

preservation of only a remnant are going to be filled up. Under the overwhelming flood both nation and royal house shall go down, yet not to perish. A darkness, to which there seems no dawn, shall settle on the land; but those who have faith will wait on Jehovah, who hideth His face (ch. viii. 17). And the darkness shall yet roll away before the eternal day. "For there shall not be gloom to her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into dishonour the land of Zebulun, . . . but in the latter time hath he made it glorious, the way of the sea, Galilee of the Gentiles. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. . . . For a child is born to us, a son is given to us, and the government is upon his shoulder." There passes before the prophet's eye all the coming history, as in a panorama. For the real thing in the prophets is their faith, not the particular events predicted or projected in which they give their faith embodiment. These events are always the events occurring immediately around them in their day, which they fill out and animate with the meaning of their own universal conceptions.

According to this interpretation, the sign does not lie in the meaning of the *name* Immanuel, but in the person of Immanuel himself, whom his name interprets. He is the same as he who is the Wonder of a Counsellor, God the Mighty of ch. ix., and as the shoot out of the root of Jesse, on whom the manifold spirit of the Lord shall rest, of ch. xi. But the question comes, Does not this interpreta-

tion require the omission of ver. 16, "Before the child know to refuse evil and choose good, the land shall be a desolation, before whose two kings thou art in terror?" Even if this should be the case, we must choose that side on which there appears to lie the greater probability. The chapter and the succeeding ones have not escaped interpolation. It is not impossible that the same hand from which came the date in ver. 8 may be found in this other reference to the northern kingdom. The verse in its present form cannot be read along with ver. 17; at any rate, if retained, it must sink into a mere subordinate clause, and be part of the statement that the Assyrian devastation shall involve north and south *alike*; and that Judah shall be devastated is the burden of the passage, and to this alone the sign of Immanuel has reference. Besides the improbability of the near date for the birth of Immanuel, the language of the verse otherwise is peculiar. It is strange that Syria and Israel should be spoken of as a single "land"—"the land before whose two kings thou fearest." It is certainly probable, if the verse be original, that it ended differently, or that its last words were "the land shall be forsaken"—the "land" in this case being Judah, and used absolutely as in ch. vi. 12, "a great forsaking in the midst of the land." In this case the mistaken explanatory gloss would consist merely of the words "before whose two kings thou fearest." There are indications in some MSS. of the Septuagint of some confusion of text in the end of ver. 16.

## The Inspiration of Waiting.

BY THE REV. ALFRED PLUMMER, D.D., MASTER OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, DURHAM.

"And, behold, I send forth the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high."—ST. LUKE xxiv. 49.

"He charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said He, ye heard from Me."—ACTS i. 4.

If we had only the Gospel of St. Luke, we should probably have believed that our Lord ascended up to heaven immediately after the Resurrection, either that same night or early the next day. St. Luke does not say that this was the case; yet he does not make it clear that there was a considerable interval between Easter day and Christ's return to glory. But the other three Gospels show

that there must have been an interval in which the appearance or appearances in Galilee took place; and St. Luke himself in the Acts tells us exactly how long the interval was. He says that Jesus "showed Himself alive after His passion by many proofs, appearing unto the apostles by the space of forty days" (i. 3). In his Gospel, St. Luke condenses into one consecutive speech what seems to have

been said by our Lord on several occasions, namely, on Easter day, on Ascension day, and once or twice between those times. He is there closing his narrative of the life of Christ, and he gives no more than is necessary for its legitimate conclusion. In the Acts he is beginning his narrative of the life of Christ's Church; and he thinks it well to dwell on the fact that even after the Resurrection there was a considerable period during which Jesus was still at intervals instructing His disciples, preparing them by gradual withdrawal for His bodily absence from them in perpetuity, and teaching them how they were to continue the work which He had begun of "making disciples of all the nations" (Matt. xxviii. 19). Just as a detailed account of the births of John the Baptist and of Jesus Christ gives the proper supernatural starting-point for the history of the Redeemer's work among His people, so a detailed account of the Ascension gives the proper supernatural starting-point for the history of His apostles' work among all the nations of the earth.

To the evangelists, who were merely giving us all that it concerned us to know about the life of Christ, the Ascension was not an event on which it was necessary to lay great stress. Even if it had not been well known, it might safely have been assumed. Christ had risen from the dead and had departed from the world. How had He departed? Not by dying again, like the widow's son and Jairus' daughter; for that would have undone His victory over death, and would have left us without any assurance that we should rise again. But if Christ rose from the dead and returned to the Father without dying again, then something of the nature of the Ascension must have taken place. We leave the world through death: there is no other way. But if Christ left the world without dying a second time, there must have been a supernatural departure.

It ought not to surprise us, therefore, that in the Gospels so little is told us about the Ascension. St. Matthew and St. John do not give any narrative of it. It is the Resurrection which they all four insist upon so strongly. The miraculous return to glory follows as a matter of course, if the Resurrection is believed and understood.

