

would offer rich offerings to the Lord—the treasures of the sea and those of the land generally. Ver. 20, 21. *Gad*. He was to have a wide territory in the kingdom of Sihon, and, as a lion, was to obtain the conquest over his foes (Gen. xlix. 19). The first fruit refers to that part of the country which *Gad* chose for himself on the coast of Jordan (Num. xxxii. 2, 6, 25.) Ver. 22. *Dan* was compared by Jacob to a serpent. Moses gives him greater strength, and compares him to a lion. He dwelt in a country—*Bashan*—which abounded with caves, out of which he sprung upon his foes. Ver. 23. *Naphtali*. His territory was situated in a fertile country in the N.E. of Canaan, reaching to the Sea of Galilee. Of the sea and the south, as the words mean, he was to take possession. Ver. 24, 25. *Asher*. A child of prosperity would enjoy rest all his life, and be blessed before the sons of Jacob. His country was to be one flowing with oil, into which, as it were, he would dip his foot. His territory reached to Lebanon, which perhaps contained brass and iron. Ver. 26–29 contain the conclusion of the blessing, and are full of rich promises which we, in a spiritual sense, may claim. Learn ver. 27.

Afternoon. PAUL AT ROME. (Acts xxviii. 16–31.) At last the apostle's long-felt desire to see Rome is gratified. He entered it by the *Via Appia*, on which was a small town called *Appii Forum*, forty-three miles from that city, and an inn for travellers, ten miles nearer, called the *Three Taverns*. Here he was met by a number of Christian brethren, who, prisoner as he was, greeted him with joy. He dwelt in his own hired house, guarded by a *Prætorian* soldier, to whose arm he was fastened by a chain (ver. 20). After three days the Jews came together, to whom he explained his position, and how it was that he came as a prisoner. They appointed a day when they came to his lodgings in greater numbers, and he then addressed them on the claims of Jesus as the Messiah (ver. 23). Some believed, but others did not, and then he told them that he must preach the Gospel to the Gentiles who *would* believe it. Two whole years he dwelt in his own hired house, the Christians in Rome paying the rent of it no doubt; and he preached the Gospel to all who came to him. During this period he wrote his Epistles to the *Philippians*, *Colossians*, and the brief one to *Philemon*. Luke here closes his narrative; but there is no doubt that Paul was at length liberated, and went forth again to preach the Gospel in other lands (A.D. 62–64).

Dec. 23. *Morning*. THE END OF A NOBLE LIFE. (Deut. xxxiv.) At God's command Moses ascended Mount *Nebo*, a peak of *Pisgah*, from which he could see the whole land of Canaan. He was aged, but his sight was not impaired, and he beheld the wondrous scene here described with great joy. But he was not to go over the Jordan (ch. xiii. 3, 26, 27). He died there, as some render, "at the mouth of the *Larā*," in the land of *Moab*. And God buried him in a valley in the land of *Moab*. Probably angels were employed in this act (cf. Jude 9), and the purpose is supposed by some to have been the preservation of Moses' body from corruption, that, with *Elijah*, he might afterwards appear in the Holy Mount with Christ (Mark ix. 4). No man knew of his sepulchre. He was 120 years old, but was still vigorous and strong. It was a noble end, and a glorious funeral.

Afternoon. PAUL'S LAST WORDS. (2 Tim. iv. 1–18.) After St. Paul's first imprisonment he visited several parts of Europe, probably including Spain. Six years later he was a prisoner in Rome the second time, and then wrote this epistle to Timothy. These are his last recorded words—and he first (ver. 6–8) takes a retrospect of the past, and then looks forward to the future. He then asks Timothy to come to him, for he had no one with him but the faithful *Luke*. He wishes *Mark* also to come, and he asks for the cloak he had left at *Troas*, for he was now in a cold damp cell of *Mamertine* prison, and it would help to keep him warm. The books were perhaps copies of the Scriptures; the parchments of his own epistles. What a sad account he gives of *Alexander*, the copper-smith (1 Tim. i. 20). The words of ver. 16 refer to his first defence, when he had stood before *Nero*, accused perhaps of being a Christian, and of having had something to do with the burning of Rome, which, however, was instigated by *Nero* himself. On that occasion no one stood by him, but the Lord was with him, and he was able, perhaps in the midst of a large concourse of people, to preach once more the tidings of salvation. The lion from whom he was delivered was probably *Satan*, who doubtless tempted him in this struggle, but from whose power he was rescued. What followed? Some time after, as it is supposed, another stage of his trial came on, and he was condemned to die. There is no doubt that he

