

The BEREAN.

THEY RECEIVED THE WORD WITH ALL READINESS OF MIND, AND SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, WHETHER THOSE THINGS WERE SO.—ACTS xvii. 11.

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THE ORDINATION.

Ezekiel iii. 17, &c., xxxiii. 7, &c.

Up to thy Master's work! for thou art sworn
To do his bidding, till the hand of death
Strike off thine armour. Thy deep vow denies
To hoard earth's gold, or truckle for its smile,
Or bind its blood-stained laurel on thy brow.
—A noble field is thine.—The soul! the soul!
That is thy province,—that mysterious thing,
Which hath no limit from the walls of sense,—
No chill from hoary time,—with pale decay
No fellowship,—but shall stand forth unchanged,
Unscathed amid the resurrection fires,
To bear its boundless lot of good or ill.

Up, blow thy trumpet, sound thy loud alarm
To those who sleep in Zion. Boldly warn
To scapo their condemnation, o'er whose head
Age after age of misery hath roll'd,—
Who from thine prison-house look up and see
Heaven's golden gate,—and to its watchmen cry,
“What of the night? while the dread answer falls
With fearful echo down the unfathom'd depths:
“Eternity!”

Should one of those lost souls
Amid its tossings utter forth thy name,
As one who might have pluck'd it from the pit,
Thou man of God! would there not be a burst
Of tears in heaven?

O, live the life of prayer,
The life of tireless labour for His sake:
So may the Angel of the Covenant bring
Thee to thy home in bliss, with many a gem
To glow for ever in thy Master's crown!

Mrs. SIGOURNEY.

THE CONVERSION OF THE JEWS.

It has been too customary with Christians to look upon the Jews as a people, who having performed the part allotted to them in God's moral government of the world, have been laid aside, as an instrument which has done its work, and will be no more required by the artificer. The story of their fortunes has been regarded as belonging altogether to the annals of the past. Their continued existence, indeed, has been pointed out, as a verification of the Word of God: but their future bearing upon the Church of Christ, and upon the spiritual state of mankind, was too long overlooked. Of later years it has been more clearly seen, that the thread of their destiny is interwoven with the history of the world, from the moment when it first fell under captivity to sin, to the time when it shall be finally delivered from its thralldom; that there are prophecies still unfulfilled, the accomplishment of which is certain, foreshowing that the Jews have still an important part to act in the development of the Christian dispensation; and that they are to be principal agents in its closing, as they were in its opening scenes. Bear this in mind, and with what interest will that ancient and long-despised people be regarded. How little shall we be inclined to boast ourselves against the branches, which were once broken off that we might be grafted in; but which in their appointed time, shall be grafted in again, and perhaps be more lovely and more fruitful branches than those which St. Paul describes as having been grafted, contrary to nature, into the good olive tree, not their own.

Looking to the memorable enumeration of blessings upon the children of Israel, while obedient, and of curses upon their disobedience, contained in the 28th and two following chapters of the Book of Deuteronomy, it is obvious, that while the curses have been fulfilled to the very letter, in the fortunes of that wonderful people, the blessings can hardly be said to have received their full accomplishment. At no time, after their captivity in Babylon, did the state of the Jews altogether correspond to that which had been promised to them, as the result of their calling to mind the blessing and the curse, among the nations whither the Lord their God had driven them, and returning unto Him, and obeying his voice; Then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return, and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the utmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee; and the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. And the Lord thy God will make thee plentiful in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers.

As there is here no limitation of a certain time, after which repentance and turning to God would be of no avail, we might conclude, that it is still open to the Jews, as a nation, to look for the fulfilment of these promises upon the conditions prescribed, and to re-enter, penitent and obedient, into possession of the land of their forefathers. And that, which is here spoken of as a possible contingency, is distinctly foretold by later prophets, as an event which will assuredly come to pass. The eighth and the three last chapters of Zechariah cannot, we think, without doing violence to all the laws of interpretation, be so explained, as not to imply a future restoration of the Jews to their ancient and covenantal inheritance, and the re-establishment of their national polity. This is, of necessity, connected with a reinstatement of the holy city of Jerusalem in splendour and

strength. Jerusalem, says the prophet, shall be safely inhabited. It shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place; and men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction.

