

tine: they cannot reasonably be regarded as intended figuratively: and they unquestionably have not been fulfilled.

Nor can the difficulty be overcome by the exegetical expedient of spiritualizing the imagery of such prophecies so as to make them predictions, in disguise, of Christianity. The language used is too plain to permit that. The Israelites are to be delivered not from the stronghold of sin and Satan, but from Babylon; and their deliverer is, not the Saviour of the world, but the Persian monarch, Cyrus. We must take prophecy as we find it: we must not, prior to any inductive study of what the contents and character of the prophecies actually are, assume that every description of the future which they contain must tally necessarily with the event, and be surprised and disappointed if we find that it does not do so; nor must we unduly strain the language for the purpose of bringing the two into agreement. The prophet is much more than a mere fore-teller: he is in a far wider sense the interpreter of the thoughts of God, the announcer to man of the Divine will and plan. He is not the less a true prophet because the picture of the future which he draws is sometimes a Divine ideal, rather than the reality which history actually brings with it. The ideals of the prophets display astonishing brilliancy and imaginative power. They stand before us, to kindle our admiration, to ennoble our aspirations, to stir our emulation. In no part of the Old Testament is the ele-

vating and ennobling influence of the Spirit more manifest than in the great ideals of the prophets. But they must be read, and interpreted, as ideals: the imaginative garb in which the prophets' thoughts and aspirations are set forth must be recognized as such, and not regarded as necessarily, in all its details, a prediction of the future. And although such prophecies cannot, without doing violence to words, be understood even as disguised, or figurative, descriptions of the blessings of the Gospel, yet they do embody ideas which are appropriated, and find their fuller realization, in the Gospel: they depict states of ideal blessedness, which, though they are not, and are not intended to be, identical with the blessings conferred by Christianity, may still be regarded as emblems, suited to the ages to which they were addressed, of the blessedness which it is the ideal aim of the Gospel to secure, partly upon earth, more completely hereafter in heaven. The felicity which the prophet of the Exile imagined would be the immediate consequence of the restoration to Palestine, may be viewed as an ideal, setting forth in warm and glowing colours God's purposes of grace towards His faithful people, and the blessedness which He has in store for them, and at the same time serving as a fore-gleam, or prelude, of that wider and larger salvation, which He offers to all men in Christ. Unto which, in His mercy, may He vouchsafe to bring us, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

## In the Study.

### ④ Study in Illustration.

HERE is a man who believes that the highest reach of art in the preparation of the sermon is the art of illustrating it. And if rarity is an evidence of high attainment he must be nearly right. The title of Mr. Edwards' book is *The Art of Illustration illustrated* (Culley; 3s. 6d. net).

It is quite clear that Mr. Edwards has given some time to the study of the art. And he has learned to practise it. His introduction contains good principles, illumined by good examples.

He has also read liberally among the artists of illustrations.

And yet, for all that, one can see that he has only skimmed the surface of his subject. He has a section on the Rev. William L. Watkinson, Ex-President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, as an illustrator. We could undertake to find more illustrations, and better, in a single sermon of Mr. Watkinson's than he has found in all his writings.

Take a sermon from his latest book, *Themes for Hours of Meditation*, and let it be the sermon on

'The Claim of the Outsider.' The text is Col 4<sup>5</sup>, 'Walk in wisdom toward them that are without.'

The divisions of the sermon are simple, almost inevitable—I. The Distinction here assumed: 'them that are without' implies 'them that are within.' II. The Duty of the Within to the Without.

In the Distinction itself Mr. Watkinson deals first with the *reality* of it, next with the *determination* of it, and then with the *significance* of it. Under the *reality* he points out that though men dislike the distinction of sheep and goats, wheat and tares, it occupies the New Testament, and it can be seen in life itself. 'We obey one law: the higher law of the mind, or the lower of the flesh. The antagonism between France and Germany is emphatic and the frontier is exactly defined—a clear line of demarcation not to be crossed with impunity.' That is the first illustration. The *determination* of the distinction, he says, is made by Christ. But there is no illustration here except the Biblical one: 'To be within is to be in Him. He spake of the temple of His body. *He* is the true Church.' Under the *significance*, he says: 'We are exhorted in some quarters to judge Christ as we should another man, to judge the Bible as we should another book, the Church as we should any other institution; but we cannot thus understand the faith of Christ. We do not know the glory of a garden by a glimpse through the hedge, the glory of a cathedral by walking about it and looking up at its dark windows, or the glory of a country by sailing round its shores; the garden, shrine, or country must be judged from within, and from within must we judge the Lord Jesus and all that pertains to His faith and service.' And 'to be without,' he says a little later, 'is to be outside the ark, struggling with the deluge.'

The second division is the Duty of the Within to the Without. Mr. Watkinson sums up the whole duty in this, that we must maintain *high character*. And very soon we reach this illustration: 'Years ago we read a work on Alpine flowers which was vividly written and brilliantly illustrated; yet when we saw those very flowers in blue, gold, and crimson growing on the mountains we better understood their true glory.'

He points out that the Apostle's word is not *talk* in wisdom, but *walk* in wisdom. 'The sun needs no syllables to assure us that it shines; a letter of commendation is not necessary with the

evening star; the blue sky requires no dictionary to explain itself; no elocution is desirable to set forth the purity and grandeur of the sea; and the purple patch on the mountain side, the golden gorse on the heath, the red rose of the garden, persuade us of their lustre and sweetness without any tricks of rhetoric.' Here is a very riot of illustration, but it is the riot of nature, which is the highest art.

