

Verses 18 and 19. The American must go abroad to the peasantry of Russia or India or China to get any conception of the mental and moral hopelessness of the common people in the provinces of the Roman empire in the first century. The message of Christ to this people was a message of hope. Glad tidings to the poor which meant better opportunities, a larger distribution of wealth, more universal comfort. Comfort to the broken-hearted—hope at the open grave, flowers for escape, and the smile of anticipated meeting mingled with the tears of present separation. Deliverance to the captives—the translation of government from a military to an industrial and social organization. Recovery of sight to the blind—hospitals, asylums for the unfortunate, and for the mentally blind universal systems of public education. Liberty for body, soul, and spirit. This was Christ's mission which he fulfilled while he lived, and left to his followers as their heritage.—*Lyman Abbott.*

As the restored health of his patients is a better argument of skill in a physician than labored examinations and certificates; as the testimony of the almanac that summer comes with June is not so convincing as is the coming of summer itself in the sky, in the air, in the fields, on hill and mountain; so the power of Christ's Gospel in the world is the best evidence of its divine origin. What blessed changes does it work in the world's history!—*Beecher.*

Verses 22. "Is not this Joseph's son?" It is not from castles so much as cabins, from princes so much as from the people, that reformers and patriots spring. Luther came out of a miner's hut; and while the German boy sang in the streets for his bread, John Knox earned his by teaching. Wallace and William Tell, Hampden and George Washington embarked in the cause of freedom with little else but their lives to lose. The noblest sacrifices of piety and patriotism have been made by such as had not a drop of noble blood in their veins. Scotland's history illustrates this. Her middle class and peasantry dyed scaffolds in blood and kept her banner flying till liberties civil and sacred were secured.

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

Safely through another week,
Come, said Jesus' sacred voice,
Jesus is tenderly calling thee.
I heard the voice of Jesus,
I was a wandering sheep.

No. 2.

Art thou weary?
Hail, to the Lord's anointed.
How sweetly sounds the call,
O what amazing words of grace.
He was not willing.

The Naturalist in Palestine.

There is no country in the world which presents such a unique field for the naturalist. In Palestine we have gathered, focussed in one little narrow corner, specimens from every part of the whole world. In fact, when we are in one part of Palestine we find ourselves in an Alpine region, and in another part we find ourselves in a tropical outlier, in the Jordan valley. The fact is that there is no spot in the world that I am aware of where you can bring together so closely the animals, the birds, the insects, the land shells, and the plants of the far north, of the tropic, and what we call the Germanic region—the temperate zone. The reason of it is this: Palestine, in the first place, possesses lofty mountains. The peaks, which reach about 10,000 feet in height, are covered with all but perpetual snow. I have waded through snow on the top of Mount Hermon in the middle of August. From these two mountain ranges, the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, or Hermon, which are a spitting of the great Syrian range which comes down from the gates of Syria, you have first a long range, gradually diminishing in elevation, but flattening and broadening out, which forms in succession the Highlands of Galilee, Samaria, and Judea. Then, on the other side, you have Mount Hermon running down into Bashan and flattening out again, while the prolongation of Lebanon is lost in the plateau of the Tih, as it is called.

Between these two ranges you have a phenomenon unique on the earth's surface. You have a deep fissure, a rent, the surface of which is about 1,300 feet below the level of the sea, known in the Hebrew as Ciccar, by the natives as the Ghor, and by ourselves as the Jordan valley. You find a tropical climate all around the Red Sea and in the lower Jordan valley. The result is, while I am standing under Banias, at Tell Kadi, the ancient Laish, or Dan, I can look up and see the snow-clad top of Hermon, with its bears and Alpine plants and birds. I am standing about 200 feet below the level of the sea, with papyrus waving round me. I look down into the Jordan valley, into a region peopled by semi-tropical plants and animals, while in the middle of the whole country and in the plains are what are called the German fauna and flora, that is the same as in the Mediterranean countries.—*Charles Tristram, in the Natural History of Palestine.*