

Selects.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHURCH TIMES.

SIR,—Thinking your readers would be pleased with a selection from Dr. Kuto's 'Daily Bible Illustrations,' I have copied his beautiful chapter on 'Woman,' for insertion in the *Church Times*, and will, if you approve of it, send others from time to time.

Yours, &c. MARGARET.

WOMAN.

'As if to prevent that man should take occasion, in the sad history of the fall, to hold in too light esteem the appointed companion of his life's journey, holding her to be merely a

"Fair defect of Nature,"

God has chosen to confer singular honors upon woman throughout the sacred Scriptures. They who disparage her capacities and pour contempt upon her understanding; they who condemn her faithfulness, and distrust her truth; they who make her man's household drudge, or the mere instrument of his pleasures or convenience—have none of them any warrant in Scripture for so doing. Although we may not overlook the sad part which woman took in the fall of our race—yet that terrible damage, which was not, after all, wholly her work, may be held to have been fairly and fully counterbalanced by the part she had in bringing salvation. It was not without some such significance that the illustrious "seed of the woman" who took upon him "to bruise the serpent's head," was "born of a woman," and nourished from her breast.

But let us look at the women mentioned in Scripture, and observe how few of them are undistinguished by some useful quality or holy grace. Some are seen to have been endowed before men with supernatural knowledge, being favored by the Spirit of God with the high gifts of prophecy—such were Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, and Anna. Others are noted for their sagacity and understanding—for which indeed they were proverbial—such as the woman of Tekoah, and the wise woman of Abel-Bethmaacah. Sarah lacked not strong capacities of faith, and strong was the faith of Rahab, of Sampson's mother, and of that alien woman whose faith won from Christ a blessing which then belonged to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" only. Some have shown greater courage for the Church, and manifested firmer resolution than men have done. Did not Deborah encourage Barak to the war against the innumerable hosts and iron chariots of Jabin, and adventure her presence with him to the war, when, without her, he—the selected champion—was afraid to go? And who could be more resolved to jeopardize her life for God's people than the beautiful Esther, when she uttered and acted upon the memorable words, "If I perish, I perish." Others are famous or memorable for various things. For attention to God's word—as the Virgin Mary, and as Lydia. For going far to seek knowledge—as the Queen of the South to hear the wisdom of Solomon.—For works of charity—as Dorcas. For works of pious zeal—as the women whose busy hands in spinning and needlework helped forward the labors of the tabernacle. For fervency of prayer—as Hannah. For patient waiting for God, in daily fasting and prayer—as Anna. For the cordial entertainment of God's messenger for His sake—as the Shunammite woman, as Lydia, and as one of the gospel Marys. For courtesy to a mere stranger—as Rebekah. For humility and patience—as the aged Naom; and for faithful and devoted affliction—as the beloved Ruth. In Thessalonica, not only "devout Greeks," not only humble persons, but "chief women not a few," were among the first to receive the Gospel at the preaching of Paul and Silas; and among the learned of Athens, an Areopagite cannot become a believer without a woman, Damaris, to join with him. In what have men been, in fine, renowned, wherein some women have not been remarkable? In wisdom, in faith, in charity, in love to the world, in regard for His servants, in fervent affection, and in the desire of heavenly things.—If men have suffered imprisonments, cruel persecutions, and bonds for Christ—women have done no less. When persecuting Saul made havock of the Church, not only men but women were torn from their homes and committed to prison; and his commission had equally injurious respect to the believers, "whether they were men or women." And, although we confine our illustrations chiefly to the Scripture itself, it were impossible in mentioning these, not to call to mind the numerous illustrious women who, in a later age, were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection, and who might say with Anne Askew in the prison-house:—

"I am not she that lyst,
Me an' ee to let fall,
For every dry'd ynge myst;
My shippe's substancyall."

Nay, more than this, have not the female worthies of the Scripture often, in many respects, surpassed the men of their day and generation? Who entertained Christ so much, so devoutly, and so often as Martha and Mary? Who are in many texts noted to have contributed to our Lord's necessities, but women? Who, of all the ordinary followers of Christ, took note of the place where he was buried, but women? Who first went to the sepulchre to anoint his body with sweet spices, but women? In Acts 16, 13, we may read of a congregation of women to whom Paul preached, being gathered together at the accustomed place of prayer, as being more forward in their faith, it would seem, at that time, than the men.

Some might count it tedious, were we to mention all the notable things reported concerning women in the holy Scriptures, and the excellent graces that were bestowed upon them. Yet may we not pass without a thought, the knowledge which Priscilla shared with her husband, in the ministry of the Gospel, which qualified her no less than him, to instruct even the eloquent Apollos; nor Lois and Eunice, by whom the well-beloved Timothy was trained up in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures; nor Persis, "who labored much in the Lord"—as many other women did. But not to dwell further on particular instances, it may be well worth our while to note one great matter that deserves to be mentioned to their praise, and to be held in everlasting remembrance. We have read of men once held in high esteem who became apostates—Demas, Alexander, Philetus and others; but never, by name, in all the New Testament, of a woman who had once been reckoned among the saints. This is great honor. But not only have women been thus honored with extraordinary gifts; they have been otherwise favored with special marks of attention from the Lord. To whom but unto women did Christ appear after his resurrection? Of what act did He ever so speak as to render it overlastingly memorable, but of that woman's who poured upon his feet her alabaster box of precious ointment; and to whom he promised that, whenever in the whole world his Gospel should be preached, there should her work of faith be held in remembrance!

