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Yours,
JOHN CARRY.

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Theory I. is that Christ did preach to the "Spirits in Prison." F. & B. interpret verses 18, 19 as applying to a preaching by Noah. Of all the historical writers upon the "Descent into Hell" I like Knappe, of Hall, the best, although I prefer Pearson's conclusions. After treating the matter from a Hebrew and Greek point of view, and giving the various theories from the Fathers to the "Reformed" and Lutheran theologians since the 16th century, he concludes as follows:—

Some have often affirmed that the passage 1 Pet. iii. did not relate to this subject. But all the other explanations given, are forced and unnatural, and the idea, after all, is scriptural, for the passage Acts ii., cannot be explained away. According to the passage 1 Pet. iii., the soul of Christ actually went to the place of the damned, (carcer cacum) in Hades, and there preached to the disembodied spirits. Until the last judgment the souls of all the deceased are in Hades (i.e., they are *manes*, disembodied) but in different regions, distant from each other, (i.e., in *vario statu*), Luke xxi. 19, 31. Christ, then, during his continuance there, did what he was accustomed to do while yet on the earth for the good of men: he instructed those who needed instruction—and exhorted. The object and use of this preaching, which is mentioned in the passage in Peter, we cannot see, since those who are in Hades are always represented by Jesus, the Apostles and Peter himself, as fixed in their destiny, and reserved to the day of judgment." Cf. Luke xvi. He says further: "The nature of this preaching, its particular object and consequences, what he intended to effect, and did actually effect by it, are entirely unknown to us, as many other things which pertain to the invisible kingdom of spirits." (Vide page 307 of reprint from American Ed. of 1831). I should like to give the whole article to our Canadian clergy, but as it takes up five columns of small print, with a good many Greek and Hebrew words, I will not inflict this punishment upon you.

I am, Sir, Yours, X.

FINANCE.

SIR,—I notice in the secular press that a resolution had been passed by the executive committee of Huron authorizing the investment committee to bring in a report at its next meeting, dealing with the financial system of the diocese, and recommended such changes as may be deemed requisite. The movement is a good and necessary one, and shows a degree of vitality in that body which if has been thought it did not possess. I was not at the meeting, but as the work of that committee is properly open to the members of the Synod, the discussion has elicited a spirit of inquiry. No doubt the terrible financial disaster of some of the London monetary institutions, involving so much loss and misery to dependent women and men, has quickened the action of the committee to take such steps as may be considered necessary to confirm and establish the confidence of the Diocese, in the conduct of our finances. I do not altogether approve of using the secular press for discussing church matters, when the church press is available for the purpose, and which should be a guardian of the temporal interests of the church. The recent appalling calamity which has made London so notorious in financial circles, has quickened inquiry into the Huron method of managing our temporalities. Investigation has established, beyond a doubt, that the collapse of a prominent financial institution, supposed to be controlled by able and competent men, was owing to a dangerous centralization of power in a few directors. Of all the evils in the church, centralization has been the parent, and should be avoided. It is the history of Papal ascendancy and despotism. At the Executive Committee the discussion is said to have been animated, some advocating one thing, and some another. Examining the securities with care and scrutiny was generally considered necessary. The present system of auditing the accounts was declared to be of no practical value. The theory of having a board of directors, like every well managed institution, was strongly advocated. It is evident that the time for doing so is at hand. I am decidedly of the opinion that the method pursued in Toronto Diocese is the best and safest, viz: that of having different committees to manage the various trust funds committed to the Synod. The theory of a large Executive Committee consisting of sixty members may sound very democratic, but in practice it is the opposite. It is safe to assert that half a dozen men control the temporal interests of the diocese, and London has for some time been freely spoken of as controlling diocesan affairs. By the synod journal the mission fund account shows the available income from the diocese, for diocesan missions, amounted to \$7,458.80. This amount should and could be doubled. It matters not

what may be given for other objects, this fund has the primary claim on the diocese. What is the cause of such a small contribution? The answer is, centralization. The expense account of last year amounted to, as per synod journal, \$6,183.79. I am not sufficiently pessimistic to advocate economy at the expense of efficiency, but there is no need for such expenses, and when it is considered that the heavier the expenses the less goes to the mission fund, something is required here. It may be said that the Bishop's Commissioner has ended his work, and that will save the diocese \$1500 per annum. The same thing was said when the Rev. W. F. Campbell, missionary agent, finished his work, but then the office of Commissioner was pressed upon the diocese, at an aggregate cost of \$2,800, whilst many thought, and still think, that the work could have been accomplished as satisfactorily by the Ruri-decanal meetings at one-fifth of the cost. And now what is looming up? Why, increased assistance in the synod office. What does it mean? How can it be effected? Only by centralization. It is questionable whether a larger sum than \$1200 per annum should be applied for the official work of the office. The indebtedness of the diocese is a serious matter. The synod journal shows a mission fund debt of \$5,840.61. The Episcopal fund, a debt of \$888.06. The see house, a debt of \$14,591.68, making in the aggregate a debt of \$20,826.35. There must be added to this the amount paid by the clergy under the widows' and orphans' fund canon, from 1875 to 1884, and which was loaned to the mission fund, amounting to some \$5,000. Here, then, we have a diocesan indebtedness of \$25,826.35. What has developed this state of things? The reply is centralization. The widows' and orphans' fund requires attention, for by the last synod journal the balance, after paying the widows, was only \$108.42. The Executive Committee had good reason to urge immediate action. In analysing our financial system, I will only add at this time, that it does not consist with the interests of the Diocese, that an officer of the synod, who is paid a large salary to serve the diocese, should represent a congregation in the Synod and thereby become a director of its affairs.

