

one grave there, whose presence is specially affirmed in the very designation of this shrine, causing it to be universally known as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It is said to contain the most precious dust that was ever committed to the earth. Christ's tomb is there. It appears to-day as a little chapel, whose rocky, rough-hewn walls are completely hid behind luxurious marbles. We enter it by passing through the larger marble chapel which encloses it, and where we see the stone which angel-hands are said to have "rolled away." It is a little apartment, measuring but six feet in one direction by seven feet in the other; while its ceiling is covered by numerous suspended lamps. With beating heart and silent lip we view at last a spot which in imagination we have often viewed before. The impression produced, even upon one who is wont to be careless, must invariably be profound and enduring. Surely that man were made of stone who could stand unmoved amid such soul-stirring surroundings.

The force of these emotions is modified, and of course considerably lessened, when, in the calmness of sober reflection, we become practically convinced that the site of Calvary, after all, cannot lie within the walls of this huge building, and that our deepest feelings have been aroused through the instrumentality of (conscious or unconscious) imposture. A dream of the Empress Helena,—as, in the case of her distinguished son, a dream,—is credited with explaining the intensity of their kindred zeal for the new faith: the one discovers a wooden cross in a cave, the other discerns a golden cross in the heavens. But modern scholarship is distrustful, is even sceptical, touching the competency of such omens. Moreover, the outcome of patient Biblical research (carried on during the last fifty years by geographers, geologists, critics, and other recognized experts, the representatives of widely-separated schools and churches and lands) has been agreement in a practically unanimous verdict; and that verdict is adverse to the traditional opinion. Unquestionably many of the references to Golgotha in the Scriptures, whether direct or indirect, cannot easily be reconciled with an acceptance of that site to which both the Greek Church and the Latin Church have affixed their *imprimatur*.

But how could a spot so unique,—so unique in a dozen ways,—ever by possibility become shrouded in uncertainty? The fact cannot be denied that for centuries, so far as Christendom is concerned, it was so shrouded. When Helena "found" it, it seemed to be unknown,—unless indeed to those who preserved well their secret. And apparently the Empress, notwithstanding her alleged supernatural guidance, was woefully deceived. Rev. Haskett Smith, in a magazine article which he prepared some years ago, gave an excellent statement of the reasons why so many to-day view with special reverence the little knoll outside the Damascus Gate, both of which objects are familiar to every modern visitor to Jerusalem. Mr. Smith points out that this knoll is known as the Hill of Execution; that this Place of Stoning was also the place where the numerous crucifixions occurred; that it is still regarded by the Jew as accursed, so that he spits at it as he approaches it; that it has the shape of a skull\*; that it stands at the angle formed by two main roads, where (as in the open area behind it) the crosses would be visible to every passer-by. There has also quite recently been discovered, a few rods distant, a long-forgotten tomb. It stands in a garden. It has never been finished. It was hewn about the time of Christ. It was plainly intended for a Jew, for the feet of its occupant lie to the west. And it was revered by the early Christians as the burial place of one whom they worshipped. It is little wonder that, with eager promptness, £3,000 were secured by representative Anglicans, to make certain that this site shall in the meantime be held and suitably cared for.

Perhaps, in view of the ordinary ways of Providence, it should not surprise us that men have unexpectedly lost their way when journeying to Calvary. Is it wholly advantageous that the true site is by millions supposed to be known? Let those testify who have personally mingled with the pilgrims at Jerusalem. If the burial place of Moses, the great leader and lawgiver of God's ancient people, is a tomb which no man knows unto this day, it is not only possible, but probable, that we shall never know with certainty where Joseph buried Jesus. And it is very unlikely that the elaborate ceremonials, that for ages have distinguished the varied forms of worship which may continually be witnessed in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, will ever be transferred to a new locality,—unless it can be demonstrated that the new site is the true one.

