

OUR NATION.

T. H. BLENUM.

We have just reason to thank God and congratulate ourselves when we consider the character of the nation of which we are component parts. It is because the British empire has ranged herself on the side of true greatness; because she has burst the fetters of cruel tyranny and acknowledged in every man the right to exercise his inherent power and faculties consistently with the good of his fellows, that she is greater, better and more to be honored than any other nation of the earth. No British subject is a slave, performing reluctantly the tyrant's will; but we are freemen and are at liberty and encouraged to act upon the noble impulses which God has revealed to us, and has implanted in our souls, impulses which are ever stimulated and advanced by liberty, but deadened and blighted by the withering influences of servitude. Her government is not an instrument for the oppression of her people, but the bulwark of their liberties.

It is right on this jubilee year, when millions of patriotic hearts are filled with a proud joy, and deep gratitude, as they celebrate the sixtieth year of the reign of our most gracious sovereign lady the Queen—it is right that we should indulge sentiments so fitted to call forth the noblest and purest patriotic emotions of our souls, and the higher and finer sensibilities of our nature. It is right that we should encourage reflections which make us feel our indebtedness and our dependence upon God for the exaltedness of our position among the nations.

Whoever reads the history of England in her steady, unswerving development in the direction of civilization, and has within him the germ of an honest principle, must be made a better citizen. In the history of nations, it is evident that the hand of God has used the British nation as an instrument. And if she be an instrument, there must be some noble end and object in view. That end is the salvation of the world, and that object is the diffusing of the light of truth among the nations. We do not believe this is idle speculation. For this purpose our nation has been blessed. For this purpose there has been an enlarged view and an ever-increasing insight in regard to the divine law. For centuries there has been a gradual progressive development in literature, science and civilization, until to-day we have a government without a parallel in history—a government of which no record of antecedent nations can afford a precedent.

Our empire stands to-day the queen-*orb* in the constellation of nations, and, like the star of Bethlehem, points to the elevation and redemption of the world. She radiates from her centre the brilliant coruscations of wisdom and knowledge, which illuminate the universe with their light, and give life and animation to her laws and her literature. By the ever-increasing power of her influence tyrants have been shorn of their

despotism, the funeral dirge has been sung over the grave of tyranny, and millions have been made to rejoice at the dawn of freedom, and salvation from ignorance and superstition. The waves of the world's oceans have borne into her lap the wealth of nations. Every navigable stream bears upon its bosom her ships laden with the products of her industry. Foremost in the van of civilization, she carries in her train the powers of the world linked by the ties of a common interest.

Again, let us thank God that we live in a Christian land. Our civilization is advancing toward the divine perfection. The lamp of eternity is burning on our every shore, illuminating the pathway that leads to the realms of eternal joy. Our inspiration is from the word of God, and gives an impetus to our literature and government that has raised us so high in the scale of the divine law. It is doubtless to the great fountain of virtue, the Bible, that we are indebted for the grand and ennobling principles upon which rests the proud fabric of our government, and it is to the influence of this "Book of books" that we can best trust our preservation.

A SEEMING CONTRADICTION.

W. H. HARDING.

"And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no man." (Acts ix. 7.)

"And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me." (Acts xxii. 9.)

The above two verses seem to contain a contradiction: one stating that the men who journeyed with Saul heard a voice, the other that they did not. No doubt many Sunday-school teachers will be puzzled in their efforts to harmonize these two passages. I have eight or nine commentaries on the book of Acts and they all differ more or less in their explanation of this difficulty, and not one of them is satisfactory.

I offer the following explanation: In the first place (ix. 7), Luke gives his account of Saul turning to God in Christ. In the second place (xxii. 9) Paul is giving an account of his experience on the way to Damascus.

How many voices were there to hear? Two. Christ's and Saul's. These men did not hear the voice of Christ, for Paul says, chap. xxii. 9, they heard not the voice of him that spake to me, that is, these men did not hear the voice of Christ when he spoke to Saul, but Luke says, chap. ix. 7, they heard a voice but saw no man. Whose voice did they hear? Saul's. There was no other for them to hear. Saul cried out, "Who art thou Lord?" They heard his voice. The voice of the Lord was for Saul only. After careful study I am convinced that this is the true solution of the difficulty

God never works only for to-day. His plans run on and on. The web he weaves is from everlasting to everlasting, and if I can fill a part of that web, be it ever so insignificant, it will abide forever. And this is one of the most comforting thoughts to us. While on earth we may do something for eternity.—*Bishop Simpson.*

PREACHING THE GOSPEL.

T. H. BLENUM.

The gospel conditions are simple and suited to all. The gospel not only provides a universal salvation, but the conditions upon which its blessings are to be bestowed, its privileges enjoyed, are such that man everywhere is found capable of meeting them. Offering, as it does, salvation to all on the ground of faith and obedience, it calls upon every man to exercise that power which he necessarily and naturally possesses. All men have faith. They have faith in something, though they may not have faith in God. Man cannot help believing. The state of mind which we term faith exists in us by our very nature. It is not only there, but by the very constitution of our being must remain there while man is what he is. And the gospel, by presenting Christ as the object of faith, and offering to man spiritual restoration on the ground of faith, not only rendered its acceptance possible to all, but placed it upon the only principle in our nature which constitutes the true bond of union between God and man.

The gospel meets the yearnings, the longings of our race for an incarnation. Humanity in all ages, anterior to the incarnation, has evinced this longing for some such provision as the gospel makes for its moral and spiritual necessities in the incarnation, death and ascension of Jesus. All its mythologies and speculations were but so many unconscious prophecies and longings of humanity for a divine-human Prophet, Priest and King. The gospel claims, indeed, to be God manifest in the flesh, and to be foolishness to the wisdom of the world; yet it by no means claims to be out of analogy with all that men had ever thought or felt before. It represents all creation as groaning and travelling in pain until now, and it represents Jesus as the stiller of creation's groans, himself at once the eternal Son of God, and the leader of humanity in its final march to victory and the realization of its unspeakable desires. And it was this Son of God in human form walking among men, leaning on their bosoms, weeping over their graves, slumbering in the manger, and bleeding on the cross—this divine man presented to us in the gospel, that, despite the prejudices of the synagogue, and the doubts of the academy, found, and still finds, his way to the hearts of the masses. The gospel really contains nothing contrary to what man accepts as truth; but it takes his faint conceptions and throws upon them additional light. There are certain truths which are universally acknowledged, which have been held by man everywhere; certain truths which being clothed according to the peculiar traits of mind of each nation and tribe, if not, indeed, of each individual, have taken on different forms and coloring, but which, stripped of these, always exhibit the same features. There is, for example, the idea of God, the awful fact of sin, the terrible truth that God is offended, and perhaps the faint idea that God is willing to be reconciled. The universal prevalence of these truths not only prepare the way for the acceptance of the gospel, but the fact that the gospel not only contains nothing contrary to these ideas, but gives a flood of additional light on these points, proves its divine origin and really renders the work of preaching it comparatively easy.