It is scarcely possible to understand these words in a purely spiritual sense, of the heavenly Jerusalem; and if there were no other ground of objection to such an interpretation, it would be precluded by the prophetic declaration of our blessed Lord, They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled; from which words it is a necessary inference, that when the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled, Jerusalem shall cease to be trodden down, and shall be restored to her ancient state. As the city of Jerusalem was trodden down, so the city of Jerusalem shall be built up.

But the restoration of Jerusalem to its imperial state implies that of the people of Israel to their covenantal possession of the land of Canaan; and this, by the concurrent testimony of prophet and apostle, is connected with their acknowledgment, as a nation, of Jesus Christ, as their promised Messiah, and with their acceptance of the free grace of God in the Gospel. I will pour out, saith the Lord, upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. Such are the words of ancient prophecy; and what says the Christian apostle? Blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved.

Whether the conversion of the great body of the Jewish people to Christianity shall precede, or follow their restoration to the inheritance of Abraham and his seed, is not, I think, distinctly foretold in holy Scripture. Something may be said for either supposition. Nor is it by any means clear, whether our Saviour's words, until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled, are equivalent to St. Paul's expression, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and are to be understood of the period, at which the times of the four great kingdoms of the Gentiles, according to the prophet Daniel, shall have expired, and a fifth kingdom shall be set up in their place; or whether, as I am inclined to believe, they mean simply the period of time, during which the Gentiles shall be permitted by the providence of God to have dominion over his ancient people, and to hold Jerusalem in bondage.

Two things appear to be plainly revealed in Scripture; that the Jews towards the close of the Christian dispensation, are to be brought as a people, into the Church of Christ; and that they are to be re-instated in the possession of their ancient patrimony. It will then appear to men and angels, that God's covenant with Abraham and his seed was an everlasting covenant, fulfilled to the letter; and that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. These two points, we repeat, are plainly made known to us by the Holy Spirit. As for the rest, the circumstantial details of those great events are left in that partial obscurity and indistinctness which shrouds from our view the particular features of many solemn scenes in the future history of God's Church, while their great outlines stand clearly out in the light of prophecy. Enough is revealed to keep alive our watchfulness, but not enough to gratify our curiosity. Almighty God condescends to work by human agency in the fulfilment of his great purposes of mercy to mankind; and we know not in what degree their final consummation may be hastened by our zeal and diligence, or retarded by our coldness and neglect. As we are bound to labour continually for the advancement of his glory, in the accomplishment of his known designs, the precise mode, in which they are to be finally completed, is perhaps left in obscurity and doubt, in order that we may not be tempted to relax in our efforts to promote it.

It may be, that a general conversion of the Jewish nation will be suddenly effected by some miraculous display of divine power; but we cannot tell what preliminary steps may be required, on the part of Christ's servants, nor in what degree their charitable effort may prepare these their elder brethren for a return into the bosom of their common Father. We know, in general, that the duty of converting unbelievers is a sacred duty of charity; we know that many Israelites have been converted by the labours of Christian teachers, without any exertion of supernatural power, save those secret influences of the Holy Spirit, which co-operate with all who are engaged in the faithful performance of his own work; and even if all Israel may not hope to obtain that, which as yet the election only hath obtained, without the intervention of some mighty deliverer, who shall come out of Zion, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob, it may well be supposed, that God will require, at the hand of those who have obtained mercy through their unbelief, that they manifest their sense of that mercy by a compassionate regard for those, who were partly its heralds to the Gentiles, and partly the causes of their early reception into the covenant of grace; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. If, although we may perhaps be warranted in expecting that a very general, if not universal, conversion of the

* Zech. xiv. 11, 10. † Luke. xxi. 24.
* Zech. xiii. 10. † Rom. xi. 25.
* Romans xi. 29. † Rom. xi. 26.
* Rom. xi. 30. † Rom. xi. 31.

Jewish people will finally be effected by a miraculous display of the Saviour's power, I do not understand why we should despair of succeeding in that work of love to a considerable extent, if we attempt it by the right methods, and with faith in the promises of God.

