

Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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WHOLE SERIES.
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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Human.

O! human life! so far, so near!
Thy quick electric wires,
Bear music from the courts above,
And touch the lowest fires.

O wondrous web! whose full design,
Earth's vision may not see,
How beautiful will seem the plan
Viewed in eternity.

O! wondrous waiting human eyes
So filled with human tears,
That doubt, because ye fail to see,
The issue of the year.

O! human hands that strive to lift
Our loved above all pain,
Above temptations withering power
Above all sin, all stain.

O human hands; how weak ye are,
Unless the Christ stoop down,
And take the load ye strive to bear,
Our efforts bear no crown.

C; wandering feet that leave so soon,
Life's early woodland ways,
To journey in the noontide sun,
Unsheltered from its blaze.

O! weary feet that may not rest,
Or pause by sea or shore,
Till in the "Island of the Blest,"
Ye rest for evermore.

And human voices full of woe,
Are echoing through the years,
And sadder sounds but breathed so low,
They reach but listening ears.

O! human love that builds so fair,
Its castle in the clouds,
That melt and die away in air,
Or drop to earth in shrouds.

From off your castle's battlements
Ye thought to look in Heaven,
To catch a flash of deathless song,
Among the loved forgiven!

But tho' on eye and voice and heart,
The cause of sin be strong,
The Master's hand hath loosed the chords,
That bound the world so long.

The Human hath been sanctified,
Nay! glorified in him,
Let human voices join in song,
And hearts sweet offerings bring.

For "beautiful" may be the "feet,"
Of those who bear the Word,
And human voices low and sweet,
Tell 'til the heart is stirred.

The story that will never die,
The story that will seem,
As new, when earth's old chronicles,
Have faded into dream.

He loveth us, O! eyes look up,
Wipe off the dimming tears,
He loveth us, He loveth us,
O! listen human ears.

Riverbank, May 19th.

S. J. E.

THE POWER OF THE CROSS.—In what direction—what line—may I so place myself, as to find omnipotence coming forth to draw me to the Lord? In the line of the cross. In your looking unto Jesus. "I, when I am lifted up, will draw all men unto me."—Through the blood of the dying surety, Almighty power comes forth on all them that believe.—*Rev. Hugh Martin.*

A FRANK ADMISSION.—The *Christian Era* says: "Sitting beside a leading Episcopal clergyman, the other day, in the cars, he said, 'If anything is plain in the New Testament, it is that immersion is the primitive form of baptism; and I should consider that I was disgracing myself before scholars and unlearned alike, by attempting to prove the contrary. Only I do not consider it essential.'"

Conversation is the daughter of reasoning, the mother of knowledge, the breath of the soul, the commerce of hearts, the bond of friendship, the nourishment of content, and the occupation of men of wit.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

Thoughts on Theology.

No. IX.

THE MOSAIC DISPENSATION.

Administration.

My Dear Sir,—

The Israelites were a "peculiar people"—God's own—separated from all others for the special purpose of preserving the knowledge and worship of the Most High, till "the fulness of time" should come, when the ultimate manifestation would be made.

The government under which they were placed was different from all other nations. It was a Theocracy. Jehovah himself was king; he was to be worshipped as God, and obeyed as sovereign. The land was His land and the people were his tenants, bound to render certain services in lieu of rent, and in acknowledgement of proprietorship. The laws were his laws, and the ordinances of worship were his, and no alterations were to be made in either. If the nation should demand a king as they afterwards did they were bound to accept the man whom God should choose, and who would therefore be his viceroy; and the king was required to write out for his own use a copy of the law, and to "read therein all the days of his life"; nor was he to turn aside from the commandment, either to the right side or the left.—Deut. xvii. 18-20.

