Maps.

THE NORTHMEN. By the above author. With Map.

THE SLAVS. By the above author. With Map.

THE CONTINENTAL TEUTONS. By the Very Rev. CHARLES MERIVALE, D.D., D.C.L., Dean of Ely. With Map.

DIOCESAN HISTORIES.

This Series, which will embrace, when completed, every Diocese in England and Wales, will furnish, it is expected, a perfect library of English Ecclesiastical History.

Fcap. 8vo, with Map, cloth boards.

BATH AND WELLS. By the Rev. W. HUNT. 2s. 6d.

CANTERBURY. By the Rev. R. C. JENKINS. 3s. 6d.

CARLISLE. By RICHARD S. FERGUSON, Esq. 2s. 6d.

CHICHESTER. By the Rev. W. R. W. STEPHENS, M.A. 2s. 6d.

DURHAM. By the Rev. J. L. LOW. 2s. 6d.

HEREFORD. By the Rev. Canon PHILLOTT. 3s.

LICHFIELD. By the Rev. W. BERESFORD. 2s. 6d.

NORWICH. By the Rev. A. JESSOPP, D.D. 2s. 6d.

OXFORD. By the Rev. E. MARSHALL, M.A. 2s. 6d.

PETERBOROUGH. By the Rev. G. A. POOLE, M.A. 2s. 6d.

SALISBURY. By the Rev. W. H. JONES. 2s. 6d.

ST. ASAPH. By the Venerable Archdeacon THOMAS. 2s.

ST. DAVID'S. By the Rev. Canon BEVAN. 2s. 6d.

WINCHESTER. By the Rev. W. BENHAM, B.D. 3s.

WORCESTER. By the Rev. I. GREGORY SMITH, M.A., and the Rev. PHIPPS ONSLOW, M.A. 3s. 6d.

YORK. By the Rev. Canon ORNSBY, M.A. 3s. 6d.

THE HOME LIBRARY.*Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 3s. 6d. each.*

- BLACK AND WHITE.** Mission Stories. By H. A. FORDE.
- CHARLEMAGNE.** By the Rev. E. L. CUTTS, B.A. With Map.
- CONSTANTINE THE GREAT.** The Union of the Church and State. By the Rev. E. L. CUTTS, B.A.
- GREAT ENGLISH CHURCHMEN;** or, Famous Names in English Church History and Literature. By the late W. H. D. ADAMS.
- JOHN HUS.** The Commencement of Resistance to Papal Authority on the part of the Inferior Clergy. By the Rev. A. H. WRATISLAW.
- JUDEA AND HER RULERS,** from Nebuchadnezzar to Vespasian. By M. BRAMSTON. With Map.
- MAZARIN.** By the late GUSTAVE MASSON.
- MILITARY RELIGIOUS ORDERS OF THE MIDDLE AGES:** the Hospitallers, the Templars, the Teutonic Knights, and others. By the Rev. F. C. WOODHOUSE, M.A.
- MITSLAV;** or, the Conversion of Pomerania. By the late Right Rev. R. MILMAN, D.D. With Map.
- NARCISSUS:** a Tale of Early Christian Times. By the Right Rev. W. BOYD CARPENTER, Bishop of Ripon.
- RICHELIEU.** By the late GUSTAVE MASSON.
- SKETCHES OF THE WOMEN OF CHRISTENDOM.** Dedicated to the Women of India. By the Author of "The Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family."
- THE CHURCH IN ROMAN GAUL.** By the Rev. R. TRAVERS SMITH. With Map.
- THE CHURCHMAN'S LIFE OF WESLEY.** By R. DENNY URLIN, Esq., F.S.S.
- THE HOUSE OF GOD THE HOME OF MAN.** By the Rev. Canon JELF.
- THE INNER LIFE,** as Revealed in the Correspondence of Celebrated Christians. Edited by the late Rev. T. ERSKINE.
- THE LIFE OF THE SOUL IN THE WORLD:** its Nature, Needs, Dangers, Sorrows, Aids, and Joys. By the Rev. F. C. WOODHOUSE, M.A.
- THE NORTH-AFRICAN CHURCH.** By the Rev. JULIUS LLOYD, M.A. With Map.
- THOUGHTS AND CHARACTERS;** being Selections from the Writings of the Author of "The Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family."

