

large circulation among the followers of the Church party to which he was so ardently attached. His forty-one years' incumbency of Tunbridge Wells, and his deeply earnest spiritual nature, gave him almost unique power in his parish and neighbourhood, which have for many years been a strong centre of Evangelical work and thought. His mother was sister to Elizabeth Fry, and his father was connected with the great banking firm of Messrs. Hoare. He has been an Honorary Canon of Canterbury for more than twenty-five years.—*Church Bells.*

THE CHURCH AND HARD TIMES.

The Church has not caused the hard times for a single soul, and yet it is made to suffer because of the hard times, for some members who are not generous but selfish, and not constrained by the love of Christ, are only too ready to refer you to the prevailing hard times as their latest excuse for doing nothing for the Church of Christ and His cause throughout the world.

When times were the best they were not generous with the Church, but always fabricated some excuse for giving the least possible. In fact they always robbed God, and never with grateful and loving hearts recognized Him as the giver of all good. When they were prospered, they congratulated themselves, and never felt under any special obligations to God and wondered why He was so kind to them, but as soon as trouble comes then they think of God and wonder why He is punishing them.

Let us be honest and conscientious in our Christian profession and practice, and as we have freely received from God, so let us freely give, for we cannot rob Him and prosper. It is this "withholding that tendeth to poverty," and against which He has warned us.

Think of the misery of thousands who have brought wretchedly hard times upon themselves by sin, who have lost not only their money, but their friends, their character, self-respect and hope in God and the hereafter. Let us who enjoy the safeguards and consolations of religion be willing also to contribute toward the support of our religious privileges and not begin with our religion to curtail expenses. Our religion has saved us many hurtful extravagances, and we should recognize this fact with love and devout gratitude to God, and not pretend to make the hard times an excuse for our unfaithfulness. Let each one do what he is able. That is the divine standard, and every one can attain unto it.

Of course, we need bread, but "man shall not live by bread alone." Our souls must feed on the bread of Heaven, which alone can satisfy them. Hence be true and faithful to your Church, for it makes none poorer, but saves many, many from poverty, and enriches all with divine and eternal blessings.

Let no one make the fatal mistake of neglecting their church because of inability to contribute toward its support, for if you are suffering from the distress of the hard times, how much you need of the sympathy and love of Christ, who for your sake became poor, that you through His poverty might be made rich. None are poorer than He, for He had not where to lay His head. Improve all the means of grace that you may be rich in spiritual experiences. The Church is your best friend.

Let all be kind to the poor. Do all you can to cheer and help them. Many are not responsible for their condition.—*Young Lutheran.*

THE CANTICLES AT MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER.

By THE REV. E. I. GREGORY, M.A., Vicar of Halberton, and Probendary of Exeter.

(From the Church S.S. Magazine, London.)

THE BENEDICTE.

(Continued.)

Or, look again at the great "Wisdom" chapter of the Book of Job. It was no careless observer who had noted that gold chiefly lay on, or close to, the surface, whilst for silver, a mine must be opened, and a shaft sunk "away from where men sojourn."* The Psalmist too, the Naturalist of his day, loved to dwell upon the habits of the creatures around him: the lion seeking his prey at night, and returning at dawn to his den: the goats sheltering among the high hills, and the feeble conies amid the rocks.† He notes also the growth of vegetation, and the coming in of spring; and the singing of the birds,‡ and how man, in obedience to the law laid upon him, "goeth forth to his work and his labour until the evening."§ The sea too is full of mystery for the Psalmist: the sea, with the ships upon its surface, and the wealth of life in its waters; and as he observes all these things, he draws, it is true, no lessons or conclusions as to adaptability for purpose, no surviving of one here and another there; the laws governing creation, which men are still engaged in working out, with infinite pains and care, have no special existence for this old lover of nature; but there is one law, which he is sure is working, and one conclusion to which he certainly comes,—"These wait all upon Thee . . . Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled: Thou takest away their breath, they die and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created, and thou renewest the face of the earth.||

