

THE STONES IN AARON'S BREASTPLATE.

'Aaron had to wear upon his breast before the Lord, twelve precious stones, *not of one sort*, but each one reflecting the light *differently* from his neighbor. There was actually one nearly *black*, whatever the diamond thought of *him*. But all the stones being set equally upon the priest's breast, no one of them might quarrel with another. Saying, 'you are quite wrong, you are, you ought to reflect the light as I do. You will never be admitted into the most holy place. Even the dark jasper reflected its measure of light, as freely as brilliant diamond. The former may have a meekness which the latter has not. Indeed it is a known fact that the diamond is *harder* than any other stone. And hardness is distance from life in proportion to the hardness.

One thing is clear, *there is a tribe in Israel corresponding with each stone*. And the Lord requested that He might see the twelve stones upon Aaron's breast, with the names of the twelve tribes engraven on them, as often as He appeared before Him to minister in the priest's office; Exod. 28, 29. Perhaps it was in virtue of his representing, impartially, every tribe of God's people, that he obtained Divine responses pertaining to every tribe. A man cannot be the medium of Truth to all the tribes of God, unless all truth has a place in him. Learn, whether the priests and ministers of God ought not to comprehend in their souls and characters considerable breadth and variety." Excellent; and the moral or teaching indicated in the last sentence very direct. Yet the public opinion of the modern religious world generally runs counter to that idea. Your minister of God's Word must be a person of a very uniform pattern, and that pattern by no means a grand or noble one, says modern religiosity. He must be well-starched, and tightly straight-laced; his soul well cramped and swaddled by hands and other man-millinery, or he might make an erratic movement that would throw us all into consternation. A well-constructed piece of mechanism he must be that will strain out all the little gnats that are such a terror to the weaklings and godfings. Here is another contribution from the same quiet sombre man, and the sound of it is like music that was heard in Palestine eighteen centuries ago;—

A LITTLE BIRD'S SERMON TO A SERMON-MAKER.

"I was in the act of kneeling down before the Lord my God, when a little bird, in the lightest, freest humor, came and perched near my window, and thus preached to me, all the while hopping from spray to spray; 'O thou grave man, look on me, and learn something, if not the deepest lessons, then a true one. Thy God made me and the like of me; and if thou canst conceive it, loves me and cares for me. Thou studiest him in great problems, which oppress and confound thee; thou losest sight of one half of his ways. Learn to

see thy God not in great mysteries only, but in me also. His burden on me is light, His yoke on me is easy; but thou makest burdens and yokes for thyself which are very grievous to be borne. And I advise thee not only to see God in little things; but to see little, cheerful, sportive things in God, as well as great, solemn, awful things.—'Things deep as hell and high as heaven thou considerest over much; but thou dost not consider the lilies sufficiently. Every priest should put by his awful robes, &c., &c., sometimes, and go free. It thou couldst be as a lily before God, for at least one hour in the twenty-four, it would do thee good; I mean if thou couldst cease to will and to think, and be only. Consider, the lily is as really from God as thou art and is a figure of something in Him—the like of which should also be in thee. Thou longest to grow, but the lily grows without longing;—yes, without either thinking or willing, grows, and is beautiful both to God and man. Think of that.

'In conclusion, I remind thee that God has "many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification." But I perceive that thine ear is open only to voices of one kind. Thy danger is, under the conceit of being the more Godly, of becoming monstrous, and not quite God-like. Excuse a little bird; I am but one of the "many kinds of voices" which God has "in the world."

Better and better; and Scriptural too, brother Fearing. Yes, "God reveals himself in many ways," and all His ways are beautiful and safe. But man is confined in view, and halt in limb, and finds it difficult to walk in the 'royal law of liberty.' He runs from extreme to extreme. He is either worldling or ascetic; the younger son spending his substance 'in riotous living' or the 'hermit in cell.' Talk of birds to thee, thou barren pattern-figure of the sects! Hadst thou been consulted upon creation work, we would have had no dainty humming-birds, nor lovely canaries; nothing but sober ravens and solemn owls and stupid buzzards to people the air. And the kindly race of men would have appeared, all staid and severe and precise. And yet 'what a terrible world it would be without children!' I pity thee; for it is an error leading to much deformity to believe that ideal truth, beauty, and goodness can be attained by process of cribbing, or binding, or clipping. He grows most into the likeness of the perfect man, whose soul is most open to all the influences of heaven and earth, whose humanity is not only intense but most comprehensive and many-sided. G.

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FOR THE MONTHLY RECORD.

The morning bells rang out, their early call to prayer,
And sweetly fell their tones upon the perfumed air.
Listening their joyful sound, low on a bed of pain,