

South's Department.

SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS.

L. EDMON.

414. Edom was another name for Esau. On what occasion was it given to him?—*Genesis*.

415. The Edomites sprung from Esau, or Edom, and were inhabitants of Mount Seir, the place in which Edom fixed his residence. From what passage do you ascertain this?—*Genesis*.

416. The Edomites and the Israelites being descended from two brothers, the latter naturally expected that on their return from Egypt to the Land of Promise, a free passage should be given them through the country of Edom. Can you state the reasonable but respectful request which Moses made on this occasion to the king of Edom? and the unceremonious answer which he received in return?—*Numbers*.

417. When Isaac pronounced his blessing on his sons, he declared that Esau or his descendants, the Edomites, should be in subjection to the descendants of Jacob. This event was partially fulfilled in the days of Saul, when he is described as having vexed Edom; and more fully in the days of David, his successor. Can you point out the three passages which refer to these events?—*1 and 2 Samuel and 1 Kings*.

418. In the same blessing pronounced by Isaac, though it was declared that Edom should serve Jacob, yet it was still added, "And it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck." Where do we find the fulfilment of this declaration, in the days of both Jehoram and Ahaz?—*2 Chronicles*.

419. When the Israelites were carried captives into Babylon, the Edomites, though no longer subjected to Israel, are still described as inveterately and malignantly respecting Jerusalem, "Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation of it." Where does this passage occur?—*Psalms*.

420. Though there was this continued hostility between Israel and Edom, from what Scriptural injunction does it appear that it was the divine will that fraternal peace and amity should subsist between these kindred nations?—*Deuteronomy*.

CHURCH CALENDAR.

May 19.—WHITSUNDAY.
20.—Monday in Whitsun-week.
21.—Tuesday in do.
26.—Trinity Sunday.

THE PLAGUE OF EYAM.*

The value and importance of vital religion are in nothing more remarkably manifested than in the entire acquiescence in the Divine will, and the implicit trust in the Divine goodness, which such religion is so eminently calculated to produce; and he has good reason indeed to be dissatisfied with his spiritual state, who is not content to drink without murmuring the cup, however bitter, which his heavenly Father hath mingled, and who does not realise the truth of the declaration, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee." It has seldom been my privilege to read a more remarkable instance of such submission and trust than that which presented itself in the devoted minister, of whom a brief notice is here given; and who testified, under circumstances the most trying, the strength of christian principle: while he holds out, especially to those who, like himself, are peculiarly consecrated to the service of the sanctuary, the propriety, or rather the absolute duty, of being ready at all seasons, and under all circumstances, to administer to the temporal and spiritual necessities of those committed to their care. It is to be regretted, indeed, that more is not known of this excellent man: enough, however, is handed down to convince us that he was a fearless and faithful shepherd.

The parish of Eyam, in the High Peak of Derbyshire, diocese of Lichfield, was visited in the year 1666 by that dreadful pestilence which wrought such havoc in the metropolis. It was introduced into the parish in a bale of woollen stuff, sent from London to a tailor, who, with his family, was the first to fall a victim to the disease. It is needless to add, that the neighbourhood was thrown into the utmost consternation, as the whole kingdom was in a state of alarm, lest the ravages of the pestilence should extend far and wide; for it was feared that the people of Eyam, in endeavouring to escape from the plague, might carry the infection into the surrounding districts; and this, probably, would have been the case, had not the rector, the Rev. William Mompesson, with the greatest presence of mind, collected the inhabitants together, adjured them not to leave their homes, pointed out the duty of not being instrumental in causing the pestilence to spread, and stated his own fixed determination to remain among them. His wife, a person of a weak habit of body, and at that time showing evident symptoms of consumption, he earnestly exhorted to remove to a distance, and to take with her their two young children. This excellent woman, however, could not be persuaded to leave her husband, or to shrink from what appeared to be a solemn duty. The children were removed to the house of some friends who resided at a distance, and were preserved.

