

unspeakable gain; and not only to a poor and suffering Lazarus, who goes from a state of deepest affliction and poverty to the bliss of Abraham's bosom—but also to the mightiest monarch on earth, who is prepared for it, and who is called to resign his sceptre, crown, and empire, and the splendour of his court and palace, for the honour and happiness of the heavenly world. For the gain of that individual who should be raised from the lowest state of worldly degradation and misery, to the highest state of earthly dignity and honour, bears no proportion to that which shall be realized even by a "Solomon in all his glory," as an inheritor of eternal life. As such, then, is the gain of dying to the Christian, and the glory which shall be revealed in the saints beyond the grave,—

"Let sickness blast, let death devour,
If heaven must recompense our pains;
Perish the grass, and fade the flower,
If firm the word of God remains."

For all these discoveries of the certainty and blessedness of a future state, we are indebted to divine revelation, and especially to the Gospel of Christ. Reason may suggest many arguments in behalf of immortality, and produce a kind of moral certainty in the minds of men who already believe it as a doctrine of true religion; but it is Revelation only which gives the full assurance of it, and which gives us any sure information concerning man's existence and condition as an inhabitant of a future and spiritual world.

But those inspired and infallible Scriptures that declare, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth;" and which confirm the sentiment of the Apostle, that for the Christian "to live is Christ, and to die gain;" alike declare the infinite loss the sinner will sustain when death shall close his earthly career. He will lose all the advantages and gracious opportunities afforded by time and a state of probation; "for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave;" and though he should have gained the world, he will lose his soul; and, then, "what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" To that "most sure word of prophecy we do well that we take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place."

"Most wondrous book! bright candle of the Lord!
Star of eternity! the only Star
By which the bark of man could navigate
The sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss
Securely! only Star which rose on time."

And let those who are called to rejoice in the superior light and privileges of the Gospel dispensation, remember that it is because Christ, by dying, has conquered death, that the weakest believer may triumph over the last enemy, in a way which neither Socrates, nor any other of the great philosophers among the Gentiles, could do. To Christ, as dying for our sins, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage,"—to Christ, "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification," and who is himself the "resurrection and the life,"—we owe all our immortal hopes.—"Death is swallowed up in victory." "We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus;" and shall finally wear the crown of eternal life as the purchase of his blood. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Amen!"

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ELEVEN COMELY THINGS.

THESE things are comely and pleasant, and worthy of honour from the beholder:—

A young saint,—an old martyr,—a religious oldier,—a conscientious statesman,—a great man courteous,—a learned man, humble,—a child that understands the eye of its parent,—a cheerful companion, without vanity,—a friend not changed with honour,—a sick man happy,—a soul departing with comfort and assurance.—*Bishop Hall.*

SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATIONS.

EXODUS xi. 2.

"Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold."

NUMBERLESS are the methods resorted to by the friends of revelation, to justify the divine procedure in this matter, and to protect from the fangs of infidels, who loudly boast, that if they were to believe the Bible, God is the friend of fraud, deceit, and injustice. But such blasphemous charges spring from ignorance of the scriptures; for this circumstance is not obscurely hinted at in only one passage, in which an error of expression might have crept in; but the fact is recorded in a manner which plainly shows, that the scriptures, or the Spirit which indited them, do not blush at what they narrate. 1. It was foretold to Abraham, Gen. xv. 14. 2. Before Moses appears to Pharaoh, it forms part of the divine promise to him, Exod. iii. 21, 22. 3. It is mentioned in the chapter we are now considering, by a particular divine edict. 4. The execution of it is recorded, Exod. xii. 35, as done by the direction of Moses; and 5. It is afterwards spoken of in different places, as a demonstration of the power of God; see Psalm cv. 37. We are, therefore, confident to assert, that it is not only a transaction worthy of God, but one in which his glory is manifested. Dr. Hawker, whose "Poor Man's Commentary" we highly respect, thus expresses what we believe to be the generally received view of the subject:—"By borrowing, we may understand, without straining the expression, accepting these presents to which their long servitude had justly entitled them." This is well meant, but by no means satisfactory.

