

IS THE WHOLE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TO BE MET WITH IN THE WRITINGS OF THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES?

I was dining some time ago, said the late Rev. Dr. Buchanan, of Edinburgh, at old Mr. Abereromby's (father of General Abereromby who was slain in Egypt, at the head of the British army), and we were spending the evening together. A gentleman present put a question which puzzled the whole company. It was this. Supposing all the New Testaments in the world had been destroyed at the end of the third century, could their contents have been recovered from the writings of the three first centuries? The question was novel to all, and no one even hazarded a guess in answer to the inquiry.

About two months after this meeting, I received a note from Lord Hailes, inviting me to breakfast with him next morning. He had been of the party. During breakfast he asked me if I recollected the curious question about recovering the contents of the New Testament from the writings of the three first centuries. I remember it well, said I, and have thought of it often without being able to form any opinion or conjecture on the subject.

"Well," said Lord Hailes, "that question quite accorded with my antiquarian turn of mind. On returning home, as I knew I had all the writers of these centuries, I began immediately to collect them, that I might set to work on the arduous task as soon as possible." Pointing to a table covered with paper, he said, "There have I been busy for these two months, searching for chapters, half chapters, and sentences of the New Testament, and have marked down what I have found, and where I have found it; so that any person may examine and see for themselves. I have actually discovered the whole New Testament from those writings, except ten or eleven verses, which satisfies me that I could discover them also. "Now," said he "here was a way in which God concealed or hid the treasure of his word, that Julian, the apostate Emperor, and other enemies of Christ, who wished to extirpate the Gospel from the world, never would have thought of; and, if they had, they never could have effected its destruction."

THE SPRING.

*From a Discourse on Easter Sunday, April 16, A. D. 383.*

All nature now moves on in unison with our festivity, and rejoices in common with our joy. Behold the face of things. The *queen of the seasons* unfolds her pageantry to the *queen of days*, presenting from her native shore whatever is most beautiful, whatever is most delightful. Now is the canopy of heaven cloudless; the sun rides higher in his course, raying out a more golden lustre; brighter is the circle of the moon, and purer the chorus of the stars; more pacific now, the waves murmur on the shore; the

tempest is allayed; soft are the whispers of the breeze; genial is the earth to the opening flowrets, and grateful the flowrets to our eyes. Released from winter's tyranny, more limpid flow the fountains, in streams more copious the rivers; gay is the blossom on the plant, and sweet the fragrances of the meadow; the herbage is cropped by the cattle, and lambs disport on the blooming plains.

The vessel now rides forth majestic from the harbour, accompanied with shouts, for the most part shouts of gratitude; and is winged with its sails. The dolphin glides on the bosom of the waters, dashing the silvery foam around, and following, with alacrity, the mariner.

Now doth the husbandman prepare his implements of tillage, raising his eye to heaven, and invoking Him who makes the fruitage flourish. How jocund he leads his oxen to the yoke! How patiently he cuts the prolific furrow, while hope sits smiling on his countenance?

The shepherd and the herdsmen attune their reeds, meditating the rural strain, and revel with the Spring, in the grove or the grove. The gardener now more anxiously tends his plants; the fowler renews his snare; inspects the branches, and curiously explores the flying of the bird. The fisherman sits on the summit of the rock, surveys the deep, and repairs his net.

Again the assiduous bee, spreading wide her wings, and ascending from the pine, demonstrates her native skill, skims o'er the meads, and riles the flowers of their sweet. One labours at the honey-comb, constructing the cells, hexagonal and mutually opposed; while another lays up the delicious store, providing for him who builds her habitation, retention sweet, and sustenance untold for. Oh! that we could resemble them; we, who have received so wondrous an example of industry and of wisdom! Again the bird fabricates his nest; and one returns, and another enters the new-formed mansion, while a third traverses the air, and bids the forest re-echo to his harmonies, and greets the passenger with a song.

Even the inanimate part of the creation hymns and glorifies its Maker with a silent homage. For every thing which I behold, I magnify my God; and thus their hymn, from whom I have derived my melody, becomes my own.—*From the writings of St. Gregory Nazianzen, Archbishop of Constantinople, who was born 328 after Christ, and died 390. The Book of the Fathers, p. 108.*

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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Printed and Published monthly, by A. F. PLEES, at the Office of *The Church paper*, No. 7, King Street West. Price, 2s. 6d. per annum. No orders filled unless accompanied with remittance.