

The Church Times.

"Evangelical Truth—Apostolic Order."

VOL. VIII. HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, SATURDAY, SEPT. 16, 1854. NO. 27.

Calendar.

CALENDAR WITH LESSONS.

Day/Date	MORNING.	EVENING.
S. Sept. 16	15 B. of Tria	Jerem 23, Matt 17, Jeros 38 1 Cor 1
M. 17	16	Zeph 8, Hag 2, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 1 Cor 2
T. 18	17	1 Cor 3
W. 19	18	1 Cor 4
Th. 20	19	1 Cor 5
F. 21	20	1 Cor 6
S. 22	21	1 Cor 7
S. 23	22	1 Cor 8

* One of the Reader Week Collects to be used on this day and each day in this week.

† The Athanasian Creed to be used

Poetry.

HYMN.

In wide eternity's vast space,
When no beginning was, wert Thou
Sovereign of all-pervading grace.
Beneath Thy veil, flamed on Thy brow,
Then love and nature sprang to birth,
And life and beauty filled the earth.

Awake, my soul! pour forth thy praise;
To that great Being anthems raise—
That wondrous Architect, who said,
"Be formed!" and this great orb was made

Since first I heard the blessed sound,
"To man my spirit's breath is given,"
I know, with thankfulness profound,
His sons we are—our home is Heaven.
O! give me tidings, that shall tell
When I may hope with Thee to dwell,
That I may quit this world of pain,
Nor seek to be its guest again.

A bird of holiness am I,
And from the vain world's net would I fly.
Shed, bounteous Lord! one cheering shower,
From Thy pure cloud of guiding power,
Before, e'en yet, the hour is come,
When my dust rises toward its home.

What are our deeds? All worthless all!
O! bring devotion's wine,
That strength upon my soul may fall
From drops Thy Thou mad'st divine.
The world's possessions fade and flee:
The only good is loving Thee.

—From the Persian of Hafiz.

Religious Miscellany.

THE SOUL IMMEDIATELY AFTER DEATH.*

But again, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus throws much light on this subject, and tells us something in addition of the souls of the wicked as well as of the good. "And it came to pass (we read) that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died and was buried: and in Hell (i.e. Hades) he lift up his eyes being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted and thou art tormented." (Luke xvi 19-31) Now it is confessed at once, that some of the circumstances mentioned in the parable, such as the dipping of the finger in water to cool the tongue are not to be taken literally, but in a figurative signification. Nevertheless, the description of the souls of the wicked and righteous being instantly conducted to misery or happiness can never be the mere drapery of the parable. Such a scenic representation of the future state, calculated as it is to deceive, would surely never have been given if it were entirely fiction. And when we recollect (as the learned Lightfoot has proved) that "it was universally believed amongst the Jews that pure and holy souls, when they left the body, went to happiness with Abraham," we cannot suppose that our Saviour would have placed the stamp of His approval on an unfounded fable, and thus confirmed them in their erroneous belief. And since the parable describes Lazarus as comforted, and Dives as tormented, at the same time that the five brethren were still resident on the earth,

it is clearly to be understood as showing the condition of the dead previous to the final resurrection.

But the evidence is not yet exhausted. We find St. Paul writing to the Philippians (Phil. i. 23, 24), "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better: notwithstanding to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." In those words the departing from the flesh is immediately followed by the being with Christ, and this is declared to be "far better," which it would hardly be if the soul was in a state of insensibility "like the bats in their dark winter-quarters," and indeed it is difficult to understand in what sense a sleeping unconscious soul may be said "to be with Christ."

The same Apostle writes again to the Corinthians, (2 Cor. v. 6, 8,) "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. (for we walk by faith, not by sight). We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." Where we also perceive that it was St. Paul's expectation, that he should no sooner be "absent from the body" than "present with the Lord," and this must evidently be meant of that separate state of the faithful between death and the resurrection, because he speaks of the soul as "absent from the body:" and the condition of being "present with the Lord" necessarily conveys the idea of a blissful and joyous communion, for "in His presence is fullness of joy." When, therefore, the Apostle, in other places, speaks of those who are "fallen asleep," or are "sleeping in Jesus," these expressions refer to the body, which is laid down in the grave as a bed, to awake and arise at the breaking of the resurrection morning; and they are used as the familiar phrases by which it was customary to speak of the departed; in the same way as burying-places for the body are called cemeteries, i. e. sleeping places. And where we read in one place of those who "sleep in Jesus," mention is made in another of those who are "dead in Christ."

