

1, 1887.

July 21, 1887

time. Until we believe in the heart, that missions are going to be a success, there is no use in having them.

QUASI-HIGH CHURCH IRREVERENCE.

SIB.—I was very sorry to read, in your issue of July 7th, a letter from Mr. Clifton, in reference to St. Barnabas. I do not think that it helps the matter to publish it throughout the country in the columns of a newspaper, and as Mr. Clarke has really just commenced his work, he ought to get a fair trial. As regards the building itself, it is of course in a most unfinished condition, owing to the want of funds, no doubt, but will, I think, when completed make a dignified church. Room was a necessity, and architectural considerations will come into operation with more money. I must deny that Mr. Clarke is irreverent. He is nervous, and perhaps unnecessarily alive to a sense of his responsibilities, but his manner struck me as particularly reverent. At present, he has all the responsibility of the services on his own shoulders. As time goes on, all the details will settle themselves, and Mr. Clarke will be relieved from all but the service itself. As far as the prayers are concerned, I think the difficulty arises from the unfinished state of the chancel, and the want of a proper kneeling stool. This will, no doubt, soon be remedied. I don't think Mr. Clifton can fairly apply the expression "a young clergyman" to Mr. Clarke. He is a man of considerable experience, and has, moreover, been very acceptable to every congregation to which he has ministered. As regards the administration of the Holy Communion to two persons, I think that even that is defensible. The rubric says three or four according to the priests' discretion. Another rubric says that persons intending to communicate, shall send in their names beforehand. If this is not done, how can the priest know how many intend communicating? If two people take the trouble to get up early and go to church, on a cold morning for instance, why should they be deprived of the Holy Communion, because a third person would not take the same trouble? I may say that if Mr. Clifton knew the whole history of the parish, the difficulties in the separation from St. Anne's, the deadness of that parish, the small income of the church, etc., he would join the churchmen of Toronto in devout thankfulness that Mr. Clarke has been enabled to get on as satisfactorily as he has done. If Mr. Clifton visits St. Barnabas in a year or two, and finds the service faulty, then let him find fault, but at the beginning of a church's career, it is the duty of every churchman to help and sympathize, instead of blaming and criticizing in the way Mr. Clifton has done. Yours truly, F. G. PLUMMER.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

7TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY. JULY 24TH 1887. Divinely Called.

Passages to be read.—Numbers xi. 16-27; xiii-10.

Service of some kind is rendered by every one, no matter how high his position. Kings and Queens are the servants of the Most High God; and under them, in various places of trust, are persons appointed for particular duties. Some work with their hands, others with their heads; some remain at home, others are sent abroad; some are in high and honored places, others have low stations and common duties. Now all servants of Her Gracious Majesty, the Queen, must be appointed or chosen by the State. They cannot choose themselves. Another thing may be noticed. They must all be interested in the Queen's business, and must put that first, otherwise they are unfaithful servants.

To-day our lesson describes how certain servants, not of man, but of God, were appointed. I.—Help for God's Prophet.—You remember Moses' sorrow when Israel murmured. He longed to be rid of the leadership. Indeed he even wished to die. Wisely, however, he cast his burden upon the Lord (xi. 11-15); and God showed him that what he wanted was more faith. God also promised him assistance in looking after the multitudes of Israel. By Jethro's advice, helpers to Moses had been appointed (Ex. xviii. 25, 26,) but they were merely rulers, or judges. Teachers or prophets were now wanted, men possessed of spiritual gifts.

So an assembly of the people was held before the tabernacle, and the presence of God, in the form of a cloud, was again witnessed. Moses and seventy chosen elders drew near, and God poured upon these seventy men His Spirit, and gave them wisdom and understanding. By this sign, known to and witnessed by all the multitude, through their prophesying, the people understood that the seventy were prophets—not simply rulers under Moses—but servants of God.

One endeavored to stop them, and jealous of the honour of Moses, informed him of their doings. But the answer of Moses showed that he possessed the true spirit of a servant of God. He did not care for himself. His chief thought, his sole desire, was the glory of God, and the good of the people. And so he said to this messenger: "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His spirit upon them," (Numb. xi. 29).

II.—Jealousy of God's Prophet.—One might have thought that now Moses would have peace and quietness. But fresh trouble springs up. Two of his own family complain. They raise their voices against Moses because of his wife (xii. 1). Miriam is probably the leader. Their desire is to be equal to Moses. They have not the spirit of which Christ speaks (St. Luke xiv. 11). But God hears their murmurings. Moses, Aaron and Miriam are called into His presence. He shows what honour He will put upon Moses, and how his place is higher than that of a prophet. To a prophet He will make Himself known in visions: to Moses He will speak mouth to mouth, and not in dark speeches. (Numb. xii. 6-8).

God has spoken. Aaron and Miriam tremble. The cloud departs from the Tabernacle, and, looking upon her, Aaron perceives that Miriam has been struck with leprosy for her sin. At once he turns to Moses and begs him to intercede for her with God. Moses then prays for the sister who has wronged him, and after seven days, this awful disease is removed, and Miriam restored.

Two lessons may be learned from the narrative:— 1. How God's servants are called, i.e. by Divine choice. 2. What spirit they should possess, i.e. to seek always God's honour and glory.

8TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY. JULY 31st, 1887.

A Land to be Possessed.

Passage to be Read—Numbers xiii. 17-27.

