

WETHERSFIELD

PARISH

MAGAZINE.

MARCH, 1870.

PRICE TWO-PENCE.

*All Poor Persons (earning less than 14s. per week) will be  
required to pay one penny only.*

The Magazine may be had of the Rev. W. Marsh, Mr. Edwards,  
or at the National School.

BRAINTREE :

E. AND C. JOSCELYNE, PRINTERS.

give, at least, so much light as is necessary to enable us to see the next step; not questioning His promises, though they may seem long in fulfilment; not staggered by judgments and disappointments, though they may seem hard to reconcile with our idea of God's providence; in fact, trusting Christ entirely, when He says, 'What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.'

It is the temper of mind which Christ our Lord recommended to His disciples when He was foretelling the destruction of their nation. When they should be surrounded with all the appalling events which accompanied the siege of Jerusalem; and should see their city tottering to its fall—a dispensation closing in ruin and blood; all the traditions and associations of the most holy and the most absorbing of national histories apparently swept away by the invading and idolatrous Gentiles; and 'the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place,' in the midst of all this, Jesus said, 'In your patience possess ye your souls.'

In the present day, when a destruction dark and thorough as that which swept the ancient Jerusalem, seems threatening from a different quarter to desolate our spiritual Sion, what can we in our wisdom do but listen to the same exhortation. When clouds and darkness seem to wrap round the holy hills, and shut out the guiding light; when too often through the perversion of the noblest gift of reason, 'the very light that is in us becomes our darkness;' when leaders of popular thought bewilder us with the bright, the taking, the fanciful, the ever-varying result of restless speculations; and the leaders of religious thought paralyse us by contradictory statements, even of those things that concern our peace;—what *can* we do but look with longing eyes for the light that shall be granted us if we remain steadfastly where Christ has placed us? How shall we occupy this time of our waiting and our watching, but in simply acting on those plain, broad truths about which none but the violent or the wilfully ignorant can raise a doubt; in simply doing what Christ has bidden us, though we know nothing of the why or the wherefore: doing from faith, and love and trust, what the Church in the Bible has enshrined of the plain commands of Christ, and finding it a sufficient reason for our unquestioning patience and obedience, that 'the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.'

And yet this patience—the attitude in which the Christian is ever to await the storm, be it of persecution or misfortune, or onslaught upon the doctrines of his Church—this patience, I say, is not a patience of inactivity; it is not the patience of the 'wicked and slothful servant,' who kept his one talent hid in a napkin; it is that which St. Paul describes as 'patient continuance in well-doing;' and which our Lord stamps as the mark of real growth, of true progress; the steady, irresistible, unhurried, but unwavering advance of the disciplined soul; the characteristic of the good seed in the good ground, which 'brings forth fruit with patience.'

How it operates may be illustrated, I think, by the conduct and the treatment of the lepers mentioned in the text, 'As they went, they were cleansed.' They met Jesus as lepers, living types of sinners, and of their state before God. They knew bitterly their need, and

from a distance they lifted up their piteous cry, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.' What is the reply of our blessed Lord? He simply bade them go, show themselves to the priest—just as they were, with the foul disease upon them unabated, with nothing apparently even pointing to their cleansing, except that one strong, yearning, heart-sick longing for health, so earnest, and yet apparently so hopeless. Just as they were, Christ bade them go to the priests, as if they were clean. He saw they were not clean; they knew they were not clean; but they were, at Christ's command, to act as if they were—to present themselves before the priests for examination, and to make those offerings and perform those services which none but the clean might make and perform.

Foul and loathsome lepers, they heard the words of Jesus. Foul and loathsome lepers, with their disease still upon them, they did as Christ told them, they went His way; 'and as they went, they were cleansed.'

And so it always was in Christ's dealings on earth. Simple, unquestioning trust, naturally followed by unhesitating obedience, had its reward. Cavilling, doubting impatience was the prelude to rejection and ruin. 'Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it,' was the direction of the Blessed Virgin to the servants at Cana; they acted on her advice: they obeyed Jesus when He spoke to them, the result was the first miracle Jesus wrought. On the other hand, Jesus speaks to Nicodemus of the one Sacrament; he is staggered, and says, 'How can these things be?' And for the lifetime of Jesus, he never had the courage to own himself His disciple. Jesus speaks of the other Sacrament at Capernaum, and the people question, 'How can this man give us His flesh to eat?' and they stumble at the doctrine; they cannot bear to wait, they desert the Lord, and, sad epitaph to write upon their memory, 'they walked no more with Him.'

I have no wish to travel into the regions of controversy; and, indeed, with all my heart I wish there were no such regions for any of us. But I cannot help following up this last reference to the Jews at Capernaum by a consideration that meets us at the present time. Are we not too fond of questioning and defining the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, instead of obtaining the blessing connected with it by obediently receiving it?

Let me take one single case as an illustration. We all, I suppose, with scarcely a single exception, believe that *in some way* Christ is present in that Holy Sacrament. No one, at any rate, can use the words of the Church Service without so believing. But when we come to enquire into the *When* and the *How* of that presence, we find ourselves rather imitating the Jews with their questions—'Rabbi, when camest thou hither?' or, 'How can this man give us His flesh to eat?' than obeying the command of Christ, 'Do this,' or the Apostolic injunction, 'Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.'

Can we not at that sacred Board, where all agree is perpetuated the remembrance of a dying Saviour's love, agree also in this,—that as Christ has said it, as St. Paul has confirmed it, Christ Himself is really present, and imparts Himself to the soul of the

faithful communicant. Can we not have patience enough for this—patience as our dear English Church intends we should have it, neither explaining away the comfort and the reality of the Sacrament, as too many Protestants do, nor defining it in that exact and scientific way that the Roman Church has arrogated the right to do. Rome and Dissent, in this as in a great many other things, act in exactly the same way. They both know that human nature is impatient; they offer to satisfy that impatience at once—the one by saying boldly exactly what the Sacrament is; the other, with equal boldness, by saying what it is not. Our Church, on the other hand, leaves the matter where it finds it in God's word: taking Christ's own language when she must describe at all, and without telling us when any change takes place, or how any change takes place, reminding us of what Christ Himself has said, 'He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.'

