

## MISCELLANEOUS.

## SCRIPTURAL ILLUSTRATION.

## PREDICTED DESOLATION OF BABYLON.

*Isaiah xiii. 21*—"But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there.

"In my second visit to Birs Nimrood, while passing rapidly over the last traces of the ruin-spread ground, at some little distance from the outer bank of its quadrangular boundary, my party suddenly halted, having descried several dark objects moving along the summit of the hill, which they construed into dismounted Arabs on the look out, while their armed brethren must be lying concealed under the southern brow of the mound. Thinking this very probable, I took out my glass to examine, and soon distinguished, that the causes of our alarm were two or three majestic lions taking the air upon the heights of the pyramid. Perhaps I never had beheld so sublime a picture to the mind as well as the eye. These were a species of enemy which my party were accustomed to dread without any panic fear; and while we continued to advance, though slowly, the hallooing of the people made the noble beasts gradually change their position, till in the course of twenty minutes they totally disappeared. We then rode close up to the ruins, and I had once more the gratification of ascending the awful sides of the Tower of Babel. In my progress I stopped several times to look at the broad prints of the feet of the lions, left plainly in the clayey soil, and by the track I saw that if we had chosen to rouse such royal game, we need not go far to find their lair.—But while thus actually contemplating these savage tenants, wandering amidst the towers of Babylon, and bedding themselves within the deep cavities of her once magnificent temple, I could not help reflecting how faithfully the various promises had been fulfilled which relate in the Scriptures to the utter fall of Babylon, and abandonment of the place, verifying in fact the very words of *Isaiah, wild beasts of the desert shall lie there.*—*Sir Robert Kar Porter.*

## THE REV. J. W. FLETCHER.

A clergyman in his advanced age, recalling to mind the intercourse which, when a youth, he had with Mr Fletcher, observes—"On all these visits I derived the highest pleasure and education. I not only had the opportunity of hearing many excellent sermons, but of seeing him in the privacies of life; and I know not which most to venerate, his public or private character. Grave and dignified in his deportment and manners, he yet excelled in all the courtesies of the accomplished gentleman. In every company he appeared as the least, the last, and the servant of all. From head to foot he was clothed with humility; while the heavenly-mindedness of an angel shone from his countenance, and sparkled in his eyes. His religion was without labour, and without effort; for christianity was not only his great business, but his very element and nature. As a mortal man, he doubtless had his errors and failings; but what they were, they who knew him best would find it difficult to say, for he appeared as an instrument of heavenly minstrelsy, always attuned to the master's touch. In no one point was he observedly defective. But what above all endeared him to my esteem, love, and veneration, was his personal and private conduct:—he most excelled in that in which other christians are most defective; and this, I conceive to be the reason why his friends speak of him with an ardour of affection; with a degree of veneration almost bordering on adoration; with a feeling which I can compare only to that which we entertain for patriarchs, prophets, and apostles. In every view he was a great man, and entitled to rank in the very first class of ministers; but it was his goodness, which, even in the ever blessed God, is the acme of moral greatness, that raised him above all the ministers of his day.—Never can we forget the sweet spirit and fire of piety his conversation kindled in our breasts, and which is re-kindled and raised into a flame at every recollection or mention of his virtues."—*Church.*

## ON KEEPING CHURCHES OPEN.

A writer in the British Magazine for July, on this subject, thus expresses himself—

I would suggest it to the consideration of your readers, whether the existing practice of closing our churches, except during the hours of common prayer, be not an abuse? My impression is, that it is so; and I believe most churchmen who, in travelling on the continent, have had an opportunity of comparing the two systems, will agree with me. The first effect of our system is, that no man among us thinks of resorting to the house of God for private prayer. In fact, however he might desire to do so, we preclude the possibility. It is not in the power of every man, like the venerable Hooker, "every Ember week to take from the parish clerk the key of the church-door, into which place he retired every day, and locked himself up for many hours; and did the like most Fridays and other days of fasting." I believe it would require some experience to enable any man to estimate the degree of injury which has resulted to the devotion of our church from the disuse of this habit. It is the remark of one skilled in the practice of devotion, "If you were to use yourself, as far as you can, to pray always in the same place; if you were to reserve that place for devotion, and not allow yourself to do anything common in it \* \* \* this kind of consecration of it as a place holy unto God would have an effect upon your mind, and dispose you to such a temper as would very much assist your devotion." The force of this remark I never duly felt until I made it my practice, in a tour on the continent, to resort to the ever-open churches for my daily prayers. Never shall I forget the assistance which I derived, in restraining wandering thoughts, and fixing my mind on him whose presence I was seeking. Such, Sir, was the effect on one, to whom God's providence has given ample opportunities of retirement during his whole life—for never since childhood have I wanted the means of "entering into my closet, and, when I had shut the door, praying to my Father which is in secret." But now let me ask (and I would put the question specially to the parochial clergy) how large is the proportion of our population who have these opportunities of retirement? Let the village priest say how many of his cottagers have room enough, in their narrow dwellings, to retire from the noise of children, and from the interruption of neighbours. And yet, of all classes of the poor, these have the greatest opportunities. As the alternative, I will ask the most devotional man, whither he would retire for prayer if his lot had been cast in the crowded courts or alleys of London, or of any of our manufacturing towns? Would he not find it a most blessed opportunity, if in this difficulty he could betake himself to the calm and solemn atmosphere of a cathedral or a parish church, and there for a while forget the cares, the noise, and bustle, of a poor man's life in town? How great a privilege would this be to many of our pious poor on the Sunday morning, before the hour of public worship, if at no other time. Whither do they actually betake themselves? I cannot say: but this I know, that the want of means of retirement has been assigned to me as a most serious injury by a country parishoner.

