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"Not slothful in business : fervent in spirit."

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HALIFAX, N. S., WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1868.

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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

"When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them."—Paul.

There's danger! Where? Not in the blast
That smites the wreck and feeds the flood;
Not in the bending breaking mast;
Nor leprous scourge, nor field of blood.
Man's greatest danger lurks within;
And gathers round the guilt of sin.

Power cannot shield it. Nor disguise
Avert its doom. At hall of mirth;
In loftiest state; 'neath fairest skies;
Amid the boldest scenes of earth,
Sin, unrepented, unforgiven,
Will surely meet the wrath of Heaven!

With one step 'tween thee and thy grave,
Remember, man, life's fleeting hour,
Thy God to thee in mercy gave
The life eternal to secure.
Remission is through blood alone,
Turn to the tried Chief Corner Stone.

J. F. T.

Middlefield, June 30th.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

Thoughts on Theology.

No. X.

THE MOSAIC DISPENSATION.

Principles.

My Dear Sir,

God spoke to the patriarchs individually, instructing them in his will; and they taught their respective families. A different method was now adopted. The chosen people, solemnly convened for the purpose, heard the voice of Jehovah, louder than the thunders of Sinai. How mysteriously strange that they should so soon forget the awful terrors of that day! The law was "engraven on stones" and "the writing was the writing of God." Exod. xxxii. 16; 2 Cor. iii. 7. Before the Israelites entered the promised land the whole of the divine will, as far as it was then revealed, was written in a book, and injunctions were given that it should be periodically read in the hearing of the people. None but historical additions were made to the revelation during the next six hundred years.—Then, by means of David, the holy book received important accessions, in its devotional department, and from that time to the days of Malachi, a period of six hundred years more, prophet after prophet contributed to the inspired pages, till the volume of the Old Testament was completed.

We have now to inquire into the theology of the Mosaic Dispensation, bearing in mind that the truths received and held by the patriarchs are to be considered as forming the foundation of all subsequent disclosures.—They were from time to time amplified and further developed.

1. Respecting God.

The sacred writers teach us that he is a self-existing spirit. Exod. iii. 14, 15; vi. 3. Isa. xxxi. 3. Psalm lxxviii. 4.

These statements are not contradicted by the numerous representations of the Old Testament which seem to involve corporeal ideas, the Most High God being described as possessing parts and faculties common to his creatures. Such descriptions are manifestly given in condescension to our weakness, seeing that it is so difficult, if not impossible, to realize the conception of a purely spiritual being. By these figurative representations we are assisted in our endeavours to think of God. Psalm viii. 3. Isa. xl. 12, 22; lxxvi. 1.

Some sects, however, in the early Christian times, were charged with *anthropomorphism* that is, that God really exists in a human form. They did not refer to the glorified body of the Redeemer, but went back to Genesis i. 26, maintaining that Adam was created literally in the "image" of the Divine Being. The progress of sound biblical criticism has dispelled these follies.

It would be easy to place before you a

large collection of passages, presenting views of the character and perfections of God, far more glorious and sublime, than could be furnished by any uninspired mind. A selection must suffice. The Old Testament saints contemplated God as *eternal*.—Deut. xxxiii. 27; Psalm cii. 27; Isa. xl. 28, xli. 4, xliii. 10, xlv. 6, xlviii. 12, lvii. 15.—*unchangeable*.—Numb. xxiii. 19; 1 Sam. xv. 29; Mal. iii. 6.—*almighty*.—Psalm xciii. 1; Isa. xl. 28; Jer. xxxii. 17, 27.—*ever-present*.—1 Kings viii. 27; Psalm cxxxix. 7-12; Jer. xxxiii. 24.—*all-knowing*.—2 Chron. xvi. 9; Psalm cxxxix. 1-6, 23, cxlvii. 5; Prov. v. 21, xv. 3; Jer. xvi. 17, xvii. 10, xx. 12; xxxii. 19.—*Holy*.—Exod. xv. 11; Deut. xxxii. 4; 1 Sam. ii. 2; Psalm xxii. 3, lxxxix. 35, xovii. 12, xcix. 5, 9, cxlv. 7; Isa. vi. 3, xl. 25, lvii. 15; Hos. xi. 9; Hab. i. 12, 13, iii. 3.—*just*.—Deut. xxxii. 4; Psalm lxxxix. 14; Isa. xxvi. 7, xlv. 21; Jer. i. 7; Zeph. iii. 5.—*wise*.—Psalm civ. 24, cxlvii. 5; Isa. xl. 13, 14; Dan. ii. 20, 21.—*good and merciful*.—Psalm cxxxvii. 1, cxlv. 9; 2 Chron. v. 13; Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7; Micah vii. 18-20; Psalm xxxi. 19, cxiii. 11-14.—*true*.—Deut. vii. 9, xxxii. 4; 1 Sam. xv. 29; Psalm xxv. 10.