Surely, in this spirit, many, who may be supposed to differ, may well and wisely meet. All who come in penitence, and faith, and love, God accepts, and speaks to them at that feast, and feeds them with the true Bread from Heaven, though it be to them indeed Manna, 'for they wot not what it is.'

And one other thought on this subject, which the patient obedience of the text especially brings home to us here. It was, 'as they went, they were cleansed.' They started to go, lepers just as they were. As they were on the road, the road of obedience, the blessing came to them. Dear brethren, doubting, hesitating, excusing, or else accusing yourselves, pleading your ignorance, or your unworthiness, or your sin, why do you linger. Is it with you as with those lepers? Do you really know that you are offenders against God's law; do you really know that you are in a state of spiritual sickness, desolation and danger? Do you, like the lepers, wish for better things with all your heart? And do you come to Jesus for them? Then do as He bids you; imitate the lepers, who went in the face of the greatest improbabilities, but of whom we are told 'that as they went, they were cleansed.' You, as you obey Christ's command, as you comply with the request of the messengers whom He sends to compel you to come in, you will find that in trusting Him, and in doing as He bids, you will have your reward. Christ will bless obedience; Christ loves the simple, humble heart; Christ goes to meet those who draw near to Him. He is Himself the Master who commands, and the Priest who judges and absolves: He not only cleanses the leper, but He gives His own nature: He not only invites to the feast, but He provides the marriage garment. He saw the lepers—types of sin in its most revolting features before God; He judged them clean beforehand, and cleansed them in their simple, patient acceptance of His one condition, and in that figure He appeals to the sinner, yes, to the greatest sinner, who feels his need, to consider himself already cleansed by the work of Christ; He appeals to him by that nobility of which the worst is capable, by that welcome He has in store for all who come in faith, He appeals to us—and shall Christ appeal in vain?

## EVENING SCHOOL.

The examination of the scholars took place on Tuesday, the 15th February, at 7 p.m., in accordance with the Government Regulations.

The two examiners were REV. WILLIAM MARSH, (Vicar,) and HUMPHRY E. G. MARRIOTT, ESQ.

The number presented to the Privy Council for examination, was 38,—of whom 36 were present at the School on the evening of the examination. The result of the examination will not be known for some weeks, when the Committee on Education will send down the list of those who have passed in the papers of arithmetic, &c.,—furnished under sealed covers for the purposes of the examination.

We trust that the number that will be found to have passed, will be at least 30, and that the Government Grant will be obtained for these passes,—(viz. 5s. per head.)

It is important to observe, that the total number of evening scholars on the books is 59, out of these only 38 have attended the requisite number of times,—(viz. 24, out of the 45 evenings on which the School has been open during the winter months.) There remain therefore 21 scholars for whom no Government Grant can be obtained on account of *irregular* attendance.

The reason alleged by many of these 21, (who were necessarily absent also from the examination on the 15th February,) is that they cannot leave work in time to get to the School at 7 o'clock. We trust that in future years the employers of these *Evening Scholars*, will give all the facility that they can, to enable them to reach School on the evenings that their attendance is required.

## EVENING SCHOOL DINNER.

On Friday, the 25th of Feb., at 6 p.m., a substantial dinner of roast beef, boiled mutton, and plum pudding, was prepared at the National School Rooms, for the 36 scholars who were present at the examination on the 15th inst. Each of these scholars subscribed 6d a head towards the dinner, and the remaining cost of it must be met by such subscriptions as may be offered by persons taking an interest in our Evening Schools. After the dinner (to which as may be supposed, complete justice was done;) amusements of various kinds were provided, including singing, stereoscopes, bagatelle draughts, &c, which were kept up in full enjoyment till ten o'clock.

We must not conclude this account of the Evening Schools of 1869-70, without expressing our most cordial thanks to Mr. Sidney Halls, and Mr. Edward Morris, who have assisted voluntarily in the teaching of the scholars; and been in constant attendance during the winter. The Managers of the School earnestly hope that this example may induce others to come forward in future times to assist in like manner. The work of teaching in an Evening School, no doubt, requires considerable self-sacrifice and exertion; but there is probably none that produces such excellent results in a country parish.

It is not easy to over-rate the good that comes especially from employers,—showing that they take a real interest of this kind in those who work for them; and it may be asked—in what way can boys of 12 years and upwards better spend their winter evenings, than in learning to read and write, and a little simple arithmetic?

## Parish Church Notices.

### LENT SERVICES.

Mar. 2.—Ash Wednesday. The Litany and Communion Service at 11 a.m. Evening Service at half-past 7.  
Evening Service at half-past 7 p.m. on the following *Fridays*—

#### PREACHERS.

March 11.—Rev. MATTHEW VAUGHAN  
" 18.—  
" 25.—  
April 1.—Rev. LIONEL LAMPET

### BAPTISMS.

Feb. 13.—Letitia Mary Edwards

### BURIALS.

Feb. 6.—Thomas Rogers  
" 5.—John Cornell  
" 9.—Robert Hasler

## S. Mary's Church.

### LENT SERVICES.

DAILY—Morning at 9. Evening at 5.  
Wednesday Evening—Litany Service—with *Hymn and Addresses*.  
Friday Mar. 25.—Feast of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary, Evening Service at 7.

### VESTRY MEETING.

At a Meeting held on Thursday, the 17th of February, to consider the best means of providing for the effectual drainage and sewerage of the Parish; Mr. DAY was appointed Inspector of Nuisances, at an Annual salary of £4, and received the necessary instructions to make a report to the Vestry respecting the present sewerage, &c., of the Parish.

