

CHURCH CALENDAR.

July 12.—Fourth Sunday after Trinity.
19.—Fifth do.
25.—Saint James the Apostle.
26.—Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

ALBAN, A TALE OF VERULAM.
CHAPTER I.—THE PROCESSION.

Who would willingly be unacquainted with the Christian antiquities of his country? Who does not love to discern the first prints of the steps of the Gospel among us, and to see upon what a soil they were impressed?—If, in one view, we can command the church which rose over the first martyr, and the dykes of the camp of the first persecutor; is not such a spot precious to the eyes of every one who has his country, earthly and heavenly, at heart? Will he readily dismiss the scene from memory, or will he not rather cherish it, and bring to bear upon his mind all the glorious associations with things lovely and holy which its history supplies?

Proceeding upon these, how many a tale will his ruminating mind put together, and thus endeavour to transplant itself into the scenes and times which it is so delightful to contemplate! When after this he shall revisit the spot, how full is his enjoyment! There is not a mound nor a stone to which he does not immediately assign a lively circumstance; and loose straggling heaps rise into walls and towers at the voice of the harmony which is within him. Cities and churches, with their attendant throngs, tower around him amid open fields and pathless thickets.

Such a revisit was made by the narrator of the following tales, to the church and neighbourhood of St. Alban's. He first beheld the place on a fine summer's evening, and as he approached it from the west, was struck with the exceeding beauty and singularity of the scene. On his right hand appeared the traces of the conquerors of the world, in the huge grassy mounds which still remain to point out their once flourishing colony of Verulam. In front, the venerable abbey, towering above the town in all the massive grandeur of Norman outline, carried his mind away to other times and to another race. But the recognition, on a nearer approach, of Roman brick abundantly worked into its structure, reminded him that the ruined fortification and the magnificent church were quite as intimately connected in history. He made on the spot a resolution of revisiting it at greater leisure, and with fuller information. It was then that different objects suggested or revived in livelier colours to his mind, various portions of the train of the narrative which he now commences, and induced him to examine that period of history wherein lie the foundations of the following tales.

It was the latter end of May, which suddenly commenced with a warm southern breeze, and a clear sunny sky succeeding upon a long and tedious fit of boisterous, cloudy, and chilly weather. All at once the voice of complaint was silent. The proud foreigners of Verulam ceased to sigh after the sun of Italy, and to rail at the rude and barbarous climate of their adopted country.—It was no longer the land of the gloomy deformity of continual rain and mist. Its peculiar freshness took them quite by surprise, and wrung from the murmurers a confession that, as it was a new world, so was it also a younger, uninfected as yet by the pestilential influences of the elder.

It was both morally and naturally in an earlier state, and nearer to former innocence. Many a heart, no less than many a constitution, felt the wholesome change, and listlessness and depravity lifted up for a moment their yokes, to ease the necks of their victims. The valetudinarian, slowly recovering from the fever of his native Italy, sallied forth into the green fields to meet the fresh and uninfected breeze, and felt health pour in at every draught of air. The veteran sentinel, as he looked from the walls upon the long succession of downs, swelling one beyond the other in their pride of verdure, felt their hue of soft green come with an impression of delicious and healing coolness upon his eyes, which had been scorched by the tyrannous assault of many a Syrian sun. The Roman native exulted in the praises of his country, which its unexpected burst of beauty had extorted from mouths which had hitherto been so eloquent in its abuse.

Thus, satisfaction pervaded the whole colony. All hearts, both of native and of new-comer, of young and of old, were tuned to the note of the enjoyment of the mirth and revelry which accompanied the approaching festival of Diana.

It was among the last times that her showy procession was allowed to pace the streets of Verulam in all its glory. It came forth upon the present occasion with more than its wonted splendour; for Paganism, now raising its head in insulting triumph, under the auspices of Diocletian, studied to win or maintain the popular favour, by all those appeals to the senses which a carnal religion so well knows how to make. And the spirit of religious party determined that the Christian should not espay the least sign of falling off and decaying zeal, but be covered by the imposing appearance of the attachment of the Pagans to their ancient worship. On this account the ceremony may deserve a more minute description than would otherwise have been necessary.

