

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE BEAUTIES OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN MIRROR.

SIR,—If you think the following original remarks suitable for your paper, they are at your service.

JUNIVS.

The human mind, cultivated or otherwise, naturally clings to the romantic in its associations. The pictures and stories of boyhood often haunt us in maturer years; and as it has been observed by one, it would be well if the pleasing ideas of youthful simplicity would gratify alike the days of manhood. The large family Bible, with its many engravings, can be recollected vividly even now: the scenes of patriarchal simplicity there delineated, and the great events and characters that excited our admiration, have formed a nucleus to ideas of a more comprehensive order, and fixed in our minds the leading truths and events of sacred story. And what history, let me ask, is conveyed in language so unadorned, and yet so profoundly striking, as the narratives of Holy Scripture? How sententious and yet sublime! Setting aside the beauty and variety of Oriental scenery, and even their venerable character as inspired writings, when other histories and biographies satisfy our curiosity after a few perusals, these excite a greater relish; and, though ages have revolved since they were written, the distance of the objects only seems like the mellow twilight of evening to render the landscape more lovely and impressive. To roam in the garden of sweets, and cull every inviting flower, is not our purpose; but merely to notice the sympathy that exists between our mental associations, in regard to their beauties, and the reasons that excite it. There is, indeed, little barren soil in this consecrated ground; its most lonely spots are distinguished by some mercies, or honoured by the abode of some servant of God. Whether we contemplate the first dawn of creation in the luxuriance of Paradise, or gaze on the lonely ark of Noah as it mounts the surges of a deluged world, or trace the wanderings of Abraham, with his cloud of servants and camels, thro' the Arabian deserts; or, last of all, recount the adventures of Joseph—that most touching of all narratives—do we not feel as if we had never read them or heard of them before, so powerfully do they entwine themselves with our natural feelings.

What fiction of romance can equal the forcible pathos of the young Joseph's misfortunes, or the becoming catastrophes of his subsequent elevation to Pharaoh's court. The famine in Canaan—the meeting of the brothers, after long years of separation and guilt—and, to finish the picture, the venerable old Jacob before Pharaoh, surrounded by his whole family, like the time-worn oak, grey with years, clasped round with the green ivy plants—We fancy we hear the tremulous accents of the aged seer, in the august presence of royalty, uttering, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." What can be more touching or natural.

Numerous other parts of Scripture furnish imagery of the like character. Can we forget the sling and stone of the stripling David—or the monstrous armour of Goliath?—the sudden destruction of the walls of Jericho at the blast of rams' horns. Elijah, in the trackless desert, fed by ravens,—his singular translation to heaven,—or the events that attended his successor, who inherited his mantle and his spirit; the simple furniture of the prophet's chamber; the table, candlestick, and stool, and his restoring the Shunammite's son to life.—I say, it is no febrile sensibility to pronounce, that these narrations have a power to interest the heart as long as memory holds her throne. Dignified in their catastrophe, simple in their narration, we linger over them as upon a well-executed painting, reposing in the subdued lights of other ages.

Turn we to the New Testament. The same beauty presents itself in other ways. Our Lord's birth in the humble village of Bethlehem—the midnight angelic choirs—the adoration of the shepherds and magi, at peep of dawn, led by the illustrious star to the manger and cradle of the King of kings. Or, if we glance at the most active scenes of his ministry, can we forget his numberless miracles and sweetness of demeanour towards the people—the novelty of his choice of teachers, of so humble a character? Can we forget his stupendous displays of power in assuaging the tempest, in feeding the twelve thousand; the preaching in Peter's boat and the blue lake of Genesareth; or the deeply affecting passion he exhibited at the grave of Lazarus, whom he restored to life, to the joy of the weeping sisters of Bethany? What is it, then, that throws over the scene such mystic light and loveliness? Is it the splendour of language, the riches of description, or the renowned characters on which it dilates? No; it is the meekness and divinity of the actor in all these wonders, that gives the charm and deepens the impression.

It was this heart-appealing influence that caused a Soame Jennings, a Lord Lyttleton, and a Rochester, (who searched the sacred records avowedly to find materials for their refutation,) to become humble converts to the faith, and levelled their scornful prejudices to the earth. Wearied with hackneyed philosophical enjymemes—tired of pleasure's flowery magic—sick of the world's hyocrisy, and yet no resource of consolation, they thought, at any rate, to revenge themselves on Christianity, as the disappointed man revenges himself upon the nearest object; but the beauty of everlasting truth captivated them, and its simplicity was as the angel of peace to their distracted mind.

