

And though they take our life,
Goods, honor, children, wife,
Yet is their profit small;
These things shall vanish all—
The City of God remaineth

GENEVA.

(From Correspondence of Presbyterian)

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, May 9, 1853.

Like Jerusalem of old, it is girt about with everlasting hills, lying snugly nestled between the range of the Jura on one side and that of the Alps of Savoy on the other. Built on both sides of the Rhone, and at the very extremity of the beautiful Lake Lemman it rises steeply from its shores, and frowns like a grim wrinkled giant over its smoothly blue waters. Apart from its historical associations, the city itself, *i. e.* what of it is shut up within the walls, presents nothing of particular interest. Like all old walled towns, its streets are narrow and damp, the houses lofty and black, and the whole aspect cheerless in the extreme. You sigh in vain for a bright ray of sunshine; and as cheerful looking houses, that may remind you of the luxury of American cities, they are few and far between. The same house almost invariably holds many families, and you may freely enter any front door, and mount four, five, or six stories, and never be questioned as to your business. I would be led into an inextricable labyrinth if I should attempt to describe to you the streets. Narrow and without sidewalks, people, wagons, asses, and market-baskets all mingled in wild confusion, you have to tread them carefully. From one to another there are many short passages through dark and forbidding alleys. They lead you everywhere and nowhere, and every time you emerge from them, you have to take new bearings like a sailor on the pathless ocean. Not the least curious thing about these streets is their names. Here they form quite a historical and interesting study. Here, for instance, is the street of the *Bakers*, there of the *Merchants*, there again of the *Philosophers*, and still again of the *Priests*; and they all tell you of the olden times, when men of these different professions were grouped together in these particular quarters. Then here again is the street of the *Good Children*, undoubtedly the locality of an ancient school, and there (must I say it) the street of *Hell*, and that of *Purgatory*; and singularly enough, they both lead to one of the principal churches of the city. The philosophy of these names, I have not yet been able to divine.

But let us hasten out of the city proper. It is too gloomy and sad for such a bright spring day as this. We go through the *Port Neuve*, and walk about the beautiful ramparts. How enchanting! What a contrast to the dark, frowning city! What a rebuke from the God of nature, smiling in green fields and shady groves, to the men who have shut themselves out from heaven's pure light behind their thick walls! Shall we walk? Take any road we will, and we will find it lovely. Great trees overarch our path, and interweave their branches above our heads. Hawthorn hedges regale us with their sweet perfume. The beautiful *primrose* skirts our way, and offers its loveliness to the eye; and in the evening, the nightingale enchants us with her mellow notes. Villa will succeed villa, and picturesque Swiss houses will peep out from thick bowers of vines and shady oaks. So it will be for miles around, and you will find that more of Geneva is without its walls than within them. The environs of the city are thus very extensive, and as beautiful as can be imagined.

But let us stand still and gaze, and from beauty we ascend to grandeur. From the heights of the city we look down upon the beautiful Lake Lemman. Its placid waters stretch before us as far as the eye can reach. Its sloping banks are covered with a carpet of green, scattered over with luxurious villas. To the left extends the long chain of the Jura, guarding Switzerland from France, still white with snow. To the right rise the Alps of Savoy, piercing the air with their sharp, needle-like points, and beyond them all the glorious Mont Blanc, the monarch of mountains, with "its thousand years of snow." Though sixty miles away, it stands forth on a clear day, with an outline perfectly distinct. You never tire of gazing upon it. It is the embodiment of silent sublimity.

Thus about Geneva, beauty and grandeur dwell side by side. On the one hand you are led to contemplate God in those minute details which mark his all-embracing providence and his universal care: on the other, you are carried away to wonder at those lofty conceptions which have left their imprint upon these sublime and eternal hills.

Such is Geneva, presenting two aspects; the one, dark damp, and chilling, as you shut yourself up within the walls which man has built; the other, bright, cheerful, and sublime, as you go out into the beautiful *campagne*, and meet the fresh breath of a pure and invigorating atmosphere.