Then he touches on the elements of character. But first there must be symmetry and proportion. 'We often do ourselves and the cause of Christ great injustice by faults of temper and life which lessen our influence. As every one knows, the famous Church of St. Peter at Rome was not completed according to the original plan of Michael Angelo; a later builder put up the façade in another order of architecture, in consequence of which the grand dome that Angelo fixed in the golden air is largely concealed, and the splendid proportions of the structure are not adequately realized.'

The elements of character he touches are all for avoidance. The first is *rigidness*. Rigidness is not conscientiousness; it is the insistence upon hard-and-fast rules which are chiefly gratuitous. 'The artists tell us that Nature abhors the straight line, that the curve is the line of beauty; and it is thus in morals. There are Christians who are so fond of straight lines that they would square the sun and flatten the rainbow.' The next is *roughness*. Mr. Watkinson rarely makes use of an anecdote, but the rare use is the right use. 'At a meeting for Christian fellowship,' he says, 'we heard a brother deplore that he found himself lacking in that perfect courtesy which ought to distinguish the Christian.' It is the only occasion upon which Mr. Watkinson has heard this grace referred to in a meeting. But he has heard men say, 'I do not care for smoothness and suavity: I believe in reality and outspokenness.' 'What!' he exclaims, 'is not silk as real as sandpaper, and is it not infinitely more effective?' The third is *hardness*. Hard people remind him of a tuning-fork; 'they are genuine enough, and you get from them a true note in a steely fashion, yet no one will mistake the sound for music, or care to die for such an instrument.' The last is *gloominess*. And here Mr. Watkinson gives us a quotation, effective also on account of its rarity. It is from R. L. Stevenson: 'I do not call that by the name of

religion which fills a man with bile.' Then comes that most difficult of all the accessories to a great sermon, the touch of humour. 'We remember seeing a South African journal which contained an advertisement for a lady help: "A Christian preferred; cheerful, if possible." So it has come to that!'

But character is combination of characteristics. And the sermon ends with a quotation from the diary of Andrew Bonar: 'In prayer in the wood for some time, having set apart three hours for devotion; felt drawn out much to pray for that peculiar fragrance which believers have about them who are very much in fellowship with God. It is like an aroma, unseen but felt. Other Christians have the beauty of the Rose of Sharon; these have the fragrance too.'

### Ⓐ Study in Old English.

WHAT does the uneducated Englishman make of the phrase, 'Woe worth the day!' in Ezk 30<sup>2</sup>? The Scotsman understands it instinctively; for it is used freely in Scots to this day. But how many Englishmen catch the meaning of it as they read; or how many of them have it explained from the pulpit?

It comes from Coverdale. It was accepted by Cranmer and the Bishops, and so passed into the Authorized Version and is retained by the Revisers. Even Toy in the Polychrome Bible keeps the Authorized phrase, although he begins his introduction by saying: 'The present rendering of the Old Testament is not a revision of the Authorized Version, but a new translation from the Hebrew in Modern English.'

The Hebrew is וָאֵיךְ הַיּוֹם, *hah layyom*; the Greek ὀδυμένη; the Latin 'vae, vae, diei.' From the Vulgate comes Wyclif's 'Woo! woo! to the dai'; and the Douai, 'wo, wo to the day.' The same

exclamation in the Hebrew in Joel 1<sup>15</sup> was rendered by Coverdale, 'Alas, alas for this daye,' and has come through all the later Versions in the form 'Alas for the day!' except the Douai, which has the singular expression, 'A a a, for the day,' following literally, as Wyclif had already done, the Vulgate, 'A a a, diei.'

'Worth' as a verb meant in Old English to *become* or to *be*. In the *Legends of the Saints* (ed. W. M. Metcalfe, Scot. Text Soc., ii. 11) it is said of St. Machor that

Growand ay furth he wes  
In vertu and in gudnes,  
And for he doutyt for to fal,  
Til abstinens he gef hym al,  
And held his flesch undirlout,  
For dred it suld worth stout  
A-gane the saul.

It is still in use in modern Scots. Hogg (*Tales*, 1838) says, 'I was . . . considering what could be wort of a' the sheep.'

Accordingly, 'woe worth the day' means 'evil happen to the day.' Blind Harry has the phrase in *Schir William Wallace* (ed. J. Moir, Scot. Text Soc., iv. 744)—

Than wepyt scho, and said full oft, 'Allace  
That I was maide, wa worthe the coursit cas!

Spenser has 'Woe worth the man,' in the *Faerie Queene*, vi. xxxii. 7—

Wo worth the man,  
That first did teach the cursed steele to bight  
In his owne flesh, and make way to the living spright,

And Chaucer, in *Troilus and Criseyde*, ii. 345, uses the phrase four times in successive lines—

Wo worth the faire gemme vertulees!  
Wo worth that herbe also that dooth no bote!  
Wo worth that beautee that is routhelees!  
Wo worth that wight that tret ech under fote!

## The Law of Purification in Mark vii. 1-23.<sup>1</sup>

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THE difficulties in Mark's report of the incident of the washing of the hands before eating bread, and in his remarks on the Jewish laws of purification, are so well known that it is hardly necessary

<sup>1</sup> Lecture read before the Cambridge Theological Society on May 13th.

to enumerate them. On the other hand, the explanations of the passage offered by commentators are either unsatisfactory or do not do justice to the rules of purification as preserved in the early Jewish literature. In most cases the commentaries give criticisms of the