An impartial consideration of the laws given by Moses, taking into account the character of the people, their situation, and the state of the times, will lead to the conviction that the whole institution was admirably adapted to answer the designed end. If some of the laws were severe, the peculiar nature of the government is to be borne in mind, as well as the other circumstances above mentioned. If some of the minute details seem burdensome, or even trifling, (the Apostle Peter termed the whole law a "yoke," which neither their fathers nor they were able to bear" Acts xv. 10.) it is sufficient to remark that, being God's laws, their fitness is not to be questioned. In some instances the enactments or the permissions hardly square with the morality of the gospel, it must be remembered that the people had been subjected for many years to the debasing influences of slavery, and were in a semi-barbarous state. It was manifest that on the one hand they required a tight rein and a stern rule, and that on the other it was expedient to interfere as little as possible with certain inveterate habits which could only be shaken off under higher teachings than they were qualified to receive. If we were more fully informed on the subject, we should doubtless discern the wisdom and rightness of the Mosaic system.

In giving an account of the religious arrangements it may be advisable to adopt an old division.

1. HOLY PERSONS.

The high priest was the special representative of the Divine King, whom he consulted on solemn occasions by "Urim and Thummim." But it does not clearly appear how the consultation was conducted, nor in what manner the consequent directions or commands were given. There is great diversity of opinion respecting the Urim and Thummim.—The words mean "lights and perfections." When the high priest was attired in his full sacerdotal dress he wore the "breastplate of judgment," in which were placed twelve precious stones, each bearing the name of one of the tribes; and it is said, "Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth into the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually, and thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart when he goeth in before the Lord; and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually."—Exod. xxviii. 29, 30. But we know not what the Urim and Thummim were, nor how divine oracles were given through them. Of the many conjectures that have been haz-

arded, one may be mentioned, viz., that when the high priest sought counsel from God the answer was contained in a word formed of letters in the name of the tribes, and which were caused to shine brilliantly on the occasion. Thus, if David asked whether he should go on a certain expedition, and the answer was, "Go," the two letters of that word, (expressing it in English,) as found in the names of the tribes Gad and Simeon, would be supernaturally illuminated, GAD, SIMEON. This, however, is only guess-work.

On the day of atonement the high priest was the representative of the people before God, and on that day only might he enter the most holy place. It is probable that between the times of Joshua and Saul he was the supreme ruler in civil matters. We know that Eli "judged Israel."

The Priests. It was their duty to offer sacrifices, and carry on the worship of God. They were also required to instruct the people in the law, and to give judgment in difficult cases. Deut. xvii. 8-13.

The Levites. The whole tribe of Levi was set apart for the service of God, first in the tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple. In addition to the manual labor which they were called to perform, they took part in the work of instruction and administered the laws.—Forty-eight cities being assigned for their residence, they were beneficially scattered over the country, and no one had to travel far to obtain their assistance. Deut. xxxiii. 8-10; 1 Chron. xxiii. 4; 2 Chron. xix. 8-11; Neh. viii. 9-12.

The Prophets. This was a peculiar institution. It has been already shown that there was a sustained succession of inspired men, charged to protest against all transgression of God's commands, and to announce his will to the people. The writings of some of them remain to this day, furnishing the noblest eloquence to be found in any language, and presenting in their wonderful predictions, fulfilled and unfulfilled, indubitable proof of their own inspiration.

Schools of the prophets were instituted in the days of Samuel, partly, perhaps, with a view to the religious instruction of the people, under the superintendence of Samuel, at first, and afterwards of other prophets, his successors. Accessions to the prophetic order were often made from those schools. 1 Sam. x. 5. 10-12. xix. 20; 2 Kings ii. 2, 3, 5, 15; iv. 1. 38-44; ix. i. Amos vii. 14.

2. HOLY PLACES.

The **Tabernacle** was a temporary structure adapted to the condition of the people while in the wilderness. It was thirty cubits long, by ten broad, and ten high. (The length of the cubit was twenty inches.) The most holy place, in which the ark was deposited, was ten cubits square. The court of the Tabernacle was an inclosure, a hundred cubits by fifty.

The **Temple** erected by Solomon, was a building of unequalled magnificence. The Temple proper was small, being only sixty cubits long by twenty broad, and thirty high. The most holy place was twenty cubits square. The whole building glistened with gold. The chambers and offices attached to it increased the size of the structure very considerably.