It matters not, however, whether we conclude to believe that Calvary is to be sought within Jerusalem's great church or without that city's walls. For only two sites can lay serious claim to be the spot which we seek, and these are separated by only a few hundred yards. The three stone pockets into which I

looked, rudely cut in the crown of the up-springing skull-like rock within the Church, may not have been those three sockets in which three special crosses were set up nearly nineteen centuries ago: the deep fissures in the rock, still reverently pointed out, may not have had any connection with those dread tremblings of the earth when our Lord uttered His last expiring cry; the reputed Tomb of Christ, which I devoutly entered, may not have been the sepulchre I sought, viz., "a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid." Yet one thing I do know. One belief at least does not admit of denial. Within the city of Jerusalem, I have certainly stood upon ground not far from the spot upon which the Lord of Life suffered and died!

III.

Now what ought we to do who, at this joyous Christmastide, have looked beyond Bethlehem towards the City of the Great King? What can we do but bow ourselves, in unfeigned reverence, before Him who there endured the anguish of the cross. Christ for us condescended, not merely to be conceived, but also to be crucified; and it becomes the supreme moment in a man's life when, looking up from the foot of the cross, he deliberately says: "My Lord and my God." Such a one, like the Saviour Himself, will not long abide at Calvary. He will grow impatient to see the Greater City of the King the heavenly Jerusalem. Christ's tomb, wherever it may have been, is to-day an empty tomb. His grave was empty less than three days after He was laid in it, although men and devils conspired to keep it sealed and to keep Him within it. Our Saviour rose again. He rose in exact accordance with His often-uttered predictions, "conspicuously proved to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead." And soon He passed on to the brow of Olivet, whence, triumphant and transfigured, He reascended into Heaven.

And while, in this hour, we tightly recall, not Bethlehem only but also Calvary, may our thoughts and longings carry us far past the period of the infancy and the passion of Jesus. When we celebrate together the Lord's Supper, we think not exclusively of that death which we are enjoined specially to remember: we think also of that life which has vanquished death. And the Christ whom we commemorate and worship to-day is no longer a Jewish babe, nor yet a friendless martyr, but a glorified Redeemer. Let us likewise press up the slope of Olivet, where the dread of doubt and disappointment and darkness and death cannot follow us to torment and terrify. For as many as come back from that summit, to resume once more their usual avocations, are invariably found to be enlightened men and women. They show themselves strong enough to "rejoice," even amid tribulation. They have gained a new conception of the cross, discerning it to be none other than the significant "sign" and safeguard of the hosts of those who "conquer."

There is a green hill far away,  
Without a city wall,  
Where the dear Lord was crucified  
Who died to save us all.  
Oh dearly, dearly, has He loved!  
And we must love Him too;  
And trust in his redeeming blood,  
And try His works to do.

Toronto.

The Flight of Love.

J. K. LAWSON.

A wind in the woods went wailing,  
As slow the sun sank down;  
A voice in the wind prevailing—  
"O love where art thou flown?"  
And the old, old hills, with feet moss-grown,  
The old cry heard, and from their throne  
Sent back an echo wailing:—  
"O love where art thou flown?"  
A sound from the sea came wailing,  
As slow the moon uprose;  
The voice of the tide prevailing,  
The tide that ebbs and flows—  
"O love where art thou flown?"  
Thou wert so sweet—so sweet!  
And life so fleet—so fleet!  
What would'st thou more than—soul for soul?  
Sobbed the long waves that shoreward roll,  
"O love where art thou flown?"  
I heard the wind, and I heard the sea,  
And surely they were but a part of me!  
The wail of the wind and the sob of the sea  
Woke the old pain,—broke the heart of me.  
O hush thee, Wind! Be still, sad Sea!  
Love will never, ah! never come back to me!  
And still the wind goes wailing  
In the lone wood of the years,  
While smiles the moon, and all the tides  
Are tides of human tears;  
For love still comes, and love still goes,  
And the tale is told, and the pain still grows;  
The wound may heal but the heart abides,  
And the heart that knoweth can only moan—  
"O love where art thou flown?"