The village of Eyam, while the plague lasted, was necessarily cut off from all intercourse with the neighbourhood, and the most disastrous consequences might have arisen from the scarcity of provisions. Through the instrumentality of Mr. Mompesson, however, the Earl of Devonshire, then resident at Chatsworth, was led to provide a regular supply of food for the inhabitants. This was placed on the hills adjacent; and wells, or small reservoirs, are still shewn, where the money paid for the provisions was deposited, to be purified by the water before it was touched by the receiver: and to the honour of the people, and not a little to the influence of the worthy rector, it would appear that they never transgressed the boundary-line, which for a season excluded them from the rest of the world. The sick were removed to small airy huts, where every attention was paid to them. The service in the church was necessarily interrupted; but worship was regularly maintained at a rock still called Cucklett's Church, around which the people assembled, and from which their faithful pastor ceased not to prepare them for that change which might speedily take place. Is it possible to conceive a more solemn meeting for prayer and instruction, or circumstances better calculated to render the heart of the hearer more prepared for the reception of the good seed? Doubtless not a few were seriously impressed, and, amidst the fearful havoc of the destroyer, were awakened to newness of life.

*From the Church of England Magazine.

While Mr. Mompesson was thus actively engaged in the performance of the solemn duties to which he was called, and fearlessly exposing himself to the infection of the dreadful miasma, it pleased God that his beloved wife should fall a victim to the disease, and enter into rest. She was the daughter of Ralph Carr, of Cockon, in the county of Durham; and a monument is still extant to her memory.—Such a loss was, if possible, increased by the peculiar circumstances in which the good pastor was placed.

A letter of Mr. Mompesson to Sir George Saville, Bart., patron of the living of Eyam, testifies strongly the excellence of his departed wife, and his own implicit trust in the Redeemer's merits in the immediate prospect of death.

To Sir George Saville, Bart.

"Eyam, Sept. 1, 1666.

"Honoured and dear Sir,—This is the saddest news that ever my pen could write! The destroying angel having taken up his quarters within my habitation, my dearest dear has gone to her eternal rest, and is invested with a crown of righteousness, having made a happy end.

"Indeed, had she loved herself as well as me, she had fled from the pit of destruction with her sweet babes, and might have prolonged her days, but that she was resolved to die a martyr to my interest. My drooping spirits are much refreshed with her joys, which I think are unutterable.

"Sir, this paper is to bid you a hearty farewell for ever, and to bring you my humble thanks for all your noble favours—and I hope that you will believe a dying man; I have as much love as honour for you, and I will bend my feeble knees to the God of heaven, that you, my dear lady, and your children, and their children, may be blessed with eternal and eternal happiness; and that the same blessing may fall upon my lady Sunderland and her relations.

"Dear Sir, let your dying chaplain recommend this truth to you and your family, that no happiness nor solid comfort can be found in this vale of tears like living a pious life; and pray ever retain this rule—never to do any thing upon which you dare not first ask the blessing of God upon the success thereof.

"Sir, I have made bold in my will with your name for an executor, and I hope that you will not take it ill. I have joined two others with you that will take from you the trouble. Your favourable aspect will, I know, be a great comfort to my distressed orphans. I am not desirous that they may be great, but good; and my next request is, that they may be brought up in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

"Sir, I thank God I am contented to shake hands with all the world, and have many comfortable assurances that God will accept me on account of his Son; and I find God more good than ever I thought or imagined; and I wish for my soul that his goodness were not so much abused and contemned.

"I desire, sir, that you will be pleased to make choice of an humble, pious man to succeed me in my parsonage; and could I see your face before my departure from hence, I would inform you which way I think he may live comfortably among his people, which would be some satisfaction to me before I die.

"Dear Sir, I beg your prayers, and desire you to procure the prayers of all about you, that I may not be daunted by all the powers of hell, and that I may have dying graces; that when I come to die, I may be found in a dying posture: and with tears I beg, that when you are praying for fatherless infants, you would then remember my two pretty babes.