suffered martyrdom by decapitation, and the Christians of Rome probably buried his body. (See *Conybeare* and *Howson*, Vol. II. p. 590).

December 30. *Morning*. GOD'S MERCIES TO ISRAEL. Psalm lxxvii. 1–8; 25–39. This psalm is a recapitulation of God's dealings with the Israelites. Ver. 18 intimates the purpose for which it was written—to instruct future generations. Vers. 25–39 tell of the supply of manna, etc., of the quails, but of the murmuring of the people, and of God's displeasure with them. But when He slew them thus they sought Him, and remembered that he was their rock (Deut. xxxii. 4–15) Their heart was not right with Him yet. He remembered that they were flesh, and was full of compassion to them. This is God's character still. He knoweth our frame. He remembereth that we are dust, and as a father pitieth his children, so He pitieth us. (Ps. ciii. 14.)

Afternoon. REVIEWS, ETC. Phil. iii. 7 is the memory text. They are the words of Paul, "What things were given to me, those I counted loss for Christ." It is a precious lesson for the close of the year, and of these notes on the lessons. Let us learn that nothing we can gain in this world—riches, honour, fame, or whatever else—is to be compared with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

HONOUR.

THE true basis of distinction among men, is not position or possession; it is not in the circumstances of life, but in the conduct. It matters not how enviable a position a man occupies, nor how much wealth he has in store, if there be defects in his behaviour he is not entitled to that consideration and respect due to one who is his superior in a moral point of view, though he possesses neither riches nor honour. It is not that which gives us place, but conduct which makes the solid distinction. We should know no man above us but for his virtues; none below us but for his vices. Entertaining this view, we would seek to imitate the good, though it would be found under a coarse exterior, and pity the evil though it be clothed in the finest garb and dwell in luxury. We would never become obsequious in the wrong place.

Call no man mean, low, or vulgar because he tills the soil or stands before the work-bench, for in point of true worth and real manhood he may be much superior to the president of some bank, some eminent liquor dealer, or Wall-street broker, or rich nabob who dwells in his palace.

The virtuous and right-minded sons of toil are nature's noblemen; they are lovers of good, lovers of nature, lovers of each other; they were not born to shine, nor to be the recipients of empty honour; but they were born to be men and a nation's bulwark.

GET THAT YOU MAY GIVE.

IS there any such proverb as this?

There ought to be. Surely it will be one of the proverbs of the millennium!

"Get that you may give." It is simply the condensation of what Paul was inspired to say to the Ephesians, when he directed the convert to "labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."

Amos Lawrence once wrote to one of his partners:—"I am sick, and denied the sight of most of those who call; but not of the privilege of reading their papers, and giving them money. In short, I have more use for money when in the house than when able to be abroad." And again he wrote:—"The good there is in money lies altogether in its use; like the woman's box of ointment, if it be not broken, and the content poured out for the refreshment of Jesus Christ in His distressed members, it loses its worth. He is not rich who lays up much; but who lays out much."

And many a man who has had hundreds of thousands of pounds less to give than that princely man, has discovered that it is a joy to toil for money, not in order to hoard but to scatter it; has even found out that the common world was made for common folks, and that the dear luxury of doing something for others may be felt just as really, and just as richly, by the little pauper, who, with a kind heart and a love smile, gives a cup of cold water to the thirsty wayfarer, as by the millionaire among his money-bags.