That temple was destroyed by the Babylonians. The second was far inferior in splendour, and it wanted the invaluable depository, the ark of the covenant.

In the troublous times of Syrian oppression the second temple fell into decay and ruin. It was scarcely susceptible of repair. Herod the Great expended vast sums in renovation. The building which he erected might properly enough be called the third temple, very little of the former being retained, except perhaps the massive foundations.

3. HOLY THINGS.

The **Sacrifices**, with their accompaniments of meat-offerings, drink-offerings, oil and incense. There were various kinds of sacrifices:—the burnt-offering, for thanksgiving and general worship, which was entirely consumed; the sin-offering, for atonement of offences against God; the trespass-offering, in cases of a doubtful character. These were enjoined; besides these, individuals often presented free-will offerings, in discharge of vows, or in gratitude for benefits received.

Sacrifices could be legally offered only at the tabernacle-altar, or that of the temple.

The **Shewbread.** Twelve loaves were placed

on the golden table in the holy place, every Sabbath morning, those which had been placed there the preceding Sabbath being then removed, and eaten by the attendant priests.

The **Instruments of service**, including dishes, spoons, knives, &c., &c.

The **tithes.** The tenth part of the produce of the land, in corn, fruit, and cattle, was levied for the support of the tribe of Levi, in addition to the cities which were given them. And they had to pay a tenth of their tithes to the priests. Those who officiated at the altar received also certain portions of the sacrifices, for the support of themselves and their families.

4. HOLY TIMES.

The **Sabbath**, reckoning from the sunset of the preceding day.

The new moon.

The **feast of trumpets**, on the first day of the seventh month.

The **three annual festivals**, at which all the males were to appear before God. The **passover** was celebrated on the fourteenth day of the first month. For seven days afterwards unleavened bread was to be eaten: "no manner of servile work" was to be done on the first or last of those days; they were to have "a holy convocation." The **Pentecost**, or feast of first-fruits, fifty days after the passover, was observed in like manner. The **feast of tabernacles**, or of ingathering, at the close of the harvest, commenced on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, and continued eight days.

The **Day of atonement**, the tenth day of the seventh month, was a solemn fast, when they "afflicted their souls," and the "scapegoat" was sent into the wilderness, bearing the transgressions of the people. There is no notice of this ceremony, however, after the settlement in Canaan.

The **Sabbatic year.** Every seventh year, the land rested. There was no tillage.

The **Jubilee.** Once in fifty years there was a re-adjustment. If a man had sold his inheritance, or a part of it, it was then restored to him. There was a general release from servitude. It was the year of freedom.

Morning and evening sacrifices were regularly offered at the Tabernacle, and afterwards at the Temple. Double sacrifices were offered on the sabbath. Additional sacrifices were enjoined to be offered at the "holy times" which have been specified. But we have very little information respecting the people's worship, or the religious instruction communicated to them. It is to be presumed, that the priests and the Levites taught the people orally, taking advantage of the Sabbaths for that purpose. There was no reading in those days. Copies of the law could not generally be possessed during the early history of the nation. It was ordered to be read in public once in seven years. Deut. xxxi. 9-13.

Synagogues were instituted after the return from the Babylonish captivity. It was a useful appointment. The Scriptures were read and expounded in the synagogues every sabbath day; exhortations were given and prayers offered.

To the festivals appointed by the Law, two others were afterwards added; the feast of Purim, to celebrate the deliverance of the Jews from the destruction threatened by Haman, Esther ix. 20-32—and the feast of the dedication, to commemorate the purification of the Temple after its profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes, (John x. 22.) But it does not appear that there was a divine appointment of these observances; consequently, although they were appropriate commemorations they were not binding, not being part of God's law.

Many reflections are suggested, but it may be better to defer them till we have considered the principles and the effects of the Mosaic dispensation.

Yours truly,

J. M. CRAMP.

Acadia College, May 27, 1868.

For the Christian Messenger.

Pen Sketches.—No. 5.

ENVOUS PEOPLE.

That there are such individuals none will deny who are at all acquainted with the various phases of human nature presented in