"Sir, pardon the rude style of this paper, and if my head be discomposed, you cannot wonder at me. However, be pleased to believe that I am, dear sir, your most obliged, most affectionate, and grateful servant.

WILLIAM MOMPESON.

May the reader and writer of this imperfect sketch, when the hour of death is, or is supposed to be at hand, enjoy the same rich consolations, and the same gracious trust, which supported the excellent rector of Eyam.

The ravages committed by the plague soon rendered it necessary to bury the dead elsewhere than in the church-yard, which became incapable of receiving the bodies.—A correspondent of the "British Magazine," in 1832, states that "it would appear, from the very crowded accumulation of graves in the churchyard, many bearing date 1666, that for a time, at least, the dead were deposited there in the usual manner; but probably the space was soon occupied, and it was found necessary to inter the remainder wherever the relatives chose; for although now few memorials exist, within the memory of man, in several places, particularly in a small plot of ground close to the village, many grave-stones remained; but, with an unpardonable indecency and indifference, these sacred records of so interesting a period of parochial history have been removed and appropriated to other purposes. About three years ago, a few skeletons were discovered beneath the flooring of a barn, evidently placed there as a matter of convenience, without coffins or any other perceptible coverings. Besides the church-yard and the small plot of ground just alluded to, one other appears to have been a favorite burying-ground—it is called the Riley Gravestones, on an elevated, exposed hill, about half a mile from the village. Some years ago, numberless little sepulchral mounds were visible, but they are all obliterated; and nothing now remains to identify the spot, saving six headstones and a tomb, memorials of a whole family, who, with the exception of one boy, were carried off in eight days."

The plague began to decrease in September, and in two months had almost ceased. The following letter from Mr. Mompesson records his thankfulness to God for this great mercy:—

"To John Beilby, Esq., of — in Yorkshire.

"Eyam, Nov. 20, 1666.

"Dear Sir,—I suppose this letter will seem to you no less than a miracle, that my habitation is *inter vivos*. I was loath to affront you with a letter from my hands, therefore I made bold with a friend to transcribe these lines.

"I know that you are sensible of my condition—the loss of the kindest wife in the world, whose life was truly invaluable, and her end most comfortable. She was in an excellent posture when death came with his summons, which fills me with many comfortable assurances that she is now invested with a crown of righteousness. I find this maxim verified by too sad experience: "Bonum magis carendo quam fruendo cernitur." Had I been so thankful as my condition did deserve, I might yet have had my dearest dear in my bosom. But now, farewell all happy days, and God grant that I may repent my sad ingratitude! The condition of this place has been so sad, that I persuade myself it did exceed all history and example. I may truly say that

*"Good is more perceivable in the privation than in the enjoyment."

our town has become a Golgotha, the place of a skull; and had there not been a small remnant of us left, we had been as Sodom, and like unto Gomorrah. My ears never heard such doleful lamentations, my nose never smelled such horrid smell, and my eyes never beheld such ghastly spectacles. Here have been seventy six families visited within my parish, out of which two hundred and fifty-nine persons died! Now, blessed be God, all our fears are over; for none have died of the infection since the 11th of October, and all the pest-houses have been long empty. I intend, God willing, to spend most of this week in seeing all woollen cloths fumed and purified, as well for the satisfaction as for the safety of the country.

"Here hath been such burning of goods, that the like, I think, was never known; and, indeed, in this I think that we have been too precise. For my part, I have scarce left myself apparel to shelter my body from the cold, and have wasted more than needed, merely for example.

"As for my own part, I cannot say that I had ever better health than during the time of the dreadful visitation; neither can I say that I have had any symptoms of the disease. My man had the distemper; and upon the appearance of a tumour, I gave him several chemical antidotes, which had a very kind operation, and, with the blessing of God, kept the vomit from the heart; and after the rising broke, he was very well. My maid bath continued in health, which is as great a temporal blessing as could befall me; for if she had quailed, I should have been ill set to have washed, and to have gotten my own provisions.