But it was not only with the earth and its productions that the ancient Israelite busied himself. He was an astronomer, as well as a naturalist. Already in the earliest days he had noted the motions of the stars, and their order in the sky. "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades," the Lord asks Job, "or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide the bear with her train?"** For many an Israelite the sky, with its great ruler of day, and its multitude of stars at night, had an irresistible attraction. And as he looked at them, there were two thoughts impressed upon his soul, the littleness of man, and that there was one Rule and one Will laid upon them all. "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained; what is man that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" "The sun knoweth his going down"; "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork."††

Now, in all this there were no really scientific deductions made. The time for these had not come. The phenomena were observed, and well recorded; but the reasons for things, and the laws which God had imposed upon all the various parts of creation, whilst they were observed in their working, were themselves hidden. The command to "subdue the earth" was as yet

* Job xxviii. 4, R.V.

† Ps. civ. 20—22, of. Prov. xxx. 26.

‡ Ps. civ. 14, 12, cxlvii. 8, of. Song of Solomon ii. 12, 13.

§ Ps. civ. 23.

|| Ps. civ. 27—30.

** Job xxxviii. 31, 32. "Mazzaroth"; i.e., "the signs of the Zodiac."

†† Ps. viii. 3, 4, civ. 19, xix. 1.

understood in a very limited sense. That it should include the subjection of steam and electricity and sound to the service of men, never entered into the thoughts of the ancient observer. But of one thing he was profoundly convinced. There might be mystery; as he looked closer and closer, he might exclaim, more and more, "O Lord, Thy thoughts are very deep";* but at least everything was a work of the Lord:—"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof"; "and the heavens are the work of His hands."†

"Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold;
There's not the smallest orb which Thou behold'st,

But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims:
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly press it in, we cannot hear it."

Such words bring out very clearly to us the purpose, the true purpose, of the Holy Scriptures. It is to lead men up to God; to teach them that a great purpose was running through all the history of the world until the fulness of time came. Yet other things might come in to promote this teaching, which would sometimes be expressed in the words of an unscientific observer as he marked the phenomena around him, and sometimes of necessity, from man's want of experience, in the language of metaphor and imagery.

But of one thing we may be quite sure, that, if with the ancient Israelite we can say, on the one hand, "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works, in wisdom hast Thou made them all," and on the other, "Thy Word is a lantern unto my feet, and a light unto my path," the will and the power of God expressed by the one passage are not contrary to the other. The moral law and the natural law (if so we may call it for the sake of distinction) are alike the offspring of the same Divine Will, and if they have ever seemed to us contradictory, or if in conveying to us spiritual truth the God-inspired men of the Old Covenant appear to have taught physical impossibilities, let us remember that we have certainly misread our lesson, and have either misunderstood the purpose of the instruction, or the conditions under which it has been given.

Since the days of Galileo some steps have been made in appreciating this, and the theologian on the one side, and the (so-called) scientist on the other have come to see how God speaks in manifold ways to men. We are slow to learn this lesson. Yet we are learning it. It no longer shocks us as Christians to know that the earth goes round the sun, nor that the rocks beneath our feet are of so vast an age. We have learnt that the divine and heavenly teaching of the sacred Scriptures was necessarily conveyed in language, and with illustrations, adapted to the knowledge and comprehension of the generations of men to which those Scriptures were in the first instance addressed. Nay, more, we are beginning to see how God is revealing His deep thoughts to men in these days, and whilst hiding many things from us—the mystery of sin—the mystery of life—the mystery of pain—is yet stowing unto us some things which reveal His power and Godhead. These revelations cannot, and will not, affect the great revelation made once for all of the Word of God, the Word made flesh, and dwelling amongst men. Yet, to the seeing eye and the hearing ear, they have a wonderful power of bringing God home to us in His love and goodness.

I dare say we have all noted, and perhaps pondered upon, the wonderful cycle of awakening life to which we are accustomed, year after year, in the vegetable world. It is this awaken-

* Ps. xcii. 5.

† Ps. xxiv. 1, cii. 25.

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