The artist who admires the sublime creations of a Raphael, Rembrandt, or Michael Angelo, sees in them nature exhibited by the pencil in light and shade so vivid as to seem real. And who cannot but imagine, so natural and affecting are the portraits and scenes of Holy Scripture, that, while we are reading, we are present, treading those holy fields, over whose acres, eighteen hundred years ago, His sacred feet trod who was nailed for our advantage to the bitter cross?

From those few observations let us learn: 1. That the style of the Scriptures is certainly a proof of the antiquity and genuineness of the books themselves. 2. That the attractions they have are not literary ones merely, though the Old Scriptures furnish abundant examples of them, but it is their truthfulness that gives them their natural and impressive character. 3. The importance of the subject they relate to, should induce every person to read them as the oracles of God, and pray for its enlightening spirit to make him wise unto salvation.

St. Sylvester, July 20, 1844.

THE CONVERSION OF THE JEWS.

LETTER XXVI.

CONCLUSION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN MIRROR.

SIR,—We refer to our former letters on this subject with considerable diffidence and consciousness of defect. And, as an ample apology, it would be perfectly satisfactory, could we fully explain the circumstances of inconvenience under which they have very often been composed. But we feel happy in having so triumphantly succeeded in establishing our original position and in animating the hopes and the efforts of the Church of Christ, in relation to the conversion of "the nation of the Jews."

Typographical errors have, in some instances, impaired, and in others completely perverted, the sense we intended to convey. As, for instance, in the last paragraph of our 24th letter; where the word *preceded* was printed instead of the word *succeeded*. The idea we meant to express was this: that the age of Gospel Millennium "will be succeeded by, at least, a short struggle, on the part of the powers of darkness, for their lost ascendancy. During that period, (Revel. xx. 7, 8.) "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan

shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth." But the Gospel shall previously be preached, and shall prevail, "among all nations."

Our proofs of the approaching national conversion of the Jews, have chiefly been drawn from the New Testament. The same animating truth is taught, indeed, in the Old Testament, in connection also with their promised return to Palestine; which shall yet most assuredly take place. But more than ordinary discrimination, on the part of the reader, would be needful, in order to understand some of the Old Testament allusions to these magnificent events. And as we have written purposely for the benefit of the unlearned enquirer, we have restricted ourselves to what was more obvious, in argument, illustration, and proof, and have endeavoured to assist him by reference to straightforward, unfigurative, New Testament teaching. This, the use of but a very small portion of common sense, will convince any person, can only be REALLY understood in ONE WAY.

We have shown, beyond any questioning, that the Epistle to the Romans is eminently a JEWISH EPISTLE. It was written by a learned and converted Jew, in relation to the church-standing of his converted Jewish brethren. It was written to a church in which there were strong tendencies, on the part of converted Gentiles, unduly to disparage even the converted Jew; and it contains a most logical and scriptural argument, in reproof of such disparagement, and in demonstration, that Jewish "blindness" shall yet be removed in connection with Gentile "fulness," and that the whole nation shall then be converted to God.

The chief weight of our argument has been made to rest on Rom. xi. 25, 26, 27. An impartial analysis has conducted the reader to that part of the epistle, which some have either inadvertently or "ignorantly" applied to "the spiritual Israel;" or to those already converted by the Gospel. "This their way is their folly."

We have seen:—

I. This passage refers to an "Israel" said to be under the influence of "blindness." But it cannot be said of "the spiritual Israel," "that blindness hath happened unto them."

THEREFORE they are not here intended; but clearly the Jews, as a nation, who still have "the veil upon their hearts."

II. This passage declares, that the "blindness" of Israel shall only continue "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

But this blindness will continue, until this day:

THEREFORE "the fulness of the Gentiles" has NOT YET "come in."

III. This passage teaches, that when "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, all Israel shall be saved."

But none can be "saved" unless "converted." THEREFORE "all Israel" shall then be "converted."

IV. What Holy Scripture announces, we are authorised to believe and expect, with unwavering assurance.

But Holy Scripture announces the approaching "fulness of the Gentiles," as characterising the era in which "all Israel shall be saved."

THEREFORE, we ought to expect, with unwavering assurance, both "the fulness of the Gentiles," and that then, "all Israel shall be saved."

Affecting it is, to see certain individuals, from whom better things might have been expected, holdly affirming that both the conversion of the Jews "and the fulness of the Gentiles" NEVER WILL "come in!"

After mistaking Scriptures so PLAIN, intelligent persons will be able to judge of their COMPETENCY to understand the more obscure and difficult portions of "DANIEL" and "THE REVELATIONS!"

Yet they undertake to LECTURE even on these!

These, they do truly "darken, BY WORDS WITHOUT NUMBER."

Whatever allowance may be made for their MOTIVES, it is, clearly, a solemn duty to expose their MISTAKES. No sincere persons become "deceivers," but by themselves, "being deceived." And we have devoutly dropped this clue of truth,