

## PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

## THE WAY OUT OF EGYPT.

The man whom God now chooses is Moses, one of the grandest men, as all acknowledge, that ever walked upon this earth.

In the story of his infancy, how simple, how natural, how life-like, how manifestly transparent and truthful, with a striking absence of all those miraculous accompaniments with which fable is wont to encircle the infancy of its heroes—in that story we have a striking illustration of how God "makes the wrath of man to praise Him." He uses Pharaoh's edict of extermination against the Hebrew children as his letter of introduction to the court of Pharaoh and the universities of Egypt for that Hebrew child who is to be Israel's champion, who shall open for his people a way out of their galling bondage. It reminds us of that cruel cross, which represented the wrath of men who with wicked hands attempted to destroy the Saviour of the world, but which ever since has been "the power of God and the wisdom of God" unto salvation.

The education of Moses covers eighty years—forty in Egypt, forty in the land of Midian. From this it follows that his birth must have taken place about the beginning of the reign of Rameses the Great; and it becomes exceedingly interesting to contrast the magnificent career of the world's hero with the quiet preparation of God's hero, and reflect how God makes use of "the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty." The great Egyptian monarch is now nothing more than "the shadow of a mighty name;" the poor Hebrew child has a mightier influence in the great world of this nineteenth century than he had even on that awful night when he wrested from the relaxing grasp of Rameses' son the victims of his father's tyranny.

It is most worthy of notice that there is not a hint of faith or of heroism in the narrative before us. We are told, indeed, that he did identify himself with the oppressed people; but it is told in such a way as to bring out the weakness of Moses rather than his strength. What does this mean? It means most undoubtedly that Moses himself is the author of the story as we have it in Exodus. If it had been written by another hand, and in a later age, as many now-a-days are trying to make out, it would have been at least appreciative and almost certainly highly laudatory, as in the pages of Josephus, for example; whereas, in the plain unvarnished narrative before us, there is a conspicuous absence of everything of the kind, while every weakness is honestly, faithfully recorded. Evidently Moses was a most modest man, as all truly great men are. And herein, no doubt, is found the solution of those difficulties which some discover in comparing the accounts in Exodus with certain references in the New Testament, which they are pleased to call contradictions, whereas they are only those variations which we always expect to find between what a great man, with modesty proportioned to his greatness, will say of himself, and what another will say of him. Take even that which seems most serious of all, where in Exodus we are told he "feared," and in Hebrews he is spoken of as, "not fearing the wrath of the king." Can you doubt that, in the former case, Moses is speaking of a moment of weakness when his heart did fail him, whereas in Hebrews, it is the general character of the man, in which undaunted courage was a large and almost constant element, which is referred to? The grandeur of the sacrifice which Moses made appears all the greater that he himself says nothing about it. Many a small man has never done talking about the small sacrifices he makes; but he is a great man indeed, who can sacrifice everything and say nothing.—*Dr. Gibson.*

## THE IDEAL SABBATH.

The ideal Sabbath is the Sabbath at home, when the head of the household—farmer or mechanic, merchant or lawyer, capitalist or operative—enjoys the weekly rest among those for whom the six days of labour have been spent. Whether the Sabbatic institution was or was not created by the Fourth Commandment, there seems to be in those words, "Thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid servant," a glimpse of the restful enjoyment which the day of rest, in the primitive conception of it, would bring to the families that keep it. The day

of rest, being rest, and not revelry or dissipation, and being therefore a day of home enjoyment, brings with it opportunity for sober thoughts and conference. A Sabbath-keeping people will become a thoughtful people, and such thoughtfulness is manliness. All men, and especially the busy millions in an advanced civilization like our own, need for the mind's sake, not less for the sake of wearied nerves and muscles, the seventh day intermission of their ordinary work. A true Sabbath is something far more restful than a day of noisy jollity. In its calm air the mind rests by thought, not thoughtlessness; by quiet musing, by conscious or unconscious retrospection; perhaps by consideration of what might have been, perhaps by thinking what may yet be, perhaps by aspiration and resolve toward something in the future, that shall be better than what has been in the past. The home in which the Sabbath is a day of rest and home enjoyment is hallowed by the Sabbaths which it hallows. In the Sabbath-keeping village, life is less frivolous, and at the same time industry is more productive, for the weekly rest. A Sabbath-keeping nation is greater in peace and in war for the character which its tranquil and thoughtful Sabbaths have impressed upon it.—*Rev. Dr. Bacon.*

## PEACE.

Is this the peace of God, this strange, sweet calm?  
The weary day is at its zenith still;  
Yet 'tis as if, beside some cool, clear rill,  
Through shadowy stillness rose an evening psalm,  
And all the noise of life were hushed away,  
And tranquil gladness reigned with gentle, soothing sway.

It was not so just now. I turned aside  
With aching head, and heart most sorely bowed;  
Around me cares and griefs in crushing crowd;  
While only rose the sense, in swelling tide,  
Of weakness, insufficiency, and sin,  
And fear, and gloom, and doubt in mighty flood rolled in.

That rushing flood I had no strength to meet,  
Nor power to flee; my present, future, past,  
Myself, my sorrow, and my sin I cast,  
In utter helplessness at Jesus' feet;  
Then bent me to the storm, if such His will,  
He saw the winds and waves, and whispered, "Peace,  
be still."