One office or the other should be relinquished, for no man can justly serve "two" masters.

VIDETTE.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

CIRCUMCISION.

JAN. 1ST, 1888.

The Troubler of Israel.

Passage to be read.—Joshua vii. 1, 16-26.

Jericho having been captured and destroyed; and the silver and the gold put into the Treasury of God as the first-fruits of the Conquest, Israel next proceeded to follow up the victory.

I. *Israel's Trouble*.—Through one of the ravines leading up from the valley of the Jordan lay the city of Ai. It was thought that a small army would suffice for its overthrow, so Joshua sent 3,000 men, his first military venture. How anxiously he and all Israel look for the news of victory; but instead sad news of defeat. Terror seizes on the people. What will become of them? See Joshua with all the signs of grief, (v. 6) taking his trouble to God! What can be the reason? (v. 7, 8).

II. *The Troubler*.—Joshua did not know, but God knew the reason. (Compare 2 Chron. xvi. 9; Prov. xv. 3; Heb. iv. 15). He had not forgotten His promise. Here is the reason, (v. 11), "Israel hath sinned." Why does not the offender confess before it is too late? Until the sin is put away Israel cannot have God's protection. (Compare Isa. lix. 1, 2). God directs how the guilty one is to be discovered, (v. 14). The lot is cast, the tribe, the family, the household, the individual. Achan is taken (v. 18). See the guilty man, covered with shame. Compare Psalm lxxxix. 45.

III. *The Troubler's Sin*.—Joshua demands "What hast thou done?" (v. 19). Confession comes now, but too late. (v. 20). Like that of Judas, it is wanting in the signs of true repentance. He had found a costly garment and some silver and gold, and instead of bringing them into God's Treasury, he hid them in the ground under his tent. See of what this sin consisted, (v. 11)—disobedience, covetousness, dishonesty, deception—more than all, sacrilege! Ah! what would he not have been saved from if he had remembered Gen. xvi. 18! Compare Ps. cxxxix. 3; St. Matt. ix. 4; St. John ii. 24, 25.

IV. *The Troubler's Punishment*.—Sin always brings its punishment. Achan was punished in many ways. Fear of detection must have haunted him, (Num. xxxii. 23); how his conscience must have troubled him, (St. John viii. 9). Imagine his shame. Think of the end of unrepented sin, (See Dan. xii. 2). His death was a warning. Stoned, and burnt with fire by God's command; the site marked with a heap of stones, and called *Achor*, or trouble. Let the teacher

impress upon the scholars to beware of the first steps to sin. One sin leads to another. Well does our Church teach us to pray daily, "Grant that this day we fall into no sin," and in the *Te Deum*, "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin."

Family Reading.

AN OLD MAN'S IDYL.

By the waters of life we sat together,
Hand in hand, in the golden days
Of the beautiful early summer weather
When the skies were purple and the breath was
praise;
When the heart kept tune to the carol of birds,
And the birds kept tune to the songs that ran
Through shimmer of flowers on grassy swards,
And the trees with voices Æolian.

By the river of life we walked together,
I and my darling unafraid,
And lighter than any linnet's feather,
The burdens of being on us were laid.
And love's sweet miracles o'er us threw
Mantles of joy, outlasting time,
And up from the rosy morrows grew
A sound that seemed like a marriage chime.

In the gardens of life we strayed together,
And the luscious apples were ripe and red,
And the languid lilac and honeyed heather
Swooned with the fragrance that they shed.
And under the trees the angels walked,
And up in the air a sense of wings
Awed us tenderly while we talked
Softly in sacred communings.

In the meadows of life we strayed together,
Watching the waving harvests grow,
And under the benisons of the Father,
Our hearts, like the lamb skipped to and fro;
And the cowslips, hearing our low replies,
'Broidered fairer the emerald banks,
And glad tears shone in the daisies' eyes
As the timid violet glistened thanks.

Who was with us and what was round us,
Neither I nor my darling guessed;
Only we knew that something crowned us
Out from the heavens with crowns of rest;
Only we knew that something bright
Lingered lovingly where we stood,
Clothed in the incandescent light,
Of something higher than humanhood.

Oh! the riches love does inherit;
Ah! the alchemy which doth change
Dross of body and dregs of spirit
Into sanctities rare and strange.
My flesh is feeble and I am old,
And my darling's beautiful hair is gray,
But our elixir and precious gold
Laugh at the footsteps of decay.

Harms of the world have come upon us,
Cups of sorrow we yet shall drain;
But we have a secret which doth show us
Wonderful rainbows in the rain;
And we hear the tread of the years go by,
And the sun is setting behind the hills,
But my darling does not fear to die,
And I am happy in what God wills.

So we sit by our household fires together,
Dreaming the dreams of long ago:
Then it was balmy summer weather,
And now the valleys are laid in snow.
Iceles hang from the slippery eaves,
The wind blows cold—it is growing late;
Well, well, we have garnered all our sheaves,
I and my darling—and we wait.

RICHARD REALY.

THE OLD CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

At the restoration service at the Church of St. Mary's, Chatham, Canon Self said: "The Norman and the Plantagenet, York and Lancaster, Tudor, Stuart, and Hanoverian sovereigns, have all been prayed for on this actual spot." And again: "The Chatham Parish Church stood here three hundred years before the battle of Agincourt, four hundred years before the earliest dockyard, and four hundred and fifty years before the destruction of the Spanish Armada; and parts of this building existed before there was any House of