At daybreak, the gates of Verulam were opened, and instantly there rushed in a crowd of Britons, curious and eager, as into a theatre, who had poured in from all the country round. The throng almost overbore the sentinel's guard, and abuse was freely given and returned in all the languages of the confusion; in Roman and British, in Illyrian and Batavian, in Syriac and in Greek. Within the walls the scene was most singular. In one place barbarism and civilization were seen in direct contrast, in others it was amusing to observe the various proportions in which they were mutually blended. Along the main street was seen the Legionary sauntering with all the insolent ease inspired by the consciousness of being one of the dominant caste. Had he been a resident for any length of time, he declared it by a contemptuous want of curiosity amid a scene so strangely varied. Were he a new-comer, he was discovered by nothing more readily than by the admiring astonishment with which he regarded the depth of colour and snowy complexion of the British fair. The attention was next drawn by a group of Britons, arrived from some remote part of the province, and still retaining their painted skin, and but imperfectly clad. With wild bright eyes of wonder and curiosity, which glared from beneath their long shaggy hair, they looked round upon this humble image of Rome, nor could they imagine how it could be excelled by its prototype.

On coming to a corner, where two main streets intersected, as in a camp, the observer was entangled in a crowd of British peasantry, who stood listening to some legend of their country from the lips of a Harper. A little farther on he encountered a group of Romans and foreigners, the centre of which was a mendicant Priest of Cybele, busy with one hand in offering a sacred image to kiss, and with the other thrusting down into a large pocket, with which his cloak was purposely furnished, leaves, cheeses, and pieces of money, shouting all the time with brazen lungs, "Kiss and give, for the honour of the Great Mother."

* From "Tales of the Ancient British Church, by the Rev. R. W. Evans.

Meanwhile hands were busy in spreading forth tapestry on the front of every house, until the principal street glowed from one end to the other with the richest dyes of the Tyrian loom. Not a gap was there, for the Christians had ever, on this very account, avoided living in the main streets, and withdrawn into narrow alleys, where they were in no danger of being called upon to do public honours to Paganism.

In a short time the approach of the procession was announced by unnumbered heads thrust through every window, and over every parapet, and by a vast crowd pushing its masses with difficulty down the street. It was ushered in by a most grotesque company, which was hailed by the Briton with extraordinary admiration and delight. This was a band of masquers, whose motley characters, representing huntsmen, fowlers, fishermen, women, soldiers, and gladiators, came on practising the most absurd antics.

But what gave most satisfaction to the Briton, and excited his hearty laughter, were two especially, a Philosopher and a Roman Magistrate, dressed out in all their peculiar habits, and dancing hand in hand with the most extravagant and ridiculous gestures. Alas! this his approbation of the profanation of the dignity of Rome, was now the only vent for his vengeance, and he used it freely.

After these had passed, the street was quite overflowed with white, which poured, in a stream that seemed endless, round a distant corner. This white-robed train was formed, first of a band of women, scattering as harbingers flowers and perfumes. Next came an immense company, bearing burning links, candles, and torches. Then a band of music preceded a troop of the principal youth of the colony, who sang, as they marched, the praises of the Goddess. A long line of Priests, bearing different banners and symbols, now announced the approach of the Goddess, and in a few minutes her consecrated image, which never, but on this occasion, left the temple, turned the corner. At that instant a deafening shout arose from all the length of the street, and as the Priest who bore it, raised and turned it from time to time, the whole multitude bowed in adoration crying, "Hail holy Diana!" The procession was closed by the chief magistrate Bassian, attended by the authorities and persons of chief rank in the colony.*

One among these attracted very particular notice.—He was a youth of noble and commanding air, who rode next to Bassian. Every stranger enquired who he was, and was told that he was Alban, the son of Posthumus, and had lately returned home from Athens, whither he had been sent to study. He looks soldierlike for a student, cried the stranger. That may well be, it was replied, for he made no small breach in his studious years, by serving in the Persian war under Diocletian Augustus, whom may the Gods preserve. His father is in ill health, and was long kept in uneasy suspense concerning him, for he is an only son. You may estimate his gratitude to the Gods on the return of his child by the magnificence of that portico which he has added to the Temple of Diana. He is truly attached to the worship of the Gods of Rome, and has diligently trained his son in the same belief.

