

[COMMUNICATED.]
TODAY THOU SHALT BE WITH ME
IN PARADISE.

When the Savior of the world hung upon the cross, His flesh torn by the spikes which nailed him to the ignominious tree, derided by coarse Roman soldiers, insulted by hypocritical Jews forsaken by His own, rejected by His people, bearing the awful load of this world's sins, then under these humiliating circumstances and exquisite sufferings which caused Him, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to suffer in body and in spirit, a word of comfort and cheer is ministered to Him from one of the malefactors condemned to the same supplice; speaking to the other malefactor, he rebuked him, saying: "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward for our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." and Jesus, touched by the friendly defense, gave him this memorable answer, generally so little understood: "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

What did He mean by "Paradise?" It was not the heaven. Rev. Blomfield in a note to this passage in his edition of the New Testament in Greek has this much to say: "The word itself is derived from the Persian or Armenian, and means a garden. Now, as great pains were bestowed by the Orientals on gardens, thus the word easily came to mean a pleasure garden, a place of luxury and enjoyment. In this sense 'paradeiso' often occurs in Xenophon. Hence it is no wonder that the term came to denote, among the later Jews, that pleasant abode in Hades appointed for the reception of the just, until they should, after the day of judgment, be again united to their bodies in a future state; see Josephus, War of the Jews, III, 8, 4; II, 8, 11. The Chrysostom has shown, was the idea entertained of Paradise by all the orthodox believers of his time."

This same idea of Paradise which obtained among the later Jews of the ancient covenant, we find also in the Book of Mormon, in chapter 40 of the Book of Alma, verse 12, (page 353): "And then shall it come to pass that the spirits of those who are righteous, are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise; a state of rest; a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care and sorrow, etc.,

"And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of the wicked, yea, who are evil; . . . these shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth . . ."

Hence, when Jesus entered paradise, the abode of the spirits of the just, He took with Him the spirit of the only man who had dared to say a good word in His favor. But between this place and heaven there is a wide difference, as we shall see further on. As there are many who are in the dark concerning the manner in which Jesus spent the time between His death and His resurrection, we will quote His own words, which He spoke when He was yet in the mortal sphere of life:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." (John 5: 25), thus showing that the time was near at hand when the dead should hear His voice proclaiming the Gospel. Now, Peter, the chief of the Apostles,

long after the death and resurrection of his Master, testifies this to have been the case: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which some time were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing. . . ." (1 Pet. 3: 18-20.) Paul also adds his testimony: "Wherefore He saith, when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens that He might fill all things.") Ephes. 4: 8-10. This visit of the Savior into the lower parts of the earth we find also described in the Apostle's creed: "He (Jesus Christ) was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day he rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven," etc.

Jesus, having established his Church on earth among the Jews, went into the spirit world. As a proof that His disciples and Apostles working among the living were notified of the fact, that the Gospel had been introduced among the dead, Paul says: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" (1 Cor. 15: 29.) Modern Christendom does not pretend to understand these obscure words. Rev. Blomfield notes: "More attention is due to the interpretation of some ancient expositors, by which an allusion is supposed to the practice (in use, as we learn from Tertullian, Epiphanius, and Ambrose, in the first century), of vicarious baptism, i. e., of baptizing a living person in the place of and for the benefit of one who had died unbaptized. . . . But no certain proof has been adduced that the practice was prevalent so early as the time when this passage was written, or at Corinth . . . Well, if anybody is supposed to know what this mysterious passage of Paul means, it is certainly those who lived in the first centuries, as Tertullian, Ambrose and Epiphanius, and who received their tradition from those who knew the Apostles, their works and their doctrines.

Now, returning to our first subject, viz. the death and resurrection of the Savior, the historian John says: "But Mary stood without at the sepulchre, weeping . . . and when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. . . . Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni. . . . Jesus saith unto her, touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." (John 20: 11-17.) Thus the resurrected Son of God proclaims Himself in words not to be mistaken, that He had not as yet seen His Father and His God, since His death. But now with the resurrected Saints He ascends into heaven, leaving in Paradise the penitent thief, not worthy of such a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

A. RAMSEYER.

STRIKING EXTREMES.

London, Oct. 25.—Mr. Wm. T. Stead, writing from St. Petersburg, says:

"When Sir Robert Morier, one of the ablest of British ambassadors, was transferred from the court of Madrid to the capital of Russia, he remarked on his arrival, 'I have come from a

country which lives in the past to a country which lives in the future.'

"Since then many years have gone by, Spain has almost used up its past in a vain effort to contend with the forces of the present while Russia is exhausting the resources of the present in order to be able to cope with the immense possibilities of the future. Russia is the greatest aggregate of white men ever compacted into a state unit since the world began. The English speaking family alone exceeds in numbers the Russian, but they know no one political allegiance such as that which binds all the Russians to the throne of Nicholas II.

"One hundred and twenty millions of men constitute a world in themselves large enough to absorb their energies and monopolize their attention. The indifference of the Russians to what passes beyond their frontiers is phenomenal. Fifteen years ago one of the aides-de-camp of the then emperor, falling into conversation with an American asked him to what country he belonged, and was told America. 'America! America!' said the aide-de-camp. 'Where is America?'

"An American traveler recently returned from Siberia gravely assured me that all the war news he could find in the Orenburg papers were brief reprints of telegrams describing the war which was raging between 'Spain and England.' The Russian peasantry are not apt to make fine distinctions. Mankind for them, it has often been said, consists only of two great divisions—the Russians, or speaking men, and the non-Russians, or those who cannot speak.

"The small but highly cultivated minority which forms Russian society, the larger group which forms the administrations and the officers of the army and of the navy, are, of course, keenly alive to the evolution of events in America.

"There is M. Pobyedonostreff, who is universally regarded as a kind of lay-pope and 'persecutor general' throughout Russia. No milder mannered man ever doomed a Schismatic to exile. He is keenly alive to the American evolution, or, as he thinks it, degradation. To him 'Boss' Croker is a kind of sombre portent of the doom that awaits parliamentarism or representative government. In his 'reflections of a Russian statesman,' which has just made its appearance in English, he expresses profound alarm at the probable triumph of the Roman Catholic religion in the United States.

Prince Khilkoff (pronounced Hilkoff) minister of war and communications is known as the 'American.' He served some years in American railway shops; he wears his beard in the traditional American fashion; his letters are written on a typewriter, and he is simply burning with a desire to repeat in Siberia the grand industrial developments that the Americans achieved in the last fifty years west of the Mississippi.

"At the foreign office Count Muraviev, bluff, cynical, Bismarckian in his ambitions, though not in his capacity, has kept a careful eye upon the development of American ambitions. While scrupulously preserving the most rigid neutrality during the war, he had a bias in sentiment toward the United States. Great and growing powers have not much sympathy among the ministers of the czar. But the Spanish war interested them but little. It was waged, as it were, in a distant planet. Astronomers might watch it, but it was not the business of the average man.

"Americans are coming well to the front in Russia, as they are discovering more and more what an immense undeveloped field the hands of the czar offer to western enterprise. Russia is but at the beginning of a new epoch of industrial development. Before the next century closes she hopes to have