There is nothing in the religion of the Jews, or at least in that which they profess, to disqualify them altogether for embracing the Gospel, difficult as it may be for them to see the truth, through that barrier of false opinion and unkindly feeling, which has grown up around them during the lapse of ages, partly by reason of their own isolation from the great family of mankind, partly through the intolerance and persecuting spirit of erring Christians, which for so long a period sought rather to convict them as malefactors, than to reclaim them as lost sheep, strayed from the fold of God. A great proportion of the early converts to Christianity were Jews; and although their conversion took place in an age, when miracles still attested the authority of those who preached the new religion, all of them were not eye-witnesses of those miracles: some surely believed the report of others, or were convinced, by those who reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, and proved that Jesus was the Christ. Such appears to have been the case with Apollon, and with the Jews in Achaia, whom he brought to an acknowledgment of the truth in Jesus. Their case is parallel with that of the Jews of our own days, but the difficulty of removing the blindness from their eyes, and the veil from their hearts, is increased by the long continuance of their nation in unbelief, and by the deteriorated and divided condition of the Christian Church, one of the most obvious and plausible grounds of objection to the divine authority of its Founder. But it cannot be maintained that this blindness is universally judicial and incurable. One single instance of undoubted conversion to the truth as it is in Jesus is sufficient to disprove such an assumption. And, therefore, the undertaking of that work upon a larger scale, difficult though it may be, is clearly not hopeless. It is at least within the verge of possibility that it should succeed; and therefore it ought to be attempted.—Sermon before the Society for the Conversion of the Jews, by the Lord Bishop of London, May 4, 1843.

THE OUT-POURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Two essential elements are combined in the revealed plan of Divine Mercy for the spiritual renovation of the world—the Word of God, as the adapted instrument by which men are saved; and the Holy Ghost, as the efficient agent. Both are so indispensable, that no real progress is made in the work if either be absent.

In like manner, the Divine Plan embraces, as the means of its execution, a twofold agency of the people of God. They are His witnesses, to testify to the world the truth of His Word; and they are intercessors for their fellow-men, to plead with Him for the gift of His Spirit.

To them, Jesus Christ has entrusted his Gospel to be published by them to every creature; and to them he has given the promise of the Spirit to be poured out unto all flesh, in answer to their prayers. Each part of this twofold agency of the Church has its appropriate place in the revealed purpose of Divine Wisdom and Love, and its appropriate relations to the great result which that purpose makes sure. Each is connected with its proper object, as means with the end, as a cause with its effect. As God has suspended the publication of His Gospel for the salvation of the world on the fidelity and obedience of His people, so has He suspended the mission of the Spirit, by which that Gospel is made effectual, on their believing intercessions. As a privilege and a duty, the obligation and blessedness of both are equal.

Prayer for the Spirit is as much a part of Missionary Work as effort to publish the Gospel. It is as characteristic of the true Missionary Spirit. It is as much the object for which Missionary Societies exist. It claims equal attention, in reviewing their progress—in ascertaining their position—in forming their plans. Neglect or failure in this part of their work will be fatal to their hopes. In vain may their treasures be replenished, and able and faithful Missionaries sent forth, and schools, and presses, and all the means of instruction and impression multiplied: the reign of error and death over Heathen Minds will never be broken, until the Spirit be poured upon them from on high. For this, God will be inquired of by His people to do it for them. The Holy Ghost must be magnified in His work. The Redeemer must be honoured in His ascension gift. The Eternal Father must be glorified in the great promise of the New Covenant.

There are considerations peculiar to this part of the agency of the Church. The influences of the Spirit, and of course the prayer for them by which they are obtained, are necessary, not only to the success of efforts to spread the Gospel, but they are also necessary to prompt and guide and sustain those very efforts. Zeal for God's honour, love to Christ, compassion for perishing men, faith in the promises—all the elements of Missionary Character are the fruits of the Spirit. The Missionary Enterprise will languish and die in its very birth, if it does not animate and sustain it. He must raise up and qualify the Missionaries: He must open to them a door of entrance and utterance in the Heathen World: He must incline the hearts of the people of God to furnish liberally the means for their support and usefulness. In every part of the Missionary Work our dependence on the pro-

Acts xvii. 2.

vided aid of the Holy Spirit is entire and absolute.