EARLY CHRONICLERS OF EUROPE.

The object of this Series is to bring readers face to face with the sources of Early European History.

Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 4s. each.

ENGLAND. By JAMES GAIRDNER, Esq.

FRANCE. By the late GUSTAVE MASSON, B.A.

ITALY. By UGO BALZANI.

THE FATHERS FOR ENGLISH READERS.

A Series of Monographs on the Chief Fathers of the Church, the Fathers selected being centres of influence at important periods of Church History and in important spheres of action.

Fcap. 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. each.

LEO THE GREAT. By the Rev. CHARLES GORE, M.A.

GREGORY THE GREAT. By the Rev. J. BARMBY, B.D.

SAINT AMBROSE: his Life, Times, and Teaching. By the Rev. ROBINSON THORNTON, D.D.

SAINT ATHANASIUS: his Life and Times. By the Rev. R. WHEELER BUSH. (2s. 6d.)

SAINT AUGUSTINE. By the Rev. E. L. CUTTS, B.A.

SAINT BASIL THE GREAT. By the Rev. R. T. SMITH, B.D.

SAINT BERNARD, ABBOT OF CLAIRVAUX, A.D. 1091-1153.
By the Rev. S. J. EALES, M.A., D.C.L. (2s. 6d.)

SAINT JEROME. By the Rev. E. L. CUTTS, B.A.

SAINT JOHN OF DAMASCUS. By the Rev. J. H. LUPTON, M.A.

SAINT HILARY OF POITIERS AND SAINT MARTIN OF TOURS.
By the Rev. J. GIBSON CAZENOVE, D.D.

SAINT PATRICK: his Life and Teaching. By the Rev. E. J. NEWELL, M.A. (2s. 6d.)

SYNESIUS OF CYRENE, Philosopher and Bishop. By ALICE GARDNER.

THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS. By the Rev. H. S. HOLLAND.

THE DEFENDERS OF THE FAITH; or, The Christian Apologists of the Second and Third Centuries. By the Rev. F. WATSON, M.A.

THE VENERABLE BEDE. By the Rev. G. F. BROWNE.

CHIEF ANCIENT PHILOSOPHIES.

This Series of Books deals with the chief systems of Ancient Thought, not merely as dry matters of History, but as having a bearing on Modern Speculation.

Fcap. 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. each.

EPICUREANISM. By WILLIAM WALLACE, M.A.

STOICISM. By the Rev. W. W. CAPES, Fellow of Hertford College.

ARISTOTELIANISM. The Ethics of Aristotle. By the Rev. I. GREGORY SMITH, M.A., Hon. LL.D. The Logical Treatises, the Metaphysics, the Psychology, the Politics. By the Rev. W. GRUNDY, M.A.

EARLY BRITAIN.

This is a Series of Books which has for its aim the presentation of Early Britain at Great Historic Periods.

Fcap. 8vo, with Map, cloth boards.

ANGLO-SAXON BRITAIN. By GRANT ALLEN, B.A. 2s. 6d.

CELTIC BRITAIN. By Professor RHYS. 3s.

NORMAN BRITAIN. By the Rev. W. HUNT. 2s. 6d.

POST-NORMAN BRITAIN. By HENRY G. HEWLETT. 3s.

ROMAN BRITAIN. By the Rev. Prebendary SCARTH. 2s. 6d.

NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS.

These Manuals furnish in a brief and popular form an accurate account of the great Non-Christian Religious Systems of the World.

Fcap. 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. each.

BUDDHISM : being a Sketch of the Life and Teachings of Guatama, the Buddha. By T. W. RHYS DAVIDS. With Map.

BUDDHISM IN CHINA. By the Rev. S. BEAL. With Map.

CHRISTIANITY AND BUDDHISM : a Comparison and a Contrast. By the Rev. T. STERLING BERRY, D.D.

CONFUCIANISM AND TAOISM. By Professor ROBERT K. DOUGLAS, of the British Museum. With Map.