It is said that he has never so much as deigned to enquire about the opinions of the hateful Christians.—It is enough for him to know that they are contrary to the institutions of his forefathers. Educated by such a father, yonder youth is looked upon as the rising hope of the colony, and the main pillar of our ancient rites and customs. See how warmly all greet him as he passes. What a friendly recognition between him and the hoary-headed Caius, whose prayer to the Gods for many a long year has notoriously been, that he may yet live to see the Christian superstition torn up, root and branch, from the soil of the empire. Among such remarks Alban passed along.

To the procession succeeded the sacrificial banquet. He did not spend over it the usual time of mirth and enjoyment, but quitted it long before its noisy revelry began, and went to attend upon the sick bed of his father.

To be Continued.

ANECDOTE OF ARCHBISHOP CRANMER.

A priest near Scarborough, sitting among his companions, over his beer, at the door of a country ale-house, and somebody happening to mention the archbishop; "That man," said the priest, "as great as he is now, was once but an ostler, and has no more learning than the goslings yonder upon the green." Cromwell, Earl of Essex, who had his spies in every quarter, was informed of what the priest had said. A messenger was immediately dispatched for him, and he was lodged in the Fleet. Some months elapsed, when the archbishop, who was entirely ignorant of the affair, received a petition from the poor priest, full of penitence for his imprudence, and of supplication for mercy.

The primate having inquired into the business sent for him. "I hear," said he, "you have accused me of many things, and, among others, of my being a very ignorant man. You have now an opportunity of setting your neighbours right in this matter, and may examine me, if you please."

The priest, in great confusion, besought his grace to pardon him: he never would offend in the same way again.

"Well then," says the archbishop, "since you will not examine me, let me examine you."

The priest was thunderstruck; making many excuses, and owning he was not much learned in book-matters.

The archbishop told him he should not then go very deep, and asked him two or three of the plainest questions in the bible; Who was David's father? and who was Solomon's?

The priest, confused at his ignorance, stood speechless.

"You see," said the archbishop, "how your accusation of me rises against yourself. You are an admirable judge of learning and learned men.—Well, my friend, I had no hand in bringing you here, and have no desire to keep you. Get home; and if you are an ignorant man, learn at least to be an honest one."

Soon after the Earl of Essex came to the primate, and with some warmth told him, he might for the future fight his own battles; that he had intended to have made the priest do penance at Paul's cross, but his grace's misjudged lenity had prevented him.

"My good lord," said the primate, taking him by the hand, "be not offended. I have examined the man myself; and be assured from me he is neither worth your notice, nor mine."—*Giulii's Lives of Reformers.*

BISHOP JEBB IN SICKNESS.

Effect of Scripture in soothing the mind in the midst of pain.

The life of such a man was one continual preparation for meeting the divine will concerning him. But it should not pass unrecorded, that when it pleased God thus suddenly to visit his faithful servant (by an attack of paralysis) he was found, with, as without, in that

* The reader will perhaps think that the foregoing description has been drawn from the sight of the religious processions which appear on the Continent; I have, however, collected the particulars from Apuleius. The band of masquers still survives in those relics of our ancient religious processions, the annual shows of Shrewsbury and Coventry.

state of preparation which our blessed Lord Himself (St. Luke xii. 35, 36) has specially recommended and enjoined. For several days before the shock he had engaged in the study (with him an early and favourite study) of Bishop Hall's contemplations; and on the evening of the attack the book lay open upon his study-table ready to be again taken up had he returned in health. Accordingly, when first able to collect his thoughts they flowed naturally in their usual channel. During the remainder of his continuance he gave himself wholly, at his waking hours, to hearing passages of Scripture read, suited to his present state, to meditating, or making short reflections, upon them. One night, finding himself disturbed from sleep by uneasy dreams, as is usual (at times) in sleep procured by anodynes,* he desired to have something suitable on a religious subject read to him. My brother proposed a Psalm, and was about to begin the beautiful and appropriate 103rd, when the Bishop said, "Read the Psalm that has 'who saveth thy life from destruction,'" (that is, Ps. ciii. 4.) He listened with the deepest interest and emotion; called for Bishop Horne's Commentary, which gave him much satisfaction, and, immediately after, settled into a calm slumber, which lasted through the night. In the morning he told the physicians of his anodyne, which, they cordially agreed, was far more effectual than any thing they could have prescribed. At another time expatiating in their presence, upon the matchless beauties of Scripture, he called for the 104th Psalm, and, pronouncing it the sublimest ode that ever had come from the mind or pen, even of inspired men, desired that it might be read aloud. The effect none, who had the happiness to be present, can easily forget: his animated eye seemed to nod a comment on each verse, and to impart his own feeling of the divine original. None caught the spirit more fully than his two medical friends; while one of them, Dr. Carroll, a Roman Catholic, could not refrain from expressing the mingled pleasure and edification with which he ministered at the bedside of a protestant Christian bishop.—*Foster's Life of Bp. Jebb.*

