

mentous interest. It is not, "Come, and hear, and obey, that the wrath of the Almighty be averted." There is no intimation that his words are regarded by either party as offering them the choice of eternal life or of eternal death—of eternal life to those who adopt them as the practical rules of conduct, and of eternal death to those who carelessly receive an unholy neglect them. No; it is simply, "Come and hear," "Come" that your curiosity may be gratified, and "hear," that you may be able to judge of the teacher's merits; but it is not "come and hear," that your understanding may be enlightened and your heart converted. And the people are collected together, according to the coming of the people: gathered together, as they are in our own days, from any motive but the right, to exercise their critical faculty on the address, manner, attitude and doctrine of the minister, or the candidate for the ministry; to comply with a custom which has become necessary from habit; to set an example to their children or their inferiors; to keep up a character for decency and respectability in the estimation of the world; to escape the scandal of impiety; to follow in the track of the multitude; or to find in the services of religion, the means of passing away those slowly-moving hours of the Sabbath, which, in the cessation of all worldly business and amusements, would otherwise be left altogether destitute of occupation. "They sit before the prophet as the Lord's people."

As it is with our congregations, so it was with the congregations of Ezekiel. Humannature was still consistent with itself. There was the form without the reality of religion. His hearers attended to his word without any serious purpose of obedience. They individually brought no part of his discourse home to their own hearts. His moral precepts were not regarded as things addressed immediately to themselves, but as lessons by which their friends and companions might be improved. His remonstrances against sin were not received as matters in which they had any personal concern, but as most cutting sarcasms on the vices of their neighbours: while, as is the case at the present day in most instances, his earnest exhortations to repentance and his solemn denunciations of those judgments with which the Almighty was about to visit them if they persevered in the course of their iniquities, were listened to without any serious and practical application of their purport to their own lives and consciences; or, if they chanced to excite any emotion in the breast, were admired only for their eloquence, and then postponed as subjects for future consideration. "They heard the words of God, but they did them not."

Such could never be the object for which our Heavenly Father has granted us a revelation of His will, and appointed a permanent ministry to enforce it on our attention. Something infinitely more important was designed. Our Lord's purpose was, says St. Paul, "to purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." "We are begotten by the Word of Truth," says St. James, "that we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures." "We are," says St. Peter, "a chosen generation, that we might show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light." Reader, will your Sabbath worship and your every-day life stand the test of such passages? *Christian Treasury.*

LETTER FROM EGYPT.

EDFO, UPPER EGYPT.

IN one of my former letters allusion was made to prophecies referring to this land. There are others whose literal fulfilment we witness, and others which are this day illustrated by the testimony of past ages. Hosea predicts the captivity of Israel thus: "Ephraim shall return to Egypt." It follows of course that they shall be cut off from the privileges of God's house. A sad picture

is there given of a church forsaken of the presence and glory of her God. A nation with the dead for us and barren symbols of faith is left to silent desolation.

"They shall not offer wine to Jehovah, neither shall they be pleasing unto Him; their sacrifices shall be unto them as the bread of mourners; all that eat thereof shall be polluted for their bread: for their soul shall not come into the house of the Lord." Then he inquires of the result of this neglect of the sanctuary ordinances? "What will ye do in the solemn day, in the day of the feast of the Lord? For, lo, they are gone because of destruction. Egypt shall gather them up, MEMPHIS SHALL BURY THEM."