More than once (it may be a foolish conceit) these two aspects of the city have suggested to me a thought about that form of theology of which Geneva is known as the special representative. To those who shut themselves up within the walls of a human philosophy, who close their hearts against the melting influences of grace, and who know nothing of this theology except as a formal creed, against which their pride and self-sufficiency are constantly revolting, it will and must be cold, chilling, and repulsive. But break through those walls—go out from self, to look at this theology from the same stand-point with God himself—tear away the veil, and let the eye survey the whole truth of God's government and

man's condition—open the heart to the influences of grace as coming through an accepted substitution, and at once all is changed. A beautiful harmony pervades the system once full of contradictions, and all, all the doctrine of a creed once hated, now breathed upon by the Holy Spirit, become radiant with a hitherto undiscovered loveliness. What the godless intellect rejected, the heart, that has let in God, joyfully embraces!

But to close this letter, already too long, let me add that Geneva is at present a thriving city. Containing a population of 40,000, it is constantly increasing. The great thoroughfare to the Alps and to Italy in the summer, it is crowded with strangers, and hotels are almost as numerous and large as in our Atlantic cities. No railroad has hitherto invaded the quiet of these hills, but an order has just been passed for the construction of three, which shall here have their centre. These will give a wonderful impetus to the place, and ere long, the old familiar features so long preserved of the city of Calvin, will be swept away by the resistless enterprise of the nineteenth century. So be it, if, thereby, a way is made for the gospel, and for the melting down of all nations into one Christian brotherhood.

JEWISH NEGROES.

The Rev. Dr. Philip, missionary in the north of Africa, gives the following details concerning that country. A Russian Jew, resident at Meadah, gave him information concerning a great number of Israelites inhabiting the oases of Salnara and dwelling also at Bathhor, Bis-Wrabi, Tauggan, Bousara, Bein Uzab, Loquas, etc. There are in each of these places as many as a hundred families, and in some more. In one place he found six hundred families with numerous synagogues, and about a hundred copies of the Law, written upon parchment, some of which were more ancient than any he had ever seen.

But this is not all; other curious details reached Dr. Philip from another source. A Jew who had accompanied a German traveller as far as Timbuctoo, found near the boundary of the kingdom of Bambara, a large number of Jewish negroes. Nearly every family possesses the Law of Moses, written upon parchment. Although they speak of the prophets, they have not their writings. Their prayers differ from those of other Jews, and are committed to little leaves of parchment, stitched together, and contain numerous passages derived from the Psalms.—These Jews have mingled some of the superstitions of "oral law" (which they have not committed to writing) with those of their neighbors, the Mohammedans and the Heathen. They enjoy equal liberty with other subjects of the African chiefs, and have their synagogues and their rabbis. The explanation which they give of themselves, in connection with their black skin, is this: That after the destruction of Jerusalem, at the time of the first captivity, some of their ancestors, having neither goods nor lands, fled to the desert. The fatigue which they endured was so great, that nearly all the females died by the way. The children of Ham received them with kindness, and by intermarriage with their daughters, who were black, communicated their colour to their children. These children became, generation by generation, of a deeper hue, until no difference of colour now distinguishes the children of Shem and those of Ham. The form of their features, however, is very different from that of the negroes around them.

These are highly interesting facts, and create a strong desire that these unexplored regions may be speedily opened to intercourse with the civilized world. Access to these ancient manuscripts, which are probably older than any other now extant, would be of great value in correcting the received Hebrew text, or in throwing upon doubtful passages.—*Jewish Chronicle*.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, and saying a man-child is born unto thee, making him very glad."—Jer. 20: 15.

In India, the birth of a boy is greeted both by parents and relatives with the liveliest manifestations of joy. So in Arabia—whenever a son is born, one of the domestics, after announcing it hastily to the family, runs to the door, which she beats all her might to attract notice, exclaiming all the while, a male child! a male child! a male child is born. In Persia, when such an event takes place, some confidential servant is generally the first to get the information, when he runs in great haste to his master, exclaiming, "good news," by which he secures to himself a gift. No such joy attends the birth of a daughter; she is despised as soon as born. No messenger runs to make glad a father's heart, as he regards her presence as a curse upon him. This feeling has led some tribes to destroy most of the female children born among them.

"I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me."—7: 21.

"I have no rest day or night," said a converted New Zealander, to a missionary, "for the wickedness of my heart; it is always contending for evil." Until you came and made known among us the Word of God, we had nothing of this sort; now, one heart is continually teasing the other to do wrong, and the other to do right; and between them both I have no rest. I wish to do right, but I do not understand all this quarrelling." As in water, face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man. The experience of this man, once a savage, was that of the great missionary to the Gentiles, and is felt more or less by every child of God.