It will readily be observed, that the articles which they are said to have borrowed are "jewels of gold and silver;" and in one place it is added, "raiment." Now we know, that *jewels* are neither gold, silver, nor raiment, but that the expression "*jewels of gold*," &c. implies, not only that which is most precious, but sacred; hence God's elect, the purchase of the blood of Christ, are called *his jewels*: "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels." Mal. iii. 17. As in those days, gold and silver were no medium of commerce, they were chiefly employed in decorating their *teraphim*, household gods, idols, and their vessels employed in domestic as well as public worship. What belonged to public worship appeared in their temples; but a man's private wealth appeared in his household gods, and their investiture, which was chiefly under the charge of their women. The history of Micah, recorded Judges xvii. will tend to illustrate this: "Micah said to his mother, the 1100 silvers that were taken from thee, about which thou anathematized, behold, the silver is with me. And his mother said, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my son. And when he had restored the 1100 silvers to his mother, she said, I had wholly dedicated the silver to the Lord, from my hand, for my son, for a graven image," &c. Now, *jewels of silver* were dedicated pieces of silver, whether in vessels and cups for sacred use, or in images. If traces of this idolatry appeared occasionally in the church of God in the patriarchal age, Gen. xxxv. 4, and still more in the after periods of her history, we may safely say it was but trifling, compared with what was the case in Egypt and other idolatrous nations. The vestige, at least, of this is to be observed in the antichristian kingdom: the ornamenting of her churches, the immense riches of her sacred vessels—her shrines, crucifixes, &c.; and we may add, the raiment of her priests, sprung from the same root; nay, even the immense wealth devoted to religious private worship in the church of Rome, may furnish us with no bad idea of the "*jewels of gold*" which the Israelitish women borrowed of the Egyptians. It is related in the history of Portugal, that in the cabinet of an old lady who died in Lisbon in 1574, there was found an image of our Saviour on the cross, the diamonds in which were estimated at £173,000 sterling.

We cannot suppose it necessary to illustrate our subject, that we should travel through the scraps of Egyptian mythology, to prove, that this commandment of God to borrow the sacred substance of Egypt was part of the divine plan of judgment

against her gods; that the word "spoil" in the text is *sacred spoil*; and that the Egyptian gods were robbed, afterwards to decorate the sanctuary of the God of Israel; and that all this was a sign and figure of the manner in which "the glory and honour of the nations shall be brought into the new Jerusalem," Rev. xxi. 24. It is worth the reader's notice, that he will in no instance find the words "*jewels of gold or silver*" used in any other sense than *dedicated*; thus, in Exod. xxxv. 22: "And the Israelites, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought bracelets, and ear-rings, and rings, and tablets, all *jewels of gold*: and every man that offered gave an offering of gold to the Lord."—Again, in Numbers xxxi. 50, "We have therefore brought every man an oblation for the Lord, *jewels of gold*, chains, bracelets, rings, ear-rings, and tablets, to make an atonement for their souls to the Lord: And Moses took the gold of them, all *laboured or formed jewels*." From these, and many similar passages, it is clear, that the word *jewel*, whether applied to gold or silver, is not used in the sense we apply it, viz. a precious stone; but that these precious metals became jewels, when dedicated to the service of the Lord, or to be used in his worship.

In this transaction, then, Israel was directed to ask (not "borrow;" the translators introduce this word to soften what they did not understand) the vessels which were sacred to Egypt for their worship; and what a wonderful miracle was it!—"God gave them favour in the sight of the Egyptians, and they gave them freely such things as they required." We repeat, that this was a miracle more wonderful than any which preceded it! That God should dispose the hearts of the Egyptians to give to those very Israelites whom they had so oppressed, and who were now professedly going three days' journey into the wilderness, to sacrifice to the Lord their God, the vessels sacred to the worship of their gods; was a more singular judgment against these gods than he had yet executed. Nor do we at all find ourselves careful to answer profane scoffers, as to *divine honesty* in *spoiling* the household gods of Egypt. As to the use in which these very idolatrous jewels were applied in the Israelitish worship, we shall be called to speak as we proceed; as well as to the great thing signified or prefigured by this, which shall be fulfilled, just before the Lord's hosts shall be delivered from spiritual Egypt.

Although we have extended on this subject beyond what is customary with us; yet, as we believe the view now given of "*jewels of gold*" has not been hitherto attended to, we shall take notice, in this place, of a few other passages where the expression occurs.

In I. Sam. vi. a transaction is recorded, to which we request our readers to attend particularly. The ark of God had been seven months in the land of the Philistines—which had, in consequence, been afflicted with divine judgments. By advice of the priests and diviners, they were not to send back the ark empty, or spoiled, but to make ten golden images, viz. five golden mice, and five golden emerods, and return them in the ark; "peradventure," said they, "he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods," &c. Now, in the 8th verse, these golden images of mice and emerods are expressly called *jewels of gold*. But perhaps the subject is nowhere placed in a more undeniable point of view than in such passages as the following, when the prophets are expressly speaking of the ornaments of the church of God: "Thou hast also taken thy fair *jewels* of my gold and silver, and madest to thyself images of men, and committedst whoredom," &c. Ezek. xvi. 17. In the 39th verse of the same chapter, it is said, "And I will also give thee into their hand; and they shall throw down thine eminent places, and shall break down thy high places; they shall strip thee also of thy raiment, clothes, and shall take thy fair *jewels*, and leave thee naked and bare."

We shall only detain our readers further to observe, that there was *sacred raiment* in all idolatrous worship, as well as *sacred jewels*: these we shall consider more fully in the *investiture of the priesthood, and structure of the tabernacle*.—MORRISON.

ONLY madmen and fools are pleased with themselves; no wise man is good enough for his own satisfaction.—*Whitchote.*