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Poetry.

GOD MADE MANIFEST.

AN ACTUAL OCCURRENCE.

A hard, stern man upon a sick-bed lay,
More and more feeble with each passing day;
No hallowing gleam of heavenly peace was there,
No ray of love Divine—no breath of prayer.

There Christian friends, on holiest mission bent,
Came, bright and hopeful—and and anxious went,
Harder and sterner still the atheist grew,
The flinty heart no answering softness knew.

Angry, at last, at each persistent call,
With firm refusal he defied them all;
The Saviour's sacred name he would not bear,
His loving words could find no listening ear.

"Wife! fetch the blackboard—and a bit of chalk!
One way remains, to stop this senseless talk;
I will write something, which I trust indeed,
And have it placed where every one may read."

The thin, weak hand, that scarce the chalk could hold,
Wrote, "GOD IS NOWHERE," large and clear and bold,
That fearful sentence met his waking sight,
In wretched mockery, by day and night.

Time crept along—hour after hour passed o'er,
While the death-angel still his touch bore more;
Lower and lower burned the flickering flame,
And, slower yet, the fatal pulses came.

Then a pier change repaid the anxious view—
And hope, so long denied, sprang forth anew;
Through every vein a fuller current flowed,
And Heaven once more the gift of life bestowed.

Soon, the fond father sought his banished child,
Who erst with prattle sweet his heart beguiled;
Charmed to come back, she told her little news,
And showed her "nice new gown and pretty shoes."

"And that's not all"—the tones grew eager, now—
"For I can read—my Aunt taught me how."
"Nonsense, my dear!" the father quick replied,
"You cannot read, my child—I'm satisfied."

"Yes, father, dear! Oh yes! I truly can,
For Aunt taught me"—and the child began
To look around, perchance to find some way
Of proving what her words had failed to say.

The father smiled—and, pointing to the wall,
Said, "Well, read that, if you can read at all."
She hesitated—and the father spoke—
"I told you so—I knew it was a joke."

But still, she kept her deep and earnest eyes
Fixed on the board—and soon, in glad surprise,
Exclaimed, "I know!—Oh, yes! I see!
GOD IS NOWHERE—that last word puzzled me."

Religious.

JERUSALEM.

BY THE REV. H. B. RIDGWAY, D. D.

The Turks are yielding to an outside pressure of European opinion and an inside pressure of pecuniary want, and opening one after another all the places which were once guarded against the touch of the "infidel." The tombs of the patriarchs at Hebron are about the last to remain sealed. My first thought on entering the grounds of the mosque of Omar was, what decayed beauty! Everything seemed crumbling to pieces. Yet, withal, the pavement, the steps, gateways, praying places, wear a substantial air, which reminds one of the powerful days of Mohammedanism, and makes you feel that this old mosque and its surroundings really ally you to the nobler structures of Solomon, Nebuchadnezzar and Herod, which formerly stood on this holy ground. The Dome of the Rock first arrests attention. It is of octagonal shape, not so large as you would expect to find it, but its proportions are just and general appearances beautiful. The dome itself is a gem for grace. Unfortunately for me the whole building was being renovated, and a perfect view was obstructed. The great thing in the mosque is not the building, but the rock which the building contains. The rock is there, the veritable rock on which on this Mount Moriah Abraham offered Isaac; on which David, in this threshing floor of Araunah, offered sacrifice to stay the hand of the avenging angel; from which Mohamet, the prophet, according to Moslem tradition, ascended to heaven. It is a great mass of the common reddish limestone,

such as prevails about Jerusalem, projecting about five feet above the general surface. Around it is some beautiful lattice work. Near one of the main pillars supporting the dome is an exquisitely carved marble oratory, where Solomon is said to have prayed. The supports are twisted columns, as is seen often with the fig-trees, two and sometimes three trees being twisted and growing into one trunk. Under the rock is a cave apportioned to all sorts of holy associations in connection with Abraham, David, Solomon and Mohamet. The prints of Gabriel's fingers, in his effort to prevent the rock from rising with Mohamet to heaven, are pointed out; also *Bir el-Arweh*, the "well of spirits," at the bottom, where departed souls are confined. Unfortunately for these traditions, the altar of sacrifice in the temple stood on this rock, and the venerated cave was nothing more than a cess-pool, into which the waste water and blood ran from the altar, and the "well of spirits" was but the escape pipe to the main drain under the temple. On the whole the edifice falls short of what one with European ideas of Christian architecture would be pleased to see occupying the site of the grandest temple of antiquity. Much of the material is common, and some of best is borrowed from other and more ancient buildings.

