her make. 'I used,' she said, 'to bring my troubles to the Lord, and bring them away with me again; now I have learned to bring them to the Lord, and to leave them there.' She had learned to rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.

'All will come right,' are the words put on the tombstone of President Brand, a late President of the Orange Free State. It was a remark he was often in the habit of making in his lifetime. If our trust be in God, may we not take them up too? All will come right. 'The Lord reigneth.'

V.

'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house.'—Ex. xx. 17.

WHAT constitutes coveting? Here, for instance, is a ragged urchin, a homeless wanderer, shivering in the cold street, and gazing in through a lighted window at the Christmas festivities within. It is a glimpse of Paradise to him, so near and yet so far. Could he help having a longing to share the happy ongoings? It would be natural, in the circumstances, and it would be far better than pretending to go away with feelings such as the fox pretended to have with regard to the grapes he could not reach. That fox, mind you, was really full of the covetous spirit, for all his disparagement of the unattainable. Some of ourselves, probably, must plead guilty to turning a wishful eye, in our time, upon some houses,—a house beautiful for situation, and with, perhaps, a room like that one in which Jesus and His disciples met of old—'a large upper room furnished,'—comfortable within, and commanding a splendid view without. Would not life be better and brighter, we think, with such a room to live and work in? Still, if we haven't it, it does not trouble us. We want to aim not in the coveting direction but in the content direction, which St. Paul had learned to do so well.

It was a very different thing with Ahab when he coveted Naboth's vineyard. First he took to his bed about it, and refused to eat, like a big baby. And then came the tragedy of Naboth's murder, and the joyous uprising of the king to go down and take possession. Not so joyous, however, after all, for there was a troublesome little thing, called conscience, that had to be counted with. Conscience within, and Elijah to be faced without, Ahab was not to be envied in his new possession.

But this commandment against coveting is a very far-reaching one. In some respects it might be said to be the highest string in what Augustine called the ten-stringed instrument of the commandments. The high notes are the most penetrating, and this, you remember, was the commandment that reached home to St. Paul's heart with condemning power. And it is not likely that, if St. Paul stood condemned by it, we, if we understand ourselves aright, shall be able to hear it, and count ourselves blameless. 'Take heed, and beware of covetousness.' It is very insidious in the ways in which it can find a lodgment in the human heart. There may be a certain longing, at times, that is natural, and can hardly be avoided; but it is a different thing to set the heart on what does not belong to us, in an envious and selfish way.

Still, there was never a man more covetous, in one sense, all his days than St. Paul was. 'Covet earnestly the best gifts' was his exhortation to others also. Ah, but what were they? Gifts such as faith, hope, and love. Get as much of these as you can, for nobody will suffer loss by your gain in these respects. Nay, rather, not only will you be blessed yourself, but all connected with you will be made partakers of the blessing.

Ezekiel's Temple.

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III.

THERE are some other peculiarities in Ezekiel's temple and its services which are closely connected, though perhaps not necessarily so, with this advance of the holy place to a position of equality or identity with the most holy place.

1. There is now no laver, such as stood beside the altar of burnt offering and the entrance to the tabernacle of Moses, that by washing their hands and feet in it the priests might not die when they approached the altar or entered the tabernacle.

In Solomon's temple this laver was replaced by the more elaborate symbolism of the ten lavers and the brazen sea, whose absence from Ezekiel's temple has been already noticed. Yet, why should there any longer be a laver, now that an enduring state of complete atonement and purification has been introduced? Compare, in another prophet, the close connexion of Zec 12^{10} and 13^{1}. And Zec 14^{8} speaks of living waters going out from Jerusalem in that day, like Ezekiel's perpetually-flowing and life-giving stream ($47^{1.\,8.\,9}$). This greater gift of God makes the little laver no longer worth preserving.

2. There is no anointing of the temple, such as is mentioned with much precision in Ex $40^{9\text{-}11}$; and more briefly in Lv $8^{10.\,11}$, where, however, the interest centres in the anointing of Aaron and his sons, and in the sacrifices with which they were installed in office. The new and emphatic statement in Leviticus, v. [15], is, that with the sin offering for the priests, Moses also 'purified the altar, and poured out the blood at the base of the altar, and sanctified it, to make atonement for it.' On the other hand, Ezekiel says nothing of either the priests or the altar being anointed. Yet in chap. $43^{18\text{-}20}$ he tells particularly of a sin offering presented for the altar on the day that it is made, to deal with it by a sin offering, and to make atonement for it; and in v. [22] of a second; and in vv. [23-27] of burnt offerings for seven days, with which to consecrate, or more exactly, to install it.

3. There is nothing answering to the golden candlestick, or lampstand, with its seven lamps, in the tabernacle, multiplied into ten candlesticks in Solomon's temple, and otherwise glorified in the vision in Zec 4. Why was the candlestick absent from Ezekiel's temple? Not merely because there was no longer the veil which had left the most holy place in thick darkness (1 K 8^{12}); for the candlestick stood in the holy place, outside of the veil. The true and adequate reason must be found in the return of the glory of Jehovah to the house, filling every part of it and making the whole of it become the most holy place. Nevertheless a still higher stage of the spiritual privilege was reached in the vision of the beloved disciple (Rev $21^{22.\,23}$), when the temple and all its sacrifices had disappeared, and he saw only the holy city. 'And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb are the temple thereof. And the city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of the Lord did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb.'