The Meeting was then adjourned to Thursday, March 3rd, at 11 o'clock, to receive and consider the report of the Inspector of Nuisances.

It must we think give general satisfaction to find, that, this question has been so earnestly taken up by the Vestry at their last Meeting.

There is, we may now hope, a good prospect that under the last Acts of Parliament, a regular and efficient sanitary system may be established, by which all reasonable complaints of Nuisances, &c., may be at once attended to, and the necessary measures taken to remove them.

soon over and Eternity so near. Such a hush in the house, the clock seemed saying "Too late, too late!" to his troubled mind. But the next moment Mrs. Wilmot saw him, and got up, and put her finger to her lips, and glanced towards the stairs leading up to the bedroom. The blood rushed back to Golding's heart, and sang and throbbed in his head; the hush, as of death, was gone, and the tone of the old clock sounded differently, it was saying "Not yet, not yet!"

"He is asleep," Mrs. Wilmot said, in a whisper, "and doctor says, please God, he'll wake up better. I'm sure I never thought as he'd see another day, but God knows best. Would you like to see him?" she asked, doubtfully.

"No, no," Golding said, quickly; "I'm glad he's better, and I hope he'll come round all right," and he went off. He was afraid of betraying himself in the sudden relief, of saying something rash and imprudent that he might regret afterwards. People grow so prudent and far-seeing in old age. He would certainly claim his son, oh yes, he would, and tell him all, some day; but he would do it calmly, not in a hurry, not in excitement; not yet, not yet.

Johnnie got well, slowly; but still, Golding said to himself, "Not yet;" he regained his strength and went back to his work, and was again constantly in Golding's sight, but still, "Not yet," and the old clock went steadily on, and the days, and weeks, and months passed. The old clock marked at last the dying moment of its old mistress, and old Mrs. Wilmot went to her rest, and Johnnie lost a kind friend and had to seek new lodgings; and Golding had to find some one else to do for him, and got a new woman who did not understand his ways, and put him about sadly. "But there! he's getting old and fidgety," he overheard her say to a neighbour. *Was* he getting old? Sixty-two next birthday; not so old as many a one round; not what one would call an *old* man, but he was not as strong as he used to be, he got easily tired and done up. Ah, dear! an old man!

Then he got a cold in the winter and had a bad cough; it hung about him and he could not get rid of it or pick up his strength, and when he lay by for a week or two, the man in charge of the shop mismanaged everything, and it was all in such a muddle when he looked into things, that it made him ill again setting them right. "Ah," Smith said, "if you'd such a lad as Johnnie now, you might lie by and spare yourself a bit, like I do, for we're not so young, Golding, as we were, neither of us."

As the spring came on and he only felt more weak and unequal to his work, his mind became gradually made up, and he let himself dwell on all the pleasure and comforts of having a son, and such an one as Johnnie, to be his right hand. He should no longer be a lonely man with no one but himself to care for. He would make it a pleasant home for Johnnie, and he would not mind then sitting by as an old man, if his place was so well filled.

One evening he was down in the Low Meadows, and as he stood where his poor wife died, his mind was finally made up, and he resolved to seek out Johnnie and tell him the whole truth, and ask his forgiveness and pity, and with this resolution he set off homewards.

## CHAPTER V.

Occupied with his thoughts, Golding turned his steps towards his own home which was so soon to be brightened by the light of affection and comfort, and which in his mind grew even brighter and pleasanter than the old home long ago. Surely the blessings to come would repay him for all the sadness of those twenty long years of loneliness and labour. So absorbed was he by these dreams of his that he did not notice the signs of excitement in the people who hurried past him, nor heed what they called out to one another, till he found himself in a crowd of people, all moving in one direction, and was being urged along in the direction of one of the narrow lanes of Hilton, from whence a thick column of smoke going up towards the peaceful evening sky, witnessed the truth of the people's cry—"Fire! Fire!" which now broke upon his ears. As soon as an opportunity offered, he drew himself away from the crowd and stood in a doorway watching the scene.

Even in quiet Hilton a crowd soon gathers, and the little lane was already thronged with gazers. It was one of the older houses of the town, which might once have seen better days, built of stone, with large mullioned windows and heavy stone copings. It had taken fire in the lower story during the absence of its inmates, and till the engines arrived, it seemed hopeless saving any of the furniture and goods within, and the crowd were only trying to prevent the flames spreading by throwing water on the thatch and tiles that stood dangerously near. Foremost among the helpers Golding saw Jack Stone with a ready hand wherever it was most wanted, and a kind word to the terrified neighbours who came out of their houses carrying children and goods, for they could not tell which way the flames might spread that were gaining ground so fast in the old house. The engines were long in coming, the keys of the engine-house could not be found, the man who knew about it was away and without anyone to guide their efforts, the confusion and alarm were great. Golding, as he stood watching the scene, told himself that, if he had been a younger man, he would not have stood there idle, but have been in the front of it all, where Jack Stone stood; but he could not help feeling glad that his boy Johnnie was not there to be in danger. Luckily there was no wind to spread the flames, but the smoke poured up straight to the sky, where, one by one, the stars were coming out. The flames were showing plainly in the lower rooms, and from more than one of the upper ones the smoke was bursting, and the hot glass was cracking and falling down, when suddenly a thrill seemed to run through the crowd—a thrill of horror and fear—and Golding heard a man telling of a lad coming in from work tired and worn-out, and throwing himself on his bed, and being left there asleep by the other inmates of the house, when they locked the door and went out, and this was the house, and up there was the window which the flames had not yet reached, where the lad lay, stifled already, may be, in his sleep, or still to wake up to the horror of such a death.