Passing out of the "Dome of the Rock" at the south door through an open porch supported on marble columns, you descend to the main outside pavement in the direction of the mosque el-Aksa. On the right is the noted marble pulpit "a gem of Arab architecture, built by Barhan ed Din Kady, A. D. 798." Going on under the great arch and down one step, and following a broad tessellated avenue, with tall cypresses on either side, a large fountain in the centre, you reach el-Aksa. Around are great cisterns, connecting with some central reservoir under the area, and immediately in front of the door a beautiful little marble fountain, the sides of which are well worn with the cords which for centuries have drawn water from its depths. Underneath el-Aksa I noticed some broken columns and stones, on one of which were Hebrew characters; also a triple gate in the south wall, which must have belonged to the old temple. The mosque is an altered Christian church, supposed to have been built by Justinian in the sixth century. It is 272 feet long by 184 wide, has seven aisles, and the interior is supported by 45 columns. These columns are of different sizes, showing that they were not originally designed for their present uses. In the wall of the south end are some of the most perfect mosaics I have seen, but the stained windows, while very beautiful, are not so rich as those of the "Dome."

In the southeast corner of this general enclosure is the little chapel of Jesus—the Mohammedans not hesitating to account Jesus as a prophet. Through it, by a flight of steps descending about sixty feet, you come to an immense excavation, supported by massive arches resting upon columns. Here is what are called Solomon's Stables. This area was probably occupied as stalls for the horses of the crusaders, and may have been used by Solomon for a like purpose. This shows how all the extended portions of the temple grounds were supported, resting on arches sustained by pillars until the great wall was reached. Coming out of this depth, I looked down from the southeast corner of the walls into the valley of Jehoshaphat, or Kidron, as far as to En Rogel or Job's Well, where the Kidron and Hermon come together, nearly to the junction of which this same eastern wall in ancient times used to run, encompassing the hill Ophel, and with it, some say, Solomon's great house which was the wonder of the Queen of Sheba. Walking on the wall northward, I could not resist the temptation to straddle the column which sticks out of the wall toward the valley, on

which Mohamet is to sit at the judgment of the world. The Golden Gate is now approached, walled up on the outside, but a very handsome open court on the inside. The antiquity of this gate is proved by the massive monolithic jambs on which the ancient gates turned. It marks the extent of the temple area, all north of it having been added at a subsequent period. This area was approximately 1,000 feet square, while the present area includes one third as much more from south to north. This enclosure is now scarcely more than a sort of holy park, to which the Mohammedans resort for prayer, gossip, and lounging. It is sadly neglected, and evinces the want of taste and enterprise so prominent in all Mussulman countries.

We are again at St. Stephen's Gate, in the east wall. Going out at it, I stroll a moment along this wall, noting some of the great stones with bevelled edges, especially near the southeast angle, which may have belonged to the original wall built by Solomon. Sixty-five feet deeper down, and deflecting from the perpendicular line of the wall, similar stones are found. A moat runs along the wall, and between it and the valley of Jehoshaphat is a Mohammedan burial ground. The Mussulman deems it a great object to be buried here; while the Jew, wishing to be as near the temple ground as possible, must be content with a spot over on the slope of Olivet above Absalom's tomb, and the tombs of Zachariah and of St. James. Returning to St. Stephen's Gate, I am reminded of the close neighborhood of a spot the spell of which quickens my pulse and my step. This well-worn path winds down the hill over the brook Kidron, and leads to Olivet, Bethany and Gethsemane. I think of One who came frequently to it; but I think of Him especially on that sad night when the bright Pass-over moon lighted him to his agony. Crossing the little stream, the Garden is immediately on our right in the fork of the road which leads around to Bethany and on to Jericho, and that which runs directly up to the brow of Olivet. It is surrounded by a high stone wall. I was disappointed to find it thus hedged in, but I recollected that most gardens around cities in ancient or in modern times were enclosed by walls. Admission is gained at a little door on the southeast. A monk receives you. The Garden has a walk around it, in following which you pass the fourteen different pictures of Christ in his last sufferings. These pictures have only lately been put up, and I give an example or two: 1. Jesus sentenced to death; 2. Jesus meets his mother; 3. his third fall under his cross; Within the walk is a wooden paling fence running around the holy ground, which is again divided into four parts. But we will not mind the fence. The flowers, too, so pretty and so assiduously cultivated by the brothers, are of little moment. These old olive trees are the attraction; one particularly gnarled, scraggy and heart-eaten, is pointed out as that under which Christ's agony took place. "And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here while I shall pray. And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death; tarry ye here and watch. And he went forward a little and fell on the ground and prayed, that if it were possible the hour might pass from him." "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." This tree may not be, is not—though the olive lives to a great age—the identical one under which the Saviour suffered, but there can be no doubt but it and its neighbors are successors of the grove in which he prayed. My emotions were strong as I stood there, and I could not resist the impulse to get furtively behind the tree and pray.

MY WILL AGAINST GOD'S WILL.

Miss A. B. Harris relates in *The Congregationalist* a story that was told her by "a venerable friend" concerning his life-long endeavors to have his own way, and the lesson he learned at last:

I always had a strong desire to be rich. Not at all for the sake of riches, but to command those beautiful things which it takes money to buy; and after I was married the longing grew upon me, for the sake of surrounding my wife and children with luxuries. I thought I was a Christian; and I determined to give God a reasonable share—one-sixth of all that I made in a year. I gave it most cheerfully, without a grudging thought; and considered that it was liberal in me; and that all the rest was mine, to do with as I pleased.

