

Communications.

Our Troubles.

NUMBER XXVI.

At the close of my last chapter I intimated to your readers that I would meet them again on the way to the altar of prayer; but a very solemn question arises in my mind. Am I worthy to approach so sacred a place as the altar of prayer? God directed Moses thus, "Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it; and it shall be an altar most holy; whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy." Ex. xxix. 37. If that altar upon which slain beasts were to be offered was required to be so pure, more holy must that altar be upon which we offer ourselves a living sacrifice to God? "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Rom. xii. 1. While in deep meditation on this subject, I resolved, that in addition to a thorough investigation of the Bible; I would visit some of the altars, erected by the religious denominations, hoping I might be able to derive some information on the subject, from the precepts and examples taught by them. I accordingly visited the Roman church, this being the oldest human organization, except the Masonic. Here I found a most magnificent altar, beautifully decorated and richly ornamented, with a variety of paintings, calculated to inspire one, with solemnity. At noon day illuminated with wax candles, which, said to me, the glory of the temple had departed, if this be an imitation of the Jewish worship; or if it be the Christian worship, the Holy Spirit, the light of the church was not here. But our visit was not to admire the paintings or to speculate upon the various maneuverings which accompany the offerings made at this altar, of which nothing is taught in the Bible. But my heart's desire was to be enlightened on the subject of prayer. The man, who was dressed somewhat in imitation of a Jewish priest, though he was not a descendant of Levi, and would have been stoned to death if he had looked into a holy thing found uncovered, with a censor, like that used by Korah, Dathan and Abiram, and claiming to be to Christ, what they claimed to be to Aaron,

SAID MASS,

As they called it, in a language unknown to most of the congregation. The people, while all this was being performed, were either reading in a book or counting beads, I suppose saying prayers, prepared for them and written many years ago, and most likely embracing none of their wants. I could not have met this priest at his finely decorated altar, if I had felt myself perfectly worthy.

Paul says: "Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, than by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." 1 Cor. xiv. 19.

I left this magnificent establishment, being somewhat interested, but uninstructed. I did not visit the Episcopal church, knowing that the principal difference between her and her mother of Rome, was, she said mass in a known tongue. Our Lord never taught us to pray in an unknown tongue, nor did he or his apostles, in all the Bible, use a word the meaning of which we could not understand.

I visited some of the other churches in each of light. The first action that attracted my attention was, the preacher, who walked into the pulpit and knelt down, with protrusive feet, when the sacred desk, as they called it, was ample to enable him to pray in secret. My mind could but remember the praying Pharisee. He then offered a long public prayer, ask-

ing for everything he could think of, whether the congregation needed it or not. While he was, as I thought, trying to make an eloquent prayer, some of the church were kneeling, some standing, and others remained sitting. Knowing that our God was a God of order, the question was forced upon me, Is it thus in heaven, with the angels and blood washed souls, who have gone over there? Not at the altar erected around the pulpit, but at that altar erected in a secret place, to which we alude, when we sing, "Low down in that beautiful valley, where love crowns the meek and the lowly, where loud storms of envy and folly may roll on their billows in vain." I come, and with my whole heart, pray God, in the name of Christ, that the time may soon come, when his will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven, and that order may be restored in the church; adorned by the holy place, in that tabernacle erected by Moses in the wilderness, and that wonderful temple built by King Solomon, and dedicated to the service of the only true and living God, in the year of the world three thousand. Here we have a demonstration of the truth that our God is a prayer hearing and a prayer answering God, and that.

CHRISTIANS

As well as Jews should be thankful for his favors and grateful for his manifestation. For at the dedication of the temple, Solomon, having an offering upon the altar, prayed to God, and when he closed his prayer, "fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offerings and sacrifices." "And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord upon the house, they bowed themselves, with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth forever." 2 Chron. vii. 3.

Will your readers read, think and study, and wait another week, until I can make another visit to the altars, that we may be better prepared to talk together and learn what our qualifications must be to approach the altar of prayer acceptably?

HENRY THOMAS.

Oakland, Cal., Feb. 20, 1878.

The True View.

NUMBER I.