The excitement of the crowd was intense. "What would they do?" Golding wondered, as he saw a cluster of men talking eagerly, and a long ladder being brought out. One of the men was Jack Stone, and he seemed wild with eagerness and anxiety, and again Golding thanked God that Johnnie was not there; when suddenly the name, that was in his thoughts and that had been dwelling in his mind so much of late, was taken up and repeated from mouth to mouth in the crowd, "Johnnie Blake, Johnnie Blake," and then it flashed across his terror-stricken brain that it was his boy, the son he had neglected so long but had hoped so soon to claim, who lay there in the very arms of death.

How much agony can be condensed into a moment! Surely, in the moment when he stretched out his hands towards the flames with a helpless, hopeless cry and then staggered back, sick and faint with horror, against the wall behind, a lifetime of remorse and pain was endured. But it was but for a moment—the next, how he made his way through the pushing, driving crowd, he could not tell and did not notice, but he was there in the front by the side of the group of men who still stood in eager discussion, and he had got his hand on Jack Stone's arm and was crying out, above the roar of the flames and people, in a shrill voice that sounded strangely in his own ears, "Oh! save him, save him. You won't let him die there, like a rat in a hole."

At first they hardly heeded the feeble old man's words, but he still kept his grasp on Jack's strong young arm and urged him to help, till one of the men turned to him, and, not knowing or recognising him in his excitement, said, "What be you after, old man, urging the lad to his death, for death 'twould be to go in yonder now."

"And you'll let him die?" shrieked Golding, wringing his hands together; "die in his sleep? Oh, Jack Stone, you and he were always such friends. He wouldn't have done so by you."

Jack's hand grasped the ladder and he made a step forward but stopped. He was no coward, and he loved Johnnie as David loved Jonathan, but life is sweet, and fire is an awful death.

"I'd go myself," another man said, "but there's my wife and little ones."

"Ay! but he's got no one as cares. Cowards! I'm an old man but I'll go myself." He made a push forward, but was roughly pulled back, and Jack Stone, shaking off the kindly hands that held him back, had already his foot on the ladder.

"Right enough," he cried; "there's none as cares for Jack Stone. Here goes!"

It has taken long to tell this, but it was but a few minutes between the time that Golding stood watching the fire without a thought of danger to him or his, and that Jack went up the ladder into the burning house. The ladder could not be placed straight under the window, which still stood dark and free from fire, the only one now in all the house from which neither flame nor smoke streamed. The flames were bursting out below it, and would have caught the ladder in a moment, if it had been put there, so it was set against a corner of the old house, where a solid buttress gave it

support, and Jack had to walk a few yards along the coping at the top of the house before he reached the window in the roof, to which all eyes were turned. As he made his way along quickly and firmly, with his form showing out black and clear against the lurid smoke, a breathless silence settled down upon the crowd, and when the window was reached, and he dashed in the glass and disappeared into the room, in spite of the roaring and crackling of the flames, the silence was so intense, that Golding thought the beating of his heart must be heard by all.

There were prayers going up from many a heart in the crowd in this moment, hearts feeling their own utter helplessness, and crying to the great God who holds the elements in His hand to save those two lives which were in such deadly jeopardy. How long was it? How the flames gained ground, leaping and stretching like living, hungry creatures greedy for the strong young prey in their clutches. Golding had sunk on his knees, and hid his face in his hands. A noise in the crowd roused him, a gasping sound, half sob, half shout. There was a movement within the dark window. He is coming back! *They are coming!*

Yes! it is true; two forms are seen coming, and none too soon, for the smoke bursts out with them through the window. That is Johnnie Blake first, he seems half stupified, and Jack, as he comes behind, has to hold him up and guide him along the dangerous path. Jack's shirt is torn, and his arm blackened with smoke, and his hair singed, but the crowd can see the bright, bold look on his face, and can hear him encouraging Johnnie with his cheery voice. Eager hands are ready with the ladder, eager eyes are following every step, eager voices, breaking the dreadful silence, are cheering them on, eager hearts are beating and throbbing with hope for the rescued and rescuer. The ladder is reached. The sudden and terrible awakening from his sleep, the flames and smoke, the noise and the crowd, seem quite to have stupified Johnnie Blake, and he scarcely notices the kindly hands that help him down, or the old man who clasps his hands, and, with tears running down his cheeks, sobs out his thankfulness for his wonderful escape. For a second he stands stupified, and then, tearing his hands from Golding's grasp, he turns round to his rescuer—turns, but where is he? The ladder still stands there, but where Jack Stone stood a minute ago, there is an awful chasm where part of the roof has fallen in, and the flames and smoke are rushing up in wild triumph over their terrible victory. One saved, one lost. Lost, did I say? No, surely, Jack Stone is safe from all dangers of this troublesome world, though he reached the shelter by a fiery and terrible path.

The engines are coming at last, but for what good? there are women screaming and wringing their hands, and strong men pale and trembling. They can do nothing to save the bold-faced lad who, five minutes ago, was so full of life and strength, and now—they shudder as they think of the poor, charred thing that was once Jack Stone, with his bonny face and sturdy frame. Johnnie Blake, rushing forward, would have thrown himself into the fire after his friend, had there not been many to hold him back, and

then the terror was too much, and he fell senseless and was carried out of the crowd.

“No one as cares for Jack Stone!”

There was scarcely a mother in Hilton who did not sigh for many a day, for motherless Jack Stone; and many a strong man passed a rough hand across dimmed eyes, and spoke with a husky voice, as he told of the heroic death of the Workhouse lad who died to save his friend.

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An hour afterwards the flames had sunk down, leaving the walls of the house, where the fire had been, standing up black and gaunt, like mourners over the destruction, the red glow was dying out of the sky, the crowd was dispersing to their beds, and only a small group remained watching the engines which were still at work. There was no further fear of the fire spreading, and nothing more to be done till the ruins cooled, and they could dig for all that remained on earth of poor Jack Stone. The other poor inmates of the house had found shelter with the neighbours, who were all ready and anxious to take them in, only Johnnie Blake sat watching the ruins, with Golding standing beside him, afraid to break by speaking the despairing gloom in which he seemed sunk. At last Golding touched his shoulder and said, “Come, lad, 'tis no use staying; we'd best go home.”