But it is different, when St. Luke is making a fresh start in order to sketch the history of the infant Church. Then it was important to point out, not only that the disciples had ample oppor-

tunities of convincing themselves that Jesus had risen from the grave, but that they also had abundant instruction from the risen Lord as to how they were to conduct themselves under the changed conditions of His never more being visibly present with them.

Only a few of the "many proofs" of the reality of His return from the grave have been recorded. Only a few of the many words which He said to them during the forty days, "speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God," have been preserved. Perhaps there are not very many persons who seriously desire to know a larger number of these many proofs. Those which have been recorded are enough to convince us that no satisfactory explanation of the evidence for the Resurrection can be given, excepting the fact that it took place. But who does not yearn to know more about those momentous conversations which the risen Lord held with His apostles in the interval between the resurrection from the grave and the ascension into heaven?

Among the few sayings of Christ which are recorded as having been spoken shortly before His Ascension, the charge to the apostles to "tarry in the city until they were clothed with power from on high" may easily have been a very real trial to them. They had recently been plunged in the depths of despair. Their Master, whom they had hoped to be the promised Redeemer of Israel, had been captured by His enemies and slain; and His disciples had come to the conclusion that they had staked all upon an erroneous conviction and lost. Then His Resurrection had raised them again to the utmost bounds of joy and exultation. During His mysterious appearances among them since that joyous restoration, He had told them what glorious things they were to accomplish for Him. They were to make disciples of all the nations, and teach them to observe all His commands. They were to preach the gospel to the whole creation, working miracles in His name and being miraculously protected from harm. And then He had gone to His Father to prepare a place for them, promising to return once more and summon them to Himself. But almost His farewell charge to them had been, "Wait"—for an indefinite period, which might be weeks, or months, or years.

When there was not a day to be spared!

Think of the work which had been committed

to them, and which they had cheerfully undertaken—the conversion of the world. They were to be His witnesses, not only in Jerusalem, but “in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Think also of their strong conviction that Jesus Christ would return very soon; so that the time allowed for this enormous task was very short. Think, moreover, of the amazing events, which had been crowded into the last six weeks from the time of the institution of the Eucharist to the time of the Ascension, and to what intensity their enthusiasm had been kindled by all these things. They were eager to be up and doing, to prove themselves worthy of the great trust committed to them, to accomplish some great thing for the furtherance of their Master’s kingdom.

And they were told to *wait*. “Wait for the promise of the Father, which, said He, ye heard from Me.”

This charge, which St. Luke records twice over,—first at the end of his Gospel, and again at the beginning of the Acts,—was probably not intended merely for that particular crisis, nor only for the apostles. It may be meant for us also; and the apostles’ cheerful and loyal acceptance of it and obedience to it may be an example worthy of our imitation. It may be a comfort to us, in times of hindrance and perplexity, to remember that God has laid, and does lay, such commands upon His servants. And it may help us, if we recollect that others have found happiness in obeying such commands readily.

There are seasons in our lives when God

appears to call upon us simply to wait. We are yearning for action; but before we can act safely or profitably, some point has to be decided, which we cannot decide, and the decision of which we cannot hasten. As week after week, or month after month, passes away, we think with regret, or it may be with consternation, of what might have been accomplished if we had but been allowed to set to work at the time when we ourselves seemed to be ready; and we begin to fear that a point may be reached, after which nothing satisfactory will be possible. We are tempted like Saul to take the matter into our own hands and thus get rid of the painful suspense of waiting, or (as we prefer to put it to ourselves) thus put an end to the serious risk which seems to be inseparable from delay. We “force ourselves, therefore,” and undertake responsibilities to which we are not equal, because we have not been “clothed with power from on high.”

We often condemn the generation to which we belong as an *impatient* generation. Perhaps nearly all of us have contributed to this impatience. We are so ambitious of setting the world to rights, and so bent upon having immediate and visible results of what we have attempted. More real progress would be made if we were equally anxious to secure the promise of the Father, were more in the temple blessing God, and were more ready to go on quietly with the plain duties which lie immediately before us, without seeking “to know times or seasons which the Father hath set within His own authority.”

One step enough for me.

## Studies in Tennyson's "In Memoriam."

BY MARY A. WOODS.

### IV.

And I—my harp would prelude woe—  
I cannot all command the strings;  
The glory of the sum of things  
Will flash along the chords and go.

WE have seen our poet stunned by the first shock of bereavement; we have watched him as he wakes first to a sense of dreary hopelessness, and gradually to one of solace in the past and a faint hope in the

present; and, lastly, we have realised how this hope—that of the continued life and well-being of his friend—has become an assurance strong enough to control his grief and inspire a new peace and content. It is this assurance that dominates the remainder of his song. It does not wholly satisfy him. There are moods in which he would willingly exchange all that strife and thought have won

. . . for the touch of a vanished hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still.