The views and impressions of the Israelites respecting God acquired great distinctness and power from the consideration of the peculiar relationship into which they were brought towards him. He was *their* God, in a sense in which he was not the God of any other nation, inasmuch as he had chosen them for himself, given them their country, fixed his abode among them, and established a system of arrangements, religious and political, especially for their use and advantage, and of which he was himself the head. Psalm cxlvii. 19, 20.

And that Jehovah was the one, the only God, was the cardinal truth of the dispensation. Heathenism acknowledged many gods, and nations were content to recognize each other's deities. But Israel was taught that "the Lord our God is one Lord," and that there is no other, nor can be. Deut. vi. 4; Isa. xliii. 10, xlv. 6, xlv. 5, 14, 18, 21, xlv. 9; 2 Kings xix. 15; Neh. ix. 6.

In their prayers and songs of praise the servants of God in those times dwelt with emphatic pleasure on the manifestations of Deity in the works and wonders of creation. They loved to contrast the might and wisdom of their own Jehovah, who "spake, and it was done," who "commanded, and it stood fast," with the "vanities of the Gentiles," the nonentities of heathen worship. Exod. xx. 11; Psalm xxxiii. 6-9, civ. cxv. 1-8; Isa. xlv. 9-20.

So also they expatiated with deep and reverent satisfaction on the universal supremacy the uncontrolled and uncontrollable rule of the Heavenly King, whom none could effectually resist, whom none could disobey with impunity. Here again, they triumphed in the contrast; the idol-gods could neither save nor destroy. 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12; Psalm xciii. 1-4, cxxxv. 6-12, cxlv. 10-13; Isa. ii. 10-22; xlv. 24-28; Dan. ii. 20, 21, v. 18-23.

In the selection of their race to be God's own people—in the choice of the tribe of Levi for the tabernacle and temple service, of the family of Aaron for the priesthood, and of the house of David for the honours of royalty—and in the appointment of Jerusalem as the holy city, they recognized the sovereignty of God, who, being under obligations to none, bestows his benefits when, and where and on whom he pleases. Deut. ix. 4, 5; 1 Chron. xxviii. 4, 5; 2 Chron. xxvi. 16-21; Psalm lxxv. 4, cxv. 1-3, cxxxii. 13-16.

The deliverance of their ancestors from Egypt's bondage, "with a strong hand and a stretched-out arm," was the theme of many a joyous celebration, and the foundation of confidence and hope. Miraculous interpositions were not infrequent in their subsequent history. In their straits they might ask counsel and aid of God, through the high priest; while for many ages there were prophets among them, from whose lips they could receive direct announcements of the divine will. Thus the great fact of the ever-present Deity was set before them continually, and its remembrance was identified with every-day life. Judges xx. 18, 23, 26-28; 1 Sam. xxiii. 1-5, 9-12, xxviii. 6, xxx. 7, 8; 2 Sam. v. 19-25; 1 Kings xxii. 7-28; 2 Kings xviii. 14-37, xxii. 8-20. What we now call the doc-

trine of Providence, both general and particular, was firmly believed by every devout Israelite. 2 Sam. vii. 22-26; Psalm xxxiii. 18, 19, xxxiv. 6-10, 19-22; Prov. xvi. 9, xx. 24; Jer. x. 23.

While it was held that God is ever displeased with the wicked, as unmistakable judgments show, and will ultimately visit them with condign punishment, it was sufficiently manifest that the full infliction of that punishment is not experienced in the present state, but that the ungodly often "prosper in the world." Psalms x, xi, lxxiii; Prov. x. On the other hand, although the kindness of Providence was generally enjoyed by the righteous, and remarkable interpositions in their favor were not infrequent, grievous sorrows sometimes fell to their lot. At such times, the truly pious, though they were perplexed by those difficulties, and accounted them mysterious, were humbled before God, acknowledging the equity of his chastisements. They comforted themselves, too, with the assurance that in the issue it would be well with them, and with all God's people, and that "their expectation should not be out of." Psalm cxix. 67, 71, 75; Prov. iii. 11, 12, xi. 8, 31, xii. 7, xiii. 9, xiv. 32, xxiv. 15-20; Lam. iii. 22-41.

But the greatest stumbling block in their way was the seeming breach of God's covenant with his people in the ruin that fell on the land at the time of the Babylonish captivity. In their passionate grief they were tempted to "charge God foolishly." See Psalm lxxxix. 33-51. They had evidently forgotten or overlooked the solemn warnings which were uttered by Moses just before his death, and the threatenings of divine anger in case of their disobedience. Nevertheless better thoughts prevailed among the truly devout.