And there was calm. Oh, Saviour, I have proved  
That Thou to help and save art really near;  
How else this quiet rest from grief and fear,  
And all distress? The cross is not removed,  
I must go forth to bear it as before;  
But, leaning on Thine arm, I dread its weight no more.

Is it, indeed, Thy peace? I have not tried  
To analyze my faith, dissect my trust,  
Or measure if belief be full and just;  
And therefore claim Thy peace. But Thou hast died,  
I know that this is true, and true for me,  
And knowing it, I come, and cast my all on Thee.

It is not that I feel less weak, but Thou  
Wilt be my strength; it is not that I see  
Less sin, but there is pardoning love with Thee,  
And all-sufficient grace: Enough! And now  
I do not think or pray, I only rest,  
And feel that Thou art near, and know that I am blest.  
—*Francis Ridley Havergal.*

## THE NEW COMMANDMENT.

In the seventeenth century the minister of a retired parish in the Vale of Anworth, on the shores of Galloway, Scotland, was the celebrated Samuel Rutherford—the great religious oracle of the Covenanters and their adherents. It was, as all readers of his letters will remember, the spot which he most loved on earth—the very swallows and sparrows which found their nest in the church of Anworth were, when far away, the objects of his affectionate envy. Its hills and valleys were witnesses of his ardent devotion when living—they still retain his memory with unshaken fidelity. It is one of the traditions cherished on the spot that on a certain Saturday evening, at one of these family gatherings, whence, in the language of the great Scottish poet, "Old Scotia's glory springs," when Rutherford was catechising his children and servants, a stranger knocked at the door of the manse, like the young English traveller in the romance which has given fresh life to those hills in our own day, and begged shelter for the night. The minister kindly received him, but asked him to take his place among the family and assist at their religious exercises. It so chanced that the question in the Catechism which came to the stranger's turn was that which asks how many commandments are there, and he answered eleven. "Eleven!" exclaimed Rutherford; "I am surprised that a person of your age and

appearance should not know better. What can you mean?" The stranger answered: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you; that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye love one another." Rutherford was much impressed by the answer, and retired to rest.

The next morning he rose, according to his wont, to meditate upon the services of the day. The old manse at Anworth stood—its place is still pointed out in the corner of a green field—under the hillside, and thence a long, winding, wooded walk, still called Rutherford's Walk, leads to the parish church. Through this glen he was passing, and as he threaded his way through the thicket he heard among the trees the voice of the stranger at his morning devotions. The elevation of the sentiments, and of the expressions of the stranger's prayer, convinced Rutherford that he would be no common man. He accosted him, and then the traveller confessed to him that he was no other than the great divine and scholar, Archbishop Usher, the Primate of the Church of Ireland, one of the best and most learned men of his age, who well fulfilled the new commandment to the love which he bore to others—one of the few links of Christian charity between the fierce contending parties of that age; devoted to King Charles I. in his lifetime, and honoured in his grave by the Protector Cromwell. He it was who, attracted by Rutherford's fame, had thus come in disguise to see him in the privacy of his own home. The stern Covenanter gave welcome to the stranger Prelate; side by side they pursued their way along Rutherford's Walk to the little church of which the ruins still remain; and in that small Presbyterian sanctuary, from Rutherford's rustic pulpit, the Archbishop preached to the people of Anworth from the words which startled his host the evening before: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you; that ye also love one another."—*Dean Stanley.*

## THE BLUES.

When people are sick in body they usually want to do something for the disease. They ought to be as wise when mentally sick with that unnerving malady, the blues, and do something, with an active emphasis on the *do*. Too many, I fear, when in low spirits, are tempted to "take something." A dose of morphine, a glass of wine, a good cigar, an exciting novel, or an aimless holiday, seems so pleasant to take. But they do not cure, they only aggravate the ailment. The harmonious and simultaneous employment of head, hands and heart, is the availing remedy. Plan some sensible work and execute it. Take hold of plough or hoe, saw or hammer, pen or yardstick, needle or broom, and stir your blood by stirring something to some purpose. Where there is no possible bodily disease, one can do much toward dispelling one's dismal blues of murky misery, by helping to put a bit of the clear blue sky of happiness over somebody's head.

If you are sick, do not whine nor sigh nor drizzle a "continual dropping" of complaints. Gird yourself with the spirit of a man and bear your infirmity. Bring your wandering gloomy gaze within the compass of to-day. Christ has commanded: "Take no thought for to-morrow." But do, do take thought for to-day. Trust God to-day.

It is wrong to give away to the blues. If they rise from bodily indisposition, then fast a little if need be, exercise wisely, and quit your misguided habits. Live according to God's laws in all things.

If your spirit is wounded with some deep sorrow, do not repine. Go to the loving Christ who was a "man of sorrows," and who can enter into all our sore afflictions. Trust, love, obey. Find something for hand and heart to do. Never despair. Christ reigns, and His hand that "in faithfulness" has sorely chastened, can richly comfort, in due time.

DR. FRASER, Bishop of Manchester, in a recent discourse, spoke as follows of the ritualistic controversy now so rife in the Church of England: "It engendered strife and bitterness, and wasted energies which might be far better employed in downright and earnest preaching and teaching about righteousness. While they were fighting and disputing about vestments, and ornaments, and chalices, and incense, the infidels and atheists at their doors were trying to destroy their people's faith in everything that spoke of God, of judgment, and the life beyond the grave."