"I know that I have your prayers, and question not but I have fared the better for them. I do conclude that the prayers of good people have rescued me from the jaws of death; and certainly I had been in the dust, had not omnipotency itself been conquered by some holy violence.

"I have largely tasted the goodness of the Creator, and, blessed be his name, the grim looks of death did never yet affright me. I always had a firm faith that my dear babes would do well, which made me willing to shake hands with the unkind froward world; yet I hope that I shall esteem it a mercy if I am frustrated of the hopes I had of a translation to a better place, and God grant that with patience I may wait for my change, and that I may make a right use of his mercies; as the one hath been tart, so the other hath been sweet and comfortable. I perceive by a letter from Mr. Newby, that you concern yourself very much for my welfare; I make no question but I have your unfeigned love and affection. I can assure you, that during all my troubles you have had a great deal of room in my thoughts.

"Be pleased, dear sir, to accept of the presentments of my kind respects, and impart them to your good wife, and all my dear relations. I can assure you that a line from your hand will be welcome to your sorrowful and affectionate nephew,

"W. MOMPESON."

Mr. Mompesson, thus mercifully preserved, was afterwards preferred to a prebendal stall in Southwell, and the rectory of Earling, Northamptonshire. The deanery of Lincoln was offered him, which, however, he refused in favour of his friend Dr. Fuller. In 1679 he married the widow of Chas. Newby, Esq., by whom he had two daughters, and died in 1708.

Among those who afterwards held the rectory of Eyam was the father of Miss Anna Seward, who was born there in the summer of 1757, according to Miss Seward, "five cottagers were digging in the healthy mountain above Eyam, which was the place of graves after the church-yard became too narrow a repository. Those men came to something which had the appearance of having once been linen. Conscious of their situation, they instantly buried it again. In a few days, they all sickened of a putrid fever, and three of the five died. The disorder was contagious, and proved mortal to numbers of the inhabitants. My father, who was then canon of Lichfield, resided in that city with his family at the period when the subtle, unextinguished, though much abused, power of the most dreadful of all diseases awakened from the dust, in which it had slumbered ninety-one years."

In 1766 Dr. Seward preached a centenary sermon in the church—composed, it is said, "with such a power of description, and such a pathetic appeal to the feelings of his auditors (many of whom had lost their ancestors by that dreadful visitation), that he was continually interrupted by the exclamations and tears of his audience."

Howard the philanthropist, previous to his last departure from England, visited Eyam, to obtain information relative to the ravages of the pestilence; and at his suggestion the remains of a beautiful cross, lying in the church-yard, and overgrown with docks and thistles, was replaced on its imperfect shaft.

In reading this brief sketch, we cannot but be reminded that scenes no less mournful than that now brought before us were not unfrequently but a few years since, when the pestilence, in another form, was permitted to visit our country. Through the tender mercy of a gracious God, the cholera for the present has left our shores—whether for a season, or for ever, is known unto Him alone. Should it ever be permitted to return, may every Christian minister be enabled to follow the example of Mr. Mompesson; and may all be prepared, with their lamps trimmed and their lights burning, whensoever it shall please Providence to call them away.

† Quailed (old English), fell sick.

TIDES.

To behold the ebbing and flowing of the tide, is an amusement ever new. By this contrivance of infinite wisdom (whatever second causes are employed to produce the effect) the whole mass of sea water is kept in continual motion, which, together with the salt contained in it, preserves it from corrupting (as it would do if stagnant) and poisoning the world. At one part of the day, therefore, the ocean seems to be leaving us, and going to other more favoured coasts; but at the stated period, as if it had only paused to recover itself, it returns again, by gradual advances, till it be arrived to its former height. There is an ebb and flow in all human affairs; and a turn of events may render him happy who is now miserable: the vessel which is stranded may yet be borne upon the waters, may put out again to sea, and be blessed with a prosperous voyage.—*Bishop Horne*.

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7-4f.

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