HINDUISM. By Professor MONIER WILLIAMS. With Map.

ISLAM AND ITS FOUNDER. By J. W. H. STOBART. With Map.

ISLAM AS A MISSIONARY RELIGION. By C. R. HAINES. (2s.)

THE CORÂN : its Composition and Teaching, and the Testimony it bears to the Holy Scriptures. By Sir WILLIAM MUIR, K.C.S.I.

MISCELLANEOUS PUBLICATIONS.

- AIDS TO PRAYER.** By the Rev. DANIEL MOORE. Printed in red and black. Post 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 6d.
- ALONE WITH GOD;** or, Helps to Thought and Prayer, for the use of the Sick. By the Rev. F. BOURDILLON. 12mo, cloth boards, 1s.
- BEING OF GOD, SIX ADDRESSES ON THE.** By C. J. ELLICOTT, D.D., Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol. Small post 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 6d.
- BIBLE PLACES;** or, The Topography of the Holy Land. By the Rev. Canon TRISTRAM. With Map and numerous Woodcuts. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 4s.
- CALLED TO BE SAINTS.** The Minor Festivals Devotionally Studied. By CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI, Author of "Seek and Find." Post 8vo, cloth boards, 5s.
- CHRISTIANS UNDER THE CRESCENT IN ASIA.** By the Rev. E. L. CUTTS, B.A., Author of "Turning-Points of Church History," etc. With numerous Illustrations. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 5s.
- COMMUNICANT'S DAILY HELP:** Being Thoughts for Daily Prayer and Hints for Daily Life. By the Rev. W. ABBOTT. 18mo, limp cloth, 6d.
- DAILY READINGS FOR A YEAR.** By ELIZABETH SPOONER. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 3s. 6d.
- DEVOTIONAL (A) LIFE OF OUR LORD.** By the Rev. E. L. CUTTS, B.A., author of "Pastoral Counsels," etc. Post 8vo, cloth boards, 5s.
- GOSPELS, THE FOUR.** Arranged in the Form of an English Harmony, from the Text of the Authorized Version. By the Rev. J. M. FULLER, M.A. With Analytical Table of Contents and Four Maps. Cloth boards, 1s.
- GREAT TRUTHS AND HOLY LIVES.** By Lady HAMMICK. Post 8vo, cloth boards, 2s.
- HOLY COMMUNION: PREPARATION AND COMPANION.** By Bishop W. W. HOW. 18mo. Cloth boards, red edges, 8d.; limp roan, 1s. 4d.; morocco, 2s. 4d.; limp German calf, 3s.; limp morocco, 12s.
- DITTO,** with COLLECTS, EPISTLES, and GOSPELS, in one vol. 18mo. Cloth boards, red edges, 1s.; limp roan, 1s. 8d.; morocco, 2s. 8d.; limp German calf, 3s. 6d.; limp morocco, 14s.