“Home?” was the answer. “What home?”

“Well, anyhow come home with me and have a bit of food and rest; I'm sure you must need it.”

“I don't know what cause you've got to be so kind,” Johnnie said, rising wearily; and, unwillingly turning from the smoking ruins, he followed Golding through the streets, where the usual midnight quiet was fast settling down. His heart was very sore, poor lad, very sore and aching. His life that had been so hardly saved, seemed scarcely worth the keeping, since it had cost another life so much more worthy than his. Jack was such a good fellow, so kind-hearted and ready to help, everyone liked him, he made friends everywhere. He was always jolly and merry, and yet he never talked bad like other chaps. He was a good lad too, though he didn't set up and preach and think himself a sight better than other folk. Well, maybe he were the fittest of the two to go. Such were Johnnie's thoughts, and then he resolved to try to be a better fellow himself, and then, maybe, as the Parson said, he'd meet Jack Stone again some day, and then in his heart he thanked God for his safety, and asked for help to be a better man in his life to come. He could not put it all into fine words; but one honest feeling is worth a hundred fine words, and he really meant what he prayed.

Golding was tired and worn out; he was very much shocked and sorry for Stone's death; but, through all, there was the pleasant feeling of having his son by his side and bringing him home. When they reached home, he lighted the fire and set on the kettle, and made Johnnie sit down in his own arm-chair, and, getting food and hot tea, he waited on Johnnie, pressing him to eat and taking care of him, almost as a mother might have done, in spite of his

own weariness. It was such a pleasure to him, sitting there with his boy, and thinking how they would never be parted again, no more lonely days and nights, a young step, a young voice in the silent house; and Johnnie should be always happy, no wish nor whim unsatisfied, his own life should be altogether devoted to making amends to him, and when death parted them, a son's love would smooth his dying pillow, and a son's hand close his eyes. Johnnie, meantime, sat wrapped in his own thoughts, not noticing the old man's kindness or thinking of anything except poor dead Jack. But at last he was roused by Golding saying, "Come up and go to bed, Johnnie, some sleep will do you good, and I've a deal to say to-morrow."

"Sleep?" he answered, getting up; "not I. I don't think I shall ever sleep again after waking like that. I'll go down and see if the fire is out yet."

"Stop a bit," Golding said, seized with a sudden impulse to tell out his secret; "I've something to tell you first."

Blake sank into his chair again, wondering what the old man could have to say, and why he had chosen this time of all others, when his thoughts were fixed on one object.

"It's more than twenty years ago," the old man began, and Johnnie wondered again what this could have to do with him; "I had a wife then, and a baby—a boy, christened John up at St. Peter's yonder"—he spoke slowly, stopping every now and then, and looking into Johnnie's face. "My wife was false to me—broke my heart—left me—and took the child. In two years she came back, poor and ragged and ill; but I had sworn to have done with her, and everyone thought her dead—and I—well, she went away, and the next morning they found her dead in the Low Meadows."

Johnnie's face had altered now; he got up and standing, leaning on the table opposite Golding, looked at him with a pale face and closely set teeth, "Don't be hard on me, Johnnie—don't—I've repented bitterly since—I have suffered so; it's made an old man of me."

"Well?" Johnnie spoke between his clenched teeth.

"They buried my wife and took my child to the Workhouse."

"You let your wife die at your door? and let your boy grow up a pauper? Maybe you don't know what a Workhouse is?"

His voice was hard and cold, and Golding stretched out his hands as if he had been struck. "Oh, lad, don't speak so! I'm an old man, don't be hard on me! I'll make it all up to you; don't be hard on your poor old father."

There was a moment's pause, and then Johnnie Blake spoke, slowly and steadily, "You've made a mistake. My mother was a Hilton girl, who died, when I was born, in the workhouse. Jack Stone, poor chap, he as died to-day, is your son, and may God forgive you"; and he turned and left him in his desolate house. Surely God's ways are not our ways, and He knows best.

In the morning Golding was found senseless, and for a long time he lay unconscious, for the hand of God was heavy upon him. In his wandering he kept repeating those most bitter words, "Too

late. Too late," till they stopped the great eight days clock on the landing, whose ticking seemed speaking to the sick man. Little by little his faculties came back, and he was spared time to bless the Hand that had smitten him. In those days he told Mr. Percy his sad story with deep sorrow and repentance, and found much comfort.

In little St. Peter's on the Hill there is a small tablet on the wall, put up by Miles and by those (and they were not few) who were proud of the brave deed of the poor workhouse boy:—

To the Memory  
of

JOHN STONE,  
Who lost his life in rescuing a man from  
a burning house.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down  
his life for his friend."

Too late for Golding to find his son on earth, not too late by penitence and God's grace to meet him in heaven. He is an old man now; but the old clock still speaks to him, "Not yet, not yet."



### The Land o' the Leal.

I'm wearing awa', Jean,  
Like snaw when it is thaw, Jean;  
The day is aye fair, Jean,  
In the land o' the leal.

There's nae sorrow there, Jean,  
There's neither cauld nor care, Jean;  
The day is aye fair, Jean,  
In the land o' the leal.

Ye were aye leal and true, Jean;  
Your task's ended now, Jean,  
And I'll welcome you, Jean,  
To the land o' the leal.

Our bonnie bairn's there, Jean;  
She was baith sweet and fair, Jean;  
She was ow're gude to spare, Jean;  
Frae the land o' the leal.

Then dry that tearfu' e'e, Jean;  
My soul lang's to be free, Jean;  
And angels wait on me, Jean,  
To the land o' the leal.