The remains of the largest cemetery on Earth is this day probably found at Memphis. I presume, from observation, that it is about ten miles in length, embracing many square miles. In one corner of it stand the everlasting PYRAMIDS! They are the noblest funeral monuments ever erected by man. Nothing was ever built to embalm the ashes of a mere worm, that cost so much treasure, so much toil, or so much blood. Nor to the end of the World will any thing, we presume, approach them in magnitude. The Pyramids, although enveloped in the mystery of antiquity, have been the object of unceasing and universal wonder and admiration for nearly 4000 years; still they are scarcely less wonderful than those which have been hewn out of the rocks, and concealed for ages. A tomb, one of hundreds scattered over leagues of this graveyard, discovered and opened by Colonel Vyse, is an object of art and beauty that astonishes every beholder. But we will allude to these things hereafter. How did Hosea know of the wide extent of this field of death? How could he have described the grandest of Earth's cemeteries, had not the Spirit of Jehovah inspired him? It is curious that amid these proud monuments, which filled the entire horizon west of Memphis, and which Jacob gazed upon and Joseph beheld, standing in all their glory, this child of faith could not consent that his father's dust should repose. The monarchs of earth had honoured these grounds by their ashes and their gold, but nothing could consecrate pagan ground, nothing could persuade Joseph to consent to either his or his father's dust in the sepulchres of the uncircumcised kings. This fact made the prophecy of Hosea still more emphatic to the Jews: "Ye shall be captives in a foreign land, and MEMPHIS SHALL BURY YOU." How intently the ancient Jew dreaded a foreign burial may be learnt from the fact that multitudes, for the last eighteen hundred years, having found themselves in a stranger land, far from the sacred soil where rests the dust of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, have sacrificed every thing to return and sleep with their fathers. Many have toiled a lifetime to obtain the means to return to Palestine, and die and be buried there. Thousands in every age have gotten just enough to pay their expenses to tread the consecrated soil, to behold Jerusalem, to enter one of their seven sacred cities, and then perish of starvation. The Holy Land is no place for charity, since the miserable dwellers there are so poor that to share their scanty pittance would probably be the death of giver and beggar. It is true that the Jews throughout the World send up once or twice a year a contribution to give bread to their wretched countrymen fortunate enough to reach the Holy Land, and yet numbers starve to death every year.

The Jewish banker, Sir Moses Montefiore, has opposed the missionaries so vigorously at Jerusalem, and contributed so liberally of his hoarded gold to feed the hungry children of Abraham, that at this very hour in Palestine, there are not a few Jews who sincerely, and religiously, and verily believe this Italian Hebrew to be the long promised SHILOH! Such is the midnight darkness that blinds the eyes and veils the hearts of these Jews. Such the straws to which the sinking heart of the desolate Jew clings. They esteem it a sad foreboding of eternal exclusion from the blessed presence of Jehovah, if their bodies should be excluded from sepulture in the sacred land. Hence the awful emphasis of these words of Jeremiah: "They have a desire to return to dwell there: for none shall return."—(Chap. xlv. 14.)

In Tuscany in the city of Pisa I saw quite a graveyard, all the soil of which had been brought from Palestine by those Jews who loved Italy for the treasures and pleasures there enjoyed. They were willing to remain among infidels, but their ashes must mingle with the consecrated soil, rendered holy by so many associations. There are multitudes who are not content with either dying or living out of the sacred territory. It is absolutely painful to see them in Rome, Cairo and Constantinople crowded up in their obscene quarters, servilely cringing at every threat, and begging to be permitted to live! But the heart aches to hear them mourning over their absence from their fatherland. Had they the means, as they have the desire, few or none would consent for a single day to dwell among the Gentiles. They have a common saying that, *He that dwells without the land of Israel is like one who has no God.*

In the following verse we are told that a great multitude of Jews dwelt in Pathos near On, the same as Heliopolis. In this city Jeremiah dwelt, and wrote his Lamentations, and a part of his prophecy: "Then all the men that knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwell in the land of Egypt, answered Jeremiah, saying, As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of Jehovah, WE WILL NOT HEARKEN UNTO THEE. But we will certainly burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and pour out drink-offering unto her, as we have done, for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil!" How exactly had dwelling with idolaters misled the people of God with their bold, daring spirit of rebellion. We can almost hear in these words the very echo of the infatuated Pharaoh: "Who is Jehovah that I should obey His voice? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go."

In the village of Elfo we found the full-filled memorials of these very sayings of the Holy Ghost. The temple here is the most perfect in all Egypt. Its proportions,—its lofty pinnacles, nearly one hundred feet high,—its lengthened courts, adorned with noble columns,—the spacious and numerous chambers for the priests, all covered with hieroglyphics and the most elaborate sculptures,—all indicate the wealth, energy, and superabundance of the ancient population. But, amid the countless figures there left, that of Apollonia, or Venus, the queen of heaven, stands conspicuous. True, the Hebrews might have learned to worship this Ashtaroth from nearer neighbours; yet, when all their fellow