- HOLY COMMUNION FOR ENGLISH CHURCHMEN, A PLAIN MANUAL OF.** By the Rev. E. BURBIDGE. 18mo. Limp cloth, 6*d.* ; limp roan, 1*s.* 2*d.* ; morocco, 2*s.*
- DITTO**, with COLLECTS, EPISTLES, GOSPELS, and HYMNS, in one vol. 18mo. Cloth boards, 8*d.* ; paste grain roan, 1*s.* 6*d.* ; limp morocco, 2*s.* 6*d.*
- LAND OF ISRAEL, THE.** A Journal of Travel in Palestine, undertaken with special reference to its Physical Character. By the Rev. Canon TRISTRAM. With two Maps and numerous Illustrations. Large post 8vo, cloth boards, 10*s.* 6*d.*
- LECTURES ON THE HISTORICAL AND DOGMATICAL POSITION OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.** By the Rev. W. BAKER, D.D. Post 8vo, cloth boards, 1*s.* 6*d.*
- LESSER LIGHTS:** or, Some of the Minor Characters of Scripture traced. Series I. and II. By the Rev. F. BOURDILLON. Post 8vo, cloth boards, 2*s.* 6*d.* each.
- OUR OWN BOOK.** Very Plain Reading for People in Humble Life. By the Rev. F. BOURDILLON, M.A. Post 8vo, cloth boards, 1*s.*
- PALEY'S EVIDENCES.** A New Edition, with Notes, Appendix, and Preface. By the Rev. E. A. LITTON. Post 8vo, cloth boards, 4*s.*
- PALEY'S HORÆ PAULINÆ.** A New Edition, with Notes, Appendix, and Preface. By the Rev. J. S. HOWSON, D.D., Dean of Chester. Post 8vo, cloth boards, 3*s.*
- PARABLES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT (THE).** By the Right Rev. A. BARRY, D.D. Demy 8vo, cloth boards, 4*s.*
- PEACE WITH GOD.** A Manual for the Sick. By the Rev. E. BURBIDGE, M.A. Post 8vo, cloth boards, 1*s.* 6*d.*
- "PERFECTING HOLINESS."** By the Rev. E. L. CUTTS, B.A. Post 8vo, cloth boards, 2*s.* 6*d.*
- PLAIN WORDS FOR CHRIST.** Being a Series of Readings for Working Men. By the late Rev. R. G. DUTTON. Post 8vo, cloth boards, 1*s.*
- PRAYER OF CHRISTENDOM (THE GREAT).** By Mrs. RUNDLE CHARLES. Post 8vo, cloth boards, 1*s.* 6*d.*
- READINGS ON THE FIRST LESSONS FOR SUNDAYS AND CHIEF HOLY DAYS.** According to the New Table. By the Rev. PETER YOUNG. Crown 8vo, in two volumes, 6*s.*
- RELIGION FOR EVERY DAY.** Lectures for Men. By the Right Rev. A. BARRY, D.D. Fcap. 8vo, cloth boards, 1*s.*

- SEEK AND FIND.** A Double Series of Short Studies of the Benedicite. By CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI. Post 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6*d.*
- SERVANTS OF SCRIPTURE (THE).** By the late Rev. JOHN W. BURGON, B.D. Post 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 6*d.*
- SOME CHIEF TRUTHS OF RELIGION.** By the Rev. E. L. CUTTS, B.A., Author of "St. Cedd's Cross." Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6*d.*
- SPIRITUAL COUNSELS;** or, Helps and Hindrances to Holy Living. By the late Rev. R. G. DUTTON. Post 8vo, cloth boards, 1s.
- THOUGHTS FOR MEN AND WOMEN. THE LORD'S PRAYER.** By EMILY C. ORR. Post 8vo, limp cloth, 1s.
- THOUGHTS FOR WORKING DAYS.** Original and Selected. By EMILY C. ORR. Post 8vo, limp cloth, 1s.
- TIME FLIES: A READING DIARY.** By CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI. Post 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6*d.*
- TRUE VINE (THE).** By the Author of "The Schönberg-Cotta Family," etc. Printed in red and black. Post 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 6*d.*
- TURNING-POINTS OF ENGLISH CHURCH HISTORY.** By the Rev. E. L. CUTTS, B.A., Vicar of Holy Trinity, Haverstock Hill. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 3s. 6*d.*
- TURNING-POINTS OF GENERAL CHURCH HISTORY.** By the Rev. E. L. CUTTS, B.A., Author of "Pastoral Counsels," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 5s.
- WITHIN THE VEIL. STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.** By Mrs. RUNDLE CHARLES. Post 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 6*d.*



LONDON: NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, W.C.;

43, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, E.C.

BRIGHTON: 135, NORTH STREET.



RETURN TO the circulation desk of any
University of California Library
or to the

NORTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
Bldg. 400, Richmond Field Station
University of California
Richmond, CA 94804-4698

ALL BOOKS MAY BE RECALLED AFTER 7 DAYS

- 2-month loans may be renewed by calling (510) 642-6753
 - 1-year loans may be recharged by bringing books to NRLF
 - Renewals and recharges may be made 4 days prior to due date.
-

DUE AS STAMPED BELOW

NOV 14 2000

GENERAL LIBRARY - U.C. BERKELEY



8000791441