Now fare ye well, my ain Jean;  
This world's care is vain, Jean;  
We'll meet, and aye be fair, Jean,  
In the land o' the leal.

thing is quietly and decently made ready according to the rubrics, that kneelers are provided for the sponsors to kneel, and that they are supplied with Prayer-books, if (alas!) they have not brought their own with them. And so with everything else in connection with his duty; piety and reverence, and a little common sense, will make every clerk a real means of doing good in a church. And surely no one can think lightly of his office of vergers or beadle who recollects the glorious expression of the Psalmist, when he said "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of ugodliness;" because, whatever be the exact meaning of those words, they certainly intimate that even to sit on but the threshold of the temple of God is better than the greatest honours and comforts afforded by unholy abundance. Now, vergers and beadles often have their tempers tried by unruly boys; but let vergers and beadles recollect that everyone who does his duty is often much tried in his temper. Let not the only object be to get rid of the unruly boy, but rather to win him, and to cure his unruliness; and this may clerk, or vergers, or sexton do, if only he love his fellow creature as Jesus Christ loved us all, and clerks, vergers, and sextons are every one of them officers belonging to that Church which Jesus Christ purchased with His blood, and is enlarging by His grace.

IV. Therefore do I say, with all possible good feeling and affection, to every clerk, vergers, and sexton of the Anglican Church, in whatever part of the world he may be, do not allow yourself to think lightly of your office; it is a sacred office, for it is closely connected with the Church of Christ; it is a blessed office, for it is one in which you can promote reverence, and this is something in these days of infidelity and irreverence; it is an office closely connected with the worship of God, and with the salvation of souls. Every duty which a clerk, a vergers, or a beadle has to do in his official capacity arises, in one way or another, out of the work of Christ Jesus in His love for sinners. But for Christ, there would not have been a Church or worship. Your offices arise entirely out of His work, and therefore let them be discharged in the full feeling of their being religious in their origin and religious in their object. When you do this, we shall have, what indeed exists in many places, but is greatly needed in not a few churches still, viz., "heartiness in the performance of their duties amongst clerks, vergers, and beadles."

### George Peabody.



GEORGE PEABODY was born in the City of Danvers, Massachusetts, on the 18th of February, 1795. He began business at the age of eleven, when he became clerk in a grocery store at Danvers. Four years later, the lad, proving to be a smart young fellow, with an ambition beyond 'groceries,' went to live with his uncle at Genge Town. The war with Great Britain was at that time going on, for it was the year 1812, and his uncle was a volunteer soldier, and



GEORGE PEABODY.

speedily became a general. George served under him, and was engaged at Fort Warburton. At the close of the war he returned to business, and became a merchant in the city of Baltimore. He succeeded so well, that with the generosity which distinguished him through life, he charged himself with the maintenance and education of his father's family.

He first visited this country in 1837, and settled in London in 1843 as a merchant and money broker. His prosperity was great,



but business was not his only thought, for like the patriarch Jacob, at the outset of his career he vowed a vow unto the Lord.—“If God spares my life, and prospers me in my business, then the property of which I may become possessed I will devote to His glory—in seeking the good of my fellow men wherever their claims may seem most to rest upon me.”

This vow he faithfully and nobly kept, and, unlike those who wait for their death to distribute the riches they can no longer enjoy, Mr. Peabody benefited others during his life-time with a marvellous munificence. Not to mention all the great and noble things that he did, it may be stated that in 1851 he revisited his native city of Danvers, in America, and founded there, at a cost of £30,000, an educational institution and library. In 1857 he built and endowed at Baltimore a similar institution, which cost him £100,000. Magnificent, however, as were these acts, they were quite eclipsed by what he afterwards did for the London Poor. On retiring from business in 1862, he presented the City of London with £150,000, to be expended in the erection of comfortable lodging houses for the working classes. In 1866 he gave again £150,000 for the same purpose. In the letter bestowing the former sum, Mr. Peabody wrote, “It is now twenty-five years since I commenced my residence and business in London as a stranger; but I did not long feel myself a stranger or in a strange land, for in all my commercial and social intercourse with my British friends during that long period, I have constantly received courtesy, kindness, and confidence. Under a sense of gratitude for these blessings of a kind Providence, I have been prompted to make a donation for the benefit of the poor of London.”

What rendered this act the more beautiful and touching in spirit was that it occurred at a time when there was a great deal of irritation and ill-feeling existing between England and America. Mr. Reed, M.P., in a speech at the Guildhall, in 1862, on the occasion of conferring the freedom of the city of London on Mr. Peabody, said, with great truth, “Here is a man, bound to us by no ties but those of our common humanity, at a time when some men delight to revive the memory of ancient jealousies and national animosities, who stands forward to rebuke our unworthy suspicions by an act of kindness to our poor, which brings the blush of shame to our cheeks when we think of merchant princes of our own who, living, have been strangely insensible to the claims of Christian charity, and, dying, have left no trace behind.” He afterwards added, “Mr. Peabody has made himself familiar with distress, that he might learn how best to mitigate woe; he has become acquainted, by personal investigation, with the overwhelming vicissitudes of the labouring poor, that he might ameliorate their condition; and he has given a practical illustration of the way to do good, which leaves all our busy theorists far behind.”

There is little more to add. In 1866, on leaving this country for America, the queen wrote him a letter of grateful acknowledgment, assuring him how deeply she appreciated the noble act of more than princely munificence by which he had sought to relieve the wants of her poorer subjects residing in London.

## On the Origin and History of the English Bible.

BY DENHAM ROWE NORMAN, VICAR OF MIDDLETON BY WIRKSWORTH.

**W**E are accustomed to think of the English Bible as one book, and to regard the two Testaments in a general way as One Volume. Bound together as we have ever seen them from earliest years, we speak of this large and varied collection of books as The Bible. In a certain sense, this is all quite correct, for there is but “One” Author and Giver of this good gift of Revelation—God. Yet how many human hands have been employed in setting down for our instruction the “manifold wisdom of God.” Since the torch of Divine truth was first lit in the Arabian desert, how many brave, noble, holy saints have held it for a while, and at a word from on high, trimmed it afresh and increased its brilliancy!

