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Texts and Their Meaning.

Or, Words and Pictures.

'Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.'—Matt xv., 2.

'Elisha, the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.'—II. Kings iii., 11.

In the countries of the East it is still the custom when at meals to have one dish at a time placed in the centre of a low table, round

who gleaned in his field, 'At meal-time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar.'

The Lord Jesus ate with his disciples in the same way, for at the Last Supper he said, 'He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me' (Matt. xxvi., 23).

When the master wishes to honor a guest, he takes a choice piece of meat out of the dish, and puts it into the person's mouth, or on his bread; or he gives him a 'sop,' that is,

water on their hands over the bowl, so that they wash in running water. This will explain to you the words, 'Here is Elisha, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.'

When the Lord Jesus was on earth the Jews were very particular about washing the hands before eating. It says in Mark vii., 3, 4, 'For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brassen vessels, and of tables.' This will explain to you why, at the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee, 'there were set six water-pots of stone,' holding two or three firkins, or about seven gallons and a half each. All this water was needed for the washings of the guests.

It was, of course, quite right for the people to be clean; but while they made so much fuss and show about outward things, they forgot the kind of cleanliness that God wants. You know, children, that God does not only look if our hands be washed clean in water, but if they be clean from bad actions. It says in Psalm xxiv., 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?' That means, 'Who shall go to be with the Lord?' The answer is, 'He that hath "clean hands."' We know that that means those who try to be good; and say, as David did, 'I will wash my hands "in innocency."'—'Little Folks.'



THE GUEST CHAMBER.

which the people are seated, sometimes on low stools or cushions, and sometimes on the floor. No knives and forks are used, only the fingers and thumbs. In the house of an Arab, the master says, 'Bismillah,' which means 'In the name of God.' He then says, 'Zafuddal,' or, 'Do as I do,' and dips his finger and thumb into the dish, taking out a piece of meat, when the rest follow his example. Every one has his own piece of thin bread, which he rolls up spoon-fashion, and when the meat is chopped very fine, the bread is merely dipped in.

You will remember that Boaz said to Ruth,

a piece of his own bread dipped in the dish. When St. John asked our Lord who it was that would betray him, he replied, 'He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot.'

You will see from this that it is necessary for those sitting at meat to have very clean hands; and so, before the food is brought in, a servant gives each one a napkin, while another comes in with soap, a jug of water, and a bowl. The servant goes to each one of the company separately, and holds the bowl in the left hand, while with the other he pours

God is Love.

The bereaved are everywhere. There are few homes without their vacant chair. How can we best comfort others? What solace is there in the gospel for breaking hearts? What is there in Christianity that will wipe away tears? There is comfort for the bereaved in the infinite and eternal love of God. In this divine love all life's 'whys' are answered. St. John puts it all in the one little sentence—'God is love.' Back of and in his power, his justice, his holiness, his truth, is love. We know that this is our Father's world. There is no 'chance' in any of its events or circumstances. Science tells us that in all occurrences in nature, even in those which seem disastrous—storms, earthquakes, tidal waves—no force, no drop of water, no particle of matter ever gets out of the clasp and control of natural law—that is, out of the hand of God. So in all the events of Providence, though we call them calamities, nothing ever happens without God's permission, and, therefore, all that happens has love in it.

Another element of comfort for the bereaved is that their friends who have gone from them have finished their work. Jesus was not caught in a snare when he was arrested in the garden. There was no inextricable dilemma in his position that night. He could have escaped but his 'hour' had come. It was now the Father's time for the closing of his life. The same is true of each one of God's children. Sometimes it is in infancy, even in earliest infancy, that the death angel comes. 'My baby lived only two hours,' a young mother wrote the other day. Yet, in its coming and its brief stay it brought bless-