

Lent.

IF our blessed Lord took a Lenten season to prepare Himself for His great work, do we not need one every year to help us to go rightly about our life's work?

Then let us see to it that Lent has some real meaning for us. We speak of self-denial, and look upon Lent rightly as a time for practising it, and higher still as a season of self-sacrifice. It is a time, too, for penitence, for looking our sins unflinchingly in the face, calling them by their right names, and setting ourselves, with the help of God and all the force of our nature, to conquer and destroy them.

But it means something higher still; it is not a well-spent Lent unless it teaches us to look out of ourselves to Christ.

Some speak of Lent as if its whole intention were to produce a feeling of gloom. One of the deep sayings of a saintly man speaks of humiliation as a means to amend,

and it is a good saying to bear in mind in Lent. 'You must not place the chief part of your religion in humiliation, as if it were a life of mere sorrow that we are called to by the Gospel. But you must make it a servant to your faith, and love, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and other graces. As the use of the needle is but to make room for the thread, and then it is the thread and not the needle that makes the seam; so much of our sorrow is but to prepare for faith and love, and these are they that close the soul with Christ. It is, therefore, a sore mistake with some that are very apprehensive of their want of sorrow, but little of their want of faith or love, and that pray and strive to break their hearts, or weep for sin, but not much for those higher graces which it tendeth to. One must be done, and the other not left undone.'

The Storm and Calm.

WAREFUL HUMANITY.—Ezekiel xxvii.

WHAT ship is this with broidered sail,
Perfect in every part,
The ivory bench, the cedar mast,
Prove her a work of art?
A ship of Tarshish, built by men
In their vocation skilled,
Her mariners and pilots wise,
Her hold with treasure filled.

Spices from Sheba, precious stones,
Silver and gold are there;
Perfect in beauty is her form,
Her freightage rich and rare.
But human skill is all in vain,
In storm and adverse wind,
The men and gold together sink
And leave no trace behind.

SLEEPING DIVINITY.—Matthew viii.

A fishing boat is on a lake
Beneath an Eastern sky,
No ivory benches line her sides,
No purple floats on high.
No precious stones, no spices rare
Her narrow hold contains;
Her crew are humble, rugged men,
Content with scanty gains.
The smiling sky by clouds obscured,
Grows ominous and dark,

The storm in all its fury roars,
The waves sweep o'er the barque.
Our Saviour Christ in slumber lies,
But when, with earnest prayer,
His followers turn to Him they find
Protection in His care;
For He arose, and to the waves
In their tumultuous sway
Said, 'Peace be still,' and while He spake
The tempest died away.

J. FOTHERGILL.