With great caution, an attempt must now be made to bring forward some few points of striking and lasting interest which may be gleaned in tracing the growth of Scripture unto its present perfect form as we see it in our English Bible.

For a vast number of years, when men’s lives were much longer than they are now, when there were many facilities for handing down from father to son the commands of the Almighty, in the very words in which those commands were received, there was not, so far as we know, any written Word of God at all, any portion of our present Bible in existence. For upwards of 2,500 years from Adam to Moses, there was no documentary testimony to appeal to as a Rule of Faith and Law of Life. God at sundry times and in divers manners spoke to the several patriarchs and gave them His directions, as in the case of Noah (Genesis ix. 1—17), or Abraham (Genesis xxii. 1, 2); but these messages, so far as we are aware, were not written in a book, and used as guides and counsels by succeeding generations.

In the course of time, however, circumstances were different. The life of man was shortened, the means of passing on by word of mouth, by oral testimony, essential facts and truths became much less trustworthy. It is now, that the first bright germs of revealed truth are communicated by God unto His servant Moses. A concise history from the creation of the world to the advance of the Israelites to the brink of Jordan, a minute account of the building of the tabernacle, the consecration of the priesthood, the bondage, deliverance and wanderings of the Israelites, under the general name of the Pentateuch, or five Books of Moses, is the first contribution to the Sacred Roll.

There is ample authority afforded in this first instalment, for this new but more permanent mode of preserving by a written record the memory of important matters. Such clear and distinct charges as (Exod. xvii. 14), “Write this for a memorial in a book,” or (Exod. xxiv. 4) “and Moses wrote all the words of the Lord,” or (Exod. xxxiv. 27) “Write thou these words,” or (Deut. xxxi. 9) “and Moses wrote this law and delivered it unto the priests,” or (Deut. xxxi. 24—26) “and it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the Ark of the covenant, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the Ark of the covenant of the Lord your

God, that it may be there for a witness against thee." Many as have been the trials to shake and undermine the authority of this venerable and instructive portion of our Bibles, it stands at the present day on a firmer basis of evidence than ever; and constrains us by its very antiquity alone to a belief in its genuineness as a part of God's word to Man.

Moses dies, and is buried by God—yet in a little while the stream of truth which had begun to flow, is swollen by another contribution; for we read (Jos. xxiv. 26) "Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God," that book namely which had been laid up in the side of the Ark of the Covenant at the command of Moses. Then again, after a considerable span of years, we learn that there was another addition by a fresh hand to this increasing roll (1 Sam. x. 25), "Samuel wrote in a book and laid it up before the Lord." And so on in the course of years, the Psalms of David and other holy men, the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah; the visions of Ezekiel, Daniel and Habakkuk; the annals of Kings, and the books of Ezra and Nehemiah were added; until the designed number of books was reached; until the exact measure of His will which God saw fit to communicate to the Jews had been attained.

Careful and painstaking, diligent and laborious though Ezra and his fellow helpers were, in gathering up into one the separate works of the various Old Testament writers, yet still there were to be dug by other workers fresh wells of salvation, from which men to the end of time might draw the living water in copious and unfailing draughts. Four hundred and fifty years elapse from the prophet Malachi to the Apostle St. Matthew, and there is once again another inflowing unto the already mighty current of revealed, written Truth. In quick but ordered succession, penmen are inspired to give to the Church and world statements and facts of vital consequence. In language simple but sublime, Evangelists describe events which had but lately occurred; tell not of an expected Saviour, but of Jesus as teaching, toiling, dying, rising again, ascending into heaven. Evangelists and Apostles in vivid and graphic words set forth the workings of God the Holy Ghost in the hearts of divers men of various lands; and record, in language at once sober, temperate, and free from exaggeration, the triumphs of the Gospel, in countries where vice and ignorance had abounded; in cities where worldly wisdom and scornful unbelief had been wont to dwell for ages!

From all these various contributions of so many writers, known and unknown, separate and distinct in point of time and of composition, clearly differing in the matters written of, these rich treasures of Holy Scripture, extending from 1451 B.C. unto 96 A.D., a space of 1547 years, form now in these last days but one book. In that specific circle of years there was a commencement—a continuance—a completion of the Bible—so far as its utterance is concerned; and in a little over three hundred years more there was a final settlement of what is called, in technical language, the canon of Holy Scripture—gathered piecemeal from age to age, with scrutinizing care laid silently side by side until there is this

goodly pile of inspired wisdom, and then, as one Volume, it is intrusted to the care of the Church. Patriarchal, Levitical, Apostolical lore, cautiously selected, and welded into one harmonious whole, was thus consigned to the custody of the Church; and as, from century to century, this glorious roll of truth remains in her hands, does she not stand out in each succeeding period more prominently in the character of an honest "witness and keeper of Holy Writ." (Art. XX.)

It is generally understood and agreed that as Moses was the earliest writer under Divine guidance, so St. John was the last to receive from God the Holy Ghost messages from Heaven to man. It should be borne in mind, however, that though it happens to be the case that the writings of Moses commence, and the Revelation of St. John stands last in our English Bibles, there are many books, both in the Old and New Testament, which are not placed according to the strict order of time in which they were written. Very numerous and sometimes very serious mistakes have often arisen from a want of knowledge on the matter; mistakes which need not now be so constant, if the reader would look at the date now very generally placed at the top of the page in the ordinary bibles of the day.