It is the pleasure of this Divine Agent to put honour on the Divine Word, by using it in the work of spiritual renovation. But He is not limited as to the amount of truth which He employs, or to the proportion which it bears to the effects produced. His efficiency is so sovereign and infinite. He can multiply as He pleases the means for the diffusion of the Gospel; and, by feeble and apparently inadequate means, He can produce effects a thousand-fold greater and more glorious than have been witnessed in past ages. These are the very results which the Scriptures indicate as characteristic of those copious effusions of the Spirit, which shall come down on the Church and the World in the latter-day—a vast increase in the means of mercy; an unwonted power imparted to those means; and an unparalleled success following them. A little one shall become a thousand: the fruit of a handful of corn on the tops of the mountains shall wave like Lebanon: the reaper of the spiritual harvest shall overtake the sower: a nation shall be born at once. The outpouring of the Spirit is the blessing to be desired and sought above all others, for the Churches, for the Missions, for a World perishing in sin.

Let Christians be baptized with the Holy Ghost, as on the Day of Pentecost, and what stores of wealth would be joyfully devoted to the service of Christ for the salvation of men! What treasures of talent and learning and holy emotion would be laid on His altar! How many ingenious youth would burn with holy zeal to bear His image of mercy to distant lands; while parents and friends, glad to be honoured even in making sacrifices for such a work, would dismiss them with their blessing, and follow them with their prayers!

Let the presence of the Spirit be experienced at every Mission Station, and all the Missionaries receive an abiding unction from the Holy One, and with what power would they bear Testimony to the Resurrection of Jesus, and what new life and energy would be at once imparted to all their operations!

And in the countries where Missionaries are now publishing the glad tidings of salvation by Christ, how many millions have already so heard the joyful sound, that the quickening breath of the Divine Spirit is all that is wanting to wake them to life and joy!

God has promised to give His Holy Spirit, when His people ask. Believing, importunate prayer is the appointed means by which this blessing is obtained—the electric chain, along which the life-giving influence descends from heaven on a world dead in trespasses and sins. This is needed for the prosperity of the Missionary Enterprise at this hour, more than any or than all things else. This necessity surpasses every other necessity: it includes and comprehends all others in itself.

Much as we come short of our duty to the Cause of Missions in other particulars, is not here our grand failure? Where are the Members of our Churches, and where are the Ministers, who cherish a deep, abiding, heartfelt impression of the necessity of prayer for the effusion of the Holy Spirit? Do not the evidences of our want of faithfulness in this matter meet us in the thin and languid attendance at the Monthly Concert for Prayer—in the infrequent, formal, cursory notice of this great topic of supplication in the services of the sanctuary, in the social circle, and at the domestic altar? Does not God see evidence of this unfaithfulness in our closets? Can we find a more important and appropriate theme for most serious thought and most earnest and devout discussion, at the convocations of Ministers and Friends of Zion throughout our land, than this—How may we stir up one another, and our fellow Christians in all our borders, to more fervent prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Churches, on Missionary Labourers, and on the World?—The Rev. Josiah Pratt's Missionary Register; quotation from an American publication.

CHURCH ARCHITECTURE SCRIPTURALLY CONSIDERED.

Church Architecture might at the first glance appear to be a subject essentially secular and practically material; to ascertain by diligent search the earliest and most comely specimens of Christian Churches—to study their varieties—to class them under different orders—to select that style best adapted to modern use, and to embellish it with suitable decorations, all this appears to have little connection with religious principle or spiritual feeling.

And yet has the whole art or science of ecclesiastical architecture the strongest possible bearing on the religious character of the country: interwoven with all its spiritual sympathies, and national prejudices, it exercises a diffusive and extensive influence even over the essential truths of revealed religion.

As the experienced architect is disturbed by any violation of good taste, or by any departure from the rules of art, in the building on which he gazes, so should the pious and enlightened Christian be at least equally offended if he discovers in buildings consecrated to the simple worship of the Lord Jesus Christ decorations and emblems more worthy of the ponderous ceremonial of the Jewish, or the idolatrous corruptions of the Papal system.