Baptism in water is a command to be obeyed; baptism in the Holy Ghost is of promise. If we examine Acts ii. 38, we will there find that Peter commands the inquirer to repent and be baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of sins. We know that this has reference to water baptism because it is a command. But say some it does not, for it is only done in the name of Christ, and water baptism is done in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, therefore it must have reference to spiritual baptism. But we ask can that be a valid argument? How can it be Holy Spirit baptism and at the same time be a command? And again is it not a common thing for us when reporting baptisms, either by word or letter, to say one or more was baptized into Christ, or baptized in the name of Christ, or in the name of the Lord? And further, let us examine the Bible and see if this is not a practice even among the apostles. Turn first to Acts xix. 4, 5, 6. Here we find that these disciples who had been baptized, according to John's manner of baptizing, were baptized over again, and that in the name of the Lord Jesus, and not in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and yet its connection with the baptism of John and the explanation of the sixth verse which shows that the Holy Spirit came upon them after they were baptized, is positive proof that it was water baptism, and if it is water baptism in this case, when it is

only done in the name of the Lord Jesus, why may it not be in Acts ii. 38? Also in Acts x. 47, 48, the baptism is only done in the name of the Lord; and yet it is plainly said that it is water baptism.

(To be continued.)

Debate.

NUMBER I.

Prop. That which emanates directly from the Almighty can never cease to be.

Embodied in this proposition is the idea of the eternity of the Great Jehovah, also commensurate with that idea the operation, the idea, the fact of the indestructibility of the works of the Creator. On the other hand a denial of this proposition is in substance a denial of the eternity of the Almighty.

Naked operations are not evidence, therefore we must bring to their support the testimony of reliable witnesses, and in order for clear comprehension, we must first listen to that which is plainest, to that which cannot be contradicted. Man whose very constituents are weakness and ignorance in the construction of his works, though he can but leave the impress of his weakness and ignorance on his works, yet he wisely construct in the most durable manner that his knowledge can give to the works of his hands, yet his efforts are futile; though he has matter of which to build matter that cannot be annihilated, yet form it as he will, cement and fortify it with all his skill, that form must come to naught. The decree "Dust to dust" has gone forth and man cannot reverse it. As his natural body is subject to this mandate so are the works of his hands. All which emanates from this tenement of clay, from the covering which protects the body to the strongest edifices of which he can boast from the lowest frivolity of mind to the astuteness of a Voltaire and Payne, all is subject to this same decree. God has spoken and it must come to pass.

It is far from my purpose to argue a self-evident fact, but from this fact, which none dare deny from the fact that workmanship emanate from whence it may, is co-existent with the author of it, that it bears the impress, the likeness of its author to that extent that if the author is foolish the work is foolish, if the author is wise the work is wisely constructed, if the author is mortal the work is mortal; if the author is imperishable the work is imperishable; from this fact we want to make an application to the proposition under investigation, which is done in a few words. God is from "everlasting to everlasting," that is, he has neither beginning or ending of days. He possesses all power and all wisdom. This being true, it is not reasonable that with his wisdom and power he would create only correspondingly with his own nature, or in other words that his works must be as durable as he himself is; this is tangible, and nothing less is. The evidence is that, which is created is as durable as its Creator, and the law or connecting link between the parent and child will endure while the thing formed and he who formed it continues to be whether the law is suited to the child or the child to the law, the child will live until the connection is severed; the law is the life. This is true of all animated things, and virtually true of things inanimate. For illustration know that all flesh derives its nourishment from earth, and while this nourishment is given, life is assured with few exceptions. Or man frames and fits together a machine, say a clock, he arranges and places it in a proper position, but until the power or law is attached it is lifeless, and that life, when given, will last until the connecting link is severed; law, action and life are equivalent. Thus an individual without law is void of

action, or life without action is void of life, or law without life is void of action or law.

I have placed these as equivalents, as I deem them one and inseparable; yet I admit that action is an effect of life; and that life is an effect of law; life then being given through law it necessarily follows that so long as our bodies are connected to the another earth by the law applicable to them, they live, but when this connection is severed they die, not by a reverse of law or by connection with another law, but for the want of law. Death is not the effect of law, but the want of it. And what is death? Death is a change, a resolving back to primitive elements. It is termed destruction in the Scriptures; Gen. vi. 7; 1 Chron. xxi. 16. Other like passages might be referred to, but these are sufficient to show that when a thing or person is threatened with destruction, or is said to have been destroyed, it is death that is spoken of. What is death? A resolving back to primitive elements. We see vegetation die and go back to earth. We see the animal die and return to earth; and it is not necessary for me to ask are they annihilated, it is not necessary for me to ask does destruction mean annihilation for the witnesses, nature and aspiration instruct on this point, and these, together with our limited knowledge, tell us that death does not annihilate, but that in changing from one condition to another after having changed she loses her hold and leaves the victim underlaw. Having passed through death it still exists, it has not ceased to be.