DEATH OF A RABBI.

When Rabbi Jochanan, the son of Sachai, was ill and on his death-bed, his disciples came to visit him. When he saw them, he began to weep. "Light of Israel," said they to him, "main pillar of the right, thou strong hammer, why dost thou weep?" He answered, "Were I led forth to judgment before a mortal king, who is here to-day, and in his grave to-morrow; whose anger, were it excited against me, would not be lasting; whose fetters, were he to chain me, could but confine the body; whose infliction of death, were he to kill me, would not be eternal; whom I could mollify with words or bribe with gifts;—even then I would weep. How much greater is my cause for tears, now that I am to be led before the King of kings, the Holy One! Blessed be He who liveth and reigneth for ever! whose wrath, were it excited against me, is everlasting; whose fetters, were he to chain me, know no end; whose infliction of death, were he to kill me, would be eternal; whom I can neither mollify with words, nor bribe with gifts. Moreover, there are two paths open before me,—the one leading to bliss—the other to torments; and I know not which of them it will be my doom to take. Then, how can I abstain from weeping?" His disciples then said, "Our Rabbi, give us thy blessing." He answered, "May the fear of the Deity be as strong on you as the fear of man!" One of them said, "What no stronger?" He answered, "O that it were as strong! for you know that he that is committing a sin says within himself, 'I must take care that no man seeth me.'"—*From Ake-dath Itzchack, by R. Isaac ben Moses.*

The Garner.

THE BEST MEANS OF GRACE. Among all the means of grace, there is no one does so much corroborate and nourish the soul of man as the Holy Eucharist.—How many wise and impartial reflections does the preparation for it occasion? What unfeigned humility, and what a profound awe of the divine majesty, does a previous self-examination beget in us? What a tender sense of the divine love does the contemplation of the whole mystery excite? What firmness and resolution do we derive from fresh vows and repeated engagements; and these offered up with so much solemnity? And how much, finally, is the habit of holiness improved by that spiritual pleasure, which the sensible assurances of grace and salvation work in us, by that awe and holy fear which the whole action leaves behind on our minds, and the zeal, vigilance, and circumspection it obliges us to for the time following? Not to mention here, how the participation of this holy sacrament obliges us to a most solemn exercise of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus, of brotherly love and charity, and the hope of immortality and glory. Here, in a word, we prepare to meet God, as we would do in death and judgment; here we make an open profession of our holy faith, renounce the world and flesh, all our sinful or vain desires; devote ourselves to the service of Jesus; and learn to expect happiness from nothing else, but the merits and the imitation of his cross. So profound is the wisdom of this institution, that it evidently speaks God the author of it, and proclaims the too common neglect of it, in most parts of this nation, an inexcusable sin and folly.—*Rev. Dr. Lucas.*