4. A very interesting peculiarity is that the altar of incense and the table of shew-bread appear to be combined into one in Ezekiel's vision. The description is given (chap. 41^{22}), 'The altar was of wood, three cubits high, and the length thereof two cubits; and the corners thereof, and the length thereof, and the walls thereof, were of wood: and He said unto me, This is the table that is before Jehovah.' There is nothing to perplex us in the mere use of the name 'table.' It is so applied to the altar in Mal 1^{7}; also by Ezekiel himself (chap. 44^{16}). But the perplexity lies here. There are just three articles of furniture for the holy place, both in the tabernacle of Moses and (with minor modifications) in the temple of Solomon; and they are so prominent that it is impossible to mistake or overlook them. These are the candlestick, the shew-bread table, and the altar of incense. The absence of the candlestick has just been discussed. The table of shew-bread might be supposed to be also absent: only no explanation of its absence is suggested. It only remains, then, to suppose that Ezekiel's 'table before Jehovah' did service for both the shew-bread table and the altar of incense.[1] One or two considerations may recommend this supposition, though it is peculiar.

(1) Ezekiel's vision makes no mention of incense any more than of shew-bread; yet he knows of it, and speaks of the censers and of the odour of incense going up out of the hands of those who offered the illicit worship described in chap. 8^{11}. Nor indeed does he mention the compound of sweet spices described in Ex $30^{34\text{-}38}$, nor the fragrant ingredients of the holy anointing oil, the description of which and its uses immediately precedes this. These things had all become unimportant: when the living cherubim appeared in the temple, and the glory of Jehovah filled it, incense and perfumes were no longer needed.

(2) The shew-bread may be regarded as simply a special variety of the bloodless offering (named the meat offering in the A.V., the meal offering in the R.V.), and therefore it may suitably be coupled in our thoughts with the incense of the golden altar, also a bloodless offering; in fact Lv 24^{7} tells

[1] It has already been suggested that perhaps the jubilee and the sabbatical year coalesced in Ezekiel's vision. Here would be something analogous.

us that pure frankincense was put upon each row of the cakes of shew-bread. The expression 'the bread of their God' (Lv 21^6, etc.) is applied to the offerings apparently in a pretty wide sense, taking in even animal food. And thus we read in Lv $3^{11.16}$, of 'the food' (in the Hebrew, the bread), 'of the offerings made by fire unto Jehovah.' And Ezekiel uses the word so in chap. 44^7.

(3) Perhaps the true view is that priest and altar ought to go together, and that it was only the limitations of matter which made it necessary to have more than one altar in the symbolical services of the tabernacle and the temple as the priest moved further and further inward. If there had been a living spiritual altar, instead of a material one, it might have taken the place, first, of the brazen altar of burnt offering in the court; then of the golden altar of incense, as the priest passed into the holy place to offer intercessions; and finally, it might have accompanied the high priest into the most holy place on the day of atonement. Ezekiel's vision rises superior to all material limitations, and he sees only one altar, to which he attaches special prominence and importance.

(4) Does this suggest an explanation of the peculiarity in the account of the sacred furniture in He 9^{2-4}? There is first the holy place, with the candlestick, and the table and the shew-bread; and after the second veil there is the most holy place, 'having a golden censer,' etc. Such a censer is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture, yet is not inconsistent with it: we know that on the day of atonement the high priest took a censer full of coals from off the altar and filled it with sweet incense, bringing it within the veil. It is this censer which may perhaps be meant in the passage in Hebrews. However, there is very much to be said in favour of the marginal rendering in the R.V., 'a golden altar of incense,' which on this interpretation is looked upon as really belonging, in the strictest sense, to the furniture of the most holy place.

Contributions and Comments.

Almug Trees, with a Study of the Passages referring to them.

THE chief object of this study is to throw fresh light on the mysterious 'almug trees.' I am pleased to notice that Dr. Post, in Messrs. Clark's new *Bible Dictionary*, has not committed himself to the opinion of 'the majority of scholars,' which inclines to identify 'almug' with red sandalwood, and to the disparaging view generally taken of the notice in 2 Ch 2^8, which connects 'algum trees' with Lebanon. His own position is, I think, in a high degree provisional; most philological critics will doubt whether it can be justified. But one who holds such a view is perhaps more open-minded than those who say that they are quite convinced that almug timber is equivalent to sandalwood. We must look at the matter all round, from the point of view both of analytic and of textual criticism (which Dr. Post has very naturally passed over), and finally,—here I can be very brief,—from that of botany. As I go along, I may be able to help those whose interests are not confined to almug trees.

We read in 1 K 10^{11} (R.V.), 'And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees and precious stones. And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house, harps also and psalteries [lyres and lutes] for the singers: there came no such almug trees, nor were seen, unto this day.' This passage occurs in a description of the visit of the queen of Sheba to Solomon. It interrupts that account, however, and evidently comes from a different source—the same source to which $10^{21.22}$ belongs, and which gave details of the wonderful things which Solomon imported, and of the use to which he put some of them. Read $10^{11.12}$ after v.^{22}, and the bearings of this remark will become clear.

In 2 Ch $9^{10.11}$ (R.V.) we find nearly the same account; only it is the 'servants of Huram and the servants of Solomon' who bring the gold from Ophir, and the trees are called 'algum.' 'Terraces' also take (in R.V.) the place of 'pillars.' There is, besides, a difference in the form of the admiring remark at the end of the passage, but we can afford to neglect this. Let me first of all point