My success was remarkable; and I was just on the eve of realizing my wishes, building an elegant residence, and furnishing it suitably, when a distant relative was suddenly left a widow, with several little children, and without means of bringing them up. She applied to me to set her up in business; not because I was any wealthier, or nearer of kin, than some others of the family, but because I was a Christian, she said; and she thought I should look at it in a different light from the others.

Now here was a question forced upon me. I thought she proposed it to me; never imagining that it was God. Some misgivings, however, haunted me as I answered, declining. Nevertheless, I reasoned in this way: God has given me just what I have been asking for for so many years, the means of making my family happy (notice, I had never asked him to give me what it was best for them to have); and of course, I am to use it for that purpose. It can't be my duty to take care of John's widow and children. There are others whom she can call on, who are more under obligation to. Besides, I already spend one-sixth of my income for such uses. So I refused; thinking I had only refused her. It proved to be God who had sent the request.

Some way I soon began to be financially embarrassed, through a singular complication of affairs; and instead of building on the foundation I was so sure, I made a most disastrous failure, which put me back to my starting-place. But being still a young man I set out anew, with the same end in view. That was my chief ambition, and I could not see that it was selfish, because it was not for myself, nor for show, nor for influence; but to make those precious to me happy, to minister to their taste for the beautiful and refined. I could see no reason why it was not proper and right; nor why, if I sacredly set apart one-sixth, as before, I should not keep to my purpose.

In time came another test, similar enough to the first to startle a man. An old friend, poor and in feeble health, while travelling across the country to his relatives stopped at my house, grew worse, and died there, leaving on my hands a beautiful little girl, his only and now orphaned child. After a few weeks the not very willing relatives came for her, but she clung to us, and begged to live with us. Do I seem a monster, in saying that I felt that my own children ought to have all that their father had with such difficulty acquired, instead of sharing with a stranger who had no claims? Both they and my wife pleaded for her, but I resisted, and she went away.

I have to add that this orphan, as well as John's widow and children, prospered, and apparently suffered nothing from my refusal. It was I that suffered. I had refused one of those little ones whom, if ye receive not, Christ says ye receive not me. I had been asked by him to do something; but thinking it would retard my own purpose, I had disregarded him.

We are slow in learning that God rules. I lost my property the second time; and in this instance, in a very

simple way—through the failure of others with whom I was concerned. And gradually the truth began to dawn upon me; and at last, in its awful light I stood revealed, as I was, a shamefaced, baffled penitent. God had tried me in the one way which most nearly interested me. He had defeated the plan of my life, my plan, once, twice. He had convicted me of my sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Though I had paid tithes, and cultivated the Christian graces, and tried to live a consistent life, I had twice miserably denied him when he came asking me to do a thing against my wishes. If I had obeyed, and left the result with him, what sweet peace should I have had, and the approval: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my disciples, ye did it unto me!" Failing to do it, I failed of all.

Briefly as my story has been told, the experience of all my most vigorous years is crowded into it. I was a gray-haired man when God flashed the conviction into my soul that he never meant me to be rich. I was fifty years learning that it was not my will, but his that was to be done.

NOT ENOUGH OF CHRIST IN THE SERMON.

A minister in one of our large cities had prepared and preached, as he supposed, a most convincing sermon for the special benefit of an influential member of his congregation, who was well known to be of an infidel turn of mind.

The sinner listened unmoved to well-turned sentences and the earnest appeals; his heart was unaffected. On his return from church, he saw a tear trembling in the eye of his little daughter whom he tenderly loved, and inquired the cause. The child informed him that she was thinking of what her Sabbath School teacher had told her of Jesus Christ.

"And what did she tell you of Jesus Christ, my child?"

"Why, she said he came down from heaven and died for poor me!" and in a moment the tears gushed from eyes which had looked upon the beauties of only seven summers, as in the simplicity of childhood she added "Father, should I not love one who has so loved me?"

The proud heart of the infidel was touched. What the eloquent plea of his minister could not accomplish, the tender sentence of his child had done, and he retired to give vent to his own feelings in a silent but penitent prayer. That evening found him at the praying circle, where, with brokenness of spirit, he asked the prayers of God's people. When he came to relate his Christian experience, he gave this incident, and closed his narration by saying, "Under God I owe my conversion to a little child, who first convinced me that I ought to love one who has so loved me."

The minister, on returning from this meeting, took his sermon and read it over carefully, and said to his family and to himself, "There is not enough of Jesus Christ in this discourse."—*Christian Treasury.*

Two things characterize every church that is in the highest condition of spiritual health. The one is that they all worship, the other that they all work. The first appertains more directly to the heart; the second appertains as well to the head, the hands and the purse. The fullest combination of the two would almost realize the ideal of church life in its highest form.—*Theo. Cuyler.*

It is only necessary to grow old to become more indulgent. I see no fault committed that I have not committed myself.—*Goethe.*

Ignorance is the wet nurse of prejudice.