There is another passage which ought not to be passed over in this investigation. "For Christ also had once suffered for sins . . . being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit. By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah" (1 Peter iii. 18, 19.) Many interpretations have been given of these mysterious words, but by far the most probable is that of Bishop Horsley. He concludes, on weighty critical reasons, which we cannot now explain, that the true translation is, "Being put to death in the flesh (i.e. His body), but being quick or alive in His spirit (i.e. His soul). In which also He went and preached to the spirits in safe-keeping." And he supposes the meaning to be, that the soul of Christ, after the death of His body, descended alive into that invisible mansion of the departed, where the souls of the righteous are preserved in safe-keeping under the shadow of God's right hand, and that He preached or proclaimed to them, not repentance or faith (for they must have repented and believed before they died, or they would never have gained admission into the place destined to receive the souls of the saints,) but the glad tidings that He had offered a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, and in the merit of His blood was about to appear in the Court of Heaven as their Intercessor, a proclamation which may be supposed to have sent a thrill of animation through the midst of Paradise, and have encouraged the tenants with new hopes of their perfect consummation and bliss both in body and soul at the resurrection. He adds, with regard to this proclamation being addressed to the souls of men who lived before the flood, that there is no intimation given in Scripture that the souls of those whose bodies perished in the deep are to perish everlastingly in the lake of fire. There is nothing to show that the earnest and lengthened exhortations of Noah were altogether without effect, and that some, ere it was too late, did not repent and cling to the alone anchor of salvation. And certainly the words "which sometime were disobedient" seems to point to such a conversion from their stubbornness. But if this be so, then after such an universal and indomitable manifestation of God's anger, we can well understand the peculiar fitness of

the publication of the story of the cross specially to those who, though involved in the general wreck of humanity, had previously listened to the warning voice of "the preacher of righteousness," and yielded themselves captives to the Spirit of God. And

I think I have observed (says Bishop Horsley) in some parts of Scripture an anxiety, if the expression may be allowed, of the sacred writers to convey direct intimations that the antediluvian race is not uninterested in the redemption and the final retribution. It is for this purpose, as I conceive, that in the description of the general resurrection it is mentioned, with a particular emphasis, that "the sea gave up her dead," which I cannot be content to understand of the few persons, few in comparison of the whole of mankind, lost at different times by shipwreck—a poor circumstance to find a place in the magnificent images which surround it: but of the myriads who perished in the general deluge, and found their tomb in the waters of the raging ocean."

The above are the chief passages which our standard divines have adduced to prove that "the spirits of just men made perfect," (Heb. xii. 23,) or who have finished their earthly course, not only subsist, but also enjoy felicity, inferior only to that complete bliss which they will finally receive in heaven, when they will no longer "see through a glass darkly, but face to face." (1 Cor. xiii. 12.) "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth, yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." (Rev. xiv. 13.)

And it cannot but be a great confirmation of this doctrine, that while there is nothing in the writings of orthodox Christian authors of the first three centuries to support the unscriptural doctrine of purgatory, and the other "fond things vainly invented," which accompany it; yet "I do affirm (to use the words of Bishop Bull) the consistent and constant doctrine of the Primitive Church to be this, that the souls of all the faithful, immediately after death, enter into a place and state of bliss far exceeding all the felicities of this world, though short of that more consummate perfect beatitude of the kingdom of heaven, with which they are to be crowned and rewarded in the resurrection: and so, on the contrary, that the souls of all the wicked are presently after death in a state of very great misery, and yet dreading a far greater misery at the day of judgement." And that this is the doctrine of our own branch of the Church Catholic will be clear from a single quotation from the Burial Service: "Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of them that depart hence to the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh are in joy and felicity, we give thee hearty thanks, for that it has pleased thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world, beseeching thee that it may please thee shortly to accomplish the number of thy elect, and to hasten thy kingdom, that we, with all those who are departed in the true faith of thy holy name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

And what indeed can be more full at once of warning to the impenitent sinner, and of comfort to the earnest and striving Christian than this? The one may well tremble as he hears how, when Judas by transgression fell, "he went to his own place," the place allotted to the souls of the lost, how, as it seems, no respite, no reprieve was granted him, but as soon as his guilty soul was disengaged from his body, he was borne away to be reserved like (the fallen angels) in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. The good man, on the other hand, will be animated for the dread encounter with "the last enemy" by the certainty that he will speedily be ushered, not into a place of purgatorial pangs, where the remainder of sin may be cleansed away by fire, but into the receptacle for the blessed, where a great multitude of beloved ones are awaiting his arrival, "for without us they shall not be made perfect," and when "the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs," are already assembled. *Churchmans Magazine.*

* Concluded from last week.