Toronto.

Written for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

The Prohibition Plebiscite.

BY REV. W. A. MACKAY, B.A., D.D.



WITHIN the next few months the electors of this Dominion will be called upon to answer, by their ballots, the following question: "Are you in favour of the Immediate Prohibition of the Manufacture, Importation and Sale of Intoxicating Liquors as a Beverage?" This plebiscite is virtually a challenge on the part of our legislators to all friends of the great temperance reform. It says: "You ask for national prohibition; but you must show that you have the country with you; we give you, therefore, an opportunity to prove this by taking a national popular vote on the question." It is a non-partisan vote and appeals to every lover of God and humanity. The churches are specially interested. All the leading Church courts have, time and again, declared that the liquor traffic "is contrary to the word of God and to the spirit of the Christian religion," and that "it cannot be legalized without sin." If, therefore, prohibition is not carried at this time it will be the churches that will be beaten, and the bar-room crowd will rejoice. The importance of the occasion can scarcely be overestimated. Perhaps never before in the history of the world was such a grand opportunity given to a million voters to advance a great moral question. Our opportunity is great, and great is our responsibility. We believe this movement is a part of the divine purpose to establish righteousness in the earth. Oh the broken hearts, the desolate homes, the diseased bodies and the ruined souls caused by the drink traffic! The cries of weeping children, broken-hearted wives, disconsolate widows, fallen sisters and depraved brothers have entered into the ears of Jehovah, and are bearing witness against our folly and crime in legalizing the murderous traffic. Ere the judgments of heaven descend let us arise, and buckling on our armour, go forward writing, and speaking, and praying, and preaching for the contest; and when the voting day shall come, may the Christian men and patriots march by the thousands to the ballot-boxes of the land, and under an avalanche of freemen's ballots bury beyond resurrection the bar-rooms of Canada.

Let us take a large, comprehensive view of this plebiscite, *pro* and *con*. Some objections have been urged

AGAINST THE PLEBISCITE.

1. It is said to be unconstitutional and subversive of the principles of responsible government. We live, however, in an age of progress when popular opinion is becoming more than ever before a potent factor in legislation. Before taking so important a step as passing a prohibition law it is surely permissible for our national Government to ascertain the minds of the people on the matter.

2. This national plebiscite is said to be unnecessary. There is much more force in this objection than in the other. No other subject has been so much discussed by the people of Canada as prohibition, and in favour of no other subject have they expressed their minds so emphatically. In the press, on the platform and in the pulpit the matter has been agitated. Petition after petition, signed by tens of thousands of the best citizens in our land, have gone up to Parliament. Resolutions loudly calling for prohibition have from year to year been passed almost unanimously by the various Church courts of the land. Many of our Counties have voted on local prohibition and sustained it by majorities ranging from 500 to 3,000. A number of the Provinces have taken a plebiscite on prohibition and in every case the majority in favour has been simply overwhelming.

Manitoba gave for prohibition a majority of over.....	12,000
Ontario .....	81,000
Prince Edward .....	7,000
Nova Scotia .....	31,000

New Brunswick, by a unanimous resolution of her Legislature, has called on Parliament to pass a prohibition law.

Such is the mind of the people already expressed. No political party ever gained such decisive verdicts, though they have often claimed to "sweep the country," and to "snow under" the defeated. It is not surprising, then, that many friends of temperance have objected to the plebiscite that it is unnecessary, and have charged the Government in submitting it with seeking a subterfuge for delay, and a pretext for evading the issue. There is no use, however, in quarrelling with the inevitable. Whether we like it or not, the plebiscite is before us, and is now the only way in which we can reach the great end at which we are aiming—entire prohibition. If through prejudice or indifference we fail in our duty it will be the greatest calamity that has ever happened our cause in this country.

\* See frontispiece, *The Biblical World*, November, 1896.