

## Our Contributors.

### The Irrevocable Record.

BY REV. W. G. JORDAN, D. D.

What I have written, I have written.—John xix: 22.

This is a striking saying uttered in strange circumstances. This text has two links with my own life. I remember hearing a powerful sermon upon it when I was a boy, little now remains of the discourse but the text was deeply impressed, and the thought of the solemnity of life and the irrevocable past continued to haunt the mind. Second, it was used as the subject of a sermon, the last in a series of special sermons to young men preached at intervals in a pastorate extending over nine years, my first and only charge in Canada. The message of those particular sermons had been given, an important part of a pastor's life had passed away and linked itself with the life of many young men and so it could be said even in that connection "What I have written, I have written."

In moments of high excitement men utter striking words which reveal their own nature and express truths deeper than they themselves realise at the time. This fact is brought out with special distinctness in the scenes around the cross. Before the crucifixion, Caiaphas, the high priest declared that it is expedient that one man should die; his declaration is true but not in the low selfish sense that lies upon the surface. During the crucifixion there were those who said "He saved others himself he cannot save," another profound truth carelessly uttered. After the great tragedy Pilate causes to be written over the cross the words "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews," another far reaching statement by one who did not know its full meaning.

When we ask is the question how this came to be written we are told that it was a custom to place in this way an inscription over the head of doomed criminals. That however accounts only for the fact of the writing not for its form and motive. Three times Pilate had declared "I find no crime in him." There was a charge but no crime. When this charge had served its cruel purpose those who used it wished to forget it and to have it for gotten. That is not Pilate's view of the matter; he has been defeated but now takes his revenge. He has lost the main position but he can be stubborn on a small point. He will not grant a revised reading; he sends away the cavilling Jewi-leaders with a sharp statement that shows the bitter feeling lying behind it "What I have written I have written."

Jesus was a mystery to Pilate, but as a Roman he knew what justice meant, and in delivering up this strange prisoner he rejected justice and was false to duty. He is now writhing under the sense of defeat and he writes the thing that is true but that he does not understand. "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews," written in the three great languages of the world means, Here is a lowly King, a rejected King, a King of universal signi-

ficance. At the beginning of the twentieth century the church recognises this with great clearness, and disciples seek to carry out into their lives its sacred meaning. That these words should survive so long and stand out so dramatically before the eyes of later generations of men is something that Pilate never anticipated but in his tone there is a sense of the solemnity of life. And is not this one of the things that makes life so solemn to all of us that what is done cannot be recalled, that the record of the past cannot be re-written. There are men to day would give a life they possess to undo the past, but they are mocked by the sheer impossibility of the thing; we have to reckon not with what "might have been" but with what is. Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.

The privilege of youth is that so much of life is in the future and in working out their life and building up their character they may avail themselves of great lessons of the past. This saying hard y seems to be appropriate in their case and yet we cannot tell how soon the account may be closed and the young man may have to say "What I have written I have written."

Let the young then remember that they are writing (1) a revelation of themselves. This world's photography shows only the outward form and feature, and so much of the inward life as can be revealed by that. But there is a spiritual record, our whole life as it unfolds before God and men reveals our nature and re-acts upon our growing character. The time will come when, so far as this sphere we have to look back upon a record complete and fixed. (2) A judgment of the Christ. We, like Pilate, have to face the question, "What shall I do then with Jesus that is called the Christ?" It is not merely that some aggressive preacher drives us into a corner and demands decision. He is here pleading for Himself, it may be through a father's prayers or a mother's tears but also in His own person, so that we can have immediate knowledge of Him "How I am with you always." The fact of Christ, of His love and sacrifice every young man must face, it is the highest privilege and the gravest responsibility. Over His cross we must write our judgment of him. Now is the time for choice and decision, if we learn to surrender ourselves and seek his strength when the end comes we may be able to say with humility but also with some measure of gratitude and hope "What I have written, I have written."

### The Wandering Jews.

BY GEO. W. ARMSTRONG

The Jews for 40 years in the wilderness had the making of religious history, in type, for all succeeding ages of the world. The lessons their wanderings supplied are both useful and interesting. Their journey from the Nile to the Jordan covers an entire generation, and but few, who started from Egypt effected an entrance into Canaan. Their experiences were types and symbols of their long promised and expected Messiah.

Before they left Egypt God selected his chosen ones by an act of obedience and reverence. They were told to sprinkle the door posts and lintels of their houses with blood. Obedience saved—neglect destroyed. On the lintel and door post—not on the step or floor. The blood of the covenant was too holy a thing to be trodden under foot. This was to typify the greater covenant sealed with the precious blood of the Eternal Son of God.

Their first wandering difficulty was on the banks of the Red Sea. Hemmed in on every side; in front the sea, on the right hand and on the left mountains and the pursuing Egyptian army behind—every avenue closed but *the best—the one above*, where resided the seat of all power; help came from the heavens, thus showing man's extremity was God's opportunity. This typified Christ who came from heaven to deliver us from the difficulties and trials beyond our power and to save us from the adversary who seeks our destruction. In our helpless emergency He always finds a way of escape.

When supplies failed—bread and water exhausted, bread in the form of manna—angels food, was given and water was brought out of the flinty rock. This typified Jesus Christ who is the living bread from heaven, John vi: 31 to 35, and the living rock, 1 Cor. x: 4. In their calamities when fiery serpents invade their camp and carried death and destruction in their course—a *look saved*, Numbers xxi: 6 to 9. This also typified the Messiah to whom those who look by faith are rescued from the more deadly scorpion sin, John iii: 14-15. And so in many ways they were taught by type, by sign, by figure until they reached the banks of the Jordan; then the wilderness, wandering types ceased and the geographical gave way to personal. The moral desert which the wilderness typified ends in eternal rest; but the geographical wilderness ended in prospective activities and warfares—thus the type fails and another series of type begins when they gained a footing on the other side of Jordan.

On the banks of the Jordan before crossing God had other lessons to teach His people: He had been leading, guiding and teaching them for forty years and they have yet much to learn. The first lesson was: That He was an abiding presence with them, Joshua 3: 10.

2nd. That His presence was not merely local, like the gods of the heathen nations, but that He was the God of the whole earth, in other words that He was Omnipresent.

A third lesson was: That He was Omnipotent; and He gave them a practical manifestation of His power by building watery walls across the rapidly flowing river Jordan and made a dry passage for them across its bed. Another lesson He taught them before they crossed into Canaan was: That God uses consecrated men as His instruments—the priests, his ministers were to bear the ark and by their faithful feet to dry up the flowing stream.

A fifth lesson He taught them was that those who are the leaders of God's people should be firm and fearless. The duties of the priests needed both faith and courage.

The ways of God are not men's ways. Men select the easiest means to effect their end. In sending His chosen people across the Jordan, God did so at its