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"HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS."

Scripture.

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POETRY.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

By JAMES MONTGOMERY.
From the *Christian Keepsake*.

Free, yet in chains, the mountains stand,
The valleys link'd run through the land;
In fellowship the forests thrive,
And streams from streams their strength derive.

The cattle graze in flocks and herds,
In choirs and concerts sing the birds,
Insects by millions ply the wing,
And flowers in peaceful armies spring.

All nature is society,
All nature's voices harmony,
All colours blend to form pure light;
—Why then should Christians not unite?

Thus to the Father pray'd the Son,
"One may they be as we are one,
Then I in them, and thou in me,
They one with us may ever be."

Children of God, combine your hands,
Brethren in Christ, join hearts and hands,
And pray—for so the Father will'd
That the Son's prayer may be fulfill'd;—

Fulfill'd in you.—fulfill'd in all,
That on the name of Jesus call;
And every covenant of love
Ye bind on earth, be bound above.

DIVINITY.

UNBELIEVING THOMAS.

Extracted from the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, for November.

"The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."—
John xx. 25.

THE return of the season of the year in which we celebrate the most glorious triumphs of our blessed Redeemer* almost necessarily directs our minds to the contemplation of the event to which the above-quoted scripture refers, and on which depends the evidence of the truth or fallacy of Christianity. "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." (1 Cor. xv. 16—18.) "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." (Verse 20.)

Among the witnesses to this remarkable event, "unbelieving Thomas" holds a conspicuous station; for though the fact of his particular incredulity is mention-

ed only by St. John, it is a fact of most weighty and conclusive importance in the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus. At the same time, it has obtained for that disciple a very unenviable celebrity. Commentators, Expositors, and Preachers, (whose duty it is to take care that they divide the word of truth aright,) as well as private Christians of every grade and denomination, have so universally fixed the stigma of incredulity upon this devoted Apostle, that we scarcely hear him mentioned without the epithet "unbelieving" being affixed to his name. More than once has it fallen to my lot to hear, on Ascension-day, from the mouths of very eminent Ministers, elaborate arguments to show the extent and heinousness of the sin of Thomas in rejecting the evidence of his Master's resurrection, when the other ten Apostles admitted it, and declared to him, "We have seen the Lord."

Perhaps it may be presumptuous to differ from the common opinion; but, though I will not assert that Thomas's incredulity was praiseworthy or even justifiable, yet I think a brief consideration of all the circumstances will show, that a perverted view of the subject has obtained; and, consequently, that the great object and use of this remarkable history have been mainly lost sight of. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God:" therefore of no part or passage of it can it be said that a right view and correct understanding is unimportant; for, although a scripture misunderstood may convey to the mind both instruction and benefit, it does not convey, either in subject or degree, the peculiar instruction and benefit for which it was designed, and stands blazoned in the sacred page. I propose to rescue the character of Thomas from the distinguishing aspersion which has been cast upon it, by showing that he asked for no higher degree of evidence of the resurrection of his Master than was required to convince the other Apostles: and to point out, in the second place, the real use to be made of the fact, as recorded by St. John.

And let not preconceived opinions and old habits of thinking stand in the way. A remarkable instance of the effect of prejudice upon the mind is furnished in the view usually taken of the only other individual act which is recorded in the Gospels of this Apostle. Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, whom Jesus loved, sent from Bethany to Jesus beyond Jordan, whither he had escaped out of the hands of the Jews, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." Two days after he had received the message, Jesus proposed to go to Lazarus, who was then dead at Bethany. The disciples astonished, said, "Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?" Jesus confirms his purpose of going,

* This article was received in March last.—EDIT.