Long before the Israelites left Egypt, God promised that He would not only deliver them "out of the house of bondage," but also that He would bring them into a land flowing with milk and honey, where they should be free, possessing the land for themselves. The journey to the land was a long and difficult one (Deut. i. 19), but at length we find them arrived at its very borders, in the Wilderness of Paran by Kadesh.

I. On the Threshold of the Land.—Perhaps they need a rest after their long journey. Yet surely they are too eager to enter and take possession. Do they not remember what God told them about the goodness of the land, (Exod. iii. 8, 17), and His promise (Exod. xxiii. 23) that they should overcome the inhabitants thereof? Moses, their great leader, encourages them to enter at once, fearing nothing, but believing God's promise, and trusting in Him (Deut. i. 20-21). Alas for the unbelief of this people! Why do they so frequently distrust and rebel against God? Again they are unwilling to take Him at His word. They will send out spies to see if it is really so good a country as God has proclaimed it to be, and whether the inhabitants are such that they may hope to overcome them (vv. 18-20). Moses, not perceiving, perhaps, from the terms in which the request for the spies is made (Deut. i. 52) the unbelief underlying their action, willingly assents to their desire (Deut. i. 23); while God, yielding to their weakness (see a similar case in S. Matt. xix. 8), commands that the messengers be sent (v. 1).

II. The Search, (xv. 21-25).—Twelve leading men are chosen, as God directs, a man from each tribe (xv. 1-2). These, climbing the mountains of "the south country," and descending again, probably into the Jordan Valley, pursue their course northward till they came to "Rehob at the entering in of Hamath." (v. 21 R.V.) Then, turning southward from the mountains of Lebanon and Hermon, they pass through the centre of the Promised Land, by the fertile hills and valleys of the later Galilee, Samaria and Judea, covered at that day, probably more than at present, with the vine, the fig and the pomegranate. Arriving at length at Hebron, their feelings are doubtless deeply moved at the sight of the ancient city of Abraham, but they perceive it is surrounded by high and strong walls, and is inhabited by giants. Gathering a cluster of grapes and other fruit at Eschol as they pass along (v. 24) they at last return to the camp after an absence of forty days.

III. The Report, (vv. 25-28).—How eagerly the people are waiting for them! How fast spreads the news that they have come! How quickly the whole assembly gathers round them! Then to Moses and the people their report is made. The land surely does "flow with milk and honey," as God had said. But the people are strong, the cities are walled and great, and giants dwell in the land. The Israelites are distressed, but Caleb and Joshua encourage them, saying, "Let us go up at once and possess the land, for we are well able to overcome it" (v. 80). What if

there are difficulties before us, has not God promised that we shall overcome them? (Exod. xxiii. 23, 24). But the rest of the spies misrepresent the land, saying "It eateth up the inhabitants thereof:" exaggerate the strength of the inhabitants, saying, "All the people we saw are men of great stature, and we in comparison with them were but as grasshoppers," so that "we be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we." Thus two of the spies were believers and two unbelievers. Which will the people follow? This we shall see next time. But what a pity they did not at first believe God's word and act upon it, instead of desiring to test its truth by sending spies into the land.

Family Reading.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE.

(Continued.)

Now we have to discuss this subject from all points of view, but mainly from the direction of objections. Men love objections; and so they say there are difficulties, and absurdities, and errors, and contradictions in the Bible. You have all heard such assertions. After speaking once in the city of Boston, an ex-minister came to me and told me that the Bible was not true, for there was that story which Moses told about the quails. Israel lusted after flesh, and the Lord sent them quails to eat, and they fell by the camp a day's journey on each side, or over a territory forty miles across, and they were two cubits deep on the ground, and the Israelites ate them for a full month. I have in my possession an infidel paper which was published in Boston, in which there is about a column of arguments and figures on this "quail story;" giving an estimate of the number of bushels of quails that were piled up over the country, and showing that when they were divided among the host of Israelites, each one would have 2,888,648 bushels of quails, which they were to eat during the month; giving each poor Israelite 69,620 bushels of quail to eat at each meal for thirty days, and therefore the Bible was not true! [Great laughter and applause.] That is the sort of food our skeptical friends love to eat. That is the meat on which these Cæsars grow so wondrous great.

I said to this gentleman, "The Bible does not say any such thing!" He replied that it certainly did; but I answered that it did not say any such thing. He insisted that it did. "Well," said I, "find it!" And when you ask an infidel to find anything in the Bible, you generally have him. He could not find the place; so I turned over to the eleventh chapter of Numbers, and there read that instead of the birds being packed like cordwood on the ground, three feet deep, the account says that the Lord brought the quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were "two cubits high," or about three feet high upon, or above the face of the earth. That is, instead of flying overhead and out of reach, they were brought in about three feet high, where any one could take as many of them as he chose. And this skeptical friend had got the birds packed solid, three feet deep, over a territory forty miles across. As if I should say that a flock of wild geese flew as high as a church spire, and some one should insist that they were packed solid from the ground up, a hundred feet high! This is a sample of the kind of arguments infidels bring to prove that the Bible is not true!

The book, to my mind, bears the marks of inspiration in the foresight which it exhibits. This book foretells things. You cannot do that. You cannot tell what will be next year, or next week. "The spirits" cannot tell who will be the next President, or governor, or emperor. They may tell a great many things which are past. They may tell you who your grandmother was, and may copy the inscription on your grandfather's gravestone, and may tell things which are written in the family record. They may reveal many things in the past—for the devil knows about the past—but they cannot foretell the future. I did hear of one spiritual medium who foretold her own death, and she died within a few hours; but when they got the stomach-pump, they pumped out of her sto-

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