

Dominion Churchman.

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THURSDAY, OCT. 19, 1876.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The fourteenth and eighteenth chapters of Ezekiel are two of the most instructive in this remarkable book. The fourteenth sets forth that every man who is self-willed enough to rebel against his God, and set up himself as his own lawgiver, becomes self-deceived, his eyes are blinded to the character and enormity of his sin, and God Himself permits this infatuated blindness to go on until utter destruction ensues. Noah, Daniel, and Job are brought before us as three of the most eminent men who had borne witness for God in the midst of a perverse and rebellious people; but that in the judgment overtaking the Jewish nation, these eminent Saints could not deliver their own souls by their righteousness. The allusions made in this chapter to the patriarch Job are legitimately brought forward in support of the belief that he was a real individual, and not as some suppose, a mythical person, merely introduced into the sacred narrative of the book that goes by his name to support a character. He is here mentioned in connection with two individuals, Noah and Daniel, about the existence of whom there has never been any doubt among those who believe the Bible at all. With the names of these eminent Saints, God's sore judgments are mentioned, and in such a way as to show that these visitations are providential dispensations, and as corroborating the principle involved in the question:—"Is there evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it?"

The eighteenth chapter establishes the righteousness of God's dealings with the children of men, and from the truth that he visits with death the workers of iniquity, and rewards with life the followers after righteousness, he appeals to the house of Israel to turn from their evil ways, so that they may obtain that life which God alone can bestow. This chapter may be taken in connection with the thirty-third chapter, which not only dwells upon the fact that the Divine Being can have no pleasure in inflicting death, but also states more distinctly and more emphatically than in any other part of the Bible, the conditional nature of God's promises. In the face of the plain declaration of this latter chapter it is strange there should be found in any part of the Church, men professing to believe either that the Bible is the Word of God or that it is the expression of that Word, and should yet hold one of the most dangerous and soul-destroying doctrines that have ever been known in Christendom—a personal and unconditional election to eternal salvation. The prophet Ezekiel speaking in God's

name is most precise and emphatic. He even says that when God has positively promised to the righteous man that he shall surely live, if he trust to his own righteousness and commit iniquity, he shall nevertheless die, notwithstanding that God had before promised him life. That there should be no mistake about the matter and as if to intensify the Divine statement of the principle that even God's most positive promises and threatenings are conditional, he goes on to state:—"When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin and do that which is lawful and right . . . he shall surely live, he shall not die." What terms can be more express? It may be safely stated that no language found on this earth can be less liable to be mistaken.

The COLLECT, EPISTLE, and GOSPEL, may all be considered as referring either to the prevention of sin or the forgiveness of it. The Collect asks for what alone can prevent its commission—both the direction and the governance or rule of the Holy Spirit. That man without the direction of the Divine Spirit cannot know the nature of that which he should avoid as sin is evident; because sin is the transgression of a Divine Law, and we cannot possibly know what God's Law may be, until He Himself has told us. And even after he has made a revelation of His Law, the instances of the Jews and of multitudes of Christians show that an application of the truth of that law by the same Spirit is needed, both in the ministrations of the Church and also in the hearts and consciences of her individual members. And when the principles of the law are duly apprehended, the whole man must, by the influence of that spirit be placed under its governance, or every thing else will be of no avail. The Epistle presents a striking picture of the life of sin engendered by heathenism and indulged in by the corrupt nature of un-renewed man, while it also refers to the Holy Spirit as the great agent of our redemption in its practical and individual application to ourselves. The Gospel deals specially with the forgiveness of sin, and shows two things—first that forgiveness of sin is attainable on earth, by the weary and heavy laden pilgrims, —in opposition to the opinions of many, who imagine that this balm of consolation can only be obtained when this mortal has put off immortality, and the spirit has entered the unseen world. And so we are taught that when, in the creed, we say that we believe in the forgiveness of sin, Holy Scripture warrants us in looking for that supreme blessing of the Gospel before we enter the dark and dreary valley of the shadow of death. And secondly we learn from the Gospel that the human nature of our blessed Lord had both the power and the authority to forgive sins; and that the principle involved in the

question of the unbelieving Jews:—"Who can forgive sins but God only?" was the natural outcome from the perverse and rebellious hearts which rejected the Messiah, notwithstanding the clearest tokens of Divine authentication.

ST. SIMON AND ST. JUDE.

The Collect for this Festival is one of the richest and most beautifully expressed in the Book of Common Prayer. It is eminently worthy of that noble branch of the Church to which we belong, and precisely indicates the position she claims, and to which we doubt not, she is fully entitled. Its teaching combines a protest against all papal assumption with a protest equally firm and decided against all sectarian and denominational schism.—"Who hast built thy Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the head cornerstone."—Then, according to this, the Church was not built on St. Peter; and when Christ said, "On this rock will I build my Church," He did not mean on that one Apostle alone. He doubtless meant the whole infant Church then assembled—Himself and His twelve chosen ones, of whom St. Peter was but a solitary individual. This may be gathered from the words Christ Himself made use of; for the Church was to be built on a rock, *petra* (feminine), while St. Peter was only *petros* (masculine), a stone, part of a rock. And further, according to this also the Church must be historically connected with the Apostles and Prophets, upon whom, with Christ, the Church is built—thus excluding all unauthorized, self-made, schismatical bodies. The rest of the Collect opens up in a succinct form and in expressive language, the teaching of the Church in reference to unity, on which we have not space at present to say more than that the epistle of St. Jude unequivocally lays down the same principles in reference to unity, and gives equally distinct warnings against schism with those which so eminently characterize the writings of St. Paul.

The epistle of St. Jude contains two very remarkable passages; one relating to Enoch's prophecy of the Second Advent, and the other in reference to Michael the Archangel disputing with the devil about the body of Moses. These passages are contained in two apocryphal works—the Book of Enoch and the Assumption of Moses. It is not necessary to suppose that St. Jude quotes from them. He may have embodied some ancient tradition, or have quoted from some older works not now extant. His epistle is remarkable for the force and energy of its composition and style.

ROMISH VERACITY.

We have, several times, had occasion to put our readers on their guard in reference to statements made by Roman-

on 12th, 1876.

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