Thus far I conceive that in the main we will agree, so we pass to consider other features of the subject. Next in order, next above the body is intellect, and first let me inquire from whence does intellect emanate. Man alone possesses it to any great degree, and some men far in advance of others. The beasts of the field, and man too, at death, return to dust, all feed upon the fruits of the earth, all are subject to the same natural laws. From these simple facts and others I purpose offering. I insist that intellect is not all of earth; if so, what advantage could man have over the brute creation?

No Substitute for the Bible.

BY S. H. HEDRICK.

NUMBER III.

In speaking of the neglect and abuses of the Bible, we notice that there is a large class of mankind who have not the opportunity or facilities to read it, and of those who are in possession of these prerequisites, not a few willingly neglect it, while others read it only to find something to object to saying it is unworthy the God of heaven, and therefore they would prefer nature for their guide, reject the Bible and disdain its facts, commandments and promises. Adding to this the myriads who profess to believe it who daily neglect to store their minds with its great and grand truths, and fail to develop its fruits in their lives and you have a large class of mankind indeed in direct antagonism to the Bible, and its authors. This presents a picture of sad wants of sin and weakness and destitution, doubtless to the natural and legitimate effect of such neglect and abuse of God's righteous law. God has given both the field of nature and revelation, and they are each adopted to our many temporal and spiritual wants, but in each of these fields there is a work for us to do, a timely work which if neglected or abused, we suffer from the irremediable effects which must follow. In nature no one finds fault because it is thus ordained, nor would any of those naturalists who reject the Bible, be willing to find or admit such objections against nature as they hurl against nature as they hurl against the Bible yet it does not show any greater ap-

parent defect than the field of nature. A novice could easily find faults in nature as reasonably as the sage philosopher does in the Bible, for he could point to many of the annoying things on land, and the queer ugly looking things of the sea, and affirm that God never created such a thing, so out of shape, and so repugnant to all taste. Why not nature as well as revelation, be open to such criticisms? Why not ridicule God's work here and claim that he is not the alwise Creator of these things? Surely, it is just as well grounded and so far as the facts in the case are really known, the field of nature stands at quite a disadvantage by the side of revelation. It was this apparent defect in nature that caused the old magi to affirm that God created the horses cows and nightingales, and Satan the hyenas, hornets and canker worms, and his theory was quite as plausible as that of those men who often find fault and ask for something as a substitute for the Bible. God knows if we do not just what any atom, plant and animal in the field of nature is for, from the greatest down to the smallest, that in their own time and place they fill their needful office. So every sentence of revelation, has its place and either the past present or future, will have done much. God in filling up the great supply to our spiritual wants. That in regard to Paul's cloak at Troas, his parchment, Zenas the lawyer, &c., is not without its use; as also the law of Moses, which for a time was a school master to bring the people of that day to Christ, to usher in a more perfect way; while the facts, precepts and promises of the Gospel of Christ are like flowers in the market, or seed in spring time always in demand and indispensably necessary to our present comfort and future happiness.

In our minds we may place the field of nature and revelation in antithesis, and obtain many great and grand analogical conclusions. No one does this more successfully than Jesus and Paul. As we pass along many of the streets and lanes of our country, and many other portions of the world, and behold the stately mansions, the beautiful lawns and gardens of our people, surrounded by all that art and wealth can suggest and furnish; and as we hear the sweet tones of music within from the many instruments invented by man, operated by his most thoroughly developed faculties, we feel charmed by the beautiful sight and electrified by the grand harmonies we hear. We almost conclude this is the fountain of all things pleasant to the eye and ear, and a problem sufficient to interest the mind of man for ages to come.

Now passing by and a little further beyond, you may find the broad field of nature as yet untouched by the hand of man, with her forest deep, her mountains high, resounding with her sweet harmonies of her dashing rivulets, zephyrs breezes and singing birds, mingling with old oceans roar. While the beautiful sunshine has awakened the thousands of flowers in her vast forest, which are emitting the fragrance of their odors, all conspire to compose and fill up the vast book of nature on whose title page you may read the lesson that what you saw at first—those mansions, lawns and gardens, were but gleanings from this store, and as compared to it, it is only as rain drops to the sea. From the earliest dawn of time, this boundless store has been the unfading supply of all temporal wants. But should you feel more inclined to offer supplication to any or all of these, could they speak.

The brook, the tree, the mountain and sea, the sun, moon and stars—they would all cry out, Not me! not me! So, could you now go to a church as pure as Philippi or Philadelphia of old, and hear the eloquence of Luther and Wesley, Taylor and Dewick, of Paul and Apollon, with Peter and John also sitting by, should you fall down,