A most important point has next to receive our attention. Have we in our English Bible, so far as the safest evidence proves, the exact measure of God's will unto man? No less—no more? A complete canon—a perfect rule of faith? A precise and accurate Divine law of morals? There are such writings as the Book of Jasher mentioned (Josh. x. 13 and 2 Sam. i. 18.), or again "the book of the wars of the Lord" (alluded to at Numb. xxi. 14.), or the books of the Apocrypha, read sometimes as lessons in Church; or the Epistle mentioned by St. Paul as having been written by him to the Church of Corinth (1 Cor. v. 9.) and various others which need not be enumerated. What is to be said about them! Our answer is this: That however profitable to read, as St. Jerome says, for example of life and instruction of manners, these several writings never have been included in the canon of holy and inspired Scripture, or regarded and treated as the very and true word of God. The Jews, those jealous guardians of the Divine oracles committed unto them, never received as God's word any single writing except those which are contained in our Old Testament. So minute, so sifting, so reverently exact and strict were they, that they knew not only the names of the books, the numbers of the verses and words, but even the very count of the letters of these Scriptures which they held as Divine, and that not even a very smallest portion may be lost or altered, there was placed in the middle word of the Book of the Law, and also in that of the psalter, a capital instead of a small letter. Is it likely, is it possible, that in the hands of such curiously scrupulous people, errors could occur to the extent of whole books being shut out which rightly belonged to Holy Scripture! The books placed in our English Bibles, as the veritable word of God, written for our learning and comfort, correspond with those which have been held sacred since the days when

Ezra, as it is generally supposed, reviewed, revised, and completed the Old Testament; reckoned by the Jews as twenty-two, a number corresponding with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet—it being supposed that as by the number of these letters all that was requisite to be said or written could be expressed, so in like manner the number of sacred books comprehended all that was needful to be known or believed. Besides, as a further and stronger argument, on the same side, when our blessed Lord conversed with the Jews, as He often did, we do not find that He charged them with unfaithfulness to their trust as guardians of Holy Scripture. That they misunderstood, misinterpreted, perverted Scripture is laid to their charge, but they are not accused of taking from or adding to the number or measure of books which had been entrusted to their care.

It would undoubtedly appear from this, that such as the canon was when it left the hands of Ezra, about the year B.C. 450, the same was it found by our Lord in its threefold division of The Law, 5 books; The Prophets 8 books; The Psalms and other Writings 9 books; or as enumerated by ourselves, The Law 5 books; History 12 books; Poetry 5 books; Prophecy 17 books. These are the Scriptures referred to by Him, quoted by Him, read publicly by Him; and concerning which He said (Matth. v. 17) "Think not I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." If our Lord who is the "Truth" was convinced of the perfection and sufficiency of the number He found, to the utter exclusion of all other books whatever, may not devout and candid minds rest content with a Canon or set of books which has received the stamp of His direct sanction and approval? And with regard to the number of books which compose the Canon of the New Testament, though some were for a long number of years looked upon with suspicion and distrust—notably the second Epistle General of St. Peter—yet in the end, every single writing has in every branch of the Catholic Church been received as the veritable written word of God, and with that general and universal verdict in favour of its correctness, he would be a presumptuous man who would venture to think, we had too little or too much—defect or excess—in our present English Bible.

One word in closing this paper. Days of sifting enquiry and earnest search are not to be considered as entirely evil. It should be an answer to all who deprecate anxious, painful moments, that we have, speaking humanly, to thank two of the greatest troublers of the saints for the high value which has since attached to Holy Scripture, and for the jealous care with which it has been preserved. Antiochus (B.C. 168) sought out the books of the Old Testament to burn them. Diocletian, the Emperor of Rome (A.D. 303), caused the deaths of many Christians for refusing to deliver up the Christian Scriptures to the heathen magistrates. May the day be far distant when Holy Scripture shall be lightly esteemed. Meanwhile may the number be largely and daily increased of those who can from their own experience say with David, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." (Ps. xix. 7.)



IN the month of February, 1826, during the Bishop Heber's voyage from Calcutta to Madras, on his first and last visit to the southern part of his extensive diocese, among the passengers on board the "Bussorah Merchant," there was a lady in weak health, who was going to England with a sickly infant of two months old, and leaving her husband in Calcutta. The child was suddenly seized with convulsions, and after lingering through the day, in the evening breathed its last. The Bishop spent much time in the cabin of the poor bereaved mother, comforting and praying with her; and while she was bitterly lamenting her loss, instead of checking her expressions of impatience, and prescribing to her the duty of submission, he told her the following beautiful parable, as one with which he had himself been deeply moved:

"A shepherd was mourning over the death of his favourite child, and in the passionate and rebellious feeling of his heart was bitterly complaining that what he loved most tenderly, and was in itself most lovely, had been taken from him. Suddenly a stranger of grave and venerable appearance stood before him and beckoned him forth into the field. It was night, and not a word was spoken till they arrived at the fold, when the stranger said to him:—'When you select one of these lambs from the flock, you choose the best and most beautiful among them: why should you murmur, because I, the Good Shepherd of the sheep, have chosen from those which you have nourished for me the one which was most fitted for my eternal fold?' The mysterious stranger was seen no more, and the father's heart was comforted."

## Short Sermon.

### Patient Obedience.

BY GEORGE C. HARRIS, M.A., PREBENDARY OF EXETER, VICAR OF ST. LUKE'S, TORQUAY.

St. Luke xvii. 14.—'And it came to pass that as they went, they were cleansed.'



HERE is a saying left on record by the prophet Isaiah in these words—'He that believeth shall not make haste.' It is, to a certain extent, one of the 'hard sayings' that meet us from time to time in Holy Writ. But I venture to think that this meaning may be derived from it; that one mark of the true believer is an absence of impatience; that perfect faith implies, almost as a necessity, perfect trust; that the attitude of such an one will be determined by that other utterance of Habakkuk, in reference to the visitation of God's mercy: 'Though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come; it will not tarry.' It implies a readiness to leave things as we find them at God's hands; to be content to wait for explanations; to stand still in the darkness, sure that God will