## THE GOOD OLD WAY.

"I am the way, the truth, and the life," saith our Saviour Christ, "no man cometh to the Father but by me," but if he enter in by me, he shall be saved.

That this is a good way, there can be no doubt; that it is the old way, is certain. It is therefore, the "good old way," by which alone we can arrive at heaven. And as we can only insure eternal happiness through Christ, we must come to him in his own appointed way, and seek him by his own appointed means. He "is the door of the sheepfold," in which all of his faithful disciples are gathered. He is the Head and Bishop of the Church he has ordained.

But as "the invisible things are known by the things that are made," so He has seen fit to represent the invisible Church Triumphant in Heaven, by a visible Church Militant on earth. And as all above are joined to the one, so it is the duty of all below to unite with the other.

Some may excuse themselves by saying, "I am not fit to join the Church." To such I would say, fellow-sinner, you have no promise of to-morrow; this night thy soul may be required of thee. And your own heart condemn you, how can you answer at the judgment seat of Christ? To delay this duty until you shall feel yourselves worthy of so high an honor, is looking for a time that will never come. For, the most humble Christians must say, "We do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies."

Others excuse themselves by alleging the faults and foibles, the crimes, corruption, and dissension of professing Christians, as an excuse for not professing Christ. Who art thou, O man, that thinkest to plead before the bar of heaven, the sinfulness of thy fellow-mortal as an extenuation of your own guilt? "Cannot join the Church for its impurity!" Pharisaic boasting this, and an evidence of the rebellion of thy heart. "Ashamed to join the Church!" and this an excuse for disobeying one of the commands of Christ. Away with such self-righteousness. How dare you remain in the world? Knowest thou not that it "lieth in wickedness, and that the wicked are reserved to the day of destruction, to the blackness of darkness forever?"

The invitation is to all; "Come, for he is able to save all that come unto him." We must come with our whole hearts; for he will not receive the homage of a divided heart. Come in youth, for a whole life is short to serve one who laid down his life for us.—And again, we must come to Christ in his own appointed way; this is the road that leads directly to the blissful regions above. We may be told of a shorter cut—a road of less difficulty, but we heed it not. Ours is the way which has been travelled for centuries, by saints and martyrs, and no one who kept straightforward has ever been lost. But of those who have turned aside to try the shorter cut, we never heard of them more. Sure we are they never have passed the portals of bliss. Therefore listen not to the syren song, charm it never so wisely.—*Chronicle of the Church.*

## THE "SINIAN."

I knew one instance of a man who prayed very fervently to live a little longer. He had been a labouring man—and, for a labouring man, "pretty well to do." He had never had sickness—was strong, stout, hale; of, perhaps, seventy-two or three years of age. He then had a paralytic attack, and sent for me. He continued in a doubtful state some time. At every visit I paid him, he earnestly prayed and hoped to be allowed once more to sit in the sun before his cottage-door, and then he would be so thankful, and so good! How seldom are these self-formed resolutions of much avail! He was able to sit and sun himself at his cottage-door, and often did I sit there with him, and remind him how he had prayed for that as a blessing, and that it had been granted. But by degrees I found him pass from silence to sullenness. I was evidently not a welcome visitor. He was enabled to do more than sun himself at his door—he was able to walk about his little garden. At length I observed that, as I entered the cottage, he would make his escape at another door. On one occasion his wife, nearly his own age, shut the door by which he would have escaped, purposely, so that he had no help for it, but to seat himself sullenly in his chimney-corner, and endure my presence. I saw him, as he thought unobserved, clench his aged fist at his wife, and put on an expression of imbecile malignity. This a little roused the old woman, who told him he was a bad man, and had had friends—that he had better listen to the parson. This put me on the inquiry; but first I questioned him as to what had been the cause of his change—did he not believe as he formerly did?—He did not know that he did; all he knew was, that some people believed very differently, and he was not afraid to die. Upon inquiry, I then found that a workman had come out from a neighbouring town, and having work to do at a gentleman's house about a mile off, had taken lodgings within a few doors of this poor cottager. The old woman said he had called himself a "Sinian;" and I verily believe she thought it meant an encourager of sin; "and she reads a book here," said she, "that nobody can't