A TEST OF CHRISTIANITY.—The heart is often more reliable than the head in the judgment it forms of Christian truth and character. Many professed skeptics are instinctive believers, and their faith sometimes shows itself unconsciously in works, as the following incident witnesses:—

A Christian gentleman had occasion to travel through a thinly and newly-settled part of the Western country; his companion was a man of intelligence, but of infidel opinions, who was fond of discussion, and tried to beguile the way by urging arguments against the truth of the Christian religion. The thinly settled section of the country through which they were passing was inhabited by a people of bad reputation, and it had been rumored that travellers had suffered fatal violence from them when they were within their power.

As taverns were unknown, our travellers were compelled to trust to the hospitality of those of whom they could not but entertain secret fear. On one occasion, as the evening closed in, they sought a lodging-place in a log cabin, far remote from other habitations. They anticipated but little comfort and were induced to believe that it would be a measure of safety to watch alternately during the night.

As they were about to retire to their rude beds, their host, whose exterior had excited their distrust, proceeded to a shelf, took down an old and much worn Bible, and informing his visitors that it was his custom to worship God in his family, he read and prayed in so simple a manner as to secure the esteem of the travellers. They retired to rest, slept soundly, and thought no more of alternate watching.

In the morning, the Christian requested his infidel companion to say whether the religious exercises of the preceding day had not dispelled every particle of distrust in their host's character, and had not enabled him to close his eyes in the most confident security.

He was evidently embarrassed by the question; but at last he admitted that the sight of the Bible had seemed a sound night's rest.

Here was a testimony extorted from an infidel in favor of the influence of a religion which he skeptically assailed. He could not harbor a fear of violence from one who was in the daily habit of bending his knee before God. The very erection of the family altar rendered the house a secure asylum. Who would not be a Christian? Who would be an infidel?

HERAT—WHAT AND WHERE IS IT?

Herat was formerly the capital of Khorassan. It is a city of no great architectural pretensions, whatever may be its importance of situation. Placed upon a spacious and highly cultivated plain, it covers an area of four square miles, and is surrounded by a lofty wall and ditch. On the western face of the wall there stands upon a mound a square castle, flanked with towers at the angles. Nature has raised a wall of mountains, which encircle the plain; the river Heratod flowing across the latter, and emptying itself into the Caspian, near Zaveb. The plan of the town is as follows:—On each side of the wall is a gate—two on the northern—and from each gate there runs to the centre of the city a spacious and well-suppliedazaar. On each side of the bazaars are public "stains, in addition to those enjoyed by almost every separate house, and the street leading from the southern gate to the cattle market is covered with a vaulted roof. Herat is not remarkable for its public buildings. The principal are the residence of the Prince and the chief mosque; the former, a mean building, with an open square in front, and a gallows in the centre of the square,—the latter, once a magnificent building covering a space of eight hundred square yards, has for some time been falling into decay. The site of this city is important, and as it is theemporium of the commerce carried on between Cabul, Cashmere, Bekhara, Hindostan, and Persia, it enjoys a very extensive trade. The articles of commerce which come to it are shawls, raw sugar, ebony, muslin, leather, and Tartary skins, which the inhabitants export to Meshed, Yezd, Kerman, Isfahan, and Teheran, receiving in return dollars, tea, chinaware, broad cloth, copper, pepper, and sugar-candy. Its staple commodities are silks, saffron, and arsenic, which are exported to Hindostan. Its gardens abound in mulberry trees for the use of the silk-worm, and the plains and hills near the city grow the assaetida.—The fertility of the soil is great, and yields abundant crops of wheat, barley, and every kind of fruit known in Persia. The abundance of roses which grow in the vicinity of the city has procured for it the name of Saqultzar, or City of the Rose. The population does not exceed 100,000, 10,000 of whom are foreigners, Patans, Hindoos; the remainder being Afghans. The cattle are small and few in number; the broad tailed sheep abundant. Thus the possession of Herat is a matter of great moment to Persia.—*Morning Advertiser Correspondent.*

THE NEW METAL ALUMINIUM.—Aluminum is contained in clay in the proportion of from 20 to 25 per cent. (Greenland cryolite consists of aluminum 13 per cent., sodium nearly 33 per cent., and fluorine 54 per cent.) It is of a bright and shining white, intermediate between the color of silver and that of platinum. It is lighter than glass; its tenacity is considerable; it is worked by the hammer with the greatest facility, and it may be drawn into wire of extreme fineness; it melts at a temperature lower than the point of fusion of silver. Here is a list of characteristics sufficient to entitle this simple body to take rank with the metals of daily use in the arts; but its chemical properties render it still more valuable. Aluminum is a metal completely unalterable by the atmosphere; it may be exposed without tarnishing, both to dry air and to moist air. Whilst our usual metals—such as tin, lead, and zinc—when recently cut, lose their brightness when exposed to damp air—aluminum, under the same circumstances, remains as brilliant as gold, platinum, or silver; it is even superior to the last of these metals as to resistance to the action of the atmosphere. In fact silver, when exposed to sulphurated hydrogen gas, is attacked by it, and turns speedily black; and consequently, silver articles, after a long exposure to atmospheric air, are dulled at last by small quantities of sulphurated hydrogen gas, which are accidentally combined with the air. Aluminum, on the contrary, offers a perfect resistance to the action of sulphurated hydrogen, and in this respect claims a notable superiority over silver. Again, aluminum decidedly resists the action of acids; azotic or sulphuric acids, applied cold, produce no effect whatever. Thin plates of aluminum may be kept immersed in azotic or sulphuric acid without suffering dissolution or even injury.—Chlorydric acid alone attacks and dissolves it. The advantages to be derived from a metal endowed with such qualities are easy to be understood. Its future place as a raw material in all sorts of industrial application is undoubted, and we may expect soon to see it in some shape or other in the hands of the civilized world at large.—*Household Words.*