And of what material is the superstructure of the Christian temple? No other than living souls! Individual believers. They were described well by Isaiah the prophet as by nature rough, unshewn, misshapen stones in a quarry—or as clay and mire in a pit—and to humble them in their after state he bids them “look to the rock whence they were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence they were digged.” Using exactly the same figure, St. Paul says to the believers at Corinth, “Ye are God's building”—and he

was “a workman who needed not to be ashamed,” and by such means God formed, and fashioned, and polished, and decorated these rough stones, until they became polished corners of this spiritual temple. Long and painful may be the process by which a misshapen lump of stone becomes a fair proportioned pillar, or rich architrave, or lovely model of the human frame; but by the skill, and wisdom, and patience, and love of him who selected the stone from the quarry, and moulded the clay into a symmetrical form, it is at last complete, and becomes “a living stone” in this great living temple! Here, indeed, is divine architecture—here are beauty of design and perfection of execution. “In Christ all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit!” Yes, marvellous as this mysterious and divine and holy building is, each individual believer, perfectly in himself, is the temple of God; and all believers congregated together form one great, glorious new-covenant temple—inhabited by God himself—the only material building he recognises under the Gospel dispensation as actually possessed of his presence! “In whom” that is, in Christ, “ye also as lively,” or living, “stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ.” St. Peter speaks not here of evangelists, or pastors, or teachers as sacrificing priests—but he describes all individual, spiritual believers, as members of this mystical temple, containing in itself, spiritually, all that was typically prefigured in the first temple. Holy incense ascending continually in the flame of divine love, which glows on the altar of a renewed heart, fragrant to God himself—“a sweet smelling savour”—“know you not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?” “What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God?”

It would tax the ingenuity of the most ardent worshipper of primitive Christian architecture to discover one line in the New Testament to prove that separate, much less consecrated buildings were set apart, or intended to be set apart, during the lives of the holy apostles, for Christian worship. Such a custom, however becoming and needful in the subsequent ages of the Church, cannot therefore claim to be primitive, apostolical, or scriptural. As far as the inspired writings of the New Testament are concerned, we therefore re-affirm—that they recognise no temple but the spiritual one which we have attempted to describe—and that upon the subject of Christian Church Architecture they observe a remarkable and studied silence.

This general principle is deducible from the whole analogy of God's dealings with His people: viz. that the Churches in which Christians worship, should, as to external decorations, harmonize with the genius of the Christian dispensation.

Here then we might at once turn to the modern attempts to revive the decorative style of Church Architecture; and testing it by the general principles now established, and by the practice of the apostles and their converts in the first century, we might at once decide the question,—whether it is consistent with the simplicity and spirituality of Christian worship to lavish vast sums of money on the decoration of the outward structure and the mere ceremonies of worship? But inasmuch as the present disposition extravagantly to adorn our churches is not an invention, but an imitation—and as the perfection of modern effort consists in copying that which is considered antiquity—it will be more satisfactory to glance at the rise and progress of that style of architecture which is to be restored; and if we should trace its source to some of the most benighted and corrupt periods of the Church, and find it identified with, and contributing towards, the superstitions which were then prevalent, our fears will at once be awakened, and a holy jealousy will be excited in our minds, lest with the restoration of the varied emblems of superstition and idolatry—the corruptions with which they were allied should gradually be introduced along with them.

Ascending, then, to the earliest days of the Christian Church, of which there are but scanty records in uninspired history, we find a singular conformity with all we have traced in the canon of Scripture. It is a disputed point whether any churches, or distinct places of worship, existed at all during the second century. Friends and foes admitted in these early days that “the Christians had neither altars, nor temples, nor images; but affirmed that God could be worshipped in every place, and that his best temple upon earth is the heart of man.”

With the opening of the fourth century a change, at first gradual, but subsequently rapid and widely diffused, took place in regard to Church Architecture. Then it was that the opinion became prevalent that churches should be divided into three parts, distinguishing the clergy, the faithful, and the catechumens—a servile imitation of the division of the Jewish temple—the holy of holies—the sanctuary—and the court! It would far exceed the limits of this Essay, to follow the infinity of details of structure which followed from this commencement.

Church Architecture arose and flourished! Ecclesiastical buildings were multiplied, in which scenes were enacted alike disgraceful to Christianity, morality, and reason. In fact, the huge piles, which were raised towards the middle and close of this century might more justly be considered as vast mausoleums—in which truth, scripture, light, salvation, and common sense were entombed together—and churches of the saints, in which “the God of

* Rom. xi. 18. † Rom. xi. 21.
* Deut. xxx. 3, &c.