CONFESSION NOT REPENTANCE. It is a great imposition which, it is to be feared, many men put upon themselves, when they divide confession from the other important parts of repentance, and sit down satisfied, as it were, upon the first step of the ladder. God forgive me, say they, I am a sinner; and after this they flatter themselves that all is well with them: they have told their tale, they have owned, and then they reckon themselves qualified for the divine mercy. But never was there a grosser imposition upon our reason, than such a proceeding as this. What! do we think that God perceives nothing but the sound of our lips? that he does not look into the heart? Where is the deep sorrow for sin? where the taking due shame upon ourselves? where the confusion of face, and remorse of mind which true repentance brings? Does such a slight confession carry the least mark of all, or any, of these? Does it not look as if we thought ourselves sure of pardon for a word's speaking? or that our confession was more for our sake, and a mere point of ceremony shewed towards our Creator? We may confess our faults to God every day of our lives, and twice, or oftener, every day, and still be as far from being forgiven, as he is, who never thinks about them. Unless we forsake them, all acknowledgments of guilt are but counterfeits. Such coin can never pass with God: it is base and adulterated; it has the stamp and inscription, indeed, of real penitence, but not the true weight and value. Let none of us then hope to deceive God with such a payment, as makes two faults of one; for to endeavour to pay a creditor in bad money, is not only not to pay him, but to attempt to cheat him too.—*Bishop Pearce.*

USES OF AFFLICTION. Trust in earthly things are the great checks of God's kindness. We hardly forsake this temper till we are forsaken by all those things we confide in. Times of extremity make us more humble; and humility, like the plough, fits us for the seed of mercy. The gardener's digging up the clods, is but to prepare the earth for the receiving and nourishing some excellent plants he intends to put into its womb. There is a certain set time for God's great actions. He lets the powers of darkness have their hour; and God will take his hour: "Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion, * Medicines intended to soothe pain and procure sleep.

for the time to favour her, yet, the set time is come." He hath a set time for the discovery of his mercy, and he will not stay a jot beyond it. What is this time? When they "eat ashes like bread, and mingle their drink with weeping." When they are most humbled; and when the servants of God have most affection to the church. When their humble and ardent affections are strong even to the ruin and rubbish of it; when they have a mighty desire and longing for the reparation of it, as the Jews in captivity had for the very dust of the temple: "For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof." "For," there, notes it to be a reason why the set time was judged by them to be come. That is God's set time, when the church is most believing, most humble, most affectionate to God's interest in it, and most sincere. Without faith, we are not fit to desire mercy; without humility, we are not fit to receive it; without affection, we are not fit to value it; without sincerity, we are not fit to improve it. Times of extremity contribute to the growth and exercise of those qualifications.—*Rev. S. Charnock.*

KNOWING CHRIST.

Where does the Christian's strength lie? It lies in this alone—in believing experimental views of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we obtain those views of our blessed Saviour, which are offered to us all, we may obtain a principle and power to resist all the difficulties in our way; but this is absolutely essential. To know Christ, then, is the great lesson of our lives, to know him more and more is the single and grand lesson which every soul among us must devote on our way to heaven. For this, and this alone, St. Paul counted all things but loss that he might be accounted of Him. This, and this alone, was that which seemed to him to sum up all other blessings in himself. What was so inexpressibly precious to St. Paul, and is most precious to each believer in exact proportion to his experience of it, must be set before us all, as the grand thing we have to aim at in our desires, our exertions, and our prayers. To know the glory of Christ, the majesty of Christ, the power of Christ, the faithfulness and truth of Christ—to know his holiness—to know more and more of his tender compassion to sinners—to observe his wise and merciful dealings with his people—to survey the promises he has given, and the means by which he accomplishes them—to know how he loves us—to experience, in our own hearts, the height and depth, and length and breadth of that love which passeth knowledge—this is the business of each one who would call himself a Christian—this is the grand spiritual discovery, after which each of us must aim. For this no exertions are too great, it will infinitely more than repay every effort that we can make for it.—*Rev. B. Noel.*

Advertisements.

BRITISH AMERICA FIRE AND LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY. NOTICE is hereby given, that a dividend of eight per cent per annum, on the capital stock paid up, for the half year ending on the 30th instant, was this day declared; and that the same will be payable on and after Monday the 13th day of July, next. The Transfer Book will accordingly be closed from the first to the eleventh day of July, inclusive. By order of the Board, T. W. BIRCHALL, Managing Director.

British America Assurance Office, } Hamilton
Toronto, 23rd June, 1840. }

* The Kingston Chronicle, Prescott Sentinel, Hamilton Gazette, London Gazette, Western Herald, and Niagara Chronicle, will please insert the above three times, and send their accounts to this Office. T. W. B.

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