They laid the case before God with imploring earnestness, and then the tearful eye was brightened with hope. Psalm lxxxix. lxxx. The writings of the prophets, also, encouraged them to expect a glorious future for Israel. They too frequently misunderstood and misapplied the predictions; yet it cannot be doubted that their faith preserved them from despair. The conviction which they had of the necessary righteousness of God's dealings was practical and consoling. It was "an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast.

Yours truly,

J. M. CRAMP.

Acadia College, June 29, 1868.

For the Christian Messenger.

Truth Triumphant.

The ways of infidelity are movable. All parts of the truth are strictly observed, and attacks are skillfully planned and executed where the greatest success seems probable.—The New Testament has been bitterly assailed and after ages of conflict still stands unmoved. The Christ it reveals still wears the crown of supreme Godhead, and the Spirit who inspires it daily vindicates the nobility of the record, and power of the truth.

Foiled in its attacks upon the gospels, skepticism turns, with the malignity of a viper, to the Old Testament, and attempts to falsify its history, misconstrue its laws, overturn its philosophy, and render its heroes infamous. It is refreshing to the soul, and encouraging to the faith of the Christian, to notice the method of God in meeting the cavils against his word. History shows that every fresh ebullition of hell's rage against the Scriptures brings out resources of defense and establishment that put to rout "the armies of the aliens." If evil seems to gain a temporary triumph it is only that its overthrow shall be rendered more complete.

The late attacks upon the Pentateuch are bringing out the defense of the faith in a way that should cause every Christian heart to rejoice. Lange, and Lewis, and Conant, with others, have grappled with the difficulties so flippantly thrown at us by so-called science, and the results reached are on the side of revelation.

A careful perusal of Lange, Lewis, and Conant, on Genesis, will show to the reader the disadvantage under which the man has labored who has access only to the common English version. The frequent revisions made by these scholars, and the explanations of the sense in which the original is used fre-

quently, shed a flood of light upon difficulties that before seemed inexplicable; and this light often comes through *one word* accurately translated. It is not asserted that a strictly accurate translation will remove every difficulty from this oldest part of the Bible, for in these wondrous accounts there are some heights to which the strongest eye can not penetrate, and depths which the profoundest intellect can not fathom; yet the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law. And as Wickliffe wrote five hundred years ago: "As the faith of the Church is contained in the Scriptures, the more these are known in their true meaning, the better; and inasmuch as secular men should assuredly understand the faith they profess that faith should be taught them in whatever language is best known to them."

While ministers and all who can afford time and expense to use the larger work of Lange should do so, the work of Conant, less in bulk, but quite as full in results, clear in its renderings, with comprehensive annotations is more adapted to the people, because it is a careful revision of the common version of Genesis, the result of many years' study. A gentleman, who has himself bestowed much attention upon Genesis, and has critically examined this work, says of it: "It is a revised and most learned and accurate version of the most difficult book of the Old Testament, accompanied by a commentary condensing in the space of less than two hundred and fifty pages the solution of more questions and the communication of as much scriptural intelligence about Genesis, as any other work of the same size that has ever been printed. We do not hesitate to commend it as a newly opened mine of treasure, the value of which to the student of the Bible can not be estimated." After perusing the work with profit and delight, the writer of this is prepared to say to every truth lover, *get the book*; it costs but little, and it will be invaluable to you. Moreover, let every additional contribution to the clearer rendering of God's word be hailed joyfully, and with a co-operation that shall make truth triumphant.

HENRICUS.

Singing with the Spirit.

Mr. Spurgeon in a recent sermon upon praising God, delivered himself of these sentences; "I have noticed one thing—I have jotted this down in the diary of my recollections—that you always sing best when you are most spiritual. Last Monday night the singing was better than it was on Sabbath evening. You kept better time and better tune; not because the tune was any easier, but because you had come up to worship God with more solemnity than usual, and therefore there was no slovenly singing such as pains my ear and heart sometimes. Why, some of you care so little to give the Lord your best music, that you fall half a note behind the rest; others of you are singing quite a false note, and few make no sound of any kind. I hate to enter a place of worship where half a dozen sing to the praise and glory of themselves and the rest stand and listen. I like that good old plan of everybody singing, singing his best, singing carefully and heartily. If you cannot sing artistically, never mind, you will be right enough if you sing from the heart, and pay attention to it, and do not draw out like a musical machine that has been set a-going and therefore runs on mechanically. With a little care the heart brings the art, and the heart desiring to praise, will by and-by train the voice to time and tune."

Guarded Lives.

It is a solemn thing to grow out of youth, and not be a Christian. It is a solemn thing for a young man to grow up into manhood and not be a Christian. It is a solemn thing for parents to wait for their children to get into the trough of the sea before they attempt to bring them to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a solemn thing to abandon a child to hope and chance, and promise, when all growth beyond youth is wrong growth. I buy an old grape of a careless man, and find that the grape trellises have been neglected until the vines have gone in and out, in and out, and